



Pandemic can't be an excuse to crush labour rights: Rahul Gandhi
page 10



Eight parties write to President, condemn arrest of activists
page 10



Government issues data processing rules for Aarogya Setu
page 12



With oil price crash and COVID-19, Saudi Arabia confronts double crises
page 14

Maharashtra cases cross 23,400 mark

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE
PUNE

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

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

As many as five deaths were reported from Solapur to take the district's toll to 16. Two fatalities were reported from Thane, while one each was reported from Amravati, Aurangabad, Nanded, Ratnagiri and Wardha.

"About 75% of the deaths reported today had co-morbidities such as diabetes, hypertension, asthma and heart disease," said State Surveillance Officer Dr. Pradeep Awate.

As many as 587 persons were discharged on Monday, taking the cumulative tally of those discharged till date to 4,786. Mumbai city reported the bulk – 782 – as the city's tally crossed the 14,000-case mark to touch 14,521.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 11

Modi asks States to prepare for ramping up economic activity

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

NISTULA HEBBAR
NEW DELHI

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



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

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

Migrant labour

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

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

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

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

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

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

MORE REPORTS ON ▶ PAGES 7, 10, 11, 12, 13 & 14

Uddhav to PM: deploy Central forces

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Monday appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to approve the deployment of Central forces in the State in order to reduce the stress on the police force. As many as 1,007 Maharashtra Police personnel have tested positive for COVID-19 as of Monday, including seven deaths.

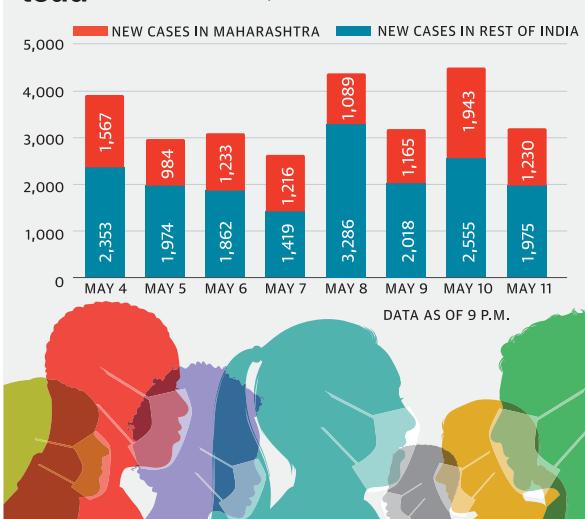
"Doctors, nurses and the police are working round the clock, and the police, especially, need to be given rest. We cannot afford to have them falling ill," he said.

Mr. Thackeray also requested the PM to resume Mumbai suburban railway services for essential service personnel amid the lockdown.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 2

Viral load

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



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

Responding to allegations about the government mulling community/religion-based mapping of the COVID-19 spread, Mr. Agarwal said, "This is a very irresponsible piece of news. The virus does not see people's caste, creed or religion."

"The Supreme Court has

their family members and others," he added.

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

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

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

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

Pleas sought restoration of 4G facility

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

Manmohan stable, under observation

SANDEEP PHUKAN
NEW DELHI

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

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

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

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

Ready to roll



Back on track: A worker cleaning a Rajdhani coach at a yard in Delhi on Monday as the Railways readies to restart some passenger train services from Tuesday, after a hiatus of about 50 days due to the COVID-19 outbreak. ■ R.V. MOORTHY ▶ (REPORT ON PAGE 12)

Migrant exodus chokes Maharashtra-M.P. border

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

SIDHARTH YADAV
BHOJPAL

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

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

"We were told the Madhya Pradesh government will

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

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

tancing norms observed.

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

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

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

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

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

When Madhya Pradesh had earlier refused to accept workers bound for Uttar Pradesh, he confessed that the police had suggested the workers take alternative routes to avoid detection.

"How can someone be stopped from going back home," he asked. Then, the held-up workers had begun throwing stones, injuring three policemen.

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

Bodies queue up in city crematoriums

Staff work in fear after employee at Shivaji Park tests positive

JYOTI SHELAR
MUMBAI

With the number of COVID-19 bodies being brought in seeing a sharp rise in recent days, staff at the city's electric crematoriums are struggling to cope with the increased workload.

For the past week, the electric crematoriums at Shivaji Park in Dadar and Chandanwadi in Kalbaudi are working at 50% capacity as one furnace each in both facilities has been shut down for repairs. Though there are 11 electric crematoriums in the city, the facilities at Shivaji Park and Chandanwadi are among the few that have two furnaces each. These two crematoriums have been handling most of the workload as they are located near major hospitals.

An average of 15 to 18 bodies are brought in every 24



Staff at the crematorium in Shivaji Park after performing the last rites of a COVID-19 patient. ■ PRASHANT NAKWE

hours and most of them are of COVID-19 patients, an employee at the crematorium in Shivaji Park said. "The furnace has been functioning continuously. At the end of the day, it is a machine, it will need some time to cool off. But that has not been possible for many days," he pointed out. The staffer said, "Most ambulances now

bring two bodies in one trip." The employees at the crematorium have been instructed to quickly dispose of the bodies of COVID-19 victims, but with only one furnace functioning, there is a queue of bodies.

On Monday evening, at the crematorium in Chandanwadi, there were four bodies of COVID-19 patients yet to be disposed of. An employee said, "Once the body is placed in the furnace, the process takes about one and a half hours. Then the furnace has to be cleared to cremate the next body."

The staffer said the number of bodies has been rising at the crematorium over the past two weeks. "We are getting an average of 20 bodies, of which 70% are of COVID-19 patients," he said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

Deploy Central forces to offer police a breather, CM tells PM

Uddhav also suggests running of suburban trains for essential service personnel

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Monday appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to approve the deployment of Central forces in the State in order to reduce the stress on the police force.

In a videoconference with Mr. Modi, which was attended by all CMs, Mr. Thackeray also requested the PM to resume Mumbai suburban railway services only for essential service personnel amid the lockdown enforced to check the COVID-19 pandemic. "It will be only for the essential services, and individuals will be permitted only after checking their identity cards," he said.

"Doctors, nurses and the police are working round the clock, and the police, especially, need to be given rest. We cannot afford to have them falling ill. Therefore, making Central forces available when required, would reduce the stress of the State police," Mr. Thackeray said.

The CM also said the State has suffered a loss of ₹35,000 crore on account of the lockdown. He urged the PM to clear the Goods and Services Tax (GST) refunds and grant tax concessions to Maharashtra so that the money can be



Exchange of ideas: Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray in a videoconference with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

used to strengthen healthcare infrastructure to fight COVID-19. Mr. Thackeray urged the Centre to also waive the GST levied on medical equipment and consider concessional customs duties on critical equipment imported to tackle the pandemic.

Regarding the movement of stranded migrant workers, Mr. Thackeray said they are moving through different zones. "Hence, everyone should take proper care, otherwise the country is at a risk of increasing the infection, especially at a time when it is being said that May will bring the highest number of patients. The number may continue to rise for the next two months as well."

Explaining the condition

of farmers, the CM said, "In Maharashtra, a loan waiver scheme was started for farmers before COVID-19 broke out. However, in some districts, especially in Vidarbha, due to the elections, the farmers have not got the benefit of loan waiver. Now the kharif season has begun. The Reserve Bank of India should be instructed by the Centre to provide crop loans to those who have not availed of the benefit of the State loan waiver scheme."

He suggested that a task force of expert doctors, including those from Mumbai and Pune, should be formed at the national level, which should stay in touch and help co-ordinate the pandemic response.

Goa CM wants graded lifting of transport restrictions

ADITYA ANAND
MUMBAI

Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Monday said he is in favour of a restricted lifting of inter-State transport curbs, quick resumption of mining, and drawing up a standard operating procedure (SOP) for tourism industry.

Speaking to reporters after attending a videoconference of CMs with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Mr. Sawant said that lockdown 4.0 would begin on May 18 and would be implemented in the State, even though it is a green zone.

"Section 144 will continue to be in force till this phase of the lockdown is on. The duration will be announced by the Centre. We will take steps to restart public transport," he said.

Mr. Sawant said he had told the Prime Minister that "we need to go slow on the running of trains and resumption of airlines."

Parties divided on 'victim' lines

BJP, MNS focus on students stuck in Pune

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE
PUNE

As various segments of the population struggle through the lockdown, political parties are doing what they are best at: play vote bank politics. While the Congress is focusing on the plight of migrants, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the students' wing of the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) have taken the responsibility of providing inter-district transport for thousands of students from Maharashtra's rural areas stranded in the city due to the lockdown.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Maharashtra Navnirman Vidyarthi Sena (MVNS)'s Pune chief, Kalpesh Yadav urged the Mahatma Gandhi government to provide free transportation to students from the State's rural areas. "There are nearly 4,000 students preparing for civil services and the Maharashtra Public Service Commission examinations. For the past 42 days, we have been providing meals to more than 1,750 students. Their plight was no less miserable than that of mi-

grant workers," he said. "While this is no time to point fingers at other parties, I strongly urge the State government to make free transportation available to these students so they can return to their villages on the lines of bringing back stranded students from Kota in Rajasthan." He said students in the Peth areas in the heart of the city as well as suburbs like Wagholi, Lonikand, Vishrantwadi and other areas had reached out to him.

Besides these meals, supplied twice a day by the MVNS, Mr. Yadav said the outfit has spent ₹70,000 and requisitioned two State Transport buses to take a batch of these students to their home towns in Jalgaon district. On Monday, two more buses carrying more than 40 students left for Ahmednagar and Nashik after taking permission from the Pune district collector.

The students have run out of money due to the lockdown being extended, he said. "With all hotels and eateries shut, they were not only bereft of food but were also

under severe mental stress," Mr. Yadav said.

It was only after MNS leader Amit Thackeray [Raj Thackeray's son] had petitioned Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray that the directives were issued to district authorities to make arrangements for these students, he said. The BJP, too, has taken up the cause of the students, with three buses provided by the party taking them to their destinations in Kolhapur, Sangli and Nashik districts.

Political observers said the Congress is eyeing the larger vote bank by targeting migrant workers, while parties like the MNS were focusing on the younger lot.

Traditionally, not only migrant workers from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, but other social classes from these States too owe a firm allegiance to the Congress. The MNS, being a much smaller regional party, has eyed the younger demographic for building their base in Pune, especially among students preparing for competitive exams," said city-based political analyst Rajendra Pandarpure.

Ticket costs ₹2,420 for now; passengers to be screened before boarding

AJEEET MAHALE
MUMBAI

Minutes after the online ticket window opened on Monday evening, the first special Mumbai-Delhi train to be run on Tuesday was completely booked. The train will leave Mumbai Central at 5.30 p.m. and reach New Delhi railway station at 9.05 a.m.

The tickets can only be booked through the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation portal or the mobile application, with a forward booking window of up to one week. Barring 15 pairs of trains, all other trains are still cancelled.

A dynamic pricing policy is in force, with tickets priced according to the Rajdhani Express rates. A ticket between Mumbai Central and New Delhi costs ₹2,420.

Passengers have been asked to arrive at the station at least 90 minutes before the departure time. The ticket also mentions that dry, ready-to-eat meals and packaged

Cases, fatalities rise in Pune, Aurangabad

Death toll in Pune division reaches 179, while 1,237 have been discharged till date

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE
PUNE

At least five COVID-19 fatalities were reported from Pune and two from Aurangabad on Monday, with both districts reporting a fresh surge in positive cases.

While State Health Department figures put Pune's death toll at 158, district health officer Dr. Bhagwan Pawar said the toll had risen to 161. At least 112 new cases were reported across Pune district on Monday to take the total tally of cases – including deaths and recoveries – to 2,969, Dr. Pawar said.

Along with Pune's total fatalities, the death toll in Pune division – which consists of the districts of Satara, Sangli, Kolhapur and Solapur, along with Pune – now stands at 179. While Solapur has reported 16 deaths, Satara district has recorded two. Kolhapur and Sangli have reported one death each, thus far.

"The total positive cases in Pune division stands at 3,440, of which 2,028 are active. Of them, 115 are critical," Pune Divisional Commissioner Deepak Mhaiskar said. Of the active cases, Pune district has 1,663, which includes 100 critical ones, he said.

As per figures given by the Pune zilla parishad's health department till Sunday evening, there were 1,562 active cases recorded in the dis-



No entry: Pune Police personnel block Timber Market Road on Monday. ■ JIGNEH MISTRY

trict; 1,329 cases in Pune city, 78 in Pimpri-Chinchwad, and 155 in Pune rural areas.

Speaking to *The Hindu* on the rise in cases in the district's rural areas, Pune zilla parishad CEO Ayush Prasad said, "Cases have increased following relaxations in lockdown rules. The last two days have seen a rise of 17 cases. Most of these are personnel engaged in essential services, who live in Pune city but move around because of the nature of their vocation. These are mainly medical practitioners and other personnel."

Mr. Prasad further said that steps had immediately been taken to check the spread of the contagion by ensuring that the families of the positive cases were not similarly afflicted.

Solapur reported 32 new cases on Monday to take its cumulative tally to 296. Ac-

cording to district administration officials, nine of the new cases are police personnel. On May 7, a 58-year-old assistant sub-inspector posted at Solapur MIDC had tested positive and had succumbed during treatment.

Satara has recorded 119 cases till date, including one from the tourist hill station of Mahabaleshwar, while Sangli and Kolhapur have reported 37 and 18 COVID-19 positive cases respectively.

