

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA  
HYDERABAD | FRIDAY | 10 APRIL 2020

**WEATHER**

Max: 36.2°C  
Min: 23.2°C  
RH: 85%  
Rain: 18

Forecast: Cloudy sky, Rain or thundershowers likely  
Max/Min temp. 37/24°C

**CORONA COUNT**

CASES (+737)  
DEATHS (+30)

6,653 209

covid19india.org

**STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS**

(+18)  
TS: 471 12

(+15)  
AP: 363 06

**COVID-19 CASES IN THE WORLD**

1,555,019

**DEATHS**  
91,830

COUNTRIES WITH CASES 209

worldometers.info/coronavirus

**ASTROGUIDE**

Saravali: Uttarayana  
Tithi: Chaitra Bahula Tasya till 9.36 pm

Star: Visakha till 9.58 pm  
Varjyam: 5.20 am to 6.47 am  
1.41 am to 3.10 am (Sunday)  
Durmuhurtam: 8.35 am to 9.24 am  
12.42 pm to 1.31 pm  
Rahukalam: 10.30 am to 12.00 pm

**HURI CALENDAR**  
Shabaan 15,1441 AH

**PRAYERS**  
Fajar: 5:02 am  
Zohar: 12:27 pm  
Asar: 4:38 pm  
Maghrib: 5:36 pm  
Isha: 7:45 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6:31 PM  
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6:03 AM  
MOONRISE TODAY 9:02 PM  
MOONSET TOMORROW 7:51 AM

**COUNTER POINT**



Take your time, dear... the shop queue has come to our house!

**BRIEF**

**Banks caution on EMI frauds**

New Delhi: Leading banks have reached out to customers to caution them against EMI moratorium frauds and strongly advising them not to share sensitive information like OTP and PIN with the imposters.

**OPEC, allies meet to cut oil output**

London: Top oil producers from the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and its allies reportedly decided to cut oil production by up to 15 million barrel per day. The OPEC group will cut 10 Mbpd while non OPEC nations are expected to cut up to 5 Mbpd.

**US thanks India for HCQ trials**

Washington: US President Donald Trump on Wednesday thanked India for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's decision to allow the export of malaria drug Hydroxychloroquine to the US. "Thank you India and the Indian people for the decision on HCQ. Will not be forgotten!" he tweeted.



**WORLD 5**

**Joe Biden presumptive Democratic nominee**



**BUSINESS 7**

**Labour shortage affects harvesting**

**TABLOID**

**Singles, not allowed to mingle!**



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Vol. 83 No. 100 Established 1938 | 16 PAGES | ₹6.00

## Coronavirus to decide future of economy: RBI

### Central bank says growth forecast depends on how fast virus is stopped; lower oil prices can't offset demand loss

**FALAKNAAZ SYED**  
MUMBAI, APRIL 9

The Covid-19 pandemic would impact economic activity in India, due to the lockdown and declining global trade and economic growth, and hangs over the country's future like a spectre, said the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Thursday.

In its Monetary Policy Report released on Thursday, the RBI said "Covid-19, the accompanying lockdowns and the expected contraction in global output in 2020 weigh heavily on the growth outlook. The actual outcome would depend upon the speed with which the outbreak is contained and economic activity returns to normalcy. Significant monetary and liquidity measures taken by the Reserve Bank and fiscal measures by the government would mitigate the adverse impact on domestic demand and help in

spurring the economic activity once normalcy is restored. Risks around the inflation projections appear to be balanced at this juncture and the tentative outlook is benign relative to recent history. But Covid-19 hangs over the future like a spectre."

Prior to the outbreak of Covid-19, the report said the outlook for domestic growth for 2020-21 was looking up but the Covid-19 pandemic altered this outlook. "First, the bumper

The actual outcome would depend upon the speed with which the outbreak is contained and economic activity returns to normalcy... But Covid-19 hangs over the future like a spectre

— RBI IN MONETARY POLICY STATEMENT

harvest and higher food prices during 2019-20 provided conducive conditions for the strengthening

of rural demand. Second, the transmission of past reductions in the policy rate to bank lending rates has been improving, with favourable implications for both consumption and investment demand. Third, reductions in the goods and services tax (GST) rates, corporate tax rate cuts in September 2019 and measures to boost rural and infrastructure spending were directed at boosting domestic demand more generally but the

Covid-19 pandemic has drastically altered this outlook," read the RBI report. The central bank said the global macroeconomic outlook is overcast with the Covid-19 pandemic, with massive dislocations in global production, supply chains, trade and tourism and the global economy could recession. "Financial markets across the world are experiencing extreme volatility; global commodity prices, especially of crude oil, have

## 1 more dies due to Covid in state

### 101 locations in TS to be designated hotspots, 18 new cases in state takes total to 471, toll 12

**BALU PULIPAKA I DC**  
HYDERABAD, APRIL 9

One more person died of Covid-19 in the state, taking the toll to 12 on Thursday. On the other hand, the state registered the lowest number of cases in a week, with 16 people confirmed as having been infected by coronavirus, taking the total to 471.

Health minister Etala Rajendar said the government had decided to designate 101 locations across the state as hotspots for Covid-19 and has implemented a strict containment policy of not allowing anyone to enter or exit the identified areas for any reason. The government had on Wednesday declared 14 containment zones in the state capital.

Mr Rajendar expressed the hope that the dip in new positive cases is an indication that the state is heading for a day when there will be no more new cases.

Mr Rajendar said that 655 samples were tested since Wednesday. A total of 414 patients are being treated at Gandhi and King Koti government hospitals. The disease burden from those who visit

## 2 Manipuri youths denied mall entry

### JAYENDRA CHAITANYA T I DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 9

In an alleged incident of racial discrimination, two youngsters from Manipur were denied entry into a supermarket as the security guards called them foreigners.

The police has taken the manager of the supermarket and two security guards into custody.

The incident took place at Star Supermarket in the Panama area in Vanashalipuram on Wednesday. A video of the incident that was shot and posted on social media went viral. The two students were identified as Angam Weapon, 24, an engineering graduate,

and his friend Thang Kai Hoopik, 22, a final engineering student at a private college in the city.

Mr Angam Weapon told Deccan Chronicle, "It was about 3.15 pm when we went to the supermarket to buy vegetables. As we reached the entry line, the security guards stopped us saying that foreign nationals are not allowed. They were calling us foreigners because our looks are not similar to that of our fellow citizens. Even showing our Aadhaar card did not help us, as the security guards were not ready to listen to us and bluntly objected to our entry."

■ Page 2: No one at store came to their help

returnees or their contacts who tested positive will begin to be disinfected after they test negative.

■ Page 3: Containment zones barricaded

He said some of the Delhi

## Wedlock in lockdown



A wedding in progress at a home in Nacharam with just the family members attending by wearing masks during the lockdown on Thursday. — S. SURENDR REDDY

## 2 MORE DEATHS RECORDED IN ANDHRA PRADESH

### SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 9

Two more deaths, one each in Guntur and Anantapur, were attributed to Covid-19, taking the toll to six on Thursday. The 45-year-old victim from Guntur and the victim from Anantapur aged 70 had died on April 7. Their samples tested positive on Thursday.

The state also registered 15 fresh positive cases — 11 from Prakasham, two from Guntur and one each from East Godavari and Kadapa — to bring the total to 383. One Covid-19 positive patient was discharged after the recovery in Chittoor district. He is the tenth patient to be discharged. The Guntur victim was a cable TV operator who visited houses of his subscribers to collect monthly fee.

## India's Covid-19 toll 209, 737 new cases recorded

### VINEETA PANDEY | DC NEW DELHI, APRIL 9

In a desperate bid to control the rising coronavirus fatality rate, the Centre has decided to begin clinical trials for convalescent plasma therapy on critical patients. The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) is preparing a protocol document, that will be released soon.

The ICMR has also changed its testing strate-

gy in hotspots, where everyone with influenza-like illness symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose) would be tested now, irrespective of whether they are connected to Covid-19 patients or not. India on Thursday reported 737 new cases and 20 new deaths in one day, taking the total toll to 209 as per covidindia.org, a crowdsourced website that updates the numbers frequently. With 737 new cases since Wednesday

evening, the total number of positive Covid-19 cases has risen to 6,653, of which 5,842 are still in hospital while 692 have recovered. Maharashtra, with 1,155 cases and 72 deaths, is still the epicentre of the pandemic in India. The state reported 70 new cases and nine deaths on Thursday. About 80 per cent cases in the state surfaced in the last eight days.

■ Page 4: ICMR revises testing for hotspots

## ODISHA BECOMES FIRST TO EXTEND LOCKDOWN

### AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC Bhubaneswar, April 9

Odisha on Thursday extended the lockdown by another 15 days, the first state to do so while the Centre is still mulling the proposal, as the state reported two more Covid-19 positive cases, taking the total Covid-19 count to 44.

The extension was announced by Chief Minister Naveen Pattnaik soon after an emergency meeting of the state Cabinet.

"Taking into consideration the Covid-19 situation in the state, the State Cabinet decided to extend the lockdown till April 30. Besides, it has been decided that all schools will remain inoperative till April 17," the CM announced.

The government also urged the Union government to continue suspension of flight and railway services till April 30.

The two new positive cases were reported from Dhenkanal and Bhubaneswar.

## 2 women docs blamed for virus, attacked

### BHASKAR HARI SHARMA | DC NEW DELHI, APRIL 9

Despite Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal and banging of utensils to express gratitude for their relentless battle against coronavirus, doctors continue to be the targets of mob frenzy across India, including in Delhi.

Two women doctors of the government-run Safdarjung Hospital were assaulted on Wednesday night as they went out to buy fruit and vegetables at Gulmohar Enclave market, near Gautam Nagar, where they live. They were reportedly heckled by a

## 2 AIIMS docs beaten by cops, probe on

### RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, APRIL 9

Two resident doctors of All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS) Bhopal were allegedly abused and physically assaulted by the police when they were returning home after attending emergency duty on Wednesday.

The two doctors released a video on Thursday narrating their ordeal.

"We had disclosed our identity by showing them our identity cards. The policemen abused us and then assaulted us, saying that doctors are spreading coronavirus," the two doctors said. They reported the matter to the cops. The resident doctors'

association of AIIMS-Bhopal demanded stringent action against the cops. One policeman was suspended on Thursday in connection with the incident and a probe was on, the investigation officer said.

Shockingly, some doctors and nurses at AIIMS were threatened with eviction from their residences by their landlords over fears of the virus spreading.

## Several low quality products flood market while health workers struggle to procure safety equipment

## PPE prices surge as makers exploit big demand

### KANIZA GARARI | DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 9

The cost of one set of personal protective equipment (PPE) varies from ₹1,200 to ₹3,000. With the demand for them surging in the backdrop of Covid-19, many players, including unscrupulous ones, have entered the market.

This has made it crucial for medical associations, hospitals and government

departments to check the quality of the PPEs before placing orders.

The demand is such that dentists, general surgeons and medical staff in small hospitals are required to wear them. Surgeons, who carry out minor procedures in small hospitals, need protection as they go close to patients.

Senior dentist Dr K. Satyendra Kumar said that dentists will have to wear

PPE when they carry out procedures as they deal with the oral region, where aerosols are generated. Dentists' procedures will now require a PPE and N-95 mask.

"Till the lockdown is lifted, no procedure can be done without this protection," he said.

The guidelines have compelled the Indian Dental Association to look for PPEs in the market and

they find that the rates are different and so is the quality.

An senior surgeon explained, "The virus is not going to die after the lockdown. Post-lockdown, there are going to be extreme precautions that doctors, nurses and other staff in hospitals will have to take. In the operation theatre, distance cannot be maintained and we will need PPE. We are also try-

ing to source them but are finding that the market is being exploited by vested interests."

Earlier, there were only a handful of PPE manufacturers in the country but after Covid-19 was declared a pandemic, many others have sprung up.

Mr Rajiv Nath, forum coordinator of the Association of Indian Medical Device Industry, said "There are licensed

manufacturers who are using the standard and specified protocol. The PPE has to go through a process before they are certified. But, of late, unscrupulous players have mushroomed and we have alerted the government about the same as it could be a dangerous proposition."

A senior doctor, on condition of anonymity, said that the market is being exploited by new manufac-

turers with no experience, whatsoever.

The other problem is caused by large corporate hospitals, which hoard stock.

