

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
HYDERABAD | FRIDAY | 13 MARCH 2020

WEATHER

Max: 33.1°C
Min: 21.9°C
RH: 85%
Rainfall: Nil
Forecast: Cloudy sky. Misty morning. Max/Min temp. 33.1/21.9°C

ASTROGUIDE

Vikari: Uttaraynam
Thithi: Phalguna Bahula
Chaturthi till 8.53 am and Panchami till 6.17 am
Star: Swathi till 2.03 pm
Varjyam: 7.16 pm to 8.46 pm
Durmuhurtam: 8.52 am to 9.39 am and 12.49 noon to 1.37 pm
Rahukalam: 10.30 am to 12 noon
HIJRI CALENDAR
Rajjab 17,1441 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.26 am
Zohar: 12.26 pm
Asar: 4.45 pm
Maghrib: 6.31 pm
Isha: 7.39 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6.25 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.25 AM
MOONSET TOMORROW 8.30 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 9.17 PM

IN BRIEF

AP reports 1st Covid +ve case

Nellore: The first Coronavirus (Covid-19) virus positive case in Andhra Pradesh has been reported in Nellore on Thursday. The victim is a 25-year-old youth studying in Italy, who had returned home on March 6. He developed dry cough on March 6 and was admitted to the isolation ward of the government general hospital, Nellore. The medical and health and family welfare department confirmed the news of a positive Covid-19 case through a press release on Thursday, saying that the case was positive.

Full report on Page 4

Shah: NPR not to mark 'doubtful'

New Delhi: Allaying fears over the National Population Register (NPR), home minister Amit Shah on Thursday said no citizen will be marked 'D' or 'doubtful' during the updating exercise and no documents need to be furnished to prove citizenship. Also, it is not compulsory to provide any information not available with an individual, he said. Shah gave the clarification during his reply to a debate on communal riots in Delhi which he said were triggered by alleged hate speeches after passing of the new citizenship law that gave non-Muslim illegal migrants Indian citizenship.

Full report on Page 8

COUNTER POINT



Not a walkout... someone coughed in the House!



NATION | 8
Rajini wants to be party boss, not CM



SPORTS | 16
Atletico dump champs Liverpool out of CL

TABLOID
Tom Hanks tests positive for Covid-19



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India records 1st Covid death

76-year-old Saudi returnee was in Hyderabad for two days

M.B. GIRISH | DC BENGALURU, MARCH 12

Mohammad Hussein Siddiqui, who died in Kalaburgi in Karnataka on Wednesday, has now been officially declared as the first Coronavirus victim to succumb to the disease in India, with health department officials on Thursday confirming he was tested positive for Covid-19.

Soon after the Karnataka state health department confirmed that the 76-year-old religious leader was a positive case of Covid-19, B. Srinamulu, minister, health and family welfare, tweeted that the Karnataka government had made necessary contact tracing, isolation and other measures as per protocol.

The Telangana government has been informed, since the deceased was admitted to a private hospital in Hyderabad, officials here said.

Soon after his death, the last rites were conducted under strict medical supervision and monitored by the district health and family welfare officials at Kalaburgi.

Siddiqui was admitted to a hospital, following complaints of cough due to viral pneumonia after his return from Saudi Arabia. Siddiqui had gone to Saudi Arabia on January 29 and returned a month later.

Officials said the patient had severe co-morbidities, such as a history of hypertension, diabetes and asthma and appendicitis.

On his return from Saudi, he was down with fever and took treatment at a private hospital. He was at first admitted to a hospital in Kalaburgi, following complaints of cough and other symptoms. Later, on advice of doctors and family, he had gone to Hyderabad, officials said.

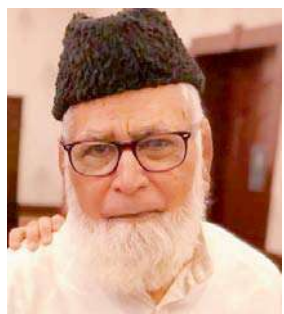
Doctors screened him for suspected Coronavirus, a couple of days back.

He, however, did not respond to the treatment and died on Tuesday night at around 11 pm.

A senior health department official said that he man died on the way back from Hyderabad around 11 pm on Tuesday.



Two employees walk in the unusually empty check-in hall at Arlanda international airport outside Stockholm, where flights have been cancelled due to concerns over the coronavirus, on Thursday.



Mohammad Hussein Siddiqui

Page 9: Siddiqui's body was sanitized

7,400 need to be traced after 74 confirmed cases

KANIZA GARARI | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 12

India must trace and track 7,400 people for the 74 confirmed coronavirus cases that have tested positive. (20 others are awaiting confirmation.)

Experts calculate a contact tracing ratio of one positive to 100. But if anyone was at a mass gathering, a cinema hall, a marriage, or a commercial and religious event, then 1,000 will have to be traced to prevent a widespread transmission.

With a lockdown, each must be traced and checked. This was necessary as those arriving from abroad tested positive for Covid-19. One Covid-19 positive patient can spread to three people.

"Contact transmission" means that those who came from the 124 Covid-19 affected countries carried the virus and those in India whom they came in touch with are 'suspects' for the transmission.

These include those met during travel, at home, their friends, office colleagues, vendors, etc. "We do a detailed detective-like investigation where each detail of the routine has to be gathered and traced," a health official said. "Since these are educated and affluent people the phone numbers are available and tracing is easy. Each has to report to the health department daily through telecommunication. If they develop symptoms they must go to government hospital for checking."

Due to the coronavirus scare, those who went abroad have self-reported. People have cooperated. In Telangana there were issues about visiting Gandhi Hospital and demanding private hospitals for check-ups and isolation.

Page 4: Possible to trace a few thousands

Centre debunks 'heat kills virus' hope

BALU PULIPAKA | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 12

The Central government on Thursday delivered a wake-up call to those making claims that rising temperatures would control and arrest the spread of Novel Coronavirus that causes the dreaded Covid-19 disease. The Telangana state government, led on this front by health minister Etala Rajendar, has been among those highly vocal and an avid advocate of a 'summer heat will rescue people from Covid-19' theory.

Luv Agarwal, joint secretary, Union ministry of health, said on Thursday that not much was known about the virus. It is a new virus, he said at a news conference. Replying to a pointed question on impact of summer and heat on the virus, Mr Agarwal said, "A lot is not known about the virus," making it clear, that there was no information on the impact of heat on the virus' survival rates.

Mr Agarwal's response flies in the face of repeated assertions by Telangana health minister Etala Rajendar that once summer heat sets in, Covid-19 disease causing virus would not be able to survive. This argument was the basis of his repeated statements that therefore, there was no need to have any fears of the disease spreading in the state.

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao too had asserted in the Legislative Assembly last week that once daily temperatures cross 22 degrees Celsius, the virus would not be able to survive.

In fact, at one press conference earlier this month, Mr Rajendar, made this claim for a second time, and when asked about evidence backing the claim, responded that "my assertion was not born out of imagination."

Page 9: No merit in individual quarantine

While admitting that aviation was under pressure, Ajay Singh, chairman and managing director, SpiceJet, believes that the pain is temporary.

far better placed than many others to weather this turbulence," Mr Singh said, adding that the Indian market has immense potential.

"Number of international visitors to India has come down drastically. I was told that it has come down by 25 to 30 per cent. Because of the quarantine by every country, both inbound and outbound passenger traffic have got severely impacted," civil aviation joint secretary Usha Padhee said on the sidelines of civil aviation show Wings India 2020.

To boost sales, SpiceJet launched a discount sale offering one-way domestic tickets for ₹987 and international tickets for ₹3,699, along with free meals and seats, for the travel period up to till February 28, 2021.

Aviation stocks suffered badly in a global rout in equity markets. The stocks of Interglobe Aviation, the operator of IndiGo airline, lost 11.43 per cent and Spicejet 19.55 per cent. airport companies like GMR Infra and GVK Power & Infra lost nearly 14 per cent and 12 per cent respectively.

Page 3: Airlines reschedule tour packages

AIR | TURBULENCE

Private airlines to fly low after 20% fall in flight bookings

S. UMAMAHESHWAR | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 12

With several countries locking themselves down to prevent any further spread of Coronavirus (Covid-19) on their lands, private airlines would once again end up in red, despite aviation fuel being available at nearly a two-decades low price.

"Daily bookings have declined by up to 20 per cent due to the Coronavirus scare and travel restrictions imposed by governments," said IndiGo, the country's largest airline by number of tickets sold.

Page 3: Airlines reschedule tour packages

Travel restrictions put in place by government affect airlines with results likely to reflect in quarterly earnings

Tour packs money guzzlers

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 12

Deep discounts for travel have backfired on tourists who booked packages for Europe back in November and December. They now stand to lose money from the airlines and from the hotels where they paid a 25 per cent advance.

With Covid-19 forcing countries to self-quarantine, the global travel industry has incurred a loss of \$47 billion which may go up to \$113 billion.

Industry experts say that for India, the disaster has just begun. The next 15 days will show how drastic the situation is as the numbers will roll out.

groups from Hyderabad said. "They have lost their airline fares and about ₹5 lakh paid for hotel booking. Italy is a popular destination and the maximum losses are here. European visas are valid for six months, but will people travel before the next season?"

"Group bookings are ₹40 lakh comprising families of 25-30," Tulsidas Ratanam, a tour-packager for

constituents ended in the red. SBI was the top loser, crashing 13.23 per cent. All 11 sectoral indices compiled by the NSE ended lower, led by the Nifty PSU Bank, down 13 per cent.

Page 14: US trading halts 2nd time in a week

Quarantined seek luxury facilities

PAWAN BALI | DC NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

Indian nationals in quarantine are giving the Indian army, running the coronavirus quarantine facility at Manesar, a headache, by demanding specially prepared food, separate rooms with attached bathrooms and five-star facilities.

The Army is spending ₹3.5 lakh per day on the Manesar facility where 455 individuals, mostly Indians, who were evacuated from Wuhan (248), Japan (124) and Italy (83) have been quarantined in three batches.

Some Indians and foreign nationals of Indian origin who came from Italy created chaos on Wednesday with their demands.

Many refused to step out of the buses and the administrators made extra "efforts" to bring them into the facility.

Sources managing Manesar said it was an emergency facility consisting of temporary barracks for accommodation, administration, and medical facilities.

"It was created so that those quarantined could be monitored for two weeks by a team of doctors and staff to watch for signs of infection. The quarantine facility established by Indian Army is an emergency facility and not a luxury retreat," said sources.

Page 14: US trading halts 2nd time in a week

MEA to let IPL organisers decide on event

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Thursday evening said that the authorities could only advise the organisers of the Indian Premier League (IPL) not to hold their sporting events in India in view of the pandemic, but that it was up to the organisers of such events to take a decision.

When asked if such events could be banned if organisers went ahead on commercial considerations, MEA additional secretary Dammu Ravi said the matter could be referred to the GoM monitoring the situation.

More reports on Page 15

Page 9: Siddiqui's body was sanitized

Page 4: Possible to trace a few thousands

Page 14: US trading halts 2nd time in a week

Page 9: No merit in individual quarantine

Page 3: Airlines reschedule tour packages

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Page 9: Siddiqui's body was sanitized

Page 14: US trading halts 2nd time in a week

Page 9: No merit in individual quarantine

Page 3: Airlines reschedule tour packages



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IN BRIEF

Tourist visas on hold from Mar 13

Hyderabad: Those who have come to India for business, professional work, medical procedures and on family visas cannot travel back to their countries after March 13, when India stops all international flights. The Government of India has stated that their visas will be extended till April 15. But the question is where will they stay and who will bear the cost of a month's extra stay? A senior government official said, "All foreign nationals will have to seek help from their embassies. It will be the embassy that will make all the arrangements and facilitate them. All those who stay back have to get in touch with them only."

GHMC to provide sanitisers to staff

Hyderabad: The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation will provide hand sanitisers for staff using the biometric attendance system, Mayor Bonthu Rammohan said on Thursday. The Mayor, who chaired a meeting that was attended among others by GHMC commissioner D.S. Lokesh Kumar and senior corporation officials, suggested that doing away with the biometric attendance system in the wake of Covid-19 fears might not be a good idea. The general consensus at the meeting was that if the biometric system was done away with, even temporarily, that could result in truancy.

NIT STUDENT SUSPECTED OF COVID-19

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL/HYDERABAD,
MARCH 12

A student of the National Institute of Technology, Warangal, is suspected to have contracted Covid-19 and was placed in the isolation ward of Mahatma Gandhi Hospital on Thursday. MGM superintendent B. Srinivas Rao said the student has arrived with symptoms of Covid-19 and was immediately placed in the isolation ward. "A decision will be made whether to shift him to Hyderabad or continue his stay at the isolation ward here after consulting the director of the health department," he said.

Registrar of the National Institute, S. Govardhan Rao, said the research scholar returned from the USA on March 1 after attending a conference and went to his native place in Kurnool. He came to Hanamkonda on March 8 but was staying outside the campus. "As he was suffering from cold, cough, and fever, he was initially admitted to Rohini Hospital on March 10. The Rohini hospital authorities have notified the case to the DMHO and the patient was shifted to MGM Hospital on Thursday afternoon. NIT Warangal has taken all precautionary measures to conduct medical examination of the students returning from outside Warangal and also advised all faculty, staff and students to take all preventive measures to ensure that they do not get any viral infections," the registrar said.

Combat measures



A family wears masks as precaution against Covid-19 at Gandhi Hospital on Thursday. — DEEPAK DESHPANDE

No sanitisation acts carried out by RTC

Staffers say that only daily morning cleaning is done

BALU PULIPAKA | DC
HYDERABAD, MARCH 12

A week after instructions were issued to all regional managers of TSRTC to fully sanitise the fleet of RTC buses in the state, some RTC staffers say the most they have seen is the daily morning sweeping inside the vehicles to get rid of accumulated garbage.

On March 4, TSRTC's executive director (operations) issued instructions on the steps to be taken to ensure that RTC buses do not become carriers of Novel Coronavirus that causes Covid-19 disease. The precautionary measures were to be

● **THE ORDERS** said that TSRTC regional managers were to 'arrange' to maintain cleanliness inside the buses 'cleaning door handles, passenger grab rails, arm rests of seats with chlorine or alcohol based disinfectants.

implemented 'immediately.' The instructions did not mention how often the steps listed in the letter addressed to all the regional managers were to be repeated. The TSRTC says that it carries upwards of 100 lakh passengers a day.

While the instructions were exhaustive in terms

of steps to be taken, an RTC conductor serving on a long distance route said on Thursday that "nothing of the sort is being done."

The orders said that TSRTC regional managers were to 'arrange' to maintain cleanliness inside the buses 'cleaning door handles, passenger grab rails, arm rests of seats with chlorine or alcohol based disinfectants.'

"We had no idea that we are also supposed to get masks for our protection," a conductor said, when asked if this was being done as instructed. To the extent possible, 'distribute masks to

employees and also commuters', the instructions said.

The RTC must also put up posters with information on Covid-19 and ways to prevent it, and make announcements at bus stations over the public address system. Neither was in evidence at the Jubilee Bus Station on Thursday.

Gate meetings with RTC employees to be addressed by doctors with help from district medical and health officers and the Indian Medical Association must be held. "I haven't yet come across one or was I informed of any such meeting," a staffer at JBS said.

Church puts off rituals over virus

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH, 12

The holy water stoops will go dry from now on and there will be no kissing of the cross, the Archbishop of Hyderabad has stated in an official letter to who. These precautions are being exercised by the Catholic Church in view of the spread of the novel coronavirus.

The Archbishop of Hyderabad Thumma Bala to

● **ARCHBISHOP SAID** the traditional Sign of Peace, where one has to shake hands with persons beside one in a mass, should be suspended and the namaste be adopted instead.

the clergy and members of the congregation that those who have contracted the virus should not attend any social gathering or come for mass and stations of the cross.

The traditional Sign of Peace, where one has to shake hands with persons beside one in a mass, should be suspended and the namaste be adopted instead, he said.

The Archbishop also said that on Good Friday, which will come up shortly, during the Veneration of the Cross, people should not kiss the cross.

Holy water stoops will also be dry. Person-to-person contact is a potent way of spreading the

virus and the Church is doing its bit to avoid this.

The Archdiocese circulated a special prayer sent by Cardinal Oswald Gracias, Archbishop of Bombay.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, Vicar General Rev. S. Bernard said, "This pandemic is spreading, and keeping this in mind, as there will be bigger congregations during Lent and Holy Week, public health is our concern."

AIRLINES RESCHEDULE TOUR PACKAGES

From Page 1

Some airlines with refund policies are rescheduling and giving alternate dates, but this option is only for regular airline fliers.

European bookings in January for the summer 2020 (post-April 20) were minimal. The Covid-19 scare reduced bookings drastically.

Tourists wanted to wait and watch the situation in China. With Italy and Iran affected by Covid-19, the tourism industry took a beating as there were no fresh bookings and old ones were cancelled.

"Individual tour operators have lost ₹10 lakh each," travel agent Srinivas Rao said. "Tour companies are losing ₹10 crore and more. There will also be lay-offs if the situation does not improve."

Due to the Covid-19 scare, Kerala as tourist spot is already affected. Domestic tourism to North India is now under watch as the numbers are high in these states. Tourists will now wait till April 15 to see if there is any hope for domestic tourism in the summer.

Samples of 5 suspected Covid cases collected

Hyderabad: Eighty-two people came to Gandhi Hospital on Thursday and samples of five were taken while the others have been asked to self-isolate.

As of date, results of 12 samples are awaited in Telangana for Covid-19.

A total of 313 samples have been collected and of them 300 have tested negative

while the state has reported one positive case.

The number of suspected cases in TS stands at 942 as of March 12. Meanwhile around 53, 560 passengers have been screened at RGIA from February onwards.

Government of Telangana has asked passengers to call 104 Helpline for assistance.

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HC expresses content over steps by TS to stop Covid-19

VUJJINI
VAMSHIDHARA | DC
HYDERABAD, MARCH 12

The Telangana High Court on Thursday expressed satisfaction over the steps taken by the Telangana state government to contain the spread of Covid-19, the disease resulting from the coronavirus.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Raghavendra Singh Chauhan and Justice A. Abhishek Reddy was dealing with a PIL filed by Ms Sidda Laxmi which sought directions from the court to order the state government to prohibit the conduct of Holi and celebrations to prevent the spread of the virus.

State Advocate-General B.S. Prasad submitted a Note explaining the measures taken to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in TS and the preparedness of the state machinery to curtail and contain the virus. He informed the court that more Covid-19 testing centres have been set up in Osmania General Hospital,

which will commence functioning from March 13, and laboratories have been set up at MGM Warangal. He also informed the court that a team of doctors has left for Kerala to study the good practices followed by that state in curtailing Covid-19.

Every day, drug inspectors are keeping a strict vigil on medical stores, and action is taken against those selling sanitisers and face masks at exorbitant rates.

Dr Shankar, Director, Institute of Preventive Medicine, Hyderabad, informed the court that each testing centre can test 100 patients every four hours and at this rate, the five testing centres that have been set up can test 500 cases in a single day. Chief Justice Chauhan, while appreciating the response of the state machinery, directed the Advocate-General to furnish the details of hoarders of sanitisers and face masks or those selling them at high price as action must be initiated against such persons by the next date of hearing.

The court must also be informed of the best practices followed by the Kerala government in curtailing Covid-19 and which of these practices should be followed by the TS government as well.

Assistant solicitor-general Rajeshwar Rao, representing the Union of India, informed the division bench that as on March 11, 44 confirmed cases of Covid-19 exist in India and the Central government has invoked the Disaster Management Act empowering states to take the help of private independent laboratories to contain the spread of the disease.

Chief Justice Chauhan said, "The World Health Organisation has declared more than 73 countries as coronavirus affected and the epicentre has shifted to Iran, Italy, and the USA, though now there is almost a panic situation prevailing in the USA." The court directed the state government to submit another report by March 23. The case was adjourned to March 24.

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SHORT TAKES

AP REPORTS
FIRST COVID-19
POSITIVE CASE

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, MARCH 12

The first Covid-19 virus positive case in Andhra Pradesh has been reported in Nellore on Thursday.

The victim is a 25-year-old youth studying in Italy, who had returned home on March 6. He developed dry cough on March 6 and was admitted to the isolation ward of the government general hospital, Nellore.

The medical and health and family welfare department confirmed the news of a positive Covid-19 case through a press release on Thursday, saying that the case was positive, referring to a report from the virology lab of the Sri Venkateswara Institute of Medical Sciences (SVIMS), Tirupati.

"The patient is stable and all his vitals are normal. He has recovered from the symptoms and is keeping good health. He will be discharged after completion of 14 days, after re-testing his samples again. All the five contacts of the patient have been identified and brought under the hospital's quarantine, as per protocol," the press release said.

Another student, who had returned from Italy along with him, however, tested negative. But he has also been kept under observation at the GGH, though he has no symptoms, as a precautionary measure. Samples of the five have been sent to Pune for testing and the results are awaited.

UoH STEPS UP
SAFETY ACTION
FOR COVID-19

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 12

Amid the Covid-19 scare across the country, the University of Hyderabad (UoH) has kick-started a sustained campaign to educate and sensitise the population of around 10,000 on its campus.

In an attempt to spread awareness and dispel rumours around the pandemic, students and staff are developing communication materials, from pamphlets and posters to short videos and interviews and PSAs in English, Hindi, and Telugu on precautions that need to be taken at the varsity.

On Thursday, an event was also held on the campus, at which Dr Sandeep Ganta, senior consultant at Citizen's Hospital, spoke with students, professors and non-teaching staff about ways to keep oneself safe.

"A special section on the website of the University has been designated to preparedness and awareness of the Coronavirus. The Department of Communication at the Varsity has created communication material and pamphlets and posters have been put up for display in three languages to help the teaching as well the non-teaching staff," said Dr Vasuki Belavadi, of the Department of Communication, UoH.

These steps are important as nearly 10,000 staffers, including a floating population of outsourced workers stay in hostels and quarters across the university campus in Gachibowli. UoH steps up safety measures for Covid-19.



Visitors at the Wings 2020, a biennial civil aviation show, at the Begumpet Airport on Thursday.

— DEEPAK DESHPANDE

Covid precautions ignored
at Hyderabad air show

Union ministry directed all states to take care at mass gatherings

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 12

The organisers of Wings 2020, a biennial civil aviation show, turned a blind eye to the Union health ministry's advisory on precautions to be taken while organising mass gatherings to prevent the spread of Covid-19, putting hundreds of participants potentially at a health risk.

