



### WORLD 8 NATION 7 **Prince Charles tests** Mamata says Centre didn't give lockdown info positive for Covid-19

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### ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari; Uttarayana Thithi: Chaitra Shuddha Vidiya till 7.53 pm Star: Revathi till 7.13 am Varjyam: 5.41 am to 7.28 am (Friday) Durmuhurtam: 10.12 am to 11 am; 3.02 pm to 3.51 pm Rahukalam: 1.30 pm to 3 pm **HLIRI CALENDAR** Rajjab 30,1441 AH PRAYERS Faiar: 5.16 am Zohar: 12.32 pm Asar: 4.43 pm Maghrib: 6.34 pm Isha: 7.41 pm SUNSET TODAY 6.25 PM SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.15 AM MOONRISE TOMORROW 6.56 AM MOONSET TODAY 7.19 PM



No need, sir... let's conduct online games!



New Delhi: Amid the coronavirus outbreak, the government on Wednesday banned export of anti-malarial drug hydroxycloroquine, with immediate effect to ensure sufficient availability of the medicine in the domestic market.

### **Spain overtakes**

## Hyderabad cops create crisis at AP border

TS lures people with 'pass' to travel to destination of their choice as AP cops stop them from entering N. VAMSI SRINIVAS I DC

VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 25

In a flagrant violation of the nation-wide lockdown for 21 days in less than 24 hours, Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao on Wednesday put lives of thou-sands of people at extreme risk by sending them away from the various hostels in the state capital city of Hyderabad to far-off places in neighbouring states, mainly Andhra Pradesh.

The Telangana government created a humanitarian crisis by luring people with passes to travel to destination of their choice, barely a day after a nationwide lockdown was announced.

The most glaring dimension of this tragic saga is that several girl students and working women had to travel nearly 200 km on twowheelers in their eagerness to reach their native place, even as Telangana police issued passes to those who have their own means of transport".

The crisis deepened further with neighbouring Andhra Pradesh police stopping them from entering their jurisdic from tion, thereby resulting in a mass gathering of evac-uees, stranded on roads till late at night, defeating the very objective of the heath emergency-led lockdown — social distancing. Serpentine que-ues of four-wheelers and two-wheelers were seen at the Garikapadu check post on the Hyderabad-Vijayawada highway and at Panchalingala checkpost near Kurnool on the Hyderabad-Bang-

alore highway. Women pleaded with police to leave them as they have to travel 100 km further to reach their and hostels in Hyderabad destinations. and move to the intra-state border. This unforgivable Page 4: AP reacted on lack of foresight and planhealth officials' plaint ning, oblivious to both



People from Andhra Pradesh being stopped at the inter-state border shared with Telangana after it was closed by district rural police at Vijayapuri south, on Wednesday. They were returning from Hyderabad and other places of Telangana State following the lockdown announced all over the country on Tuesday. – TEJO ROY

INDIA **TELANGANA** CASES CASES DEATHS 606 41 10

India at home during lockdown

How long for vaccine

to defeat COVID-19?

## AP youth forced out of hostels in Hyderabad

#### **JAYENDRA** CHAITANYA | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 25

In gross legal violation of the compete national lock-down till April 15, on its very first day on Wednesday, thousands of people, most youth from Andhra Pradesh, were forced to leave their rooms

national legal norms, the global health emergency and potential human cost that defeated the very purpose of a lockdown imposed by Telangana State came to the fore in the city on Wednesday, with thousands of young people — mostly from Andhra Pradesh — forced to leave their rooms and

managements of various hostels and paying guest (PG) accommodations asking their "clients to immediately vacate" their rooms. According to managements, they were in no position to provide services to their tenants as it was becoming increasingly difficult for them to procure essential commodi-

dents, professional workers standing in clumps small and large — and heading to some police stations in gatherings of thousands, standing cheek to iowl — prompted a late evening tweet with a tone of urgency from TRS working president and minister K.T. Rama Rao, urging restraint from accommo-

purpose of the nation-wide and state-wide lockdown, with helpless students pushed to throw to wind all caution as they rushed to police stations and sought "permission letters" to travel back to their homes in Andhra Pradesh. Thousands of voungsters — living in hostels across the city were rendered

homeless force and unprotected by police.

### **TRS CONDEMNED** FOR 'INHUMAN', **HASTY ACTION**

+ **→ c m y** k

### S.A. ISHAQUI | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 25

The Telangana state government's decision on Wednesday to allow students and young professionals to be evicted from their hostels and to return to their native places in neighbouring state, particularly Andhra Pradesh, besides several people from within Telangana, leading to virtual stranding of scores of people in sever-al parts of the city, and the AP-Telangana state border, came from strong condemnation from across the polity.

The move enabled by Telangana police, in gross violation of both the Central government declaration of national lockdown as announced by Prime Minister Nare-ndra Modi yesterday, as well as Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao's shutdown announce-ment, created a bizarre standoff and mass-scale violation of the much needed social distancing in the aftermath of the Covid epidemic.

'It is a crazy situation, a humanitarian crisis created, perhaps unwit-tingly but must be resolved immediately. Both state governments must immediately resolve it. The two Chief Secretaries must speak and find an amicable solution. We are facing an unprecedented emergency, and we must not allow it to greater tragedy," said

### China Covid toll

Madrid: Spain's coronavirus death toll overtook that of China on Wednesday, rising to 3,434 after 738 people died over the past 24 hours, the government said. The spiralling number of deaths came as Spain entered the 11th day of an unprecedented lockdown to try and rein in Covid-19 epidemic.

### **Banks stagger** working hours

New Delhi: Banks have resorted to staggered working hours as they work with reduced manpower to maintain social distancing in the wake of coronavirus spread, besides encouraging customers to use digtial banking channels more often. SBI's managing director P.K. Gupta said they have implemented staggered time slots for banking hours across the country

### **25 killed in Kabul**

### gurdwara attack

Kabul: Heavily armed gunmen and suicide bombers blasted their way into a Sikh gurdwara in the heart of Afghanistan's capital of Kabul on Wednesday, killing at least 25 worshippers and wounding 8 others. in one of the deadliest attacks on the community in the country. The gunmen attacked the gurdwara in Shor Bazar.

#### Report on Page 8



**CITY.. PG2 Railway hospital lacks** basic facilities

> NATION.. PG7 Kerala shuts down liquor outlets

take to the streets and scat tered across the city to different police stations desperately seeking help. The issue erupted with

ties to ensure other regular services.

The spectacle of hundreds, and at some locations, thousands of stu-

dation managements and "promising all assis-Wednesday's tance". development punched a serious hole into the very

Asaduddin Owaisi.

Page 2: Cops issue 3,000 permits to students

Page 2: Owaisi appeals for financial aid to poor

### NPR, Census Phase 1 put off, new dates after 21 days

enumeration

### DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 25

February 9 to 28, 2021. In view of the coronavirus The updating of NPR was outbreak and the 21-day nation-wide lockdown, the also to be done along with Centre has decided to put Phase I of Census 2021 in on hold the first phase of all the states and Union Census 2021 and the upda-Territories, except Assam. tion of the National Officials said new dates Register Population for the first phase will be (NPR). Both were schedfinalised after the threeuled to be conducted between April 1 and week lockdown period. No decision has been taken September 30, 2020. regarding the second phase of the Census exer-In a statement, the home ministry said Census 2021 cise that was to be held from February next year. Census 2021 was to be was scheduled to be conducted in two phases house listing and housing launched from April 1 in

census during April-September and population Meghalaya Lakshwadeep and Andaman and Nicobar from Islands.

There is a growing view within the home ministry that not only will the state government machinery be busy dealing with the corona crisis, sending officials for house-to-house survey will only expose them further to the risk of the deadly virus.

Further, states like Odisha and Delhi had requested the home ministry to defer both Census and NPR exercise in view of the corona menace.

### DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, MARCH 25

India marked Day 1 of the world's largest shutdown on Wednesday by staying at home, mostly. Visuals from across the country were similar - deserted main roads and colonies, but long queues outside medical and grocery sto-res, with people in masks diligently maintaining

social distancing norms. Even as the number of confirmed Covid-19 cases in the country went up to 606 on Wednesday, there were reports of people violating the unprecedented nationwide restrictions, especially at interstate

SUPPLY OF food, groceries and even medicines was severely affected

### HEALTH officials said India can now test 12,000 samples a day

and local bus stands. Many were daily wagers trying

to return home. In Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, UP, Jharkhand and Delhi, shops found their own way of ensuring social distanc-ing — by marking wellspaced circles or squares before the country that led for customers to stand in to the lockdown on Tueas they waited in queues. sday midnight, Prime

While police and securi-ty officials detained hundreds for violating prohibitory orders, many more were let off after mild punishment by the police in Jammu & Kashmir and Delhi, which included making them roll about on the road, or squat while holding their ears. Several FIRs were regis-

tered across the country against people for violating lockdown orders. In Uttar Pradesh alone, 1,788 FIRs were filed 5,592 people were booked and 39,757 vehicles were challaned. Underscoring the enormity of the challenge

Minister Narendra Modi said winning the war against coronavirus will take 21 days as opposed to the 18 days taken to win the epic battle of Maha-bharata. He was addressing people of his parliaconstituency, mentary Varanasi, through a video link. The number of confirmed Covid-19 cases in India went up to 606 on Wednesday, including 10 deaths reported earlier.

Maharashtra reported 15 more cases on Wednesday, the largest number of increase, taking the total positive cases in the state to 122.

#### Page 5: Delhi reports five fresh cases

### Panchangam predicts ups and downs for state **UGADI** TALK Telangana, beware till May 22

#### DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 25

total

the

The

Vedic scholar Bachampalli Santosh Kumar Sastry of Sringeri Sarada Peetham, reading out the Panch-(almanac) for angam Sarvari Nama Samva-staram, cautioned the people to be more cautious till May 22, 2020.

• THE STATE government's Ugadi celebrations were a low key affair due to the lockdown

of the state. Homes were decorated with mango leaves and flowers and people ate Ugadi 'Pachadi, lockdown which is made with neem announced by the Centre flowers, jaggery, pepper or green and state government chillies, salt. tamarind juice, and small resulted in scaled-down celebrations of the Telugu pieces of raw mango.

New Year, Ugadi in Telangana on Wednesday. The state government organised celebrations at However, traditional ferendowments commissionvour won over health conerate in the city but they were low-key with the Vedic scholar reading out cerns early in the morning were as people thronged many markets in the Almanac predicting Hyderabad and other parts good rains in the Telugu



He said that KCR's zodiac sign is Karkataka Rasi (Cancer) and in Sarvari Nama Samvastaram would be more beneficial personally to the Chief Minister. He said that though there will be ups and down in the state economy due to the economic slowdown in the country, the state government will successfully overcome the situation.

Maintaining that Sarvari Nama Samvastaram started with the Sarpa Yoga, the

New Year. He stated that state as well the country will face some calamities and the people should more cautious till May 22 and to protect them from these calamities the people perform the have to Yaganas and Yagas.

He also predicted ups and down in the banking sector in the New Year.

The Vedic scholar said that in the new year the Centre and the state government will work like brethren and face all the hardships to protect the people from the calamities and also for the welfare of

the people. He predicted that with the completion of the Kaleshswaram Project, Telangana will turn into a lush green state.

### BALU PULIPAKA | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 25

A three-year-old child has become Telangana's fortyfirst Covid-19 patient, with the government announcing that the child had travelled from Saudi Arabia to the city recent-Iy.

The health department did not provide any further information on the family of the child, who has been identified as a boy.

Ón Wednesday, two cases - including that of the child - tested positive, the health department said in its daily Covid-19 bulletin.

The other case is that of

THE HEALTH department did not provide any further information on the family of the child, who has been identified as a boy.

3-year-old from Saudi is

TS' 41st Covid +ve case

TWO CASES had tested postive on Wednesdsay, the health department said in its daily Covid-19 bulletin

a 43-year-old woman from Hyderabad, designated as patient no. 40, who is a contact of a patient who tested positive earlier.

now spreading in Telangana from primary patients to secondary patients. It is learnt that this new patient is the second in the family who has contracted the disease from the primary patient who returned from abroad recently. While 50 persons were admitted to hospitals with signs of coronavirus infec-

This woman has no histo-

ry of foreign travel, the

department said, confirm-

ing that the coronavirus is

tion on Wednesday, a total of 813 have been admitted so far as possible suspects, including those who have tested positive for the disease so far, the department said.























### SHORT TAKES **ALL RELIGIOUS PLACES SHUT IN BORABANDA**

#### DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 25

Borabanda has become first division to convince religious leaders across the spectrum and ensure closure of all religious places during the entire 21-day lockdown period.

Intense awareness created Greater Hyderabad by Greater Hyderadau Municipal Corporation (GHMC) and other religious organisations helped achieve this incredible feat. Consequently, all mosques, churches and temples in the

division will remain closed until April second week.

### **OWAISI APPEALS** FOR FINANCIAL **AID TO POOR**

#### From Page 1

The Hyderabad MP appealed to Prime Minister Modi to give immediate financial assisstrata stuck in different parts of the country. "This may be the first such instance, but if poor people cannot get food, nor go back home – what are they to do?"

Sources in the state government took umbrage in the catch-22 situation they claimed to have found themselves in, given that managements of private hostels in Hyderabad forced these youth to vacate hostels and that they allowed them a one-time exemption because of "humanitarian" reasons. But most political leaders were scathing of the move, with leaders of different parties condemning the incompetence of the government, its brutality in handling the situation and its absolute lack of pre-paredness.

Telangana state BJP president and Lok Sabha MP Bandi Sanjay Kumar called it a "hasty act, which reflects the mindset of CM K. Chandrashekar Rao. While Prime Minister Narendra Modi has appealed to people to stay wherever they were for 21 days, the CM allows people to be forced out of their rooms, gives them permits after they rush to in herds to local police stations, further augments the risk of Covid by large-scale violation of social distancing norms and inhumanly does

not do it properly." He said that if at all the Telangana government had resolved to send back students it should have consulted the AP government first.

and coordinated it properly,

## Hyd, neighbour dists Covid hotspots soon

Stay away from others, don't go out unless very necessary, are the only ways to curb its spread

#### BALU PULIPAKA | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 25

With coronavirus cases popping up in several parts of the city, it is feared that the whole of Hyderabad, as well the neighbouring districts of Ranga Reddy and Medchal-Malkajgiri, may turn into a hot zone for the

Covid-19 disease. This should be a compelling reason for people to stay put in their homes and scrupulously follow the directions of the state government with respect to the lock down.

Since coronavirus is known to spread from per-son to person, an effective way to contain its spread is to stay away from others to the extent possible and not step out of the house unless absolutely necessary. And when such is the case, limit the time spent outside the home to the minimum, come back home, wash hands thoroughly and take all the other hygiene precautions to ensure the safety and security of others at home. So far, positive cases of coronavirus infec-tions have been reported from Manikonda, Kuka-tpally, Kokapet, Chandanagar, Shantinagar in Saidabad, Secunderabad, Begumpet, Somajiguda, Banjara Hills and Banjara Hills and Balkampet in and around the city of Hyderabad.

Typically, when more than one case is found in a given locality, and such has been the case in at least two instances in the city so far, the containment protocol calls for a lockdown in a three kilometre radius of the epicentre with no one allowed

to leave or enter the containment zone. While the geographical spread of positive cases by itself is a serious concern in terms of containment, the safety of people whom the confirmed coronavirus patients have come in contact with - who could be 'close contacts', such as members of their families or more importantly oth-ers outside of the families who are residents of other parts of the city - has left the government with no option but to take strict action to limit exposure of people to any possibility of

contracting the virus. Nearly 78 per cent of people who might have contracted the virus never display serious symptoms or come down with the dis ease itself. But they could still be carriers of the virus and spread it to the more vulnerable among the population such as elders, children or those already suffering from diseases such as diabetes and those related to heart, kidneys or the upper respiratory tract. Such being the case, government officials are at pains to explain the importance of staying put at home during the lock down period and are repeatedly urging people to respect the lock down



A large number of people who stay in hostels visit police station to seek permission to go to their native places, at Raidurg PS on Wednesday. – R. PAVAN

Cops issue 3,000 permits to students

### From Page 1

SR Nagar and Punjagutta police sta-tions, officials "issued nearly 3,000 such permits' for students to go back home in a one-time exemption from the curfew. At several other police stations, thousands more were "waiting for their turn to collect" such let-

ters well past 6 pm. After an entire day of chaos, neither prevented to urgently unattended to by the Telangana government or police, Director General of Police M. Mahendar Reddy "issued instructions" to all hostel and PG accommodation managements that any 'evictions would be met with serious action" and "called on them to withdraw" any such moves. This came for thousands

of students, too late, after the city police, claiming to be under siege from homeless students, began issuing travel permission certificates to them instead of taking the back to their respective hostels. A woman from Andhra Pradesh, who works in the city and lives in a hostel at Begumpet area, said, "This (lockdown) has come as a shock to us. Though our office had earlier informed us to work there is no transport. from home due to coronavirus (Covid-19) threat, the hostel management informed us only today to going to North Zone DCP vacate the premises, owing to their incapabilioffice to request and coltv to serve us food and prolect a pass. We are a group vide other amenities till and have a car in which the completion of lockwe want to go home. down." Surprisingly, not one of the thousands of Though thousands were issued permits, it is unsure how they would illegally evicted students considered calling the make their way back to friendly Telangana police their native places, for protection to stay on in whether in Andhra their hostels. Pradesh or in Telangana When asked further, the itself, since there is no woman who was traveling public transport or prion foot from Begumpet to vate taxi service of any Secunderabad, said, "we kind currently being perthat information mitted. got Later on, when then police are giving some passes for people who want to travel to their issue was brought to his notice, Mr K.T. Rama Rao native places today. I am tried to address the situa-



People from hostels wait at the Jubliee Bus Stand on Wednesday to get some means of transport so that they can reach their town or villages.

### **AP GOVT REACTS ON PLAINT OF HEALTH OFFICIALS**

### From Page 1

Some passengers said that they have to travel as far as villages in the Godavari districts. The Y.S. Jagan Mohan

Reddy-led Andhra Pradesh government too did not react to the impending danger when vernacular TV news channels began airing stories of Telangana police issuing passes to people to travel to AP.

Only after the Andhra Pradesh state health authorities complained to state Chief Secretary Nilam Sawhney and the Chief Minister's Office against the influx, and the risk it brought, did the top brass react.

We can't rule out the possibility of some of the entrants being carriers of Coronavirus. We told higher authorities that we are already exhausted and can't take further workload, which is avoidable," a senior doctor involved in pro-viding healthcare to Covid positive patients told *Deccan Chronicle* on condition of anonymity. Back in Andhra Pradesh, it was realpolitik that punctured a larger cause of the nation's safety and resolve to fight the dreaded Covid-19. The ruling YSR Congress Party and principal opposition Telugu Desam competed with each other to welcome "our own people." While TD leaders ques-

tioned the stopping of our own people from entering our state, the ruling party MLA S Udayabhanu reached the spot and negotiated with the police to let them in. Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy directed the state police to allow them after conducting health check-ups.

