



THE ACTUAL SHAFI SHAUQ

The India we now live in has prompted a new short story by Amit Chaudhuri. Is it fiction or some other kind of truth?



IDEA EXCHANGE PAGE 10

'WE ADMIRE THE POLITICAL DEBATE IN INDIA... VIOLENCE WORRYING... BUT CAN BE RESOLVED'

EMMANUEL LENAIN, Ambassador of France to India

BIG PICTURE PAGES 12-13

Inside Fort Scindia

Journey through Jyotiraditya's MP bastion shows divided Cong footsoldiers, but also uncertainty among BJP men



GOVT SAYS COVID-19 A 'NOTIFIED DISASTER', UNLOCKS MORE FUNDS

Pak on board, SAARC leaders will talk today to plan joint virus fight

Countries welcome PM's move to seek meet; 2 new cases in Jaipur, Hyderabad

SHUBHAJIT ROY & ABANTIKA GHOSH
NEW DELHI, MARCH 14

SAARC LEADERS are set to hold a summit via video-conference on coronavirus on Sunday, 5 pm, after Pakistan late Friday night accepted Prime Minister Narendra Modi's proposal for such a meeting.

Islamabad, however, specified that the engagement would be at the level of the Special Assistant to the Pakistan PM on Health. In a tweet, Pakistan Foreign Office Spokesperson



51 people reached Kolkata from Bangladesh by Maitree Express on Saturday. Services have now been suspended. Partha Paul

Aisha Farooqui said, "We have communicated that SAPM (Special Assistant to Pakistani Prime Minister) on Health (Zafar Mirza) will be available to participate in the video conference

of SAARC member countries on the issue." Two more positive cases were reported across the country on Saturday, taking the official

EXPLAINED Why disaster tag matters

DECLARING SOMETHING as a disaster means funds from state and national disaster management funds can be accessed. It also empowers a committee constituted under The Disaster Management Act, 2005, to take all measures for containment. In this case, powers have been delegated to the Union Home Secretary. The Act defines "disaster" as a calamity resulting in substantial suffering.

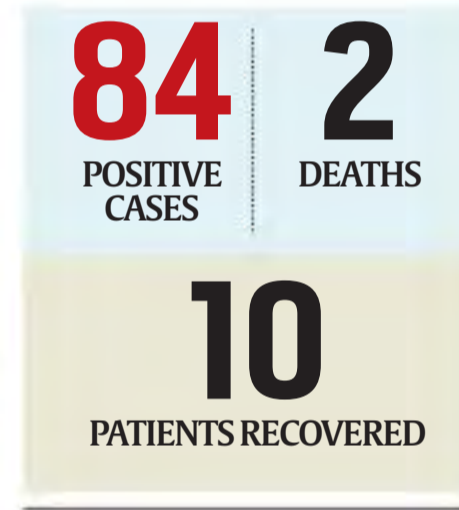
Wife faces FIR in Agra, hospitalised man says she didn't know

AMIL BHATNAGAR & AVANEESH MISHRA
NEW DELHI, LUCKNOW, MARCH 14

AS HIS wife and her family faced an FIR by the Agra district administration for allegedly interfering with medical officials, a coronavirus patient hospitalised in Bengaluru denied reports that she had deliberately dodged testing or isolation. The woman had travelled to her parents' home in Agra via Delhi by the time she was tested. While she has been found to be carrying a heavy viral load, results of her samples sent to the NIV are awaited.

Employed with an IT firm in Bengaluru, the husband said his wife and he had gone on honeymoon to Europe, and that she had gone to Agra via Delhi to be with her parents before he tested positive, and had been fully cooperating with the authorities since. "All her travels in India were between 8th and 9th. My test was carried out on 10th, which was only confirmed by 12th. It is untrue that she purposely travelled outside the city despite knowing about my condition," he told The Sunday Express from isolation in Bengaluru, adding that they had the tickets to prove this.

Agra District Magistrate Prabhu Narain Singh said he had ordered the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) to file an FIR



INSIDE



INDIAN IMMUNITY WON'T WARD OFF VIRUS: AIIMS PROF

DELHI: ANGANWADIS STOP NUTRITION PROGRAMME PAGES 4,9,14

New J&K party meets Modi, says he has assured no demographic change

BASHAARAT MASOOD
SRINAGAR, MARCH 14

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi has assured that there will be "no demographic change" in Kashmir and that elections in the state would only be held after delimitation of constituencies, a political outfit floated in the Valley days ago said on Saturday, after a meeting with him.

One of the founders of the Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party, Ghulam Hassan Mir, said, "The Prime Minister was categorical that people should not think about demographic change. He called it propaganda. We sought statehood and domicile rights



PM with J&K Apni Party delegation at his home Saturday. ANI

for the people of Jammu and Kashmir. It was a wonderful meeting."

The Apni Party delegation, including its leader Altaf Bukhari and 23 other members, met the

PM for around two hours Saturday evening. They will be meeting Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday.

The outfit, including political

On empty streets of northern Italy, gloom and some rainbows of hope

DAMINI RALLEIGH
BRA (ITALY), MARCH 14

LAST SATURDAY, a week ago, when talk of a lockdown suddenly overwhelmed conversation in this provincial town in Italy's northwest, the virus had still seemed far away. Then, a little after 2 am on Sunday, Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte announced a lockdown of much of the country's north — Italy, he said, was facing a national emergency.

In the week that followed, every day brought new horrors. By Saturday evening India time, the number of confirmed coronavirus infections had reached 17,660, hospitals across the country were overflowing with patients, and 1,441 people had



In Bra, in heart of Italy's coronavirus outbreak. Damini Ralleigh

died — the biggest toll from the pandemic anywhere outside China. Piedmont, along with neighbouring Lombardy and Emilia-Romagna, as well as Veneto, are the worst affected.

In Bra, a town of 30,000-odd inhabitants to the south of Turin,

the capital of the Piedmont region, it is not difficult to feel disconnected from the rest of the world. Life moves slowly, and revolves largely around epicurean endeavours — this, after all, is where the Slow Food Movement

Lutyens Delhi to clubs in US, ED on trail of 40 assets of Rana Kapoor

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
NEW DELHI, MARCH 14

YES BANK promoter Rana Kapoor and his family not only opened 78 companies to receive "kickbacks" from firms the bank gave loans to, but invested this money in as many as 40 real estate and hospitality assets across India and abroad, investigations by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) have reportedly found.

The central agency has traced documents related to these assets and properties and is currently verifying them, sources said.

According to ED sources, of the 40 properties that the Kapoors bought with the alleged kickbacks, around 28 are in India — mostly in Delhi, particularly the VIP Lutyens zone — and 12 in the UK and US.

"The Delhi properties are spread across Jor Bagh, Lodhi



18, Kautilya Marg, in Delhi's diplomatic enclave. Amit Mehra

SUNDAY STORY PAGE 11 BANK, BOOM, BUST The story of Yes Bank and Rana Kapoor is of warning bells that went unheard

SBI heartless, inefficient, FM tells its chairman

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, MUMBAI, GUWAHATI, KOLKATA, MAR 14

IN AN outburst against the State Bank of India and its top brass, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman referred to the largest government-owned bank as "heartless" and "inefficient" because some 2.5 lakh bank accounts of tea garden workers in Assam were not functional.

In an audio clip of the event, Sitharaman asks how soon the accounts could be made functional, and an SBI officer is heard

THE CORONA FIGHTERS AN EXPRESS SERIES FROM TESTING SAMPLES TO TRACKING CONTACTS AND TREATING PATIENTS, MEET THE MEN AND WOMEN, UNSEEN AND UNHEARD, ON THE FRONTLINES OF INDIA'S FIGHT AGAINST CORONAVIRUS

24/7, a CMO and his team track the virus: making endless calls, visiting many homes

PRABHA RAGHAVAN
NEW DELHI, MARCH 14

THE SCENE that unfolded in the room of the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) of Uttar Pradesh's Gautam Buddha Nagar district on Friday afternoon would have spooked almost anyone. Except perhaps, CMO Anurag Bhargava himself.

A worried young man approached the 59-year-old chief who was fielding endless phone calls from citizens at his desk. The man's sister stood in a corner at the other end of the room,



Dr Anurag Bhargava, Chief Medical Officer of Gautam Buddha Nagar, in his office on Friday. Prabha Raghavan

coughing into a thin disposable mask that did not cover her nose. "Right now, those coming in from outside the country are at the greatest risk. Has she travelled abroad lately?" Dr Bhargava asked the man.

"Yes," he replied. "Okay, then here is what you have to do," the CMO said, noting down the contact details of the suspected patient while directing the man and the woman to the designated hospital to give samples.

As the woman turned to leave, Bhargava stopped her.

Village cuts events, pools in aid money to give itself 'school like big city'

IRAM SIDDIQUE
MUMBAI, MARCH 14

A TWO-ACRE plot dotted with pomegranate trees in the village of Pokhari, 50 km from Aurangabad in Maharashtra, will soon be the site of a unique community initiative. Villagers have pooled resources, including money received as drought relief, to buy the land to upgrade their sole zilla parishad school to the level of "international schools".

The school is currently till Class 8, and students in higher classes must walk an hour to

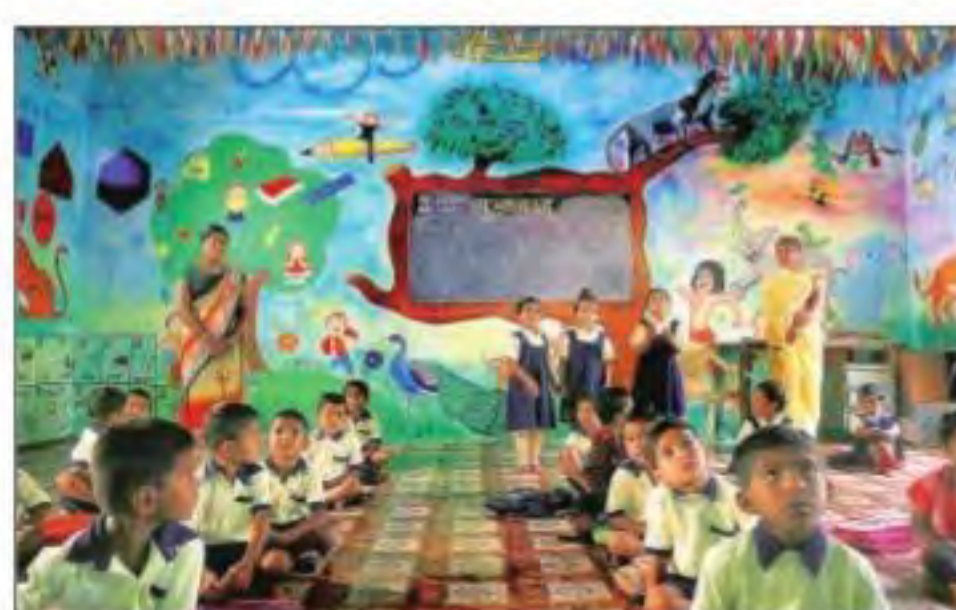
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Garaj, the nearest town, causing many to drop out. Those seeking any professional course have to go further, to Aurangabad district headquarters. In September last year, villagers took up this issue with the education officer of the Aurangabad zilla parishad,

Surajprasad Jaiswal, who had come on a personal visit. They also urged him to get vacant teachers' posts filled at the school, that barely sustained itself on an yearly grant of Rs 15,000.

Says Jaiswal, "I told them the state would help, but if they wanted a better future for their children, they needed to be more proactive. I told them about Bable Wadi in Pune, where villagers had started own school." The Pune school has emerged as a role model for alternative education using innovative teaching methods.

In the first week of October,



One of the classrooms at the revamped zilla parishad school in Pokhari village in Maharashtra. Amit Chakravarty

even as the state elections were approaching, the NCP's taluka head, Balsaheb Bhosle, and local Shiv Sena leader Babasaheb Thube put politics aside to jointly lead a visit of villagers and leaders to Bable Wadi.

Pokhari sarpanch Dilip Jadhav says they were astounded by what they saw at the Bable Wadi school. "Students there were studying robotics and electric cars. Those in Class 6 were learning foundation courses for engineering entrance. For those interested in languages, there were modules to teach at least five foreign languages. They also prepared students for competi-

tive exams," he says. Soon after their return, the villagers formed a WhatsApp group, 'Aamche Swapnachi Shala (School of our Dreams)', where videos were shared of Bable Wadi students experimenting with technology and speaking fluently in other languages.

On October 21, soon after voting for the state polls had ended, the village held a meeting. "Every farmer had received a minimum of Rs 8,000 in drought relief... At least Rs 5,000 was contributed towards the school," says the NCP's Bhosle, one of the main forces behind the initiative.

Residents who are in government service gave between Rs 50,000 and Rs 1 lakh, while others "as much as they could". Saheb Rao Malavde, 35, contributed Rs 8,000, the equivalent of what he earns in a month as a driver. "I have two daughters. My family did not buy new clothes last Diwali and cut down on expenses to manage," he says. Alaka Bai gave Rs 5,000, her year's savings from grazing cattle for others.

As the first step, urgent repairs were carried out at the school, including a fresh coat of paint, new sliding windows and a

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WEB EXCLUSIVE

HOW LIVERPOOL BALLADEER JAMIE WEBSTER FOUND HIS PLACE IN INDIA

Just like any other Liverpool FC fan, Jamie Webster channels the emotion of being part of a "family" into his words, and that's how he has gone global — from Merseyside to the pubs of New Delhi, Mumbai, and Chennai.

EXPRESS AUDIO

India's chances of winning a boxing medal at the 2020 Olympics

NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY

The latest episode of the Express Sports podcast takes a look at the Indian boxing contingent that going to the Tokyo Olympics.

VIDEO OF THE DAY



HAILSTORM IN DELHI-NCR

10 crazy videos of the hailstorm in Delhi-NCR

EXPLAINED



WHAT'S AN 'ESSENTIAL COMMODITY'?

Why has govt declared masks and hand sanitisers 'essential'?

FROM PAGE ONE

Rana Kapoor

Road zone and South Delhi. In the US and UK, companies owned by the Kapoor family made investments in hotels and clubs," an ED official said.

The ED has alleged that Yes Bank gave out loans of crores to companies, many of which later became stressed assets. As companies began defaulting, Rana Kapoor allegedly conspired with the companies and got them to invest in firms run by his wife and daughters.

According to the agency, firms owned by the family received in excess of Rs 4,000 crore from companies that owed money to Yes Bank. As a classic example, ED sources cited the purchase of a bungalow owned by Avantha Group of companies at 40, Amrita Shergill Marg, address in Lutyens Delhi. The CBI has registered a case against Rana Kapoor and his wife Bindu among others over this.

As per the CBI FIR, Yes Bank had loaned Rs 2,500 crore to Avantha Group. One of Avantha's companies, Avantha Realty, owned the Amrita Shergill property, then valued at Rs 550 crore, and had mortgaged it to ICICI Bank for a loan. It was to repay this loan that Avantha borrowed Rs 400 crore from Yes Bank in March 2016. Since the property was already mortgaged to ICICI Bank, the loan was sanctioned on the basis of a lease rental agreement that Avantha Realty entered into with BILT Graphics Paper Ltd (BGPL), a group company of Ballarpur Industries Ltd.

The CBI says the lease putting the annual rent at Rs 65 crore was a sham, pointing out that the earlier tenant, Ballarpur Industries Ltd itself, paid only Rs 1.02 crore. The agency has alleged that BGPL in fact never paid any rent to Avantha Realty.

The CBI has also raised questions regarding the terms of the Yes Bank loan, with the principal repayment for the 10-year loan fixed at Rs 5 lakh a month for the first year, though the incoming rent was supposedly above Rs 5 crore.

In due course, the loan became stressed and Yes Bank asked Avantha to sell the property. Consequently, in August 2017, Bliss Abode Pvt Ltd (BAPL), a company owned by Rana Kapoor's wife Bindu, made an offer to purchase the property, buying it eventually for Rs 378 crore. The bungalow is currently valued at over Rs 600 crore.

Interestingly, even before making the offer to Avantha, BAPL received a loan from Indiabulls of Rs 90 crore against the property, which it didn't still own. Indiabulls went on to finance the rest of the loan as well for the purchase of the property.

Says the CBI FIR, "The proposed increase of lease rent from Rs 1.02 crore per annum to Rs 65 crore was...intentionally done to deceive Yes Bank to make the loan approval look justifiable... This appears to have been done to get the loan account become stressed for justifying sale of the 40, Amrita Shergill Marg property to Shri Rana Kapoor."

'Big city' school

computer lab. With Jaiswal keeping his promise, three new teachers were appointed, for computers and English. The villagers pay their salary, working out to Rs 35,000 a month.

One of the English teachers is attached to the new anganwadi. Says Pokhari zilla parishad head Ambadas Sukhdeo Kale, "The existing anganwadi was nothing more than a creche where children ate midday meals. The new anganwadi will ensure they have a strong base before primary classes."

The teachers use tools like interactions with experts such as a guide for a lesson on forts. An India map was etched on the school ground where students could, say, jump from Jammu to Kerala, to learn about states.

Villagers have begun cutting down on budget for religious functions to save money for the school's expansion. For example, they now get own food during weeklong *kirtans* at the three local temples. With the Rs 12 lakh saved through such measures, apart from the Rs 44 lakh coming from drought relief contributions, villagers purchased the two-acre plot for the school.

Owner Nyaneswar Devidas Thube, 31, a former student of the school, told *The Sunday Express*, "The market price is around Rs 80 lakh but I accepted what they gave."

The villagers plan to meet political leaders next for funds to construct a new building, sports facilities, a "world-class library" and an air-conditioned study room. "We want our school to be just like those big schools in big cities," says Bhosle.

New J&K party leaders from a wide spectrum but all considered traditionally close to New Delhi, was launched on March 8. At the launch in Srinagar, the Apni Party said it was willing to move beyond Article 370 and engage with New Delhi.

A statement by the PMO said, "Prime Minister engaged with the delegation on issues like concerns on demographic changes, delimitation exercise and grant of state domicile. Referring to his statement in Parliament, Prime Minister underlined that the government will work with all sections of the population to realize the hopes of statehood for Jammu and Kashmir at an early opportunity."

It said Bukhari had hailed abrogation of Article 370 and 35A as a watershed moment in the history of Kashmir and that the PM said, "democracy in the region could be strengthened through a fast-moving process of political integration".

MoS, PMO, Jitendra Singh, who belongs to Jammu, was conspicuous by his absence. Sources said some visiting leaders had expressed "reservation" about his presence at the meeting.

A senior Apni Party leader who was there at the meeting said when they asked the PM about the return of statehood to J&K, he asked them to wait for delimitation of seats. "He told us there would be delimitation first, then elections and only after that would statehood be returned."

About fears of a demographic change, "Modi was categorical that nobody should think like that. He said nobody

Pak on board, SAARC leaders to talk today

number to 84, including two deaths. The new cases were reported from Jaipur and Hyderabad. Uttar Pradesh Surveillance Officer Surveillance Vikasendu Agarwal said a woman who returned from Canada on March 8 had also tested positive. Reports of some more positive cases in Maharashtra have not been confirmed by the Health Ministry.

A total of 10 persons who tested positive, including three from Kerala, five from Uttar Pradesh and one each from Rajasthan and Delhi, have recovered and been discharged.

The Union Home Ministry Saturday announced classification of coronavirus as a "notified disaster", for the purpose of providing assistance under the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF).

PM Modi would lead India at the SAARC video-conference. In a tweet Saturday night, he said, "Timely action for a healthier planet. Tomorrow at 5 PM, leaders of SAARC nations will discuss, via conferencing, a roadmap to fight the challenge of COVID-19 Novel Coronavirus. I am confident that our coming together will lead to effective outcomes and benefit our citizens."

With SAARC almost defunct as India took a hard position on Pakistan's role in terrorism, Modi's offer on Friday took the neighbouring countries by surprise. While the number of coronavirus cases is relatively less in South Asia, the density of the population, the absence of robust public health infrastructure and lack of public hygiene are seen as challenges, and would come up at the video-conference.

ence. The G-7 leaders are planning to have a video-conference summit too, on Monday.

Diplomats of at least three SAARC countries told *The Sunday Express* they were looking forward to cooperation on the issue. Within hours of the PM's tweet, leaders from Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, the Maldives, Afghanistan and Bangladesh welcomed the initiative. The SAARC Secretariat called Modi's proposal "timely".

A State Minister for Health, Mirza is leading Pakistan's campaign against the coronavirus. He earlier served as Director, Health System, at WHO. Pakistan's high-powered National Security Committee Friday took several decisions to boost efforts against coronavirus, including closing its western borders with Afghanistan and Iran. It also announced that while the Kartarpur corridor would remain open for Indian pilgrims, it was being shut for Pakistani visitors.

After India, Pakistan has the highest number of positive cases among SAARC countries (30), followed by Maldives (8), Afghanistan (7), Bangladesh (3), Sri Lanka (2), and Nepal and Bhutan with one case each. New Delhi has suspended bus and train services to Bangladesh.

PTI reported that India had suspended movements of all types of passengers through the international border points with Pakistan from March 16 midnight.

The confirmed cases in India include 17 foreigners. Contact tracing of the 84 positive cases

with 14 official cases are the worst affected. On Saturday alone, 106 people were hospitalised in Kerala, while the state started supply of food directly to houses of those under observation. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said passengers in trains entering the state would be examined.

The fourth case to test positive in Rajasthan is a 24-year-old man who returned from Spain on Saturday. Rajasthan Additional Chief Secretary, Health, Rohit Kumar Singh said, "He flew in to Delhi from Madrid and then from Delhi to Jaipur. We are getting the manifest of both the flights." He is the fourth case to test positive in the state.

The second positive case in Telangana is of a person who arrived in Hyderabad from Italy on March 7 and cleared airport screening. He developed fever on March 9 and his samples tested positive on Saturday. The two deaths so far have been of a 76-year-old man, who died in Kalaburagi in Karnataka on Tuesday, and a 68-year-old woman who died in Delhi on Friday. After the family of the 68-year-old woman faced problems with her cremation, the Union Health Ministry began work on framing guidelines for handling bodies of victims.

There were reports of a suspected coronavirus case dying in Buldhana, but his test results are not back yet. The 71-year-old, with a history of severe diabetes, hypertension and kidney ailments, returned from Saudi Arabia three days ago and had been isolated after developing high fever. Officials said they have isolated 14 of his contacts.

Kerala with 19 cases (three discharged) and Maharashtra

against the woman, 26, and her family for actions that could have endangered lives. Contradicting her husband, Singh said, "When the woman came from Bengaluru and we got to know her husband was positive, we asked her to stay at home in isolation. When our team went there Friday, we were told she had left for Bengaluru via Delhi. Her father told me she had left on a train. When we sought the train details, the father said she had gone on a general coach. However, we

put her phone on surveillance, and her location was found to be in Agra itself. I then sent a police team and she was found hiding in her house."

Agra SSP Bablu Kumar said, "Once the facts are verified and investigated, the accused will be arrested accordingly."

As per ticket details provided by the husband, the two of them flew back from Europe to Mumbai on March 5, and were cleared in airport screening. The following day, they flew to Bengaluru.

next couple of days, schools, the neighbouring university, offices, shops, the cinema, restaurants and bars, all shut.

If you were out of doors, you had to have a reason — and a government-issued piece of paper stating what it was. A lapse attracted heavy fines or even jail. People went out only to buy medicines or food.

"I went to the supermarket yesterday to stock up on essentials. We were all given a number and told to wait for our turn. Only 25-30 people were allowed in at a time, and were given plastic gloves," said food and drink writer Bruce McMichael, 58, who arrived from London last year. The rules are being followed, he said, "easing the panic that a situation as surreal as this might otherwise have caused".

The stress, however, has come out in incidents of xenophobia and racism usually not seen in multicultural Bra. Vietnamese-American Madeline Nguyen posted on Instagram how children had screamed "Corona!" as she passed by. "The racialisation doesn't surprise me, but it does make one feel alone," she said.

Some believe the lockdown came too late. "This could have been anticipated 10 days ago,"

Wife faces FIR for dodging test, man says she didn't know

against the woman, 26, and her family for actions that could have endangered lives. Contradicting her husband, Singh said, "When the woman came from Bengaluru and we got to know her husband was positive, we asked her to stay at home in isolation. When our team went there Friday, we were told she had left for Bengaluru via Delhi. Her father told me she had left on a train. When we sought the train details, the father said she had gone on a general coach. However, we

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gives giving their samples, the family complained of the facilities not being up to the mark." He says they were taken to isolation wards but left, and were forcibly brought back after police was sent to their home on March 13. With the woman's sample sent for a second round of tests, she is under isolation now. The eight family members who tested negative are in home quarantine.

"I have asked the CMO to get an FIR registered by Sunday afternoon," the DM said.

Some in the track-and-trace group, which had been expanded from the six-strong earlier, had showed up an hour before their shift was to start. "Do these persons have a fever? Do they have a cough?" the unit tries to find out.

By the afternoon, around 500 persons had been contacted — and things seemed under control. "It is important to make sure that we are ahead of the curve," said one of the employees at the CMO's office, requesting not to be named.

This exercise will be repeated every day for 28 days to make sure every person is followed up rigorously. Each day, a new person makes the follow-up call to ensure that the details match, Dr Bhargava said.

"We give the people we call all the details that they need. We also instruct them on the directions that have been given (to the hospital) for the testing," said one of the callers, who too, requested anonymity.

What if the person on the list does not respond to the calls? Some members of the unit show up at the address on their list. Since the beginning of the year, the CMO's department has tracked over 100 such people in person, Bhargava said.

"They follow protective measures, wear masks, keep a distance of 2 metres, and do not enter the houses of these people," he said. The staff have been trained to maintain hygienic practices at all times.

Those in the COVID-19 tracking unit primarily work in other teams like 'Malaria', 'Leprosy',

Tracking virus

"Please make sure you wear that mask properly. You can't have it not covering your nose like that," he said with the calm sternness of a man who understands exactly how — and why — the situation could take a potentially devastating turn.

Over the last three months, COVID-19 has taken over the lives of the CMO and his staff. Bhargava's deputy, Sunil Dohre, has been making repeated rounds of the designated hospitals in the district, ensuring they are prepped for every eventuality. Bhargava's epidemiologist, Vartika Gupta, has been meticulously maintaining a list of all persons under surveillance.

Bhargava himself is either in endless meetings with his staff, assuaging fears of those calling him about the virus, or guiding associations on how to scrub their offices clean.

How many hours in a day does he work?

"Twenty-four-seven," an office staffer replied on behalf of the CMO. "He is the most accessible CMO we have ever seen."

Dr Bhargava's wife, Richa, said he has always been "completely involved" in every assignment he has taken up. "Of course, I'm concerned too, but I understand that this is his job." She does try to ensure he takes as many precautions as possible though, she said. "I keep telling him every day to make sure he has his sanitiser, to wear his mask. I don't know if he listens."

Since February 1, Bhargava's team has directed the testing of 158 samples for COVID-19. The rapid response team has been virtually camping at the CMO's office near Noida's City Centre Metro station, making endless follow-up calls to find people who may have come in contact with confirmed cases.

On Friday afternoon, a team of 12 was sitting at the CMO's office with a list of 707 employees of a Noida-based leather unit, making surveillance calls. An employee at the unit with a history of international travel had tested positive on Wednesday, and the team had been at the exercise since the list was given to them on Thursday morning.

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Those in the COVID-19 tracking unit primarily work in other teams like 'Malaria', 'Leprosy',

the 'Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme' and 'Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram'. They are referred to as such when summoned to Bhargava's office for updates.

"Right now, it doesn't matter what department they work in. Everyone is in the coronavirus team," Dr Bhargava said.

SBI chairman

saying that the bank needed some clearance from the RBI for these accounts to be made functional, and it can be done within a week.

At this point, the Finance Minister snaps, and says, "Don't tire me out... don't tire me out. (inaudible). SBI Chairman you will meet me in Delhi on this matter and I am not letting this go. This is utter omission of job. I hold you completely responsible for a failure and I shall have a detailed talk with you. (You should) get the accounts going and not one of the tea garden workers will suffer because of your obduracy."

Assam Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and several senior bureaucrats from the state and the Centre were present at the SLBC meeting.

The All India Bank Officers' Confederation (AIBOC), which has 3.2 lakh officers as members, on March 13, condemned the Finance Minister for her "direct and unsavoury" attack on Rajnish Kumar. AIBOC general secretary Soumya Datta said: "She even went on to brand State Bank of India as a 'heartless bank' and literally humiliated Rajnish Kumar." He pointed to the "huge burden" on the SBI in bailing out Yes Bank, and said it was an irony that these comments came when public sector banks were "overburdened predominantly with government schemes".

On Saturday, however, AIBOC said it had withdrawn the statement, claiming it was "erroneously issued". While Datta did not respond to calls and messages, Prabir Sorkhel, Administrative Secretary, AIBOC, said, "We gave the letter you mentioned. But we retracted it later. This is all I can say." The office was shut on Saturday.

Post midnight, Sitharaman tweeted the AIBOC letter which said that the March 13 statement was erroneously issued, and had been withdrawn.

In Mumbai, an SBI spokesperson said the bank officers' confederation has withdrawn its statement and did not offer any further comment. Separate mails sent to the SBI Chairman and Finance Ministry did not elicit any response.

A source in SBI in Guwahati said: "It is not very easy to get the garden workers to open bank accounts. But yes, there is a government push towards it. Announcing policies is one thing, but in the implementation often there are many hurdles. We are working to meet them, sending people to the ground and taking all the steps."

Attaching the AIBOC statement of March 13, Assam Finance Minister Sarma posted a series of tweets late Saturday evening, and said the confederation "has not understood the context", and that he strongly opposed it. He said the state had opened nearly 8 lakh accounts of tea garden workers in 2017.

"Subsequently, we transferred an incentive amount of Rs 5,000 in each account. Due to... lack of alertness on part of local banking officials, a sizeable section of these workers were being deprived of their rightful dues," he wrote in the tweets.

In his budget speech, he had noted that in Financial Year 2018-19, the state had transferred Rs 5,000 to 7,21,485 bank accounts of tea garden workers. The community has been a special focus area of the BJP government in the state.

Police offer 2 training schools to Delhi govt as quarantine camps

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 14

DELHI POLICE has "offered" its police training schools (PTS) in Wazirabad and Jharoda Kalan to the Delhi government's health department to be used as "quarantine camps".

Delhi Police spokesperson Mandeep Singh Randhawa said, "In case the need arises, the PTS

can be used by the government."

A senior police officer said that over 1,000 people can be accommodated at the PTS.

On March 13, Michi Paku, Additional Commissioner of Police, Jharoda Kalan PTS, sent an order "deferring the training at the PTS till March-end... The trainees are directed to go to their homes till further order." Paku's order stated that "in



Delhi Police chief S N Shrivastava has directed all DCPPs to arrange masks and sanitisers for personnel. Tashi Tobgyal

view of the coronavirus threat, the PTS Jharoda Kalan is likely to be requisitioned for coronavirus suspect screening centre".

Likewise, the final indoor/outdoor examination of lower school course of batch number 74 at PTS Wazirabad was postponed, as per an order dated March 13.

The order stated, "All trainees of lower school course

are relieved from the institution."

Commissioner of Police S N Shrivastava has, meanwhile, directed all DCPPs to "arrange masks and sanitisers in sufficient numbers and provide them to the police personnel".

A letter sent by DCP Vikram K Porwal, staff officer to the CP, stated: "All police personnel having direct interface with the public at large are advised to use

masks and frequently use sanitisers to thwart any threat of coronavirus."

Shrivastava also sent 10 pointers on precautions to be taken by all police personnel.

These include "washing hands for 20 seconds, using sanitisers, not touching face, staying at home if sick, using tissue paper, and maintaining distance and using masks".

He also directed the staff to

maintain a log of people quarantined in hospitals in their area, along with their contact details.

An official from the health department, when contacted, said, "There were discussions regarding police's offer. Multiple options are being explored, and the health department will provide medical services in quarantine facilities whenever an arrangement is finalised."

Jails step up efforts to fight coronavirus

SOMYA LAKHANI
NEW DELHI, MARCH 14

ACROSS THREE prisons in the capital — Tihar, Mandoli and Rohini — isolation wards for new inmates have been set up as a precautionary measure to fight coronavirus, said Tihar Jail AIG Rajkumar.

"On Thursday, at least 15 inmates were sent to Tihar Jail after they were arrested by the customs department at the airport. They are from Afghanistan and have a travel history. They have not shown any flu-like symptoms, but they have been accommodated in isolation wards that have especially been built to tackle the virus," said a senior Tihar official.

If any inmate in the ward shows symptoms, he will be taken for a test, said the official,

adding that they are keeping a close watch. Other new inmates too have been kept in different barracks for the first three days at least.

Rajkumar said, "We have begun the process of manufacturing facemasks for inmates and healthcare workers. Manufacturing additional quantities of phenyl and handwash too has started to ensure hygiene."

He said isolation wards have been set up in each jail for inmates showing flu-like symptoms. "No inmates have been put in these wards yet. We are ensuring the virus does not spread in the prisons," said Rajkumar. Thermal scanners are also being used to screen those entering the jail premises. "Personal protection equipment has been provided to healthcare workers across the three prisons," said Rajkumar.

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- अब हिंसा हुई तो होगी 'प्रबल प्रतिक्रिया' (enhanced response)
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0-50 Good

ANAND VIHAR

Satisfactory



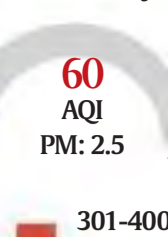
SIRIFORT

Poor



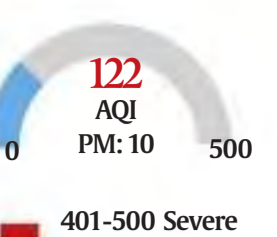
SHADIPUR

Satisfactory



DWARKA-SECTOR 8

Moderate



A Delhi Metro train being disinfected on Saturday as a precautionary measure to deal with coronavirus. Gajendra Yadav

Should focus on self-quarantine, avoid crowded places: AIIMS chief

ASTHA SAXENA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 14

AIIMS DIRECTOR Randeep Guleria on the precautions one must take amid the coronavirus outbreak, testing facilities at the premier medical institute, and speculation on whether summer could diminish the effects of the virus.



Randeep Guleria

With seven cases being reported in the capital so far, the Delhi government has shut cinema halls, schools and colleges as precautionary measures. What, according to you, are other measures that can be taken?

Prevention is always better than cure. We have seen that the number of cases has suddenly gone up in countries such as Italy and Iran, which means there was no index case and the infection spread through the crowd. Due to the sudden spike, the number of deaths and admissions in hospitals have also increased. If we want to put a stop to it, we should focus on self-quarantine and avoid going to crowded places. This will not lead to an outbreak in our country. Till now, we have been lucky. The Government of India has also taken good measures to avoid any type of community spread.

What are the facilities at AIIMS for testing samples?

At AIIMS, virology labs are regularly testing samples sent by the government. As of now we have enough capacity to test samples, and it can be increased as per the situation. If required, a new lab facility will be started at our National Cancer Institute in Jhajjar. All positive samples from AIIMS are also being sent to the National Institute of Virology in Pune for confirmation.

There has been panic among people who have displayed

flu-like symptoms. What is the difference between Covid-19 and the flu?

There is not much difference between symptoms of Covid-19 and the flu. Many people are getting fever, cough, cold, sore throat and body ache, but if you have travelled abroad in the last 14 days, especially to countries which have been affected by the disease, only then should you approach the helpline and get a test done. You shouldn't go directly to the hospital because even if it is a viral infection, you will still be passing it on to other patients by coughing and sneezing. It will infect the entire area.

Is it possible that the effects of the virus could diminish during the summer?

It is a theory, which is not yet proven. Some people say the virus will be less effective in summers. If Delhi sees extreme heat levels this summer, it could make it difficult for the virus to survive in such an environment and the magnitude of transmission will also come down. But we should also remember that the virus broke out in tropical countries such as Thailand and Singapore, where the heat levels are comparatively higher. Also, if the heat levels are high, people will stay indoors and switch on air conditioners. This will bring down the temperature again and give space for the virus to spread.

Helpline numbers in Gurgaon get 200-250 calls a day

SAKSHI DAYAL
GURGAON, MARCH 14

THE TWO helpline numbers launched by the health department in Gurgaon last month for queries on coronavirus are receiving "between 200 and 250 calls" on a daily basis over the past week, officials said.

"We received several calls at the beginning itself, but the numbers reduced in between. However, the calls have increased massively in the last one week. We are getting anywhere between 200 and 250 calls a day now. I get at least a 100 calls on my number itself," said Dr Ram Prakash Rai, epidemic-in-charge at Gurgaon's Civil Hospital, whose number is among the two publicised as helpline numbers. The other is a landline number.

Officials said most calls they receive are from city residents, who are either themselves running a fever or have a cold, or know someone with these symptoms, and are concerned if these are indicative of a coronavirus infection. Other people, officials said, call to discuss concerns about going to their workplaces or precautions they should take as more cases of the virus surface. Many, they added, also call to get clarifications on myths or rumours circulating about the virus.

"We mostly advise them on what precautions to take, how they can combat the infection, and recommend whether or not they need to get tested. Our work so far has been more focussed on reassuring people and preventing any sort of panic from taking hold," said Dr Rai.

Health department officials said 820 people from Gurgaon have so far been placed in "home isolation". These include 71 employees at Paytm's Gurgaon office, one staff member of which was confirmed to have contracted the virus last week, as well as 142 people working at a trading firm in Udyog Vihar, where an employee had tested positive.

"These are people who are asymptomatic and have no contact history with a coronavirus patient. Apart from the people from the two firms, the others placed in home quarantine are mostly those who are asymptomatic but have a history of travel to coronavirus-affected countries," said Dr Jaswant Singh Punia, Chief Medical Officer (CMO).

In addition, a total of 11 samples have so far been sent for testing, of which seven have tested negative, while results of four are awaited. Officials said samples from Gurgaon are currently being sent to the testing facility at the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) in Delhi.

ITBP camp set to expand, will be biggest quarantine centre in city

ASTHA SAXENA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 14

WITH THE number of coronavirus cases rising across the country, the quarantine facility at the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) camp in Chhawla is set to expand to accommodate more patients, if required.

At present, there are 600 beds in the camp. This will be increased to 1,000, making the camp the biggest quarantine centre in the city to accommodate patients and suspected Covid-19 cases.

Over 500 patients have been quarantined at the facility so far. These include two batches of



112 evacuees from Wuhan have left the ITBP facility

Indians evacuated from Wuhan, China — 324 were brought to the camp towards the end of January and 112 people towards the end of February. Those from Wuhan have tested negative and have been allowed to leave the camp. A team of 25 doctors — 15

from Safdarjung Hospital and 10 from ITBP — are also stationed on the premises, which also houses its sector headquarters for logistics and communication.

"We are creating more facilities for patients; with this, the centre will become the largest quarantine facility in the city. The number of doctors and medical professionals will also be doubled, as per the needs. At present, we have a team of 30 medical professionals, including doctors, which is taking care of suspected cases," said ITBP spokesperson Vivek Pandey.

Officials said suspected patients are kept in the isolation ward at the camp till the time they test positive for the disease. If the

test is positive, the patient is immediately referred to either Ram Manohar Lohia or Safdarjung hospitals for treatment.

Delhi has confirmed seven positive cases of Covid-19 so far. The capital also saw its first death on Friday — a 68-year-old woman from West Delhi, who had tested positive earlier this week and had underlying conditions of diabetes and hypertension.

ITBP officials said they will add a pre-quarantine facility, which will be a separate space with 300 beds for patients. "If a need arises that a patient needs to be tested first before keeping him/her in the isolation ward, then such patients will be kept in the pre-quarantine facility. Around 100 beds will be

added to the quarantine space and 300 more for the pre-quarantine facility," said an official.

The building complex has operational kitchens and bathrooms, apart from communication amenities like telephones and WiFi. Residents can watch TV and play games such as carom and cards and volleyball.

The camp also has a laundry facility, with linen being changed every second day. The clothes are dipped in hypochlorite and then washed with hot water. Rooms are fumigated with a strong high-level disinfectant.

Health officials said the first patient who tested positive in the capital was discharged from Safdarjung Hospital on Saturday.

Doctors oversee last rites of first Delhi victim of coronavirus at Nigambodh Ghat

ASTHA SAXENA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 14

THE LAST rites of a 68-year-old woman who died in RML Hospital Friday after testing positive for coronavirus were performed Saturday at the CNG crematorium at Nigambodh Ghat under the supervision of medical authorities. However, this was after the woman's family was initially told by authorities at the ghat to go to Lodhi Road electric crematorium instead.

The Union Health Ministry then intervened to ensure the final rites were performed smoothly. Doctors from Ram Manohar Lohia (RML) Hospital oversaw the funeral after crematorium staff reached out to authorities, seeking directives to ensure the infection did not spread.

Officials said the Nigambodh Ghat Sanchalan Samiti, which manages operations at the crematorium, delayed the last rites by a few hours and approached municipal authorities to seek directives in view of the coronavirus outbreak. "The situation is sensitive across the world. We had to seek instructions first from MCD and medical authorities. They said the cremation will be done using CNG, and officials came to supervise the process," a Samiti official said.