In a memo dated March 5, the Union ministry of health and family welfare had directed all state governments to make sure that organisers of mass gatherings take all required precautions. "In case any such mass gatherings are organised, states may take necessary action to guide the organisers on precautions to be taken as per the risk communication material," the memo said.

Adhering to the direction in letter, organisers of Wings 2020 had claimed on their website that they have "made hand sanitisers available to attendees, deployed a team of doctors and medics on standby for visitors who feel unwell, and provided tempera-

ture screening at all Wings India event venue access points."

However, none of these precautions were implemented in actuality on ground on the first day of the three-day event being hosted at the Begumpet airport. There was no proactive housekeeping management at the event, which led to taps going dry at some toilets - so much so for all those who wanted to wash their hands with soap.

Though the organisers had promised to provide hand sanitisers to all attendees, they were not seen at most places frequented by visitors. Temperature screening was done only at gate no 3, but several people could get entry into the airport from other gates, which didn't have temperature screening.

The ministry of civil aviation, Ficci and Telangana government are jointly organising the fifth edition of biennial civil aviation expo in Hyderabad. The Telangana police personnel, who were providing security at the event, in addition to the Central paramilitary forces, said that they have no idea

Wings India show turns
out to be a damp squib

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 12

India's biennial civil aviation show, the Wings India 2020, may end up as a damp squib going by the watered-down presence of bigwigs of the civil aviation industry on day one of the event here on Thursday.

The main aim of the business-to-business event has been to provide a common platform for sellers and buyers of aircraft and aircraft-related goods or services in the country. Aircraft have been a major attraction of the show since its inception in 2010.

There were merely 12

aircraft parked in the static display area, compared to over 50 airplanes and helicopters in the heydays of the event, and the industry. Out of the 12 aircraft in the current edition of Wings India, only Brazilian aircraft maker Embraer has brought in its E195-E2 145-seater aircraft, which matches with Airbus A320 and Boeing 757 in seating capacity. The rest of the 11 are small aircraft, including one from the Indian Air Force that is not a part of the civil aviation industry.

Given the turmoil in the global economy in general, and the civil avi-

ation sector in particular, the fifth edition of civil aviation show, unlike the first few, appears to have been bankrolled by Central and state governments. At least two in every three big stalls at the exhibition were set up by either government agencies or public sector units.

The Coronavirus (Covid-19) scare appears to have had an effect on the air show as the delegate count appears to have declined. The duration of the current show has also been truncated to three days by dropping the two open days for general public.

about sanitisers being provided for them to use. An official from the Union civil aviation ministry, however, in stark denial of these realities, insisted they took extra

care to maintain hygiene at the event. However, he conceded that he was unaware of water taps going dry in rest rooms. He claimed that hand sanitisers were provided

at many points and temperature screening, which was being done by state health department, would be conducted at all gates from tomorrow.

Religious, commercial meets pose big risk

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 12

The Union ministry of health and family welfare has asked all states not to allow mass gatherings and commercial and religious conferences which increase the risk of contracting Covid-19. Religious gatherings for the month of Rajab have been cancelled.

Police permission will not be issued for gathering of more than 1,000

people. Conferences hosted by professional organisations will have to be cancelled till April 15.

Organisers of health conference scheduled for March 15 in Hyderabad are not sure what will happen and an event organiser has asked international delegates to hold a web conference instead.

Delegates to conferences already in India are looking for flights that will allow them to leave the country before

March 13 when Indian travel restrictions come into force with visas for all short term foreign visitors being suspended. The notice on travel was too short, lamented an organiser who is now trying to get seats on an airline for international delegates to fly out.

Telangana health minister Etala Rajendar said, "Please refrain from attending conferences and large gatherings. Organisers have been told not

to organise mass gatherings and keep all such functions aside for a month. The police is liable to take action if the orders are not followed."

At the same time, all those people who have come to India from China, Italy, Iran, Republic of Korea, France, Spain and Germany after February 15, 2020 should self-isolate for a minimum period of 14 days.

The TS health department is going to call all these people and telephonically check on their health. If there are any symptoms, they have to report to Gandhi Hospital.

There are also two additional thermal screeners at the airport for screening incoming passengers. But with the lockdown from March 13 there will be no international flights to India.

PILGRIMS | PROGRESS

Pilgrimage was scheduled for July, August

Haj plans hang in balance
due to coronavirus scare

ATHER MOIN | DC
HYDERABAD, MARCH 12

The annual Haj hangs in the balance as fears about the Covid-19 plague the world. This year the Haj is due to take place in July and August and as the spread of the virus shows no signs of abating, many people fear that the Saudi authorities if they don't cancel the Haj, may reduce the number of pilgrims who visit the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. More than two million people, which includes two lakh Indians, perform the Haj every year.

Tour operators are not sure if they will get sufficient visas for the Haj this year. People who use private tour operators may

● TOUR OPERATORS are not sure if they will get sufficient visas for the Haj this year

● AN UNEXPECTED ban on Umrah and visit visas by Saudi authorities in the wake of Covid-19 has disrupted the plans of thousands of faithful ahead of the fasting month of Ramzan

have to cancel their planned Haj if Saudi authorities cut down the number of Haj pilgrims allowed, as tour operators will increase the cost.

An unexpected ban on Umrah and visit visas by Saudi authorities in the wake of Covid-19 has dis-

rupted the plans of thousands of faithful ahead of the fasting month of Ramzan.

Pilgrimage planners are worried about the travel restrictions by the host countries of sacred places due to Covid-19 as these countries have imposed a blanket ban on entry of foreign citizens without saying for how long it will be in place. Tour operators are thus unable to plan the pilgrimage schedule for the holy month of Ramzan.

During Ramzan more than 5,000 Muslims visit Saudi Arabia every year. There are many families in Hyderabad who spend a few days in the two holy cities and are unsure whether they can do so this

time. Tour operators are not collecting passports from their clients as they are not sure when the Saudi authorities will revoke the ban on Umrah visas.

Habeeb Abdul Quader of Bismillah Travels said, "We are not in a position to say anything at this juncture. Saudi authorities may reduce the number of Haj pilgrims."

He said it's not just the usual businesses and industries that have been severely affected by the Covid-19, the international religious economy too has been affected as hundreds of intending Umrah pilgrims have deplaned and no pilgrimages can be planned with any certainty.

Possible to trace
a few thousands

From Page 1

"It is still possible to trace a few thousands and isolate them than to deal with lakhs of cases," Dr K.K. Aggarwal of the Confederation of Medical Associations in Asia and Oceania said. "The government has realised the virus is 'high-risk'. The lockdown for a month will help fight the virus."

It is suspected that many out there might carry the virus without developing any symptoms. So the 11,14,025 passengers who were screened at airports will be revisited.

"It is important as symptoms are not immediate and the virus could be in their body while their immunity is fighting it," said a senior health official. "With most countries affected it

DATA OF
Covid-19 CASES

Total number of cases in India: 74

Serious: 0

Community spread: 0

Super spreader: 0

More men have got Covid-19 than women

Age group affected is: 3 to 45 years

Two cases of children: One each in Kerala and Karnataka

can peak here. The examples of Italy, South Korea and Iran help us understand that we cannot take a risk as it is a major hazard."

NURSE WHO HAD ATTENDED TO
SIDDIQUI IN CITY QUARANTINED

Hyderabad: A nurse in the emergency ward of a private hospital in the city, who had come in contact with the 76-year-old patient from Gulbarga who tested positive for Covid-19, and died on Thursday, has been put on isolation.

Mohammad Hussein Siddiqui, the 76-year-old, was kept

in emergency room, which was separated from others.

Telangana health officials visited the private hospital and counselled the nurse to practice self-isolation. They have asked the hospital to check on her daily. She has now been listed as a Covid-19 suspect but does not have symptoms currently.

9th DAY MEMORIAL SERVICE (DINALJU)
Mr. BASANI INNA REDDY
DOB: 19-09-1945 DOD: 06-03-2020
"Jesus said, I am the resurrection and the life: He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" - John 11:25
"A day never passed without your memory you live in our hearts forever"
"May his soul rest in peace"
On Saturday 14th March 2020, Holy Spirit Church, Mass @ 10 a.m. in Reddypalem Village, Chintalcheru.
With Love & Affection: Wife: Mrs. Basani Rajamma from all Family members, Sons, Daughters, Grand Children & Near & Dear ones.
Contact: 9705108026, 9000020022
(S/1920/D01997)

10th DEATH ANNIVERSARY
The Lord has told you what is good; to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8
OF LATE MRS. G. VIVEKAVATHY BHASKER
Wife of Late Mr. G. Bhasker Joseph
Slept in the lord on March 13th, 2010
Amma, we put God first in our lives as you taught us. We miss the way you made each of us feel special and loved. Family and friends remember your love and generosity.
Family remembered by: Evelyn, Manoj, Chris, Clint, Hemanth Kumar, Sheba Gandham, Krupal, Sharon, Mr & Mrs Sukumar Christopher & Family (USA)

SHRADHANJALI
May god give strength to entire BOGHANI family for the immense loss of
YASH BOGHANI
Inserted by:
Rucha, Reshma, Seema Falguni, Rajul, Disha, Beena Jigna, Jhanvi, Heema, Neha Kalpu, Reshma, Sujata, Falguni
(S/1920/D02004)

REMEMBRANCE
SMT. RAYALA VENKATA LAKSHMI
W/o. Late. H. Ramjaneyulu
(DOB: 01/04/1946 DOD: 13/03/2008)
"All that we are now or hope to be, we owe to our mother always" we miss you Amma... "your blessings are always with us" From:
Sons, Daughter, Daughter-in-Laws, Son-in-law & Grandchildren. Ph: 9848052710

1st DEATH ANNIVERSARY
Late KRISHNADAS GHANSHYAMDAS SHAH
S/o Ghanshyamdass Shah
DOB: 09-12-1939 DOD: 13-03-2019
Those we love don't go away, they walk beside us every day. Unseen, unheard, but always near; still loved, still missed and very dear.
Inserted by:
Ghanshyamdass Shah Family, Phone: 9346320041, 9866099594

SHRADHANJALI
YASH BOGHANI
S/o Chetan and Dipti Boghani
Inserted by:
Samir Damani, Rachana Damani, Uday Suchak & Seema Suchak, Alpesh Bakhai, Sejal Bakhai
(S/1920/D02000)

2nd DEATH ANNIVERSARY
Dr. ANURAG CHATURVEDI
(14 November 1955 - 13 March 2018)
You always remain in our hearts, thoughts and actions.
Inserted by: Family Members
(S/1920/D01977)

13th ANNIVERSARY
In Loving Memory Of
Smt. SAROJA BAI DUBEY
DOD: 13-03-2007
Though you left us on this day your presence is felt & cherished by us in every moment of our lives
Inserted by:
DUBEY FAMILY
(S/1920/D01999)

6th DEATH ANNIVERSARY
P.HARIDAS
DOB: 27-12-1950 DOD: 13-03-2014
Inserted by:
M/s. Sharada Stores, R.P.Road, Secunderabad & Family Members
Ph: 984965964
(S/1920/D01999)

9th DEATH ANNIVERSARY
GURRAM SUNDARAYA RAJ
I Will Dwell in the House of the Lord Forever
DOB: 27-02-1952 DOD: 13-03-2011
We miss you Dad, our hearts our sore as time go by we miss you more, your loving smile, your gentle face no one and fill your vacant face.
Inserted by: G. Adrian Kiran Raj (Son)
Advocate, Cell: 9848947278.

8th DEATH ANNIVERSARY
I will dwell in the house of Lord forever.
Late Rev. Dr. RATHNAM D. DANIEL
D.O.B: 12.08.1954 D.O.D: 13.03.2012
ALL FAMILY MEMBERS
Ph: 9133989179, 9705008642, 9866149166
(S/1920/D01998)

16th DEATH ANNIVERSARY
Smt. K. SUSHEELA JAGANNATHAM
W/o K. Jagannatham
- FAMILY MEMBERS
(S/1920/D02002)

28th ANNIVERSARY
The memory of the righteous is blessed. Proverbs 10:7
Capt. ALBERT KARUNAKAR
DOB: 13 March 1992
Inserted by: Sons - Phillip Kiran, Ruben Arun, Daughters-in-law & Grand Children.

IN BRIEF

PILOT TRAINING FACILITY IN CITY LAUNCHED

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 12

IT and industries minister K.T. Rama Rao on Thursday inaugurated a new eight-bay pilot training facility established by the Flight Simulation Technique Centre, a city-based aviation training institute, here. "Three bays of this facility are already occupied by an A320neo, Bombardier Dash-8 and ATR72-600 simulator and with five simulators already positioned at FSTC's Gurugram facility, the number of simulators with centre as on date are eight," the company said in a statement.

The company trains pilots through full flight simulation training at Gurugram and Hyderabad.

PALM OIL CAN BE CULTIVATED IN TS: MINISTER

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 12

The Telangana state agriculture minister, S. Niranjan Reddy on Thursday told in the Assembly that 2.78 lakh hectares land in Telangana was suitable for the cultivation of palm oil. During the Question Hour, replying to the questions from MLAs Balaka Suman, A. Venkateswar Reddy, Bhaskar Rao and Sandra Venkata Veeriah he said that the Centre has accorded permission to cultivate palm oil in 18,100 hectares initially in the state. Assuring the House that the farmers need not worry about the minimum support price to palm oil, he said that for 130 crore population of this country is consuming 21 million tonnes of edible oil and the union of India importing ₹75, 000 crore worth of edible oil particularly palm oil.

HC UPHOLDS RESERVATION FOR CONVERTS

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 12

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Raghavendra Singh Chauhan and Justice A. Abhishek Reddy has observed that the mere conversion of a Scheduled Caste man from Hinduism to Christianity will not make him a Brahmin or a millionaire and hence it is unfair to deny him the reservation facility.

The bench appreciated the state of Telangana for creating two per cent reservations for such converts in the social welfare gurukul school admissions. The bench was hearing a PIL filed by P. Srinivas of Hyderabad who challenged the notification earmarking two per cent reservations for Dalit Christians issued by the social welfare department seeking applications for admissions into Class V. The bench pointed out that the purpose of reservations was to uplift those who were weak and deprived. The petitioner's counsel, Harinath, argued that once an SC person converts to Christianity, they cannot be granted a reservation. Reacting to it, the bench said that the state and the society should never try to hold a person back. By conversion, only the nomenclature of the person changes, not his backwardness or poverty. The central philosophy of the reservations is to attend to the more oppressed and backward, the bench said.

Suresh Reddy gets RS nomination

TRS fields party's general secretary Kesava Rao again to the Upper House

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 12

The Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) boss and Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao on Thursday re-nominated party general secretary Dr K. Kesava Rao to the Rajya Sabha and nominated former Legislative Assembly Speaker K.R. Suresh Reddy to the Upper House.

Both the ruling party candidates will soon file their nominations for the biennial elections. It appears that though there were speculations about

● SURESH REDDY who was the Speaker from 2004-2009, represented Balkonda Assembly seat in 1989, 1994 and 2004. He failed to win the 2009 elections from Armoor.

the re-nomination of Dr Rao, the party boss chose him again keeping in view his experience. This will be the third RS term for Dr Rao, who was first nominated in 2006 by the Congress. Dr Rao was nominated by the TRS in 2014, a year after he switched over from

Congress. Mr Suresh Reddy, who was the Speaker from 2004-2009, represented Balkonda Assembly segment thrice-1989, 1994 and 2004. However, he failed to win the 2009 elections from Armoor.

Mr Reddy joined the TRS in October 2018 two months prior to the Assembly elections. Born on May 25, 1959, Mr Reddy started his political career as a youth Congress worker. Dr Rao and Mr Reddy met the Chief Minister and thanked him for nominating them.



Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao flanked by TRS Rajya Sabha nominees K. Kesava Rao (right) and Suresh Reddy (left) in Hyderabad on Thursday. — DC

DC union meets



Dr G. Sanjeeva Reddy, president of INTUC and Deccan Chronicle Employees Union, along with office-bearers and committee members during the annual general body meeting of the union on the office premises in Secunderabad, on Thursday. — DECCAN CHRONICLE

Jagga vents ire at Revanth Reddy

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 12

Internal issues among Congress leaders came into the open on Thursday, with Sangareddy MLA T. Jayaprakash Reddy aka Jagga Reddy coming down heavily against Malkajgiri MP A. Revanth Reddy and his party supporters.

Addressing the media after the Assembly session, Jagga Reddy lamented the trouble he was facing from those owing allegiance to Revanth Reddy. He said the MP's supporters have been posting preposterous content on social media claiming that he, along with MLA Sridhar Babu and D. Rajanarasimha, was joining TRS.

Such acts need to be stopped, he said while demanding the TPCC core committee and discipline committee to take action against elements out to defame them. "Without giving clarifications on such a sensitive issue, Revanth Reddy has raised the issues of GO No. 111, and KTR farm-house issues and trying to push his personal agenda on the Congress party," he said. He asked Revanth whether the MLAs should

● JAGGA REDDY lamented the trouble he was facing from those owing allegiance to Revanth Reddy. He said the MP's supporters have been posting preposterous content on social media claiming that he, along with MLA Sridhar Babu and D. Rajanarasimha, was joining TRS.

attend the Assembly sessions or deal with harassment of his supporters.

"Why could he (Revanth) nor rake up the issues when he was in TDP?" wondered Jagga Reddy, adding, "I am also booked in a case related to my passport, but I never made it a party issue. I am fighting it myself."

"I want to know from Revanth Reddy, why he could not win Kodangal Assembly seat if he enjoyed massive following. You are in jail now and yet aspire TPCC post," the MLA said.

The MLA said that if harassment by Revanth's supporters are brought to an end, he would personally meet AICC president Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, and bring the mudslinging to their notice.

Rao: Centre goofing up tax devolution to states

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 12

Chief Minister, K. Chandrasekhar Rao, on Thursday, hit out at the BJP government at the Centre while alleging that it had been goofing up the tax devolution to state governments.

While intervening when finance minister T. Harish Rao was replying to the discussion on the Budget 2020-21, he alleged that the BJP government has been misusing its power which he had achieved after a prolonged political struggle.

Maintaining that in the Constitution, the procedure for tax collection and its devolution was clearly derived, he said that devolution is not a charity and it is a constitutional right of the state government.

Reacting to the BJP leaders' remarks on the state government with regard to the Centre's grants to Telangana, he said that for the past five years the state had received only ₹10,000 crores from the Centre.

He said he had deman-

● WHILE INTERVENING when finance minister T. Harish Rao was replying to the discussion on the Budget 2020-21, he alleged that the BJP government has been misusing its power which he had achieved after a prolonged political struggle.

● MAINTAINING THAT in the Constitution, the procedure for tax collection and its devolution was clearly derived, he said that devolution is not a charity and it is a constitutional right of the state government.

● WHICHEVER PARTY is at the Centre, it must give legitimate tax to states. Reacting to BJP leaders' remarks with regard to the Centre's grants to Telangana, he said that for the past five years the state had received only ₹10,000 crores from the Centre.

was in power at the Centre, it was always misleading the people and vexed with the Congress, the people had given a mandate to the BJP. But, unfortunately, the BJP is also behaving just like the Congress.

Stating that there are only few states which are feeding the country and Telangana is among the first three, he made it clear that Telangana is the only state in the country which is participating in nation building.

Rao said that though the Centre is getting around ₹50,000 crore, in return the state government gets not more than ₹24, 000 crore from it.

Rao also intervened a second time when health minister Etala Rajender replying to the allegations of Congress legislators party leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka of a scam in selling maize stocks to the poultry industry at subsidised prices.

Making it clear that there was no scam in it, Rao said that to support the poultry industry, the government has given incentives in purchasing the maize stocks from Markfed and that that was a perfectly legitimate thing to do.

ded an apology from Union home minister Amit Shah for misleading the people with the false figures of tax devolution. When the Congress

MP Komatireddy calls on Sonia

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 12

Bhongir MP Komatireddy Venkatareddy meeting Congress president Sonia Gandhi in Delhi on Thursday set off talks of the state getting a new president for the Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC).

With the BJP appointing its MP Bandi Sanjay Kumar as the president of the Telangana unit, the Congress high command is also likely to appoint one of its MPs as the new TPCC president.

The Telangana Congress has three MPs and the present TPCC N. Uttam Kumar Reddy is one of them. Though Mr Venkatareddy and another MP A. Revanth Reddy are in the race for TPCC post, senior Congress leaders are said to be opposing the appointment of Mr Revanth Reddy as he had joined the party recently and also has an RSS background. Mr Venkatareddy served as information technology minister in the YSR Cabinet but had resigned in 2010 in support of a separate Telangana state.

Telangana Congress leaders feel that the decision of the BJP high command to appoint the TS BJP presi-

UTTAM DEMANDS HYD-VIJ BULLET TRAIN

Hyderabad/New Delhi, March 12: Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) President & Nalgonda MP Capt. N. Uttam Kumar Reddy on Thursday demanded that the central government consider starting a high-speed or bullet train between Hyderabad and Vijayawada.

Speaking on the Railway Budget in Lok Sabha today, Uttam Kumar Reddy reminded the Centre that an assurance was given to Telangana State under Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act of establishing a Railway Coach Factory at Qazipet. However, he said the promise has remained unfulfilled for the last six years. While asking the railway minister to clarify the Centre's stand on the issue, he said for some reason if the government does not want to invest in the project due to shortfall of funds, then it might look at Public Private Partnership (PPP) model. He said that AP Reorganisation Act was passed by both Houses of Parliament and therefore, it was essential for the Centre to honour the promises made in the Act so as to create employment and also to honour the sanctity of the Act.

Uttam Kumar Reddy said that the railway route between Hyderabad, Telangana's capital, and Vijayawada, from the British time, takes the travel time of nearly six hours. Therefore, he said that the Railway Ministry should consider laying up a new line from Chitlyal to Jaggaipet to run a high speed train from Hyderabad to Vijayawada. He said Hyderabad-Vijayawada was one of the busiest routes in India. Therefore, he said any high speed train between Hyderabad and Vijayawada on a shorter route would be financially viable.—INV

● THE CONGRESS high command is likely to appoint one of its MPs as the new TPCC president.

