

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
HYDERABAD | THURSDAY | 2 APRIL 2020

WEATHER

Max: 38.2°C
Min: 26.2°C
RH: 30%
Rain: Nil
Forecast: Partly cloudy sky with haze. Max/Min temp. 38/26°C

CORONA COUNT

CASES 1637 DEATHS 39
TS: 107 06
AP: 111 00

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

8,65,970
DEATHS 43,082+
COUNTRIES AREAS WITH CASES 186

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvar: Uttarayana
Tithi: Chaitra Suddha Navami till 2.40 am (Friday)
Star: Punarvasu till 7.21 pm
Varjyam: 7.22 am to 5.59 am and 3.05 am to 4.38 am (Friday)
Durmuhurtam: 10.17 am to 11.06 am; 3.11 pm to 3.59 pm
Rahukalam: 1.30 pm to 3 pm
SHUBH GATI PRAYERS
Shahaan 7,1441 AH
Fajar: 5.10 am
Zohar: 12.30 pm
Asar: 4.41 pm
Maghrib: 6.35 pm
Isha: 7.44 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6.29 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.06 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 11.48 AM
MOONSET TOMORROW 12.25 AM

COUNTER POINT



Not corona... they are alcohol-deprived patients!

IN BRIEF

CBSE promotes all till Class 8

New Delhi: HRD minister Ramesh Pokhriyal on Wednesday directed the CBSE to promote all students of classes 1 to 8 to the next class in view of the coronavirus outbreak. Students of class 9 and 11 will be promoted on school-based assessments. Whenever CBSE can hold exams, he said it shall conduct for 29 subjects which are crucial for university admissions.

Full report on Page 4

Bhadrachalam fete minus people

Bhadrachalam: The celestial wedding of Lord Venkateswara and his consort Sita would be performed inside the temple for the first time ever because of coronavirus. For over 300 years, the wedding has been performed outside the temple to allow a large number of people to witness it. But this year, only DD and SVBC staff and priests would be present.

Another report on Page 2

GST kitty misses ₹1 lakh cr mark

New Delhi: Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue in March stood at ₹97,597 crore, lower than over ₹1.05 lakh crore collected in February. Of the total ₹97,597 crore revenue, the CGST stood at ₹19,183 crore, SGST at ₹25,601 crore and integrated GST at ₹52,813 crore.

Full report on Page 7



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NATION | 4

Save people, forget about GDP growth: Cong



BUSINESS | 5

US may force India to ease drug export ban

TABLOID

Not ready for the game



India sees biggest jump in Covid-19 cases

Health ministry puts total cases at 1,637 in evening; total tally of state reports shows 1,910 coronavirus cases

VINEETA PANDEY
With agency inputs
NEW DELHI, APRIL 1

Religious gatherings conducted before the imposition of a nationwide lockdown are posing a fresh challenge for India, which recorded a steep rise in its fresh cases of Covid-19. According to the health ministry, 388 fresh cases have been reported in the

country in last 24 hours (between 4 pm on Tuesday and 4 pm on Wednesday). The total number of Covid-19 positive cases in India till Wednesday is 1,637 and 39 had died of coronavirus infection. Out of these, the number of active cases are 1,466 while 192 have got cured and 1 migrated.

However, news agency PTI claimed total number of confirmed cases was 1,910 with 58 deaths and 168 discharged. The government has attributed the sharp rise in cases to the Tablighi Jamaat gathering in Delhi's Nizamuddin area and underlined that this did not reflect the national trend. "One of the main reasons for the rise in positive cases is the travel by members of Tablighi Jamaat," said Lav Agarwal,

a joint secretary in the Union health ministry. The official added all states which have reported positive cases of the disease have been asked to carry out intensive drives of rigorous contact tracing and testing and also sending those with symptoms to quarantine facilities or hospitals.

After Tablighi Jamaat. More such cases are expected to come up in the coming days from other religious gatherings such as *Hole Mohalla* in Punjab, which was attended by Sikh religious preacher Bakro Singh, who died of Covid-19 on March 30. He came to India from Italy.

Covid cases in state cross 100

TS GOVT TO PAY FULL SALARY FOR ALL EMPLOYEES

JAYENDRA CHATANYA and BALU PULIPAKA | DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 1
Twelve more Covid-19 cases were reported in Telangana, taking the total coronavirus cases in the state to 107. Of these, the government said 88 were active cases, which are under treatment.

Though the government claimed one more death due to deadly virus infection on Wednesday, it has reduced the total number of deaths to five from six, without offering an explanation. A state-wide manhunt for a missing Tablighi Jamaat's Markaz attendees, flared tempers at two hospitals and advice from the state to the Centre that it should be "more active" when it comes to controlling coronavirus made Wednesday a mixed bag for Telangana in its fight against Covid-19. The day's developments included arrival of personal protection equipment kits from the Centre and the state's own purchases, prophylactic pills

Chief Minister K. Chandrababu Naidu late on Wednesday decided to pay full salaries to all the state employees and pensioners for March.

for the doctors treating Covid-19 cases and a claim by health minister Etala Rajendar that Telangana was the "role model for the country" when it comes to tackling coronavirus and that "the Centre should also be more active." He claimed that it was the state police which was quick off the block to alert the Centre over the connection between Tablighi Jamaat in Delhi and possibility of spread of Covid-19 from all who attended an event between March 13 and 15.

Page 2: Bha says 12 patients will be discharged

Ration rush



Thousands of people stand in a queue from early morning without maintaining social distance to collect ration from a PDS shop at Moghalpura in Hyderabad on Wednesday

—DEEPAK DESHPANDE

2,361 shifted out of Delhi Markaz India scouts for protective equipment around world

SUNIL THAPLVAL and BHASKAR HARI SHARMA | DC NEW DELHI, APRIL 1

It took 36 hours to evacuate 2,361 people from Alami Markaz (headquarters of Tablighi Jamaat) in Nizamuddin West area, Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia said on Wednesday.

Tablighi-e-Jamaat's three-day congregation, in which people from across the country and various countries had gathered, has emerged as "super spreader" of the novel coronavirus infection in the country. The operation by the Delhi government, medical staff, Delhi police and DTC staff continued for 36 hours and the Markaz was cleared at 4 am on Wednesday. "The entire building has been cleared and 617 people, who had symptoms, have been hospitalised while the rest have been home quarantined," Mr Sisodia announced on Twitter.

Medical staff, administration, police and DTC staff worked together in this 36-hour operation, putting their lives at risk. "Hats off to all of them," he said in another tweet.

Soon after the evacuation, the Nizamuddin Markaz and the area around it was sanitised by the South Delhi Municipal Corporation. With 32 new positive cases of coronavirus on Wednesday, the total number in Delhi has climbed to 152. Of these, 53 cases are linked to the Nizamuddin Markaz.

An FIR has been registered against the Alami Markaz cleric Maulana Saad, and six others, though he has been untraceable since March 28 after he was served a notice by the Delhi police. Mr Sisodia said that a list has been prepared with the phone numbers and other details of people who attended the congregation and handed over to the Delhi Police's cyber cell. They will trace the history of movement of these people with the help of their mobiles phones details.

There is a "huge shortage" of essential equipment to fight the coronavirus pandemic in India, including ventilators, N95 masks, surgical masks and personal protection equipment (PPE) kits, and the government plans to import these wherever it is available abroad, including from China, government sources said on Wednesday.

They added a decision was also taken to accept donations from abroad of the new PM-Cares fund. Sources said domestic companies were "urged to ramp up production" of such critical equipment and the textiles ministry was also working on it.

"On equipment like PPE kits, ventilators and surgical masks, there is a huge shortage... we will continue to source (these from abroad)... We are working with the Indian ambassador in Beijing," the sources said. "We should be able to get any item of short supply. Ventilators, N95 masks, surgical masks are in short supply in India. That process is on (to import) from countries willing to offer these," the sources added.

The violence of the family member against junior doctors led to a security guard asking him to stay inside the hospital. As such, there was a huge crowd at the hospital as lots of people had come for testing at the hospital and controlling the crowd was a major challenge. The patient's brother

Patient critical, kin beats up doctors

KANIZA GARARI | DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 1

A family member of a 50-year-old patient at Gandhi Hospital entered into a bitter argument with junior doctors and manhandled them after his brother was put on ventilator support on Wednesday night.

Junior doctors were angry that the patient's brother was repeatedly violating all instructions and not listening to them, and moved in and out and around the hospital premises in gross violation of lockdown rules. The violence of the family member against junior doctors led to a security guard asking him to stay inside the hospital. As such, there was a huge crowd at the hospital as lots of people had come for testing at the hospital and controlling the crowd was a major challenge. The patient's brother

While junior doctors were angry about the patient's brother attacking them, the patient's brother alleged that the death was due to negligence on part of the doctors

alleged that his brother's condition turned critical due to negligence of the doctors who were not treated him properly. Gandhi Hospital superintendent Dr Shrawan Kumar and other senior doctors intervened to counsel the patient's brother, who was also in uncontrollable rage. Reacting to the incident, Hyderabad police commissioner Anand Kumar said, "In this war-like situation police and doctors have to work together to win against coronavirus."

Page 4: Violence will invite arrest, say cops

DOMICILE | RULE A person who stayed in J&K for 15 years can get all rights in Union Territory Amid virus scare, Centre redefines J&K resident

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, APRIL 1

Exactly eight months after stripping Jammu and Kashmir of its special status and splitting it up into two Union Territories, the Central government has notified a new domicile rule, which makes a person residing in Jammu and Kashmir for at least fifteen years eligible to be a domi-

nant of the UT. The Union Territory of Ladakh has not been included in the notified list.

As per the notification, Section 3A of the J&K Reorganisation (Adaptation of State Laws) Order, 2019, under the J&K civil services (decentralisation and recruitment) Act, has been introduced to define domicile as that "who has resided for a period of 15

years in the UT of J&K or has studied for a period of seven years and appeared in class 10/12th examination in an educational institution located in the UT of J&K."

Various political parties and trade and civil society groups in Jammu and Kashmir have expressed shock and dismay at the Centre's decision to bring in a new domicile law for the Union Territory (UT) when the country is struggling hard to contain the Covid-19 outbreak.

There is rage among the residents, particularly the youth, many of whom took to social media platforms to pour scorn on the Central government and allege that the new law is aimed at paving the way for demographic change in the Muslim-majority Jammu and Kashmir.

The definition expands to include "children of those Central government officials, all India services officers, officials of PSUs and autonomous body of Central government, public sector banks, officials of statutory bodies, officials of Central universities and recognised research institutes of central government who have served in

Page 4: Insult is heaped on injury, says Omar

IN BRIEFS MA&UD provides property tax relief

Hyderabad: Amid the Covid-19 crisis, the Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MA&UD) department has extended the financial year by three months...