Later, the government issued a press release stating that municipal minister Satyanarayana spoke to his Telangana counterpart K.T. Rama Rao and brought to the latter's notice that it was "not

**PEOPLE STUCK ON AP BORDER CREATES HAVOC** MD ILYAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 25

If the forcible eviction and sending away of Andhra people from Hyderabad despite a shutdown of hostels was one half of a tragedy, the other half was the refusal of entry to those people at AP borders, leading to havoc among people

Nearly 2,000 people set out for their native places due to closure of hostels at Hyderabad on Wednesday since morning. They started to their with

native places with Telangana police department giving permis-sions for those with vehicle arrangements to leave. But when they reached Garikapadu check post on the AP Telangana border, AP police denied permis-

them

to

taking them properly to their native places after a medical examination and handing them over to the AP government so they could put them in home isolation.

Mr Bandi said it was not just a problem of AP students but also youth from several places in Telangana who were thrown out of hostels today. "Police herding them into buses, beating some of them is this the way for a government to respond during a national health crisis?

He said if Chief Minister Rao really wanted to handle the crisis, he would have constituted committees Assembly and Parliament Constituency wise with senior officers experienced in crisis management and made a minister in-charge to each committee. Instead of making concrete efforts, Mr Rao was making theatrical statements and puts up a tame show. If the state government has real intention to rescue the youngsters it would have been made arrangements in plenty of empty lodges available in the city and informed parents that their wards were safe cus-tody, instead of allowing them to leave the city without proper prior arrangements with the neighbouring state.

TPCC president N. Uttam Kumar Reddy said that the problem of voungsters stranded at the border was a humanitarian crisis that should be resolved by both state governments immediately. He said that since the lockdown period was fairly long, both governments should coordinate better so that parents should not suffer mental agony.

Congress working president and Malkajgiri MP A. Revanth Reddy said that the state government has handling the Covid situation in Telangana with immaturity ever since the first positive Covid-19 case was detected in the state.

Why did the state govern ment allow students to go to their native places in AP without prior consultations with the government there? he asked. "Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao is competing with and trying to projecting himself as someone who is handling the Covid crisis better than PM Modi.

• WHEN MORE than one case is found in a given locality, and such has been the case in at least two instances in the city so far, the containment protocol calls for a lockdown in a 3 km radius of the epicentre with no one allowed to leave or enter the containment zone.

procedures.

I work as a labourer in Hyderabad and Stay in a private hostel. They shut down the hostel and told us to vacate. Some of them are students and some of us work in this city. We have been waiting here since 5 pm but there has been no mode of transport. I have to go to Kareemnagar. But

### **SATHISH KUMAR**

tion through a tweet, promising "hostel man-agements and PG accommodations all the support they require to keep the hostels and running smoothly". He requested these managements not to evict anyone and "cause undesirable panic"

The minister also called Hyderabad city police upon all elected represencommissioner said since tatives to "visit the hoshostel tels, along with officials" sought passes to get essenand convey the governtial commodities for running the hostels, the police ment's commitment to helping them. provided them with the It did not help matters

same and following this, any with management of one hostel claiming that it many students changed their plans and returned received orders from the to their accommodations.

government.

the

down.

Since lock down is under

implementation, no per-mission/NOC shall be

granted for any movement

of the people across the

States till further orders

in the overall interest of

public health and public

In another release, the

managements

safety, the release said.

sion to enter.ensuring they government that they have to cut off electricity Majority of the people and stop providing food returning were stu-

following orders from the dents, who were getting coaching for various exams and courses. The official release from DGP's office also They claimed that manreferred to reports it agements of hostels received that manage forcibly closed down and ments of certain hostels threw the out citing Telangana government were pressurising their orders and instructed renters to vacate their rooms despite the lockthem to vacate.

They said that they went to the Hyderabad police who asked them to make arrangements of vehicles to go back to their native places in AP and further issued permissions, instead of settling them back at their hostels. At Garikapadu check post, the Andhra Pradesh police denied permission to them to travel up to their native places. They were made to wait for over five hours without food and water. Several of them claimed that they were ready to undergo medical check-ups for coronavirus.

advisable at this junc ture for students and youth to move out. The official press statement further said officials of the AP CMO and Chief Secretary spoke to their TS counterparts.

Meanwhile, to avoid

Botsa

congestion on National Highway 65, several peo-ple took to different routes but were stuck beause local villagers at several places obstructed their movements. Tension prevailed in areas like Budhavaram, when locals prevented them from proceeding further. "I only heard of the travails of people who migrated, forced out their homes. of overnight from Pakistan to India during the 1947-Partition, with death hovering around. I feel like that, thrown out of a hostel in Hyderabad, and now stuck at AP border, disowned by both, surrounded by fear and uncertainty ahead," said a youth stuck at the border.

### TOTAL | CHAOS It all started when private hostels and paying guest owners asked inmates to vacate Centre intervenes in AP-Telangana border mess

#### N. VAMSI SRINIVAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 25

the night

The Centre on Wednesday took a serious note of the Telangana government's deliberate disobeying of to travel hundreds of kilometres violating the lockdown? The tamasha, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for a national reports obtained by us, lockdown by evicting thoureveal what went on the sands of people away from whole day," fumed a senior capital city of official at Union ministry the

Hyderabad. of home affairs. While two state governwhich acted above regionments of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh did not care much about the impending danger due to movement of masses from already done. one place to other, the Centre's intervention saved the day, though chaos prevailed till late in sensing danger, urged his

colleagues at the Centre to "The Telangana governact as he was not sure of ment acted deliberately. his own government tak-How can state police issue ing up the matter with passes to people who want Telangana.

Chief Meanwhile Secretary Nilam Sawhnev spoke to her counterpart Somesh Kumar and conveyed the state's concerns. A senior Telugu official, who was in a crucial post in Centre, alerted the A bureaucratic network MHA on the developments

al lines brought the inhu-It all started in the mornman deadlock to an end, ing when managements of though much damage was private hostels and paying guest accommodations According to official sources, a senior bureaupurportedly asked tenants to vacate. Their decision crat in Andhra Pradesh, came after police prevented them from fetching veg-

### AGITATED YOUTH gathered on roads and later proceeded to police stations at Madhapur, SR Nagar and Kukatpally in the

city after "being tipped" that they would be permitted to go to their native places. Police started issuing passes to people having their own transport.

etables and essential commodities to prepare food for them

Agitated youth gathered on roads and later pro-

ceeded to police stations at Madhapur, SR Nagar and Kukatpally in the city after "being tipped" that they would be permitted to

go to their native places. The Telangana police started issuing passes to people having their own mode of transport and "assured them" that the pass would ensure a free passage till state border. Instructions were issued to all police stations enroute till the Andhra Pradesh borders not to stop these vehicles carrying passes issued by the Hyderabad and Cyberabad city police.

The city police action resulted in thousands of

people gathering at police station as TV channels Deccan Chronicle Cornered over violations aired these visuals since Narendra

morning. By the time, IT minister announced lockdown, TS K.T. Rama Rao was alerted police took up eleventh hour fire-fighting, but by of the issue and he responded through a tweet that time, thousands gathat 7.15 pm, requesting hosered at the AP borders, tel managements not to waiting for an entry after evict inmates, it was way too late.

"He (KTR) would have done this in the morning itself. How can anyone expect KTR did not know about the issuance of migratory passes to people? We have information that city police acted on instructions of their top brass," a senior Andhra Pradesh police official told

health checks. Telangana Director General of Police (DGP) M. Mahender Reddy and Hyderabad city Police Commissioner Anjani Kumar issued separate statements urging tenants to stay back and asking hostel managements to not evict them. But the train had left the common capital's station long ago.

Prime

Minister

Modi's























## Umasankar **D**g 3

### IN BRIEF

### **Exams postponed**

due to lockdown Hyderabad: The theory examinations of Kaloj Narayana Rao University of Health Sciences PG Medical scheduled to be held in April 2020 have been postponed indefinitely. The next date of examination for the courses along with fee notification and time table will be intimated later on the website knruhs.telangana.gov.in.

### **Transporters to**

get special passes

Hyderabad: Police commissioners of Rachakonda and Cyberabad on Wednesday met representatives of associations involved in transportation and supply of essential commodities and updated them about the do's and dont's during the lockdown period. Issues pertaining to trans-portation and the supply of pharma products, LPG, petrol and diesel, and groceries to traders and their availability for the public, were discussed. The police also discussed inter-state transportation issues and on how to address them. The traders were advised not to sell commodities for higher prices and it was decided to give special passes to those involved in supply of essentials to ensure that the public does not suf-fer. Meanwhile, the Cyberabad special opera-tions team sleuths apprehended 15 persons, who were selling vegetables, surgical masks and sanitisers at higher prices. They seized 54.000 worth vegetables and `14,000 worth masks and sanitisers from their possession.

### **TWO BOOKED FOR** THRASHING **HOME GUARD**

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 25

Two persons assaulted a home guard for questioning them about the reason for travelling long despite a lockdown in force. The two have been booked in a case by the Kondrug police of Cyberabad

Commissionerate. The incident occurred Tuesday afternoon when the home guard from the PS stopped a car moving from Parigi to Shadnagar. When HG Venkatesh questioned the occupants, Ramakrishna and Madhusudhan, about the pur-

# **Curfew in Hyd further diluted**

### Despite appeals, public violates lockdown norms

#### MADDY DEEKSHITH | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 25 with their children.

Appeals made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister  ${\rm K}$  . Busy by-lanes had a fes-tal look, with people look-ing to buy goods necessary to celebrate Ugadi, the Telugu New Year. Chandrashekar Rao did not have any impact on several Hyderabadis. Ignorant of the possibility People gathered in hundreds at local markets in that local transmission of Novel Coronavirus several areas to purchase vegetables, meat and chicken to celebrate (Covid-19) had started and with the country entering gadi. In areas like RTC X stage 3 of the crisis, peo-Roads and Husbiguda, even sweet shops were ple queued up at super-markets and wayside shops to buy mangoes, open. A sweet shop owner pots, neem leafs, flowers, in Musheerabad said, "we

tive gear.

revoked.

apart from groceries givhave already prepared ing a toss to social dissweets for a week prior to Janata Curfew. We have already suffered a huge tancing and basic prevenloss. Thank God, every-However, by afternoon, even by-lanes wore a deserted look after police thing was sold out by 9 today because of am Ugadi." intervention. Few volunteers helped police at some check posts. They explained about the-ill

People took police, who were deployed in small numbers, to task at vegeffects of stepping out till etable markets. There were stray reports of citithe Corona crisis period and the lockdown is zens having roughed up police, among others, at the Ramnagar vegetable While Chief Minister Chandrashekar Rao appealed that only one market.

An over enthusiastic tiffin centre owner near the member per family was allowed to purchase gro-ceries, people have been discrete till afternoon in

No decision yet on Haj

thronging to wayside shops and supermarkets the name of service.

Though he was selling food, he claimed, "how would people eat if everyone is closed. God will not forgive us if we do not serve hungry people.

However, by afternoon even by-lanes were empty. People cursed the police for closing their shops.

"How would we earn if police devils shut our shops. I have only 5 kg pickle left to be sold. I will earn about ₹1,500 if my shop is open till after noon. I demand the government to save us from police brutality," said a pickle shop owner in Chilkalguda.

Citing demand, black marketers spread their wing, despite Mr Rao's warning to book them under the Preventive Detention Act.

The price of daily commodities saw a hike. Onions were sold for ₹40 per kg, which was ₹30 yes-terday. Chillies were sold for ₹160 while it was only ₹80 yesterday. Tobacco products like cigarettes were sold for ₹200 per pack of 10 and further higher.

this year, the amount paid

by the pilgrims would be

reimbursed. He added th-

at those who have been se-

lected for this Haj will be

sent next year because of

the Covid-19.



Police use lathis on those who were found roaming the streets during lockdown on Wednesday.

– DEEPAK DESHPANDE

MLA Maganti

### **KTR** inspects ongoing lockdown

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 25

**Cops in action** 

Municipal administration and urban development (MA&UD) minister. K.T. Rama Rao on Wednesday Rama Rao on Wednesday toured various parts of Hyderabad city and inspected the ongoing measures taken to prevent the spread of coronavirus. The minister took note of the cituation while leaf the situation while lockdown is being implemented in the city.

Some daily wage work-ers, natives of Suryapet district, were struck in Hyderabad due to the lockdown. While they were walking on the road along with their belongings, Rao, who was on his way to buddha bhavan, stopped the convoy and interacted with them. Learning about their problem, Rao immediately arranged for a vehicle and instructed the officials to make sure they reached their desti-

nation safely. Rao also interacted with a youth, an orphan, who is

a native of Bihar. He instructed officials to shift the youth to one of the night shelters in the city. Later, Rao went to the enforcement, vigilance and disaster management (EVDM) office at buddha bhavan in Hyderabad. He enquired about the measures being taken up by the GHMC Disaster Response Force (DRF) to curtail the spread of coronavirus in the city.

Rao then visited the call centre set up at the GHMC head office to respond to queries related to the coronavirus. He interacted with the staff and asked them to respond with empathy to the queries of

Few netas heed to KCR's call

Hills

### DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 25

Despite Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao's call on Tuesday to elected representatives to come out on the streets and help the authorities during the lockdown, very few showed up to help police and municipal authorities in the city. Until afternoon no minister, MLA, corporator, or chairman was seen out in the city. Deputy mayor Baba Fasiuddin was the only elected representative who distributed food packets to police and municipal authorities in

### his division. By afternoon, Jubilee them on the roads. Fines to be slapped as AI detects 3-km rule violation

#### 2020, says TS panel chief ATHER MOIN | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 25 interpreted. Speaking to the media, Mr Masihullah or the other. He said that the date for said Saudi government has not taken any such payment of second instal-Chairman of Telangana State Haj Committee, Mr ment has been extended decision, although they and it can now be paid Mohammed Masihullah had banned Umrah in the along with the final instal-Khan, on Wednesday clar-ified that neither Saudi authorities nor the Haj Committee of India had wake of Covid-19. ment amount. Mr Khan also said that in case if Saudi Arabia cancels Haj operations

However, the video of Saudi Ambassador to Senegal, Abdullah Ahmad announced about cancel-Al Abdan, which is in circulation, shows him advising Haj tour operashows him Taking serious excep-tion to the video making tors against making reservations with hotels such claims that is going and airlines till an official viral, he made it clear that they were being wrongly decision is taken, one way

A long walk home

lation of Haj 2020 rituals.





citizens.

Rao also visited the GHMC night shelter at Golnaka and interacted with the senior citizens and children there.

### Gopinath was spotted in the vegetable market enquiring about the spike in prices. When Deccan Chronicle asked TRS party workers why they had not heeded the CM's call, in a off the record conversation said how can you quote an off the record conversation that too after saying it was so? that they have been busy with the Ugadi festivities till afternoon and post that situation was under control.

Some elected representatives claimed that when they tried to volunteer prior to Mr Rao's call, police had not allowed

### POLICE ARE now identifying owners of these vehicles to slap cases against them under relevant sections of the IPC and Epidemic Act.

pose of their travel, they were enraged and assaulted Venkatesh.

A case was subsequently registered against the two. Kondurg police also served notices to them.

### **TRA CHIEF HELD AFTER EX-WIFE** COMPLAINS

#### DC CORRESPONDENT **HYDERABAD MARCH 25**

President of Telangana Rifle Association (TRA), who threatened his estranged wife, was booked by the Banjara Hills police here Wednesday. Speaking to De on

Deccan Chronicle, Reeta Sanghi, who was separated from her husband Amit Sanghi three years back, said, "On Tuesday night, he came to my house with a weapon to kill me.

He was under the influence of alcohol and was barely able to stand on his legs. He came to my house on the pretext of seeing our son to whom he showed the gun. My son alerted me and in turn screamed for help. My brother, who lives next door, came to our rescue and overpowered my husband and took the gun from his possession. Our 16-year-old son, who witnessed the incident, remains in a state of shock,' Reeta Sanghi said.

She lodged a complaint with Banjara Hills police, who booked a case of criminal intimidation and violation of Arms Act.

Hills Banjara police Inspector Kalinga Rao said, "Investigation is going on. Amit Sanghi said his son found the weapon in a bag and misunderstood him. He is a license holder.

Mr Rao added that only after questioning the son would they get a clear picture of exactly transpired. 'Meanwhile we have booked a case', he said.

HE WAS under the influence of alcohol and was barely able to stand on his legs.

People leave their hostels in Secunderabad on Wednesday and walk towards LB nagar hoping to find some means of transport to help them reach their villages. -GANDHI

### CHAITHANYA | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 25

There is a "third eye" closely watching move-ments of vehicles to detect violation of the three-kilometre rule for fetching essential com-modities. The government has stipulated that whatever shopping a person needs to do during the lockdown period has to be within a three-kilometre distance from home

Violators of the rule will find challans slapped against them, thanks to the state police using Artificial Intelligencebased video analytics from Wednesday onwards for strict implementation of the lockdown imposed throughout the state owing to Covid-19. Owners of vehicles that violate the order will be booked. There are about 250 junc-

tions in Hyderabad, where thousands of high definition cameras have been installed to capture violations of traffic rules. These cameras have now been equipped with Automatic Number Plate Reading software, which will read the registration numbers of vehicles crossing the junction.

The software automati-cally calculates the distance travelled by the vehicle once it crosses the On junction. next Wednesday alone, over 1,000 vehicles, including cars and two-wheelers, were seen violating the

iree-kilometre rule Police are now identifying owners of these vehicles to slap cases against them under relevant sections of the IPC and Epidemic Act. Speaking to Deccan Chronicle, a senior police official said, "The software detects vehicles that cross the three-kilometre limit and indicates a popup along with images. Our teams are in the process of identifying owners of these vehicles to book cases against them for violating the

lockdown. The official pointed out that youngsters have been coming onto roads to take selfies and shoot TikTok videos. Some are even taking up challenges of covering distances in the shortest time. "We appeal to the public not to venture onto roads unnecessarily and get into trouble," the official added.

• THE STATE It was

reports, which high-

lighted about how

men were selling

ties at exorbitant

traders and middle-

essential commodi-

prices, taking advan-

tage of the crisis. The

inaction of the author-

ities in monitoring the

rates was accentuat-

Secretary, Principal Sec-

Agriculture and Civil Su-

pplies Consumer Affairs

departments, Commi-ssionerate of Civil Sup-plies, DGP, Collectors of

Hyderabad and Ranga

Reddy districts are respo-

Home.

ed in the media.

retaries of

based on news

### HAPPY | ANIMALS | NZP is completely sanitised and anti-viral sprays are also being used Zoo declared as 'essential services'

#### BALU PULIPAKA | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 25

ernments.

ernments.

