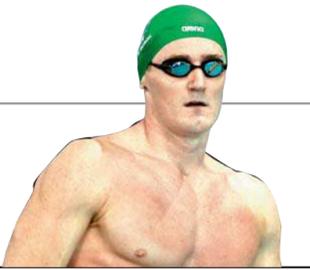


DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
HYDERABAD | TUESDAY | 24 MARCH 2020



WEATHER

Max: 34.6°C
Min: 22.7°C
RH: 46%
Rain: Nil
Forecast: Partly cloudy sky. Rain likely.
Max/Min temp. 35/22°C

NATION | 7

Shivraj Chouhan sworn in Madhya Pradesh CM

WORLD | 9

Senate declines \$1tn Covid-19 aid package

SPORTS | 12

Olympic swim champ Cameron hit by virus

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NOTICE

The Coronavirus has had an impact on our daily lives and on our economy. As a result, Deccan Chronicle has had to make temporary changes. We are suspending the publication of our lifestyle tabloid, Hyderabad Chronicle, and we are scaling down the number of pages to 12. We know you will bear with us through these difficult times, so that the good times can make an early return.

Editor-in-Chief

ASTROGUIDE

Vikari: Uttarayanam
Thithi: Phalguna Bahula Amavasya till 2.57 pm
Star: Uttarabhadra till 4.18 am (Wednesday)
Variyam: 12.07 pm to 1.55 pm
Durmuhurtam: 8.45 am to 9.33 am; 11.10 pm to 11.58 pm
Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm
HIJRI CALENDAR
Rajjab 28, 1441 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.17 am
Zohar: 12.33 pm
Asar: 4.44 pm
Maghrib: 6.34 pm
Isha: 7.41 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6.27 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.16 AM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 6.22 AM
MOONSET TODAY 6.32 PM

COUNTER POINT



Mom is doing panic buying, dad panic selling!

BRIEF

SC to shut down its premises

New Delhi: A decision was taken on Monday to "shut down" the Supreme Court premises with immediate effect and hearing in urgent matters would take place only through video-conferencing and skype, the lawyers bodies of the apex court said.

FM empowered to up excise tax

New Delhi: Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday took authorisation to raise excise duty on petrol and diesel by ₹8 per litre each in future as Parliament passed the Finance Bill, 2020, that also allowed pension funds to be treated like sovereign wealth funds.

Report on Page 11

Domestic flights cancelled

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

In view of lockdown in several cities and restriction on travel amid the coronavirus pandemic, the Union Civil Aviation ministry issued an order suspending domestic commercial air travel from March 25. India has already banned international flights for a week from Sunday.

"The operations of domestic schedule commercial airlines shall cease with effect from the

midnight that is 23.59 hours IST on March 24, 2020. Airlines have to plan operations so as to land at their destinations before 23.59 hours on March 24, 2020," Civil Aviation ministry the spokesperson said. The spokesperson clarified that the restrictions would not apply on cargo flights. However, aviation experts feel that the ban on domestic flights may go well beyond March 31.

The Union health ministry has told all Indian airlines that passengers with "home quarantined"

stamps on them should not be allowed to board any domestic flight. The ministry had on Sunday asked the airlines to let the passengers with stamps of "home quarantine" to board domestic transit flights to reach their final destination.

"The ministry believes that such passengers, who came from coronavirus-affected countries and have instructions to be under home quarantine for 14 days, have reached their final destination by now," a statement said. The government has

directed that every asymptomatic passenger coming from abroad to stay in home quarantine for 14 days. "As all international flights have stopped on Sunday (March 22, 2020), the home quarantined passengers were permitted till now to travel on connecting flights to reach their final destination within India. With the stoppage of all international services 24 hours back, there is no rationale in carrying these passengers," the Airport Health Organisation (AHO) told airlines in an e-mail on Monday.



People gather in large numbers without even wearing masks to protect themselves against the coronavirus as they purchase vegetables that are being sold at a high price during the lockdown in the Hyderabad at Madannapet market on Monday.

- P.SURENDRA

COVID-19 WATCH

INDIA	TELANGANA
CASES 467	CASES 33
DEATHS 8	

5 NEW +VE CASES, TS PLANS FEVER SURVEILLANCE

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

Rapidly upwards spiralling cases of positive coronavirus are taking a vicious hold of Hyderabad.

On Monday, the Telangana state government reported five new cases from the city and its immediate neighbourhood and another from the districts.

With most people returning from trips abroad to the state belonging to the city, it is expected that the number of Covid-19 cases in Hyderabad will rise further in days and weeks ahead.

With number of Covid-19 cases rising to 33, with 97 possible suspects under close watch, the state health department announced that the government was considering a state-wide fever surveillance.

Page 4: Containment procedures started

Rich returnees risk spread breaking quarantine rules

BALU PULIPAKA | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

The rich, the powerful and the influential: after returning from abroad have led the way in breaking home quarantine rules in Telangana, threatening to spread the coronavirus infection to the rest of the population.

Health minister Etala Rajendar on Monday therefore strictly warned that no one, irrespective of position or power, will be spared if they or their family break home quarantine.

Take Kothagudem deputy superintendent of police S.M. Ali. He allowed his 23-year-old son who tested positive for Covid-19 after returning from abroad. Rajendar specifically cited the DSP and his educated son's disregard for public safety and their having risked spreading the disease in Kothagudem and Khammam.

People like the DSP have not kept their end of their

● **HEALTH MINISTER** warned that no one, irrespective of position or power, will be spared if they or their family break home quarantine.

● **200 VIOLATORS** found till now, and cases booked against them.

bargain, Rajendar told reporters, after assuring the government that they can quarantine their wards or themselves, and that they did not want government-run quarantine facilities.

"We also have reports of other youngsters — children of people with responsibility towards society — who arrived from other countries who have been driving around in cars and jeeps and attending parties. We will crackdown and put them in quarantine if they do not follow the rules. We will book cases and punish them and their parents," he said.

"So far, 200 such individ-

uals have been identified, caught and cases booked against them. The government is spending money, effort and human resources in tracking and monitoring the health of foreign returnees. It is irresponsible on their part to act this way," Rajendar said.

Among those who displayed "irresponsible behaviour" is ruling TRS Party MLA from Sirpur (T) constituency, Koneru Konappa, who after returning from the USA with his wife, went about attending a series of events in Kagaznagar. He was subsequently ordered to stay put at home for 14 days and observe quarantine.

"This is no longer about individuals. Such people are putting not just themselves but the state, the country at risk. In the case of the DSP we are monitoring the health of one of our officials, a doctor and a police officer," Rajendar said.

PM ANGRY WITH VIOLATORS, CALLS FOR LOCKDOWN

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday expressed anguish over those flouting the lockdown call and asked law enforcing agencies to crack down on violators.

"Many people are still not taking the lockdown seriously. Please save yourself, save your family, follow the instructions seriously. I request state governments to ensure rules and laws are followed," he said in a tweet.

Later, Union home secretary Ajay Bhalla held a video-conference with state DGPs and asked them for strict implementation of lockdown and take legal action against violators.

Following the Centre's direction to states to enforce additional restrictions, if necessary, Punjab and Maharashtra imposed curfew while Delhi has completely sealed its inter-state borders with neighbours. Curfew passes will be issued to those moving essential goods in Delhi.

Since many people ventured out in lockdown, Puducherry has ordered a curfew.

Page 8: Lockdown kicks in across India

Sensex crashes, ₹14 lakh-cr lost

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, MARCH 23

Indian equities witnessed its worst carnage ever in stock market history with the Sensex falling over 4,000 points and the Nifty-50 falling over 1,100 points in a day on rising coronavirus cases forcing lockdowns and virtually bringing the real economy to a halt.

Investors lost ₹14 lakh crore in the bloodbath with all the 30 stocks in the Sensex and 50 stocks in the Nifty closing deep in the red. BSE's market cap stood lower by ₹14.23 lakh crore compared to ₹116.09 lakh crore on Friday.

The Sensex and the Nifty have lost over 35 per cent of value in the last one month — from 40363 on February 24 to 25981 on March 23 which translates to an average loss of nearly 500 points a day. The Sensex has witnessed its worst day in history on Monday by recording the steepest ever fall in terms of both absolute number and percentage — beating the 12.7 per cent fall caused by the Harshad Mehta scam in April 1992 in percentage terms.

Giants Reliance Industries and TCS too fell a hefty 13.37 per cent and 7.53 per cent on the BSE. The carnage in the

RUPEE PLUMMETS TO LIFETIME LOW OF ₹76.20 VS DOLLAR

● The rupee on Monday crashed by 100 paise to settle at its lifetime low of 76.20 against the US currency due to heavy dollar demand

market began right from the opening of the trade as Sensex opened over 2,300 points lower at 27,608.80 and the brief up move to 27,900 was sold into with no buyers daring to enter a bearish market.

The main indices Sensex and Nifty-50 indices hit the lower circuit in the morning session and trading was halted for 45 minutes. But selling resumed once the markets opened.

The Sensex fall intensified in the last hour of trade despite market regulator's measures announced last week to curb short selling and the benchmark index was down 4,035.13 points to 25,880 minutes before the closing bell.

The Sensex closed 3,935 points down at 25,981.24 down by a massive 13.15 per cent. The Nifty-50 closed 1,135.20 points or 12.98 per cent down at 7,610.25.

Gandhi, Chest hospitals full, tell pvt clinics to treat Covid

KANIZA GARARI | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

Officially Telangana has just 33 cases of the coronavirus even though Gandhi Hospital and Chest Hospital have asked designated private hospitals to not forward Covid-19 positive cases to them.

Treat cases in your hospital as our hands are full, is the message from health officials at government hospitals. This indicates that there are many more cases

though they are not declared positive till the second test says so.

The Gandhi Hospital isolation ward, with 50 beds, is full. Those with severe cough and flu symptoms are kept in isolation and monitored. The Chest Hospital has over 20 patients. Doctors here worry as there are only 10 ventilators and so more admissions of patients with respiratory illness is risky. The Fever Hospital's isolation ward has 25 beds; the spillover

from Gandhi is to be shifted here.

On Monday morning, those who came in contact with travellers from Covid-19 countries were at Gandhi Hospital for testing. Isolation wards in designated hospitals like Apollo, Care and Continental are ready and unlike previously, existing patients are not sent onwards to government hospital.

Page 4: 300 auxiliary nurses to check quarantined patients

Hyderabad returns to 'rush hour'

MADDY DEEKSHITH | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

Hyderabad seemed normal on Monday morning, compared to absolute curfew on Sunday.

People thronged to supermarkets and grocery shops from 8 am. Keeping the Coronavirus protective gear aside, people queued up outside popular supermarkets. Citing the rush of private vehicles, autos, and cabs etc, police barricaded the few arterial roads which made it difficult for commuting. Chief Minister K.

● **PEOPLE THROGGED** to supermarkets and grocery shops from 8 am.

● **CITING THE** rush of private vehicles, autorickshaws, and cabs etc, police barricaded the few arterial roads which made it difficult for commuting.

● **PRIVATE CARS** hit the roads with traffic snarls at few locations. Hawkers were back on the roadsides, and there were long queues at supermarkets.

Chandrashekar Rao's extension of the lockdown till March 31 fell on deaf ears. Private cars hit the roads with traffic snarls at few locations. Hawkers were back on the roadsides, and there were long

queues at supermarkets. Cops in Uppal had to regulate traffic in front of a popular mall. Despite repeated warnings by the Central and state governments, few followed Covid-19 preventive measures.

Few wore masks or maintained social distance. Even banks saw a heavy footfall.

At the Jubilee Bus station, people were in a hurry to flee the city and did not mind travelling in jam-packed four wheelers without masks. A few private firms arranged minivans for their employees to go to office. Cabbies had a hassle-free time until stopped by the police. Cops said cabs had medical reasons to stay on the road.

By afternoon traffic police made a special diversion plan that would

increase the travel distance from one point to another. At important junctions, cops barricaded exit points forcing commuters to take a different route. Even though roads wore a deserted look, traffic police forced commuters to spend at least 15 minutes at each signal. Police locked the entry and exit points of Tank Bund, Indira Park, RTC crossroads, Abids, Basheerbagh crossroads, Tarnaka, Habsiguda and others areas. By afternoon all entry and exit points were shut.

SHORT TAKES

REFRAIN FROM VISITING BANK: SBI CGM

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

Mr O.P. Mishra, chief general manager of State Bank of India's Hyderabad Circle has urged customers to refrain from visiting its branches. In a statement here on Monday, he said that the bank was continuing to provide essential banking services, with minimum staff.

The bank will continue to offer facilities like deposits, withdrawals, remittances, cheque clearance and government transactions. He advised customers to use net-banking and ATM services, as much as possible.

GHMC SPRAYS CHEMICALS TO CONTAIN COVID-19

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

As part of its ongoing activities to control the spread of coronavirus, Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) has taken up spraying of sodium hypochlorite chemical on main roads of Himayathnagar. Mayor Bonthu Rammohan said six high-pressure spraying machines will be pressed into service on all main roads in the city in a phased manner.

He appealed to the citizens to follow the lockdown and support the government in its efforts to control coronavirus. Urging everyone to put foreign returnees under home quarantine, he said that GHMC teams are also monitoring on this front. The control room established at GHMC head office is monitoring the situation in coordination with officials of four districts, field teams, health, revenue, police, 104, 108 departments.

The citizens can utilise the relaxation period to buy provisions and vegetables nearer homes.

RELEASE JAIL INMATES TO CURB COVID: REVANTH

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

Congress MP A. Revanth Reddy has demanded the release of prisoners, especially women and senior citizens, charged with non-heinous crimes, as there are chances of the spread of Covid-19, with several prison officials moving in and out of the premises. Mr Revanth Reddy, who recently was released from the Cherlapally central prison after being held for 14 days, has appealed to Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao to consider the vulnerable conditions of the inmates and take necessary steps.

The MP in his letter to the CM said that there are five lakh prisoners in the state and 65 per cent of them are undertrials. Therefore it is of utmost importance that all undertrials especially women and senior citizens in all non-heinous crimes be immediately released. Even those who have almost completed their jail term or are booked for petty crimes should be released with immediate effect, he said.

2 HELD FOR FAKE COVID-19 NEWS IN VIKARABAD

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

Two persons, who were spreading fake news about a Covid-19 'positive' case in Vikarabad district, were arrested by Tandur police on Monday. The accused were spreading information that an elderly woman had tested positive.

According to Vikarabad district police, rumours were spread on local WhatsApp groups that an elderly woman from Tandur town was affected with Covid-19, and was shifted to Tandur hospital. They added that this was the first such case in Vikarabad district.

After tracing the origin of the message, it was found that the news was spread in a regional channel news group, in which a person Vijay Kumar has posted it.

A case was booked against Vijay Kumar and also the group administrator Balraj, under relevant sections of IPC and Disaster Management Act, and were taken into custody, police said.



Shoppers stand in a long queue for hours to purchase essential items at a supermarket on Monday in view of the lockdown in Telangana till March 31. — DEEPAK DESHPANDE

You can buy essentials from 6 am to 6.30 pm

Pvt buses, taxis, cab, autos banned till March 31

JAYENDRA CHAITHANYA T. | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

Except emergency medical services, all goods and commercial establishments will remain closed throughout Telangana every day from 7 p.m. to 6 a.m. People will be allowed to purchase essential commodities from 6 a.m. to 6.30 p.m. every day, announced Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar on Monday.

However, road movement of all public transport vehicles, including cabs, private buses, taxis and auto rickshaws, stands banned till March 31. Only vehicles carrying essential goods and

supplies will be allowed to ply. Speaking to media, the Chief Secretary said depending on the necessity, there will be relaxation or further tightening of these rules.

He appealed to public not to come onto the roads unless there is an emergency or they have to purchase essential goods like vegetables, eatables or medical supplies.