DISTRIBUTION OF FREE RICE RNS INTO TROUBLE

VUJINI VAMSHIDHARA HYDERABAD, APRIL 1 The free distribution of 12 kgs of rice to each BPL family...

In keeping with the assurance of Chief Minister K. Chandrababu Naidu, the state started distribution of 3.34 metric tonnes of rice at 17,000 ration shops covering approximately 2.90 crore beneficiaries...

VIOLENCE WILL INVITE ARREST, SAY COPS

Strongly warning people that anyone who misbehaves with doctors, nurses or any paramedical or other staff...

Hunt on in TS, AP for Tablighi attendees

Telugu states pushed on backfoot by rapid coronavirus spread among Tablighi Jamaat returnees

MADDO DEEKSHITH | DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 1 Six persons who returned to the city from the Tablighi Jamaat congregation in Delhi...

the GHMC authorities to trace them and ensure they are either home quarantined or shifted to isolation wards if Covid-19 symptoms were found. The corporation has traced the addresses of 427 persons out of the total 603 that came to the city...

Tablighis, Iranians, among 100 Covid patients shifted to Unani hospital

ATHER MOIN | DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 1 More than 100 people have been admitted into the Unani Hospital in the city on Wednesday including among them 50 people belonging to Tablighi Jamaat...

monitor their health. This action comes in the wake of death of six persons in the city connected with the attendance in this meeting so far. All six were confirmed to have been infected with Coronavirus...

for disposal of medical disposals and medical hazards, etc. Additional director ATUSH and principal of the Nizamia Tibbi College Dr. Mohammed Ahsan Farooqui said that 14 Unani doctors are posted in the morning shift...

159 RETURNEES IDENTIFIED, SENT TO ISOLATION CENTRES

JAYENDRA CHAITANYA T | DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 1

About 159 persons residing within the jurisdiction of the Cyberabad and Rachakonda commissionerates, who returned from the Tablighi Jamaat in Delhi, have been identified and were sent to quarantine centres for testing for Covid-19.

GHMC FORMS PANEL TO DISPOSE BODIES

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 1

The state government on Wednesday formed a committee to ensure disposal of dead bodies of suspected or confirmed Covid-19 cases...

The committee will function under the chairmanship of Serilingampally zonal commissioner N. Ravi Kiran and will have seven nodal officers.

Food for thought



People stand in a long queue to receive free ration at a fair price shop in view of the lockdown, in Mettuguda on Wednesday. Residents, however, did not maintain social distance, vital to control the spread of coronavirus.

CCMB to grow virus in lab for testing

KANIZHA GARARI | DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 1 Hence prevention in terms of hand hygiene and social distancing must be practiced.

The spread of the virus was anticipated, and given the manner in which it has acted in China, Italy, Spain and United States of America...

hospitals has started at CCMB, which has the capacity to test several hundred samples a day. Suspected cluster spreads which are emerging have led to collection of large number of samples and CCMB is assisting government in testing.

Etala says 12 patients will be discharged

Mr Rajendar said that 10 more people who were previously identified as Covid-19 positive, have recovered and ready to be discharged, while two others were scheduled for release from Gandhi hospital later on Wednesday night...

GHMC apathy leaves their lives under threat Virus risk hits sanitation staff

Enforcement Vigilance and Disaster Management (EVDIM) wing's nearly 300 DRF personnel are doing the spraying work after undergoing a three-day training programme on the use of spraying machines, respirators etc.

The sanitation staff say that all they have been given are some nominal face masks as they go about tracing possible Covid-19 suspects...

home quarantined until the medical teams arrive. "By and by, a sanitation worker."

Echoing his concern, his colleague Sreenivas said, "Now we are tracking individuals who returned from the Tablighi Jamaat congregation but we are not testing them."

Tender Notice No. MCT/2020 (Open tender) dated 01.04.2020 The Divisional Railway Manager (Mech.) E. Railway, Samarapur for and on behalf of the president of India invites Open 'e' tender from experienced and financially capable tenders...

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY Important Notice All tenders of North Eastern Railway - Stores Department-Headquarters Office due to open between 24.03.2020 to 15.04.2020 (lapsed & not opened or Live), except tender number 224/9098A, 28180704 & 28190615A due on 25.03.2020, 08.04.2020 & 08.04.2020 respectively have been postponed to 15.04.2020.

SANJAY GANDHI POST GRADUATE INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES RAEBARELLI, UTTAR PRADESH SANJAY GANDHI POST GRADUATE INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES RAEBARELLI, UTTAR PRADESH PHONES: 2668004-9, 2668700, 2668800, 2668900 FAX: 91-522-2668973, 2668218 (JDDM) EMAIL: info@sgpi.ac.in

IN BRIEF

Wine shops to be closed till Apr. 14

Hyderabad: The Prohibition and Excise Department has issued an order extending the closure of wine shops across the state till April 14. These shops were earlier expected to remain closed till March 31. Prohibition and excise director Sarfaraz Ahmed said in view of the nationwide lockdown because of the Covid-19 threat, the earlier order closing wine shops till March 31 has been extended to April 14. As such, all wine shops in the state will remain closed till April 14.

GADDIANNARAM FRUIT MARKET TO BE DECONGESTED

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 1 The state government has decided to initiate measures for decongesting the Gaddiannaram fruit market, the biggest in the state, in view of the Covid-19 threat. The decision to decongest the market came after several traders, commission agents and hamals of the market met agriculture minister S. Niranjan Reddy demanding that the market be closed to check coronavirus from spreading. However, the minister told Deccan Chronicle that this would be difficult as the market's closure will have an adverse impact on farmers across the state. The season of fruits, including sweet lime, orange and pomegranate, has also just begun. As it is, buyers are not coming forward to buy the seasonal fruits because of the lockdown. Closure of Gaddiannaram market altogether will cause a huge burden on farmers and the state as well.

STUDENTS OPPOSE UoH ADMISSION NOTIFICATION

HAARLEEN MINOCHA | DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 1 Raising a strong opposition to the latest notification issued by the University of Hyderabad (UoH) pertaining to admissions for the academic year, the student union has written to the Vice-Chancellor expressing its disapproval. Calling the notification "arbitrary", the union asked the authorities to order in the backdrop of the coronavirus crisis. "This untimely notification will cause hindrance to a majority of students in applying online. Students, especially from marginalised communities and rural backgrounds, do not have access to internet facilities and rely on internet centres. And these all are closed because of the lockdown. Students may find it difficult to even apply for entrance examinations", the letter said.

TRS NOT TO HOLD BIENNIAL PLENARY

S.N.C.N. ACHARYULU | DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 1 The Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) is likely to postpone its plenary session to be held on April 27, marking the occasion of the party's foundation day. The party organisational elections would also be postponed, given the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic. The TRS was founded on April 27, 2001. According to the party constitution, organisational elections should be held every two years, to comply with which, the party conducts its plenary session on its foundation day. The plenary session held in 2018 was advanced to January at which K Chandrashekar Rao was re-elected as the party president. The TRS plenary looks unlikely now with the state government fully engaged in fighting the battle against Coronavirus and a lockdown announced till April 14. For a few days, when the state government opined that the Covid intensity and growth was coming down, the sudden rapid proliferation of positive cases has left the government too worried to bother about a party event. A TRS leader said that even if the Coronavirus affect were checked and its risk flattened in the next ten to fifteen days, now looks bleak, restoring normalcy would take at least two to three months.

Healthcare staff safety must

HC demands protection for doctors, their assisting workers and others

VJUNINI VAMSHIDHARA | DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 1 Responding to the grievance that the government doctors and their assisting staff are not getting adequate health assistants and Asha karyakarthas, lives were being put at the risk by not providing the complete personal protection equipment at the time of physical visit to the suspects of pandemic Covid-19, the Telangana High Court on Wednesday directed the state government to submit the measures taken towards the safeguard of the field staff, who were rendering noble services to prevent further spread of the epidemic. A division bench, comprising Justice M.S. Ramachandra Rao and Justice K. Lakshman, on Wednesday, was dealing

with a suo motu PIL, based on a letter from high court advocate, Sameer Ahmed. In the letter, the advocate sought the court's intervention in the interests of the field staff. Ahmed said that as many of 20,000 international travellers who had recently came to the state were being suspected as the carriers of the pandemic Covid-19. The state government had taken the decision to quarantine them and their contacts for 14 days, to stop the spread of the virus. Doctors and medical staff, including Asha workers, were being directed to physically visit the residences of the suspects for medical checkups and to conduct counselling sessions. The letter proclaims that several staff was being used for this purpose across the state just wearing gloves and masks. Personal protection equipment, like an N-95 respirator mask, face shield, goggles, surgical gowns, shoes and head covers have to be provided them, according to the rules of the ministry of health. Considering the letter as a suo motu PIL, the high court ordered an explanation from the chief secretary and other concerned departments by Monday.

20 kids, 7 women tested at Gandhi

KANIZA GARAR | DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 1

Twenty children, seven women and also 150 men were called to the Gandhi Hospital on Wednesday for sample taking as they had attended the religious congregation at Markaz, Nizamuddin in New Delhi organised by the Tablighi Jamaat a couple of weeks ago. Earlier, 100 samples from Mahbubnagar were found tested negative, while the process for testing other 100 samples taken in Hyderabad and other areas for testing are still going on. There is a huge load on Gandhi Hospital as additional team of doctors and para-medical staff had to be placed on duty for sample collection, which is still going on. There is a strict discipline while conducting the process, which begins in the morning, continues till late at night. Junior doctors, residents and senior doctors, who are in different shifts, have been given these works and there is strict secrecy maintained due to sensitivity of the issue. With people of one community coming in large numbers, who were upset at allegedly being targeted by a section of the media, it has become a difficult task for doctors to manage them, while doing their duties. For this reason, registry of names, addresses and phone numbers are maintained by senior professors, who are not allowing anyone to come around. There is a strict discipline while conducting the process, which begins in the morning, continues till late at night. Junior doctors, residents and senior doctors, who are in different shifts, have been given these works and there is strict secrecy maintained due to sensitivity of the issue.

Citizens step in to help migrant workers

T.S.S. SIDHARTH | DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 1

Migrants workers have been facing the most difficulties after the lockdown announced by the central government to curtail the spread of the coronavirus (Covid-19). According to city based activists there are close to 5,500 migrant workers in the Greater Hyderabad region. "These workers are facing innumerable difficulties. Be it finding daily supplies or work to make ends meet. We have come up with a way to provide them with shelter and two-square meals a day," said Parmannand Sharma, president of Janseva Sangh, an NGO. Apart from working as domestic help, the migrant workers worked in hotels as waiters, and in a host of other jobs, but since the hotels are all closed due to the 21-day lockdown, the NGO is feeding close to 2,000 people a day. "The hotel industry was their bread and butter, but after its shutdown, they have been left with no place to go. So we took it upon ourselves to give them food," Parmannand Sharma said. Janseva Sangh has around 200 volunteers, who are working round the clock, across the city in this time of need.



