

AP: 44 00 WORLD CONFIRMED CASES 💏 8,00,000 DEATHS 38,540+ COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES 183

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari; Uttarayana Tithi: Chaitra Suddha Ashtami till 3.38 am(Thursday) Star: Arudra till 7.23 pm Varjyam: Nil Durmuhurtam: 11.55 am to 12.44 pm Rahukalam: 12 noon to 1.30 pm **HIJRI CALENDAR** Shabaan 6,1441 AH PRAYERS Fajar: 5.10 am Zohar: 12.30 pm Asar: 4.41 pm Maghrib: 6.35 pm Isha: 7.43 pm SUNSET TODAY 6.29 PM SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.10 AM MOONRISE TODAY 11.48 AM MOONSET TODAY NA



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Buying ventilators? It

is sheer stupidity

City has 603 Tablighi suspects

China may test Covid

vaccine abroad

Telangana reports 15 Covid positive patients; officials form teams to trace Markaz visitors

PSBs' mega merger

comes into effect

MADDY DEEKSHITH AND JAYENDRA CHAITHANYA T. I DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

Telangana state registered a steep increase in number of coronavirus positive cases with the government on Tuesday announcing 15 new cases — the single largest jump in the state in one day. All the cases announced on Tuesday were of people who had either visited the

event organised by the Tablighi Jamaat at the Markaz mosque in Nizamuddin of Delhi between March 13 and 15, or relatives of those who attended it, health minister Etala Rajendar said in an official statement.

Tuesday's cases took the total Covid-19 tally so far to 96, of which 14 patients been discharged have while six others have died, leaving 76 active coronavirus cases under treatment as on Tuesday in different hospitals in the state. According to the government, in all, 1,030 persons from the Telang-ana attended the Markaz. The immense impact of the Tablighi Jamaat organised events in Delhi on the spread of coronavirus in Telangana, sent state officials, including the police, scrambling to trace every one of the 1,030 persons and bring them to hospitals, or place them under home quarantine, along with members of their families and their

other contacts. The government poured in manpower forming special teams that fanned out across all districts of Telangana for the purpose.

In the city itself, 200 special teams including the GHMC, revenue and police officials, fanned out to trace, locate and get 603 Markaz attendees from the city to book. "It did not help any that many of the addresses we had for **SC ASKS CENTRE** these people were fake. It has been a Herculean task to locate them," an official **TO PREVENT**



People, who came for a religious gathering at Nizamuddin mosque, are being taken to a hospital for Covid-19 test in New Delhi on Tuesday

Tablighi spreads Covid in AP

AP adds 21 cases in 1 day; 711 people from AP visited Markaz

MD ILYAS I DC Guntur with nine positive cases, Krishna (five), East VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 31 Godavari (four), Ananta-

The Tablighi Jamaat meet pur (two), and one each registered in Chittoor, Kurnool and Nellore disconducted by the Markaz masjid at Nizamuddin is turning into a disaster for Andhra Pradesh too. Twentyone new coron-avirus (Covid-19) positive cases were identified in the state on Tuesday, takavirus deaths in the family ing the total to 44, out of whom 18 persons had met any of the Delhi

returned from the meet. Prakasam district tops returnees to the Guntur General Hospital for testing.

The Markaz meet was conducted from March 15 to 17 and was presided by Moulana Saadh, head of the Markaz mosque. Tablighi Jamaat leader Ikram Ali of Hyderabad super-

vised the programme. State officials found 711 persons who attended the from Andhra meet Pradesh, in which officials traced whereabouts of 626 people and shifted them to

people who went to attend the Delhi meet are from Kurnool district (189), fol-lowed by districts of Guntur (88), Anantapur (73), Nellore (68), Prakasam (67), Kadapa (59), Krishna (43), Visakhapatnam (42), Chittoor (36), East Goda-vari (27), West Godavari (16) and Vizianagaram (three).

The highest number of

Many of these returnees transmitted Covid-19 to their family members,

MEDICAL GEAR EXPORT TO SERBIA KICKS UP ROW

in India by Serbia and

was flown from Kerala to

Serbian capital Belgrade.

The consignment repor-tedly includes "35 lakh

pairs of sterile latex sur-

latex gloves was banned,

the government official

said the government had banned the export is on

Nitrile Rubber (NBR)

According to reports

from Europe on Tuesday,

tracing of those who

The government is fac-

ing severe criticism for

having one of the lowest

testing rates in the world.

Over 200 scientists and

members of the Indian

academic community on

attended the event.

While the export of

gical gloves".

gloves.

Delhi cops book Tablighi Jamaat meet organiser

SHASHI BHUSHAN and BHASKAR HARI SHARMA | DC NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

The Delhi police on Tuesday registered a case against Maulana Saad and others under various sections of the IPC and the Epidemic Diseases Act for violation of government directives given to the management of the Markaz of Basti Nizamu ddin. The government said so far 1,582 Tablighi Jamaat workers were shifted to the Narela, Sultanpuri and Bakkarwala quarantine facilities that included 441 admit-

ted in hospitals. The police said an FIR was filed against Maulana Saad and others of Tablighi Jamaat for violation of the directives issued after the coronavirus outbreak.

Over 3,000 people had gathered March 1 and March 18 at the Nizamuddin Markaz mosque for a Tablighi Jamaat meet. A senior police official said the FIR was filed under Section 269, 270, 271 and 120B IPC at the Nizamu-

ddin police station. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has appealed to religious leaders, irrespective of faith, to not organise any event during the lockdown.

Delhi health minister Satvendar Jain said 24

"A second cargo Boeing

747 landed at Nikola

Tesla Airport in Belgrade

from Kerala, with 90 tonnes load of medical

protective equipment bought by Serbia to com-

The reports said "the

cost for the transport of

the equipment was fully funded by the European

Page 7: Cochin Port

tweeted about export

testing facilities to detect

Covid-19 in every region.

Defending the govern-

ment, ICMR scientist Dr

Raman Gangakhedkar said so far 42,788 samples

have been tested for Covid-

19 out of which 4,346 sam-

ples were tested on Mon-

bat COVID-19".

Union.

ATTENDED DELHI MOSQUE MEET DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

TS OFFICIAL TOO

A senior Telangana state government official is one of the 1,030 people who have been ascertained to have attended the Markaz Nizamuddin in Delhi. An animal husbandry department official, he is said to have attended the event that was held from March 13 to 16. He is a resident of Masab Tank, with his house located close to the GHMC munic-

ipal office there. An internal memo was sent to department directs officials to look into the matter and conduct necessary medical inves-tigations on the official.

> branch on Tuesday asked the government to take action on at least 157 persons linked to the Tablighi Jamaat now staying at various masjids and

other places in Delhi. These include 94 from Indonesia, 13 from Kyrgyzstan, nine from Bangladesh, eight from Malaysia, and some Indian nationals. The police warned no "social distancing" is

You are lucky! You don't have corona, only swine flu, jaundice, dengue, HIV ...



Only BS-6 fuel from today

Hyderabad: India will switch to cleaner BS-VI fuel from April 1, joining select club of countries. The new fuel contains just 10 part per million (ppm) of sulphur and reduce nitrogen oxide emissions considerably. The switch to clearer fuel was planned in 2016 by the Narendra Modi government. Though public sector oil marketing companies meet April 1, 2020 deadline, auto companies got 10 day extension to sell vehicles that run on older BS-IV fuels.

Euro chief warns EU's break-up

Brussels: Eurogroup president Mario Centeno warned the euro single currency could break apart if feuding governments don't bury the hatchet and agree on a rescue plan to help Italy and Spain. The warning came as the 19 members of the single currency still cannot agree on a rescue plan to reverse the impact of the coronavirus. - PTI

Brokerages: Cut trading hours

Hyderabad: The Association of National Exchanges Members of India (Anmi), which represents nearly 900 brokerages, asked market regulator Sebi reduce market hours four hours from the current six hours 15 minutes. The brokerages body want the markets to from function from 10 am to 2 pm as against the present 9.15 am to 3.30 pm in view of national lockdown.

said. A senior police official said, "about 90 per cent of the people state-wide who visifed Delhi for the religious event have been traced. Those with symptoms of Covid-19 were shifted to government hospitals and quarantine centres for treatment. All put, official said, the total number of Covid-19 suspects in the state connected to Markaz visitors now may be in thousands. 'But we have to identify and trace every one of them and check them for

lages are carrying the symptoms," he added. In the city, GHMC officials were up and running early and formed 200 speby the Centre that now there are no migrant workers on the road, a cial teams to identify 603 persons from the city who attended Markaz. The submission contradicted by reports and images teams inspected houses of coming in on Tuesday. 463 people and identified Union home ministry said over 6.6 lakh stranded and that 74 persons have been suffering from Covid-19 symptoms, apart from destitute people have various other ailments. been housed in shelter

Page 4: A large group returned from Delhi by road

the list, with 11 new positive cases, followed by Visakhapatnam (10),

MIGRATION

Supreme

DC CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

A day after the Uttar

Pradesh administration

received flak for spraying

migrant labourers with

some unspecified chemi-cals, the Centre told the

Tuesday that there is a

possibility that three out

of 10 migrant workers

heading towards their vil-

deadly novel coronavirus.

The court was also told

In its daily briefing, the

camps across the country.

them are from one area.

Full report on Page 5

Court

on

places in Guntur district are fearing community transmission and rushing remaining 85.

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

The Union health ministry

on Tuesday said that cities

and states with the highest

number of positive cases

are being treated as major

hotspots of Covid-19 and

the government is making

all efforts to focus on them

to contain the spread of

the virus. But at the same

time it emerged that till

now only 42,788 people have been tested in the

country so far for the dead-

Since India recorded its

first confirmed positive case in Kerala on January

30, this means that an

average of 713 tests have

been conducted every day

in a country of 1.3 billion.

During the last 24 hours,

121 new confirmed cases

and three deaths have

been reported in India,

taking the total confirmed

cases to 1,397, and the death toll to 35. By late

Tuesday evening, there

ly virus.

Adding to the crisis, peo-

ple are falling for rumours

wherein even non-coron-

of any Delhi returnee is

Besides this, people who

in

various

being related to Covid.

tricts.

quarantine The search is on for information on the

SRIDHAR

KUMARASWAMI | DC

NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

Ending a controversy on

alleged export of protective medical equipment

to Serbia in contraven-

tion of a ban, a govern-

ment official said the con-

signment did not contain

any item, whose export

The official said 90-

tonne consignment was

purchased from vendors

were 1,238 active cases, 123

people have been cured while one left India.

The sudden spurt in

cases in the last couple of days is being attributed to

the Delhi mosque gather-

ing in Nizamuddin where

24 have tested positive so

far and health agencies

have intensified contact

was prohibited.

them to quarantine.

Centre to focus on urban areas

including their wives, and people had tested positive. the officials have shifted The Delhi police special

possible at these places and there was a grave public health risk.

WRITE TO BANK **IF YOU WANT** TO PAUSE EMIs

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO | DC NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

Several public sector banks on Tuesday informed their branch heads as well customers about RBI's three-month moratorium on all term loans, including home, auto and crop loans and credit card dues. Private and foreign banks, however, haven't begun the process by Tuesday evening. The pause on equated monthly installments (EMIs) won't come into effect automatically. "Customers need to inform their banks that they want to avail the benefit of the moratorium. If there is a standing instruction, the customer has to inform the bank that he want to defer EMIs. Otherwise, instalments will be deducted," a senior bank official added.

Another chief of a public sector bank said on condition of anonymity, "Banks on its own unilaterally cannot stop ECS payment due to legal issue but the customer has the option of requesting bank to stop it.'

The borrowers of pri-vate banks and foreign banks, however, have received text messages, alerting about the scheduled EMIs. The bank official said customers are getting such messages because the moratorium decision has to be approved by the board of each lender but in many cases the board meetings have not taken place due to the lockdown.

Full report on Page 9

OFFICIAL | APATHY Experts say TS would have seen fewer cases if suspects were traced earlier TS ignored Centre's warning on Markaz

KANIZA GARARI I DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

could lead to a cluster A total of 257 people who transfer of Coronavirus attended a religious con-gregation at Markaz Nizamuddin in New Delhi (Covid-19) in the state if a majority of them test positive. So far, most of these people do not have any a couple of weeks ago came to the Gandhi Hospital for symptoms. These people testing on Tuesday. The said they had been to the testing was going on till Markaz, but as they had no late night as people were travel history to any forwaiting for their turn. Of eign country, they did not suspect that they could have been infected by the all the people who have come from different parts of Hyderabad, about 30 of disease. The congregation

was attended only by men, most of them middle-aged. It is suspected that this The prayer meeting is an annual event and they go

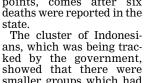
there every year. Members claimed that all precautionary announcements made by the government were being followed at the meet, save the request not hold congregations. Since there were no symptoms in any of them, none of them felt a suspicion that Covid-19 could strike the gathering.

They said they are now scared after being brought Hospital got 15 teams ready for testing purpose and nasal swabs were taken.

The action of the state government on Tuesday to track, quarantine and test all those who attended the event, and their touch-

The cluster of Indonesians, which was being tracked by the government, showed that there were splintered in different

There are a lot of questions, which are now com-ing to fore, especially after a note by Union home ministry which says that it had informed Telangana gov-



smaller groups which had directions.

points, comes after six ernment about this risk on March 21.

If that was the case

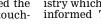
experts are asking why did the Telangana government take so long to track these people. The Indonesians have

recovered completely and are fine, which implies that had the rest been tracked on time, several lives could have been saved and any others would have been spared the infection.









state.

Tuesday asked the governday, while the private secment to rapidly enhance tor screened 399 cases.

to hospital by health workers and the police. The queue to get tested was fairly long and only six people were allowed in the room at a time. The Gandhi



attended the event, 19 have been traced. District col-

lector Rajeev Gandhi

Hanumanthu said they

have shifted these persons

to an isolation ward and are looking out for the rest. In Mahbubabad dis-

trict three persons who attended the event have

been quarantined since past two days ago. Two persons of Mulugu,

who attended the meeting,

have completed their isola-

tion period but are under

observation by the author-

One person each in

Warangal Rural and

Jayashankar Bhupalpally

districts, who travelled to

Delhi to take part in the

religious event, have been home quarantined.

while Warangal district

community elders to trace

out those who are not will-

ing to identify themselves.

Dayakar Rao has also

appealed to people who attended the Tablighi Jamaat meet in Delhi to

voluntarily come forward

undergone tests,

Errabelli

ities.

have

Minister

SHORT TAKES **RLY MAKES TWO** QUARANTINE **COACHES**

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

The South Central Railway (SCR) on Tuesday completed the conversion of two coaches into isolation and quarantine coaches to help in the Covid-19 response effort. Officials at the Carriage Workshop at Carriage Lalaguda modified two non-AC coaches as prototypes. Each coach will have nine cabins of eight berths. Two of these cabins can be used as isolation cabins.

The cabins will have a mosquito mesh, stainless steel bottle holders and power sockets. The toilets have been modified for more regular use

It may be recalled that the Indian Railways has asked all zones to submit designs for the conversion of coaches. The Railways will consoli-

date all designs and pick the best features from them to create a uniform prototype. This prototype will be used across the country to augment health facilities being used for Covid-19



A view of berths to be used as isolation cabins.

300 CAMPS FOR MIGRANT WORKERS

ATHER MOIN I DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

Hyderabad police commis-sioner Anjani Kumar on Tuesday launched an awareness programme on Covid-19 by the traffic police at MJ Market.

Speaking to mediapersons on the sidelines of the event, Mr Kumar said the state government was working hard to combat the Covid-19 crisis. The public was extending cooperation to ensure that the lockdown is successful.

He said that there were no complaints of shortage of essentials in the city for the last five days. The GHMC has started supplying food packets particularly to migrant workers from Tuesday, he said. The Chief Minister has

ordered that nobody should remain hungry. With this directive, and with the coordination and all departments including the police, local phi-lanthropists, donors and NGOs, feeding programmes had started in every police station, Mr Kumar said In Hyderabad 300 pockets had been identified where migrant labourers stay. The city administration has given this programme top priority, the police commissioner added.

STATEWIDE HUNT FOR DELHI RETURNEES

Government is searching for those who attended the Tablighi Jamaat meeting in Nizamuddin, Delhi

53 from Nizamabad attended event

NARENDER PULLOOR | DC Nizamabad district are NIZAMABAD, MARCH 31

believed to have attended the Markaz meeting. One The police in Nizamabad of them is being treated in Gandhi Hospital in district are searching for people who had attended Hyderabad and another the Tablighi Jamaat meetdied in the Government ing at the Markaz mosque in Nizamuddin, Delhi. General Hospital in Nizamabad. One person is reported t be still in Delhi. Following directives from the state government, offi-The address, contact numcials have been searching bers and other informafor the men who attended tion of the rest is being the religious programme collected.

People from Nizamabad, Armoor, Balkonda and other parts of the district as several people who did so have shown symptoms of Covid-19 or have tested positive for the disease. attended the Markaz meet-Fifty-three persons from ing. The health condition

of those identified is being should be up to those who keenly observed by med-ical teams. Information is also being collected about the people they have come in contact with. A Muslim elder who did

not want to be identified told *Deccan Chronicle*, that people from Nizamabad district regularly attend this religious meeting. Retired men particularly participate in Markaz

meetings. He said it will be difficult to find all those who have returned from Delhi and trace their contacts. It

attended the Markaz to approach hospital author-ities and get tested, he said. The district administration has tentatively identified around 200 persons who came in contact with those who participated in the Markaz meeting.

They hope to trace the rest during the lockdown period. Police, revenue, medical and health teams are

searching for whoever attended the Delhi meeting from the district.



GHMC officials enquire about the people who attended a religious event Nizamuddin Markaz Masjid, New Delhi, between March 13 and 15.

Search for 57 returnees in Karimnagar

It is learnt from the health department that 57

members from erstwhile

Karimnagar district visit-

ed New Delhi to attend

Karimnagar, nine are

from Rajanna Siricilla and

six from Peddapalli dis-

These 57 members from

Penganga on the state

The police shifted the 32

in

Delhi's

PULI SHARAT KUMAR

I DC KARIMNAGAR, MARCH 31

Suspecting the risk of contracting Covid-19, officials prayers at the Markaz mosque. 25 are from Jagtial, 17 are from are in search of around 57 members of erstwhile Karimangar district who attended mass prayers held between March 13 and 15 at Markaz mosque Nizamuddin, New Delhi.

The medical and health department alerted all disold Karimnagar district attended an ijtima (relitricts to trace the persons gious ritual) held in the middle of March every year in Markaz mosque in who returned from the Markaz mosque.

The authorities of four New Delhi. districts — Karimnagar, Jagtial, Rajanna Siricilla and Peddapalli — intensistate fied search operations to identify the persons in their respective districts

that many of them might have contracted Covid-19. In view of that, officials tions. of the four district are directed to identify the persons who attended the returned to their native places in erstwhile Karimuse Karimnagar district between March 17 and 18.