"From 7 p.m. to 6 a.m. every day, no movement will be allowed and everybody is requested to stay at home. Purchasing of essential goods should be completed within 6 a.m. to 6.30 pm," he clarified. However, these rules

will be relaxed at villages and places where agriculture, dairy, and vegetable cultivation are carried out. But people involved must ensure social distancing while working.

Irrigation and NREGA workers will also be allowed to work in the same way.

Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar underlined that foreign returnees should remain home quarantined as advised. If they come out of homes, legal action would be initiated against them.

He requested public to pass on information to police about such persons. "If necessary, action will be taken

involving their passports as per law," the chief secretary warned.

He announced that a committee has been formed to ensure availability of essential commodities during the period of lockdown through-out the state.

The committee will function under secretary, Agriculture, and comprise civil supplies commissioner, transport commissioner, inspector general of police, Hyderabad, directors, Control Administration, Horticulture and Marketing departments, controller of Legal Metrology, and managing director, Dairy Development Cooperative Federation.

Keep customers at 4 ft gap, shops told

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

The state health department has issued guidelines to all shops and establishments to mark

spaces to separate people in queues against the backdrop of the Covid pandemic. On Monday, special chief secretary A. Santhi Kumar issued the guidelines.

- All shops, establishments, etc., shall paint, foot-marks on the floor at the distance of 4 feet to indicate location where customers shall be required to queue up at the counter.
- Above mentioned marks can be made inside the premise of the shop or even outside on footpaths, etc. in case of constraint of space.
- The proprietary/management of the establishment shall be responsible for seeing that people who are queue up at the counters stand on these marks thereby ensuring the practice of social distancing.
- The proprietary/management of the establishment shall ensure that people do not gather in groups inside the premises.
- Shops, establishments, etc, shall provide hand wash facilities and/or sanitisers for the use by visitors.
- The violation of the above social distancing norms shall be punishable under Sections 188, 269, 270 of IPC.

Total lockdown in Old City

ATHER MOIN I DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

The lockdown in Old City was complete and purposeful. While most preferred to stay at home, the law enforcing agencies ensured complete lockdown. Only essential service providers were allowed to step out of their homes. People rushed to make their purchases early and youth from the area were not allowed to sit on chabutras.

Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) authorities took up a massive sanitation initiative. Teams from Disaster Response Force conducted cleaning operation and sprayed disinfectants at public places, particularly near places of worship. Sanitation teams cleared garbage in many parts of Old City.

● VEHICULAR MOVEMENT dropped in the early hours. Policemen did not allow people to roam around on the streets and allowed motorists only after they explained the reasons for coming out.

Tolichowki et al wore a deserted look. The police did not allow auto-rickshaws and cabs to ply anywhere.

Residents in panic buying mode

ADITYA CHUNDURU | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 20

Thousands of Hyderabad residents on Monday morning resorted to panic buying at grocery stores. In spite of a lockdown order issued by the state government, they thronged supermarkets, rythu bazaars and grocery shops in large numbers.

The sudden demand led to a spike in all vegetables, differing widely in different parts of the city.

The price of tomatoes, for instance, ranged from ₹60 to ₹100 per kilo. Potatoes, chillies and carrots sold at ₹100 per kilo. Sriram, a resident of Uppal, said one vendor tried to sell him chillies for ₹200 per kilo. Even the prices of chicken and eggs, which has been low in the past few weeks, shot up to their old levels.

There was utter chaos in many rythu bazaars



Huge rush to buy vegetables and other essential items at the Monda market on Monday in view of the lockdown in state till March 31. — DEEPAK DESHPANDE

(farmers markets), where social distancing proved impossible. Narayana, a Gudimalkapur resident, said he felt he needed to go to the market despite the crowd since the lockdown could affect vegetable supplies in the future.

Many other citizens also believed vegetables would become scarce over the next few days and this was their last chance to buy them until

things get better. Some supermarkets and chain stores were able to maintain order. At many places, customers were made to line up outside and only a few people were allowed in at a time and senior citizens were given preference.

At Pollimera's in KPHB, apart from letting just 10 people inside at one time, customers were not allowed to buy more than one kilogram of a

vegetable to prevent hoarding. Many netizens took up the issue with the government on Twitter. In a press conference in the afternoon, chief secretary S.K. Joshi acknowledged these reports. While refusing to spell out what exactly would be done, he said that the government was monitoring the vegetable prices and would take action when it deems it necessary.

Don't roam on roads without reason, DGP warns residents

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

After people ignored the lockdown ordered by Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao, the Director General of Police M. Mahendar Reddy has warned that vehicles will be seized and cases booked against those who are roaming on the roads for no reason. People are allowed out to purchase essential goods and attend to medical needs.

"Once and for all, if we want to get control over the spread of the virus, strict implementation of the lockdown must be carried out. It is for public safety, and the public should understand this is being done for the existence of mankind," said DGP Mahendar Reddy.

According to him countries that have implemented a lockdown have controlled the spread of the virus, and wherever it was not implemented, they are suffering now. "From 7 pm to 6 am, nobody will be allowed on the roads. Even petrol pumps will be shut during that time. Residents shall procure essential goods and services from shops and establishments located within a radius of 3 km from their residence," said the DGP.

Across the state, in the jurisdiction of each police station, check posts will be

POLICE URGES CITIZENS TO FOLLOW THESE GUIDLINGS

- From 7 pm to 6 am, all services except emergency medical needs will be halted
- One person can ride on a bike
- Two persons maximum on a four-wheeler
- People allowed to travel to get essential commodities within a radius of 3 km from their house
- No public transport vehicles
- Vehicles will be seized if moved on the roads without a purpose
- Police check-posts in every locality to curb the unnecessary movement



There is no relaxation for anyone. Everybody should be confined to their homes because if the virus enters a person before the symptoms are identified, it gets to other people.

— M. MAHENDAR REDDY DGP

installed to check if people are going out of their homes for a valid reason.

The vehicle of anyone violating this rule will be seized and given back only after the lockdown period.

"One person on a bike and two in a four-wheeler, including a driver, if the car is not self-driven, will be allowed to get essential goods. Violators will also be booked under other relevant sections of the law," the DGP warned.

"There is no relaxation for anyone. Everybody should

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SHORT TAKES

COVID SUSPECT SPARKS PANIC IN KARIMNAGAR

PULI SHARAT KUMAR | DC KARIMNAGAR, MARCH 23

The news that a local resident of Karimnagar has contracted the coronavirus disease from a team of Indonesians has caused tension in the town of about 3.5 lakh residents. An estimated 1 lakh people pass through Karimnagar every day.

With Karimnagar entering the second stage of coronavirus transmission, it would become a challenging task for the officials to take preventive measures and trace the persons who came in contact with the Indonesians and the local resident who tested positive.

The Karimnagar resident who is associated with the Popular Front of India (PFI) and runs a coaching institute, has connections with a large number of people in the four districts of Karimnagar, Peddapalli, Jagtial and Rajanna Siricilla.

He received the Indonesians, spent three days with them from March 14, until they tested positive to Covid-19.

During this period, he ran the coaching centre in violation of rules till it was seized on March 17. At that time, there were about 12 students present there.

The district administration has announced the collectorate and Mukurampura regions as red zones and sealed the area.

Collector K. Shashanka and police commissioner V.B. Kamalasa Reddy visited the Mukurampura region and interacted.

Medical teams conducted screening tests of about 80 people who came in touch with the Indonesians and shifted six suspected people to the government main hospital for further screening.

● **THE KARIMNAGAR** resident who is associated with the Popular Front of India (PFI) and runs a coaching institute, has connections with a large number of people in the four districts of Karimnagar, Peddapalli, Jagtial and Rajanna Siricilla.

● **HE RECEIVED** the Indonesians, spent three days with them from March 14, until they tested positive to Covid-19.

Survey to find Covid-19 suspects



The Health Department and GHMC officials conducted a door-to-door survey at Kaudiguda to find if any persons have come from abroad and collected details of the people suffering from symptoms related to Covid-19 in Hyderabad on Monday. — S.SURENDER REDDY

Pneumonia of unknown origin concerns doctors

Such patients are seldom found in March: Experts

KANIZA GARARI | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

Pneumonia of unknown origin has been detected in patients, and to have these cases in the month of March has surprised the medical fraternity since the occurrence of this type of pneumonia is usually just 1 per cent at this time of year. Overall pneumonia cases are 5 per cent in India in the winter season.

To see these cases in March, in a population that is not otherwise suffering from co-morbid conditions of diabetes, hypertension or any other disease, is an indication of the spread of the coronavirus, say doctors. Moreover, the affected who have come to hospitals are below 30 years of age.

The Centre has asked hospitals to notify severe respiratory distress infections, and these numbers, coming in from different hospitals, are now

indicating that the incidence of such diseases is on the higher side.

Swabs of these patients undergo dual testing – for Covid-19 and swine flu.

A senior pulmonologist said, "Symptoms of the patients indicate co-infection. For this reason, we are insisting on both tests. This will allow us to use medicines that can fight H1N1."

Reports of co-infection have been sent to the government authorities to alert them of the existing situation.

The test results for H1N1 are ready soon but that of Covid-19 take time.

The treatment for H1N1 helps to reduce the viral load which is important for recovery of the patient. These are typical cases being seen in Hyderabad and doctors state that this is because swine flu is a part of the Indian environment.

TB is as alarming as coronavirus

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

Co-infection with Covid-19 and tuberculosis is a worry on World TB Day to be observed on March 24. Just like Covid, TB must also be dealt with seriously as the call of medical fraternity.

TB is as dreadful as Covid-19 and prevention, diagnosis and treatment needs to be improved with the threat of the new virus.

Co-infection of these diseases will place a major challenge and the same methods of contact tracing must be used in active cases so that the passive ones are better controlled. There are 1.5 million

people dying from TB every year. An approximate 10 million people suffer from the disease.

The most vulnerable are countries like India who have put up a tough fight but the results are not as expected.

Covid has helped in bringing awareness about infectious diseases and the same must be extended to other diseases especially tuberculosis.

The government, both at the Centre and the states, must also prioritise its fight against TB. The fear of isolation in Covid-19 patients is similar to those of TB patients who suffered from discrimination and stigma, experts said.

Loss of smell, taste, early symptoms of Covid-19

Doctors engaged in treating cough, cold patients

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

Common cold, cough and flu is driving a lot of people to out-patient units of private hospitals and they insist on getting tested for Covid-19. While some of them have come in contact with those who came from Covid-19 affected countries and asked for home quarantine. Others are suffering due to the change in the climate.

General physicians and pulmonologists stated that they are spending most of the time counselling these patients. Those who have come in contact with travellers do not disclose history until and unless repeatedly asked. Family members whose children have returned from abroad are staying with them without isolation and when infected demanding what must be done now. "There is a lot of fear of quarantine. People think they will be tied or kept in a room where they

● **LOSS OF** smell and taste is another indication of Covid 19 in the body.

● **COMMON COLD** and cough being seen in the population is also due to recent rains and sudden change in climate and people must not panic.

● **TO ENSURE** that the actual cases must come up to hospitals, experts have stated that the early signs of loss of smell and taste must be evaluated.

night. With number of common cold on the rise, private hospitals have decided that they will get a general practitioner to evaluate first and then bring them upward to pulmonologist.

To ensure that the actual cases must come up to hospitals, experts have stated that the early signs of loss of smell and taste must be evaluated.

Data studied from Wuhan and Italy has shown that those who lost their sense of smell and taste were tested early were also able to recover fast as their care parameters improved. These are the early warning signs. But in India, government hospitals have been asked to check only if there are symptoms of cough and cold.

They are not being tested even if they have travel history. Neither are questions being asked as their asymptomatic condition is not a concern. With lock down these patients are expected to come later but they must come on time.

IMPROVE FACILITIES IN HOSPITALS, CONGRESS URGES STATE GOVT

Hyderabad, March 23: State Congress treasurer G. Narayana Reddy has demanded that the state government take immediate measures to improve facilities and infrastructure at hospitals to deal with the coronavirus situation. While steps like lockdown would help in breaking the chain in spread of Coronavirus, more practical measures are needed to fight the crisis, the senior Congress leader said.

Mr Narayana Reddy said the Centre had agreed to permit the CMB and Centre for DNA Fingerprinting and Diagnostics to conduct Covid-19 testing. But the institutions were not provided any testing kits.

HC orders clean up of quarantine centres

VUJJINI VAMSHIDHARA | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

Based on a Deccan Chronicle report on the pathetic conditions at quarantine centres, which was suo motu (by itself) taken up as a public interest litigation, the Telangana High Court on Monday directed the state government to

maintain hygiene in such establishments and house one person in each room. The court also sought a report on the quarantine centres.

A division bench comprising Justice M.S. Ramachandra Rao and Justice T. Amarnath Goud on Monday heard the PIL and passed the order.

When the matter came up

DC IMPACT

for adjudication on Monday, Advocate General B.S. Prasad explained that the state government had taken steps to improve the facilities in the quarantine centres when the issue came to its notice.

The quarantine centres were established in hostels

and residential buildings meant for government employees.

Deccan Chronicle, in its report 'Quarantine facilities dirty' published on March 20 had reported on the lack of basic facilities at these premises, where two to three passengers, and on some occasions more than five passengers, were put up in a single room.

The rooms had bed bugs, cockroaches and mosquitoes. The toilets were defunct and did not have running water. There was inadequate supply of drinking water, the report had stated.

The report was taken up as a suo motu PIL on the directions of Chief Justice Raghavendra Singh Chauhan.

20 Khammam Covid suspects sent to Hyd

A. RAVINDRA SESHU | DC KHAMMAM/KOTHAGUDEM, MARCH 23

About 20 persons from Mittapalli and Venkatapuram under Tallada mandal, after adequate counselling by health workers and police, were shifted to Hyderabad for suspected Covid-19 infection.

A person from Mittapalli and a friend of Awaz in Kothagudem met four days back in the coal town. Awaz was found Covid-19 positive and he is undergoing treatment in Hyderabad.

The health officials found a link with a cotton trader, who interacted with another 19 persons in Mittapalli and Venkatapuram for the last four days.

● **HEALTH OFFICIALS** visited Chandrugonda in Bhadradi district, where Awaz had attended a function. On conduct of tests, everyone tested negative for Covid-19

● **THE HEALTH** officials found a link with a cotton trader, who interacted with another 19 persons in Mittapalli and Venkatapuram for the last four days.

● **SOME IN** the border villages with Andhra Pradesh cut-off road link by digging a trench on the road as part of lockdown.

returned from Dubai. He underwent Covid-19 tests in Khammam.

Some natives of Juggudem under Kamepalli mandal who came from Bengaluru and a farm labourers returning home from Maharashtra. were also subject to the test.

Meanwhile, people from Ramakrishnapuram and Komminapally under Kamepalli mandal blocked the roads of their village by felling trees on the roads.

Some in the border villages with Andhra Pradesh cut-off road link by digging a trench on the road as part of lockdown imposed in the state.

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IN BRIEF

300 NURSES TO CHECK THOSE IN QUARANTINE

From Page 1

Three hundred auxiliary nurses are to check 628 home-quarantine patients. In case of symptoms, the patients are to report to the nearest hospital, Gandhi or private.

The swab procedure for testing Covid-19 releases aerosols making healthcare workers and the hospital set-up vulnerable. The outpatient department, diagnostic endoscopic procedures and elective surgeries have been closed in private hospitals.

CONTAINMENT PROCEDURES HAVE STARTED

From Page 1

It said that containment procedures have been initiated in all localities from where Covid-19 positive cases have been identified.

Overall, the state government announced six new Covid-19 cases on Monday. The sixth case was reported from Karimnagar, that of a 23-year-old male who has no travel history. However, this individual was one among those who were in close proximity or contact with a group of 10 Indonesian Islamic preachers, all of whom have tested positive for disease and are undergoing treatment here in the city.

The cases reported on Monday include one from Medchal, in the area where one person who returned from abroad lived before coming down with Covid-19 earlier this month.