● THE TELANGANA Congress has three Members of Parliament

dent will also move the high command in appointing a new TPCC Chief. Former minister D.K. Aruna who joined the BJP from the Congress and former MP A.P. Jitendar Reddy who joined the BJP from the TRS were also strong contenders for the post of BJP state president. In fact, Mr Jitendar Reddy was in the BJP in the past. But the BJP high command decided to give the post to Mr Sanjay Kumar. Mr Sanjay Kumar has long been associated with the RSS and the BJP also but Ms Aruna and Mr Jitendar Reddy are new converts into the fold. Mr Revanth Reddy is also a newcomer in the party while Mr Venkatareddy has a long association with the Congress.

Meanwhile, speaking to this newspaper Mr Venkatareddy said that he had briefed Ms Sonia Gandhi about political situation in the state and had even requested her to appoint a new TPCC President at the earliest.

LESSONS | DEBATE Education minister reminded of promises by CM

MLAs up in arms on education

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 12

The MLAs of the ruling party and Opposition parties raised concerns over the delay in considering requests to improve educational facilities in their constituencies during the Zero Hour of the Assembly on Thursday.

Education minister, Sabitha Indrareddy, said that she is making note of the requests raised by the members in the House.

Nomula Narasimhaiah of Nagarjuna Sagar constituency reminded her that the Chief Minister, K

● EDUCATION MINISTER Sabitha Indrareddy, said that she is making note of the requests raised by the members in the House.

● N. NARASIMHAIAH of Nagarjuna Sagar constituency reminded her that the Chief Minister had promised to set up a degree college

Chandrashekar Rao, had promised to set up a degree college in Halia. He said till date no steps are being taken to set up the college.

Bellampalli segment MLA, Durgam Chinnaiah, also

reminded the House several times during Zero Hour that he had requested the sanction of an intermediate college for each mandal in his constituency, but his request remained unattended till date.

Narayanpet MLA, S. Rajender Reddy, also requested to sanction a postgraduate college in his constituency as Narayanpet became the district headquarters of newly formed Narayanpet district.

Choppadandi constituency MLA, S. Ravishanker, requested the government to establish a degree college in

Kodimal mandal and also permit the occasional course in Gangadhara college.

Parkal legislator, Ch. Dharma Reddy, expressed annoyance at the delay in issuing the gazette notification changing the name of his village from Dongala Singaram to Pragathi Singaram.

Munugodu MLA, K. Rajagopal Reddy, asked the Chief Minister Rao to fulfill his promise of constituting Gattupalli as a new mandal. He reminded Rao that he had made this promise during his campaign in the assembly elections in 2018.

Covid discussion in House today

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 12

Speaker Pocharam Srinivas Reddy has allowed a short discussion in the Assembly on Friday to create awareness of Covid-19 pandemic and allay fears of people of virus spreading in the state.

During Question Hour on Thursday, health minister Etala Rajender, replying to a question from TRS MLA S. Ramachandra Reddy, said that only

one case has tested positive for Covid-19 in the state so far.

He said that as a precautionary measure, thermal screening is being done for passengers arriving from foreign countries at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport in the city.

The minister told the House that a state level coordination committee has been formed and a nodal officer has been designated for state level monitoring of the health situation.

PARLIAMENT OF INDIA RAJYA SABHA SECRETARIAT NEW DELHI 110001

RAJYA SABHA RESEARCH AND STUDY (RSRS) SCHEME

RAJYA SABHA STUDENT ENGAGEMENT INTERNSHIPS

Applications are invited for Rajya Sabha Student Engagement Internships from students pursuing graduation or post graduation courses in any discipline to provide them an opportunity to acquaint themselves with the working of Indian Parliament, especially Rajya Sabha.

The details of the Rajya Sabha Student Engagement Internships including eligibility, duration etc. and the Application Form are available on the Rajya Sabha website: <http://rajyasabha.nic.in> under the head 'Rajya Sabha Research and Study (RSRS) Scheme'. Prescribed format of Application Form is available at **Annexure V**.

Duly filled in application may be sent to Shri S. D. Nautiyal, Joint Secretary, Rajya Sabha Secretariat, Room No. 517, Fifth Floor, Parliament House Annex, New Delhi - 110001 or may be forwarded through e-mail at rsrs@rajyasabha.nic.in on or before **31st March, 2020**.

Candidates who had applied before the release of this advertisement need to apply afresh.

davp 312021/11/0015/1920

IN BRIEF

Man sentenced for sexual abuse

Hyderabad: A 32-year-old centring worker, who misbehaved with a woman in public at KPHB by hugging her, was convicted and sentenced to six-month imprisonment by a court on Thursday. According to the police, the woman, 40, a cook at a women's hostel at KPHB had lodged a complaint around 4 pm on September 21, 2019, when she was on her way to work, the accused Mohd. Sadak Ali, 32, hugged her from the rear. The accused touched the woman inappropriately and outraged her modesty.

Honking laws gone astray

16 out of 17 silence zones fail to comply, ambient noise standards

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH
HYDERABAD, MARCH 12

Motorists in the city have thrown environmental laws to the wind, with most of them honking at places like schools, places of worship and hospitals - designated silence zones.

Based on the ambient noise data generated for the last five years, 2015-19, in seven cities, which includes Hyderabad, it was noted that, honking knows no bounds. As many as 16 out of 17

silence zones fail to comply with the ambient noise standards. This, officials say, is due to the unabated use of fancy, multi-toned horns, which are meant to be banned. Breaking the law, these cacophony-makers exceed the upper limit of 112 decibels.

The manufacturers of such noise-making vehicles must take certification from the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), bureau officials say that they have not received any such application till date

THE MANUFACTURERS of such noise-making vehicles must take certification from the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)

in the city. "We don't have any record of manufacturers seeking such permission. Usually, all such automobile-part manufacturers are mandated to keep to the laws laid down in the Indian Standards Act, and

the Central Motor Vehicle Rules," said a senior official of the standards office, requesting anonymity. Experts from the central pollution control board were of the opinion that there should be clear demarcation of honking zones and silence zones.

"If there is incessant honking, then motorists who are at the receiving end often develop anxiety, nervousness or something else. That is why there is a no honking signs near schools and hospitals. If

honking brings anxiety to motorists, imagine what it would do to patients and students," A. K. Sinha, a retired scientist with the board told *Deccan Chronicle*. It is not just experts, even school parents say that there is no regard for the rules.

"Honking in front of schools is a regular affair. There seems to be no enforcement of the rules," said Seema Agarwal, a parent and member of the Hyderabad Public School Parent's Association.

Social activists to work against CAA

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 12

Social organisations and prominent social activists of the Telangana have decided to work against CAA-NRC-NPR as a common agenda under Alliance against CAA-NRC-NPR. A decision was taken at a consultative meeting presided over by Justice Chandra Kumar (Retd).

The decision to work together against CAA-NRC-NPR came about because the organisations believe that the move of

the union government is against the fundamental rights and the spirit of the Indian Constitution.

The participants observed that it is not just Muslims but all backward communities and citizens of the country will be affected. Fascist forces are trying to change the constitution and demolish the unity of the people.

A resolution has passed demanding the state government to reject NPR and permit all types of protests against CAA-NRC-NPR.

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IN BRIEF

Worker held by ACB for bribe

Hyderabad: An employee of Telangana State Wakf Board, who demanded ₹4,000 as bribe from a citizen for giving information through Right to Information Act, (RTI), was arrested by Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) sleuths at Nampally here on Thursday. ACB officials said that Azher Khan, a Junior Assistant (on a consolidated basis) in Towliath Committee, Permission, and Registration section (zone I) office located at Haj House in Nampally was caught red-handed. The accused demanded and accepted ₹4,000 bribe from one Syed Moinuddin, who sought information under RTI Act. Azher was arrested at around 2 pm while taking the bribe at his office and was produced before the Special Judge for SPE and ACB cases.

GOLD SMUGGLER ARRESTED AT AIRPORT

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 12

A passenger, returning from Riyadh, and trying to smuggle in 1.4 kg of gold worth ₹60 lakh, in the form of wire was arrested by Air Intelligence Unit (AIU) officials at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) here on Thursday. Air Intelligence Unit (AIU) sleuths intercepted a passenger, who arrived from Riyadh by flight (XY 325), who was carrying 1.4 kg of gold. The passenger had concealed the gold in the form of a wire (THNN) coated with silver in his baggage. The gold has been seized, and a case was booked against the passenger, under arrest.

2 traffickers held, 5 Nepalis rescued

A small office was set up for illegal gain

GEETA VALABOJU HYDERABAD, MARCH 12

Two persons were arrested for sending five Nepali women to Azerbaijan by creating fake visit visas. The accused, Dyavalla Naresh and Kosna Thirupathi Reddy, who live in Srinivas colony, had set up a small office that makes visit visas and sending Nepali women to Arab countries, for their own illegal gain.

On recent information by G. Raghuramudu, along with WPC and PCs, two mediators went to Indira Apartment, Srinivas colony, Boduppal, where they found two male and five Nepali women.

Upon investigation, they disclosed their identity and working agency in the name 'Mary Holidays' which arranges visit visas only for Nepali women to Arab countries.

They were taken into custody and the five victim women were rescued.

Police seized four mobile phones, one laptop, seven Indian passports, two Nepali passports, fake Aadhar cards and documents related to Kurdistan and some other documents from the scene of offence, under the cover of a confession cum seizure panchnama and the police registered a suo moto case against the accused.



Representational picture

Nepali women: An exploited lot

Hyderabad, March 12: According to the Special Operations Team (SOT), the accused Dyavalla Naresh and Kosna Thirupathi Reddy were friends from Jagatyal district who worked in Kurdistan, Dubai from the year 2011-2014.

Naresh studied till Intermediate while Thirupathi Reddy has studied till the seventh standard. Both run a travel agency in the name of 'Mary Holidays' at Hankawa and Erbil of Kurdistan for more than two years and used to book flight tickets for customers in need.

Incurring losses in the business, they had to close the travel agency. Naresh returned India in 2014 and Reddy in the

year 2017. Both plotted to gain money by bringing Nepali women to India, in order to send them to Arab countries by creating visit visas without getting immigration permission.

In 2017, they opened their travel agency at Dilsukhnagar and about 14 months ago, they shifted to Srinivas Colony, Boduppal and ran the agency from a three-bedroom flat. Both the accused sent about 150 people from Nepal to Arab countries on visit visas, creating fake documents.

In the last 15 days, the accused were in touch with five Nepali women, in order to send them to Iran and Azerbaijan via Dubai.

MAN GETS LIFER FOR 2015 DOWRY DEATH

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 12

A 29-year-old man who set his wife ablaze for additional dowry was convicted by a court on Thursday.

According to the Medchal police, accused Katica Ravi, 29, of Srirangavaram village married Srija (name changed) in 2015. He took some household articles, gold, silver and ₹50,000 towards dowry. Not even a week into the marriage, Ravi demanded ₹3 lakh dowry. When Srija expressed the inability of her parents, she was physically and mentally harassed by her husband, mother-in-law, and brother-in-law.

Unable to bear the harassment, the woman went to her parents and a panchayat was held in the presence of the elders in the village, where her husband and the in-laws agreed to take proper care of her, but on September 21, 2015, Ravi had set his wife ablaze when she was in the kitchen, which resulted in an explosion of the gas cylinder, the police said. Srija was admitted to a Gandhi Hospital for treatment but succumbed the next day. Ravi was arrested and remanded. A charge-sheet was filed before the Second Additional District Judge Court at LB Nagar, where Judge V. Venkata Seshu Babu conducted a trial and convicted Ravi. The Judge sentenced Ravi to life imprisonment, and to pay a penalty of ₹1000, said the police.

Three peddlers detained: PD Act

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD MARCH 12

Cops from Rachakonda Commissionerate Has been Detained Three Drug Peddlers Under PD Act recovered 2 Kgs Ganja, 150 grams Heroin, One Swift D-Zire Car from their possession, remanded them to judicial custody and lodged in Central Prison, Cherlapally.

According to the police, Accused Rajesh Parameswar Jamdade, Badavath Kisan and Anil Bhosle hailed from Jharkhed Tq of Maharashtra State where Badavath Kishan from Mahababad of Telangana.

When Rajesh was travelling in a bus from Vizag to Hyderabad has got in touch with Shabbir, Having introduced that he is native of Madhya Pradesh, told him that he is dealing with sale of drugs and that he can contact him whenever required. Thereafter Rajesh discussed with other two, about selling of Ganja and heroin after procuring from Shabbir of Shirdi. According to their plan, Rajesh purchased 2 Kgs Ganja and 150 grams heroin from Shabbir at Sirpur of Maharashtra on credit basis and brought the same in a Swift D-zire car to Kushaiguda.

MAN ARRESTED FOR SEXUALLY ABUSING CALF

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD MARCH 12

A person was arrested by Narayanguda police for trying to have sex with a calf after receiving a complaint from a People for Animals NGO volunteer.

Identifying the accused as Mahesh, police said he was caught engaging in the act with a nine-month-old calf by his neighbour, Mr Verma.

Narrating the incident Dattatraya Joshi, executive officer of the NGO told *Deccan Chronicle* that the incident happened around 11.15 pm on Wednesday.

"Our volunteer Verma saw Mahesh, a worker at a small dairy facility, forcing himself on the calf.

The gruesome act was recorded by the eyewitness, who along with representatives of People for Animals and Humane Society International/India, approached police through Dial 100.

The Narayanguda police reached the spot and took the accused into custody," Dattatraya Joshi, said.

Man booked for cheating a woman

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD MARCH 12

The Chandrayangutta police booked a case against a person who cheated a woman under the pretext of marrying her. According to the police, in 2015, Mohd Adnan Ahmed Shaik befriended the victim through

Whatsapp and proposed to her. Further, he made false promises to the victim to marry her and had sexual intercourse with her at her house.

Later, the accused got engaged with another girl. After learning about it, the victim approached the police who booked a cheating case.

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SHORT TAKES

'POUR ACID IN MY EYES IF I'VE DONE ANYTHING WRONG'

New Delhi, March 12: In an unusual argument, expelled BJP MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar on Thursday told a Delhi court that if he has done anything wrong, he should be hanged and acid poured in his eyes.

He was convicted for culpable homicide not amounting to murder in the death of the Unnao rape victim's father.

Sengar, who himself argued during the hearing on quantum of sentence, claimed before District Judge Dharmesh Sharma that he has no involvement in the murder of the victim's father who died in judicial custody on April 9, 2018. "Give justice to me or else hang me, put acid in my eyes if I have done something wrong," he told the judge.

Sengar, who was convicted by the court along with seven others on March 4 in the case, denied any involvement in the death of victim's father and asserted that he has done no wrong.

On December 20 last year, Sengar was sentenced to jail for "remainder of his natural biological life" in a separate case for raping the woman in 2017 when she was a minor.

During the arguments on Thursday, the judge told Sengar that he has already been held guilty and he cannot deny his involvement as the records clearly suggested that he was on call with the police officials when the victim's father was being beaten up in custody. Sengar said he has two daughters and requested the judge that he be let-off.

CONGRESS FIELDS DIGVIJAYA, BARAIYA FOR RS

SREPARNA CHAKRABARTY | DC NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

The much-awaited Congress list of Rajya Sabha candidates over which the party has almost lost a state government not to mention a high-value leader to the BJP was finally out on Thursday.

AICC General Secretary (Organisation) K.C. Venugopal was the candidate from Rajasthan along with local face Neeraj Dangi.

Another leader Rajiv Satav, who is known to be very close to Rahul Gandhi, also got a berth from Maharashtra.

In Madhya Pradesh, where the Congress virtually imploded over Rajya Sabha nominations, old war horse Digvijay Singh managed to get the first seat while the second, which has become dicey now with the rebellion of MLAs loyal to Jyotiraditya Scindia was given to local leader Phool Singh Baraiya.

In Gujarat, another contentious state, the seats went to Shaktisingh Gohil and Bharat Singh Solanki. Gohil, a veteran state leader was Leader of Opposition in the Gujarat Assembly and is known to be close to the party's senior leadership.

One of the most notable omissions was the name of the party's Communication Department head Randeep Singh Surjewala who had hoped for a berth from Haryana from where veteran leader Bhupinder Singh Hooda's son Deepender is the candidate.

Surjewala was not even allowed to be accommodated from any other state like Chattisgarh where the party has nominated senior lawyer K.T. S. Tusli as its candidate.

MP ministers storm resort in K'taka to 'free' Cong MLAs

Two ministers taken to Bengaluru police station, subsequently released

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, MARCH 12

High voltage drama was on Thursday witnessed at a resort located on the outskirts of Bengaluru when two Madhya Pradesh ministers stormed the hotel to 'rescue' 19 rebel Congress MLAs, secluded there for the last four days, leading to their 'detention' by local police.

Ruling Congress released a video here in which state higher education minister Jitu Patwari and state animal husbandry minister Lakhman Singh were seen engaged in a heated exchange with police deployed at the resort.

The video clip showed the two ministers along with father of Congress MLA Manoj Choudhury, holed up in the resort along with 18 other rebel party legislators, being taken to a bus parked there.

"The two ministers along with Mr Choudhury's father were arrested by Bengaluru police when they tried to rescue the 19 Congress MLAs held hostage in the resort", AICC legal cell chairman and Rajya Sabha member Vivek Tankha said while addressing a news conference here.

The video clip showed Mr Patwari being pushed by the police when he tried to enter the resort.

Veteran Congress leader Digvijaya Singh and state law minister P.C. Sharma were flanked by Mr Tankha at the presser.

Sources in Congress here said that the two ministers were taken to a local police station and then released.

The two ministers along with local Congress leaders were planning to stage sit-in at the resort demanding 'release' of the MLAs from the resort, sources said.

"The two ministers were assaulted by the police there", Mr Tankha claimed.

He said the two ministers visited the resort to 'rescue' the 19 rebel MLAs being held 'hostage' in the resort for the last few days. Even, the cell phones of these legislators were 'seized' and they were now allowed to talk freely to their family members over phone.



BJP leader Jyotiraditya Scindia being felicitated by party leader Shivraj Singh Chauhan in Bhopal on Thursday. Scindia said he considers himself fortunate that the BJP accepted him in the party and assured party workers that he will work wholeheartedly for them.

All eyes now on Assembly speaker

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, MARCH 12

All eyes are now focused on role of speaker of Madhya Pradesh assembly N.P. Prajapati and Governor Lalji Tandon with political impasse in MP triggered by 'resignation' of 19 rebel Congress MLAs, continuing.

Setting in motion the move to end the impasse, the Assembly speaker on Thursday issued summons to 13 out of total 22 Congress MLAs who have a couple of days ago submitted their resignation letters to the Governor through the BJP leaders.

These MLAs have also emailed their resignation letters to the Assembly speaker and Governor in their respective official mails.

"We will go for floor test in the House to prove our majority only after all the 22 Congress MLAs appear before the speaker to confirm their resignations", veteran Congress leader and former chief minister Digvijaya Singh said here on Thursday indicating that the current political crisis in the state may

linger further. Even as the Congress leadership here has banked on split in the rebel camp enabling some lawmakers to return to the party fold to save the Kamal Nath government from collapsing, constitutional experts were of the opinion that the speaker has a vital role to play to end the impasse.

"Speaker's decision to issue summons to the 13 out of 22 rebel Congress MLAs to be present before him to confirm their resignations indicated that the Assembly has taken control of situation denying Governor to play any significant role in the ongoing political drama", constitutional expert N. Chaturvedi told this newspaper.

"Governor has now no significant role to play except ordering floor test by the Kamal Nath government", he said.

However, the rebels MLAs are at liberty to decide if they would present themselves before the speaker. But, they have to provide sufficient evidence that they have not been coerced to tender resignation, he said.

Speaker has also authority to decide the cases of these MLAs without in their absence if he is given evidences on the validity of their resignation letters. Hence, the issue was going to be more complex in coming days, a political observer here said.

CAA posters issue sent to new SC bench

New Delhi, March 12: Terming the putting up of posters of anti-CAA protesters in Lucknow "an issue of significance", the Supreme Court on Thursday referred the Uttar Pradesh government's appeal against an Allahabad High Court order asking it to remove the posters to a three-judge bench.

The apex court said the appeal required "further elaboration and consideration". A vacation bench

of justices U.U. Lalit and Aniruddha Bose took note of the issues involved in the matter such as right to privacy and the apex court's earlier directions on compensation for damages from rioters.

"Considering the nature of the matter and issue of significance involved therein, in our view, the matter be placed before a Bench of at least three judges as early as possible and preferably in the week

commencing March 16, 2020," the bench said.

It also directed the apex court registry to place immediately the case records before the Chief Justice of India S.A. Bobde "so that a bench of sufficient strength can be constituted by the Chief Justice of India in the coming week to hear and consider the controversy involved in the matter".

The Supreme Court also granted liberty to those individuals whose names, pictures and

addresses have been displayed in the posters to seek to be impleaded as parties in the appeal of the state government.

"Liberty is granted to those individuals whose names and pictures appeared in the hoardings to implead themselves in the present proceedings. If such applications for impleadment are filed, the Registry is directed to list said applications along with the main matter," the bench said. — PTI

Shah: Nobody will be marked a doubtful citizen

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

The Modi government on Thursday assured Parliament that those responsible for riots "irrespective of their political, religious affiliation will be brought to book" after more than 50 people lost their lives and many got severely injured during the recent Delhi violence.

Facing widespread criticism over its inability to control the situation and allegation that the "communal virus" unleashed by the ruling BJP would eventually pose a threat to democracy, the government in the Rajya Sabha also blamed the Opposition for spreading lies against the amended Citizenship Act, which the Union home minister said ignited hate speeches.

Replying to a short-duration discussion on Delhi violence in the Upper House, Shah asserted that the government was not running away from debate, as alleged by the Opposition but only wanted peaceful Holi.

He also apprised the Upper House that two persons who were found to have links with ISIS and were part of the conspiracy have been arrested by the Delhi Police.

Urging all parties to come together and dispel fears about the CAA and NPR, Shah said, "No docu-

2 PFI MEMBERS ARRESTED

New Delhi, March 12: The Delhi Police on Thursday arrested two members of the Popular Front of India for their alleged involvement in anti-CAA protests and northeast Delhi riots, officials said.

The accused have been identified as PFI secretary Parvez and secretary Iliyas, they said. The two were arrested by the Delhi Police's Special Cell, the officials said.

ment will be asked under NPR. You are free to give whatever information you want. Nobody will be marked a doubtful citizen. No one should be scared of NPR process."