Four members who visited the Markaz mosque were identified in Vemulawada of Rajanna Siricilla district and were sent to Siricilla govern-ment_hospital to be tested

Speaking to the *Deccan Chronicle*, Dr Mahesh Rao However, it is going to be an uphill task for the offi-Thousands of people from many parts of the of Vemulawada said that even from receiving the orders from collector D. Bhaskar, medical teams were alerted and instruc-tions to the employees by appointing special before the outbreak of the tions to the employees with them keeping in teams to quarantine all of pandemic, it is suspected related to health depart- the present situation.

ment were given to inten-sify their search opera-

"With the information received from ASHA workers that four people had visited the Markaz mosque and returned on March 19, we went and identified them and after conducting primary medical tests on the four and on their family members, including those who came in contact with them, we sent 21 people to the main government hospital situ-ated in Sircilla," Dr Rao said.

cials of four districts to remaining

19 from Warangal who took part in EFFORTS TO TRACE TJ VISITORS LOOK-OUT FOR prayers traced 1,030

The Centre has

sent a district-

wise break-up of

the people who attended the two-

day religious

event at the Markaz masjid in

603

• Mahbubnagar 11

Kothagudem

Bhadradri-

Vikarabad

Suryapet

Rajanna-

Sircilla

Medchal

Mulugu

Wanaparthy

Jayashankar

Bhupalpally

Warangal

Mancherial

80

45

38

30

27

25

25

22

17

13

11

13

10

10

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6

6

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Delhi.

ANUDEEP CEREMILLA I DC WARANGAL, MARCH 31

After six persons, who took part in a Tablighi Jamaat event in the Nizamuddin area of Delhi died on Monday due to coronavirus, officials of the erstwhile Warangal district have been alerted by the state government to identify all those who took part in the event.

Accordingly, various district administrations within the erstwhile Warangal district area have swung into action and started tracing those who had attended the Delhi meeting as well as those with whom the returnees had come into contact.

None of the persons traced out so far in erst-In Jangaon district three persons who attended the meeting have been traced. have showed any symp-toms of coronavirus. Most While two are asymptomatic one has been found to be symptomatic. All three have been shifted to Gandhi Hospital in Hyderabad. One of the of them have already been placed in quarantine and which turned out to be three owns a mutton shop in Veldhi village of Narmetta. negative. Officials are in talks with

After coming back from the event, he worked in his shop for some days and people bought meat from his shop. Officials said 35 families in the village have been isolated. In Warangal Urban district, of the 32 persons who for tests.

Search on for 38 from Khammam, Bhadradri

RAVINDRA SESHU I DC KHAMMAM, MARCH 31

Fear has gripped Khammam and Bhadradri districts following reports that 38 persons belonging to the two districts had attended the prayers held by the Tablighi Jamaat in the Nizamuddin area of

• OVER 2.000 delegates from India and abroad, including Indonesia and Malaysia, had attended the Tableeghi Jamaat congregation.

however, have no information on the remaining 17 persons who reportedly attended the religious con

Mr Kumar said medical examinations had been completed on those who returned from other cities and foreign countries.

He requested the public that if any member of their family shows symptoms of viral infection, they should inform the Covid Control or dial 100 for the police.

'The health department will guide you. If necessary we will arrange facilities either at their home or at Covid treat-ment centres," Mr Kumar said.

The police commissioner said, "we have issued passes to agencies rendering essential services and the traders of essential commodities. The purpose is to ensure easy sup-ply of essential goods." He requested that the passes not be misused.

The additional commissioner of police, traffic, has launched a special drive to curb misuse of passes and more than 45 veĥicles have been seized so far, Mr Kumar said.

He clarified that the expiry date of passes has been extended for next week and there is no need for renew it.



Hyderabad Commissioner of Police Anjani Kumar launches an awareness campaign to control the spread of coronavirus.

and abroad attend this ijtima and offer mass prayers. As the meeting was held

border.

tricts.

trace the Krishna members from four districts along with others who had come in contact with them keeping in view

32 found by Adilabad riverside

PILLALAMARRI SRINIVAS I DC ADILABAD, MARCH 31

persons in a special van and took them to Jagtial The Adilabad police shifted 32 persons who were via NH-44 to avoid avoidreturning in a van to the ing going through vilstate after attending a relilages. The 32 persons gious event at Nizamuddin in Delhi, at belong to Korutla town of Jagtial district. At least the state border and shiftsix persons who had gone ed them to the quarantine to the Tablighi Jamaat event at the Markaz centre in Jagtial on Tuesday morning. Police mosque Nizamuddin have died of shifted the vehicle with an escort from the Metpalli the novel coronavirus disease

It is learned that the Meanwhile, the Adilabad police got the information police and medical and of the arrival of several health department are people who attended the looking for people from religious event in Delhi and had camped at river Adilabad district who had attended a religious event

in Delhi. Several people who were at the event were found to have symptoms of coronavirus and have been home quarantined. The police got information that 52 persons from Adilabad district had gone to Delhi to attend the religious event, but the police is not sure where

they live. Thirty of them have been home quarantined and it was after observing their health condition that centres. the authorities are look-

ing for the rest. Some political leaders have objected to medical officers subjecting the Covid suspects to home quarantine and medical

tests. The medical depart ment has also identified 40 persons from Nirmal dis-trict who attended the same event, and have quarantined them at home.

Another 10 people who attended the event have been identified in Mancherial district. Those who are showing

no symptom of the disease are asking to be allowed home from quarantine

Officials are having a tough time tracing the whereabouts of people who have returned from abroad, since many of them are not staying at the addresses they gave.

Rural

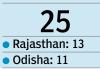
FOREIGN WORKERS OF THE TABLIGHI JAMAAT, WHICH HELD THE MARKAZ EVENT, SPREAD IN STATES AS ON MARCH 21

Tamil Nadu: 125 • Uttar Pradesh: 132

Maharashtra: 115 • Haryana: 115 TELANGANA

82 • West Bengal: 70 • Karnataka: 50 Madhya Pradesh:

49 • Jharkhand: 38 Andhra Pradesh:



throughout India and including abroad, Indonesia and Malaysia, had attended the Tablighi Jamaat congregation in Nizamuddin West area of Delhi from March 1 to 15. This area has now been sealed off following fears that some of those who attended the meeting may have contracted Covid-19.

Over 2.000 delegates from

According to details available, 27 persons from Khammam district and 11 from Bhadradri district attended the prayers. They were among the 1,030 people of Telangana hailing from various districts who attended the prayers.

Following an alert, the Khammam district admin-istration identified and quarantined 10 persons on Sunday. District medical and health officer Malathi said tests were conducted and results that came out on Tuesday showed that none of them had contract-

ed the coronavirus. With this, Khammam district has retained its record of having zero Covid-19 cases. The DMHO said they, gregation in Nizamuddin. Authorities of Bhadradri Kothagudem district too have identified 10 of the 11 persons who attended the Delhi meeting. Five of them belong to Kothagudem, four to Manuguru and one is from Charla. Bhadradri district collector M.V. Reddy said the 10 persons disclosed their identity voluntarily and have been sent into quarantine. Tests have been conducted on them and their reports are awaited. Officials are searching for the remaining 17 persons in Khammam town and one in Bhadradri district. They are not avail-able at the addresses given

Venkateswarlu, G. teacher of Khammam, said those missing must be immediately traced. "Many of us are hoping that the lockdown will end on April 14. We will be freed of tension if the remaining 18 persons are accounted for."

on their railway reserva-

tion application forms.

Many returned from Delhi by road

From Page 1

police.

They were sent to the Gandhi and Chest Hospitals for further screening. Another 348 people were placed under home quarantine while 41 were shifted to isolation wards set up the health department. Across other districts of

In Telangana, officials were

working overtime to trace and contact individuals who attended the Delhi event. In Warangal, 13 of the 32 listed as attendees were yet to be traced, while in Adilabad, 32 more persons who were travelling into Telangana in a van, were stopped for checks, to be discovered that they had attended the

Markaz. It was not immediately known if this large group, belonging to Jagitial, had travelled to Telangana by road all the

way from Delhi. Vemulavada of Karimnagar, four of the Markaz attendees, along with 17 others from their families, were moved to a hospital in Siricilla, to be placed under observation and testing if required. In a sign of magnitude

of the task facing the government in tracing Markaz attendees and their contacts, Niza-mabad district officials said that 53 persons were identified along with 200 of their contacts. Officials are searching for these people on Tuesday.

Air India flight evacuates **38 German nationals**

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

An Air India flight evacuated 38 German nationals (19 women, 17 men and two infants) from the city on a special flight from the Shamshabad airport on Tuesday. The flight had taken off from Chennai in the morning with German nationals based there. From Hyderabad, the aircraft flew on to Mumbai to collect more passengers and fly them to Frankfurt. The passengers were made to pass through a fully-sanitised Interim International Departures Terminal, which was prepared for evacuation



German nationals, who were stranded due to the coronavirus lockdown, board a special flight for Mumbai, at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport in Hyderabad on Tuesday. – PTI

measures such as these. On March 28, the airport Special screening and other safety measures had handled another spe-cial flight to rescue IndiGo were put in place, includcrew stuck in Hyderabad ing thermal screening and The airport's cargo termimandatory social distancnal is fully operational ing via special queuing and is facilitating transarrangements. port of essential supplies.



1 booked for fake

A man who shared his conversation with a doctor from Apollo Hospital on Covid-19 on social media, describing it as a conversation between a reporter and a doctor, and created panic among the citizens, was booked by the Hyderabad cybercrime police.

The fake audio clip was in circulation on social media platforms for quite a few days.

It contained a warning that the virus would infect several lakh of people if they failed to take precautions. The hospital authorities

that the virus would infect several lakh of people if they failed to take precautions. lodged a complaint with the cybercrime police on March 27.

social media platforms

for quite a few days. It

contained a warning

The police said the investigation revealed that the accused recorded a casual conversation and circulated it through social media. Notices have been served on the accused.









SHORT TAKES **MAN WHO MADE** FAKE G.O. ON LIQUOR ARRESTED

JAYENDRA CHAITHANYA T. | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

A man from Uppal was arrested by the Hyderabad cybercrime police for creating a fake government order (GO) on the opening of wine shops in the city, on Tuesday. The police also booked a case on four others for circulating the fake information and served notices to them. On March 28, Excise depart-

ment officials lodged a complaint with the cybercrime police that some unidentified persons had cre-ated a fake GO by forging the signature of the Director of Prohibition and Excise, that wine shops will be opened. The fake GO went viral on social media and at several places the public had gathered at the wine shops believing it to be true.

The cybercrime sleuths identified the origin of the post from Uppal, and held K. Sanish Kumar alias Sunny, 38. It was found that five others had circulated the fake order on social media platforms, and the police served notices to them seeking an explanation.

• ON MARCH 28, Excise department officials lodged a complaint with the cybercrime police that some unidentified persons had created a fake GO by forging the signature of the Director of Prohibition and Excise, that wine shops will be opened.

PRISON INMATES BUILD HYGIENE KITS FOR ₹900

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH I DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

In a bid to cater to the requirement for hand-sanitisers, masks, soaps and phenyl, whose demand has risen astronomically, the prisons department, has come up with a home health and hygiene kit.

These kits which are manufactured by as many as 100 inmates are made in the prison itself.

The kit consists of two bottles of phenyl, two containers of hand sanitiser, three bars of soap and 12 washable masks. This kit is priced at ₹900, say officials of the department.

It said that they would be able to do door delivery if there are 15 or more orders, making it suitable for a resi-

Agents not willing to carry medical items

Despite proper documents, vehicles are not allowed

SHORTAGE OF SUPPLIES TO MANUFACTURERS

KANIZA GARARI I DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

Police action against pharmaceutical company employees, drivers and staff ferrying medicines has raised serious concerns and transporters are not willing to carry medicines, medical equip-ments and other important medical devices. Those who are stuck on national highways, interstate borders are not moving at all as police officials and local administrations

are being violent. Despite documents pertaining to medical equipment, devices and inventories of products being given to them, the move-ment of vehicles is not allowed. Official letters from government departments are being demanded and providing them is not possible, say manufacturers. Company officials, manufacturers, stockists and distributors are talking to officials but it is of no use as the response is different at the ground level.

Due to the lockdown, inter-state borders are closed and convincing officials on both sides to allow the vehicles to cross over is a very difficult task of schedules. which most drivers are not capable of.

This has led to shortage of medicines, equipment and devices in hospitals as well as with pharmacists. Stents, pacemakers for cardiovascular diseases

Raw materials, chemicals for medicines Components to make masks, sanitisers

Medical devices like gloves, consumables, disposables, electronics, equipment, instruments, implants and IVD reagents

SHORTAGE AT STOCKIEST AND CHEMIST POINTS

Masks and sanitisers

Prescription drugs under Schedule H

Gloves, disposables, surgical masks and surgical equipment

and prescription drugs for withdrawal symptoms are not available in the market. Stockists are not supplying products as the people in depots are not reporting to work. There is no public transport for them to travel. Despite the police issuing passes, they are not willing to come to work. Most of them are scared that they will be beaten up. Similarly, those who live

on inter-state borders are not able to come to work as they have to cross borders and that is a cumbersome task. This has led to problems at the manufacturing level, delaying production Interstate borders in

south, west and north India are where major complaints have come, from manufacturers and pharmaceutical companies, as police and collectors are demanding permit papers from industry with government stamps. This has made it very difficult as these materials are stuck at borders and pharmaceutical company officials who have negoti-ated on behalf of companies have also faced very rough behaviour from police officials.

Mr Rajiv Nath, forum coordinator of Association of Indian Medical Device Industry, said, "We have been talking to the central government and they have understood the situation but there are many challenges and states have to co-operate. Their co-operation in allowing workers, transporters and company officials to move the goods is very important. If they do not help, there are com-plaints of shortage of masks, sanitisers, personal protection equipment, implants and many other devices which are

required for emergency patients. There are high end molecules which are sent only by aircraft courier services and we need them to be operational to transport those goods." The Centre has issued

notices to the state governments to allow vehicles carrying medicines and medical devices and equipment to ply. But bureaucratic tangles are making it difficult. "In states, police and collec-tors are not listening as they have not been sensitised by their senior officials. This means that the order of the central government, if it has reached the states at all, has not been communicated to officials. It is a clear case of bureaucratic lapse.

Mr Pavan Choudary, chairman, Medical Technology Association of India, said, "We have had

the department of pharmaceuticals, Cabinet Secretary and home ministry to co-ordinate and instruct the states to allow movement of medicines. We are hoping that they allow as it is a major challenge coordinating at the local level." Delay in the supply of finished products will be covered as soon as states co-operate but the biggest challenge is at the manufacturing level. Workers will not come to work till they are assured that they will not be beaten by police. Till that time, there is no possibility of them returning to work.

Question hour



Police question the motorists for roaming on the streets during the lockdown in - S. SURENDER REDDY. Secunderabad on Tuesday.

Junior doctors in govt hospitals get PPE, N95

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

It took a warning from the Telangana Junior Doctors Association to make the government aware that there is no personal protection equipment in Osmania General Osmania General Hospital, Gandhi Hospital and Niloufer Hospital. On Tuesday personal protection equipment (PPE) and N95 masks were provided in all the three hospitals. A junior doctor said, "We have been demanding these masks and PPE since the outbreak but no one was listening to us. Hospital superintendents are not forwarding our requirements to department. There is a major

communication gap betwsociety and is in an een them. We were made immune compromised to work but no protection state. The parents are running around for funds for was offered, which is not medicines. How did the fair.' child get Covid-19?" This

The 16 junior doctors and post graduates at Niloufer Hospital, who came in contact with a three-year-old child in the general ward who tested positive, are having mild symptoms of Covid-19. The first test has turned negative but they have been asked to stay at home. This exposure has also shown the lack of clinical understanding at the government level to diagnose the disease. A senior doctor Niloufer Hosp

Hospital explained, "The child is from the poor strata of

• JAYANTH, A first-year

MANGO LOVERS HIT BY CLIMATE, LOCKDOWN

lapse has put the health

officials on the alert and

they have asked junior doctors to directly report

to them if they find any

suspicious cases or lapses

The office of health min-

ister Etala Rajendar has asked TJUDA to be in

touch for any of their pro-

blems. The minister has

also asked Telangana St-

ate Medical Services and

Infrastructure Developm-

ent Corporation to ensure

that there are enough

masks and personal pro-

tection equipment.

in providing facilities.

3

pq

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

student of Bogomolets Mango production has undergone a slump this vear as a result of a poor students from the Telugu winter that affected the states in his hostel. They trees and now a shortage of manpower to pick the fruits in time has worsened matters. families to send money to

'More than one-third of the area allocated for mangoes did not reap any yield this year. Also, power to keep the Indian a majority of mango community safe and heagrown here in the state concerns in this difficult is of the pulp variety situation.' This is of little exported to the northern states for manufacture of juices, jams and other such products," Dr G.V. Sai, another student from Hyderabad, said Indian students in Kiev Ramanjenayulu, execuhave to deal with racism. tive director. Centre for 'When we go to shops, Sustainable Agriculture told Deccan Chronicle. Two of the most com-Recently, we tried to buy monly consumed vari-N95 masks at a pharmacy eties of mango are Benishan and Rasalu. Distrbut they refused to sell them to us. Yesterday, a icts like Karimnagar in female student from our Telangana and Kurnool college was not allowed to in Andhra Pradesh are enter a supermarket. The hotspots for the Benipeople there told her it was only for Ukranians," shan variety of mango.

Rachakonda cops rush to help migrants

SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

A video made by migrant workers about their sorry plight, and sent to Deccan Chronicle, got them the help they required. Migrant labourers who

work in the marble and granite stores at LB Nagole, Nagar, Nagole, and Chaitanyapuri are in deep trouble following the nationwide lockdown. Nagar, and

A group of these workers, who made a video of their grievances and sent it to Deccan Chronicle, said they are without work. income, or food. The video was forwarded to Rachakonda police commissioner Mahesh Bhagwat, who responded and made arrangements for necessities and food for the labourers till the lockdown ends. The migrant labourers from Rajasthan, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh, work in the granite and marble stores. loading and unloading the stone or as polishers. They get a daily wage of ₹500. From the time the lockdown was imposed, these men have been jobless and therefore earned nothing have and their savings have been exhausted to the point where they don't have money to pay for



Students stuck in Ukraine, need help

ADITYA CHUNDURU | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

National Medical Several Telugu medical University in Kiev, said students are stuck in there are around 20-25 Ukraine due to the Covid-19 pandemic. They have appealed to political leaders from Andhra Pradesh are running low on and Telangana to somesupplies and need their how get them out and back home. survive. first-year Javanth. student of Bogomolets National Medical University in Kiev, the country's capital city, said lthy and to address their there are around 20-25 students from the Telugu states in his hostel. They comfort to the students. are running low on supplies and need their families to send them large sums of money to sur-"The prices of all vive. goods have gone up. they don't treat us as Everything is two or equal to Ukrainians. three times more costly," he said.

dential community or apartment block to purchase.