The other cases are one from Shantinagar in Saidabad, from Balkampet, Somajiguda, Gachibowli and from Kukatpally. The health department said that four of the patients declared Covid-19 positive today were in their twenties. The oldest person declared a Covid-19 victim was a 56-year-old man from Kukatpally in Medchal district, with a travel history to Sri Lanka.

The case from Shantinagar in Saidabad is of a 30-year-old male, who recently returned to the city from London. The department said that the other patients include a 21-year-old male student and a resident of Balkampet, who recently returned from France, a 20-year-old male, who is a resident of Somajiguda, who returned back home here from New York, and a 25-year-old man who lives in Gachibowli and returned home from London recently.

MOTORCYCLIST RAMS INTO WOMAN

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

A 40-year-old woman who was crossing the road at Dilukhnagar was injured when a two-wheeler hit her. The couple on the bike also received injuries in the accident.

According to reports, the woman, identified as Manjula, a resident of Dilukhnagar, went to purchase vegetables at a market and was walking home. The bike rammed into her when she was crossing the main road. Manjula suffered a fracture to her leg, and the couple on the bike, Sai Kumar and Manasa, received minor injuries. Chaitanyapuri police booked a case.

BENGALURU MAN HELD FOR KIDNAP

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

A 20-year-old Bengaluru resident was arrested by Malkajgiri police on Monday on charges of kidnapping a minor girl on pretext of marrying her.

Police said that Dasherath Anand, 20, who worked as a mechanic at Lalapet in Secunderabad, had lured the girl from Malkajgiri after promising to marry her. As per the plan, the girl left her house to meet Anand in Bengaluru. Anand took her to his home, introduced her to his parents and sought their permission to marry her. His parents refused, pointing out that the girl was a minor. They then handed her over to the local Hebbal police. In the interim, the girl's parents lodged a complaint with Malkajgiri police, who arrested Anand.



Motorists had a tough time for more than one hour following the closure of Sardar Patel Road towards Begumpet near the Central Telegraph Office in Secunderabad. Police said the road was closed following an order. — GANDHI

Lockdown: 3.5k vehicles seized

60,000 cops, municipal and govt staff implement Covid-19 lockdown

DC CORRESPONDENTS HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

The police was out in full force across the state to implement the lockdown that has been ordered by the state government till March 31.

At least 60,000 personnel from various departments including police, health department, municipal administration, transport, civil supplies, and other essential services are trying to implement the lockdown and provide uninterrupted

services to the public. At some places, the police used public address systems in the morning to inform the motorists that after 2 pm they would not be allowed on the roads and have to finish shopping by then.

The awareness programmes continued on the roads where the police was seen making violators hold placards and stand to create awareness for others. Police also barricaded the roads and allowed the public only after promises of

good behaviour. From noon, the police started to register cases on those who were moving on the roads on bikes, autorickshaws and cars with a stated purpose.

Across the state, approximately 3,500 cases have been booked. In Hyderabad, the traffic police booked 2,480 cases, in Rachakonda 159 and in Cyberabad a total of 250 cases were booked under various sections.

The Hyderabad traffic police conducted enforcement against commuters

found loitering in the streets. The Hyderabad police organised 73 check posts in the limits of all 25 traffic police stations of Hyderabad and seized the vehicles.

Citizens were requested to refrain from moving out of their homes and not to come out unless there is an emergency. In the morning hours only emergency services and essential services will be allowed stated Hyderabad traffic police.

Hyderabad city police commissioner Anjani

Kumar in a video message requested citizens to abide by government order 45, which specifies a lockdown till March 31.

Mr Kumar said: "We need to break the chain of infection, to curb the spread of Covid-19."

Mr Kumar said more than four people should not gather at one place and asked the people to practice social distancing.

The police commissioner directed people to remain indoors during the specified hours.

State's earnings to take a massive hit in 10 days

S.N.C.N. ACHARYULU | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

The 10-day lockdown announced by Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao due to coronavirus will have a serious impact on finances of the state. Not only has business and industry come to a near halt, activities being taken up by the state government have also come to a standstill.

The state government has projected ₹7,100 crore as tax revenues and ₹2,200 crore as non-tax revenue

per month. The main sources of revenue for the government are excise duties on liquor and VAT (Value Added Tax) on petrol and diesel. But liquor shops and fuel outlets have been closed.

Likewise, commercial and business establishments are shut. The state government will thus lose GST, which will also have an effect on getting tax devolutions from the centre. Officials are not in a position to collect tax arrears from these establishments due to coronavirus. Revenue collections in

rural and urban areas have also suffered. Municipalities and gram panchayats are unable to collect property and other taxes. TSRTC is also losing revenues as its buses are not plying.

The dismal revenue scenario is bound to impact implementation of state government's flagship schemes, such as farm loan waiver and investment subsidy under Rythu Bandhu, among others.

The situation could deteriorate if the lockdown goes beyond the current 10 days.

GHMC battles to pay its staff

MADDY DEEKSHITH | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

The Covid-19 crisis has hit Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) very badly, particularly in monetary terms.

Officials claimed that deployment of tax inspectors to the corona special teams has adversely impacted their current month property tax collection. Till now the corporation has only collected ₹67.56 crore and were falling short by about ₹400 crore to reach the current year's annual property tax target of ₹1,800 crore.

As against the monthly requirement of ₹110 crore towards salaries, the corporation, presently, has a mere ₹60 crore in its kitty, according to sources. They claimed that the state government would not be held responsible as payment of salaries to its employees has to be from the GHMC's own treasury.

According to highly placed sources, even as the corporation is falling short by ₹50 crore pertaining to salaries, things might worsen if the lockdown continues for the first

two weeks of April. This will have a direct bearing on regular maintenance activities like sanitation and also take a toll on the Early Bird Rebate Scheme.

That apart, sources said that the corporation is yet to clear bills to the tune of ₹550 crore pertaining to infrastructure projects and others since January. Prior to the lockdown, the corporation has cleared pending December bills worth ₹148 crore, with the state government releasing ₹78 crore from its budget.

A senior GHMC official, on condition of anonymity, told *Deccan Chronicle* that Covid-19 crisis has already hit revenues very badly. He said though instructions were given to the bill collectors to achieve the current financial year property tax target, coronavirus containment is the top priority of the government.

"If the crisis continues for three months, the corporation would be bankrupt, thereby affecting all basic civic amenities. If ₹50 crore is not collected within a week, salaries of employees may not be credited," the official said.

Doles to cost ₹1,304cr, TS mulls options on payout

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

The state government is considering three options for extending assistance to the poor, who are suffering following a lockdown in the wake of the spread of the coronavirus disease.

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao has announced that apart from supplying rice to the poor, the government will give cash assistance of

₹1,500 per family for purchasing other food items. This one-time economic package is projected to benefit 85.4 per cent of the total households.

It is estimated that this will cost the state exchequer ₹1,304 crore.

The finance department is considering three options for extending the cash relief. One is direct distribution of money, second is handing over cheques and the third is making an online transfer.

A final decision on this will be taken by the CM. If the money is to be distributed directly, officials will have to visit villages. This may lead to large gatherings, defeating the very purpose of lockdown. If the government distributes cheques, people will through banks to withdraw money. That will also lead to crowding.

Officials are of the opinion that given the circumstances online transfer is the best option.

ANDHRA PRADESH

HC stays house site patta distribution

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 23

The Andhra Pradesh High Court issued a stay order on Monday on the YSRC government's decision to distribute nearly 26.6 lakh house site pattas to people of the weaker sections under the Navaratnal scheme. The court also issued a stay on the distribution of one cent pieces of land to poor farmers in the Amaravati region. The orders staying gov-

ernment orders 44 and 107 were given by a bench headed by Chief Justice J.K. Maheswari and comprising Justices A.V. Sesha Sai and M. Satyanarayana.

One A.N. Kishore filed a public interest litigation raising objection to both the GOs. Petitioner's counsel Karumanchi Indraneel Babu said the GOs flouted norms of the AP Assigned Lands (Prohibition of Transfers) Act, 1977 and certain zonal regulations.

SC upholds HC order to rid govt buildings of YSRC tint

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 23

In a setback to Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, the Supreme Court upheld an order of the AP High Court against painting government offices with colours of ruling parties.

The SC bench, led by Chief Justice S.A. Bobde, dismissed a Special Leave Petition filed by the AP government challenging the HC

directive. The SC bench observed that it found no reason to entertain the SLP and dismissed it accordingly.

Justice Bobde wondered how any government could order for the painting of its offices with colours reflecting those used in its party flags. "Will you keep quiet if the BJP-led Central government asks for all government offices to be painted with its party colour, saffron," he asked.

Chief Justice Bobde said that the bench finds itself in agreement with the directive of the HC that the ruling party colours should be removed from walls of all government offices.

One M. Venkateswarlu of Guntur district had filed a PIL in the High Court challenging the painting of village secretariats and government buildings with blue, green and yellow, colours of the YSR Congress flag.

AP police forces residents home

N. VAMSI SRINIVAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 23

The AP government on Monday switched over to strict enforcement mode after people initially defied the lockdown announced by Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to be in force till March 31 to contain the further spread of coronavirus.

A day after confining themselves to their homes to observe the janata curfew, it was business as usual Monday morning for the state's residents, who were to be found in hordes everywhere, on streets, in shops,

at offices and around markets as if the Covid-19 virus had vanished miraculously, following clapping and ringing of bells.

The highways witnessed heavy movement of traffic. The state-run RTC buses were off the roads.

On seeing the needless exuberance, the police took charge and enforced the lockdown. They set up barricades preventing entry on to main roads, increased patrolling to shut shops and establishments. In several places, police were seen making public announcements against moving around in groups.

VIZAG GETS ITS FOURTH +VE COVID-19 CASE

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC VISAKHAPATNAM, MARCH 23

One more person, a youth, tested positive for coronavirus here on Monday, taking the total number of positive cases in Visakhapatnam district to three. A 65-year-old person was declared positive on March 19 while his 50 year old wife was found to have tested positive on March 22. The couple's daughter was tested negative. All three are undergoing treatment.

Health officials said that the youth, a native of Revidi in Padmanabham mandal in Visakhapatnam district, about 12 km from Bhimili town, returned from London four days ago and was admitted to the Government Hospital for Chest and Communicable Diseases after he showed strong symptoms of Covid-19. His reports came on Monday, which declared him positive.

Revenue officials in Padmanabham said that the youth had toured the mandal extensively and held a get-together with his friends before he contacted cold and cough. "Now we are trailing his footfall and surveying households in a five kilometre radius," health officials said.

TTD EXTENDS CLOSURE OF BALAJI TEMPLE

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, MARCH 23

Following in the footsteps of the AP government, which announced a complete lockdown till March 31 to contain the coronavirus infection, the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) has decided to extend the closure of the Lord Venkateswara temple for pilgrims till the end of the month.

That the TTD has earlier decided to stop Srivari darshan for seven days from noon of March 20.

Speaking to media persons at Tirumala on Monday, TTD's additional executive officer A.V. Dharma Reddy said that in board had decided to keep the temple closed for the public in view of the larger public interest. All the daily kankaryams will be performed to the presiding deity by archakas, he said.

He said that as a precautionary measure and in view of health and safety of people residing at Tirumala, the twin ghat roads will be closed down from 9 pm to 6 am every day till the end of this month.

With heavy hearts and a total submission to God's will, we inform the sad & sudden demise of



BRIAN (DANNY) ROSHIER
15th Jan 1946 - 21st Mar 2020
A loving husband, caring father, doting granddad, ever loyal brother. And most of all a father figure to the rest of the family.
It's his guiding spirit that has been & always will be the source of laughter & inspiration for all of us. We love you, miss you and continue to live life to the fullest as you showed us all.
Deeply mourned by the Roshier and Francis families, relatives & friends.

(A/1920/D00130)

IN MEMORY



Late R. RAMASWAMY
(Retd. PO, SCR)
Inserted by (Son)
R. Sai Kumar - (Son)
R. Jagadish Kumar (Grand Son)
R. Sukanya, R. Vinitha (Daughters-in-law)
R. Bharati Bai (Daughter)
R. Shirisha (Grand Daughter)
R. Jayanthi (Grand Daughter)
Ph: 8712941552

(CA-3297)

3rd DEATH ANNIVERSARY

If we have been united with him in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.

Romans 6:5



Dr. G.P. PARAMJYOTHI (PD)
Associate Professor in Physical Education, G.P.E. Domalguda
D.O.B: 11-05-1966 D.O.D: 24-03-2017
To live in hearts we leave behind is not to die.
Inserted by: Family Members

18th ANNIVERSARY



Smt. VEENA SRIVASTAV
W/o. Shivkumari Srivastav
Mom U left us beautiful Memories.
Ur love is still our guide, although U cannot see U, U always at our side
with Eternal Love
SANDESH-PRINYANKA, RUDRAAKSH
VRISHAKA & SUMEET-MEHA
98493 43234 / 78934 24201

11th DEATH ANNIVERSARY

IN LOVING MEMORY OF



Master. H.J. HARRY ELVIS (DENNY)
"Years are passing by, But you are Still live in our hearts and memories, We miss you every minute."
Inserted by:
Mom & Dad and Sister
Ph: 9394061399, 9032734764.

1st DEATH ANNIVERSARY



Late GUMMADI SHANKARAIIAH
(Retd. Asst. Commissioner, Customs & Central Excise)
DOB: 12.09.1938 DOD: 24.03.2019
"We miss your love, affection, care, concern and selfless thinking."
Inserted by: Family Members

UTHAVANA/PAGADI



SMT. PUSHPA SARPAL
W/o. LATE TILAK RAJ SARPAL
Left for heavenly abode on 22.03.2020
Due to restrictions on gathering, your condolences are accepted through calls and messages.
Inserted by:
Yogesh sarpal 9989570985
Jitender sarpal 9848063985
Kartik sarpal 9908052226
SARKAP UNITY ENTERPRISES, Hyderabad

IN BRIEF

Fraudster held for swindling ₹1.18L

Hyderabad: Hyderabad cyber crime police on Monday arrested a fraudster from Bihar for cheating a person from city of ₹1.18 lakh. According to cyber crime inspector G. Venkata Rami Reddy, the accused Suresh Kumar (30) hailing from Bihar, lured his victim into purchasing a watch on Snapdeal. After the watch was purchased, the victim got a message saying he won a Tata Stroma vehicle worth ₹12.6 lakh in a bumper draw. "Later, Kumar asked the victim and asked him to pay ₹4,600 towards registration fees. Then he further siphoned a total ₹1.18 lakh in the name of GST charges, IT, RBI fee and so on. Subsequently the accused stopped taking calls when asked about the car," the cyber crime inspector said. Following a complaint from the victim, the Hyderabad cyber crime police launched investigation and arrested the accused.

Man cheats job seekers, arrested

Hyderabad: A 32-year-old man from Warangal was arrested by Rachakonda special operations team for cheating unemployed persons in government departments. According to police, accused G. Rajendra Prasad, a native of Parakala in Warangal district, introduced himself as a junior assistant working in the Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority and lured an unemployed youth saying he could get him a government job. Prasad then went on to collect ₹2.1 lakh from the person. He was earlier booked by Begumpet police station in 2019 for cheating job aspirants with a similar modus operandi. The accused had then collected ₹7.5 lakh from 16 persons on pretext of providing them jobs in the irrigation department.

CAR DRIVER BOOKED FOR INJURING DOG

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

Shalibanda police on Monday booked a case against a four-wheeler driver for hitting a stray dog with his vehicle and dragging it for a few meters before being stopped by a student. According to the student Syed Taqi Ali Razvi, he was on his way to Shamsheergunj Goshala on Saturday morning when a four wheeler bearing registration AP 39 AJ 3783 hit a stray dog and dragged it for a few meters before he forced the vehicle driver to stop his vehicle. The student took the injured dog to Narayanguda veterinary hospital for first aid and then shifted it to People for Animals, Emergency Rescue Home in Begum Bazar. Dattatraya Joshi of People for Animals said, "We lodged a complaint with Shalibanda police who have booked a case. The dog suffered internal bleeding injuries and is battling for life."