He also invited a delegation of the Opposition parties to come and discuss the NPR along with officials of the ministry to dispel fears being propagated about the NPR.

The Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, led by the Congress, on Thursday launched a scathing attack on the government as well as the police over the Delhi violence last month that claimed over 50 lives, and warned that the spread of the "communal virus" would eventually pose a threat to democracy.

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Madhya Pradesh Public Works Department (MPPWD) invites online application "Request for Qualification (RFQ)" for Six road projects in single package in the State of Madhya Pradesh having total length 167 Km, with indicative project cost Rs. 6893.00 Lacs on OMT basis from qualified bidders having experience of construction, development, operation and maintenance of roads, bridges, tunnels, runways or other relevant sectors (detailed in the RFQ) on OMT/BOT/BOO/BOLT or similar basis.

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NEW ROLE

Will enter politics when there is an uprising in my favour: Rajini

Rajini wants to be party boss, not CM

ANUPAMA SUBRAMANIAN | DC CHENNAI, MARCH 12

Actor Rajinikanth disappointed many of his fans, who were expecting him to announce the date of launch of his political party, at his press conference in Chennai on Thursday. Rajini said he would make his political entry when there is a perceptible uprising in his favour. He was, however, clear that the uprising has to come now for by the time the next elections come, in 2026, he would be 76 years.

"This is the right time for an alternative in Tamil Nadu, where there's a vacuum. We need to create a new movement to bring change. I want media to be united and take the message forward and educate people. It

is all in your hands. If you don't accept what I'm saying now, how will you accept in five years? I want to see the new revolution and wave in TN politics. As I said earlier 'a miracle will happen and it will happen in 2021 elections.'

He categorically stated that he would not be the Chief Ministerial candidate but only party chief.

"I have never aspired to become the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu but want to create leaders. I earlier said 'the system should change'. Entering politics before cleaning up the system is like making sweet pongal in a fish kuzhambu vessel," he said.

People may have been saying that Rajinikanth was coming to politics for more than 25 years though he had opened his mouth about his



Superstar Rajinikanth addresses a press conference in Chennai on Thursday.

desire to enter politics only on December 31, 2017 when there was instability in the state politics. There was a vacuum then following the demise of legendary politicians J. Jayalalithaa of the

AIADMK and M. Karunanidhi of the DMK, he added. "I was offered this CM chair in 1996 itself, when I was just 45. Having turned it down then, do you think I would get lured at the age of 71? He spoke about his three-point vision that has emerged following the discussions he had with many people with a view to finding the mean for alternative politics.

"The first and foremost thing is that we have to get away with 'unwarranted party posts' that flourish after each election. Apparently, these posts lead only to corruption in the entire system," he said.

"The political party and the government should not be headed by the same person. Youngsters and those under the age of 50 should be party candidates in the

elections and the Chief Minister will be someone who is educated and far-sighted. He will be a person who is ambitious, kind and with high self-esteem. And the party chief will be like an opposition leader who will be the first to question if anything goes wrong," he said.

Substantiating his strategy, he added, "Even when I hear a script for a film, I do discuss it with at least 10 people. Imagine ruling a state - how big a responsibility and mammoth task it is. I will bring in people with good reputation, including judges, IAS and IPS officers and infuse new blood into politics," he said.

However, he made it clear that he was not making any sacrifice by refusing to become Chief Minister; nor was it a political stunt.

SHORT TAKES

2 TEST POSITIVE IN KERALA; TOTAL CASES RISE TO 14

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MARCH 12

Two more persons were tested positive for Covid-19 in Kerala on Thursday taking the total number of positive cases to 14.

One person came to Kannur from Dubai and the other returned from Qatar. They are currently admitted to isolation wards in Pariyaram Medical College in Kannur and General Hospital Thrissur respectively. Both had been screened at the airport on arrival and quarantined before being shifted to isolation wards.

One more person from Thiruvananthapuram has been found positive in the preliminary test conducted at Thiruvananthapuram Medical College laboratory. His samples have been sent to National Institute of Virology, Alappuzha for final confirmatory test.

The person tested positive from Thiruvananthapuram had come from Italy. On returning from West Asia, he was put quarantined following suspected symptoms. Subsequently, he experienced chill and uneasiness at home and was admitted to isolation ward of Trivandrum medical college where the preliminary test was found positive.

VIOLATING RULES, CPM-LED CITY HOLDS DIST MEET

DC CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MARCH 12

The ruling CPM-led trade union CITU organised a public meeting in Thrissur district of Kerala in total violation of restrictions imposed by the government on mass gathering, public meetings and conferences.

Though the CITU leaders maintained that they had taken adequate precautionary measures and made adequate number of hand sanitizers, the Thrissur district collector directed the organisers to stop the event. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan also intervened in the matter and got the meeting stopped.

The CPM organized separate meetings in Alappuzha and Thiruvananthapuram districts in which over 90 and 100 persons took part respectively. There were more than 150 persons present at the meeting in Thrissur.

With the media highlighting the violation of CITU, the collector had no other option but to intervene in the matter. He reportedly got instructions from chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan to stop the meeting.

As part of the preparation for the local bodies poll the CPM had also scheduled meetings of party workers in various districts.

In Vizhijiam, over 100 members assembled to discuss the preparations for the poll. Top leaders of the CPM district committee presided over the meetings. While the chief minister had himself given strict direction to defer, postpone and cancel all meetings, his own partymen seem to be caring two hoots for the instructions.

COVID-19 SUSPECT ADMITTED TO ODISHA HOSPITAL

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, MARCH 12

A Covid-19 suspect was on Thursday reportedly admitted to Saheed Laxman Naik Medical College and Hospital in Koraput.

Reports said the suspect, Abhimanyu Mundagudia, a bonded labourer had returned from Kerala recently. Abhimanyu was first admitted to Boipariguda Hospital on Wednesday and then referred to District Headquarter Hospital in Jeypore. Later, he was shifted to SLNMC late on Wednesday night as his condition deteriorated.

Earlier, six Covid-19 suspects were admitted at Cuttack SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack. Their swab tests tested negative for the disease. They were released from the hospital on March 10, informed SCB emergency officer Dr Bhubanananda Moharana.

A youth from Cuttack on Monday and another from Kendrapara on Tuesday were admitted to the isolation ward of SCB Medical College and Hospital on suspicion of Covid-19. The young man from Cuttack had a cold cough after returning home from a trip to Delhi and Agra.

74 cases so far; India braces for worst

Health ministry monitoring over 3K people; No mantris to travel abroad in coming days

VINEETA PANDEY | DC NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

"God has been kind. We have not reached the stage of community transmission, so no need to panic," said Lav Aggarwal, joint secretary in the Union Health Ministry, even as Covid-19 positive cases reached 74 in India on Thursday. With over 1,18,000 coronavirus cases across 114 countries, WHO has declared Covid-19 as a pandemic.

But the government maintained that the situation is well under control and that health agencies were monitoring over 3,000 persons who came in contact with the infected. "There is no instance of any community transmission and the positive cases relate only to local transmission," Aggarwal said, adding that all positive cases are stable.

The government also said there is no need for panic buying of masks "as not all people need to wear them". The Centre has directed chief secretaries of states to check against the hoarding of masks and hand sanitizers.

According to ministry officials, 52 testing centres and 56 collection centres set up by the government are screening people. Officials said Prime Minister Narendra Modi is also monitoring the situation with regular meetings.

In a tweet, the PM said: "Say No to Panic, Say Yes to Precautions. No Minister of the Central Government will travel abroad in the upcoming days. I urge our countrymen to also avoid non-essential travel. We can break the chain of spread and ensure safety of all by avoiding large gatherings."

Out of the total positive cases, 57 are Indians, and 17 are foreign nationals (16 from Italy and one from Canada). These include three from Kerala who are cured. In addition, 83 evacuees from Italy who arrived on Wednesday have been quarantined at Manesar.

The Delhi government announced closing of all schools, colleges and cinema halls to prevent large gatherings in the city. All major events in the city are also getting cancelled or postponed and the fate of IPL cricket remains uncertain after government advised BCCI against holding any major sporting event that sees huge gathering of people.

The government has suspended all existing visas (except diplomatic, official, UN/International Organisations, employment, project visas) till April 15. This will come into effect from 1200 GMT on 13 March at the port of departure. Visa-free travel facility granted to OCI card-holders is also being kept in abeyance till April 15. OCI card holders already in India can stay as long as they want while visas of all foreigners already in India remain valid and they can seek extension/conversion of their visa or grant of any consular service.



A doctor checks the temperature of a child passenger, as part of precautionary measures against Covid-19, at a railway station in Jammu on Thursday. — PTI

Delhi schools, cinemas shut till March 31

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

The Delhi government on Thursday declared Covid-19 an epidemic and shut all cinema halls, schools, and colleges — except those where exams are on — till March 31.

The government also made it compulsory to disinfect all public places, including government and private offices and shopping malls, every day in the national capital. The number of cases, which have tested positive, has gone up to six with the latest case being reported from West Delhi.

The decision was taken at a high-level meeting attended by Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, L-G Anil Bajjal, and top government officials. After the meeting, the chief minister said the Delhi government was making arrangements for quarantine facilities at vacant flats owned by Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board and under-construction hospitals.

Mr Kejriwal said: "All cinema halls will remain shut till March 31. Also, all schools and colleges, except those where exams are being held, will remain shut till March 31 due to coronavirus. The government has declared coronavirus an epidemic."

He said that his government is fully prepared to deal with Covid-19, asserting that more than 500 beds in hospitals are ready to admit coronavirus patients, if needed. He said that measures taken so far to tackle coronavirus were also reviewed in the meeting.

Mr Kejriwal said: "Whatever we are doing is to deal with coronavirus. I hope that all will support us. In the entire world, coronavirus is rapidly spreading. But in India, we all have so far been able to contain it. If we are cautious, we can save our country from coronavirus."

After the meeting, Mr Bajjal tweeted, "Reviewed preparedness to contain COVID-19 in Delhi with Hon'ble CM @ArvindKejriwal, Hon'ble Health Minister @SatyendarJain, CS, Delhi & other officers. Decision taken to close schools, colleges, cinema halls, etc. for some time to minimise the possibility of spread (sic)."

The latest case in Delhi is of the mother of a 46-year-old man, who had earlier tested positive for the coronavirus. The 69-year-old woman has now herself been detected with the virus, making her the sixth patient in the national capital. The patient is admitted

Duty-free shops put restrictions

New Delhi, March 12: Indian Customs has barred passengers arriving from 15 nations, including China, the US, Italy and South Korea, from entering duty-free shopping area at the Delhi airport in wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

With the government already cancelling visas with effect from March 13, this would mean that even Indian nationals returning home from these 15 countries will not be allowed to enter the Delhi duty-free shopping area.

The Commissioner of Customs at the Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi, in a notice, said the ban has been put in place "in view of the threat from Covid-19 virus".

Passengers arriving on flights from China, the US, Italy and South Korea, Iran, Japan,

Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore, Indonesia, Spain, France, Vietnam, Nepal and Thailand will not be able to enter the duty free shopping area due to operational limitations till further orders, it said.

The World Health Organization (WHO) on Wednesday declared coronavirus (Covid-19) a pandemic. Globally there have been over 4,200 deaths in 114 countries. The number of infected people in India is 73, as per health ministry data.

The government on Wednesday suspended all existing visas, except diplomatic, official, UN/international organisations, employment, project visas until April 15. Also visa-free travel facility for Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) holders has been suspended from March 13 to April 15. — PTI

Where are we supposed to go, cry Indians in Italy

Thiruvananthapuram, March 12: "Where are we supposed to go?" a woman, stranded at an airport in Italy, who had booked her tickets to Kerala, was heard saying in a video which has gone viral on social media.

Many like her stranded at airports in Italy can be heard making desperate pleas for being airlifted to their home state of Kerala.

"You tell us where we are supposed to go? We have come from Kerala to work here in Italy. We are expatriates. We have left our jobs and homes. You tell us what we are supposed to do. Where will we go other than our state," another woman passenger asked.

Small children and pregnant women are among the 300-odd stranded Indians in the airports in Italy, where 827 people have died in the last two

weeks due to Covid-19. Another passenger said Emirates Airlines and the Italian authorities were prepared to take them to India, but it was the Indian government which was insisting on the certificate, they said.

The Director General of Civil Aviation had recently issued a circular stipulating that people "traveling from or having visited Italy or South Korea" and desirous of entering India "need to obtain certificates of having tested negative for Covid-19" from the designated laboratories authorised by the health authorities of those countries.

"Dear friends, we are from Italy. We had booked tickets. But we are unable to come to Kerala. The Italian authorities are not allowing us to board the flight. They say the Indian government was not allowing us to get back to

India. We are expatriates and where are we supposed to go?" a stranded woman traveller was heard saying in the video.

Though they had reached the airport with confirmed tickets and were waiting in the queue, the airport authorities informed them they cannot board any flights as the Indian government was not prepared to receive them, another traveller said.

"We all reached the airport with confirmed tickets. But now the authorities are saying that the Indian government was not ready to receive us. There are small kids, pregnant women among us. Where are we supposed to go? We are prepared to remain in 14 or 28 days quarantine in case it is required. We all are ready for that," she said. — PTI

US DEFENCE SECY CALLS OFF HIS INDIA VISIT

New Delhi, March 12: US Defence Secretary Mark Esper's visit to India on March 15-16 has been called off due to the Covid-19 threat, Defence Ministry officials said on Thursday.

The trip, during which Esper was supposed to meet his Indian counterpart Rajnath Singh, is among the several events being postponed because of the coronavirus infection.

A two-day conference organised by the Manohar Parrikar IDSA, which was to start from Thursday, has also been postponed.

The defence minister and Home Minister Amit Shah were scheduled to attend the conference. "Due to the prevailing global situation with regard to Covid-19, it has been decided to postpone the conference to a later date. Fresh dates for the Conference will be conveyed in due course," MPIDSA said.

SIDDIQUI'S BODY WAS SANITISED

From Page 1

The body of Siddiqui was sanitised by government health officials before handing it over to his family. District health officer M.A. Jabbar inspected those conducting the final rites and ensured they did not touch the body with naked hands and used protective measures to bury the body.

"The instruction for conducting the final rites of Siddiqui was issued keeping in mind public safety," said Mr Jabbar. "All protocols were followed for the disposal of the body." "There will be no chance of virus on a dead body. It was sanitized as well. But, since it is a suspected case of Coronavirus, we gave strict instruction regarding the final rites," he had told Deccan Chronicle. Karnataka has reported five cases so far.

NO MERIT IN INDIVIDUAL QUARANTINE

From Page 1

Since the evacuees already travelled together, individual quarantine for 14 days may not find much merit. "Despite differing individual preferences and demands, the administrators running the facility have gone about doing their job in the best possible way," said sources.

Currently, 83 individuals who arrived from Italy on Wednesday are quarantined at the facility at Manesar, including 74 Indian nationals and nine foreigners of Indian origin. The individuals from Wuhan have been discharged and 124 from Japan have completed their 14-day isolation and are ready to leave.

To prevent a mass outbreak, the facility has been divided into sectors, each with a maximum capacity of 50. The sectors are not allowed to intermingle. "Daily medical examination of evacuees is being done at the medical facility area. All are required to wear a three-layered mask at all times," said sources.

After 14 days, persons with no symptoms are allowed to go home with their detailed documentation sent to the local surveillance units. Those infected are shifted to isolation facilities for further medical treatment and recovery.

"Apart from games, TV and meals together within a barrack, patients are not allowed to interact with the members of another barrack or sector," sources added. — PTI

Hotels bank on temperature checks, sanitizers

New Delhi, March 12: Hospitality chains across India, such as domestic majors Indian Hotels Company and EIH and global firms like Hyatt, are taking a slew of measures, including checking temperature of guests and staff, and undertaking additional hygiene procedures to control the spread of Covid-19.

"In light of the current situation, we have implemented additional precautionary hygiene measures across our hotels based on the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare advisory and guidelines for prevention and transmission," an IHCL spokesperson said in a statement.

This includes training associates as per the protocol prescribed by the Government of India,

sanitisation of all areas, increased access to alcohol-based hand sanitizers at prominent locations and body temperature checks for everyone visiting our premises using non-invasive laser thermometers, it added.

"As mandated, we are notifying local authorities on travellers coming from affected countries," IHCL said.

Stating that its guests and colleagues are well with no symptoms of Covid-19, EIH that runs the hotels and resorts under the Oberoi and Trident brands said it has implemented a guest check-in declaration form at all hotels. This form identifies guests who have travelled to any of the high-risk countries in the past 14 days or have symptoms associated to the virus.

"The temperature of each guest is being checked and recorded at the time of check-in. If any of the parameters are not normal, the guest is being requested for a medical examination before completing check-in formalities," EIH said in a statement.

For hotels located in remote locations or with little to no non-resident business, entry to the hotel is being restricted to hotel guests, it added. "In our hotels located in key cities across the country, non-resident guests are being requested for their temperature readings before entry," the statement said.

Thermal imaging cameras are being procured to monitor the temperatures of each person entering the hotel premises. This should be in place in the next few days in hotels located in key cities across the country, it added.

Corporate office colleagues have all been advised to work from home to the extent possible. The colleagues have also been requested to stay at home under self-isolation for a period of 14 days

if they show signs of any of the symptoms or have come in contact with someone from a high-risk country, the statement said.

At Trident Udaipur, 83 employees are undergoing self-isolation for a period of 14 days as a precautionary measure, it added. Emphasising that it is taking all measures to safety and well-being of its guests and employees, a Hyatt spokesperson said, "We have introduced comprehensive COVID-19 guidance across Hyatt hotels globally, detailing how to protect against transmission of the virus including implementing hand sanitizer stations and frequent cleaning of high-touch areas, and procedures in case there is a suspected or confirmed case among

our guests or colleagues."

In addition, cross-functional, global response teams, including infectious diseases and occupational health experts, provide guidance to our hotels and help address specific situations, if needed, the statement added.

In similar vein, Embassy Group Hospitality Business Head Sartaj Singh said that both "our hospitality partners Hilton and Four Seasons are world leaders of stature. They are bringing in global best practices to ensure that the well being of our guests, our visitors and our staff is protected and we are suitably geared to meet any eventuality arising from the Covid-19 crisis." — PTI

DECCAN Chronicle

13 MARCH 2020

Covid-19: A challenge, but an opportunity too

It's a pandemic now, though a "controllable" one. The World Health Organisation has declared the Covid-19 outbreak a pandemic, literally means affecting everybody, for two reasons, according to its secretary-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus: the alarming levels of the spread and severity and by the alarming levels of inaction. The move was triggered by the sudden increase in the number of people infected by the disease and the death toll in the last 24 hours. Italy, one of the worst affected, reported 194 deaths on Wednesday, taking the toll to 827. In Iran, 62 more lost their lives, taking the toll to 354. Some 127,000 cases have been reported from 120 countries and territories and over 4,700 people have died. WHO fears the number of cases, deaths and affected nations could climb higher.

WHO's concerns on governmental inaction are well-founded. It's ironic that on the day WHO alerted the world on the impending threat, the United States shut itself off almost completely from the world. President Donald J. Trump has consistently been in denial mode, saying first that the coronavirus outbreak will be gone by April as "the heat kills this kind of virus" and then playing it down, comparing the Covid-19 statistics with that of the flu. World media reports talk very poorly of America's preparedness to tackle the escalating crisis, costing precious time for health workers. Experts suggest the virus had reached Italy in mid-January, but that country failed to identify it, leading eventually to its spread to every region and a virtual lockdown of the north. Iran initially boasted that the virus wouldn't touch it, and even suggested it could export masks to China. South Korea failed to spread the necessary information on the disease, that led to a religious congregation becoming the epicentre of the epidemic.

But all is not lost. WHO hopes to bring it down to a "controlled pandemic" if countries step up measures to tackle it. There are successful models all over. On Thursday, a day after WHO's announcement, news came from China's Wuhan that it closed all makeshift hospitals it had opened to treat Covid-19 patients. India, which has reported 74 cases with no deaths, has announced a series of steps to tackle it. Kerala has developed an exhaustive protocol to trace the infected; the Union health secretary is understood to have advised other states to follow it. It's time WHO led other nations in picking up the best practices from around the world and made them available to all. The pandemic's economic cost is yet to be determined. Stock markets worldwide are in peril. The impact will be more on poorer countries; Iran has already asked the IMF to extend it a loan to fight the disease.

The coronavirus outbreak is no more a regional affair, and it demands that the world to pull together all its resources — financial, scientific, communications — in the fight. It's a challenge, as well as an opportunity, for humanity to remain united and fight the common enemy.

Riots: Some questions remain

Home minister Amit Shah's combative defence in Parliament on Wednesday of his government's record over the recent riots in northeast Delhi, where he blamed the violence that raged for over three days on a "well-planned conspiracy", was curiously fuzzy on certain aspects — such as why it took so long to end the violence. While the home minister stoutly defended the Delhi police, which falls under his direct charge, for containing the violence in "36 hours", and said it deserved praise for not allowing it to spread over a wider area, he failed to explain why it needed that long in a metropolitan area, where reinforcements could have been rushed within an hour of the outbreak. He also didn't explain why, as the violence was starting, the police personnel deployed in the vicinity, stood as bystanders. Indeed, as many Opposition parties as well as Delhi's AAP government had demanded at the time, the Centre could have immediately called in the Army or at least the paramilitary forces and swiftly ended the violence. Mr Shah's reply in the Lok Sabha did not cover this aspect either.

Mr Shah's attack on the Congress, and specifically on the speech of its president Sonia Gandhi on December 14, two and a half months before the Delhi riots, where she is said to have referred to "aar paar ki ladai", as a part of the so-called "conspiracy", while downplaying the role of hate speeches like "goli maaro" by BJP leader Anurag Thakur and others just before the Delhi elections (two weeks before the riots), as well as the threatening language by the BJP's Kapil Mishra a day before the outbreak, seems just partisan politics. The minister's statement that a "scientific investigation" would be done with facial-recognition software to identify, and crack down on, those behind the violence seems justifiable — except that, given this government's record, public confidence is low that it would deal with all communities fairly. That is why a full-fledged judicial inquiry into the causes of the Delhi outbreak might be the best way out.