In a bid to rein in the spread of the contagion in Pune city, the civic body is conducting an extensive drive to make the five highly infected wards 'corona-free'. "More than one lakh people have been screened via our 50 mobile dispensaries. Of these, 200 cases have tested positive. We are aggressively targeting the 'red zones' of Bhavani Peth, Yerwada, Kasba-Vishrambaug-

wada, Shivajinagar-Ghole Road and Dhole-Patil Road by increasing testing in slum clusters located in these areas," said Rubal Agarwal, additional municipal commissioner and CEO of Pune Smart City Development Corporation Limited (PSCDCL).

In a heartening development, the numbers of those recovering have also increased with 1,237 people in the division and 1,139 across Pune district being discharged till date.

In Aurangabad, an 80-year-old woman who tested positive on May 9, passed away in the wee hours of Monday at the district's Government Medical College and Hospital (GMCH).

Another 58-year-old man with co-morbidities succumbed during treatment at the same hospital late afternoon, to take the district's death toll to 15.

"On May 10, the 80-year-old woman was put on ventilator support after her oxygen levels plummeted sharply. Unfortunately, she passed away sometime after 1 a.m. The second patient, who had a history of medical ailment, was admitted on Sunday and had to be put on ventilator support. He died following a seizure around 4.30 p.m.," an official from GMCH said.

At least 51 new cases were reported on Monday to take the district's cumulative case tally to 619, said officials.

Mumbai-Delhi train fully booked in minutes

Ticket costs ₹2,420 for now; passengers to be screened before boarding

AJEEET MAHALE
MUMBAI

Minutes after the online ticket window opened on Monday evening, the first special Mumbai-Delhi train to be run on Tuesday was completely booked. The train will leave Mumbai Central at 5.30 p.m. and reach New Delhi railway station at 9.05 a.m.

The tickets can only be booked through the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation portal or the mobile application, with a forward booking window of up to one week. Barring 15 pairs of trains, all other trains are still cancelled.

Political observers said the Congress is eyeing the larger vote bank by targeting migrant workers, while parties like the MNS were focusing on the younger lot.

Traditionally, not only migrant workers from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, but other social classes from these States too owe a firm allegiance to the Congress. The MNS, being a much smaller regional party, has eyed the younger demographic for building their base in Pune, especially among students preparing for competitive exams," said city-based political analyst Rajendra Pandarpure.

drinking water "will be available in the train on payment". The trains only have three-tier air-conditioned (AC), two-tier AC and First AC compartments. "Passengers will be checked before boarding. Any passenger who shows signs of COVID-19 will not be allowed to board," said Ravinder Bhakar, chief public relations officer, WR.

No linen will be provided on trains and there will be minimal staff. The number of stops have also been curtailed. Mr. Bhakar said the train was fully booked, including the middle berth in three-tier AC coaches.

The Railways were initially not allowing the Shramik Special trains for migrant workers to run at full capacity in line with physical distancing norms. The reduction of the middle berth in Shramik Special trains had reduced each coach's capacity to 54 seats from the regular 72 seats. As a result, the trains have only been carrying between 1,100 and 1,200 passengers every day.

However, a few days ago,

railway officials said the policy had been changed to allow middle berths. This will add nearly 400 seats to each train's capacity.

MSRTC transports 21,714

AJEEET MAHALE
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) has transported 21,714 migrant workers between May 9 and 11. On Monday, it transported 11,866 workers, who were walking along the highway, free of cost.

The State government has decided to provide transport to all migrant workers till their State borders and to transport workers from Maharashtra from the border to their districts, free of cost.

It has also decided to provide transportation to migrant workers walking along the highways to reach State borders.

Only 29% silt removed from Mithi river

TANVI DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

Less than three weeks to go for the May 31 deadline to ready the city for the monsoon, the BMC is struggling to cope. The desilting of the Mithi river is just 29% complete, new Municipal Commissioner IS Chahal found during a review of the cleaning work in the river and other major nullahs in the city.

Mr. Chahal asked for more machinery and manpower to be deployed, while officials blamed the lockdown, shortage of labourers and the need to maintain physical distancing for the slow pace of work.

The 21-km Mithi river is supposed to be cleared of silt before every monsoon. The BMC is to remove 98,500 metric tonnes of silt from the river but has managed to clear only 26,118 metric tonnes or 29% so far.

Rickshaw, taxi drivers leave for home in their vehicles

The drivers, who usually go home during the summer, may not return soon this time



Auto drivers heading for their home towns stuck in a traffic jam at Kasara ghat. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

may have left by now," said A.L. Quadros of the Mumbai Taximen's Union. Had the government done something

to help them through April, fewer people may have gone, he said.

"Several rickshaw drivers have already gone. Some were stopped at toll nakkas and check posts, but were eventually allowed to go. There is fear among drivers as to what will happen if they remain in the city," Mr. Pandit pointed out.

Union officials said rickshaw drivers were going in groups of 15 or 20, either with their families or with other drivers. "We are a group of 15 autorickshaw drivers and have stocked up on dry rations as well as key spare parts in case of a breakdown," said a rickshaw driver from Jharkhand who wished to remain anonymous.

He said they planned to take several halts along the way and drive cautiously. "There is no requirement for us to reach home at the earliest. But we want to leave this city as soon as possible," he said.

Champi Kurien from the Mumbai Rickshawmen's Union, estimated that 10% of the city's autorickshaw drivers may have left. "We can

no longer tell them to stay back. There is no saying when this lockdown will end. It's a risky journey, but so is going by foot. I only get calls from drivers once they cross the border. Had the State government acted sooner in helping them, this would not have been the situation," he said.

Transport department officials said they were preparing to create an online application to help drivers get a temporary permit to travel outside the State. "The permit is usually taken by several taxi drivers who go home during the summer. Typically, the number of taxi and rickshaw drivers in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region drops by around 15%," a senior transport department official said.

However, while most of them usually come back after the summer break ends, Mr. Pandit believes those who have left this time will only return once things stabilise in the city.

The officer said immediate arrests were unlikely given the numbers.

Timings

MUMBAI
TUESDAY, MAY 12

RISE 06:05 SET 19:05

RISE 00:00 SET 10:28

WEDNESDAY, MAY 13

RISE 06:05 SET 19:05

RISE 00:06 SET 11:25

THURSDAY, MAY 14

RISE 06:05 SET 19:06

RISE 00:53 SET 1

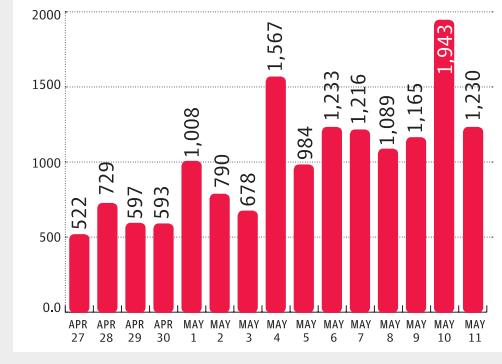
Maharashtra COVID-19 tracker

TOTAL CASES	NEW CASES	ACTIVE CASES	RECOVERED	DEATHS
23,401	1,230	17,747	4,786	868

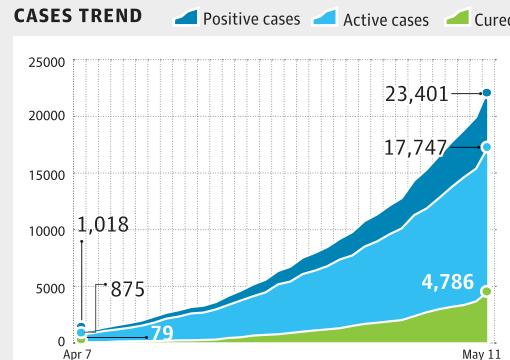
DISTRICTS AFFECTED: 34

DISTRICT	CASES	DEATHS	DISTRICT	CASES	DEATHS
Mumbai	14,521	528	Sangli	37	1
Thane	2,592	23	Nanded	45	4
Pune	2,789	158	Latur	31	1
Nashik	696	34	Buldhana	25	1
Aurangabad	584	14	Nandurbar	22	2
Palghar	286	12	Kolhapur	19	2
Raigad	262	3	Ratnagiri	42	2
Nagpur	259	2	Jalna	14	0
Solapur	296	16	Sindhudurg	6	0
Akola	162	11	Chandrapur	4	0
Jalgaon	180	19	Osmanabad	3	0
Satara	121	2	Parbhani	2	1
Yavatmal	97	0	Washim	1	0
Amravati	83	13	Beed	1	0
Ahmednagar	63	3	Bhandara	1	0
Hingoli	60	0	Gondia	1	0
Dhule	54	6	Wardha	1	1

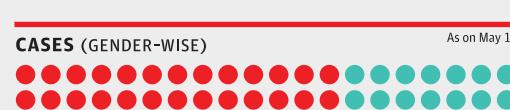
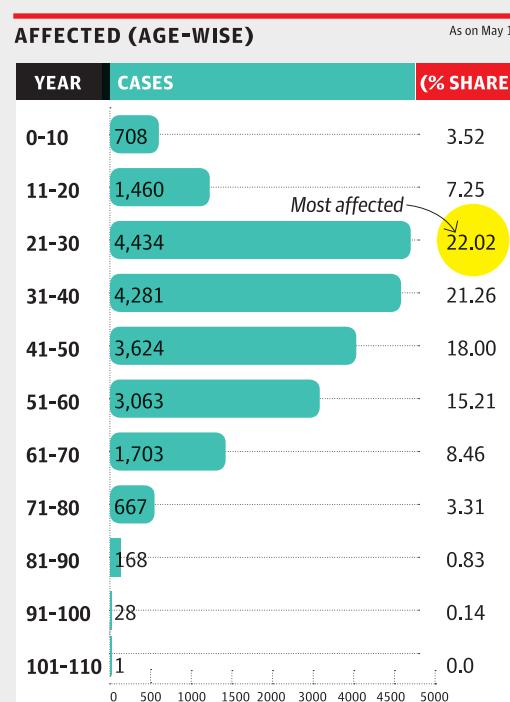
POSITIVE CASES OVER LAST 15 DAYS



782 (63.57%) of total cases are from Mumbai



18.93% is the State recovery rate



73% of deaths due to co-morbidities

HELPLINE NUMBERS
Toll free number: 104/1075
Maharashtra: 020-26127394
National: 1075/1800-112-545/011-23978046
State helpline email id: ssumaharashtra@gmail.com

CITY-WISE HELPLINE NUMBERS
Mumbai city: 022 22664232
Mumbai suburbs: 022 26556799 / 26556806
Thane: 022 25301740
Palghar: 02525 297474
Raigad: 02141 222118
Ratnagiri: 02352 226248
Sindhudurg: 02362 228847

Source: Public Health Department, Maharashtra, BMC

Second-highest surge in a day takes city tally beyond 14,000

Mumbai has lost an average of 21 lives to COVID-19 every day since May 1

JIOTI SHELAR

MUMBAI

Mumbai recorded 782 new COVID-19 cases on Monday, the second-highest jump in a day, pushing its tally to 14,521. With 20 more deaths, the death toll rose to 528.

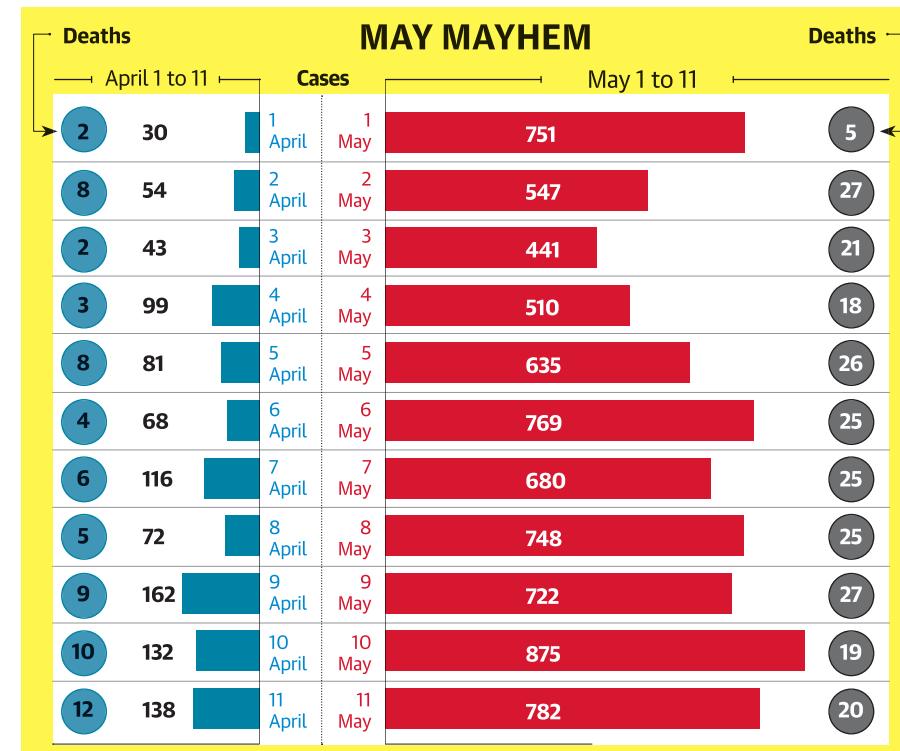
Despite the lockdown, the number of cases and deaths have multiplied rapidly, especially this month. Since May 1, the city has lost an average of 21 lives every day.