● **THE STUDENT,** Syed Taqi Ali Razvi took the injured dog to Narayanguda veterinary hospital for first aid and then shifted it to People for Animals, Emergency Rescue Home in Begum Bazar

Compelled to work in lockdown irks techies

ITES companies have been listed as essential services

ADITYA CHUNDURU | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

Several IT employees from across the city were asked to report for work on Monday, much to their dismay. In spite of a lockdown prevailing in the state until March 31, many of the city's arterial roads saw normal traffic today. Shivkant, an employee of an MNC major, said his team lead was forcing him to come to office even though they had laptops. "He said work was suffering and we were behind schedule. In spite of my protests, he kept insist-

● **THERE WERE** also many companies that had called their employees to office just to issue laptops to work from home

ing," he said. Several offices in the IT corridor as well as those in Uppal were open today. Many employees were upset about ITES companies being listed as "essential services" exempted from the lockdown restrictions. An employee of Tech Mahindra said, "What makes our work so essential? We are part of the only industry that can practi-

cally make its employees work from home."

Some IT employees felt this exemption was due to the lobbying efforts of major IT companies. One Twitter user wrote: "KTR (IT minister KT Rama Rao) is not just supposed to care for the companies but also us employees."

There were also many companies that had called their employees to office just to issue laptops so that they may work from home. Some of them even received their work desktops. An employee of Accenture said, "For security reasons, my project required me to be

physically present at the office. But the client waived the condition and allowed us to get laptops."

Meanwhile, state government officials clarified on Monday that IT companies had been requested to allow all their employees to work from home.

IT Secretary Jayesh Ranjan told *Deccan Chronicle* that, so far, companies were left to their own discretion. "But we are reviewing the situation constantly. If drastic measures are needed, we will remove the exemption given to the companies," he said.

Hostel occupants land in trouble due to lockdown

SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

The shutdown of educational institutions, offices, and commercial establishments, has been ordered by the state government in an attempt to contain the spread of the corona virus that causes Covid-19 disease. The state government has pronounced a lockdown of the state which has forced even hostels to close down, stranding the occupants.

Amritashree Gupta works in an IT company in Madhapur. On March 19, she returned to her hostel

after work to be met by the shocking news that the hostel in Gachibowli will be shut down till the Coronavirus is found to be less of a danger.

Amrita is from Kolkata and had requested the management of the hostel to allow her to work from there. She has been only six months in the city. Fortunately, the hostel allowed her to work from her room at the hostel from this Monday.

University and government college hostels will remain closed till March 31. Mallipreddi Rohit, who studies at Nizam College, stays in the college hostel. He had

to leave the hostel and return to his home in Chevella.

Private hostels which admit only students have been vacated and shut down, with students returning to their home towns.

Drushya Hostel at RTC crossroads, which boards working men and also students, had to shut down too.

There were many requests from the boarders to keep it open, "but since it was a government decision we had to go by the instructions," said Abilash Reddy, manager of this hostel.

Lockdown woes



Passengers overload a trolley due to lack of transport facility at LB Nagar crossroads circle in view of the lockdown in state till March 31. — P. SURENDRA

ATHER MOIN | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

A day after observing a complete 'janata curfew' in the city, several organisations and individuals swung into action to provide food for patients and attendants in various hospitals and to homeless people. The Good Samaritans also distributed ration kits to slum-dwellers on Monday.

They visited Niloufer Hospital and MNJ Cancer Hospital in Nampally. Some social organisations distribute food near both hospitals regularly. However, when they saw a video message stating that there was scarcity of drinking water and food on Sunday, they rushed with cooked food and water sachets.

Volunteers of 'Humanity First', Payam-e-Insaniyat

social organisations and Mr Babu Rao of Niloufer Cafe are among those who provide food every day.

Nampally inspector Mohammed Khaleel Pasha and Moulana Siddique Nadwi of Payam-e-Insaniyat clarified that many people had brought lot of food items since last evening and most of it had to be dumped. They said those wanting to help the needy should also visit other areas and coordinate with NGOs, police and GHMC.

A group of youngsters from Bahadur-ud-Dowla Wafk complex Nampally has been preparing one quintal rice daily and distributing among the patients' attendants and homeless people. In Nampally alone, more than 2,000 people depend on that

food. With the lockdown all of them become penniless as most of them work in hotels, which are closed down.

Mr Osman Mohammed Khan, president of Insaan Foundation of India, distributed the food among the destitutes and announced that they would serve food to 300 people and arrange ration for 500 poor families.

Likewise Mehr Foundation arranged the food for needy at Darushifa, Mirchowk, Arsh Mahal, Phool Bagh, Lal Darwaza, Bhavani Nagar and Suraj Bhan Hospital. The lunch was sponsored by head qazi Shariat Panah Mr Qazi Mir Quadar Ali.

Mr Mohammed Farooq has dedicated his function hall in Moghalpura for cooking purposes during the lockdown period.

Woman happy with good facilities in Gandhi hosp

VIKRAM SHARMA | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

On the night of March 19, Deepal Saboo Adeppa felt feverish. She had returned with her sister six days ago, after a fortnight's holiday in London, where a third sister hosted them and they had a great 'girl gang' time - the three of them meeting after a long time. Almost a week

Her worst fears appeared to be coming true. The fear augmented realising she was to go to a government hospital to undergo tests for Coronavirus. She had never been to a government hospital in her life and had heard of horrid stories. It was a nightmare in anticipation.

Only, she was pleasantly surprised, because unlike those who are running away from quarantine or avoiding Covid-19 tests and staying back home, Deepal gathered courage to visit Gandhi hospital. Over 25 hours later, having undergone tests and being quarantined, she described her experience at Gandhi hospital to *Deccan Chronicle* as "mind blowing"

The first thing she did on entering the hospital was to check its overall



Deepal Saboo Adeppa

hygiene. She was relieved.

"On landing in Hyderabad on March 14, we went through thermal screening. Doctors took all my details on a form. From next day, I got 4 to 5 calls each day from a government hospital in my area enquiring about my health," said Deepal, who runs a school.

Nearly a week without any symptoms, she first developed a slight temperature. "I called my father, who told me to go to Gandhi Hospital without delay. I reached at 11.30 am. A busy helpdesk and a long queue, a wait of an hour later, they took my details and reason why I wanted to get a test done," she said. "People in queue were

arguing with Gandhi staffers, which was sad. They are heroes in this hour of crisis. Some patients had trivial rationale - they had come out of their homes or had travelled in a bus," she lamented.

"At level 1, doctor analyse patients who, after preliminary checks, don't need further investigations. A doctor on duty there asked me if I had any symptoms. They sent me to seventh floor, where Coronavirus tests are done. A security guard, completely covered, protected, after checking my card, helped me go there," she said, impressed.

"I entered a long corridor, with chairs on both sides with few people waiting for their check-up, seated at a safe. Dr Hemant spoke to me and ordered a test. While I waited, I saw some patients, not needing quarantine or further tests, sent back for home isolation for 14 days," she recalled.

"At 3.30 pm, a swab test was done on me. I was given a pack of sterilized costume; a kit bag consisting of a full body robe, cap, pair of eye glasses, a mask, pair of gloves, socks, a disposable napkin and a pillow

cover, besides a bottle of water, soap, toothpaste and toothbrush.

She was offered lunch and allotted a cubicle.

"I was tensed regarding hygiene of a government hospital. My experience was mind blowing. I checked a washroom and was surprised," she recalled with a smile.

She was put in total isolation. Another doctor came for an X-ray. "There were four technicians in the X-ray room. After my test done, I was taken back to my room till night, when someone served dinner. Next morning, a doctor came to ask about my health.

At 9 am, she was served tasty and healthy breakfast. Around 10.30 am, a doctor performed a few more checks. Twenty minutes later, a nurse reported that she was found Covid negative.

Minutes later, she was given a discharge sheet, along with a set of instructions. Deepal walked out of hospital, happy and relaxed, after discarding her costume.

"A day of my life spent at Gandhi hospital went off smoothly. And forever changed my perception that government hospitals can't be great," she added.

TECH | MONITOR Containe Technologies, its director ready to assist the authorities

IT firm builds app to track travellers

VUJJINI VAMSHIDHARA | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

To make it easy to monitor recent international travellers in the country, in view of the coronavirus disease, a software company approached the Telangana High Court on Monday and sought a direction to the Centre and the state government to consider their IT application to track them. The Secunderabad-based IT firm Containe Technologies and its director Anand Kumar Seethala submitted to the court that the

IT Company was ready to assist the authorities with its Application to track the immigrants already entered into our territory.

The petitioner said their mobile application provides a solution to effectively monitor or track the persons who are asked to quarantine themselves, without much manpower. The app is ready for use, it said.

As part of the corporate social responsibility, the petitioner said it was ready to provide its services to assist the government. The petitioner said it needed information of the persons

● **THE PETITIONERS** said the app has four types of user interfaces for individual patients, health workers, doctors and police or health officers

to be uploaded on the app and directions to firms like Google and Apple to provide latitude and longitudes (location) coordinates at an interval of 15 minutes in respect of their mobile numbers.

Responding to the plea made by the petitioners' counsel P.V.A. Padmanabham, the division bench compris-

ing Justice M.S. Ramachandra Rao and Justice T. Amarnath Goud told the petitioner to first approach the state government and other authorities with their suggestion and solutions.

The petitioners said the app has four types of user interfaces for individual patients, health workers, doctors and police or health officers. The functionalities at different levels are well protected and controlled to prevent misuse. The monitoring authorities can periodically check the health status of the immigrants and suggest future course of

action. The user can raise a request for hospital pick up in case of an emergency, the petitioner said.

Government functionaries at various ports of entry or at check posts or places of checking could ensure that the application is downloaded by the traveller and critical data is uploaded before he or she is permitted to go home and remain quarantined. A call centre service would be offered by the petitioner and follow-up with the persons who have already entered the country based on the mobile numbers.

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SHORT TAKE
WB RECORDS FIRST COVID-19 DEATH

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, MARCH 23

A 57-year-old man from Dum Dum in north Kolkata became the first Covid-19 victim in West Bengal on Monday. The deceased was the fourth patient among the list of seven in the state to be detected with the deadly virus on March 21.

He died at 3.35 pm on Monday at a private hospital in Salt Lake where he had been on ventilator since his admission on March 16 with high fever and cough. The hospital stated that its critical care team tried their best and used "ECMO (Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation) twice on Monday but the patient could not be revived."

At an all-party meeting in the state Secretariat — Nabanna — Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who is also the health minister, said, "The Covid-19 patient died of cardiac arrest. He had travelled to Italy with his family to visit his son."

Her comments on the patient's travel history, however, triggered confusion as the private hospital and the state health department officials earlier claimed to have found him with no infection.

The CM also ordered the police to ensure the last rites of the victim be performed carefully following the protocol. On February 23, the railway employee had travelled to Bilaspur to attend a relative's wedding.

On March 2, he returned from Pune to Kolkata in Azad Hind Express and attended his workplace for the next five days. Meanwhile, the man also went to a shopping mall in New Town with his wife before falling ill on March 10.

J&K cops use drones to ensure lockdown

Drones broadcast message seeking cooperation

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, MARCH 23

Jammu and Kashmir police on Monday used drones to broadcast audio messages asking people to stay indoors as the incidence of defiance of the virtual lockdown in force here and elsewhere in the Valley since Thursday in view of growing Covid-19 threat.

"People are requested to cooperate. There's no cure for Covid-19 but your cooperation. Stay at home to ensure you and your family do not contract this deadly disease", the message broadcast through drones said.

The hi-tech Unmanned Aerial Vehicles or remotely controlled camera drones and other modern surveillance equipment were used by the police and other law enforcing agencies also to maintain high vigil in the area.

Simultaneously, mife-fitted police vehicles drove through the streets here and in other major cities and towns of the Valley and several areas of the Union Territory Jammu region to announce that restrictions under Section 144 CrPC are in force and warning that anyone found violating these would be dealt with severely.

J&K police is also contemplating to distribute pamphlets this week to



Police uses drone to keep a check in the interior areas, during restrictions imposed as a precautionary measure to contain the spread of coronavirus, in Srinagar on Monday. — PTI

spread awareness about the deadly Covid-19.

Srinagar and towns of Budgam and Pulwama were placed under curfew-like restrictions to limit the spread of Covid-19 on Thursday.

A day later, the virtual lockdown was extended to the rest of the Valley. On Sunday, the government formally announced closure of all establishments and services across the UT till March 31 which was followed by sealing of borders with Punjab and other neighbouring state. Sixteen services and commodities were exempted after being

declared as essential.

However, Srinagar's DC Shahid Iqbal Choudhary regretted that exemption was misused by many people to converge at places in large numbers thus creating conditions which could prove harmful to them and others. He tweeted "Inclusion of groceries, fresh fruits and vegetables (in the list) mistaken by many as license to roam on streets."

Wielding a big stick in view of the "instances of non-cooperation and violations of restrictions", he ordered stricter restrictions on movement of people in the district and said that no one except those delivering healthcare, power, water and food services officially and media persons can now move without a movement pass issued by his office. The order issued by him said, "All kinds of business and other establishments will remain closed and public movement including pedestrian and vehicular is prohibited up to 6 pm of March 31. Cremations and funerals will be allowed though".

Similar and more stringent measures have been ordered by his counterparts in several other districts of the UT.

Maha: Man who recovered dies, total +ve cases rise to 89

DC CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, MARCH 23

A 68-year-old man, who tested positive for novel coronavirus infection and later recovered died on Sunday, taking the death toll in Maharashtra to three.

The man had initially tested positive for coronavirus and was under treatment at the civic-run Kasturba Hospital. He was later shifted to a private hospital after his test report came out negative. He died due to renal failure, said a statement issued by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation.

Maharashtra health minister Rajesh Tope said that a total of 89 positive coronavirus cases were reported in the state, including 15 new cases in Mumbai and one in Pune.

"Eight people have contact history and six have travel history to affected countries," Tope said.

Tope also said that coronavirus suspects, who have tested negative for Covid-19, will now be kept in isolation for 14 days, as per the Centre's new precautionary advisory.

Speaking to reporters, Tope said earlier people who tested negative were

kept in isolation wards for seven days only.

"As per the Centre's fresh advisory, these patients will be kept in isolation for 14 days," he said.

At present, six Covid-19 testing laboratories are functional in the state and the government is trying to use them to their optimal capacity, said the minister. "I have been told that all the government-run medical colleges across the state will also have testing laboratories from March 27," he added.

The number of Covid-19 patients has jumped by 15 in one day, but those without any travel history who got the infections are the close relatives of the coronavirus positive patients, he said. "It is not a community transmission," he said. Meanwhile, BMC is beginning the home testing facilities with a helpline number where citizens can reach out.

"This facility will begin in the next 48 hours. Currently, calls are being made to home quarantine travellers and if symptomatic, testing facilities are offered through private labs registered with ICMR," Dr Daksha Shah, deputy director of the BMC health department said.

NEW TESTING FACILITY SET UP AT JJ HOSPITAL

DC CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, MARCH 23

A new testing facility for Covid-19 has been set up at the state-run JJ hospital. State medical education minister Amit Deshmukh inspected the facility on Monday. In an official statement, Deshmukh said, we were testing around 100 samples on daily a basis, which will be increased to 1,000 soon.

The Indian Council of Medical Research has now permitted Covid-19 detection tests at Haffkine Institute in Mumbai as well as at Sassoon General Hospital and BJ Medical College in Pune.

According to reports, permission has been sought for Covid-19 testing at seven private hospitals and labs. "Some technical clearances are awaited. Once they are received, these labs will also be available for carrying out Covid-19 confirmation tests," said the minister.