"The manufacturers supplying to corporate hospitals are not willing to part with their material as they are high-paying clients. It is only the small and new ones who have problems in procuring the equipment," he said.

IN BRIEF

Cop hurt in road mishap, critical

Hyderabad: A Sultan Bazaar police constable who was riding on a motorcycle fell down from the vehicle when he tried to avoid hitting a dog that suddenly came in his path. Police said constable Mamidi Raju was returning home at about 3 am after completing duty when the incident occurred at Chaderghat bridge. He fell down and lost consciousness. He was wearing a helmet but it fell off due to the impact, police said. The constable was shifted to the Yasoda Hospital at Malakpet where his condition is stated to be critical.

35-year-old junior artist found dead

Hyderabad: A junior artist, Vishwa Shanti, 35, was found dead in her apartment, the SR Nagar police said on Thursday. She was staying alone and police said the death might have been accidental. According to the SR Nagar police, she used to take sleeping pills and was found fallen in her bedroom in a state of semi-consciousness and suffered a head injury. Shanti had not been answering the phone for three days. Her mother then asked the house owner to check. He called the police, who broke open the door and entered the house only to find her dead.

EFLU to conduct online exams

Hyderabad: The academic council of the English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU) on Thursday decided to conduct the end-semester examinations online for May online, using the open-book or take-home examinations or term papers or assignments/projects in view of the ongoing lockdown. The decision was taken at a meeting consisting of 40 members of the academic council with the Vice Chancellor and it was decided that the sit-down mode of the examination should be dropped for May. The council approved the conduct of PWD viva-voce examinations online.

NO ONE AT STORE CAME TO THEIR HELP

From Page 1
Angam Weapon, one of the Manjipuri youth who was stopped at a supermarket in Vanasthalipuram said he clearly told the security guards that they are not foreigners, and not infected with Covid-19. "No one at the store came to our help, which is really sad," said the youngster. Mr Angam Weapon said that the manager of the store did not come to talk to them even though they waited for some time and they went back without purchasing vegetables at the supermarket.

UoH STUDENTS IN COVID-19 SURVEILLANCE

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 9
The state government has drafted students from the public health departments of the University of Hyderabad (UoH) to carry out epidemiological fieldwork in the districts across as part of its containment strategy against the spread of Covid-19. About 15 second semester students of the Masters of Public Health (MPH) who volunteered for the work were issued orders by the district authorities to participate in active and passive surveillance teams.

In addition, four research scholars and 30 students, including MPH seniors and alumni, submitted their credentials to the government and offered to work for the humanitarian cause. Vice-Chancellor Prof. Appa Rao Podile lauded the students' motivation to serve voluntarily in this hour of crisis. The government has appointed the spirit of the volunteers and promised to consider them for future placements.

An opportunity in calamity



The lockdown due to Covid-19 pandemic comes in handy for the GHMC authorities to implement their decades-long-pending plan of laying a concrete road in the Kavadijuda corridor, one of the busiest routes, in Secunderabad, on Thursday. — GANDHI

Telugu CMs differ on lockdown

KCR wants complete lockdown, Jagan wants it only in hotspots

S.N.C.N. ACHARYULU | DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 9
There is difference of opinion between the two Telugu states on continuation of lockdown beyond April 14. Chief Ministers K. Chandrashekar Rao of Telangana state and N.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy of Andhra Pradesh had conveyed their respective opinions to Prime Minister Narendra Modi during Wednesday's video conference with CMs of various states. Mr Rao is firm on a complete lockdown for two weeks from April 14. The CMs of certain other states too expressed a similar opinion during their interaction with the Prime Minister. But Mr Reddy wants continuation of lockdown only in areas where the threat of coronavirus is continuing. In a video conference held by Mr Modi with leaders of various parties in Parliament, YSRC MP Vijayasa Reddy, a close associate of the Chief

Minister, maintained that for the convenience of people, the lockdown should be lifted from those areas where coronavirus cases have not been registered. The MP maintained that lockdown should continue only in the coronavirus hotspots. TRS Parliamentary Party leader K. Keshava Rao reiterated Mr Chandrashekar Rao's opinion that the lockdown should continue for another two weeks. In support of his stand, the YSRC MP pointed out that due to lockdown, all states in the country are losing huge revenues. Compared to other states, the situation in AP is acute as at the time of bifurcation itself AP had inherited a financial crisis. It will thus be very difficult for AP to manage if it continues to lose further revenues. In normal conditions, AP government earns ₹155 crore revenue per day. After the lockdown, AP has not been getting even a single rupee. Though the Centre released around ₹3,000 crore for three weeks, the AP government had to borrow ₹1,000 crore from the Reserve Bank of India two days ago. Meanwhile, AFSRTC has started advance reservations for travel after April 14 in anticipation that lockdown could be lifted.

HC lauds TS for fighting virus

VUJINI VAMSHIDHARA | DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 9
The Telangana High Court on Thursday lauded the steps taken by the state government in tackling Covid-19, such as helping the poor during the lockdown, protecting doctors and announcing incentives for frontline workers. Dealing with five PILs on Thursday, the division bench comprising Chief Justice Raghavendra Singh Chauhan and Justice T. Amarnath Goud, observed: "The Telangana government is doing its best to curb the further spread of Covid-19 cases... they are trying their best to ensure that coronavirus does not spread further."



Motorists hit the roads inundated with water in Begumpet after rain lashed the city on Thursday. — R. PAVAN

Parts of city get sporadic rainfall, highest in Bolaram

T.S.S. SIDHARTH | DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 9
In line with the predictions made by the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), the city witnessed a brief and sporadic spell of rain. Some places like LB Nagar also witnessed a hailstorm on Thursday evening. As of 7.30 pm, the highest rainfall of 36.5 mm was recorded at Bolaram. The second and third were at Srinagar Colony and the Centre for Economic and Social Studies (CESS), which received 24 and 23 mm, respectively. The IMD centre near the Begumpet airport received 18 mm rainfall, which is just two millimetres short of the highest rainfall registered for the year 2019 at 20.2 mm on April 19. "There is an unseasonal trough oscillating from east to west over the southern peninsula. Whenever it moves to the east, Telangana state and Odisha receive rains. We predict that this activity would subside in the next 24 hours," Mahesh Palawat, chief meteorologist, Skymet (a private weather forecasting outfit), told Deccan Chronicle. The IMD has also issued a weather warning for the state for Friday. It warns of thunderstorm accompanied by hail, lightning and gusty winds of 30-40 kmph at isolated places in the districts of Hyderabad, Rangareddy, Medchal Palakurthi, Medak, Sangareddy, Khammam, Jangaon, Mahbubnagar, Yadadri-Buvanagiri, Nagarkurnool, Nalgonda, Suryapet, Joggulamba Godwal, Wanaparthy, Mahbubabad, Warangal, Jaishankar-Bhupalpally and Bhadradi Kothagudem districts.

Cong prepares for relief work

IREDDY SRINIVAS REDDY | DC HYDERABAD, APR 9

State Congress president N. Uttam Kumar Reddy on Thursday asked party leaders and cadres to prepare a plan for extensive relief operations as the ongoing lockdown would have a long-lasting impact on the people. Addressing senior leaders during a video conference, Mr Reddy said normally might not return to the state immediately after the end of lockdown, which is most likely to be extended. Therefore, he said, Congress leaders should prepare a comprehensive plan to extend help and relief to the people affected by lockdown. While the priority is to supply food to daily wage earners, migrant workers, the homeless and other poor sections, Congress leaders would also need to work out a plan to help those who have lost their livelihoods or jobs due to the lockdown, he said.

LOCKDOWN PUTS FARMERS IN DEEP DISTRESS

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 9

Former minister and BJP leader D.K. Aruna on Thursday demanded that the government come to the rescue of farmers who grow oranges and lemons as buyers were not coming forward due to the lockdown. In a press statement, she appealed to Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao to fix a minimum support price for the produce. The farmers are not able to export the produce, she said. In the Nagpur market, the biggest market in south India for oranges and supply it to the people through the civil supplies department. Mr Reddy demanded that the state government release a white paper and disclose the 'real statistics' pertaining to coronavirus besides facts on the financial situation. He said it was unfortunate that people had started raising apprehensions that the state government was hiding the real statistics of coronavirus patients, suspects and deaths. He said such apprehensions were triggered due to the failure of authorities to release media bulletins on a regular basis. He said Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao had been giving contradictory statements. In his earlier press conference, he had claimed that the state would be free from Covid-19 after April 7. Things have changed after the emergence of fresh cases related to returnees from the Tablighi Jamaat congregation in Delhi. The state government must release a status paper. He said the government should also disclose figures on the availability of hospitals, beds, ICU units, ventilators, drugs and other medical equipment. Testing kits and medical professionals involved in the treatment and operations and the estimated amount required to deal with the situation.

Govt: Call 104 or 108 for any help

BALU PULIPAKA | DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 9

The government on Thursday appealed to the people with serious health conditions, including those requiring dialysis, treatment for cancer or other health problems, to call either the 104 or 108 helplines for assistance. "Whether it is transport to get to a hospital or making sure they receive the treatment they need, the government assures that their needs will be attended to in a matter of hours," health minister Etala Rajendar said. He said Chief Minister Chandrashekar Rao, who reviewed the Covid-19 situation, called for strict implementation of containment at the 10 designated hotspots. "Ninety-nine per cent of people are observing the lockdown as per the Chief Minister's call. The Chief Minister instructed that people suffering from other conditions because of the lockdown should not be denied of their treatment," Mr Rajendar said. He said the state had about 1,500 thalassaemia patients who need blood transfusions twice a month and appealed to people to donate blood. "Just call 104 or 108 and the government will make all arrangements for donors. If the breadwinner of a family is in quarantine or under treatment for Covid-19, then the government will do everything it can to assist such families," Mr Rajendar added. The government has set up a team of 10 doctors for people to speak with doctors in case they need other medical assistance.

Woman ends life, jumps off terrace

JAYENDRA CHAITANYA T, DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 9

A 21-year-old woman at Chandanagar committed suicide by jumping from her apartment early on Thursday morning. She did not leave behind a suicide note. The incident occurred at Chandanagar police station. Pooja Ambika, 21, a private employee and engineering student, was living with her parents K. Vedukondalu and Samanthanankam, tailors, at Rajeev Swarghara in Papireddy Colony of Serilingampally mandal. She was reportedly suffering from thyroid and obesity issues due to her early hours. At around 5 am on Friday, when her parents were asleep, she went to the terrace on the fifth floor and jumped. The security personnel informed her parents.

Families were set to host close to 300-400 family members and friends in the wedding

Some couples opt to put off their nuptials due to lockdown

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 9
Alankrita Ranjan and Ankit Bangar would have tied the knot on April 19 in Hyderabad's Mrugavani Resorts. The couple was to host close to 300-400 family and friends in a grand wedding. But an invited guest — the dreaded coronavirus — made them change their plans. The two chose to

prioritize the safety and well-being of their near and dear ones and postponed their wedding indefinitely just a few weeks before the big day. "There was a strange fear among all of us when the news of the spread started trickling in from across the globe. Many of our guests were to fly down from different countries, including the groom who is in the US

rather postpone the wedding," said Alankrita. Asked if they faced financial issues due to the postponement, she said that most vendors were cooperative. Even though they were not refunded the money paid in advance, the vendors assured her it was safe with them until she decided on a new wedding date. Currently when some of them started to back out, we didn't want to celebrate our big day without the

presence of those important to us, so Ankit and I took the final call and told our families that we would postpone the wedding," said Alankrita. Asked if they faced financial issues due to the postponement, she said that most vendors were cooperative. Even though they were not refunded the money paid in advance, the vendors assured her it was safe with them until she decided on a new wedding date. A bridegroom in Secunderabad, who had not



IN BRIEF

Wakf Board to distribute food

Hyderabad: The Wakf Board has sanctioned ₹2 crore for distribution of the food grains and grocery kits among poor during Ramzan in the wake of the lockdown. The board held an emergency meeting under the chairmanship of Mohammed Saleem who said the kits will be distributed in the slum areas and villages. He said that the TS Wakf Board was the first in the country which came up with such a plan. The board has already distributed food grains worth ₹20 lakh.