Additional municipal commissioner Suresh Kakanji said most new cases are from quarantine facilities and through targeted testing. "Additionally, we have fever clinics from where people are being referred for testing," he said.

Since shortage of beds has become a problem, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) is readying 1,000 beds at the Bandra Kurta Complex. Of these, 500 will be equipped with oxygen support. "The facility should be ready by May 15," Mr. Kakanji said.

Civic officials said deaths are higher among people with underlying ailments. Of the 20 deaths reported on Monday, 11 were men and nine were women. Fourteen had co-morbid conditions like diabetes, hypertension and asthma. Two were below the age of 40, eight were between 40 and 60, and 10 were above 60.

Discharge protocol
Much before the Centre announced its new discharge protocol, the BMC had im-



plemented it on the directions of the task force appointed by the State government. As per the new rules, patients with mild symptoms will be discharged after 10 days of the onset of symptoms and if they have no fever for three days. There is no requirement to test them at the time of discharge.

The patients will have to follow strict home isolation for seven more days. If they develop symptoms like fever, cough or breathing difficulty, they will contact the nearest COVID Care Centre or the helpline number 1916. Patients with moderate to

severe symptoms can be discharged based on clinical parameters and the doctor's opinion. For severe patients who are clear of symptoms, one test will be carried out before discharge.

Before getting approval from the ICMR, a unit of plasma donated at Nair hospital was given to a critical patient in Lilavati Hospital on compassionate grounds. However, the patient died a few days later.

Nod for plasma trial
The civic-run Nair and Kasurka hospitals have received approval from the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) to jointly conduct a trial on convalescent plasma therapy. Nair hospital has collected 12 units of plasma from recovered COVID-19 patients. Experts will now identify suitable patients for the therapy.



Risky duty: Police stand guard in Dharavi. ■ FILE PHOTO

Cases in police force cross 1,000 mark

Nearly 40% cases among Mumbai Police

GAUTAM S. MENGLE

MUMBAI

The number of COVID-19 cases among Maharashtra Police personnel reached a whopping 1,007 on Monday, with 106 officers and 901 constables having contracted the virus so far.

According to data shared by the police, 91 officers and 796 constables are under treatment, while seven died and the rest have recovered.

Officers said the Mumbai Police Commissionerate continues to be a cause for concern, with 394 of the 1,007 COVID-19 cases being reported among its personnel as of Monday morning.

PPE supply

Officers said attempts are under way to ensure a continuous supply of personal protective equipment to police personnel. All personnel above the age of 55 have already been sent on compulsory leave, and shift timings for on-ground personnel have been modified so that each person gets 24 hours of rest after each shift.

Mumbai Police Commissioner Parambir Singh on Monday visited the northern suburbs and interacted with personnel posted to enforcenakabandis at Malad, Malwani, Goregaon, Kandivali and other locations. Mr. Singh also visited the Dahisar check naka, a crucial entry-exit point to the city that is witnessing an exodus of migrants leaving for their hometowns.

"We briefed him on the nitty-gritty of the bandobast and the precautions taken to ensure the safety of our personnel. We also voiced our concerns on the issue," an officer with the Dahisar police station said. Mr. Singh had earlier visited the JJ Marg police station, where 34 personnel have tested positive for COVID-19.

Lockdown violations

Meanwhile, the police have so far registered more than 1.03 lakh cases against lockdown violators across the State and collected ₹3.87 crore in fines. The police have also arrested 19,630 offenders so far and seized 55,784 vehicles.

With 57 fresh patients, case tally in Dharavi reaches 916

Mahim, also in G North ward, reports increase of 18 cases, taking its total to 137

TANVI DESHPANDE

MUMBAI

With 57 new cases on Monday, the number of COVID-19 patients reported from Dharavi has reached 916.

G North ward, which consists of Dharavi, Mahim and Dadar (West), has recorded over 1,000 cases, one of the highest tallies in a single ward in Mumbai.

Repeat samples of Air India pilots test negative

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Medical reports of five Air India pilots who had tested positive for COVID-19 earlier, came negative for the virus on Monday evening.

Airline officials confirmed the development and said that the retest results had boosted the morale of other anxious crew members in the middle of Vande Bharat Mission, India's repatriation of its citizens who are stranded abroad being carried out by Air India and Air India Express.

On Sunday, the five, all Mumbai-based pilots, had tested positive for the virus. Officials termed their initial results as false positives given that the entire kit had given positive indication to everyone tested.

The retests were conducted by a private diagnostic laboratory.

The five had operated cargo flights between Guangzhou in China and Delhi, carrying medical supplies and equipment in April. Four of them had been rostered together, two pilots for each sector to China.

"We felt that it was highly unlikely that they were positive. None of them had flown for 21 days. They were all at home," a fellow pilot said.

Two of the five pilots had operated flights on April 18, while the others flew even earlier.

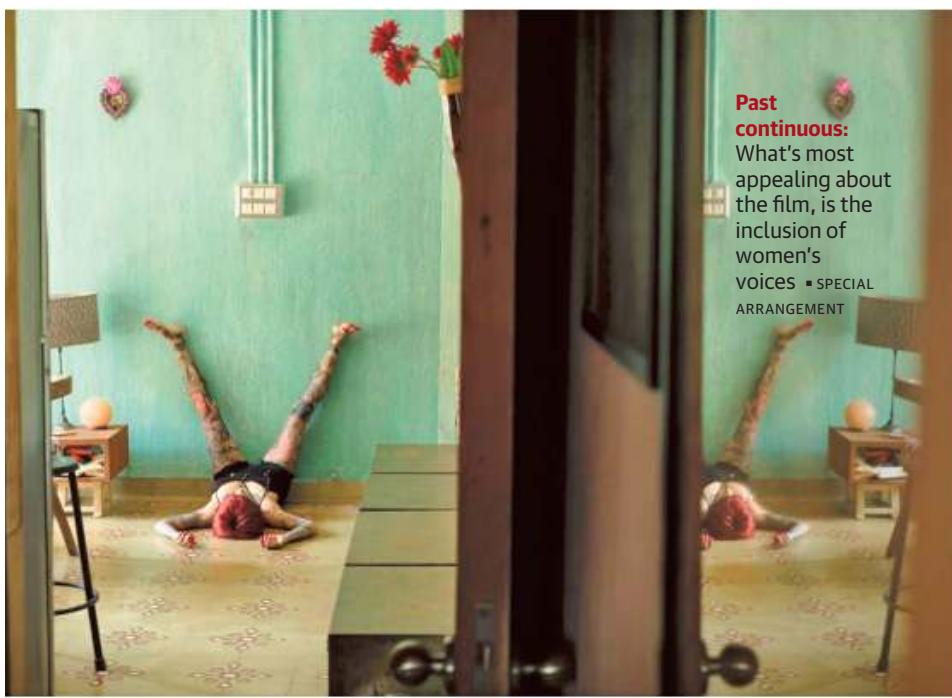
Bhatia Hospital reopens after a month

Facility starts treating COVID-19 patients as well as those with other ailments

JIOTI SHELAR

MUMBAI

Bhatia Hospital, which was among the city's worst-hit hospitals due to COVID-19 with 45 of its staff contracting the virus, has reopened.



Empty metaphors make *Sindhustan*, a personal documentary on postmemory of Partition, a curious but hollow watch

KENNETH ROSARIO

At the start of *Sindhustan*, the documentary quotes Nisid Hajari's *Midnight's Furies*, comparing the barbarity of the Partition to the Holocaust. Yet we, as a nation of storytellers, historians and filmmakers, have often struggled to spotlight and chronicle the trauma of Partition, especially in the mainstream, in comparison to Germany's *Erlinnerungskultur* (culture of remembrance). India's first Partition museum was, after all, opened only three years ago. The onus, therefore, shifts heavily on personal stories, as artists ask themselves what their parents and grandparents were doing when India was violently divided. Sapna Moti Bhavnani's directorial debut, *Sindhustan* establishes its narrative on similar lines of familial introspection, to tell a larger story of the loss, negotiation and re-establishment of land, identity, civilisation and culture.

"The best way, I thought, to tell a story is to become the story," says Bhavnani, the narrator of the documentary, as she ruminates over her Sindhi identity, an aspect of her life she barely paid attention to before she turned 36. She uses an intriguing motif of using her tattoos as a tool of storytelling while paralleling chronicling the narrative in cinema. The concept has an element of novelty and there's an attempt to revitalise a templated documentary format. But the outcome appears to be self-indulgent and distracting, and the half-baked visual metaphors (caves, fire, etc) are either hollow or laden with signs

The transmission of trauma

Sindhustan (documentary)

DIRECTOR: Sapna Moti Bhavnani
STORYLINE: The filmmaker retraces her Sindhi identity through a documentary and her tattoos

and symbols that are unable to communicate its intent. The film is torn between a narrative (which is poignant and delightful) and obscure metaphors which don't serve a purpose.

As commendable as Bhavnani's choice is, to break free from a traditional documentary format, the film falls in other, perhaps familiar, traps of unnecessary visual abstraction, which make the film so personal, that it ceases to have any universality to it, and becomes an artistic home video. There's also something innately uncomfortable about the privilege of tattoos being contrasted against starkly opposite, working-class areas like Dhobi Ghat; and the juxtaposition of plush homes against impoverished Indian reality.

What's most appealing about the film, is the inclusion of women's voices. The sound and look of old age are endearing and melancholic, as the women

reminisce about Sindh and recall the calluses of Partition. There is a deliberate attempt to draft histories through female voices, who are often relegated to the sidelines. As the women revisit their childhoods and youth, the film deals with postmemory, which professor Marianne Hirsch describes as "the relationship that 'the generation after' bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before – to experiences they 'remember' only by means of the stories, images, and behaviours among which they grew up". Bhavnani – who confesses to having explored her Sindhi identity only much later in her life – grew up with these images, stories and behaviours, involuntarily. As she begins to understand her Sindhi origins, the documentary explores the trauma of a distant historical event that lingers on in the new generation, who have no direct experience of the past. Despite its narrative hollowness and discombobulating aesthetic choices, the film brings forth a pertinent idea – that trauma and memory do not die with a generation. *Sindhustan* will release on MovieSaints on May 12



Surfing in my driveway

Each day, Abbey Burns Tucker creates an elaborate new drawing for her daughters to enjoy all the summer fun, without having to step out

: PRIYADARSHINI PAITANDY

If it's Sunday, it must be jump-in-the-puddle day. On Monday, it's time to go swimming with whales and on Tuesday, ride a carriage. For three-year-old Charlotte, each morning spells out a new surprise, a new adventure. Her mother, Abbey Burns Tucker, has taken this period of lockdown/quarantine and turned it into an opportunity for her four daughters, aged three to 13, to have fun, without leaving their premises. And a set of coloured chalks is all she needs.

Every day, Abbey draws a new elaborate image on the driveway of the house. Big, bright, cheerful images. It could be anything from carousels, roller coasters and dinosaurs to a kitchen, classroom or the galaxy, even. She then gets her daughter to pose next to them, clicks pictures and uploads them on social media. "Getting my three-year-old to cooperate can be challenging,

although she does pretty good for being so young," says Abbey, in an email interview from Atlanta, Georgia, USA. The images however, show Charlotte having a good time and sometimes emoting as well.

"I come from an artistic family but never really drew before this. My eldest daughter, 13-year-old Aspen, drew some balloons late March at the start of our quarantine. I took a photo of my youngest with them and fell in love with it. We decided to try a few more and it took off from there," explains Abbey, who also enjoys photography.

The whole process begins with her sketching the chalk drawing on paper, and then start working on it throughout the day. "Each drawing takes me an hour or more. It takes longer to complete because I also have to take care of my four girls who are doing school from home and Zoom activities as well," she says. The creations that are more demanding

Chalking out For Charlotte, all it takes is her mother's drawings to set off on adventures • ABBEY BURNS TUCKER

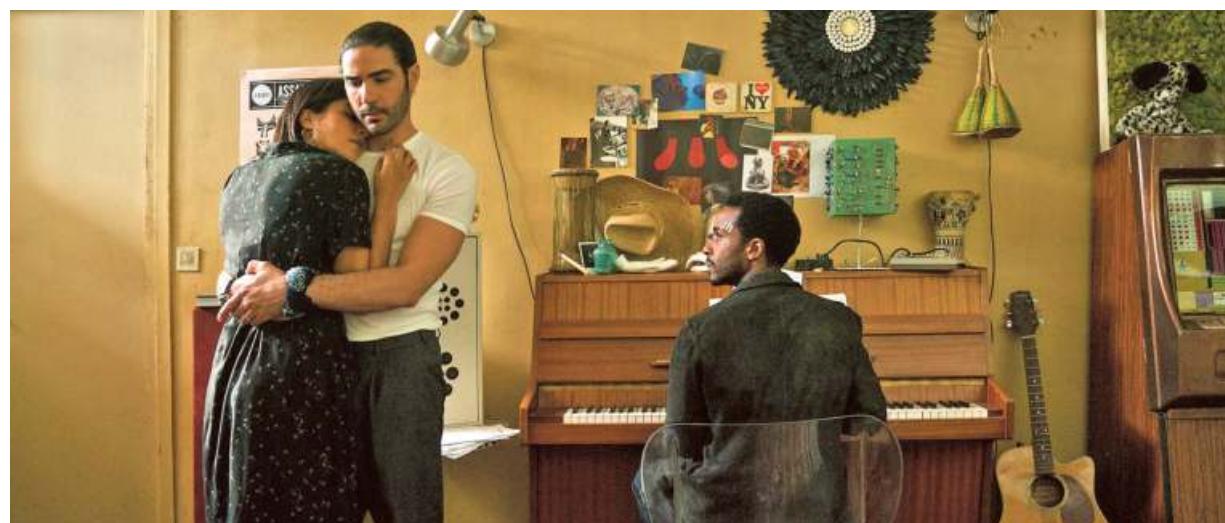
are the ones with the most detail, like the one of the doctor with the globe. "The most challenging part is being able to finish the drawing with everything we have to do that day," she adds. The dimensions vary, with most of them measuring eight feet by seven feet.