'We have seen that people are scrambling for these hygiene products. So, we thought we can rope in the jail inmates to produce these items on a large scale," Rajiv Trivedi, Director General, prisons and correctional services, told Deccan Chronicle. The prisons department has been receiving as many as 150 orders for these kits per

day. "One kit can last a family of four for three weeks at least. And, if used conservatively, it could go up to one month," he added.

For placing orders, it has said that people should call 9866092127.

THE DEPT said it would be able to do door delivery if there are 15 or more orders. making it suitable for a residential community or apartment block to purchase.



"We are also worried Uttar Pradesh, who works that our landlords will as a stone polisher said in now ask for room rent. We the video. equest the authorities to The group also men-either provide us a place tioned that there are

to stay and food or send us around 80 people like

Tuesday. them who are still here while the rest have left for

their native places hiding in trucks. "I live in a shared single room with eight persons. People living in four rooms share bathroom," said one Ramjeet Ramdhar.

Migrant labourers que in large numbers to collect the ration and money assured by

to migrant labourers on

the government in Vittalwadi, Narayanaguda on Tuesday.

Along with these 80 Rachakonda police commissioner Mahesh Bhagwat dismigrant labourers, there are other groups of migrants in this locality. tribute necessities and food The police have extended a helping hand to all of them.

Inspector Janaki Reddy of the Chaitanyapuri police distributed fruits and later lunch was provided. The men also got a lecture on precautions they must take to protect themselves from the Coronavirus. A patrol car has been attached to these migrant labourers for future assistance.

– P. SURENDRA

The Indian Embassy in Kiev is unable to help. The officer there told us it is impossible to organise a flight since both Ukraine and India are not allowing flights to operate,"Jayanth said. he said.

The students are tweet-The Indian Embassy's website carries a notice ing to the handles of that says: 'The political leaders, the Government of India is Ministry of External committed to carry out all Affairs and the prime necessary steps within its minister to help them.

Official records show that mango plantation takes place on 2.8 to 3 lakh acres and bears 10 lakh metric tonnes of fruit.

'There are mangoes, picked for manufacture of pickles this year, that still lying in godowns as there is no transport willing to collect them. Growing mangoes has also become an arduous task because there is no manpower to come and collect the mangoes. Usually, by this time of the year, we receive several stockpiles of the fruit in godowns at Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra, we do not have that as yet," said S. Insram Ali, president, mango growers association of India.

Concurring with that, officials of the horticulture department say that the rearing of the fruit took a hit due to the lack of manpower which tends to the orchards.

"It is not just the lockdown that is to blame here, even climatic reasons like the lack of winter, has also contributed to the lack of mango production," said Kiran Kumar Adapa, associate dean of the horticulture university Rajendranagar.

Sudden unavailability of liquor has forced addicts to get their highs from cough syrup, analgesic DRUG ABUSE Medical shops become go-to places for alcoholics

cation," he said.

VIKRAM SHARMA I DC HYDERABAD MARCH 31

Late on Sunday evening, this 32-year-old complained of nausea, dizziness, was sweating profusely, and appeared confused. His father, a small-time businessman, frantically called up a doctor and insisted that he wanted to see him right away after home remedies failed to provide relief.

The patient reluctantly informed the doctor that he was addicted to alcohol. "But now there is no alcohol available, right?" the doctor said. After persistent questioning, the patient admitted that he had been getting high on cough syrups for the past one week.

With liquor shops shut across the state, medical shops have become the go-to place for those desperate enough

to take anything to get high. Alcoholics are now getting

food.

hooked on cough syrups, and injectable medicines. both of which are cheap and easily available over the counter. Industrial spirits and even diluted bleach are other options, besides adhesives used to patch up cycle tubes and soles of footwear. and other forms of glue and whiteners.

According to officials dealing with narcotics and doctors who were interviewed by Deccan Chronicle. the sudden unavailability of liquor due to the lockdown has forced addicts to get their highs from other cheaply available substances.

"Purchasing a few bottles of cough syrup or injectables like Fortwin (a potent analgesic medicine used in the treatment of severe pain) over the counter is an

• **PEOPLE USING** cough syrup or injections tend to have extreme anxiety, memory impairment,

hallucinations, paranoia, restlessness, sleep disturbance, poor appetite and in extreme cases, cardiac arrests.

substances like easy task and comes cheap. Moreover, now that medical shops are not insisting much on prescriptions due to the long queues amid the coronavirus scare, it has sultant Apollo Hospitals. become much easier," an official said.

^{*}Because addicts have stopped drinking suddenly, they are experiencing alco-He says that though cough syrups, injections, adhe-sives, different forms of hol withdrawal effects. They would also be having glue. ganja, etc., have always been used by addicts, the effects of whatever subtheir use is bound to stitute they have taken, increase manifold due to making the clinical picture

very confusing," Dr Reddy non-availability of liquor. "Whenever prohibition of added. A doctor who has several liquor is enforced in any VIP patients, disclosed that state, people get used to

other cheap forms of intoxiit is not only the lower strata of society that consumes "While there is a sudden cough syrups to get high. surge of patients with alco-"Businessmen, housewives hol withdrawals since the from affluent families too have used it at some point or the other. After all, rock last three days, some of them have also come with symptoms of usage of other stars and hip-hop artists too cough syrups, some unknown liquids mixed with industrial spirits and even diluted bleach," says Dr Bharat Kumar Reddy, senior conpsychiatrist of

have taken cough syrup, which sort of made it a cool thing to do and people just followed. In a situation where alcohol is not available, the use of other cheaply available forms of intoxication obviously goes up,'

he said. In fact, states such as Bihar, which imposed total prohibition in 2016, saw a sudden spurt in the use of other forms of intoxication. Punjab, which has many cases of drug addiction, has

also been witnessing massive abuse of drugs such as buprenorphine, and cough

syrups and injections. "Most of the abusers of cough syrup or injections take them in higher doses. This causes dizziness, impaired judgment and hallucinations. Some cough and cold syrups in higher doses can cause life threatening problems including cardiac arrest. I have personally come across some youngsters who have been using these forms of intoxicants," says Dr Subhash Kaul, consultant neurologist at KIMS hospital.

Dr Bharat Reddy explains that alcoholics usually fall into two groups. One group of addicts cannot tolerate abstinence and develop withdrawal symptoms and in desperation, use whatever substitute they can. The









lies on

second group of people have

co-morbid mental health

issues such as depression,

anxiety, personality issues

and they use alcohol as self-

medication. This group also

starts looking for substi-

tutes when alcohol is

An official in the Narcotics Control Bureau

(NCB) said that there is no

way this misuse of syrups

and injections can be con-

trolled in the present situa-

"Panic buying of medi-

cines has become the order

of the day and how does one

tell who is buying the medi-

cine for what purpose? The

the parents or spouses to

check whether the family

member is consuming

cough syrups or injections

to get high in the absence of

responsibility

alcohol," he said.

unavailable.

tion



DECCAN CHRONICLE | HYDERABAD | WEDNESDAY | 1 APRIL 2020

phlegmatic posturing by employees could not be considered as a red her-

Through a late evening

TRS government

government order (GO),

announced a 50 per cent

pay cut to 70 per cent of

employees and pensioners — rest being staffers of

Public Sector Undertak-

ings (PSUs) and out-

sourced employees. Even

employees of PSUs, including the Singareni Collieries Company Ltd, would also be affected

under the 50 per cent pay

cut scheme, though the employees of electricity

department might be

A ballpark estimate is

that the monthly salary

bill of Telangana runs to

almost ₹3,200 crore. Excluding the electricity employees and outsourced

employees, the salary

outgo aggregates to about

₹2,850 crore. A cut by

means the state govern-ment will save ₹1,400 crore

a month owing to this deci-

Despite the Covid-19 being a global crisis and

no one being immune to it,

Telangana government staff find the pay cut an

unpalatable decision, with

employee and their fami-

lies being furious at Mr

Rao' decision. For almost

all employees who depend

on salaries, the equated

monthly instalments (EMIs) of housing loan,

car loan, personal loan,

and in some cases, house rent, milk bill, grocery,

cable TV bill, electricity

bill, often empties the

bank accounts where

exempted.

sion.

ring.



GIVING ADVANCE

KANIZA GARARI | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

PAY, SAY DOCTORS

Upset that 50 per cent of their salary will be cut,

government doctors dema-

nded that they ought to be

given a bonus and appreci-

ated. Instead, the govern-

ment has angered them by

not even paying their dues

, despite their working in

conditions where there is

not adequate personal pro-

tection equipment and N 95 masks to protect them

Government doctors have

salaries have been given.

"Doctors and healthcare

them, the TS want to impose

a salary cut of 50 pc," asked

A senior doctor wrote, "This is truly disgusting and

demoralising the doctor fra-

ternity. Instead of boosting

our morale, the Telangana

government is diverting our

attention as we will not get

our regular rightful salary. Scarcity of funds is only an

excuse not to carry out their

duties and appreciate those

who are fighting day and

night with minimal resources in hospitals." The Telangana Joint Action Committee (TJAC)

of health and medical dep-

artment got into action as

from Covid-19.

one.

SHORT TAKES HALF SALARY, PENSION UNFAIR, SAY PARENTS

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

The Telangana Parents Association (TPA) vehemently opposed the state government order to pay half the salaries and pensions of state employees and pensioners for March

Nagati Narayana, state president, TPA in a letter to the Chief Minister over the issue said that it was irresponsible of the government to pass such an order during the lockdown.

"In the situation that we see today, the expenditure being incurred by the people is immense. Most of the salary and pension goes into paying rent and EMIs, stocking up basic essentials and fulfilling medical needs.

Families are facing financial problems. This order will defeat the spirit of the lockdown," he said.

Mr. Narayana, on behalf of the Telangana Parents Association, demanded that the government retire the order and pay full salaries and pensions.

SALARIES WILL NOT BE CUT BUT DELAYED: STATE

S.N.C.N. ACHARYULU | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

The state government has clarified that it has not cut the salaries of its employees but has only deferred their payment.

It may be recalled that the Telangana government had earlier announced a cut in salaries of all government employees including All India Service (AIS) officers and public representatives including MLAs.

and Employees others thought that they will lose a part of their salary due to the government's decision.

According to an order issued by the state administration on Tuesday, the government is only deferring the payment of salaries, wages allowances.

The order says due to the present crisis, the state government has decided deferment in payment of salaries from the month of March 2020, payable on 1st April. This order will be in force till a further order is issued in this regard.

Officials too have clarified that only a part of the salary will be paid for the month of March. The balance salary will be paid to all at a

Workers angry with KCR over pay cut

Employees, families find decision unpalatable; move may also demoralise them amid Covid fight DC CORRESPONDENT **OTHER STATES** HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

KCR says state is revenue surplus, The decision of Chief Minister K. Chandrashe-kar Rao to cut the monthly why cut salary, ask Congress, BJP pay of state government employees by half has come as a shocker to

employees. Though nobody has dared to chal-lenge it, considering the war-like situation, the S.A. ISHAOUI I DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

The state Congress has strongly opposed the deci-sion of the state government to cut salaries of government employees and slash pensions. BJP state president Bandi Sanjay Kumar also vehemently opposed the decision of Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao. Mr Kumar requested the Chief Minister to reconsider his decision of paying only 50 per cent of salary to government employees, teachers and pensioners and deferring salaries and pensions to 10per cent of Class IV employees and pension-

ers. Expressing complete sol-idarity with Mr Rao's efforts to contain the spread of Covid-19, he pointed out that the Chief Minister had declared Telangana as a surplus revenue state. He said, "I am unable to understand how could the

state financial position deteriorated in less than 15 days of announcing of the lockdown. He reminded that Prime

Minister Narendra Modi had directed paying of salaries to employees of

salaries are deposited. There is still confusion over the announcement made by Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman about moratorium or deferment on EMI payments, including if it applies from April 1, whether banks have cali-brated their software to defer deduction of instalments towards loans through auto-debit mode.

• KOMATIREDDY VENKATA REDDY ques-tioned how could the state became poor within less than 15 days and be unable to pay the full salaries and pensions.

private and even unorganavirus operations and the ised sectors for the lockdown period. If the government cuts salaries, it is obvious that the private sector will take advantage of it, Mr Sanjay said. Several Congress lead-

ral Congress including MPs Hay Venkata ers Komatireddy Venkata Reddy and A. Revanth Reddy, former minister Mohammed Ali Shabbir, and TPCC treasurer Gudur Narayana Reddy, AICC official spokesperson Dasoju Sravan and TPCC spokesperson Indira Shoban while opposing the state's decision said Mr Chandrashekar Rao was wrongly trying to take advantage of an epidemic to cut down the salaries of employees and pensions. They said that the move would demoralise the government staff which has

been working relentlessly for the last 10 days to pre-vent the spread of coronavirus in the state. They said that employees of all departments are

There is also confusion whether it applies to personal loans and credit cards, and if individuals should apply to respective banks seeking to avail the moratorium. Most employees, who would receive only 50 per cent of salary, are keeping their fingers crossed.

A several staff union leader in Telangana, who requested anonymity sayа

health, police, energy and municipal administrations departments are working round the clock basis to provide essential services to the people during the lockdown, employees of other departments are taking care of logistics and other managerial tasks.While demanding that the government issue

a White Paper on the state finances and explain the sudden economic crisis, Mr Shabbier Ali said, "it will be a shock for all the employees to learn that they would be getting only 50 per cent of their salary this month." He accused the govern-

ment of forcing the employees to share the financial burden of war against coronavirus. Mr Narayana Reddy said that the Chief Minister should first disclose the figures for funds spent by the state government to

"Everybody perceived huge expenditure on Kaleswaram project and other irrigation schemes, close to ₹ 1.20 lakh crore, an investment to generate permanent economic

He said "while expenditure to deal with the coronavirus situation should be the top priority, it cannot be used as an excuse to cut salaries of government employees.

Komatireddy Mr Venkata Reddy reminded that during the announcement of lockdown, the Chief Minister had announced spending of ₹10,000 crores to combat Covid-19 as Telangana state is rich.

He questioned how could the state became poor within less than 15 days and be unable to pay the full salaries and pensions. Dr Sravan said state employees who had retired depend solely on their pensions. f they get only 50 per cent of their pension at this crucial ĥour they would suffer mental agony and trauma. Ms Shoban said that instead giving incentives to the employees who are on 24x7 duty since the outbreak of Covid-19, the move to cut salaries was inhuman.

leaders Congress demanded that the government withdraw the decision for and re-assure the employees they would not face any financial burden.

activity. The service of employees in making this project a reality was not small. Yet, today we are being punished," he said.

Leader of another union said, "half pay would mean half work or halfhearted work. For that matter, every scheme launched by TRS govern-ment has been a big hit with wholehearted and full-fledged support of employees. But, now they are pained as resources into exchequer ebbed for no fault of ours." The state government

employees were looking forward to amounts they might receive as arrears and enhanced monthly pay, once pay-revision commission submits its recommendations and the same were implemented. The PRC would have to be implemented from July 1, 2018. Now, with Covid-19 casting its darkest shadow

on prospect of implementing PRC, government employees are despondent. "They are now feeling it would be enough if cur-rent salary hits their accounts without a cut, leave alone a revised and enhanced pay check," said a union leader.

been messaging each other The dole promised to government staff during on social media that the government must take a look at elections includes enhancother states like Tamil Nadu ing retirement age to 61 and scrapping of Contrand Odisha where advance ibutory Pension Scheme; now, these two are also staff are carrying out untirunlikely to happen. ing work in this pandemic and instead of rewarding Employees are irked that

Chief Minister Rao suddenly announced the decision to cut their pay. "He could have discussed options and cut pay by 25 per cent and cut expenditure on welfare schemes partially too," he said.

"The state is spending almost ₹25,000 crore for purchase of more than one crore metric tonnes of paddy and entire output of maize. If the state had purchased only 50 per cent of these two crops, it could have utilised the remaining ₹12,500 crore for other things," said a senior bureaucrat.

"CM Rao could have bal-anced other welfare schemes to maintain salary and pension bill. Instead, he forced his own machinery to sacrifice government staff earnings. Maybe employees would grudgingly hold their anger for now and uncork bottled-up anger later," he said.

doctors demanded that go-vernment must be apprised of their work and their salaries must not be cut. The TJAC explained that out-patient department is everyday seeing patients with cough, cold and fever and many of them are not

revealing their travel and contact histories.

Revanth opposes CM's decision on salary cut

IREDDY SRINIVAS REDDY I DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

TPCC working presi-dent and Malkajgiri country is facing Jongress MP Revanth

tors and Class 4 employ-ees and police, all of Ranga Reddy district. whom are on 24x7 duty following the outbreak of Covid 10 of Covid-19. a public hearing on The MP said: "The April 3 in this regard.

Mr Revanth Reddy also

questioned the irriga-

tion department's move

calling tenders on Monday for works to be

undertaken for the third

phase of lifting water

from the Kaleshwaram

project.

IN FOND MEMORY 7th ANNIVERSARY

deal with the coronavirus and the estimated revenue the loss to the exchequer involved in anti-corondue to the lockdown. ing "this is not the right time to blame it on government", said it is employees who make any government scheme a success. though politicians take credit.



later date. Officials maintain that the government is not in a position to pay the full salaries at present due to financial constraints.

• OFFICIALS TOO have clarified that only a part of the salary will be paid for the month of March. The balance salary will be paid to all at a later date

Reddy has found fault calamity because of with the decision of Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao to Covid-19. In such a crisis, the government should not take hasty impose 50 per cent cut in decisions. salaries of state govern-He regretted that on ment employees and one hand, the government was appealing that pensioners.

Covid cricket



Youth kill time playing cricket in an open space near Jamai Osmania railway station on Tuesday.

- GANDHI

nabbed for arson attempt

JAYENDRA CHAITHANYA T | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

Two men from the city attempted to burn a reli-gious place, an RTC bus and an ATM centre. They hurled petrol bombs at the religious place last week but there was no damage to property or life, said the Hyderabad police.