Hundreds of migrants throng Musheerabad GHMC grounds to collect rice supplied free of cost by the government.

- S. SURENDER REDDY

APART FROM working as domestic help, the migrant workers worked in hotels as waiters, and in a host of other jobs, but since the hotels are all closed due to the 21-day lockdown, the NGO is feeding close to 2,000 people a day.



Migrant labourers seen walking to their native places under the sweltering sun in Tankbund on Wednesday.

- R. PAVAN

BIP OPPOSES PAY DEDUCTION, PENSION SLASH

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 1

Former minister and BIP leader D. K. Arjun on Wednesday vehemently opposed the state government's move to cut salaries of its employees as well as pensions payable to the retired staff. In a media statement on Wednesday she said Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao's decision in this regard is unfair, particularly when employees of all departments have been striving hard to combat the outbreak of Covid-19. She regretted that, instead of giving them incentives, KCR has imposed a cut of 50 per cent on their salaries. The former minister pointed out that on one hand the Chief Minister has said that the state government is prepared to spend 110,000 crore on fighting the virus. On the other hand, he has cut the salaries of employees, despite asserting that Telangana is a rich state. She recalled Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call that private employees and workers be paid full wages by their employers, though there has been a lockdown. "If the Chief Minister himself takes the decision of paying only 50 percent of salaries to government employees, what will be the fate of private employees," she asked.

THE FORMER minister pointed out that on one hand the Chief Minister has said that the state government is prepared to spend 110,000 crore on fighting the virus. ON THE other hand, he has cut the salaries of employees, despite asserting that Telangana is a rich state.

Uttam flays salary cut, blames KCR's team

IREDDY SRINIVAS REDDY | DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 1

Strongly condemning the cut in salaries for government employees and pensions, Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) president and MP N. Uttam Kumar Reddy on Wednesday demanded that the state government pay the entire amount in two instalments on the lines of other states like Maharashtra and Kerala. Addressing a press conference, Uttam Kumar Reddy, along with CLP leader Mallu Bhatts Vikar, former deputy CM Damodar Rajanarasimha, former PCC President V. Hanumantha Rao, AICC spokesperson Dr Dasuju Sravan and other leaders reviewed the coronavirus situation in Telangana at Gandhi Bhavan on Wednesday. Mr Uttam Kumar Reddy said that it was strange that Chief Minister Rao announced a huge salary cut within after one week of lockdown, which has exposed his government's incompetence in managing



TPCC chief Uttam Reddy at a press meet in Gandhi Bhavan on salary cut on Wednesday.

the state's finances. He said the financial crisis was a result of mismanagement by the KCR-led TRS government. While no other state in the country has announced a salary cut, Telangana, which was repeatedly described as richest state in the country by TRS leaders, has announced not only a salary cut but also slashed pensions by half. Mr Reddy said it was strange that one week of lockdown has pushed Telangana into such a huge crisis that government does not have money to pay full salaries to employees. He demanded a White Paper on Telangana's financial condition. Blaming the TRS government led by CM Rao for wrong priorities and pushing the state into a deep crisis, Mr Reddy said Telangana inherited debts of nearly 769,000 crore at the time of formation on June 2, 2014. Now debts have scaled up to nearly 73 lakh crore and the state was nearly bankrupt.

KCR calls on Gov. to explain steps taken to combat virus

S.A. ISHAQUI | DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 1

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao on Wednesday met Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan at the Raj Bhavan here. The Chief Minister was accompanied by Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar, Health Minister Etala Rajender, DGP M. Mahender Reddy and principal secretary of medical and health Sant Kumar. The team met Governor Dr Soundararajan to apprise her of measures that have been initiated by the state government to contain the spread of coronavirus (Covid-19). Sources disclosed that Chief Minister Rao, along with his team of officers, explained the current situation in the state to the Governor for about 30 minutes. Sources revealed that during the meeting, the Governor asked Mr Rao about the dynamics of the changing situation with returnees from a meeting of the Tablighi Jamaat. Mr Rao appraised her about the state's preparedness to handle any situation, including procurement of emergency medical equipment and preparation of isolation wards in government hospitals, sources added. Mr Rao appraised her about the state's preparedness to handle any situation, including procurement of emergency medical equipment and preparation of isolation wards in government hospitals, sources added. Mr Rao appraised her about the state's preparedness to handle any situation, including procurement of emergency medical equipment and preparation of isolation wards in government hospitals, sources added.



Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao meets Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan in Raj Bhavan on Wednesday.

SOURCES REVEALED that during the meeting the Governor asked KCR about the dynamics of the changing situation with returnees from a meeting of the Tablighi Jamaat. Mr Rao appraised her about the state's preparedness to handle any situation, including procurement of emergency medical equipment and preparation of isolation wards in government hospitals, sources added. Mr Rao appraised her about the state's preparedness to handle any situation, including procurement of emergency medical equipment and preparation of isolation wards in government hospitals, sources added. Mr Rao appraised her about the state's preparedness to handle any situation, including procurement of emergency medical equipment and preparation of isolation wards in government hospitals, sources added.

VIRUS | IMPACT The latest figure comes as major shock for the Union finance ministry

Covid, lockdown give income tax big drubbing

VIKRAM SHARMA | DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 1

With the coronavirus pandemic disrupting operations of the Income Tax (IT) department into the last weeks before the end of the financial year (FY), direct tax collections as on March 31 for FY 2019-20 stands at less than ₹9,98 lakh crore (₹9,97,872.80 crore to be precise), an overall slump or negative growth of minus 8.8 per cent. This is far below the target of ₹13.8 lakh crore set by the Central Board of

Direct Taxes (CBDT) for the FY. Compared to total net collections of over ₹10.94 lakh crore during last financial year (2018-19), the latest figure comes as a major disappointment for the Union finance ministry led by Nirmala Sitharaman. The final figure is expected to slightly increase in a day or two as the IT department is still in the process of updating last day collections and figures. However, for the Hyderabad IT region, which comprises both

Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, total net collections for 2018-19 and 2019-20 remains almost the same at ₹56,874 crore and ₹56,067 crore respectively. "The coronavirus pandemic has hit our operations severely. We could not make IT raids and surveys, which would have made people pay up. Unlike previous years, we were not able to summon possible defaulters and make them pay taxes, or visit them. With all coercive methods ruled out, overall tax collections

were hit badly," IT officials told Deccan Chronicle. They said that due to Covid scare, IT department has no other option but to talk to many high and mighty over telephone or interact through email, which "clearly did not work". Moreover, many were reluctant to pay taxes due to prevailing uncertainty amidst a lockdown currently underway, IT officials said. Sources said that the chief commissioners of Income Tax of a few regions even wrote to the

CBDT seeking extension of the March 31 deadline. According to IT collections till March 31, a copy of which was sent to Deccan Chronicle, overall corporate tax collected stands at over ₹5.41 lakh crore (₹5,41,086 crore) while total IT collected was over ₹4.43 lakh crore (₹4,43,063 crore). The target set by CBDT for corporate tax for 2019-20 was ₹7.60 lakh crore while target for IT was over ₹6.97 lakh crore (out of a total ₹13.8 lakh crore target). While total net collec-

tions for Mumbai IT region stood at over ₹3.30 lakh crore as against ₹3.51 lakh crore the previous FY, with a growth of minus 6.17 per cent, the Delhi IT region's net collections was over ₹1.49 lakh crore (₹1,49,000 crore) compared to the previous year. The growth was minus (-9.7 per cent). Similarly, the net collection in Bengaluru IT region was over ₹1.07 lakh crore (₹1,07,000 crore) compared to the previous year's net of over ₹1.19 lakh crore, a negative growth of -10 per cent.

SHORT TAKES

SONIA SEEKS ADVANCE PAY FOR MNREGA WORKERS

SREERAPNA CHAKRABARTY | DC NEW DELHI, APRIL 1

Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Tuesday asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to pay 21 days advance wages to workers registered under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act in order to investigate the financial reverses suffered by daily wage earners to the lockdown in the wake of coronavirus pandemic.

In a letter to the Prime Minister, Gandhi said, "Since its inception, the MNREGA which caters to eight crore rural workforce has been a critical lifeline for the rural poor, particularly during periods of chronic economic distress."

She said that due to the 21-day lockdown to contain Covid-19, lakhs of agricultural workers have been left unemployed during the crucial harvesting season. "Devoid of an alternative source of income, an increasingly large number of the rural poor are expected to demand work under MNREGA. However, social distancing norms have rendered all works unfeasible during the lockdown. Furthermore, even after the works commence, MNREGA workers have to wait for more than a month to receive wages," she said adding that in such a situation it was imperative that government considers giving advance wages.

250 PILGRIMS FROM LEH TEST POSITIVE IN IRAN

PARMOD KUMAR | DC NEW DELHI, APRIL 1

The Centre on Wednesday told the Supreme Court that 250 pilgrims from Iran in the Iranian city of Qom who have tested positive for coronavirus have not been evacuated while other over 500 have already been airlifted.

The Qom is epicentre of Covid-19 outbreak in Iran which is badly infected with the outbreak.

As Solicitor General Tushar Mehta confirmed the national wide impact of the corona spread in wake of the meeting of the Tablighi Markaz with Cabinet Secretary Raju Gauba discussing the issue with home secretary Ajay Bhalla on Wednesday, following which the two held a video conference with

chief secretaries and state DGPs. Sources said the Centre has categorically asked the states to "identify, isolate and quarantine" all those who had attended the religious event.

States have also been directed to immediately assemble a complete database of these people and also all those who came in contact with them after they reached their respective areas.

At least 400 more people from West Bengal alone are suspected to have attended the Delhi event. Majority of them are yet to be identified and traced so far.

The death toll in West Bengal rose to seven on Wednesday after two more patients, with no history of foreign travel, fell victim to the virus. One of them is the 57-year-old eatery owner from Ariadaha in North 24 Parganas near Kolkata who died in the morning.

Trouble, however, cropped up over the last



A woman wearing protective mask walks past near empty shelves of a supermarket at Sion in Mumbai on Wednesday during the national-wide lockdown. With several localities in Mumbai and surrounding areas sealed after coronavirus positive patients were found, the threat of community transmission of Covid-19 is looming large in the state.

Nation-wide search for Delhi returnees begins

Centre asks states to quarantine all those who attended the meeting

DC CORRESPONDENTS NEW DELHI, APRIL 1

With a Tablighi Jamaat congregation in a Delhi locality becoming an epicentre for Covid-19 spread across India, states are hurrying to identify and possibly isolate those who attended the meeting.

While Telangana saw six fatalities, all of whom attended the congregation in Nizamuddin West in Delhi last month, Tamil Nadu witnessed the steep increase in the daily number of Covid-19 positive cases on Tuesday at 57, taking the aggregate to 124. Of these, 120 positive cases, 50 had attended the event.