IIT-H GIVES 100 LTRS OF SANITISER

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 9

The Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad has provided nearly 100 litres of hand sanitiser per day to the Sangareddy district administration since April 4. The sanitiser is distributed among the people. The hand sanitiser has been developed by a research group led by Dr Jyotsnendu Giri, associate professor of the department of chemical engineering, IIT-H, called the ENARM Lab. The sanitiser is said to be at par with the standards recommended by WHO and the US Centres for Disease Control. Dr Giri said, "Being a researcher in an IIT, it is my duty to serve our nation through scientific research and innovation. This is my small contribution to our society in this difficult time."

CONTAINMENT ZONES BARRICADED

From Page 1

Telangana is hoping to keep discharging cured Covid-19 patients. "We hope that we will get the results tonight or tomorrow. Once we get confirmed negative tests, we should be able to discharge some 60 to 70 patients. After Thursday, all those who returned from other countries will have ended their quarantine periods. From now on we hope we can keep discharging cured patients and that the state will be free of Covid-19 cases by April 22 or 23, provided no new cases crop up," Mr Rajendar said.

Reflecting on the highest number of cases in the state coming from the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation limits, the minister said, "these are small pockets in the city where Covid-19 cases have been found and families of these patients, or their contacts live. Our goal is to stop the disease from spreading outwards from these pockets," he said. The government has set up containment zones which have been barricaded by the police at Moula Ali, Sharief, Panjagutta, Balapur, Malakpet Race Course Road, Khairatabad Bazar, Chintalbasti, Ramgopalpet, Jagadrigutta and Mallepally. "The government is sending appeals to those living in these containment zones contact 104 or 108 services if they live in cramped homes. The government will shift such people to comfortable quarantine facilities where distance between people can be maintained so any possibility of disease spreading among them can be eliminated," Mr Rajendar said.

STRICT NORMS

No one is allowed inside Gandhi for tests, suspects will be sent to Koti hosp Only Covid patients in Gandhi, staffers get break

VIKRAM SHARMA | DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 9

For doctors, medical staff and private security personnel at the Gandhi Hospital, a majority of whom were working round the clock, the past month has been grueling and tiring. The government's decision to allow only Covid patients in Gandhi, staffers get break. "The government is sending appeals to those living in these containment zones contact 104 or 108 services if they live in cramped homes. The government will shift such people to comfortable quarantine facilities where distance between people can be maintained so any possibility of disease spreading among them can be eliminated," Mr Rajendar said.

Complete curfew



With the GHMC notifying some localities in Hyderabad as containment clusters demanding complete curfew-like situation to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, Hafeez Bada Nagar in Chandrayanagutta wears a deserted look on Thursday

Govt seals the area around Badi Masjid

Religious site has been converted into quarantine centre

ATHER MOIN | DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 9

The government on Thursday cordoned off the area surrounding the Jamia Masjid Mozza-ampura (Badi Masjid), Mallepally, one of the 12 containment zones in the city. The mosque is the centre of the Tablighi Jamaat for the city and has been converted into a quarantine centre. Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar, principal secretary municipal administration, Arvind Kumar, Director General of Police M. Mahendar Reddy, police Commissioner Anjani Kumar, GHMC commissioner D.S. Lokesh Kumar, Hyderabad collector

Sweta Mohanty and Nampally MLA Jafar Hussain Meraj inspected the area. "The administration will ensure that the people will not be allowed to move outside and no one will be allowed to enter the zone." Covid patients had been shifted to hospital, and areas where they were found have been cordoned off. "The people residing in the zone should confine themselves to their houses. We will ensure we will provide essential commodities at their doorstep. Residents will be provided a phone number for emergency help. There is no need to panic," he said.

GHMC MEDICAL TEAM WILL BE POSTED TO MONITOR THE SITUATION. TEAMS WILL CARRY OUT A DOOR TO DOOR SURVEY.

Lokesh Kumar said the GHMC medical team will be posted to monitor the situation. Teams will carry out a door to door survey for symptomatic cases. Police commissioner Anjani Kumar said, "We have been working on the issue for the last one week. The main purpose is to contain the spread of the virus. In coordination with the GHMC the police had initially identified 12 areas and the number may go up to 15."

He said the GHMC has completed the survey on the requirements of essential commodities of the people residing in the containment zones. "Our role is to ensure that stock is regularly replenished. If something is required for the people residing in the zone the police will provide it. Each of these clusters has provisions for a medical emergency. GHMC officials and DCPs are working on this aspect."

TOP-COP INSPECTS COVID AFFECTED AREAS

DURGA PRASAD SUNKU | DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 9

Hyderabad police commissioner Anjan Kumar and principal secretary Sunil Sharma visited several containment areas in the city and inspected the measures taken for safety and security. Mr Kumar said the police was strictly enforcing the isolation and monitoring of containment areas. After visiting Khairatabad, Mr Kumar said, "There are seven points where barricades have been set up. Each point will be covered by CCTV. The purpose of barricading is to contain the spread of virus by curbing the movement of people."

TRS says BJP MP's degree is fake

NARENDER PULLOOR | DC NIZAMABAD, APRIL 9

The political war between TRS and BJP leaders is heading for a crescendo in Nizamabad district, amid the Covid-19 crisis. Leaders from both parties have lodged complaints with the state government and the Election Commission against each other. TRS social media in-charge Y. Satish Reddy complained to the EC that Nizamabad MP D. Arvind of the BJP had given false information about his educational qualifications. Mr Arvind stated that he had completed post-graduation in political science from a deemed-to-be-university at Rajendranagar in Rajasthan in the distance mode in 2018.

TRS SOCIAL media in-charge Y. Satish Reddy complained to the Election Commission that Nizamabad MP D. Arvind of the BJP had given false information about his educational qualifications.

BJP district president Baswarupam Laxminarasimha had complained to the State Election Commission in March against former MP K. Kavitha, alleging that she had lied about her property in the MLC by-election affidavit. He demanded cancellation of her nomination. In view of the lockdown, the by-election has been postponed.

Spokesman newsmen here on Thursday, Mr Arvind said that ruling party has no student named Arvind, son of D. Srinivas (Rajya Sabha member), in the university records, the TRS claimed. The tweet to the EC also had an attachment of the purported letter of the university.

SHRC asks reports on street kids' plight

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 9

The State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) has sought reports from the GHMC commissioner and the Hyderabad district collector over the plight of children who have taken to begging on the streets for their livelihood in the wake of the spread of the coronavirus disease. The directions of Bala Hakkula, Mr Kumar said, "There are seven points where barricades have been set up. Each point will be covered by CCTV. The purpose of barricading is to contain the spread of virus by curbing the movement of people."

SHRC asks reports on street kids' plight. The commission directed the officials to submit reports before April 22. In a safe shelter and provide them food besides taking care of their other needs.

DC IMPACT. The children in Sangham, an organisation which works towards protecting the rights of children, approached the commission based on a story published in Decan Chronicle. "Street children beg for survival amid lock down" on April 7, that highlighted the plight of children who are left with no option but to beg on the roads. The commission directed the officials to submit reports before April 22. In a safe shelter and provide them food besides taking care of their other needs.

No congregational prayers due to virus

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 9

Muslims observed the sacred night of Shab-e-Baraat (the night of forgiveness) within the four walls of their houses due to restrictions imposed in the wake of Covid-19. People avoided congregational prayer of Isha (night prayer) in the mosques. The mosque did not visit the graves of their loved ones as per rituals. People spent time in saying namaz and special supplications in the night. The gates of the mosque including historic Macca Masjid and Shahi Masjid, Public Garden, were remained closed for common people. The religious scholars opted to address their disciples on social media platforms using technology.

Good Friday, Easter service to be live-streamed online

SAJAY SAMUEL PAUL | DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 9

Good Friday and Easter Sunday church services will be live-streamed on social media platforms in view of the lockdown. Bishop M.A. Daniel urged the community to follow the lockdown protocols and pray at home. The Centenary Methodist Church will go live on Facebook with the Good Friday service at 12 noon and on Easter Sunday from 6 am to 6 pm. The Millennium Church of Good Friday service at 12 noon and the Easter sunrise service at 5 am. The Anglican Church of Good Friday service at 12 noon and the Easter sunrise service at 5 am.

and 10 am to 12 noon (Hindustani). On Easter, English at 8.30 am, Hindustani at 8 am. The Church of South India's (CSI) Wesley Church, Ramkote, will be live on YouTube. Rev U. Daniel said, "We have services throughout this Holy Week at 6.30 pm online. Good Friday service will be from 11 am to 3 pm."

Rev U. Daniel said, "We have services throughout this Holy Week at 6.30 pm online. Good Friday service will be from 11 am to 3 pm." Despite repeated instructions not to gather at any place to prevent the spread of Covid-19, a group of 10 people was found gathered at the place of worship. The police registered a case against the 10, including two minor boys, and the in-charge of the place of worship. The Bachupally police said they received a tip-off on Wednesday evening that the group had gathered at the place of worship to offer prayers. A patrol reached the spot at 11 pm in the Indian Colony Phase II in Nizampet. On seeing the

10 GATHER AT PLACE OF WORSHIP DURING LOCKDOWN, ARRESTED

JAYENDRA CHAITANYA T. I DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 9

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Online video classes for CAT 2020. 255+ TIME students into the IIMs in CAT '19. Watch from home on your mobile/computer. Online classes starting on 11th & 14th April. Enrol Today! TIME 630930060 9121177880. EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY Addendum and corrigendum slip No. 01 of e-Tender Notice No. 88 of 2019-20 (Open)-Engg/DDU.

No one is allowed inside Gandhi for tests, suspects will be sent to Koti hosp Only Covid patients in Gandhi, staffers get break

VIKRAM SHARMA | DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 9

For doctors, medical staff and private security personnel at the Gandhi Hospital, a majority of whom were working round the clock, the past month has been grueling and tiring. The government's decision to allow only Covid patients in Gandhi, staffers get break. "The government is sending appeals to those living in these containment zones contact 104 or 108 services if they live in cramped homes. The government will shift such people to comfortable quarantine facilities where distance between people can be maintained so any possibility of disease spreading among them can be eliminated," Mr Rajendar said.

THE POLICE has stepped up security at the hospital, with barricades placed till the entrance to the building.

angry and abuse us and we had to bear their tantrums," a doctor at the hospital told Decan Chronicle. He said that now that the tests were not being done at the hospital, it was the first slightly relaxed day for them. "But we are keeping our fingers crossed as we hope and pray the number of coronavirus positive patients does not go up," he added. At the main entrance, an ambulance came to a halt

this afternoon. "Have you come for testing?" a security guard asked the man seated in the ambulance. When he replied in the affirmative, the guard told him that he needed to proceed to the government hospital in King Koti for tests and isolation. "Many persons came for tests since yesterday but we directed them to the Koti hospital. Till a couple of days ago, we had to escort the person to the help desk, take them in a lift to the seventh floor for coronavirus test. We had to keep an eye on them as they would just disappear after waiting for several hours for tests. After the tests, we had to be very watchful of

them when they were in the isolation wards for a day or two. Now, all of this is over," said a security guard. The police has stepped up security at the hospital, with barricades placed till the entrance to the building and a sub-inspector and four constables deployed on each floor. The strength was increased on Thursday. Meanwhile, the hospital sources said that the shifting of equipment and furniture from the gynaecology ward to the sultan bazaar maternity hospital was completed by this evening. All the doctors, nurses, lab technicians and other staff in the gynaecology

ward were asked to report at sultan bazaar for work in three shifts. "A separate building has been made available in the sultan bazaar maternity hospital where the gynaecology ward of Gandhi hospital has been shifted," sources said. Over the past week, four deliveries were performed at Gandhi hospital. The women had been admitted as they were suspected to be infected with coronavirus. Luckily, all of them tested negative and they will be discharged shortly," they said. On an average, over 30 deliveries are performed at Gandhi Hospital daily.

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INDIAN RAILWAYS GOVERNMENT OF INDIA MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (RAILWAY BOARD) No.2020-TM-III/MC4 New Delhi, dt. 08.04.2020 E-GLOBAL TENDER No. TM-2004 for procurement of 17 (Seventeen) sets of Track Laying Equipment Machine (TLE). SANJAY GANDHI POST GRADUATE INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES (PGIMS) RAIPUR (C.G.) E-TENDER-CUM-TENDER NOTICE On-line offers are invited through e-tender from Manufacturer/Direct Importers/Authorized Distributors/Dealer/Agent for the supply of ICU Ventilators & other Medical Equipments etc. for COVID-19 and various departments of the Institute.