Telangana

the NZP Nehru Zoological With the entire country in Park that functions as part the grip of a serious Coronavirus crisis, the Central Zoo Authority has of the Forest Department too received the status, though not formally. said that it is time to declare zoo in the country as 'essential services'. Declaration of zoo under this category will enable them to function fully and normally under the cur-

With the zoo closed as part of the government's lockdown to stop the spread of Covid-19 disease, the forest department has written to the director-general of police rent lockdown restrictions and city commissioner of imposed across the counpolice to issue instructry by respective state gov-

tions to police personnel to allow zoo staff to travel from home to the zoo on Declaration of zoo under this category will enable work and on other duties them to function fully and assigned normally under the currequired.

tial service and thereby

According to some of the rent lockdown restrictions zoo staff, by and large there is no problem with imposed across the country by respective state govthe police allowing them The state government to go to work, since they has already declared the have emergency duty pass-Forest es. But sometimes they are

• THE STATE govern-Department as an essenment has already declared the **Telangana Forest** Department as an essential service and thereby the NZP (Nehru Zoological Park ) that functions as part of the Forest Department too received the status, though not formally.

> "Sometimes they are asked why the need to go to work at the zoo during the lockdown. The thing is we need people like electricians, carpenters, our own animal keepers, veterinary staff and others. The cages need cleaning every day, animals need to

be fed and checked for their health," NZP curator N. Kshitija said.

"Every day we need deliveries of fresh vegeta-bles and fruits as well as meat for the animals and birds. Emergency duty passes have been issued for 14 vehicles and we have asked the suppliers to deliver these materials to meet the needs for up to three days at a time as we have cold storage facilities. As far as grains and dry foods are concerned, we have already made preparations to ensure there is no shortage in the zoo," Ms Kshitija said.

In a worst-case scenario, the zoo can manage for a couple of days supplying animals with fresh green

leaves from its mulberry and other trees, and grass from the lawns. But supplies of fresh grass are

much-needed for many of the herbivores in the zoo. 'We started our prepara-

tions about a month ago with the news on Covid-19 and the importance of ensuring health of all wild animals in the zoo. We first completed a full hea-

lth check on all our inm-ates," Ms Kshitija said. Before the zoo was locked down, its staff and workers were issued hand sanitizers, masks and additional rations of soaps to ensure that they maintain proper hygiene. "With thousands of peo-

ple coming to the zoo, we tried to make sure our staff had what is needed to protect them," she added. The Nehru zoological

park has also been completely sanitised all its vehicles and also antiviral spray has been used in all public areas.

+

### **Black marketing:** HC takes up PIL

### VAMSHIDHARA | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 25

The Telangana High court has taken up a suomoto PIL on the spiraling prices of vegetables, fruits and other essential commodities due to the lockdown across Tela-ngana State. The High Court took up the PIL on the directions of the Chief Justice.

It was based on news reports, which highlighted about how traders and middlemen were selling essential commodities at exorbitant prices, taking advantage of the crisis. The inaction of the authorities in monitoring the rates was accentuated in the media.

The State of Telangana Reddy districts are res represented by its Chief ndents in the petition.



questioned. as



### SHORT TAKES

### **24-HR CURFEW IF LOCKDOWN NOT RESPECTED**

S.A. ISHAQUI | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 25

secretary, Somesh Chief Kumar, in a circular, cautioned that if the present system of lock down fails then 24-hour curfew will be imposed on the state. He said that the present night time curfew will continue till March 31.

Kumar instructed that "ir this context, all collectors and CPs/SPs should have a joint press conference to request all citizens to cooperate so that the necessity of imposing harsher restrictions and enforcement measures does not arise.'

According to the circular, curfew shall be imposed from 7 pm to 6 am every day till 31 March, 2020. All the shops and establishment shall be closed by 6 pm every day so that peo-ple can reach their homes by 7 pm. The following are the instructions in the circular to the general public and also official machinery in the state If any establishment does not close by 7 pm, it should be closed immediately and legal action should be taken against it. Movement of people should be restricted to 3 km from their

houses in Hyderabad. In other cities, a lesser limit can be imposed, depending upon the size of the city. A list of persons who are put

in home quarantine should be available on the collector's table. The process of home quarantine is to be monitored very strictly. GHMC collectors of Rangareddy, Medchal and Hyderabad are to play key role in the monitoring as 75 per cent of foreign returnees are from these districts. Their passports are to be collected under proper procedure and returned once their quarantine is over.

Any person having any emergency shall dial 100. The police department is requested to ensure that the caller is attended to urgently. Police personnel shall be courteous while dealing with such emergencies. The supply chain of essential services is not to be disturbed. The price of all essential commodities shall be monitored on a daily basis. Essential items which are permitted in GO Ms 45, vehicles carrying those goods going outside the state and those coming into the state shall be allowed movement in the evening hours.

Hospitals, clinics, and medical shops shall be allowed to function. Collectors should report any issues.



## **Crucial medical equipment supply hit**

Youth without masks assaulted in Supermarket

### **Doctors cannot attend to Covid-19 patients without wearing personal protection gear KANIZA GARARIJ DC** (PPE) is also not there in product without checking explained, "We need function by local state offine need for air courier s

### HYDERABAD, MARCH 25

Chemicals, raw materials for medicines, finished products like masks, sanitizers, gloves and medical devices are not being allowed to move from one state to another due to a total lockdown, com-plained manufactures to central government. These are essential products and required during a time of emergency like this but trucks are stopped at check points at interstate borders and not allowed to move.

Manufacturers from Monday onwards are following up with local administration and police in different states to allow for free movement of their vehicles, as masks, sanitisers, medical devices for respiratory distress are in high demand. Personal protection equipment

ADITYA CHUNDURU |

HYDERABAD, MARCH 25

Misinformation is lead-

ing to fights and con-

frontations among a

stressed and panicked public. Two youngsters

visiting a supermarket were accosted by another customer for not wearing masks. This

despite the lack of con-

sensus about the effica-

Prashansa and Harshit

were waiting in line out-

side Heritage Fresh at Whitefield, Kondapur.

Once they entered, a

man who was already inside started shouting

at them for not wearing

Harshith said, "The man was not willing to listen to us. He assault-ed me and pushed me

Prashansa said she

tried to show the man,

who himself had only

tied a handkerchief around his mouth,

tweets by the Union ministry of health on

the use of masks. "I told

him it is not necessary

for anyone. but the man

wouldn't listen. It was

an assault but even the

security guards didn't help us," he said.

store security had no problems allowing them

They added that the

out of the store.

cy of masks.

masks.

major government hospi-

tals in the country. The has demand increased as number of patients coming for testing and treating has seen a Doctors cannot rise. attend to patients without wearing personal protec-tion. PPE is required in drawing of samples for testing, treatment in emergency and isolation wards. It is a protection against transmission of virus. Before lockdown, fake PPE products took over the market and certain hospitals, which had procured it, are now complaining that checks have not been in place. Dr Sai Kumar Katam,

president, Doctor of Pharmacy, explained, "due to a surge in demand, PPEs are manufactured without proper manufacturing license. Small and big hospitals stocked the

varsity of the manufacturer. On realising that they were not certified, there is a hue and cry as to how spurious products have come to be sold. There are no quality checks done for fluid resistance, filtration efficiency, flammability and bio-compatibility. This is a major concern as medical staff is the first line of defence and they need to be well protected." Due to this reason, some private hospitals have refused to see Covid-19 patients and very few have come forward who have a good stock of certified equipment. With emergency supplies and raw materials being stopped at inter-state borders, the effects of lockdown will not be achieved if those who are sick are not provided medical help on time. A senior doctor on condianonymity

masks and sanitizers urgently. We have made sanitisers in the hospital but that is not sufficient. There has to be a supply to hospitals on priority basis. End-stage patients with pneumonia of unknown origin cannot be attended without PPE. To control situation from deteriorating further, it is important that supplies of these essentials are quick to all government hospitals as they are running out of stocks

The other hospital units which are not in infection control like psychiatry, orthopaedic, ENT and others have been asked to come on rotation basis as their patients are not to visit the hospitals until an emergency.

In districts of states the manufacturing units for medicines and medical devices are not allowed to

cials and police.

Collectors are not willing to listen to pharmaceutiand cal companies demand that it must be shut down. Indian Medical Device Industry has appealed to all central and state agencies to co-oper-ate with them as they play a crucial role of manufacturing in times of crisis and stopping them will only aggravate situation as they will not be able to supply on time.

Rajiv Nath, Forum Coordinator, Association of Indian Medical Device Industry explained, "Production schedules have been stopped since Monday. Local administration of states are not allowing workers to reach factories. The raw materials and various components have been stuck on the road at the inter-state borders. There is also a

need for air courier serv-

ice as some molecules have to be sent in temperatures which are below 10 degree C. We need these services to operate. The central government has been apprised of this situation and states must cooperate or we will be in short supply of treating medical devices and medicines. On top priority are gloves, disposables, elec-tronic devices, instru-

ments, IVD reagents for testing purposes. The reagents are to be sent to ensure that there is adequate testing and on time. Hospitals require these as they are already having problems due to shortage. Mr Nath said, "Just like doctors, those in the supply chain also have to be supported so that the essential goods can reach hospitals on time to treat patients.

### **HYPERACTIVE COPS STALL MED SUPPLY'**

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 25

At a time when the nation has addressed the novel coronavirus crisis by going in for a national lockdown, members of the Association of Indian Medical Device Industry (AiMeD) say that due to the lockdown, most of the hospitals are getting masks and sanitizers but certain medicines and some medical devices were not reaching on time.

"Avoidable restrictions have been imposed by the local police on the mobility of people asso-ciated with the supply, distribution and transport of medicines, raw materials, components to make masks, sanitizers and other medical devices to the factories and manufacturing plants, which are holding up production lead-

ing to shortages. "A bigger concern is the absence of courier services and trucking though the authorities had issued an order for transporting essential goods," said Rajiv Nath, Forum Coordinator, AiMeD.

### **SENIOR CITIZENS SUFFER AMID COVID CRISIS**

to the lockdown in the state, were provided with essential commodities on Wednesday after the family tweeted to the Chief Minister's Office and Minister K. Taraka Rama Rao about their pathetic condition.

With the sudden lockdown, which has not spared a thought for the hundreds of daily wagers, the family was unable find work and did not have enough money cials even to buy food. The family members have been starving for the last two days. On Wednesday, they rea-ched out to the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) added.

twitter with the help of their acquittance sharing

The information was Rachakonda sent to commissioner police Mahesh Bhagwat who instructed the Keesara police to make necessary arrangements for the family.

Inspector J. Narender Goud of the Keesara police said, "Several migrant workers from Telangana and Chhattisgarh have been living on the out-skirts of Rampally village and were engaged as

labourers." The Keesara police inspector said Kumar's family had been unable to stock food and had gone without for two days. They were given rice, dal and other groceries.

break the chain of Covid-

19. In every business activ-ity, there is a supply chain.

Most of those involved in

the same should commute.

In view of this we called

Mr Kumar said 900 pass-

The Nagaram munici-The unified federation pal commissioner and of residential associa-tions (UFRA), of which concerned revenue offiwere informed about the situation and 4300 residential colonies requested to do whatever in the twin cities are was needed for migrant members, has come out labourers living in the area who survive on daily the inspector wages,

**Family starves** for 2 days, KTR, CMO intervene HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 25 A family of six, starving their ordeal. for the last two days due

Dharavath Kumar, a native of Rajlu village in Korvi mandal of Mahabubabad district, moved with his family of five to the outskirts of Hyderabad some time ago. The whole family works as daily wage labourers in nearby Rampally village and lives in a makeshift hut on the roadside.

and industries minister K.T. Rama Rao through SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH, 24

> Senior citizens, many of whose children are not living with them, are those suffering the most during this lockdown. The seriousness of the

lockdown means that transportation is nonexistent, groceries are out of stock in some parts, food availability has also fallen as restaurants are closed, delivery services are at a standstill. The Health department has announced that people who are above 60 years are at a greater risk At this point, senior citi-zens will be in need of

help. A few socially responsible citizens have come forward to extend a helping hand.

### COMPANIES **GIVEN PERMITS**

#### DC CORRESPONDENT YDERABAD, MAR 25

The state government on Wednesday announced that persons engaged in delivery of goods can apply for passes to enable their movement within the city.

After a lengthy meeting with representatives of the companies, IT secretary, Jayesh Ranjan, said that their managements could send emails to covid19.hyd@gmail.com with details of name, vehicle number, route and company name for a pass

It may be noted that though delivery personnel have been exempted from the lockdown many companies have stopped their services. In the past few days, delivery personnel reported issues with the police obstructing them on duty.

told Ranjan Deccan Chronicle that a meeting was held with representatives of delivery aggregators, including BigBasket, to smoothen out the logistics. Representatives of logistics companies dealing with essentials such as vegetables, milk. meat and poultry, even newspapers, attended the meeting to enumerate their difficulties to the government and police

department. Food delivery aggregators which had become inactive have been asked to resume service in an attempt to reduce the number of people visiting shops for groceries. "BigBasket, Amazon and other aggregators will soon start delivering groceries and other essentials. We are expecting the companies to resume their services tomor-row morning (Thursday). They will be focussed on delivering groceries, medicines and other essentials," he said. The movement pass would be issued by the state police department. "We have received an enormous number of applications since the email was activated," said Ranjan.

inside, even without a mask. The duo tagged

Cyberabad police in their tweets, who asked them to file a written complaint. They have also lodged a complaint via the police department's app HawkEye and are waiting to hear back.

This is not the first case of vigilantism since the announcement of a lockdown. There have been many cases of the general public trying to enforce rules, real and imagined, on oth-

ers. Recently, frenzied residents in an apartment complex in Banjara Hills locked a resident inside his house when they found out he had recently returned from overseas.

A few days ago, two journalists from the city were accosted by a man claiming to be a social worker, for ordering food from a restaurant, well before the deadline.



Hungry daily wage labour queue up for food being distributed by NGOs on the third day of lockdown at Musheerabad on Wednesday. – DC

to help senior citizens whose children are not living with them. They contacted 30 senior citizen associations, during the janta curfew and managed help 11 older people in need of help. Since the lockout declared, UFRA was to extend this want B.T. Srinivasan, work. general secretary, UFRA, said that there are 70 senior citizen associations in the city

Trice, a startup, app and logistics team, funded by Movie Director Rajamouli, designed for large residential areas, came into existence two years ago by four people. It delivers necessities to senior citizens. "Trice is seen as a great help to many senior citizens in sun city and surrounding areas who are taking the help," said T. Goutham Reddy and Naveen. K.L. two of the founder-members.

### Vendors complain of travel blockages

### DURGA PRASAD SUNKU | DC HYDERABAD MARCH 23

The Hyderabad city police held a meeting with representatives of all essential services during which the latter brought their prob-lems to the notice of the police. The Telangana State

Dairy Association appealed to the police to allow tankers into the city for distribution of milk. The lockdown has also

affected the movement of vegetables in the city as the commission agents are not allowed to come out. Representatives of the

drugs and pharmaceuti- vehicles during the night are around 40 members of cals industry stated that if the situation continues like this, there will be a shortage of medicines.

The police assured them that passes will be provided for required vehicles and persons to allow free movement of essential products in the city.

Sultan Masqati of the Dairy Telangana Association told *Deccan Chronicle*, "Milk tankers have been stopped at the state borders. They should Explaining the difficulbe allowed in. There is ties in the vegetable maralso a shortage of packagkets, C Sanjay Kumar Gudimalkapur, a member of the vegetable market committee said, "There ing material for milk and fuel for boiling it. Due to curbs on movement of

hours, distribution of the market staff and 200 milk packets has been affected. There is also shortage of cattle feed and members agents in the market. Due to the lockdown they are both green and dry grass. scared to come. Every day Mr Masqati requested the markets do business of that milk distribution vehicles be allowed to ply during the night so that the milk will reach the public on time. He also requested that supply of milk after 7 pm should be allowed as many milk vendors supply milk at night.

for a meeting.' nearly ₹1 lakh. During the es have been issued, including 750 individual lock down it has come down to half (₹50,000)." Representatives of Bowepasses and 150 vehicle npally market, Monda passes, to allow people to market, and Mir Alam commute, and another 900 passes will soon be given. "We have opened a special Madi market attended the meeting. Addressing a press conference aftermail id covid19.hyd.com to wards, Anjani Kumar, Hyderabad city police commissioner said: "Total apply for the passes online. No need of coming to the commissioner's office. We will contact the 10,000 police personnel are on their toes to protect the people who have applied

citizens of Hyderabad and

commission

### Psychiatrists claim many will suffer from severe seizures TROUBLED TIME Addicts face withdrawal symptoms

### KANIZA GARARI | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 25

Withdrawal symptoms in addicts are being seen with demands surging in the black market as friends and family are try-ing to procure for them to

keep them calm. Psychiatrists estimate that more than 500 may to suffer from severe seizures and hallucinations in the next few days. With stocks drying up due to lack of transportation, they will

\_\_\_\_

report to hospitals soon. Violent behaviour, anger, depression, fatigue, insomnia and urge for narcotics are signs to look out for, stated psychiatrists. Some of them also shift to nar-

A change from daily routine for a long period of 21 days is stressful. People must think positively and utilise this time by spending it with their loved ones.

> – Dr Jyotirmayi K. Psychiatrist

cotic drugs from medical shops to deal with their urges. Experts said emergency doctors have been apprised as they will have to deal with these patients as there are no out-patient departments functioning. Dr. Minhaj Nasirabadi, general secretary, Indian psychiatric society, Telangana state branch, explained, "We have appealed to all psychiatrists to guide emergency doctors who will be seeing these patients over the phone. They have been apprised of the situation as by early next week, we are expecting that there will be more patients as they will suffer from withdrawal symptoms.<sup>2</sup>

Government hospitals like Gandhi and Osmania do not have psychiatrists and often the patients who come there are asked to go to institute of mental health, Erragadda. Most of them never make it to the institute as it is far from both these hospitals.

### **HOME STAY TROUBLES MANY**

• Psychiatrists claim that boredom complaints are already pouring in. The complaints were mostly from men, who wonder what should they do during 21-day shutdown.

 Social distancing has compounded troubles of many people as they cannot meet friends or relatives. They find it difficult to confine themselves to home.

SOLUTION • Consider it as contribution for

people's well-being Start exercise for physical activity. Sleep well at night.

Assist in household chores and share burdens with family.

Read books, engage in games with children for mental agility.

+

### PM's firm support cheers up doctors

#### **BALU PULIPAKA | DC** HYDERABAD, MARCH 25

for passes.

Doctors were pleasantly surprised to see Prime Minister Narendra Modi warn landlords in the country against attempts to evict medical personnel from their homes fearing that healthcare personnel might be carriers of the disease.