The Centre is closely monitoring the nationwide impact of the corona spread in wake of the meeting of the Tablighi Markaz with Cabinet Secretary Raju Gauba discussing the issue with home secretary Ajay Bhalla on Wednesday, following which the two held a video conference with

rites of the deceased. The body which was not handed over to his family as per protocol, was taken to Dhapa Crematorium off EM Bypass in Kolkata for cremation. But a group of local residents started protesting against the last rites of the deceased as he was a Covid-19 patient.

Assam health minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday said that 13 new Covid-19 positive cases have been detected, taking the total number of corona cases in the state to five. The minister said, "All five cases detected in the state have the history of attending the religious congregation of Tablighi Jamaat in Delhi."

Officials in Bihar have been asked to carry out searches across the state to identify people who had attended the religious gathering organized at a Markaz in Nizamuddin. According to health department officials, the state administration has received a list of 81 persons who had attended the

religious gathering out of which 30 have been traced in Patna and Buxar. Taking serious note of the Markaz development the state government has now directed officials to carry out intensive screening of people who have returned from abroad after March 18 and didn't show any symptoms of Covid-19.

"We will examine all those who returned from abroad after March 18. This decision has been taken after assessing a few cases who didn't show any signs or symptoms of coronavirus during their initial examination but tested positive later," Sanjay Kumar, Principal Secretary, Bihar health department reports.

The total number of coronavirus cases in Bihar has surged to 63. Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Wednesday lashed out at the attempts being made from certain quarters to give a communal colour to the Tablighi conference.

"There seems to be intolerance towards the people who contracted infection and their religion. Certain forces are unleashing a propaganda and misusing the social media to carry out this purpose. No one should try to exploit the crisis situation developed by Covid-19 for vested communal purpose and for unleashing communal propaganda," he told new mediapersons in Thiruvananthapuram.

Jammu and Kashmir police also stepped up its effort to trace members of Tablighi Jamaat who are reported to have attended a meet at its headquarters in Nizamuddin area but have not, so far, presented themselves before the concerned authorities for mandatory screening and possible quarantine.

Reports emanating from the Union capital said that 87 people from Jammu and Kashmir who were among the people sent to Nizamuddin area have been put in quarantine in Delhi itself.

CBSE to promote Class 1-8 students to next class

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 1

In its latest directive, the ministry of human resource development (HRD), on Wednesday, instructed the central board of secondary education (CBSE) to promote all students of classes 1 to 8 in the country to the next class in view of the nationwide lockdown due to the coronavirus scare.

In a tweet, Union HRD Minister Dr. R.P. Nishank said, "In view of the current situation due to #COVID19, I have advised @cbseindia29 to promote ALL students studying in classes I-VIII to the next class or grade."

Meanwhile, promotion for students of classes nine and eleven will be on the basis of all the school-based assessment, including project work, periodic tests, term exams, conducted so far.

The union HRD minister added that students of classes 9 and eleven that fail to be promoted this time can appear in school-based tests, online or offline. The CBSE also announced that it will not conduct pending class 10 and 12 exams in schools affiliated to the board in foreign countries. The exams were postponed in view of the coronavirus outbreak in the country.

However, the CBSE will conduct Class 10 and 12 exams only for 29 main and 150 back subjects required for admissions in higher educational institutions, said a directive issued by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), on Wednesday.

"Whenever CBSE is in a position to hold board exams, it shall conduct for 29 subjects by giving advance notice," said the Union HRD Minister Dr. R.P. Nishank in a series of tweets.

While this decision has been taken in view of the Coronavirus outbreak, it is also significant as many exams were also postponed in areas of North-East Delhi due to the violence that broke out in February.

Following are the subjects for which re-examination will be conducted: Class 10 1. For North East Delhi: Hindi Course A, Hindi Course B, English Communication, English Language and Literature, Science, and Social Science. 2. For whole of India: Nil

Class 12 1. For North East Delhi: Core, Mathematics, Economics, Biology, Political Science, History, English Elective-N, English Elective-C, Physics, Accountancy, and Chemistry. 2. For whole of India: Business Studies, Geography, Hindi (Elective), Hindi (Core), Home Science, Sociology, Computer Science (Old), Computer Science (New), Information Technology (Old), Information Technology (New), Information Technology, and Biotechnology.

For the rest of the subjects, the Board will not hold re-examination. The instructions for marking/assessment in all such cases shall be separate as issued by the Board.

Baldev holds meets at many places

From Page 1

A major crisis situation is now also building up in Punjab where former Hazoori Bhangi Golez Temple, Nirmal Singh has tested positive for Covid-19.

The 62-year-old 'Gurbani' exponent had recently returned from abroad and was admitted to Guru Nanak Dev Hospital after he complained of breathlessness and dizziness on March 30.

Police have sealed the area around Singh's residence to check the spread of the infection.

According to the officials, Singh held a large 'sammelan' (religious gathering) in Delhi and some other places after he returned from abroad. Contact tracing, such as huge gathering is now a major challenge for health authorities.

Punjab got its first case from 70-year-old religious preacher Baldev Singh who had travelled

to Italy and Germany before reaching Navashahr. He later died of Covid becoming first death in the state. Baldev Singh had also actively participated in religious gatherings - Hala Mohalla - in Ruppnagar's Anandpur Sahib between March 7 and March 9. Several have tested positive in the area now posing questions on the efficiency of airport screening that let go all such people who are now testing positive.

Maharashtra has become the hot spot for Covid as the number of cases reached 302 after 98 new cases were found on Wednesday. In a major concern for health authorities, one positive case of Covid was reported from Mumbai's Dharavi which is one of the biggest slum areas. The patient, a 56-year-old man who was undergoing treatment, has since died. As many as 7 of his family members have been put on quarantine.

Tablighi Jamaat committed sin, says Naqvi

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, APRIL 1

positive for Covid-19. "This is not negligence but a Taliban crime committed by them (Jamaat). It is a serious crime against the entire country is fighting against coronavirus, committing such a heinous crime," said the minister who posted on his social media accounts messages from acquiring imams and others appealing to people to follow the lockdown.

Mr Naqvi also said that

which could impact the spread of the infection against the corona virus. Uttar Pradesh power minister Shrikant Sharma said the entire country's medical staff, states governments, those involved in sanitisation, police, media and many first responders have been working round the clock to contain the spread of the act of the Jamaat has hurt their efforts against the virus spread.

The Union minister said despite knowing that such large gathering have been banned, the event was organised intentionally. "The gathering was held in many in danger and strict action needs to be taken against the organisers of the event at the markaz in Nizamuddin and the Hindu Parishad said it was a "shameful and unfortunate incident."

everyone needs to participate in the fight against coronavirus, committing such a heinous crime," said the minister who posted on his social media accounts messages from acquiring imams and others appealing to people to follow the lockdown.

Mr Naqvi also said that

Insult is heaped on injury: Omar on domicile law

From Page 1

"Children of such residents of J&K as reside outside UT and in connection with their employment or business or other professional or vocational reasons, their parents fulfill any of the conditions provided earlier.

Through the same order, the Centre has repealed the J&K Civil Services (Special Provisions) Act, Section 5A of the newly introduced Jammu and Kashmir Civil Services (Recruitment) Act states that no person shall be eligible for appointment to a post carrying a pay scale of not more than Level-4 (25,500) unless he is a domicile of the UT of J&K. The level 4 includes posts like Junior Assistant, Constable, while the provision of the new law authorise the Tehsildar as competent authority for issuing the

domicile certificate, as opposed to deputy commissioner or any officer specially notified by the Services Selection Board from now on wards. All Indian citizens including J&K domiciles would be eligible for remaining non-gazetted and gazetted posts. Before August 5, all jobs in erstwhile state of J&K were exclusively reserved for permanent residents of the State.

Before August 5, 2019, Article 35A of the Constitution (now abrogated) empowered J&K Assembly to make laws for the reservation of permanent residents from permanent settlement and from acquiring immovable properties, government jobs and scholarships in the State. The provision of the new law authorise the Tehsildar as competent authority for issuing the

Many others are in hospitals and in quarantine. The Government of India has by taking advantage of this situation only proved itself to be worst opportunist."

Former chief minister and National Conference vice president Omar Abdullah came down heavily on the Centre over issuing such a notification at a time when everyone's attention should have been on Covid-19 control. He tweeted "Talk about suspect timing. At a time when all our efforts & attention should be focused on the #COVID outbreak the government slips in a new domicile law for the UT of J&K. It is a completely wicked move and heaped on injury when we see the law offers none of the protections that had been promised."

Without naming Syed Altaf Bukhari, former minister and president of the newly formed Jammu Kashmir Apni Party, Mr Abdullah also said, "You can imagine how hollow the domicile law is from the fact that even the new party created with Delhi's blessing, whose leaders were lobbying in Delhi for this law, have been forced to criticise the #JKdomicile law for being wicked."

Mr Bukhari had earlier demanded that the new domicile law should be put in abeyance till Covid-19 pandemic is over. "It is most unfortunate that such an important order has been issued at a time when the whole country is battling for its survival and is under strict lockdown to stem spread of deadly Coronavirus disease", he said. He added that while his party had been vehemently demanding domestic rights on land and jobs for the residents of the Centre "reflects a casual exercise carried out at the expense of the people taking aspirations and expectations of people into consideration."

People's Democratic Party termed the move as "frighteningly ambivalent, irresolute and akin to rubbing salt in the people's wounds". While the PDP president Mehbooba Mufti remains in incarceration, her party general secretary Surinder Choudhary in a statement said that the notification is "irresolute, ambivalently drafted and outcome of confused and chaotic bureaucracy."

He added, "It seems that the order has been deliberately issued at a time when the entire country is facing a dreadful threat due to Covid-19 and the whole population is caged in their homes." He alleged that either those at the helm are trying to play a provocative or deliberately trying to insult the people by issuing an order which contains "obscure and confusing content which is but akin to rubbing salt to their wounds."

MALAYALAM FILM CREW STUCK IN JORDAN

QILVESTER ASSARY | DC THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, APRIL 1

A Malayalam film crew comprising actor Prithviraj and director Blessy who were shooting for their film Aadujeevitham are stranded in Jordan.

The 58-member crew was shooting daily since it landed in Jordan early in March. However, owing to lockdown announced by Jordan, they had stopped shooting on March 21.

The crew has sought Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's help for evacuation as their visa period is set to expire on April 8. Since the Indian government had ban-ed all international flights, they will have to stay put in Jordan.

The crew was shooting in the desert of Wadi Rum in Jordan which is a popular shooting location. Earlier the crew, through Kerala Film Chamber had sought CM's intervention. Subsequently the Non Resident Kerala's Affairs Department had advised the officials of Indian Embassy in Jordan about the requirement of the film crew.