SHORT TAKES

JAILS SAFER THAN MUMBAI IN PANDEMIC: HC

KALPESH MHAMULKAR | DC MUMBAI, APRIL 9

The Bombay High Court on Thursday refused to grant interim bail to an accused saying that it cannot allow him to be released and put his life at the risk of contracting coronavirus...

MAMATA TO ATTEND PM'S MEETING

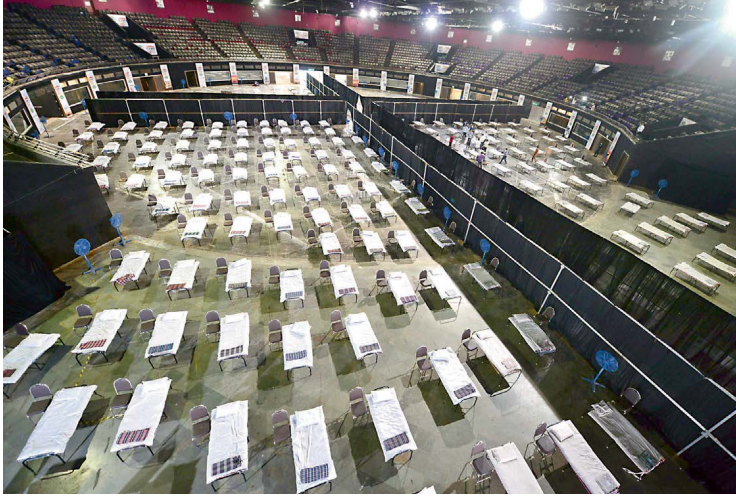
RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, APRIL 9

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee will attend Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meeting on April 11 with all the CMs on the Covid-19 pandemic after facing sharp criticism from the BJP for skipping a similar discussion earlier...

BIHAR MLAS, MANTRIS TO TAKE 15% PAY CUT

NAVYAR AZAD | DC PATNA, APRIL 9

The Bihar cabinet has passed a proposal to deduct 15 per cent salaries of MLAs and ministers and divert the money towards the coronavirus eradication fund which is being set up by the state government...



Mumbai Municipal Corporation workers prepare an isolation centre at the NSCI dome during a government-imposed nationwide lockdown as a preventive measure in Mumbai. - RAJESH JADHAV

MP doc succumbs to Covid-19

Doctors alleged that the deceased didn't take adequate precautions while at work

RABINDRA NATH CHOUHURY | DC BHOPAL, APRIL 9

A doctor in Indore on Thursday succumbed to Covid-19 causing unseemly medical fraternity as well as the administrative circles here...

admission in the hospital. He died on Thursday morning, an office-bearer of Indian Medical Association said. He indicated that negligence by the doctor might have led to his death...

infection. The deceased's three sons are currently living in Australia. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan expressed grief and shock over the demise of the doctor. The tragic incident comes in the wake of at least 21 health officials testing positive for coronavirus in Madhya Pradesh...

recovered so far. According to official information, there were total 29,914 beds available in both government and private hospitals in the state. Of them, 9,492 have been identified as isolation beds. Meanwhile, 70 fresh cases of coronavirus positive were reported in MP on Thursday taking the tally of confirmed cases in the state to 411...

Small cities such as Khandwa, Khargone, Dhar and Barwani have reported coronavirus positive cases in the last three days. Similarly a number of villages in Gwalior-Chambal region have also reported confirmed cases. Eighteen out of 52 districts in the state have so far been affected by coronavirus, the Chief Minister said.

He said the virus outbreak was almost under control in the state. But the attendees of religious congregation in Nizamuddin have contributed to the spread of the virus in the state in later stage.

Mumbai has 381 containment zones so far, all sealed

DC CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, APRIL 9

The number of containment zones in Mumbai, which has become the epicentre of Covid-19 outbreak in the state, has shot up from 146 to 381 in just eight days.

MAHARASHTRA REPORTED 162 new Covid-19 cases on Thursday, taking the state tally to 1,297.

An area is declared as an MLC during the containment zone even if a single suspected patient is found there

An area which may be a housing society or a slum pocket is declared as a containment zone even a single suspected patient is found there. These areas are totally sealed by the authorities and only medical shops are allowed to remain open there.

The BMC has closed down the vegetable and fruits markets and has also banned the hawkers in all the containment zones of the city. Such zones identified by the BMC so far include slums, isolated buildings, nursing homes and housing colonies.

UDDHAV TO BE MLC FROM GUV'S QUOTA

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC MUMBAI, APRIL 9

The uncertainty over the fate of Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray has finally been cleared as the state cabinet on Thursday decided to recommend his name for being nominated as a member of the State Legislative Council as an MLC during the biennial elections of nine Legislative Council seats from the MLAs quota, that were falling vacant on April 24. However, the polls were deferred by the Election Commission due to the Covid-19 outbreak and the national lockdown.

ICMR revises testing strategy for hotspots

From Page 1

ICMR on Thursday revised its testing strategy for Covid-19 hotspots, clusters, large migration gatherings and vaccine centres. Here everyone showing symptoms of influenza like illness have to be tested irrespective of their links with patients. They will go through the regular 'RT-PCR' test within seven days of illness, and if negative an antibody test will be done after another seven days of illness.

As scientists worldwide scramble to make Covid-19 vaccines, India too has begun work whole genome sequencing of coronavirus to understand the evolution of the virus.

Elsewhere in the world, a drug called EIDD-2801 is also going for clinical trials.

As of now, only five categories of people were tested — all symptomatic individuals with international travel in the past 14 days and all the symptomatic contacts of lab-confirmed cases, all symptomatic health care workers, all patients with Severe Acute Respiratory Illness (fever, cough and shortness of breath) and asymptomatic direct and high-risk contacts of a confirmed case who are tested once between Day 5 and Day 14 of coming into India.

Doctors have claimed the condition of critically ill Covid-19 patients improved substantially after being given antibody-rich plasma from others who had recovered earlier. Elsewhere in the world, a drug called EIDD-2801 is also going for clinical trials after it showed it could reduce lung damage during Covid-19.

Blood donations have gone down in state drastically after the lockdown

Lockdown threatens to 'bleed' Odisha dry

ANSHAYA KUMAR | DC BHUBANESWAR, APRIL 9

Now with an extended blood donation drive, blood banks in Odisha, which often hit headlines for shortage, are going to face even tougher times ahead. Despite putting elective surgeries on hold, several hospitals in the state have been struggling to meet the daily requirements of blood in the past few weeks.

Though the government is tight-lipped about the current stock status of the blood banks, sources said the lockdown has impacted availability of blood for emergency surgeries, postpartum hemorrhage cases, thalassemia, sickle-cell disease and cancer patients.

Chief Minister Navan Prasad Pattnaik has requested his party MPs, MLAs and representatives of urban local bodies and Panchayats to use Rajya Sabha's institutions to use 'Jiban Bindu' blood donation programme to collect blood.

The National Blood Transfusion Council's (NBT) interim guidelines issued last week emphasises on continuity of supply of safe blood and recommends resuming of outdoor and in-house donation, in compliance with social distancing standards, bio-medical waste disposal rules and infection control guidelines.

In Odisha, blood donation has dramatically reduced due to the implementation of social distancing, cancellation of blood drives. Support needs to be extended for easy movement of donors and supply of chain of critical materials and equipment used in blood and component collection."

fusion or via a blood donation procedure. "In Odisha, blood donation has dramatically reduced due to the implementation of social distancing, cancellation of blood drives. Support needs to be extended for easy movement of donors and supply of chain of critical materials and equipment used in blood and component collection."

DEAD MP TIGER HAD NASAL FLUID SECRETION

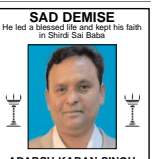
DC CORRESPONDENT BHOPAL, APRIL 9

Death of a tiger in Pench reserve forest in Madhya Pradesh last week has sparked fears of coronavirus outbreak among wild animals since several measures have already been undertaken to protect them. A spokesman of the forest department told this newspaper here on Thursday.

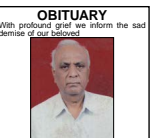
According to him, the deceased tiger had secretion of nasal fluids, a symptom of Covid-19. However, there were no reports of human interference in the reserve forest in recent times and hence, there was hardly any chance of the tiger being infected with the virus.

Rlys Drafts Plans to Protect its 13 Lakh Employees

New Delhi: Mapping all its 13 lakh employees and identifying potential quarantine facilities for each of them is part of the protocol drafted by Central Railway to insulate its staffers from Covid-19.



SAD DEMISE He led a blessed life and kept his faith on Christ. Sad Baba



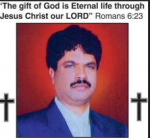
ADARSH KARAN SINGH DOB: 29-04-1974 DOD: 09-04-2020



Ms. PHILOMENA DOB: Teacher St. Anthony's High School, Secular Pastoral, Secular Pastoral, Secular Pastoral



DILIP KUMAR DESAI, VIJAYA DESAI



B. SOLOMON SUKUMAR DOB: 10-03-2017



Late B. SIMON SCRYMGEOUR



P. SURESH DOB: 10-04-1951 DOD: 18-03-2020

IN BRIEF

Fire at private care home kills 4

Moscow: Four people died and at least six were taken to hospital suffering from smoke inhalation after a fire broke out in a Moscow retirement home, investigators said on Thursday. Residents at the private care home in the city's northwest pleaded for help from windows as thick smoke filled the building, a source in emergency services said. There were more than 50 people in the facility when the fire broke out Wednesday evening, Russia's Investigative Committee, which probes serious incidents, said in a statement.

Taliban protests release of inmates

Kabul: The Afghan government said it would release another 100 Taliban inmates Thursday, even though the insurgents have walked out of talks over a weekend prisoner swap and dismissed Kabul's piecemeal freeing of captives as "unacceptable". The administration's spokesman Ashraf Ghani on Wednesday released 100 low-risk Taliban prisoners who had vowed never to return to the battlefield, and officials said the same number of insurgents with similar profiles would be set free Thursday. The releases come as Ghani faces an ongoing political crisis, US fury over the peace process and a growing coronavirus epidemic in Afghanistan, where officials fear the disease could run unchecked through the country's prisons.

Mujibur killer's mercy plea declined

Dhaka: Bangladesh President Md Abdul Hamid has rejected the mercy plea of a former military captain, sentenced to death for his involvement in the 1975 coup in which the country's founder Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was assassinated, removing the last hurdle for his hanging. A district court in Dhaka on Wednesday issued a death warrant against Abdul Majed, who was arrested in Dhaka on Tuesday after hiding in India for nearly two-and-a-half decades. Dhaka's District and Sessions Judge Md Iqbal Choudhury issued the death warrant with Supreme Court's special permission during the ongoing Covid-19 lockdown.

Shot down Indian spy drone: Pak

Islamabad: Pakistan on Thursday claimed to have shot down a small Indian surveillance drone for allegedly violating airspace along the Line of Control. According to a statement by the Pakistan Army, the Indian quadcopter in a "provocative act" violated 600 meters inside the LoC on the Pakistani side in Sankh sector of Jammu and Kashmir. "This blatant act was aggressively responded to by Pakistan Army troops shooting down the spy drone," according to the Pakistan Army. Such unwarranted acts by the Indian Army were a clear violation of established norms, existing air agreement between two countries, it said.

SPY CHIEF NAMED IRAQ'S THIRD PM-DESIGNATE

Baghdad, April 9: Iraqi President Barham Saleh nominated spy chief Mustafa Kadhem on Thursday as the country's third prime minister-designate. The 53-year-old head of the National Intelligence Service, has ascended to the role as Iraq faces a budget crisis beset by the collapse in world oil prices and the spread of the novel coronavirus. "This is a huge responsibility and a difficult task," said Saleh in his nominating speech, describing Kadhem as someone with integrity and wisdom. His nomination was attended by ministers, political rivals and even the United Nations representative in Iraq, indicating widespread support for Kadhem that neither of the previous PM-designates had enjoyed. Moments before the ceremony, his predecessor Adnan Zuri announced he was withdrawing his bid to form a government. Kadhem's 53-year-old bid to form a government to "internal and external reasons," without elaborating. Zuri had been staunchly opposed by hardline factions with close ties to Iran, which enjoys vast political and military influence in Baghdad.

