

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
HYDERABAD | MONDAY | 6 APRIL 2020

WEATHER
 Max: 36.7°C
 Min: 23.1°C
 RH: 36%
 Rain: Nil
Forecast: Cloudy sky, Rain or thundershowers likely
 Max/Min temp. 37/23°C

WORLD | 5
Trump calls Modi for Hydroxychloroquine

SPORTS | 8
Kyle walks out, is set to face music

TABLOID
Back to old-school, raw workouts



CORONA COUNT
 CASES (+1100) DEATHS (+27)
4,182 118
 covid19india.org

STATE GOVT HEALTH MINISTRY
 (+62) TS: 334 11
 (+62) AP: 252 03

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES
 1,226,532
DEATHS 66,548
 COUNTRIES AREAS WITH CASES 190
 Source: AFP

ASTROGUIDE
 Sarvari: Uttarayana
 Tithi: Chaitra Shuddha Trayodashi 3.48 pm
 Star: Purva Phalguni till 12.13 pm
 Varjyam: 6.31 pm to 7.55 pm
 Durmuhurtam: 12.43 pm to 1.32 pm; 3.10 pm to 3.59 pm
 Rahukalam: 7.30 am to 9 am
 HELIUM GLOBE
 Shabam 11.1441 AH
PRAYERS
 Fajar: 5.06 am
 Zohar: 12.29 pm
 Asar: 4.39 pm
 Maghrib: 6.36 pm
 Isha: 7.44 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6.30 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.05 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 4.51 PM
MOONSET TOMORROW 4.45 AM

COUNTER POINT

 You've only donated a month's salary. I am donating a month's income!

IN BRIEF
IMD predicts thunderstorms
 Hyderabad: The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted a thunderstorm accompanied by lightning in isolated places over the state. By 'isolated places', the IMD means at least 25 per cent of the stations of a region reporting at least 2.5 mm rainfall.
 Kerala: In an update, it says that rain from South Kerala to north-central Maharashtra. This may cause rainfall or thundershowers, an IMD official said.

CRPF DG tests +ve, quarantined
 New Delhi: Director General of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) A P Maheshwari said on Sunday that he has gone into quarantine after a doctor of his force tested positive for Covid-19. Maheshwari (59), the chief of the country's largest paramilitary force with a strength of about 3.25 lakh personnel, his predecessor and senior security adviser in the Union home ministry K. Vijay Kumar (67), and about two dozen officials in his chain have gone into self-quarantine after the doctor was found infected on April 2.

Rapid Covid test for flu-like symptoms Centre brings in 30-minute test; Covid toll nears 120, +ve cases cross 4,000

VINEETA PANDEY | DC with agency inputs
 NEW DELHI, APRIL 5

Facing a lot of flak for under-testing coronavirus suspect cases, the Centre on Sunday said that all symptomatic, influenza-like illness (ILI) persons will now be tested using the rapid antibody tests for quick detection.

In case they are negative, a repeat test will be done after 10 days. All asymptomatic ILI persons should be advised home quarantine for 14 days.

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) said overall testing for Covid-19, using real-time RT-PCR (polymerase chain reaction), was increasing and the authorities will be reaching full capacity in the near future. Hence, the rapid antibody based blood test in clusters (with containment zones), and in large migration gatherings/evacuation centres, have to start now.

These rapid antibody test kits will be available by Wednesday. The rapid test can be done on blood/serum/plasma samples and the test result is available within 30 minutes.

The ICMR, meanwhile, clarified that Covid-19 is not airborne. "We need to understand that in science whoever does experiments, some will have a 'for opinion' and some 'against', but we need to take a balanced, evidence-based approach."