AIIMS director Dr Randeep Guleria said there is no problem in cremating the body of a coronavirus victim. "There is no risk of transmission in cremating a body. It spreads through droplets, like if someone coughs. People can cremate the body by any means; this is just a panic reaction."

On the recommendations of

the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the AIIMS has drafted the guidelines for carrying out the autopsies of those who have been infected with Covid-19.

Laying down the rules for transporting the body, the institute has stated that the deceased must be placed in a body bag immediately after death. "Ensure that the body is fully sealed in an impermeable body bag before being removed from the isolation room or area, and before being transferred to the mortuary, to avoid leakage of body fluid. Then transfer the body to the mortuary as soon as possible after death," said Dr Sudhir Gupta, head of forensic medicine at AIIMS.

When properly packed in the body bag, the body can be safely removed for storage in the mortuary, sent to the crematorium, or placed in a coffin for burial

The woman, a resident of West Delhi, died Friday evening due to comorbidity (diabetes and hypertension), the ministry said, adding she had tested positive for Covid-19, following which she was admitted to the RML Hospital.

Doctors said her sample was collected on March 8 and her condition worsened on March 9 with the development of pneumonia, and she was shifted to the ICU. Her sample also tested positive for Covid-19. Since then, she was having respiratory fluctuations and was provided ventilatory support.

Officials said she had history of contact with her son, who had travelled to Switzerland and Italy between February 5 and 22. The son had returned to India on February 23. The health department has traced 813 contacts of her son and 14 people who were in contact with her so far.

6 who went to Germany quarantined

New Delhi: As many as six passengers with a travel history to Frankfurt in Germany have been quarantined at a facility created by the Delhi government in the South district on Saturday.

Delhi now has seven coronavirus cases, with the patient who tested positive at the Army's quarantine facility in Manesar being shifted to the isolation ward at Safdarjung Hospital late Friday night. The capital also reported its first death on Friday, of a 68-year-old woman from West Delhi.

According to data collated by the health department, six people from Delhi and 10 from other states who tested positive for the virus are availing treatment at hospitals in Delhi. One patient was discharged on Saturday. **ENS**

RESIDENTS GET MASKS, HAND SANITISERS

To keep coronavirus at bay, visitors restricted at relief camp

SUKRITA BARUAH
NEW DELHI, MARCH 14

RESTRICTING VISITORS' access and teaching children to keep a safe distance from each other — the Eidgah relief camp in Northeast Delhi's Mustafabad is trying to find ways to maintain precautions against coronavirus.

The relief camp has been set up by the Delhi Waqf Board, in association with the Delhi government, to provide shelter to families displaced by the riots. With hundreds of people living in the limited space in exposed condi-

tions, which also sees a steady inflow of volunteers and mediapersons, residents of the camp find themselves vulnerable during the current health crisis.

At the moment, hand sanitisers and masks have been distributed to residents. Hand sanitisers have also been made available at desks at the entry to the camp.

"We are making announcements every hour or so, telling people to keep washing their hands. We are also telling them to visit the medical-aid desk if they have the slightest cold or fever, and we will refer anyone with more serious symptoms to a hos-



pital. We are also trying to restrict the entry of people to the camp. The residents are here out of compulsion but others need to be limited. We are allowing media and NGO representatives to only stay here for an hour, and we have set aside a specific hour for relatives to visit," said Mohammad Imran,

Hand sanitisers have been distributed to riot victims at the Eidgah relief camp in Mustafabad. The entry of media representatives to the camp has also been restricted. Praveen Khanna

the nodal officer from the Waqf Board at the camp.

Children attend daily classes and reading activities in the camp, organised by the Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights (DCPCR). Here, too, children are being counselled on precautions to take against the virus.

"DCPCR representatives are talking to them about maintaining a safe distance and not touching each other. A paediatrician is also visiting every alternate day to conduct check-ups," said DCPCR member Ranjana Prasad.

NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) GENERAL ADVISORY FOR PUBLIC



The 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a contagious virus that causes respiratory infection, can transfer from human to human.

SYMPTOMS

- FEVER
- DIFFICULTY IN BREATHING
- COUGHING
- TIGHTNESS OF CHEST
- RUNNING NOSE
- HEAD ACHE
- FEELING OF BEING UNWELL
- PNEUMONIA
- KIDNEY FAILURE

MODE OF TRANSMISSION

Human Coronavirus (COVID-19) most commonly spread from an infected person to other through:

- Coughing and sneezing
- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hand
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands

HOW TO REDUCE RISK OF CORONAVIRUS INFECTION (COVID-19)

- Clean hand with soap and water or alcohol based hand rub
- Cover nose and mouth when coughing & sneezing with tissue or flexed elbow
- Avoid close contact & maintain 1 meter distance with anyone
- Isolation of persons travelling from affected countries for atleast 14 days.

DO's

- Cover your nose and mouth with disposable tissue or handkerchief while coughing or sneezing
- Throw used tissues into closed bins immediately after use
- Frequently wash your hands with soap and water
- Avoid crowded places/big gatherings
- Person suffering from Influenza like illness must be confined to home
- Stay more than one meter distance from persons sick with flu
- Take adequate sleep and rest
- Drink plenty of water/liquids and eat nutritious food
- See a doctor if feel unwell (fever, difficulty breathing & cough). While visiting doctor, wear a mask/cloth to cover your mouth and nose.

DON'Ts

- Touching eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands
- Hugging, kissing and shaking hands while greeting
- Spitting in public places
- Taking medicines without consulting doctor
- Disposal of used napkin or tissue paper in open areas
- Touching surfaces usually used by public (Railing, door gates, etc)

Control Room Numbers at State and District level

State DGHS (HQ) 011-22307145, 22300012, 22300036
 North 011-27708768
 South 011-29531277
 East 011-22050908, 22051234
 West 011-25195529
 North-West 011-25951182

South-West 011-25066674
 South-East 011-26476410
 North-East 011-22115289
 New Delhi 011-23385743
 Central 011-23270151
 Shahdara 011-22111077

24*7 Control Room has been established at DGHS (HQ), may be contacted for any query related to COVID-19 Ph: 011-22307145, 22300012, 22300036



Capital witnesses hailstorm on wettest March day since 2015

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, MARCH 14

DELHI RECORDED the highest amount of rain in a single March day on Saturday, as hail, thunder, and heavy rain lashed Delhi-NCR. At Safdarjung, observations from where are considered the official figures for Delhi, 101.9 mm of rain was recorded.

The city witnessed low visibility as a thick cloud cover hung close to the surface, and waterlogging was seen in several areas. Before this, the highest rainfall on a single March day — 97.4 mm — was recorded in 2015.

Saturday's minimum temperature was 16.4 degrees Celsius, a degree below normal, while the maximum temperature was 24.7 degrees Celsius, five degrees below normal. The maximum humidity recorded was 98% and minimum was 67%.

Thundershowers were also recorded Saturday in Chandigarh, Karnal in Haryana, Shimla in Himachal Pradesh, and across the cities of eastern and western UP.

"Due to westerly trough in mid-tropospheric levels and moist easterlies from the Bay of Bengal, moderate to severe thunderstorm activity taking place over Haryana, Delhi, Jharkhand, north Chhattisgarh and Bihar," read a tweet by the India Meteorological Department (IMD).



The capital received 101.9 mm of rainfall, as per the Safdarjung observatory. Tashi Tobgyal

The upper level features are also conducive for development of thunderstorms and hailstorms," said the IMD in a release.

Dehradun and Nainital in Uttarakhand also witnessed hailstorms Saturday. The size of a hailstone was an average of 1 cm in diameter.

"In the atmosphere, the freezing point varies, sometimes reducing by 2-3 degrees, which leads to hail. This usually happens from February-April," said an IMD official.

The cyclonic disturbance will move further eastwards and result in thunder and hailstorms in Bihar, Jharkhand, north Chhattisgarh, Sikkim and West Bengal till Sunday, said the

IMD. "It is probable that Bihar may also see hailstorms in the coming days," said an official.

The western disturbances, a cyclonic circulation, extending up to the troposphere and moving eastwards from Pakistan, is responsible for the storms, the IMD said.

Both clear skies and fog are expected on Sunday and Monday in Delhi-NCR. Officials said an increase in temperature is expected over the next few days, with the maximum temperature set to touch 30 degree Celsius on March 18.

Cab driver claims attacked, but CCTV shows him rioting

MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL NEW DELHI, MARCH 14

A 26-YEAR-OLD private cab driver, who had approached the Northeast district police claiming he was a riot victim, turned out to be an accused after police found footage from a CCTV camera in Brahmपुरi that purportedly showed him holding a sword and pelting stones.

Police sources said Surendra Soni, a resident of Brahmपुरi, was also arrested in 2013 on molestation charges.

"On February 25, he had lodged a police complaint, alleging he was attacked by a group when he was heading home, and that he had received a gunshot injury on his left hand. An FIR of attempt to murder was then registered at New Usmanpur police station," said a police officer.

During their investigation, police found footage purportedly showing Soni carrying a sword and standing with a group of people in Brahmपुरi's gali number 13 at 2.50 am on February 25.

Others beside him can be seen firing several rounds and pelting stones at a group, which fires back.

"Soni was again questioned by police, and they showed him the footage as well. He admitted to the crime. He then

claimed that people were gathering in his street, so he came out of his house to help his neighbours, and he fired and pelted stones in self-defence," the officer said.

Later, police also arrested a 22-year-old man, Nasir alias Arbaj, who was purportedly seen firing several rounds from a country-made pistol in the footage.

Meanwhile, the special investigation team of the Crime Branch has identified around 15 people, including 10 women, who allegedly attacked DCP Amit Sharma, ACP Anuj Kumar and 60 other policemen.

"Among the 15 people, five are local registered criminals of different police stations in Northeast Delhi. We are conducting raids to nab them. We identified the women after gathering information about them, and came to know they were part of the anti-Citizenship Amendment Act protests in the area where Head Constable Ratan Lal was shot dead," said a senior police officer.

Police have also arrested four more people in connection with the murder of Intelligence Bureau staffer Ankit Sharma, whose body was fished out of a drain in Northeast Delhi.

Earlier this week, police had arrested Salman alias Haseen after they intercepted his calls and found his alleged link to Ankit's murder.

Actions of cops during NE Delhi riots to be assessed

MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL NEW DELHI, MARCH 14

TO ASSESS the action of each police personnel deployed in Northeast Delhi when riots broke out from February 23 to 25, the Joint Commissioner of Police (Eastern Range) has asked them to provide details of their place of duty and action taken by them when violence took place in their area.

A letter has been sent by JCP (Eastern Range) Alok Kumar to DCPs of all districts, specialised units such as Crime Branch, Economic Offences Wing, Delhi Armed Police as well as all district police personnel. "The name of ACPs, SHOs, inspectors, who performed law and order duty in Northeast Delhi during riots, along with their place of duty, timing of duty and action taken by them during riots may be intimated by return signal. This may be treated as most urgent," the letter states.

Further, data compiled by the



JCP (Eastern Range) has asked for details such as place of duty and action taken during the violence by personnel. Praveen Khanna

Delhi Police suggests that Khajuri Khas area saw the most violence, with 153 FIRs being registered — the highest in an area, among the 700-plus filed so far. More than 100 FIRs have been filed at Bhajanpura and Gokulpuri as well, indicating that these areas were particularly hit by violence.

The riots claimed 53 lives. A total of 10 murder FIRs have been filed in Karawal Nagar, nine in Gokulpuri and seven in

Dayalpur. Till March 8, the Delhi Police had registered 708 FIRs, including 638 on charges of rioting. "There are 14 police stations in Northeast Delhi and data was compiled as per FIRs registered at all these stations since February 22.

There are eight headers, with charges such as dacoity during riot (3 cases so far), murder (6), murder during riot (33), attempt to murder during riot (24), culpable homicide not amounting to murder (1) and voluntarily causing grievous hurt by use of acid (1)," a senior police officer said.

The data, compiled by the Northeast district police, has been shown to Delhi Police Commissioner S N Shrivastava, it is learnt.

"Apart from Khajuri Khas, Gokulpuri and Bhajanpura, Karawal Nagar also saw major violence, with 88 cases being registered," an officer said, adding that 71 cases have been filed from the district's Dayalpur area.

Chadha slams Centre over oil prices

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, MARCH 14

DEMANDING THAT the benefit of reduced crude oil prices in the global market be passed on to the people of the country, AAP MLA Raghav Chadha said the Centre was working against

the interest of people by hiking fuel prices.

"We demand the price of petrol be reduced to Rs 39/litre and diesel to Rs 31/litre, as there is a 55% decrease in crude oil price in global market," Chadha said. The Centre had announced a Rs 3 per litre hike in excise duties on petrol and

diesel on Saturday.

"In India, the crude oil price is dependent on the crude oil price in the global market. Today, in the global market the price has become the lowest in the last 15 years but under the Modi government in India, the crude oil price has only increased," Chadha said.

For the first time, Gurgaon buses make way to capital

SAKSHI DAYAL GURGAON, MARCH 14

THE GURUGRAM Metropolitan City Bus Limited (GMCBL) Friday added two new routes to its service, including one that connects Gurgaon to Delhi — the first of the service to ply between the two cities.

Officials said while route 210 will see buses ply between Gurgaon's Sector 10 and Delhi's Karol Bagh, route 119 will have buses plying from Gurgaon bus stand to NIT bus stand in Faridabad. "Two buses each will ply on the two new routes," said GMCBL spokesperson Vanita Akhauri. Officials said the four buses operating on these routes have been deployed from the existing fleet of 154 buses, by reducing the number of vehicles operating on other routes.

Route 210 is the first route started by GMCBL between Gurgaon and the capital. Officials said it begins from Gurgaon bus stand and makes 15 stops en-route to Karol Bagh. In Gurgaon, these include Patel Nagar Vyapar Kendra, Sukhrali, Udyog Vihar, Shankar Chowk, Delhi-Gurgaon border, while the stops in Delhi

Fake sanitiser factory busted, four held

Noida: Four people were arrested after a fake hand sanitiser and face mask manufacturing company was busted in Noida on Saturday, officials said, a day after the Centre declared the two items as 'essential commodities'. "Four people were arrested from the spot. Over 5,000 face masks and around 5,000 bottles of hand sanitiser have been seized," said sub-divisional magistrate Rajeev Rai. PTI

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL HOSPITAL AND CENTRAL HEATING DIVISION SRINAGAR
 (Tele-fax No: 019-2496089, e-mail id: xenmhchdk@yahoo.in)

GIST of e-Tender
GIST of E -NIT NO: MHCHD/TS /2019-20/158/e-Tendering
Dated: 12.03.2020

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K State e-tenders are invited from registered/reputed/experienced firms with J&K State Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the below mentioned work:-

Name of Work	Estt. Cost (Rs. in Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In Rupees)	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Time of Completion (In day)	Position of AAA/ Funds
S.T.T.C of M.S C class piping and insulation for HVAC system at 500 Bedded paediatric Hospital, Srinagar.	33.00	1000	66000	30	Demande

- The Tender document Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/ downloaded from the departmental website: www.jktenders.gov.in from 12.03.2020 (18.00 hrs).
- The bidders shall deposit their bids in electronic format on the above web site from 13.03.2020 (10.00 hrs.) to 05.04.2020 (14.00 hrs.) in Two (02) cover.
- The bids uploaded on the website up to due date and time will be opened on 06.04.2020 (15.00 hrs.) or any date convenient to the department in the office of Executive Engineer, MHCHD, Srinagar.

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
MHCHD, Srinagar.
Dated:12.03.2020

No.:MHCHD/TS/6701-04 DIPK- 2283

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, MINISTRY OF RAILWAY
RESEARCH DESIGNS & STANDARDS ORGANISATION
MANAK NAGAR, LUCKNOW-226011
TRANSPORT SECTION
OPEN e-TENDER NOTICE

- Open e-tenders for the following works are invited on IREPS portal at RDSO website to be opened on 08.04.2020 (Wednesday) at 15.00 hrs. and shall be submitted up to 14.00 hrs. In case, the date of opening of tender happens to be a holiday, the tenders will be opened on the next working day at specified time and place.

Tender Notice No.	Description of Work	Approx. Cost (Rs.)	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Contract period
HAG-SAG-JAG-JAG (SG) NDLS-Call- Dated 26.02.2020	i) Hiring of Maruti CIAZ (AC) Taxi or similar taxi on call basis for HAG officers of RDSO/LKO visiting at New Delhi. ii) Hiring of Maruti Swift Dzire (AC) Taxi or similar taxi on call basis for SAG officers of RDSO/LKO visiting at New Delhi. iii) Hiring of Maruti Wagon (R) Non-AC, Hyundai i-10 non-AC, Maruti Ritz Non-AC or similar taxi on call basis for JAG & JAG(SG) officers of RDSO/LKO visiting at New Delhi. The above Taxis will be utilized at New Delhi and controlled by ED/QA(S&T), Inspection Cell, RDSO/NDLS.	75,06,593/-	1,50,100/-	Two years from the date of Operation

- Tender documents, work schedule, terms & conditions, special technical criteria, submission of affidavit, eligible criteria and Annexure-I, II & III etc. are uploaded.
- Cost of tender documents is Rs. 5,000/-. The cost of tender document and earnest money will be accepted through net banking or gateway only.
- A) The minimum requirement that a tenderer shall have to submit. The tenderer shall have to submit the certificates of GST Registration, firm registration, pan number and Bank details in CBS Bank Account No, MICR Code, IFSC Code etc. for payment purposes.

B) CREDENTIALS OF TENDERER:

- The tenderer(s) should have completed from start to finish, in the last three financial years (i.e current year and three previous years) at least one similar single work, for minimum value of 35% of advertisement tender value of the work.
- The tenderer(s) shall be eligible only if he/they fulfil minimum eligibility criteria of having received total contract amount during the last three financial years and in the current financial year with a minimum of 150% of the advertised tender value and authentic certificate shall be produced by the tenderers to this effect which may be duly attested by the employer/client and audited balance sheet duly certified by the Chartered Accountant, etc.

- The undersigned have the right to cancel the tenders without any notice.

(PREETI LATA)
Joint Director/Estt.-II
For Director General/RDSO/LKO

File No. T/MTR/Hiring of Taxi/Call Basis/NDLS/2020-21/
 Dated: 26.02.2020

NMDC Limited
 (A Government of India Enterprise)
 Bailadila Iron Ore Mine, Kirandul Complex, Kirandul-494556, Distt.-South Bastar Dantewada, Chhattisgarh
 Gram : IRONORE, Fax : 07857-255226, 255227, 255225 CIN : L13100TG1958G01001674

PRESS NOTIFICATION Dated: 14-03-2020

Tender No.	Description of Items	Quantity	Display & download of Tender	Last Date & Time for submission of offer	Tender Fee (Rs.)	EMD (RS.)
1) Tender No. NMDC/ Kirandul/195/19-20/ET/941 Purchase Indent # 03F048, Dt.11-10-2019	Procurement of spares for Hitachi Shovel Ex1900-6 at NMDC Limited Kirandul Complex, Dist. Dantewada (C.G.)	As per Tender document available in MSTC website (10 Items)	14-03-2020 to 17-04-2020	17-04-2020 03:30 PM (IST)	Rs. 5,900/- (Rupees Five Thousand Nine Hundred only)	Rs. 75,000/- (Rupees Seventy Five Thousand only)
2) Tender No. NMDC/ Kirandul/197/19-20/ET/946 Purchase Indent # 03F046, Dt.09-09-2019	Procurement of Ladder & Travel device of Hitachi Shovel Ex1900-6 at NMDC Limited, Kirandul Complex, Dist. Dantewada(C.G.)	As per Tender document available in MSTC website (02 Items)	14-03-2020 to 17-04-2020	17-04-2020 03:30 PM (IST)	Rs. 5,900/- (Rupees Five Thousand Nine Hundred only)	Rs. 2,00,000/- (Rupees Two Lakh only)
3) Tender No. NMDC/ Kirandul/196/19-20/ET/945 Purchase Indent # 03F047, Dt.22-09-2019	Procurement of New front bucket of Hitachi Shovel Ex1900-6 at NMDC Limited, Kirandul Complex, Dist. Dantewada (C.G.)	As per Tender document available in MSTC website (01 Item)	14-03-2020 to 17-04-2020	17-04-2020 03:30 PM (IST)	Rs. 5,900/- (Rupees Five Thousand Nine Hundred only)	Rs. 2,00,000/- (Rupees Two Lakh only)
4) Tender No. NMDC/ Kirandul/203/19-20/ET/979 Purchase Indent # 14F020, Dt.17-01-2020	Procurement of H.T motors for Primary & secondary crusher of CP-11B at NMDC Limited Kirandul Complex, Dist. Dantewada (C.G.)	As per Tender document available in MSTC website (02 Items)	14-03-2020 to 17-04-2020	17-04-2020 03:30 PM (IST)	Not Applicable	Rs. 75,000/- (Rupees Seventy Five Thousand only)
5) Tender No. NMDC/ Kirandul/201/19-20/ET/972 Purchase Indent # 10C333, Dt.03-11-2018	Procurement of Exciter for Elecon make JU400 and TRF make TUF-11 Vibrating Feeder at NMDC Limited, Kirandul Complex, Dist. Dantewada (C.G.)	As per Tender document available in MSTC website (02 Items)	14-03-2020 to 17-04-2020	17-04-2020 03:30 PM (IST)	Rs. 5,900/- (Rupees Five Thousand Nine Hundred only)	Rs. 2,00,000/- (Rupees Two Lakh only)
6) Tender No. NMDC/ Kirandul/194/19-20/ET/982 Purchase Indent # 10D761, Dt.06-01-2020	Procurement of Critical Conveyor Belt Rollers at NMDC Limited, Kirandul Complex, Dist. Dantewada (C.G.)	As per Tender document available in MSTC website (20 Items)	14-03-2020 to 17-04-2020	17-04-2020 03:30 PM (IST)	Rs. 5,900/- (Rupees Five Thousand Nine Hundred only)	Rs. 2,00,000/- (Rupees Two Lakh only)
7) Tender No. NMDC/ Kirandul/200/19-20/ET/972 Purchase Indent # 05H903, Dt.09-07-2019	Procurement of Front Suspension for CAT 777D Dumper for BIOM, Kirandul Complex, Dist. Dantewada (C.G.)	As per Tender document available in MSTC website (02 Items)	14-03-2020 to 17-04-2020	17-04-2020 03:30 PM (IST)	Rs. 5,900/- (Rupees Five Thousand Nine Hundred only)	Rs. 2,00,000/- (Rupees Two Lakh only)

The complete tender document can be viewed and / or downloaded from MSTC portal http://www.mstccommerce.com/eprocurement/nmde/buyer_login.jsp and NMDC Ltd's Website link <http://www.nmdc.co.in/> under tender section and Central Public Procurement (CPP) site <http://www.eprocure.gov.in/> from 14-03-2020 to 17-04-2020.
 Contact details : 07857-255234, 9109197722, 9109197670, 9685470525, 9685120227, 7587876642.
 Email: kvprakash@nmde.co.in ; gnanakumar@nmde.co.in ; ssawariya@nmde.co.in ; nihils Sharma@nmde.co.in ; blauch@nmde.co.in

The interested bidders should download the tender documents and submit the online offer through MSTC Portal only within the due date as mentioned above.
 Note : Any addendum / corrigendum / bid clarifications / time extension shall be issued on the MSTC website only. No separate press notification shall be issued.
 Dy. General Manager (Materials)

Rajasthan State Road Development And Construction Corporation Ltd., JAIPUR
 No. NIT/2019-20/34328-37 अराकानन ई-निविदा सूचना सं. 384/19-20 Date: 13.03.2020
 निम्न निविदा परियोजनाओं पर पक्का वस्तुकी शुरु ई-निविदा प्रक्रिया में अनिवार्य निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है:-

कार्य का विवरण अंशित पैका (क.)

Collection of Toll Tax (Including Private Vehicles) on Goran-Bhatra-Sojar Road for 365 days. UBN No.: RRCC1920WLBRC00814 963.77 Lac

अंशित निविदा प्रक्रिया सम्बन्धीत कार्य की अंतिम तिथि: 13.03.2020 प्रातः 9:00 बजे से 19.03.2020 प्रातः 6:00 बजे तक

निविदा में सम्मिलित समान विवरण एवं संक्षेप विवरण हेतु: <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>, <http://spp.rajasthan.nic.in> तथा <http://roads.rajasthan.gov.in> पर देखा जा सकता है। शुल्क संवेदनशील की अंतिम तिथि 13.03.2020 को प्रातः 9 बजे तक है।
<http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> पर निविदा करवाना आवश्यक है।

सहायक निदेशक

DR. RAM MANOHAR LOHIA INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES
VISHU TI KHAND, GOMTI NAGAR, LUCKNOW-226 010
 Phones : 0522-4918502, 4918510, Fax : 0522-4918506 ; Website : www.drmlms.ac.in

Ref. No. RMLMS/MM/eq/19-20/6281 Date : 14.03.2020
Notice for inviting comments/objections for purchase of MRI Compatible Gynacological Brachytherapy Applicator on Proprietary Basis

The Institute is in process of purchase of MRI Compatible Gynacological Brachytherapy Applicator on proprietary basis submitted by the firm and user department in favour of M/s Elekta Ltd., UK, wherein it has been certified and confirmed that MRI Compatible Gynacological Brachytherapy Applicator is proprietary product of M/s Elekta Ltd., Cornerstone, London Road, Crawley, West Sussex RH10 9BL, United Kingdom.

The above documents with specifications will be uploaded on e-tender portal i.e. www.etenderup.nic.in from 15.03.2020 for open information to submit online objections, comments, if any from any manufacturer regarding proprietary nature of MRI Compatible Gynacological Brachytherapy Applicator within 21.03.2020, failing which it will be presumed that any other vendor is having no comments, objections for above purchase on proprietary basis and case will be decided on merits.

The above details will also be available on our website www.drmlms.ac.in for reference only. The objections/comments will be accepted On-Line only through above e-tender portal within above stipulated period.

Director

MADHYA PRADESH JAL NIGAM
 (A Govt. of Madhya Pradesh Undertaking)
 "D" Wing, 2nd Floor, Vindhyachal Bhawan, Bhopal - 462004
 Ph.: 0755-2579034, 2579874 || Fax : 0755-2579873
www.mpjalinigam.mp.gov.in || E-mail : mpjalnigam@mp.gov.in
 CIN No. - U41000MP2012SGC028798
 NIT No. 44-48/Proc./MPJNM/2019-20 Bhopal, Dated 13.3.2020

Notice Inviting E-Tender

Online Lump-sum rate bids for execution of following Multi Villages Scheme(MVS) are invited from Registered Contractors/ firms fulfilling eligibility criteria as specified in tender document. Basic details of MVS is as follows: -

NIT No.	Name of MVS	District	Probable Amount of Contract (Rs. in Crore)	Completion Period (including rainy season)
44	Machagora	Chhindwara	846.68	36 Months
45	1. Wardha 2. Ghogri 3. Meda 4. Gada	Betul	674.39	36 Months
46	1. Kutne-Rajnagar 2. Tarped 3. Garoli	Chhatrapur	604.629	36 Months
47	1. Rajond 2. Narmada Lower 3. Maan Dam 4. Nimrani	Dhar Dhar Dhar Khargone	801.41	36 Months
48	1. Shahpura- Mehdwani 2. Halon	Jabalpur, Dindori & Mandla	792.35	36 Months

Interested bidders can view/download/purchase the bid document online from M.P. Government E-Procurement Portal from 19.03.2020, 17:30 Hrs. Bidding process dates mentioned as critical dates on M.P. Government E-Procurement Portal will be applicable. Corrigendum/Addendum in NIT, if any, would be published on portal only and not in newspapers.
M.P. Government E-Procurement Portal - <https://mptenders.gov.in>
 M.P. Madhyam/97182/2020 Managing Director

MANIPUR UNIVERSITY
 CANCHIPUR, IMPHAL-795003
 MANIPUR

TENDER NOTICE
 Dated, 13th March, 2020
 No. MU/IV/26/DR/PO/DEPT-FUR/2020: Manipur University invites tenders for procurement of Furniture items. Details can be seen at the Manipur University website www.manipuruniv.ac.in Sd/-
 Purchase Officer
 Manipur University, Canchipur

NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY
NOTICE OF INVITING TENDER
 SIGNAL & TELECOMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT
 Tender Notice No. SNT-JP-44-2019-20
 DRM (S&T) North Western Railway/ Jaipur, for and on behalf of the president of India, invites Sealed open tenders from established and Reliable contractors for the following work: 1. Name of work with its location: Provision of telecom facilities for new Cyber Cell for RRF (Security Department) at DRM Office Jaipur in JP Division. 2. Tender Value (Rs.) 3000/-, Earnest Money to be deposited (Rs.): 8800.00/- in F/O FA&CAO, NWR, Jaipur. 4. Date & Time for Submission of Tender and opening of tender: 09.04.2020 Up to 15.00 hrs., 09.04.2020 Up to 15.30 hrs. 5. Website Particulars & Notice board location: www.indianrailways.gov.in, DRM office/NWR/Jaipur 282-SR-20
 Please join us on file/nwr/railways

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, CONSTRUCTION DIVISION,
 U.P. JAL NIGAM, Etah, Head Office: 6- Rana Pratap Marg, Lucknow
Letter No.: 828/Nivida/17
 Date : 06.03.2020

SHORT TERM E-TENDER NOTICE
 U.P. Jal Nigam, E-tenders are invited on two bid system for "Repairing of OHT (100kV capacity) including supply of all material, labour, T&P etc. all complete as per specification of Engineer in charge, laying & jointing of rising main 150 mm dia class K-9 including supply of all material, labour, T&P etc. complete, construction of 1 no. tubewell (discharge 800 lpm 57 m head) and other E&M works and construction of 1 no. pump house cum chlorinating room including all material, labour, T&P etc. complete on turnkey basis including defect liability period of 1 year including handing over to Nagar Panchayat Nidholi Kalan, District Etah." Tender document shall be available at e-procurement website <http://etenderup.nic.in>. Interested Contractors may view & download tender document and upload their tender duly filled online as per schedule given below :- Date for (i) Uploading bid document at website : 13.03.2020 upto 17:00 hrs. (ii) Online Submission of e-bids : 23.03.2020 upto 17:00 hrs. (iii) Opening of pre qualification bid : 24.03.2020 at 12:30 hrs.

परिचालक विद्युत वितरण निगम लि., विक्टोरिया पार्क, मेरठ
निविदा विज्ञापन एवं रिटेंडरिंग सूचना
 इस कार्यालय द्वारा आमंत्रित की गयी अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा संख्या - 11/ वि. कार्यशाला खं./ मेरठ/ कार्य/ 2019-20 को अपरिहार्य कारणों से रिटेंडरिंग करते हुए निविदा खुलने की तिथि को दिनांक 21.3.2020 तक विस्तारित किया जाता है। निविदा विज्ञापन की अन्य नियम एवं शर्तें अपरिवर्तनीय रहेंगी। अधिशासी अभियंता, विद्युत कार्यशाला खण्ड, प.वि.नि.लि., मेरठ। पत्रांक- 193/ वि. कार्यशाला खं./ मेरठ/ दिनांक: 13.03.2020



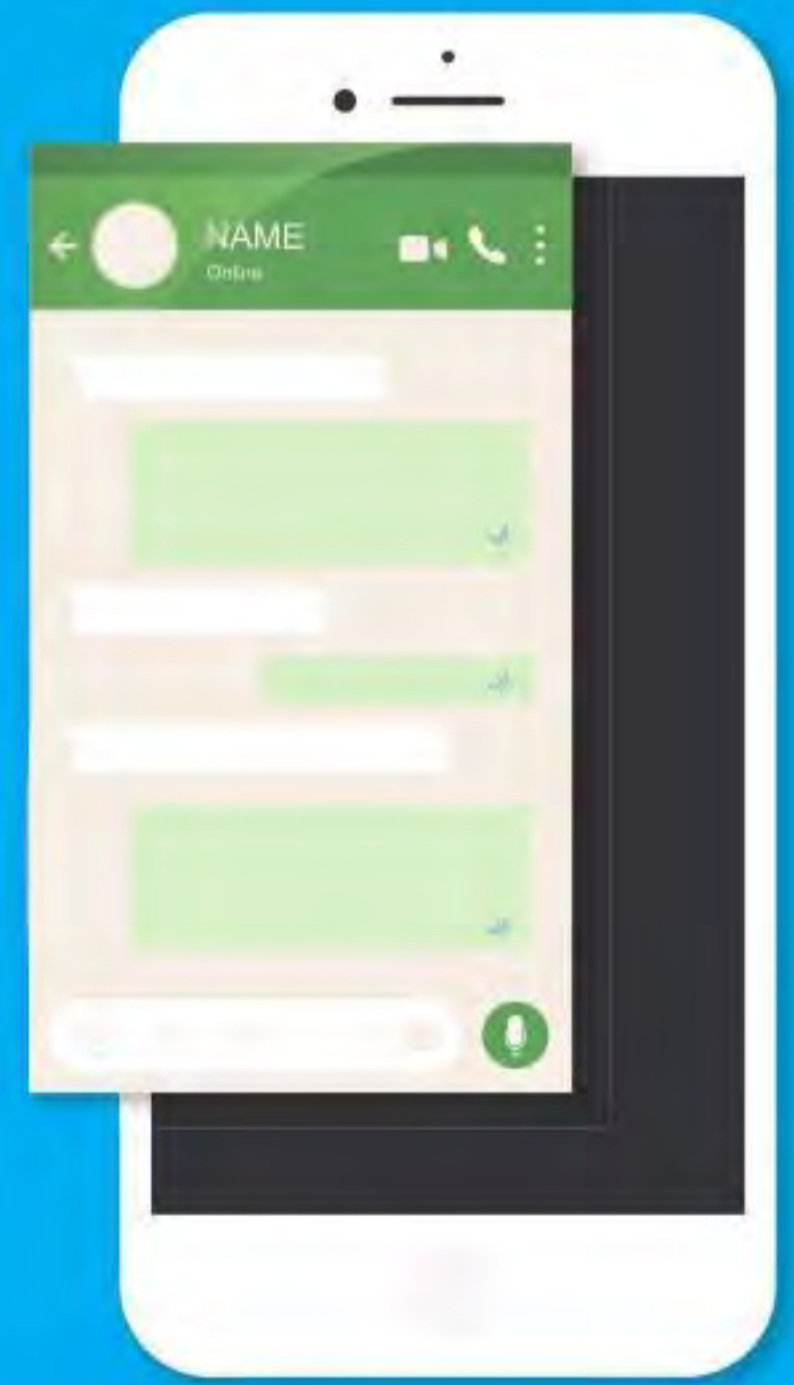
ATTENTION!

SHARING INFLAMMATORY MESSAGES ON WHATSAPP CAN LAND YOU IN JAIL FOR 3 YEARS

If any individual shares or forwards messages or videos on WhatsApp or any Social Media Platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc) which are inflammatory in nature or incites communal tensions then the guilty will have to serve jail term upto 3 years.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

If you find anyone sharing communally inflammatory messages or video on WhatsApp or any Social Media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc) then immediately send the screenshot or the video to us on the number given below.



BECOME A PEACE - MAKER

If an F.I.R. is lodged on the basis of your complaint, then **YOU WILL ALSO GET A REWARD OF ₹10,000**

WhatsApp no.  8950000946

Email: DVSCommittee@delhi.gov.in

8 GOVT & POLITICS

Governor orders floor test in MP on Monday

MILIND GHATWAI
BHOPAL, MARCH 14

ROUNDING OFF a day of high drama in Madhya Pradesh, Governor Lalji Tandon Saturday ordered a floor test in the state Assembly on Monday, setting the stage for the Kamal Nath-led Congress government to attempt prove its majority.

The Governor said the test would take place immediately after his address in the House. The voting would take place via division and the proceedings would be recorded by an independent videographer, he said. The Governor also said no other business would take place in the Assembly.

The announcement came on a day the Opposition BJP requested Tandon to order a floor test. The government was already in a minority, and could try to avoid facing the House, the BJP said.

The budget session is due to begin on Monday. It would be unconstitutional and undemocratic to allow the government to conduct any business before proving its majority in the House, the BJP said.

Nath had called an emergency meeting of his cabinet on Sunday. This triggered speculation that it could recommend postponement of the assembly session. The CM had met the Governor on Friday to ask him to investigate the circumstances into which 22 Congress legislators were taken to Bengaluru, and their resignations letters were submitted to Speaker N P Prajapati by a former BJP minister in Bhopal.

The BJP delegation led by former chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Leader of Opposition Gopal Bhargava called on the Governor around 5 pm and



Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Gopal Bhargava and other BJP leaders submit a memorandum to MP Governor Lalji Tandon at the Raj Bhavan in Bhopal on Saturday. PTI

submitted a letter accusing the CM of trying to either lure or pressure the 22 rebels and other legislators. The letter asked the Governor to ensure the trust vote is taken by a 'division' and pressing the button; not by a 'voice vote'. The proceedings should be recorded by an official videographer, it said.

The letter said 22 legislators had resigned and confirmed their decision to the national media. "The government should prove its majority first. Any Assembly proceedings other than the trust vote, or allowing the government to continue in office, would be undemocratic and unconstitutional. Any further delay in holding the trust vote would lead to more horse trading," the letter said.

Later in the evening, the Speaker accepted the resignations of the six Congress MLAs who had been ministers in Nath's government. These six MLAs are among the 22 in Bengaluru, and had been summoned by the Speaker to confirm in person whether they had signed the letters voluntarily or under duress.

In the evening, the Speaker

said the six legislators had already been removed by the Governor from the cabinet, and that they had failed to appear before him until 2.45 pm on Saturday.

"The conduct of the legislators is surprising and they are not fit to remain members of the Assembly," he said, referring to their statements to the media. The Speaker said he would take a call on the remaining 16 legislators later.

With these six resignations, the number of Congress members in the house has been reduced to 108. The BJP has 107 members. Four Independents, one SP, and two BSP members are with the Congress. There are two vacancies in the 230-member House.

The Congress on Saturday issued a three-line whip asking its legislators to attend the session and to vote with the government.

Also on Saturday, the CM wrote to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, seeking his intervention to release 22 Congress legislators kept at a resort in Bengaluru, and to allow them to attend the budget session of the Assembly.

Congress, BJP set for keen contest over 3 Rajya Sabha seats in MP

LIZ MATHEW
NEW DELHI, MARCH 14

WITH UNCERTAINTY prevailing over the floor test in Madhya Pradesh Assembly after a group of Congress MLAs reportedly switched sides, the BJP is scrambling for numbers to get its nominees elected to the Rajya Sabha in the March 26 elections.

A Rajya Sabha candidate in Madhya Pradesh requires 57 votes in the 228-member Assembly (two seats are vacant), and the BJP has 109 MLAs. If the resignation of 22 rebel Congress MLAs is accepted, it will have an impact on the elections for the Upper House in the state.

The BJP has fielded two candidates — Jyotiraditya Scindia and Sumer Singh Solanki — although it can comfortably manage votes for only one seat. The Congress has fielded Digvijaya Singh and Phool Singh Baraiya, making it a tough fight for the three seats going to the polls.

Sources in BJP said there is a

EXPLAINED
BJP MP unit may be in for a power tussle

IN MP, names of BJP leaders such as Narottam Mishra, considered close to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and Narendra Singh Tomar, who apparently played a key role in getting the 22 Congress MLAs to rebel, are making the rounds in case the Kamal Nath government fails the floor test. While former CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan may emerge on top given his "bankability", people close to Mishra and Tomar, however, contend that Chouhan, CM for three terms, has had his innings and others should be given a chance now.

power struggle in the state unit on who would lead the party government in the event of the Congress government led by Kamal Nath falls. They said the main factor in choosing the leader would be "bankability". The leader, they said, should be accepted by the rebels, who have already put in their papers as MLAs and pushed the Congress government into crisis.

A BJP leader familiar with developments in Madhya Pradesh

said: "Our model here (in MP) would be (that of) Karnataka because the rebels from Congress and JD(S) there could be re-elected mainly because of B S Yeddyurappa. We have a number of examples of defectors losing by-elections, but Yeddyurappa's leadership ensured their (Karnataka rebels') return to the Assembly."

"MLAs who have left the Congress along with Scindia want to be re-elected. Their sup-

port to a BJP government depends on that," a party leader from Madhya Pradesh said.

Meanwhile, the BJP is gearing up for a contest in Gujarat, where elections to four Rajya Sabha seats has become a close contest after the party announced its third candidate in the form of Narhari Amin. Although the Congress has numbers for two seats, the BJP hopes to woo some of its MLAs to vote for Amin, a former Congress leader who still has a lot of influence.

In Jharkhand, ruling JMM-Congress-RJD alliance is fielding Shibu Soren and Congress's Shahzada Anwar for the Rajya Sabha polls, opening a contest. The Congress, which had won 18 Assembly seats, has strengthened its tally by adding two more from Babul Marandi's JMM-P. Currently, BJP has 27 members - after Marandi joined the party - to elect its candidate from the 81-member Assembly, but any move from the ruling alliance could spoil its chance.

TMC backs Independent, eyes Oppn vote to stop CPM nominee

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, MARCH 14

FORMER TMC MLA Dinesh Bajaj may have tried to queer the Rajya Sabha election arena in West Bengal with his last minute entry as an independent candidate, but to put up any semblance of a fight, he will need votes from his former party's bitter rival in the state, the BJP.