Global coronavirus cases top 1.5 million

US has recorded 4,32,132 cases, Europe remains the worst-hit continent with 7,72,592 cases and 61,118 dead

Iran says virus deaths pass 4,000

Tehran, April 9: Iran's health ministry on Thursday said 117 new deaths from the novel coronavirus took the total to 4,110 in one of the countries worst hit by the pandemic. But ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour said the latest figures showed there was a downward trend in the number of new coronavirus infections. "Today we are clearly seeing a decline in the number of new cases," Jahanpour said in a televised news conference. "We have identified 1,634 new cases, bringing the total number of confirmed cases to 66,220." The spokesman praised the people of Iran for following guidelines aimed at stopping the spread of the disease. "We owe the reduction in the number of cases of the disease to... our beloved

people, as well as to the intervention of our colleagues in the health system. "In the past 24 hours we have had 117 people. We have had a total of 4,110 deaths due to the Covid-19 disease." Iran, which announced its first Covid-19 cases on February 19, is by far the worst hit by the pandemic in the Middle East, according to official tolls. But there has been speculation about that the real number of deaths and infections in the country could be higher.

A TWO-MONTH-old baby who was believed to have been Italy's youngest COVID-19 patient has been released from hospital after overcoming the disease, media reports said Thursday. The baby was no longer running a temperature or fever and was released with her mother, who has recovered from a bout of pneumonia, the reports said.

THE U.S. HAS no objection to Europe sending medical supplies to Iran, which has been badly hit by the deadly coronavirus, President Donald Trump has said. The Trump administration has imposed one of the toughest economic sanctions on Iran alleging that it is going ahead with its nuclear ambition and it is supporting terrorist organisations to destabilise the Middle East.

Safety measures

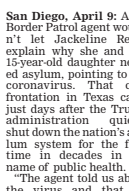


A health worker sprays disinfectant on a migrant worker who arrived from Malaysia, before entering a quarantine centre at Soewondo Air Base in Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia, Thursday.

BORIS JOHNSON MAKING STEADY PROGRESS IN ICU

London, April 9: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's health continues to improve on his fourth day in the intensive care unit (ICU) of a London hospital where he is being treated for the coronavirus. Downing Street said on Thursday. The 55-year-old was shifted to the ICU of St. Thomas' Hospital in London on Monday night as his condition worsened. "The agent told us about the virus and that she couldn't go further, but she didn't let us speak or anything," said Reyes, 35, who was shuttled to a crossing March 24 in Reynosa, Mexico, a violent border city. She tried to get home to her 7-year-old daughter but fled to the Nicaraguan border. But she was stuck in Mexico as the virus closed borders in Central America. The US government used an obscure public health law to justify one of its most aggressive border crackdowns ever. People fleeing violence and poverty to seek refuge in the U.S. are whisked to the nearest border crossing and returned to Mexico without a chance to apply for asylum. President Donald Trump's other policies to curtail immigration - which often rely on help from Mexico - by setting aside decades-old national and international laws. Mexico is again providing critical support. It's accepting, not only Guatemalan, El Salvador and Honduras who accounted for well over half of all US border arrests last year. The Trump administration has offered little support on the rules that, unlike its other immigration policies, have been challenged in court. The secrecy means the rules got little attention as they took effect March 20, the same day Trump announced the southern border was closed to nonessential travel. "The administration is able to do what they always wanted to do," said Aaron Reichlin-Melnick, policy counsel for the American Immigration Council, which has criticized the administration. "I don't see this slowing down." The administration tapped a law allowing the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to ban foreigners from the country. I created a "serious danger" to the spread of communicable disease.

Don shuts asylum centres at US borders to fight virus



AS MANY as 10 drugs are currently under clinical trial in the US as part of the administration's "unprecedented" effort to find a therapeutic solution to the fast-spreading coronavirus pandemic, President Donald Trump said.

Taiwan demands apology from WHO

Taipei, April 9: Taiwan demanded an apology Thursday from the World Health Organisation chief after he accused the island's government of leading personal attacks against him and his agency's response to the coronavirus pandemic. WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus called Wednesday's attack "a disgrace" and urged US President Trump criticised the global health body and threatened to cut its funding. During a press conference Tedros spoke of the abuse - including racial slurs - he had been subjected to since the public health crisis began. He largely avoided mentioning Trump by name but did single out the government in Taipei, which has been frozen out of the WHO after political pressure from Beijing. "Three months ago, this attack came from Taiwan," he told reporters in Geneva, referring to online criticism and Thursday's accusations.

'Covid ceasefire' in Yemen begins

Sana'a, April 9: The Saudi-led coalition began a unilateral ceasefire in Yemen's long war on Thursday, saying it hoped the initiative to prevent coronavirus in the impoverished country would lead to a wider political solution. The Iran-backed Huthi rebels have not made any comment on the coalition's declaration of a two-week pause in the five-year conflict that took effect from 0900 GMT. If the ceasefire holds, it would be the first breakthrough since 2011, after a ceasefire in a UN-brokered ceasefire in the port city of Hodeida during talks in Sweden in late 2018. The United Arab Emirates, a key ally in the coalition which drew down its troops last year as the conflict became increasingly intractable, applauded the Saudi move as "wise and responsible". Hope the Huthis rise to the occasion. The Covid-19 crisis eclipses everything else in the international community must step up efforts to work together to protect the Yemeni people. UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Anwar Gargash tweeted. "It is an honour to go together we can make a great deal of difference, and the biggest thing we can do is make Yemen go forward." The idea, Kamala, that you ran a hell of a race and you endorsed me means a lot. It's not an easy thing to do, but you know, thanks for making the time and for being so loyal," Biden said. "And I'm so lucky to have you as president, this partnership going forward, because I think we're going to make a great deal of difference, and the biggest thing we can do is make Yemen go forward." The idea, Kamala, that you ran a hell of a race and you endorsed me means a lot.

Wuhan fears 2nd attack by virus

Wuhan, April 9: Hairy-tailed 'Ah Ping' is back in business now that Wuhan's coronavirus lockdown has been lifted, but his salon has no customers, only empty chairs and lingering fears over a contagion that continues to haunt the city. Wuhan is waking from its coronavirus nightmare, loosening tight restrictions on movement and business as the global pandemic's launchpad tries to move on. But full recovery remains hampered by fear of a potential new wave of infections. Many businesses and schools are still closed, restaurants aren't allowed dine-in customers, and some neighbourhoods remain sealed off behind barriers. Residents need to show they have a "healthy" rating on a mandatory phone app to leave their homes, use public transport, or enter some areas. "When people come out, when people probably rise, I'm really afraid of this," said 'Ah Ping', a nickname. The 43-year-old, who declined to give his full name, also worries about getting his life restarted. He paid his salon's quarterly rent of 15,000 yuan (\$2,100) in full just before Wuhan was locked down on January 23. Now another rental payment is due, but he has not paid it. "I paid 15,000 in rent and I did no business," he said. While many other Chinese cities are getting back to near-normal, Wuhan's government has made clear that easing controls poses new perils and that a return to usual life will have to wait.

Some areas, it's been two steps forward, one step back. Wuhan authorities said 70 residential neighbourhoods - out of nearly 7,000 recently declared "epidemic-free" - lost that status this week, prolonging lockdown measures there. —AFP

U.S. [POLLS] With Sanders ending his campaign, former-Vice President's path cleared for a showdown with Trump

Biden becomes presumptive Democratic nominee

Washington, April 9: Joe Biden has become the presumptive Democratic nominee after his last remaining opponent, Senator Bernie Sanders, ended his US presidential campaign, clearing the former Vice President's path to the White House. Biden emerged as the nation and a showdown with President Donald Trump in the November election. Hours after becoming the presumptive nominee of the Democratic party on Wednesday, Biden held a virtual fundraiser with Kamala Harris as special guest, fuelling speculation that the Indian-origin US Senator may be his running mate in the presidential election. Biden, 77, emerged as the presumptive nominee of the Democratic party after leftist Senator Sanders withdrew from the race and endorsed the former Vice President for the November presidential



Washington, April 9: Joe Biden held a virtual fundraiser with Kamala Harris as special guest, fuelling speculation that the Indian-origin US Senator may be his running mate in the presidential election. Biden, 77, emerged as the presumptive nominee of the Democratic party after leftist Senator Sanders withdrew from the race and endorsed the former Vice President for the November presidential

elections against Trump. "I wish I could give you better news, but I think you know the truth, and that is that we are now some 300 delegates behind Vice President Biden, and the path toward victory is virtually impossible," Sanders said in a livestream after the call. "So while we are winning the election, Biden and I while we are winning the support of so many young people and working people throughout the country, I have concluded that this battle for the Democratic nomination will not be successful. And so today I am announcing the suspension of my campaign," he said. Indian-origin Senator from California, Harris, 35, withdrew her bid from the presidential race last year due to low poll ratings. While in the bid, she and Biden had bitter political fights. But, she later endorsed Biden after the former vice president made substantial gains in the Democratic primary. Hours, later Biden invited Harris as a special guest for his virtual fundraiser in view of the social distancing measures being enforced across the country due to the coronavirus pandemic. Biden campaign has resorted to innovative ways to raise money, he remarks. Biden expressed how "lucky" he felt to have a "partnership" with Harris going forward. "The idea, Kamala, that you ran a hell of a race and you endorsed me means a lot. It's not an easy thing to do, but you know, thanks for making the time and for being so loyal," Biden said. "And I'm so lucky to have you as president, this partnership going forward, because I think we're going to make a great deal of difference, and the biggest thing we can do is make Yemen go forward." The idea, Kamala, that you ran a hell of a race and you endorsed me means a lot.

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# DECCAN Chronicle

10 APRIL 2020

## Lockdown fine, but tests weapon to vanquish virus

The nation is seized of the question of whether it should extend the 21-day lockdown Prime Minister Narendra Modi has declared to contain the pandemic Covid-19 but there is hardly a discussion on what we have achieved in the fact that while strict social distancing norms are key, the tracing, screening, isolation, testing and treatment processes are equally important in ensuring that the number are within limits. Kerala, which has recorded just two deaths and reported about 350 positive cases have conducted more than 12,000 tests and quarantined more than one-and-a-half lakh people. The success of Bhiwara, the new model that is emerging from Rajasthan, is attributed not only to the ruthless containment but to also extensive screening and testing. As per reports, the government set up about 7,000 teams which went on a house-to-house search and screened or tested over 20 lakh residents. The lockdown and the carefully planned follow-up action produced instant results with the district, a hotspot two weeks ago, reporting no new case in the last five days. On the contrary, the figures across the nation saw a surge in both the number of patients and the deaths after two weeks of lockdown. This indicates that lockdown alone cannot work wonders; it must be followed up by meticulous planning and resolute action on the ground. Limiting people to their homes is an easy administrative task which the government can implement using the police force but making the most of the exercise calls for more imaginative action. Focus on hotspots with aggressive screening and random and rapid tests can also help. The proof of the pudding, as they say, is in the eating.

Sadly, this is almost similar to the number of samples the United States, which has of late woken up to the threat posed by the deadly disease, tests every day. The relatively successful model of Kerala and Bhiwara in fighting the disease illustrates the fact that while strict social distancing norms are key, the tracing, screening, isolation, testing and treatment processes are equally important in ensuring that the number are within limits. Kerala, which has recorded just two deaths and reported about 350 positive cases have conducted more than 12,000 tests and quarantined more than one-and-a-half lakh people. The success of Bhiwara, the new model that is emerging from Rajasthan, is attributed not only to the ruthless containment but to also extensive screening and testing. As per reports, the government set up about 7,000 teams which went on a house-to-house search and screened or tested over 20 lakh residents. The lockdown and the carefully planned follow-up action produced instant results with the district, a hotspot two weeks ago, reporting no new case in the last five days. On the contrary, the figures across the nation saw a surge in both the number of patients and the deaths after two weeks of lockdown. This indicates that lockdown alone cannot work wonders; it must be followed up by meticulous planning and resolute action on the ground. Limiting people to their homes is an easy administrative task which the government can implement using the police force but making the most of the exercise calls for more imaginative action. Focus on hotspots with aggressive screening and random and rapid tests can also help. The proof of the pudding, as they say, is in the eating.