On March 14, some bottles of liquor were found at a place of worship in Madannapet. On checking,

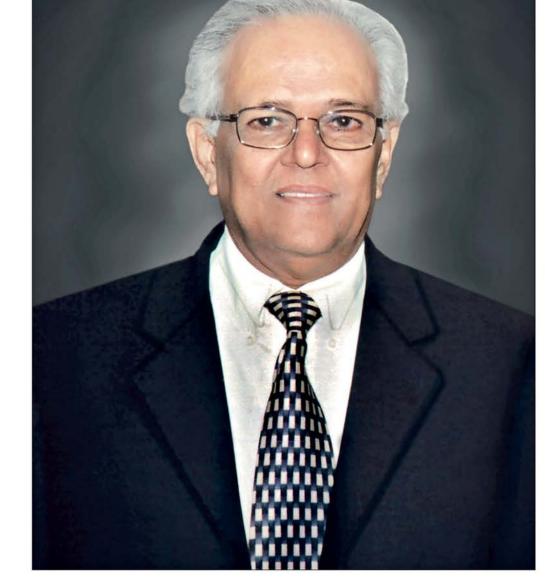
police found that they were filled with kerosene, and it was an attempt to set ablaze Task Force Additional DCP G. Chakravarthy. "They closely observed the incithe place. There was no

dents in Delhi and at Shaheen Bagh. They also damage to property or life. The South Zone Task Force sleuths on Tuesday watched the recent riots in Delhi on social media appliapprehended Arshad, 22. cations. They were attractand Abdul Wasi, 20, both residents of the city, and ed to the speeches against the CAA and assumed that childhood friends, for these their community may be crimes. expelled from the country,"

The two were motivated Mr Chakravarthy said. by the imposition of the He said the accused believed that the Centre Citizenship Amendment Act and the National Register of Citizens, said was suppressing the Muslim community and so

they hatched a plan to dis-turb the peaceful atmos-phere in the city.

In the course of the investigation, police found that Arshad and Wasi were also involved in attempts to set ablaze an RTC bus at Kanchanbagh, an Axis Bank ATM kiosk at Chandrayangutta and a religious place at Madannapet, said the Additional DCP. He said further investigation is underway in all the three cases and the accused will be produced before a court.



Sri A. BALA KUMAR

4th October 1941 - 1st April 2013

Daddy, Deep in our hearts you'll always inspire us. We miss you every day.

Always Yours : Bagi, Madhavi, Suneetha, Seenu, Nanna, and SNL FAMILY











SHORT TAKES

MAHA ANNOUNCES 8% CUT IN POWER **TARIFF FOR 5 YRS**

DC CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, MARCH 31

The Maharashtra government on Monday announced an average of eight per cent electricity tariff cut for the next five years to help business and people tide over the Covid-19 crisis. While the industry has been given the highest benefits, farmers will have to contend with one per cent reduction in electricity costs, according to an official statement.

According to an official statement, the Maharashtra Electricity Regulatory Commission has approved a move to cut tariffs by an average of seven to eight per cent, which is first such measure in the past 10-15 years. New tariff will be implemented from April 1.

Meanwhile, the Maharashtra government on Tuesday has decided to pay the salaries of the elected representatives and government employees in 'two installments' to combat financial crisis owing to the outbreak of coronavirus. The government alleged that the decision was taken as the Centre failed to pay its dues of ₹16,654 crore of the financial year 2019-20.

A Government Resolution (GR) issued later said that elected representatives including the chief minister, ministers and MLAs will get their salaries for March with 60 per cent deduction. The salaries of group A and B will be deducted by 50 per cent.

COPS ASK BJP MLA IN WB TO STAY AT HOME

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, MARCH 31

An MLA in West Bengal has been allegedly threatened by the police to stay home or face action after he was found distributing food among people near his residence at ČE Block in Salt Lake for the past three days amidst nation-wide lock down due to Covid-19 pandemic as the death toll rose to 3 with the total number of confirmed cases at 27 in the state. On Monday evening a senior officer of the Bidhannagar North police station knocked the door Sabyasachi Dutta, the New Town legislator who recently defected from the Trinamul Congress to the BJP. He told him that he would

not be allowed to step out of home further due to the lock-

TABLIGHI EVENT RINGS ALARM BELLS IN KERALA TOO

GILVESTER ASSARY |

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MARCH 31

The death of a few due to Covid–19 who attend-ed the Tablighi Jamaat religious congregation in Nizamuddin has prompted Kerala authorities to sound an alert in the state to locate people who returned from the Delhi

event. What is of concern for Kerala is the death of a retired professor who belongs to Melevetti-puram in Pathanamthitta who died while taking part in the Nizamuddin event. M Salim died of cardiac arrest on March 24.

As the results of his samples are awaited, it cannot be said conclu-sively that he died due to Covid-19.

The funeral of the patient took place in Delhi as the body could not be brought to his native place because of the nation-wide lockdown.

After reports came in that ten persons who took part in the event died of Covid-19, 25 participants were tested positive and 700 have been quarantined, the Pathamathitta district administration is not taking any chances.

Six persons who returned from Delhi after attending the event and two persons with whom he stayed in Delhi have already been put on home quarantine. The district adminis-

tration is preparing a list of people with whom Salim came into contact recently. All will be put under quarantine.

Lens on 299 from Assam who went to Delhi event

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, MARCH 31

Assam health minister Himanta Biswa Sarma here on Tuesday said that a 52-years old person who travelled to New Delhi recently was detected positive for coronavirus. In a social media post, the minister said that coronavirus positive patient was undergoing treatment at Silchar Medical College and his condition was stable. The

minister, however, refused to divulge more details in this regard as detection of a positive case involves a series of exercise to iden-

tify and trace the persons who came in contact with the patient and quarantine them to check the spread. The hospital sources said that patient is resident of Karimganj and had trav-elled to new Delhi recently. He was first tested on March 18 and thereafter his sample was sent to

NIV, Pune which on Tuesday confirmed that patient was suffering from Covid-19. In related development Assam government on Tuesday launched search operation and sought help of citizens in tracing the whereabouts of 299 persons who attended

the religious congregation at Nizamuddin in Delhi. Asking the citizens to voluntarily report themselves to health authority, Assam health minister Himanta Biswa Sarma in an appeal through various means including social media also asked people in neighbourhood either to persuade or report about the presence of such peo-ple on helpline number

104 He said, ""If there is anyone from Assam who attended the religious conof Tablighi at Hazrat gregation of Jamaat at Nizamuddin in Delhi. IMMEDIATELY please

report voluntarily to the nearest government hospital or by calling Helpline no # 104. Please treat this

as very important.' Pointing out that Assam government is now in pos-session of a list of persons, who were present in and around the hotspot near Nizamuddin Dargah the health minister said, 'We've alerted district administrations to find out if these people have returned to Assam. We have also issued strict instructions to quarantine them if they are in the state.

The minister of state health Pijush Hazarika

told reporters, "We have received information that 216 persons from Assam had attended the religious congregation and out of them, 28 are from Nagaon district. The Nagaon district Deputy Commi-ssioner and Superintendent of Police told me that none of the 28 persons have returned to the district so far. But we are alert. The figure may go up. I appeal to the people who attended the Nizamuddin event and returned to the state to immediately voluntarily

decided to ease lockdown norm and said that construction of embankments and work in tea gardens and agricultural farms would be exempted from the ambit of the lockdown from April 1. that will free lakhs of people from the restrictions of social dis-

tancing. The cabinet meeting also decided to allow all trucks carrying food items and other essentials stuck at Sri Rampur gate along the Assam-West Bengal border from April 1. Besides, the state government also allowed to open all factories producing rice, flour

Meanwhile, Assam government on Tuesday



3 FROM ODISHA WHO ATTENDED DELHI EVENT IN ISOLATION

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, MARCH

Odisha government has identified three persons who attended the religious congregation at Hazrat Nizamuddin in Delhi. The identified persons have been kept under hospital quarantine while efforts were on to find if more persons had attended the event.

'So far we have identified three persons who attended the religious congregation and Hazart Nizamuddin and they are currently under hospital quarantine. Our surveillance teams are working to find out if any more persons had attended the event. Family members of the identified persons have been kept under home isolation," Odisha gov-ernment's Covid-19 chief spokesperson Subrato Bagchi said on Tuesday. Mr Bagchi said the Covid-19 situation in Odisha was quite under control as there has not been any addition to the affected persons since March 26 and attributed the credit to the over-

whelming support of the people to the lockdown call by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "So far, 473 samples have been examined out

of which three tested

positive. However, we

are not complacent nor do we think it's an

were being taken to test and segregate positive

home ministry said in its daily briefing on Tuesday that over 6.6 lakh strand ed and destitute people have been housed in 21,000 shelter camps across the country and over 23 lakh people are being provided with food at these camps. The Supreme Court, hearing petitions seeking directions to provide food and shelter to migrant workers, told the Centre that with summer knocking there should be adequate water, including drinking water, food, beds, medicine and people should not face any force or intimidation at the camps. "You will ensure that all those whose migration you have stopped are taken care of in terms of food, shelter, nourishment and medical aid,' Chief Justice Sharad A. Bobde told the Central government, represented by Mr Mehta. CJI Bobde, heading the bench, also emphasised that shelters should be free from the use of force or intimidation.

The house of a person who attended the religious congregation at a mosque in Delhi's Nizamuddin area being sanitised at Velladichivila near - PTI Nagercoil on Tuesday.

J&K bizman feared to be 'super spreader'

Man travelled by air, train and road; attended Delhi event

New Delhi, March 31: A Srinagar-based businessman who attended the Tablighi Jamaat congre-Tablighi Jamaat congre-March 9 and took a sleeper and a cai rier of the virus. coach of a train for took a flight to Srinagar Deoband, where he attendfrom where he drove to Sopore in north Kashmir, ed a meeting at the Darul about 54 km away. Two days later, he returned to his home in Two days later, on March 11, he took another train Srinagar, again by road. Tracking the travel his-"He complained of chest tory of the man, who was pain and normal flu on in his mid-60s, officials said many of the passen-March 21 and was taken to a nearby hospital and later to the super specialty gers travelling with him in the trains have been put SKIMS hospital in Soura on the outskirts of Srinagar," an official said. under quarantine after authorities dug out their Doctors were initially of In Jammu, the businessthe opinion that he had a pollen allergy, common in man met up with his docfriend and both Kashmir during spring. addressed a religious con-The next day, however, gregation in a mosque in Samba on the outskirts of his condition deteriorated and he was shifted to the and Disease Chest The two were together Hospital in the city where till March 16 and stayed at he died on March 26. lodge, since sealed, in The elderly gentleman was the first coronavirus Bari Bramhmana outside fatality in Jammu and Kashmir, which reported 55 cases. The doctor, now in a which has Jammu hospital in a criti-As news spread about to the death, officials began tracking his movements closely. He is believed to have spread the virus to at

more as well.

Migrants may be virus carriers, Centre tells SC

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

A day after the Uttar Pradesh administration received flack for spray-

cases from others.

Separately, the Union

down

Mr Dutta, who was also the Bidhannagar Mayor during his stint with the Trinamul, wondered, "Why can't I help the people in their need if the ruling party's leaders are doing the same?"

On Tuesday morning when he was about to go out of his residence, another cop visited and cautioned him that he would be booked in a case which may lead to his arrest.

Undeterred, Mr Dutta however vowed to go out to help the people.

The threat and warning by the police reflect the state government's excesses," claimed.

State BJP president and Midnapore MP Dilip Ghosh, also a resident of Salt Lake, rushed to Mr Dutta who later met a senior officer of the Bidhannagar Police Commissionerate to allow his social work.

WON'T GIVE MP FUNDS, SAYS **AIMIM MP**

Aurangabad, March 31: Aurangabad Lok Sabha MP and Maharashtra AIMIM chief Imtivaz Jaleel on Tuesdav said his local area development funds were meant for his constituency and he would not hand it over to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund in view of the novel coronavirus outbreak.

He said there were many problems in his area that need to be tackled and he would use the funds, also called the Member of Parliament Local Area Development fund, for this purpose.

"I had got a call from the Union Urban Development ministry on Tuesday about handing over funds to the PM Relief Fund. I welcome the steps taken by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to fight the novel coronavirus outbreak. But the MP fund is for con-stituency development," he said.

He said he would hand over a letter about his funds to the district and state administration in a day or two.

gation ın Nizamuddin travelled by air, train and to Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and back to Jammu and Kashmir before he died of Covid-19, raising fears he may have infected many others along the way, officials said on Tuesday.

Among his possible victims is a doctor battling for life in a Jammu hospital. The businessman died

on March 26 in a Srinagar hospital, 19 days after he set off for the national capital. He could have infected

scores of people during his travels and about 300 people have been put under quarantine because of him, officials said.

Recapping his movements, they said he left by air from Srinagar to Delhi on March 7 to attend the congregation the of Tablighi Jamaat, an orthodox Muslim organisation at the centre of the coron-

the city. Jammu city.

Uloom seminary.

to Jammu.

details.

cal condition, belongs to Rajouri district of Jammu avirus spread with 24 of the 2,000 odd participants region, officials said. At least 45 people from his testing positive. area have been quaran-

The passenger lists of the flights on which he travelled were also pulled out and every individual was picked up and put under necessary quarantine, they said, adding the two doctors who had examined him were also taken for quarantine.

Authorities across the country have swung into action to trace the contacts of those who attended the Tablighi Jamaat congregation, attended by hundreds of people, including from Malaysia, Arabia Saudi and Indonesia.

Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain said 1,033 people in Nizamuddin West have been shifted to various places.

"An estimated 700 people who attended this congregation have been quarantined while around 335 people have been admitted hospitals," he told reporters.

Besides, all those who participated in the event are being screened.

migrant labourers with some unspecified chemicals, the Centre told the Supreme Court on Tuesday that there is a possibility that three out of 10 migrant workers heading towards their villages are carrying the

deadly novel coronavirus. The court was also told by the Centre that now there are no migrant workers on the road, a submission contradicted by reports and images coming in on Tuesday of thousands of migrant workers stuck at borders, sleeping under flyovers, on footpaths, bus stands.

"We are trying to ensure that no migration is permitted. It would be risky for them and for the village populations. So far, rural India is unaffected by coronavirus but there is possibility of three out of 10 moving from cities to rural areas carrying the virus," solicitor general Tushar Mehta told the court, without specifying how this figure was arrived at, or what steps

achievement. We are taking all precautions to ensure that the disease does not assume serious proportions. Many of our cities and towns like Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Puri, Bargarh and Jeypore have equal or more per-square-km population than Rome, New York and San Francisco," said Mr Bagchi.

Stating that 57 persons were kept under hospi-tal quarantine, he said 11,575 people with foreign and domestic travel history were advised home isolation.

On Odisha's migrant workers stranded in other states, Odisha home secretary Sanjiv Chopra said senior officers were in touch with their counterparts in other states to ensure shelter and food to them. In Jharsuguda, health minister Naba Kishore Das said the state government would set up Covid-19 hospital in all 30 districts.

20,000 houses marked home quarantine

DC CORRESPONDENTS NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

Over 20.000 houses have 2.500 so that social distancbeen marked as "home ing is adhered to effectivequarantine" by the Delhi ly. Home quarantine has to government in the wake of be strictly monitored. the novel coronavirus out-More than 20,000 homes Lieutenant have been identified by break, Governor Anil Baijal said GNCTD for home quaranon Tuesday.

tine," he tweeted. In another tweet, the Taking to Twitter, the L-G said the number of food Lieutenant Governor said distribution centres will that the decision to also be increased to increase food distribution ensure social distancing centres was taken after reports that social distancin the national capital.

ing norms were violated at

"My advice to adminis-

very strict watch on social

distancing & home quar-

some centres.

widely

Baijal held a meeting with Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Chief Secretary Vijay Kumar Dev and Police Commissioner through video conference to discuss measures to combat Covid-19.

Separately, action to ramp "It has been decided to

increase the number of food distribution centres from the present 500 to Governor tweeted.

Another doctor tests positive

Another doctor from mohalla clinic in Delhi has tested positive for coronavirus.

A notice outside a community clinic in Delhi's Babarpur asked patients who visited the clinic between March 12 and 20 to quarantine themselves at their homes for the next two weeks.

This is the second such incident at a Delhi mohalla clinic in one week.

tration & police is to keep The clinic in Mohanpuri area of Maujpur was antine. Take deterrent closed and sanitised.

actions for any violation & The doctor's wife and daughter also tested posipublicise. tive for coronavirus. Soon

up medical facilities to be after the doctor was tested positive, a similar notice positive, a similar notice was put outside the Maujpur clinic asking people who came in contact with the doctor to quarantine themselves.

The first doctor had contracted the coronavirus infection on March 21 from a 38-year-old woman from Dilshad Garden, who had visited the doctor's private clinic on March 12, with symptoms such as

cough and fever. deaths have been reported from the city so far.

The chain of infection at Maujpur started with a woman who returned from Saudi Arabia on

March 10, and visited the clinic with symptoms of Covid-19. The doctor was exposed to the virus when the 38-year-old woman visited the clinic on March 12, according to Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain.

Five days later, she tested positive. That day, the doctor was also admitted to the hospital.

According to information available, five more persons had tested positive for the virus from direct contact with the woman - her mother, brother and two daughters, and a relative who picked her up from the Delhi airport on her arrival

Some 74 persons in her neighbourhood are also under watch.

New Delhi, March 31: need to understand and appreciate that this is not Amid apprehensions of the time to do any fault substantial spread of Covid-19 after a religions congregation in Nizamuddin in the national capital left many infected with the virus. the Health Ministry on Fuesday said it was not the time to find faults. The Delhi Police has

Not the time to

find faults: Centre

cordoned off a major area in Nizamuddin West where many people showed symptoms of coronavirus and 24 have tested positive after taking part in a religious congregation that was attended by over 2,000 people.

Nizamuddin area, we all coronavirus symptoms.

finding. What is important for us is to take action as per our containment process in any area where a positive case gets reported,"Agarwal said in response to a question on whether there was an "intelligence failure" on the administration's part to prevent the religious mass gathering.

Meanwhile, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday said 1,548 people have been evacuated Nizamudddin markaz (centre) here of which, 441 were hospi-"With respect to the talised after they showed











from

It may be noted that Delhi has recorded nearly 50 cases in the last two days as the Covid-19 count crossed the 100-mark: two

Chronicle 1 APRIL 2020

More vigilance needed to keep Covid-19 at bay

he sudden outbreak and detection of a large number of coron-avirus cases that can be traced back to a thousands-strong reli-gious congregation held in New Delhi's Nizamuddin area, that has already caused the deaths of at least 10 Indians and one foreigner in different parts of the country (including six in Telangana), is a warning on the perils of not taking "social distancing" seriously. At least 250 for-eign nationals — including from virus-hit Malaysia and Indonesia — had come to attend the congregation hosted by the Tablighi Jamaat at its Markaz facility in the first half of March, many of whom were among the 1,500-odd people still there on Monday, when the city's health authorities swung into action and took at least 300 of them to hospitals. At least 24 of them have tested positive. True, the event was held before the lockdown went into effect in Delhi and the rest of India, but given the flurry of advisories early on cautioning people against gatherings of large numbers of people due to the virus threat, the actions of both the Tablighi Jamaat and the governmental authorities in allowing it to carry on was irresponsible, to say the least. The area was finally cleared on Tuesday morning, with the police moving 700-plus people to quarantine in different parts of the city, and a police case lodged against the mosque administration, but the

damage has largely been done. While the Talbighi incident is a wake-up call on the consequences of slackness in the face of a health emergency, the callous actions of those in authority in the face of the grave humanitarian crisis that we face - particularly the plight of migrants with no food or shelter who feel compelled to make the long trek homewards — is also a cause of great alarm. The shocking action of the municipal authorities in Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh — in hosing down a large group of migrants on the move with a chemical solution described by some as "insecticide" — was brutal and inhuman, to say the very least. In the face of outrage in the social media after a video of the spraying went viral, and vociferous protests by Opposition leaders, the district magistrate of the area was forced to admit that the municipal authorities had "gone too far", but who will be held responsible for this horror? This was one more example, if any was needed, that the rights and protections that our middle classes take for granted — even in extraordinary times — do not seem to apply to the poor in India.