People light up diyas and crackers at 9 pm on Sunday against Covid-19 pandemic at Lanco Hills buildings in Hyderabad. ■ Report on Page 3

● **THE ICMR** said overall testing for Covid-19, using real-time RT-PCR (polymerase chain reaction), was increasing and the authorities will be reaching full capacity soon

the "proactive and ruthless containment strategy implementation", and "preparedness, even to the extent of being over- and under-prepared", was the focus of the agencies are monitoring elderly citizens in March to follow quarantine or isolation procedures after three passengers on those flights tested positive. Two of these flights were from Goa to Mumbai, one from Mumbai to Delhi and another from Delhi to Patna.

● **SUNIL THAPLIYAL | DC**
 NEW DELHI, APRIL 5

Eight Malaysian nationals were apprehended by CISE at Delhi airport on Sunday. They were trying to board a relief flight that was going to Malaysia from India. The group was trying to board a Malindo Airways flight amid the lockdown in India in which all passenger flights were suspended.

Modi speaks to Oppn on Covid-19

DC CORRESPONDENT
 NEW DELHI, APRIL 5

As positive coronavirus cases increased rapidly across India and the death count grew in the past two days, Prime Minister Narendra Modi reached out to leaders across the political spectrum on Sunday, including Congress president Sonia Gandhi and Trinamool boss Mamata Banerjee, as well as predecessor Manmohan Singh and several chief ministers, on whom to handle the crisis facing the country.

● **SNOW AND** rough terrain impeded the evacuation and added that the operation was still going on. The Army launched search operations in the area three days ago

62 new Covid positive cases reported in TS

BALU PULIPAKA | DC
 HYDERABAD, APRIL 5

Coronavirus continued its rampage in Telangana on Sunday, with the state government announcing that 62 new victims of the virus were added today to the growing list of existing Covid-19 patients.

● **SNOW AND** rough terrain impeded the evacuation and added that the operation was still going on. The Army launched search operations in the area three days ago

2 MORE DIE IN AP, 62 NEW CASES IN 1 DAY

MD ILIYAS | DC
 VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 5

Two people died of coronavirus in Andhra Pradesh on Sunday, one each in Machilipatnam and Anantapur, taking the toll to three in the state, even as the virus spread rapidly in the state with 62 positive cases confirmed during the day, taking the total number of cases to 252.

● **SNOW AND** rough terrain impeded the evacuation and added that the operation was still going on. The Army launched search operations in the area three days ago

8 Malaysians stopped from relief flight may be 7J men

SUNIL THAPLIYAL | DC
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HUNDREDS LEAVING HYD IN LOCKDOWN

MADHY DEEKSHITH | DC
 HYDERABAD, APRIL 5

Hundreds of people have been using ingenious ways to leave the state capital for their home towns and native villages in Telangana, persisting to escape the lockdown. Coronavirus threat risk here.

● **SNOW AND** rough terrain impeded the evacuation and added that the operation was still going on. The Army launched search operations in the area three days ago

3 soldiers, 5 ultras killed in firing at LoC

BORDER INFILTRATION
Jawan killed in fighting, 2 others succumb as terrorists refuse to surrender

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SHORT TAKES

CS APPRISES CENTRE OF STEPS TO CURB COVID

IREDDY SRINIVAS REDDY | DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 5

Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar informed the Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gotha that the state government has taken all possible measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in Telangana. He said people were being alerted in districts where more cases were being reported.

He said most of the cases were reported in Hyderabad, Ranga Reddy and Medchal districts. Mr Kumar was briefing Mr Gotha who held a video-conference on Sunday with chief secretaries of all the states. Mr Kumar said that Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, Chandrashekar Rao had given strict instructions to the state machinery following the guidelines and instructions issued by the Centre. He said the state government has set up a high-level committee to monitor the lockdown and to identify foreign returnees and send them to quarantine. He said 2,200 people had been sent to quarantine, and 27,000 to home quarantine. Special teams were monitoring their health twice a day. During the lockdown, the people are taking adequate measures to avoid the spread of Covid, he said. Mr Kumar said the state government was distributing 12 kg of rice and ₹1,500 to white ration card holders. Special Chief Secretary Sumantha Kumari, Panchayati Raj secretary Sandeep Kumar Sultanika, medical and health commissioner Yogitharan, finance secretary Ronald Ross and excise secretary Sarfaraz Ahmad were present.