## Optics and strongmen

Hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) is no Sanjeevani, as it has not been clinically tested as a deterrent against the coronavirus. It is a Sanjeevani for Prime Minister Narendra Modi, however, going by the encomiums heaped on him by the Presidents of America and Brazil, Donald Trump and Jair Bolsonaro. Each praised him for unbanning the anti-malarial medication for its export to their nations. "Will not be a Sanjeevani for me," Trump tweeted, thanking Mr Modi for his "strong leadership in helping not just India but humanity in this fight". Mr Bolsonaro went further, comparing Mr Modi to Hanumanji, who courted the Sanjeevani to save a dying Lakshmana. Neither the World Health Organisation (WHO) nor the USA's Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have given HCQ the Sanjeevani status. Yet when has science ever convinced a member of the Axis of Strongmen.

Whether or not HCQ works, each leader gets to show off that he is a man of action. (It helps if you monopolise your mass media. Also, no one dare call you out for lying, in this Age of Alternative Facts.) Mr Trump got to again show his voters that he gets things done — a necessary demonstration the day he learnt his opponent in this November's election would be the toughest option he faced. Mr Bolsonaro hopped on the bandwagon as he faces pressure for his casual attitude to the coronavirus and his efforts to end Brazil's lockdown.

For Mr Modi, it's whispered that his eye is on the Nobel Prize — for India's containment, so far, of Covid-19. A year ago, Mr Trump claimed that Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe had nominated him for the Nobel Prize. Maybe it is Mr Modi's quiet pro quo for the HCQ. Who knows? In 2020, though is that whoever gets the Prize for peace, no strongman will get it for medicine or economics.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

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DECCAN CHRONICLE Postal registration no. No. HSD-348/2006-08



Neelima Mathur

## Is world all set to experience 'coronaissance'?

It was due. Humanity and the World were crying for it. A rebirth... but it could happen only after a black death. The institutions became too big. Gigantism became too large. Full-scale capitalism took charge. Humans became numbers for outreach, output and scalability in the development sector. Like inmates in a prison. Between multinational companies and the World Trade Organisation, everything linked to mankind went into a spin — self-generated and manufactured. Increased wealth did not make for happier human beings. Anything that was powerless or voiceless was devoured with greed and heartlessness. Peaking with the screaming realities staring us in the face today, The Sustainable Development Goals achieved little. The Millennium Development Goals are limping. Vast tracts of land disappeared, fossil fuels became precious, seas began to rise. Climate Change became the new "scare". Even that

"I love to go [to the market] and see all the things I am happy without." — Socrates

was not good enough to bring humanity to its senses — voluntarily. The busy-ness of acquiring wealth, power, fame, remained unstemmed. It was well accompanied with avarice, greed, ostentation, display. Backroom parlays ensured the fulfilment of each — read corruption. The scenario became as glib as it could get. "Instant" and "Now" were the mantras. Wealth and access made it possible. A virus became the great equaliser. Brought it all to a halt. Now, mankind is struggling with questions that have not occurred to most at the turn of the century. The rising questions in themselves are a puzzle for most. Suddenly, the "I" is turning into a "We". A collective spirit is silently escalating in the desperation to survive the onslaught of an unseen virus. Arrogance is taking a toss. Rich economies facing a Covid-19 explosion need help from the less wealthy. Are we going to learn from history? Before the European Renaissance, religious and philosophical beliefs spread and inter-

mingled across trade routes. There were conflicts and the Crusades were like a culminating symbol of that era. Scholars began delving into ancient Greek and Roman texts in search for a new value system. There were innovations in publishing and the arts. The printing press arrived with long-term impact. Increased literacy meant people could read and interpret texts for themselves, not via a priest. More than anything else, though, it was the Black Death that impacted the rise of the Renaissance. Words like "Great Mortality" eerily evoke the Covid-19 era. The great Plagues' spread relentlessly across large tracts of Europe and Asia. People were stupefied that they did not know how to stop the spread. The balance of power and wealth in Europe completely changed. Society was primed for a Renaissance. Are we primed for a "coronaissance"? Let's look at the pointers that mark back to history. There has been an exceptional global exchange of diverse socio-economic-cultural-anthropological

and scientific theories. A wide spectrum of stakeholders have developed one or other form of interconnectedness — both physically, and more importantly, now, virtually. Religious thinking has taken various forms, including the fundamentalist, with an equal number of diverse responses to the Internet is an explosion of information like never before. The Smartphone is increasingly making this flow of information available for anyone, anywhere, even across the Digital Divide. Then comes Covid-19 and the world is dumfstruck. From royalty to ministers to the poor, no one knows where the virus will strike next. Figures of death, what people are looking at, day in and day out. The fear psychosis has reached mob hysteric levels. Is there a chance that Humanism will make a comeback? Will concepts of spirituality and justice take root? A book written in the mid-1970s has re-emerged for relevance time and again. Now maybe the time to give it its due. Small Is Beautiful by E.F. Schumacher. Almost ten years ago, Madeline Bunting reviewed the book and the concepts in

an article in the Guardian of UK. Between the book and the article in the Covid-19 scenario, there are strong takeaways. The large scales of big markets and big political entities led to a dehumanisation of people and the economic system. Profit was the only guiding factor, disregarding human need. Down the line, people tried to revive the human / small aspect. Again, voracious expansion of consumer capitalism distorted these initiatives. As Schumacher indicated in his book: Human happiness would not be achieved through material wealth. Going back to the human scale is imperative — to focus on human needs and human relationships. From that will spring the ethical response of stewardship to the environment. Maybe time to take a leaf from Confucius: "We are so busy doing the urgent, we do not have time to do the important."

Neelima Mathur is an Indian-based executive producer-researcher-writer, mentor and trainer for documentary and NGO films. She is also festival director, Lakeside Doc Festival.



## Divisiveness, impunity hurts anti-Covid battle



Anand K. Sahay Far & Near

Since we Indians seldom fail to brag about our "uniqueness" which we tend to equate with "greatness" here and there, a few recent examples of our particular attributes that the world is likely to regard with amazement and curiosity in the context of the coronavirus crisis. The first concerns religion and its misuse for sparking social animosities even at an especially difficult moment, and the second the notion of impunity for the political powerful. Unlike in any other country, matters relating to these have been in the news, and have occupied our consciousness, nearly as much as steps taken to fight the novel coronavirus (Covid-19). At a time when the world seems to be contemplating the most efficient ways of coping with the calamity, our public concerns too relate to fighting the war, and the toll these twin concerns are likely to take on the economic template of nations.

Instead, we have bowed to pseudo religion. Its accomplice pseudo-science, superstition, and the show of political power. In this wretched project we have unquestionably been aided by influential sections of the media that relate to us, and legitimise the art of succumbing to authority by not questioning it and by wagging its tail before a

national instruction issued in a time of crisis, it may be safely said that the Tablighi Jamaat's callous disregard of science, and of the national and global mood generated by the Covid-19 emergency, that demands condemnation. But it must be stressed that TJ's international congregation in New Delhi in mid-March, which is officially thought to be responsible for nearly one-third of all corona-positive cases in India, must not be exploited to feed Islamophobia and engender communal crisis, as is being done by the organised religious right and its media accomplices who have busily touted the expression "Bio-jihad". But is no way to fight the Covid-19 challenge all across the country. It may be time for the Central government to sound a caution. It is useful to know in this context that in a primarily Muslim country like Pakistan too, the religious rabble is filling the air with absurdities. Surely, the goal there cannot be to overwhelm "Hindu rule". And in this country, the fanatics on the so-called Hindu side have held parties where "gau-matras" or cow urine was drunk as an antidote (since the cow is regarded as the most sacred of animals in Hinduism) to the novel coronavirus.

If TJ and its asinine counterparts among other religious groups are a collection of bumpkins, whose actions can be regarded as inconsequential, what do we say of Rashtrapati Bhawan? On March 18, when the nation was already in the grip of anxiety relating to Covid-19 although the lockdown was still a few days away, President Ram Nath Kovind invited MPs from Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh for breakfast, and there are no photos of masked men and women at the jamboree. How clever was that?

On March 18, President Ram Nath Kovind invited MPs from Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh for breakfast, and there are no photos of masked men and women at the jamboree. How clever was that? It isn't even for the constitutional buccannery that has pronounced disregard of the Constitution. On March 18, President Ram Nath Kovind invited MPs from Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh for breakfast, and there are no photos of masked men and women at the jamboree. How clever was that?

## LETTERS

### RISKY DECISION

India succumbed to US pressure (US: India gave 29mn HCQ pills, DC, April 9). The Centre is not serious in fighting Covid-19. On what basis is it saying that the virus will not go out of control when 29 deaths occurred in a single day? The virus is spreading in countries where people are disciplined. In India many don't follow lockdown. What will government do have if HCQ stock falls short?

Alankrita K. Hyderabad

### ABANDONING PETS

Thank you for the sympathetic report on rich people abandoning pets (Owners abandon high breed petting Covid, DC, April 9). I wonder how these people can live with their conscience. To dump your dog and drive away is a sad comment on our times. In spite of the havoc brought about by the virus by the human treatment of animals, humans will never learn.

Raseel Ahluwalia Secunderabad

### CARE FOR SENIORS

Many senior citizens suffering from life threatening ailments need dialysis and medical care. The lockdown is posing serious risks to them. Our government's efforts would also be to take care of these patients. Ola and Uber must be allowed to operate medical emergency cabs as in Bengaluru. Secondly, Covid-19 must give permission by mail or SMS.

Srikanth Subrahmanyam Hyderabad

### No fresh arrivals of USSR tanks in Pak

NEW DELHI, April 9 Defence Minister Swaran Singh said in the Lok Sabha today that the old concept of military balance between India and Pakistan no longer had any relevance as "we have to be ready for a possible com-



50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN CHRONICLE. Making a statement in response to a calling attention motion by Dr. Sushila Nayyar (Cong O) and others on the reported Soviet decision to supply 300 tanks to Pakistan, the Defence Minister said that according to information with the Government about 150 tanks (T-54 and T-55) from the Soviet Union were received by Pakistan some time ago.



## quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	31,158.62 4.23
Nifty 50	9,111.90 4.15
S&P 500*	2,802.57 1.91
Dollar (₹)	76.29 0.09
Pound Sterling (₹)	94.60 -0.73
Euro (₹)	82.94 -0.10
Gold (Oz) (₹)	1,716.20 3.17
Brent crude (\$/bbl)	33.07 0.70
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.490 0.740
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.768 0.524

\*As of 9:30 PM IST

## Cognizant withdraws 2020 forecast

Cognizant Technology Solutions Corp said it was withdrawing its forecast for the year due to the uncertainties caused by the coronavirus pandemic. It said the outbreak increasingly affected its business in late March, mainly due to project delays in India and the Philippines, where employees shifted to work-from-home. Cognizant said reduced client demand, primarily in the travel and hospitality industries, also impacted its business.

## HDFC Bank cuts lending rate by 0.20 per cent



Largest private sector lender HDFC Bank has cut its lending rate (MCLR) by 0.20 per cent, amidst a gradual decline in cost of borrowing across the system. The marginal cost of funds based lending rate (MCLR) has been reviewed across tenors since Tuesday, according to its website. The revised overnight MCLR stands at 7.60 per cent, while the one-year MCLR, to which most loans are linked, has been put at 7.95 per cent.

## Blue Dart cuts rates; govt may let couriers run

Express logistics services provider Blue Dart Express said it has reduced retail tariff prices by 25 per cent, amidst reports that the government may allow operations of courier and parcel services to enable companies to send and receive documents at a time when the country is under coronavirus lockdown, sources said. Blue Dart's aircraft have been operating during the lockdown across cities enabling essential shipments.

## Naredco seeks \$200 bn stimulus for economy

Realtors' body Naredco demanded a stimulus package of at least \$200 billion to revive the economy from the adverse impact of Covid-19 as well as suspension of insolvency law provisions for six months to prevent companies from becoming bankrupt and acquired by foreign entities. Naredco president Niranjan Hiranandani said the government must allow one-time debt restructuring of the realtors.

Regd. No. H/SD/509/2018-20  
Printed and Published by T. Venkateswarlu on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Press situated at Plot No. 2, Alwal Villu, Vasista Nagar Taluk, Medchal (Malkajgiri Dist., Telangana and Published at No. 3, D. Road, Secunderabad-3.  
RR Registration No. 3061/1957.  
Editor: Aditya Sinha

## This week alone sees gains of 12.7 per cent Market enters bull phase, up 20% from March lows

**RAVI RANJAN PRASAD**

MUMBAI, APRIL 9

The stock market closed with strong weekly gains of over 12.5 per cent after several weeks of decline. With benchmark indices up 22 per cent from March lows, technically the stock market has entered the bull phase again after falling sharply in March.