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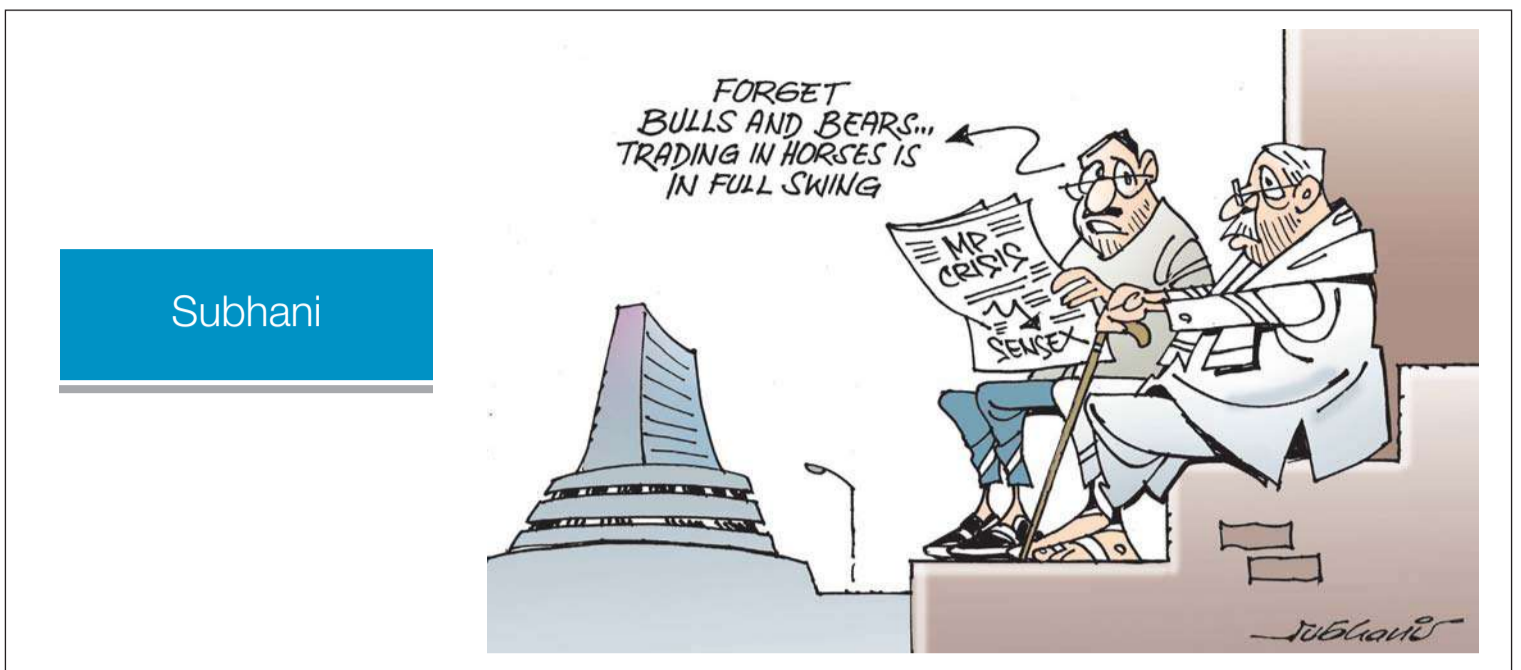
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Subhani

The uncertain science of military planning



N.V. Subramanian

Horses for courses" is a late 19th-century British idiom of the racetracks. Horses that prove winners, say on boggy ground, may not be as good on hard surfaces. The idiom applies to military planning as well but it brings with it enormous difficulties and intangibles. Unlike a horse, military planning does not come readymade as an organic whole. The whole point and pain of planning are to make it so. All countries face problems planning for future wars and low-intensity conflicts. India is not immune from this just as its victims include the United States, the world's sole superpower, and Israel, the leading military state of the Middle East.

Since the beginning of 2019, the press has reported conceptual rethinking of India's military force structure. The Army Chief at the time and the current Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), Gen. Bipin Rawat, advocated the concept of integrated battle groups (IBGs). In the evolution of the concept over the following months, it grew from a battalion force to a brigade combining all fighting arms. The aim was to deploy IBGs quasi-independently on the Pakistan and China fronts in the beginning and gradually transform the Army's strike and holding corps into networked IBGs for conventional war purposes. Since Gen. Rawat's promotion as CDS, IBGs have dropped out of the headlines.

Meanwhile, the new Army Chief, Gen. Mukund Naravane, has observed that tanks and fighter aircraft are "outdated" in the modern

era. "Icons of 20th-century warfare like large main battle tanks and fighter aircraft are on their way out," he said addressing a military think tank. Since Gen. Rawat's IBGs are to have tanks supported by air, it's not clear how that meshes with the Army Chief's thoughts which are, independently, quite valid. If you add to that the Indian Air Force's insistence on full squadrons of fighter planes with the 36 Rafales forming the cherry on the cake, things start to look a bit ragged.

It doesn't end there. Gen. Naravane believes the future foretells more events like the Houthi/Iranian drone-missile strike on Aramco facilities and the Balakot attack. Saudi oil production plunged by more than half after the September 2019 strike while the only verifiable outcome of Balakot is a lost plane and a captured pilot. But the point is taken. The Army Chief seems to suggest conventional wars may be a thing of the past while the IBG concept and the IAF leadership would appear to be stuck in it. Conceptual clarifications may not be out of order here.

However, clarity in concepts flows from clear first principles. To that must be applied the idiom, horses for courses. For example, how does India define future threats? What is the nature of its standalone threats from Pakistan and China and how do they transform in a situation of collusion between them? How does the internal security situation impinge on external threats? Who are the country's foreign friends and adversaries? How much stake has the existing world order in

the status quo in the region and what will it do to preserve it? What is the level of threat that contesting ideologies pose? What is the correlation of future threats with the decline of the Indian economy and nearly stagnant defence expenditures where a bulk is spent on salaries and pensions at the cost of force modernisation and upgrade?

Almost no country has got answers to similar or possibly slightly different questions exactly right. Often not raising questions and demanding adequate answers result in botched war results. In 1967 in Sinai, Israeli tank forces seemed to be invested ironically with the ghostly powers of the Wehrmacht armour great, Heinz Guderian. In the Yom Kippur War six years later, anti-tank weapons proved the nemesis of Israel. In 2006 against the Hezbollah in Lebanon, history was repeated. It was more than anti-tank weapons in 2006 though. By focussing on the Hamas insurgency, Israel's tank warfare skills had deteriorated when it took on the Hezbollah, which was both insurgent and a conventional war-fighter. Israel faced two war variants on two fronts and failed in foresight, planning and improvisation.

As a superpower, the United States has also barely muddled through. After the first Gulf and Kosovo wars, it realised the need to model an intermediate force between the heavy strategic and light tactical ones. One took inordinately long to deploy with armour, artillery

The first requirement of a plan is determination of the course. The course in this instance means determining the country's future threats and answering the related questions.

and so forth though perfectly suited for conventional wars, which were expected less and less likely to occur. The other could be quickly gotten into battle but had limited staying power. That intermediate force took the name of Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) centred on Stryker all-purpose fighting vehicles which were supposed inter alia to make up for the absence of 70-ton tanks in rapid deployments. Although an interim plan, its full evolution with so-called future combat systems has suffered a setback not least because the US remains unconvinced of large conventional wars despite a resurgent Russia and an expansionist China. There are similarities between BCTs and the Indian IBGs but their contexts are different which raise their own perplexing questions. It is about horses for courses again.

BCTs are purposed for easy foreign deployments. They have seen action in Iraq and Afghanistan and are present in Korea although their principal briefs are counterinsurgency and counterterrorism. Are the same roles envisaged for IBGs? From Gen. Rawat's viewpoint, the role would cover conventional war because IBGs include tanks. His successor, Gen. Naravane, thinks tanks and even fighter planes are outdated. He also seems to be writing the obituary for conventional wars. Where does all this leave Indian military planning? There is no doubt that Gen. Naravane is right. But India still needs a plan.

The first requirement of a plan is determination of the course. The course in this instance means determining the country's future threats and answering the related questions raised in the foregoing. Choosing the horse for the course comes later.

N.V. Subramanian is a writer, journalist and analyst

LETTERS

POSTPONE IPL

The BCCI is not concerned about people of India. They are only interested in making money. When coronavirus is spreading its tentacles, it is far more important to take all possible containment measures now. Lot of international games are being cancelled. To play 38 days of cricket in different cities at a time of pandemic will be the height of indifference to public safety.

B.B. Jagdeesh Rao
Hyderabad

CORONAVIRUS

When the world is trying to combat Covid-19, declared a pandemic by WHO, it is saddening to see Chief Minister K. Chandrababhan Naidu making irresponsible statements in the Assembly about this dreadful virus. Though warmer climates may bring down transmission rates, there is no mention about the cut off temperatures for transmission in any medical journal and research is still under way. A multidisciplinary approach of supportive care can save many lives and Mr Rao quoting just tablets of paracetamol would be enough shows his ignorance and lack of seriousness on this issue. If what he said was true we could have saved 4,000 people all over the world.

Dr Rithvik Golla
Secunderabad

There is so much left to be desired of people on the roads in terms of hygiene. They litter the road, cough, sneeze and clean their nostrils in full public view. This lack of hygiene is not found anywhere in the western world. Such people should be fined for endangering the health of others. Only then will India become Swachh Bharat.

S. Kishore
Hyderabad

BLAME GAME

How disgusting of the home minister Amit Shah to blame the Opposition for Delhi riots (*Shah links riots to Sonia's comment, DC, March 12*). Where was the home minister and what was he waiting for when Delhi was burning for three days? Why didn't he condemn the violence? In fact there is visual proof of police indulging in violence and literally facilitating the rioters. The Centre and home minister cannot wash their hands off by blaming the Opposition.

Shazia Razzaq
Hyderabad

Email your letters to info@deccanmail.com, editor@deccanmail.com. You can also send them to Editor, Deccan Chronicle, 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad-500 003.



Rafia Zakaria

This has never happened before. A British court has found that the ruler of Dubai, Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, had arranged for two of his adult daughters to be kidnapped and forcibly returned to the emirate after they attempted to flee abroad. The fact-finding judgment emerged from a case filed by the sheikh's former wife, Princess Haya, to prevent her husband from taking their children, aged 7 and 11, back to Dubai from where she had escaped with them to London last year. The court also granted protective orders for the children.

During the court proceedings, among the most high-profile in Britain since the divorce of Prince Charles and Princess Diana, the lawyer for Princess Haya argued that the sheikh had used his status to "threaten and intimidate" his former wife. On two occasions she found a loaded gun with the safety catch off on her bed. On another, a helicopter landed at her estate and the men on board tried to kidnap her, threatening to take her to a remote desert prison in Dubai.

The court believed Princess Haya, the half-sister of King Abdullah of Jordan. She and the sheikh married in 2004, after a fervid romance that began at a riding event in Spain. Both loved racing their expensive horses on the circuit all over Europe and the United Kingdom. All seemed well until February last year, when the princess found out that the sheikh had divorced her. The reasons for the divorce are unclear, but whatever they were, the princess took her kids and left and went to London.

It is not the first time that an Emirati princess has appealed to the British for help. Back in 2000, Princess Shamsa, one of the sheikh's daughters, attempted an escape after a riding event. (She too was a skilled equestrian.) A huge search was launched and she was eventually tracked down and apprehended by Emirati bodyguards in Cambridge, England. She has not been heard of since. Then in 2018, Shamsa's sister, Princess Latifa, also attempted a spectacular escape. Pretending to visit a café, the princess, then in her early

thirties, fled to the beach, where she used jet skis to get to a boat captained by a man with whom she had been communicating via the Internet. The two were able to escape and survived on granola bars while they tried to use the boat's satellite Internet to get the message out to the Western press. Near the coast of Goa, their attempts at communication were apprehended by the Indians, who had been forewarned by the Emiratis. When Princess Latifa was taken off the ship, she repeatedly stated she was asking for asylum. The men did not care to listen to what she was saying and she was forcibly returned to Dubai.

What are the reasons so many supposedly blessed royal women are trying to escape Dubai and Sheikh Maktoum? According to a recent article published in *Vanity Fair*, the life of royal Emirati women is very different from the picture of suave urbanity that the sheikh projects in public. He has had at least six wives and is the father of 30 children. While Dubai sports a veneer of modernity, what with the towering Burj Khalifa and

the gleaming malls all a testament to a successful experiment in merchant capitalism, private mores have not changed.

Among these prevalent norms is that royal women will ascribe to strict codes of conduct, ensure that every move is approved by their male guardians, spend their monthly royal stipends and not complain. Those who do are dealt with swiftly, as the examples of princesses Shamsa and Latifa illustrate. It is a terrible pity. The image that Dubai presents to the world and to the hundreds of thousands of expats that live there is one of a laissez-faire merchant capitalism. Alcohol is easily available, there are no restrictive dress codes for women, technology abounds and money appears to possess the magic of making everything possible. The idea that the ruler of such a place would harass his wives and keep his daughters captive seems, in the glitz and glamour of Dubai's synchronised fountains, impossible.

This syndrome of projecting the image of being progressive is very familiar to Pakistanis. The country does not have any royals but many

wannabe magnates and millionaires here operate under the same archaic beliefs that women are property, available to be married off, traded, held captive and ignored. As it is in the royal lands of the Muslim world, so it is in the plains and trenches like Pakistan. On the surface, the sheikh, who dresses in full British garb for the horse races at Ascot, appears to be a rational and sensible man who would not be given to such atrocities. Yet the measure of his tolerance is so low that a woman who wants to make decisions about her own life is more than he can handle. With no one to stand up to him, it fell perhaps to a British court to do so. Princess Haya, then, is the one who got away. Not only that, she also managed to get legal protections to keep her children with her. In the end, perhaps, the lessons that the men of the Muslim world are unwilling to learn voluntarily are taught to them by force. So it is for the ruler of Dubai; so too it may be for the pretend-kings of Pakistan.

By arrangement with Dawn

Memories of another riot: '84 lessons not learnt



Saikat Datta

I was 10 years old when the pogrom against the Sikhs started in Delhi in the aftermath of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's assassination. Naturally, some of my early memories are of extreme violence. I saw houses being attacked, shops ransacked and men being killed. A nearby gurdwara in South Delhi was attacked and nearly burnt.

These memories are my prism to study what happened in Delhi in February this year, as parts of the city burnt and at last count left over 50 people dead and hundreds injured.

In 1984, after the Army was finally deployed, the next few nights as residents of a Delhi Development Authority colony, we were asked to take urgent measures. It was decided that the dominant Hindu Bengali and Punjabi families in the

colony would ensure complete safety of the few Sikh families living in the complex. Patrolling duties were handed out to all males to ensure there was some form of resistance if any mob arrived at the gates. Stones were gathered up and placed at strategic points and rods and stout tree branches were distributed as weapons to the patrols.

My father, as a 10-year-old, had to leave his ancestral home in the newly-created East Pakistan. He had seen his share of violence during the 1947 Partition. His family had settled in a place called Sylhet, then part of undivided Assam and one of the two places in the subcontinent where a plebiscite was held. Assam, under then provincial leader Gopinath Bordoloi, was seen that the Bengali-speaking district of Sylhet was given off to East Pakistan.

The Muslims were a majority and voted largely on religious lines. Overnight, district boundaries became an international border. My father's family packed up overnight and trudged through hills and crossed rivers to arrive in the new India and rebuilt their broken lives.

During the anti-Sikh riots, my father's patrolling duty was between 1 am and 4 am. Every night, as soon as he would leave to keep watch, I would quietly get up and go to the window from where I could see him. I kept a *khukri* at hand, gifted by an uncle who was an officer with an Indian Army Gurkha battalion. In my mind, I felt responsible for my father and I was prepared to rush and fight alongside him, if he was attacked.

The few Sikh kids in the colony took haircuts to look like Hindus and we would go out and buy provisions for them whenever the curfew was lifted. One night the young men in the colony were dispatched to every house with an urgent message. Every family was warned not to drink the water supplied by the municipal corporation. There was a rumour that the Sikhs had poisoned the water supply to Delhi and we

The Congress never recovered from the genocide. But nor did those of us who witnessed it firsthand. The same panic that we witnessed in 1984 is back on the streets of Delhi. The only difference is that we are now less tolerant.

couldn't drink it. The next day was spent trapped at home, thirsty and waiting for confirmation that the water was safe.

Days later we understood that this was a ploy to make us distrust the Sikhs.

"Othering" a community: This was long before fake news became fashionable, and we did not have WhatsApp to spread disinformation. Despite these obvious limitations, the rumour spread far across the city. While it added to the panic, it also seeded doubts about the Sikhs living amidst us. This was our first experience of how a community can be easily demonised and "othered".

Ironically, the fear and the hatred of a Congress-led pogrom against a minority

group led many people to become staunch opponents of the party. For years they proudly announced that they had voted for the BJP, even though the party had no hope of winning the polls. Many were convinced that the Congress had "appeased" one minority, while targeting the Sikhs. For many Hindu Bengalis living nearby, in a colony that was originally called the East Pakistan Displaced Persons' Camp (later renamed as Chittaranjan Park), the BJP represented a party that would not "appease" a particular minority.

Ironically, the targeting of the Sikhs, a tiny minority, led to anger and the need for legitimacy to target another minority, Muslims. In living rooms, families spoke of how the BJP would end the reign of the Congress and endemic corruption, while also putting the Muslims in place. By the time the Babri Masjid was demolished in 1992, many responded to news polls by pointing out that a major "problem" had been finally "resolved".

The "not appease" is a euphemism for othering a minority. It now became a group that could be identified by their clothes, religious practices, food habits and names. They

were now made to bear the brunt of insecurities and fears of the majority that stemmed from attacks on another minority in 1984.

Repeated systemic failures: Cut to the Delhi of 2020. The systemic political and bureaucratic failures that led to the riots of 1984 have remained exactly the same. The reports by the Subsidiary Intelligence Bureau (SIB) to the Delhi police were vague, and had no clue about a riot being planned. Most Cabinet ministers in the Narendra Modi government, including those directly responsible for law and order in the national capital, were in Gujarat planning for US President Donald Trump's visit.

The lieutenant-governor, appointed by the Central government to govern Delhi, held two meetings with top police officials who never asked for additional troops and did not anticipate the riots. A meeting held with the Union home secretary to review security preparations for Mr Trump's visit had no discussion about a possible riot.

Then Delhi police commissioner Amulya Patnaik had failed to stand up for his constabulary when Delhi's lawyers attacked them during

an agitation in November last year. His constables had to stand with placards outside the police headquarters, watching helplessly as their leadership dithered. Once again, Mr Patnaik's leadership qualities failed to impress as the city burned.

The Congress Party never recovered from the genocide. But nor did we recover — those of us who witnessed it firsthand. The same panic that we witnessed in 1984 is back on the streets of Delhi. The only difference is that we are now less tolerant and fear more. We know who and what has led us to that fear. But we can't understand why we have become afraid. We are now consumed by hate.

If India needs to aspire to be great, it will have to let go of its insecurities and fears. It will have to embrace the fact that we are one people. We will rise or fall as one. That choice is for us to make. Political parties will rise and fall. But future generations will thrive or perish depending upon what we do today.

The writer is a journalist based in New Delhi and a founding partner of CSDR Consulting

The weight of right and wrong is too heavy on us



Amrit Sadhana

How often do you find yourself standing in front of your wardrobe wondering what to wear? We devote much time thinking whether to eat regular food or opt for diet food, get a haircut today or let it wait for one more week. It would be an interesting exercise to count the time one spends making small decisions in daily life. The worst situation happens when we mentally decide to do something but don't have the resolution to implement it.

We are more than familiar with our hesitation, lack of resolution or self-confidence, and the long habit of wishing to have been told what to do by somebody else when it comes to deciding something. It is safer to throw the responsibility on the other instead of taking the risk of making a wrong decision.

Human beings are intellectually free to think for themselves but this has been too heavy a responsibility for many people to carry. They easily give up their freedom to any authority in exchange for an easy life. Living is full of choices, and choosing seems to be difficult because nobody wants to accept the possibility of failure. The weight of right and wrong is too heavy on us. When deciding is too complex or the interests at stake are too important, we resort to an informal decision-support technique such as tossing a coin, asking an oracle, visiting an astrologer or a tarot reader. And this is about the small decisions of everyday life — what about the big ones in which a big corporate house is involved? Decision-making is dis-

cussed a lot in management science because the end of the 20th century saw economic boundaries between countries crumble, as businesses became more complex, global and knowledge-driven. Managers need to ensure that their company is continuously innovative and improved to achieve and maintain a sustainable competitive edge.

A lot of energy goes into helping managers make decisions through training programs, refresher courses and so on. But they overlook the simple fact that it is the same person who cannot make small decisions in his personal life who is working in the corporate houses. If children are not trained to be independent and courageous to decide for themselves, how are they going to be able to decide about the broader interests of their company when they become adults?

Decision-making is a habit that should be inculcated in childhood. Children should be encouraged to make decisions — whether they are right or wrong, doesn't matter. The same child will grow up to be a self-confident, decisive, resolute young person who can manage a big enterprise and use the knack learned at a young age in the best interests of the company.

The former American President Harry Truman followed his own advice when his decisions went awry: "Whenever I make a bum decision, I go out and make another one." This is the clue: Keep making decisions without worrying about the results.

It's not necessary to throw the results to the winds, but the very activity of making decisions generates energy which gives you freshness and vitality. Life becomes an adventure as you are always facing the unknown.

Amrit Sadhana is editor of Osho Times International. She facilitates meditation workshops based on Osho insights around the country and abroad.

Erle Stanley Gardner dead

TEMECULA, (CALIFORNIA), March 12
Erle Stanley Gardner, whose mysteries starring ace criminal attorney Perry Mason won him a rating as history's biggest selling writer, died yesterday. He was 80.

His office however, did not give the cause of Gardner's death. The office said that he did not recover from an illness for which he was hospitalised earlier this month. Other sources said he had cancer. Gardner also masterminded the "Perry Mason" television show during its nine-year run.

A lawyer turned author, the "old master" of the mystery novel confounded the publishing world with his prodigious output—almost entirely dictated rather than written by hand with the help of eight secretaries. He often turned out six books a year.