There are five Rajya Sabha seats in West Bengal that go to polls on March 26. The TMC is fielding four candidates and the Congress-Left alliance is fielding one - former lawyer and mayor Bikash Bhattacharya.

The choice of CPI(M)'s Bhattacharya, who was a vocal voice against the chit fund and Narada scams, has left the TMC miffed, say sources. "We proposed to Congress that they make Meera Kumar the fourth candidate. We would have supported her. But the Congress refused to do so," a TMC source said.

A senior Congress leader denied this. "We have always maintained that if the Left chooses a suitable candidate, we will support him or her."

A Rajya Sabha candidate in West Bengal needs 49 first preference votes to get elected. The CPI(M) and Congress have 51 MLAs in all. Also, around 10 MLAs of the TMC are either not in touch with the party or have crossed over to the BJP, according to party sources. It is these 10 MLAs along with other BJP members, and two from the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha, that TMC is now trying to persuade.

Provided it garners enough opposition votes, and some Left and Congress MLAs remain absent, Bajaj has a chance of winning.

Cong's RS pick a bid to appease Dalits

MILIND GHATWAI
BHOPAL, MARCH 14

"ONLY THE Gandhi family can save the nation from disintegration because the BJP is bent on pursuing a divisive agenda. If the Gandhi family goes out of the equation, the only person who can save the nation is Digvijaya Singh," insists Phool Singh Baraiya, who filed his nomination for the Rajya Sabha Friday.

Baraiya and former chief minister Singh, who filed his nomination on Thursday, are the Congress' candidates from Madhya Pradesh. Baraiya (57), an engineering graduate, is a former state president of the Bahujan



Phool Singh Baraiya files his nomination in Bhopal. PTI

Samaj Party (BSP) and is a Dalit leader from the Gwalior-Chambal belt.

Till former Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia threw the state into political turmoil by switching to the BJP, the ruling

Congress appeared set to win two of the three Rajya Sabha seats. After the resignations of 22 Congress legislators in support of Scindia, the Congress is certain of winning only one seat.

Party insiders told *The Sunday Express* that Baraiya was fielded to win over the Dalit community in the new political scenario. Five of the seven Dalit legislators who belong to Scindia camp are from the Gwalior-Chambal region. The party hopes Baraiya, irrespective of the outcome of the Rajya Sabha polls, would help it make some gains there.

The Congress fared well in the Gwalior-Chambal belt in the 2018 Assembly elections. The Supreme Court ruling in a case under the

SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act had made the community uneasy. The Congress tapped into the unrest and won a majority of seats in the region. In a bid to scuttle the then ruling BJP's chances, BSP sympathizers had voted strategically for the Congress.

A follower of BSP founder Kanshi Ram, Baraiya contested several Parliamentary and Assembly elections from the late 1980s to 2018. He lost three successive elections to Jyotiraditya's father Madhavrao Scindia in Gwalior and once lost to Jyotiraditya's maternal uncle. His only victory came in 1998 when he won from the Bhandar Assembly constituency on a BSP symbol.

EX-CM SILENT ON ARTICLE 370, NC SAYS RELEASE UNCONDITIONAL

Farooq meets son Omar, Azad drops by

NAVEEDIQBAL
SRINAGAR, MARCH 14

AS THE National Conference specified on Saturday that party president Farooq Abdullah's release from seven-month detention was "unconditional", and not tied to any promise to not talk politics, one of the first to pay him a visit was Congress MP Ghulam Nabi Azad.

As they emerged together to address the media, Azad said restoration of democracy in the Valley and release of leaders was "the first and foremost thing for any political process to start" in the state. Farooq remained quiet apart from thanking the Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha for visiting. Both avoided a direct answer to persistent questions on Article 370 and on the scrapped special status of J&K.

Earlier, the NC chief called on his son Omar Abdullah, who has also been in detention, at the Hari Niwas guest house. It was the first meeting between the father and son since they were detained on August 5 last year, ahead of the scrapping of J&K's special status. Farooq was accompanied by wife Molly and daughter Safia Abdullah Khan. On Friday evening, in his first visit outside



Ghulam Nabi Azad with Farooq Abdullah at the latter's residence in Srinagar. Shuaib Masoodi

his house in seven months, Farooq offered prayers at the mausoleum of his late father, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.

Azad met Farooq for over two hours at his Gupkar Road residence, which had served as a subsidiary jail for the period of his detention, including under the PSA. Pressed over Article 370, the Congress leader advocated a step by step approach. "Let us go one by one. Let us restore democracy, which can happen when all the

leaders who are behind bars, within jails or in guest houses or under the PSA, are released. Let the political process start, let every individual of J&K be released from jail. Let democracy prevail first. Then we can think of other things."

Asked about Farooq's silence, including on Article 370, NC spokesperson Imran Nabi Dar said, "It's an unconditional release and he has neither been asked to nor has he agreed not to talk on

political issues." Reports on Friday had hinted that the NC chief had agreed to certain preconditions for his release.

Azad said, "I will repeat what I have been saying inside and outside Parliament... Building the future of J&K will not happen by locking leaders in a cage like parrots... The only solution is to release all political leaders immediately and a political process initiated. And in this political process, statehood must be re-

stored."

Azad said once the leaders had been released, elections should be conducted, and people given the power to choose their government. "Political process is a fundamental right in a democracy. India is not known across the world for its size, it is known for its democracy. (This is) not a democracy, where three former chief ministers are incarcerated for over seven months, and an ex-chief minister (referring to himself) has to get an order of the Supreme Court to travel within the state. If these leaders and those of other political parties are in jail, then where is democracy? To restore democracy is the first and foremost thing for any political process to start."

Farooq's release is being seen as part of the government's bid to start this process, coming soon after the launch of a new political outfit, Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party, which has reached out to the Centre and is believed to have its blessings.

Commenting on the launch of this new party, led by former minister Altaf Bukhari, Azad said, "Such parties have tried many times in the past. Agency parties cannot run J&K."

He also sought restoration of statehood to J&K.

Cong slams govt over hike in petrol, diesel excise duty

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 14

THE CONGRESS on Saturday hit out at the government over the hike in excise duty on petrol and diesel and demanded that the benefit of reduced international crude oil prices should be passed on to the people.

Congress' senior spokesperson Ajay Maken said the government should reduce the rates of petrol, diesel, and LPG by at least 35-40 per cent. He said the Congress will strongly raise the issue both inside and outside Parliament to democratically pressurise the government to ensure people's welfare. Maken said the total incidence of excise duty on petrol has risen to Rs 22.98 per litre and that on diesel to Rs 18.83.

The tax on petrol was Rs 9.48 per litre when the Modi government took office in 2014 and that on diesel was Rs 3.56 a litre, he said. Central excise duty has been hiked more than a dozen times since the BJP came to power, Maken said. "The Modi-Shah government has looted the people by increasing excise duties and huge taxes on petroleum



'Benefits of reduced crude oil price must be given to people'

products and did not bring this under GST despite the consistent demand of Congress," he said.

"The ill-directed anti-people policies of the BJP government are responsible for the high prices of petrol, diesel and LPG despite crude oil consistently remaining down to less than 50 per cent for the last six years," Maken said.

The Congress demands that the benefit of reduced international crude oil prices should be forwarded to the people and the rates of petrol, diesel, and LPG be reduced by at least 35-40 per cent, Maken said, adding that petrol and diesel should be brought under the GST.

Member of PM's Economic Advisory Board Nilesh Shah has himself conceded that the government has earned a profit of Rs 3.4 lakh crores by not passing on the benefits of reduced oil prices to the consumer, Maken said.

MLAs under pressure, horse-trading being done openly: Gehlot

Jaipur: Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot alleged on Saturday that the BJP had created a situation in the country where elected MLAs were under pressure and horse-trading was being done openly. He said Congress MLAs from Maharashtra were earlier shifted to Jaipur, party MLAs from Madhya Pradesh were currently here and now, the Gujarat lawmakers of the grand old party were coming to the state.

"It is a reflection of the situation created by the BJP that after Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, MLAs from Gujarat are coming here. The BJP has created an atmosphere of terror in the country," Gehlot told reporters outside a resort on the Jaipur-Delhi highway where the Madhya Pradesh MLAs have been lodged.

"Where is democracy in the country? Horse-trading is being done openly.

"Why do the MLAs from Gujarat want to come here... you can imagine... there is so much mental pressure. The entire country is watching this," the veteran Congress leader said. PTI

500-km Konkan highway gets nod

Mumbai: The Shiv Sena-led government on Saturday announced its first big ticket infrastructure project—a 500-km long coastal highway connecting Navi Mumbai to Konkan.

"The greenfield project will help connect parts of Konkan to the global market," senior Sena leader and Urban Development Minister Eknath Shinde said in the Legislative Assembly.

The announcement came on the final day of the Budget Session of the legislature. It is being seen as Uddhav's brainchild and Sena's response to former ally BJP. Almost immediately after coming to power in 2014, then chief minister Devendra Fadnavis had announced the 701-km long Mumbai Nagpur Samruddhi Corridor, which has now been christened after Sena found Bal Thackeray. ENS

Eye on 2022 UP polls, SP to push off cycle yatra

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, MARCH 14

THE SAMAJWADI Party Saturday said it will start a 'cycle yatra' campaign from March 23 and hold meetings at every village in Uttar Pradesh on the 22nd of the following months as part of its campaign for the 2022 Assembly elections.

The decision was taken at the national executive meeting of the party, whose election symbol is bicycle.

Addressing a press conference here, SP's national spokesperson Rajendra Choudhary said, "It was decided that from March 23, on occasion of Ram Manohar Lohia's birth anniversary, cycle yatras will be

organised by party workers in every village. From April, on every 22nd, demonstrations or cycle yatra will be held. The date was chosen by national president Akhilesh Yadav because the state election will be contested in 2022, and we will have a 22-point agenda for these meetings in villages. The agenda for these meetings will be made public later," said Choudhary.

Among those who attended the meeting on Saturday were Rajya Sabha member Jaya Bachchan, Leader of Opposition in the state Legislative Council Ahmed Hasan, Leader of Opposition in Legislative Assembly Ram Govind Choudhary, and former Rajya Sabha member Kiranmoy Nanda.

Din in Maharashtra House as BJP tries to expose cracks in Sena-NCP-Cong alliance over CAA, NPR

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, MARCH 14

RUCKUS PREVAILED in the Maharashtra Assembly on Saturday as BJP attempted to expose the cracks in the ruling Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi over the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and the National Population Register (NPR).

A discussion on the budgetary grants for 2020-21 was disrupted after the Treasury and the Opposition benches locked horns over the issue. Saturday was the last day of the current session, which has been curtailed amid the spread of Covid-19.

Trouble erupted in the House



Devendra Fadnavis, Anil Deshmukh

after Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnavis, while discussing budgetary grants, accused "some of the ministers" in the state of stoking fear among minorities.

Fadnavis said there was no

provision in the CAA to take away anyone's citizenship, but a "misinformation campaign" had been undertaken against it.

"It is the responsibility of the state government to clear the air in this regard. But some ministers of the government are themselves stoking fear and spreading confusion. How are they being allowed to speak out against a national legislation? The government must get them against the same," said Fadnavis.

Senior ministers, especially those belonging to NCP and Shiv Sena, repeatedly interrupted Fadnavis' speech, contending that a discussion on CAA was beyond the scope of the discussion.

"This is an independent issue.

It has nothing to do with budgetary grants," said Home Minister Anil Deshmukh.

When Fadnavis argued that the "rumours being spread" had created a law and order issue, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Anil Parab, who belongs to Sena, countered. "Riots have taken place in BJP-ruled states. We haven't seen a single incident. You (BJP) are trying to pollute the atmosphere in the state," he said.

NCP's Nawab Malik and Chaggaan Bhujbal later read out legislative rules, seeking the chair's ruling that Fadnavis should not be permitted to speak over the issue. The din in the house intensified after Bhujbal made an "objectionable" remark, with the BJP

members storming into the well.

Assembly Speaker Nana Patole adjourned the House for 30 minutes. During the break, group leaders of all parties held a meeting. When the proceedings resumed, Patole ruled that "objectionable" remarks made on both sides stood expunged.

While he ruled that Fadnavis shouldn't speak on the issue further, the Opposition leader concluded his speech criticising the coalition for not acting against former Jawaharlal Nehru University student Umar Khalid, alleging that the latter, while addressing a gathering in Amravati, had exhorted people to come out on the streets during US President Donald Trump's recent visit to India.

As work heads home, agencies bolster digital capacity

KARISHMA MEHROTRA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 14

WITH EMPLOYEES and students retreating from physical gatherings, government agencies are looking at bolstering digital capacities to handle the shift. The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has eased rules to help IT companies transition to "work from home" in the wake of coronavirus, while the IT Department in Kerala, the state with the most confirmed cases so far, has worked with telecom companies to bolster network capacity after struggling to convince coaching classes in the state to transfer lessons online.

With 19 coronavirus cases confirmed so far, Kerala has implemented the strongest quarantine measures to stem the flow.

"We were worried about entrance coaching classes because they would not disband classes. This required quality internet service, which (the concept of) 'work from home' also requires," Kerala IT Secretary M Sivasankar said.

"The classes have now been disbanded. We have managed to provide quality browsing through this timely meeting of telecom companies," he said.

Sivasankar has met with officials of internet service providers such as BSNL, Reliance Jio, Airtel, Idea, Asianet, Tala Teleservices, and PowerGrid for this purpose. The stakehold-

ers agreed to reroute internet data traffic in Kerala so that the network can withstand a 40-per cent increase in usage.

Sivasankar said this was done by ensuring 80 per cent data was retrieved from data servers in Kerala, and 20 per cent from those in the rest of India.

"We have seen (internet) usage increase in the past two days primarily because of coaching classes. We have also seen hyper-local areas where there is a higher demand for browsing. The telcos are responding to those areas," he said.

On Friday, the DoT relaxed the rules for "Other Service Providers" (OSPs) to create "Work from Home" facilities without requiring prior permission. OSPs are defined as

tele-banking, tele-medicine, tele-trading, e-commerce, and other non-telecom services.

Online education platforms are leveraging the moment to provide free subscriptions and courses.

In Delhi, schools such as British School are introducing primary- and secondary-level students to virtual systems, and some private schools are providing worksheets through log-in systems for self-study.

"We are certainly only talking about 1 or 2 per cent of schools which have online systems," Osama Manzar, head of Digital Empowerment Foundation, said. "(But) what about the municipality school in Delhi? They (students) might not be connected at home.

The current scenario is an initial proof of concept to test in a quarantine if our education infrastructure is being enabled by digital connectivity."

The US Federal Communications Commission (FCC) created a "Keep Americans Connected Pledge" on Friday to "ensure that Americans do not lose their broadband or telephone connectivity as a result of these exceptional circumstances," according to FCC chairman Ajit Pai.

The pledge, signed by Google Fiber, AT&T, Verizon and Comcast, guarantee that the company will waive late fees, open up WiFi hotspots, and not terminate services to residential or small business customers even if they can't pay their bills.



PREVENTION BETTER THAN CURE

The Lucknow Zoo Administration has fixed a hand sanitiser bottle at its gates over Covid-19 fears. *Vishal Srivastava*

To address situation, Indian missions working round-the-clock

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, MARCH 14

WITH MORE than 150,000 cases of coronavirus being reported worldwide, India has taken the lead in the SAARC to formulate a joint strategy to deal with the public health crisis.

The efforts by the government began almost seven weeks ago. From evacuating Indians from China, Italy, Japan and Iran to round-the-clock monitoring by top officials in South Block, sending relief material to China and The Maldives, fielding calls from Indians in distress - the Ministry of External Affairs and the Indian embassies have mobilised all its resources to address the Covid-19 situation since January, officials said.

"As part of the proactive pan-government approach to address the Covid-19 situation, MEA has been leading efforts to ensure the safety and well being of our nationals abroad, under challenging circumstances," an official said on Saturday.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla

are personally monitoring the situation. Jaishankar also travelled to Srinagar on March 9 and met with the families of Indian students in Iran and heard their concerns.

"A fully functional special cell has been set up in the Ministry to coordinate coronavirus response-related issues both internally and externally. The cell is being headed by Damru Ravi, Additional Secretary, and has four officers and other staff to support him," the official said.

The MEA has worked with the missions abroad to bring back Indian nationals from severely affected countries. The mission in Beijing worked round-the-clock to work out the necessary logistics during the evacuation from Wuhan. Tasks involved collating the list of Indians over WeChat and emails, making transport arrangements for people from different cities amidst a lockdown, deploying officers in Wuhan and then bringing them safely on two Boeing 747s to Delhi.

The Indian embassy in Japan also mounted evacuation operations on February 26 and 27, with Air India bringing back 119 Indians and five nationals from Sri Lanka, Nepal, South Africa and Peru who were quar-

antined onboard the Diamond Princess cruise ship off the Japanese coast.

"Our Missions in Iran and Italy are in regular touch with Indian nationals, including Indian students and community members, and is advising them on following all health protocols amidst the outbreak. Medical team has reached both countries to test our nationals for the virus... Medical teams and the embassy staff are working to collect the samples," another official said.

"Our mission/ posts in the US have been coordinating evacuation of Indian nationals quarantined onboard the cruise ship Grand Princess, docked at the port of Oakland," the official said.

According to officials, the missions are also working to responding to queries from Indians nationals abroad. "Missions have set up their helplines and are proactively responding to queries over phone and emails as well as using social media platforms to reach the Indian community in these countries," the official said.

As part of this effort, envoys from 130 countries were briefed by the government officials on Saturday.

Covid-19 cases rising, Kerala ups preventive measures

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MARCH 14

THE KERALA government Saturday decided to strengthen steps to monitor the entry of persons with suspected symptoms of Covid-19.

Although no fresh cases were reported on Saturday, the number of persons under observation went up to 7,677, with 302 of them isolated in hospitals. On Saturday alone, 106 people were hospitalised.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan told reporters that passengers in all trains entering into the state would be examined. "A team of health workers would be assigned to examine passengers in two compartments. The examination would be held only after the trains enter the state. All vehicles entering into the state would be checked in the similar way at 24 points across the state... Screening teams at airports would be strengthened and police would be deployed at all airports to help screening," he said.

The state government has also decided to supply food provisions directly to the houses of those under observation. In Ernakulam district, 173 persons were given food items Saturday.

To address the shortage of masks in the market, the ruling dispensation decided to rope in prisoners to manufacture them. Mask manufacturing will start on a war footing at three central prisons. Besides, state-owned Kerala State Drugs and Pharmaceuticals has been asked to manufacture one lakh bottles of hand sanitizer within ten days.

Telangana in virtual lockdown, Tirupati temple puts curbs

SREENIVAS JANYALA
HYDERABAD MARCH 14

WHILE THE Telangana government on Saturday ordered a virtual lockdown in the state until March 31 after a second person from Kothagudem is suspected to have coronavirus, in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh, for the first time in over 1,700 years of its existence the temple of Lord Venkateshwara at Tirumala put curbs on visits by pilgrims due to the outbreak.

Also for the first time in the temple's history, participation of devotees in the celestial wedding ceremony of Sri Sita Rama Kalyanam, which is usually observed at Vontimitta as part of the annual brahmotsavams of Sri Kodanda Ramaswamy temple, has been cancelled this year in view of the coronavirus alert. "As nearly 1 lakh devotees are expected to converge for the celestial Kalyanam on April 7 and sit for six to seven hours, Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) has decided to cancel the mass fete keeping in view the health of devotees. The Kalyanam will be observed in the temple by priests as usual, a TTD official said.

In Hyderabad, after a marathon meeting the Telangana Cabinet ordered shutdown of all educational institutions, shopping malls and cinema halls, and banned public gatherings until March 31.

This comes a day after a man from Kalaburgi, Karnataka, who visited Hyderabad for treatment, died and his samples were reported to have tested positive for Covid-19. He had come in contact with more than a hundred people, who are all under quarantine now, officials said.

On Saturday, officials said a person who had visited Italy is suspected of coronavirus.

Telangana Health Minister Etala Rajender said: "The person had arrived from Italy on March 7 and did not show any symptoms

when tested at the airport and went home. On March 9, the person developed high fever and was admitted to a private hospital at Manganuru, Telangana. On March 10, the patient was referred to Bhadrachalam Hospital, and after treatment went home. However, the Bhadrachalam Surveillance Officer counselled the patient to visit Gandhi Hospital, Hyderabad, for a test, where he was admitted in isolation ward."

"Officials said the results came positive (in the first test, not confirmed case yet) today," the minister said.

In Andhra Pradesh, instead of allowing thousands of pilgrims to wait in huge compartments for 'darshan', the TTD will give out tokens with time slots from March 17. This, officials said, will ensure that not more than 4,000 pilgrims are present inside the temple complex at any given time, and that they would stand in different queues instead of waiting in compartments, where thousands are bunched together.

TTD executive officer Anil Kumar Singhal said, "We had decided to take some steps, and the state government also asked us to initiate (certain) measures to prevent spread of coronavirus here. Tirumala is the most populated pilgrim centre, with the highest congregation of pilgrims, and we have contemplated measures to prevent any outbreak here," he added.

As part of the new measures, devotees will not be made to sit in compartments of "Vaikuntham Queue Complex" to avoid person-to-person contact. "In the given time slots, pilgrims will be allowed for darshan by limiting the numbers. Devotees should bring ID card such as Aadhaar, voters' ID, driving licence to get the time slot tokens," Singhal said.

Singhal said the ground-breaking ceremony for construction of Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple in Mumbai, earlier scheduled on April 5, has also been postponed due to the virus outbreak.

Karnataka curbed public gatherings after experts cited Italy, Wuhan data

JOHNSON T A
BENGALURU, MARCH 14

A TEAM of health experts in Karnataka convinced the state government to issue orders to restrict all big gatherings in the state by citing details of the galloping coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19) in Italy and Spain in recent weeks and in Wuhan earlier.

The state government Friday decided to impose curbs - including shutting down public spaces such as malls and theatres apart from cancelling public events - for a week and to review the situation subsequently. The experts had recommended that curbs be imposed on public gatherings and large social interactions for two weeks.

"What happened in Italy and Spain and the way the disease spread in these countries within a matter of weeks because control measures were not put in place was presented to the government to facilitate the decision to curb public gatherings," said Dr R Ravindra, a member of the Indian Medical Association who was at the government meeting.

"The reason two weeks was considered was due to the 14-day incubation period for the virus," the IMA member said.

At the meeting on Friday attended by Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa, state government officials and health experts, it was suggested that as many as 1 lakh people may be infected in Karnataka if data of the spread of the virus in places such as Italy, Spain and Wuhan is considered, sources familiar with the meeting said.

"There are a lot of projections being made on the rate of spread of infections but we relied on available data in the public domain and what we already know is needed to control the spread of the virus, which is restricting movement of people and social interactions. This is what we recommended," said

Dr Ravindra, president of the Private Hospitals and Nursing Homes Association in Karnataka.

A total of six positive cases of Covid-19 have been reported in Karnataka - all had recently returned from abroad, including a 76-year-old man who died on March 10.

Those who tested positive reportedly came in contact with as many as 4,000 people, as per Karnataka's health department.

An engineer of Dell India who came back from a work visit to US is reported to have made 2,666 contacts during and after his return before he fell ill and tested positive for the virus. His wife and daughter later tested positive too.

"There is going to be transmission for another maybe three or four weeks. After that, epidemics start dying down. In China, it has started dying down because of control measures. We are also putting in control measures. The weak link is the contact tracing and if that is not good then there is going to be spread of disease," said Professor V Ravi, head of the virology lab at the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences.

According to the report of the WHO-China Joint Mission on Covid-19, quarantine and social distancing measures were most effective in curbing the spread of the disease which was doubling in the initial phases in China.

"Much of the global community is not yet ready, in mindset and materially, to implement the measures that have been employed to contain Covid-19 in China. These are the only measures that are currently proven to interrupt or minimize transmission chains in humans. Fundamental to these measures is extremely proactive surveillance to immediately detect cases, very rapid diagnosis and immediate case isolation, rigorous tracking and quarantine of close contacts, and an exceptionally high degree of population understanding and acceptance of these measures," states the WHO-China joint mission report.

Health workers spray disinfectant as a precautionary measure against Covid-19 in Jammu on Saturday. AP

Kolkata civic poll notification may be delayed

Kolkata: The West Bengal State Election Commission (SEC) may postpone the announcement of civic polls in Kolkata and Howrah due to coronavirus, an SEC official said. "It's very difficult to announce poll dates due to the coronavirus outbreak. Once the poll schedule is released, the campaign will start immediately. But any type of campaign means gathering, which is very dangerous in the current circumstances," the official said. He said if the situation does not improve in the next 15 days, polls may be not be held until May or early June. **ENS**

SC for canteens on its premises to be shut

New Delhi: As part of precautionary measures against Covid-19, Supreme Court authorities Saturday "advised" all cafeterias on its premises to remain closed until further orders. A circular asked staff members to make their own arrangements for food, and advised them to use alcohol-based sanitisers. "All staff members may be required to subject themselves to thermal-screening and persons detected with high body temperature would be denied entry and further, they may be subject to the SOP prescribed by the Government of India, Ministry of Health from time to time," the note said. **ENS**

Rlys withdraws curtains from AC coaches

Mumbai/New Delhi: In the wake of coronavirus outbreak, Central and Western Railway on Saturday ordered withdrawal of blankets and curtains from AC coaches as they are not washed every day. Other items in the bed roll, including bedsheets, towels and pillow covers, are washed every day. "As per the extant instructions, curtains and blankets provided in AC coaches are not washed (after) every trip. In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19, blankets and curtains will be immediately withdrawn from service till further orders," Western Railway spokesperson Gajanan Mahatpurkar said. **PTI**

Goa CM tells tourists to avoid state: 'Don't travel unnecessarily'

Panaji: Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant Saturday asked tourists - both domestic and foreign - to avoid the state as a precautionary measure, as the government ramped up measures to stave off a coronavirus outbreak.

Sawant also ordered the closure of educational institutions, pubs, movie halls, public swimming pools, spas, cruises and casinos till March 31, announcing a midnight deadline for the same. The state will also install thermal scanners at Panaji airport, local ports and railway stations.

The moves come after the government invoked the Epidemic Act Friday evening.

For now, the government has allowed malls, restaurants and eateries to remain open. "We are also advising people not to travel unnecessarily and not conduct meetings with large gatherings. Hotels with wedding venues have also been urged to make sure mass gatherings are avoided," Sawant said.

The Chief Minister is, however, allowing organisers of the ongoing Shigmo, a Hindu festival, to take a call on public floats and carnivals. But he said that any other avoidable religious gathering should be delayed till the outbreak subsides. **ENS**

People we met in Kashmir were selected, so it was a partial image. But not a fake image... It was clear there are big challenges, but efforts by the government and aspirations of the people represent lot of reality"



WHY EMMANUEL LENAIN

Having arrived as France's Ambassador to India in October 2019, Emmanuel Lenain was among 25 foreign envoys who were taken to Kashmir by the government last month. Following his visit, Lenain caused a stir when he said that while the authorities were making "significant efforts" to "normalise the situation" in

the region, the remaining restrictions should be removed "as soon as possible". A career diplomat, he has served in New York, Beijing and Washington DC. He is in India at a time when India-France ties are strengthening in a wide range of areas — defence, counter-terrorism, trade and nuclear, among others



"All governments must handle coronavirus in a proper way... No panic but serious contingency... We are eager to work with India. There is general advice for trips outside France, but no fear specifically about India

SHUBHAJIT ROY: In light of coronavirus, has France proposed any travel or health advisories concerning India?

All governments must handle it in a proper way, which means no panic but serious contingency. This can be managed if there is full cooperation and therefore we are very eager to work with the Indian authorities. We are in touch with the authorities, and we perfectly trust them... Right now, there is general advice for any trips outside France, to limit them, but no fear specifically about India.

SHUBHAJIT ROY: Have India and France moved on from the Rafale deal controversy? What is the status of the delivery of the first batch of fighters?

Cooperation of this kind has been going on for decades between France and India, and it is not a surprise that we are ready to move on. There has been a controversy and it was linked very specifically to election time in India... It has been cleared by the Supreme Court. I don't see any voice saying anything different after this ruling, even in the Indian political landscape... As for the delivery, everything is fine, everything is on time. Last October, the first Rafale was handed over to the Indian Defence Minister. The second, third, fourth are also being delivered on site in France as the choice was made by the Indian authorities for the pilots to be trained on site. Once the training is done, the planes will come to Indian soil, starting this May, perfectly on time as per the contract...

SHUBHAJIT ROY: Do you think the shadow of the Rafale controversy on future purchases is over?

I don't see any more controversy. I think everyone now knows that this controversy was totally linked to politicians bickering at election time.

SHUBHAJIT ROY: Do you think that with the Chinese chairmanship of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), it has become difficult to put Pakistan on the black list?

India and France are totally on the same page on counter-terrorism. My country, like India, has been a victim of terrorism, especially the dreadful attack in 2015 and later. It is a major field of cooperation between our governments, intelligence, and this includes cooperation at international fora. At New York (the UN Security Council), we have been very active to have some terrorists included by the sanctions committee. We won't be deterred by any country when it comes to putting any terrorist on that list, whatever it takes and whether it takes some time... You mentioned the FATF... We are very clear that we want concrete results on counter-terrorism, which means we want financial curbs for terrorism... The neighbouring country (Pakistan) was put on the grey list at the last meeting to keep up the pressure on it to fulfill the points we had raised. We are totally determined that this is the case, and a re-assessment will be done at the next meeting in June.

SHUBHAJIT ROY: You went to Kashmir as part of the second batch of envoys taken by the government there. What was your sense of the trip, interactions there? Were things normal?

I understand it is not easy to go there on individual trips these days because of security reasons... Within that frame (of a government-organised trip), many interactions were provided to us, direct interaction, without mediation. We met people from civil society, business community, local journalists and civil servants. It was very clear that there are still challenges, of security, but the efforts by the government to move on and the aspirations of the people we met represent lot of reality. They were very clear that they wanted to move forward, get economic development.

SHUBHAJIT ROY: Did any of the envoys of the two batches seek a meeting with the former chief ministers of J&K in detention now for more than six months? (Farooq Abdullah's detention under the PSA was revoked on Friday.)

No, it was not a prerequisite... If we had been provided access to all people, to all parts of the reality of Kashmir, we would have taken the opportunity. But again, the important thing for us was to get a first glimpse from our eyes of what was going on...

You can't say that (the situation) is totally normal. You can see that efforts towards normalcy are being made. We got a briefing from people in charge of the security, we got a briefing from government officials, nobody tried to convince us that things are back to normal. There have been challenges for a long time, but we saw big efforts were being made to move on, to bring back investors, to get jobs for the

'We admire the political debate in India... Violence can be worrying... but India, with rule of law, can resolve it'

Ambassador of France to India Emmanuel Lenain says CAA is a domestic issue, assures Paris is firm over FATF action against Pak, insists Rafale row was linked to Indian politics and that planes are on schedule, and hopes for "good news" on the Jaitapur n-units



Ambassador of France to India Emmanuel Lenain with Associate Editor Shubhajit Roy in The Indian Express newsroom. Tashi Tobgyal

youth. Still there are obstacles, and restrictions that are yet to be lifted.

SHUBHAJIT ROY: Do you think French investors would come to Kashmir?

The region is wonderfully beautiful... For investment, you need long-term perspective, you need to have clarity and the environment. It is going to take some time for international investors to come back.

RAVISH TIWARI: There is a fear that the entire visit of the envoys to Kashmir will be seen as a repeat of the Potemkin village chapter. That the government used the visit to give legitimacy to its actions there, especially amidst international criticism. Have you factored in this risk?

Firstly, I don't think we have been given a Potemkin image (in 1787, Grigory Potemkin is said to have built a fake, portable village solely to impress Russian Empress Catherine II during her journey to Crimea). We were given a certain image, the officials, people we met had been selected by the government, so it was a partial image. But it was not a fake image. Secondly, I needed to view the situation from my eyes, that's my job and that's how I can make personal judgments about situations, advise my government. Then, as you may have seen, all of us refrained from making comments that could be used one way or the other. We went there to assess the situation, we didn't go there to say this is right, this is wrong. Besides, I would say, the Kashmir issue has implications and that is why we are very vigilant. But, at the core of it, is our decision that it is a domestic issue, and that is why I am very cautious.

P VAIDYANATHAN IYER: Recently, US President Donald Trump on more than one occasion talked about his willingness to mediate between India and Pakistan...

He likes to mediate... Well, there are two different sides. There are implications internationally, on regional security and beyond. That is why, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, we are very vigilant... We see no added value in discussing the issue in the Security Council. The Security Council is not going to impose a solution. Each time, a country (Pakistan) has tried to bring the issue to the Security Council, we have opposed it.

P VAIDYANATHAN IYER: How does France view the protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act?

These are internal issues, and my government, my authorities refrain comment on that. Obviously, we are always very at-

tached to freedom of belief, and that is one reason why we admire India, which has traditionally been a very tolerant place for different groups and communities. But, it's a domestic issue... Obviously, we are concerned when we see some violence. We admire the way there is real political debate in India all the time... very energetic, very vibrant... When it deteriorates into violence, we are concerned. But, it's a domestic issue and we feel that in India, with its rule of law, these things can be solved through regular process. When you oppose a law, you can appeal to the court. That is also something we expect.

RAVISH TIWARI: Critically examining the five permanent members of the Security Council, the kind of heavy lifting that France has done for India, it outmatches even Russia in recent years. One view is that given the state of the French, or the entire European, economy, Paris sees the relationship as merely transactional, an economic opportunity, and that is what is dictating your position, whether it is on Article 370 or the CAA...

What you say is very cynical. How can you imagine that a country, my country, can take a position for a mere prospect of a military front?... Don't forget that we were the first country to establish a strategic partnership with India in 1998. We have been side by side on all the major crises our countries have had... When you did your nuclear test in Pokhran in 1998, we were with you, some countries had put sanctions on India at that time. When you had difficulties with certain neighbours, we were always there. So why do we do that? To get one or two contracts? In international politics, you never take a certain alignment for purely commercial reasons. We have been doing that because we have made the as-

essment, and we have been proved right, that we have alignment on core interests and values. We are big democracies, we feel that we are attached to the law, international law to settle issues between countries, that we have interest in a free world, in an Indo-Pacific free world... My country wants to remain independent. We don't want to be a junior partner, of either China, the US or whoever... And to get this independence, we have a strong anchor, which is that we have very strong partnerships with certain countries. At the core of these partnerships is parity. We want more partnership with you, and we want India to get a permanent seat in the Security Council. We feel it is high time, for the Security Council to reflect the reality of today.

AAKASH JOSHI: How does the unrest in India, including the recent Delhi riots, affect your outreach in India?

First, what we want is more people-to-people exchanges. We feel that no friendship can last between countries without it. Cultural (exchange) is one way to achieve it, but a more efficient way is to ensure that people travel to our country. So we welcome Indian students and tourists to come to France. The figure has doubled in the last two years. For students, we are offering scholarships, we have more partnerships with schools, and we are providing more and more courses entirely in English... We had 10,000 Indian students in France last year. Within five years, that number will reach 20,000... We are going to reach one million (Indian) tourists soon. We have the Alliance Française. We have 30,000 students now, we will have 35,000... We are working on very ambitious preparations. I don't see any reason for it to be disrupted. We all hope that events like what we have seen in Northeast Delhi are behind us... Right now we have no reason to cancel any

events anywhere in India.

UDIT MISRA: While Kashmir and the CAA are domestic issues, does France have a problem with the way things are being pushed in India? There is criticism over decisions being taken without any discussion and debate. Does this bother France?

India is a democracy that believes in the rule of law. In that case, there is not much for international partners to talk and discuss about. If the assumption is that India is no longer a democracy, and the institutions are not functioning, that is another issue. But I haven't seen anybody challenging that right now.

SHUBHAJIT ROY: Do you think the anti-CAA protests across the country and the riots in Delhi will deter French businesses from investing in India?

According to my record, French companies already provide roughly 350,000 jobs in India. They are very eager to be part of the huge transformation going on in this country. They want to be part of the ecological transformation, which means sustainable development. Ten per cent of the solar power in India has been installed by French companies... We want to be part of the urban transformation of your country. We are world leaders in (constructing) subways, anything pertaining to smart cities.

We also want to be a part of the digital transformation of your country. We already have some companies investing heavily. French companies such as Capgemini will soon reach 150,000 employees in India... Is the image of India these days an obstacle? Honestly, when companies are investing, they are long-term investors, you have a 10-year, 20-year perspective. If you look at 20 years, India is just growing huge.

MONOJIT MAJUMDAR: Over the past few years, since 2018, most of the news that we come across in the international media from France is about deep social unrest which seems to be manifesting itself in a lot of street violence and protests — the Yellow Vests movement, the transport strike over the pension reforms. What has triggered the recent unrest?

The Yellow Vests movement is different from previous movements... A certain part of the population feels that due to globalisation, tomorrow will be worse than today, and that things are going to be even worse for their kids. It's a perception... Perception is very important in politics. They are not poor people, they are not people without jobs, they are people who work hard and feel that the opportunities to ac-

cess some services are not as they were. The government has recognised this and a huge plan has been launched. In the meantime, the government is committed to keep on reforming the country. My president wants France to be the most competitive country, and since he came to power there have been numerous reforms.

SHUBHAJIT ROY: Has India's economic profile taken a beating in the international community?

Growth is slower but I would say there is a global component in it. There has been some very impressive progress in the Indian economy. India jumped up in 'ease of doing business'. Would we like to see some additional reforms? Yes. Would we like to have less barriers? Yes. We would like to see lesser taxes on products which are very important for French economy. We would like to have less taxes on food and agriculture. Would we like more investment in infrastructure? Yes. Our companies and we are very optimistic of the future of India. They are not looking for cheap returns, they are long-term investors.

RAVISH TIWARI: In your view, how is democracy shaping up in Europe?

Europe is not immune from populism tendencies... We have seen globalisation unleash some forces because of which a part of the middle class feels disenfranchised and frustrated by the way their lives have been altered. But, he (the French president) has tried to have a very responsible, ambitious policy for Europe by proposing to move forward and, so far, Europe is moving.

SHUBHAJIT ROY: Although France was the first to sign an agreement with India after the NSG waived rules that forbid nuclear trade with a non-NPT signatory, the construction of the six European pressurized reactor units at Jaitapur hasn't really moved as fast as it should have. What are the hurdles?

In nuclear energy, you have to be safe... It does take time. When you build nuclear plants, you commit yourself for as much as a century... We already have two plants in China. We have plants under construction in the UK. They are perfectly on time... We think we have a great technology. What remains to be discussed... we have technical issues, issues about responsibility, which you call civilian nuclear liability. The progress is fast, we are almost there.

The other is the commercial aspect. The companies are discussing among themselves. We are committed to the best price for Indian companies.



"Is image of India these days an obstacle? Firms have long-term perspective. If you look at 20 years, India is just growing huge... I don't see any reason why French investors will not look at big projects in India

Bank, Boom, Bust



Praveen Khanna

In 2004, a former bank executive started his own bank. As it grew, courting corporates, lending aggressively and dodging referees, the bad loans grew too. Until one day, the bank went belly up. GEORGE MATHEW, SUNNY VERMA & SANDEEP SINGH on how the story of Yes Bank and Rana Kapoor is of warning bells that went unheard

AFTER PROVIDING services to Yes Bank for years, a vendor was keen to terminate the contract. But no sooner had he left the Yes Bank office after communicating this to the bank's then CEO Rana Kapoor, than he got a call from Kapoor's secretary seeking an appointment the next day to "sort things out". The following morning, half an hour before the appointed time, there landed at the vendor's office hundreds of small pots of money plant, along with an expensive art piece. As well as a letter from Kapoor to the vendor, in which he called the latter a "partner" in Yes Bank's growth story, and apologised "for not valuing the services offered". The letter also promised to triple the fee Yes Bank would pay henceforth. Even as the vendor was recovering from all the activity around his office, Kapoor walked in at the appointed hour to talk the vendor out of his decision. Needless to say, the vendor stayed on.

Rana Kapoor, a former Bank of America executive who helped Dutch giant Rabobank set up an NBFC (non-banking financial company) business in India in 1998, stood out for his flamboyance in a business that is considered staid and which calls for utmost prudence. It was this flamboyance — coupled with unbridled aggression in his financial moves — that drove him to take risky decisions and, as it now turns out, allegedly corrupt ones with quid pro quo built in.

Kapoor's banking experience earned him and his brother-in-law Ashok Kapur (husband of Rana Kapoor's wife's sister), who died in the 26/11 terror attack at Mumbai's Oberoi Hotel, a rare banking licence in 2004, along with Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd.

Around the same time, July 24, 2004, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), then headed by Y V Reddy, had taken everyone by surprise by announcing a moratorium on private sector lender Global Trust Bank (GTB), which was then reeling under huge losses and bad loans. The bank was merged with public sector Oriental Bank of Commerce (OBC) within 48 hours under an RBI-led rescue plan.

Over 15 years later, in a repeat of history, the central bank on March 5 announced a moratorium on Yes Bank, restricting withdrawals to Rs 50,000 per depositor till April 3. That made Yes the first private bank to go under since GTB. After long grilling and raids on his properties, Kapoor was arrested in Mumbai on March 8.