Abbey tries to complete a couple of drawings in a day so she can get a rest day in between or in case the weather is bad, she still has a drawing ready to showcase. She usually waits till the evening to do the shoot so the driveway has enough shade. After each drawing, the driveway is washed down to make space for another vibrant image. "I have heard from people that they have been inspired to try some drawings with their own kids. I just love that people are enjoying them so much," says Abbey.

+ All that jazz

to find its hero. After a brief taste, albeit a tantalising one, of the show's brilliant original music, the cohesive link of *The Eddy* quickly oscillates to become gritty Paris as a melting pot of cultures. Just as that's sampled, there's a swift change to familial dynamics and then later the spotlight turns on each character's personal life. Thorne and Chazelle would have done well to let the audience enjoy just one focus, in this writer's opinion the music.

In spite of its flaws, *The Eddy* does possess heart with sincere and passionate performances across the board. Holland as a harried business owner, friend and father, for whom respite remains elusive. Joanna Kulig as Maja the lead singer of the house band stands out. The show's depiction of a less-than-romantic side of Paris too strikes a chord with its portrayal of a multi-ethnic Paris and her criminal underbelly. Unfortunately, though, there's very little redemption for *The Eddy* when episode eight is done and dusted with. Some will hope for a second season for closure, but in this case, it's very easy to move on without ever knowing. *The Eddy* is streaming on Netflix



Sound of music: The series is intriguing in its premise and wholly ambitious in scale and cast • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

teenage daughter.

Intriguing though its premise may be and wholly ambitious in scale and cast, *The Eddy* can't quite find its grip or pace over eight one-hour long episodes. Each segment, dedicated to one musician from the house band, has the audience

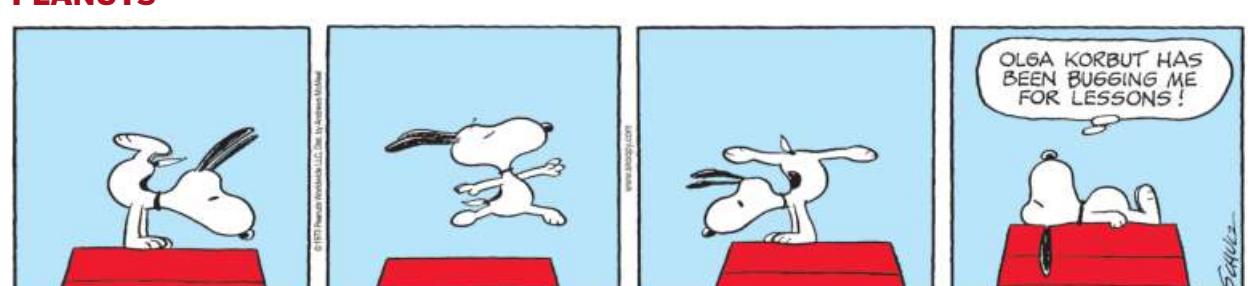
in rapture over back stories that ultimately find little consequence to a larger whole. With glitchy storytelling glaringly evident, it becomes labourious then, bordering on the oppressive, when progress is so excruciatingly slow. In times of restricted attention spans with a plethora

of content available at the click of a button, *The Eddy* could be just a panacea for those looking to slow down and smell the roses. It might as well have been intended to be. Especially, when the flower here is the wonderfully alluring world of jazz. But the show never quite manages

POOCH CAFE



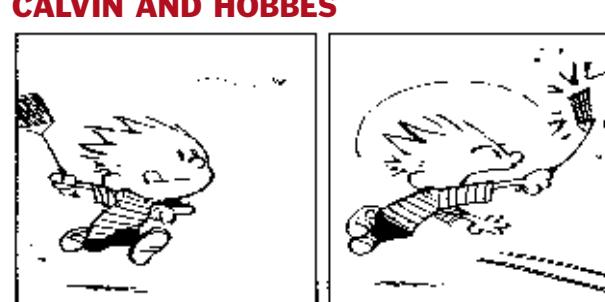
PEANUTS



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



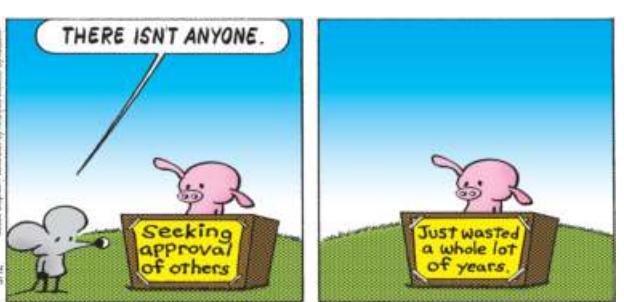
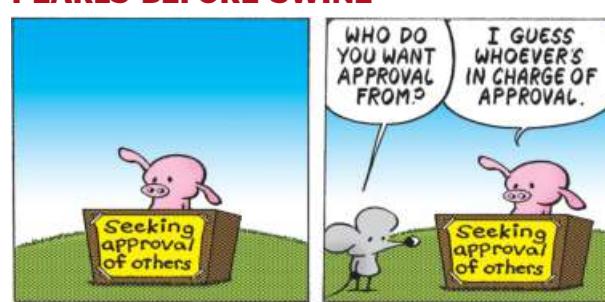
CALVIN AND HOBBES



TIGER



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



Goans trying to smuggle in people from other States: CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PANAJI

Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Monday said some locals were trying to "smuggle in" people from neighbouring States, in violation of directives for the prevention of COVID-19 spread, and warned of strict action against them.

People arriving in the State need to be tested for COVID-19 and they have to remain quarantined as per the guidelines, Mr. Sawant said in a video message.

"We have noticed that some Goans are trying to smuggle in people from the neighbouring States using alternative routes. This is a punishable offence under the National Disaster Management Act," the CM said.

He said the government will take strict action against those caught in such illegal activities.

Goa has been declared a 'green zone' as it has no active case of the virus.

Mr. Sawant said nearly 2,000 Goans, who were stranded abroad, have returned after completing due formalities. "On the other hand, 7,000 to 8,000 people have left Goa, after taking individual permissions, in their own vehicles," he said, adding that most people went to Karnataka.

Indian Bank gives ₹40 lakh to CM fund

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Indian Bank on Monday contributed a sum of ₹40 lakh to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

Sandeep Kumar Gupta, field general manager, Indian Bank, Mumbai, handed over a demand draft for the amount to Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on behalf of MD and CEO Padmaja Chunduru.

Mr. Gupta was accompanied by field general manager Avaya Kumar Mohapatra, Ashok Patnaik and V. Chandrasekaran, zonal managers, Mumbai.

Mr. Gupta briefed Mr. Pawar about various CSR activities and COVID-19 emergency loans being provided by the bank for MSMEs, corporates, pensioners, salaried class, self help groups, poultry and agriculture.

Mr. Pawar assured the bank officials that he would coordinate with them closely in the days to come, for the State's growth.

Quarantine centres can't be used for preventive detention, says HC

'Police can't keep away people they think are of nuisance value'

SONAM SAIGAL
MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court recently held that the manner in which a trade union leader was kept in quarantine, raises suspicion and questions. The court said COVID-19 "quarantine facilities cannot be used as preventive detention or a punitive measure" by the police to keep away people, who according to them, are of "nuisance value".

A single Bench of Justice Revati Mohite Dere was hearing a habeas corpus petition filed by Mahendra Singh, a member of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), on behalf of his colleague K. Narayanan, CITU president of the Mumbai District Committee.

The court was informed that the police intervened while Mr. Narayanan and his colleagues were distributing food and other essentials to migrant workers in compliance with physical distancing norms in Andheri (West) on April 21. The CITU had called for a national

State govt. mulling policy to help small scale industries

Can't take risk of restarting industries in red zones now, says Subhash Desai

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

Industries Minister Subhash Desai on Monday said the State government is considering implementing a policy to help small scale industries in Maharashtra.

Mr. Desai was speaking at a webinar organised by the Maharashtra Chamber of Commerce, Industry & Agriculture in Pune. "The Central government has informed us that it is working on a relief package to help small scale industries in the State. We are in talks daily with Union Ministers Nitin Gadkari, D.V. Sadananda Gowda and Piyush Goyal regarding the package. The State government is also in the process of framing a policy to help and provide various other facilities to these industries," the CM said.

He said the government will take strict action against those caught in such illegal activities.

"We have noticed that some Goans are trying to smuggle in people from the neighbouring States using alternative routes. This is a punishable offence under the National Disaster Management Act," the CM said.

He said barring red zones, his department has given permission to 57,745 businesses to reopen and around 25,000 have already begun work.

"A total of six



Back in business: The Industries Department has given permission to 57,745 businesses to reopen and around 25,000 have already begun work. ■ FILE PHOTO

and a half lakh workers have resumed work. In western Maharashtra alone, 9,147 industries have been given permission to restart work. Of these, a total of 5,774 have already resumed operations," he said.

Mr. Desai said no permission for resumption of industries had been given in Mumbai, Thane, Pune and Pimpri Chinchwad as these areas have a high number of COVID-19 cases and are in

the red zone, stressing that "we cannot take any risk of restarting work here".

Fight virus first

Mr. Desai said, "Even though there is a lot of demand to enable industries here to restart production, it will have to wait till the area becomes a green zone. I expect cooperation from all till then. Our first battle is with the novel coronavirus and I request all to not

rush." Mr. Desai said sops on power tariffs and loan repayment would be given to ease the burden of industries. He said, "Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray is determined to make the entire State a green zone."

Last week, Mr. Thackeray said even though he knows that the economic stress of the coronavirus outbreak is huge, it is important to defeat the virus first.

(With PTI inputs)

70% migrants travelled to UP: Gujarat govt.

2.56 lakh workers have left Gujarat on 209 special trains; most left from Surat

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
AHMEDABAD

A bulk of about 2.56 lakh migrant workers who have left Gujarat on Shramik Special trains till Monday travelled to Uttar Pradesh, a State government official said.

While about 1.76 lakh or 70% of the 2.56 lakh migrants travelled to U.P., others set out on their journey to Bihar, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh, he said.

From Gujarat's various cities, the largest number of migrant workers have left for their home States on trains from the textile hub Surat, followed by Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Rajkot and other districts, the official said.

About 86,400 migrant workers have left Surat, followed by 60,000 from Ahmedabad, he said, adding that more trains are being lined up to take them to their home States. A total of 209 special trains have originated from Gujarat, which accounts for 45% of the 461 trains being operated from different States until Monday

Nirma labourers vandalise staff bus after train to home State cancelled

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BHAVNAGAR

Hundreds of labourers working at Nirma Limited's detergent plant in Bhavnagar district allegedly went on a rampage and vandalised a staff bus in the early hours of Monday after a Shramik Special train to Uttar Pradesh was cancelled, the police said.

The incident occurred at the labourers' colony near Nirma plant in Kala Talav

after the workers got angry thinking that the company was not letting them go to their native place, "which was not true", Superintendent of Police Jaipalsinh Rathore said.

"Some of the labourers were supposed to catch a special train to U.P. from Bhavnagar railway station on Monday morning. When they were being taken to the station in a staff bus, the company management learnt the

train was cancelled due to some reason. Thus, the bus took a U-turn mid-way and came back," Mr. Rathore said.

"After returning, they went on a rampage and broke some window panes and windscreens of the bus," the superintendent said.

The police lodged an FIR under charges of rioting and a process was under way to arrest 10 of the labourers, he said.

morning, said Ashwani Kumar, Secretary to Chief Minister Vijay Rupani.

"Out of 209 Shramik Special trains that left from various stations in Gujarat till Monday morning, 147 went to U.P., 23 to Bihar, 21 to Odisha, 11 to Madhya Pradesh, 6 to Jharkhand, and one to

Chhatisgarh," he said in a video message. Another train will leave for Uttarakhand.

While 72 trains have left from Surat, 50 trains departed from Ahmedabad, 16 from Vadodara, 10 from Rajkot, seven from Morbi, six from Palanpur, five each from Nadiad and Jamnagar,

four each from Anand and Godhra, and three each from Bhavnagar, Junagadh, Navsari, and Vapi.

So far, 2.56 lakh migrant workers have left for their home States, and 36,000 more will leave by Monday on 30 more trains, Mr. Kumar added.

Assets of over ₹140 cr.

As per the affidavit submitted by Mr. Thackeray, he has total assets worth ₹76.59 crore, of which ₹52.44 crore

are immovable while ₹24.14 crore are movable assets. His wife, Rashmi, has property worth ₹65.09 crore, of which ₹28.92 crore is immovable

Vande Bharat: Air India flies 883 people out of country

Almost 4,000 stranded citizens brought back home

ADITYA ANAND
MUMBAI

Over the last few days of the Vande Bharat mission, Air India and Air India Express have flown 883 people out of India on 25 flights.