1st DEATH ANNIVERSARY



Mrs. E.M. BINDU BHASHINI D.O.B: 17.5.1944 D.O.D: 2.4.2019 We Love and Miss You

Husband, Daughters, Son-in-Law, Grand Children, Near & Dear

6th ANNIVERSARY



RAMAKURI BHASKARA RAO (Retired. Survey of India, Upper. Jyoti.) D.O.B: 17.5.1914 D.O.D: 20.4.2014

Identified by: WIFE, CHILDREN, DAUGHTER-IN-LAW, GRAND CHILDREN Ph: 252545

IN BRIEF

Turkmenistan bans 'Covid-19'

Ashgabat: The Central Asian country of Turkmenistan claims it has no Covid-19 cases. But if you happen to utter the word 'Covid-19' while waiting, say, for the bus in the white-marbled capital Ashgabat, there's a good chance you'll be arrested. That's because the Turkmen government, run since 2006 by the flamboyant dentist-rapper strongman Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov, has reportedly banned the word, according to Paris-based Reporters Without Borders (RSF).

Afghan, Taliban talk prisoner swap

Kabul: Afghan government representatives have met with the Taliban in Kabul for the first time to discuss a prisoner swap aimed at jump-starting a floundering peace process, officials said on Wednesday. "The two sides held face-to-face negotiations about the release of Afghan National Defence and Security Force personnel as well as Taliban prisoners," Afghanistan's Office of the National Security Council said on Twitter. The two sides met Tuesday after Taliban delegates arrived in the Afghan capital.

Eight killed in Afghan bombing

Kabul: A roadside bombing in southern Afghanistan on Wednesday killed at least eight civilians, including six children. The victims were all from a single family, according to Helmand police spokesman Zaman Hamdard. The family had just left the southern district to Greshk when the bomb hit their car, Hamdard added. Two more family members were wounded, he said. No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack, but both the Taliban and the Islamic State militants are active in the province.

Two 'tough' weeks: Trump

Prez advises people to be prepared for 'hard days' in Covid fight

Washington, April 1: The US is headed for a "very tough two weeks," President Donald Trump has warned, advising people to be prepared for the "hard days" ahead, as the country was at war with a deadly Covid-19 pandemic that the White House projects could claim one to two lakh lives during the next fortnight. Trump's remarks came as Deborah Brix, a member of White House Task Force on Covid-19, based on a model from actual data from the ground, said the death toll in the US could be between 100,000 to 200,000, with the strict implementation of the existing mitigation measures, including social distancing till April 30.



Beijing-based artist Roy Wang has paid tribute to doctors and nurses battling to treat virus patients in his latest light painting creations. Wang and his team used the photographic technique of light painting to 'draw' white wings on the back of a model posing in a white hazmat suit, the protective gear that has come to symbolise medical workers fighting the virus worldwide. — AFP

ASYMPTOMATIC CASES IN CHINA: 2ND WAVE FEARED

Beijing, April 1: For the first time since the Covid-19 outbreak, China on Wednesday revealed the presence of 1,541 asymptomatic cases carrying the deadly novel Covid-19, raising concerns of a second wave of infections amid the relaxation of stringent measures in the country initiated to contain the deadly disease. Asymptomatic Covid-19 cases are those who carry the virus but do not show any symptoms and can cause sporadic clusters of infections. In a surprise announcement on Tuesday, China's National Health Commission (NHC) said it would begin to release the data of asymptomatic patients. A total of 1,541 asymptomatic patients infected with Covid-19 have been put under medical observation in China by the end of Monday, including 205 imported cases. — PTI

IRAN: US MISSED 'HISTORIC CHANCE' TO LIFT SANCTIONS

Tehran, April 1: Iran's death toll from the Covid-19 has passed 3,000, the health ministry said on Wednesday, as President Hassan Rouhani accused Washington of missing a "historic opportunity" to lift sanctions. Tensions have soared since President Donald Trump abandoned a landmark nuclear agreement in 2018 and reimposed sweeping sanctions. Tehran has repeatedly called on Washington to reverse its policy which has been opposed by US allies, particularly since the Covid-19 pandemic hit. Health ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour said the Covid-19 death toll in Iran now stood at 3,008 following 198 new fatalities in the past 24 hours. He added that 2,987 new cases had been confirmed, bringing the total to 47,593, with 15,473 of those recovered and discharged. — AFP

PAUSE H1B VISA PROGRAMME, TRUMP URGED

Washington, April 1: A US body representing American technology workers has urged President Donald Trump to suspend for this year the H-1B visa programme, the most sought-after among the Indian IT professionals, to protect their interests amidst the massive layoffs in the country due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. Companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China. — PTI

Boy, 13, with no health issues UK's youngest victim

London, April 1: A 13-year-old boy with no underlying health conditions has become the UK's youngest victim of the Covid-19 pandemic as the death toll continues to rise in the country. Ismail Mohamed Abdulwahab was admitted to King's College Hospital in London after suffering breathing difficulties and died on Monday. An online fundraiser organised by Arabic educational institution Madinah College in the UK capital has raised over £56,000 in funds for the boy's grief-stricken family within days. "Ismail was only 13 years old without any pre-existing health conditions and sadly he died without any family members close by due to the highly infectious nature of Covid-19," the fundraiser page notes. "We at Madinah College would like to appeal to our brothers and sisters to donate generously to help raise £4000 for the funeral costs and to support the family, who sadly also lost their father to cancer," it adds. — PTI

VIRUS TO PLUNGE 8M INTO POVERTY IN THE ARAB WORLD, WARNS UN

Beirut, April 1: The Covid-19 pandemic will plunge 8.3 million people in the Arab region into poverty, the United Nation's Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia said on Wednesday. ESCWA also warned that two million people could become undernourished as a result. "With today's estimates, a total of 101.4 million people in the region would be classified as poor, and 52 million as undernourished," the UN agency said. Women and young adults working in the informal sector and who have no access to social welfare are among the most vulnerable, said ESCWA executive secretary Rola Dashti. "Arab governments must ensure a swift emergency response to protect their people from falling into poverty and food insecurity owing to the impact of Covid-19," Dashti added. ESCWA last month warned that the pandemic could wipe out more than 1.7 million jobs across the Arab world this year. — AFP

Advertisement for 'Vijayapathi' featuring a portrait of a man, the title 'విజయపథి', and text in Telugu. It includes contact information for Hyderabad and other cities, and a logo for 'విహార సర్కార్'.

DECCAN Chronicle

2 APRIL 2020

Media's freedom is vital as India battles Covid-19

A free press is a covenant for a society's freedom of expression. Without a free press, there is no free flow of ideas or information, no free speech, and no free thought. An authoritarian government's self-interest is to control thought and speech, the free flow of information and ideas, and therefore, the press.

Thus, the Supreme Court's directive on Tuesday to "refer to and publish the official version" of the developments related to the coronavirus pandemic is of concern. It was a response to the central government's submission that the mass movement of migrant workers was caused by panic created by the "fake news" that the lockdown would continue for three months.

True, there is speculation in the media about the length of the lockdown — but it is based on the epidemiological uncertainty about the spread of the coronavirus or about India's resources on the healthcare front

True, there is speculation in the media about the length of the lockdown — but it is based on the epidemiological uncertainty about the spread of the coronavirus or about India's resources on the healthcare front. None of the media's speculation was done with the intention of spreading panic, but rather to convey to readers about the continuing deliberations within the medical community in India and the scientific community worldwide.

With this in mind, the court's directive is like amputating a limb of democracy in response to a blister or a sprained muscle. It is unlikely that the directive will be applied strictly in the matter of facts and figures regarding cases and deaths, nationally and statewide as it is, the Indian Council of Medical Research's daily briefing has been merged into the Union Health Ministry's briefing, effectively reducing the multiple sources of news available to reporters — and ultimately the public — on the coronavirus.

Most states, however, are under severe financial stress. The budgets of several state governments, presented in February and March, had complained of the same, saying many of their programmes hinge on the timely disbursement of the share of GST revenue to them. The Centre, which has turned a deaf ear to the plea of the states, has not yet loosened the purse strings. The pandemic has come as a bolt from the blue, and most states have little clue as to how to raise resources to meet the contingency.

Loosen the purse strings

State governments are in the forefront of the fight against the pandemic Covid-19. They are putting in all their resources to implement the national lockdown, treat the sick, quarantine those under observation, and take care of the destitute.

Some have deprived their own staff: Maharashtra and Telangana governments have announced the deferment of the payment of April salaries while Kerala has asked its employees to donate a month's salary to the Chief Minister's Distress Relief Fund.

The nationwide lockdown has virtually ground the economy to a halt; nobody knows when it will be back on its feet. This means the coffers of the states will continue to remain empty for the foreseeable period. This could translate into lethargy on the part of the states and its workmen in the fight Covid-19, which could further endanger the very existence of our nation.

The Union government must step in now and stop the states from slipping into a vicious circle. It must immediately release the share of tax revenue as per the plan and come up with a package to help the states effectively implement measures to prevent the spread of the virus. The government should not take refuge in fiscal conservatism and cite the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act. It must help the states instead, be proactive and join forces in the national cause.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

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Mahir Ali

April Fool's Day: What punchlines will amuse us a year from now?

April is the cruelest month," T.S. Eliot authoritatively declared at the start of his enduring poem "The Waste Land" and it may well prove to be so as nations around the globe struggle to subdue the Covid-19 pandemic amid a steadily escalating death toll.

The first day of the month is also traditionally an occasion for japey and generally harmless hoaxes. The origins of April Fool's Day are lost in the mists of time. One theory dates it back to ancient Rome and the festival of Filaria, another suggests it originated with the French switch to the Gregorian calendar in 1582, when those who continued to celebrate the new year three months later than the newly designated date of Jan 1 were mocked as "April fools". Others link it to a broader cultural trend towards frivolous spring-time celebrations including Holi, Sizdah Bedar and Purim, in the Hindu, Persian and Jewish traditions, respectively.

Be that as it may, the occasion alternately known as All Fools'

Day can also be seen as an annual tribute to human gullibility. Our tendency to allow absurdity to fill the enduring gaps in human knowledge has stood the test of time. For instance, around 400 years ago, Galileo Galilei was accused of heresy by the then all-powerful Catholic Church and sentenced to life imprisonment for corroborating the Copernican theory that the Earth revolved around the sun, not the other way around. The gaps have steadily narrowed over the years, but the scope for perpetrating falsehoods has barely been diminished.

This is illustrated in a relatively harmless way by the mass media getting in on the act. BBC television pitched in back on April 1, 1957, by devoting a three-minute segment of its news to the revelation that Switzerland was revealing in a bumper spaghetti harvest, backed up with images of folks chopping strings of pasta from trees.

Back in those days, when upper lips were resolutely stiff, received pronunciation still inspired awe and

spaghettini was a relatively exotic import, the BBC's unexpected joke sparked hundreds of queries about the pasta bushes that were discovered and how they could be cultivated. To the latter question, the Beeb reportedly responded: "Place a stick of spaghetti in a tin of tomato sauce and hope for the best." In subsequent years, the BBC's better hoaxes have included a report just 12 years ago about a breed of flying pen-guins, backed up with clever computer animation, and, back in the 1980s, a solemn report about the hands of Big Ben being replaced with a digital clock.