The RBI's announcement of moratorium was followed by a reconstruction plan for Yes Bank and capital infusion by banks and financial institutions. While the State Bank of India announced equity infusion of Rs 7,250 crore on March 12, ICICI Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, HDFC and Axis Bank on Friday said their boards have approved investments of Rs 1,000 crore, Rs 500 crore, Rs 1,000 crore and Rs 600 crore, respectively, in Yes Bank. Some more private investors are also expected to pitch in.

RED FLAGS ALL ALONG

There are other uncanny parallels between Yes Bank's fall and GTB's — from allegations of loans to dubious firms to money laundering, kickbacks and under-reporting of bad loans and losses.

According to the Enforcement Directorate (ED), Kapoor laundered money using his dominant position at Yes Bank, at the cost of depositors, investors and the other stakeholders. There are several loans that the bank gave

over the years that turned bad, raising questions over the credit appraisal and the underwriting standards at the bank.

Industry executives say that while the bank's Board of Directors will have to account for some questionable decision-making by its promoter, the RBI will also have to share some blame. They contend that the banking regulator should have been more prompt about detection of stressed books and the lack of corporate governance standards at Yes Bank.

Bankers in Mumbai also blame credit rating agencies for not raising any alarm, despite several red flags since 2015 — from rapid expansion of the bank's loan books (34% over the previous five years as compared to 10-12% for other banks), to lending to highly-leveraged corporates, and large-scale suppression of non-performing assets or NPAs (loans due for repayment for over 90 days). The figure stood at over Rs 6,000 crore three years ago.

In 2015, the RBI, under then Governor Raghuram Rajan, had started a special inspection of banks' balance sheets, called asset quality review. The RBI inspectors found that Yes Bank had suppressed its NPAs — reportedly underreporting the same by Rs 2,299 crore in 2018-19, Rs 6,355 crore in FY 2017 and over Rs 4,000 crore in FY2016 — as well as cooked up its balance sheet.

All this should have set off alarm bells and prompted tougher action, but not much was done and Kapoor continued to call the shots.

The RBI finally cracked down when the bank's NPAs differed from its assessment. It ordered an early exit of Rana Kapoor from the bank, forcing him to step down as MD and CEO in January 2019, and placed its nominee director on Yes Bank's Board. But by then, it was already too late.

Meanwhile, the bank's bad loans kept growing. Following the RBI's asset quality review in 2019, its gross NPAs surged 87 per cent from a year ago, with the bulk of the jump in the March and June quarters. Its net NPAs more than doubled.

The bank, however, still refuted the charge of suppression of bad loans. "As mandated and required under regulations, the bank has been making all disclosures to stakeholders on NPA divergence related findings made by the regulator," Yes Bank had said in a statement.

In May 2019, the RBI appointed former deputy governor R Gandhi as additional director on the board of Yes Bank for two years.

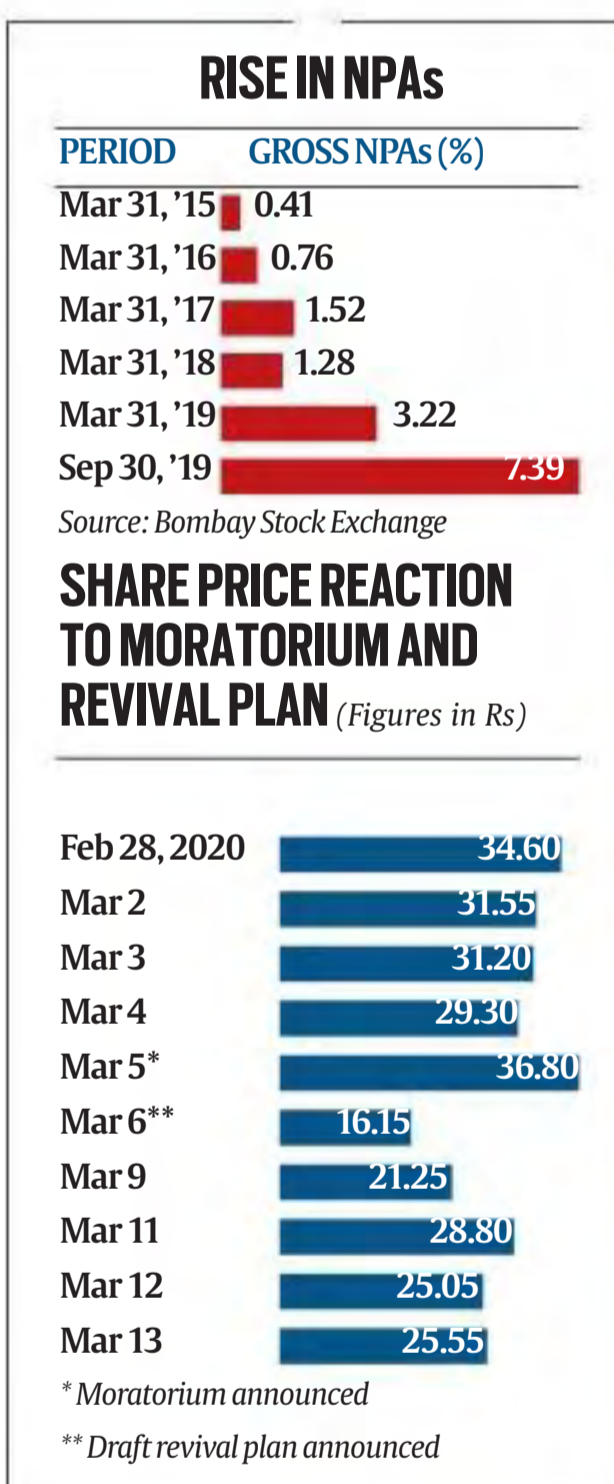
MODUS OPERANDI

One of the reasons for Yes Bank's troubles was the massive increase in its loan book between 2014 and 2019. From total advances of Rs 55,633 crore in 2014, the number grew nearly five times to Rs 2,41,500 crore in 2019 — a CAGR or compounded annual growth rate of 34.1 per cent, as compared to roughly 10-12 per cent for other lenders.

When many of its borrowers such as DHFL and Reliance Infra, among others, went belly up, and given that it had not done adequate provisioning against such losses, Yes Bank's entire business model unravelled.

This model rested on targeting lending to corporates as opposed to building a slow and steady retail portfolio.

Left without funds following the global financial crisis of 2008 that came after the credit boom of 2003-2007, Indian corporates had been finding the going tough, with projects stalled and stuck with overcapacity.



When questions were raised about his plan for a book, Kapoor once said, "If you have to grow and create wealth, you have to keep your inhibitions aside and be focused on what you want. Don't second guess"

"Sensing the mood in the economy, most banks were not willing to lend funds to certain promoters and projects. But many of them went to Yes Bank and Rana Kapoor obliged. The appraisal process of these loans remains a mystery," said a former official of a leading nationalised bank who has watched Kapoor since the days he headed Bank of America's wholesale banking business and later became the Country Head of ANZ Grindlays Bank.

"Yes Bank's mantra under Rana Kapoor was to aggressively grow the corporate loan book while taking in high-cost wholesale deposits. Growing a retail portfolio requires effort, energy and a large branch network built over years. It also pays off in the long run in terms of lower delinquency. On the contrary, a bank can make an advance of Rs 15,000 crore to a single corporate and surpass other banks by a wide margin. And when this aggression to grow the book is combined with poor risk control, and weak appraisal and underwriting standards, it can play havoc on the institution. This is precisely what happened at Yes Bank," a senior banker told *The Sunday Express*.

According to the latest available financial data, 80.2 per cent of Yes Bank's total loan ad-



Yes Bank promoter Rana Kapoor after his arrest in Mumbai on March 8. File

vances were to corporates, with retail portfolio accounting for the rest.

While excessive leverage by many of the corporates to whom Yes Bank lent caused stress, industry sources also point to the lender's alleged intent to hide its NPAs through an "ever-greening of loans".

The typical modus operandi: when a large corporate borrower of Yes Bank's loan was about to default on its repayment, the bank roped in some other agency or an NBFC to arrange a stop-gap loan for the borrower. "While this delayed the problem, it was bound to have blown up sooner or later. It's only the extent of the blow-up that caught the corporate community by surprise," said an industry executive who has watched Kapoor closely and who asked not to be named.

On March 11, the ED, which has arrested Rana Kapoor on money laundering charges, declared in a special court in Mumbai that of the Rs 30,000 crore that Yes Bank sanctioned during his tenure, Rs 20,000 crore had turned into NPAs. The ED also alleged that it had found details of Rs 5,000 crore in kickbacks that Kapoor received while extending these loans.

Sources said the ED charges of quid pro quo were based on a forensic report by audit firm KPMG on DHFL, one of Yes Bank's borrowers which is also under RBI moratorium.

Kapoor was questioned by the ED over a Rs 600-crore loan from a DHFL firm to DoIT Urban Ventures (India) Private Ltd, a company owned by Kapoor's family, at a time when Yes Bank had a loan exposure of over Rs 3,700 crore to DHFL.

DoIT was incorporated in 2012 with Rana Kapoor's wife Bindu as its director. It currently has his daughters Roshini Kapoor and Radha Kapoor Khanna as its directors. The company has no employees and in the year ended March 2019, it incurred a loss of over Rs 48 crore on a revenue of Rs 59.36 crore.

Kapoor extended loans to several other corporates through this route and the kickbacks were allegedly routed to companies floated by the Kapoor family, the ED said in the court. These kickbacks were allegedly used to acquire properties in Delhi, Mumbai, the UK and the US, the ED said.

Though Kapoor travelled to London often, he chose to live in Samudra Mahal, a tony complex in downtown Worli area of Mumbai

which he had rented from Congress-turned-BJP politician Jyotiraditya Scindia.

By 2016-17, RBI auditors had wind of Kapoor's alleged loan-for-commission modus operandi. In September 2018, during then Governor Ujit Patel's tenure, the central bank had asked Kapoor to leave the bank. However, for reasons that are inexplicable, no other action was initiated against him by the central bank. "The RBI could have initiated prompt corrective action (PCA) against the bank and slapped curbs on lending. But the RBI allowed the bank to function freely... that too when nearly a dozen PSU banks were under PCA curbs of the RBI due to the high level of bad loans," said a banking source.

On March 6, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the RBI had stepped up monitoring of the bank since 2017, when governance lapses at the bank starting surfacing. "In September 2018, they (the RBI) clearly said that the leadership has to change, they did not allow further continuation of the Chief Executive's term (and a new CEO was appointed)... These steps the RBI has been taking to keep the bank healthy," she said.

THE MAN, HIS BUSINESS

Just ahead of completing his 28-month term as president of the industry body Assocham, Rana Kapoor had planned to come out with a coffee table book compiling pictures of his tenure at the head of the body. The team tasked with the book was also asked by Kapoor to get it delivered to all senior journalists across the country. A source privy to the conversation said that when questions were raised by some at the ideation stage, as to what purpose such a book would serve, Kapoor reportedly got agitated and said, "If you have to grow and create wealth, you have to keep your inhibitions aside and you need to be focused on what you want to do. Don't second guess others, just do it."

There are many such anecdotes of the man and his propensity, as Kapoor sought to be counted among the high and mighty, including how, at a key awards night in Mumbai in 2012, he managed to get a front-row seat that was reserved for a top investor by telling the organisers that he had met the investor during his morning walk and the latter had told him he was unlikely to come for the function. The top investor, of course, walked in 10-15 minutes later to find Kapoor in his seat.

Those who know him also talk about his tendency to be over-controlling. "He would deal directly with all big clients. Even his senior employees weren't empowered to take decisions," said a former Yes Bank employee, who worked at the mid-management level.

But even his worst critics don't deny his sharp business acumen. "Many a time, while offering a loan to a borrower, Kapoor would push for an upfront interest to be paid to the bank, thereby securing the interest of the bank to an extent," said a senior official with an NBFC.

Kapoor once said he would never sell his shares in Yes Bank and compared them to diamonds. "Diamonds are Forever: My Promoter shares of @YESBANK are invaluable to me. I will eventually bequeath my @YESBANK promoter shares to my 3 daughters and subsequently to their children, with a request in my Will stating not to sell a single share, as Diamonds are Forever," he said in a tweet on September 28, 2018.

By a year later, Kapoor and his family would have sold their entire stake in the bank.

Inside Fort Scindia

One of Congress's tallest leaders, Jyotiraditya Scindia's defection to the BJP has sent tremors down the two parties as well as down politics from Delhi to Madhya Pradesh. From Gwalior, the royal family's stronghold, to Guna, its political battleground, DIPANKAR GHOSE finds Cong leaders weighing their options and BJP oldtimers nervous about theirs

PHOTOGRAPHS: GAJENDRA YADAV



Scindia's grandmother and a founder member of the BJP, Vijayaraje Scindia's photograph stands along with other BJP legends at the party office in Gwalior

IN GWALIOR, the name is inescapable. Atop the Gwalior Fort, looking out at the sprawling city within its walls, its lights twinkling at night, is the Scindia School. On the streets below, there are other schools, lanes, universities, even a shopping arcade, all of which carry the same Scindia. The Congress office is called Madhavrao Scindia Bhavan and is located in a place called Sindh ki Chavni. Over the years, that has got distorted to 'Scindia ki Chavni'. No one corrects you when you say that; there has never been any point. Yet, there is one building that has staunchly resisted this political legacy — a narrow, three-floor structure, bang in the middle of the city's 'Maharaj Bada', and serving as the city's BJP headquarters. Named 'Mukherjee Bhawan' after Syama Prasad Mookerjee, it was the one building here where the name Scindia was not taken in adulatory tones. Until 2.30 pm on March 11.

Wearing a sharp orange shirt tucked into his trousers, a saffron *tika* on his forehead, BJP media in-charge of the district Pawan Sen arrived at the office a little before 11.30 am that day. With Scindia scheduled to join the BJP in half-an-hour, Sen fields a constant stream of calls and queries from journalists, repeating what seemed to be the set party line: "It is only good for the BJP that such a big leader is joining us. It shows that in the one year the Congress has been in power, they have done nothing. They have not fulfilled their promises. And Scindiaji has shown he is against this government before. He told Chief Minister Kamal Nath that he would take to the streets if teachers were not regularised. He raised issues of farmers. He even supported the abrogation of Article 370. He may have been with them, but his heart was with us."

To the inevitable follow-up question too, there is a ready answer. Journalists point out that Scindia made numerous speeches against the BJP during his Congress days, including against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah; said the BJP spread poison; and that it formed governments through the backdoor (an allegation now being levelled in Madhya Pradesh). One media person notes that BJP leaders made statements against Scindia from the press briefing room in the very building Sen is sitting in. Quickly, Sen, a leader in his 30s, who joined the ABVP as a student, leads the journalist to the second floor of Mukherjee Bhawan and switches on the lights. Above a door in a large hall are framed photographs of BJP legends. Right at the centre is Vijayaraje Scindia, Scindia's grandmother and one of the founder members of the BJP. "In politics, when you are on opposite sides, many things are said," Sen says, pointing to the bust. "This (Scindia's entry) is not a shift, this is a homecoming."

However, underlying this confidence is unsaid uncertainty about the ramifications of the political change. Even as Sen fields questions on his own for two-and-a-half hours, the rest of the rooms in the BJP office are locked and deserted. There is no joyous celebration, no bevy of supporters with posters. One journalist comments, "Log raha hai BJP mein koi aa nahin raha, BJP se koi jao nahi hai. (It seems somebody is leaving the BJP, rather than joining it.)"

As the live telecast of Scindia arriving at the BJP headquarters in Delhi finally begins, Sen settles down, his eyes trained like a hawk on his smartphone playing the video. He approves of the absence of Amit Shah, noting that with the BJP a disciplined party, "it is but right that only president J P Nadra is present." Scindiaji ko yeh seekhna padega (Scindiaji will have to learn this)," he says, in a swipe at the Congress's apparent and hidden chains of command. Sen claps when Scindia thanks Nadra, PM Modi and Shah, and then again when he speaks of the ills of the Congress state government. Towards the end, as Scindia gets up from his chair, Sen's eyes narrow, observing that the royal scion has placed his hand on Nadra's back. The only office staff who is around articulates what Sen is thinking. Scindia is president of the state BJP.



GWALIOR-CHAMBAL BELT: THE SCINDIA STRONGHOLD

4 Lok Sabha seats, all won by BJP in 2019

GUNA
Winner: BJP's K P Yadav (52.11% votes); Runner-up: Cong's Jyotiraditya Scindia (41.45%)

MORENA
Winner: BJP's Narendra Singh Tomar (47.63% votes); Runner-up: Cong's Raminwas Rawat (37.66%)

BHIND
Winner: BJP's Sandhya Rai (54.93% votes); Runner-up: Cong's Devashish Jarariya (34.12%)

GWALIOR
Winner: BJP's Vivek Narayan Seiwalkar (52.44% votes); Runner-up: Cong's Ashok Singh (40.12%)

32
Assembly seats

24
won by Cong in 2018

15
of the MLAs are among the 22 suspected Cong rebels

think they are equals yet," he says.

Only hours earlier, at the Madhavrao Scindia Bhavan 2 km away, a smattering of Congress workers sat dejected in a hall, amidst walls covered with the royal family's photographs, including Scindia's posters. One has Scindia's father Madhavrao with Indira Gandhi, and her sons Rajiv and Sanjay. The Scindia posters, from the 2018 Assembly elections, highlight him as the face of the Congress in the family's stronghold of Gwalior-Chambal belt — one particularly large one says "Congress ka haath, Scindia ke saath".

Most of those in the hall still nurse the hope, small as it may be, that Scindia, or "Maharaj" as they refer to him, will stay back — taking heart from the delay in the BJP's official announcement. "First they said they would announce it (Scindia's joining) yesterday. Then at 12:30 pm today. Now it has been pushed further. Maybe..." says Mahant Singh, trailing off. After a moment, Singh, who has been with the Congress since 1978, adds that there is no question of him leaving the party in Scindia's wake.

However, this has not been an easy decision, he admits. "The cadre is divided. In this region, Maharaj has always been our leader. We have loved him. But now he has turned his back on us. We were here, in this hall, before he was born and we will die here. But, it is true, not everyone thinks like this. Some have resigned, others have not."

Hours after Scindia's defection becomes official in Delhi, a group of Congress workers burn his effigy in front of the office. But, they number "only 20". A few kilometres away, at a memorial to Madhavrao Scindia, called Scindia ki Chhatra, a relatively larger number collects to sign a register as an act of resignation. Nearby, a guard at the white marble memorial to 'Rajmata' Vijayaraje Scindia jokes, "One (memorial) was the BJP's, one was with the Congress. Now the BJP has both."

The images from the two party offices though are not the complete picture. While BJP workers are obviously happy that the Kamal Nath government may finally fall after Scindia's revolt (many believe the BJP was cheated of power), there is some disquiet within old-timers about what his entry means for them in the region.

At his home called Seva Char in the city, former Gwalior MP as well as ex-MLA Ji Bhan Pawaiya sits surrounded by a group of supporters. The former president of the Madhya Pradesh Bajrang Dal, Pawaiya has been one of the loudest opponents of the Scindia family here — for their "feudalism", he says — and is even credited with "sending Madhavrao" to the Guna Lok Sabha seat, from his Gwalior constituency. Jyotiraditya Scindia incidentally lost the Guna seat in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, to former protege K P Yadav, who fought



In Guna, the flag atop Mahendra Singh Sisodia's home is changed from Cong's to BJP's. A Labour Minister in the Kamal Nath government, Sisodia is a staunch Scindia loyalist and among the 22 'rebel' MLAs



At the Madhavrao Scindia Bhavan in Gwalior, hours before the press conference at BJP headquarters in Delhi, a few Congress workers sit dejected, hoping that Jyotiraditya Scindia will stay back; the walls of the office are covered with the royal family's photographs, including Scindia's posters

on a BJP ticket.

Choosing his words carefully, Pawaiya tells *The Sunday Express*. "Ours is a party driven by ideology. Agar (If) Scindiaji has had a change of heart and ideology, then he is welcome. We will then together chant 'Jai Shri Ram' and go to Ayodhya. Agar that has happened, then it is good that another *karyakarta* has joined the party."

Bhargava as well as other leaders like Mahendra Singh and Uday Raj argue that there is no other way. Says Uday Raj, "Maharaj was the reason we won Madhya Pradesh. If Kamal Nath had been the face, the Congress would not have won. In the Gwalior-Chambal range, we won 24 of 32 seats. After all that, forget chief minister, Kamal Nath and Digvijaya Singh didn't let Maharaj even be state Congress president. He had to even struggle for a Rajya Sabha seat. Is that not disrespect?"

Mahendra Singh, a polling agent from Bamon, takes charge of changing the party flag atop Sisodia's home. Barking orders as the Congress's hand is replaced with the BJP's lotus, Singh repeats that Scindia was left no option by Digvijaya Singh and Kamal Nath. "For instance, back in the BJP government, Sisodiaji had done a *dharma* asking for a sports stadium in Guna. The first project he asked for as a minister in the Congress regime was creation of three lakes for farmers, a long-standing demand. On the first thing, nothing has been done. On the second, despite Sisodiaji pushing for it, money for the first lake may have been sanctioned but nothing has moved. At the ministry level, all the officials are Nath and Digvijaya Singh's men and are actively working against Scindia and his people."

As he speaks, he gets a WhatsApp alert. Reading it, Singh says, "Look, Scindiaji has left and they have transferred the collectors of Guna and Gwalior. This is how petty they are." "This 'pettiness' Scindia's backers say, is also why he lost the Guna seat, considered a Scindia fortress, in 2019. "There were various reasons. One may have been a little overconfidence, and the Modi wave. But Guna has eight Assembly segments, some have our people as MLAs or district presidents, and the others have Digvijaya Singh's people. We never hurt them, but they

etc., all of whom have resigned. As one person greets the other with a "Jai Shri Ram", the group breaks out in laughter. "Hans kyun rabe ho bhai? Jai Shri Ram toh pehle bhi bolte they (Why are you laughing? Didn't we say Jai Shri Ram earlier too?)" he responds, going on to add, "But yes, now we will have to say it louder. For our politics too."

On Thursday morning, Bhargava is among those lining up with vehicles to head to Bhopal for a roadshow to welcome Scindia as he arrives from Delhi. The crowd at Sisodia's home, greeting each other loudly, includes local block presidents, district presidents, district general secretaries,

EXPLAINED E. Faultlines, uncertainty

ON THE GROUND, in the Gwalior-Chambal belt, while Jyotiraditya Scindia's move to the BJP from the Congress marks a seismic shift, there are still faultlines that need ironing out for both parties. The BJP might have to soothe frayed nerves at the *karyakarta* level, and even though Scindia got a big starry welcome in Bhopal, the Congress worker may not get the same in the BJP. Much of these decisions will also hinge on the future of the Kamal Nath government and whether any rebel MLAs return.

At Guna, the political battlefield of the Scindias, more than 200 km from Gwalior, a majority of the Congress workers have de-

ceded the side they are on. Mahendra Singh Sisodia, the party's Bamon legislator, who belongs to Guna, is a Labour Minister in the Kamal Nath government but a staunch Scindia loyalist. He is among the 22 Congress MLAs believed to be ready to defect to the BJP. Says Mukesh Bhargava, a close aide of Sisodia and the "vidhyok pratidinhi (MLA representative)", "Here in Guna, 95% of the party has resigned along with Maharaj. He has always been our leader. Wherever he goes, we will go, as will our minister. There is no doubt in anybody's mind."

By Thursday evening, much of the conversation both in the BJP and Congress offices in Gwalior has shifted to the future, about the possibility of fresh elections and the fate of grassroots workers. At the BJP headquarters, still suspiciously devoid of any enthusiasm, the conversation is about the *karyakarta* and whether Scindia "the Maharaj" "will fit in". Says a BJP leader, "There are certainly problems to resolve. Now that he has come, he will want his people to get tickets... We don't see people as Maharaj. Even Yashodhara, his aunt, is only a worker for us. This Congress system where he would appoint his people, or have his ministers, cannot happen. *Samantvaad* (feudalism) has no place here, and if we give in, the *karyakarta* will not be happy, and that can affect the elections. Scindia has to prove his loyalty."

At the Congress office, all the Scindia posters have been removed overnight, and lie in an untidy heap in a store room. District Congress chief Devendra Sharma is asking his supporters a question he has been repeating for two days: should he resign? Every possible answer seems fraught with risk. Considered a Scindia man, as any district Congress chief in Gwalior is, not jumping ship will mean the label of a Digvijaya man for Sharma. But in the BJP he fears the prospect of no post and no respect.

14 BODY & MIND

Fighting fit, fighting coronavirus

Fears about the virus have prompted online searches and plenty of misinformation about how to strengthen the immune system. Here's what works — and what doesn't

TARA PARKER-POPE

AS WORRIES grow about the new coronavirus, online searches for ways to bolster the immune system have surged. Are there foods to boost your immune system? Will vitamins help?

The immune system is a complex network of cells, organs and tissues that work in tandem to protect the body from infection. While genetics play a role, we know from studies of twins that the strength of our immune system is largely determined by non-heritable factors. The germs we are exposed to over a lifetime, as well as lifestyle factors like stress, sleep, diet and exercise all play a role in the strength of our immune response.

The bottom line is that there is no magic pill or a specific food guaranteed to bolster your immune system and protect you from the new coronavirus. But there are real ways you can take care of yourself and give your immune system the best chance to do its job against a respiratory illness.

Lower your stress

Worries about the coronavirus, the stock market and the general disruption of life have added to our stress levels, but we know that stress also can make you more susceptible to respiratory illness.

In a series of remarkable studies over 20 years at Carnegie Mellon University, volunteers were exposed to the cold virus (using nose drops) and then quarantined for observation. The researchers found that people who reported less stress in their lives were less likely to develop cold symptoms. Another series of studies at Ohio State University found that marital conflict is especially taxing to the immune system. In a series of studies, the researchers inflicted small wounds on the arms of volunteers, and then asked couples to discuss topics both pleasant and stressful. When couples argued, their wounds took, on average, a full day longer to heal than after the sessions in which the couples discussed something pleasant. Among couples who exhibited especially high levels of hostility, the wounds took two days longer to heal.

The bottom line: Your body does a better job fighting off illness and healing wounds when it's not under stress. Learning techniques for managing stress, like meditation, controlled breathing or talking to a therapist are all ways to help your immune system stay strong.

Improve your sleep habits

A healthy immune system can fight off infection. A sleep-deprived immune system doesn't work as well. In one surprising study, researchers found 164 men and women willing to be exposed to the cold virus. Not everyone got sick. But short sleepers — those who regularly slept less than six hours a night — were 4.2 times more likely to catch the cold compared with those who got more than seven hours of sleep, researchers found. Risk was even higher when a person slept less than five hours a night.

The bottom line: Focusing on better sleep habits is a good way to strengthen your immune system. The sweet spot for sleep is six to seven hours a night. Stick to a regular bedtime and wake-up schedule. Avoid screens, night-eating and exercise right before bedtime.

Check your vitamin D level

While more study is needed on the link between vitamin D and immune health, some promising research suggests that checking your vitamin D level — and taking a vitamin D supplement — could help your body fight off respiratory illness. In one study of 107 older patients, some patients took high doses of vitamin D while others were given standard doses. After a year, the researchers found that people in the high-dose group had 40 per cent fewer respiratory infections over the course of the year compared to those on the standard dose. A more recent analysis of 25 randomised controlled trials of 11,000 patients showed an overall protective effect of vitamin D supplementation against acute respiratory tract infections. The data aren't conclusive, and some studies of vitamin D haven't shown a benefit.

Why would vitamin D lower risk for respiratory illness? Our bodies need adequate vitamin D to produce the antimicrobial proteins that kill viruses and bacteria. "If you don't have adequate vitamin D circulating, you are less effective at producing these proteins and more susceptible to infection," says Dr Adit Ginde, professor of emergency medicine at the University of Colorado School of Medicine and the study's lead author. "These proteins are particularly active in the respiratory tract."

It's important to note that there are no clinical recommendations to take vitamin D for immune health, although the standard recommendation for bone health is for 600 to 800 international units per day. (That is the level found in most multivitamins.) In the study of respiratory illness and vitamin D, the dose was equivalent to about 3,330 international units daily.

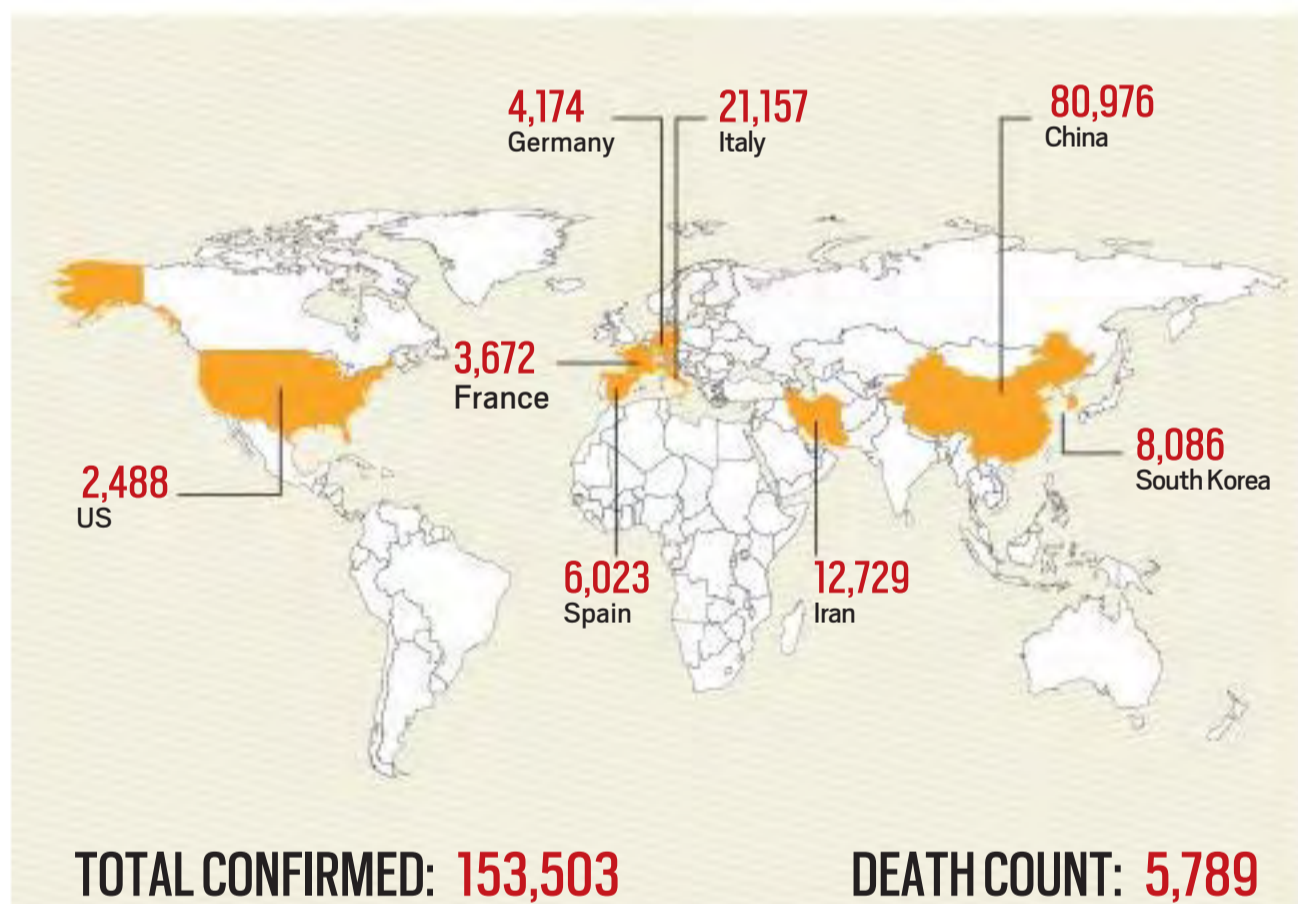
Vitamin D can be found in fatty fish, such as salmon, and in milk or foods fortified with vitamin D. In general, our vitamin D levels tend to be influenced by sun exposure, skin tone and latitude — people in northern areas who get less sun exposure in the winter typ-



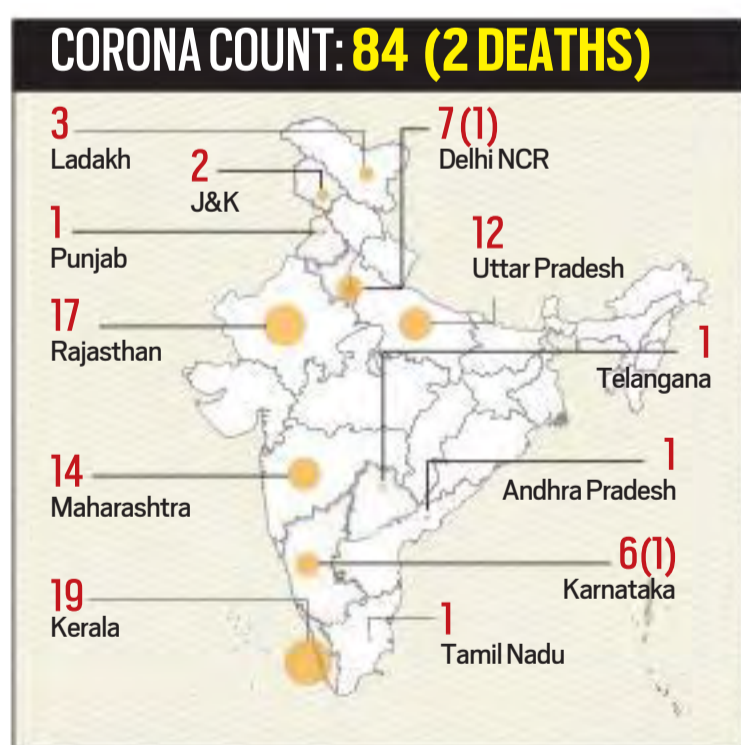
Health workers check temperature and travel history of people at India-Bangladesh border in Agartala. Abhishek Saha



CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK



Source: Johns Hopkins University; map updated at 11 pm, March 14



THE MAP is based on the Union Health Ministry update at 5 pm on March 14. Some state governments may have reported higher counts.

*Apart from 67 Indian nationals, 17 foreigners have also tested positive for Covid-19, taking the total count of confirmed cases in India to 84

Have a question on the Covid-19 outbreak and what you should/should not do?

Write to explained@indianexpress.com

If you are concerned about immune health, you may consider having your vitamin D level checked and talking to your doctor about whether to take a supplement

ically have lower vitamin D. A blood test is required to check vitamin D levels. Less than 20 nanograms per millilitre is considered deficient. Above 30 is optimal.

The bottom line: If you are concerned about immune health, you may consider having your vitamin D level checked and talking to your doctor about whether to take a supplement.

Avoid excessive alcohol consumption

Numerous studies have found a link between excessive alcohol consumption and immune function. Research shows people who drink in excess are more susceptible to respiratory illness and pneumonia and recover from infection and wounds more slowly. Alcohol alters the number of microbes in the gut microbiome, a community of microorganisms that affect the immune system. Excessive al-

cohol can damage the lungs, and impair the mucosal immune system, which is essential in helping the body recognise pathogens and fight infection. And it's not just chronic drinking that does damage. Binge drinking can also impair the immune system.

The bottom line: A cocktail or glass of wine while you are sheltering in place during coronavirus is fine. But avoid drinking to excess. The current US Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that alcohol should be consumed only in moderation — up to one drink per day for women and two drinks per day for men.

Eat a balanced diet and skip unproven supplements

A healthful diet and exercise are important to maintaining a strong immune system. However, no single food or natural remedy has been proven to bolster a person's im-

CORONAVIRUS HAS CAUSED A HAND SANITISER SHORTAGE. WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?



ALARM OVER coronavirus has caused a run on hand sanitizers. Where it isn't sold out, enterprising sellers are charging outrageously inflated prices simply because they can. If you don't have any hand sanitizer, you're not likely to get some while the manufacturers create enough supply to meet the frenzied demand caused by panic over coronavirus.

While using hand sanitizer is a smart way to slow and prevent the spread of

viruses, keep in mind that washing your hands thoroughly with soap is more effective than using hand sanitizer. But if you're on a train and a sudden lurch forces you to grab a pole, we can understand wishing for a squirt of something purifying while you're enclosed for the rest of your trip. So what do you do if you can't get your hands on the most popular hand sanitizers?

NYT

DO'S

DO If you are able to buy a lesser-known brand of hand sanitizer, make sure it's made of at least 60% alcohol, as recommended by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

DO If you make your own hand sanitizer, it must contain at least 60% alcohol. Some recipes use liquor (like vodka), which is usually 40% alcohol

DO Dry your hands before applying any hand sanitizer. A 2019 study published in the American Society for Microbiology's publication, mSphere, found that wet mucus protected the influenza A virus, rendering hand sanitizer less effective

DO Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly. This is the smartest thing you can do to prevent the spread of viruses

DON'TS

DON'T Don't rely on DIY recipes based solely on essential oils. They won't work.

DON'T Don't be conservative with your sanitizer, even if you're down to one small travel-size bottle. For it to work, you need to cover every surface of both hands entirely with the sanitizer and rub until dry, according to CDC

DON'T Don't use any hand sanitizer on greasy or dirty hands; it's less effective

DON'T Don't expect baby wipes to work as well as handwashing or hand sanitizer. Baby wipes don't have alcohol in them, and rubbing won't remove germs from your hands the way simple soap and clean running water can

If you enjoy foods touted as immune boosters, there is no harm in eating them as part of a balanced diet. Just be sure that you don't neglect proven health advice — like washing your hands and not touching your face — when it comes to protecting yourself from viral illness

une system or ward off disease. But that hasn't stopped people from making specious claims. A recipe circulating on social media claims boiled garlic water helps. Other common foods touted for their immune-boost-

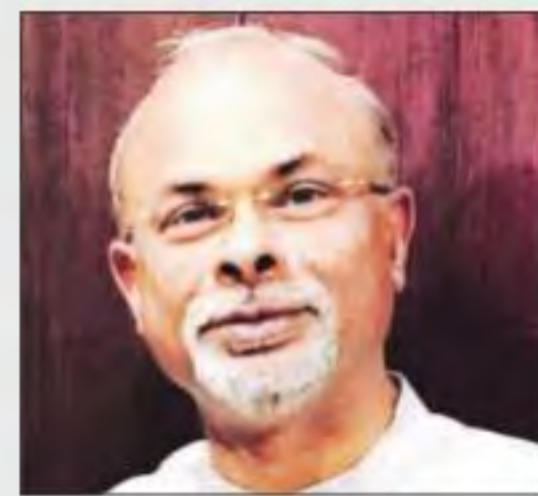
ing properties are ginger, citrus fruits, turmeric, oregano oil and bone broth. There are small studies that suggest a benefit to some of these foods, but strong evidence is lacking. For instance, the bone broth claim has been fuelled by a study published in 2000 that showed eating chicken soup seemed to reduce symptoms of an upper respiratory tract infection. A number of small studies have suggested garlic may enhance immune system function. Claims that elderberry products can prevent viral illness also are making the rounds on social media, but evidence is lacking.

Zinc supplements and lozenges are also a popular remedy for fighting off colds and respiratory illness. Some studies have found that zinc lozenges may reduce the duration of cold by about a day and, may reduce the number of upper respiratory infections in children. But the data on zinc are mixed. If

INTERVIEW

DR. ANAND KRISHNAN,
PROFESSOR, CENTRE FOR
COMMUNITY MEDICINE, AIIMS

'Vegetarian food, Indian immunity won't prevent Covid-19'



ABANTIKA GHOSH
MARCH 14, NEW DELHI

There seems to be an overwhelming optimism that heat will reduce the impact of coronavirus. What do you think?

The chances of survival of the virus will be less as the temperature goes up, but the exact impact is hard to predict. Whatever the impact, one thing is for sure, it will not be drastic.

Many social media messages claim that Indians have a higher immunity because of the conditions we live in and are exposed to. Is that correct?

That is absolute drivel. There is no immunity against the novel coronavirus. It is also difficult to say for certain whether it is impossible to get a second infection because it is a new virus. While in case of some viruses one gets lifelong immunity after the first infection, in other cases that doesn't happen. But there is no cross immunity — in the sense that an earlier infection caused by some other virus will give you immunity against the coronavirus.

Many people have switched to vegetarian food for fear of contracting the virus.

There is no evidence that choice of food will make any difference in the spread of the virus. Food is certainly not the source of transmission. It may be different for people who live near abattoirs etc. But if you cook it in your home kitchen and have it, there is no problem. Well-cooked meat is never a problem.

What about the preventive functions of garlic, turmeric, honey etc. Do they help?

These are very general... We have been having garlic for years. If it was really protective we would not have any diseases. These are very general, not specific to any disease, least of all the novel coronavirus.

What is social distancing?

Respiratory infections spread by contact so there are normally restrictions placed on social mixing. A distance of 1-2 metres is good enough for an infection to spread. There are models on how an infection spreads based on available data. That is where the effectiveness of such measures are estimated. However, there are issues related to the availability of such data to cover all population groups.

Food is not the source of transmission. It may be different for those who live near abattoirs. If you cook it in your kitchen and have it, there is no problem. Well-cooked meat is never a problem"

you already have enough zinc from your diet, it's not clear that taking a supplement can help. Zinc supplements also commonly cause nausea.