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MP: Shivraj takes oath as CM for fourth time

Chouhan is the first CM in the country to be chosen as leader of BJP legislature party via a video conference

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, MARCH 23

Nearly 15 months after he lost power following defeat of BJP in Madhya Pradesh in November 2018 assembly elections, Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Monday returned as Chief Minister of the state for the fourth time. Chouhan, 61, was administered oath of office and secrecy by Madhya Pradesh Governor Lalji Tandon at a simple ceremony in the Raj Bhavan here late on

Monday evening. He would currently head one-man-ministry in the state and expand his cabinet later. Significantly, Chouhan has earned the distinction of being the first chief minister in the country to be chosen as leader of BJP legislature party in a video conference being attended by party observers appointed for the purpose, from Delhi. "This is the first time in the country the leader of a legislature party is elected in a video conference. We

had to resort to the remote system of electing the leader of the legislature party in view of Covid-19 outbreak", BJP national general secretary in-charge of affairs in MP Vinay Sahashrabudhe who was one of the two observers appointed by the party to oversee election of BJPLP leader in MP, said from Delhi. BJP has staked claim to form government in MP following resignation of Kamal Nath as chief minister on Friday in the wake of

resignation of 22 Congress MLAs from the house. The BJPLP which met here in the evening 'unanimously' elected Chouhan as its leader. Soon after the meeting, BJP staked claim to form government before the Governor Lalji Tandon. "I will take charge of office on Monday night in view of Coronavirus outbreak which has posed a big challenge to the country as well as the state. I will work with a missionary zeal to tackle menace which I have identified as my priority at

this juncture", he told the BJPLP meeting. Mr Chouhan, the longest serving chief minister of MP, had demitted his office in December, 2018 after BJP lost power to Congress in the state in the November, 2018 assembly polls. The never-say-die Chouhan had declared then that he would return as CM of state in less than five years. "Tiger abhi zinda hai (Tiger is still alive)", was his common refrain when he addressed public meetings at different places in

the state after he was ousted from power. Born on March 5, 1959 in Budhni in Sehore district in MP, Chouhan began his political career in Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad during his college days. He associated him with Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh at the age of 13. He had succeeded late Babulal Gaur as chief minister of MP on November 29, 2005 and continued in office till December 17, 2008 in his first stint in power in the state.



Shivraj Singh Chouhan takes oath as the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh at Raj Bhavan in Bhopal on Monday.

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SHORT TAKES

SEX WORKERS NOT TO WORK FOR TWO WEEKS

Alipurduar, March 23: Over 100 sex workers in West Bengal's Alipurduar district will not be working for the next two weeks in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, they said on Monday.

People from several places, including neighbouring districts, visit the red light area located in the central part of the district town.

They said that the step was taken to prevent the spread of the deadly virus.

A local NGO that works for the welfare of the sex workers said it would provide financial assistance to these women during the period.

"This is a very good decision and we will provide them some assistance so that they can sustain themselves during this period," said Larry Bose, a member of the NGO.

Terming the decision exemplary, the district's chief medical officer Puran Sharma appreciated the efforts of the sex workers and said that the move was much needed.

RAHUL CORNERS CENTRE OVER EQUIPMENT BAN

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

Amidst the Covid-19 outbreak, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi lashed out at the Central government over the "delay" in banning the export of life-saving equipment.

"Respected Prime Minister, WHO's advice 1. Ventilator 2. Surgical Mask, why did the Indian government allow the export of all these things till March 19, instead of keeping sufficient stock? Which kind of forces have encouraged these games? Isn't this a criminal conspiracy?" he tweeted. (sic)

Mr Gandhi's question comes after experts said that the estimated 40,000 working ventilators in India will be inadequate in case there is a surge in Covid-19 infections that, in approximately 5 per cent of the cases, sends patients to intensive care units (ICU) with acute breathing problems.

The Congress MP also tagged a news report which claimed that India did not stockpile coronavirus protective equipment for health workers despite WHO guidelines in this regard.

According to the Congress, the government had on March 19 banned export of all ventilators, surgical/disposable masks and textile raw material used for making masks with immediate effect in wake of the coronavirus outbreak. The Congress has been critical of the government's handling of the situation.

Mr Gandhi in a tweet on February 12 had warned the Central government about Covid-19 and had asked it to take preventive measures.

Mr Gandhi had also called for immediate steps to revive the country's economy amid the pandemic and said there was a need for a big financial package. He said that the coronavirus outbreak was a serious attack on our fragile economy.

ASSAM TOO OPTS FOR COMPLETE LOCKDOWN

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, MARCH 23

The Assam government on Monday announced complete lockdown of the state from Tuesday 6 pm till March 31 as precautionary measure to counter the growing threat of coronavirus outbreak.

Assam health minister Himanta Biswa Sarma told reporters, "Extraordinary times need extraordinary measures. Assam will be under lockdown from tomorrow (Tuesday) 6 pm until March 31 12 am."

The minister clarified that certain exceptions have been made to ensure essential items are available for purchase and basic services continue to operate. "Grocery shops, fruit shops, chemists and petrol pumps will remain open and persons associated with essential services like electricity, water supply, fire brigade and medical services will be allowed to go to their destinations during the lockdown," he said adding that no public transport will operate during this period.

All Guwahati Newspapers Hawkers Association has also announced that they would distribute the newspapers from Tuesday.



Locals rush to buy vegetables and fruits after lockdown in the wake of coronavirus pandemic in Mumbai on Monday. Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray has announced imposition of curfew in the entire state due to coronavirus.

- PTI

Lockdown kicks in with scramble for essentials

20 states witness complete shut down while 6 have partial closedown

From Page 1

Major part of India remained under lockdown on Monday as people stayed away from offices and public places and bare minimum vehicles were seen on roads. However, in cities, a huge crowd was reported in market places as people rushed to stock vegetables and ration in anticipation of a long haul. A total of 20 states saw complete shut down while six had partial closedown in view of novel coronavirus pandemic.

The Centre and states on Sunday had announced lockdown in about 80 districts where at least one confirmed case of Covid-19 was reported.

Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba wrote a letter to State Chief Secretaries urging them to monitor the situation round the clock. Underlining the importance of social distancing, the health officials said that it is the best remedy to check the spike in cases and break the chain of transmission.

Several states like Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana have started pasting posters outside the houses of people who have been instructed to be on home quarantine.

Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh, Regional Director of World Health Organization (WHO) South-East Asia said that so far airborne spread of Covid has not been reported in India.

"Based on the information received so far and on our experience with other coronaviruses, Covid-19 appears to spread mostly through respiratory droplets (for instance produced when a sick person coughs) and close contact. This is why WHO recommends maintaining hand and respiratory hygiene," Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh, Regional Director, WHO South-East Asia said.

"The Chinese authorities reported that there could be a possibility of aerosol transmission in a relatively closed environment with prolonged exposure to high concentrations of aerosols, like in ICUs and CCUs in hospitals, but more investigations and analysis of epidemiological data is needed to understand this mode of transmission of the virus," she added.

In an interaction with the editors of television channels, the Prime Minister said media should counter pessimism and panic through positive communication and asked channels to spread scientific reports, involve informed people in their discussions and counter the spread of misinformation.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi appealed to state governments to ensure that rules and regulations of the coronavirus lockdown are enforced as he noted that many people are not taking the measure seriously. Meanwhile, government has said that it is working with various industry bodies and manufacturers to streamline supply chain, remove bottlenecks and maintain a steady supply of body coveralls, N-95 masks, and 2-ply/3-ply surgical masks required for healthcare professionals dealing COVID-19 cases. Government said that over the last 45 days, Ministries of Health and Family Welfare and Textiles are attempting to locate adequate number of sources who can produce and supply the requirement of body coveralls for the government.

So far, proto type garments of six Indian manufacturers have passed the prescribed tests conducted at South India Textiles research association at Coimbatore, and two more manufacturers are forthcoming as on date.

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FINALLY, PARL ADJOURNED SINE DIE

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

As the country went into a lockdown due to the Coronavirus outbreak, the Parliament on Monday was adjourned sine die after passing the Finance Bill hurriedly without a discussion.

The government, however, ignored demands from Opposition MPs to announce a financial package to tackle the pandemic.

Both Rajya Sabha Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla held meetings with representatives of various political parties and it was decided that the Bill would be passed without a discussion. In the Lok Sabha after Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman moved the Bill, Opposition MPs, led by Congress, demanded that the government announce a package.

In the Rajya Sabha too the Bill was passed by a voice vote without any discussion and the House was adjourned.

Priest held for holding mass

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC THRISSUR, MARCH 23

The Thrissur police on Monday took a priest into custody for conducting a mass at a church in the district in which over 100 people took part in total violation of government's strict instructions against mass gathering in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic.

A police team arrived at the Lady of Perpetual Help Church at Koodapuzha in Chalakkudy during the mass which was being attended by over 100 persons. The cops took the priest Pauly Padayatti who is also Vicar of the church, into custody for violating the government order against big gathering. He was later released on bail.

A case of under 269 IPC (negligent act likely to spread infection of diseases dangerous to life) and 118e of the Kerala Police Act (causing danger to public) was slapped against the priest and about 100 believers.

Covid scare: SC sets up panel to decongest jails

PARMODO KUMAR | DC NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

The Supreme Court on Monday ordered the states and Union Territories to constitute a High Powered Committee to decide on the category of prisoners who can be released on parole or interim bail to decongest the overcrowded prisons across in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak.

There care over 4,66,084 inmates in 1,339 prisons across the country with an average occupancy rate at 117.6%, and with occupancy rate of 176.5% and 157.3% in Uttar Pradesh and Sikkim respectively.

A bench of Chief Justice Sharad A. Bobde, Justice L. Nageswara Rao and Justice Surya Kant said that the committee would comprise the Chairman, State Legal Services Committee, and the Principal Secretary (Home/Prison).

The court said that the prisoner has been convicted for a lesser number of years than the maximum. "The court passed the order noting that the overcrowding of prisons was a matter of 'serious concern' particularly in the present context of the pandemic of Coronavirus. Referring to Article 21 guaranteeing right to life, the court said that it has become 'imperative' to ensure that the spread of the Coronavirus within the prisons is controlled. The court said that the Undertrial Review Committee that was set up by an earlier order of the top court would continue to meet every week and take decisions in consultation with the concerned authority. Meanwhile, the Supreme Court ordered the shut down of its functioning leaving just one virtual court that would be hearing 'extremely urgent' matters through video-conferencing.

Bihar keeps an eye on migrants returning home

NAYEAR AZAD | DC PATNA, MARCH 23

The spike in the number of cases in the country has prompted the Bihar government to initiate preventive measures to deal with the threat emerging due to the Coronavirus outbreak in the state.

After one death and three positive cases, the state administration has asked its officials to increase the screening for the Coronavirus in the state.

To deal with rising Coronavirus threat, isolation wards and test centres have been set up at all medical college and hospitals across the state including Patna Medical College and Hospital, Nalanda Medical College and Hospital, Indira Gandhi Institute and Medical Sciences and All India Institute Medical Sciences Patna.

As per the state health department's reports so far 185 samples have been examined out of which three cases were found positive.

To prevent the outbreak of the Coronavirus, intense screening of passengers is being done at Patna and Gaya airports.

According to officials here, the state government has also made special arrangements to keep passengers coming from abroad in quarantine.

"Officials have been asked to track all contacts of cases who have been found positive," said Sanjay Kumar, principal health secretary.

Besides, migrants from other states are being screened at various railway stations of the state.

As per an assessment, around 537 passengers who

Doctors and medical staff will be given an amount equivalent to their one month of basic pay as an encouragement for their services to people during the Coronavirus outbreak.

— NITISH KUMAR, Chief Minister

arrived from other states have been kept under observation after being screened at railway stations.

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Monday also announced a relief package for doctors and medical staff as encouragement for their services to people.

In a statement, he said that "doctors and medical staff will be given an amount equivalent to their one month of basic pay as an encouragement for their services to people during the Coronavirus outbreak".

He also said, "Ration cardholders will get a month of ration free while pensioners will be provided three months pension in advance".

On Sunday Bihar government had imposed a complete lockdown in the state after one person with a travel history to Qatar died at AIIMS, Patna.

Earlier the state government had cancelled all major events and had also shut down all educational intuitions, parks, and zoo and cinema halls.

Also, Leader of Opposition in the Bihar Assembly, Tejashwi Prasad Yadav, on Monday offered his 1, Polo road official bungalow to the government for turning it into a makeshift quarantine camp or a testing centre for Covid-19.

PUNJAB CLAMPS CURFEW

Chandigarh, March 23: The Punjab government on Monday imposed a curfew to combat coronavirus, making it the first state to take the drastic action after finding that many people were ignoring the lockdown ordered by it.

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Name of the work: "Providing the parking place and connecting road along the side of Railway bulding leading from L&T junction to Gate No.-1". Estimated cost: Rs.8,10,10,216.50. Last Date and Time of submission of Bid: 07.04.2020 up to 17:15 Hrs. For details please refer the Website: <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>. Executive Engineer, HWD No.11, PPT PPT/PR/728/19-20 DL.23/03/2020

Department of Atomic Energy
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Corrigendum to e-Tender Notice

1. Last Date for Submission of Online Bid against NIT No.: **DPS/HRPU/NFC/PT/TPT/CAP/11086** is extended upto **20/04/2020 up to 2:00 PM**.
Visit <https://etenders.dpsdae.gov.in> for details.
[DPS/HRPU/NFC/1920/35C2]

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e-TENDER NOTICE

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[DPS/HRPU/NFC/1920/40]

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Hyderabad Regional Purchase Unit

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1. Last Date for Submission of Online Bid against NIT No.: **DPS/HRPU/NFC/PT/TPT/ELE/15018** is extended upto **07/04/2020 up to 2:00 PM**.
2. Last Date for Submission of Online Bid against NIT No.: **DPS/HRPU/NFC/PT/TPT/CAP/11080** is extended upto **15/04/2020 up to 2:00 PM**.
Visit <https://etenders.dpsdae.gov.in> for details.
[DPS/HRPU/NFC/1920/34C2]

Department of Atomic Energy
Hyderabad Regional Purchase Unit

Corrigendum to e-Tender Notice

1. Against NIT No.: **DPS/HRPU/NFC/PT/TPT/ENG/16863** (a) Date of Pre-Bid meeting is extended upto **06/04/2020 @ 11:00 AM** (b) Last Date for Submission of Online Bid is extended upto **05/05/2020 up to 2:00 PM**.
2. Last Date for Submission of Online Bid against NIT No.: **DPS/HRPU/NFC/PT/TPT/CAP/11087** is extended upto **23/04/2020 up to 2:00 PM**.
3. Last Date for Submission of Online Bid against NIT No.: **DPS/HRPU/NFC/EPT/ENG/16732A** is extended upto **09/04/2020 up to 2:00 PM**.
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[DPS/HRPU/NFC/1920/38C1]

SHORT TAKES

3 CHINESE HR LAWYERS 'DISAPPEAR'

Geneva, March 23: A group of independent UN rights experts said on Monday they were "gravely concerned" about the welfare of three human rights lawyers "forcibly disappeared" by Chinese authorities shortly after their arrests last December.

Ding Jiaxi, a prominent Beijing-based disbarred lawyer, previously jailed for protesting against official corruption, and lawyers Zhang Zhongshun and Dai Zhenya have been held since late last year in so-called "residential surveillance in a designated location" (RSDL).

That is a form of extrajudicial detention lasting up to six months where detainees are denied access to lawyers and relatives, and are vulnerable to torture and coercion, according to activists.

The three were among more than a dozen lawyers and activists who were detained or went missing in the final days of 2019 in what rights groups have said was a crackdown on participants of a private democracy gathering. —AFP

DOCTOR IN PAK DIES INFECTED WITH COVID-19

Islamabad, March 23: A 26-year-old Pakistani doctor has become the country's first medic to die after contracting the novel coronavirus while treating the Covid-19 patients in Gilgit region of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, officials said on Monday.

Usma Riaz was treating the patients who recently returned from Iraq and Iran.

Pakistan, which borders Iran and China, two of the most affected countries by the deadly coronavirus, has reported five deaths and nearly 800 persons have been infected.