There was no real alternative to the nationwide lockdown that was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi a week ago. Those who believe that it could have been avoided just need to look at the plight of New York — a shining symbol of the richest and most powerful country in the world — which now threatens to be the epicentre of the coronavirus pandemic — to see what could have happened had India delayed any further. But our government failed to realistically assess the impact this measure would have on the most vulnerable sections of our population, and plan accordingly. Some steps are now being taken, but much more needs to be done.

A political pardon

Cri Lanka refuses to be accountable to the world for the war crimes Scommitted in the course of winning the war against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The decision of its president Gotabaya Rajapaksa to pardon the solider R.M. Sunil Ratnayake is not only deeply disappointing but also sends quite the wrong signal to the UN and the world that the island nation will not bow to international opinion on respecting the law against war crimes.

The hand of the Rajapaksas, who returned to power last year, is behind this decision to exonerate the only soldier of five who had been sentenced to death for a war crime in the village of Mirusuvil in December 2000 where the Sri Lankan Army had killed Tamil civilians who had returned home to the Jaffna Peninsula to see the state of their village. The decision is seen to be linked to the parliamentary polls that were to be held on April

25, but which were postponed due to the global pandemic. How exceedingly political the brothers — President Gotabaya and Prime Minister and former President Mahinda — can be is signified in their chauvinistic support for Sinhalese soldiers and their disregard of the Human Rights Council of the United Nations that has been fighting for accountability in war crimes. The island's history was punctuated with extreme violence in the three decade war against the Tamil rebels of the equally brutal guerrilla force of the Velupillai Prabhkaran-led LTTE. His own death, as well as that of his elderly father and his minor son, are thought to have been engineered in possible war crimes generally attrib-uted to the command of Lt General Shavendra Silva, who was the Army Commander at the time of the final battle. If the soldier had not been pardoned, he would simply have stayed in jail as the nation has suspended executions, making it clear that the Rajapaksas are using him to make a statement of political intent in this selective exoneration.



Overcoming effects of ill-conceived policies



t has been three weeks since the World Health Organisation declared a Covid-19 pandemic. It's not the world's first coron-avirus. We have had Sars, Mers, H1N1, swine flu and the like, some with much higher rates of fatality. But this is unique in its sweeping virulence. America's Centres for Disease Control (CDC) says the annual percentage of the US population infected with the flu is about eight per cent, which translates to 26 million people a year. Of these, the CDC estimates up to 60,000 persons die. It stands to reason that many more in India get afflicted by flus and influenzas each year, possibly with larger fatalities.

Given this knowledge and some very recent hindsight, it's time to sit back and objectively reconsider the draconian policy measures unleashin India The four hours to midnight order for a nationwide "curfew" to enforce social distancing has caught our public and administration woefully unpre-pared. The consequences of Covid-19 to the Indian economy and consequent loss of lives and longevity seems likely to exceed the loss due to any mass spread of the virus. Epidemiological studies by several well-regarded institutions like MIT and the Global Virus Network (GVN) seem to suggest that this particular coronavirus is endemic in populated areas falling in the temperature band of 3-17C with a humidity between 51-79 per cent. These findings suggesting a correlation between latitude and incidence have the powerful endorsement of Dr Robert Gallo, famed virologist and GVN head. Mind you, it's been just a few months that Covid-

finding a home in human beings. Covid-19's natural reservoir seems to be bats, like the earlier coronaviruses Sars and Mers. But the fact remains the spread of Covid-19 has been faster in areas with colder climes.

The essential facts about Covid-19 is that while it is virulent, its fatality is around one per cent, and this is princiconcentrated pally among the elderly and already ailing. Its symp-toms are mostly akin to common seasonal flus often attributed to a change of season, etc. Covid-19 can only be confirmed by testing and the cheapest test costs about ₹5,000 each. Clearly, we cannot afford to test enough, which means we won't ever know how

many are truly afflicted by the virus. The 68.7 years. The above-65 vears cohort accounts for

often exceeding 60,000 per square mile. India has over 410 million workers in the unorganised sector, the vast majority of whom are daily wagers making a little more than the pre-scribed official wage and often much below that. This working age cohort is mostly made up of younger Indians. The youthful age group (14-35 years) accounts for about 34 per cent of India's pop-ulation. This cohort is about as much as the 35-65 years cohorts. Thus, even if the pandemic is real for India, the fatality due to it will be very low. The vast majority of Indians who might get infected by Covid-19 won't even know it. Now assume that the Covid-19 pandemic will overwhelm India, and consider India's abysmal healthcare scene. We

have six physicians; nine hospital beds and 13 nurses per 10,000 people. Nationwide, we have less than 40,000 ventilators and only 70,000 intensive care beds. This calls for a policy that will help stagger the load and allow immu-

TACKLING COVID-19 nity to build

up without overwhelmaverage life ing the critical care sysexpectancy of Indians is tem

Harvard's Yonatan professor our 100 top corporations

they said, the restrictive episodes may be shorter, with longer intervals between them. Clearly, the nationwide simultaneous social distancing norms' imposition was ill-conceived.

The IMF has now announced a global recession due to disrupted supply chains and contraction of consumption. In India, consumption (C) accounts for 63per cent of GDP. Given GDP is = C + I + G + (X -M), or GDP = private con-sumption (C) + gross investment (Í)+ government investment + gov-ernment spending (G) + (exports – imports), the impact of the collapse of private consumption in the economy can be easily understood. Many respected analysts are agreed that it will be no less than 20-30 per cent in Q1. The government pledged to step up its spending by ₹1.7 lakh crores. We won't go into how this was arrived at now, but just consider how inadequate it is

compared to the hit taken by consumption. The government clearly needs to do more. It needs to pull out all the stops to do this. The question is: where

₹398,000 crores. TCS has

almost ₹100,000 crores,

ITC has ₹60,000 crores.)

Our government's wage

accounts for 11.4 per cent

of GDP. Holding back

only 10 per cent of this,

or just the annual LTC

will fetch the Central and

state governments over

₹2 lakh crores. It only

calls for will and vision

to accumulate the cash to

begin reconstruction of a

devastated economy. The

Modi has formidable

communication skills,

and he must use it now.

pensions bill

and

LETTERS DISINFECTANTS

In these times of the coronavirus epidemic, it is correct medical procedure to spray disinfectant on visitors. This is not a new procedure. For centuries, disinfectant usage is being practised in every hospital across the world in one way or the other. Let there be no sentiments attached to this practice. Because of not carrying out such practices in the initial stages on foreign visitors, the entire world is suffering

T. Satvik Rithika Secunderabad

EXEMPT PENSIONS

The coronavirus crisis has unsettled the financial position of not only Centre but also of all the states. CM K. Chandrashekar Rao's decision to pay reduced salaries is a step in the right direction to mop up revenues to meet medical expenditures. But to reduce the payment for pensioners is certainly unfair as it is already a hand-to-mouth situation for many of them with rising rents, living and medical expenses. They have no other means to survive except with the existing pensions with hand loans etc.

Katuru Durga Prasad Rao Hvderabad

EXODUS TRAGIC

The exodus of migrant workers to their home states has added a tragic dimension to the Covid-19 related lockdown. The dread of starvation and the urge to seek refuge in the safety of home has overwhelmed is the money? Even if it their fear of catching the infection sequestered 20 per cent in the midst of their desperate jourof the cash reserves with ney. Would they have embarked upon this arduous journey had the it will be substantial. The host states taken care of them when top 10 corporations alone they had no income to meet their have a hoard of over ₹10 basic needs? lakh crores. (Reliance has cash reserves of

DECCAN CHRONICLE

ADITYA SINHA

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only about six per cent of India, which suggests that the incidence of fatality here will be lower. Bubonic plague has a mortality of over 80 per cent, while even diphtheria has a mortality rate of 32 per cent. Covid-19 is not a killer virus. In developed coun-tries like the United States, Italy and elsewhere with substantially higher life expectancy, the 70-plus cohorts are much bigger. The mortality rate has been the highest in Italy, with about nine per cent. Almost 86 per cent of Italians who died were over 70. Italy has the second oldest population in the world after Japan, with over 23 per cent over 65. Experts believe this was the determining factor in its high fatality rate. The goal of social distancing is a hugely unfulfilled aspiration. The poor in India live cheek

by jowl, with densities

immunology and infec-tious diseases, and colleagues conducted research on how to prevent overwhelming the US healthcare system during the pandemic. This indicates the only possible method for dealing with the epidemic may be multiple "intermittent" social-distancing periods that ease up when cases fall to a certain level, and reimposed when they rise past a key threshold. As time passes, and more of the population gains immunity,

The only possible pain cannot and must method for dealing not be borne by the poorwith the epidemic est alone. PM Narendra may be multiple 'intermittent' social-distancing periods that ease up when cases fall to a certain level, and reimposed when they rise past a key threshold

G. Thirupathaiah Kothapet

Attempt on Basu's life: One held

PATNA, March 31 Mr Jyoti Basu, Marxist former Deputy Chief Minister of West Bengal, escaped unhurt after an unknown assailant had fired a shot at him at Patna railway junction this morning. But an officer of the Life Insurance Corporation, Mr Ali Imam, was hit by the bullet and was killed. The assailant who Mr Basu

pointed out made his escape in тhе large

crowd gath- 50 YEARS AGO IN ered to greet Marxist leader as he



The writer, a policy anaarrived from Calcutta. lyst studying economic Police later took into custody one man on suspicion. They also and security issues, held senior positions in govtook possession of a car parked ernment and industry outside the staircase as also the He also specialises in the Chinese economy. car of Mr Ali Imam.



Since millennia, man has strived to either defeat or delay death

global pandemic to remind you of your own mortality, is there? All day long, we are subjected to an ever-increasing tally of infections and deaths, as if the whole world were glued to the scoreboards of a morbid, seemingly neverending Olympics. At some point, you have to wonder if you too will end up as a statistic on a government chart. But, as singer Hank Williams lamented, "No matter how I struggle and strive, I'll never get out of this world alive," and while we will, as a species, survive this latest plague, it is also certain that, at some point, our individual lives will come to an end. After all, only two things are certain: Death and (depending on where you live) Taxes.

nere is nothing quite like a

Still, trying to forestall the inevitable has always been a human obsession, and it is no different when it comes to trying to outwit or dodge death itself. Over 2,000 years ago, Qin Shi Huang, the first emperor of united China, proclaimed a dynasty that 'would last 10,000 generations". He

+

also expressed the desire to be around long enough to see it through. Seeing as the Qin state was also arguably the world's first proper police state, he simply ordered his governors to search for the elixir of immortality, and newly discovered records show a fascinating series of exchanges between an increasingly impatient emperor and "assorted awkward replies from regional governments who had failed to find the key to eternal life".

19 jumped species by

Qin Shi Huang died at the age of 49, but the quest continued for millennia, with subsequent emperors and noblemen remaining wedded to the idea of discovering the elixir of immortality, often with deadly results. Ironically, the elixirs brewed by Chinese alchemists were better suited to ending lives rather than prolonging them, containing as they did toxic metals and minerals such as mercury, lead and arsenic.

An even greater irony perhaps is that the experiments of one alchemist, who was using saltpetre in his concoctions, ended up blowing up in his face, burning him and his entire house: he had not found the secret of immortality, but had in fact discovered gunpowder, which has played a major part in ending so many lives since then.

Of course, the quest did not start with the Chinese. The ancient Epic of Gilgamesh revolves around the mythical king's search for the plant that confers immortality, and millennia later we have the apocryphal quest of Ponce de Leon for the Fountain of Youth.

And today, we have medicine replacing sagas and superstition, and we have scientists looking to succeed where heroes and kings failed. The end-goal, however, remains the same: to defeat or at least delay death.

That is not to say some of these techniques are not inspired by legend and history. Bram Stoker's Dracula believed that "the blood is the life" and so did the real-life 'blood countess' Elizabeth Bathory, who reportedly bathed in the blood of young women to preserve her youth

and beauty.

In the modern iteration of this technique, a company called Ambrosia, led not by count Dracula, but by a Dr Karmazian, is infusing the blood of the young into the veins of the old, a process it claims can rejuvenate the recipient at the trifling cost of up to \$12,000 for two litres of a young person's plasma. While the US Food and Drug Administration has warned that this treatment has "no proven clinical benefit", effectively shutting down Dr Karamazian's business, the overall anti-aging industry is considered to be a safe investment bet, given that, according to Merrill Lynch, it is expected to reach a value of at least \$600 billion by 2025.

That is a lot of money, and so you can expect that a lot of different techniques are being tried right about now, such as organ replacement technologies, in which the most promising is currently the prospect of 3-D printing working human organs to replace failing ones. Nanotechnology offers another lifeline with two potential applications:

-

one is to use these microscopic machines to cure life-threatening diseases like cancer, delivering their payload directly to malignant cells. Similarly, custom-built nanobots are being designed that could actively work to remove the plaque that builds up in arteries leading to heart attacks and disease. Extend that concept and you could, sooner than you think, have armies of nanobots in your body repairing cellular damage in real time.

The most promising frontier for life-extending technology lies in the field of genetic research, where scientists are studying the genetic structures of long-lived species like whales, turtles and tortoises in an effort to unlock their secrets. As creatures age, their DNA strands become increasingly prone to damage and breakage, and learning to control that may prove to be a key to longevity. This is what the future holds, let us see if we live long enough to see it.

By arrangement with Dawn













life. One of the nurses who

treated the couple con-

In a statement here, state

be viewed seriously. Cases

will be registered under

relevant IPC sections as

fake messages could cause

distress and fear among

Meanwhile,

Kerala

SHORT TAKES **ARMYMEN TOLD NOT TO SHARE VIDEOS IN UNIFORM**

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

Indian Army on Tuesday issued an advisory asking its personnel not to share videos in uniform on social media sites as it can reveal their personal identities.

There have been certain cases in recent times where personnel from defence forces have been honey-trap by the Pakistan's spies on social med ia like Facebook. Last year, Indian Army was able to iden-tify around 150 social media profiles of Pakistani spies which were using various modus operandi to try to trap its men. 'It has been noticed that serving Indian Army personnel are creating or sharing videos on social media giving their identity as also in Uniform. All personnel are advised to follow existing guidelines and refrain from such activities," said the advisory on Tuesday.

An army dossier last year had warned its men against honey-trap by Pakistan spies who create fake female pro-files on social media like Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. It had asked its personnel to avoid accepting friend requests from unknown people avoid suspicious websites and not to take calls from or chat with unidentified people. It had advised its men to change the privacy settings on Facebook and other apps to "only friends.

CONG ASKS GOVT **TO SCALE UP** COVID-19 TESTING

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

Expressing apprehensions that India might soon enter the phase 3 of the Coronavirus outbreak, the Congress on Tuesday asked the government to scale up testing as advised by the World Health Organisation. It also demanded that a consolidated amount of ₹10,000 be put into Jan Dhan accounts of all vulnera ble sections.

According experts in the field of medicine, the situation on Tuesday points towards the country entering stage 3 of Coronavirus transmission, Congress Spokesperson Manish Tewari said address-ing the media through videoconferencing.

"The only antidote to Covid-19 spreading is test, test and more test," he said adding that this is what has been advised by the WHO. He noted that India was pos-

Kerala records second Covid-19 death

Health officials on high alert as the deceased had no travel history; efforts on to trace origin of infection

DC CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MARCH 31

During the course of his treatment in ICU, the man suffered paralytic stroke Kerala recorded second death due to Covid-19 on and cardiac arrest. What is bothering the Tuesday after a 68-year-old man, who had no travel authorities now is the lack history, succumbed to the of clarity on his travel infection

ventilator support till

native

His

village

death.

at ... Medical details. Before being admitted to Trivandrum College Hospital. medical college hospital, The death of the Covid-19 the patient had visited sevpatient Abdul Azeez has eral places attended martroubled the health authorities as he had not reported any travel historiages, funeral ceremony, went to government offices to collect pension,

ry. Efforts are now being made to trace the origin of mosques. infection. The state had reported its first Covid- 19 death on March 28 when a 69-year old-man died at the these events. Ernakulam Medical College.

The health officials have his travel because of critibegun a detailed exercise cal condition. to locate the primary and secondary contacts of the Pothencode and adjoining patient who was a retired areas have been put under additional sub inspector of total lockdown and surveillance has been stepped police. Azeez was admitted to up in areas bordering

the Trivandrum Medical College on March 23 after other panchayats. Meanwhile, health minister K.K. Shailaja said the he developed symptoms of body of the patient would Covid-19. He was in a highly criti-

be buried complying with the World Health cal condition since past five days and remained on Organisation protocol.

7 persons test +ve for virus, Oldest patients in 1.63 lakh under surveillance state recover fully

DC CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MARCH 31

Seven more persons tested positive for Covid–19 in Kerala on Tuesday taking the total number of infecttook part in prayers in ed persons in the state 215. Of the seven cases, two The authorities suspect each were reported from that he might have come Kasargod and Thiruvaninto contact with people with infection during anthapuram, one each from Kollam, Thrissur and Kannur respectively. The authorities could not Baring one person, all contake much details about the infection tracted

through contact. As on Tuesday 1.63 lakh people are under surveil-lance including 1.62 lakh under home quarantine, 658 persons admitted to hospitals including 150 on Tuesday.

Kasargod has the highest number of people in hospitals — 163 followed by Kannur 108 and Malappuram 102.

Of the 7455 samples sent be collected of persons for testing 6,380 have been with fever, cough and resfor testing 6 380 have been

piratory problems . The samples of such persons will be taken and set for • KASARGOD HAS the highest number of people in hospitals 163 followed testing. by Kannur 108 and The Malappuram 102.

has been improved by turning it into Covid found negative. This was disclosed by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan at a press conference after the nod from ICMR for a high level review meetstarting testing facilities. ing. He said as of now there is no indication of facing a problem in connection with the people who have returned from community spread at the moment.

He said laboratories in Nizamuddin in Delhi and Malaysia after attending the state had started collecting more samples with improvement in testing facilities. More samples are being collected and sent, reports being pro-

cured in time. The Chief Minister said a special action plan would be implemented in Kasargod which is the epicenter of the infection. Panchayat level data will

the Tabligi conference. It needs to be examined whether such people have

facilities

Kasargod medical college

Hospital. Kasargod central

university has received

Vijavan said the state is

of

contracted the infection. The police has conducted a detailed inquiry and with the help of district collectors have prepared list of people who participated in these conferences

Required preventive measures will be taken at the district level.

deft handling by doctors and nursing staff, they could be brought back to

DC CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHPURAM. MARCH 31

Kerala's oldest Covid-19 patients Thomas, 93 and

tracted the infection. She his wife Mariyamma, 88, has been extended all suphave fully recovered from port from the government the infection. The couple who contractfor treatment. ed the infection from their

police on Tuesday warned son, daughter-in-law and of arrest and cases againgrandson who returned from Italy on February 29, st persons sending April fool messages pertaining to Covid-19 and lockdown. were successfully treated at the Kottayam Medical Those found to be sending such messages will be College. arrested instantly.