Market gains of above 20 per cent is defined as an entry into the bull phase by equity market analysts. On Thursday, the market moved with the bull run that began on Tuesday, the Sensex and Nifty-50 gained over 4 per cent on global hotspots of coronavirus showing signs of containment, leading to firm global cues, and in anticipation of another stimulus package being announced by the government for small and medium businesses.

The Sensex closed at 31,158.62 up 1,265.60 points or 4.13 per cent, while the Nifty-50 closed at 9,111.90, up 363.15 points, or 4.15 per cent.

"India's stocks joined other Asian markets to get a technical uptick on optimism that government steps will help contain the coronavirus outbreak and stimulate economies packages will ease the economic damage," said a Dharwad-based analyst. ICICI Direct said, "Structurally, the index (Nifty) has witnessed a faster pace of retracement as it entirely retraced preceding five



## IP UP 4.5% IN FEBRUARY

**ICICI DIRECT**  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 9

"Thanks to higher output in mining, manufacturing and electricity sectors, the industrial output, measured by the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) for February, rose to 4.5 per cent from the revised figure of 2.1 per cent in the

previous month, government data released on Thursday said. The IIP data for February 2019-20 over the corresponding period of the previous year stands at 0.9 per cent," the release said.

sessions decline (9038-8055) in just two sessions, indicating structural improvement. This helped the index witness the longest pullback in magnitude since the life high of 12,430. The current pullback off March low of 7,511 is longer (1,621 points or 22 per cent) compared to the March pullback (1,604 points or 19 per cent). "Equity benchmarks set-

ted the truncated week on a cheerful note underpinned by firm global cues. Nifty ended the week at 9,111, up by 12.7 per cent. Nifty Midcap, Smallcap behaved in tandem with benchmarks as they rallied over 7 per cent, each. Sectorally, all major indices ended in the green, led by auto, pharma, and financials," Shah said.

"The current week's

rally was supported by the strong market breadth, indicating rejuvenation in market strength as throughout the week market breadth was strong compared to the past seven weeks' breadth underpinned by around 15 per cent incremental cash turnover," Shah said.

In the last two weeks' sharp cool-off, around 40 per cent in India VIX index, which gauges sentiments, have added the index witness a robust move in the current week and Nifty-50 decisively closed above the immediate resistance of 9000, indicating subsiding fear among market participants, ICICI Direct said. Abating downward momentum along with elongated uptrend signals a recovery from the lows of 8,000 on the back of not just short covering, as the market is supported by inflow of fresh long positions.

Amit Gupta, head-derivatives, ICICI Direct, said the Nifty-50 has seen a recovery from the lows of 8,000 on the back of not just short covering, as the market is supported by inflow of fresh long positions. Foreign portfolio investors were net buyers of equities worth ₹1,737.62 crore, this was the help of their family members and neighbours," Gujar said.

An agriculture ministry official has confirmed that many district-level authorities have informed the ministry about the situation, where much of the yield is ready to be ₹60,000 crore by them.

## Labour shortage, transport hurdles affect harvesting

**MADHUSUDAN SAHOO**  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 9



Despite the Centre's direction to states to allow movement of essential goods and services, including farm produce and fertilisers, farmers find harvesting and transportation difficult due to the lockdown and the resultant labour shortage.

A Srikakulam-based farmer, who grows cashew and vegetables in his 100-acre field in Andhra Pradesh, has this to say: "Normally I pay ₹5,200 per day to the 100-odd labourers for collecting cashew nuts from my field, but they are not coming now due to the coronavirus scare and fear of police harassment. They get free rice, dal and a little money from the state government and so they prefer to stay at home. I also cannot take vegetables to the mandis due to the unavailability of transport facility."

There is also a similar story for Himmat Singh Gujar, who grows wheat in his fields in Dousa, Rajasthan. "The harvest season for crops like wheat and gram is currently going on while the crop-cutting season for mustard has commenced. In the absence of daily labourers, farmers are trying to do crop-cutting with the help of their family members and neighbours," Gujar said.

An agriculture ministry official has confirmed that many district-level authorities have informed the ministry about the situation, where much of the yield is ready to be ₹60,000 crore by them.

harvested but are left unattended due to labour and transport disruptions. Agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar, along with state agriculture ministers, on Thursday reviewed steps taken to alleviate the problems of farmers. The union minister asked the states to sensitize field agencies about exemptions granted to farming-related activities during the lockdown period. "They should allow movement of farm produce, farming products, fertilisers and farm implements and machinery," he said.

In the meeting, issues related to farming operations and harvesting, agriculture marketing and mandi operations, procurement at MSP, provision of inputs like seeds and fertilisers, and movement of products were discussed. Issues regarding harvesting, procurement, availability of inputs, credit and insurance were also raised," said an official present in the meeting.

## PSA skips 2020, re-times Citroen launch to 2021

**MICHAEL GONSALVES**  
PUNE, APRIL 9

French carmaker Groupe PSA, which was to start its India innings with the rollout of its Citroen brand this year, has announced a rejig of India market plans amid the coronavirus outbreak.

The group will now launch its first product, the Citroen C5 Aircross midsize SUV, in January-March (Q1) 2021 instead of in September-October 2020 as announced earlier. Groupe PSA in India in close co-ordination with its dealer partners has decided to re-time the launch of its debut vehicle, the Citroen C5 Aircross SUV to Q1 2021, while ensuring industrial investments in close co-ordination with the government. The re-timing is aimed to move the commercial launch to a potentially more positive economic activity period where consumer sentiments are upbeat, it said.

However, Groupe PSA has not made any rearrangements to the project timeline for 'C-Cubed'-its programme to re-introduce a new SUV to be introduced in 2021 as announced in 2019 by Carlos Tavares, head of PSA Group on board, Groupe PSA.

## ILC given moratorium on long-term loans

**FALAKNAZ SYED**  
MUMBAI, APRIL 9

Taking a cue from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the insurance regulator on Thursday allowed life insurance companies to provide moratorium on payments of Equated Monthly Installments (EMI) for all term loans that were outstanding as on March 1, 2020 to borrowers reeling under financial distress amid the outbreak of Covid-19.

The move will provide a breather to public sector life insurance companies. LIC is a lender of last resort to various state insurance companies and many corporate houses. On the other hand, private life and non-life insurance companies refrain from giving term loans. In respect of term loans, insurers are permitted to grant a moratorium of three months towards payment of instalments falling due between March 1, 2020 and May 31, 2020. The repayment schedule for such loans and also the residual tenor, will be shifted across the board by three months subsequent to the moratorium period," said the Irdai.

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) in a release said that it has received numerous representations from industry associations seeking moratorium on

## Discounts on apparels likely after lockdown

New Delhi, April 9: Apparel retailers are expected to offer large-scale discounts to clear old stocks and also perk up sales during the lockdown is lifted, say industry players. "The season of the lockdown is over and the world has severely impacted the fashion retail ecosystem as stores all over the country have shuttered, resulting in cancellations of late Summer and Autumn merchandise and a build-up of unsold Summer 2020 within the business, they said.

Benetton, India MD & CEO Sundeep Chugh said although "there is certainly no specific discounting strategy post-lockdown, as a brand we would want to uplift the sentiments of our consumers through a

## MF assets down ₹4,96 lakh crore but equity inflows up ₹1,722 crore

**RAVI RANJAN PRASAD**  
MUMBAI, APRIL 9

Mutual fund industry assets under management fell sharply in March 2020 by ₹4.96 lakh crore to ₹22.26 lakh crore as on March 31, 2020 from ₹27.22 lakh crore at the end of February, 2020, data released by Association of Mutual Fund in India (AMFI) showed.

A sharp fall in stock market benchmark indices by around 25 per cent and close to ₹2 lakh crore withdrawal from the debt / income and arbitrage fund category of mutual funds were the main reason for such a heavy fall in the industry AUM.

However, the silver lining was one year-high inflows into equity mutual funds, which surged to ₹11,722

## Office space demand, supply fall in March quarter

**SANGEETHA G**  
CHENNAI, APRIL 9

After the quarter post-demonetisation, absorption and new completion of office space saw the steepest fall in March quarter.

In March quarter, the office market saw a net absorption of 0.6 million sq ft, a decline of 30 per cent from 12.3 million sq ft in Q1 2019. Last such drop was witnessed in Q1 2017 after demonetisation, when absorption had dipped to 4.4 million sq ft against 10.6 million sq ft in the year ago quarter. However, in Q1 2018, it moved up to 6.8 million sq ft and doubled to 12.3 million sq ft in Q1 2019, as per a report by JLL.

While the momentum continued in the first two

## Office space demand, supply fall in March quarter

**SANGEETHA G**  
CHENNAI, APRIL 9

months of Q1 2020, in March several leasing deals in the final stages of negotiation were deferred with occupiers asking for the removal of lock in periods and a downward revision of rents. Further, occupiers have put up decisions regarding fresh take up of spaces on hold for the next couple of months. Bengaluru, Mumbai and Delhi NCR accounted for

more than 50 per cent of the net absorption. Net absorption in Mumbai and Chennai more than doubled in Q1 2020 as compared to Q1 2019, led by strong leasing activity in the first two months by IT/ITES occupiers. However, the global health crisis arrested the growth in the Hyderabad market with 78 per cent drop in net absorption.

## MF assets down ₹4,96 lakh crore but equity inflows up ₹1,722 crore

**RAVI RANJAN PRASAD**  
MUMBAI, APRIL 9

Mutual fund industry assets under management fell sharply in March 2020 by ₹4.96 lakh crore to ₹22.26 lakh crore as on March 31, 2020 from ₹27.22 lakh crore at the end of February, 2020, data released by Association of Mutual Fund in India (AMFI) showed.

A sharp fall in stock market benchmark indices by around 25 per cent and close to ₹2 lakh crore withdrawal from the debt / income and arbitrage fund category of mutual funds were the main reason for such a heavy fall in the industry AUM.

However, the silver lining was one year-high inflows into equity mutual funds, which surged to ₹11,722

## Office space demand, supply fall in March quarter

**SANGEETHA G**  
CHENNAI, APRIL 9

After the quarter post-demonetisation, absorption and new completion of office space saw the steepest fall in March quarter.

In March quarter, the office market saw a net absorption of 0.6 million sq ft, a decline of 30 per cent from 12.3 million sq ft in Q1 2019. Last such drop was witnessed in Q1 2017 after demonetisation, when absorption had dipped to 4.4 million sq ft against 10.6 million sq ft in the year ago quarter. However, in Q1 2018, it moved up to 6.8 million sq ft and doubled to 12.3 million sq ft in Q1 2019, as per a report by JLL.

While the momentum continued in the first two

## Airline selling tickets during lockdown unfair: CAPA

**MUMBAI, APRIL 9:**

Aviation consultancy CAPA on Thursday said allowing domestic airlines to take advance bookings from April 15 is "unfair" to consumers since a decision on lifting the nationwide lockdown is yet to be made.

During the lockdown, only special flights approved by the Director General of Civil Aviation, medical evacuation flights and those carrying cargo, are operational. While the government is yet to decide on lifting the lockdown, Indian airlines have started taking bookings for travel on domestic flights from April 15. —PTI

## Gold demand seen dipping

**SANGEETHA G**  
CHENNAI, APRIL 9

The Indian Chamber of Commerce foresees gold demand coming down to around 480 tonnes in 2020, almost half of what the world Gold Council estimated earlier. The Chamber estimates that purchases can plummet 30 per cent in 2020 from the estimated demand of 690 tonnes last year, due to the economic impact of the virus outbreak, which would affect employment and income. A 30 per cent decline will take the annual gold demand to 483 tonnes, against 700-800 tonnes predicted by the World Gold Council earlier.

Following the coronavirus outbreak, the gems

and jewellery sector has come to a complete halt still in the country. Wedding purchases were also affected, as there were restrictions on such functions. Increased volatility coupled with higher prices has impacted the demand severely even before the coronavirus outbreak, finds ICC. Gold imports have dropped by 73 per cent to 25 tonnes in the March quarter. Gold being a discretionary item, job losses and fall in incomes will have a negative impact on demand. Moreover, the gold price outlook is very bullish, as investors will seek the safe haven during turbulent times. Gold is already trading around all-time high levels in the international market.