Dr P. Raghu Ram, president of the Association of Surgeons of India, had brought to the notice of the Prime Minister on Tuesday the plight of heathcare professionals in Warangal, who were asked to vacate their rented houses by landlords as they fear the healthcare

what we were saying," Dr Ram said, recalling his complaint to the PM during the latter's meeting with doctors ahead of his address to nation on Tuesday. He also said the Prime Minister was very attentive to other suggestions he had made, including the need for a directive from the government to

professionals could be the

see the Prime Minister

pay serious attention to

"It was heartening to

carriers of the disease.

protect employment of healthcare professionals in small and medium hospitals who are being laid off because of a slump in the number of patients.











### SHORT TAKES

### **RAM LALLA IDOL** SHIFTED, YOGI FACES FLAK

Ayodhya/Lucknow, March 25: The Ram Lalla idol in Ayodhya was shifted to a temporary new location on Wednesday at a ceremony attended by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, who faced opposi-tion flak for seemingly violating norms meant to beat coronavirus. The shifting of the idol clears the site to begin construction of a Ram temple. The idol was placed on a 9.5-kg silver throne at the new structure, where it would remain till the construction of the Ram temple is completed on the site allotted for it by the Supreme Court. The rituals involved in the shifting had begun Monday.

They ended early Wednesday at a ceremony attended by Adityanath and a small group of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and VHP leaders.

The local administration did not allow people to gather on the occasion as a lockdown has been imposed across the country. Opposition parties criticised Adityanath, saying he had not presented a good example by taking part in the ceremony.

"Yogi is telling people not to go to temples and mosques, and in view of the coronavirus epidemic this is absolutely right. But the chief minister himself is flouting what he is saying, Samajwadi Party's Naresh Uttam said.

### **N-E REGISTERS** SECOND **POSITIVE CASE**

#### MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, MARCH 25

A man from Mizoram on Wednesday tested positive for coronavirus. He tested positive at Guwahati Medical College Hospital. This is the second corona positive case in

north-eastern states which are under complete lock down. Informing that the frontier state has quarantined 140 people including some having their travel history abroad so far, health and family welfare board vice chairman and rul-ing Mizo National Front (MNF) MLA Dr. Z. R. Thiamsanga who is heading the operation against coronavirus in the state told this newspaper, "The sample of a 50-year-old Aizawl man with recent travel history to Holland has tested positive for coronavirus. His family has also been kept in isolation at Zoram Medical College and hospital in Mizoram."

## India may see up to 13L Covid-19 cases

Minister

Modi

### Report says in absence of widespread testing, it is impossible to quantify scale of community transmission

**New Delhi, March 25:** the pandemic, the country is critically missing a key 0,000,000 to 13 lakh confirmed cases of the novel ment - the number of truly coronavirus by mid-May if affected cases. the current trend in the This factor depends on This factor depends on the extent of testing, the accuracy of the test results, and the frequency and scale of testing of peo-ple who may have been growing number of Covid-19 cases continues, according to a report by an international team of scien-

tists The report, compiled by COV-IND-19 Study Group, exposed but do not show symptoms, researchers, including Debashree Ray from Johns Hopkins University in the an interdisciplinary team of researchers, said while India seems to have done well in controlling the US, said. number of confirmed "So far, the number of cases compared to other people tested in India has been relatively small. In the absence of widespread countries like the US and Italy in the early phase of

testing, it is impossible to quantify the magnitude of 'community transmis-sion', in other words, estimate how many are infected outside hospitals and health care facilities," the scientists wrote in the

report. Thus our current estimates are at best underestimates for India based on the including early phase data," they said.

According to the report, it is essential for India to "draconian measadopt to act before the ures growth of Covid-19 infections starts to accelerate in the country

Prime Narendra announced on Tuesday a total lockdown for 1.3 billion people in India for 21 days, warning that the nation may go back by 21 years and many families could be devastated if we don't abide by the lock-

down rules. In their analysis, the scientists used data on the number of reported cases in India up to March 16, and applied tools of modelling disease transmission.

They estimated the theoretical number of infected at any given time, and compared projections for India against the US and

The scientists, including those from Delhi School of Economics in New Delhi and the University of Michigan in the US, noted in a blog post on the plat-form *Medium*, that the estimates may change as stricter restrictions and measures are adopted by India. India, according to the researchers, has the most overstretched healthcare system where it is hard to provide care even when the patient volume flowing into hospitals is "normal"

Citing World Bank data,

hospital beds per 1,000 people in India is only 0.7, compared to 6.5 in France, 11.5 in South Korea, 4.2 in China, 3.4 in Italy, and 2.8 in the US.

Owing to this, the scien-tists said, the predicted surge in the number of cases may make it impossible for the healthcare providers in India to support the sheer volume of cases

The report also identi-fied the most vulnerable groups of population in India.

Citing multiple studies, the researchers said the

they said the number of number of people in the country without an insurance policy stretched to about 1,100 million as of 2014, with the number of men and women with hypertension, one of the major risk factors for death from Covid-19, being more than 300 million peo-

> Without enforcing any intervention in the country, the scientists pre-dicted that the number of cases may exceed the estimated capacity of hospital beds in India, which stands at 70 beds per 100,000 Indians. - PTI

# Sit-ups, squats: New ways to keep people at home

activities amidst the Covid-19 lockdown, police across the country have come up with unique ways to highlight the importance of staying at

home. From making COVID-IOTS (a term coined for those flouting restric-tions) squat on the road and do sit-ups, to making them pose with pamphlets admitting their fault, police officials have pulled out all the stops from their kitty of cre-ativity to drive home the moscare

message. Think before you step out during lockdown in # AndhraPradesh. Vijayawada police are finding new ways to restrict traffic. The Chief Minister @ysjagan has allowed only one per family to purchase essentials, gathering more than 5 is #AndhraFightsCorona," writes a user on microblogging site

Twitter. A similar awareness tac-tic was used by the Maharastra police, which

New Delhi, March 25: cials. The Central govern-With people continuing to ment had last week step out for non-essential announced a lockdown till March 31 in 80 districts across India to contain the spread of the deadly coronavirus.

The police forces in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand took their creative ways a notch higher to ensure that the public curfew is followed. The restrictions were extended after Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared a 21-day nationwide lockdown. UP Police punished unnecessary people wan-dering around in order to make 'public curfew' suc-

cessful and maintain #Social\_Distancing #Covid19India," posted a Twitter user.

accompanying The video shows the police resorting to the age old 'murga' punishment to teach the defaulters a lesson. Murga punishment is a stress position used as a corporal punishment where sit-ups are done holding the ears.

While defaulters in Punjab were asked to either crawl on all fours, or lie down flat on the in a video posted on social road; those icast nine people do sit-ups near a traffic signal, evoking both laughter and appreciation for the offi-ups near a traffic signal, evoking both laughter and appreciation for the offi-Uttarakhand were made

Every ration-card hold-er should be provided,

— P. CHIDAMBARAM

Former finance minister

allowing for 15 per cent of

wrong payments, it is

worth doing these cash

Similarly the former

FM said that for the

urban poor ₹6,000 can be

put into the Jan Dhan accounts of the benefici-

aries, adding that the 'no

frills or zero balance

accounts' opened before

the Jan Dhan scheme was launched should be included in this.

Every ration-card hold-

er should be provided,

through ration shops, 10

kg of rice or wheat free as

a one-time measure in the

Chidamabaram suggest-

ed. He said the govern-

ment should ask all regis-

tered employers to main-

tain current levels of

employment and wages. "Guarantee to such

employers who do so that

the wages of the employ-

ees will be reimbursed by

the government within 30 days of payment," he

Spokesperson Randeep

Singh Surjewala said a cash transfer of ₹7,500

should be done in every

Jan Dhan Account, every

PM Kisan Account and

every Pension Account

just like the Nyay scheme

package for farmers,

proper procurement and

fair price for crops, and

suspension of all due

promised by Congress. He demanded a relief

21 days, Mr

transfers"

next

said.

Congress

#PunjabPolice Nagin dance bhi karva do Bhai inse... why can't people getting in there brains at it is very serious matter... Please stay at home (police makes people crawl from one place to a n o t h e r ) #StayAtHomeSaveLives #StayHomeStaySafe #COVID2019 (sic), one Twitter user posted along with pictures of people being punished in Punjab. Niti Aayog chief Amitabh Kant also took to Twitter to projec the Twitter to praise the Delhi Police for its ways of encouraging social distancing. Sharing a video of a few

police personnel driving people out of a public park peacefully while telling them the importance of staying indoors, he wrote, Delhi Police at best! As its Gr8 Ambassadors #SocialDistancing #StaySafeStayHome" It was not all praise for the force as many also

shared instances of the police crossing the line. In places like Guntur, Sikar, police is seen beat-ing up those flouting the

rules with lathis. In several cases, people who were out for essential activities were harassed by the security personnel. Many users posted videos of such instances. - PTI

**NO EVIDENCE TO** 

LINK COVID TO

Police punishes an offender after he came out of his home while enforcing the complete lockdown in Ranchi on Wednesday.



Pointing out that they are already in touch, with the Indian Council of Medical Research Dr Thiamsanga said that patient was responding to the medicine and doctors are confident to cure the patient.

The first case of coronavirus positive had come from Manipur after a 23-year-old woman who returned from the United Kingdom tested positive, making it the first case in the northeast region of India. Meanwhile, Dr Thiamsanga said that the Mizoram government has constituted a med ical operation team headed by him to fight coronavirus spread in the state.

### **ONE MORE TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID IN BIHAR**

#### NAYEAR AZAD | DC PATNA, MARCH 25

A person has tested positive for coronavirus in Patna tak-ing the number of confirmed cases in the state to four. He has been admitted to

Nalanda Medical College and Hospital, Patna. Initial reports suggest that he has been sick after he returned from Gujarat a week earlier. He was referred to NMCH after his condition deteriorated on Tuesday.

His test reports arrived on Wednesday morning which confirmed that he was infected with the virus. He has been kept under observation in the isolation ward at the hospital, officials said.

'He has been kept in the isolation ward at the NMCH. We are taking all kind of preventive measures. We now are trying to track all those whom he has been in touch with after he returned to Patna from Gujarat", State nodal officer for COVID-19, Dr. Ragini Mishra told this newspaper. On Sunday, a person with a

travel history to Qatar died. The administration has been worried about the growing threat due to the huge migrant population returning home. So far 194 samples have been examined, out of which 174 were negative while results for 14 are awaited.

### implement Nyay scheme: Cong

Centre should

### SREEPARNA CHAKRABARTY | DC NEW DELHI, MARCH 25

through ration shops, 10 kg of rice or wheat free as a Congress on Wednesday one-time measure in the demanded that the Modi government make immenext 21 days diate provisions of providing food and cash into the hands of millions of Indians who would be

financially affected by Coronavirus lockdown. Among the many suggestions made by party were implementa-tion of the Nyay Minimum Income gestions made by the Guarantee Scheme which had been a poll promise of the Congress during last year's Lok Sabha polls. Former Congress President Rahul Gandhi said that the government should provide direct cash benefits and free rations to daily wagers and give tax rebates to

businesses Making more concrete suggestions, Former finance minister P. Chidambaram recom-mended a 10-point action plan which included doubling the amount, both paid and payable, under PM-KISAN to ₹12,000 and transferring the additional amount immediately to the bank account of each beneficiary as well as bringing tenant farmers under the scheme and transferring ₹12,000 to their accounts in two

equal installments. He also sought transfer of ₹3,000 into the accounts of each registered MNREGA worker.

'There will be some duplication despite the de-duplication efforts made by seeding Aadhaar in these accounts. There will be cases where the beneficiary received a double payment. There will be some mistakes. Does not matter. Even recoveries from farmers.

### CHINA: ENVOY SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI NEW DELHI, MARCH 25

Under severe pressure due to mounting global criticism of it, China on Wednesday lashed out at its critics and said it had "neither created the (Corona)virus nor intentionally transmitted it".

In a statement issued from New Delhi on Wednesday evening, the Chinese Embassy spokesperson Ji Rong also claimed "there is no evidence that China is the source of the virus that caused the Covid-19 although Wuhan city reported the outbreak" China also sought to draw parallels with the H1N1 virus, stating that it originated in North America but was never called the "North called the American Flu".

People stand on designated areas to maintain social distancing as they queue outside a grocery store during the first day of a 21-day government-imposed nationwide lockdown as a preventive measure against the COVID-19 coronavirus in Faridabad.

## Delhi reports five fresh cases of Covid-19

#### From Page 1

Delhi, which has been under lockdown for three days, reported five fresh cases of coronavirus on Wednesday, taking the total number of active cases to 28. As the number of deaths from around the world from the novel coronavirus stood at 19.246 on Wednesday, and more than 427,940 declared cases in 181 countries, the Indian government said that it has ramped up its testing capacity by allowing 29 private diagnostic chains that have over 16,000 collection centres to do Covid-19 testing. Union health ministry officials said that India now can test 12,000 samples per day. However, all samples are to be collected as per ICMR norms. From several states,

including Delhi, there were reports of long queues outside grocery stores, inflated prices, difficulty in getting important items. With the sup-ply of food, groceries and even medicines severely hit due to the nationwide lockdown, the Central government on Wednesday announced it is setting up a control room to monitor the situation.

The Union home ministry also wrote to the state governments asking them to set up round-the-clock control rooms with a helpline number at its headquarters and in each of its districts to ensure seamless availability of essential commodities during the 21-day lockdown period. This came in the wake of reports that those involved in the distribution and delivery of

essential commodities and services were facing difficulties due to restrictions on movement despite ecommerce and home delivery coming under essen-tial services and exempted from the lockdown rules. E-commerce players like Big Basket and Grofers complained that their staff were being stopped from delivering goods and at some places even beaten up by police.

Several state governments, including Jammu & Kashmir, Andhra Prade-sh, Uttar Pradesh and Kerala, among others, have announced that ration will be delivered to people's doorstep. Safal, the fruits and vegetable brand of Mother Dairy, announced that all its outlets will open "from 6 am - 2 pm and then 4 pm - 10 pm, in full capacity." The Central

government has also asked states to set up a dedicated helpline number to help healthcare workers and others officials who are working in hospitals handling coronavirus cases as some of them are facing harassment by landlords, neighbours or locals. The government sought

help from its PSUs, including DRDO and BEL, in making PPEs (personal protection equipment), masks etc. Indian Railways' production units have already started producing sanitisers. Meanwhile, amid coron-

avirus outbreak, the government on Wednesday banned export of antimalarial drug hydroxy-cloroquine with immediate effect to ensure sufficient availability of the medicine in the domestic

market ICMR Director General Balram Bhargava had on Monday recommended the use of hydroxychloroquine for treating healthcare workers handling suspected or confirmed coronavirus cases and also the asymptomatic house-hold contacts of the lab-

confirmed cases. The treatment protocol recommended by the ICMR-constituted National Task Force for Covid-19 has been approved by the Drug Controller General of India for restricted use in emergency situations. In a notification issued on Wednesday, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade said, "The export of hydroxycloro-quine and formulations made from hydroxycloroquine is prohibited with immediate effect".





Chief









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DECCAN CHRONICLE | HYDERABAD | THURSDAY | 26 MARCH 2020

6 pq

### Chronicle 26 MARCH 2020 Centre must plan for Lakshman Rekha

inally, India has got into a lockdown fighting Covid-19 pandemic. About 130 crore people have been advised not to get out of their homes except for essentials, as part of the mammoth effort to break the chain of Covid-19 spread. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, announcing the decision in a televised address to the nation on Wednesday, advised people not to breach the Lakshman Rekha for the next 21 days, lest we push the nation back in 21 years of progress. The Prime Minister has also announced a ₹15,000 crore package to boost the healthcare sector, including training. Mr Modi has assured the nation that the Union government is working with the states to ensure that the supply of essential commodities is not disrupted. The home ministry has followed up on the Prime Minister's statement with detailed guidelines on how to enforce the lockdown. While whatever the government has announced is welcome, what is left out is worrying. The Lakshman Rekha poses no hazard to those who have assured income but India has about 50 crore daily wage-earners and the Prime Minister was silent on them. Several states, including Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab have announced schemes to ensure that they don't go hungry. But we see no national effort to put in place a comprehensive plan, backed by the Union government with its financial muscle, for their well-being during the lock-down period. There are thousands of migrant labourers who have set out for their homes anticipating the lockdown but are stranded en route with no food, money or transport. We don't know who will take care of them as the Prime Minister's advice to people is to remain wherever they are. The industrial sector has been asked not to cut down on salaries or wages but has been given no assurance on a help from the government. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's announcements on easing statutory filings have come as a disappointment; her assurance to come up with plans later are less than reassuring for the economy. All that we have seen till now from the Union government are pieces of advice to the people on their conduct. Now, the Centre must come up with its own action plan. Nations have already done it: The United States has prepared a \$2 trillion economic stimulus package. Britain, another big casualty, has announced a 330 billion pound programme while France has come up with a 45 billion euro booster dose for the economy. Various estimates say Covid-19 could bring down India's GDP by about 0.3 per cent to 0.4 per cent, which could impact people at the lowest level of the economic spec-trum the most. The states which are in the forefront of the fight against the pandemic have been given no assurance on Central support; many are asking the Centre to at least clear the GST arrears that are due to them. It is time that the Centre comes up with a definite plan to mitigate the fear that more people will die of hunger than of Covid-19 during the lockdown and to handhold the economy out of the tough times.

### Olympics makes the sacrifice

The Tokyo Olympics has bowed to the inevitable in putting off the scheduled July 24 start and picking 2021 as its year. The Covid-19 pandemic has hit sport's greatest showpiece that has run once in four years from 1896 except during the world wars and embraced multiple disciplines to best reflect a panorama of competitive sport. Japan may be paying the heaviest price since it has already spent \$10 billion on preparations. However, they may not go waste as the Games won't be aban-doned. Nevertheless, the IOC and its sports federations will suffer a financial blow from delays in TV rights money. Considering how much sport at all levels has already sacrificed in suspending or putting off landmark events like the French Open, the Super Bowl, the Kentucky Derby and the NBA, it is only logical that the biggest event follows suit. "Humanity first, sport later," said an IPL franchise owner as the cash-rich cricket league, which holds Indian audiences in its thrall, prepares to postpone or cancel altogether the 13th season. Cricket would be seen to be acting selfishly if it tries to run a truncated version of its billion-dollar league in 2020. Two seasons in 2021 may be possible if the world recovers from the pandemic. There can be no winner in this battle against Covid-19, only survivors as the world reconciles to deal with the scars the pathogen would leave on 21st century civilisation. In an ideal world, even amid a global emergency, live sport may have proved the greatest boon to billions living in isolation at home. But that is not to be and Japan has understood the situation and taken the hit in its stride. By simply staying at home, sportspersons, too, have to contribute to the cause of humanity in this grave hour of crisis.