"There are a lot of products that tout immune boosting properties, but I don't think any of these have been medically proven to work," said Dr Krystina Woods, hospital epidemiologist and medical director of infection prevention at Mount Sinai West. "There are people who anecdotally say 'I felt great after I took' whatever. That may be true, but there's no science to support that."

The bottom line: If you enjoy foods touted as immune boosters, there is no harm in eating them as part of a balanced diet. Just be sure that you don't neglect proven health advice — like washing your hands and not touching your face — when it comes to protecting yourself from viral illness.

NYT

Across THE AISLE



PCHIDAMBARAM

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I am not impressed by the CBI and ED jumping into the fray before the RBI fixed accountability on individuals in Yes Bank. Now, I am afraid, accountability will not be fixed until the 'investigation' is over. Inspired leaks and juicy tit bits will fill media space and accountability will be relegated to a distant future. The people and Parliament must demand that the names of borrowers be published and the individuals or committees that approved the loans be asked to explain

A BANK receives funds in the form of current accounts, savings accounts and fixed deposits, and pays interest on them (cost of funds). A significant portion of the deposits has to be kept as reserves in instruments that meet the RBI's stipulations. The bank can lend only the remaining amount and earn interest (interest income). Even that amount is capped by what is known as the CRAR or Capital to Risk (Weighted) Assets Ratio, commonly known as the Capital Adequacy Ratio. The difference between 'interest income' and 'cost of funds' is the net interest margin (NIM) and is the bank's profit. Since NIM will always be positive, a bank should ordinarily make profits.

A lending bank is required to keep a close watch on the borrower's account — Is the interest being paid regularly? Were the instalments of principal repaid on the due dates? Have the balance sheet and profit and loss statement been audited and do they reflect the true state of the finances of the borrower?

MULTI-LAYERED OVERSIGHT

There are multiple levels of oversight over banks. First is the Finance Committee of the bank. Second is the Board of Directors. Third is the Internal Auditor. Fourth is the external Concurrent Auditor. Fifth is the RBI-approved Statutory Auditor. Sixth is the Annual

Not banking but buccaneering

General Meeting of shareholders. Seventh is the Department of Banking Operations and Development (DBOD) in RBI. Last is the hawk-eyed analyst. Above all these is the invisible market that will reward or punish in the case of a bank that is a listed company. There is also the Department of Financial Services (DFS) in the Ministry of Finance that is supposed to keep an eye on every scheduled commercial bank of a certain size, including all public sector banks.

Despite the multi-layered oversight, some loans will turn non-performing due to genuine business failures. What loan shall be classified as a non-performing asset (NPA) is determined by the rules and directions of the RBI. Once classified as NPA, the bank has to make a 'provision' eating into its profits and affecting its capacity to declare dividends or re-invest the earnings. If the gross NPAs are on the increase, alarm bells should ring.

Yes Bank seems to have escaped all levels of oversight and declared profits every quarter. It declared its first ever quarterly loss in Jan-March, 2019. Even then, no alarm bells went off in the DBOD or DFS.

LOAN BOOK JUMPS

Since April 2014, Yes Bank was on a lending spree. Here are the official numbers from the balance sheets of the bank:

Year ending	Outstanding Loans
March 2014	₹ 55,633 crore
March 2015	₹ 75,550

March 2016	₹ 98,210
March 2017	₹ 1,32,263
March 2018	₹ 2,03,534
March 2019	₹ 2,41,499

Please notice the jump from March 2014 to March 2019: the loan book grew at the rate of 35 per cent a year! Please also notice the spike in 2016-17 and 2017-18, the two years immediately following demonetisation.

Some pertinent questions arise: Which committee or who authorised the grant of new loans after March 2014? Were not the RBI and government aware that Yes Bank was on a loan-giving spree? Did no one in the RBI or the government read the balance sheet of the bank at the end of every year? Why did nothing change after the CEO was replaced and a new CEO appointed by the RBI in January 2019? Why did nothing change after a former deputy governor of the RBI was appointed to the Board of Yes Bank in May 2019? Why did the alarm bells not ring when Yes Bank reported its first-ever quarterly loss in Jan-March 2019?

WHO IS ACCOUNTABLE?

No one in the RBI or government has answered these questions since they were raised on March 7, 2020. It appears that the government's wish is that the Yes Bank story would vanish from the

public domain. There is no chance of that at all, thanks to social media. The print and TV media have no option but to report the sordid story.

I am not impressed by the CBI and Enforcement Directorate jumping into the fray before the RBI fixed accountability on individuals in Yes Bank and within the DBOD. Now, I am afraid, accountability will not be fixed until the 'investigation' is over. Inspired leaks and juicy tit bits will fill media space and accountability will be relegated to a distant future.

The people and Parliament must demand that the names of borrowers (especially the big defaulting ones) be published and the individuals or committees that approved the loans be asked to explain. Additionally, we should demand that individuals who had direct responsibility of oversight in the DBOD and DFS be identified and asked to explain. I suspect we will find not just inadvertent omissions but culpable negligence.

The RBI and government are poised to implement a rescue plan that can be only described as bizarre. According to the plan announced on March 12, the SBI will invest Rs 7,250 crore to pick up, along with others, a 49 per cent stake in the restructured capital of Yes Bank at a price not less than Rs 10 per share when the net worth of the bank is perhaps zero and the shares are worthless! There are options that deserve to be explored before throwing good money after bad. The Yes Bank story is not over.

Fifth COLUMN

TAVLEEN SINGH

Twitter: @tavleen_singh



Corona times

IT WAS on my last day in New York that corona panic really began. First, came the news that the stock market had experienced its worst single day crash in history. Then Donald Trump with a posse of officials, medical experts and doctors appeared on television to try and reassure people that everything was under control, and that every effort was being made to contain the spread of the virus. Nobody was reassured. Within hours it became impossible to find hand sanitisers and even toilet paper seemed to become unavailable. Friends said that they were beginning to seriously consider stocking up food supplies and self-quarantining. And, from Europe came the alarming news that Italy was in total lockdown.

On a personal level, I discovered that Swiss had cancelled my flight to India. I would be put on the same flight the following day, they said, but hours later, called to say that this flight had also been cancelled. Luckily for me, they were kind enough to put me on a British Airways flight and so it was that I managed to come home via London before the US government announced that all flights to Europe were being cancelled for a month. The flight that brought me to Mumbai was only half full and a flight attendant handed me a form to fill in duplicate attesting that I was in good health and listing the countries that I had visited in the past month. When I landed at Mumbai airport I noticed that everyone was wearing masks and that there seemed to be grim concern about the contagious nature of this evil new virus.

So, it disappointed me to arrive home and find that the news channels were more interested in the political transition of Jyotiraditya Scindia than in a contagion that could bring the already wobbly Indian economy crashing down to unimaginable depths. If there ever was a time when politics should take a backseat, it is now. As of the time that I write these words, India seems to be relatively unaffected by this new Chinese disease but, having seen how quickly things changed in the United States, I fear that by the time you read this, there may have been an exponential and dangerous increase in the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Are we prepared?

The Prime Minister has advised us not to panic, but perhaps what we need is to panic enough to acknowledge that we live in a country that is notorious for having the most hopelessly inadequate public health services. Government hospitals remain as bad as they were 30 years ago and prove every time there is an epidemic, as happened in Bihar last year, that they can simply not cope. More than a hundred children died of encephalitis in that hospital in Muzaffarpur last June. For a while, this awful story made national headlines. Famous anchors traipsed through the filthy wards of the hospital holding forth on its abysmal standards. Intrepid reporters discovered human bones lying around in the hospital's backyard. Shril prime-time debates were held on what needed to be done to improve the standard of Indian public health facilities and then everything died down and we were back to yelling at each other about politics.

Of course it is the fault of our officials (both elected and unelected) that conditions in our hospitals are so bad that more than 80 per cent of our population is forced to use private facilities. But, it is the fault of all of us that healthcare never becomes a major issue when elections come around. The result is that although India has some of the finest private hospitals in the world, and Indian doctors are so excellent that they are sought out by hospitals in distant lands, there is also the shameful reality that our public health services remain utterly abysmal. In the constituency of the mighty Yogi Adityanath, children die of encephalitis every year. He now tells us that he is so well prepared for the new contagion that he is setting up quarantine wards in every district hospital in Uttar Pradesh. Can we trust that they will be cleaner than the regular wards in district hospitals?

Trust really is at the crux of the matter. Can we trust what the Health Minister and our chief ministers have so far told us about the corona virus? Can we trust that our hospitals will be able to cope with a pandemic when they have so far shown an inability to cope with local epidemics? Can we trust that the Prime Minister will be able to enforce higher standards of hygiene when most public hospitals have been totally resistant to his otherwise successful Swachh Bharat programme? Can we trust that until this contagion passes he will put healthcare above Hindutva on his list of priorities? Can we trust that he is fully aware that this virus could push the economy into a recession from which it will take a very long time to recover? Speaking for myself, I admit that even as I ask these questions I know the answer is that it is hard to trust that any of these things will happen. My intention is not to spread gloom in an already gloomy time, but the truth is that public healthcare has been very low on Narendra Modi's list of priorities.

inside TRACK

COOMIKAPOOR



SCINDIA STORY

WHATEVER their public posturing, Jyotiraditya Scindia's two aunts in the BJP, Vasundhara Raje and Yashodara, are not exactly thrilled about their nephew joining the party. The longstanding family feud is not about different political ideologies but over the inheritance of the vast Scindia estate. It was not Scindia's aunts but his in-laws from the Gaekwad royal family of Baroda, Gujarat, who opened a channel for him with Narendra Modi. Amit Shah backs the anti-Vasundhara Raje faction in Rajasthan, while Yashodara was marginalised as a minister by Shivraj Singh Chouhan in Madhya Pradesh. An additional incentive for Jyotiraditya's defection may have been a government bungalow in Lutyness Delhi, preferably 27, Safdarjung Road. This was the Scindia family house for over three decades, allotted first to Madhavrao Scindia back in the 1980s. It was retained by the Scindias even when no member of the family was a minister. The bungalow is currently allotted to HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank.

MEETING NO ONE

While entering Parliament House, NCP leader Supriya Sule congratulated Rahul Gandhi for two recent Congress appointments. Rahul refused to take credit, saying, "I am not making appointments. I am not meeting anyone." A journalist standing nearby suggested that Jyotiraditya Scindia might have been disillusioned by his lack of accessibility. After pausing a moment, Rahul protested, "Jyotiraditya was the only guy who could walk straight into my house. We were in college together."

PATCH-UP

If Shivraj Singh Chouhan returns as chief minister of Madhya Pradesh, it signifies that Narendra Modi and Amit Shah have shed their longstanding hostility towards him. After the Madhya Pradesh elections in December 2018, Chouhan had been confident that he could still manage to form the government since the difference between the Congress and BJP was a wafer-thin five seats. But even before the final results were announced, Modi conceded defeat and rejected Chouhan's proposal to cobble together a majority. Though Chouhan indicated he wanted to remain active in state politics, the BJP leadership appointed Gopal Bhargava as

Assembly party leader. The Modi-Shah duo has not forgiven Chouhan, propped up by L K Advani and Sushma Swaraj, for briefly challenging Modi as an alternative OBC face to lead the BJP in 2014. In settling scores with Chouhan in 2018, Shah allowed a canny Kamal Nath to bring around more legislators. Jyotiraditya Scindia's revolt provides a fresh opportunity for the BJP, which is this time backing Chouhan, who is also close to the RSS. Relations between Shah and Chouhan thawed after the Delhi elections and the fall from grace of BJP general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya, Chouhan's biggest detractor.

MISSING SANE VOICES

Prime Minister Modi's fury over communal violence in Delhi was not just about the riots per se, but that it happened during US President Donald Trump's visit. The government's media minders, whether from the Ministry of External Affairs, the PMO or the BJP, failed miserably in controlling the narrative in international media. The buzz in political circles is that the Shah-Modi team rode high only as long as there was a seasoned and media-savvy Arun Jaitley to advise the duo about impending pitfalls and to soften criticism. The present media spokespersons simply preach to the converted and ignore criticism. After Jaitley's death last August, the BJP has blundered from one crisis to the next. Sushma Swaraj's absence is also missed.

BLIND INTRODUCTIONS

The Raj Thackeray family is cursing itself for scoring two self-goals. Raj introduced struggling journalist Sanjay Raut to the Thackeray family. Raut took over as the powerful executive editor of Shiv Sena mouthpiece *Saamana* and eventually propped up the easy-going, laid-back Uddhav against Raj, who had aspired to be party chief for years. Raj's sister Jayawanti introduced her colleague at LIC, Rashmi Patankar, to Uddhav and the two ended up married. Rashmi turned out to be the ambitious one in the partnership, who pushed her husband to take the Chief Minister's chair. Now Rashmi has taken over as *Saamana* editor. Her sister's son Varun Sardesai is a key figure in the Sena youth wing and is also aide to his cousin Aaditya. Even Rashmi's brother Sridhar Patankar plays an active role in Sena affairs.

PROMOTING WOMEN

There have been two women Lok Sabha Speakers, Meira Kumar and Sumitra Mahajan, but it's Om Birla who has done the most to promote women MPs. The current Lok Sabha has a record 78 women and Birla has ensured that each got an opportunity to speak in the House. Some women were hesitant but Birla encouraged them.

Life & WORK

IRFAN PATHAN

Twitter: @IrfanPathan



Imagine a crowd cheering you... Little comes close

Amidst coronavirus fears, the former India all-rounder talks about what fans bring to a player's game, but hopes, 'Life will move on once the games begin'

FOR EVERYONE concerned, playing in front of empty stands is a unique situation. Everyone understands the importance of fans; the high that one feels from thousands cheering for you. Having said that, in today's time, cricketers are used to playing with and without the crowd. Domestic cricket, for example, doesn't attract many fans. The current situation, triggered by coronavirus, is different. It's not like the fans have turned away from the game, but other circumstances driving it, and we all understand the seriousness of the situation. Still, who doesn't like appreciation? Just not for a wicket or a boundary or a good ball, but also if a player just dives to save a run, the crowd applauds. It makes a player extend himself, give more.

When there is no one watching, *jism mein farak padta hai, josh mein farak padta hai* (there is a difference, in our body, in our spirits). I know of many who feel this. Imagine running in to bowl and thousands screaming and cheering your every stride. It's the best feeling in the world. Nothing comes close.

I remember the first time I played to a full house. It felt like a *mele*, and I had to find my own way to deal with the madness. Once I got used to it, I could see what difference the crowds made.

At another time, in 2012, I was returning after an injury. I had not played an international game for two years. My cricketing career was almost over. I was a bit down and my confidence was running low. We were playing the West Indies. At our first match in Chennai, as I was making my bowling run-up mark, the whole stadium started chanting "Irfan, Irfan, Irfan". I can't tell you how much it meant. It boosted my confidence, the noise made me feel that "Yes, I'm back". I ended up taking a wicket off my first ball. I thank the crowd for it.

From the time we leave the hotel to the time we reach the stadium, the love which we get from the crowds is amazing. The cheering people, in thousands, certainly transfer their energy to us. They give us hope to climb boundaries and give us the spirit to win any game.

Recently, even when I played a Road Safety tournament in Mumbai for retired players, the crowd turnout was amazing. I felt almost the same high as during my India days. Perhaps, if there weren't as many people, I would have slacked off. But I am sure



'We are 11 but some 40,000 are with us. How can it not make a difference?'

the crowd made us forget that we don't have the body we did in our prime. Maybe we retired players would have cared more about protecting and preserving our bodies if not for the crowd. We played for the crowd that day because we didn't want them to go home disappointed.

When you are playing for your country, it is easier to push what is happening in the stands at the back of your mind as the intention is clear: to perform for India.

Now, as the possibility of games before empty stadiums looms, players will take time to get used to it. Especially in India, where we are not accustomed to playing any international game without a crowd, particularly with the white ball. I don't remember ever seeing a deserted or even almost-empty stadium in white-

ball cricket. Foreign teams always complain that wherever India play, the crowd support is more for the Indian team. Even if we play abroad, where the opposition team might be playing at home, the Indian team gets louder cheers. We are 11 on the ground but some 40,000 are with us. How can it not make a difference? However, life will move on once the games begin.

Ultimately, there is no doubt that while it is a cricketer's hard work that takes one places in the game, it's because of the fans that we are remembered for so long. It is they who make us feel like superstars. When thousands cheer each shot or good cricket, it makes us players realise that God has been kind to us.

As told to Devendra Pandey

Out of MY MIND

MEGHNA DESAI



THE QUESTION is not why he did it but why did it take him so long? Jyotiraditya Scindia is talented, well-educated, politically savvy (everything Rahul Gandhi is not). In any decent political system, he would have been a contender for leadership. But not in India. Not with the Dynasty.

Since its humiliating defeat in 2014, we have all been waiting for a searching analysis for the reasons of its failure by the Congress. Apart from absolving the Family for the failure, the Antony analysis, not yet published, did nothing else. The second de-

Scindia's exit seals Cong's fate

feat in 2019 did not improve matters. Like the dog in the manger, Rahul neither wants to be party president nor does he want there to be an election for the leadership position. Within those five years, the US Democratic Party has had two leadership competitions, the UK has changed prime ministers thrice after leadership elections in the Conservative Party, France has elected a president and the German CDU saw Angela Merkel resign leadership, nominate a successor who was approved by the party who has since resigned while a second leadership election is on the way. The Congress has done nothing.

It is repeating what happened to the British Liberal Party which dominated

British politics in the Nineteenth Century as one of the two great parties, won a landslide victory in 1906, stayed in power till 1922, and then declined for the next hundred years. Longevity in a political party is no guarantee of immortality. In politics your life is measured in your ability to renew yourself at each election. The Congress is governed by geriatrics who have not won (and could not win if they tried) an election to the Lok Sabha. They control the Congress and are in no mood to give up. Bahadur Shah Zafar, the last Mughal Emperor, had more energy than this lot.

The question now is why are Shashi Tharoor, Manish Tiwari, Gaurav Gogoi, Milind Deora, Sachin Pilot still wasting

away in the Congress when all they can look forward to is Priyanka Vadra taking over since her brother does not fancy the job for which he was never elected. After Priyanka, will come her children to rule. It is a repeat of Mughal history. Three good kings and then 150 years of decline.

The basic model of the Indian party structure is Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, one dominant party and a crowd of pygmies. After 2014, the Snow White changed from the Congress to the BJP, but the dwarfs remain, with the Congress joining them. The Congress had nothing left to say to the voters except that it had fought for Independence. Even that is false history. The Congress today is not the one which

fought for Independence. That Congress split in 1969; in 1980 it became the Indira Congress. The Indira Congress cannot claim credit for the Independence struggle. Even then there were the Ghadar Party, Anushilan Samiti, Abhinav Bharat Society, the Swaraj Party, Hindu Mahasabha, the Communists and Socialists plus Subhas Chandra Bose who also fought.

The BJP has fought since 1951 to win power, almost displaced the Congress in 1998 but lost and came back in 2014. Had Rajiv Gandhi lived, he could have made the Congress a Hindu nationalist party with orthodox Muslim clergy support. Why not just follow Jyotiraditya and merge the Congress with the BJP?

Lord of the Deccan

A detailed account of the life and times of Salar Jung, the forgotten Diwan of Hyderabad



A jade screen showing Salar Jungs I, II and III Courtesy: Penguin Random House

TCA RAGHAVAN

THE MAGNIFICENT Diwan is the life story of Salar Jung, Diwan of Hyderabad state from 1853 to 1883. This long tenure also provides a point of entry into some larger themes of the history of Hyderabad and also the difficult interface between the government of India and the princely states in the 19th century. In Bakhtiar Dadabhoj's narrative, Salar Jung comes across as an astute politician, a dynamic and often reform-minded administrator and a courtier deeply loyal to Hyderabad and its Nizam. The fact that he is largely forgotten today, even in Hyderabad, was the reason for embarking upon this biography. The famous Salar Jung Museum, for instance, is named not after him but his grandson, and the "Magnificent Diwan" himself has retreated into obscurity. This biography admirably remedies that.

It is well known that as the Mughals entered their final twilight, one of their premier nobles — the Nizam-ul-Mulk — found it in his interest to sink deep roots in the Deccan from the second decade of the 18th century. Later in the 18th century, successive nizams found it expedient to ally with the British — they were the most potent military force available against the Marathas and Mysore rulers. Salar Jung's family came into prominence in the second half of the 18th century and many of his ancestors had also held the post of the Diwan in Hyderabad.

In Salar Jung's tenure as Diwan, we find in Dadabhoj's treatment a comprehensive view of Hyderabad in the second half of the 19th century. There were a host of internal issues — courtly intrigues with rival centres and con-

flicting factions to be navigated — but there were also other issues very specific to Hyderabad. One of these was the Arab diaspora, consisting largely of former and present soldiers in the Nizam's army. They were both a source of strength and a constant headache. How much the elements of this diaspora could leverage their Hyderabad base to influence politics in Yemen forms a very interesting part of the book. Similarly, there was the antagonism between "mulkis" and "non-mulkis" — in brief, original Deccanis and the northerners who made the Deccan their home from the early 19th century, as the Mughals headed for extinction.

A considerable bulk of *The Magnificent Diwan*, however, concerns the British and their

relations with and perceptions of Hyderabad. In this Salar Jung was frequently, as the book brings out, caught in the middle. On the one hand, there was the Government of India, represented in Hyderabad by hyper-sensitive regents. On the other hand, there was a whole princely setup that strained against any curbs on its authority. What were the British so concerned about? Salar Jung was appointed Diwan just a few years before the Mutiny and, in 1857, he had firmly sided with the British. Such outbreaks as there were in Hyderabad were put down firmly by him. But the British on the whole remained suspicious about potential challenges and this was reflected in a long series of often petty intrigues to make sure that the Diwan remained firmly circumscribed in his functioning. Salar Jung, notwithstanding the actual realities of the situation, often functioned on the premise that Hyderabad was an ally rather than a subordinate or subsidiary state with respect to the colonial power. How often he would be abused of this is part of the fascinating detail of the book. The process by which this happened is also quite revealing — the intrigues and frequently petty tactics employed by British officials to make their point.

One particular area of friction throughout Salar Jung's tenure as Diwan was Berar — originally part of Hyderabad, but given away in the 1850s to offset the expenses for a British military contingent maintained in the Nizam's territory. But as Dadabhoj points out, in the Berar issue "it was neither the settlement of the Nizam's debt, nor the payment of the contingent, which agitated Dalhousie's mind but the British need for cotton". For many in Hyderabad, the restitution of Berar to the Nizam was a priority above all others and for

successive nizams, the cession of Berar was a standing humiliation. Dadabhoj appropriately quotes the last Nizam wryly commenting, when he was awarded the Knight Grand Cross of the British Empire or GBE half a century later in 1917, that the initials stood for "Gave Berar to the English". Salar Jung failed in reversing the Berar cession and the failure embittered and disillusioned him. The process by which this happened also illustrates the tight leash on which the Government of India kept the princes — otherwise their strongest supporters. This tight control was executed both in terms of day to day policy and also in optical terms through extravaganzas such as Viceroy Lytton's Grand Durbar in Delhi in 1877. Salar Jung's participation in this is described in some detail and the many vanities of the British in India certainly merit revisiting.

While its details may overwhelm some readers, this hefty book can certainly be read with interest by all connoisseurs of Hyderabad history. This reviewer would have liked the author to delve more deeply into what is, in retrospect at least, another fascinating aspect of the polity of the Hyderabad state: its multi-national and multilingual nature. The old state was like a quasi-Ottoman empire covering a territory that included Telugu, Marathi, Kannada and Urdu speaking areas, and had therefore a political and social complexity unmatched elsewhere in India. But this does not detract from what is otherwise a great long read about a forgotten personality of Indian history.

Raghavan is a retired diplomat. His latest book is History Men: Jadunath Sarkar, G.S.Sardesai, Raghubir Singh and their Quest for India's Past

CHAPTER 1, LINE 1

"It was about the beginning of September, 1664, that I, among the rest of my neighbors, heard in ordinary discourse that the plague was returned again in Holland" — *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722), Daniel Defoe

In the Beginning

A collection of essays re-locates historical rupture of 1989 that affected Kashmir's political trajectory



A protest in Kashmir Express Archives

AAKASH JOSHI

BEFORE IT was a Union Territory, before it was a military camp and even before it was the idyllic frontier for a now-besieged idea of the Indian republic — secular, federal and socialist — Kashmir was something else. It was a place of originality and ideas — more a port at the confluence of great civilisational powers than a frontier. The essays in *A Desolation Called Peace: Voices from Kashmir*, edited by Ather Zia and Javid Iqbal Bhat, seem acutely conscious of that past, and what losing it has meant.

In the popular imagination, as well as among journalists and academics in the rest of India, the constant negotiation with the country's only Muslim-majority state encountered a decisive rupture in 1989. From then on, militancy, the forced exodus of Kashmiri pandits from the Valley and an ideological-security governmentality have trumped any other form of political engagement.

The central theme, across the essays by journalists, writers, poets and academics from Kashmir is that the popular Indian imagination is wrong. The editors' attempt is to clearly show how 1989, far from being a rupture, was an almost logical consequence of the betrayals of the Indian state from 1947 onwards. The writers are young and old, men and women, pandits and Muslims — and the sheer diversity of their accounts and analysis makes it clear that Kashmir has never been a political or cultural monolith.

The opening essay by professor G R Malik, for example, frames the discourse well: Beginning with the great betrayal by Nehru, and Sheikh Abdullah's perceived naivety about his friends' democratic credentials, Kashmiris have nurtured the hope of being free, a hope that has been constantly belied. Elections have been rigged, puppet chief ministers have been installed by New Delhi and the might of the Indian state has been used to suppress a people.

The jailing of Abdullah and the installation of Mohammad Bakshi is the first coup by India, as Mohammad Junaid points out, and the memories of that time were fresh in 1989. Mona Bhan's essay paints a vivid picture of how azadi was an aspiration not merely of the Muslims in the Valley but equally of the Pandits. In fact, Sheikh Abdullah's Naya Kashmir — his land reforms, secularism and socialism — was far more progressive than anything that happened in India and continues to form the bedrock of



A DESOLATION CALLED PEACE: VOICES FROM KASHMIR

Edited by ATHER ZIA & JAVID IQBAL BHAT
Harper Collins India
296 pages
₹ 499

the relative prosperity that Kashmir enjoys. Abdullah remains the central pole of Kashmir's political idiom, imagination and discourse, despite his many compromises and the affinity among many in the region towards Pakistan. For contemporary politics, that holds an important lesson.

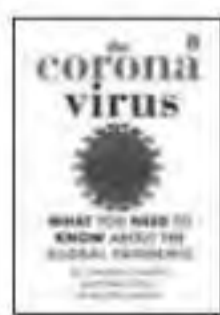
A Desolation Called Peace is essential reading for anyone interested in Kashmir. It is at

once a lamentation, an analysis and an expression of the tragedy of modern state-making. And for the Indian government of the day, it is also a lesson about how to handle frontiers and how even a Machiavellian design requires subtlety. Why was there no violence till 1989? What made so many, despite the underlying current of resentment, support the Indian state — work in its universities, take its jobs, make relationships throughout the country?

The power of the Indian state, the core of its hegemony, was the ability to exploit differences and keep open at least a modicum of space for dialogue. It was an acknowledgement — no matter what the reality on the ground — that the desire for autonomy was legitimate. In fact, rather than being seen as an insult, the negotiation between India and Kashmir could have provided a roadmap for the future of federal relations across the country.

None of this, of course, is stated directly by the essays in the book. The insecure Indian of today will read of azadi and Pakistan, of a syncretic and diverse Islam that it does not understand and cry "anti-national!" But perhaps someday, if the wound of abrogation is healed, these essays will preserve the memory of what could be.

LOOKOUT NOTICE



PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE INDIA APPEARS to have taken first mover advantage in publishing about coronavirus with a book due out soon, by Mumbai physicians Swapneil Parikh, Maherra Desai and Rajesh Parikh. It will deal even-handedly with the facts and myths about the pandemic which is sweeping the world. The wavefront of the information and disinformation cloud is spreading even faster than the pathogen itself, and there is a need for books which organise meaningful information, contextualise it and make it accessible to the lay reader, who may not be able to make much sense of research preprints and the analysis sites being run by medical organisations. This promises to be a useful manual for the mystifying times we live in.

The Rebel Who Lived

A look back at the fierce life and ideals of Safdar Hashmi

FEISAL ALKAZI

I REMEMBER Safdar clearly — sitting alone sometimes, but most often surrounded by a group of friends in the Shri Ram Centre canteen. Lanky, bespectacled, charismatic, often writing furiously on a paper, brushing his hair out of his eyes.

Shri Ram Centre was still a new institution in the 1980s — ten years old with an excellent Hindi theatre bookshop and cafe run by Mrs Puran Acharya which served delectable parathas, mint chutney and other delicacies. Much of Delhi's theatre crowd gathered there regularly: NK Sharma, MK Raina, the recently established group of former NSD students, Sambhav and us — members of Ruchika Theatre Group, as we had virtually colonised the SRC basement theatre with our frequent productions. Chai and cigarettes in a rehearsal break was *de rigueur* and that's how many of us met.

The draconian Emergency of the 1970s and the horrific pogrom against the Sikhs in 1984 brought us together, conscious of the need to not only provide material relief to the disaffected but also to loudly voice our protest, dissent and rising concern on the fail-

ure of the state to deliver in any way. Though, it was very adept at stifling dissent.

Regular proscenium theatre in Delhi was undergoing metamorphoses. The focus on using folk elements in urban theatre had started: re-vamped *bhavai* in NSD's 'Jasma Odan', folk devices in Girish Karnad's 'Hayavadana' and, of course, Habib Tanvir's Naya Theatre that brought folk and urban theatre artists together. A completely new middle class audience was flocking to see comedies in Punjabi at Sapru House, full of sexual innuendo.

It was at this time, when most of the mainstream theatre was quite out of sync with social concerns, that street theatre emerged as a form. Some like Theatre Union with Anuradha Kapoor, Maya Rao and Manohar Khushalani, among others, were articulating their voices against dowry and dowry deaths while others like Safdar and Jan Natya Manch (Janam) produced plays in solidarity with workers reflecting their concerns.

Deshpande's recently released book *Halla Bol: The Death and Life of Safdar Hashmi*, encapsulates the life of this talented young man who was killed on the first day of 1989, when he was only 34. His death resulted in a public outcry and the establishment of Sahmat

(Safdar Hashmi Memorial Trust) which, for over 25 years, has brought together like-minded people from across India to celebrate Safdar's life and legacy. The book is a celebration of the actor-activist.

The opening is gripping and extremely well-written and Deshpande gives us a de-



HALLA BOL: THE DEATH AND LIFE OF SAFDAR HASHMI
SUDHANVA DESHPANDE
Leftword Books
264 pages
₹ 350

tailed account of Safdar's last day, January 1, 1989. The reader has a sense of being on the spot with the disrupted street performance, the horrific and violent attack on Jan Natya Manch and their attempt to disperse, run and hide in different areas of Jhandapur and, finally, the search for the right hospital that could care for Safdar. As his colleagues and friends move Safdar from cycle rickshaw to car to a taxi, the suspense builds so that by the time he reaches the correct hospital and is diagnosed, we know that his death is inevitable. This section is followed by a crisp sketch of Safdar's family's modest background.

Jan Natya Manch was created by a group of young people barely out of college in April 1973, who had literally been thrown out of the IPTA office in Shankar Market! Their initial plays were Irwin Shaw's 'Bury the Dead' (in Bengali), Ramesh Upadhyaya's 'Bharat Bhagya Vidhata' and Sarveshwar Dayal Saxena's satire, 'Bakri'. Janam was almost an extension of the CPI and CPI(M), performing regularly at election campaigns for party candidates.

In the late 1970s, when Safdar and Moloysree decided to marry (after a romantic interlude in Srinagar), they both decided to exchange surnames. The banks were baffled, adding Hashmi to Moloysree was, of course, easy but adding Roy to Safdar was not possible at all. Sudhanva recounts this story of bureaucratic blindness with a sense of humour.

By the time Indira Gandhi was replaced by the Janata Party post the Emergency,

Janam was already into creating street theatre. Within days, their iconic script 'Machine' came to be written and performed. Twenty-two other plays emerged over the next 10 years.

A major part of the book is dedicated to exploring the process of conceiving, writing, rehearsing and performing street theatre. This part is particularly fascinating because it is the first time a theatre practitioner has actually described the process in sufficient detail. Questions like 'Why no play on the Dalit issue?' and how 'Moteram ka Satyagraha' and 'Aurat' were created, or how 'Chakka Jam' metamorphosed into 'Halla Bol' are well-documented. The background for Janam's work — the situation of workers, the party position, and what goes into organising a strike, provide much-needed context. These are excellent authoritative materials that will over time form an essential part of the history of theatre in our country and how it was shaped, developed and grew over a 70-year period. Sudhanva is able to move effortlessly from the first person narrative to nuanced backgrounders on several issues, and Safdar emerges as fierce and gentle, charming and charismatic.

'Rangeen Mijaz Fakir' was one of the many names Safdar was known by, and it was the most suitable one. This elegantly produced slim volume with a striking black and white cover is a testament to the times we live in.

Alkazi is a veteran theatre artist

17 EXPRESS NETWORK

First engagement with Maoists in safe zone Abujhmad, police say their morale hit

VIVEK DESHPANDE
GADCHIROLI, MARCH 14

IN WHAT police are calling a major blow to Maoist morale, Maharashtra's elite C60 commando force entered Abujhmad in south Bastar last month for possibly their first-ever engagement with the extremist outfit in that area.

Police said the Maoists they encountered included senior cadres such as Sonu alias Bhupati alias Malloju Venugopal Rao, the second-in-command of the CPI (Maoist) Central Military Commission, and Tarakka, and said the Naxals suffered at least one casualty before making good their escape.

The C60 Command Force that ventured inside the 6,500-km Abujhmad area was led by Additional Superintendent of Police Ajay Bansal and included Commander Moitram Madavi,

who has been a part of several successful missions.

The troops walked nearly 100 km for five days, starting February 6 from the Lahiri outpost in Bhamragad and returning unharmed, after four nights in the jungle. Saying the Maoists may have not seen such an operation coming, Gadchiroli Superintendent of Police Shailesh Balkawade said, "Our idea was to send the message that no area was safe for them."

The mission also revealed that the Maoists had retreated from vast stretches following police area domination exercises.

In 2006-07, a police team had penetrated the area near Ghamandi. "But this could be the first time the Naxals engaged police in the area that is their safe zone," then SP Shirish Jain, who led that operation, said.

Bansal said the February 11 operation was based on pin-

point information from five Maoists captured in an operation in Abujhmad area on January 28. Detailing its complexity, the Additional SP said they walked with arms, ammunition and food, up steep inclines. The rain on February 6 and 7 made tracking footprints difficult. "But we managed to get horse footprints as Naxals use horses to carry their stuff in such parts. But we had police guides, so we could trek avoiding booby traps."

Bansal said what gave them an edge was that the Maoists were not sure whether they were Maharashtra or Chhattisgarh Police. "This made it difficult for them to guess in which direction we will move." He said sources and signs of mourning at a village indicated they may have killed one Maoist.

The Gadchiroli police see the operation as part of a series of blows to Maoists over the past

two years in the district, including the April 2018 encounter in which 40 were killed in Boriakasnur in Etapalli tehsil, including top commanders, Srinu, Sainath and Nandu, the capture of others such as Narmada (the head of the Gadchiroli division) and husband Kiran as well as Dinkar Gota, and the surrender of Vilas Kolha, Radha Majji, Gokul and Deepak apart from dalam commanders and members.

However, Bansal said, they needed to keep pushing. "Success depends on a combination of factors such as intelligence, willpower, training and execution on the ground to surprise the enemy. Also, we get only six months of the year to try and get there since the area remains cut off for the rest of the time due to rains. And we need to have strategic posts as close to the Maoists' safe zone as possible. It's clearly a long haul."

2 CAF personnel killed in Bastar, CRPF man injured

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
RAIPUR, RAJNANDGAON,
MARCH 14

TWO CHHATTISGARH Armed Force (CAF) personnel were killed in a Maoist ambush in the jungles of Chhattisgarh's Bastar district on Saturday, the police said. A CRPF personnel was also injured in a blast triggered by Maoists in a separate incident in the same area, they said.

A team of CAF, which is a part of the state police force, was out on patrolling to provide security for road construction work under the Mardoom police station area, Inspector General of Police (IG) Sundarraj P told PTL.

Around 3.30 pm, when the team was between Bodli and

Malewahi villages, it came under attack, he said. "Two CAF head constables were killed," the IG said, adding that further details were awaited.

Elsewhere in the Mardoom area, a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel sustained minor injuries in an IED blast carried out by Maoists, he said. The CRPF personnel was being treated at a local hospital.

Meanwhile, a Maoist couple with a collective reward of Rs 13 lakh on their heads on Saturday surrendered in Rajnandgaon district, police said. Gainsingh Kovachi (35) and his wife Ramsheela Dhurve (22) turned themselves in before senior police officials, citing disappointment with the hollow Maoist ideology, an official said.

Above-normal March rainfall likely to impact mustard output

Wheat may see little impact: experts

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 14

AS HEAVY rain, accompanied by hailstorm in some areas, lashed many parts of the country over the last few days, major wheat-producing states have recorded more than 100 per cent "higher than normal" rainfall during first 11 days of March, according to latest data available with the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare.

While assessment of the damage caused by the unseasonal showers to the Rabi crop is not known immediately, experts said the early-March rain may impact the mustard harvest.

Indian Institute of Wheat and Barley Research's director Dr G P Singh told *The Sunday Express* that early March rain and hailstorm, which is a localised event, will have very little impact on wheat output. However, it may have a negative impact on the mustard crop, which is ready to be harvested, Singh said.

According to the latest report of the Crop Weather Watch Group, available on the ministry's website, during March 1

to 11, the country recorded 16.9 mm rainfall - 82 per cent higher than the 'normal' rainfall of 9.3 mm. However, the top six states which contribute more than 90 per cent to the total wheat production of the country have recorded manifold higher than normal rainfall in early March. For instance, Uttar Pradesh, the largest wheat-producing state, recorded 23.8 mm rain from March 1-11, which is 667 per cent higher than the normal rainfall level of 3.1 mm during this period.

Similarly, Punjab (311 per cent), Madhya Pradesh (168 per cent), Haryana (702 per cent), Rajasthan (685 per cent) and Bihar (604 per cent) have also recorded much higher rainfall than is normally recorded in this period.

According to the 2nd advance estimates 2019-20, "Production of wheat during 2019-20 is estimated at record 106.21 million tonnes. It is higher by 2.61 million tonnes as compared to wheat production during 2018-19 and is higher by 11.60 million tonnes than the average wheat production of 94.61 million tonnes."



Davinder Singh

Davinder to be brought to Delhi: police

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 14

THE DELHI Police Special Cell has filed a case of conspiracy against suspended J&K Police officer Davinder Singh, who was caught ferrying Hizbul Mujahideen militant Naveed Mushtaq on the Srinagar-Jammu highway on January 11. According to police, a team of New Delhi range landed in Jammu two days ago to bring Davinder with them to the national capital on a seven-day production warrant.

Davinder was lodged in the Hiranagar jail in Kathua district. Davinder has been accused of assisting terrorists and alleged involvement in anti-India activities, police sources said.

DCP (Special Cell) P S Kushwaha said Davinder was earlier been interrogated by the J&K Police and NIA. "To find out about plans to carry out any terrorist activity in Delhi, he has been brought to Delhi on a production warrant by Special Cell for interrogation in this regard," he said.

A resident of Tral in south Kashmir's Shopian, Davinder joined J&K Police as sub-inspector in 1990. A brave and wily policeman, Davinder's colleagues said he soon joined the Special Operations Group, which was at the time the crack anti-militancy unit.

Davinder was arrested on January 11 in Kulgam while he was ferrying Naveed, who is known to be a close aide of Hizbul commander Riyaz Naikoo, his accomplice Asif and lawyer Irfan Mir to Jammu in his car.

9 more people test positive for swine flu in West Bengal

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, MARCH 14

NINE MORE people, including six members of a family, tested positive for swine flu (H1N1), a Health Department official said on Saturday.

The six affected family members are residents of Metiabruz in Kolkata and had been admitted to a private hospital in south Kolkata.

A senior official on Friday had said that at least 13 people, including two children, had tested positive. According to the health

department, the total number of confirmed cases was 22.

A senior health department official said, "The number may increase in the coming days. The symptoms of swine flu and coronavirus are almost same and people should stay alert."

A woman from Manipur, and two children - a 10-year-old girl from Hooghly district and a 23-month-old from Odisha - are being treated for swine flu at a private hospital in the city's southern part, an official said. "The state government is in constant touch with the authorities of the medical institution."

4 cops injured in mob attack, curbs in Manipur town

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
IMPHAL, MARCH 14

PROHIBITORY ORDERS under Section 144 CrPc were imposed in Moreh town in Manipur's Tengenoual district after four police commandos were injured in an attack by a mob, an official said on Saturday.

The prohibitory orders in Moreh town, which is close to the Indo-Myanmar border, were issued by the District Magistrate of Tengenoual, Mayanglangbam Rajkumar on Friday evening for one month, the official said.