SHORT TAKES

Wimbledon earns big via insurance

**Hyderabad:** Despite calling off the 2020 edition of Wimbledon, the organisers are all set to get as much as \$14 million (\$141 million), a sum that will help them offset an estimated revenue loss of around £250 million. A week after the tournament was cancelled, a first since the World War II, due to the Coronavirus pandemic, more details of the insurance policy have emerged. The All England Club reportedly updated its Wimbledon insurance policy years ago to include the infectious disease clause following the worldwide SARS outbreak in 2002. The Club's risk and finance sub-committee is charged with assessing all potential risks to the annual tournament, including global pandemics, terrorist attacks and even the death of a monarch, which would thrust the country into a time of national mourning. The recently cancelled 2020 British Open golf is also covered by pandemic insurance.

UFC to stage fight amidst lockdown

**Los Angeles:** The Ultimate Fighting Championship is aiming to circumvent coronavirus lockdown restrictions by staging an event on an Indian reservation in California later this month, US media reported on Wednesday. The New York Times reported that UFC chief Dana White planned to hold UFC 249 at the Tachi Palace Resort Casino in central California after the state sidestepping state guidelines. The casino — which has been closed since March 20 because of the Covid-19 pandemic — is on land belonging to the Tachi-Yukut Tribe. Indian reservations typically operate independently of the states in which they are located, outside of local government or US federal government control. By staging the event on tribal land, organizers also evade the requirement to obtain sanctioning from the California State Athletic Commission. — AFP

Bryant's book retains top spot

**Washington:** Kobe Bryant is back atop the best-seller lists, days after the late Los Angeles Lakers superstar was inducted into the Hall of Fame. The latest release from Bryant's Granity Studios, *The Wizenard Series: Season 1*, will debut at No.1 on *The New York Times* middle-grade hardcover list that will be published April 19. Earlier this week, it had already hit No.1 on Amazon's bestseller list for children's basketball books. Bryant's company describes it as a story of strain and sacrifice, supernatural magic, setbacks, and supreme dedication to the game. Bryant was the series creator and envisioned the story lines. Other books created by Bryant's content company soared in popularity in the days following the announcement of his death in a helicopter crash on January 26. — AFP

GERMAN SIDES BEGIN CLOSED DOOR DRILLS

**Berlin:** Wearing gloves for hygienic reasons and observing social distancing on the pitch are among the challenges facing Bundesliga football clubs as training this week amid hopes the league could resume next month. Most of the 18 clubs in Germany's top flight returned to their clubs on Monday, albeit in small groups with limited contact to meet health guidelines due to the coronavirus. League matches in Germany have been suspended since March 13. The German Football League (DFL) is in talks with the clubs and authorities about Bundesliga resuming on May 2, but with matches played in front of empty terraces and fans locked out while public events remain banned in the country. A decision about when competition can resume is expected on April 17, which could make it the first of Europe's top leagues to restart. Meanwhile, the league's stars are adjusting to training in the area of social distancing. Defending champions Bayern Munich, who were four points clear when the league was halted, were top scorers in the holding sessions in small groups. — AFP

# playing Park

## Kapil snaps at Shoab, says India doesn't need money

New Delhi, April 9: The legendary Kapil Dev on Thursday slammed Shoab Akhtar's idea of a made-for-television three-match ODI series between India and Pakistan to raise funds for the Covid-19 pandemic, saying "India doesn't need the money" and it is not worth risking lives for a cricket match. Akhtar on Wednesday had proposed a closed-door series to jointly raise funds to fight the deadly virus both in India and Pakistan. Dev said the proposal is not feasible. "He is entitled to his opinion but we don't need to raise the money. We have enough. For us, what is important right now is that how our authorities work together to deal with this crisis. I am still seeing a lot of blame game on television from the politicians and that needs to stop," Kapil said. "Anyways, the BCCI has donated a hefty amount (₹51 crore) for the cause and is in a position to donate much more if the need arises. It doesn't need to raise funds. "The situation is unlikely to get normal anytime soon and organising a cricket game means putting cricketers at risk which we don't need to," said the World Cup-winning former captain. Akhtar, the BCCI has donated a hefty amount (₹51 crore) for the cause and is in a position to donate much more if the need arises. It doesn't need to raise funds. "The situation is unlikely to get normal anytime soon and organising a cricket game means putting cricketers at risk which we don't need to," said the World Cup-winning former captain. Dev said cricket should not even matter for at least the next six months. "It is just not worth the risk. And how much money can you make from three games? In my view, you can't even think of cricket for the next five to six months," he added. Dev said the focus, at the moment, should only be on saving lives and taking care of the poor who are struggling to make ends meet in a lockdown situation. "Cricket will resume when this gets normal. The game can't be bigger than the country. The pressing issue is to look after the poor, the hospital workers, the police and all other people who are on the frontlines of this war," he said. Dev said cricket should not even matter for at least the next six months. "It is just not worth the risk. And how much money can you make from three games? In my view, you can't even think of cricket for the next five to six months," he added. Dev said the focus, at the moment, should only be on saving lives and taking care of the poor who are struggling to make ends meet in a lockdown situation.



Indian captain Virat Kohli (second from right) has a conversation with the field umpire as his counterpart Tim Paine walks off after their altercation during their second Test match in Perth, in this file photo.

## Paine calls out Clarke's bluff

Hobart, April 9: Australian cricket team didn't want to unnecessarily provoke Virat Kohli but his predecessor Michael Clarke's claims of players being scared to sledge the Indian captain in order to protect their IPL deals is far from truth, said current Test skipper Tim Paine. Paine rebutted Clarke's claims that his team had "sucked up" to Kohli in order to land fat deals with IPL franchises, calling it a tactical decision not to engage Kohli into verbal duels during the 2018-19 series. "I certainly didn't notice too many people being that nice to Virat or not trying to get him out or anything like that," Paine told ESPNcricinfo. "I thought everyone who had the ball in their hand or when we were batting were trying their absolute best to win the game for Australia. I'm not sure

## PAKISTAN TO CONDUCT FITNESS TESTS ONLINE

Karachi, April 9: The Pakistan Cricket Board will conduct fitness tests for over 200 of its locked-down players via video link and the drills, among others, include push-ups, sprints, burpees and the 'Yo-Yo' test. The tests, a bid to keep the contracted players in peak physical condition in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, will be conducted on April 20 and 21, ESPNcricinfo reported. Pakistan's coach cum chief selector Misbah-ul-Haq, along with team trainer Yasir Malik, has written a letter to the players, intimating them of the planned fitness tests. "With all the limitations and lack of resources at the moment, we have chalked out this new fitness battle with everyone given an equal opportunity," the letter reads, Misbah said. — PTI

who was going easy on him; we certainly had a thing where we didn't want to provoke any fight with him because we think that's when he plays at his best," Paine said. India are scheduled to tour Australia from October, 2020 to January, 2021 to play four Tests, three One Day Internationals and three Twenty20 International matches. "Who knows what will happen this series and, as we saw in the documentaries, there was still quite a lot of heat in some of those games. I certainly wasn't holding back, but again the IPL's not a huge draw for me at the moment, so I had nothing to lose," Paine said. "But anytime our guys go out and play a Test match for Australia, they'll be giving their absolute all and I'm pretty sure they're not thinking about an IPL contract." Paine said verbal wars won't win matches. "What you say on the field is irrelevant 99 per cent of the time. Sometimes you can get a little inside someone's head or something like that, but if you're not batting well and not bowling well, all the talk in the world doesn't mean anything," Paine said. — PTI



Tiger Woods enjoys a quarantine lunch with his girlfriend Erica Herman (left), daughter Sam (second from left) and son Charlie at the Augusta National Club in Augusta, Georgia (USA).

## Tiger devours meal at Augusta

**Miami, April 9:** Reigning Masters champion, among those staying home to try and slow the spread of the deadly virus. So instead of hosting past Masters winners at Augusta National, Woods had a meal at his South Florida home and tweeted a photo of himself with his "guests" — girlfriend Erica Herman, his daughter Sam and his son Charlie. Food was only seen at

the edges of the photo but it looked to be the same meal Woods said in February that he planned to serve at the Champions Dinner. Woods was wearing his Masters green jacket with a red shirt, his typical final-round shirt, and the Masters champion's trophy a replica of the course's famed clubhouse, on the table in front of him. Food was only seen at

## Hockey hero is stuck in the US

### Ashok Diwan, part of the Indian team that won the 1975 hockey World Cup, is currently stranded in California, USA, and has sought help from the Sports Ministry to get him back to India.

New Delhi, April 9: The Sports Ministry on Thursday swung into action after hockey Olympian and member of the 1975 World Cup winning team, Ashok Diwan desperately sought help to get back to country from the USA, where he is stuck due to travel restrictions. The spike in Covid-19 pandemic cases across the globe has forced the countries to enforce lockdown in their territories. His deteriorating health adding to the trauma, the 65-year-old Diwan made a distress call to the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) President Narinder Batra. President Narinder Batra, who has plea to the higher authorities. Ministry sources confirmed that a Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju has received the letter and has forwarded the same to the Ministry of External Affairs. "The Sports Minister has asked appropriate authorities to evaluate the situation and take a call on this matter," a Sports Ministry source confirmed. Dhyanchand awardee Diwan had first approached Batra for help. "I need your help as I am stuck in USA and have developed some health problems. I had to attend hospital in emergency last week in California. I am not feeling well these days,

moreover doesn't have insurance here. The medical costs are very high here," Diwan wrote to Batra, who also heads International Hockey Federation (IHF). "Originally, I was supposed to fly back on 20th April by Air India but due to the ongoing epidemic situation my travel dates have been pushed back. "I request a favour for forwarding this message to Honourable Sports Minister and External Affairs Minister for helping me with a hospital for my check up or if they can arrange earlier departure from San Francisco to India," he added. "The hero of 1975 World Cup-winning team also promised to pay all the bills after returning to India. "Kindly, treat this urgent as I am really in bad health here," he said. Diwan travelled to Sacramento in December last year to spend time with his son, who works there. — PTI



Sports Authority of Telangana State chairman Allipuram Venkateswaru Reddy (second from left) and Telangana Minister for Animal Husbandry, Fisheries and Aquaculture, K. Jayadev (second from right) distribute groceries to the needy at the Lal Bahadur Stadium in Hyderabad on Thursday as part of the week-long free distribution programme in view of the lockdown imposed to fight coronavirus.

## Antetokounmpo donates masks

Athens, April 9: Greek basketball star Giannis Antetokounmpo and his brothers donated 10,000 surgical masks to the Athens suburb of Zografou on Wednesday to help fight the coronavirus outbreak. "The municipality of Zografou wants to express its great gratitude to the Antetokounmpo family for offering 10,000 masks to the residents of the city as a measure of protection against the Covid-19 virus," a statement from the municipality said. "The gesture from the family, in addition to the substantial offer that they have not forgotten the city and when the nightmare of the coronavirus is over, the municipality will honour Giannis and his brothers accordingly," he added.

**ENGLISH FOOTBALLERS TO HELP NHS**  
Premier League players announced they had launched an initiative to generate funds for Britain's National Health Service (NHS) to help against the coronavirus pandemic. The idea — named #PlayersTogether — has been set up on Wednesday to help those fighting for us on the NHS frontline" during the Covid-19 outbreak. "It is about we, as players, collaborating together to create a voluntary initiative, separate to any other strategic and club conversation," a statement from the group said. Individuals such as Liverpool's captain Jordan Henderson, Tottenham's Harry Kane and Arsenal's Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang were among those to post on social media about the move. — AFP

## FLORIDA FAN SUES WOODS AS CADDIE SHOVES

Los Angeles, April 9: A Florida man is suing Tiger Woods and caddie Joe LaCava over an alleged shove at the 2018 Valspar Championship and his lawyer asked witnesses to come forward. Attorney Josh Dreschel, who represents Brian Borruso, issued a statement seeking the public's help in identifying witnesses on a video that appears to capture portions of the incident. "We're asking anyone who was there to contact us and let us know if you saw the incident, if you know whose voices are on the video and if you may have video or pictures of the incident," Dreschel of the St. Petersburg-based Josh Firm, said. "Unfortunately, the PGA has refused to cooperate and we are confident they are confident they have the incident on video," Borruso said in a statement filed on Tuesday in Florida's Pinellas County claims court. Borruso filed on the 13th hole in the third round of the tournament at Innisbrook near Tampa, Florida. The complaint, seeking some \$30,000 in damages, — AFP