**Department of Health Research
Indian Council of Medical Research
Ministry of Health & Family Welfare**



National Laboratories Testing for COVID-19

When to test: Cases with respiratory symptoms along with pertinent travel history; close contacts of laboratory confirmed cases

What samples to collect: Oral swab and/or nasal swab

How to test: Real-time Polymerase Chain Reaction



51 Testing Labs*



Additional 56 Collection Labs**

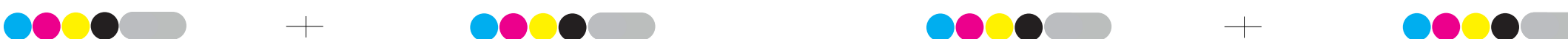
1. Sri Venkateswara Institute of Medical Sciences, Tirupati
2. Andhra Medical College, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh
3. GMC, Anantapur, AP
4. Regional Medical Research Centre, Port Blair, Andaman and Nicobar
5. Gauhati Medical College, Guwahati
6. Regional Medical Research Center, Dibrugarh
7. Rajendra Memorial Research Institute of Medical Sciences, Patna
8. Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education & Research, Chandigarh
9. All India Institute Medical Sciences, Raipur
10. All India Institute Medical Sciences, Delhi
11. BJ Medical College, Ahmedabad
12. M.P. Shah Government Medical College, Jamnagar
13. Pt. B.D. Sharma Post Graduate Inst. of Med. Sciences, Rohtak, Haryana
14. BPS Govt Medical College, Sonapat
15. Indira Gandhi Medical College, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh
16. Dr. Rajendra Prasad Govt. Med. College, Kangra, Tanda, HP
17. Sher-e- Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences, Srinagar
18. Government Medical College, Jammu
19. MGM Medical College, Jamshedpur
20. Bangalore Medical College & Research Institute, Bangalore
21. National Institute of Virology Field Unit Bangalore
22. Mysore Medical College & Research Institute, Mysore
23. Hassan Inst. of Med. Sciences, Hassan, Karnataka
24. Shimoga Inst. of Med. Sciences, Shivamogga, Karnataka
25. National Institute of Virology Field Unit, Kerala
26. Govt. Medical College, Thriuvananthapuram, Kerala
27. Govt. Medical College, Kozhikhode, Kerala
28. All India Institute Medical Sciences, Bhopal
29. National Institute of Research in Tribal Health (NIRTH), Jabalpur
30. NEIGRI of Health and Medical Sciences, Shillong, Meghalaya
31. Indira Gandhi Government Medical College, Nagpur
32. Kasturba Hospital for Infectious Diseases, Mumbai
33. J N Inst. of Med. Sciences Hospital, Imphal-East, Manipur
34. Regional Medical Research Center, Bhubaneswar
35. Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education & Research, Puducherry
36. Government Medical College, Patiala, Punjab
37. Government Medical College, Amritsar
38. Sawai Man Singh, Jaipur
39. Dr. S.N Medical College, Jodhpur
40. Jhalawar Medical College, Jhalawar, Rajasthan
41. SP Med. College, Bikaner, Rajasthan
42. King's Institute of Preventive Medicine & Research, Chennai
43. Government Medical College, Theni
44. Government Medical College, Agartala
45. Gandhi Medical College, Secunderabad
46. King's George Medical University, Lucknow
47. Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi
48. Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College, Aligarh
49. Government Medical College, Haldwani
50. National Institute of Cholera and Enteric Diseases, Kolkata
51. IPGIMER, Kolkata

1. Siddhartha Medical College, Vijayawada
2. Rajeev Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences, Kadapa
3. Rangaraya Medical College, Kakinada
4. Guntur Medical College, Guntur
5. Silchar Medical College, Silchar
6. Jorhat Medical College, Jorhat
7. Tezpur Medical College, Tezpur
8. Fakhruddin Medical College, Barpeta
9. Patna Medical College, Patna
10. Darbhanga Medical College, Darbhanga
11. S K Medical College, Muzaffarpur
12. Government Medical College & Hospital, Chandigarh
13. Late Sri Baliram Kashyap Memorial Govt. Medical College, Jagdalpur
14. Lady Hardinge Medical College, New Delhi
15. Government Medical College, Surat
16. GMC, Bhavnagar
17. PDU GMC, Rajkot
18. Government Medical College & SSG Hospital, Vadodara
19. Government Medical College, Srinagar
20. Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences, Ranchi
21. Vijayanagar Institute of Medical Science, Bellary
22. Gulbarga Institute Of Medical Sciences, Gulbarga
23. Government Medical College, Thrissur
24. Bundelkhand Medical College, Sagar
25. MGM Medical College, Indore
26. Gajra Raja Medical College, Gwalior
27. S.S Medical College, Rewa
28. Government Medical College, Miraj, Sangli
29. Seth GS Medical College & KEM Hospital, Mumbai
30. Government Medical College, Nagpur
31. Government Medical College, Aurangabad
32. V. M. Government Medical College, Solapur
33. Shri Bhausaheb Hire Government Medical College, Dhule
34. Government Medical College and Hospital & Superspeciality Hospital, Akola
35. Regional Institute of Medical Sciences, Imphal
36. SCB Medical College, Cuttack
37. Indira Gandhi Medical College & Research Institute, Puducherry
38. RNT Medical College, Udaipur
39. AIIMS, Jodhpur
40. Madurai Medical College, Madurai
41. Government Mohan Kumaramangalam Medical College, Salem
42. Government Medical College, Thiruvananthapuram
43. Government Medical College, Villupuram
44. Tirunelveli Medical College, Tirunelveli
45. Coimbatore Medical College, Coimbatore
46. Madras Medical College, Chennai, Tamil Nadu
47. Osmania Medical College, Hyderabad
48. Kakatiya Medical College, Nizampura, Warangal
49. UPUMS, (Formerly UPRIMS) Saifai
50. AIIMS, Rishikesh
51. Doon Government Medical College, Dehradun
52. Murshidabad Medical College & Hospital, Murshidabad, Berhampur, West Bengal
53. Midnapore Medical College & Hospital, Midnapore
54. North Bengal Medical College, Darjeeling
55. Malda Medical College, Malda
56. RG Kar Medical College, Kolkata

* These labs accept samples for testing through government health authorities.
** These labs facilitate collection of samples through government health authorities by providing sample collection kits and transporting collected samples to testing labs

<https://www.icmr.nic.in> | National Helpline Number for corona-virus : +91-11-23978046

davp 17301/13/0016/1920



IN BRIEF

East Syria strike kills 26 Iraqi fighters

Beirut: An air strike killed 26 fighters of Iraqi paramilitary group Hashed al-Shaabi in eastern Syria after a deadly attack on US-led coalition troops in Iraq, a war monitor said Thursday. Updating its toll for the Wednesday strike, the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said it was probably carried out by the coalition. The coalition did not immediately provide comment. Before the strike near the border town of Albu Kamal, rockets were fired at a military base north of Baghdad hosting coalition troops, killing two Americans and one Briton.

Violence as Chile marks Piner's 2 yrs

Santiago: Students clashed with riot police in Chile's capital Santiago during protests that marked the second anniversary of conservative President Sebastian Piner's taking office on Wednesday. The protests coincided with the 30th anniversary of Chile's return to democracy after Augusto Pinochet's 1973-1990 dictatorship. During a ceremony in Santiago, Piner said that 30 years of democratic rule in Chile had been a "fertile" period that dragged 8m Chileans out of poverty. But he also recognized shortcomings and inequalities that hurt "the soul of our nation." "We have not sufficiently taken into account the fears and shortcomings of our middle class. We have not progressed strongly enough towards full equality between men and women."

Remains of US airmen repatriated

Mandalay (Myanmar): The remains of suspected US airmen killed in Myanmar during World War II were repatriated on Thursday, as American officials continue searching for 500 unaccounted servicemen in the country. Myanmar was a key battleground between the Allies and Japan during the war. The remains are thought to be those of some of the seven servicemen in a B-25G aircraft downed in February 1944 in northern Salingyi. Although the wreckage was located two years later, it was not until 2019 that the US Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) found possible remains in the same region and returned this year to continue the search. On Thursday, a ceremony was held in honour of the lost servicemen at Mandalay airport as white-gloved US guards carried the coffins draped in the American flag into a C-17 military plane. The remains will be taken for further analysis at a Hawaii laboratory.

LANKA INVITES OBSERVERS TO MONITOR POLLS

Colombo, March 12: Sri Lanka's National Election Commission has invited foreign observers to monitor the upcoming parliamentary polls in the island nation. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa on March 2 dissolved Parliament six months ahead of its schedule and called a snap election on April 25. The earlier Parliament was appointed on September 1, 2015. Rajapaksa sacked the House after the minimum term of four-and-a-half years necessary to dissolve it. Rajapaksa, who was elected to office in November last year, had said he cannot work freely because his powers had been reduced. He also faced restrictions as the opposition commanded a majority in the 225-member House.

According to National Election Commission member S Ratnajeewan H Hoole, the organisation has invited observers from the European Union (EU), Commonwealth countries and the NGO, Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL), to monitor the upcoming parliamentary election, the Daily Mirror reported on Thursday. The observers will be deployed across the country. They will submit their observations and recommendations after the conclusion of the polls. The observers will carry out a comprehensive election assessment, focusing on the legal framework, electoral administration, voter registration, campaigning, conduct of the media, including social media, voting, counting and tallying, and the transmission of results.

Torch lighting ceremony



Greek actress Xanthi Georgiou (centre) playing the role of a high priestess, holds a torch during the flame lighting ceremony at the closed Ancient Olympia site, birthplace of the ancient Olympics in southern Greece, on Thursday. — AP

Iraq to probe attack on US troops

3 coalition personnel dead, 12 hurt by a barrage of rockets targeting Camp Taji base

Baghdad, March 12: Iraq's military on Thursday said it opened an investigation into a rocket attack hours earlier that killed three servicemen, including two Americans, at an Iraqi base housing coalition forces. At least 12 coalition personnel were also injured late Wednesday by a barrage of rockets targeting Camp Taji base, located 27 kilometers (17 miles) north of Baghdad, according to a US-led coalition statement. A truck rigged with 107 mm Katyusha rocket launchers was discovered by Iraqi security

forces a few kilometers (miles) from the base following the attack. A military statement from Iraq's joint operations command said caretaker Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi ordered the investigation into what he called "a very serious security challenge and hostile act." The United Nations condemned the attack, saying it took "critical political attention away" from Iraq's ongoing domestic challenges, which threaten to create power vacuum at the seat of Iraq's government. "The last thing Iraq

needs is to serve as an arena for vendettas and external battles," the statement said. Heightened tensions between the United States and Iran in recent months were set in motion by a rocket attack in December on an Iraqi base that killed a US contractor. American airstrikes targeting the Iran-backed militia Kataib Hezbollah followed, which led to protests at the US embassy in Baghdad. A US drone strike in Baghdad then killed Iranian General Qassem Soleimani, a top commander responsible for expeditionary opera-

tions across the wider Mideast. Iran struck back with a ballistic missile attack on US forces in Iraq, the Islamic Republic's most direct assault on America since the 1979 seizing of the US Embassy in Tehran. Wednesday's attack coincided with what would have been Soleimani's birthday. The potential power vacuum looming over Iraq comes after the prime minister-designate, Mohammed Allawi, withdrew his nomination earlier this month. That followed political squabbling over the naming of his cabinet. — AP



US army forces at a training session at the Camp Taji base north of Baghdad. — AP



OZ COURT DELAYS FINAL VERDICT ON CARDINAL PELL

Canberra, March 12: Australia's High Court on Thursday delayed judgement in Cardinal George Pell's appeal against his conviction for child sex abuse, with a decision now not expected for months. The court adjourned the case of the 78-year-old former Vatican cardinal on Wednesday's appeal against his conviction for child sex abuse convictions, with a decision now not expected for months. The court adjourned the case of the 78-year-old former Vatican cardinal on Wednesday's appeal against his conviction for child sex abuse convictions, with a decision now not expected for months. The court adjourned the case of the 78-year-old former Vatican cardinal on Wednesday's appeal against his conviction for child sex abuse convictions, with a decision now not expected for months.

Pell, who once helped elect popes, is the highest-ranking Catholic Church official ever convicted of child sex crimes. He was not present for the two-day hearing and will remain behind bars while seven of Australia's top judges consider his fate. A court official said that it typically took between three to six months for a decision in cases where judgement had been reserved. Pell's lawyer, Bret Walker, on Thursday urged them to quash the conviction rather than order a retrial, saying it was "the power and duty of this court". He also accused the prosecution of an "inappropriate and over-engineered attempt at improvisation to make matters fit that won't fit". — AFP

Sanders isn't dropping out, but where does he go from here?

Burlington (US), March 12: Bernie Sanders is vowing to press ahead with his presidential campaign at least long enough to debate Joe Biden this weekend, even while acknowledging his deficit in the Democratic race may be insurmountable. The Vermont senator on Wednesday offered no further details on what his campaign may look like before or after he and Biden — the last two major candidates vying for the Democratic presidential nomination — spar Sunday night on stage in Arizona. as unlikely as it may seem less than two weeks after losing his once-commanding front-runner status — about how long Sanders will persist against increasingly daunting odds, especially as the pressure within his own party increases exponentially. Sanders addressed reporters in Burlington after offering no public statements Tuesday night, when he suffered a devastating

defeat in Michigan and losses in Missouri, Idaho and Mississippi. Sanders noted that he won North Dakota and that the continuing count in Washington state remained close — but admitted he was trailing badly in the race to secure enough delegates to clinch the nomination before the Democratic National Convention in Milwaukee. "While our campaign has won the ideological debate, we are losing the debate over electability," Sanders said, meaning Democrats think Biden has a better chance of beating President Donald Trump in the fall. "That is what millions of Democrats and independents today believe." He was quick to add that he thinks he's the stronger

choice, and that he could show that during Sunday's debate. Sanders promised to press Biden for answers about millions of Americans who don't have health insurance, a criminal justice system he said unfairly targets and punishes minorities and raising federal minimum wage. After that, though, Democrats' desperate desire to defeat Trump could affect his calculus. Should Sanders get out soon, he could save Democrats months of a messy and expensive primary fight. But an early departure would also deprive the party's most passionate supporters, including many young people, of the one man who embodies the dramatic change they crave. — AP

'Sick' Weinstein back in hospital

New York, March 12: Disgraced Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein was admitted to hospital after he was sentenced to 23 years in prison for rape and sexual assault. According to his spokesperson, the 67-year-old and wheelchair bound producer was back in Manhattan's Bellevue Hospital for his "ongoing heart problems and chest pains". Weinstein was suffering from chest pains and medical staff at Rikers Island decided to take him to Bellevue, the oldest public hospital in the US, barely six days after he left the same facility. "Mr Weinstein is being taken to Bellevue Hospital Ward to treat him for his ongoing heart problems and chest pains," a spokesperson for the

Oscar winning producer told Deadline. Weinstein was discharged from Bellevue on March 5. He was then shifted to Rikers' North Infirmatory Command, where he had undergone mild surgery just a few days beforehand for a blockage in his heart. "In addition a complication related to his back surgery is going to be evaluated. We are incredibly appreciative of the level of care and attention the NYC Dept. of Corrections is showing regarding Mr. Weinstein's medical condition and we are hopeful he will be held overnight for observation given his recent heart procedure less than a week ago and his ongoing medical issues," the spokesperson for the producer added. — PTI

HUMAN | EXPLOITATION 1m Uighurs and other Muslim minorities held in camps, say rights groups

US seeks Xinjiang import ban over forced labour

Washington, March 12: Lawmakers in Washington have proposed a ban on most imports from China's Xinjiang region, charging that goods produced by Uighur forced labourers were easily making their way into the United States. The US already bans products made through slavery, but with rights groups saying as many as one million Uighurs and other minorities are held in camps in Xinjiang, lawmakers said forced labour was intertwined into the region's economy. "These practices in Xinjiang are one of the

world's largest human tragedies. It remains unimaginable, frankly, that this is happening in 2020," Senator Marco Rubio, a Republican sponsor of the bipartisan measure, told reporters on Wednesday. Representative Jim McGovern, a Democrat who leads the Congressional-Executive Commission on China — which looks at human rights — said that witnesses, surveillance photos and leaked documents all showed the existence of forced labour. "We know that many US, international and Chinese

companies are complicit in the exploitation of forced labor involving Uighurs and other Muslim minorities," McGovern said. "Audits of supply chains are simply not possible because forced labour is so pervasive within the regional economy," he said. The act would ban the import of any goods from Xinjiang unless US Customs and Border Protection has "clear and convincing evidence" that no forced labour was involved. Uighur activists say that China is conducting a massive brainwashing campaign in intern-

WE KNOW that many US, international and Chinese companies are complicit in the exploitation of forced labor involving Uighurs and other Muslim minorities

JIM MCGOVERN
Representative

ment camps aimed at eradicating their culture. Beijing says the camps are "vocational education centres" teaching Mandarin and job skills to steer "students" away from religious extremism. — AFP



A harvester works in a cotton field in China's Xinjiang region. — AFP

IN BRIEF

UNHRC session suspended

Geneva: The top UN rights body decided on Thursday to suspend its main annual session at the end of this week over the new Covid-19 pandemic. A proposal presented by Human Rights Council president Elisabeth Tichy-Fisslberger "to suspend the 43rd session of the Human Rights Council on the 13th of March until further notice" was met with no objections.

Spain minister tests positive

Madrid: Spain's equality minister has tested positive for Covid-19 and has been quarantined with her partner, deputy prime minister and Podemos leader Pablo Iglesias, a government statement said on Thursday. "The minister (Irene Montero) is in good condition and second deputy prime minister Pablo Iglesias is also in quarantine due to the situation," it said. "This morning, all members of the government will undergo testing," it added, indicating the results would be published later in the day.

Virus: China shuts Everest

Kathmandu: China has cancelled permits for Mount Everest because of the Covid-19, expedition organisers said Thursday, ahead of the spring climbing season on the world's highest peak. Last year's traffic-clogged spring window saw a record 885 people summit Everest, 644 of them from Nepal and 241 from the northern flank in Tibet. The Nepal side remains open for now although some expedition operators have seen cancellations and climbers have been asked to submit a 14-day travel history and medical reports. The Chinese authorities "have informed us that the mountain will close from the north side," Lukas Furtenbach of Austria-based Furtenbach Adventures told AFP. Furtenbach said that he will be shifting his 11 clients to Nepal.



EPIDEMIC IMPACT ACROSS WORLD

- Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte will be tested for the new Covid-19 as two key government buildings were being disinfected over an exposure scare.
- Ireland on Thursday announced the closure of all schools and colleges while recommending the cancellation of mass gatherings.
- Sri Lanka on Thursday announced the closure of all schools across the country.
- The death toll from the collapse of a Covid-19 Xinjian hotel quarantine facility in China rose to 29 on Thursday as the final victim was recovered from the rubble.
- Algeria has registered its first death from Covid-19, the health ministry said on Thursday.
- A spike in cases in the Gulf pushed infections in the Middle East for the new Covid-19 past 10,000 cases on Thursday.

3,169 is the toll in China due to the Covid-19. Cases continue to drop sharply in China which has reported 11 new fatalities.

114 new Covid-19 cases reported in South Korea on Thursday, but authorities warned that a new cluster in Seoul could see the infection spread in the capital.

3,000 infected due to the novel Covid-19 in Spain as of Thursday as the number of deaths almost doubled, rising to 84.

12,000 virus facemasks were allegedly being smuggled by two Malaysians from Indonesia to their home country. The two were detained.

- Disgraced Malaysian ex-leader Najib Razak's corruption trial was halted Thursday after his defence team were reportedly ordered to self-quarantine over fears about the Covid-19.
- Russia said Thursday that it has sent test kits for the novel Covid-19 to countries, including Iran, North Korea and former Soviet states.
- There's one thing the Trump administration wants Americans to remember about the Covid-19 pandemic: It carries the "Made in China" label.



Covid-19 is expected to continue for sometime — a year, and maybe longer
— LEE HSIEN LOONG, Singaporean PM

Europe furious over Trump travel ban

Officials say the trans-Atlantic embargo will wound economies reeling from the Covid-19 pandemic

A 'controllable pandemic': WHO

Brussels, March 12: European officials reacted with surprise and anger on Thursday after US President Donald Trump imposed a trans-Atlantic travel ban they fear will wound economies already reeling from the covid-19 pandemic. Trump closed US arrivals to travellers from the Schengen border-free zone — which does not include Britain and Ireland — in what he said was an "aggressive" effort to contain the spread of the often deadly disease.

But European leaders argue that their scientific advice suggests travel restrictions are ineffective when the virus is already present almost worldwide, and lamented that they had not been consulted. "The covid-19 is a global crisis, not limited to any continent, and it requires cooperation rather than unilateral action," EU chiefs Ursula von der Leyen and Charles Michel said. "The European Union disapproves of the fact that the US decision to impose a travel ban was taken unilaterally and without consultation," the presidents

Geneva, March 12: The new Covid-19 outbreak "is a controllable pandemic" if countries step up measures to tackle it, the head of the World Health Organisation said on Thursday. WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus acknowledged on Wednesday that the global outbreak of the new Covid-19 could now be considered a pandemic — a disease actively spreading globally. But he told diplomats in Geneva that describing the outbreak as a pandemic should not mean that countries give up the fight to stop it spreading further. "This is a control-

lable pandemic," he said. "We are deeply concerned that some countries are not approaching this threat with the level of political commitment needed to control it. The idea that countries should shift from containment to mitigation is wrong and dangerous," he stressed. Over 4,500 people have died, according to an AFP tally, while the WHO said 125,000 cases had been reported from 118 countries. "To save lives we must reduce transmission," he insisted. "That means finding and isolating as many cases as possible and quarantining their cl-

osest contacts," he said, urging states to test every suspected case in a bid to slow transmission. "Even if you cannot stop transmission, you can slow it down and protect health facilities, old age homes and other vital areas — but only if you test all suspected cases." The majority of cases have been in China, where the outbreak emerged in December; but major hotspots have also emerged in South Korea, Iran and Italy. Together, those four countries account for more than 90 percent of all reported cases, according to the WHO. The pandemic

has disrupted cultural and sporting events around the world as authorities try to prevent large gatherings. Tedros said countries needed to find the right balance between protecting health and preventing social and economic disruption. However, "containment" needed to remain the central pillar in any plan to tackle the spread, he said. "You can't fight a virus if you don't know where it is. That means robust surveillance to find, isolate, test and treat every case, to break the chains of transmission." — AFP

an and European markets plummeted on the news. In Brussels, European officials and diplomats were furious. "If he wants the EU to be the culprit, so be it. It's erratic, unilateral and creates a lot of problems that are unnecessary," one envoy fumed. "Trump is simply kicking a man when he's down. He wants to appear to be in control, but in seven days it will be clear that he is not," he said, referring to the spread of the disease in America. "This is going to be serious. What airlines will still exist when this is all over?" Even Britain, which has left the EU and is itself exempt from Trump's ban for now, expressed concern. "With regard to flight bans, we are always guided by the science as we make our decisions here," finance minister Rishi Sunak told BBC radio. "The advice we are getting is that there isn't evidence that interventions like closing borders or travel bans are going to have a material effect on the spread of the infection." — AFP

ISRAELI SCIENTISTS MAY ANNOUNCE VACCINE SOON

Jerusalem, March 12: Scientists in Israel are expected to announce in the coming days that they have completed development of a vaccine for the new Covid-19, according to a media report here. Israeli daily Ha'aretz, quoting medical sources, reported on Thursday that scientists at the Israel's Institute for Biological Research, supervised by the Prime Minister's office, have recently had a significant breakthrough in understanding the biological mechanism and qualities of the virus, including better diagnostic capability, production of antibodies for those who already have the virus and development of a vaccine. The development process, however, requires a series of tests and experiments that may last months before it is deemed effective or safe to use. — PTI

Help us to help you

NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID19)

Protect yourself and others!