Four Manipur police commandos were injured when a mob attacked them for stopping a vehicle for checking in Moreh town on Friday.

The police commandos had signalled a car with tinted glass to halt for checking on Friday. The car, however, did not stop and sped away, the officer said.

The commandos chased the car and stopped the vehicle.

When the injured commandos went to the Moreh hospital for medical treatment, a mob damaged their vehicle and kept them confined to a room, the officer said.



'SERVE PEOPLE IN REMOTE AREAS'

Home Minister Amit Shah with Health Minister Harsh Vardhan and Uttarakhand CM Trivendra Singh Rawat during the convocation ceremony at AIIMS, in Rishikesh, Saturday. Shah asked students to look at their profession as a means to serve people, especially those in remote parts with no access to healthcare facilities. PTT

Messages of support crop up on posters of anti-CAA protesters

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, MARCH 14

MESSAGES SAYING "I support you" were found written on hoardings with photographs of those who have been accused of vandalism during an anti-CAA protest in Lucknow and supposed to pay for the damages. The hoardings are put up around 100 metres from the site of the women's sit-in at Ghanta Ghar against CAA and NRC in Thakurganj police station area.

Next to a photograph of Riha



At least 125 such hoardings were put up across Lucknow recently. Express

Manch founder Mohammad Shoiba, a message reads, "I sup-

port you and I support Mohd Shoiba advocate". Next to a photograph of a person named Mohammad Sharif, someone wrote, "I support Sharif". Several other people's photographs had similar messages.

The Supreme Court on Thursday had turned down the UP government's petition challenging an Allahabad High Court order to remove the hoardings.

Asked about the messages, ADM (Trans Gombi) Vishva Bhushan Mishra said it was not the administration's job to keep vigil on hoardings put up by them.

Doctor held for molesting woman, Lucknow hospital suspends him

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, MARCH 14

A JUNIOR resident doctor at the King George's Medical University (KGMU) in Lucknow was arrested Friday night for allegedly molesting and threatening a woman. An FIR was registered against him at the local police station on the basis of a complaint by a woman doctor.

While senior police officers said the FIR was registered on Friday and the accused was sent to jail after being produced in

court, the KGMU administration has suspended the accused and a final decision would be taken by the varsity's disciplinary committee.

"A woman doctor had lodged a complaint alleging that the accused had been molesting and threatening her over a period of time. The FIR was lodged under IPC Sections 354 (assault or criminal force to a woman with intent to outrage her modesty), 504 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of peace) and 506 (criminal intimidation). The accused was arrested from

the KGMU campus on Friday night and was sent to jail after being produced before a court," said Assistant Commissioner of Police Durga Prasad Tiwari.

KGMU authorities said they had suspended the doctor after they got to know about the allegations. "The accused has been suspended and the matter will be placed before the disciplinary committee of the varsity. We do not tolerate such behaviour and a safer environment for women is our priority," said KGMU spokesperson Dr Sudhir Singh.

11 killed in Jodhpur mishap

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
JODHPUR, NEW DELHI,
MARCH 14

ELEVEN PEOPLE, including a bride and a groom, were killed when the car in which they were travelling collided head-on with a truck near Sointara village in Shegarh subdivision of Jodhpur on Saturday morning, police said.

Those who died included women and children accompanying the newly-weds, who were identified as Vikram and Sita.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday expressed anguish over the deaths. "I express my condolences to the families of those who died in this accident and wish for the speedy recovery of those injured," the Prime Minister's Office said in a tweet, quoting Modi.

The occupants of the car were on their way to Maldeoara from Balotra city of Barmer to pay obeisance at the shrine of famous folk deity Baba Ramdeo, police said, adding three others were seriously injured and taken to a hospital in Jodhpur.



A crane was used to separate the mangled vehicles. PTT

Jodhpur (rural) SP Rahul Barhat said, "While negotiating a turn on the highway, the vehicle collided with the truck. Eleven people died on the spot and three were injured."

Police and villagers rushed to the spot and initiated a rescue operation while a crane was used to separate the mangled vehicles and extract the bodies, they said.

PRESS NOTICE FOR APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIRPERSON AND MEMBER (WATER RESOURCES ENGINEERING) AS PER MAHARASHTRA WATER RESOURCES REGULATORY AUTHORITY (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2016. (MAHARASHTRA ACT NO. VIII OF 2017) :-

Government of Maharashtra (GoM) has enacted Maharashtra Water Resources Regulatory Authority Act, 2005 to regulate water resources within the State of Maharashtra, facilitate and ensure judicious, equitable and sustainable management, allocation and utilisation of water resources, fix the rates for use of water for agriculture, industrial, drinking and other purposes, and matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Fresh nominations are invited by undersigned on behalf of Selection Committee for the post of Chairperson and Member (Water Resources Engineering) of Maharashtra Water Resources Regulatory Authority on or before Wednesday, 15th April, 2020 upto 17.00 p.m. All the relevant details regarding eligibility criteria, service conditions, details to be furnished alongwith the nomination as per the Maharashtra Water Resources Regulatory Authority (Amendment) Act, 2016 (Maharashtra Act no. VIII of 2017.) are available on following web sites.

www.maharashtra.gov.in
www.wrd.maharashtra.gov.in
www.mwrra.org

Sd/-
(I. S. Chahal)
Principal Secretary
Water Resources Department,
Government of Maharashtra.

DGIPR/2019-2020/5439

WESTERN RAILWAY - AHMEDABAD DIVISION
VARIOUS WORKS IN CONNECTION WITH INTERLOCKING OF LEVEL CROSSING
DRMS & T acting for and behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders against Tender No. DRM-SnT-ADI-Sig 28 of 2019-20 closing date 09-04-2020, 15:00. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids upto closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Tender No. DRM-SnT-ADI-Sig 28 of 2019-20 (1) Name of Work: Part supply of signaling material, installation, testing and commissioning in connection with interlocking of Level crossing gale no. 240, 241, 242 & 243 of Sabarmati-Khodiyar section of Ahmedabad Division. (2) Estimated Cost of Work: ₹ 58,02,840.08/- (Rupees Fifty Eight Lakh Two Thousand Six Hundred Forty and Eight paise only) (3) EMD: ₹ 1,16,100/- (Rupees One Lakh Sixteen Thousand One Hundred only) (4) Date & Time of closing of tender and opening of tender: Not later than 15:00 hrs. of 09-04-2020 and Opening on 09-04-2020 at 15:30 hrs. (5) Website of E-Tendering: www.treps.gov.in 413
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Classifieds

PERSONAL

This is to certify that I, Mrs. Vineeta Rebecca Williams w/o Brig Rajiv Enoch Williams (Retd), is the same person as Vineeta Williams, as mentioned in the Pension Payment Order (PPO) of my husband. My date of birth is 27th June 1955 (27/06/1955).

My correct name is Parmesh Kumar Singh instead of Parvesh Kumar Singh as wrongly mentioned in my ESI documents. S/o (L) Geeta Ram Singh. A-76/B-2, Chander Vihar, Nilothi-Extension, Nanjoli, Delhi-41.

My correct name is Md. Farooque Azam instead of Farukh as wrongly mentioned in my ESI documents. S/o MD. Israfil, B/48, Inder-Enclave, Phase-II, Kirari Suleiman-Nagar, Delhi-86.

I, hitherto known as Khan Kamran Ekmal, S/o Ikmal Ahmed Khan presently, R/O-B-3, G-2, DLF-Colony, Dilshad-Extn-2, Distt. Ghaziabad, U.P.-201005, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Khan Kamran Ikmal.

I, Vinita Sharma, W/O Shri Vijay Kumar R/O-R-112, Ramesh-Park Gali, No. 3, Near-Community-Center Laxmi-Nagar, Delhi-110092, Have Changed My Name Viheeta Sharma To Vinita Sharma, According To My Adhar Card, No. 773223451815, For Future, All Purpose.

I, Vikas Singh S/o Mahender Singh R/O-H.No.16, Devi Mandir, Villa-Rithala, Delhi-110085, have changed my name to Vikas Gulia (DOB-02.06.1981).

I, Narayan Dutt Sharma, S/O.Late. Ram Bharose Sharma, R/O-162-A, Balbir-Nagar-Extension, Street, No-13-14, Shahdara, Delhi-110032, have changed my minor daughter name, from DHANI VATS to DHANI SHARMA.

I, Manjinder Singh, S/o Hardeep Singh, R/O-VPO-Jodhe, Teh-baba bakala, Distt-Amritsar, Punjab, Inform, that my wife, name and dob is, wrongly mentioned, as kuldeep kaur, 05/03/1983, in my service record, her correct name & dob, is kuldeep kaur, 05/03/1979.

I, Anju Bala W/O Harvinder Chopra R/O-BK-1/179, Shalimar Bagh, Delhi-110088, have changed my name to Anju Chopra for all purposes.

I, Shashi Prabha Saini W/O Surinder Kumar Saini R/O 3/54, Second Floor, Punjabi Bagh West, have changed my name Shashi Saini.

I, Aarushi Gupta, D/o Rakesh Gupta R/O-B-1004, Victoria Gardens, Azadpur, Delhi-110033, inform that name of my mother-written as Manisha in my Passport, No. M842221. The actual name of my mother is Manisha Gupta.

I, Vinay Singh S/o Raj Singh R/O Maroudi Jatan (103), Rohtak, Haryana-124001, have changed my minor son's name from Sanyam Grewal aged 5 Months to Sanyam Grewal forever.

I, Seema Kumari, W/o Ashutosh Parmar R/O 3/2421 Maliyang Street Delhi Gate Daryaganj Delhi-110002, have changed my name to Seema Parmar for all purposes.

I, Sargam Preet Alias Rahat D/o Rupa Singh R/O-D-10 Ground-floor, Bali Nagar, Ramesh-Nagar Delhi-110015, have changed my name to Sargam Preet.

I, SWADHIN GHADAI, S/o Sh. Subal Ghadai, R/O-House. No. 829, Chirag-Delhi, Malviya-Nagar, New Delhi-110017, have changed my name to SUKUMAR GHADAI, for all purposes.

I, Renu W/o Narendar R/O-H.No.19, Kh.No.382/204, Village-Saidulajab, Delhi-110030, have changed my name to Renu Kumari.

I, Pothika Rani Ray, W/o Dino Bondhu Ray, R/O-B-131 Rampuri, Surya-Nagar Ghaziabad-201011, have changed my name to Pothika Ray, for all purposes.

I, Nidhi Jain, W/o Ashish Jain R/O-F-1/139-140, Top-Floor, Sector-11, Rohini Delhi-85, changed my minor Son's name Aadvik Jain to Advik Jain.

I, Naresh Kumar alias Naresh alias Naresh Pal, S/o.Late Sh.Ram Chander, R/O-A-12, Munge-Ram, Park Budh-Vihar, Pooth-Kalan, Delhi-110086, have changed my name to Naresh Kamboj.

I, Mohan Kumar Datta S/o Ajay Kumar Dutta R/O-A-840, Gali No.-13, Deendayal Puri, Nandgram, Ghaziabad, UP-201001 have changed my name to MOHAN KUMAR DUTTA.

I, Manoj Varma S/o Sh. S.C. Verma R/O-A-39 2nd Floor Front, Ashoka Enclave - 2, Sec-37, Amarnagar, Faridabad have changed my name to Manoj Verma.

I, Himmaya Ismail Shaikh D/o Harkaman Dorji R/O 1915, Vavol, Opp Dev International School, Vavol, Gandhnagar, Gujarat-382016, have changed my name to Himmaya Harkaman Dorji.

I, Chetan Singla S/o Motilal Singla R/O B-402, 4th Floor, Eta Gardens Apartment, Magadi Road, Bangalore North, Karnataka-560023, have changed my name to Chetan Agarwal.

I, Puneet Gupta S/o Atul Kumar Gupta R/O P-87, South Extension Part-II, Delhi-110049, have changed my name to Eiakagra Gupta.

I, Atika Dhandhia, D/o Kamal Chand Dhandhia AddL-7/A, 1st-Floor, South-Extension Part-2, N.Delhi-110049, Changed My Name To Aticka Dhandia.

I, Apoorva W/o Anshul Anand R/O B-36, Panchsheel Vihar, Malviya Nagar, Delhi-110017, have changed my name to Apoorva Anand.

I, Anjana Devi D/O, Jaswant Singh R/O 121 Defence Colony, Chattwat, Post Office-jandwal, District-pathankot 145001 Punjab have changed my name to Anjana Devi Chib for all purposes.

I, Anil Kumar son of Attal Singh residing at A-887 Sai Nagar, Mehtapur Extn., Badapur, New Delhi-110044 do hereby solemnly affirm and declare that I have embraced Christianity and renounced Hinduism with effect from 11/06/1992. Also, I have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Anil Thomas.

I, Akshay S/O Satish Ahuja H.No-473, Near-Ramleela Ground, Bhim-Nagar, Gurgaon. Have Changed My Name To Akshay Ahuja.

I, Akash S/o Sh. Sombir R/O H.No.59, NSCI, Purana Kila Road, NDMC, New Delhi-110001 have changed my name to Akash Rathi for all purposes.

I, Akshen Kaur D/o Harmeet Singh R/O J9/41 Rajouri Garden, New Delhi have changed my name to Akshen Malhotra.

LOST & FOUND

I, Vikas Kukreja I have lost my Original Builder's Agreement for the property No. STS124 in DLF Star-Tower, Sector-30, Silkohra, Gurgaon, Haryana. If found, please contact-9810576994.

I, Akansha Tyagi S/o Ajay Kumar Tyagi R/O 360 DDA Flats Khirkhi Village, Malviya Nagar ND-17 have lost my original certificate Class-10th year-2007 Rollno-6410951 CBSE-Delhi.

I, Jasbir Singh, S/o Raj Singh R/O village-kapuri south west-delhi, new delhi-110073, have lost my original/certificate class-10th year-2009 Rollno-6419996 CBSE-Delhi.

I, Navneet Sharma S/o Sh. Vinod Kumar Sharma R/O H.No. 327, Pink Apartment, Dwarka, Sector-18B, New Delhi-110075, have lost my original documents i.e. Possession Slip dated 30-06-2005 etc. of above-said property. Finders may contact at above address.

I, Sreekala W/O, Biju. N R/O House Name-kuzhikkalethu, Vill & Popavumba North, Taluk-Karunagappally, District-Kollam, state-Kerala, pin-690574, have changed my name to Sreekala S.

I, Sheetaal Pathania Maloney W/O Ankit Kumar Maloney R/O 1053/41 D.D.A. Flats Kalkaji New Delhi. Have changed my Name from Sheetaal Pathania To Sheetaal Pathania Maloney. Both are the one and the same Person. I will be known as Sheetaal Pathania Maloney in future for all purposes.

I, Rohan Baid S/O, Mangalchand Baid R/O E-101, Pnb Road, Shastri Nagar, Delhi-110052, have changed my name to Rohan Mangalchand Baid for all purposes.

I, Rajiv Mehta, R/O. Flat No - 901, A-2 Block, Golf Link Apartment, Sector- 18B, Dwarka, New Delhi -110075, have changed my name to Rajeev Mehta For All Purposes.

I, Munir Khan S/O-Mehfooz Khan R/O B-52, Jahangir-puri, Delhi-110033, have changed my name Munir Khan to Muneer Khan.

I, Kuljit Singh S/o Kamikar Singh Chahal R/O 73 A-1, Northern Railway Colony, Tughlakabad, Delhi-110044, have changed my name to Kuljit Singh Chahal.

I, Karimuddin S/O Sukha Khan R/O B-52, Vijay Vihar Phase-1, Rohini, Delhi-110085, have changed my name to Kamruddin.

I, Kakhasha D/o Javed Akhtar and W/o Mohd Asad Saifi R/O B-146, Gali No-20, Subhash Mohalla, North Ghodda, Delhi-110053, have changed my name to Kehkasha Asad.

I, Amit Sharma S/O Sh. Rohtash Sharma R/O H.No. 377, Ranikhera, Kanjhwala, North West Delhi, Delhi-110081, have changed the name of my minor daughter from Kinjal alias Kinjal Sharma to Aadvika Sharma for all purposes.

PUBLIC NOTICE: Known-to-General-public-then-My-client Rasheek Kaur Sehgal is going to purchase property i.e. 2nd FLOOR, PLOT NO. B-484, Area 188 Sq. Yards, New Rajinder Nagar, New Delhi, from Sh. Rajesh Suri, Ms. Natasha Suri & Smt. Anita Suri who are the legal heirs of L. Sh. Surinder Nath Suri and L. Sh. Nishant Suri, and further mortgage with AXIS Bank Ltd. And if any person is having any objection, right of claim in respect of the said property in capacity of legal heirs of said L. Sh. Surinder Nath Suri and L. Sh. Nishant Suri, in any manner or said mortgage then he may contact the undersigned within 07 days of publication of this Notice.

PUBLIC NOTICE: THE GENERAL PUBLIC IS HEREBY INFORMED THAT MY CLIENT LEELA DEVI W/O LATE KANWAR SINGH R/O J-18 KRISHAN VIHAR, DELHI-110086, HAD DISINHERED HER SON KRISHAN PREVIOUSLY FROM HER ALL ASSETS & LIABILITIES. BUT HER SON KRISHAN HAS APOLOGIZED TO MY CLIENT AFTER APPOINTING MY CLIENT HAVE SETTLED HER RELATION WITH KRISHAN FROM NOW ONWARD AND KRISHAN HAVE ASSURED HER THAT HE WILL TAKE CARE OF MY CLIENT ALWAYS. ANY PERSON CAN DEAL WITH HIM AS THE FAMILY MEMBER OF MY CLIENT, AND MY CLIENT WITHDRAW HER PREVIOUS NOTICE PUBLISHED IN NEWS PAPER AND KRISHAN SHALL BE TREATED AS SON OF MY CLIENT WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT IN ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.

PUBLIC NOTICE: My clients-Sh. Ram Narayan-Gio Sh. Bajji Tyagi & Smt. Raj Kumari Tyagi W/O Sh. Ram Narayan, both R/O WZ-24, Village Keshopur, Vikaspur, New Delhi-110018, hereby sever all their relations with their son, Shri Rajgish Tyagi and daughter-in-law, Smt. Preeti Tyagi, and debar and divest them from claiming or inheriting their movable and immovable properties and my clients have no relation with them or any nature whatsoever. Any body dealing with Rajgish Tyagi and Preeti Tyagi shall be doing at his/her/their own risks and costs to which in any manner my clients or their property shall not be answerable to any extent or in any manner.

PUBLIC NOTICE: Be it known to public at large that my client Sh. RAJENDRA SINGH S/O SH. DHARAM PAL SINGH R/O E-485, GALI NO. 22, NEAR S.B. PUBLIC SCHOOL, KHAJOURI KHAS, DELHI-84, has debarred his both sons namely SUMIT KUMAR & AMIT KUMAR with his wife RIDHEEMA and their son master DEV from all his movable & immovable properties owing to their anti social & anti family activities. Anyone dealing with them in any manner shall be doing so entirely at his/her cost, risk and consequences.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER 400 KV TLD BHEP CHANDERKOTE. NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER. E-NIT No. 05 of 2019-20 Dated: 07.03.2020. For and on behalf of Managing Director J&K Power Development Corporation Ltd. this office invites e-tenders from OEM/Authorized Dealers/ reputed Firms for the below mentioned works:-

HAFFKINE BIO PHARMACEUTICAL CORPORATION LIMITED (Procurement Cell) Tel. No. 022-24100478. E-mail- procurementcell@vaccinehaffkine.com. Acharya Donde Marg, Parel, Mumbai 400012 (INDIA). TENDER NOTICE. Date: 09.03.2020. MANAGING Director, (Procurement Cell), Haffkine Bio Pharmaceutical Corporation Ltd., Mumbai invites tenders in two envelope systems from eligible bidders for following items for various Health Institutions in Maharashtra.

Table with 6 columns: Sr. No., Tender No., Name of Description, Pre Bid Meeting, Period of Sale and Preparation of bid & bid submission, Bid Opening. Row 1: 1, E-2416, Surgical Non Drug & other Phase-I, 18.03.2020 At 2.00 p. m., From 12.03.2020 10.00 am To 03.04.2020 up to 1400 hrs., 07.04.2020 at 1405 hrs.

कार्यालय, जिला अभियंता जिला परिषद गिरिडीह. अधिलेखनीय निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना. ई-निविदा संख्या- DOPR/DE/PP/GIRIDIH/13/2019-20. 1. कार्य का नाम- विशेष केन्द्रीय सहायता (SCA).

PUBLIC NOTICE: Be it known that my client Ram Wali W/O Late Chidda Singh R/O 1/2/241 Gali No.12, Bhan Colony, Sheikhpura, Delhi-32 has severed all relations with her sons Ishrat Chand, Ravinder & her daughter Rekha W/o Late Satish & their children and disowned/debarred them from all her moveable & immovable properties due to their misbehaviors and going against my client. Any body dealing with them in civil and criminal matter shall be doing at his/her/their own risk, cost and responsibility. My client shall not be responsible for their acts. Rakesh Kumar, Advocate Ch. No. G-111, Karkardooma Court, Delhi-110092.

Delhi govt counsel opposes L-G powers to appoint law officers

Government to obstruct the administration of justice... Let's see if the full court of Delhi HC protects its law officers? I sure am optimistic," Mehra tweeted. Mehra also said that the March 12 order was a consequence of his opposition to a law officer, whom he did not name, who looked to represent the Delhi Police. He tweeted: "I was recently told by the law officer of central govt, who is close to the powers that be, that he will 'sort me out and fix my office' as I dared to oppose his unauthorised appearance on behalf of Delhi Police. He gets a totally unconstitutional and illegal order passed."



SNOW IN SPRING. Himachal Pradesh saw snowfall in several places, including in Kufri near state capital Shimla, on Saturday. The snowfall, along with rain, intensified the cold wave in the state. Pradeep Kumar

Man hit by 'stray bullet' in Aligarh violence dies. MANISH SAHU LUCKNOW, MARCH 14. A 28-YEAR-OLD man who was undergoing treatment after suffering an injury caused by a stray bullet fired during violence in Aligarh on February 23 died at Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College on Friday, police said. Mohammad Tariq was standing on the terrace of his house when a bullet allegedly fired by local BJP leader Vinay Varshney hit him on the stomach, they said. Tariq had been on ventilator support since March 10 after his condition deteriorated.

The police had on Thursday arrested BJP leader Vinay Varshney and a hunt was on for two others. "Vinay was arrested on charges of attempt to murder and now after the death of Tariq, he will be booked on murder charge," said Additional Superintendent of Police, Crime, Arvind Kumar, who is heading Special Investigation Team (SIT) formed to investigate the case. The police claimed to have recovered a licensed pistol from the possession of Vinay, who is presently lodged at Etah jail.

SHO, Uparkot Kotwali police station, Ravindra Kumar Singh, said the licence of the pistol is in Vinay's name. It will be sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory for its ballistic examination. He added that two other accused, identified as Triloki and Surrender Lal, have also been booked in the murder case. Heavy police force has been deployed in sensitive areas after Tariq's death.

KILLING OF 4 IAF OFFICERS. AN NIA court in Jammu on Saturday charged Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) chief Yasin Malik and six others in the killing of four Indian Air Force officers in Kashmir in 1990. The court said there were sufficient grounds to draw the presumption that the accused have committed the offence. The other accused are Ali Mohammad Mir, Manzoor Ahmed Sofi alias Mustafa, Javed Ahmed Mir alias Nalka, Nanaji alias Saleem, Javed Ahmed Zargar and Showkat Ahmed Bakshi.

The seven accused were also charged with criminal conspiracy, murder attempt and under provisions of TADA and the Arms Act. Referring to the CBI chargesheet, including documentary and oral evidence, Special NIA Judge Subhash Gupta observed that "on mild sifting and evaluating the confessional statements of the accused" recorded under Section 164 of CrPC and Section 15 of TADA, "it can safely be considered as incriminating material against all the accused as they have divulged about the hatching of criminal conspiracy punishable under Section 120-B of Ranbir Penal Code and they further confessed that in furtherance of which, crime was committed by them in the present matter".

NIA court frames charges against Malik, six others. The judge has also directed the jail superintendents to produce both the accused—Yasin Malik and Showkat Ahmed Bakshi—through video conference on March 16. Nanaji alias Saleem and Javed Ahmed Mir were granted exemption from personal appearance on Saturday. The JKLF leader is under trial for the alleged killing of four IAF personnel in January 1990 and for kidnaping Rubaiyya Sayeed, the daughter of former state home minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed.

Public Notice: General public is hereby informed that my clients Vijay Kumar Setia S/o Preetam Lal and Sunita Setia W/o Vijay Kumar Setia both R/O L-2/36, F.F. New Mahavir Nagar, New Delhi, have severed all relations with their son Dipanshu Setia and his wife Jaspreet Setia both R/O Ganesh Nagar, New Delhi. My clients have also debarred their son and his wife from all their movable and immovable properties. In future any body dealing with debarred persons shall do so at their own risk and responsibility. My clients shall not be responsible for their any act and deeds of debarred persons. Sd/- PRAVEEN RASTOGI, ADVOCATE RZ-97 Khairi Ram Park, Uttar Nagar, Delhi-59

Public Notice: My clients Smt. Vmla Madan (Adhar Card No. 807749209224 W/O Shri K.L. Madan, Transfer Property No. 624-A/1, Gali No. 6 Area measuring 160 Sq. Yds, Kharsa No. 84, Govind Puri Kalkaji, New Delhi-110019, T. Smt. Suman Chauhan W/O Shri Roshan Chauhan & Smt. Kanchan Bhalala W/O Shri Krishna Gopal Bhalala to Registered GPA Dated 19/01/2006, if any person's claiming any right/interest having any objection, may write/contact with above named person at above address. Mob No. 9911516789 within 14 Days from the Date of Publication of this Notice or the person claiming any right, interest, objection with respect to this property, can personally inform at above address/Mobile. Satish Khatana Advocate 6/161 D.D.A. Flat Kalkaji, New Delhi-19, Ph. 9810016397

Public Notice: Be it known to public at large that my client Kuldip Kumar son of Shri Ram (currently residing at 5071, Upper Court Loni, Ghazabad-201102) intending to purchase 500 Sq. yard Sited Commercial Plot No. 126, Block B, Sector 3, G. Market, Pargana & Tansi, Loni (Ghazabad District) from Mrs. Dhara Sharma wife of Late Shri. Phooland Sharma resident of 174 Hari Nagar Ansham, Jangpura, South Delhi, Delhi (110014) the legal heirs against consideration. Any person, who has got, rights, interest, title claim, encumbrances, charges of any nature whatsoever in respect of the above said property in any part thereof, can send their objections with their documentary evidence at below address within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. Failing which, it shall be presumed that the said Property in entirety is free from all such claims, interest, charges, encumbrances etc. This notice is published on 15th March 2020.

Public Notice: Be it known to public at large that my client Sh. RAJENDRA SINGH S/O SH. DHARAM PAL SINGH R/O E-485, GALI NO. 22, NEAR S.B. PUBLIC SCHOOL, KHAJOURI KHAS, DELHI-84, has debarred his both sons namely SUMIT KUMAR & AMIT KUMAR with his wife RIDHEEMA and their son master DEV from all his movable & immovable properties owing to their anti social & anti family activities. Anyone dealing with them in any manner shall be doing so entirely at his/her cost, risk and consequences.

Public Notice: My clients-Sh. Ram Narayan-Gio Sh. Bajji Tyagi & Smt. Raj Kumari Tyagi W/O Sh. Ram Narayan, both R/O WZ-24, Village Keshopur, Vikaspur, New Delhi-110018, hereby sever all their relations with their son, Shri Rajgish Tyagi and daughter-in-law, Smt. Preeti Tyagi, and debar and divest them from claiming or inheriting their movable and immovable properties and my clients have no relation with them or any nature whatsoever. Any body dealing with Rajgish Tyagi and Preeti Tyagi shall be doing at his/her/their own risks and costs to which in any manner my clients or their property shall not be answerable to any extent or in any manner.

Public Notice: Be it known to public at large that my client Sh. RAJENDRA SINGH S/O SH. DHARAM PAL SINGH R/O E-485, GALI NO. 22, NEAR S.B. PUBLIC SCHOOL, KHAJOURI KHAS, DELHI-84, has debarred his both sons namely SUMIT KUMAR & AMIT KUMAR with his wife RIDHEEMA and their son master DEV from all his movable & immovable properties owing to their anti social & anti family activities. Anyone dealing with them in any manner shall be doing so entirely at his/her cost, risk and consequences.

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The number of people who have died in Syria, including more than 116,000 civilians, since the war began in March 2011, as per an observatory. The conflict is the "worst man-made disaster since World War II," the United Nations human rights chief declared in 2017

PANDEMIC WATCH



In Kenya, where the first East Africa case was reported. AP

EAST AFRICA

Rwanda's 1st coronavirus patient is Indian

Kigali: An Indian national in Rwanda has been tested positive for the coronavirus, becoming the first confirmed case in the east African country, health officials said Saturday. Its health ministry said the Indian citizen arrived from Mumbai on March 8. "The patient had no symptoms upon arrival in Rwanda and reported himself to a health facility on March 13, where he was immediately tested," the ministry said on Twitter. He is currently under treatment in stable condition, isolated from other patients, a statement said.

NEPAL

20,000 people to lose jobs

Kathmandu: Around 20,000 people are expected to go jobless after Nepal temporarily stopped issuing on-arrival tourist visas to all countries and put an end to all mountaineering expeditions for this season, in efforts to contain the spread of the coronavirus pandemic, according to a media report on Saturday. Nepal has so far reported only one case of coronavirus and the infected person has already been treated. Hundreds of climbers flock each year to Nepal, home to several of the world's highest mountains, including Mt. Everest, to scale the Himalayan peaks during the spring season.

GREECE

Pandemic death toll at 3

Athens: Greece announced two more coronavirus deaths on Saturday bringing the toll to three, as an unprecedented lockdown takes effect. A 67-year-old man died on Zakynthos island early on Saturday and a 90-year-old man died in the northern city of Ptolemaida, the health ministry said. Both men had health problems. The man in Zakynthos was believed to have contracted the virus after visiting a hospital in western Greece where the first fatality was confirmed, Athens News Agency reported.

UNITED KINGDOM

Prepares to enforce ban on mass gatherings

UNITED STATES

Extends travel ban to UK, Republic of Ireland

SAUDI ARABIA

Suspends international flights for 2 weeks

World closes borders, restricts travel

AGENCIES MARCH 14

COUNTRIES AROUND the world on Saturday continued to close borders, impose strict entry and quarantine requirements and restrict large gatherings in efforts to contain the spread of the new coronavirus.

Countries have shuttered museums, tourist attractions and sporting events to minimise the risk of coronavirus transmission, with more than 138,000 people worldwide infected and more than 5,000 dead.

Vice President Mike Pence announced Saturday that a travel ban imposed on European nations would be extended to the United Kingdom and Ireland starting at 0400 GMT Tuesday.

"Americans in the UK or Ireland can come home. Legal residents can come home," Pence told a White House news conference. Trump had earlier confirmed the ban would be extended to those countries as the pandemic progresses, saying: "They've had a little bit of activity, unfortunately."

The death toll in Italy rose to 1,441 on Saturday, up from 1,266, the civil protection authority said on Saturday. The total number of cases rose to 21,157 from 17,660, the authority said.

Saudi Arabia will suspend all international flights for two weeks, starting Sunday, state news agency SPA said. Taiwan will require travelers from mainland Europe, Britain and Ireland to self-isolate for 14 days, while New Zealand implemented a similar measure.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern also called on cruise ships, a major source of infections in some countries, not to come to New Zealand until June 30. "Alongside Israel, and a small number of Pacific Islands who have effectively closed their border, this decision will mean New Zealand will have the widest ranging and toughest border restrictions of any country in the world," she said.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who has faced criticism for his country's light touch ap-

MORE MEASURES

CHILE President Sebastian Pinera announced a ban on public events with more than 500 people on Friday

PHILIPPINES Manila, home to 12 million people, announced nighttime curfews on Saturday and urged malls to close for one month

JORDAN Jordan said it would halt flights, close its land borders and shut down schools, places of worship and public gatherings

RUSSIA Russia will close its land borders with Poland and Norway to foreigners, the country's prime minister said Saturday

VENEZUELA Venezuela confirmed its first two cases Friday. Schools have closed and flights to Europe and Colombia were halted

proach to tackling the coronavirus outbreak, is preparing to review its approach and ban mass gatherings, according to government sources Saturday.

Emergency legislation is due to be passed next week in parliament and the ban would come into force from next weekend.

Sri Lanka on Saturday cancelled all public events and gatherings for two weeks as the number of cases in the country rose to eight, the health minister said. Director General of Health Services Dr Anil Jasinghe said two more cases of COVID-19 were identified on Saturday.

Health Minister Pavithra Wanniarachchi said all public events stand cancelled for a period of two weeks as a measure to help the authorities.



Taiwanese army soldiers during a drill to prevent community cluster infection in New Taipei City on Saturday. AP

US House passes sweeping bipartisan relief bill after declaring emergency

JIM TANKERSLEY & EMILY COCHRANE WASHINGTON, MARCH 14

PRESIDENT TRUMP declared a national emergency on Friday over the coronavirus pandemic and announced steps he said would speed the availability of testing, and early Saturday, the House passed a bill reflecting a deal with his administration to provide billions of dollars to help sick workers and to prop up a slumping economy.

The president also said he would indefinitely suspend interest collections on federal student loans, although no bills would go down. And he instructed the Energy Department to buy enough oil to fill the nation's Strategic Petroleum Reserve "to the top." He said his plan would speed



PROTOCOL BREACH: At the press meet, Trump followed none of the recommended safety protocols, shaking hands with officials and sharing a microphone with them. Reuters/AP

the ability of Americans to be tested for the virus. It includes private partnerships to speed tests to the market and a website designed by Google. The president said the site would be available starting on Sunday, with the goal of allowing all Americans who needed a test to get one "very

safely, quickly and conveniently." The president, who has claimed that anyone who wanted a test could get one, also deflected any blame for the testing delays that have hampered the government's response. "I don't take responsibility at all," Trump said. NYT

CHECKS FOR ALL IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH TRUMP

Washington: The White House said Saturday it is now checking the temperature of anyone coming into close contact with President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence, as a precaution amid the coronavirus pandemic.

"Out of an abundance of caution, temperature checks are now being performed on any individuals who are in close contact with the President and Vice President," Deputy Press Secretary Judd Deere said in a statement. PTI

As outbreak threat grows, Boris pressed to move Brexit deadline

MARK LANDLER & STEPHEN CASTLE LONDON, MARCH 14

AS LEADERS on both sides of the English Channel batten down the hatches for the coronavirus, Prime Minister Boris Johnson is coming under rising pressure to ask the European Union for an extension in its negotiations to reach a trade agreement — in effect, putting off the next stage of Brexit until the virus exits.

Under the terms of its withdrawal agreement with Brussels, Britain legally left the European Union on January 31, but it is now in a transition period that preserves most of the old relationship, and has until December 31 to strike a new deal. European officials, and many in Britain, have already said that timetable was hopelessly compressed.

"It's going to be awfully difficult for the government to focus on this while dealing with the virus and maybe a financial crisis, too," said David Henig, a former British trade negotiator. "We are already being overtaken by events, and I think that pressure is going to start to become pretty intense."

A spokesman for Johnson said on Friday that Britain had no plans to ask for an extension and that there were ways to conduct the negotiations even during the peak of the outbreak. Most of the substantive talks are not expected to happen until the fall anyway, and in the meantime, officials are discussing options for video conferencing links.

The opening round of negotiations took place in Brussels this month and underscored deep differences. Negotiators called off a plan to meet in person in London next week. NYT

Iran says virus kills another 97, death toll at 611

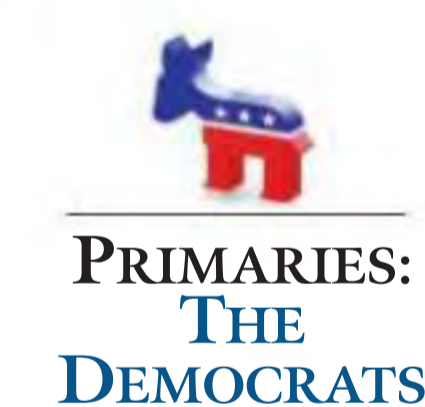
ASSOCIATED PRESS TEHRAN, MARCH 14

IRANIAN STATE TV said Saturday the new coronavirus outbreak has killed another 97 people, pushing the death toll in the country to 611 amid 12,729 confirmed cases.

Iran is suffering from the worst outbreak in the Middle East. The virus has also infected a number of senior officials there. Gulf nations have been scrambling to contain the pandemic, which has spread to more than 100 countries and infected more than 130,000 people. Of special concern is nearby Iraq.

For most people, the virus causes only mild or moderate symptoms. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness.

Rewriting primaries: Biden, Sanders to clash amid crisis



SHANE GOLDMACHER NEW YORK, MARCH 14

FOR THE first time in the long Democratic primary campaign, Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont and former Vice President Joseph R Biden, Jr will meet in a one-on-one debate, facing off Sunday night as Sanders fights for the future of his candidacy against a rival who has taken a commanding position.



Joe Biden held a 'virtual townhall' on Saturday. AP

But that isn't why this debate is different from most others in modern politics. Both men will be auditioning for the presidency amid an unfolding national emergency over the coronavirus; the last candidates to debate in such urgent circumstances were Barack Obama and John McCain during the 2008 financial crisis. Sanders will be under added pressure to show why he is still

running, at a time when people are worried about far more than presidential politics, while Biden — often uneven in these debate settings — must navigate far more speaking time as he tries to appear capable of uniting the country and leading it through a crisis.

Rarely has a debate been so shaped by palpable anxiety: The event has been relocated from a Phoenix theatre to a Washington, DC, TV studio to limit any unnecessary travel. There will be no live audience and no spin room. One moderator who had potentially been exposed to the virus has bowed out.

Debates are often unpredictable, but it is especially hard to game out how this debate will unfold and how people will process it. Hundreds of thousands of viewers, if not millions, will have been personally affected by Sunday. NYT

Taliban prisoner release stalls over guarantees

REUTERS KABUL, MARCH 14

PLANS FOR the Afghan government to begin releasing Taliban prisoners were stalled on Saturday over disagreements on the number of detainees to be released and guarantees that they will not return to fighting, a security spokesman said.

The Taliban promised to open talks with the Afghan government as part of an accord reached with the United States last month. The militants say the agreement requires the government to release 5,000 prisoners before talks begin. The government says the talks must begin and vi-

olence subside before it will free all the detainees.

"We are ready to start the process the way it is described in the presidential decree but we won't release anyone if there is no guarantee that they will not return to fighting," said Javid Faisal, spokesman for the Afghan government's national security advisor. "The Taliban have to show flexibility."

The Taliban are refusing to accept a partial release of the prisoners or any conditions on their release, its spokesman told Reuters on Friday. "Our stance on the prisoners' release is crystal clear. They should be released without any pre-condition..." Zabihullah Mujahid said.

New barrage of rockets hits Iraq base, days after strikes kill US, UK troops

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA BAGHDAD, MARCH 14

A FRESH spate of rockets targeted an Iraqi base north of Baghdad on Saturday where foreign troops are deployed, Iraqi and US security sources told AFP, in a rare daytime attack.

It was the 23rd such attack since late October on installations across Iraq where American troops and diplomats are based, with the latest rounds growing deadlier. None of the attacks have ever been claimed but the US has blamed hardline elements of the Hashed al-Shaabi, a network of armed groups in-



At the funeral for Iraqi police officers killed in a retaliatory US airstrike, in Najaf on Saturday. Reuters

corporated into the Iraqi state. At least 33 rockets hit Iraqi air defence units at the Taji air base

on Saturday, the country's military said. "The initial toll is two

wounded Iraqi Air Defence personnel who are in very critical condition," said Tahsin al-Khafaji, spokesman for Iraq's Joint Operations Command.

The US-led coalition said three of its members were also wounded in the attack. Iraq's military said it had found another 24 missiles at a nearby launching site and had detained the owner of the plot of land.

The US-led coalition's surveillance has been impaired by cloudy weather, which a US official said may have contributed to the attackers' readiness to launch the rockets during the day instead of under the cover of night.

'FOR BEING WHITE' Police watchdog sues UK Home Office for race bias

ADITI KHANNA LONDON, MARCH 14

A UK police watchdog is taking legal action against the country's Home Office for alleged race discrimination, claiming to be paid less as a white official as compared to his black predecessor.

Matthew John Parr, one of the five Inspectors of Constabulary who oversee the UK's police forces including the Metropolitan Police, took his claim to the employment tribunal in 2018 and the case is to come up for a full hearing this year.

The details came to light this week as a High Court judge

ruled to lift restrictions on it being reported after UK Home Secretary Priti Patel lost an appeal for the proceedings to be kept confidential.

In his claims for equal pay and sex and race discrimination, Parr says that his 140,000 pounds a year salary is too low compared with the 185,000 pounds salary of Wendy Williams, the last inspector appointed before him, and alleges gender and race-related grounds for that discrepancy.