## All-round approach vital to fight Covid-19



s the number of Acalled Covid-19) coronavirus (also cases rises in India, we're conjuring up two very different scenarios: one, where India one, where India becomes the next epicen-tre of Covid-19, with dreadful consequences of unimaginable propor-tion, and the other, where India is success-fully eble to prevent esfully able to prevent any major outbreak and earn for itself a big applause. Which one of these scenarios will unfold depends on how swiftly the country -which includes the government, the people and establishments -- is able to deal with the emerging situation. Now that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has placed the entire country on a three-week lockdown, there is a high chance that we may

relatively

national or international commercial flights, all passenger trains have halted, and no move-ment of people across immigration checkposts. The government has issued detailed guidelines on the strict enforcement of the lock-down. Undoubtedly, the lockdown will impose short-term hardships on people at large but it's well worth it. Although the lockdown is for three weeks for now, one doesn't really know for how long it will need to last. Clearly, we are living in

uncertain times. The novel coronavirus disease has taken the world by storm. Covid-19 is barely three months old and has already infected over 425,000 per-sons and caused over 19,000 deaths worldwide. While the disease in China (where it started), get away from Covid-19 South Korea and Taiwan lightly. has crossed the peak, the Through this lockdown, infection elsewhere is

responsive administration began imposing stricter measures as the situation started to unfold.

However, there are other experts who dis-agree. They believe the actual number of cases is probably much higher than the reported numbers. The low numbers reported by India may be the result of its testing protocol, which is limiting, and they believe that India will see a surge in cases over the next few days and weeks. In their view, India should be testing many more cases and prepare for the worst. Indeed, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), the apex official body involved in biomedical research in the country, has been revising its testing protocols based on the learning that is coming from within the country and other high-

risk nations. The ICMR has ramped up testing capacity by activating over 100 government laboratories with the combined capacity to conduct over 10,000 tests a day. Additionally, it has added substantial capacity by designating private labs and fixed a

eventuality. As we've not had any major out-break so far, our level of preparedness has not been tested yet.

In Singapore and South Korea, swift pub-lic health and safety measures have helped in controlling the spread of this highly infectious disease. In the Indian context, an effective lockdown along with a swift public health response should prove effective in containing the disease.

While the administra-tion at all levels has an important role to play, the role of the public in complying with the lockdown simply can't be overemphasised. As with the public, so is with business establishments. They need to rise above their narrow commercial interests and try to help the country in this hour of need. These are extraordinary times. Now is the time to do charity and philan-thropy. And there are a number of ways to do it depending on their line of business. Almost all experts

agree that Covid-19 is yet to peak in India. But no one is quite sure in what form or shape it will do so.

**Dunish ministry** ande on how

LETTERS

### **CORONAVIRUS**

During the lockdown the only thing that brings information to public is the media. Though it is not safe, mediapersons are travelling to places, staying hours together at hospitals to cover news. However, many false news on the virus is being shared online annoying people. Media is playing the role of an intermediary between governments and people. On the whole, to know facts media is the best.

### K. Manoj Kumar

Huzurabad, Karimnagar

India's precautionary measures are steps in the right direction. The Centre and state governments are doing their best to contain the virus, but the big task ahead for the world is on how to face an economic slowdown. Our biological and life science research institutions should have been proactive to come out with a solution for this. **M. Jeevanand** 

Secunderabad

The nationwide lockdown is the right thing to do. We need a com-prehensive plan to ensure senior and other vulnerable citizens are not adversely affected. Essential vegetables and fruits should be sold on mobile carts at the doorstep to ensure all citizens remain indoors and keep social distance while pro-viding livelihood to vendors.

Ravi P. Hyderabad

ach	government hopes to			It all depends on how	Punjab ministry
	ieve universal social tancing, which is	where the situation may land us.	conducted in private labs. Regardless of the	seriously we all take the lockdown.	toppled
	n as vital in cutting	In the spread of this	difference of opinion, all	By acting in unison, we	CHANDIGARH, MARCH 25
	chain of disease	infection, one surprise	experts agree on one	can cut the chain of	The Gurnam Singh Ministry
	nsmission.	element has been the rel-	thing: given India's frag-	transmission and take	was today defeated in the Punjab
	his extreme decision	atively low number of	ile healthcare system,	the steam out of the dis-	Vidhan Sabha when the House
	sn't appear to be a	Covid-19 cases and	disease prevention is its	ease. Together, we can	rejected the Appropriation Bill
kne	ee-jerk reaction.	deaths in India thus far:	only weapon. A delay in	defeat Covid-19, which	1970 by 44 votes to 22.
yderabad: 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad - 500 003, Ph: 040-27803930-4; Fax : 040-27805256 Sur jjavawada: No.C-3 & 4 Patamata, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijavawada (A.P.), Ph: 0866-	nday's "janata cur-	India has reported 512	the onset of Covid-19 and	we must.	Thirty-five Akali MLAs belong-
	" seems to have been	cases so far, including	its relatively slow pro-	But fighting Covid-19 is	ing to Sant
	prelude to preparing	nine deaths (these fig-	gression in the country	only one of the battles	Fateh Singh
	public for the total	ures may rise by the	has given the adminis-	that lie ahead. Shoring	Fateh Singh g r o u p , 50 YEARS AGO IN
	kđown, which was in	time this article is pub-	tration a golden opportu-	up the Indian economy,	seven Jan Chronicle
117208 the	making as there	lished). Even Iceland,	nity to not only ramp up	badly bruised by Covid-	Sangh mem-
	re some hints to it in	with a population of	its testing capacity but	19, is another battle that	bers and
401 http://www.action.com/action	Modi's first public	only 370,000, has report-	also prepare for any pos-	has to be fought later.	two CPM members voted against
128908: Telefay: 0878-2220433 add	lress on coronavirus	ed a higher number of	sible outbreak. The	This will probably last	the Appropriation Bill.
ellore: Survey No.527/2, Burranpur Village, Venkatachalam (M), Chemmudugunta Panchayat, Nellore, 001	Thursday evening.	cases!	administration has	much longer and	Eighteeen Akali MLAs includ-
n: 0861-2348581/82; Telefax: 0861-2348580	he lockdown has	Experts are divided in	ramped up quarantine	require a far more con-	ing the Chief Minister, Mr.
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	ught the entire coun-	their views. Some	facilities and kept isola-	certed effort together	Gurnam Singh, one PSP, one
	to a complete stand-	attribute the low num-	tion wards ready, consti-	with the rest of the	SSO and one Swatantra and one
	1. Except for the pro-	bers to the early intro-	tuted rapid response	world.	Rebel Akali member ( Mr.
	ction, movement/dis-	duction of border	teams, deputed addition-		Kapoor Singh) voted in favour of
ashi: No 2 P. 2rd Floor of DD TPADE TOWER, Kaloor Kadayanthara Boad, Ernalaylam, Diy 0484	oution and sale of cer-	restrictions (even before	al secretaries/joint sec-		the Appropriation Bill.
139408	n essential goods and	any positive case was	retaries for a coordinat-	(The writer is a devel-	The Congress (R), which has a
	vices, there is a total	reported in India), the	ed response at the state	opment economist, for-	strength of 28, the four-member
5 014	n on all other activi-	imposition of quaran-	level, and has not shied	merly with the Bill and	CPI group and one member of
	s, including on the	tine rules, and active	away from partnering	Melinda Gates	the SSP ( Mr. Balbir Singh) did
	door movement of	tracing of contacts.	with the private sector	Foundation and the	not participate in the voting.
ram: CHRONICLE Postal registration no: No. H/SD-348/2006-08 peo	ple. There are no	Further, the alert and a	in preparing for any	World Bank)	



### The endgame in Afghanistan looks uncertain

he global coronavirus crisis has understandably over-shadowed the international endorsement earlier this month of the Doha agreement between the United States and the Afghan

Taliban. On March 10 the UN Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution welcoming the agreement as a significant step "towards ending the war and opening the door to intra-Afghan negotiations". This marked an important develop-ment as it conferred international legitimacy on the agreement signed in Qatar on February 29. But other developments have been far more consequential for the peace process, already at a stand-still following a series of setbacks. The inability to start intra-Afghan talks slated for March 10, deadlock over the prisoners' release issue and the rival inauguration ceremonies of the Afghan President on March 9 — all underline how fraught the post-Doha situation has turned out to be. This raises serious questions about the future of the peace process as envisaged by the Doha accord.

While considering the ramifications of these developments it is

-

important to keep in view the limits of the Doha agreement. This is indicated by its purposively vague nature in some respects and the obvious fact that it excluded the Afghan government with whom Washington signed a separate declaration.

The crux of the Doha agreement is Washington's commitment to a total but phased withdrawal in return for the Taliban's commitment to prevent Afghanistan's soil from being used by terrorists and agreeing to intra-Afghan talks. The rest consists of aspirational goals and timelines, with the Afghan parties left with the responsibility to negotiate a ceasefire and a political settlement to end the war

The intra-Afghan talks assumes their progress but does not indicate when they are to conclude. It also does not specify when the new Islamic government is to be formed - within the 14-month period committed for the drawdown of US forces or after?

As many analysts have pointed out, for US President Donald Trump the agreement to bring troops home ahead of the American presidential election (less than eight months away) is

driven by domestic political calcu-lations rather than any strategic thinking. It enables him to deliver on his pledge to disengage America from an "endless war

This implies that his determination to pull out of Afghanistan appears to have priority over whether the negotiating process is able to yield enduring peace. From the Doha agreement and Mr Trump's statements it seems that the US may even be prepared to contemplate leaving Afghanistan without any meaningful long-term commitment. At the declaratory level, Washington will continue to assert that the drawdown is conditions-based until full implementation of the agreement, but President Trump is hardly likely to change his long-held view that Afghanistan is a quagmire from which an exit, not staying on, is the best course. Disagreement over the prisoners' release, which the Taliban insist is a prerequisite for commencement of a dialogue, has become the immediate obstacle in the peace process. But a bigger challenge is the political crisis sparked by the clash between Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah over the disputed presidential election.

Several questions are raised by these developments. Will the start of the US drawdown mount enough pressure on Mr Ghani and Mr Abdullah to reconcile their differences and agree on a common negotiating team for intra-Afghan talks?

How engaged will the US be at this time to press the Afghan parties to compromise, preoccupied as it is, like other countries, with tackling the coronavirus emer-gency? Will a prolonged hiatus in peace talks unravel efforts to end the war especially if there is a

renewal of significant violence? For now, Mr Ghani seems intent on using the prisoners issue as leverage to strengthen his hand with Washington and press Mr Abdullah to back down and accept him as the legitimate President. This brinkmanship, against the backdrop of parallel governments and regional leaders lining up with one or other side, risks further destabilising the situation and imperilling the peace process. Meanwhile, the Taliban, while

renewing attacks on government forces, have sought to demonstrate that they are sticking to their deal.

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Nevertheless, the longer the delay in starting intra-Afghan negotiations the greater the risk of the peace plan mapped out at Doha being derailed and the country descending into political chaos.

While Covid-19 will impose obvious limits on diplomatic efforts, Mr Khalilzad has used it to press the urgency of resolving the prisoners' dispute.Yet despite his prolonged stay in Kabul, he has been unable so far, to overcome the impasse on both the prisoners issue and parallel governments. For Pakistan it is imperative to accurately anticipate the likely scenarios that may evolve and be ready with a wholeof-government approach to respond to them. This exercise should neither be guided by wishful nor short-term thinking.

The best-case scenario of course is that the principal parties adhere to the agreement, work to reduce violence and defeat the machinations of domestic and regional spoilers even if the timelines change and stated positions are modified in order to make the arrangement work.

(The writer is a former Pakistani ambassador to the US and the UN) By arrangement with **Dawn** 











### IN BRIEF **INDIA CONDEMNS** ATTACK ON **GURUDWARA**

#### DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI/KABUL, MARCH 25

India on Wednesday "strongly condemned the heinous terror attack on a Gurudwara in Kabul" in which several people have been reportedly killed and said it "stands ready to extend all possible assistance to the affected families of the Hindu and Sikh community of Afghanistan".

Commending the valour of the Afghan security forces who fought the terrorists, New Delhi said "such cowardly attacks on the places of religious worship of the minority globs worship of the initiarity community, especially at this time of Covid-19 pandemic, is reflective of the diabolical mindset of the perpetrators and their backers". The use of the word "backers" is being scon ac a vailed indication by seen as a veiled indication by India towards Pakistan although the Pakistan-backed Taliban has denied it carried out the attack.

The MEA said, "We convey our sincerest condolences to the immediate family members of the deceased and wish speedy recovery to the injured. India stands ready to extend all possible assistance to the affected families of the Hindu and Sikh community of Afghanistan

### **MIZORAM TO BAN TRADE OF DOG MEAT**

#### MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, MARCH 25

When the world is facing a pandemic believed to have been caused by the trade in wild animals like the bat for consumption, the frontier state of Mizoram has taken lead to end the trade of dog meat by amending the law to remove the dogs from defini-tion of animals suitable for slaughter.

Welcoming the decision of the legislators to amend the law, an NGO — Humane Society International, India said, "The Mizoram Assembly has amended the law unanimously by passing the Animal Slaughter Bill 2020. We would also like to urge the government of Mizoram to ban the cruel and illegal dog meat

The consumption of dogs is also prohibited under India's food safety regulations. However, this is poorly enforced and thousands of dogs each year are illegally captured from the streets or stolen from their homes, stuffed into gunny bags with their mouth stitched

### Touch me not



Stranded passengers wait in a queue maintaining social distancing at SRTC bus terminal during a 21-day lockdown in Jammu on Wednesday imposed in the wake of coronavirus pandemic. The authorities in J&K on Wednesday decided to toughen restrictions as the number of Covid-19 patients went up with four more persons testing positive. PTI

### **GOVT TO SUPPLY** WHEAT AT ₹2, RICE AT ₹3

7

pq

### MADHUSUDAN SAHOO | DC NEW DELHI, MARCH 25

Given the massive shortage of basic food items like rice and wheat due to the complete lockdown following the spread of coronavirus across India, the government on Wednesday decided to supply wheat at ₹2 per kg, and rice at ₹3 per kg to aam aadmi throughout the country.

Also, to ensure suffi-cient supply during the 21-day lockdown, the government decided to increase the monthly supto of subpliced for quota of subsidised foodgrains by 2 kg to 7 kg per person through ration shops for 80 crore beneficiaries. In another decision, the govern-ment also approved ₹1,340 crore for the recapitalisation of regional rural banks, in which a ₹670cr share will come from the Central government.

These decisions were taken by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Announcing the world's largest food security programme for the poor, Union minister Prakash Javadekar said the Centre is hopeful that the subsidised sche-me will benefit around 80 crore people under the public distribution system across the country and it would be given at concessional rates for the next three months.

## Kerala shuts liquor outlets, mulls online delivery option

All 265 outlets run by the govt-owned beverages corporation to remain shut

### DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MARCH 25

Following mounting pressure from the society and in view of the serious threat posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Kerala government on Wednesday finally decided to shut all liquor outlets in the state.

avirus pandemic and ques-There are 265 outlets run tioned why an economic by the government-owned package had not vet been announced for the poor. Corporation Beverages rub by Consum n an

### 9 new cases in Kerala; no new case from worst-hit Kasargod

DC CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MARCH 25

Nine persons were tested positive for Covid-19 in Kerala on Wednesday taking the total number of cases to 118 in the state.

• THERE CASES were reported from Ernakulam, two each from Palakkad and Pathanamthitta and one each from Kozhikode and Idukki respectively.

high level review meeting, items for people who are

The ration shops will remain open from 9 am to 5 pm as against the routine timing of 9 am to 2 pm.

The government in asso-ciation with the local bodies will ensure cooked food and other essential

### State not in loop, says Mamata

ations or not."

#### RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, MARCH 25

Banerjee added, "We will again give some relaxations if we find Within 24 hours of Prime nothing available to households. In that case Minister Narendra Modi's announcement of a 21-day curfew-like total relaxations can be grantlockdown across India to tackle Covid-19 pandemic, West Bengal Chief ed. It will be decided on March 31 when we will review the situation. Mamata Minister Banerjee has accused the Centre of not informing may grant more relaxher government before imposing it. ations on March 31 if there will be any improve-

Warning the Centre of ment in the situation. We her government's powers are not divulging everyto grant relaxations during the lockdown, she allowed the farmers, vegetable vendors, labourers and home delivery boys

are not divulging everything right now because it depends on how the disease is spreading daily. Her stand, however, in sharp contrast to initiaives by two icons from

Daily monitoring and

review are underway. We

or tied, and transported over many days to Mizoram and Nagaland.

The Humane Societv International-India which was also the member of the State Animal Welfare Board of Mizoram, has been working to end the dog meat trade in Mizoram since 2016.

### **'WB CANDIDATES GOT THEIR RS CERTIFICATES'**

#### **RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC** KOLKATA, MARCH 25

Uncontested victory by all of the five candidates, including four from the Trinamul Congress, in the Rajya Sabha Election in West Bengal have made their voting redundant. The RS poll was earlier scheduled on Thursday.

On Wednesday Assembly Speaker Biman Banerjee told this newspaper, "The RS polls here will not be held and the election process is totally closed because the five candidates have been elected since there were no other contestants. They were given their certificates on March 18 on the direction of the Election Commission. The assembly secretary, who is the returning officer also for the RS polls, told me that he got the instructions from the EC to issue the certificates to the winners."

The Trinamul had fielded four candidates: Subrata Bakshi, Dinesh Trivedi, Arpita Ghosh and Mausam Benazir Noor who won uncontested after filing their nominations as they did not face any contest from the opposition parties.

It also decided to support its former MLA Dinesh Bajaj as an independent candidate who filed his nomination to contest for the fifth and final seat against CPI(M) leader and former Kolkata Mayor Bikash Ranjan Bhattacharyya, who was jointly fielded by the Left and Congress. But Bajaj's nomination, filed at the last moment, was cancelled as a scrutiny found his affidavit having no signature and seal of a magistrate.

and erfed. All these outlets will remain shut for the entire 21 day lockout period.

The state government is considering the sale of liquor bottles online and is contemplating changes to the existing liquor policv to facilitate online sales. The Kerala government said that it had refused to shut down liquor outlets as the decision would lead to the flow of illicit liquor into the state. Shutting down bars and ban on local brew (arrack)

in the past have led to hooch tragedies in the state. Also, closure of bars in 2015 had led to an increase in substance abuse in the state. hooch Apart from tragedies, the state government was also concerned about the revenue. The government was

Yechury said his government has taken no measures to assist poor migrants who are most hurt by the sudden lockdown and a large number of them are stranded without food or shelter.

₹14,504.67 cr.