Dr Riaz was part of a 10-member team of the doctors tasked with screening patients returning from downtowns, particularly those arriving there from Iran via Taftan. He later started providing services to the suspected patients in isolation centres established for them in Gilgit.

Dr Riaz belonged to Chilas in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). He came home on Friday night but could not get up the next day. He was first rushed to a military hospital and then to district hospital. —PTI

KILLER INDIAN COUPLE LOSES APPEAL IN DUBAI

Dubai, March 23: A Dubai-based Indian man and his wife, who were sentenced to a 10-year jail term for torturing and starving the husband's mother to death, have lost an appeal against their conviction, according to media reports on Sunday.

The 29-year-old defendant and his 28-year-old wife, both Indian nationals, tortured the man's mother inside their Al Ghusais residence, it was reported.

According to the Dubai Court of First Instance, the couple tortured the victim from July 2018, until her death in October 2018, because she wasn't adequately looking after her granddaughter, it said.

They were found guilty and sentenced to 10 years in jail to be followed by deportation by the Dubai Court of First Instance last October.

According to a forensic report, the man's mother, who was in her 50s, suffered multiple burns and broken bones as result of sustained torture and physical assault. She was only 29-kg when she arrived to the hospital and reports confirmed that she had been starved, tortured and neglected for months leading up to her death. —PTI

1.5 billion told to stay home

Covid-19 toll 16,099 and rising with 366,880 infections; nations take tougher

New York, March 23: The hunt for masks, ventilators and other medical supplies consumed the US and Europe, as more than 1.5 billion people — one-fifth of the world's population — were asked or ordered to stay home on Monday to try to blunt the spread of the coronavirus.

Worldwide, nearly 353,861 people have been infected and 15,420 have died from the virus.

At least 34 countries or territories have established mandatory lockdown measures ordering people to stay in their homes, accounting for some 659 million people.

This includes France, Italy, Argentina, the US state of California, Iraq and Rwanda. Greece is the most recent country to impose mandatory confinement measures, which came into effect on Monday morning.

Colombia will enforce an obligatory lockdown on Tuesday and New Zealand will follow suit Wednesday.

In most cases it is still possible to leave the house to go to work, buy essentials or seek medical care.

At least four countries with a collective population of more than 228 million people, including Iran, Germany and Britain, have urged their populations to stay indoors and limit contact with other people as much as possible.

But the impact of these non-mandatory recommendations has been limited. In Britain, the government warned of tougher measures after crowds gathered in parks and beaches over the weekend, while millions of people in Iran travelled for the Persian New Year last week.

Parts of India, the world's second biggest country by population,



A resident lies on a sun lounger in protective clothing and with a mask behind barrier tape on Neumarkt in front of the Frauenkirche and reads a book in Dresden, Germany, on Monday. — AP

also faced lockdown orders affecting some 700 million people.

These measures are in place in Burkina Faso, Chile, the Philippines' capital Manila, Serbia and Mauritania, while in Saudi Arabia a curfew will be imposed from Monday evening.

Some countries have imposed isolation measures in main cities, with measures barring people from entering or exiting.

Democrats said the Republican plan failed to sufficiently protect millions of American workers or shore up the criti-

Senate stalls US trillion-\$ rescue bid

Washington, March 23: A trillion-dollar Senate proposal to rescue the reeling US economy crashed to defeat Sunday after receiving zero support from Democrats, and with five Republicans absent from the chamber because of virus-related quarantines.

Democrats said the Republican plan failed to sufficiently protect millions of American workers or shore up the criti-

cally under-equipped health care system during the coronavirus crisis.

The bill proposed an estimated \$1.7 trillion or more in funding to cushion the blow for American families and thousands of shuttered or suffering businesses.

Despite intense negotiations between Republicans, Democrats and President Donald Trump's administration, the roll call was 47-47, far short of

the 60 votes needed to advance.

Five Republican senators are in self-quarantine and did not vote, including Senator Rand Paul, who announced Sunday he had tested positive for the Covid-19 illness.

Even as infighting derailed the plan, lawmakers carried on with closed-door negotiations deep into Sunday hoping to get the package back on track. Top Senate Democrat

Chuck Schumer and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin "are working late into the night, and they just had another productive meeting," a Schumer spokesman said.

The shock Senate result heaps major pressure on Congress to overcome divisions and swiftly greenlight a federal government intervention — likely the largest of its kind in US history. —AFP

NORWAY FOR UN CORONA FUND TO HELP THE POOR

Oslo, March 23: Norway said on Monday it wanted to start a United Nations donors' fund to help poor countries fight the new coronavirus pandemic.

"We are concerned about the way the virus will affect developing countries which have fragile healthcare systems," Norway's Development Aid Minister Dag-Inge Ulstein said in a statement.

"International solidarity across borders is more important than ever. That's why it is important for us to contribute financially to such a fund in the UN," he added.

The fund is expected to be set up quickly, "possibly even this week," Norway said, without specifying the amount of its own contribution.

The initiative has been welcomed favourably by UN deputy secretary general Amina Mohammed, Oslo said.

On Thursday, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres warned "millions" of lives were at stake if the international community did not show solidarity, especially with the world's poorest countries, amid the coronavirus outbreak.

More than 366,889 cases have been detected in 171 countries. —AFP

China hits back at Trump

Paris, March 23: A war of words between Beijing and Washington over Covid-19 intensified on Monday after the Chinese embassy in France suggested that the outbreak of what President Donald Trump calls the "Chinese virus" actually started in the United States.

"How many cases of Covid-19 were there among the 20,000 deaths due to the flu that started (in the United States) in

September last year?" the Chinese embassy in Paris asked in a string of messages on Twitter — a service largely blocked in China.

"Did the United States not try to pass off (cases of) pneumonia due to the new coronavirus as flu?" The embassy did not point to any scientific evidence for its claims about the deaths.

Trump and his Secretary of State Mike Pompeo have angered Beijing by

repeatedly referring to "the Chinese virus" when discussing the Covid-19 outbreak first detected in the Chinese city of Wuhan.

The virus has since spread to infect tens of thousands worldwide, leading governments to place hundreds of millions in home confinement in a bid to curb the outbreak.

On Sunday, Trump said he was "a little upset" with China, adding: "They

should have told us about this." Earlier this month, a foreign ministry spokesman in Beijing, Zhao Lijian, suggested in a tweet that the US military brought the virus to Wuhan.

The US in response summoned China's ambassador, accusing China of "spreading conspiracy theories" and of "seeking to deflect criticism for its role in starting a global pandemic and not telling the world." —AFP

Harvey tests +ve in jail for Covid

Washington, March 23: Disgraced Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein has tested positive for the novel coronavirus, US media reported Sunday.

Weinstein, 68, is in prison in northern New York state after being sentenced to 23 years in jail for rape and sexual assault.

The fallen film produc-

er's diagnosis was reported Sunday evening by celebrity news website TMZ and local paper the Niagara Gazette.

Weinstein's spokespeople have declined to comment to US media on the subject. The New York State Department of Corrections did not respond when contacted. —AFP

China hits back at Trump

Paris, March 23: A war of words between Beijing and Washington over Covid-19 intensified on Monday after the Chinese embassy in France suggested that the outbreak of what President Donald Trump calls the "Chinese virus" actually started in the United States.

"How many cases of Covid-19 were there among the 20,000 deaths due to the flu that started (in the United States) in

September last year?" the Chinese embassy in Paris asked in a string of messages on Twitter — a service largely blocked in China.

"Did the United States not try to pass off (cases of) pneumonia due to the new coronavirus as flu?" The embassy did not point to any scientific evidence for its claims about the deaths.

Trump and his Secretary of State Mike Pompeo have angered Beijing by

repeatedly referring to "the Chinese virus" when discussing the Covid-19 outbreak first detected in the Chinese city of Wuhan.

The virus has since spread to infect tens of thousands worldwide, leading governments to place hundreds of millions in home confinement in a bid to curb the outbreak.

On Sunday, Trump said he was "a little upset" with China, adding: "They

should have told us about this." Earlier this month, a foreign ministry spokesman in Beijing, Zhao Lijian, suggested in a tweet that the US military brought the virus to Wuhan.

The US in response summoned China's ambassador, accusing China of "spreading conspiracy theories" and of "seeking to deflect criticism for its role in starting a global pandemic and not telling the world." —AFP

No gloves, no masks, Italy medical facilities crumble

Milan, March 23: At Italy's Oglio Po hospital, 25 out of 90 doctors are infected with the coronavirus, compounding the strain faced by a health system overwhelmed by the world's second biggest outbreak.

Adding in nurses, technicians and other employees, a fifth of the hospital's personnel has tested positive, hospital director Daniela Ferrari said.

They and healthcare workers like them almost certainly unwittingly spread the virus before needing treatment or quarantine themselves, researchers and unions say.

The picture is the same at other hospitals, among family doctors and in nursing homes — exacerbated, unions, sector leaders and medics say, by them not having enough masks and gloves when the outbreak was detected a month ago. "We are at the end of our strength," said Doctor Romano Paolucci, who came out of retirement to help the Oglio Po hospital near Cremona, one of the worst hit towns in the Lombardy region.

"We do not have sufficient resources and especially staff because apart from everything else, now the staff are beginning to get sick." In Lombardy, the Italian

region with the highest number of cases and deaths, at least two hospitals became vehicles of contamination, with patients infecting medical staff who then spread the disease as they travelled around their communities before a stringent lockdown was imposed.

That is one factor that has helped the virus spread so quickly, said Giuseppe Remuzzi, director of the Mario Negri Institute for Pharmacological Research.

"Patients infected other patients and doctors who then went out and contaminated others," Remuzzi said. —AFP

SOME RELIEF AS NORMALITY IS BACK IN WUHAN

Beijing, March 23: People in central China where the coronavirus was first detected are allowed to go back to work and public transport is restarting, as some normality slowly returns after a two-month lockdown.

The easing of restrictions in Wuhan city comes as Chinese health officials reported on Monday no new local cases of the deadly virus, but confirmed another 39 infections brought from overseas.

Wuhan residents considered healthy can move around the city and take the bus or metro so long as they show ID, officials said.

They can also go back to work if they have a permit from their employer, and leave the city for other parts of the surrounding Hubei province after being tested for the virus and receiving a health certificate.

The virus, which emerged in a market that sold wild animals in December, sparked a dramatic lockdown of the city on January 23 that was then widened to the rest of the province of nearly 60 million people.

Since then infections have slowed dramatically and for five straight days there have been no new cases in Hubei.

Another nine people died in Wuhan. —AFP

VIRUS | EFFECT Chief executive of financial hub says tippers were losing inhibitions

Hong Kong bars non-residents, limits liquor

Hong Kong, March 23: Hong Kong will ban all non-residents from entering the city from midnight on Tuesday evening in a bid to halt the coronavirus, its leader said, as she unveiled plans to stop restaurants and bars serving alcohol.

Despite its proximity to the Chinese mainland, the financial hub has managed to stave off a runaway outbreak of the deadly virus — partly thanks to the public overwhelmingly embracing masks, hand hygiene and social distancing.

Yet in the last fortnight, the number of cases has more than doubled to 356 after locals and foreign residents flooded back once the pandemic spread to Europe and North America.

On Monday chief executive Carrie Lam announced a raft of measures designed to stop the upward trend.

"From midnight of March 25, all non-Hong Kong residents flying in from overseas will not be allowed into the city, she said, adding the order would be in place for at least two weeks.

The city's airport — the world's eighth busiest — would also bar all transit passengers, Lam added.

Non-residents will still be allowed to enter Hong Kong from the Chinese mainland, Macau and Taiwan but not if they have been to any other foreign country in the last 14 days.

Some 8,600 restaurants and bars with a licence will also be banned from selling alcohol but will, for now, be allowed to remain open.

Lam did not specify when the booze ban would be

brought in, but said emergency legislation was being drafted.

She said there was concern that Hong Kongers were losing their inhibitions when they go out drinking.

"Sometimes when people drink more, there may be some intimate acts," she told reporters.

Supermarkets and alcohol retailers are not covered by the rule.

Last week, a cluster of infections was found among patients who had been out in Lan Kwai Fong, the city's

most famous nightclub street. Hong Kong's tabloids ran lurid pieces saying one of the patients who went to bars in Lan Kwai Fong, a local, may have had one night stands.

The vast majority of the recent spike in infections have been from Hong Kong nationals returning to the city. But there has also been some anger directed at the drinking habits of some Western white-collar workers as many of the city's inhabitants isolate themselves. —AFP

SU+DO+KU

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

WHAT TO DO: Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Every puzzle has only one correct solution.

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

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

SU+DO+KU 2

	5		7		8			
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Did you think the SU+DO+KU on the left was easy? Try this. Check the solution tomorrow. Tips available at www.sudoku-ks.com DC-AGE SU DO KU FORUM: Discuss the SU DO KU puzzles printed and contribute mind teasers of your own at www.sudexel.com/forum

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

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

DECCAN Chronicle

24 MARCH 2020

Playing to the gallery amid pandemic

Indians proved that they can observe a lockdown, if Sunday's "janata curfew" was a case in point. With 80 districts going into lockdown, the scene on Monday in those places was not much different than the previous day, with only grocery shops, pharmacies and ATMs open. City roads were silent, colony lanes filled with birdsong, and life was unusually peaceful.

But what was also evident on Sunday was the way Indians undermine their own cause. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had people to, at 5 pm, clap their hands or bang their pots and pans. It was later rationalized as support for healthcare workers in the trenches against the Covid-19 — except those in the trenches are without supplies, uniforms, masks or weapons to fight the microbial enemy. Urban India came out and clapped or banged energetically — there are plenty of videos of it on social media. But they came together as crowds to party, dance or even climb on one another's shoulders — a mockery of the social distancing that the PM had specifically called for. Is it their fault? After all, thanking doctors, nurses and hospital staff seemed the last thing on urban India's mind; it was merely following the Great Leader's orders (and also, it cost nothing). Urban India, inspired by "community feeling", wanted to party (there is a video of one lady jumping up and down in a way that would make the PM blush, banging on a shiny pan, shrieking "Go Corona go"). No wonder the PM on Monday tweeted that people weren't taking the curfew seriously enough. How can he blame them — these are the same people who believe that noise drives microbes out of infected bodies. Money and education are no barriers to superstition in India — filmstars and industrialists were also standing around, banging pots and pans.

Was this yet another excuse to reshape India into an obedient population to follow the Great Leader's orders as he tries to reshape the nation from the ground up? After all, he spoke for 30 minutes on the curfew (his 8 pm addresses to the nation now are something to apprehend rather than look forward to). He did not announce what his government would do for the economy — whether it is the existential crisis that our banks will face or the break in employment and daily wages the poor will have to suffer. He did not address the shortfall in masks or testing equipment for Covid-19, at a time when questions are being raised about the lack of US Drug Administration standards in the available test kits, or the fact that a Gujarat-based firm with no prior experience was given the first chance at manufacturing test kits. The curfew seemed less a panacea than an opportunity, like the Ganesha milk-drinking hoax of 1995, to gauge the extent of support in the population. And having again satiated himself on his narcissism, the Great Leader left it to the States to handle the messy details of the lockdown and healthcare.

Suspend equity market for now

Jolted by coronavirus spreading across the world, equity markets in India have fallen like a house of cards. The Sensex and the Nifty have lost over 35 per cent of value in the last one month — from 40363 on February 24 to 25981 on March 23 which translates to an average loss of nearly 500 points a day. A faster-than-expected rise in coronavirus cases and a lockdown in 80 districts in the country pushed the markets to go into a tailspin on Monday. The Sensex has witnessed its worst day in history on Monday by recording the steepest ever fall in terms of both absolute number and percentage — beating the 12.7 per cent fall caused by the Harshad Mehta scam in April 1992 in percentage terms.