The UK Home Office insists his lower salary is the result of a drive within the department to reduce senior staff salary burdens. PTI

20 ECONOMY

INFOSYS ASKED TO PROVIDE BETTER GSTN SYSTEM BY JULY 2020

GST rate for mobiles hiked to 18%, next meet to focus on compensation payout

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, MARCH 14

A TAX rate hike for mobile phones to 18 per cent from 12 per cent to correct the inverted rate structure, a deadline to Infosys to resolve technological glitches by July this year, and a call for a special session by April-end to look into the legality of option of market borrowing to pay states in view of compensation cess shortfall were some of the key decisions taken in the 39th meeting of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council on Saturday. The impact of COVID-19 on the economy was also discussed in the meeting. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said, adding the government is trying to assess the economic impact of the outbreak and is in talks with the industrial and the services sectors.

The Council also slashed GST on maintenance repair overhaul (MRO) services for aircraft to 5 per cent from 12 per cent with full input tax credit (ITC) and change the place of supply for B2B MRO services to the location of recipient, while GST on handmade and machine-made matchsticks has been clubbed to a single rate of 12 per cent from 5 per cent and 18 per

EXPLAINED

E Compliance measures relaxed

SEVERAL COMPLIANCE-RELATED measures were eased, even as the GST Council changed inverted rate structure by hiking tax rate for mobiles to 18 per cent, keeping the proposed correction for other sectors such as fertilisers, textiles and footwear on hold as states raised concerns over a rate hike during economic slowdown. The slowdown's impact on revenue will also dominate the next Council meeting, where compensation cess shortfall and the option to explore market borrowing will be in focus.

cent earlier, respectively.

"There were suggestions recalling what late Arun Jaitley had said about there can be ways that the Council can probably even borrow from the market. So all this was discussed and I have very clearly said that I am committed to giving the compensation as is being collected...shall look at how if at all the Council is allowed to borrow — who stands guarantee for it, how will it be paid, what's the interest that will be given — all these things will have to be legally looked into. So I have told the

Council today that I will have to look at all these things, get more information, legally get the opinion and then come back to the Council as to what I have in my hand. I also said if the Council have to go borrowing I will also have to see what the impact of such a thing will be on the FRBM," Sitharaman said.

As per the data for April-February shared at the GST Council meeting, the revenue gap between the protected revenue and the revenue accrued to states has increased to 23 per cent from 14 per

REVENUE GAP DURING APRIL-FEBRUARY

State/UT	2018-19	2019-20
AP	-48	-81
Sikkim	-10	-17
Telangana	1	12
Andhra Pradesh	-2	13
Uttar Pradesh	7	15
Maharashtra	6	16
Tamil Nadu	7	18
West Bengal	10	18
Jharkhand	15	22
Madhya Pradesh	16	25
Bihar	20	26
Gujarat	15	26
Karnataka	21	29
Kerala	16	29
Delhi	23	30
Himachal Pradesh	37	41
Punjab	38	46
Average*	14	23

*Includes data for 31 states/UTs; figures in %
**Negative value denotes surplus
Source: GST Council

cent on an average. Punjab and Himachal Pradesh are among the worst performers, with the revenue gap rising to 46 per cent and 41 per cent, respectively. Northeastern states are faring better with

revenue surplus, while Andhra Pradesh has slipped to a revenue gap of 13 per cent from revenue surplus of 2 per cent last year.

This year, Rs 80,000 crore has been collected as compensation cess, but states have been given Rs 1.2 lakh crore. GST authorities expect a compensation cess shortfall to be around Rs 48,000 crore this year and the compensation payout for December-January is already delayed, while only part payment has been done for October-November.

A series of compliance related measures were also announced, including waiver of late fee for delayed filing of annual returns for FY2018, FY2019 by entities with a turnover of less than Rs 2 crore. It was also clarified that interest will be levied on net tax liability from July 1, 2017 for delayed GST payments instead of gross basis for which the law will be amended accordingly to effect the change retrospectively. The FM said the Council has asked Infosys to deploy more skilled manpower, raise capacity of hardware of GST Network to ensure the system is glitch-free. The Council has asked Infosys, which has designed the GSTN, to provide a better GSTN system by July 2020, she added.

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI/NEW DELHI, MARCH 14

THE GOVERNMENT has notified the new board of Yes Bank with Sunil Mehta, former PNB non-executive chairman, as non-executive chairman and Mahesh Krishnamurthy and Atul Bheda as non-executive directors under the reconstruction scheme. In addition to State Bank of India and four private lenders, which have committed capital infusion, two more private banks — Bandhan Bank and Federal Bank — announced they would be investing Rs 300 crore each in the stressed private lender, taking the total equity investment to Rs 10,950 crore.

It has also notified that Prashant Kumar, former CFO and deputy managing director of State Bank of India and currently the Administrator of Yes Bank, will be the new MD and CEO of the bank under the scheme.

According to the scheme approved by the government, the office of the Administrator of the reconstructed bank, appointed by the RBI, "will stand vacated immediately after seven calendar days from the date of cessation of moratorium". The moratorium on Yes Bank will be lifted by March 18. The investor bank will nominate two officers as directors in addition to the members approved by the government. "The RBI may appoint one or more persons as additional directors as it may consider necessary. Any investor who is permitted to have voting right of 15 per cent will have the right to nominate one director on the board," says a gazette notification.

3-year lock-in for shareholders

Mumbai: Investors who hold more than 100 shares in Yes Bank won't be able to sell shares for three years, as per the reconstruction scheme. The lock-in will be applicable to new as well as existing shareholders.

"There will be a lock-in period of three years from the commencement of the scheme to the extent of 75 per cent of shares held by existing shareholders on the date of commencement of the scheme and shares allotted to the investors under the scheme," the scheme says.

"The said lock-in period will not apply to any shareholder holding less than 100 shares."

The bank also said 75 per cent of the shareholding of the shareholders holding 100 or more shares will be automatically under the lock-in.

"Accordingly, all shareholders holding 100 or more equity shareholders are advised to exercise utmost caution while dealing in the scrip of the bank," the bank said in a stock exchange filing.

Yes Bank shares closed 2 per cent higher at Rs 25.55 on the BSE on Friday. **ENS**

The reconstruction scheme says that an investor, other than the investor bank (SBI), may exercise voting rights to the extent of its shareholding or nine per cent of the total voting rights of all the shareholders of reconstructed bank or as may be decided by the RBI, whichever is lower.

It says the investor bank and investors who have subscribed to the shares of the reconstructed bank under the scheme will not be liable to pay capital gains tax for any deemed profits or gains on account of such subscriptions. "All the deposits with and liabilities of the reconstructed bank, except as provided in the scheme, and the rights, liabilities and obligations of its creditors, will continue in the same manner and with the same terms and conditions," the scheme says.

"All employees of the recon-

structed bank will continue to be employees of the reconstructed bank with the same remuneration and on the same terms and conditions of service, including terms of determination of service and retirement, as were applicable to such employees immediately before the commencement of this scheme, for a minimum period of one year," it says.

ICICI Bank, HDFC, Axis Bank and Kotak Mahindra Bank on Friday said they will join the SBI-led consortium and invest in Yes Bank. ICICI Bank and HDFC will invest Rs 1,000 crore each, Axis Bank will invest Rs 600 crore, and Kotak Mahindra Bank Rs 500 crore. On Thursday, SBI said it will invest Rs 7,250 crore in Yes Bank, which is much higher than the Rs 2,450 crore it had planned initially for a 49 per cent stake in the private sector lender.

BRIEFLY

NCLAT officiating chairman

New Delhi: The government has appointed Justice Bansi Lal Bhat the officiating chairperson of the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT). NCLAT Chairperson Justice Sudhansu Jyoti Mukhopadhyaya retired on Friday. The appointment of Justice Bhat, a former judge of the Jammu and Kashmir High Court, is "for a period of three months with effect from 15.03.2020 or until a regular Chairperson is appointed or until further orders, whichever is earliest."

IndiGo to cancel some flights to UAE

Mumbai: IndiGo on Saturday said it will cancel some of its flights to the UAE after the Gulf country announced that it would suspend all entry visas, except diplomatic visas, from March 17 in view of the coronavirus pandemic. **PTI**

Apple to close retail stores worldwide

Bengaluru: Apple Inc said late on Friday it will close all its retail stores, except those in Greater China, for the next two weeks to minimise the risk of coronavirus transmission. **REUTERS**

'Credit pressures on India Inc have intensified post COVID-19'

Credit pressures have intensified on India Inc as the coronavirus spread deepens in India and across the globe, leading domestic credit ratings agency Crisil said



WORST HIT

Airlines, hotels, malls, multiplexes and restaurants

GOVT RESPONSE

The government has suspended visas till April 15, barring a few cases, and state governments have adopted strategies like closing cinema halls

Clampdowns are increasing both within and outside India, which would curtail consumer mobility and lead to deferral of spending

Demand for eggs and poultry could also be impacted

Information technology sector can also be affected because of physical restrictions
Profitability to be impacted

Lower business volumes and occupancies, and suboptimal efficiencies will impact the profitability of companies

COST CUTTING

While some affected companies may initiate cost-cutting measures, these may not be enough given high fixed costs

Near-term liquidity is critical for ensuring confidence in timely debt servicing as businesses adjust to the fast-changing operating environment

875 companies it has ratings on can get impacted because of the coronavirus-related troubles, the agency said

Source: Crisil/PTI

Excise duty on petrol, diesel hiked by ₹3/litre

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, MARCH 14

THE GOVERNMENT on Saturday announced a Rs 3 per litre hike in excise duties on both diesel and petrol in an attempt to mop up more revenue, even as falling demand on the back of the coronavirus outbreak and price wars between oil supplying countries have brought down retail fuel prices by about Rs 5 per litre since the start of the year.

A government notification said the special excise duty on petrol was hiked by Rs 2 per litre to Rs 10 per litre and to Rs 4 per litre for diesel. Road cess on both petrol and diesel has also been increased by Re 1 per litre to Rs 10 per litre, the notification added.

The increase is expected to push up petrol and diesel prices, which have fallen by about Rs 2

per litre each since late February. Post the hike, the total excise duty on petrol has risen to Rs 22.98 per litre and that on diesel has risen to Rs 18.83 per litre. Central and state taxes account for 54 per cent of the price of petrol and 45 per cent of the price in Delhi after the hike.

Government sources claimed the benefit of crude price reduction has been passed to consumers over the last few months and that this step of increasing duty has been taken to raise some revenue in view of a tight fiscal situation. Sources added this would help in generating the resources for the development of infrastructure. The government had earlier hiked the excise duty, and road and infrastructure cess for petrol and diesel in July 2019.

Sunil Kumar Sinha, principal economist at India Ratings and Research, said the hike was in

line with measures taken when oil prices fell in 2014 and the government chose to pass on part of the benefit to consumers and used part of it to boost revenue. Sinha added consumption demand was down and lower oil prices were unlikely to boost demand significantly even if the entire benefit of lower prices was passed on to the consumers.

"Even if the fall in crude price is transferred to consumers in terms of lower petrol and diesel prices, it will only ease some of the pressure which households are facing and given the sentiment it is unlikely that it would have translated into a consumption boost," Sinha said.

The price of petrol had hit a nine-month low of Rs 70 in the capital and that of diesel had hit a 13-month low of Rs 64.74 after a price war between major oil-producing countries slashed international crude oil prices by 25

per cent. Saudi Arabia triggered the crash in prices by announcing a sharp increase in oil production after Russia declined to reduce oil supply to contain a fall in oil prices due to declining demand in a meeting of petroleum exporting countries.

Roughly, every rupee hike in excise duty is expected to yield Rs 13,000-14,000 crore annually. Given that the hike in excise duty has been implemented from March 14, it's expected to roughly translate into a gain of around Rs 1,600-1,700 crore for this fiscal year.

"Usually, the rough estimate is of Re 1 hike in excise yields Rs 13,000-14,000 crore annually. But global crude situation needs to be watched closely in the coming days. The fiscal arithmetic for fuel prices would depend on many factors going ahead," a senior government official said.

BILLIONAIRE AND HIS WIFE MELINDA RUN ONE OF WORLD'S LARGEST CHARITIES, THE GATES FOUNDATION

Gates steps down from Microsoft board to focus on philanthropy

REUTERS
NEW YORK, MARCH 14

MICROSOFT CORP co-founder Bill Gates, who made the company one of the world's most valuable technology firms, stepped down from the board on Friday to focus on philanthropic works related to global health, education and climate change.

The billionaire and his wife Melinda run one of the world's largest charities, the Gates Foundation, which has billions in assets and funds global health programs to combat disease and poverty.

Gates quit his full-time executive role at Microsoft in 2008 and remained as chairman of



Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates quit his full-time executive role at Microsoft in 2008 and remained as chairman of the board till 2014. Reuters file photo

the board till 2014. Since then he has been a board member.

"It's been a tremendous

honor and privilege to have worked with and learned from Bill over the years," Chief

Executive Officer Satya Nadella said.

With the departure of Gates from Microsoft Board, it will now consist of 12 members, the company said.

Gates also stepped down from the board of Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway Inc, where he has served since 2004.

Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway Inc said on Friday that former American Express Co Chief Executive Officer Kenneth Chenault has been nominated to the conglomerate's board of directors, replacing Gates.

The change was disclosed in Berkshire's annual proxy filing, ahead of its scheduled May 2 annual meeting.

Chenault, 68, led New York-

based American Express from January 2001 to February 2018, and became one of the most prominent black CEOs in corporate America.

Berkshire knows Chenault well, having long been American Express' largest shareholder, and ending 2019 with an 18.7 per cent stake in the travel and financial services company.

Gates, 64, has known Buffett since 1991 and been a Berkshire director since 2004, but now devotes most of his attention to philanthropy, including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

He is also the world's second-richest person, worth \$103.6 billion according to Forbes magazine. Buffett ranks fourth, at \$76 billion.

"I have made the decision to

step down from both of the public boards on which I serve — Microsoft and Berkshire Hathaway — to dedicate more time to philanthropic priorities including global health and development, education, and my increasing engagement in tackling climate change," Gates said in a LinkedIn blog on Friday.

In Friday's filing, Berkshire also recommended that shareholders reject a proposal by four New York City public pension plans that lists of outside candidates for board seats include "qualified female and racially/ethnically diverse candidates."

Three members of Berkshire's 14-person board are women, and Chenault would become the only black director.

YOUR WEEK AHEAD

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)
Your financial situation will be coloured by your emotions, so this may not be the best time for taking level-headed and clear decisions about your future. On the other hand, if you want to follow your feelings, then fine. Do not feel guilty if you spend more money on luxuries than necessities — you deserve a bit of fun.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)
Jupiter is still aligned with communicative regions of your chart, enabling you to put your case with energy, verve, enthusiasm — and sensitivity. This is therefore an ideal time to arrange meetings, hold discussions, attend interviews and generally lay out a firm strategy for the future.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
The principle astrological alignments at the moment are helpful, and you may count on a successful outcome, and as long as you play fair by others. Moneywise you seem to be functioning very well, at least better than in the past, although any joint arrangements could prove surprisingly complicated.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
Sometimes the stars tell you to think about others. You must be prepared to put your own interests to one side and place yourself at the disposal of those who need you, no matter how much this may tax your emotional reserves. Also, be aware that there must be no delay in implementing family improvements.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)
You appear to have itchy feet and are desperate for a change of scenery, mainly thanks to a group of planets in your third solar house. The likelihood is of many short journeys rather than a long voyage, but life will be no less adventurous. What will mean most to you will be the chance to enjoy some genuine peace and quiet.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)
Friends will be ready to listen and eager to help, so do not keep doubts and worries to yourself. Some of you are getting the idea that love is a more important part of your relationships than mere emotional security. However, as the days pass you'll realise that what is most important is your financial situation.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)
The next few weeks are nothing short of remarkable for all those who are in the midst of a professional and personal evolution, mainly because you'll be revisiting the past before recreating the future. Emotionally you are about to move on to an entirely new level of experience which may involve a move of home.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)
You key planetary alignments this week advise you to take more care. One word of caution is to avoid saying 'yes' to absolutely every offer and find yourself totally over-committed as a result. Plus, you must try to keep all your actions absolutely open and above board if you are not to be misunderstood.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 23)
Welcome surprises lie just around the corner. Social activities will benefit in ways which will probably astound you, and events are likely to be so rapid that you may temporarily lose your bearings. This is therefore due to be a period loaded with romantic stimulation and excitement in exactly the right combination.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)
Your desire for prestige, status and recognition in the community must be satisfied somehow, and the sooner the better. Fortunately Saturn, your planetary ruler, is occupying a particularly intriguing position, offering every hope for your future success and happiness. What you still need, though, is a touch more self-confidence.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)
Your emotional condition is thoroughly strengthened by Jupiter's alignment with prosperous sectors of your chart, for prosperity breeds confidence. Don't forget the physical world, for this is an ideal time to institute an improved regime of regular exercise and a more balanced diet.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)
Romance is best found in foreign cultures and climes, while people from overseas will be those who offer you the greatest inspiration. Are you thinking of travelling? Certainly it would be in your interests to get away for a while and experience new surroundings.

If it's your Birthday

Sunday March 15
You can leave trivial details as they are. It's the big picture which counts, and your major ambitions could soon be thrown into reverse gear. Your greatest pleasure will come from a loved one.

Monday March 16
Few understand the delicate side to your nature, yet this could a week when you show how compassionate you can be. Don't let relations take you for granted.

Tuesday March 17
Your ties to the past are strong and very difficult to shake off. The appropriate course is probably not even to try, but to use all that's best about your life and experience.

Wednesday March 18
There's something about having secrets that you really enjoy. You have much to look forward to, so face the future with confidence.

Thursday March 19
Start preparing for next week's critical planetary angles. See to it that all relationships with close partners are harmonious and that you and they are getting what you want.

Friday March 20
Mars is pounding its way through your chart, upping your energy level and lending that extra bit of oomph necessary if you are to succeed.

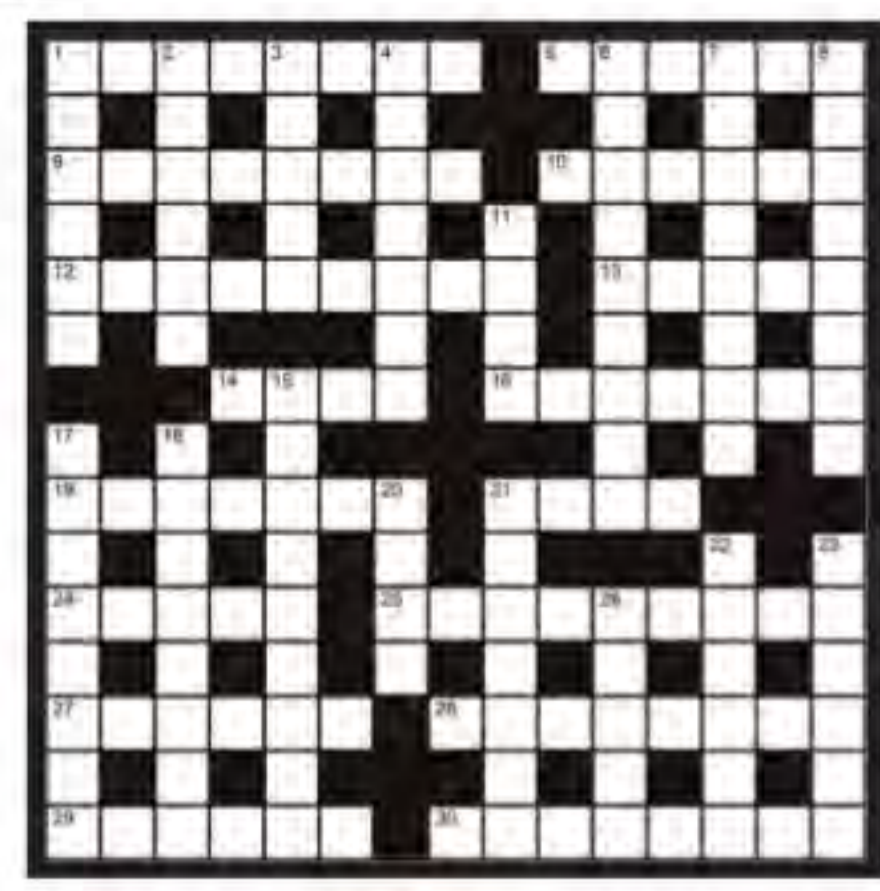
Saturday March 21
There are two intense undercurrents this week. One is cool, calculating and secretive. The other is volatile, impatient and inclined to explode.

SUNDAY CROSSWORD 2260

- QUICK CLUES ACROSS**
1. Shoe repairers? (8)
5. Eluded (6)
9. Ejecting (8)
10. Look forward to (6)
12. Wiggly (9)
13. Small bird of thrush family - "louse" anagram? (5)
14. Zest (4)
16. Makes or becomes dirty? (7)
19. Thrive (7)
21. Resign (4)
24. Roll's partner (5)
25. Tremulant (9)
27. Pests (6)
28. Star-shaped (8)
29. Moral or legal obligations (6)
30. Opposites (8)

- DOWN**
1. Like cheddar or brie (6)
2. Capital of Lebanon (6)
3. At a further time (5)
4. Moving fast (7)
6. Popular opinion (9)
7. Equestrian display (8)
8. Undated (8)
11. A long time (4)
15. Inexact (9)
17. Accepted; recognised or agreed (8)
18. Scripture (8)
20. Sticking facts (4)
21. Director Tarantino (7)
22. Ceremonial prayer (6)
23. Sea-monster (6)
26. Ernie of Fort Baxter (5)

- CRYPTIC CLUES ACROSS**
1. Light job for one standing on street (8)
5. Do about a thousand beers make them heated? (6)
9. Bob leaves the fencing game (8)
10. Land of song taking Jack in (6)
12. Mackintosh ran, if poor, perhaps (4,5)
13. Open career following Guter's brigade (5)
14. Dance professional married (4)
16. All rest is disturbed where the stars are concerned (7)
19. In secrecy, cleaned up to use in another form (7)
21. Oath not worth much to a tinker? (4)
24. More disgusting than liver could be (5)
25. Open individuals have additional implications (9)
27. A kiss in love story said to make a



- neat ending (6)
28. Chain smoking? It's quite loco! (4-4)
29. Because of the time taken to carry out a search (6)
30. Cooperate to meet a delivery? (4,4)
DOWN
1. If fifty are perhaps in debt it does not give them a lift (6)
2. Master or tender the sick (6)
3. Go at university and make it more lively (3,2)
4. Place to deploy some oar in the water (3-4)
6. These raiders include a headless comedian in Mars 1 (9)
7. Fraudulently use first-ever royal honour, the French sleeping sound within (8)
8. Son meddles with post impressionists! (8)
11. Unidentified flying objects responsible for this exploding of us (4)
15. Getting down details - one may have it taped (9)
17. Approached the green and accelerated away (5,3)
18. His work often figures in art exhibitions (8)
20. God of love making a painful return (4)

Solutions to 2259

- QUICK CLUES Across:** 1. King's 5 Hackles, 9 Scrip, 10 Alienated, 11 Tamil nadu, 12 Carat, 13 Czar, 15 Outhouse, 18 Overhear, 19 Send, 22 Abbes, 24 Hairpiece, 26 Nostalgia, 27 Noise, 28 Manipur, 29 Encrypt, Down: 1. In situ, 2. Karamzole, 4 Guacamole, 5 Haiku, 6 Conscious, 7 Later, 8 Sedate, 14 Rarestamp, 16 Terminate, 17 Sincerity, 20 Magnum, 21 Resent, 23 Bosun, 24 Hagar, 25 Panic. **CRYPTIC CLUES Across:** 1. Chrono, 5 Fallout, 9 Video, 10 Purgatory, 11 Traversed, 12 Endon, 13 Agnus, 15 Outdoors, 18 Proceeds, 19 Miss, 22 Alder, 24 Gamesters, 26 Bandicoot, 27 Tith, 28 Hard nut, 29 Hundred, Down: 1. Covets, 2 Red-ragger, 3 Noose, 4 Copstone, 5 Fared, 6 Leave room, 7 Void, 8 Toying, 14 Accordion, 16 Test-match, 17 Respector, 20 Casbah, 21 Ostend, 23 Diner, 24 Goat, 25 Satin.

BRIDGE

You don't have to win every fight with a king hit — you can sometimes prevail by simply tapping away

Dealer South. None vulnerable

NORTH	WEST	EAST	SOUTH
♠ 983 ♥ 765 ♦ AJ65 ♣ A96	♠ AK65 ♥ Q10842 ♦ 9 ♣ Q82	♠ 4 ♥ K93 ♦ 10972 ♣ K10754	♠ QJ1072 ♥ AJ ♦ KQ43 ♣ K3

Pass 1NT Pass 2♦
Pass 3♠ Pass 4♣
Pass Pass Pass

What would you lead against 4S with this West hand?
The first idea that might spring to mind is the singleton diamond. You have two sure tricks and if you can get your partner on lead, a diamond ruff will seal declarer's fate. But this may not be necessary. If you can force declarer to use up some of his trumps that will leave you in control. The way to do this is to lead your long suit, a heart.

Your partner plays the HK and declarer wins the ace. Now declarer plays the SQ and you take the king. You cash the HQ, declarer drops the jack, and you continue with a third heart which declarer trumps. Declarer now plays the SJ and you...?

You are on to a good thing but don't ruin it. Declarer is down to the same trump length as you but if you jump into this trick, you cannot tap declarer again because dummy is also out of hearts. What you have to do is duck this trick and win the next. Then a fourth heart will force out declarer's last trump and your low trump will be the setting trick. You will also be able to cash your last heart for two down because you have "forced declarer off". In fact, declarer can hold his losses to one down by abandoning trumps when he sees the 4-1 break but he has no way of making.

It is often a good idea to lead your long suit when you have four trumps.

Dealer East, EW vulnerable

NORTH	SOUTH
♠ KQ43 ♥ J943 ♦ - ♣ Q975	♠ 5 ♥ 5 ♦ AJ765 ♣ AKJ1042

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
2♥ Pass	1♥ Pass	2♣ Pass	6♣

West leads the H7 to East's ace, and East sends back the H6. No one else bid the slam, so you'll get top board if you make twelve tricks. Can you do it?

JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given clue.

Out of season, or tactlessly bestowed, can freeze the heart as much as ____ - Pearl S. Blake (6...5)

PYAE	GUYLMS
CDAIR	ELOUBP

SOLUTION: PYAE, GUYLMS, CDAIR, ELOUBP

Difficulty Level 5s Instructions

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Difficulty Level 1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard; 5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius



SOLUTION SUDOKU 4148



SOUTHERN RAILWAY (CONSTRUCTION ORGANISATION)

E-TENDER NOTICE No. 51-CECNMS-19-20-E-8952
Dated : 10.03.2020

For and on behalf of The President of India, The Chief Engineer, Construction, Southern Railway, Egmore, Chennai - 600 008 invites e-tender for the following work(s) as per Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) in our portal www.ireps.gov.in. The tenderers/Contractors intending to apply for the tender needs to get enrolled in the portal www.ireps.gov.in and only online tenders will be accepted. The Cost of the tender form and the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) should be made through online payment gateway available in the website by the way of multiple bank's net-banking, debit card and credit card.

NAME OF THE WORK				
Basin Bridge - Coaching Yard - Canteen Standard Pit Line of 24 LHB Coach Length in lieu of N1-9, N1-10, N1-11 (2 Nos.), TWO PACKET SYSTEM.				
Approximate cash value ₹	Earnest Money Deposit ₹	Cost of tender Form ₹	Period of Completion in months	Closing Date @ 15.30 hrs.
203200411.69	1166000	10000	TWELVE	02.04.2020

For further details, please refer to website portal www.ireps.gov.in or contact office of the Chief Administrative Officer, Construction, E.V.R. High Road, Egmore, Chennai - 600 008.

Chief Engineer, Construction, Egmore, Chennai-8.

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON (See Section 82 Cr.PC)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that Sandeep Singh S/o Sh. Umesh Singh R/o H.No. K-5/40, Gali No. 33, Gangotri Vihar, West Ghonda, Shiv Mandir Garhi, Mahendru, Bhajanpura, Delhi-110053 other address B-177, North Ghonda, North East, Delhi has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No. 87/19 u/s 381 IPC, P.S. Barakhamba Road, New Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused Sandeep Singh cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Sandeep Singh has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Sandeep Singh of FIR No. 87/19 u/s 381 IPC, P.S. Barakhamba Road, New Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before 22.04.2020.

By Order, Sh. Dev Saroha Ld. Metropolitan Magistrate, Room No. 13, Main Building, DP/22/NDD/2020

PUBLIC NOTICE/TENDER NOTICE
SR. NO.: 1
NAME OF DEPARTMENT/BOARD/CORP./AUTH.: HSIIDC
NAME OF WORK/NOTICE/TENDER: Online Recording/Remote Viewing of IP Surveillance - Renewal of Solution.
OPENING DATE, CLOSING DATE (TIME): 12.03.2020 to 26.03.2020 (11.00 hrs.).
AMOUNT/EMD (APPROX.) Rs. in Lacs: Rs. 21.60 Lacs/ Rs. 40,000/-
WEBSITE OF THE DEPARTMENT: https://etenders.hry.nic.in, www.hsiidc.org.in.
NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL: HoD(IT), HSI-IDC info@hsiidc.org.in
TENDER REF. NO./TENDER NO.: 2020_HBC_123378_1
HoD(IT), HSIIDC, Panchkula.

NOTICE INVITING APPLICATION FOR ALLOTMENT OF SHOPS AT SANTUSHTI SHOPPING COMPLEX, NEW DELHI

Shop No	Size	Shop No	Size	Shop No	Size
10	1132 sqft	14	425 sqft	19	753 sqft
23 & 24	773 sqft				

1. Air Officer Commanding, Air Force Station New Delhi, invites sealed application from resident Indian Nationals for allotment of shops at Santushti Shopping Complex, New Willingdon Camp, Lok Kalyan Marg New Delhi-110003.

2. The period of allotment will be three years w/e 01 May 2020. The shops will be allotted as per provision of Defence Shopping Complex (Maintenance & Administration) Rules, 2006.

3. The rates for allotment of the shop are fixed and will be charged as License Fee 160/- per sqft, Maintenance charges 60/- per sqft and GST @18%. In addition water & electricity charges will be charged as per consumption. The maintenance charge will be increased by 5% every year.

4. The application form can be collected from Santushti Shopping Complex Office, on all working days starting from 16 Mar 2020 from 1000 hrs to 1630 hrs @ Rs 500/- each (non-refundable). Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) equivalent to one month License fee i.e. (Area of shop X Rs 160/-psf) in the form of Demand Draft/ Bankers Cheque issued by any nationalized bank or ICICI, HDFC and AXIS Bank is to be drawn in favour of "Santushti 412 Air Force Station New Delhi". Application form duly completed in all respect along with EMD, is to be submitted to SSC office on or before 1500 hrs by 03 Apr 2020. Applications form without EMD will be summarily rejected.

5. Any clarification regarding allotment of Shops or any other issues for prospective allottees will be addressed at the office of Santushti Shopping Complex between 1100 hours to 1600 Hrs on all working days (Monday to Saturday) till 02 April 2020. The allotment of Shops by draw of lot, if applicable, will be held at 1500 Hrs on 14 Apr 2020 at Santushti Shopping Complex.

6. For further details please contact Tele no. 011-24679220, Mobile no 8130973799, or email on santushtishoppingcomplex123@gmail.com

7. Air Officer Commanding, Air Force Station New Delhi, reserves the right to withdraw any shop and / or accept or reject any tender or application without assigning any reason.

HIMACHAL PRADESH JAL SHAKTI VIBHAG 'OFFICE ORDER'

The e-tender called vide this office letter No. IPHDS-CB-EA I-Tender/2019-20-13855-60 dated 24.02.2020 and e-tender ID [2020_HPIPH_35493_1] for the work Job Contract for Providing/Management of skilled technical Manpower like Data Entry Operators (Outsource basis) for training, software development and support services in Jal Shakti Vibhag Himachal Pradesh from a period of one year (extendable) by further one or more years subject to satisfactory performance of the tender and its willingness to continue on existing terms and condition of decision of Jal Shakti Vibhag or Govt of Himachal Pradesh is hereby cancelled as only two bidders participated in the tender and being 1st call.

Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti Division No-1, Kasumpti, Shimla-9.

WESTERN RAILWAY - AHMEDABAD DIVISION

VARIOUS ENGINEERING WORKS
e-Tender Notice No. 30 of 2019-20 dated : 11.03.2020

Sr. No.	e-Tender No.	Name of work	Approximate NIT Cost (₹)	EMD Cost (₹)
01	DRM-ADI-151-2019-20	Outsourcing of track maintenance activities between Mahesana-Taranga Hill section under jurisdiction of Sr. Section Engineer (PW) - South - Mahesana. (for two years)	1,52,66,841.71	2,26,300.00
02	DRM-ADI-152-2019-20	Providing toilet & other basic facilities at various manned level crossing under jurisdiction of Assistant Divisional Engineer - Mahesana	60,95,199.39	1,21,900.00
03	DRM-ADI-153-2019-20	Palanpur-Disa-Bhidli :- Annual Maintenance Contract for cleaning of underground drainage and manholes in colonies for two years.	6,01,409.86	1,20,000.00
04	DRM-ADI-154-2019-20	Outsourcing of track maintenance activities between Patan-Bhidli section under jurisdiction of Sr. Section Engineer (PW) Patan. (for two years) (Re-invited)	1,97,25,698.10	2,48,600.00

Closing date and time of e-tender: 14-04-2020 at 15:00 Hrs. Address of the Office: Sr. Divisional Engineering (Co-ordination)-Ahmedabad, DRM Office, Opp. New Swadesthi Mill, Naroda Road, Ahmedpura, Ahmedabad-382345. Website for participating e-tender: www.ireps.gov.in

पश्चिमांचल विद्युत वितरण निगम लि, विकटोरिया पार्क, मेरठ

अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना
निम्नलिखित निविदाओं के द्वारा निम्नवर्णित कार्य को बाह्य एजेंसी के माध्यम से कराने हेतु अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा / निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं :-
अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सं-15/वि.कार्यशाला सं/मेरठ/कार्य/2019-20. विद्युत कार्यशाला खण्ड, मेरठ के अंतर्गत विद्युत कार्यशाला मेरठ, मवाना अड्डा-मेरठ एवं बडौल पर श्रमिकों को बाह्य एजेंसी के माध्यम से रखने हेतु। (निगम-रु 1180.00 /जी.एस.टी. सहित), धरोहर राशि-रु 9000.00). अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सं-16 /वि.कार्यशाला सं/मेरठ/कार्य/2019-20. विद्युत कार्यशाला खण्ड, मेरठ एवं अधीनस्थ सहायक अभियंता, कार्यालय/सी.टी.आर कार्याशाला में कम्प्यूटर ऑपरेटर्स को बाह्य एजेंसी के माध्यम से रखने हेतु। (निगम-रु 1180.00 /जी.एस.टी. सहित), धरोहर राशि-रु 11,000.00।
अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा खलने की दिनांक - 28.03.2020
अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा हेतु वांछित धरोहर राशि एवं निविदा शुल्क (18% जी.एस.टी. सहित), (अप्रतिदेय) आर.टी.जी.एस./एन.ई.एफ.टी. के माध्यम से अधिशासी अभियन्ता, विद्युत कार्यशाला खण्ड, मेरठ के नाम से सेंट्रल बैंक ऑफ इण्डिया की जेल चुगी, मेरठ स्थित बैंक शाखा में संचालित चालू बैंक खाता सं- 1403900519 (IFSC Code CBIN0282337) में जमा कराया जायेगा। ई-निविदा माग-प्रथम में कराने गए आर.टी.जी.एस./एन.ई.एफ.टी. की पे-इन-रिक्विजिट/रसीद के साथ, अन्य सम्बन्धित प्रमाणों, पेन कार्ड, जी.एस.टी. प्रमाण-पत्र इत्यादि की स्कैन प्रतियां (pdf format) तथा निविदा माग-द्वितीय (प्रार्थनिका) ई-निविदा खलने की तिथि को 14:00 बजे तक www.etender.up.nic.in पर अपलोड किया जाना होगा। ई-निविदा माग-प्रथम, उसी दिनांक में 16:30 बजे सार्वजनिक रूप से खोल जायेगा। ई-निविदा माग-प्रथम में सम्बन्धित प्रमाणों को अपलोड न किये जाने की स्थिति में ई-निविदा का माग-द्वितीय (प्रार्थनिका) नहीं खोला जायेगा। ई-निविदा माग-प्रथम/द्वितीय खलने की दिनांक को सार्वजनिक अवकाश होने पर निविदाएं, आगामी कार्य दिवस पर पूर्वतन समय पर खोली जायेगी। किसी एक अथवा सभी ई-निविदाएं एवं निविदा के किसी भाग को बिना कोई कारण बताये निरस्त करने का पूर्ण अधिकार अधोहस्ताक्षरी के पास सुरक्षित होगा। कृपया वेबसाइट www.etender.up.nic.in पर ई-निविदा के सम्बन्धित समस्त जानकारी विवरण/डाउनलोड तथा अन्य किसी प्रकार के संशोधन/विस्तार के लिये लॉगइन करें। विद्युत सम्बन्धी शिकायतों की सूचना '1912' पर दें।
Remark : www.etender.up.nic.in
पत्रांक 192 दिनांक 13.03.2020
राष्ट्र हित में बिजली बचायें
अधिशासी अभियन्ता
विद्युत कार्यशाला खण्ड,
पब्लिकविनिपलिसो मेरठ

SALUTE THE SOLDIER

Sep Kulvinder Singh
15 Mar 2000
During 'OP RAKSHAK', in J&K, while fighting on 15 Mar 2000, No 3390810H Sep Paramjit Singh of 10 SIKH and No 3396481N Sep Kulvinder Singh of 6 SIKH laid down their lives in the finest traditions of The SIKH Regt.
Deeply remembered by
Colonel & All Ranks, The SIKH Regt

CIPET: CENTRE FOR SKILLING AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT (CSTS)
(Department of Chemicals & Petrochemicals, Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers)
Haridwar Road, Post - Bhaniyawala, Doiwala, Dehradun - 248140 (Uttarakhand), Phone No.: +91-135-2695075, Email: cipetdehradun@gmail.com / dehradun@cipet.gov.in

CORRIGENDUM
With reference to the E-Tender No. CIPET:DDN/Tender/Equip/2019-20/01 dated 31.01.2020 for Supply and Installation of Plastics Testing Machinery/Equipments, The last date of submission is hereby extended up to 23.03.2020 at 5 PM. All other terms & conditions of the tender are remain unchanged.
Deputy Director & Head

Prayagraj Smart City Limited
1st Floor, Galaxy Building,
Near Civil Lines Bus Stand,
Prayagraj-211001 Uttar Pradesh

Corrigendum
Reference advertisement in Hindustan newspaper dated 25.02.2020, for Operation and Maintenance of Day Parking & Night Market" at Kamla Nehru Road & Dhobi Ghat under Packages-I & II. Date of bid is extended. For more details, please visit the website at <http://www.etender.up.nic.in>.

Sd/-
(Ravi Ranjan)
Chief Executive Officer
Prayagraj Smart City Limited

पश्चिमांचल विद्युत वितरण निगम लि, विकटोरिया पार्क, मेरठ

अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना
निम्नवर्णित कार्यों/आपूर्ति को बाह्य एजेंसी के माध्यम से कराने हेतु अनुभवों, प्रतिष्ठित टेकेदारों / कायदापत्री संस्थाओं से निम्नानुसार ई-निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं:-
ई-निविदा सं-86 /वि.कार्यशाला सं/मेरठ / कार्य /2019-20 (नि.मु. रु. 1,180 (जी.एस.टी. सहित)। धरो.रा. रु. 14,000] के द्वारा विद्युत कार्यशाला मण्डल, मेरठ में कम्प्यूटर ऑपरेटर्स व चतुर्थ श्रेणी कमचारी को वित्तीय वर्ष 2020-21 में उपलब्ध कराने हेतु।
निविदा खलने की दिनांक:- दि. 28.03.2020
निविदा हेतु वांछित धरोहर राशि एवं निविदा शुल्क अलग अलग (18% जी.एस.टी. सहित) (अप्रतिदेय), आर.टी.जी.एस./ एन.ई.एफ.टी. के माध्यम से अधिशासी अभियन्ता, विद्युत कार्यशाला खण्ड, मेरठ के नाम से सेंट्रल बैंक ऑफ इण्डिया की जेल चुगी, मेरठ स्थित बैंक शाखा में संचालित चालू बैंक खाता सं- 1403900519 (IFSC Code CBIN0282337) में जमा कराया जायेगा। ई-निविदा माग-प्रथम में कराने गए आर.टी.जी.एस./एन.ई.एफ.टी. की पे-इन-रिक्विजिट/रसीद के साथ, अन्य सम्बन्धित प्रमाणों, पेन कार्ड, जी.एस.टी. प्रमाण-पत्र इत्यादि की स्कैन प्रतियां (pdf format) तथा निविदा माग-द्वितीय (प्रार्थनिका) ई-निविदा खलने की तिथि को 14:00 बजे तक www.etender.up.nic.in पर अपलोड की जायेगी। निविदा माग 1 व 2 (निविदा शुल्क एवं धरोहर राशि) उसी दिन 16:30 बजे के बाद ऑनलाइन खोला जायेगा। कृपया वेबसाइट www.etender.up.nic.in पर विस्तार में सभी जानकारियों, विवरण / डाउनलोड तथा अन्य किसी भी प्रकार के संशोधन / विस्तार के लिये निविदा खलने की दिनांक से पहले तक लॉग इन करें। निविदा प्रारंभ खोलने वाले दिवस को अवकाश होता है तो उक्त कार्य के लिए अगला कार्य दिवस माना जायेगा। अधोहस्ताक्षरी द्वारा किसी भी निविदा को स्वीकार / अस्वीकार या समस्त निविदाओं को या उसके किसी भाग को और अपूर्ण निविदाओं को निरस्त करने का अधिकार बिना कारण बताये सुरक्षित है। विद्युत सम्बन्धी शिकायतों की सूचना "1912" पर दें। राष्ट्र हित में बिजली बचाएँ
अधिशासी अभियन्ता
विद्युत कार्यशाला मण्डल, मेरठ, पत्रांक 590/ वि. कार्यशाला मा. मेरठ
दिनांक 13.03.2020

Faster, Higher, Stronger ... Edgier

Chaos and fear rule the sporting world that's in the shadow of the Covid-19 virus. With no news yet of Olympics' postponement or cancellation, athletes' concerns range from preparation to well-being. Some of them are already across the world, trying to pinch vital qualification points but the pandemic threatens to unravel all plans. Here are some of the voices of doubts and powerlessness against the invisible enemy.