Inevitably, other "serious" media organs got in on the act. Among the most alarming reports was an 'interview' with Richard Nixon featured on American National Public Radio's widely respected Talk of the Nation show in 1962, in which the ex-president seemingly declared his intention of running for the White House once more, saying: "I did nothing wrong, and I won't do it again."

That got some Americans riled up with indignant wrath — but would it have been any more absurd if someone five years ago had held out the prospect of Donald Trump becoming the president of the United States? Deliberate hoaxes such as an advertising campaign announcing that Taco Bell had occurred the Albert Bell or that Burger King would be offering left-handed burgers led in comparison with a reality whereby Trump goes from being the novel coronavirus as a hoax to claiming it would be a good outcome if the evening that American death toll is restricted to 100,000.

Trump is a constant reminder that truth is stranger than fiction, and the BBC's times, though useful in the interim only serves to reinforce fears about the intellectual capacity of humanity. Americans are by no means the only segments of the human race who refuse to take reality at face value, but they stand out because their nation perennially suffers from delusions of exceptional greatness when in fact it lags behind much of the world, not least in terms

BUSINESS AS USUAL IN CHINA



Subhani

Lockdown, long march: Catastrophe looming

Patralekha Chatterjee
Dev 360

Photographs and reports of India's migrant workers walking down our nation's highways in the past week, with their bellies and bags perched on their heads, have exposed one of our worst kept secrets. Those who build our cities, houses, hospitals, hotels, multiplexes and do lots of things that make our lives in middle class urban India comfortable are neither an administrative nor societal priority.

The men, women and children who set out on foot from Delhi and other cities for their "homes" in villages thousands of miles away, in the wake of the Centre's three-week lockdown — did not suddenly pop up out of nowhere in the middle of Covid-19.

They are part of the "informal sector" which keeps the Indian economy whirring. These are people who typically have no contracts, nor social security, nor any other benefits. They are not covered by the usual labour laws.

Their exodus from the big cities, once the three-week lockdown to curb the spread of the new coronavirus kicked in and work dried up, has made them a not more visible in the national discourse. But they have been part of the Indian cityscape for long. Their numbers have been growing; their lives remain precarious. Many have chosen not to notice.

How else do you explain the biggest lockdown in human history being operationalised without paying the slightest heed to the stark realities of the lives of millions of migrant workers?

The Centre has now told the Supreme Court that the exodus was triggered by a rumour that the lockdown would extend for three months. This ignores the fact that most of these people

could not have survived three weeks without earning their daily wages. Already there are reports of migrant workers battling acute hunger and loss of their middle-class New Delhi. Once the exodus started, state governments in Delhi and other cities and appealed to NGOs to do the same. Clearly, no one in the government had thought of the possibility of this exodus before the lockdown was clamped. The relief measures that were started in a hurry are just not enough, given the numbers.

The Centre has now asked state governments to quarantine migrant workers for 14 days and prevent the movement of people across state borders and to contain the spread of the new virus and prevent transmission in the rural hinterland. But many are already home, and no one knows if they are infected. Public health experts have pointed out that for any kind of Covid-19 lockdown to have the desired impact, it must be preceded by meticulous planning, so that everyone has adequate supplies available to the poorest and most marginalised, there are transport arrangements for those who wish to get back home and there is clear communication with the public before the lockdown kicks in.

In the absence of this, what happens is what we have been reading about and seeing on our television screens for the past few days. A lot of conspiracy theories are floating around about the migrant exodus. But if you listen to what many of the migrants themselves are saying, it is clear that the suddenness of the announcement and the suspension of all public transport was what led many of these daily wage

labourers to attempt the journey back to their villages on foot despite the scorching sun and gnawing hunger. Among those who embarked on such journeys on highways, more than 20 are dead. As the lockdown enters the second week, it is important to have a national conversation about what these images of despair and abject powerlessness truly mean and policy and data gaps on migrant workers.

In the cities where they work, politicians pay scant attention to migrant workers because they are registered as voters in their villages. Another key reason for so much of policy apathy towards them and why their reality is not factored in during decision-making is their near invisibility in official statistics. In a 2019 report in "Ideas for India", an economics and policy portal, the scholar Divya Varma Ajajevika, an NGO that focuses on migrant labourers and Divyadrath of the Indian Institute for Human Settlements pointed out: "Despite the scale of migration, seasonal migrant families lead a life of uncertainty as they remain dispersed across the wide canvas of the city. Devoid of voting rights in the urban centres that they help build with their labour, their lives are stripped of any scheduled Caste and some from the Scheduled Tribes.

The Economic Survey 2016-17 noted that Census data is useful to understand certain aspects of migration, it has limitations in capturing 'circular migration' and female migration for work. Circular migrants are individuals who migrate from place to place. The Centre has now told the Supreme Court the exodus was triggered by a rumour that the lockdown would extend for three months. Most of these people could not have survived three weeks without their daily wages.

LETTERS COVID-19 PANIC

This is not a religious fight. The fact is that people attended Tablighi Jamaat after the Delhi government on March 13 banned the gathering of more than 200 people. When people from other countries attend such gatherings, the virus spreads easily and people who attended it are in the red spot. People who went to this gathering are suspected for rapid increase of cases.

Everyone's life is in danger due to such actions.

Secunderabad

It is unfortunate that even a global pandemic is being viewed along communal lines. Though the Tablighi issue is shocking, putting the blame on the group is unwarranted. Repeated pleas of the Markaz for evacuation or at least passes being ignored by government cannot be overlooked. The fault lies with authorities for not evacuating them and aggravating the situation and leading to loss of lives. The Tablighis is not a proselytising group; they are political and keep themselves scrupulously away from anything detrimental to the national interests or humanity. Their focus is on weeding out the elements that have crept into the Muslim community and instilling austerity and self-discipline among members.

Abdul Hakeem
Hyderabad

It was really sad to note that lot of Muslims attended a seminar and many of them are infected with coronavirus. It shows that they took social distancing lightly. Due to their negligence they are risking their own lives and those of others. Strict action must be taken against them.

Hyderabad

Active Pak training for rebel Indians

NEW DELHI, APRIL 1 The External Affairs Ministry has lodged a strong protest with Pakistan against continued "active Pak training" to rebel elements from India. The protest note handed over to the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi was placed on the table of the Lok Sabha in a written answer by Deputy External Affairs Minister Surendra Prasad Singh, note said that a t e d M e p h 26. Chronicle

The writer focuses on development issues in India and emerging economies. She can be reached at patralekha.chatterjee@gmail.com

of its attitude to healthcare. It's worth noting, though, that many of the actions that supposedly developed nations like Trump becoming the president of the United States? Deliberate hoaxes such as an advertising campaign announcing that Taco Bell had occurred the Albert Bell or that Burger King would be offering left-handed burgers led in comparison with a reality whereby Trump goes from being the novel coronavirus as a hoax to claiming it would be a good outcome if the evening that American death toll is restricted to 100,000.

By arrangement with Dawn

quick BITES

INDICATORS

	%
Sensex	28,265.31 -4.08
Nifty 50	8,253.80 -4.00
S&P 500*	2,490.32 -3.65
Dollar (₹)	75.67 -0.00
Pound Sterling (₹)	93.53 0.00
Euro (₹)	82.78 0.00
Gold (Oz) (₹)	15,689.20 0.37
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	24.92 -5.43
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.138 0.000
US 10-Yr 'bill' yield*	0.605 -13.44

*As of 9:30 pm IST

India Inc credit quality worsened in FY20: Icra

Rating agency Icra said the credit quality of Indian companies worsened in fiscal year 2019-20 as it downgraded Rs 7 lakh crore of debt and warned of "unprecedented strain" on credit profiles of corporates from the coronavirus pandemic. Icra said it downgraded Rs 7 lakh crore of debt in FY20, against Rs 3 lakh crore in the year-ago period. Default rates softened to 2.3 per cent against five-year average of 3 per cent.

Pandemic hurting biz in India, Europe: Tata Steel



Tata Steel said the outbreak of Covid-19 has impacted its business and operations in India and Europe. As the virus spreads rapidly across the world, Tata Steel will be reducing operations at some sites. In India, the firm said its mining operations are running normally "but the integrated facilities in Jamshedpur, Kalinganagar (Tata Steel BSL) and Gamahira (Tata Steel Long Products) have started reducing production levels.

India switches to world's cleanest fuel

India joined a select league of nations having the world's cleanest petrol and diesel as oil companies rolled out Euro-VI emission compliant fuels without either disruption or a price increase. Leapfrogging from BS-VI grade fuel standard to BS-VI grade, equivalent to Euro-VI fuel, petrol and diesel would have resulted in an up to Re 1 per litre increase in cost but oil companies decided against passing this on to consumers.

Non-subsidised LPG price cut by ₹61.5 a cylinder

The price of non-subsidised LPG, or market-priced cooking gas, was cut by Rs 61.5 per cylinder in line with a fall in benchmark international rates. The price of non-subsidised LPG, which a domestic household consumer buys after exhausting his quota of 12.14-kg cylinders at below-market price rates, was cut to Rs 744 in Delhi. This is the second reduction in rates since March, state-owned oil firms said.

Regd. No. HSD/09/2018-20
Printed and Published by T. Venkateswaraiah at The Chronicle Holdings Limited, Printed at Ocean Chronicle Press, 9/10, Plot No. 9, Alwal Village, Yashwanth Nagar Taluk, Medchal Malkajgiri Dist., Telangana and Published at 26, S.D. Road, Secunderabad-500003.
RNI Registration No. 308/1957.
Editor: Aditya Sinha

Real estate sector faces multiple woes as tenants opting for force majeure

ASHWIN J PUNNIEN
MUMBAI, APRIL 1

The nation-wide lockdown has hit real estate developers as residential sales have come to a standstill, while mall developers are seeing tenants invoking the force majeure clause as malls across the states have shut down.

Several multiplex owners, like Inox and PVR, have also indicated that they have written to mall developers and property owners to invoke the act of god clause to protect them from further losses.

Analysts said the real estate players across the country have been hit since there is a minimum guarantee clause in their agreement with tenants to maintain good business relations. According to analysts, mall operators would have to either lose rental on account of force majeure or share the loss with the leaseholders.

Force majeure clause in a contract frees both parties from contractual liabilities due to extraordinary events beyond human control like natural calamities, epidemic or riots.

In a recent conference call with analysts, the PVR management said, "We are protected in most of our contracts, I would say 90 per cent+ of our contracts have force majeure clauses, which allow us to suspend the rent and CAM payments in the period of our closure." CAM is short for common area maintenance.