Unless India stops the spread of Covid-19, a greater human tragedy awaits us even if the mortality remains three percent. At this stage, a complete lockdown appears to be the only way forward, which implies the stoppage of production and lower profits in the next few quarters. As an investor hates uncertainty, foreign investors are dumping Indian stocks every day as if there is no future. Since March 1, foreign portfolio investors have withdrawn nearly ₹1,09,000 crore from Indian equity and debt markets.

If state-run financial institutions had not intervened, the crash would have been worse. And no one knows when the market would hit the bottom. An average 35 per cent fall in stock prices (and more in the days ahead) could trigger margin calls for promoters who raised money by pledging their shares as collateral. Unless the promoters arrange the margin money, the pledged shares would be offloaded in the market triggering yet another crisis. It is, therefore, high time that the government suspends equity markets until some sense prevails. Foreign investors who want to exit should be allowed to strike deals through off-market transactions.

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- Hyderabad: 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad - 500 003, Ph: 040-27803930-4; Fax: 040-27805256
- Vijayawada: No.C-3 & 4 Patamata, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada (A.P.), Ph: 0866-255284/2555287; Telefax: 0866-2555234
- Visakhapatnam: Survey No.1/3A Beach Road, Near Kailasagiri Ropeway, Sector-9 MVP Colony, Visakhapatnam - 530 017 (A.P.), Ph: 0891-252333/252334; Fax: 0891-2755285
- Rajahmundry: Vemagiri, Dhawaleswaram Rd, Rajahmundry, Ph: 0883-2417618/2417208; Telefax: 0883-2417208
- Anantapur: Thapovan colony, Bangalore By-Pass Road, Anantapur - 515004, Ph: 08554-276903; Fax: 08554-276904
- Karimnagar: Survey No.1341, Vavilalapally Colony, Jagityala Road, Karimnagar - 505 001, Ph: 0878-2228908; Telefax: 0878-2220433
- Nellore: Survey No.527/2, Burranpur Village, Venkatachalam (M), Chemmudugunta Panchayat, Nellore, Ph: 0861-2348581/82; Telefax: 0861-2348580
- Chennai: SP-3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, Ph: 044-22254747/48/50/51; Advt Fax: 22254765/22254766/42305325
- Bangalore: 5th Floor, BMTC Commercial Complex, 80 Feet Road, Koramangala, Bangalore-560 095 Ph: 080-43460500; Fax: 080-22960552
- Coimbatore: 77, Vivekananda Road, Ramnagar, Coimbatore - 641 009, Ph: 0422 2231255
- Kochi: No.3-B, 3rd Floor of DD TRADE TOWER, Kaloor-Kadavanthara Road, Ernakulam, Ph: 0484-4039408
- Thiruvananthapuram: St Joseph's Press, TC 15/1040, Cotton Hill, Thycaud (PO), Thiruvananthapuram 695 014
- Kozhikode: Door No 6/1002 E, First Floor of City Mall, Opp. YMCA, Kannur Road, Kozhikode - 673 001, Fax: 0495 4019 018

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Subhani

Crisis exposes lacunae in India's public welfare



Sunanda K. Datta-Ray Reflections

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's March 19 address on Covid-19 was predictably a politician's rallying call. Yet, many TV anchors and columnists gushed over the banalities as if they were profundities. By ignoring vital questions like the size of the challenge India faces, details of what the authorities are doing to meet it, and the ultimate cost to the nation, they failed badly in their profession as impartial interlocutors. This is an opportunity for the government to reveal priorities that demonstrate concern for the public in its frightening suffering, with no prospect of a vaccine for at least a year. Just as Donald Trump's \$2 trillion relief package acknowledges that the leader's responsibility goes beyond doling out pious platitudes, Modi must accept that a caring government must respond to the pandemic and its fall-out call with more than immediate monetary compensation.

Looking beyond Covid-19, the totality of long-term welfare demands attention. Money may be scarce but supplementing the 52 testing centres for 1.3 crore Indians is far more important than the prime minister's 48 foreign tours in 2014-2018 that cost a reported ₹2,021 crores. India desperately needs laboratories, hygienic hospitals, critical care beds, trained para-medical staff and quarantine facilities. A density of 455 per square kilometre, against China's 148, aggravates the filth and squalor in which so many Indians live and makes "social distancing" impossible. The poor are the most vulnerable, especially when they have additional medical complaints. The cost of improvements can only be guessed at. The UN's trade and development agency, UNCTAD, laments that apart from the tragic human consequences, the economic consequences of Covid-19 may saddle the global economy — which is expected to slow down this year to under two per cent — with a \$1 trillion bill. Necessary though it may have been, the so-called "Janata Curfew" that brought India to a standstill on Sunday cannot have come cheap. Closures ever are. Some estimated the cost of the Bharat bandh the Congress and 21 other parties called in 2018 to protest against fuel prices at more than ₹4,000 crore. ASSOCHAM's calculation was between ₹16,000 and ₹18,000 crore. The CII more modestly estimated the loss to the economy "would be greater than Rs 3,000 crore."

Europe faces recession. Indian conditions may deteriorate further with the withdrawal of more than ₹100,000 crore in foreign portfolio investment this month. As an exporter of raw materials, India faces a particular threat since weaker export returns are linked to a stronger US dollar. Nor can any computation of the cost of the pandemic be complete without allowing for the massive corruption that is integral to all aspects of life here. No one knows, for instance, how much of the ₹1,000 per head that the Uttar Pradesh chief minister has promised

15 lakh daily wage labourers and 20.37 lakh construction workers may be siphoned off by those who sanction and distribute the money or have to be shared with ubiquitous middlemen. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act beneficiaries in some states speak of two distortions, although they don't see them as such. First, instead of providing a job, the NREGA actually provides an income with no labour in return. Second, the income has to be shared with the official who hands it over.

It has become fashionable now for Western liberals to applaud Indians who blame all Third World ills on white colonialism — the 1943 Bengal famine being presented as Winston Churchill's particular revenge on India. Yet, any moderately well-informed middle-aged resident of Calcutta knows the names of the Indian businessmen who became notorious during World War II, because their cynical hoarding contributed to the food shortage that killed millions.

"In an independent India such black marketers will be hung from the lamp post", Jawaharlal Nehru declared as soon as he was released from prison in June 1945. Alas, the promise was forgotten when those very same businessmen financed the movers and shakers of independent India. That linkage between politics and big money remains as strong as ever. As for contriving profit-making shortages, the price of potatoes shot up from

This is an opportunity for the government to reveal priorities that demonstrate concern for the public in its frightening suffering.

Modi govt. is out to erase both the territory's Muslim and Kashmiri character and goes far beyond 'abrogation' of Article 370. To restoration of statehood plans to be this: Bring Kashmiris to their knees and give them some crumbs to ensure that they acquiesced.

A new political outfit, the Apni Party, was launched in Srinagar on March 8, less than a week before Farooq's release. It comprises known pro-Delhi politicians, headed by one Altaf Bukhari, formerly of Mehbooba's PDP. They met Modi. A statement from the prime minister's office revealed the Modi-Bukhari consensus. Bukhari "hailed" the abrogation of 370 and 35A. Modi promised him to apply central laws to Kashmir in a "fast-moving process of political integration". Modi outlined the stages of that progress: first, delimitation of constituencies in order to tilt the balance in favour of Jammu; next,

₹10 a kilogram to ₹30 as soon as the pandemic was acknowledged. Established chemists demanded ₹250 for a face mask that would not ordinarily have cost more than ₹100.

Official policy can contribute to shortages. The World Health Organisation has ruled that gloves, masks, eye protection, decontamination suits — called personal protection equipment — are mandatory for all health workers testing or treating Covid-19 patients. The day after India detected its first coronavirus case on January 31, New Delhi very commendably banned the export of all personal protection equipment. But to what end? A month and a half later, the heads of two associations of PPE manufacturers told the media that the government had not placed any substantial orders with their member companies. People had no option but to pay exorbitant prices for masks which are in universal demand.

No item of expenditure, not the ₹186,000 crore purchase of Rafale fighter jets nor the ₹404,365 crore defence budget can claim precedence over the people's health. The medical tourism provided by a few elite hospitals in Delhi that throw in the bonus of a sightseeing tour in an air-conditioned limousine doesn't make a welfare state. Nor does an obsequious journalistic chorus ever ready to applaud those in power indicate the discerning media that a nation needs. It would be even more mistaken to imagine that five minutes — stretched out to ten in my building — of the national predilection for noisy celebration, which also copied a Spanish precedent, on Sunday evening absolved the government of its responsibility to create a kindly welfare state that provides full medical care for all citizens.

LETTERS

CORONAVIRUS

Many residential apartments are asking their maid servants to continue working. Maids usually come from densely populated areas and work in 2-3 houses, causing risk of community spread. It beats the reason for lockdown. The authorities must specify guidelines in such cases.

Anil R. Secunderabad

Covid-19 has taught us precautionary measures. Unhygienic conditions around us threaten human life. We find hotels, fast food centres and chaat bhandars on footpaths that are unclean. They spread diseases rapidly. The government needs sanitary inspectors for supervision to ensure eco-friendly environment and give quality food.

Konduri Kasivisveswara Rao Hyderabad

Indians, especially in foreign lands are finding it difficult to return due to cancellation of flights. It is problematic for students who have gone for higher studies. They are stranded there till April and are highlighting their problems through social media. In a desperate time, the Indian embassy and government is not responsive.

Pardhasaradhi Rallabandya Hyderabad

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

25 die in Gujarat quake

AHMEDABAD, March 23 TWENTY-FIVE bodies were recovered till this afternoon in Broach town and surrounding villages in South Gujarat, following two successive earthquake tremors early this morning.

Broach District Collector K. T. Yagnik told UNI over the phone this afternoon.

Over 100 persons were seriously injured and another 100 received minor injuries. Seventy persons have been admitted in the Broach civil hospital and another 30 in other hospitals in the city. Mr Yagnik said that over 500 houses had been damaged.

By arrangement with Dawn



A.G. Noorani

Farooq must worry about existential threat to J&K

On March 13, Dr Farooq Abdullah, former chief minister of Kashmir and also a central minister, was released from detention. He responded by declining to offer any political comments until two former chief ministers, his son Omar and Mehbooba Mufti, are also released along with others detained at the MLAs' hostel, notably Shah Faisal.

Earlier on Feb 12, A.S. Dulat met Farooq. His visit was cleared by the Indian government and was facilitated by the Intelligence Bureau. He could not have failed to secure Farooq's consent as well. Dulat and Farooq go a long way back. Dulat joined the Indian Police Service in 1965 and was deputed to the IB. He was posted to Kashmir in 1988 and headed the IB's Kashmiri operation group during the insurgency. He rose to head RAW from 1992-2000 and later joined prime minister Vajpayee's office in 2000. In Kashmir, his task was "to keep Farooq Abdullah in good humour". Farooq told him he was "like a brother" to him. Dulat knew everybody in Kashmir who mattered except Syed Ali Shah Geelani. Besides, he has extensive

contracts in Pakistan and co-authored a book with former ISI chief Asad Durrani.

The day after Farooq's release, Dulat said in a press interview that while he himself was fully committed to India and brought up his children in the same way, now he did not know how to answer questions his grandchildren may ask.

His prime worry should be how to face the existential threat that Narendra Modi's regime poses to Kashmir. It is out to erase both its Muslim and Kashmiri character and goes far beyond 'abrogation' of Article 370. Holidays to mark Shaikh Abdullah's birthday and Freedom Day are gone. The iconic Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre, named after Shaikh sahib, has had 'Sher' dropped from its name. Dulat is both an operator and conciliator. He candidly wrote, "[T]he IB was a key ... to the central government's hold on Kashmir". The IB has been managing elections, bribing politicians across the board, and manipulating him as well. But he knows that the status quo is fragile, which is why he publicly stated that he would ask the government to start talking to Pakistan.

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elections, and "only after that would statehood be restored". No wonder that the Congress' Kashmiri leader called this so-called Apni Party an "agency party" (read: a plant of the IB). No self-respecting Kashmiri would contest such a poll.

The next day these faithfuls met the home minister Amit Shah. The agenda is to bring back Kashmiri Pandits in large numbers, and inflate Jammu's seats in the assembly to reduce Kashmir's predominance. Detainees will be freed, internet restored, curfew relaxed and Kashmir's status restored "at an early opportunity".

The fact that this very assurance was given repeatedly since Aug 5, 2019, suggests that restoration was an integral part of the original plan — bring Kashmiris to their knees and give them some crumbs to ensure that they acquiesced. Amit Shah bluntly told Bukhari & Co, "Article 370 is gone; that's now an old story ... let's move ahead of it". And this plan is what Farooq Abdullah, his son Omar and all the detained leaders of Kashmir are up against. Farooq has been deceived more than once; last on the eve of Aug 5 when Modi personally

assured them that no such plan was afoot.

One cannot help suspecting that Dulat's aim was to persuade Farooq Abdullah to accept the new status quo. But what leverage does he have now? The answer is — the people of Kashmir. They are waiting for a lead and a leadership. He has their work cut out for him to revive the process formalised at the all-party meeting in the Gupkar Declaration at his residence on Aug 4, in which "it was unanimously resolved that all the parties would be united in their resolve to protect and defend [the area's] identity, autonomy and special status ... against all attacks whatsoever. That modification, abrogation of Articles 35A and 370, unconstitutional delimitation or trifurcation ... would be an aggression against the people of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. ... The representatives of the political parties resolved to remain together and stand united in their struggle for safeguarding identity, autonomy and the special status of [Kashmir]." Will Farooq Abdullah take the Gupkar route or the Dulat route?

SHORT TAKES



Suresh Raina and his wife pose with the newborn.

Raina names his new baby boy Rio

New Delhi: India cricketer Suresh Raina and wife were blessed with a baby boy on Monday. Raina revealed on social media that the couple has named their baby boy, Rio. The star cricketer also shared a photo of himself with his wife and the newborn. "The beginning of all things wonder, hope, possibilities and a better world! We are proud to welcome our son & Gracia's little brother — Rio Raina. May he flow beyond boundaries, bringing peace, renewal & prosperity to everyone's life," Raina wrote. The baby boy is Suresh Raina and Priyanka's second child. — PTI

Women's T20 WC breaks record

New Delhi: The recently concluded ICC Women's T20 World Cup saw unprecedented growth in the consumption of T20 women's cricket, resulting in the official broadcaster Star Sports setting new records. As per a release issued by the broadcasters, consumption rose three times to 5.4 billion minutes during the tournament. In the 2018 edition, it was 1.8. The finals which witnessed hosts Australia square off against India recorded 9.9 million average impressions, the highest ever for any women's T20 match! Australia beat India to win their fifth T20 World Cup crown in front of a packed MCG with 86,174 fans in attendance. — Agencies

Japanese sport eyes April restart

Tokyo: On a day when Japan's prime minister admitted postponing the Tokyo Olympics may be unavoidable, medical experts suggested it could be possible for the top-flight Japanese baseball and football seasons to resume by the end of next month. Nippon Professional Baseball Organisation and the J.League received advice Monday from medical experts during the fourth meeting of the joint panel that was formed to assess impacts of the coronavirus pandemic. Mitsuo Kaku, a professor in infection control and prevention at Tohoku Medical and Pharmaceutical University, said the sports officials should be targeting a start date at the end of April. There's one month until then, so I would like them to prepare as much as possible while looking at the situation," Kaku said. Both leagues have been targeting a return at the beginning of April, but now it seems like they need to push it back further. — AP

Outbreak spoils Jeje's plans

New Delhi: His national comeback plans delayed by the postponement of the upcoming FIFA World Cup qualifiers, India forward Jeje Lalpekhlua is now training at his native Mizoram, where the dreaded Covid-19 pandemic is yet to make its presence felt. The pandemic has led to either cancellation or postponement of all sporting events including the upcoming 2022 World Cup qualifiers. India's home match against Qatar (earlier slated for March 26) and other games against Bangladesh and Afghanistan in June have also been postponed. "I was really looking forward to the camp in Bhubaneswar. The postponement has come as a big setback. But there's no room to complain and I fully stand by the decision taken," Jeje said. Jeje, who has been on a rehab since May 2019, informed that he is itching to get back to action. — PTI