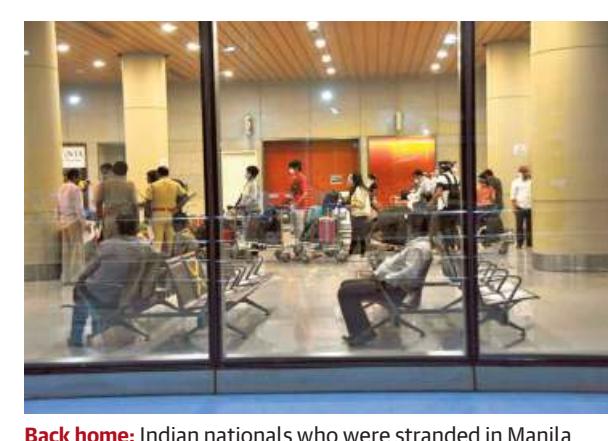
So far, 23 flights have brought 3,908 Indians back to various airports in the country. In Mumbai, 110 people returned from Dhaka on Monday, while 319 were expected from Newark late in the night. A flight from Kuala Lumpur is expected to bring back 225 passengers on Tuesday.

Data available showed that on Sunday, Air India operated 4 outbound flights with 385 passengers. Five inbound flights brought back 757 Indians the same day. Air India Express on the other hand had just 13 outbound passengers on its flights between Friday and Sunday.

These passengers were non-resident Indians living in countries like the United States who were in the country when the lockdown was announced and flights were suspended. As many as 169 passengers flew from Delhi to Washington D.C., 80 from Delhi to San Francisco, and 15 from Delhi to Singapore.

"All rules pertaining to outbound flying are on the airline website to avoid confusion of any sort," an official said.

The Ministry of Civil Aviation said several countries, including Oman, Kuwait, Malaysia, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and U.A.E. were allowing only nationals



Back home: Indian nationals who were stranded in Manila arrive at Mumbai airport. ■ VIJAY BATE

from the destination country to enter.

Foreign nationals from any of the 12 destination countries, who are stuck in India, can also avail the service. Third country nationals, meanwhile, must ensure they have eligible visas to enter Bahrain, Bangladesh, U.S., U.K. or Singapore, or to transit through these countries to another country.

Outbound flights are also open for seafarers on their way to join duty.

Uddhav, other MVA leaders file nomination for MLC polls

With nine contestants in fray, elections likely to go unopposed

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and Legislative Council deputy speaker Neelam Gorhe on Monday filed their nomination as Shiv Sena's candidates for the Council polls.

Nationalist Congress Party's Shashikant Shinde and Amol Mitkari, as well as Congress' Rajesh Rathod, too filed their nominations the same day.

It is the first time that Mr. Thackeray will become a member of either house of the legislature. Last year, his son Aaditya became the first person from the family to contest polls and get elected to the Legislative Assembly.

The CM was accompanied by his wife Rashmi, sons Aaditya and Tejas, along with senior Sena, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and Congress leaders.

ter the Shiv Sena questioned the move. State party president and Revenue Minister Balasaheb Thorat on Sunday said the party has decided to field only one candidate, keeping in mind the Chief Minister's request.

Crucial poll for CM
It is necessary for the election to be held on May 21 as Mr. Thackeray is completing six months of being in office on May 28, and must be inducted into either house before that in order to retain his seat.

The Election Commission had earlier decided to postpone the election, citing risks due to COVID-19, after which the State Cabinet passed a resolution recommending Mr. Thackeray's name for one of the two vacant MLC posts to be filled by the Governor.

The Governor, however, rejected the Cabinet resolution and hinted that Mr. Thackeray speaks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, following which the CM had a parley with the PM. A day later, the Election Commission of India announced the decision to hold the Council polls, paving the way for Mr. Thackeray's nomination.

Caring for their own while caring for others

A city NGO provides health insurance to its volunteers who go from door to door with supplies for the needy

SHUBHA SHARMA
MUMBAI

While most Mumbaikars have the ease of going through the lockdown from the comfort of their homes, a few youngsters are risking their lives to help those in need.

These include 40 volunteers with Apnalaya, an NGO which works with communities in the Shivajinagar slum clusters of Govandi, which comes under M-East ward.

Apnalaya has raised funds for insurance cover to its volunteers, who go from door to door each day distributing relief supplies.

Arun Kumar, CEO, Apnalaya, said they didn't "feel right" about the fact that while they themselves were safe in their homes, their volunteers were out there, risking everything. "All our staffers have medical cover. We decided we can't be a health rights organisation and not give cover to our own people," he said.

Raising funds took a while, as individual

premium was working out to nearly ₹10,000 per person, and for a group insurance plan, the volunteers needed to be employees.

"That set us on a hunt, talking to various people as well as insurers on how to get this done," Mr. Kumar said.

Venkat Krishnan, a philanthropist, spotted a social media post and reached out to Mr. Kumar. He connected Apnalaya with people he knew at ICICI Lombard and also offered to finance the health

insurance.

"I think this is an important thing. Frontline workers are putting their lives at risk to help those in need. We need to give them the cover required. I personally felt that the cost involved was a small sum compared to the risks they are taking in ensuring that support reaches the last mile," said Mr. Krishnan.

"In many ways, these field workers are taking risks to fulfil our need to help those in need, so as donors we owe them a deep debt of

he said.

The volunteers, on their part, are relieved that their effort is appreciated and supported. Nasreen Ansari (20), a Third Year Bachelor of Arts student, who lives in Shivajinagar, said she "felt good" that her safety and health, like those of 39 others, had been looked into. In a day, she covers 70 to 100 houses for relief work, between 6.30 a.m. and 11.30 a.m. "Initially, I was scared to go out, even though we sanitise ourselves, wear masks and maintain physical distancing," she said. "But when I saw the people suffering from hunger in my locality, I knew I had to go out there and do something."

She said her family was lucky as they had a ration card and could procure supplies. "Ever since the lockdown was announced, people have been going to faraway places to just procure food," she said.

For people like her, the medical cover is a motivator and source of hope.



Providing relief: Volunteers of Apnalaya distribute essential supplies in Shivajinagar. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ARUN KUMAR
CEO, Apnalaya

gratitude. Paying for their insurance is just one small way in which we can do it," he said.

Each volunteer has been insured for up to ₹50,000, which includes a COVID-19 cover, and any other ailment during the year. The NGO has paid a total premium of ₹72,806 to the insurer.

Sanjay Datta, chief, underwriting, claims and reinsurance at ICICI Lombard, said the insurer had come out with a COVID-19 policy covering those with mild symptoms or who had tested positive but may not require hospitalisation. "The regulator has encouraged insurers to come up with products, and our aim was to build awareness as well as make a product available to people should they need it,"

Amarinder calls for defined exit strategy, favours curbs extension

Odisha and Rajasthan Chief Ministers demand greater say for the States

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH/JAIPUR

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Monday pitched for an extension of the lockdown, but with a carefully crafted strategy backed by fiscal and economic empowerment of the States to save lives and secure livelihoods.

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

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

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



Punjab CM Amarinder Singh

rinder suggested that MSMEs should be allowed to function in red zone districts with proper safeguards.

The decision on designating the red, orange-yellow and green zones should also be left to the States, which were more cognisant of the ground realities, he said.

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

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot suggested

launching an employment guarantee scheme for urban areas on the lines of the MGNREGA. He said the lockdown has badly affected daily wagers due to which the Centre should come up with an employment generation scheme for the urban poor.

Echoing Capt. Amarinder, Mr. Gehlot said States should be given powers to decide novel coronavirus zones.

Locust menace

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

Mr. Gehlot said that the locust attack which had started in the Thar desert in May 2019 had extensively damaged crops and vegetation in as many as 12 districts. "The locusts have reached up to Ajmer in central Rajasthan," Mr. Gehlot

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

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

SOP suggested

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

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

(With inputs from PTI)

Haryana govt. anti-farmer, says Hooda

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

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

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

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

3.62 lakh migrant workers arrive in Rajasthan

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

have so far travelled out of Rajasthan.

Amid reports that the migrant labourers have set off on foot to their home States, Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has issued an appeal to them not to walk on roads, as arrangements were being made for their transport. He said buses were being arranged for short distances, while a request had been made to the railways to increase the number of special trains.

Clash at border

While the reports of migrants gathering at Ratanpur checkpoint on Rajasthan-Gujarat border came in before they were allowed on Monday, the police personnel of Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh clashed over the homeward journey of workers at the inter-State border adjoining Bharatpur district on Sunday.

The U.P. police did not allow the labourers belonging to Bihar and Jharkhand to enter the State.

The Maruti plant at Manesar, Haryana. ■ FILE PHOTO

The U.P. police did not allow the labourers belonging to Bihar and Jharkhand to enter the State.

During their home quarantine period, people will be stamped with indelible ink on their right hand and wear a wrist band. Neither the discharged person nor his family members will be allowed to venture outside their homes. Every such home will have a quarantine sticker at the entrance and treated as a containment zone.

Meanwhile, 37 new COVID-19 positive cases were detected, including 29 in Gan-

Punjab Cabinet to boycott meetings attended by CS

He had allegedly misbehaved with a Minister last week

VIKAS VASUDEVA
CHANDIGARH

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

CHARANJIT SINGH CHANNI
Punjab Cabinet Minister

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

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

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

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

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

Maruti to resume operations

Manesar plant allowed to operate with over 4,000 workers



Maruti plant at Manesar, Haryana. ■ FILE PHOTO

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

Gurugram plant

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

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

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

Odisha modifies policy on discharge of COVID-19 patients

During their home quarantine period, people will be stamped with indelible ink on their right hand and wear a wrist band. Neither the discharged person nor his family members will be allowed to venture outside their homes. Every such home will have a quarantine sticker at the entrance and treated as a containment zone.

During their home quarantine period, people will be stamped with indelible ink on their right hand and wear a wrist band. Neither the discharged person nor his family members will be allowed to venture outside their homes. Every such home will have a quarantine sticker at the entrance and treated as a containment zone.

Meanwhile, 37 new COVID-19 positive cases were detected, including 29 in Gan-

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

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

the State.

Cases to increase

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

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

He said the company had decided to double the lunch

Major haul of marijuana in Malkangiri

STAFF REPORTER
BERHAMPUR

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

Despite the continuing lockdown for COVID-19, the contraband was being smuggled to Chhattisgarh. Four persons from Malkangiri have been arrested.

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

Vehicle intercepted

According to Malkangiri Superintendent of Police Khilari Rishikesh Dnyandeo, a police team from Orkel during regular checking at Surlokonda market square intercepted the vehicle transporting the contraband to Chhattisgarh.

Thus year, a total of over 8,018 kg of marijuana has been seized in Malkangiri district while being smuggled out.

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

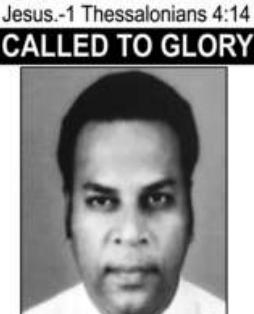
Marijuana is illegally cultivated in remote Maoist-infested regions of Malkangiri district.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

We believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.-1 Thessalonians 4:14

CALLED TO GLORY



Mr. SAMUEL MANOHAR PANDIAN

H/o (Late) Mrs. Helen Samuel & S/o (Late) Mr. G.D. Paul Pandian I.R.S. went to be with the Lord on 10th May 2020.

Funeral was held at the St. George's Cathedral, Chennai the next day.

Inserted by Children and Grandchildren Phone : 98402 6134

READ
SPORTSTAR
EVERY
FORTNIGHT

PRAFULLA DAS
BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha government on Monday modified its policy for discharge of COVID-19 patients from hospitals by increasing subsequent home quarantine period for them from seven to 14 days.

The modified rule regarding home quarantine will be applicable to patients having separate room and separate toilets in urban areas only, said Additional Chief Secretary Pradip Kumar Mohapatra.

Those hailing from rural areas will not be allowed to undergo this home quarantine, he added.

Home quarantine

Mr. Mohapatra said COVID-19 positive cases with symptoms of the disease will be allowed home quarantine for three days after they stop showing any symptom. Those with mild or no symptoms will be discharged 10 days after testing positive or not having fever for three consecutive days,

During their home quarantine period, people will be stamped with indelible ink on their right hand and wear a wrist band. Neither the discharged person nor his family members will be allowed to venture outside their homes. Every such home will have a quarantine sticker at the entrance and treated as a containment zone.

Meanwhile, 37 new COVID-19 positive cases were detected, including 29 in Gan-

Migrants workers try to escape from running train in Odisha

They were apparently trying to evade mandatory quarantine

STAFF REPORTER
BHUBANESWAR

Seven persons have been booked while trying to escape from the Shramik Special train in Odisha's Angul district.

The incident took place at Majhia, 10 km away from the district headquarters town of Angul on Sunday. Locals caught hold of seven persons and handed them over to the police. A few more have not been traced, they said. The migrant workers were coming from Ahmedabad to the Khurda road station.

According to government protocol, all returnees from the different States are to be directly taken to the quarantin-

ation centres where they have to spend the mandatory 21 days before undergoing home quarantine for another week.