Follow these Do's and Don'ts

Do's

Practise frequent hand washing. Wash hands with soap and water or use alcohol based hand rub. Wash hands even if they are visibly clean

Cover your nose and mouth with handkerchief / tissue while sneezing and coughing

See a doctor if you feel unwell (fever, difficult breathing and cough). While visiting doctor wear a mask/cloth to cover your mouth and nose

If you have these signs/symptoms, please call State helpline number or Ministry of Health & Family Welfare's 24X7 helpline number 011-23978046

Don'ts

Have a close contact with anyone, if you're experiencing cough and fever

Throw used tissues into closed bins immediately after use

Touch your eyes, nose and mouth

Avoid participating in large gatherings

Spit in public

Together we can fight Coronavirus

For further information call

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India's 24X7 control room number **+91-11-23978046** or email at **ncov2019@gmail.com**

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quick BITES

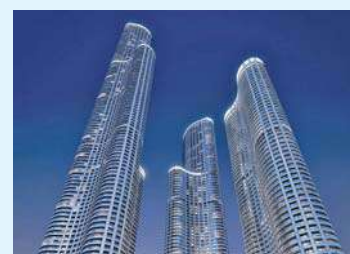
INDICATORS	%
Sensex	32,778.14 -8.18
Nifty 50	9,590.15 -8.30
S&P 500*	2,512.20 -8.36
Dollar (₹)	74.22 0.76
Pound Sterling (₹)	94.46 -0.69
Euro (₹)	83.27 -0.26
Gold (10gm) (₹)	44,490.128 -0.28
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	32.72 -8.58
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.236 1.780
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.688 -0.134

* As of 10:00 pm IST

ECB fires off stimulus to counter shock

European Central Bank chief Christine Lagarde warned that the coronavirus had delivered a "major shock" to the global economy that required urgent, coordinated action, as she unveiled fresh stimulus to keep credit flowing. The ECB launched a flurry of measures to cushion the impact of the virus, including increased bond purchases and cheap loans to banks, but left key interest rates unchanged.

Lodha Group's UK arm clears \$325 mn debt



Realty firm Lodha Group's UK subsidiary has cleared its \$325 million debt that was raised through issuance of bonds in 2015. Lodha Developers International, a subsidiary of Mumbai-based Macrotech Developers (earlier Lodha Developers), has paid \$345 mn (Rs 2,550 cr), including \$20 mn as interest, to clear its debt. Lodha Intl. has completed all payments for the redemption of its March 2020 US dollar bonds.

NCLAT sets aside govt plea on 63 Moons

The NCLAT set aside the government's plea to supersede the board of 63 Moons Technologies (formerly Financial Technologies). But the NCLAT bench under Justice S. J. Mukhopadhyaya upheld the directions of the NCLT Chennai bench to appoint three government nominees on 63 Moons board. NCLAT also dismissed the plea of three directors, including Jignesh Shah, challenging their disqualification.

Nidhis given one year more to update details

The government has given up to one-year time for Nidhi companies to update their details. Under new provisions, Nidhi companies have to apply to the central government for updation of their status or declaration as 'Nidhi Company' in 'Form NDH-4', the government said in a statement. The government amended the provisions related to Nidhi companies, which are kind of NBFCs, under the Companies Act.

Central bank offers to sell \$2-b swaps to support rupee

RBI steps in as rupee gets near historic low

FALAKNAZ SYED
MUMBAI, MARCH 12

With bloodbath across the globe getting mirrored in the domestic financial market, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Thursday stepped in to soothe nervous investors, stating that it is ready to take all necessary measures to ensure that the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Indian economy are mitigated and financial markets and institutions in India continue to function normally.

The rupee fell to 74.34 per dollar, just 14 paise shy of its record low of 74.48, a level hit in October 2018.

The RBI also announced a six-month US dollar sell/buy swaps to address the shortage of dollars. The central bank plans to offer \$2 billion to the forex market on March 16. A bank shall buy US dollars from the RBI and simultaneously agree to sell the same amount of US dollars at the end of the swap period.

"Financial markets worldwide are facing intense selling pressures on extreme risk aversion due to the spread of Covid-19 infections, compounded by the slump in international crude prices and a decline in bond



yields in advanced economies. Flight to safety has led to spike in volatility across all asset classes, with several emerging market currencies experiencing downside pressures. Mismatches in US dollar liquidity have become accentuated across the world," said the RBI.

"On a review of current financial market conditions and taking into consideration the requirement of US Dollars in the market, it has been decided to undertake 6-month US dollar sell/buy swaps to provide liquidity to the foreign exchange market. The swaps will be conducted through the auction route in multiple tranches," said the RBI

adding that the level of forex reserves at \$487.24 billion as on March 6, 2020 remains comfortable to meet any exigency.

Indian equity, bond and currency markets have witnessed their worst day as foreign investors cut their exposure to them. Foreign investors have sold Rs 33,164 crore in local debt and equity since the start of March, according to data from the National Securities Depository Ltd.

However, forex traders ruled out a shortage of dollars as forward premium has remained steady at 3.75 to 4 per cent for the last three months but the RBI move was pre-emptive.

Harihar Krishnamoorti,

treasurer at FirstRand Bank, explained, "The move must have been triggered by an understanding that there is a liquidity shortage of dollars despite the fall in US interest rates. So the RBI has opened the window which would supplement the interbank supply in the over the counter market. The advantage of doing this is that a large amount of dollars can be infused by the RBI through a bank at a single price without disrupting the market, which will give a clean execution to the bank."

Global risk-off sentiment amid continued worries over the economic impact from the coronavirus have weighed on the riskier assets, including the Asian currencies, which are down nearly one per cent against the dollar as the yuan weakened past the 7-march.

India's 10-year bond yield rose by 11bps at 6.23 per cent.

India's current account deficit narrowed sharply to \$1.4 billion in October to December 2019 from \$17.7 billion in the same period last year. The sharp contraction in the deficit was mainly due to a lower trade deficit of \$34.6 billion, and a rise in net services receipts, the RBI said.

Travel bar affects IT, hotel scrips

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, MARCH 12

In Thursday's biggest ever market fall, IT, hotel and aviation stocks were the biggest losers due to travel restrictions imposed by the government to contain the coronavirus contagion.

IT stocks fell sharply, with the US and European economies, their main markets, likely to get impacted badly from the coronavirus-led shutdown and travel restrictions. The BSE IT Index fell 8.46 per cent and NSE's Nifty IT Index fell 8.83 per cent against Sensex and Nifty-50's fall of 8.18 per cent and 8.3 per cent, each.

The top losers included TCS (-9.45 per cent), HCL Technologies (-8.18 per cent), Tech Mahindra (8.32 per cent), Infosys (-7.82 per cent) and Wipro (-6.54 per cent). L&T Infotech also declined by 9.13 per cent.

Offshore operations of IT companies would be hit though their onshore operations may not be affected much, analysts said. The fall, they said, is more sentimental, as IT companies can manage their offshore operations from home as well.

Among hotel stocks, the top losers included EIH (-17.46 per cent), Lemon Tree Hotels (-17.07 per cent) and ITC (-11.07 per cent). Indian Hotels, which operates Taj Group of Hotels, recovered after falling 15.49 per cent to Rs 96.55 intra-day to close 3.33 per cent down at Rs 110.45 on the BSE.

20 lakh IT employees may work from home

New Delhi, March 12: In a precautionary move to check spread of deadly coronavirus, state-owned Software Technology Parks of India on Thursday issued advisory that enables around 18-20 lakh employees of IT units registered with it to work from home.

IT industry body Nasscom had urged the government to relax restrictions regarding allowing employees to work from home, amid the coronavirus outbreak.

Currently, there are restrictions on WFH (work from home) under the OSP (other service providers) regime.

"There are rules that allow employees to work from home in certain situation. We have issued those enabling clauses and will motivate all units registered with us to implement it. There are around 3,000 exporters registered with us and

Revenue targets may miss

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO
NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

With the coronavirus cases rising in the country, the government is likely to face formidable economic challenges, including a slowdown consumption demand and economic activity, and may fall short of revenue collection targets in the current fiscal.

As the economy has already slowed down to an 11-year low, the virus out-

break is expected to impact several sectors such as tourism, hospitality and entertainment industries. The visa restrictions will have a cascading effect in almost all the above sectors.

Explaining the impact of the pandemic, an official source said, "While lower international oil prices will lead to lower current account deficit and inflation, reduced economic activity will dampen tax mop-up as a whole."

around 18-20 lakh employees work with them," STPI Director General Omkar Rai said.

The urgent advisory issued by STPI, which oversees facilities and rules for software exporters, said in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, units may require employees to work from home using the laptop or desktop provided by the unit to them.

"In this connection, para-6.07 of HBOP (hand-

book of procedures) of FTP, inter-alia, permits employees of STP/EHTP units to take duty fee laptops/computers, etc, out of premises of unit for working upon by authorised employees," the advisory said.

STPI mentioned another rule which permits authorised employees of STP (Software Technology Parks)-ETHP units to work from a place outside the unit. "Keeping in view of the outbreak of coronavirus, it is advised to make the industry/industry associations aware of this rule position enabling to make aforesaid precautionary measures in a seamless manner," the advisory said.

The coronavirus outbreak, declared a pandemic by the WHO on Wednesday, has led to more than 4,000 deaths so far globally.

—PTI

GST on mobiles, fertilisers, footwear & fabric to go up

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO
NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

In the backdrop of the spread of coronavirus and the slowdown in the economy, the GST Council is likely to take a slew of measures, including higher levies on certain items, in its meeting on Saturday.

Deferring the filing of return to a new date of July 1 instead of April 1 earlier, implementation of the e-invoicing system and rationalisation of rates of items such as mobile phones, fertilisers, footwear and textiles are also on the agenda.

According to top official sources, the GST Council has proposed to increase the GST rate on mobile phones and its parts from 12 to 18 per cent. "Similarly, the GST rates on fertilisers, textile (mostly on man-made fabrics and garments) and footwear are expected to be hiked to 18 per cent in the council meeting," sources said.

Experts said the rate hike would improve working capital positions of the manufacturers since it would correct the inverted duty structure, though it may increase the price of finished goods.

Currently, certain man-

DUTY STRUCTURE

Experts said the rate hike would improve working capital positions of the manufacturers since it would correct the inverted duty structure, though it may increase the price of finished goods.

At present, cellular mobile phones attract 12 per cent duty, while GST on some of its inputs are 18 per cent. With regard to footwear, the council, in June last year, had lowered the GST rate to 5 per cent on items worth up to Rs 1,000, while those above this value attract 18 per cent duty. However, inputs used by the sector attract the GST rate in the range of 5-18 per cent.

Similarly, the textiles sector currently has a differential GST rate of 5, 12 and 18 per cent. This leads to difficulty in issuing and claiming refunds by exporters. The GST rate on chemical fertilisers is currently at 5 per cent, while inputs are taxed at 12 per cent.

The lottery scheme under GST would also be discussed in the meeting.

US trading halts second time in a week since 1997

New York, March 12: The deepening coronavirus crisis sent stocks into another alarming slide Thursday, extending a sell-off that has wiped out most of the big run-up on Wall Street since President Donald Trump's inauguration.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average plummeted more than 2,250 points, or nearly 9.7 per cent, at one point but started climbing back after the Federal Reserve said it would step in to the bond market to address "highly unusual disruptions" in trading of Treasury securities. Still, the Dow was still down nearly 1,600 points, or 6.7 per cent, in the early afternoon, while the broader S&P 500 was off 6.3 per cent. European markets lost 12 per cent in one of their worst days in history.

The steep fall came amid a cascade of cancellations and shutdowns across the globe and rising worries that the White House and other authorities around the world can't or won't help the economic damage from the coronavirus pandemic any time soon.

On Wall Street, stocks fell so fast at the opening bell that they triggered an automatic, 15-minute trading halt for the second time this week. The so-called circuit breakers were first adopted after the 1987 crash, and until this week hadn't been activated since 1997.

Trump often points proudly to the big rise on Wall Street under his administration, and the

On Wall Street, stocks fell so fast at the opening bell that they triggered an automatic, 15-minute trading halt for the second time this week.

Dow just last month was boasting a nearly 50 per cent gain since he took the oath of office on Jan. 20, 2017. By early Thursday afternoon, the Dow was clinging to a nine per cent gain. It was still up 17 per cent since just before Trump's election in November 2016.

A drop on Wednesday sent the Dow into what is known as a bear market for the first time in more than a decade when the index lost more than 20 per cent from its all-time high, set just last month. The S&P 500 was likewise in danger of finishing the day Thursday in bear market territory. That would bring to a close the longest bull run in Wall Street history.

The latest sell-off came after Trump announced late Wednesday he would restrict travel to the US from Europe in hopes of containing the virus, dealing another hit to the already battered airline and travel industries.

The US President also outlined measures to extend financial help to individuals and businesses hurt by the crisis.

But "the market judgment is that it's too little, too late," said Michael McCarthy of CMC Markets. —AP

SBI to invest ₹7,250 crore to rescue Yes Bank

Mumbai, March 12: The largest lender State Bank of India on Thursday announced a Rs 7,250-crore fund infusion into the crippled Yes Bank under which it will pick up to 49 per cent equity in the fourth largest private sector lender.

The fund infusion is part of the Reserve Bank-mandated rescue plan. SBI said its shareholding in Yes Bank will remain within 49 per cent of the paid up capital of the private lender and following the fund infusion, it will pick up 725 crore shares.

"The executive committee of the central board at its meeting held on March 11 accorded approval for purchase of 725 crore shares of Yes Bank at a price of Rs 10 a share, subject to regulatory approvals," SBI said in an exchange filing on Thursday.

The bank, however, did not mention the exact quantum of stake it will be buying in Yes Bank.

Under the reconstruction scheme, SBI will have to buy 49 per cent of Yes Bank and cannot reduce its holding below 26 per cent before for the next three years.

The SBI investment of Rs 7,250 crore is much higher than Rs 2,450 crore it had planned initially for 49 per cent stake in the private sector lender that began operations in 2004.

Last week, State Bank of India chairman Rajnish Kumar had told reporters that the bank would invest Rs 2,450 crore to buy 245 crore shares of Yes Bank. —PTI

Industrial output crawls back to growth, inflation slows

FC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

Industrial production grew by two per cent in January from 1.6 per cent in January a year ago amid mute manufacturing growth while the retail inflation slowed to 6.58 per cent in February from 7.59 per cent in January this year.

According to data from the National Statistical Office (NSO), industrial output grew at the fastest pace in six months at 2 per cent, mainly on account of an uptick in mining activity and power generation. The manufacturing sector

output grew at a rate of 1.5 per cent in January against 1.3 per cent in the year-ago period.

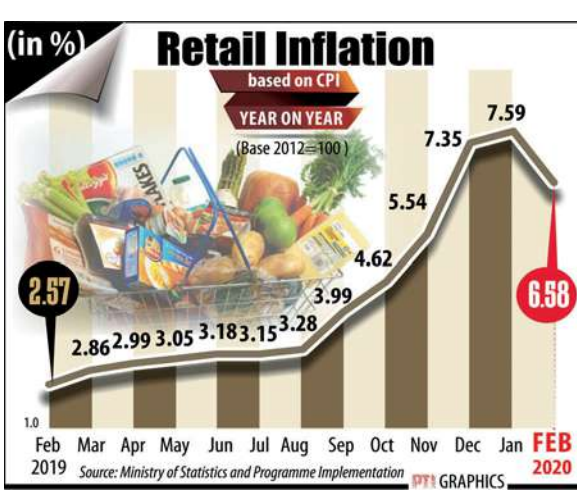
Industrial production contracted by 1.4 per cent in August, 4.6 in September and 6.6 per cent in October last year. It grew 1.8 per cent in November and 0.1 per cent in December 2019. Last month, provisional data had showed that IIP contracted by 0.3 per cent in December 2019.

Electricity generation rose 3.1 per cent against 0.9 per cent growth in January 2019. The mining sector output posted a

growth of 4.4 per cent in January 2020 compared with a rise of 3.8 per cent a year ago.

For core inflation, the February growth stood at 4.1 per cent against 4.8 per cent in January. Food prices stood at 10.81 per cent in February against 13.63 per cent a month ago.

Similarly, vegetables inflation for February came at lower 31.61 per cent against 50.19 per cent in January and cereals and products rates stood at 5.23 per cent in February against 5.25 per cent in January," it said.



SHORT TAKES

World Series tourney cancelled

Mumbai: The Road Safety World Series, featuring cricket greats such as Sachin Tendulkar and Brian Lara, have been cancelled for the time being in view of the rising coronavirus threat in Maharashtra.

A highly-placed source said that the series have been called off for the safety of the players and the public.

"In the interest of public safety, the organisers have agreed to reschedule the remaining matches. These matches will be played when the situation will be conducive to hold them," the source said.

The organisers had earlier cancelled the matches which were to be played at the MCA Stadium in Pune and relocated them to the D. Y. Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai.

It was also earlier decided that the matches would be held in empty stadiums, but now they have been cancelled for the time being.

Maharashtra reported 10 cases of coronavirus on Wednesday. Due to the outbreak of the novel coronavirus, several sporting events in India and across the globe have been cancelled or postponed. — PTI

No fans allowed on Ranji final day

Rajkot: The final day of the Ranji Trophy summit clash between Bengal and Saurashtra will be played without any spectators due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the BCCI said on Thursday.

"No public will be allowed on the final day. Only the players, match officials, officials from the host association and media are allowed," BCCI general manager Saba Karim, who is in charge of domestic cricket said.

The decision came after the Sports Ministry's advisory to all NSFs to follow the Health Ministry's advisory and avoid large gatherings in sports events.

The government's directive is unlikely to have a huge impact on the final day's proceedings with only a handful of spectators coming to watch the action on the previous four days.

The decision to not allow fans to watch day five of final comes after a host of sporting events have been cancelled around the world or are being conducted in empty stadiums to tackle the Coronavirus threat. — PTI

MAJUMDAR KEEPS BENGAL IN THE HUNT

Rajkot: Bengal's 'Man Friday' Anustup Majumdar stood between Saurashtra and Ranji Trophy with a defiant unbeaten 58 as the summit clash entered a tantalising final day with the visitors needing 72 runs more. Bengal ended the fourth day at 354 for six as Majumdar added 91 runs for the unbroken seventh wicket stand with Arnab Nandi (28 batting, 82 balls), who showed a lot of courage despite getting hit on the finger by Jaydev Unadkat delivery.

Majumdar, who had bailed Bengal out of a precarious position in the quarter as well as semifinal, was the saviour again and got much needed support from Nandi as the duo batted out the entire evening session to keep the match evenly poised going into day five.

The home team was guilty of poor fielding and allowing easy runs to Bengal in the final session where 90 runs were scored.

Harvik Desai at first slip dropped a regulation catch of Majumdar, who was on 10 at that time, and it proved to be a costly miss.

On Day Four, Bengal won the morning and evening session while Saurashtra stayed in the game by taking three wickets in the afternoon. By day three, it had become clear that final will be decided by the first innings lead and both teams were locked in a fierce battle.

Resuming the day at 134 for 3, Sudip Chatterjee and Wriddhiman Saha kept Bengal's fight going with a 101-run partnership, consuming 49 overs in the process. They frustrated Saurashtra in the wicket-less morning session, scoring 89 runs in 29 overs. With the odd ball keeping low, the predictable play was to target the stumps and bring the ball back in, which Saurashtra pacers managed to do both with the old and the second new ball.

Chatterjee, who resumed the day on 47, was solid in defence. — PTI

Brief scores: Saurashtra 425 vs Bengal 354 for 6 in 147 overs (S.D. Chatterjee 81, M. Tiwary 35, W. Saha 64, A. Majumdar batting 58, A. Nandi batting 28, Chetan Sakariya 1/52, Dharmendrasinh Jadeja 2/106, Prerak Mankad 2/45, Chirag Jani 1/32).

Corona puts IPL in limbo

Fate of glitzy league uncertain; BCCI mulls games sans spectators

DC CORRESPONDENT (with agency inputs) CHENNAI, MARCH 12

The fate of Indian Premier League (IPL) season 13 is uncertain following a directive from the Sports Ministry not to encourage the gathering of large crowds and advice from the External Affairs Ministry "not do it at this time but if the organisers want to go ahead, it is their decision".

The IPL Governing Council will take a final call on the forthcoming season (from March 29) on Saturday. It is likely that even if the IPL goes ahead, which is what the BCCI is hoping for at the moment, matches will have to be held before empty stadiums to the line of the sports ministry directive.

The cash-rich IPL might go ahead as suspending the cash rich league might bring in contractual complications involving hundreds of millions of dollars. A closed-door edition might not be the ideal solution to a sport that thrives on the presence of lively spectators at the venues besides the millions on TV.

Meanwhile, Chennai Super Kings CEO Kasi Viswanathan has made it clear that the fresh visa advisory from the Indian government has made it almost impossible for foreign players to join their respective teams in the Indian Premier League before April 15 unless the BCCI gets special permission. "Most of the players are travelling with business visas and that is how they come and play in the IPL. So, it will be impossible for them to join the teams unless the BCCI gets special permission," Viswanathan said.