The Opposition parties, IMA and activists had sought a complete shut-down of bars and liquor

outlets in the state in view

of the coronavirus spread.

duce "concrete measures"

to deal with the coron-

open letter

Meanwhile, the Left parties on Wednesday slammed the government over its "failure" to intro-

"It is very disappointing that no concrete measures have been announced so far to provide relief to the poor and the needy, and to alleviate the suffering of those who need urgent help at this moment to survive the lockdown.

"How will they (migrants) reach safe spaces? How will they survive without money or food and with reports of police harassment too?," he said in the letter. CPI general secretary D Raja said while he appreciated that reluctant to close bars, it was difficult for the govretail outlets as it is a ernment to fight this epidemic, the lack of widemajor source of income. During 2018-19, the gov-ernment sold liquor worth the country.

l'here cases were report-Prime Minister, CPI(M) ed from Ernakulam, two general secretary Sitaram each from Palakkad and Pathanamthitta and one each from Kozhikode and Idukki respectively. Four came from Dubai, one person is from UK and one from France. Three contracted the infection through contact including one taxi driver who got it from a French tourist in Ernakuam.

Six Covid-19 patients who were under treatment in the state have been tested negative.

There was no positive case from Kasargod on Wednesday which has reported the highest number of confirmed cases in the state at 45, which has come as a big relief. As on Wednesday 76,542

are under surveillance of which 76010 persons are under home quarantine. So far 12 Covid - 19 patients have completely recovered in the state.

here after presiding over a rice for a month.

Chief Minister Pinaravi Vijayan said the government would bring an ordinance to take stringent measures against those violating the restrictions. The ordinance seeks to make an amendment in the Epidemic Diseases Act by including the provision of two years imprison-ment and ₹10,000 fine for those who violate the instructions given by the government. Individual

departments will be empowered to take action as per the amended rule. Meanwhile, the special cabinet meeting on Wednesday decided to proon

vide all ration card holders at least 15 kg of rice free for a month in the wake of Covid-19 scare. People belonging to the Below Poverty line category will receive their usual quota of 35 kg of food grains, 28 kg of rice and 7 kg of wheat. All households in the state will At a press conference receive "good quality" free

under home quarantine. Ward level committees will identify homes where the marginalised sections including the elderly people, differently abled, transgender live, to make sure they also get regular food supply and essentials.

Vijavan said two months welfare pension will be disbursed from March 27. As many as 54 lakh people will receive the benefit.

The government will expedite the process of setting up 1,000 hotels which will provide meals at ₹20.

The meals will be home delivered to people. The Chief Minister said there would be no shortage of food grains as the FCI has informed that their 25 godowns in the state have stocks for eight months. The primary health cen

tres and family health centres have been directed to ensure uninterrupted supply of medicines to the people.

in the state on Wednesday afternoon to work with 'passes" for their free movements.

The Trinamul Congress supremo also demanded that the Centre give a special package, worth ₹1,500 crore to West Bengal and similar ones to other states to meet the crisis. Jagdeep Governor Dhankhar slammed her attack on the Centre.

At the state secretariat: Nabanna, she said, "The lockdown was enforced according to the National Disaster Act which never happened earlier. The state government was not informed while imposing this Act. So we also could not give our opinions about the state of affairs. We have to abide by it since the Central government has done it. While doing so, the state also has some authority on relaxations and exceptions. It depends on the

situation in which cases

we will impose relax-

the city who came forward to help her government for the quarantine of the Covid-19 patients. While BCCI president Sourav Ganguly has offered the famous crickstadium: Eden et Gardens, industrialist Harsh Neotia offered a palatial resort: Ffort Raichak, run by his group, at Diamond Harbour in South 24 Parganas for the purpose. Lambasting Banerjee, the Governor in the evening stated that the preparations have been in place after the PM's call on March 24 for a total lockdown. He said, "Concerns of

all have been taken care of. I appeal all concerned to disable their political antennas for this crisis period and take respite from political mileage. We all need to be in one mission mode and avoid either side or any side any blame game.<sup>3</sup>

### WHAT I TIMING Comedians are reconnecting with fans online to spread cheer in the time of Covid-19 outbreak

### Jokes to rescue: Comedians connect via social media

cure for coronavirus may still take a while but armed with sharp jokes, quick rebuttals and topical observations, Indian stand-up comics are trying to calm and entertain people via social media in what appears to be a long period of self-isolation. Karunesh Comedians much," he said. Comedians Karunesh Talwar, Neeti Palta, Sahil Shah, Sorabh Pant and "bummer" Sumaira Shaikh, all known for their quick-witobservational ted. humour, are reconnecting with fans online to spread some much needed cheer "I thought I don't know in the time of Covid-19 outwhen I'll get to interact break. Karunesh, who is selective about sharing with people again. But I had some footage from four old shows and I content on social media, said the idea behind putthought I've been too conting a 'Random Jokes' cerned with making every-

New Delhi, March 25: A video on Monday was to do something instead of staying stuck at home. "We don't know when is the next time we get to go on the stage. I have a lot of new jokes and thoughts that I would rather put on YouTube because the quarantine came at a time that

A cancellation of shootit didn't allow us to shoot The comic said it was a when the shoots were called off but the thought of not being able to perform for people, especially during such trying times, was unbearable.

thing as correct as possible. This time didn't really take that pressure. People are like 'give us something. Anything will work at this time',"he added.

ings was followed by stand-up gigs being called off, one after another. The plug was pulled on over 1,000 shows in the comedy scene across the country, as per Karunesh. "My tour, which was due to begin April 23, alone had 35 shows. That has been cancelled. There was a sponsorship deal I was considering with a brand that obviously suffered. So there was a lot of money that I would have loved to have to make. But it didn't happen," he added. According to Neeti,

#### WOMEN COMEDIANS feel that they suffered more as a lot of shows they get during the Women's Day week were cancelled.

women comedians suffered more as a lot of the shows they get during the Women's Day week were an Instagram Live saying how this virus is patriarchal as it got so many of our shows cancelled," Neeti quipped. The comedian said she has been putting up new content every-

day, ranging from washing hands to working from home, but in a fun way to encourage people to stay healthy and stay home. But joking on coronavirus right now doesn't always go down well with some people, the "Comicstaan 2" judge said.

"I put out some funny tweets on this and I got flak for that. The point was to laugh. I'm not making fun of those who are suffering, but people don't get it. It's better to joke about it now as it's needed and as by the time this gets over, all the content will be passe and old," she said, adding she ensures that she follows development around Covid-19 and asks people to not fall for fake news.

Sahil, best known for comic group East India Comedy, was planning to finally release his special, Thak Life" after two years and go on tour. He has been doing live standup shows via Google Hangouts from home for past two weeks. "I reached to my fans and asked them to post why they should be a part of this show. I then sent a mail to them, added 10-20 people and went ahead with it. It actually turned out to be way better than I expected. The 10 people who came on Hangouts sort of became friends, they even created a WhatsApp group." But, the comic said there are a few challenges. "I had to talk a little slower for my voice to reach to them and

wait for them to laugh due to the transmission lag. It's quiet weird waiting for the response." "I timed one stand-up with the 'Janata curfew' so that when my set got over, it was like all of them were clapping for me," he said with a laugh. Sahil wants to do such virtual shows more often and so does Sorabh. Sorabh said with tours and shows gone for a toss for at least two months, doing some Instagram Live or releasstand-up bits on ing YouTube is the way to go. "I released one video recently, I'll plan to put out stuff weekly. So this is a way in which we can make people happy. I'm also planning to do piece to camera stories on quarantine," he said. -PTI













cancelled because of the ongoing health crisis. "On March 8 itself. I was supposed to have three shows. But I could only do one,' she said. "I think (comic) Sumukhi Suresh also did

DECCAN CHRONICLE | HYDERABAD | THURSDAY | 26 MARCH 2020

### IN BRIEF **Third positive**

case in Nepal Kathmandu: Nepal has reported its third Covid-19 case in a 32-year-old man who returned from Qatar as the government has announced a week-long nationwide lockdown to battle the pandemic. The man had returned home on March 19, according to Health Ministry officials. "Our laboratory confirmed the positive case yesterday night," National Public Health Laboratory spokesperson Rajesh Kumar Gupta said.

### Iran to ban intercity travel

Tehran: Iran will ban intercity travel within days as it finally gets tough with the Covid-19 that has killed more than 2,000 people. The strict measures come after cajoling largely failed to prevent Iranians taking to the roads to visit family for the Persian New Year holiday. "Leaving towns and cities will be banned," government spokesman Ali Rabii announced, hours after President Hassan Rouhani revealed the government was poised to introduce "difficult" measures.

### **S. Africa cases** rise to 709

Johannesburg: South Africa reported that its number of confirmed cases of the novel Covid-19 jumped to 709 on Wednesday from 554 the previous day, an increase of 28 percent. South Africa, which now has the highest numbers of infections on the continent, has ordered a 21day lockdown which rolls into action at midnight on Thursday. "Right now we have actually increased from yesterday, we are now at 709 cases," Health Minister Zweli Mkhize said in an interview on the state broadcaster SABC

### **Pak suspends** domestic flights

Islamabad: Pakistan has suspended all domestic flight operations until April 2 to curb the spread of the novel Covid-19 after the country reported over 1,000 cases and seven deaths from the infection, authorities said on Wednesday. The nationwide tally of patients touched 1,037 with 413 cases in Sindh; 115 in Balochistan; 296 in Punjab; 117 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; 80 in Gilgit-Baltistan; 15 in Islamabad and one in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. The National Disaster Management Authority has said that so fai seven people have died after falling prey to Covid-19 and 18 recovered. Abdul Sattar Khokhar, the spokesman of Aviation Division, said that the decision was part of ongoing efforts to contain the virus. The ban will be effective from Thursday, Khokhar said.

#### ence 14-day quarantine re-strictions after being vac-cinated and their health Beijing, March 25: Around 5,000 people have signed up for the phase I clinical trial of recombinant condition will be recorded novel Covid-19 vaccine in every day. Chinese scien-Chinese city Wuhan whetists are hastening the development of Covid-19 vaccines through five appre the virus first emerged late last year.

The recruitment for parroaches — inactivated vaticipants ended this week ccines, genetic engineeriwith nearly 5,000 volunteng subunit vaccines, adeners signing up for the triovirus vector vaccines, al, state-run Beijing News nucleic acid vaccines and reported on Wednesday. A single-centre, open and vaccines using attenuated influenza virus as vectors. dose-escalation phase I cli-So far, most teams are nical trial for recombinaexpected to complete precnt novel Covid-19 vaccine linical research in April (adenoviral vector) will be tested in healthy adults aged between 18 and 60 and some are moving for-ward faster, Wang Junzhi, an academician with the years, according to the ChiCTR (China Clinical Chinese Academy of Engineering said. Wang noted Trial Register).

that research and develop-The trial, led by experts from the Academy of Mili-tary Medical Sciences, ment of Covid-19 vaccines in China is not slower than foreign counterparts gained its approval on Maand has been carried out rch 16 and the research is in a scientific, standardisexpected to last half a ed and orderly way. year. Requiring at least

China has stepped up the process to finalise vac-108 participants, the trial will be conducted in Wuhcines to counter Covid-19 an, capital of Hubei proviafter Kaiser Permanente nce, the region worst-afferesearch facility in Seattle cted by the virus in the and Washington stole the country, state-run China march and began human trials. China reported no Participants will experinew domestic cases on

Covid vaccine: 5k sign

### LOCKDOWN TAKEN **OFF FROM VIRUS EPICENTRE WUHAN**

Beijing, March 25: China on Wednesday downgraded the risk level of the Covid-19 in its epicentre Wuhan from high to medium and resumed bus services within the city for the first time since the nineweek lockdown even as a new study said thousands of positive cases there may have gone under the radar. China has decided to lift the three-month lockdown on more than 56 million people in Hubei province. However, the lockdown of Hubei's capital Wuhan will end on April 8. -PTI

Wednesday. But there were another 47 imported infections from overseas, the National Health Commission said. In total, 474 imported infections have been diagnosed in China -mostly Chinese nationals -PTreturning home.



### At 3,434, Spain toll overtakes China's

Madrid, March 25: Spa-in's Covid-19 death toll overtook that of China on Wednesday, rising to 3,434 after 738 people died over the past 24 hours, the gov-ernment said. on Wednesday. Across the world, only

unprecedented lockdown

people, the health min-

istry said. As the authori-

ties stepped up testing,

the number of cases sho-

wed a 20 per cent increase

on the figures for Tuesd-

Despite the national loc-

ed until April 11, both de-

Covid-19-hit cruise ship

tracting the disease with

10 deaths, left its moor-ings in Yokohama Wedne-

The ship, which origina-

lly carried some 3,700 pas-

sengers and crew membe-

rs, dominated internatio-

nal headlines as Japan's

clumsy handling of its

quarantine made it at one

point the biggest cluster

of Covid-19 carriers out-

been finished. Quaranti-

ne confirmed that the work has been finished,"

a Yokohama city official said. "It is leaving the pier" around 0500 GMT,

he said, without revealing

where it was heading on

'Disinfection work has

side China.

sday, a city official said.

over the same period.

Daily reported.

MORE THAN 427,940 cases have been regis-Italy now has a higher detered in 181 countries ath toll than that of Spain. In China, where the viand territories since the rus emerged late last year, epidemic first emerged 3,281 people have died. The spiralling number of in China in December. deaths came as Spain entered the 11th day of an ry's emergencies coordin-

ator Fernando Simon said. Health authorities to try and rein in the Covid-19 epidemic that has now infected 47,610 are hoping it will soon become clear whether the lockdown is having the desired effect. The Madrid region has suffered the brunt of the epidemic with 14,597 infections — just under a third of the ay, while the death toll total — and 1,825 deaths, showed a 27 per cent rise or 53 per cent of the national figure. With hospitals on the brink of collapse from the surge in kdown imposed on March 14, which is to be extendpatients, troops have set up a massive field hospiaths and infections have tal in Madrid's IFEMA continued to mount, with exhibition centre which currently has 1,500 beds officials warning this week would be particularbut which could be ly bad. "We are approachexpanded to take in up to

THE NUMBER of deaths around the world from the novel Covid-19 cases stood at 19,246

> **PRINCE CHARLES TESTS POSITIVE**, **SELF ISOLATING**

London, March 25: Britain's Prince Charles has tested positive for the novel Covid-19 after he displayed "mild symptoms" and is now selfisolating, his office said on Wednesday. The 71-year-old heir to

the British throne is selfisolating in Scotland with wife Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, who has tested negative for the deadly virus which has claimed 422 lives in the UK.

"The Prince of Wales has tested positive for Covid-19," the Clarence House statement read. "He has been displaying mild symptoms but oth erwise remains in good health and has been working from home throughout the last few days as usual," it notes. In keeping with social distancing advice during the pandemic, Charles has been noticeably using 'namaste' as a gre-eting rather than a handshake when seen in public over the last few weeks, including during an event to mark the Com-monwealth Day on Mar-ch 9 at Marlborough House in London. His wife Camilla, 72, was seen wearing long black gloves during the same event. "The Duchess of Cornwall has also been tested but does not have the virus. In accordance with the government and medical advice, the Prince and the Duchess are now self-isolating at home in Scotland," the Clarence House said. The Royals were tested on Monday after they had flown out to Scotl-and in a jet on Sunday and the royal couple have remained there -PTIsince then.



An man is treated in a hospital after a gunman stormed a religious gathering of Afghanistan's minority Sikhs at a gurdwara in Kabul on Wednesday. – AP/PTI

## 25 killed, eight hurt in Kabul gurdwara attack

### IS claims responsibility; suicide bomber gunned down

Kabul, March 25: At least 25 worshippers were killed and eight others injured when a heavily armed suicide bomber stormed his way into a prominent gurdwara on Wednesday in the heart of Afghanistan's capital of Kabul, in one of the dead liest attacks on the minority Sikh community in the strife-torn country.

The Islamic State terror group, which has targeted Sikhs before in Afghanistan, claimed responsibility for the attack on the gurdwara in Shor Bazar area at about 07:45 (local time) as 150 worshippers were inside the building. "Unfortunately, 25 civilians were killed and eight others injured," the Ministry of Interior said in a tweet on the attack carried out by a gunman, who was killed by Afghan special forces.

It said 80 people stranded inside the gurdwara were rescued by the security forces. Earlier, the Afghan media reported that the attack that lasted for for

**WE STRONGLY** condemn the terror attacks in Afghanistan yesterday. They are an attack on Afghanistan's multicultural fabric. My thoughts are with the bereaved families.

### — NARENDRA MODI Indian Prime Minister

ried out by four terrorists. The terrorist group issued a statement confirming that its members carried out the attack on Sikhs in Kabul city, Khaama Press News Agency reported. TOLOnews, quoting sources in the Afghan govern-ment, blamed the dreaded Haqqani group for the attack. The Pakistan-based Haqqani group, designated by the US as a banned terror outfit, has conducted several deadly attacks

inside Afghanistan. Earlier, the country's main militant group, the Taliban, denied their involyement in the attack on the gurdwara. Taliban spMujahid said in a state-Sikh worship area in PD1 ment that the militant of Kabul. A number of group had no link with the people have been rescued attack in Shor Bazar area of Kabul. Photos from the who were trapped inside the building," said Inte-rior Ministry spokesman blast scene showed security forces carrying wound-Tariq Arian. Afghan President Ashraf ed people away on stretchers. Some Afghan media Ghani condemned the attack on the gurdwara, outlets shared videos of the family members of victims waiting outside a

city hospital in tears. Police in Kabul said that at least 11 children were rescued from the gurdwa-ra. Sikh lawmaker Nardendar Singh Khalsa told reporters that up to 150 people were praying inside the gurdwara when it came under attack. Khalsa, the only representative of the Sikh community in Afghanistan said he received a call from a worshipper inside the gurdwara, informing him about the attack. "I rushed over to help. There were about 150 worshippers inside the gurdwara at the time of the attack," he was quoted as

htar News Agency.

forces

"Afghan

TOLOnews reported. "The attack on the religious sites shows the extreme weakness of the enemy, religious sites should not be vulnerable to attacks and violence," it quoted Ghani as saying. The president's spokesperson described the attack as "yet another heartless, coward-ly terrorist attack on a worshipping place in Kabul. The Afghan government strongly condemns today's senseless attack on Dharamsala Sikh temple. Our hearts go out to the families of the victims of this heinous act".

8

pq

Former president of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai strongly condemned saying by the official Bakthe attack on the gurdwara and expressed his conhave dolences to the victims'

### **ETHIOPIA TO** RELEASE **PRISONERS**

Addis Ababa, March 25: Ethiopia announced Wednesday it would free thousands of inmates from the country's overcrowded prisons in a bid to curb the spread of the Covid-19.

Attorney General Adanech Abebe told state media the me-asure would apply to more than 4,000 prisoners, many of whom are locked up for "petty crimes" and drug offences or have less than a year remaini-

ng on their sentences. "4,011 prisoners have been gi-ven pardons," Adanech said, adding that the releases would begin Thursday. Conditions in Ethiopia's prisons are "harsh and in some cases life threatening," marred by "gross overc-rowding and inadequate food, water, sanitation, and medical care," according to the latest annual human rights report on Ethiopia from the US State Department.