Health minister K.K. Shailaja hailed the recovery of the elderly patients who had developed severe police chief Lokanath Behara said such fake messages intended to make fool of people, will complications warranting ICU support during the treatment. Apart from cardiac problems, the elderly persons had blood pressure, hypertension and urinary tract infection. During the treatment Thomas had also reached a critical stage and was even put on ventilator sup-port, however, due to the

the people . The people creating such messages, sharing and forwarding these on the social media would be taken into custody. Migrants beat youth to death

person was allegedly killed by a group of men in Bihar's Sitamarhi district for informing the health authorities regarding two migrants who returned from Maharashtra following the coronavirus lockdown. The incident occurred

Monday.

Bablu Kumar, 24, had informed the local health authorities that the migrants from Maharashtra could be infected with the deadly coronavirus.

tion youth the health officials carried out extensive screening of both the suspects who were later released with the advice of home quarantine. Sources said that the entire exercise angered both the migrants who along with their other friends attacked Bablu while he was on his way back home on Monday evening. He was later rushed to Sri Krishna Medical College and Hospital in Muzaffarpur where he was declared "brought dead." According to Sitamarhi SP Anil Kumar, the case against six persons was registered Muzaffarpur under rele-

Fearing that migrants returning in large number may pose a threat of community spread the state government has set up isolation camps near the border to quarantine people who are reaching

COCHIN PORT TWEETED ABOUT EXPORT

had announced the 93 million euro package for Serbia, which provides immediate as well as short and medium term assistance to help Serbia to fight Covid-19.

According to the Indian government notifications in the past few weeks, the items that are prohibited for export include N-95 masks, surgical masks, disposable masks, all ventilators, textile raw materials for masks and coveralls, NBR gloves and medical goggles. However, the items that can still be exported include gloves (except NBR gloves), surgical blades, PVC conveyor belt, plastic tarpaulin and certain kinds of breathing appliances as well as well as ophthalmic instruments

and appliances. On March 28, the Cochin Customs nad tweeted, "Cochin Customs in action to clear a consignment of 35 lakh pairs of sterile latex surgical gloves to Serbia to support the global war against Covid-19". It may be recalled that in a video-conference on Monday evening with all 130 Indian envoys posted abroad, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had asked the Indian envoys "whether we can source medicine, and other items" from abroad to tackle the situation. All envoys were directed by PM Modi "to identify in their countries of accreditation ... sources to procure medical equipment, for India's fight against Covid-19". All the Missions shared the situation in their countries of accreditations and had also apparently highlighted the items which are available in that country which could be imported by India.

From Page 1

The European Union



on Tuesday.

NAYEAR AZAD I DC with agency inputs PATNA, MARCH 31

the matter is underway.

villages on foot

in Madhaul village under Runnisaidpur block on

According to reports

Based on the informa-ion provided by the Binar. Reports, however, sugsuch

• A CASE against six persons was registered in Muzaffarpur under relevant sections of the IPC. further investigation into

> HUNDREDS OF such migrants have defied restrictions imposed on their movement and are trying to reach their

SP Anil Kumar said.

Thousands of migrants who work in other states have been returning to their homes after the union government imposed a 21-day national union lockdown to prevent the spread of deadly coronavirus.

one of the countries which has tested the least. "We have tested only 32 out of 10 lakh people. Compared to this, in England, 1.921 out of each 10 lakh have been tested, while in America the number is 2,600," he said.

Tewari also sought government intervention on the plight of migrant workers and landless labourers.

U.P. AMBULANCE WORKERS GO ON STRIKE

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

Demanding immediate release of pending salary and protective gear, the association of ambulance employees in Uttar Pradesh has stopped work from Tuesday afternoon. The association of 19,221 workers which includes pilots (drivers) and emergency technicians also alleged that their are not provided with basic protective equipment.

General secretary of ambulance employees association, Brajesh Kumar told this news paper that employees are not paid salary since January and workers working on ambulance are exposed to infection due to lack of protective gear.

"102 and 108 emergency ambulance services in Uttar Pradesh are managed and operated by a private operator GVK — under contract with the state government. There are a total of about 4,500 such ambulances deployed across the state. 19,221 workers drivers and emergency technicians - are posted to these ambulances are on contract with the private firm," Kumar added.

According to Kumar, ambulance workers do not have sanitisers, gloves or proper masks. "We have not received salaries for three months. When we go to fill oxygen, people don't allow us inside. We told the local chief medical officer to arrange better supplies but got no response. Our vehicles have not been sanitised either," said an ambulance driver.

Centre to ensure movement of trucks

• A SPECIAL team has

been deployed in the cen-

with important

"The issue now is to

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

tralised control room set After managing to conup in the home ministry tain the large-scale movement of migrant labour ers/workers, the home diately do a detailed surministry is working with vey of all trucks parked states to ensure that thou on highways and roads in sands of trucks stranded their areas and identify on national and state those highways with essential items. commodities are allowed

to move. ensure supply chains of A special team has been all essential commodities deployed in the cenare fully functional and tralised control room set the raw material for them up in the home ministry. should reach the facto-After tackling the issue ries, else the production too will be hampered," a senior official said. The of thousands of stranded workers walking back to their villages, next on the MHA is also working with MHA's priority list is to the surface transport ensure the smooth moveministry to ensure that ment of trucks. State offithe toll for these trucks is cials were asked to immewaived.



vant sections of the Indian Penal Code and further investigation into the matter is underway.

"Case has been registered on the basis of the statement given by the deceased's brother. Two persons have been arrested and a manhunt has been launched to nab others. The case is being investigated from all angles as the matter could also be related to some local dispute", Sitamarhi gest that hundreds of migrants have defied restrictions imposed on their movement and are trying to reach their villages on foot in the absence of any public transport.

Meanwhile, on Tuesday a person from Gopalganj district with a travel history to Dubai has been found infected with the coronavirus.

Pradip Das, Director of ICMR Rajendra Memorial Research Institute, which is conducting the bulk of coronavirus tests in the state, said the latest case was that of a resident of Gopalganj district who had returned from Dubai

positive.

before the lockdown came into force. According to health department reports, 1051 samples of suspected coronavirus cases have been tested in the state of which 16 have been found

Indore records 25 new cases in 24 hours

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, MARCH 31

Indore, known as 'mini-Singh Mumbai' of India, has turned new hotspot of coronavirus outbreak with the city witnessing a record 25 new Covid positive cases in the last 24 hours.

As many as 17 new coronavirus positive cases were reported in one day on Tuesday in Indore, taking the tally of confirmed cases in the city to 44. On Monday, eight new

Covid positive cases were reported in Indore. "It is a matter of grave

concern. We will enforce lockdown in the city stringently to bring Indore out of red zone of coronavirus

outbreak", a senior Indore district officer told this newspaper. Chief Minister Shivraj

Chouhan also expressed serious concern over the spike in con-Bhopal. firmed cases in Indore while reviewing the situa-

tion at a high level official meeting held here on Fuesday. With this, the total number of coronavirus posi-

tive cases in MP rose to 64 Of the five deaths due to the virus reported in MP, Indore accounted for three

deaths. Meanwhile, one more Covid patient in the state succumbed to the virus on Tuesday taking the death toll to five in the state. died in patient AIIMS, Bhopal.

• AT LEAST 31 people who attended the Tabligh Jamaat religious event in Delhi recently have taken shelter in two religious places of minorities in

SCARE | CONTINUES MP Chief Minister expresses concern over spike in cases

• THE ALERT by Intelligence was issued in the wake of six devotees who attended the conference in Delhi succumbing to Covid-19 in Telangana recently.

Meanwhile, at least 31 eople who attended the Tabligh Jamaat religious event in Delhi recently have taken shelter in two religious places of minorities in Bhopal, intelligence has alerted the MP government.

According each of the devotees who Intelligence sources, at least 107 devotees who attended the religious conference in Delhi have fled to MP after nationwide lockdown was declared on March 22. Out of them, 31 are currently staying in two religious places of minorities in Bhopal.

The alert by intelligence

was issued in the wake of

six devotees who attended

the conference in Delhi succumbing to coron-

Chief Minister Shivraj

Singh Chouhan on Tuesday convened a high

level official meeting here

to take stock of the situa-

tion in the wake of the

in

avirus

recently.

development.

attended the conference in MP and guarantine them. Sources said some of the devotees have fled to a village on the outskirt of Bhopal following the move

to quarantine them. In another development, the state government has initiated a probe to find out if any devotees who attended the religious conference held in Tablighat in east Pakistan in the middle of March this year have visited MP recently.

Meanwhile, the state government asked police to book the violators of lockdown under appropriate sections of Indian Penal Code, indicating to enforce the lockdown strictly.

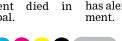
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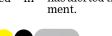
Telangana

on









IN BRIEF **Pastor held for** ignoring orders

Miami: An evangelical pastor in Florida was arrested on Monday for "repeatedly' ignoring confinement orders intended to slow the spread of the coronavirus by holding services with hundreds of people, police said. Pastor Ronald Howard-Browne, 58 was arrested for unlawful assembly and violating quarantine orders while holding two services on Sunday in the eastern Florida city of Tampa, prison records show. The pastor "intentionally and repeatedly disregarded state and local public health orders, which put his congregation and our community in danger," tweeted Hillsborough County sheriff Chad Chronister.

China's vaccine

to be tested abroad

Beijing: China, which is developing a vaccine for the deadly novel coronavirus, plans to conduct additional trials in other countries seriously hit by the pandemic if the ongoing trial in the country's virus epicentre Wuhan proves it is safe and effective, a Chinese esearcher said. The first stage clinical trial for the vaccine was started in Wuhan on March 16 after authorities approved. It has been proceeding smoothly, and its results will be published in April, said Chen Wei, a member of the Chinese Academy of Engine-

Al tool can predict after virus effects

New York: Scientists have developed an artificial intelligence (AI) tool that may accurately predict which patients newly infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 would go on to develop severe respiratory disease. The study, published in the journal Computers, Materials & Continua, also revealed the best indicators of future severity, and found that they were not as expected. "While work remains to further validate our model, it holds promise as another tool to predict the patients most vulnerable to the virus, but only in support of physicians' hard-won clinical experience in treating viral infections,' said Megan Coffee, a clinical assistant professor at New York University in the US

After Bibi, Israel's army chief isolated

Jerusalem: The Israe Jefence Forces (IDF) Chief of Staff, Lt Gen Aviv Kochavi, along with two of his senior commanders, went into isolation on Tuesday after a senior commander they came in contact with recently was tested positive for coronavirus, the army said. The development came a day after PM Netanyahu and his close advisers were placed under quarantine after an aide on Parliament affairs tested positive for virus. Lt Gen Kochavi, along with Home Front Command head Maj. Gen. Tamir Yadai and **Operations Directorate** Commander Gen. Aharon Haliva, had attended a meeting 10 days ago in which a commander in the reserves, who later tested positive for the coronavirus, participated.

New York hospital doc prepares for the worst

This is going to be a long and drawn out battle says Patel

New York, March 31: • THE WAVE of virus With the rapid rise of hos-pitalisations and a health system nearly at capacity, New York doctor Shamit Patel is preparing for the worst over the next few days, all while hoping he won't have to start choosing which coronavirus patients to treat.

Just 10 days ago, only half of the 46-year-old internist's patients at Beth Israel — one of the Mount Sinai hospitals in Manhattan — were suffer-ing from Covid-19. "We're patients. not over capacity yet, but we're planning for it to go over capacity," he said, adding he thinks the hos-pital has "planned well."

week," said Patel. The wave of virus patients at Beth Israel corresponds to the one inun-dating New York City, which shot from 463 confirmed cases two weeks ago to 36,000 on Monday. "Ăt the rate that I'm seeing, the peak could be anywhere from end of this patients. week to sometime next

WHO WARNS 'FAR FROM OVER' IN ASIA AND PACIFIC

Jakarta, March 31: The World Health Organisation warns that while attention has shifted to epicenters in Western Europe and North America, Covid-19 epidemics are "far from over" in Asia and the Pacific.

Urging governments at all levels in the region to stay engaged in efforts to combat the virus, WHO Regional Director for the Western Pacific, Dr Takeshi Kasai says, "This is going to be a long-term battle and we cannot let down our guard. We need every country to keep responding according to their local situation." He said the WHO realizes there is no one-size-fits-all approach but there are common tactics. "Those are: finding, isolating and testing case early, tracing and quarantining contact quickly, and putting in place multiple public health interventions to place physical distance between people to slow and stop transmission." Takeshi also cautioned that countries still need to prepare for large-scale community transmission.

patients at Beth Israel corresponds to the one

would be a situation similar to that in certain regions of Italy, where the health system is so over-

"You're gonna have to be

inundating New York City, which shot from 463 confirmed cases two weeks ago to 36,000 on Monday. FOR PATEL, the worst

whelmed that it can no longer take care of all

Under extreme pressure for the past two weeks, he is preparing for the worst, even if "it's something that we hope we don't have to see." For Patel, the worst would be a situation similar to that in certain regions of Italy, where the health system is so overwhelmed that it can no longer take care of all

and assessing and getting the treatment plan for each patient," Patel pre-dicted, noting they "may have to double or triple the number of patients you're seeing

But, he added worriedly, "you can't really go more than triple the number of patients you're seeing in a day and provide effective treatmen

In addition to the limita-tions of healthcare per-sonnel, Patel is worried about a potential shortage of equipment, particularly of ventilators.

New York governor Andrew Cuomo and New York City mayor Bill de Blasio talk daily about the need for the mchines. "If you get a surge of patients coming in, and you only have a limited number of ventilators, you can't necessarily ven patients," Patel said. ventilate

"And then you have to start picking and choos-ing." Outside of the hospi-

a little quicker in seeing tal, Patel is also worried about transmitting the virus to his family. He lives with his 80-year-

old father, who suffers from Parkinson's, and his aunt, who has cancer. don't want to come back here and actually give it to them because I don't think they would do well at all,' he said.

He maintains the minimum two meter (six-foot) distance and uses antibacterial wipes generously, while ensuring his relatives have enough food. "I stay pretty much in my room," Patel explained, "and then I'll go out there and periodically check on them

"If it's something that kicks in, then it goes down after it peaks, then we can sustain it for a little while," Patel said. "But all hands on deck for months on end is something that's hard to sustain." "This is going to be a long and drawn out battle.

-AFP

Hungary govt's sweeping powers sends alarm bells

Brussels, March 31: European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen warned on Tuesday that coronavirus emergency measures taken by EU countries must be "limited", after Hungary's nationalist leader Viktor Orban took on sweeping powers

Brussels' top official did not single out Orban or Hungary by name in her statement, but it came a day after he adopted rule by decree, claiming extraordinary powers ostensibly to combat the Covid-19 pandemic.

"The European Commission will closely monitor, in a spirit of cooperation, the application of emergency meas-ures in all member states," she tweeted. "We all need to work together to master this crisis. On this path, we'll uphold our European values and human rights. This is who we are and what we stand for.

Orban's spokesman for international relations responded to the EU statement directly, also on Twitter, saying: "We com-

The European Commission will closely monitor, in a spirit of cooperation, the application of emergency measures in all member states, We all need to work together to master this crisis

– URSULA VON DER LEYEN European Commission chief

pletely agree". "That's why the Hungarian state of emergency and extraordinary measures are congruent with the treaties and Hungarian constitution and targeted exclusively at fighting the coronavirus," he insisted. "It upholds EU values, rule of law, press freedom." In a separate statement read out by her spokesman, Von der Leyen admitted: "Over the past weeks, several EU governments took emer-

measures gency virus address the health crisis caused by the outbreak of the coronavirus". "We are living in extraordinary times, and governments, in principle, need to have the necessary tools to act rapidly and effectively to

protect the public health our citizens," she added.

said

But, in a clear but unstated reference to events in Hungary, she insisted: "Any emergency measures must be limited to what is necessary and strictly proportionate. They must not last indefi-nitely." "Democracy cannot work without free and independent media," she

Hungary is threatening prison sentences for journalists who publish what deems "falsehoods" about the virus or the measures against it. Critics at home and abroad have condemned Hungary's "anti-coron-avirus defence law", saying it gives Orban unnecessary and unlimited power and is a means of cementing his position rather than battling the

After declaring a state of emergency on March 11, the new law passed on Monday gives Orban the power to indefinitely rule by decree until his government decides the emergency is over. — AFF

medical gear IRAN ON TUESDAY March 31: European nations have said 141 more people delivered medical goods have died from the novel to Iran in the first transcoronavirus, raising the action under the Instex official toll in one of the world's worst-affected

Europe sends

"France, Germany and

the United Kingdom confirm that Instex has successfully concluded its first transaction, facilitating the export of medical goods from Europe to Iran. These goods are now in Iran," the ministry

transaction comes over a year after Britain, France and Germany announced the creation of Instex. months that have been marked by Iranian chafing against European delay.

 $-\Delta FP$

"Now the first transaction is complete, Instex more difficult by US sancand its Iranian counter- tions. part STFI will work on

Berlin. mechanism set up to evade American sanctions on Tehran, the German foreign ministry

enhancing the mechanism," Berlin said. Britain, France and Germany were among a list of countries that Iran reported receiving medical aid from earlier this month as it battles a serious outbreak of the novel said in a statement. The first successful coronavirus. On Monday, the number

of cases in the country passed 40,000, and the government warned the epidemic could run for several more months and cost over 10,000 lives. Tehran's struggle to bring the virus' spread under control has been made

countries to 2,898.

more transactions and

health. "Everything is fine," Peskov said. Protsenko said he tested

positive but "felt quite

Posting a picture of himself wearing a mask and green scrubs on

Facebook, he said he self-

isolated in his office and

would continue to work.

Protsenko has become a

high-profile figure on the frontlines of Russia's

fight against Covid-19,

posting daily on Facebook

to inform Russians about

his hospital's work and

Over the past 24 hours

Russian authorities have

reported 500 new cases -

the biggest daily increase

-AFP



The Italian flag flies at half-mast on the Altare della Patria, Vittorio Emanuele II monument in Rome on Tuesday as

flags are being flown at half-mast in cities across Italy to commemorate the victims of the virus, during the coun-

Global death toll crosses 40,000

Sierra

try's lockdown aimed at curbing the spread of the Covid-19 infection, caused by the novel coronavirus.