IOC DECLARES FORCE MAJEURE ON OIL BUY

New Delhi, April 1: Indian Oil Corporation has declared force majeure on crude purchases from four of its biggest suppliers—Saudi Arabia, Iraq, UAE and Kuwait—as refinery run rates have been cut down in view of plummeting fuel demand.

Sources said IOC has asked the four suppliers to defer some of the volumes they were to deliver in April. The company has reduced processing at its refineries by at least one-fourth.

Rentals, one of the fixed cost components for multiplexes, would come off too, as the force majeure clause with malls would get invoked. Analysts said. Retailers and multiplex operators want mall owners to either forgo rent for

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RBI announces more steps to deal with Covid-19

FALAKNAZ SYED
MUMBAI, APRIL 1

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Wednesday announced another set of measures to deal with disruptions caused to global trade by coronavirus pandemic such as relaxation in timelines for realisation of export proceeds and allowing states to borrow more from the apex bank. The RBI also decided not to activate the counter-cyclical capital buffer, which would give banks relief in terms of capital requirement.

The states granted relaxation in timeline for realisation of export proceeds by six months from the first day of the new normalcy period. The RBI also decided not to activate the counter-cyclical capital buffer, which would give banks relief in terms of capital requirement.

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Loan moratorium: Private banks go for 'opt-in' version

Mumbai, April 1: Most private sector lenders have decided to go for the "opt-in" option on loan repayment moratorium, putting the onus on the customer to take the initiative of informing the bank of their choice to go for the three-month breather offered by the Reserve Bank of India.

HDFC Bank said it would encourage customers with adequate funds to continue repayments to avoid the extra interest charges and tenor extension of the loan.

The RBI last Friday announced a three-month moratorium on loan repayments in the wake of Covid-19 crisis for dues to be paid during March-May 2020 and left it to the banks to implement the same.

A slew of state-run banks, which control over two-thirds of the system, have gone for an "opt-out" option where the repay-



ments automatically get deferred unless a customer informs of her willingness to pay.

Experts have already made it clear that this is not an interest waiver, but a deferment of payments, meaning the additional interest costs will have to be borne by the customers.

"If you do not want the EMI moratorium, no further action is required from your side. We will continue to bank your repayment instructions," HDFC Bank said on its website.

Kotak Mahindra Bank asked customers to write to an email ID for "opting in" for the moratorium.

Bank of Baroda said it is offering retail customers the option of getting a refund of the EMI deducted in March.

Market loses 4% in bull-bear tussle

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, APRIL 1

In a tug of war between bulls and bears, Sensex and Nifty-50 fell over 4 per cent on the first day of the new normalcy period in 2020 on negative global cues, leading to big sell-off in large-cap stocks.

The Sensex closed 1203.18 points or 4.08 per cent down at 28,265.31 while the Nifty ended 414.44 points or 343.95 points down at 8,253.80.

Market sources said Norway's Sovereign Wealth Fund, a big investor in the Indian equity market, holding most of the Nifty-50 stocks, withdrew a large portion of its stake in the economic crisis there and rebalancing its portfolio in the Indian market. Sharp drop in US market futures led to enhanced selling as the day progressed.

The foreign portfolio investors were net sellers by Rs 1,116.79 crore.

Car sales skid in March, Q1 looks bleak

MICHAEL GONSALES
PUNE, APRIL 1

The Indian automobile industry, the world's second largest, has taken a disastrous hard sales hit amidst nation-wide lockdown to contain Covid-19 virus contagion.

Passenger vehicle sales at market leaders Maruti Suzuki and Hyundai, second biggest car maker, hit rock bottom at 48 per cent at 78.76 units and 10 per cent at 26,300 units in March respectively which is likely to continue over the next few months.

Other automakers have reported similar trends. In India, vehicle dispatches from factory gates to dealerships are counted as sales.

The drop in volumes has been reported amidst the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic crisis, between automakers to shut shop temporarily in a bid to prevent virus infection.

"It is not surprising that the economic lockdown triggered by Covid-19, has sharply impacted the sales in the automobile sector, which was already reeling under the effect of a structural slowdown," Suman Choudhury, president-ratings at Acuity Ratings & Research told Financial Chronicle.

While the leading passenger vehicle players have seen a drop in factory gate sales by over 40 per cent, the decline is far sharper for commercial vehicle players and reflects the impact of the operations from the last week of March but also the production constraints in BS-VI vehicles due to global supply chain disruptions and above all, a highly weak demand market, he said.

India, which supplies more than a quarter of the world's generic drugs, last month restricted exports of 26 pharmaceutical ingredients and the medicines.

An easing of those restrictions will probably come within two days and will likely include paracetamol, which is also known as acetaminophen, the government officials in New Delhi said.



Such a scenario is likely to prevail in Q1FY21 unless there is an earlier than expected revival from the disruption," Choudhury pointed out.

Kia Motor maintained its third spot, clocking sales of 7,466 units during March, based on two products Setos and Carnival. There were no major sales in the same month last year as Kia debuted in India in the middle of last year.

Tata Motors, India's biggest automaker by revenues, fell 68 per cent in the first quarter of 2020, with 17,810 units sold last year. "Vehicle sales was affected by the Covid-19 outbreak and the subsequent nationwide lockdown," Mayank Pareek, president, PV, Tata Motors, said.

Maruti dispatched 88 per cent less vehicles at 3,384 units last month, compared to 37,946 units in March 2019.

The All-India Motor Transport Congress (AIMTC) said even after the notification by the Union home ministry on Sunday allowing movement of non-essential goods during the lockdown period, things have not changed at the ground level as many drivers have either abandoned their vehicles or moved to rural areas, where basic amenities like food and shelter are available.

There are around 90 lakh commercial vehicles that we represent all across the country with 3,500 state, district and taluka level bodies affiliated with us. What we feel is that only around 5 per cent of them are operating now. These are mainly LPG and other petroleum products carriers with short distance milk tankettes, AIMTC committee chairman Bal Mohit Singh said.

He said fruit and vegetables that are available in the market are transported by farmers through their own means.

Singh said before the nationwide lockdown was announced on March 24, there was already partial lockdown, as some states had already sealed borders and lakhs of trucks were

Export curbs on paracetamol may be lifted

NEHA DASGUPTA
NEW DELHI, APRIL 1

India will likely relax some export restrictions on pharmaceutical products soon due to intense pressure from the United States, which is worried about drug shortages as the number of coronavirus cases surge, two government officials said.

India, which supplies more than a quarter of the world's generic drugs, last month restricted exports of 26 pharmaceutical ingredients and the medicines.

An easing of those restrictions will probably come within two days and will likely include paracetamol, which is also known as acetaminophen, the government officials in New Delhi said.

There is so much (US) pressure on the government for US what matters is paracetamol, it matters to them significantly, said one official, adding that India has adequate stocks of the drug for domestic use for at least four months.

Over 5% of 90 lakh trucks operating

New Delhi, April 1: Only 5 per cent of around 90 lakh trucks across India are plying at the moment due to shortage of drivers and labourers at loading and unloading points, thereby severely hampering transportation of goods, a truckers body said.

The All-India Motor Transport Congress (AIMTC) said even after the notification by the Union home ministry on Sunday allowing movement of non-essential goods during the lockdown period, things have not changed at the ground level as many drivers have either abandoned their vehicles or moved to rural areas, where basic amenities like food and shelter are available.

Sanitiser market soars as big players get in

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, APRIL 1

The tiny sanitiser market is looking forward to multi-fold rise in sales this year, with the market expected to reach 1,000-1,500 crore by 2025, as existing businesses are ramping up production and newer players are flocking into the segment.

One impact of the spread of the novel coronavirus is the sudden shift in the purchasing behaviour of customers in favour of sanitisation and hygiene products.

In the first two weeks of March 2020, the market witnessed 1400 per cent growth on e-commerce platforms.

As a result, Indian sanitiser industry valued Rs 60 crore before the Covid-19 outbreak, is expected to grow at a robust pace and become a Rs 300-400 crore market by the end of this year, finds a research done by Hindustan Unilever.

Further, several businesses are coming out with new launches of hand sanitisers and disinfectants as they are entering the segment, helping it touch the four-figure mark in five years. "After

the current spike, the growth might taper down a bit but the epidemic is curbed, but still the behavioural change will result in a higher growth than pre-Covid times," said Vikas Bagaria, founder, PreeSafe.

Among the companies that have joined the sanitiser bandwagon, ITC has repurposed its perfume manufacturing facility in Himachal Pradesh and commenced production of Savlon Sanitisers to cater to the soaring demand. The facility will produce an additional 1.25 million litres of Savlon hand sanitiser.

Hindustan Unilever has ramped up the production of Lifebuoy sanitisers, Lifebuoy Handwash liquid

and Domex Floor Cleaners and will be scaling it up even further in the coming weeks.

PreeSafe has launched its Raho Safe mass market brand in February and this has hand sanitiser and disinfectants.

The pioneer of sachet revolution in India, CavinKare has launched hand sanitiser under its other personal care brand Nyle and professional brand Raaga. Another FMCG company tapping the opportunity is Dabur India, which announced the launch of the brand Dabur Sanitize.

Some of the liquor producers like Jagatjit Industries, Diageo India and Simbhal Sugars too have started commercial production of ethanol-based sanitiser. Jubilant Life Sciences too has come up with a similar sanitiser formulation.

Further, several new companies have started selling sanitiser products on e-commerce platforms.

GST mopup falls below ₹1 lakh crore

After a gap of four months, GST revenue collection once again registered a negative growth of 4 per cent in March and fell far below the government's target. For the full financial year, GST revenues grew by 4 per cent.

In March 2020, the gross GST revenue stood at Rs 97,597 crore against Rs 1,06,577 crore in the year-ago, a decline of 8.4 per cent. The revenue department had in January targeted for GST collections of Rs 1.15 lakh crore for February and Rs 1.25 lakh crore in March. The targets were earlier Rs 1.1 lakh crore for each month.

The GST collections for March from domestic transactions stood at Rs 78,700 crore and the negative growth of 4 per cent in March and fell far below the government's target. For the full financial year, GST revenues grew by 4 per cent.