'I'm shooting six days a week. But where is the competition?'

MAIRAJ AHMAD KHAN
SHOOTING

IF THE Olympics were to be held now, despite the health risk that the Coronavirus poses, I would go and compete without even thinking about the consequences. It's my life, it's my dream and I can put my life on the line to win an Olympic medal.

These days, when we train at the shooting range or talk among ourselves, there is some fear. We are all wondering, 'what will happen if the Olympics are cancelled?' You want to focus on training, but at the back of your mind, this question does bother you. The government and the federation are helping you by giving financial help so you are concerned if all that money will go waste. After all, it is public money.

At the same time, you can't stop training and find yourself in a situation where the Olympics go ahead as scheduled and you aren't prepared. The biggest problem, from an athlete's point of view, is preparing for the Tokyo Games.

Before a big tournament like the Olympics, it is important for us to compete at a few events to check if our preparation is on the right track. There is no substitute for match practice. We have all the facilities here,

the best of the equipment... everything, so that's not an issue. I'm shooting six days a week right now.

But where is the competition? That's where the problem is.

Every event has either been cancelled or postponed — the World Cups in Nicosia (Cyprus) and Delhi, the Tokyo Test event; I was planning to compete in a tournament in Italy in May and June. But now everything is shut down in Italy so that, at the moment, looks a bit difficult too. So the lack of match practice is going to be a big problem. And to add to it, my coach Ennio Falco will not be able to come to India before April because of the visa restrictions. So till then, I am having video calls with him every day and we are working on my training.

From what I read and hear, the chances of the Olympics getting cancelled do not seem very high at the moment. There are talks about the possibility of the Games getting postponed if the situation does not get under control. And there are suggestions for conducting the event without spectators. Personally, I don't mind that.

My dream is to win an Olympic medal and ultimately, you will be called an Olympic champion; no one will bother or care to remember if it was closed doors.

PRACTICE
Despite the best of equipment, facilities and regular training, Mairaj is ruing lack of match practice. Unavailability of Italian coach Ennio Falco has added to his worries.

'It's so hard to find motivation because you don't know when is the next event'

ACHANTA SHARATH KAMAL
TABLE TENNIS

AT THE moment I'm at the Oman Open, so my family is paranoid. They didn't want me to go, but I thought that the Olympic qualifiers are coming up, so I need some match practice and this is a good chance to improve my ranking. But with all the tension and stress, it was probably better to stay home.

This being an Olympic year, even without coronavirus it's chaos, but now it's just become catastrophic. The World Team Championships that were supposed to happen next week will now take place in June. With the Olympics in Japan, most of the tournaments this year are in Asia, so a lot of tournaments are cancelled or postponed. Peaking performance is going to

be difficult because we don't even know when the next tournament is. A week ago, I didn't know what my training schedule should look like. Do I train as if tournaments are coming up and work on match play and sharpening strengths? Do I train as if it's off-season and work on the building phase and weaknesses? It's so hard to find motivation now because you don't know when is the next event.

Before the 2016 Rio Olympics, there was the Zika virus scare. By then we already had vaccines. But in this case, there is no vaccine.

There is a lot of fear among players. On one hand, you need to catch up on the rankings and qualify. But it's not just your health on the line. As an active sportsperson, it might not affect me as much, but I could be a carrier who can give it to my family, or anyone I come close to.

I'll feel terrible if that happened especially since there were so many people telling me not to go.

As players, we're all following measures — wash hands, don't shake hands, don't get too close... But you're all friends, you'd like to spend some time, but you're nervous because you don't know who might be carrying the virus.

After this event I have to go home, I have no choice. I probably will have to self-quarantine myself because that's the directive given by the sports ministry. I'm fine with that because I do understand that I can pass this onto other people. But at the same time, there is the Olympic qualifiers in April. I don't know if they're going to postpone it or not. If it stays, then I'll be quarantining myself, with no practice, no fitness. How do I cope with that? Everything is a big question mark.

TRAINING
Muddled calendar took its toll on individual schedules. Kamal was torn whether to train as if tournaments are coming up, or to treat it as off-season.

'Right now, this thing is beyond anyone's control'

ROHAN BOPANNA
TENNIS

MY PHYSIO and I landed in Doha last Sunday around 11:30 PM, and had to catch a flight to Los Angeles at eight in the morning. We had a transit hotel, but the (immigration authorities) changed the rule for 13-14 countries, and India was one of them, so we were not allowed to leave the airport. An hour before the flight we got to know that the Indian Wells had been cancelled. It was, in a way, lucky that I got to know before boarding a 16-hour flight. Then we changed our ticket to India, which was in another 12 hours. We ended up staying at the airport because we weren't allowed to leave.

For any person, you have to follow and abide by those rules and regulations of the country. Whether it is taking a yellow fever injection or whatever it may be, irrelevant whether you're playing a sport or you're just going as a visitor, it's the same for everyone.

Similarly, on the tour, it's not just me looking to qualify for the Olympics, it's the entire tennis circuit. At the end of the day, health is

the priority and the ATP has taken the right decision to suspend the tour. The World Health Organization (WHO) has said that (COVID-19) is a pandemic, so I think it's fair for everyone to be in their respective countries and take precautionary measures and see how it plays out.

Yes, it is an Olympic year, but there are bigger things, you know, clearly health being the biggest priority for everyone. And of course, this is a very difficult situation. As an athlete, you know sometimes you get injured, but you can plan for it and prepare for it. But this is something completely different.

But I'm looking at the positive, being here at home. My wife and I had a daughter nine months ago, so I'm really happy to be here and spend time with her. If I could tell myself that in the middle of the season, I'd be there at home for six weeks to watch my daughter grow, I would take it any day. And at the age of 40, it's nice to get a few weeks off. I can be with my family. I can go to my academy to train and work, and also, I can work on my coffee.

Frustration only comes if it's something in your control and you cannot do it. Right now,



this thing is beyond anyone's control. Everybody wants to compete at the Olympics and represent their country. But even for the Olympics, the organisers need to take precautionary measures. But it's the same for every athlete. We're all going to have to wait and see how it pans out in the next few weeks.

'Been travelling across the globe since I was 13. World in a lockdown feels strange'

RANI RAMPAL
HOCKEY

INTENSITY
Uncertainty is no excuse, and Rampal & Co are training with the same intensity. No let-up in preparations is also helping the team avoid distractions.

NO HAND-SHAKES, no sharing of water bottles and regularly wash hands. These are some of the things we have been following diligently at our training camp at the moment to make sure all of us remain healthy. Recently, in our team meeting, our coaches and doctors we were briefed about the dos and don'ts. We have been explained what the Coronavirus is and been told not to panic. But they have told us to take proper precautions. So we are following the advice given to us. Apart from that, we are trying not to think a lot about everything else that's happening. Our focus is on training.

I have been travelling across the globe for competitions since I was 13-14 years old. So now, it does feel a little strange when the entire world is in a virtual lockdown to control this virus from spreading. But it's a matter of a person's well-being so it's a good decision. As an athlete, everything we do in our day-to-day life is, in a way, keeping in mind the Olympics. So, the uncertainty around the Tokyo Games can put you off a bit. Right now, though, none of us

know if the Olympics will happen or not; whether they will be postponed or not.

However, we cannot let that uncertainty affect us. As a team, we are concentrating on our training — maybe the virus will subside in a couple of months. In such a scenario, we can't then say that we didn't train well and make this an excuse. So we are training everyday with the same intensity.

It's not easy. But our coaches and some of the experienced players remind us this thing very day. If someone keeps on reminding you to not get distracted, then you automatically start focusing. And that's the thing with us — the 25 players and coaching staff. We have very young players who will be competing at the Olympics for the first time. And like typical youngsters, they never take these things seriously — they are like, 'naah, nothing will happen to us'. So their focus is firmly on training. Still, every day we keep telling each other to concentrate on training and not think about anything else. And off the field, we remind each other of taking care of basic hygiene.



'I will definitely pack my bags for Tokyo if the event happens, whether risky or not'

SHIVPAL SINGH
JAVELIN

THIS IS a very tricky situation to be in. You draw out your training plan according to the competitions you decide to take part in. We spend months if not years on preparing for one competition and if you are told at the last moment that an event has been called off, you are left stranded. All your plans go awry and the disappointment is another thing you have to deal with.

Who could have foreseen the current situation? We are training here in South Africa and the coach and support staff keep us updated on happenings. I know in the back of the mind the Olympics could be canceled. Us athletes are taught to brush off disappointments and move forward.

But this is not just another tournament. I come from a family of athletes but no one has ever qualified for the Olympics. If the Tokyo plan fails, we would have to move on to the next event. But at heart, I really pray and wish that the situation comes under control.

I will definitely pack my bags for Tokyo if the



event happens, whether risky or not. It's a dream for every athlete to be at the biggest sporting stage in the world. It's my desire to do well at the Games and until then I won't rest in peace. The rest is in God's hands.

ASTOLD TOSHIVANI NAIK, SHAHID JUDGE, MIHIR VASAVDA AND ANDREW AMSAN

BRIEFLY

Australia and NZ's tours called off

Australia and New Zealand's limited overs tours have been postponed in the wake of new travel restrictions announced by the New Zealand government on Saturday aimed at containing the spread of the coronavirus. New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said on Saturday that everyone entering the country from midnight Sunday must self-isolate for 14 days in an effort to contain the outbreak. More than 138,000 people have been infected globally and over 5,000 have died, according to a Reuters tally of government announcements. The new restrictions meant New Zealand's cricket team would head home from their current tour of Australia later on Saturday, the sport's national federation said.

'We're lucky cricket isn't a contact sport'

Australian fast bowler Pat Cummins feels "lucky" that cricket is not an out-and-out contact sport at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc on the sporting calendar, not even sparing his own game. Australia and New Zealand played the first ODI of the three-match series in an empty stadium on Friday amid the outbreak which has so far claimed over 5000 lives. "We're lucky in cricket that it's not a contact sport, you can try and avoid getting too close to each other so no one really changed too much," Cummins was quoted as saying in cricket.au.com.

Root supports Lanka tour cancellation

England Test captain Joe Root has backed the decision to abandon the Test tour of Sri Lanka over the coronavirus pandemic, saying the players' minds were "elsewhere". A practice match in Colombo was halted on Friday and the team announced they would be flying back to London. The two-Test series, which was due to start in Galle on March 19, has been postponed. The England and Wales Cricket Board said the physical and mental well-being of the players and support staff was paramount. "There was an element of relief. The right decision has been made," Root told the BBC. "You could see looking at the players that their minds were elsewhere thinking about people back home. Now that we can go and look after families and be with loved ones, that's put a lot of guys at ease."

Kolhi urges fans to stay strong

India captain Virat Kohli has asked his countrymen to take all necessary precautions in the wake of novel coronavirus pandemic. "Let's stay strong and fight the #COVID19 outbreak by taking all precautionary measures. Stay safe, be vigilant and most importantly remember, prevention is better than cure. Please take care everyone," Kohli tweeted. On Friday, the Indian captain was seen coming out of the Lucknow airport wearing black face mask. The Indian team were supposed to have a training session on Saturday but in the evening, the BCCI and South Africa mutually agreed to call off the series. **AGENCIES**

Problem of numbers

BCCI president Ganguly hints at cutting down outings of teams, franchise owners not keen to reduce match days

SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY & DEVENDRA PANDEY
KOLKATA / MUMBAI, MARCH 14

A DAY after the BCCI announced the suspension of the IPL until April 15 because of coronavirus outbreak, the cricket board's president Sourav Ganguly hinted at reducing the number of games for the 2020 season. However, some franchise officials, were keen on a full IPL with the 2009 template.

Back then, the tournament was completed inside 37 days. As per the original schedule, the IPL 2020 was to be played from March 29 to May 24. In 2009, the then IPL boss Lalit Modi had taken the tournament to South Africa because it clashed with the general election in India. The IPL 2009 had started on April 18 and the final was played on May 24. A total of 59 matches had been played. Back then, the knockouts, after 56 group league fixtures, had two semifinals followed by the final. With two Qualifiers and an Eliminator, knockouts now have just one additional game.

On Saturday, the IPL governing council had a meeting with all the franchises in Mumbai and after that Ganguly said: "If a truncated IPL will happen, because if it is April 15, then in any case 15 days are gone, it has to be truncated. How truncated, how many games, I can't say at the moment. Until April 15 there are no visas (for foreign players)."

A top official from a franchise, however, cited the 2009 example while speaking to this paper: "We had an instance of holding the IPL in 37 days in South Africa. Fingers crossed, if the situation improves, we can follow that template. There's no other window for the IPL, it has to happen in April-May. Hopefully, with summer approaching and a rapid rise in temperature, if we can start by April 20, we still might work on a full IPL," he said.

Fewer venues

If the 2009 model is eventually followed, then playing the matches in a contained area – just two-three cities – could be an option, as it will reduce air travel and will lessen the logistics burden. "Today, the BCCI apprised us of the whole situation, why the IPL has had to be postponed, and we appreciate the BCCI's stand in postponing it because it's a must. We shouldn't be looked at as if we are only looking at money, which is not the case. We are all worried about the pandemic. With regards to rescheduling, we haven't put forward any proposal. It's the BCCI's call. They might meet us again in about two-three weeks' time," said a franchise CEO.

In case of a truncated IPL, separating eight teams into two groups of four teams each, more double headers – the original schedule has only six afternoon games – and same time fixtures at different venues have been considered as options.

On Friday, the BCCI took the decision to suspend the IPL 2020 until April 15, along with cancelling the India versus South Africa ODI series. Today, the cricket board decided to put all domestic matches on hold, including the Irani Cup to be played between Saurashtra and Rest of India at Rajkot from March 18-22, "till further notice".

"Safety is most important. We will continue to monitor the situation. (Today) we met with them (franchise owners) to tell them how it can happen and where do we stand at the moment. At the moment, it is just postponed. We will assess it (the situation). It will be reassessed every week," Ganguly said.

Today's meeting was attended by all franchise owners. Everybody spoke about how public/players health and safety are of prime importance at the moment, given that coronavirus case count is on a sharp rise. The



President Sourav Ganguly and secretary Jay Shah at the BCCI headquarters in Mumbai to meet IPL franchise owners. PTI

In case of a truncated IPL, separating eight teams into two groups of four teams each, more double headers – the original schedule has only six afternoon games – and same time fixtures at different venues have been considered as options.

World Health Organization (WHO) has already declared COVID-19 a pandemic, with close to 1.5 lakh people are affected globally and over 5,000 deaths have been reported. In India, it has claimed two lives apart from affecting 83 people so far.

It's not about money

Kings XI Punjab co-owner Ness Wadia made it clear that no stakeholder – BCCI, franchises, host broadcaster Star – wants to gain any monetary benefit by having the IPL at this time. "All the stakeholders, especially

the BCCI and the owners and staff, feel that it is incorrect for us to even think about one rupee. So we are not interested in money. We are not interested in having any gain from this situation and try to hold the IPL without a clear understanding of the situation. The number one priority is to make sure that health and safety of everyone is looked after," Wadia said after the meeting.

"There can be no compromise for even one human life. If we cancel the IPL and end up saving one life, it will be worth it. That is my personal opinion. It is better to be safe than sorry."

"Wonderful to meet all the franchise owners 'off the field' so to say. The meeting by @BCCI and @IPL was to reiterate what all of us feel...safety first of the spectators, players management & cities we play in. All directives of the health agencies & govt to be followed..." Kolkata Knight Riders co-owner Shah Rukh Khan tweeted, adding: "Hope the spread of the virus subsides & the show can go on. BCCI & team owners in consultation with the govt will keep a close watch & decide the way fwd in the health interest of ever1. Lovely 2 meet every1 & then sanitise

ourselves repeatedly."

Parth Jindal of Delhi Capitals concurred. "Once the situation comes under control, all the options can be discussed," he said.

Deep inside though, it is learnt that with nearly Rs 3,000 crore at stake, the BCCI and franchises combined, the possible revenue loss, if the IPL is eventually cancelled, remains an issue. The franchises were even ready to play behind closed doors before the BCCI had announced the postponement. In case of a cancellation, though, the franchises will not have to pay their contracted players any wages.

No foreigners, no IPL

This paper understands that during the meeting today, the franchises informed the BCCI that if the IPL has to be played, it must be played with overseas players. "What we have said, we want to play the IPL with full players, with foreign players," a franchise official said.

With all existing visas – except Diplomatic, UN/ International organisations, Officials, Project and Employment – are suspended until April 15, foreign players, coaches and support staff, who come here on Business visas, will have to wait.

BOSS TALK



It will happen, because if it is April 15, then, in any case 15 days are gone, it has to be truncated. How truncated, how many games, I can't say at the moment. Hope the spread of the virus subsides & the show can go on. BCCI & team owners in consultation with the govt will keep a close watch & decide the way fwd in the health interest of ever1. Lovely 2 meet every1 & then sanitise ourselves repeatedly

SHAH RUKH KHAN,
KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS

We cannot and no one, you know, is in a position today to say when it's going to start. We will review the situation after two to three weeks. And hopefully by then the cases will reduce. At the meeting everyone agreed that human beings come first and finance comes second.

NESS WADIA, KINGS XI PUNJAB

We didn't discuss anything, we need to assess the situation and the health and safety of public is most important consideration.

PARTH JINDAL, DELHI CAPITALS

All domestic events on hold

The BCCI on Saturday put on hold all its remaining domestic tournaments, including the blue riband Irani Cup match between Rest of India and Ranji Trophy champions Saurashtra. In a statement signed by BCCI secretary Jay Shah, the Board said prominent tournaments that stand postponed are the Irani Cup, Vizzy Trophy, Senior Women's One-Day Knockout and the Senior Women's One-Day Challenger, among others. **PTI**

COURT ADJOURNED

How concerns over travel and preparations led to BWF's decision

The badminton world body on Friday suspended all events till April 12 after players expressed their displeasure. SHIVANI NAIK looks at the implications

What prompted the BWF decision?

The Badminton World Federation came under immense criticism from some of the top names of the sport, and took the wise decision of suspending all tournaments till April 12. Hans-Kristian Solberg Vittinghus first urged the world body to reconsider their business as usual gameface for not pulling back from tournaments, even as the rest of the sporting world shut shop with the Covid-19 pandemic spreading rapidly around the world. While Danish Vittinghus was the first to question carrying on with the circuit (there were 6 crucial tournaments scheduled in a 7-week period), Parupalli Kashyap believed, "the BWF was daring us to risk our health with all the tournaments going on as if nothing's happened" even as the All England forged ahead with the health emergency crumbling all around it in UK which in its bull-headed stubbornness was itself slow to accept that it was in fact not business as usual.

How did Friday pan out?

While the pleading by a bunch of players (Srikanth, Ajay Jayaram and Carolina Marin's coach Fernando Rivas also retweeted Vittinghus' concerns), led to an urgently summoned meeting of some officials from the global body late on Friday, Kashyap said the players staring at a difficult situation worsening by the minute. "Singapore is cancelled, some

Danish players are in lockdown in their country and won't be allowed into Malaysia. Indonesians have withdrawn from Swiss Open and we are also going home. Basel will be left with Thais and Taipei players," he said. The cancellation was inevitable.

What were the Indian players' concerns?

Saina Nehwal had lost in the first round at Birmingham and Kashyap withdrew as well, but the 34-year-old stressed that this wasn't only about their qualification. "We are basically giving up on qualifying if we quit the Swiss.

And if we are quarantined back home, then anyway India and Malaysia is out. Saina needs a couple of quarters and two semis, and it's not uncommon to qualify in the last few tournaments. But right now this is about the BWF taking a call for its players' health and not making them run around the world chasing points," he had said. While the Indians withdrew en masse from Swiss Open, with even Ajay Jayaram worrying that he won't be able to travel from India, Kidambi Srikanth reached India in nick of time to make the deadline before the compulsory quarantine for all travellers set in. "When I tweeted the Health Minister, I wasn't asking for some special treatment to be given to us because we are international athletes. I just wanted clarity. It's not just us, we have to return to ageing parents. We can't risk being infected."



The suspension would come into effect following the completion of the All England Open in Birmingham on Sunday. Reuters

How did the Indians decide on Swiss Open?

The conduct of the Basel Vs Frankfurt Europa match behind closed doors at a stadium right opposite the Swiss Open's St Jakobshalle where the badminton would've happened, helped Indians make up their minds about skipping Swiss and heading home. Tennis, TT, Golf, cricket and football all saw a suspension of playing activity and the Premier League got suspended while BWF was in parleys. "They were a little naive here. But then the Arsenal manager tested positive, and it took their lovely football to be cancelled for them to realise the threat," Kashyap said.

"Mind you I love football, but this just isn't the right time to play sport."

Meanwhile players like Viktor Axelsen and Carolina Marin had expressed their doubts about the visa situation to Indian players, fearing they'd be quarantined on arrival for next week's India Open Super 500.

What did BWF decision say?

"The Badminton World Federation (BWF) has taken the necessary step to suspend all HSBC BWF World Tour and other BWF-sanctioned tournaments from Monday 16 March until Sunday April 12," the statement said. "The escalation of the COVID-19 outbreak globally

has led the BWF, in close consultation and consensus with its Host Member Associations and Continental Confederations, to cancel or postpone all tournaments in this period due to heightened travel and quarantine restrictions in place and the subsequent extreme logistical complications this causes to the movement of badminton athletes. BWF equally has strong considerations for the health, safety and well-being of all athletes, their entourage, officials and the greater badminton community in general," it reassured.

Which tournaments got cancelled?

Tournaments affected include the Swiss Open, India Open, Orleans Masters, Malaysia Open and Singapore Open, as well as a number of international Grade 3 Series and Challenge tournaments: in Hamilton, Krakow, Fort McMurray, Moriguchi, Vantaa and Wateringen. The suspension of the circuit would come into effect following the completion of the All England Open in Birmingham on Sunday. The individual Asian Championship at Manila for later in April is still on – perhaps the decision coming at a later date when organisers take stock. Olympic qualification period goes on till April 30.

What's the status of All England?

"Both BWF and Badminton England have been in constant communication with government officials and relevant authorities in the United Kingdom in relation to any possible disruption to the All England Open and both parties are satisfied with the British government's most recent advisory issued Friday morning UK time to continue with the staging of the tournament. Unless government advice changes, Badminton England remains confident that the robust and comprehensive measures in place

before and during the event will minimise the potential risk of the virus.

BWF accepts this position and that all relevant health, safety and logistical risks have been considered by BWF, Badminton England, tournament organisers, and the local government in reaching this decision," the release said. Immense sponsorship obligations and the attitudes British obstinacy mean they carry on even as the world goes into lockdown.

Why's the preparation been less than ideal?

Kashyap said: "It's a messed up preparation for Olympics for everyone. Even the Chinese and others quarantined for the All England were unhappy. They've been in Europe for months eating canned food and just wanting to go home." He said that cancellations would impact players' finances too. "I understand it's about their finances. But it's also our careers and how falling rankings mean our sponsorship will take a hit. If I fall out of Top 30, my Yonex sponsorship which hinges on rankings plummets. Even BAI will put me out of their funding bracket. So there's several complications if we can't get to tournaments," he had said.

What has BWF said about revised qualification criterion?

"A number of the tournaments impacted as a result of the suspension fall within the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games qualifying period. BWF will make a further announcement on regulations related to Olympic qualification points at a later date," the BWF statement said, hinting at a revision.

Kashyap said he was aware IOC had written to all international federations offering to assist with altered qualification procedures. BWF only needs to take up the offer.

BRIEFLY

ATK beat Chennaiyin 3-1 to win ISL title

Margao: A rampaging ATK claimed an unprecedented third Indian Super League (ISL) title triumph with a 3-1 victory over arch-rival Chennaiyin FC in a summit showdown that was played behind closed doors here on Saturday. Javier Hernandez (10th) and Edu Garcia (48th) put ATK in the driving seat but Nerijus Valskis (69th) reduced their advantage to set up a tense end to the contest. Hernandez scored another in injury time (90+4th) to confirm a record third title. The final was held without spectators owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. The win will be sweeter for ATK as they will now merge with Mohun Bagan, who won the I-League title last week.

Goyat makes winning return to pro circuit

New Delhi: Indian boxer Neeraj Goyat on Saturday outpunched New Zealand's Obedi Maguchi in his first professional showdown in close to a year after being injured in an accident, in Auckland. Goyat prevailed in just two rounds of what was to be a six-round contest as his rival's corner "threw in the towel in the second round". Maguchi came into the contest with an experience of five fights, including three wins. Goyat's total fight count, on the other hand, is 16, inclusive of 11 wins. Goyat was hospitalised after suffering "severe injuries" following a car accident in June last year because of which he could not fight in a WBC Pearl World Championship clash against British star Amir Khan. The 27-year-old from Haryana met with the accident when he was returning home after training.

AFI seeks advice on conduct of Indian GP

New Delhi: The Athletics Federation of India (AFI) has sought the views of its national coaches and foreign experts regarding the conduct of the upcoming Indian Grand Prix (IGP) series competitions in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Indian Grand Prix series competitions are scheduled to be held on March 20 at Patiala, March 25 at Sangrur and March 29 at Delhi. In consultation with Adille J Sumariwalla, AFI president, who joined the meeting over phone, the committee unanimously agreed to assess the situation before conducting the Indian Grand Prix 2020.

Real Kashmir match cancelled

Srinagar: The I-League match between Real Kashmir FC and TRAU FC was cancelled on Saturday due to "unavailability of permission" from the local administration, the national football body said. In another match, Neroca FC played out an entertaining 2-2 draw against Chennai City FC in an intense I-League match that was held behind closed doors at the Khuman Lumpak Stadium in Imphal. The hosts went ahead after Khangam Horam (1st minute) found the net just 21 seconds after kick-off, registering the quickest goal of this season. Mashoor Sheriff (21st) equalised for the visitors midway through the first half before Adolfo Miranda Araujo (45+2nd), known as Fito, nicked the lead just seconds before the break. Philip Adjah (90th) saved the day for Neroca, converting a penalty in the added time to lay claim on a vital point for his side.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Virus fallout: City's Euro ban appeal up in the air

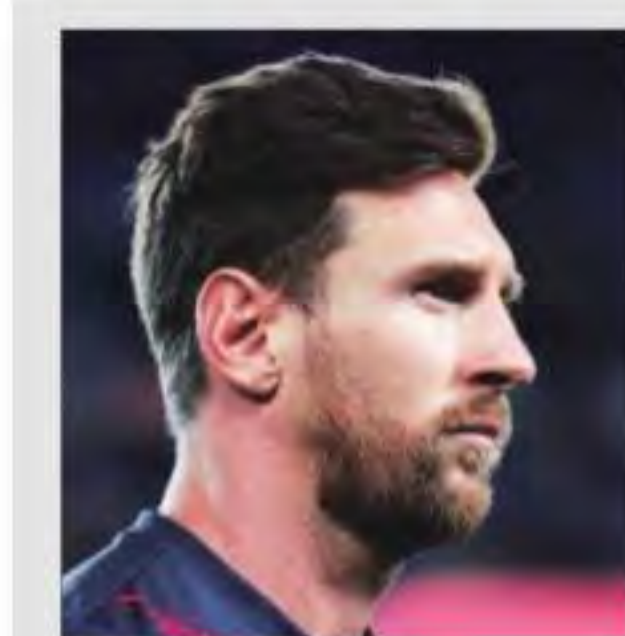
With Court of Arbitration for Sport postponing three hearings, English champions' hopes to get an early date for proceedings over their two-year ban is unlikely

HEARINGS STALLED, CITY MAY BE HIT The silver lining of possibly not having to give their title up to Liverpool in the wake of the unfortunate COVID-19 pandemic has quickly been extinguished for Manchester City after their appeal against their two-year UEFA ban from European football is up in the air as the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Switzerland deals with the impact of the coronavirus. City had hoped to have their hearing heard by early summer but that may be optimistic given the court in Lausanne has already postponed three hearings and has 16 cases already scheduled until May 18, with the City case not yet listed. CAS Secretary General Matthieu Reeb told Reuters that the court was already making adjustments and was "monitoring the situation closely and continually adapting to the changing circumstances".

MARIJNE POSTPONES FAMILY VISIT Indian women's hockey coach Sjorde Marijne had to postpone his week-long trip back to the Netherlands because of the

travel ban in place as the COVID-19 spread across the globe. "Had to turn around on my way to the airport to go to my family. The risk is too great that I can't return to India. Hard times for everyone and for me now that I can't see my family and I don't know when this is going to happen," he had tweeted earlier. Marijne was supposed to travel to the Netherlands on Friday night for a week during a brief break of the national camp of the women's hockey team. The campers are scheduled to assemble for the camp again at the SAI, South Centre in Bengaluru on March 22.

RUSSIA ASKS FOR BIGGER SLICE OF EUROS Russia is offering to host more European Championship games as UEFA considers whether the tournament can go ahead. Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Chernyshenko says Russia, which hosted the 2018 World Cup, could hold more than its scheduled three group games and one quarterfinal match in St. Petersburg. According to state news agency Tass, Chernyshenko said, "we



Lionel Messi has urged Spaniards to stay at home via an Instagram post.

MESSI ASKS SPANIARDS TO ACT RESPONSIBLY

Lionel Messi has joined hands in helping the Spanish government propagate the message of staying at home amid the ongoing pandemic that is coronavirus. "It is the moment to act responsibly and to stay home," Messi wrote on Instagram on Saturday. The Barcelona star added: "We are worried by what is happening and we want to help by putting ourselves in the place of those who are having the most difficulties, either because they or their families or friends are directly affected, or because they are working on the frontline in hospitals."

absolutely could expand the tournament program." He added that, "Russia is ready for however the situation develops."

IN ITALY, IT'S PLAYERS VS FEDERATION The Italian players association aired their frustration and said they were "saddened and outraged" at the fact that clubs were still asking players to attend training sessions, despite the COVID-19 pandemic and the effects being faced by Italy in particular. In a statement, the players' association notes that "some clubs" are

bringing in players to train in small groups, "or, even worse, for daily checks of their temperature." Italy is the European country hit worst by the virus, where the number of virus cases climbed to over nearly 20,000, with more than 1,000 deaths. The government in Rome has ordered an unprecedented lockdown, ordering businesses to close and restricting people's movement. The lockdown has suspended all sports in the country through at least April 3.

SHASHANK NAIR

Will host Olympics as planned: Abe

Japan's Prime Minister allays fears a day after Donald Trump calls for postponement of the Games

REUTERS
TOKYO, MARCH 14

JAPAN IS still preparing to host the Olympics, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said on Saturday, despite rising global concern about the viability of the summer Games due to the coronavirus outbreak.

Abe and his government have been adamant the Olympics will go ahead, even as other global sporting events have been put on hold. Speculation about a delay from the July start date has grown since U.S. President Donald Trump said organisers should consider a one-year postponement.

Abe and Trump held a call after those comments, prompting the U.S. president to say on Twitter that the Olympic venue was magnificent. But this may not be enough to assuage sponsors of the Games, who are increasingly nervous about how the outbreak impacts the competition.

The Olympic Torch relay, in which the Olympic flame typically starts a tour around the host nation, is due to start in the Japanese prefecture of Fukushima in less than two weeks. The tour of the torch through Greece has already been cut short. "We will overcome the spread of the infection and host the Olympics without problem, as planned," Abe told a news conference in Tokyo, adding that delaying or cancelling the Olympics was "not a subject at all" in his call with Trump. He said Japan working closely with the International Olympic Committee, which will have the final decision whether the Games go ahead, and the U.N. World Health Organization, suggesting he accepted that Tokyo would not ultimately decide on the event. He said Japan had a relatively low infection rate and had not seen an explosion in cases as seen in South Korea, China, Italy, Iran and elsewhere. He said delaying the peak of infections was vital to ensure treatment of those in critical condition. Abe said Japan did not need to declare a national emergency, although parliament on Friday approved a bill to give him emergency powers and allow him to close schools, halt large gatherings and requisition medical supplies.

Torch relay

Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike promised thorough measures against the coronavirus outbreak and said preparations for a "safe



Actor Gerard Butler lights an altar as he takes part in the Tokyo Olympics torch relay in Sparta, Greece, on Friday. Reuters

Abe and Trump held a call after those comments, prompting the U.S. president to say on Twitter that the Olympic venue was magnificent

and secure" Games were progressing, TV Asahi reported. Greece's Olympic Committee cancelled on Friday the remainder of the Olympic Torch relay through Greece to avoid attracting crowds, while the relay through Japan is scheduled to start on March 26.

Japan had 21 new coronavirus cases as of Saturday evening, bringing the total 1,443, public broadcaster NHK reported, while the has killed 28 people in Japan. The total infections included 697 from the Diamond Princess cruise ship and 14 returnees on chartered flights from China, according to NHK. Japan's fatalities included those from the ship.

Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike vowed to

take thorough measures against the coronavirus outbreak for the Olympic Torch relay through Japan and reaffirmed that preparations for a "safe and secure" 2020 Games were progressing, TV Asahi reported.

Koike's comments came after Greece's Olympic Committee on Friday cancelled the remainder of the Olympic Torch relay through the country to avoid attracting crowds that could raise the risk of virus contagion. The Olympic Torch relay through Japan is scheduled to start on March 26 in northern Fukushima prefecture. "(We're) taking thorough infection measures with regards to the Olympic Torch relay domestically," Koike said according to TV Asahi, adding that preparations for a safe and secure Games were moving forward.

Japan has sought to dispel speculation that the Tokyo 2020 Summer Games could be cancelled or postponed over the coronavirus outbreak, which has crippled global travel and brought the sports world to a virtual standstill.

TRACKING THE VIRUS

■ The All India Football Federation suspended football tournaments across all domestic levels till March 31.

■ The International Hockey Federation has called off the ongoing Pro League till April 15. India's next match, in Germany is on April 26.

■ An international friendly between Germany on Italy, scheduled for March 31, has been cancelled.

■ Sampdoria midfielder Fabio Depaoli has announced he's tested positive for COVID-19. He's the 10th Serie A player confirmed positive and the sixth at Sampdoria. Bundesliga, too, recorded its first positive case.

After more than a month, Wuhan football team to leave Spain

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MADRID, MARCH 14

THE CHINESE soccer team that was originally stuck in Spain because of the coronavirus outbreak is going back home to try to avoid its rapid spread in Europe. Wuhan Zall was expected to return to China on Saturday, nearly one-and-a-half months after it arrived in Spain for preseason training.

The team had not been able to leave because of the restrictions in China, but expedited its departure because of the worsening situation in Spain.

The team initially planned to leave Spain mid-February but had extended its stay in the southern region of the country until at least the end of March. That plan changed this week because of the sharp spike in the number of cases in Spain and Europe generally.

"Things are well over there (in China) now," Jose Gonzalez, the team's Spanish coach, told The Associated Press on Saturday. "The Chinese league will likely start at the beginning of May. We will have to enter quarantine when we arrive, so the sooner we leave, the better."

The team will first go to the city of Shenzhen, where it is expected to finish its preseason training for the Chinese Super League, the country's main first-division soccer competition. The league was supposed to start on Feb. 22 but was suspended because of the virus.

The city of Wuhan was the epicenter of the outbreak that rapidly spread to other countries and infected more than 145,000 people worldwide, with 5,400 deaths. Spain was set to follow Italy on Saturday in declaring a nationwide lockdown as European countries took ever more sweeping measures to reduce contact among people and slow the accelerating spread of the coronavirus.

Health authorities in Spain said more than 5,700 people were infected and the number of cases could reach 10,000 in the coming days.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia.

The vast majority of people recover. The number of new cases have dwindled in China, where more than 65,000 people recovered from the virus. The nation has been easing up on lockdown measures in its hardest-hit region that included the city of Wuhan.

None of the Wuhan Zall players were infected when the team arrived in Spain, but the grandmother of one player was among the coronavirus-linked deaths back home. Players have been away from home for several months because the team began its pre-season in the Chinese city of Guangzhou, nearly 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) away from Wuhan.

Although the team was far away from the initial outbreak, Spanish health authorities had to come out publicly to say there was no reason for local citizens to be concerned about the squad's arrival in January. Three players arrived from China later and had to stay in quarantine and be tested for the virus before joining the rest of the group.

The team initially planned to leave Spain mid-February but had extended its stay in the southern region of the country until at least the end of March. That plan changed this week because of the sharp spike in the number of cases in Spain and Europe generally

CHANGING TRACK

In a bid to run at the Olympics, Semanya switches to 200m



Caster Semenya, who ran 800m, will compete in 200m event now. File

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MARCH 14

CASTER SEMENYA is looking for another Olympic run. A different one, too.

Banned from competing in her favorite race and defending her title, the Olympic 800-meter champion is trying to make the Tokyo Games anyway - by switching to the 200 meters. Semenya announced her decision on her Instagram account on Friday, saying her desire "to compete at the highest level of sport" drove her to try to qualify for the Olympics in an unfamiliar race for her. "This decision has not been an easy one but, as always, I look forward to the challenge and will work hard, doing all I can to qualify for Tokyo and compete to the best of my ability for South Africa," she said.

Under the world track and field body's highly criticized testosterone regulations, Semenya and other female athletes with high natural testosterone are barred from races from 400 meters to one mile at top-level meets like the Olympics and world championships unless they undergo treat-

ment to reduce their hormone levels for six months prior to running.

Semenya has refused to do so, calling the rules and the medical intervention required unfair and unethical. Athletes are given three choices to lower their testosterone: birth control pills, hormone-blocking injections or surgery. But the regulations don't apply to the 200 meters and that gives Semenya a chance to run at her third Olympics, even if it's not in the race she wants to run in.

It won't be easy. Semenya has rarely run the 200 meters, and only at lower-level events. She didn't compete at all over the distance between 2016 and early 2019, and she is well off the pace of the world's leading women. The 29-year-old South African needs to improve her personal best by nearly two seconds just to qualify for the Tokyo Olympics. Her best is 24.26 seconds, in South Africa in February 2019. The Olympic qualifying standard for the women's 200 is 22.80 seconds. Semenya's PB wouldn't have got her out of the heats at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics.

But at least Semenya has a goal now after being in limbo for nearly a year after making an unsuccessful appeal of World

Athletics' testosterone regulations at the Court of Arbitration for Sport last May.

That left Semenya with a choice: Submit to medical treatment to lower her testosterone or stay away from the 800 meters. Defiant, she chose to stay away and hasn't run an 800-meter race since winning at the Prefontaine Classic in June last year; her 31st straight victory over two laps. She wasn't able to defend her title at last year's world championships. Semenya's decision to try the 200 may signal she has given up on her second legal challenge against the regulations. That second appeal is still being considered by the Swiss Federal Tribunal and a ruling is due in the coming weeks. She lost her first appeal at CAS last year by a 2-1 majority of the panel of judges.

A favorable decision from the Swiss supreme court could still overturn the testosterone rules and allow Semenya to compete in the 800 again without hormone-reducing treatment, but her chances of winning the appeal are seen as slim. World Athletics' new testosterone rules apply to female athletes like Semenya with conditions known as differences of sex developments (DSDs). Semenya was born with the typical male XY chromo-

some pattern but also female traits. She was legally identified as female at birth and has been identified as female her entire life, but World Athletics says she is "biologically male" - an assertion she has rejected angrily.

World Athletics says higher testosterone gives women like Semenya an unfair athletic advantage. Semenya's story has been one of the most contentious in sport ever since she arrived as an unknown teenager and won gold at the 2009 world championships amid a gender-test storm.

She has won two Olympic titles and three world titles in the 800 meters and is the reigning Olympic champion but has now been barred from running twice in her career. The first time she was sidelined by World Athletics, then known as the IAAF, was in 2009 in the wake of the gender controversy at the world championships.

Semenya hinted she might switch to the 200 when she won a rarely run 300-meter race and broke the South African record last month, her first race over any distance in eight months. After that victory, she declared: "I'm here to stay. Track and field, you will still see my face."