In Dubai, the annual board meeting of the ICC scheduled for March 26-29 will now be held via video conference call.

"In light of the continued global spread of COVID-19, concerns expressed by members and mindful of the importance of taking mitigating measures against the virus, the ICC Board, has decided to hold its meetings via conference call only," the ICC media release stated.



Fans sport facemasks as they wait outside the Dharamsala Stadium where India and South Africa were to play an ODI on Thursday. — AFP

Spectator at Women's T20 final diagnosed with COVID-19: MCG

Melbourne, March 12: A spectator who attended the ICC Women's T20 World Cup final between India and Australia here on March 8 has tested positive for novel coronavirus, the Melbourne Cricket Ground said on Thursday but insisted that the risk of him infecting others was low.

The final was won by Australia by 85 runs for a fifth world title. "...a person who attended the ICC Women's T20 World Cup Final at the MCG on Sunday March 8 has now been diagnosed with COVID-19," the Melbourne Cricket Ground management said in a statement.

"The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has advised of the patron's diagnosis and has classified it as a low-risk of spreading COVID-19 to surrounding members of the public and staff. The patron sat on Level 2 of the Northern Stand at the MCG in section N42," it added.

The DHHS has recommended that those seated in N42 "should continue to go about their normal routine, with an increased focus on hygiene measures, and should any flu-like symptoms emerge to consult with a medical professional." — PTI



A file photo of the crowd outside the MCG ahead of Women's T20 World Cup final. — BCCI

Sports ministry tells NSFs to follow health advisory

New Delhi, March 12: The BCCI kept mum but the Sports Ministry on Thursday dropped hints that the IPL could be held in empty stadiums due to the COVID-19 pandemic even as foreign players were ruled out of the glitzy event till April 15 following government-imposed travel restrictions.

IPL in empty stadiums would be up for discussion at the event's Governing Council meeting on Saturday and the BCCI has decided to adopt a wait and watch policy till then. The T20 tournament is due to start on March 29 in Mumbai.

However, the Sports ministry has asked all national federations, including the cricket board, to follow the Health Ministry's advisory and avoid large gatherings in sports events.

"...ensure that no public gathering takes place in any sporting event. In the event the sporting event cannot be avoided, the same could be done without allowing gathering of people, including spectators," read an order from the Sports ministry.



Fans wear facemasks amid concerns of the spread of coronavirus outbreak, at Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium in Dharamsala on Thursday. — AFP

Sports Secretary Radhey Shyam Julaniya reiterated the ministry's position while talking to this agency. "We have asked all the NSFs, including the BCCI, to follow the Health Ministry's latest advisory, which says public gatherings should be avoided in all events, including sporting activities," Julaniya said. The government on Wednesday suspended all visas, barring a few categories like diplomatic and employment, in an attempt to prevent the spread of coronavirus as cases across India rose to more than 60. No foreign player will be available in the league due to the restrictions. "The foreign players who play in the IPL come under the Business Visa category. As per the government's directive, they can't come till April 15," a BCCI source said on conditions of anonymity. — PTI

LAST TWO ODIs TO BE HELD IN EMPTY STADIUM

New Delhi, March 12: The remaining two one-dayers between India and South Africa will be played in empty stadiums in Lucknow and Kolkata due to the dreaded novel coronavirus pandemic, the BCCI confirmed on Thursday.

The matches are scheduled to be held in March 15 (Lucknow) and March 18 (Kolkata).

The sports ministry has issued an advisory that in case it's unavoidable to postpone a sporting event, then it is preferable that it be conducted without a large public gathering.

"After holding discussions with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS) and Ministry Of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW), the BCCI on Thursday announced that the remaining two One-day Internationals of the three-match series of South Africa tour of India, 2020, will be played without any public gathering, including spectators," a BCCI release stated. — PTI

REMAINING PSL MATCHES BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

Karachi, March 12: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Thursday decided to hold the remaining matches of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) behind closed doors after the spread of novel coronavirus pandemic in Karachi and other parts of Pakistan.

The majority number of positive COVID 19 cases have been recorded in Karachi. The PCB announced that from Friday matches at the NSK will be held without spectators inside the stadium and all tickets purchased would be refunded.

"Following developments in the past 24 hours, the PCB has decided to take a proactive approach and put in place precautionary measures to better safeguard the health and safety of all those who will be involved in upcoming matches. All matches at the NSK will now be held in empty stadium" PCB CEO, Wasim Khan said. — PTI

Supreme Court refuses urgent hearing on PIL

New Delhi, March 12: The Supreme Court on Thursday refused to accord urgent hearing on a petition seeking postponement of the Indian Premier League-2020 amid the coronavirus scare.

A vacation bench of justices U. U. Lalit and Aniruddha Bose told the petitioner that he could mention the matter for urgent listing before the regular bench on March 16, when the apex court will re-open after the Holi break.

"This is not a matter which cannot await till re-opening of the court. You can mention it before the regular court on March 16," the bench told advocate Mohan Babu Agarwal, who has filed the petition.

Agarwal told the bench that the Indian Premier League (IPL)-2020 is scheduled to start from March 29 and would continue for almost two

months, but no safety measures have been declared to prevent the spread of coronavirus during the matches, which are likely to witness over 40,000 spectators in each match.

"We are sitting in a vacation bench. We will hear those matters which cannot wait. All IPL matches will not start on March 29. You can mention it on March 16," the bench said.

The number of coronavirus patients in India has risen to 73 with 13 fresh cases, the Union health ministry said on Thursday. Agarwal told the apex court that during the IPL, players, commentators and broadcasters from foreign countries which are hit by coronavirus would come to India and there is a possibility of spread of the virus during large gatherings in such matches. "This IPL is just a

domestic professional tournament with no contribution to ICC records and is a private tournament and the risk in the times of Covid-19 (coronavirus) is quite high due to huge crowd gathering including players, staff, cheerleaders etc," the plea said.

"They (BCCI and other concerned authorities) should explain how they are going to deal with the recent threat of Covid-19 and is it not the right time to either postpone or defer the same to future date as the threat is apparent in all probabilities looking into the present scenario," it said.

The plea has also sought a direction to "either stop, postpone or defer for future dates all such huge programs like IPL etc, avoiding large public gathering for the time being till it (coronavirus) is being controlled." — PTI

HC notice to BCCI, Ministry

Chennai, March 12: The Madras High Court on Thursday ordered issuance of notice to the Union Health Ministry and the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on a PIL seeking a direction not to allow conduct of IPL matches in view of coronavirus outbreak.

When the PIL by G. Alex Benziger, an advocate came up, a bench of Justices M. M. Sundaresh and Krishnan Ramasamy sought the response of Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and Ministry of Health & Family Welfare Department by March 23 and adjourned the matter.

The petitioner sought a direction to the Centre not to allow BCCI to conduct IPL matches from March 29 to May 24 due to the coronavirus outbreak.

According to the website of the World Health Organisation, there was no specific medicine or to prevent or to treat the COVID-19, he pointed out and claimed that the virus was spreading all over the world rapidly and creating a huge epidemic disaster.

The Italy Federation League, one of the oldest leagues in the world, has been severely affected and the football games were being played behind closed doors with no fans allowed at any football ground until April 3 by the Italian government, the petitioner noted. — PTI

Rain washes out India-South Africa opener in Dharamsala

Dharamsala, March 12: The first One-Day International between India and South Africa was on Thursday abandoned without a ball being bowled due to incessant rain here. It was the second match in less than six months to be abandoned at the picturesque Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association

Stadium because of inclement weather. Incidentally, that match was also an India-South Africa clash in September last year. The first ODI of the three-match series was always in doubt after the weatherman forecast widespread rains and thunder showers over the region on Thursday and Friday. — PTI

Fans and organisers had offered prayers at the Indrunag Temple in the hills overlooking the stadium in an attempt to appease the rain gods. Heavy rain had also lashed the hill town just after the two teams' practice sessions on Wednesday, forcing the organisers to cover the entire playing area. — PTI

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SHORT TAKES

Delay Games, suggests Trump

Washington: U.S. President Donald Trump on Thursday said officials should consider delaying the Tokyo2020 Olympic Games for one year amid the global coronavirus outbreak, saying the event would not be the same without spectators. The United States is one of the biggest participants in the Games, are scheduled for July.

CANCELLING OLYMPICS UNTHINKABLE: TOKYO GUV

Canceling the 2020 Olympics is "unthinkable" although the classification of the coronavirus as a pandemic will likely have some impact on the Games, the Tokyo city governor said on Thursday. "It can't be said that the announcement of a pandemic would have no impact... But I think cancellation is unthinkable," Yuriko Koike told reporters. — Agencies

Olympic flame lit amidst lockdown

Olympia, Greece: The Olympic flame for the 2020 Tokyo Games was lit in ancient Olympia on Thursday amid an unprecedented health lockdown as Greece registered its first death from coronavirus. With spectators banned, an actress dressed as an ancient Greek high priestess lit the flame using the rays of the sun reflected off a concave mirror, launching a week-long torch relay in Greece before the flame is handed to Tokyo organisers on March 19. "Today marks the beginning of the journey of the Olympic flame to Japan," said International Olympic Committee (IOC) president Thomas Bach.

"When the flame returns to Tokyo after 56 years, hope will light the way across the entire country," he said. Japan last hosted the summer Olympics — also in Tokyo — in 1964.

Now it seeks to use the 2020 Olympics to show the world it has regained its creative flair and innovative energy, but also as a means to highlight reconstruction following the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Fukushima. — AFP

PCI puts national events on hold

New Delhi: The Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) on Thursday decided to put on hold all national and state championships till April 15, keeping in mind government directions to avoid large gatherings in the wake of the novel coronavirus outbreak.

The PCI was scheduled to host national para-athletics championship in Mysore from March 26-28 and national swimming championship from March 28-30 in Bengaluru.

"We were already struggling to arrange for sponsorship to host these events but with fresh directions from the government, we did not have any option but to ask the state bodies to put on hold all championships," PCI President Deepa Malik said.

Haryana's state championship was scheduled to begin from Friday in Faridabad. — PTI

Covid-19 plays spoilsport

Real in quarantine as Spanish league suspends fixtures ■ NBA suspends season after Jazz player tests positive for virus ■ McLaren withdraw from Australian GP

Los Angeles, March 12: The NBA suspended the season on Wednesday after a Utah Jazz player tested positive for the new coronavirus, prompting a game to be abandoned just before tip-off.

The test result was reported as Utah's game against the Thunder in Oklahoma City was about to begin. The game was abruptly postponed and the players were effectively quarantined in the locker room area. The league said the affected player, believed to be French defensive standout Rudy Gobert, was not at the arena and was being treated by health officials in Oklahoma City.

"The NBA is suspending game play following the conclusion of tonight's schedule of games until further notice," the league said. "The NBA will use this hiatus to determine next steps for moving forward in regard to the coronavirus pandemic."

The Jazz issued a statement saying the player had flu-like symptoms but initially tested negative for influenza and a respiratory infection.

The decision was made to test again for COVID-19, for which he tested positive.

SPAIN SUSPENDS TOP TWO DIVISIONS

Real Madrid went into quarantine on Thursday as La Liga announced Spain's top two divisions will be suspended for at least two weeks over the coronavirus.

La Liga authorities made the decision after Real Madrid confirmed its senior football team is in quarantine after one of the club's basketball players tested positive for the virus.

Real Madrid's football and basketball players share facilities at Ciudad Real Madrid, the club's training ground in Valdebebas.

La Liga has also followed Italy's Serie A in suspending its matches, after a meeting on Thursday with the Spanish Football Federation and the Spanish Players Union.

It had been decided on Tuesday that games in Spain's top two divisions would be held behind closed doors but those fixtures over the next 14 days will now be suspended.

Real's second leg away to Manchester City in the Champions League last 16, scheduled for next Tuesday, is also in serious doubt.

Barcelona have already confirmed their tie against Napoli at Camp Nou on Wednesday will be played without fans.



Real Madrid went into quarantine on Thursday as La Liga announced Spain's top two divisions will be suspended for at least two weeks over the coronavirus. — AFP



Lewis Hamilton of Mercedes attends a press conference at the Albert Park circuit ahead of the Australian Grand Prix in Melbourne on Thursday. — AFP

AUSTRALIAN GRAND PRIX IN CHAOS

McLaren pulled out of the season-opening Australian Grand Prix Thursday after a team member tested positive for coronavirus, throwing the race into chaos.

The employee was among eight Formula One personnel who went into isolation after showing flu-like symptoms typical of the virus this week in Melbourne.

The other seven — including four from the Haas team — all returned negative results, organisers said.

"The team member was tested and self-isolated as soon as they started to show symptoms and will

now be treated by local healthcare authorities," McLaren said in a statement.

McLaren's decision to pull out casts doubt over whether the race will be run without a full complement of teams, and whether others will follow suit.

World champion Lewis Hamilton earlier Thursday said he was stunned the race was going ahead as fears mount about the spread of the disease.

"I am really very, very surprised that we're here. I don't think it's great that we have races but it really is shocking that we're all sitting in this room," he said at an offi-

MIAMI OPEN, ATP EVENTS CALLED OFF

The ATP and WTA Miami Open was called off on Thursday by Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez, who declared a state of emergency over coronavirus and began halting mass gatherings.

The hardcourt tennis tournament, one of the world's top events outside of the Grand Slams, was scheduled to begin with qualifying on March 23 and run through April 5.

And the ATP later announced a six-week halt to the season that also included another US tournament, the US Clay Court Championships that had been set for next month in Houston.

MLS SUSPENDED FOR 30 DAYS

Major League Soccer announced a 30-day suspension of its season on Thursday as fears over the new coronavirus gripped sport across the United States.

A day after the NBA announced a suspension of the league after a player tested positive for the virus, MLS said in a statement it was following suit.

MLS commissioner Don Garber said the suspension had been imposed after advice from health authorities. — Agencies

RONALDO IS IN QUARANTINE BUT 'SYMPTOM-FREE'

Lisbon, March 12: Cristiano Ronaldo has been in quarantine in Madeira for several days but is not showing any symptoms of the coronavirus contracted by a Juventus team-mate, local authorities in Portugal said on Thursday.

"Ronaldo left Italy a few days ago and his isolation hasn't just started now," said Pedro Ramos, a member of the Madeira regional government in charge of health.

"Both the athlete and his family are symptomless," he added during a news conference.

Juventus and Italy defender Daniele Rugani tested positive for the COVID-19 virus on Wednesday, although the club said he was not exhibiting any symptoms.

CL GAMES POSTPONED

The Champions League last 16, second legs between Manchester City and Real Madrid and Juventus and Lyon became the latest high-profile football matches to be postponed due to the coronavirus outbreak. UEFA confirmed on Thursday. — AFP

Boxers asked to stay home-quarantined

New Delhi, March 12: The Indian boxing team, returning from the Asian Olympic Qualifiers in Jordan, will be "home-quarantined" in view of the COVID-19 threat even though all the members have got the necessary health clearances, the national federation said on Thursday.

A total of 13 boxers and almost an equal number of coaching staff arrive back on Thursday after clinching an unprecedented nine Olympic slots in the qualifiers which concluded on Wednesday in Amman.

"They will be asked to quarantine themselves at their homes or hostel rooms for a few days. They have, however, been given the necessary health clearances by the Jordanian Olympic association," Boxing Federation of India's executive director R.K. Sacheti said.

The boxers were training in Italy, one of the worst-affected by the coronavirus pandemic, till February 26.

They reached Amman from Assisi on February 27 and were found all clear after undergoing the mandatory screening for symptoms. Jordan has so far recorded only one positive case.

AFI SAYS FED CUP WILL GO AHEAD

The Athletics Federation of India on Thursday said it will go ahead with the Federation Cup National Senior Championships in Patiala from April 10 to 13 but withdrew its invitation to five countries to participate in the meet in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

AFI president Adille Sumariwalla said the national meet will go ahead as it is an Olympic qualifying event but will follow the government guidelines issued in the wake of rising threat of

the novel coronavirus. "For senior Indian athletes who are training to qualify for Tokyo Olympics, all our competitions are lined-up beginning with Indian Grand Prix 1 in Patiala on 20th March, IGP 2 on 25th March in Sangrur, IGP 3 in Delhi on 29th March followed by Fed Cup Seniors in Patiala," Sumariwalla said in a statement.

"All these competitions will go ahead as planned for Indian athletes and we will follow all the guidelines as directed by MYAS (Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports)," he added.

AITA CANCELS ALL DOMESTIC EVENTS

The National Tennis Federation on Thursday cancelled all domestic tournaments with immediate effect, following government's health advisory to prevent the deadly COVID-19 pandemic from spreading.

Several state associations and private stakeholders host plenty of ranking series tournaments, both junior and seniors every week.

CLOUD OVER INDIAN OPEN TOURNEY

The Badminton Association of India (BAI) has apprised the world body (BWF) on the latest travel advisory issued by the government, which might affect the India Open Super 500 tournament, a crucial event for the Tokyo Olympic qualification.

"The revised travel advisory issued by the government seems to have raised fresh concerns about the tournament. According to the advisory,

"All existing visas, expect diplomatic, official, UN/International Organizations, employment, project visas, stand suspended till 15th April 2020." — PTI

ARCHERY WORLD CUP IN GUATEMALA CANCELLED

Lausanne, March 12: The first stage of 2020 Archery World Cup to be held next month in Guatemala City, where 16 Indians were to compete, was on Thursday cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tarundeep Rai, Jayanta Talukdar, Kapil and Dhiraj Bommadevara were to take part in recurve men while Baria Premilaben, Himani, Ridhi, Tisa Sancheti were to participate in recurve women in the World Cup scheduled to be held from April 20 to 26.

Vedant Wankhede, Sukhbeer Singh, Mohan Bhardraj, Harsh Parashar were the compound men archers who were to be represent India in the meet while Trisha Deb, Muskan Kirar, Markoo Raginee, Ashu made up the women's compound team.

The event in Guatemala had no direct qualification implications for the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games. — PTI

Saina stumbles, Lakshya bows

Birmingham, March 12: Rising Indian shuttler Lakshya Sen was knocked out of the All England Championships after losing in straight games to Victor Axelsen here on Thursday.

Lakshya went down to the world number seven Dane 17-21, 18-21 in a hard fought second round battle which lasted 45 minutes.

Earlier, the 18-year old Indian, who won five titles last season, had defeated Hong Kong's Cheuk Yiu Lee 17-21, 21-8, 21-17 in the opening round.

On Wednesday night, star Indian shuttler Saina Nehwal's chances of qualifying for the Olympics took a hit after she made a first-round exit, following a loss to Japanese nemesis Akane Yamaguchi.

Up against world number three Yamaguchi, it was a tough opening round for Saina, who lost 11-21, 8-21 in just 28 minutes.

Saina is placed 20th on the BWF rankings with 46267 points and the 2012 London Olympics bronze-medallist needs to enter the top-16 bracket by April 28 to make the cut for the 2020 Tokyo Games.

She now needs strong performances to pocket crucial ranking points but considering that several sporting events are being cancelled.

The mixed doubles pair of Pranaav Jerry Chopra and N. Sikki Reddy advanced to the second round when top-seeded Chinese pair of Si Wei Zheng and Ya Qiong Huang retired while trailing 4-5. — PTI

Atletico send champs packing

Liverpool, March 12: Liverpool's Champions League defence is over after Atletico Madrid played the role of party poopers at Anfield and paved the way for a strangely anti-climactic end to the season for Jurgen Klopp's Reds.

Barring an unprecedented collapse, Klopp will deliver a first league title in 30 years, though there is some doubt over whether the season can even be completed due to the coronavirus outbreak.

Liverpool, after a record-breaking start to the Premier League campaign, had the title effectively sewn up by Christmas but failure to add more silverware during a historic season now feels like a let-down.

"For two and a half years we had an exceptional ride in the Champions League, we had party after party after party in the Champions League pretty much," said Klopp, whose side were also finalists in 2018. "Tonight was a party, everything was set, it was great — crowd exceptional, the stadium, everything showed up in the best way. The boys delivered a super



CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Liverpool's Mohamed Salah (right) reacts after their 2-3 Champions League Round of 16 second leg loss to Atletico Madrid at Anfield on Wednesday. — AFP

game, fought hard, played well, and scored wonderful goals. But we lost."

Atletico's 3-2 win in extra time on Wednesday completed a 4-2 aggregate victory and inflicted Klopp's first home defeat in Europe in five years as Liverpool boss, even though the Spanish side were pinned against the ropes by the

holders for 94 minutes. That was how long it took the hosts to score their second goal to move 2-0 in front on the night as a combination of wayward finishing and some brilliant goalkeeping from Jan Oblak forced the tie into extra time.

The post-mortem following Liverpool's exit points to a tale of two goalkeepers. Atletico coach Diego Simeone hailed Oblak as the best in the world. Liverpool's Alisson Becker is another contender for that crown but, with the Brazilian sidelined by a hip injury, one error from his stand-in Adrian changed the course of the tie. — AFP

Klopp takes swipe at Diego's tactics

Liverpool, March 12: Jurgen Klopp hit out at Atletico Madrid's defensive approach after holders Liverpool were knocked out of the Champions League on Wednesday.

Klopp's side were on course for the quarter-finals after taking a 2-0 lead in extra time in the last-16 second leg.

Goals from Georginio Wijnaldum and Roberto Firmino left Liverpool 2-1 up on aggregate at Anfield. But a howler from Liverpool goalkeeper Adrian opened the floodgates as Marcos Llorente struck twice before Alvaro Morata completed Atletico's 4-2 aggregate triumph.

Klopp couldn't hide his frustration at the way Atletico manager Diego Simeone set up his side in a cautious counter-attacking style for long periods.

"It's so difficult to play a side like this. I don't understand with the quality they have the football they play," Klopp told BT Sport. "They could play proper football but they stand

THE RESULTS	
Liverpool (Wijnaldum 43, Firmino 94)	2
Atletico Madrid (Llorente 97, 105+1, Morata 120+1) aet	3
Atletico win 4-2 on aggregate	
Paris Saint-Germain (Neymar 28, Bernat 45+1)	2
Borussia Dortmund	0
Paris Saint-Germain win 3-2 on aggregate	

deep and have counter-attacks. "I realise I am a really bad loser, especially when the boys put such an effort in against world-class players on the other side who defend with two rows of four."

The defeat ended Liverpool's bid for a third successive Champions League final appearance. "It doesn't feel right. I'm searching for the right words to be honest. The 90 minutes were exceptional," he said. — AFP