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IPL may be called off

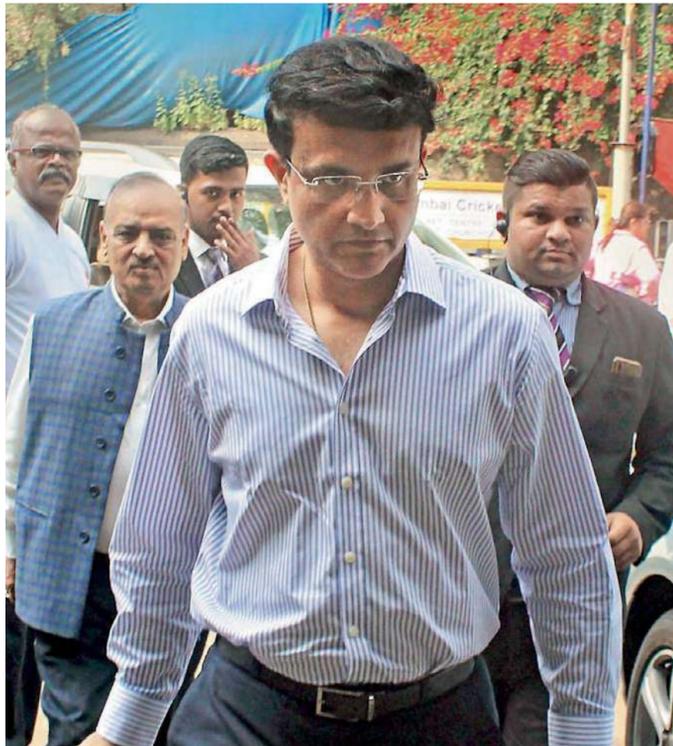
BCCI mulls cancellation as doubts grow over glitzy league

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs CHENNAI, MARCH 23

Doubt continues to grow over the staging of the Indian Premier League with the Coronavirus Pandemic spreading all over the country. The BCCI has already delayed the start of the IPL to at least April 15, but reports have emerged that the Board officials are mulling over the possibility of cancelling the edition. The BCCI are reviewing their plans on a week-by-week basis and now conceded that the tournament is unlikely to go ahead if it does not begin in the first week of May. "The latest we can wait is till the end of April. If the first game isn't played by the first week of May then it will be almost impossible to have the league this year. Even if we have to wait till end of April to follow all the procedures, we can take a cue from the South Africa edition and conduct the league successfully," a BCCI official was quoted as saying. "If you remember, that was the shortest IPL with 59 games played over 37 days and we can do the

same. But certain measures will have to be taken," the official added. **Appeal to scrap Dada's cooling off period**

The original petitioner in the 2013 IPL spot-fixing case Aditya Verma will appeal to the Supreme Court to exempt BCCI president Sourav Ganguly's compulsory three-year cooling off period which starts in July. "Being the original petitioner on whose PIL the whole constitutional revamp happened, I have decided to file a plea that apex court should let Sourav Ganguly and his team (secretary Jay Shah in this case) continue for a term of three years," Verma said. As per the new BCCI constitution based on justice RM Lodha committee's reforms, any person who has been an office bearer in state as well as BCCI for consecutive period of six years will have to go for compulsory cooling off period of three years. In case of Ganguly, a former Cricket Association of Bengal jointsecretary and later president, he had roughly nine months in the BCCI office. — Agencies



A file photo of BCCI president Sourav Ganguly.

Manjrekar says KL 'right fit' for No.5 slot

Mumbai, March 23: Former India cricketer Sanjay Manjrekar says young batsman K. L. Rahul is most suitable for the number five position in the batting order in the ODIs but suggested that the team management must look for batsmen like Suresh Raina and Yuvraj Singh. KL Rahul had batted in the middle-order in the

home ODIs against Australia in January earlier this year with success. He later continued his fine form in the limited-overs series in New Zealand. Of late, the Karnataka player has also been keeping wickets in the 50-over games. Manjrekar, who played 37 tests and 74 ODIs, was responding to questions from fans after he asked



Sanjay Manjrekar them "talk cricket" with him on his twitter page. He was asked whether

India should stick with Rahul at number five in ODIs and does he find other batsmen other than Rahul to be in that position. To which, Manjrekar, also a known commentator, tweeted, "For the moment he is the right fit. But we must keep looking for a Raina and Yuvi kind of batsman when Rahul eventually moves to the top." Yuvraj, who played

304 ODIs for India, scored 8,701 runs while Raina amassed 5,615 runs from 226 ODIs. The former Mumbai batsman was also asked who he thinks was the right choice for number four and all-rounder's spot in the T20 World Cup to be held in Australia. Manjrekar picked Shreyas Iyer and Hardik Pandya respectively. — PTI

Olympics are all but put off

Laussane, March 23: The IOC will take up to four weeks to consider postponing the Tokyo Olympics amid mounting criticism of its handling of the coronavirus crisis that now includes a call for delay from the leader of track and field, the biggest sport at the games. The IOC is planning meetings with Japanese public authorities, global sports officials, broadcasters and sponsors that will deal with scenario planning for the Olympics, which are scheduled to start July 24. Canceling the games is not under consideration. IOC President Thomas Bach sent a letter to athletes explaining the decision and why it might take so long, while also acknowledging the extended timeline might not be popular. "I know that this unprecedented situation leaves many of your questions open," he wrote. But only hours after the announcement, World Athletics President Seb Coe sent a letter to Bach saying that holding the Olympics in July is neither feasible nor desirable. He outlined a number of reasons, including competitive fairness, the likelihood athletes would overtrain if given a compressed schedule and the uncertainty caused by orders in many countries barring people from gyms

and other workout venues. "No one wants to see the Olympic Games postponed but... we cannot hold the event at all costs, certainly not at the cost of athlete safety," Seb Coe wrote. The IOC said the scenarios under consideration relate to modifying existing operational plans for the Games to go ahead on July 24, 2020, and also for changes to the start date of the Games. The change in strategy followed Bach's conference call with executive board members. Bach has consistently said organizers are fully committed to opening the games on July 24 despite athlete training, qualifying events and Games preparations being disrupted more and more by the virus outbreak causing the Covid-19 disease all over. Criticism of the stance grew in recent days from Olympic gold medalists and by an IOC member last Tuesday, before Bach finally acknowledged an alternative plan was possible. — AP

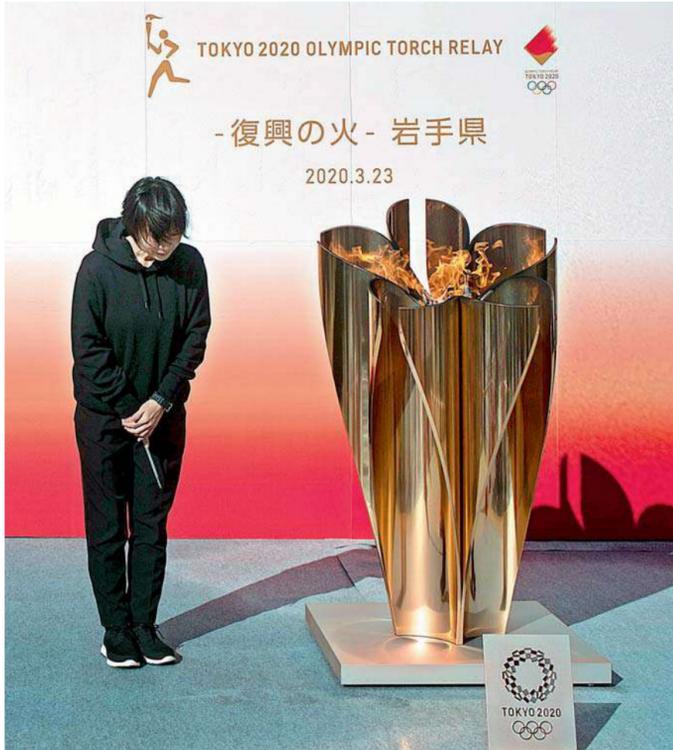
If it is difficult to hold (the Games) in a complete way a decision of postponement would be unavoidable as we think the athletes' safety is paramount.

— SHINZO ABE Prime Minister of Japan, on Tokyo Olympics

Los Angeles, March 23: Former Olympic swimming champion Cameron van der Burgh said he has contracted the coronavirus and added his voice to concerns for athletes' well-being if the Tokyo Games go ahead as scheduled. Van der Burgh, who retired from competitive swimming in 2018, posted a series of messages on social media on Sunday describing how he had been ill with the virus for two weeks. "Although the most severe symptoms (extreme fever) have eased, I am still struggling with serious fatigue and a residual cough that I can't shake," van der Burgh wrote on his official Twitter account. "Any physical activity like walking leaves me exhausted for hours," he added. Van der Burgh wrote that athletes are "exposing themselves to unnecessary risk" by continuing to train in preparation for the Olympics because there is "no clarification" on whether the games will go ahead as planned. "And those (athletes) that do contract (the virus) will try rush back to training most likely enhancing/extending the damage/recovery time," he wrote. He ended his thread with: "COVID-19 is no joke!" There are now signs that the Olympics, which are due to start on July 24, will be postponed. The International Olympic Committee announced Sunday it was considering a postponement amid growing pressure from athletes and some countries who want the world's biggest sporting event delayed or they won't send teams. The Japanese government has also accepted the possibility of a postponement. The 31-year-old van der Burgh won gold at the 2012 London Olympics and silver at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games in the 100-metre breaststroke. — AP

PREPARE FOR NEXT YEAR, AUSSIE ATHLETES TOLD

Sydney, March 23: Australian Olympic officials said Monday "it was clear" the Tokyo Games could not go ahead as scheduled this year and told its athletes to instead prepare for the event in 2021. The International Olympic Committee shifted its tone on the Games overnight as the coronavirus crisis spirals, saying it would step up planning for different scenarios, including postponement. In response, the Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) convened a board meeting on Monday and unanimously decided a Games starting in July was not possible given the uncertainty around the pandemic. "It's clear the Games can't be held in July," Aussie chef de mission Ian Chesterman said. — AP



An official stands by the Tokyo 2020 Olympic flame displayed at Ofunato in Iwate prefecture in Japan on Monday, after its arrival from Greece. — AFP

Torch relay begins to get dim as Games look bleak

Tokyo, March 23: The Olympic torch relay, due to begin Thursday from a symbolic site in Fukushima, will proceed as scheduled but organizers said they would reassess in the coming days given the "worsening" coronavirus situation. "The torch relay will start on March 26 in Fukushima, the plan has not changed," Tokyo 2020 CEO Toshiro Muto told reporters, a day after the International Olympic Committee said it was considering postponing the Games due to the pandemic. "The situation is getting worse and worse," admitted Muto, but he added: "For now, the decision made one week ago (to proceed as planned) is still appropriate." The coronavirus pandemic has already had a major impact on the torch relay. In what they described as a "heartbreaking" decision, organizers downgraded a ceremony on Friday to welcome the flame from Greece, keeping 200 children away from the event. The nationwide torch relay begins on March 26, starting from the J-Village sports complex in Fukushima that was used

as a base for workers during the 2011 earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster. Muto said organizers would learn from the experience of this weekend when tens of thousands flocked to see the Olympic flame on display - forming exactly the sort of crowds they had hoped to avoid. On Saturday, more than 50,000 people queued to watch the flame displayed at Sendai station in Miyagi, with some lining up for several hours. "This is evidence of interest from residents, so in one sense we were delighted," said Muto, further adding that their main priority was to prevent the coronavirus outbreak from spreading and putting in place "advanced countermeasures". — AFP

CORONA EFFECT Pathan brothers do their bit by donating masks

In a humanitarian gesture, former India cricketers Irfan Pathan and his brother Yusuf have donated 4,000 masks to the needy amid the rapidly-spreading COVID-19 pandemic. Former India speedster Irfan, who played 29 Tests and 120 ODIs, tweeted, "Doing our bit for the society. Whatever u guys can do please go ahead and help each other as far as sanitation is concerned. But don't gather crowd!"

@iamyusufpathan #corona it's a small start hopefully we will be helping more. Everyone of us... Irfan informed in a video that he and his brother bought the masks in the name of the Mehmood Khan Pathan Charitable Trust, which is run by their father, and that the masks will be distributed to Vadodra health department, who will in turn distribute it to the needy. — PTI

SANGAKKARA IS INTO SELF ISOLATION

Sri Lankan batting great Kumar Sangakkara has said he is currently in self-quarantine, following his government's guidelines for those recently returning from Europe, which has now become the epicentre of the Covid-19 pandemic. "I have no symptoms or anything like that, but I'm following government guidelines," Sangakkara told News First. Meanwhile, former Australia pacer Jason Gillespie has also gone into a two-week isolation after returning from the United Kingdom. — PTI

GAUTI WARNS QUARANTINE OFFENDERS

Cricketer-turned politician Gautam Gambhir on Monday warned the offenders of the government's quarantine guidelines set out to stop the spread of Covid-19 pandemic, saying they can choose to stay safe or go to jail. "Khud bhee jayenge aur parivaar ko bhee leke jayenge, quarantine or jail (either you go to quarantine with family or you go to jail)," wrote Gambhir on Twitter. "Don't be a threat to society. We are fighting for our existence, not for our livelihood. Follow the government's lockdown guidelines," he added. — PTI

Insurance cover for CAB cricketers and officials

The Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) on Monday announced that the health insurance policies it has obtained for its cricketers and match officials, numbering over 3200, will also cover the Covid-19 pandemic, which has wrecked the sporting calendars across the globe. It would also cover women players playing for Bengal and ex-cricketers who represented Bengal senior men's team. — PTI

Los Angeles, March 23: Former Olympic swimming champion Cameron van der Burgh said he has contracted the coronavirus and added his voice to concerns for athletes' well-being if the Tokyo Games go ahead as scheduled. Van der Burgh, who retired from competitive swimming in 2018, posted a series of messages on social media on Sunday describing how he had been ill with the virus for two weeks. "Although the most severe symptoms (extreme fever) have eased, I am still struggling with serious fatigue and a residual cough that I can't shake," van der Burgh wrote on his official Twitter account. "Any physical activity like walking leaves me exhausted for hours," he added. Van der Burgh wrote that athletes are "exposing themselves to unnecessary risk" by continuing to train in preparation for the Olympics because there is "no clarification" on whether the games will go ahead as planned. "And those (athletes) that do contract (the virus) will try rush back to training most likely enhancing/extending the damage/recovery time," he wrote. He ended his thread with: "COVID-19 is no joke!" There are now signs that the Olympics, which are due to start on July 24, will be postponed. The International Olympic Committee announced Sunday it was considering a postponement amid growing pressure from athletes and some countries who want the world's biggest sporting event delayed or they won't send teams. The Japanese government has also accepted the possibility of a postponement. The 31-year-old van der Burgh won gold at the 2012 London Olympics and silver at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games in the 100-metre breaststroke. — AP

Swim champion +ve for Covid-19

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Cameron van der Burgh

COACH COWEN HAS CORONA SYMPTOMS

London March 23: Leading golf instructor Pete Cowen tells The Daily Telegraph in Britain he has all the symptoms of the new coronavirus and says he has told all his players to follow health and government guidelines on Covid-19. "I'm feeling horrendous and wouldn't wish this on anyone, no matter how young and fit they may be," Cowen said. Cowen works with Henrik Stenson, Brooks Koepka, Gary Woodland and Graeme McDowell, among many others, putting in long hours on the practice range at the biggest events. He was at The Players Championship before it was canceled last week after one round because of concerns over the coronavirus. The Telegraph says Cowen has not been tested, but believes he has Covid-19. "After a few days of self-isolation, we decided to ring the ambulance and the medics said I ticked every box on the corona sheet," Cowen said. "They were fantastic, but said they were not allowed to test me unless I was admitted to hospital and then the staff there decided to keep you in," leading golf instructor added. — AP

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