As of Tuesday, Ethiopia had confirmed 12 cases of Covid-19 after conducting 480 laboratory tests, according to the Ethi-opian Public Health Institute. Officials at the institute say all the cases involve people who travelled from abroad or had direct contact with people who travelled from abroad. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has ordered measures to prevent widespread transmission of the Covid-19, including shutting land borders and limiting overcrowding in buses and taxis. But his appeals to practice social distancing have fallen on deaf ears, as large crowds continue to form in the capital, Addis Ababa, for religious ceremonies and other events.

ing the peak." the minist-

### **Diamond Princess** leaves Yokohama

Yokohama, March 25: how many crew members The Diamond Princess, a

were onboard. The departure ends the off Japan that saw 712 ship's troubled two-monpassengers and crew conth stay in Yokohama where passengers on the luxury cruise were abruptly told to remain inside their small cabins for twoweek quarantine from February 5, except for brief exercise time.

The ship arrived off Yokohama on February 3, after a former passenger left the ship in Hong Kong and tested positive for the virus. Tokyo claimed its quarantine was effective, but passengers, crew me mbers, and physicians who examined the ship

reported shortcomings, such as inadequate prote-ction for quarantine officials. The number of new infections soared daily. — AFP about six hours was car-

### **US agrees on \$2 trillion** rescue for economy

Washington, March 25: The Senate and White House have reached agree ement on a \$2 trillion stimulus package for the US economy and millions of Americans ravaged by the Covid-19 crisis, top lawmakers said Wednesday. "At last, we have a deal," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said, hailing the massive "wartime level of investment into our nation" reached after five days of arduous and

tense negotiations. "We have a bipartisan agreement on the largest rescue package in American history," top Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer said shortly after McCon-nell spoke. "So many people are being put out of work through no fault of

Washington, March 25: As if presiding over the threatened destruction of the US economy by the Covid-19 pandemic is not enough, President Donald Trump is watching another financial drama: The Trump Organisation hotel, golf course and real estate business that made him a billionaire. His fivestar US and Canada hotels with more than 2,200 rooms are mostly empty, his golf courses in the United

know what their future is going to be like, how are they going to pay the bills," Schumer added. "Well, we come to their their own. They don't rescue." The Senate and

**TRUMP'S OWN BUSINESS IS IN PERIL** 

States, Scotland and Ireland are under pressure to close, and his cherished 'Southern White House' the beach-front Mar-a-Lago club in Palm Beach, Florida is shuttered. Like other hotels around the country, Trump's have been forced to lay off most workers and face the fact that the \$435 million in revenues that the Trump Organisation reported in 2018 is likely to plummet this year. -AFP

> House of Representatives still need to pass the legislation before sending it to President Donald Trump for his signature. -AFP

MORE THAN three billion people have been asked to stay home in almost 70 countries and territories as governments battle the pandemic sweeping the globe.

### • THE UNITED Nations on Wednesday

launched a \$2 billion global humanitarian response plan to fund the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic in the world's poorest countries, warning that it is threatening the entire human race.

### RUSSIAN PRESI-

**DENT** Vladimir Putin said Wednesday the public vote on his constitutional reforms must be postponed due to the Covid-19 and declared next week a public holiday. "I believe the voting must be postponed to a later date," Putin said.

### **NO** KISSING Strict rules imposed by authorities following Covid-19 outbreak Social distancing at Indonesia weddings

Surabaya (Indonesia), March 25: Closed borders and social distancing rules to stem the Covid-19 outbreak failed to stop one tran-snational couple in Indonic began. esia from tying the knot on Wednesday, minus the cus-

on full display, with a maximum of 25 people at the Irra Chorina Octora, 29, event, temperature checks and her Turkish partner at the door and hand sani-Yavuz Ozdemir, 32, swapptiser throughout the venue. The wedding was also ed vows at Al Akbar mosque in Surabaya, as frienwrapped up in just 30 minds and family — each sat two metres apart —looked utes. The only hint of physical intimacy came when Ozdemir, whom Octora first met on social media, on. The couple both wore facemasks and kept their distance through the cerebriefly took off his mask mony to comply with strict for his bride to feed him a rules imposed by authoritpiece of wedding cake.



compromise with the mosque allowed the pair to pr-oceed with the ceremony on Wednesday, earlier than planned. "All people must pass our disinfectant gate after being checked with a thermal gun," Al Akbar mosque spokesman Helmy M. Noor said. Octora said she was still happy with the wedding despite the re-strictions. "We were worr-ied that if we stuck to March 29 for the vows things might have happened and we would not have been able to marry in the end,' -AFP



Indonesian bride Irra Chorina Octora and her Turkish partner Yavuz Ozdemir during their wedding ceremony · AFP in Surabaya on Wednesday.



**Thousands stuck** on cruise ships Perth, March 25: Thouifica, carrying around sands of passengers on 1,700 passengers, depart-

three cruise ships were stranded off Australia's west coast Wednesday as officials refused to let them land to avoid repeating the "utter disaster" of a previous cruise-related

fica were anchored off Fremantle with a third, the Vasco de Gama, on its way. "There are no circu-mstances we will allow passengers or crew to wander the streets in our state," West Australian Premier Mark McGowan said on Wednesday. The Magn-

not dock in Dubai. Health officials were testing some of the 800 passengers on board the Artania for Covid-19 after 25 were reported for respiratory illness. Virus cases have been connected with cruise ships in Australia, the latest being Ruby Princess, which let passengers off in central Sydney

ed Fremantle Tuesday aft-

er being allowed to refuel,

but was forced to turn

back when told it could

last week, sparking at least 133 cases and one death. -AFF







tomary kiss.





Their reception party was cancelled and only a ies, who have banned mass gatherings including weddings but allowed some exceptions for marriages booked before the pandem-Virus precautions were

Covid-19 surge. The Artania and Magni-



### pg 9



%

6.98

6.62

0.85

0.15

-1.86

-1.43

-2.06

-0.15

-1.332

0.489

28,535.78

8,317.85

2,468.08

76.08

89.45

82.51

27.11

6.304

0.823

1,629.00

INDICATORS

Sensex

Nifty 50

S&P 500\*

Dollar (₹)

Euro (₹)

Pound Sterling (₹)

Brent crude (\$/bbl)\*

IN 10-Yr bond yield

US 10-Yr T-bill yield\*

\* As of 9:30 pm IST

Gold (Oz)\* (\$)

## Ed-tech sees unprecedented surge in interest

### SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, MARCH 11

Ed-tech has seen a sudden spurt in demand as people sit at home or work for home. Proactive steps taken by the ed-tech companies are expected to convert new customers into regular ones even after the crisis.

Great Learning has seen a three-fold increase in content consumption on its platform. Its recently launched GL Academy has witnessed 100 per cent increase in learners consuming

our learning content. In light of the ongoing Covid19 health crisis, in the second week of March Byjus had announced that it will be providing free access to its complete app to school students till the end of



April. "Since our announcement last week, we have witnessed a 60 per cent increase in the number of new students using the app to learn from home daily. The number of queries from students and parents for its home learn-

ing programs more than doubled in the next one week," said Divya Gokulnath, co-founder and director of Byju's. "We have seen a huge spike in

March, specifically from the last week in terms of paid registrations from new users and also

the engagements from existing users have spiked up quite a bit. Our teams have been handling the situation and are constantly on the roll to resolve all queries for the students. Recently, we have also witnessed college professors reaching out to our platform to explore and try the platform on behalf of all their stu-' Chandrabhanu Pattajoshi, founder of Glossaread.

Great Learning is seeing a lot of traction from working professionals, especially employed in the IT/ITES sectors. Over the past three-four weeks, there has also been a surge in interest from college students and fresh graduates.

"Keeping in mind the disruption Covid has caused to the established routines of working professionals and also college students, we have launched the GL Academy to provide free online courses in areas such as Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Data Science, Cloud Computing, Digital Marketing etc," said Hari Krishnan Nair, co-founder, Great Learning.

Most of the surge is coming from metro cities with Bengaluru being the leading city followed by other metros like Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad and Delhi. Increased enquiries are also coming from cities such as Pune, Noida and Kochi.

"We have observed that the students have comfortably adapted to online meetings, interviews, and lectures. Webinars are also conducted to provide informa-

tion on creative careers and the industry. Our online chat support handles and responds to all the students' queries that are coming in. Students seeking undergraduate and postgraduate programme education in design, art, and gaming are applying for online admissions,' said Dhruti Patel, director-marketing and admission, Ecole Intuit Lab.

A good number of these new customers can get converted into regular customers even after the crisis.

"We believe that the current situation is going to transform the ed-tech industry altogether with massive changes in consumer behaviour patterns and shift towards studying online," said Pattajoshi.

### Government bans export of malaria drug

Amid the coronavirus outbreak, the government has banned export of anti-malarial drug hydroxycloroquine with immediate effect to ensure sufficient availability of the medicine in the domestic market. Indian **Council of Medical Research** director general Balram Bhargava had on Monday recommended the use of hydroxychloroquine for treating healthcare workers handling suspected coronavirus cases

### Yes Bank needs up to ₹13,000 cr in 1-2 years: Icra



Yes Bank will need additional Rs 9,000-Rs 13,000 crore in the next one-two years, Icra said. 'As the regulatory norms require banks to maintain a CCB (capital conservation buffer) of 2.5 per cent as on March 31, 2020, Icra expects additional capital requirements of nearly Rs 9,000-Rs 13,000 crore over the next 1-2 years," the ratings firm said. It said the bank may see deposit withdrawals for which liquidity support is needed.



RIL promoter firms exchange ₹11,000 cr shares New Delhi, March 25: Reliance Industries' promoter Devarshi Commercials LLP on Wednesday offloaded shares worth over Rs 11,000 crore in the firm through open market transactions. Devarshi sold shares of RIL through two separate transactions. While 5,80,40,583 shares were sold at an average price of Rs 950 apiece, 5,80,40,587 shares were offloaded at Rs 949 per scrip. Another promoter entity of RIL, Samarjit Enterprises LLP, bought these shares at the same price. -PTI

Sensex and Nifty-50 on market buzz that US tech The large-cap stocks in the banking and financial giant Facebook is looking services sector recovered led by Kotak Bank (12.31 per cent), HDFC Bank (11.77 per cent), HDFC to pick up a 10 per cent stake in its telecom arm,

US to unveil \$2-tn stimulus

(9.44 per cent), Axis Bank (7.83 per cent) and ICICI Bank (6.93 per cent). Gainers among other index heavyweights

included Maruti (12.23 per cent), Larsen & Toubro (8.22 per cent), and Bharti Airtel (6.36 per cent). All the sectors ended in the green, with the Nifty

Bank being the biggest gainer at 8.03 per cent. However, market senti-ments remained fragile with foreign portfolio investors selling equities worth Rs 1,893.36 crore while domestic institutions were net buyers by

just Rs 737.98 crore. Gaurav Dua, senior VP and head-capital market strategy & investments, Sharekhan by BNP Paribas, said, "Indian BNP surged ahead market today building on the gains posted yesterday. Indian market got a boost from the positive global cues. The clearing of huge \$2 trillion stimulus by political leaders in US have turned the sentiments positive globally. In India, the decision to take aggressive step to fight coronavirus has also been welcomed by the markets. Wednesday's sharp uptick shows that any sense of stability can lead to sudden turnaround in the direction of markets.

### **Brokers want** trading hours to be cut down

### **RAVI RANJAN PRASAD** MUMBAI, MARCH 25

Brokers find it difficult to run their operations as police and other enforcement agencies are trying to implement the nationwide lockdown. Brokers said their staff are facing harassment while travelling to workplace and being pulled out of their offices. Some brokers even wanted financial markets to be either closed during this period of lockdown or to at least curtail trading times of the market.

Deven Choksey, man-aging director, K R Choksey Shares & Securities, said, "Our markets must be closed because our staff is being pulled out of offices and they (authorities) are sealing office buildings. Markets regulator Sebi asked states to exempt notified enti-ties staff from the lock₹2,300 cr/day MICHAEL GONSALVES Motorcycle have also sus-PUNE, MARCH 25 pended production.

down

Auto shutdown

The Rs 8.21-lakh crore Indian automotive indus-try, the world's fourth largest, would be hit with a revenue loss of more than Rs 23,000 crore during the first 10 days of shutdown due to the coronavirus pandemic in Asia's third

largest economy. The automobile industry is the third largest employ-

er in the country. The Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers, or Siam, the trade lobby, on Wednesday said the closure of manufacturing plants by various automakers and component manufacturers due to the contagion would lead to a revenue loss of over Rs

2,300 crore per day. All major automakers like Tata Motors, Maruti Suzuki India, Hyundai, Honda, Mahindra, Toyota Kirloskar Motor, Kia Motors, MG Motor India, among others, have declared temporary shutdown of plants.

Two-wheeler makers like Hero MotoCorp, Honda Motorcycle and Scooter India, TVS Motor Company, Bajaj Auto. Suzuki Yamaha and

Companies having plants in Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu also followed suit to shut operations by March The Indian automotive market has produced an average of 75,000 vehicles

Besides, tyre makers and

other major auto compo-

nent makers too have shut

activities due to the coron-

Manufacturing activi-ties ceased from March 22 after the Maharashtra

government decided to

enforce work from home

more strictly in the state.

avirus outbreak.

manufacturing

every day so far this year, clocking production of nearly 25 million units till end of February, the latest data from Siam showed. More than 500,000 units of two-wheelers, more

than 5,000 passenger cars and little over 8,000 units of commercial vehicles powered by Bharat Stage IV engines are yet to be sold.

After the Supreme Court decided deadline of March 31 these vehicles will become scrap since BS4 stock cannot be sold or registered.

## RIL soars on buzz that Facebook may take stake in Reliance Jio Sensex vaults even as FPIs keep selling loss pegged at

### **RAVI RANJAN PRASAD** MUMBAL MARCH 25

Market benchmarks Sensex gained over 1850 points and Nifty-50 gained over 500 points on Wednesday, recovering most of the losses earlier this week despite a nation-wide 21-day lockdown announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Domestic equities ral-lied on hopes of a stimulus package sooner than later and reliefs related to compliance announced by the finance minister by extending the deadlines, besides gains in global markets on US leaders finalising a \$2 trillion stimulus package to boost

the US economy. With the lockdown in force, the number of coronavirus cases in the country has now crossed 600 while the global number was still rising fast at 4,40,318, along with deaths of over 19,750.

The Sensex gained 6.98 per cent, or 1861.75 points, closing at 28535.78 while the Nifty-50 closed 6.62 per cent up at 8317.85, with a gain of 516.80 points. Index

heavyweight Industries gained 14.65 per cent, closing at Rs 1,081.25 on the BSE and contributed maximum to the gains in Reliance Jio.

### Cost of 21-day lockdown seen at \$120 billion

Pegging the cost of the Covid-19 lockdown at \$120 billion (about Rs 9 lakh crore), British brokerage Barclays cut India's growth estimates and stressed the need to announce an economic package. "We estimate that the cumulative shutdown cost around \$120 billion or 4 per cent of the gross domestic product." Barclays said in a note, revising down its FY21 growth forecast by 1.7 percentage points to 3.5 per cent.

### ONGC, IOC drastically cut production

With the lockdown shutting down factories, ONGC has cut natural gas production by up to one-tenth as customers refused to take supplies. ONGC, which produced 64.5 million standard cubic metres of gas per day till earlier this week, has reduced the flow to 59.8 mmscmd on Wednesday, and will further cut by 3 mmscmd more on Thursday. IOC said it is cutting down its refineries by one-fourth to align production to demand.

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### JOSH WINGROVE, LAURA LITVAN & STEVEN T. DENNIS MARCH 25

Reliance

The Trump administra-tion struck a deal with Senate Democrats and Republicans on an historic rescue package that tees up more than \$2 trillion in spending and tax breaks to bolster the hobbled US economy and fund a nationwide effort to stem the coronavirus.

"At last we have a deal." Senate Majority Leader McConnell said Mitch early on Wednesday on the chamber's floor. "I'm thrilled that we're finally going to deliver to the country." Democratic Senate leader Chuck Schumer called it an "outstanding agreement.

The legislation was still being drafted but McConnell said the Senate would vote on it Wednesday. It would still have to pass in the House before it



gets to President Donald Trump's desk. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi had consulted with Schumer throughout his negotiawith Treasury Steven

The plan includes about \$500 billion that can be used to back loans and assistance to companies, including \$50 billion for loans to US airlines, as

tions Secretary

Mnuchin.

well as state and local governments. It also has more than \$350 billion to aid small husinesses Then there is \$150 billion for hospitals and other healthcare providers for equipment and supplies. For individuals the pack-

age provides direct payments to lower- and middle-income Americans of \$1,200 for each adult, as well as \$500 for each child

Unemployment insurance would be extended to four months, the benefits would be bolstered by \$600 weekly and eligibility would be expanded to cover more workers.

Democrats demanded and won a series of restraints on corporations that would benefit from loans or investments from the Treasury Department, as well as an oversight mechanism for who gets money.

Any company receiving a government loan would be subject to a ban on stock buybacks through the term of the loan plus one additional year. They also would have to limit executive bonuses and take steps to protect workers. The Department Treasury would have to disclose the terms of loans or other aid to companies and a new Treasury inspector general would oversee the lending program. -Bloomberg

Vijay Bhushan, president, Association of National Exchanges Members of India representing 900 brokers said, "The law enforcement agencies at the grass root level are still not sensitised about (the Sebi) directive. This has lead to several instances of manhandling the staff of broking firms to travel to/from offices. We have also received requests to suspend broking services...We will be taking up these

down.

concerns with Sebi." Narinder Wadhwa, president, Commodity Market Participants Association of India said, "Brokerage companies and staff are facing huge difficulties in reaching their offices, as the police is not allowing any movement; moreover the workforce engaged in these services is travelling and coming in frequent contact with their clients and other people.'

### **RoSCTL to continue for** apparels from April 1

#### SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, MARCH 25

The tax refund scheme that was about to expire by March 31 for apparel and made-up exports, will now continue from April 1. However, the refunds, which have been pending since March last year, has iust started to be issued to exporters from last week.

The apparel industry had faced a lot of hardships after the Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS) scheme discontinued on was March 7, 2019. MEIS had to be withdrawn as the country had graduated from the category of the least developed countries.

Though a new scheme, Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies (RoSCTL) was announced

This had squeezed the working capital of exporters. Meanwhile, the sector was expecting that Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP), announced for all export sectors, will be brought in for apparels and made-ups by April 1. The Cabinet o

in March, the refunds were pending for almost an year.