GREAT PYRAMID LIGHTS UP IN SOLIDARITY

Cairo, March 31: Egypt's famed Great Pyramid was emblazoned Monday evening with messages of unity and solidarity with those battling the novel coronavirus the world over. "Stay safe", "Stay at home" and "Thank you to those keeping us safe," flashed in blue and green lights across the towering structure at the Giza plateau, southwest of the capital Cairo. Egypt has so far registered 656 Covid-19 cases, including 41 deaths. Of the total infected, 150 reportedly recovered. "The tourism sector is one of the most affected industry but our priority is health," said tourism and antiquities minissaid ter Khaled al-Anani, speaking at the site.

Senior antiquities ministry official Mostafa al-Waziri thanked "all the medical staff who help to keep us safe.' Egypt has carried out sweeping disinfection operations at archaeological sites, museums and other sites across the country. In tandem, strict social distancing measures were imposed to reduce the risk of contagion among the country's 100 million inhabitants

CHINA REBOUNDS AS VIRUS CONTROLS EASE

Beijing, March 31: China's manufacturing rebounded in March as authorities relaxed antidisease controls and allowed factories to reopen. an official survey showed, but an industry group warned the economy has yet to fully recover. The ruling Communist Party is trying to revive the world's second-largest economy after declaring victory over the coronavirus even as the US and other governmshut ents down businesses. -AF

Madrid, March 31: Spain recorded its highest single-day death toll from the coronavirus Mondav into Tuesday as 849 people died.

Spain's Health Ministry reported on Tuesday that it diagnosed 9,222 new cases of the virus and saw 849 deaths in a single day. The country has reported more than 94,400 cases of Covid-19 and nearly 8.200 deaths since the coronavirus pandemic began. Spain has the third most cases behind the US and Italy and has the second

most deaths behind Italy, which has seen nearly 11,600 people die from the virus. Globally, cases of the

coronavirus top 800,000 and death toll tops 40,000. Spain, as well as Italy, held a moment of silence Tuesday to honor those who have died from the coronavirus. The two countries now account for more than half of the world's total death toll. а Britain reported

record daily coronavirus toll of 381 on Tuesday, more than double the number of deaths posted in the previous 24 hours. "As of 5pm (1600 GMT)

on 30 March, of those hospitalised in the UK, 1,789 have sadly died," the health ministry said on its Twitter page, up from 1,408 on Monday

The patients were aged between 19 and 98, and all but 28 had underlying health conditions, NHS England said in a statement.

The country's previous highest daily toll was 260, recorded on Saturday, with the number dropping to 180 on Monday.

Some 25,150 people have now tested positive for the virus in Britain, including Prime Minister Boris Johnson, a daily increase of 3,009. Data published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) for England and Wales on Tuesday revealed that the true toll could be 24 percent higher.

The government figures INDIAN-AMERICAN forcover those who have been mer Barack Obama camtaken to hospital and testpaign staffer, Suraj Patel ed for the virus whereas who is running in the the ONS data is for deaths Democratic primary for a in the community where Congressional seat in New COVID-19 is suspected. York's 12th District, has Leone has recorded its first case of been tested positive for

the new coronavirus, the coronavirus. government said on Tuesday, making it the latrecorded its first death est African country to regfrom coronavirus, a 49ister an infection. In a televised press con-

year-old man who had ference, President Julius underlying health issues, Maada Bio said that a 37the health ministry said. year-old man who arrived in the country from

12-YEAR-OLD girl con-France on March 16 had firmed infected with tested positive. The man COVID-19 has died in had been quarantined on Belgium, health officials arrival in the West said Tuesday. Fatality at African state, Bio said. "It such a young age "is a very rare occurrence," said govwas not a matter of whether, but when. Ladies ernment spokesman Dr and gentlemen, the when is here," the president said. Sierra Leone had Emmanuel Andre, adding that her death "shook us". been one of the few countries in Africa to have

Country singer Kalie Shorr says she has conreported zero cases, despite neighbouring Guinea tracted the novel coronand Liberia having detectavirus despite being under ed infections. -*Agencies* quarantine.

Russia's doctor who met Putin tests +ve

health. fine,"

well"

patients.

Moscow, March 31: The head of Moscow's main coronavirus hospital who with President met Vladimir Putin a week ago has tested positive, he said on Tuesday, as the Kremlin announced the Russian leader's health was fine.

Last Tuesday Denis Protsenko met with the Russian leader who inspected the Kommunarka hospital while wearing a bright yellow hazmat suit. But the 67-year-old Putin was also seen talking to Protsenko without any protective gear.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov swiftly so far — bringing the total tally to 2,337 cases told Russian news agencies that Putin took regular tests and there was no and 17 fatalities. reason to worry about his

ROYAL SPLIT

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex will hold on to their titles but will not be actively using them Harry, Meghan bid formal farewell as royals

London. March 31: Britain's Prince Harry and wife Meghan Markle on Tuesday bid a formal goodbye to their role as frontline royals as they settle down to their financially independent roles in the US. who remains Harry,

sixth in line to the British

throne, had announced the

royal split along with his former actress wife Markle earlier this year

and, as per the deal struck

with Buckingham Palace,

they will now be in a 12-

month transition period with the option for the

prince to return to his

frontline roles by March

their titles but will not be actively using them or formally representing Queen Elizabeth II from April 1. "As we all find the part we are to play in this global shift and changing of habits, we are focusing this new chapter to understand how we can best contribute," they said in reference to their new roles away from the UK as the couple signed off as "Harry and Meghan" on

social media. "What's most important right now is the health and wellbeing of everyone across the globe and finding solutions for the many

issues that have presented The Duke and Duchess of Sussex will hold on to themselves as a result of this pandemic," the couple said in their final message on their Sussex Royal Instagram. "While you may not see

us here, the work continues. Thank you to this community — for the support, the inspiration and the shared commitment to the good in the world. We look forward to reconnecting with you soon. You've been great! Until then, please take good care of yourselves, and of one their read another," farewell message, which indicates their return to social media under a more

future. On a more philo-sophical note, they referred to the "extraordi-narily fragile" world as it undergoes the coronavirus pandemic.

'Yet we are confident that every human being has the potential and opportunity to make a difference — as seen now across the globe, in our families, our communities and those on the front line - together we can lift each other up to realise the fullness of that promise," they add.

Alongside, Buckingham Palace released a state-ment saying: "The Duke and Duchess of Sussex would prefer that in the

• THEY WILL now be in a 12-month transition period with the option for the prince to return to his frontline roles by March 2021.

TANZANIA ON Tuesday

immediate weeks and months, the focus remains on the global response to Covid-19". "However, we recognise there are outstanding questions relating to their future beyond their household transition deadline.'

The statement reiterated that they would no longer use the name Sussex Royal for their charitable organisation, Instagram or website. -PTI

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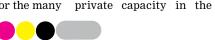


Picture of Prince Harry with Meghan Markle.





2021.











INDICATORS		%
Sensex	29,468.49	3.62
Nifty 50	8,597.75	3.82
S&P 500*	2,637.55	0.41
Dollar ()	75.67	-0.06
Pound Sterling ()	93.53	0.25
Euro ()	82.78	0.92
Gold (Oz)* (\$)	1,611.30	-0.66
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	22.64	-0.53
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.138	1.014
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.693	3.279
* As of 9:30 pm IST		

Core growth up 5.5%, highest in 11 months

Eight core sector industries recorded a growth of 5.5 per cent in February, highest in 11months, mainly due to healthy expansion in output of coal, refinery products and electricity. The core sectors had expanded by 2.2 per cent in February last year and by up to 5.8 per cent in March 2019. In January this year, these sectors grew by 1.4 per cent. The sectors have 40.27 per cent weight in the IIP.

Interest on small savings schemes cut by up to 1.4%



The government slashed interest rates on small savings schemes, including National Savings Certificate and Public Provident Fund, by up to 1.4 per cent for the first quarter of 2020-21. Interest rates are notified on a quarterly basis. Term deposits of 1-3 years will now be fetching an interest rate of

Many public sector banks inform customers about relief **Borrowers await clarity** on EMI moratorium

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

Even as borrowers groped in the dark about the repayment moratorium announced by the Reserve Bank last week, several public sector banks (PSBs) on Tuesday informed their branch heads and customers about the threemonth moratorium on all term loans, including home, auto and crop loans. But private and foreign banks are learnt to have not begun the moratorium

process yet. With many getting payment reminders, confusion

prevails among borrowers, term-plan investors and credit cardholders over implementation of the moratorium advised the central bank in view of the disruptions caused by the nationwide lockdown over

coronavirus outbreak. Many borrowers, credit cardholders and mutual investors have



received SMSes from their lenders reminding them that they need to maintain sufficient balance on the due date.

the moratorium benefit. A public sector bank offi-'Wherever there is a cial said such messages are standing instruction, the being sent to customers as customer has to inform the the moratorium decision has to be approved by the bank that he or she wants EMIs to be deferred. Otherwise, instalments board of each lender but in will be deducted," a senior many cases, the board meetings have not taken public sector banker said. place due to the nationwide However, over 13 public lockdown. sector banks, including

State Bank of India, have started messaging their customers individually on their mobile number about the deferment of equated monthly installments (EMI) for the months of monthly March, April and May. This comes at a time when many customers of

banks, mostly rural farmers, are not being able to go to banks for payment of their loan dues on account of restrictions imposed due to the 21-day long lockdown.

A top public sector bank official said, "All the branch heads have been informed with respect to moratorium on all term loans. In case of those who have opted for electronic fund transfer for EMI deduction, they are given the option of availing the facility by informing the branch concerned through mail or other digital medium. However, banks on its own unilaterally cannot stop ECS payment.

Foreign trade policy, export sops extended for one year

New Delhi. March 31: The government on Tuesday extended the existing Foreign Trade Policy 2015-20, including fiscal incentives for goods' exports for one year till March 2021, amid the coronavirus outbreak and the lockdown to contain the virus spread.

The commerce ministry said that in view of the "unprecedented current situation" arising out of the Covid-19 pandemic, it has decided to continue relief under various export promotion schemes by granting extension of the existing policy by another one year.

"The existing Foreign Trade Policy 2015-20, which is valid up to March 31 this year, is extended up to March 31, 2021. Various other changes are also made extending the date of exemptions by one year and extending validity of DFIA and EPCG authorisations for import purposes," the Directorate General of Foreign Trade said in a notification.

Centre to borrow ₹4.88 L cr in H1

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

Amidst an unprecedented financial crisis due to

the 21-days long lock-

down in the country, the

government on Tuesday said it would borrow Rs 4.88 lakh crore during the first half of the new

Announcing the aggressive borrowing plan, Depart-ment of Economic Affairs secre-

tary Atanu Chakraborty,

however, said, "The gov-

fiscal.

than Rs 7.1 lakh crore estimated in the current fiscal.

"The government has factored in higher spending due to Covid-19 outbreak and it will provide all necessary help for the health sector, for recovery of the industry and any stimulus needed for economy," said

Chakraborty. Generally, the govern-ment raises funds from the market to fund its fiscal deficit through dated securities and treasury bills. The budget had pegged fiscal deficit at 3.5 per cent for the next fiscal, down from 3.8 per cent of the GDP in the

it is waging to contain economic fallout of coronavirus pandemic." The government's gross borrowing target for the first half of FY21 is 62.56 per cent of the annual target. Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman had in her budget for 2020-21 pegged additional stimulus progross borrowing in the new financial year at Rs grammes are provided,² 7.8 lakh crore, higher Aditi Nayar of Icra said.

ernment will borrow Rs 4.88 lakh crore in the first half of fiscal 2020-21 starting April 1 to shore up resources amid a war current financial year. "The loss of economic activity is expected to dampen tax collections in Q1 FY2021, which would constrain the cash flows of the central and state governments. Additionally, expendi-ture may rise sharply in H1 FY2021, especially if

Merger of 10 public sector banks takes effect today

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, MARCH 31

banking

fund

Ten public sector banks will be amalgamated into four banks effective April

The consolidation of the addition to six independ-Indian public sector bankent banks namely Indian Overseas Bank, Uco Bank, Bank of Maharashtra, Punjab and Sind Bank, Bank of India and Central ing space was a long overdue process and key measure in improving trans-parency and accountability in banking operations. Bank of India. Anil Gupta vice-presi-dent and head financial Apart from enhancing the lenders capabilities to sector ratings at ICRA Ltd said, "The merger of pubmeet capital adequacy norms, the amalgamation is likely to streamline

operations,

improve customer service

and build economies of scale to build global compublic sector banking space. However, there could be a near term petitiveness. On August 30, 2019, the Finance Minister impact on the integration. credit growth and asset Nirmala Sitharaman had quality in the slowing ecoannounced the merger of nomic growth and near term operational chal-10 PSBs into four entities. From Wednesday, the number of public sector lenges post by Covid 19.

banks in India will come The impact of integra tion on asset quality, prof-itability and capital of the down to 12. There will be six merged banks--SBI, Bank of Baroda, Punjab National Bank, Canara Bank, Union Bank of India, Indian Bank in merging banks will be visible upon the declaration of the merged balance sheet which is likely to be disclosed by the end of

Moreover, the official

have to inform their banks

that they want to avail of

would

said, customers

form the second-largest public sector bank in the country, after State Bank of India (SBI) with the lic sector banks is going to merged entity having 11,437 branches. be beneficial in the long Syndicate Bank will be term as it will reduce redundancies within the merged into Canara Bank, tor lender.

which will make it the fourth-largest public sec-Union Bank's big amalwith

Indian Bank will be merged with Allahabad

Bank. In a statement, Indian Bank assured customers of both lenders that they will not face any disrup-tion in services. Similarly, In a statement, Union Bank of India said, "Post the amalgamation, the combined entity will have the 4th largest banking network in the country with more than 75000 employees, 9500+ branches and over 13,500+ ATMs."

Meanwhile post-enor-mous liquidity infusion and a steep 75 basis repo rate cut from the Reserve Bank of India, several public sector lenders PNB, Indian name

IndusInd deposits shrink by 10-11%

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, MARCH 31

Shares of private lender IndusInd Bank crashed on Tuesday after the lender, in an investor conference call on Monday, disclosed that it saw an outflow of 10-11 per cent of its deposits-around Rs 22,000 crorepost-the Yes Bank saga. Of the total fall in deposits since the December quar-ter (Q3FY20), 70 per cent was in state government deposits and 30 per cent in corporate deposits.

"The total deposits are lower by approximately 10-11 per cent. Almost 2/3rd of reduction is on account of government related accounts-this is largely related to general private sector bank stance. This will also result in lower





deposit reduction is least of the above categories," said IndusInd in the investor presentation.

However, the bank said that it has replaced bulk of these deposit outflows via longer duration refinance / forex borrowings swapped to rupee, bank certificate of deposits, term money borrowings, repo of excess statutory liquidity ratio/ non-SLR securities and call money.

ry by 25 bps to accelerate this," IndusInd Bank said. The IndusInd stock closed 14.68 per cent down at Rs 351 on the BSE. The stock price has corrected steeply in recent days, owing to concerns about asset quality and strength of funding franchise. In the last five trading sessions, the stock hit 10 upper and lower circuits. However brokerages gave a buy rating on the stock.

"Near-term asset quality stress is inevitable due to lockdowns, mainly in cards, personal loan, MFI, real estate, loan against property, and vehicle finance, but moratorium should help limit NPAs... We believe that the bank's near-term performance will track its ability to manage Covid19-led disruption on its growth asset quality. However, we maintain Buy with revised target price of Rs 630, mainly due to its lower valuations, said Anand Dama of Emkay Global.

May 2020." Oriental Bank of Commerce (OBC) and United Bank of India will be merged into Punjab National Bank (PNB) to

jainst 6.9 per cent while the five-year term deposit will earn 6.7 per cent against 7.7 per cent.

Banks asked to give doorstep services to elders

The Reserve Bank of India said many banks are not extending doorstep services for senior citizens above 70 years and differently abled persons even after three years of it issuing advisories, and asked for "strict compliance" on the same by April 30. The directions assume significance as they come amid the Covid-19 pandemic, where the senior citizens have been marked out as the most vulnerable.

Sebi fines 2 Yes Bank promoter entities

The Sebi imposed a penalty of Rs 50 lakh each on two promoter entities of Yes Bank for not making requisite disclosures pertaining to encumbrance of shares. The two entities are Yes Capital (India) and Morgan Credits. Yes Capital had raised Rs 630 crore from Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund in Sept. 2017. Morgan Credits had raised Rs 950 crore from Reliance Mutual Fund in April 2018.

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gamation Corporation Bank and Andhra Bank will create the fifth largest PSU bank in the country.

verseas Bank, Bank of Union Bank India, announced a cut in their MCLR and external benchmark linked lending rate.

CASA ratio. but reduce our dependency on this category for deposits in future. Some reduction is in the wholesale (deposits), possibly attributable to stock price fall. The retail

But analysts believe this should inch up funding cost in the near-term, weighing in on its margins. "Deposit traction will rebuild in April...We have enhanced a deposit catego-

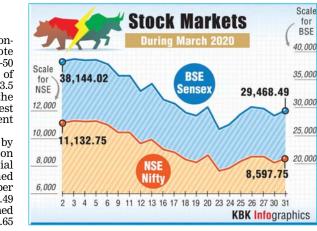
Stocks bounce back, but indices lose 23% in March

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, MARCH 31

Financial year 2019-20 concluded on a happy note with Sensex and Nifty-50 recouping most of Monday's loss with over 3.5 per cent gains but the benchmarks posted biggest monthly loss by 23 per cent each in March 2020.

Led by heavy buying by domestic institutions on the last day of the financial vear, the Sensex gained 1028.17 points or 3.62 per cent closing at 29,468.49 while the Nifty-50 gained 3.82 per cent or 316.65 points closing at 8,597.75. Domestic institutions

were net buyers by Rs 3,576.23 crore while the foreign portfolio investors remained net sellers by Rs 3,044.94 crore, the provi-



sional data showed.

Shrikant Chouhan, executive vice president-Technical Research, Kotak Securities said, " Nifty reversed completely

Monday's losses. We can call it a yearly and quarterly NAV(net asset value) management day for the market. Many large-cap stocks closed at the day's

highest level."

For the fiscal year 2019-20, the Sensex closed 23.80 per cent down at 29,468.49(as against 38,672.91 on March 29, 2019) while the Nifty-50 closed 26.03 per cent lower against 11,623.90 on March 29, 2019).

For the fiscal year gone by BSE's market capitalisation was down by Rs 38.75 lakh crore to Rs 113.48 lakh crore as compared to Rs 152.24 lakh crore on April 1, 2019.However, the financial

year closing saw big gains in index heavy weights on Tuesday led Reliance Industries (7.76 per cent), ITC (7.84 per cent),

Hindustan Unilever (5.08 per cent), HDFC (4.34 per cent), HDFC Bank (3.48 per cent) and ICICI Bank (3.34 per cent)

S Ranganathan, head of Research at LKP Securities said, "Markets were up today led by key heavyweights and supported by Technology stocks.