People who got down in Angul were apparently trying to evade the mandatory quarantine period.

Deboard train

"When the train slowed down, seven persons belonging to the neighbouring Deogarh district deboarded and tried to flee," said Jagmohan Meena, Angul Superintendent of Police.

Following the Aurangabad train accident, trains are being slowed down ahead of human habitations during their journeys.

In memory of your loved ones To dedicate a space in this section, Please contact: 022-2202 1099 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. &

For placing advertisements online log on to www.thehinduads.com For Placing Advertisements Online, Log on to www.thehinduads.com

DONATE EYES - GIFT SIGHT

CLASSIFIEDS

For more details, email: classifiedscustomercare@thehindu.co.in Contact Toll Free Number: 18003070044

For Placing Advertisements Online, Log on to www.thehinduads.com

Mr. Meena said all seven were sent to a nearby quarantine centre and they would be treated as arrested.

The police said they would be tried once normalcy is restored.

Meanwhile, several reports of returnees roaming in the open are coming from different districts. About 15 persons reportedly got down from a bus, which came from Tamil Nadu, at Cuttack on Monday and walked towards Jagatsinghpur district.

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

Patient had attended Delhi gathering; Telangana records 79-case spike, A.P. adds 38 cases, 7 more test positive in Kerala

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BENGALURU

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

Health officials said the patient from Kudachi, who had been discharged, suffered a relapse. He was re-admitted to hospital in Belagavi. The patient was initially admitted on April 15 and had recovered and tested negative a second time.

COVID-19

tive twice on April 30 and May 1. The tests were done at NIV, Bengaluru and National Institute of Traditional Medicine (NITM) in Belagavi.

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

However, he developed

Clinic on wheels

In an effort to contain the spread of COVID-19, the Karnataka government has converted some State Road Transport Corporation buses into mobile fever clinics

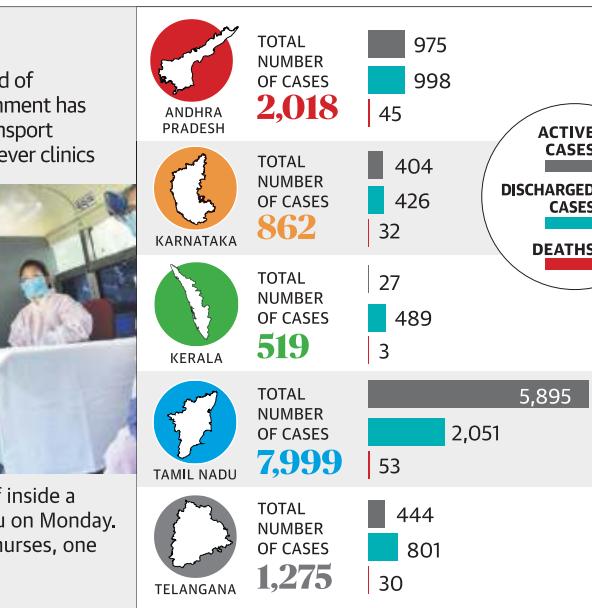


Doorstep service: Medical staff inside a mobile fever clinic in Bengaluru on Monday. Each will have a doctor, three nurses, one lab technician and volunteers.

■ K. MURALI KUMAR

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

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



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

The 14 new cases included three from Davangere, two each from Bagalkote and Bidar and one each from Kalaburagi, Haveri, Vijayapura, Ananthpur in Andhra Pradesh, Hassan and Mandy.

Except for four, the rest were primary or secondary contacts of previous positive patients. A 20-year-old man from Banahatti in Bagalkote, who travelled to Ahmedabad and a 26-year-old man from Haveri, with travel history to Mumbai and Bhaktal tested positive.

A 30-year-old woman from Hassan and a 38-year-old man from Mandy, both with travel history to Mumbai tested positive. They were hospitalised in Mandy. A 55-year-old woman from Ananthpur in Andhra Pradesh, a contact of a 60-year-old patient with Influenza-Like Illness from Bengaluru, was infected.

Andhra Pradesh, meanwhile, recorded 38 new cases and the total went up to 2,018. The death toll was 45.

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

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

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

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

Telangana witnessed a huge single-day spike on Monday with 79 persons testing positive. All the cases were from Greater Hyderabad area in the State Capital.

With Monday's cases, the State tally shot up to 1,275.

(With inputs from Vijayawada, Hyderabad and Thiruvananthapuram Bureaus)

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

The gas will be transported in two consignments

STAFF REPORTER

VIJAYAWADA

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

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

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

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

Safety protocols

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

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

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

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

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

Karnataka sets up investment task force to attract MNCs

Focus on industries moving out of China post COVID-19

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BENGALURU

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

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

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

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

Infrastructure projects

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

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

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

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

Alternative hub

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

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

Violence in Telangana town, one injured

Row as drunkard enters worship area

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ADILABAD

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

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

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

A sweet treetop harvest for Vazhachal tribesmen

During lockdown, they venture deep into the forest and collect a record 1,800 kg of wild honey

K.S. SUDHI

It was bumper harvest time in Kerala's Vazhachal forest during the lockdown, as tribesmen brought home record quantities of wild honey.

Around 300 tribesmen, confined to their hamlets, harvested 1,800 kg of wild honey, which is double what they collected last year. In 2018, they could collect only 670 kg.

Tedious process

The harvest season, from April to May, saw them traverse the deep forest in batches of six or seven people.

"It is on tall trees in the

deep forest that bees usually form hives. We enter the forest in the morning hours to spot beehives and return home in the evening. The harvest, a tedious process, starts only the next evening," said Kochugovindan of Vazhachal colony.

Armed with torches and plastic ropes, the groups approach trees by sunset when the worker bees return.

Steps are made on trees by driving bamboo spikes into the wood, to climb up. The expert members of the groups who get close to the beehive scare the worker bees away using torches and collect the honeycombs in



Tough work: Tribesmen usually get close to beehives and scare the worker bees away using torches. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

containers. Honey collectors are paid ₹450 a kg at the processing centre run by the Vana Samrakshana Samiti.

After processing and packing, the Samiti sells the product at ₹650 a kg. The profit from the retail sale is

given to the collectors as bonus during Onam, said S.V. Vinod, Divisional Forest Officer, Vazhachal.

Honeybees usually form hives on tall trees like *Thanni* and *Ilavu*, which grow to 30 metres, said Nithin Lal, Range Officer, Sholayar.

"When the harvest takes long, the groups stay in the forest till dawn. One needs to be cautious while venturing into the deep forest and staying there due to the risk of wild animal attacks," said Mr. Kochugovindan.

Kochugovindan, men from nine tribal settlements went for honey harvesting as the lockdown denied them other employment.



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

Keralites without passes turned back

Kasaragod Collector issues warning

STAFF REPORTER

PALAKKAD

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

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

With Monday's cases, the State tally shot up to 1,275.

(With inputs from Vijayawada, Hyderabad and Thiruvananthapuram Bureaus)

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

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

44 from Red zone

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

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

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

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	... 37.0	25.8	28.4	Kozhikode	... 35.5...	28.4	
Ahmedabad	... 41.3...	27.0	29.2	Kurnool	... 39.1...	29.2	
Aizawl	... 30.2...	18.2		Lucknow	8.2...	34.4...	20.6
Aligarh	15.6...	35.3...	21.1	Madurai	... 37.5...	28.2	
Bengaluru	... 34.0...	23.6		Mangaluru	... 35.5...	25.4	
Bhopal	1.6...	37.7...	22.9</td				



Consensus, not confusion

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

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

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

A welcome change

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

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

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

Equal freedom and forced labour

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



GAUTAM BHATIA

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

Labour rights

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

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

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

Judicial stand

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

GETTY IMAGES/STOCKPHOTO



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

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

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

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

The Indian situation

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

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

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

Gautam Bhatia is a Delhi-based lawyer

Playing out live, a narrative of discrimination

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



BRINDA KARAT

The tragedy of Jamlo Makdam, 12, a migrant Adivasi girl who died of hunger and dehydration just a few kilometres away from her village in Chhattisgarh, while walking back from Telangana, symbolises what Adivasi communities are facing during this period of the national lockdown. The Modi government's declared war on the novel coronavirus is turning out to be an undeclared war against the workers of India, treating them as non-citizens. Among them are workers from Adivasi communities.

Key insights into migration

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

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

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

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

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

Law and rights

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

the lockdown.

Cause of suffering

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

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

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

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

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

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



NAGARA GOPAL

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

COVID-19 antibody use

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

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

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

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

ALLEN CHIDAMBARAM, Chennai

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

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

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

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

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

ABHISHEK SURESH, Kozhikode, Kerala



The need for a second chamber

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



M. VENKAIAH NAIDU



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Constituent Assembly debates

As an illustration, a member of the Constituent Assembly, Mohd. Tahir, asserted that an Upper House was not essential and viewed it as a creation of imperialism. Professor Shiban Lal Saksena went further and warned that such a chamber would only prove to be a "clog in the wheel of progress" of the nation. The need of the hour was quick law-making, he said, which the second chamber would obstruct. He was perhaps referring to the role of the House of Lords in the British Parliament whose powers to veto the expenditure proposed was removed, and its ability to obstruct the laws made by the House of Commons was later severely curtailed in the early 20th century. Lokanath Misra vehemently opposed parity of powers in law-making for the Upper House.

Proponents of the second chamber such as Naziruddin Ahmad felt that it would introduce an element of sobriety and second thought besides lending voice to the constituent units in the legislative scheme of things. M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar argued that a second chamber would enable the genius of the people to have full

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

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

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

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

M. Venkaiah Naidu is the Vice-President of India

Legal but not appropriate

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



M.R. MADHAVAN

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

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

Lawful changes

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

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

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

The importance of consultation

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

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

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

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

Time for EU fiscal stimulus

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

GARIMELLA SUBRAMANIAM

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

Claims and counterclaims

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

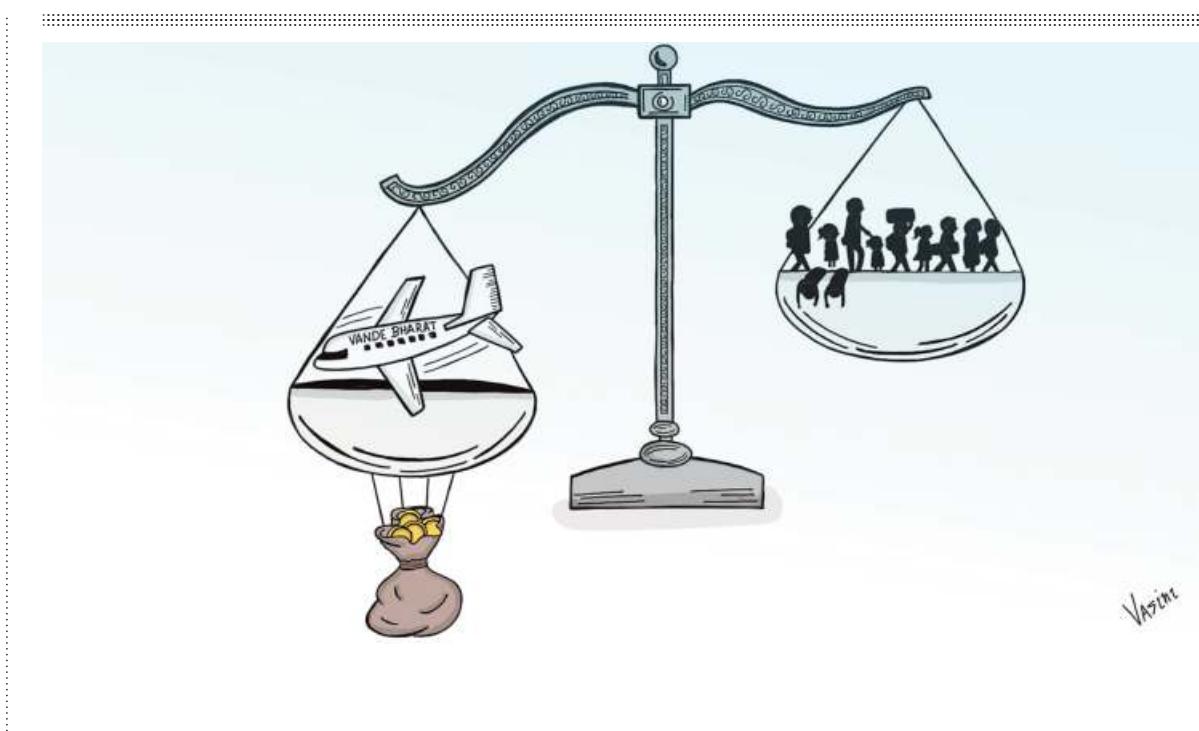
Significantly, the Karlsruhe court last week did not think the ECB debt purchases amounted to direct financing of governments. This is a setback