Wednesday gave its approval for continuation RoSCTL from April 1, 2020 onward. Later the scheme will be merged with the newly announced RoDTEP. Continuation of RoSCTL beyond March 31, 2020 is expected to make the textile sector competitive by rebating all taxes/levies which are currently not being rebated under any other mechanism, the government said.

### E-com majors suspend services as local officials stop deliveries

#### SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, MARCH 25

persons.

items,

E-commerce players, including e-grocers, suspended their services on Wednesday, the first day of the nationwide lock-down. They were unable to deliver essential items due to the clamp down by local authorities on warehouses, supply chain and delivery

like vegetables,

fruits and medical sup-

The central government

had recognised the role Amazon played by e-commerce in helping citizens remain at home and maintain social distancing. However, e-commerce players are findwebsites ing it tough to get essential

"One thing that will help us and other grocery deliv-

plies, delivered to the customers.

The companies said the transit of materials through inter-state borders is being blocked, warehouses are being forcefully shut and delivery boys are being prevented from fulfilling orders. Due to this, e-grocers like BigBasket and Grofers were declining to take orders on Wednesday and were cancelling the existing orders. Pantry and Flipkart too suspended their services. "We will be back soon," most of the players posted on their

ery companies is better



Economic Affairs (CCEA) headed by Prime Minister

Narendra Modi, will ben-

efit 80 crore public distri-

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO NEW DELHI, MARCH 25

In order to ensure adequate supply of basic food items like rice and wheat during the lockdown period, the government, on Wednesday, increased the monthly quota of sub-sidised foodgrains by 2 kg to 7 kg per person through ration shops. The decisions, taken by

coordination between the Centre and state, and between the state and local police, to ensure that our

delivery vans and bikes don't get stopped by the police, so that we can deliver grocery essentials with-

asset ratio (CRAR), in

which Rs 670 crore share, or 50 per cent, will come from central government for the scheme.

The cost of wheat is Rs 27/kg, which will be provided at a subsidised rate of Rs 2 kg, while the cost of rice is about Rs 32/kg but will be supplied at Rs 3/kg through ration shops, information and broadcasting minister Prakash Javadekar said.

out any interruptions," said BigBasket spokesperson. "Despite

declaring food delivery as essential, we are facing hardships in continuing our operations. Please bear with us as we are working hard to unblock local authority hurdles," online seafood and meat retailer Frestohome said in a message to the consumers.

While e-commerce players are finding it tough to handle the surge in orders, clampdown by local authorities is another challenge.

"Over the last few days, we faced a few hiccups in our operations which led to a backlog of around four lakh orders. However, the local authorities are helping us in resuming our operations. We are closely

working with them and with their support, we will soon start accepting orders on our platform,' said Albinder Dhindsa, Cofounder and CEO, Grofers. In many states, the local authorities do not have clarity as to what all are essential items.

"We are working with the central government and local authorities, asking them to help us urgently with detailed on-ground operating procedures, to ensure delivery of priority goods like household staples, health and hygiene products...safely across the country to our customers' homes without any disruption," said Amazon spokesperson.





government



bution system (PDS) ben-

eficiaries. The government also approved a total of Rs 1,340-crore recapitalisation of regional rural banks (RRBs) to improve capital to risk-weighted

### **HANE** DECCAN CHRONICLE | HYDERABAD | THURSDAY | 26 MARCH 2020

### SHORT TAKES

### Pep, Messi donate

to help fight corona

Madrid: Manchester City coach Pep Guardiola has donated one million euros (\$1.08 million) to help buy medical supplies for the fight against the coronavirus pandemic in his native Spain.

The former FC Barcelona boss gave the money to the Medical College of Barcelona to buy "medical equipment that is currently lacking in health centres in Catalonia," the body said in a statement.

His donation will also be used to produce ventilators to treat patients and protective gear for health care workers in Guardiola's northeastern region of Spain. Meanwhile Barcelona's Hospital Clinic said it had received a donation from FC Barcelona captain Lionel Messi to help it fight the virus. "Thank you Leo, for your support and commitment," the hospital added in a tweet. While the hospital did not say how much money the player donated, Catalan sports daily Mundo Deportivo said it was one million euros. - AFP

**CR7**, agent help set up three ICU units

Lisbon Cristiano Ronaldo and his agent Jorge Mendes will donate three intensive care units to Portuguese hospitals to help them cope with the coronavirus pandemic. The Portuguese pair will donate to at least two institu-tions and will give "two inten-sive care units", with a "capaci-ty of 10 beds each" to the University Hospital Centre of Northern Lisbon (CHULN), a group of hospitals in Lisbon, a spokesman confirmed. CHULN currently has a capacity of 77 beds Mendes and Ronaldo will also

donate a unit to the Santo Antonio Hospital of the University Hospital Center of Porto. "This is a very important investment that includes more than a dozen respirators and other necessary equipment," Eurico Castro Alves, director of the hospital's surgery department, told newspaper Jornal de Noticias. – AFP

### **Legend Roger gives** \$1m for Covid-19

Geneva: Tennis great Roger Federer on Wednesday donated more than a million dollars to help support his "most vulnerable" Swiss compatriots through the coronavirus crisis. The 20-time Grand Slam champion and his wife donated one million Swiss francs (\$1.02 million, 943,000 euros), saying nobody should be left behind as Switzerland battles against the global pandemic. According to official figures reported to the World Health Organization. Switzerland has the ninth-highest number of infections in the world. "These are challenging times for everyone and nobody should be left behind Mirka and I have personally decided to donate one million Swiss francs for the most vulnerable families in Switzerland. Our contribution is just a start," world number four Federer, 38 said on Instagram. - AFP

### **IOC chief calls for sacrifices to reorganise Games**

**TOKYO REBOOT** 

Lausanne, March 25: International Olympic Committee President Committee Bach Thomas said Wednesday that the post-poned Tokyo Games would require "sacrifices and compromises" from all sides to make them work. "These

"These postponed Olympic Games will need sacrifices, will need compromises from all stake-holders," Bach told holders," Bach told reporters in a conference call the day after the IOC decided to delay the 2020 Games because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The IOC's role, Bach said, was "to make the Olympic dreams of athletes come true'

He admitted that cancelling the Tokyo Games was "discussed and considered" but said: "It was very clear from the begin-ning that cancellation was not something the IOC would in any way favour." It is the first Olympic Games in peacetime to be postponed.

### TOKYO TO REORGANISE GAMES

Japan set about the unprecedented task of reorganising the Tokyo 2020 Olympics Wednesday after making the tough decision to postpone the Games by a year as the coronavirus pandemic locks down one third of the planet.

The dramatic step to shift the Olympics, never before seen in peacetime, upends every aspect of the organisation — including venues, security, ticketing and accom-

modation. In a move symbolic of the difficulties now facing Tokyo, Olympic count-down clocks in the city switched from displaying the number of days to go, instead simply showing today's date and the time. It is not even clear exact-ly when the rescheduled Games will take place, with the International Olympic Committee saying the new date would be "beyond 2020 but not later

than summer 2021" Japan has framed Tokyo 2020 as the "Recovery Games" — a chance to show the world it has bounced back from the "triple disaster" in 2011 when a massive earthquake sparked a tsunami Fukushima the nuclear meltdown. — AFP



Children walk past a Tokyo 2020 official shop in Tokyo on Wednesday, a day after the historic decision to post-pone the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games. — ΔFP

## BWF might freeze rankings

New Delhi, March 25: The Badminton World Federation (BWF) on Wednesday said it might freeze the world rankings for a while as it works on a "fair solution" to the Olympic qualification process after the Covid-19 pandemic forced a post-

ponement of the Tokyo Games. There have been growing calls to freeze the world rankings after cancellations and postponements wrecked the sport's calendar. Indian shuttlers Saina Nehwal, B. Sai Praneeth, Parupalli Kashyap and H. S. Prannoy have been leading the way in expressing concerns.

"For our athletes, we will review any impacts on the Olympic and Paralympic qualification system to ensure a fair solution is found to qualify players for the post-poned Games," the BWF said in a statement. "BWF, in the short-term, is also looking into the possibility of freezing World Rankings until international tourna-ments start again. We are still working on the technical solution to ensure the freezing and eventual un-freezing of World Rankings works fairly for all players and we will announce this shortly," it added. Shuttlers in the singles



Los Angeles, March 25: United States athletes welcomed the decision to postpone the Tokyo Olympics on Tuesday, orbaling a collection circle exhaling a collective sigh of relief tinged with disappointment as they began to set their sights on 2021.

The deadly coronavirus pandemic has swept into all 50 states of America, leaving US athletes' years of carefully choreo-graphed Olympic training plans in tatters.

Powerhouse swimmer Katie Ledecky, expected to be one of the stars of the Tokyo Games, had been left without a pool to train in as restrictions in California shut down the Stanford University facilities

# IPL is as good as over this season

**New Delhi, March 25:** The cancellation of this year's IPL looks inevitable with the BCCI under tremendous pressure after the declaration of a 21-day nationwide lockdown to contain the the deadly Covid-19 pandemic. When the BCCI post-

poned the IPL to April 15 earlier this month, it said conducting the tourna-ment would only come into the picture if the pandemic subsides. However, there hasn't been any remarkable change in the situation with positive cases crossing the 500-mark in India, including 10 deaths. BCCI president Sourav Ganguly did not have much to say on the current scenario, which was made worse by the postponement of Tokyo Olympics to the summer of 2021, on Tuesday, The global Covid-19 death toll is nearing

19,000. "I can't say anything at the moment. We are at the same place where we were on the day we postponed. Nothing has changed in the last 10 days. So, I don't have an answer to it. Status quo remains," Ganguly's helplessness was palpable. Kings XI Punjab owner Ness Wadia was more forthright. "The BCCI should really consider postponing the IPL now. As a premier event, we need to act with great responsibility. Contemplation of IPL is

inhuman right now. We need to save lives, not IPL," KXIP co-owner Wadia said. Currently, each stake-holder is discussing ways to limit the financial dem to limit the financial damage with insurance companies as well as broadcast--PTIers.

-PTI

### **BENGAL CRICKET BODY HELPS NEEDY CHILDREN**

Kolkata, March 25: The BCCI president Sourav Ganguly has come forward in support of those affected by the 21-day lockdown due to Covid-19 pandemic, pledging to donate rice worth ₹50 lakh for the underprivileged.

Ganguly along with Lal Baba Rice will provide for the needy people who have been put in government schools for safety and security, the Cricket Association

of Bengal announced in a statement. "Hope this initiative of Ganguly would encourage other citizens of the state to take up similar initiatives to serve the people of our state," the statement from the company added.

The 1.3-billion populated India has gone into a total lockdown from midnight in an attempt to slow the spread of Covid-19 virus and CAB secretary Snehashis Ganguly hailed the unprecedented step. Meanwhile, the Cricket Association of Bengal have also decided to donate a sum of ₹25 lakh while its president Avishek Dalmiya pledged ₹5 lakh to the state administration to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. 'We have decided to donate a sum of Rs 25 lakh and personally I will be donating Rs 5 lakh. We're in talks with the state government on how to donate the money," CAB president Avishek Dalmiya said. — PTI



ICC SET TO MEET

**VIA VIDEO** 

**CONFERENCE** 

New Delhi, March 25: The member nations of

the International Cricket

Council will be engaged in

a video conference on Friday to discuss contin-

gency plans for upcoming

ICC events in the wake of

global travel restrictions to fight the Covid-19 pan-

The high-profile ICC T20 World Cup scheduled in Australia from mid-October along with the

bilateral Test series in the

World Test Championship

schedule could be in for a

However, one ICC Board

member made it clear that

no decision will be taken

during Friday's video con-ference. "It's more about an update on contingency

planning at this stage. In

case of an extreme situa-

tion, there should be plan

B and C ready. So, we board

members need to under-stand the options avail-

able," the veteran adminis-

"Obviously, the situation

currently is very serious and Covid-19 and its impli-

cations is on agenda. But if

you think logically, World

you think logically, world T20 is in October and final of World Test Championship is in June, 2021.," he added. However, if the lock-downs then member nations will be foread to

nations will be forced to

make alternate plans for

trator said.

the series.

demic.

rejig.

### **CHESS BODY POSTPONES OLYMPIAD**

**Chennai:** The world governing body of chess, FIDE, has postponed the Olympiad, scheduled for August 5-17 in Moscow, to 2021 owing to the Covid-19 pandemic. The global chess body issued a statement saying that the Olympiad and the FIDE Congress, slated to be held in August in Moscow and Khanty-Mansiysk respectively, are rescheduled to the summer of 2021 at the same locations. "As you know, the Chess Olympiad is the most popular FIDE event, attended by thousands of people, including players. coaches. officials. and spectators. The mission of Chess Olympiads is not only to determine the sportive results but also to popularize our game and unite chess lovers around the world in this truly global sports festival. FIDE has decided to postpone the 44th Chess Olympiad," the statement said. - PT

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These postponed **Olympic Games will** need sacrifices, will need compromises from all stakeholders. It was very clear from the beginning that cancellation was not something the IOC would in any way favour. - THOMAS BACH

president of International **Olympic Committee** 

competition have to be inside top-16 of world rankings to qualify for the Olympics. In doubles, a country can field one pair if they are in the top 16 and two if both pairs are in the top eight. The BWF welcomed the

International Olympic Committee (IOC)'s decision to postpone the Olympics, originally scheduled from July 24 to August 9, to next year in the wake of the pandemic, which has caused nearly

Secretary

P. V. Sindhu in action in this file photo.

For our athletes, we will review any impact on the Olympic and Paralympic qualification system to ensure a fair solution is found to qualify players for the postponed Games, the Badminton World Federation said in a statement.

19,000 deaths worldwide. "Today, we stand in soli-darity with the IOC and International Paralympic Committee (IPC) in welcoming the postponement of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games," the statement said.

"BWF fully supports the decision made yesterday by IOC President Thomas Bach, Prime Minister of Japan Shinzo Abe, and the

Tokyo Organising Committee (TOCOG) to reschedule the Games to a date beyond 2020 but no later than summer 2021. "Balancing the many necessary considerations for the whole of sport has been a complex exercise, so we are supportive of how difficult this decision

would have been for the IOC and TOCOG,"it added. — PTI

Track and field star Noah Lyles — the reigning 200m world champion had been denied regular access to a running track. Instead Lyles, who suffers from allergies and asthma, had been forced to train in a Florida park. Lyles and Ledecky's problems had become all too common for US athletes, who found themselves torn between the need to comply with local regulations restricting non-essential movement while simultaneously sticking to training regimens designed to help them prepare for Tokyo. Lyles had no reservations about the decision to postpone the Games --and vowed to be ready for Tokyo in 2021.

"Straight up I'm tired of hearing I'm sorry like my puppy just died," Lyles wrote on Twitter. -AFP

### Cricket stadium on standby for corona

would like to offer the facil-

ity of Rajiv Gandhi Stadium in Uppal to set up

isolation centres," R. Vijayanand, HCA secre-

"This we feel is the moral

obligation on our part in

this hour of crisis as there

are 40 big rooms which can take care of some of the

virus-affected patients,'

we feel it would be appro-priate on our behalf to

make this token gesture of

than happy to be at your service in this grim battle

against the Covid-19 virus

which has become a global

Vijayanand further said, "With lot of parking space,

Vijayanand added.

appreciation of efforts. We will be more

tary said in a statement.

#### DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 25

With the coronavirus wreaking havoc, the Cricket Hyderabad Association setting a precedence — has decided to offer the Rajiv Gandhi Cricket Stadium in Uppal as a venue to set up isolation centres.

In accordance with the services rendered by Chief Minister Κ. Chandrashekar Rao, the HCA arrived upon this decision.

"In sync with our commitment and passion in implementing the meas-ures, I, on behalf of HCA President Mohammad Azharuddin, and the members of the Apex Council,

### **BADMINTON NATIONALS** PUT OFF INDEFINITELY

threat.

New Delhi, March 25: The Badminton Association of India on Wednesday postponed the 84th Senior Badminton National Championships scheduled to be held in Lucknow from April 27 to May 3 after the government put the country under lockdown till April 14

The coronavirus outbreak has claimed 10 lives and infected nearly 600 people in the country, prompting the government to put the whole country under lockdown till April 14 to fight the spread of the deadly disease. "Now that the government has extended the lockdown, we have decided to postpone the 84th Senior nationals badminton Championships and 75th Inter State — Inter Zonal. It is unfortunate that the tournament couldn't be held as planned but it is a grave situation and fighting this disease is the priority," BAI General secretary Ajay Singhania said.

### IOA to revise preparation plans in the coming months and

New Delhi, March 25: Indian Olympic The Association on Wednesday conceded that careers of some athletes would be impacted by the postponement of Tokyo Olympics and the IOA would look to address this when it makes revised preparation plans in consultation with the sports ministry.

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Olympic

19 pandemic.

all necessary support would also be extended by us," IOA General Rajeev Mehta said in a letter to the IOC and the Tokyo Games organisers without specifying any names. "I am holding discussions and there would be

meetings scheduled with the Federations after the Like all stakeholders, locked-down in India is the IOA on Tuesday welover. Athletes' safety is comed the International our utmost priority now. "We would be also be consulting with the Ministry of Youth Affairs Committee's decision to postpone the Summer Games, supposed and Sports in revising the preparation plans," he to be held in July-August, to the summer of 2021 owing to the global Covidadded.

While the postponement of the Games has brought "A one-year postpone-ment might impact the relief to the athletes, it career/ qualification and has also made some of plans of some athletes, them uncertain about the which would be addressed qualification process,



letes. I welcome the decision of IOC to postpone #Tokyo2020 in view of the global pandemic. It's necessary for the well being of athletes from across the world.



which was abandoned in most sports due to the deadly outbreak.

#### **RIJIJU WELCOMES TOKYO POSTPONEMENT**

Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju has welcomed the postponement of this year's Olympic Games to 2021 in view of the worsening COVID-19 pandem-ic, saying the IOC's decision has ensured the well being of Tokyo-bound ath-

Olympic Committee (IOC) and Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Tuesday announced postponement of the Games, scheduled for July-August, because of the pandemic which has brought the world to a standstill.

The

"I welcome the decision IOC to postpone #Tokyo2020 in view of the global pandemic. It's necessary for the well being of athletes from across the world," Rijiju said in a tweet late on Tuesday.

He also assured the Tokyo-bound Indian athletes of government's full support to ensure that their preparations are not impacted by the current situation. India was on Tuesday

placed under a 21-day





forced the cancellation or postponement of almost all sporting events across the world, including the Olympic qualifiers and the European football -PTI

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International worldwide

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected nearly 4 lakh people globally. In India, more than 500 positive cases have been detected so far and the death toll

has touched 10. Earlier, the Indian Olympic Association had also welcomed the IOC's decision, saying it has relieved the country's ath-letes of a stressful buildup during a global health

crisis. The pandemic has

championships.

lockdown to contain the spread of the deadly virus, which has caused close to 19,000 deaths