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SHORT TAKES

Hit by virus, Club president dies

Dakar, Senegal: Pape Diouf, a former president of French football club Marseille, has died after contracting the coronavirus, the West African country's first Covid-19-related death. He was 68. Senegalese health officials said Diouf died on Tuesday. He had been treated since Saturday in intensive care at Fann Hospital in Dakar, said Aboulaye Diouf Sar, the minister of health. Relatives say he was meant to be moved to France. He had recently travelled to several countries in the region, including Ivory Coast. Senegal President Macky Sall offered condolences to Diouf's family in a message posted on Twitter. — AP

UEFA fines City, Bayern, Frankfurt

Nyon, Switzerland: Bayern Munich and Eintracht Frankfurt have been fined for fans displaying offensive banners at games, UEFA said Tuesday. Bayern was ordered to pay 20,000 euros (\$22,000) for "transmitting a provocative message of an offensive nature" during a Champions League game at Chelsea in February. Fans unfurled banners in English protesting the "pricing insanity" of clubs charging away fans for tickets. UEFA also fined Bayern an extra 20,000 euros (\$22,000) for crowd disturbances at Stamford Bridge, where the German champion won 3-0 in the first leg of the Round of 16. The return game has not been held. Eintracht fans displayed profane slogans aimed at UEFA and opponent Salzburg at a Europa League game in February. — AP

Ganguly leader of Warne's India XI

New Delhi: Australian spin legend Shane Warne has named former skipper and current BCCI President Sourav Ganguly as the captain of his all-time India XI, which includes master blaster Sachin Tendulkar and Naviel Singh. Warne said he ignored former skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni and current captain Virat Kohli because he picked only those Indian players against whom he had played. "I am only picking players that I played against and that's why M. S. Dhoni and Virat Kohli are not going to be a part of the side. While Dhoni is probably the greatest wicketkeeper-batsman to have played the game, Kohli is one of the greatest batsmen across formats," Warne said in an Instagram live post. Warne also ignored V.V.S. Laxman, who was once considered his nemesis. — PTI

ROYALS SAY THEY'RE OPEN TO SHORT IPL

New Delhi: Even a shortened IPL with just Indian players would be good enough in these "extraordinary times", Rajasthan Royals Executive Chairman Ranjit Barthakar said on Wednesday, revealing that a final call on the glittery event's fate is unlikely to be taken before April 15. The top executive spelt out his franchise's wish to continue the number of positive cases and death toll due to the pandemic continued to rise across the world. The BCCI is yet to take a decision on the 15th edition of the lucrative league, which remains postponed at least till April 15. It was originally supposed to start on March 29. "We are open to a shortened tournament with only Indian players, at the end of the day it is the Indian Premier League. These are extraordinary times and the BCCI will do the best it can when things improve," Barthakar said. — PTI

Regd. No. HSD/509/2018-20 Printed and Published by T. Venkateswari on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited. Printed at Deccan Chronicle Press situated at Plot No. 3 Awas Village, Valsah Nagar Taluk, Medchal Malkajgiri Dist. Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, S.D. Road, Secunderabad-3. RNI Registration No. 30871/1957. Editor: Aditya Sinha



In this file photo, Novak Djokovic (left) poses with the Gentlemen's Singles Trophy and Simona Halep holds the Venus Rosewater Dish after winning the women's singles title at the 2019 edition of Wimbledon.

Corona forces Wimbledon off

Tennis top tourney cancelled for first time since WW 2

London, April 1: Wimbledon was canceled on Wednesday because of the coronavirus pandemic, the first time since World War II that the oldest Grand Slam tennis tournament won't be played. The All England Club announced after an emergency meeting that the event it refers to simply as 'The Championships' is being scrapped for 2020. Wimbledon was scheduled to be played on the club's grass courts at the outskirts of London from June 28 to July 12. Instead, the next edition of the tournament will be June 28 to July 11, 2021. Also Wednesday, the ATP and WTA announced that the men's and women's professional tennis tours would be suspended until at least July 13. They already had been on hold through June 7. Wimbledon first was

PATRICK McENROE CATCHES COVID-19

Washington, April 1: Former U.S. Davis Cup captain Patrick McEnroe says in a video posted on social media that he tested positive for the coronavirus. McEnroe, younger brother of eight-time major champion John, said he had a drive-through test in upstate New York after developing what he called "minor symptoms" 10 days ago. "This includes the Tokyo Olympics which have been pushed back 12 months and the NCAA men's and women's college basketball tournaments. Wimbledon is the first major tennis championship completely wiped out this year because of the coronavirus. The start of the French Open was postponed from late May to late September. As of now, the U.S. Open is still scheduled to be

held in 1877 and has been contested every year since, with the exception of two stretches: from 1915-18 because of World War I, and from 1949-54 because of World War II. "It has weighed heavily on our minds that the staging of Wimbledon, the Championships has only been interrupted previously by World Wars, club chairman Ian West said in a press release, but, following thorough and extensive consideration of all scenarios, we believe that it is a measure of this global crisis that it is ultimately the right decision to cancel this year's Championships, and instead concentrate on how we can use the breadth of Wimbledon's resources to help those in our local communities and beyond. Wimbledon joins the growing list of sports events called off completely in 2020 because of the Covid-19 outbreak.

Patrick McEnroe said: "The good news is I feel fine. My symptoms have passed. I feel really 100 per cent." As a player, he won one tournament in singles and 16 in doubles, including the 1988 French Open. He succeeded his brother as Davis Cup captain and served for nearly a decade, leading the United States to the title in 2007. — AP

INDIAN CHESS BOSS SACKS SECRETARY

Chennai, April 1: The wrangling between the All India Chess Federation (AICF) president P. R. Venketraman Bharat and secretary Bharat Singh Chauhan with the former dismissing the latter from his post and appointing Vijay Deshpande of the Marathi Chess Association in his place. In a letter dated March 30, Raja listed out various omissions and commissions of Chauhan and his deputy. A move vested with the AICF president under Article 16(a) of the federation's constitution, the latter is removed from the post of secretary. Chauhan's part in a letter dated March 31 hit out at Raja for dismissing him and said, "an officer-bearer can be removed only with the support of two-third members of the Central Council by passing a resolution." Chauhan claimed that he remained the secretary of AICF. He also pointed out that Raja has not only attempted to remove him as the secretary but also appointed Deshpande in his place without any consultation. "The president has no authority to appoint any person as an officer-bearer of AICF," the Association wanted to submit the accounts for the ₹2 crore grant given to it for holding the World Youth Chess Championship in 2019 in Mumbai. — PTI

Swim Worlds in deep water

Rome, April 1: After new dates were announced for the Tokyo Olympics, swimming's governing body is going back to the drawing board to figure out when to hold its next world championships. The biannual aquatics event was scheduled for Fukuoka, Japan, from July 16 to August 1, 2021. But on Monday, the Tokyo Games were pushed back a year by the coronavirus pandemic and moved to July 23 to August 8, 2021. That likely leaves FINA, swimming's governing body, with two options for its biggest event: A move to the end of September and the beginning of October 2021, or May-June 2022. Postponing for a full year would be complicated due to the already packed schedule of aquatics events in July and August, 2022, including Commonwealth Games and European swimming events. Holding worlds before the Olympics is undesirable because it would conflict with national Olympic trials around the world. World Athletics has already announced that its world championships in Eugene, Oregon, will be pushed back to 2022 but has not selected dates. Holding the worlds in swimming also includes diving, water polo, artistic swimming, open water swimming and the non-Olympic sport of high diving which would mean risking that many top athletes might not come. — AP



The Olympic flame is displayed at the J-Village National Training Centre after the handover ceremony of the lantern containing the Olympic flame from Tokyo 2020 to Fukushima in Naraha town on Wednesday.

Flame on display till month-end

Tokyo, April 1: The Olympic flame will be on display until the end of April in Japan's northern prefecture of Fukushima. Tokyo Olympic and prefecture officials held an official handover ceremony Wednesday at the J-Village National Training Centre in Fukushima. The public will have limited access to view the flame, and organisers hope to limit the crowd size because of restrictions in place for the coronavirus. The flame arrived in Japan from Greece on March 20 and the torch relay was to have started last week from Fukushima. The flame has remained in the prefecture with Wednesday's event merely ceremonial. The Fukushima prefec-

ture is the region of Japan that was devastated in 2011 by an earthquake, tsunami, and the subsequent meltdown of three nuclear reactors. Olympic officials have postponed the Tokyo Games until next year with the opening now set for July 23, 2021. The officials have however not confirmed as to where the flame will go at the end of the month. However, the emphasis of the Olympics next year is likely to shift to the recovery from the coronavirus pandemic that has spread across the world. — AP

CORONA CONTRIBUTION

Sporting bodies chip in money

New Delhi, April 1: Hockey India on Wednesday pledged to donate ₹25 lakh towards the PM Cares Fund for the country's fight against the pandemic. The decision was taken by the HI Executive Board after Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a special emergency fund for the nation to fight the coronavirus outbreak. "In these difficult times, it is the absolute need of the hour to come together as a nation to help fight the crisis and fulfil our duties as responsible citizens. It was a unanimous decision taken by the Hockey India Executive Board to contribute ₹25 lakh towards the PM Cares Fund," HI president Mohd Musthaque Ahmad said in a release. "Hockey has always received tremendous love and support from the people of this country and we want to do whatever little we can to help our countrymen and women emerge out of this pandemic as victors," he added. "Hockey India has always stepped up for any noble cause and in these difficult times when the world is grappling with the Covid-19 pandemic which has impacted millions of lives world over, we wanted to extend our support in fighting this crisis," HI secretary general Rajinder Singh said. "The Government of India is doing everything they can and we urge all Indian citizens to act responsibly and stay home, stay safe during this lockdown. We can fight this

LA LIGA RAISES \$1M FOR PANDEMIC FIGHT

Madrid, April 1: Spanish league's online music festival on Saturday raised more than a million euros that will be used to buy medical equipment for the fight against the virus, the Spanish football league said on Wednesday. The funds will be put towards ventilators, protective suits, gloves and masks as Spain continues to battle against the virus that has caused more than 9,600 deaths in the country, according to Wednesday's latest figures. Spanish league said that the concert, which was broadcast on more than 100 platforms simultaneously, commanded an audience from 182 different countries and connected more than 50 million people online. The 1,003,532 euros (\$1.1 million) raised from donations will be used to buy 1,115 non-invasive ventilators, 1,435,000 high-risk masks, 12,955 protective suits and 500,000 protective gloves. Sergio Ramos, Gerard Pique and Rafael Nadal were among the athletes taking part in the festival. — AFP



In this file photo, Jos Buttler poses with his family after winning the 2019 ICC World Cup.

Buttler to auction World Cup jersey

London, April 1: England's flamboyant batsman Jos Buttler is auctioning the shirt he wore during their World Cup-winning final last year, to raise funds for hospitals battling the Covid-19 pandemic. In a video message posted on Twitter late on Tuesday night, Buttler said the shirt would be auctioned to raise funds for the Royal Brompton and Harefield Hospitals charity. "As we all know, hospitals, doctors and nurses and the NHS are all doing quite an incredible job at the moment. And in the weeks and months to come they are going to need our support even more," Buttler said. The light-blue jersey, which Buttler wore during the final at the Lord's where England defeated New Zealand to win their maiden ODI World Cup, is signed by the squad. \$7.5M RELIEF FROM ECB The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) has announced a 61 million pound package to help the sport "withstand" the financial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic but did not declare any immediate cut in the players' salaries. According to the ECB, financial assistance will be made available at every level of the game across counties, boards and clubs. — AFP