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

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

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

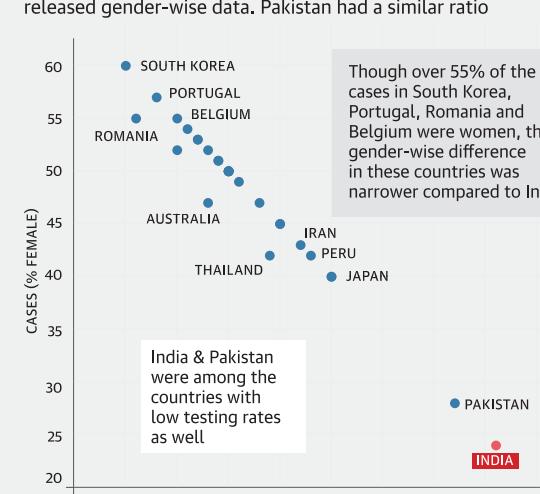
garimella.subramaniam@thehindu.co.in



DATA POINT

Gender divide narrowed

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

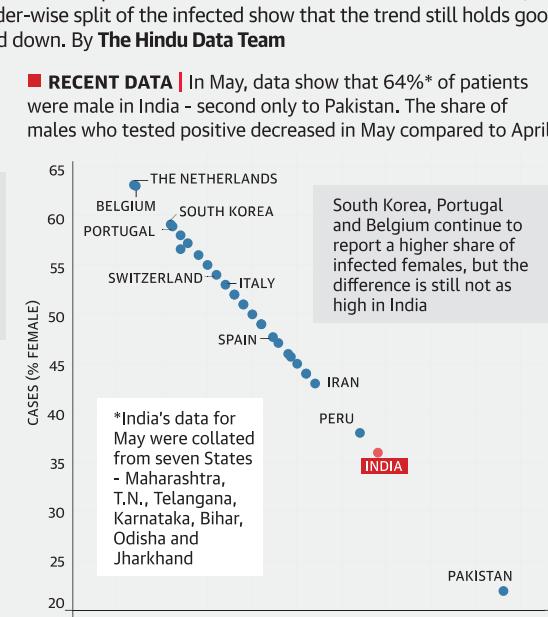


STATE DATA

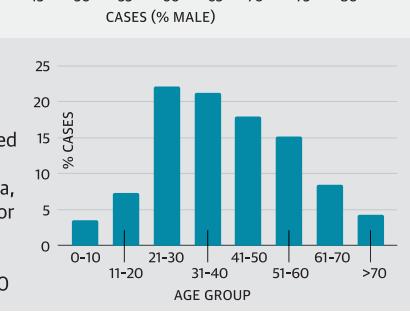
Among the States which have reported gender data, the difference between the number of male and female patients is the highest in Jharkhand. The table lists gender-wise % of cases

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

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



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



The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO MAY 12, 1970

The Supreme Court's verdict
(From an editorial)

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

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MAY 12, 1920

Immigration to U.S.
(From second editorial)

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

FROM PAGE ONE

Get ready to ramp up economic activity: PM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Domestic flights may resume soon

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

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

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

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

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

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

tionate to the "emergent situation".

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

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

Manmohan stable, under observation

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

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

CMYK

Don't crush labour rights: Rahul

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

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

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

RAHUL GANDHI, FORMER CONGRESS CHIEF



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

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

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

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

'Quack remedy'

Former Union Minister Jairam Ramesh also said it would be dangerous and disastrous to loosen laws in the name of economic revival.

"In the name of economic revival and stimulus, it will be

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Trade unions may knock at ILO's door

'Changes in labour laws retrograde'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI



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

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

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

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

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

SC extends protection to Arnab

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

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

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



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

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The RSS-affiliated workers' organisation Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh on Monday asked its State units to oppose the "unilateral withdrawal of labour laws" that some States have implemented and others are considering.

The statement by BMS general secretary Virjesh Upadhyay comes at a time when BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat have come out with employer-friendly changes to labour laws.

The BMS asked all its units to write to their respective Chief Ministers to "stop with-

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

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

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

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

'Grave situation'

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

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

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

Central trade unions

'Arrests made in Delhi riots one-sided'

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

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

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

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

tary, Manoj Jha, RJD MP, and Thol. Thirumavalavan, MP and VCK president.

'Manufactured charges'

The government's priority must be to single mindedly focus in effectively dealing with this pandemic, the letter says.

The arrests of women activists in Delhi under the draconian Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act were on

April 10, M.Phil student Sa-

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

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

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

The arrests of women activists in Delhi under the draconian Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act were on

April 10, M.Phil student Sa-

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

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

In case of the riots in northeast Delhi, the eight leaders accused the police of

making one-sided arrests of

young Muslim men and interro-

gating only members of the mi-

nority community, creating a

sense of insecurity among them.

In case of the riots in northeast Delhi, the eight leaders accused the police of

making one-sided arrests of

young Muslim men and interro-

gating only members of the mi-

nority community, creating a

sense of insecurity among them.

In case of the riots in northeast Delhi, the eight leaders accused the police of

making one-sided arrests of

young Muslim men and interro-

gating only members of the mi-

nority community, creating a

sense of insecurity among them.

In case of the riots in northeast Delhi, the eight leaders accused the police of

making one-sided arrests of

young Muslim men and interro-

gating only members of the mi-

nority community, creating a

sense of insecurity among them.

In case of the riots in northeast Delhi, the eight leaders accused the police of

making one-sided arrests of

young Muslim men and interro-

gating only members of the mi-

nority community, creating a

sense of insecurity among them.

In case of the riots in northeast Delhi, the eight leaders accused the police of

making one-sided arrests of

young Muslim men and interro-

gating only members of the mi-

nority community, creating a

sense of insecurity among them.

In case of the riots in northeast Delhi, the eight leaders accused the police of

making one-sided arrests of

young Muslim men and interro-

gating only members of the mi-

nority community, creating a

sense of insecurity among them.

In case of the riots in northeast Delhi, the eight leaders accused the police of

making one-sided arrests of

young Muslim men and interro-

gating only members of the mi-</

'India part of race to develop a vaccine'

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

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

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

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

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

NIV initiative

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

The Pune-based Serum Institute of India has tied up



K. VijayRaghavan

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

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

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

Test kits

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

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

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

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

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

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA
NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Compulsory screening

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

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

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

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

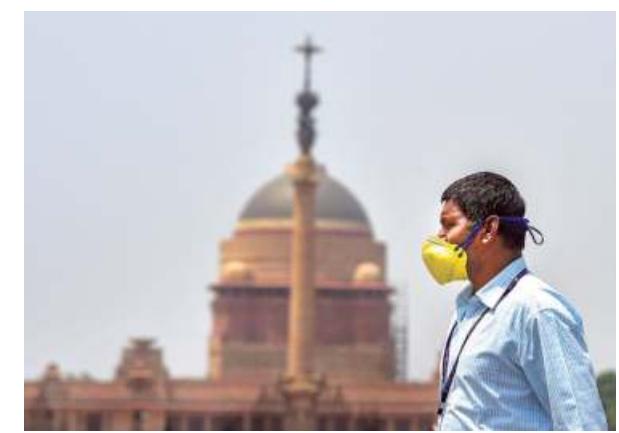
Those who do not own vehicles unable to attend office

VIJAYA SINGH
NEW DELHI

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

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

The IRCTC said on the directions of the Union Home Ministry, all officials



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

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

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

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

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

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

Considerable relaxations

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

establishment so that action may be taken to relieve them.

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

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

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

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

Shramik Specials to have 3 stops, increased capacity

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

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

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

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

Aarogya Setu data protocol norms issued

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

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

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

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

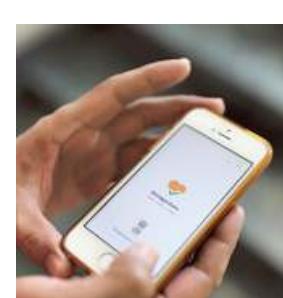
Stating that Aarogya Setu had contributed immensely to the fight against COVID-19, Mr. Sawhney said privacy protection was the primary consideration while developing the app. It stores an

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

Till 60 days

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

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



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

Mr. Sawhney said upon sign-up, every app user was assigned a unique randomised anonymous device ID. All communications between two devices and between the device and the server were done using that ID. No personal detail was used or shared with anyone.

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

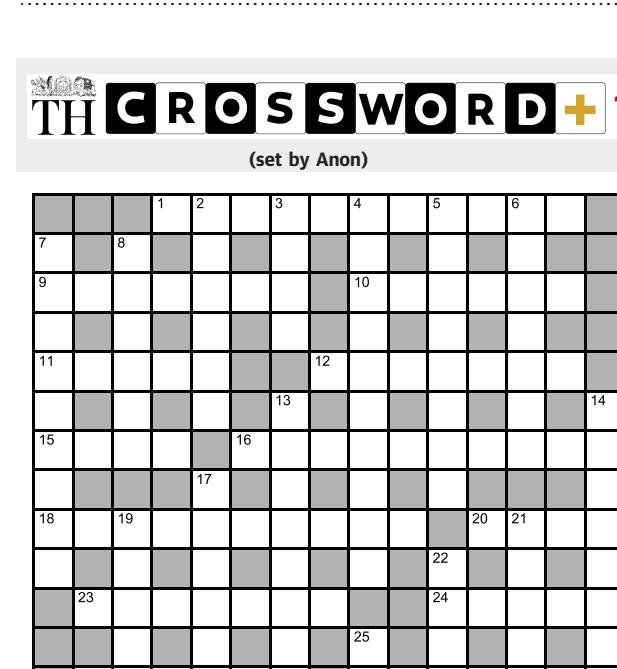
Hot spots
The information was combined with self-assessment data to identify the areas that were likely to turn into a hotspot. The details were shared with district and State authorities for timely preventive steps. The tool had helped in identification of 697 such potential hotspots, Mr. Sawhney said.

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

ing or implementing appropriate health responses.

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

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



ACROSS

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

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

SCAN TO PLAY



SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★★

Solution to puzzle 12932

B	O	H	E	M	I	A	C	H	I	S	L
O	I	I	M	E	I	A					
W	H	D	R	A	W	C	A	U	G	H	T
L	W	S	T	O	D	M	I				
E	D	I	C	E	X	P	E	T	A	N	T
D	C	U	U	O							
P	E	A		N							
P	E	A		N		</					

Nominations for Gandhi Prize extended

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

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

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

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

Another boat with migrants reaches Odisha from Chennai

42 workers have been sent to quarantine centres

STAFF REPORTER
BERHAMPUR

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

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

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

The 42 migrants, who are from traditional fishing fami-

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

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

SIDHARTH YADAV
BARWANI

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

migrant adivasi, 40-year-old Saka Ram.

gradually with felling of teak trees for timber."

As workers boarded the bus to Gujarat ahead of the harvest, each paying ₹700 as fare, they were accompanied by villagers who were stepping outside for the first time.

"We get a commission of ₹50 for convincing a villager to come with us. Next year, they will convince others," said Mr. Ram.

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

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

"But foliage has disappeared

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

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

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

Journalist questioned by Delhi police

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



Lacking confidence in your English skills?

Join the live webinar on STEP Coach Unlimited to learn English from the best.

- Meet our STEP Coaches and understand their passion towards helping you improve
- Experience the unique coaching module of the programme which has become a game changer for many
- Direct interaction with the STEP team to clear any doubts on STEP Coach Unlimited

60%
OFF
for
Attendees

STEP
COACH
UNLIMITED



Date: 14th May
Time: 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Register here: BIT.LY/STCOACH1

+ ₹6,195 crore released to 14 States

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Centre released ₹6,195.08 crore to 14 States on Monday as the second equated monthly instalment of the Post Devolution Revenue Deficit Grant as recommended by the 15th Finance Commission.

"This would provide [them] with additional resources during the COVID-19 crisis," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in a tweet.

The biggest chunk will go to Kerala, which will get ₹1,276 crore. Himachal Pradesh will get ₹952 crore while Punjab will get ₹638 crore.

Other States which will benefit are Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttarakhand and West Bengal.

NAL makes ventilator for non-ICU COVID-19 cases

It used a spinoff aerospace technology to make the device

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

The National Aerospace Laboratories, Bengaluru, on Monday said it had developed its version of BiPAP, a non-invasive breathing support device, for the use of non-critical non-ICU cases of COVID-19.

The premier aerospace lab of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research said its team of doctors and specialists used a spinoff aerospace technology to come out with the device.

The portable ventilator, named SwasthVayu, was developed in a record 36 days, a release said.

NAL director Jitendra J. Jadhav said, "This is ideal for treating COVID-19 patients in

Amid new rules, work gains pace at Assam tea gardens

Most planters are wary of interpretation of guidelines

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

A few of Assam's 803 tea estates have started working with full workforce following a clearance from the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA).

A majority of the planters big and small are, however, wary of the interpretation of COVID-19 guidelines by the local authorities and complications that could arise from the arrival of people now stranded outside the State.

ASDMA chairperson Kumar Sanjay Krishna, who is also the Chief Secretary, had through a May 8 notification allowed all tea gardens and tea manufacturing units to operate with full capacity subject to maintenance of social distancing, hygiene



Tea leaves being weighed in Assam. ■ RITU RAJ KONWAR

and other guidelines of the Health Department.

"All our employees have started working," said Bidyannanda Barkakoty, adviser to the North Eastern Tea Association (NETA). "About 65% of the total workforce is engaged in plucking and each plucker is allotted two rows

of tea bushes. The spacing automatically fulfils the criterion of social distancing," said Mr. Barkakoty, who has gardens in Golaghat district.

Other gardens are apprehensive about issues cropping up if they let all employees work at a time. "We are awaiting directions from the district authorities," said Nazrana Ahmed, chairperson of Assam Tea Planters' Association (ATPA).

Representatives of NETA, ATPA and the Bharatiya Cha Parishad had a meeting with Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on the impact of the pandemic.