Auto stocks continued to play the spoilsport ahead of the monthly numbers to be released on Wednesday which are expected to be weak. Today's trade witnessed spirited buying across sectors like Pharma & FMCG as the street moved funds towards defensives across companies who are likely to navigate through the lockdown with minimum damage.

The market volatility indicator India VIX index fell 10.29 per cent to 64.49 indicating significant reduction in daily market volatility in coming days.

Unorganised retailers peg loss at \$30 bn

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, MARCH 31

Retail trade has incurred losses amounting to \$30 billion in the past 15 days, says a traders' body. The unorganised retail sector, comprising 70 million small, medium and big traders and employing 450 million people, does a monthly business of about \$70 billion, said the Confederation of All India Traders.

Traders are likely to pay a higher than expected price for the lockdown, which has shuttered stores across the country. "The ramifications will reverberate for

a longer time than expected," said Cait secretary general Praveen Khandelwal.

According to him, a large percentage of the stores selling non-essential goods will take time,' Indian traders are too said Jhina. small to have enough cycle has been disrupted surplus to survive a pandemic like this one. But and traders may not have they still have to pay enough goods to sell even salaries, rentals, taxes after the lockdown is lift and other levies. ed. Imports of finished goods from countries

While 50 to 70 per cent kirana stores selling grocery and other food sup-plies are allowed to operate partially, a large portion of the unorganised retailers selling nonessential items is closed, said Ashish Jhina, cofounder. Jumbotail. an online wholesale market-

Resumption of services will also take time due to migration of labour from cities to rural areas.

economic stress will be

slower as the demand

from Indian consumers

might be subdued. A

large share of the con-

suming class will be cash

strapped and hard

pressed for disposable

ic, people will largely

spend on essential items

and hence recovery of

Further, the import

like China will take more

time to normalise. Indian manufacturers,

dependent on imported

raw material and compo-

nents, will take a long

time to resume their

'Even after the epidem-

the lock-down

after

income.

India, China may escape global recession: UN

YOSHITA SINGH

UNITED NATIONS, MARCH 31

The world economy will go into recession this year with a predicted loss of trillions of dollars of global income due to the coronavirus pandemic, spelling serious trouble for developing countries with the likely exception of India and China, according to a latest UN trade report.

With two-thirds of the world's population living in developing countries facing unprecedented economic damage from the Covid-19 crisis, the UN is calling for a \$2.5 trillion rescue package for these nations.

According to the new analysis from United Nations Conference Trade and Development (Unctad), the UN trade and devel-



opment body, titled 'The Covid-19 Shock to Developing Countries:



Towards a 'whatever it takes' programme for the two-thirds of the world's population being left behind', commodity-rich exporting countries will face a \$2 trillion to \$3 trillion drop in investments from overseas in the next two years

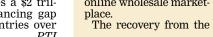
The Unctad said that in recent days, advanced economies and China have put together massive government packages, which, according to the Group of 20 leading economies (G20), will extend a \$5 trillion lifeline to their economies.

It added that while the full details of these stimulus packages are vet to be unpacked, an initial assessment by the Unctad estimates that they will translate to a \$1 trillion to \$2 trillion injection of demand into the major

G20 economies and a two percentage point turnaround in global output.

'Éven so, the world economy will go into recession this year with a predicted loss of global income in trillions of dollars. Γhis will spell serious trouble for developing countries, with the likely exception of China and the possible exception of India," the Unctad said.

give a detailed explanation as to why and how India and China will be the exceptions as the world faces a recession and loss in global income that will impact devel oping countries.



+



operations.

The report, however, did not

The Unctad estimates a \$2 trillion to \$3 trillion financing gap facing developing countries over the next two years. -PTI

ANH DECCAN CHRONICLE | HYDERABAD | WEDNESDAY | 1 APRIL 2020

pg 10

overcome this pandemic,"

gold-medallist tweeted.

contender.

The

the Commonwealth Games

Chopra, who hails from

Panipat, has qualified for the Tokyo Olympics and is

considered a strong medal

TT BODY CHIPS IN ₹5 LAKH

Federation of India (TTFI) on Tuesday pledged ₹5 lakh to the Prime

Minister's Relief Fund for

the battle against the fast-

spreading Covid-19 pandemic. "The TTFI, as a part of its

social responsibility, decid-

ed to contribute in its own

small way a sum of ₹5 lakh

to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund," TTFI said in

"A cheque for the amount

was sent to the Indian

(IOA), which had requested all National Sports Federations (NSFs) to

make contributions to the

AUGUSTA PLEDGES \$2m

Augusta National Golf

Club, which in most years

would be preparing to host

the Masters, announced on

Monday it will give \$2 mil-

lion to help fight the coron-

avirus pandemic in its

which was to have lured

golfers and fans from

around the world to the

famed Georgia layout next

year's Masters,

Association

a statement.

Olympic

This

Fund," it added.

Tennis

Table

SHORT TAKES

Red Bull wanted drivers infected!

Vienna: Red Bull motorsport consultant Helmut Marko has admitted that he wanted the team's Formula One drivers to deliberately contract coronavirus before the potential start of the new season. The 76-year-old said his idea was to bring the team's senior drivers, Max Verstappen and Alexander Albon, together with the junior drivers in a training camp.

"The idea was that we could organise a camp where we could mentally and physically fill this dead time," Marko told Austrian television channel ORF

"Then of course it would've been ideal for the infection to come," the 76-year-old added. 'They are all young, strong men in good health. Then you would be prepared for whenever you start, and you would be ready for a very tough world championship," Marko futher stated.

Marko also admitted that his plan was "not well received" - AFF

Lancashire chief

dies of corona

London: Lancashire county cricket club chairman David Hodgkiss has died after being infected by the dreaded coronavirus. He was 71. Although Lancashire did not give the exact reason of his death in their official statement, a club spokesperson told the 'Press Association' that Hodgkiss' death was "coronavirus-related." "Further to the announcement from his family, it is with great sadness that Lancashire Cricket announces the passing of its Chairman, David Hodgkiss OBE," the club said in a statement. According to reports, Hodgkiss had some prior health issues as well. Hodgkiss had been on the board at Emirate Old Trafford for 22 years, serving as a member, treasurer and vice-chairman before becoming the chairman, succeeding Michael Cairns in 2017. - AFP

Paine's wallet stolen from car

Melbourne: Australia Test captain Tim Paine's wallet was stolen from his car on Tuesday after he parked the vehicle on the street outside his home in Hobart to convert his garage into a gym. His makeshift practice area was just a day old when Paine woke up this morning to realise that his car had oeen broken into. "I've actually just turned the garage into a bit of a home gym and I want to hang the (stocking) off the bit where the garage door opens," he told 'SEN Breakfast'. "I figured if I can, I can work on my cover drive while I'm at it, but I've actually hit a bit of a snag today because I moved the car out onto the street only to wake up this morning to a text from NAB saying my credit card has been used. I went out and the (car) door was open and my wallet and a few other things had gone," Paine added. - AFF

FREEZE FRAME

Badminton body blocks rankings amid suspension

New Delhi, March 31: The Badminton World Federation (BWF) on Tuesday decided to freeze the world rankings, say ing standings as on March 17 will be the basis for entry and seedings when it restarts the internation al calender that has been thrown haywire owing to the Covid-19 pandemic.

There was a clamour for freezing the world rankings with Indian shuttlers Saina Nehwal, B. Sai Praneeth, Parupalli Kashyap and H. S. Prannoy leading the way in expressing their concerns.

The Badminton World Federation (BWF) can announce it will freeze World Rankings and World Junior Rankings until further notice. The freezing of rankings will be backdated to Week 12, which is the week following the last international tournament that was played the YONEX All England Open 2020," BWF said in a release.

"The ranking lists issued on 17 March 2020 will serve as a basis for entry and seeding into the next international tournaments dalthough it is difficult to say at this stage when this may be."

Shuttlers in the singles competition have to be inside top-16 of world rankings to qualify for the Olympics. The cut-off for doubles is also top-16. The BWF had suspended

all tournaments post the All England Championships until April 12 due to the panuntil demic.

These tournaments include big-ticket events like India Open (Super Malaysia 500). Open (Super 750) and Singapore Open (Super 500), apart from the Continental three Confederation championships.

"Due to the Covid-19 outbreak, the badminton community has experienced an unprecedented suspension to international tournaments from midmarch 2020 to the end of April 2020.

The world body said it will take time to decide on the process of unfreezing the world rankings as it will depend on how the international calender looks once things improve. "Following the announcement to reschedule the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games to 23 July to 8 August 2021, BWF will now also initiate a review process to confirm any impacts on the Olympic qualification system," **BWF** said. -AFP

People wearing masks walk past a countdown clock showing the adjusted time remaining for the postponed — ΔFP Tokyo Olympic Games, outside the Tokyo station on Monday.

Task cut out for Tokyo

Tokyo, March 31: The countdown clocks have been reset and are ticking again for the Tokyo Olympics.

The model outside Tokyo Station, and others across the Japanese capital were switched on almost immediately after organisers announced the new dates — July 23 to August 8, 2021.

The clocks read 479 days to go. This seems a long way away, but also small and insignificant compared with the worldwide fallout from the coronavirus.

Then again, it's not much time to reassemble the first Olympics to be postponed since the mod-ern games began 124 ears ago: not for 11.000 Olympic athletes, 4,400 Paralympic athletes and not for sponsors, broadcasters, the fans that have already bought tickets, and Japanese organisers and taxpayers who have spent billions, and will have to come up with billions more to pay for the setback. "I believe that these

NEXT YEAR'S ATHLETICS WORLDS MOVED TO 2022

Paris, March 31: The 2021 World Athletics Championships in Eugene, Oregon (USA) will be shifted to 2022 to accommodate the re-arranged Tokyo Olympics, World Athletics said.

The announcement came immediately after Olympics organisers said the 2020 Tokyo Games will now take place on July 23-August 8, 2021.

That means the World Athletics Championships that were scheduled to take place in Eugene on August 6-15, 2021, can no longer be held on those dates. "We support the new 2021 dates for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games announced by the Japanese organisers and the IOC," World Athletics said in a statement

This gives our athletes the time they need to get back into training and competition. Everyone needs to be flexible and compromise and to that end we are now working with organisers of the World Athletics Championships on new dates in 2022 for our World — AFF

picked for Organisers are hoping to overlay the old plans with new plans, keeping venues in place, securing thousands of rooms in the Athletes Village, deploying the same volunteers, letting people who bought tickets keep them. The summer date also avoids conflicts with the crowded North American and European sports schedules. But summer in Tokyo also means grappling with intense heat and humidity, the major

worry for games organiz-ers before the pandemic. "Obviously in the summer there might be typhoons and the heat problems. However, this situation is the same. We

always nad those prop

CORONA CONTRIBUTION

Athletes continue to donate money

Mumbai, March 31: Star India batsman Rohit Sharma has donated ₹80 lakh to fight the rapidlyspreading Covid-19 pandemic, saying the onus is on the citizens to help the country get back on its

feet. Rohit, who is the vice-captain of the Indian ODI team, has donated ₹45 lakh and ₹25 lakh to the and Relief CM's Fund (Maharashtra) respective-

He has given ₹5 lakh to 'Zomato Feeding India', which is helping families affected by the ongoing national lockdown, and another ₹5 lakh to help aid the welfare of stray dogs. "We need our country back on feet & the onus is

on us. I've done my bit to donate ₹45lakhs to #PMCaresFunds, ₹25lakhs to #CMReliefFund Maharashtra, ₹5lakhs to @FeedingIndia and

₹5lakhs to #WelfareOfStrayDogs.

Let's get behind our leaders and support them @ narendramodi @CMOMaharashtra, tweeted the elegant right handed batsman on Tuesday morning.

NEERAJ GIVES **₹3** LAKH

Asian Games gold medalregion. winning javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra on Tuesday donated a total of ₹3 lakh to the central and Haryana state relief funds to combat the Covid-19 pandemic in the country.

Chopra is currently in self-isolation at the National Institute of Sports (NIS) in Patiala after flying back from a training trip in Turkey. "I have donated a sum of

₹2 Lakh to #PMCARES fund and ₹1 Lakh to the Haryana Covid Relief Fund. I hope we all can come together in our own individual capacities to bring relief during this time and help our nation

week, was postponed indefinitely due to the global outbreak of the deadly virus. "It is our hope these gifts will help address the many challenges brought about the coronavirus throughout the city of Augusta and the greater region. We believe Augusta National has an important responsibility to support and protect the community,' Augusta National chairman Fred Ridley

— Agencies

NEHRU STADIUM IS NOW A QUARANTINE FACILITY

said.

New Delhi, March 31: The Sports of Authority of India (SAI) said it is handing over the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium here to the Delhi government for using it as a quarantine facility for patients infected with the novel coronavirus.

SAI handed over the stadium after the District Magistrate had on Monday day asked if it could be

SONY EXTENDS DEAL TO BEAM WWE SHOWS

Mumbai: Sony Pictures Networks (SPN) India Private Limited and WWE on Tuesday announced a five-year extension with an expanded broadcast agreement that will deliver WWE's weekly flagship programming and localised content in India and the Indian subcontinent, making SPN the exclusive home to WWE in-ring content across its television and digital platforms. As part of the agreement, SPN will have the rights to air Raw, SmackDown, NXT as well as WWE pay-per-view specials live on its sports and digital platforms in English, Hindi and regional languages. The expanded partnership also provides SPN the rights to WWE Network which hosts thousands of hours of content to be made available to audiences in India exclusively through SonyLIV, SPN's OTT platform. In addition and for the first time, SPN will curate content from WWE's extensive video library which includes live events, iconic matches, interviews with Legends, reality shows, documentaries and more, on its own platforms. WWE will also return to India with even bigger live events and Superstars will visit the region for promotional tours to engage with fans. Agencies

Olympics are going to have great historical sigAthletics Championships," it said.

nificance," Yoshiro Mori, the president of the Tokyo organiSing committee, said after confirming the new dates.

Mori, an 82-year-old former Japanese prime minister, also recalled there's no guarantee that the coronavirus pandemic will be under control a from now. That year

lems so we will be prepared for those issues,' includes the new dates for Mori said. the Paralympics now set for Aug. 24 to September 5. "This is a prayer that we have and I do believe that someone is going to listen to our prayers," Mori said. After cursory talk about an Olympics in the spring,

the new summer dates overlap perfectly with the same time slot that was ing up venues.

Though the internation al sports federations went along with the new dates, some like the International Triathlon Union preferred the cool-er spring during Japan's cherry blossom season. But that was overridden by the easiest route to linused for the purpose of quarantine.

The Sports Ministry had on March 22 announced that facilities under SAI across the country will be

made available for usage as quarantine facilities. More than 1,250 positive cases for the novel coron-avirus have so far been reported across the country besides 36 deaths.

Flushing Meadows turns Corona Park

New York, March 31: The site of the US Open tennis tournament here will be used to build a 350-bed facility in an effort to provide additional medical infrastructure to the city as it battles the growing coronavirus outbreak.

New York city's emergency

management office plans

patients who do not have

Covid-19, the illness caused

Additionally, the tennis

commissary that will pack-

age 25,000 meals per day for

medical professionals and

others. Construction may

begin as early as Tuesday, a

report in NPR media said.

As public and private hospitals across the state come under immense

by the novel coronavirus.

Park.

strain from the growing Covid-19 cases, officials are permitting setting up of temporary medical infrastructure various at sprawling spaces in New York.

A 68-bed field hospital is being constructed in the city's Central Park to help A report in *The Wall* Street Journal said that enhance medical capacity.

LORD'S OPENS UP FOR HEALTHCARE WORKERS

to build a 350-bed facility at the Billie Jean King National Tennis Centre in Custodian of cricket laws, the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC), has decided to Flushing Meadows-Corona provide parking and stor-The report said construcage spaces available at the iconic Lord's cricket ground to the National Health Services (NHS) staff tion could begin as early as Tuesday at an indoor training center at the facility, who are fighting the Covid-

which has multiple courts and wide spaces, according 19 pandemic. to a spokesman for the US "The close proximity of a Tennis Association. number of hospitals to The beds will likely be for

Lord's gives the Club the opportunity to assist med-ical staff so they can concentrate on their ongoing battle against the virus, centre's Louis Armstrong Stadium will become a the MCC said in media release. The club has provided 75

car parking spaces for NHS staff at the nearby Wellington Hospital, University College Hospital, and the Hospital St John and St of Elizabeth. -AFP

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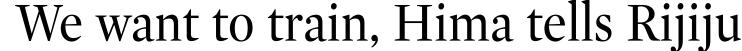
need to reschedule the World Championships 2021 normally staged in August with suitable alternatives being dis-cussed with hosts Spain," the governing body said Tokyo Olympics were pushed to next year due to in a statement. World Championships is a annual event with the exception of the Olympic year. P. V. Sindhu had won

Huelva, a city in south-west Spain, is scheduled to host the 2021 2021 World Badminton Championships in August but with the Tokyo Games now rescheduled to July 23 to August 8. BWF is looking for alternatives. 'BWF is aware of the

the Covid-19 pandemic.

in 2019. The BWF has suspended all tournaments until April 12 due to the pandemic.

the World Championships



New Delhi, March 31: Confined to their hostel rooms at NIS Patiala amid coronavirus-forced lockdown, some athletes, led by star sprinter Hima Das, have requested the sports ministry to allow them to train outdoors within the campus, which is out of bounds for out-

siders right now. Deputy chief national athletics coach Radhakrishnan Nair, who is supporting the move, said that the Hima-led campers at the National Institute of Sports (NIS)

are expecting a reply from the ministry in a day or two

"Hima and some other athletes have written to the Sports Minister that they be allowed to train one or two hours a day in small groups at different times so that they can also practice social distancing while training at the same time," Nair confirmed from Patiala.

'They have written to Rijiju that they be sent home if no training is allowed. (But) going home is not feasible as the coun-



hours. All the athletes of a group will not do running

run after him or her. This way we can practice social distancing and be safe, the top athletics coach said. "Athletics is different. In

many sports, the athletes utilise a small space but a runner or a thrower or a jumper covers a lot of distance and their cardiovascular system and physical strength has to be built continuously over a period of time," he added. -PTI





ing the dreaded coron-

We will know about it in a day or two," he added. Nair said he and other Nair said he and other coaches have supported the idea as there is no risk

of any camper contractavirus as nobody is coming in and going out of the facility. "We have 41 ath-letes at NIS and the track and field area is just 50m from the hostels. We can

have small groups say eight athletes each and only one group will train at a time for one or two

"So, the ministry will not allow them to go back

Hima Das try is in a lockdown and Prime Minister has said everybody should be

where they are.

home but this outdoor training idea is feasible.

title at Basel, Switzerland P. V. Sindhu in this file photo. -PTI

BWF eyeing new dates for Worlds New Delhi, March 31: The Badminton World Federation (BWF) is in talks with hosts Spain to reschedule the 2021 World Championships after the