He assured the planters that the government would implement the relief measures announced for the sector in the 2020-21 Budget.

Tharoor slams proposed EIA notification

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Centre's proposed Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) notification "legitimises" some actions that are currently categorised as violations, such as in construction, Thiruvananthapuram MP Shashi Tharoor tweeted on Monday. "Streamlining regulation is OK, but damaging environment is not?"

"The draft notification reduces the frequency of compliance reports required from project owners from once every six months to once every year. Again, that's fine only if environmental safety is assured. Have experts been asked," he queried. He also questioned the rush in wildlife clearance given to a slew of projects in April.

with public and private industries to be production partners of NAL. It has also begun the process of seeking regulatory approvals.

It was developed based on global experiences and specific inputs from pulmonologists in India and abroad.

NAL said its machine was simple to use. It was cost-effective, compact and configured mostly with indigenous components.

A team of technocrats and medical practitioners led by Dr. C.M. Ananda, Head, Electronics Department, Dr. Amar Narayan D., Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Virendra Sardana, respiratory physiologist IGIB, and NAL scientists worked through the lockdown.

Talks have been initiated

Europe emerges from curbs, but Asia fears a second wave

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

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS

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

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

COVID-19

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Germany too has set in motion the reopening of

shops, eateries, schools and gyms, but the process was thrown in doubt on Sunday by official data indicating the virus appears to be picking up speed again. Chancellor Angela Merkel had days ago declared the country could gradually return to normal.

Conditional plan

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Elsewhere

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

Both sides have imposed restrictions

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BEIJING

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

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

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

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

Diplomatic tensions

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

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

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

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

REUTERS
DUBAI

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

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

The frigate Jamaran fired at a training target released by a support ship, the *Konarak*. However, the support ship stayed too close to the target and was hit, state broadcaster IRIB said. "The incident took place in the perimeter of Iran's southern Bandar-e-Jask port on the

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

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

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

Gulf of Oman during Iranian Navy drills on Sunday afternoon, in which 19 sailors were killed and 15 others were injured," state TV said, quoting the Navy.

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

Putin announces end to non-working period

But mass events remain suspended

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MOSCOW

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

STANLY JOHNY

Saudi Arabia, which under Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has been trying to diversify its economy away from oil and expand its regional influence through aggressive foreign policy posturing, has run into trouble with the economy hit by the double crisis of COVID-19 pandemic and oil price crash.

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

On top of it, it has also aggravated the economic woes. The IMF now forecasts the country's GDP will fall 2.3% this year.

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

Saudi Arabia, adding that the oil crash and the pandemic made the situation worse.

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

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

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

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

Gulf region has more than 100,000 cases

REUTERS
DUBAI

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

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

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

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

MARKET WATCH

	11-May-2020	% CHANGE
Sensex	31,561	-0.26
US Dollar	75.73	-0.25
Brent oil	30.78	3.01

NIFTY 50

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

EXCHANGE RATES

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

Source: Indian Bank

TRAI advisory on online platform tariff

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

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

IN BRIEF



Tata Power arm inks

₹1,200-cr. defence deal

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

Nissan starts BS-VI vehicle dispatches

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

Amazon starts store for COVID-19 supplies

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

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

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

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

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

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

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

It was launched in April



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Supreme Court dismisses appeal on Harsh Lodha

Group can now give effect to resolutions passed at 3 AGMs

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA

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

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

The Birlas, through the defendants in the suit for



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

Determining jurisdiction

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

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

The probate of the last Will of the late Priyamvada Devi Birla, had last year moved the Calcutta High Court and obtained an injunction on declaration of results of polls taken at the annual general meetings of these three companies.

The resolutions that were disputed included the reappointment of Mr. Lodha as a director in Vindhya Telelinks and Birla Cable, and even

No increase in lease rental for SEZs

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

The Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry has directed that there shall be no increase in lease rentals for Special Economic Zone units for FY2020-21, on account of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Payment of lease rent for the first quarter is to be deferred up to July 31, 2020 for all SEZ units and the deferment may not invite any interest thereof, it said in a circular.

The Development Commissioners of SEZs are requested to advise developers of State government and private SEZs to consider similar relief measures in their zones, it added.

According to data presented in Parliament in July 2019, there are a total of 232 operational SEZ units across the country, with Tamil Nadu topping with 40 units.

Naphtha cracker unit
With the demand for these grades likely to increase even further in the coming



days, the naphtha cracker as well as the MEG (Mono-ethylene-glycol) plants at Panipat are back in operation.

The polypropylene plant at Paradip too will resume operations in a couple of days. The other polymer units are being readied to go online this month.

"We see a steady increase of consumption level across these categories. Now with non-essential categories also opening up, we expect some pent-up demand in small kitchen and home appliances," he said.

Indian Oil's refineries to operate at 80% capacity

Demand for petroleum products up

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

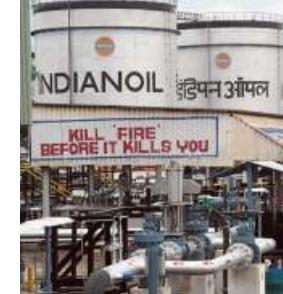
With demand for petroleum products gradually picking up, India's largest petroleum retailer Indian Oil Corporation (IndianOil) has restarted several process units at its refineries that were down due to the lockdown.

"With throughputs gradually picking up pace, the refineries are currently operating at about 60% of their design capacities with plans to scale up to 80% of the design levels by the end of the month," said Indian Oil in a statement.

The Development Commissioners of SEZs are requested to advise developers of State government and private SEZs to consider similar relief measures in their zones, it added.

According to data presented in Parliament in July 2019, there are a total of 232 operational SEZ units across the country, with Tamil Nadu topping with 40 units.

Naphtha cracker unit
With the demand for these grades likely to increase even further in the coming



days, the naphtha cracker as well as the MEG (Mono-ethylene-glycol) plants at Panipat are back in operation.

The polypropylene plant at Paradip too will resume operations in a couple of days. The other polymer units are being readied to go online this month.

"We see a steady increase of consumption level across these categories. Now with non-essential categories also opening up, we expect some pent-up demand in small kitchen and home appliances," he said.

IPPs seek liquidity window to clear dues

Want special line of credit by Power Finance Corporation to discoms

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Reeling under a liquidity crunch, independent power producers (IPPs) in the country are seeking liquidity window through a special line of credit by the Power Finance Corporation to power distribution companies (discoms) to clear their outstanding power bills of ₹50,000 crore up to March 31, 2020.

This comes at a time when the revenue collection by discoms has fallen by as much as 80%, and payments to generators have also crashed correspondingly

IN BRIEF



Warne slams obsession with 'Baggy Green' cap

MELBOURNE
Former Australia cricketer Shane Warne hit out at the country's obsession with the 'Baggy Green' cap and according to him, the iconic cap evokes 'verbal diarrhoea' from its followers. "I always believed that you didn't have to wear the Baggy Green cap to say how much you loved playing cricket for Australia," Warne told Triple M radio station as per au.sports.yahoo.com. IANS



Tennis courts and golf courses to reopen in England

LONDON
The British government has said tennis courts and golf courses in England may reopen on Wednesday, although people may play only with members of their own household. Gyms and swimming pools will remain closed, although swimming in the sea or lakes will be allowed. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Sunday to lay out the outlines of a road map for easing the coronavirus pandemic restrictions while maintaining forms of social distancing. AP



Hayden enters world of gaming

CHENNAI
Taking a leap into the world of gaming, former Australian batsman Matthew Hayden will be lending his voice and expertise to the online cricket world as a commentator on World Cricket Championship. Hayden will offer English commentary. He will join Aakash Chopra, who recently came on board as a Hindi commentator to cater to 110 million players. Hayden will bring his well-rounded cricket commentary experience that will address all aspects of the real game on the field.

Real Madrid returns to training

MADRID
Real Madrid's players returned to work at the club's training ground on Monday ahead of the planned resumption of LaLiga next month. After finding no positive cases from tests for coronavirus last week, Madrid's players arrived at Valdebebas to train for the first time in two months. AFP

Premier League likely from June

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

Premier League clubs received a boost to their hopes of completing the season on Monday as the government published a "roadmap" that could see the return of elite sport in England from June 1.

Under step two of that process, which cannot begin any earlier than June 1, sporting events would be allowed "to take place behind closed doors for broadcast, while avoiding the risk of large-scale social contact".

Such events will only be allowed if sufficient progress is made in limiting the spread of the virus.

Premier League clubs had been planning for a return to action no earlier than the week beginning June 8.

Recognition still eludes rowing and archery

Equestrian stays a priority sport despite its federation not bothering to amend its constitution

GENERAL

UTHRA GANESAN
NEW DELHI

Archery and rowing continue to remain de-recognised by the sports ministry despite holding much-delayed elections earlier this year, while the equestrian federation continues to enjoy recognition despite not adhering to the Sports Code.

Also not recognised by the ministry are golf, para-sports and School Games, the first for not following the Code and the other two for mismanagement. Carrom is back as a recognised federation after being kept out last year.

The Archery Association of India held its long-delayed elections in January 2020 and is headed by union minister Arjun Munda.

The elections paved the way for World Archery to revoke its suspension of AAI and also ended years of ad-hocism, legal struggles and electoral tussles. The ministry reportedly is waiting for formal clearance from the Delhi High Court.

The Rowing Federation of India also finds itself out of favour despite holding elec-



In troubled waters: The Rowing Federation of India finds itself out of favour in spite of holding elections in February this year.

* FILE PHOTO: G. RAMAKRISHNA

tions in February this year, in the presence of an Indian Olympic Association observer, after complying with the ministry and IOA's directives to amend its constitution.

Gymnastics still excluded
Another federation that seemingly managed to have put its house together finally, and was hoping to get government recognition, was gymnastics but that has not happened.

In its case, however, the government has at least mentioned reasons for not granting recognition – questioning the elections of S. Shantikumar Singh as secretary and Parmeshwar Prajapat as executive member – citing the National Sports Development Code 2011.

However, while the elections were held in November 2019, the objections were raised only towards the end of April 2020.

Equestrian, meanwhile, continues to be a priority sport for the ministry despite not bothering to amend its constitution in line with the NSDC even after repeated extensions and reminders from both the IOA and the government.

Interesting scenario
Interestingly, the annual recognition is normally for the calendar year. However, while the ministry delayed

the process by almost half a year, it has also specified the recognition only till September 2020.

Given that most sports would only have restarted activities around that time and the entire domestic and international calendar likely to be packed post-September, one wonders how the latest recognition list would help NSFs that largely depend on government funding.

I've retired from active sports: Deepa Malik

Says she submitted a letter to this effect in September last year

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Deepa Malik, the first Indian woman to claim a medal in the Paralympic Games, has retired from active sports, a decision she took before becoming the Paralympic Committee of India president earlier this year but revealed only on Monday.

The 49-year-old, who won a silver in shot put F53 category in the 2016 Rio Paralympics, was elected PCI president in the elections held in February under the directives of Delhi High Court.

PCI has been denied recognition by the sports

ministry.

"Who said I announced my retirement today? I have already retired in September last year before filing my nomination paper though I did not make a public announcement," Malik said.

"I submitted my letter of retirement to the PCI in September last year when the election process began. Only after that I was able to stand for PCI president's post and I won the election and became president," she said.

Malik was bestowed the country's highest sporting honour – the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna – last year.



Making her point: Deepa Malik said she became the PCI president only after retiring. * FILE PHOTO: SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Karman shines bright in Purav's show

Ankita gives Sania 7/10 for her role in helping India qualify in the Fed Cup

TENNIS

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
NEW DELHI

Karman Kaur Thandi could not play the Fed Cup qualification to the World Group play-off in Dubai due to injury, but she was at her brightest in emerging the champion in the Instagram show 'Chai with Raja'.

Unique chance

It was a unique opportunity for the entire Fed Cup team, including Sania Mirza, to put Indian women's tennis in the limelight. Top doubles star Purav Raja hosted the six players in a 50-minute show.

The general questions, labelled Raja's Wisdom, caught the girls on the wrong foot, but they were sporting and composed.

Sania was at ease and rea-



Purav Raja and Karman Kaur Thandi. * SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

shaping her career in the professional circuit.

Sowjanya spoke about the tricky experience of competing in Nigeria immediately after winning the national women's title last year.

Rutuja Bhosale said that it depended on the person to capitalise on college tennis in the US.

Quite nervous
She said she was quite nervous during the Fed Cup, despite having been part of the team since 2011.

Rutuja hoped to be in the top-200 by 2022, a sentiment echoed by Riya Bhatia also. Ankita Raina gave seven out of 10 for Sania's role in helping India qualify in the Fed Cup, even though she herself had won the singles and doubles matches to steer the team.

It's an honour to win the

Fed Cup Heart Award as the first Indian.

"I dedicate this award to the entire country and to all my fans and thank everyone for voting for me.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

Overwhelming favourite

Sania won the award for Asia/Oceania zone after securing more than 10,000 online votes cast for this year's three regional Group I nominees.

Sania, who made a comeback to Fed Cup after four years and helped India qualify for the play-offs for the first time in history, has decided to donate the \$2000 prize money to the Telangana Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

"It's an honour to win the

Fed Cup Heart Award as the first Indian.

Tennis star Sania Mirza on Monday became the first Indian to win the Fed Cup Heart Award for her successful return to the court post-motherhood.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

"I hope to bring