RELIEF FOR STRANDED KAZAKHIS

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 5

Nawab Mir Nasir Ali Khan, Honorary Consul of Kazakhstan in Telangana state and Andhra Pradesh, offered help to Kazakh citizens stranded in the country by arranging a chartered flight to Goa airport from where they travelled to their country.

This helped medical and engineering students and businessmen. Kazakhstani ambassador to India, Yermek Alimbayev expressed his gratitude to Honorary Consuls M. Mahendra Sangh (Mumbai), Dilip Chandan (Ahmedabad), Suraj Shantakumar (Chennai), Vishal Jhajharia (Ahmedabad) and Nawab Mir Nasir Ali Khan.

"Your tireless efforts have helped bring all Kazakhstani stranded in 12 cities including Delhi and Goa airports safely," the ambassador said in a letter to Nawab Mir Nasir Ali Khan. He thanked Andhra Pradesh's Gautam Sawang for his constant support. Earlier, to help Indians stranded in Kazakhstan, Nawab Mir Nasir Ali Khan directed them to contact Martin Cyril Clemence, second secretary and officer in charge of the Indian mission office of India at +77012207608 or cons.almaty@mea.gov.in for accommodation. "The Indian students will receive lodging, food and medical facilities," he said.

EPFO TO ACCEPT ONLINE DoB CORRECTIONS

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 5

In a move to extend the reach of its online services following the Covid-19 pandemic, the Employees Provident Fund Office (EPFO) has issued revised instructions to its field offices, so that PF members can rectify their date of birth in EPFO records online. This will help PF accountholders to ensure that their UAN is KYC compliant. The date of birth recorded in Aadhaar will now be accepted as a valid proof of date of birth for the purpose of rectification. This will be provided that difference in the two dates is less than three years. PF subscribers can submit the correction requests online. The EPFO has also set up a media release on Sunday. This will enable EPFO to instantaneously validate the date of birth of subscribers online with UIDAI, thus authenticating and reducing the processing time for change requests. The EPFO has also instructed all its field offices to expedite disposal of online requests, so that PF members in financial distress can apply online for availing non-refundable advance from their PF accumulations.

Light of hope and positivity



Chief Minister K. Chandrababu Naidu lights candles along with Cabinet ministers and other officials to express the country's unity in the fight against Covid-19, amid the nationwide lockdown, at Pragati Bhavan in Hyderabad, on Sunday. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had urged people in a video message to light lamps at 9 pm for nine minutes.

Cyber crime surges in Covid's name Criminals also release new computer viruses and fake mobile applications

DURGA PRASAD SUNKU | DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 5

Covid-19 has not deterred opportunistic cyber criminals who have found they can use it as a tool to lure people and cheat them. Cyber security researchers have discovered different types of cyber fraud on the name of Covid-19 which include online frauds, cheating on the telephone, phishing, ransomware, fake domain registry, info stealing through threat maps and others.

The Union ministry of electronics and information technology under its Project Information, Security Education and Awareness (ISEA) shared an advisory including case studies. Cyber criminals are releasing new computer viruses and mobile applications related to Covid-19 data. A team of cyber security researchers analysed the ransomware strains, activity on the dark web and information campaigns and found that they are taking advantage of the concerns and fear over Covid-19.

Sharing his team's findings, Prashant Jha, a cyber lawyer and co-founder of Indian Cyber Institute, said, "While this is not an innovative tactic, it does demonstrate how threat actors will attempt to exploit a global health crisis to distribute harmful attacks against victims."

Speaking about the team's findings, regarding a coronavirus threat map which steals information, Mr Tapan Mehta, founder of Indian Cyber Institute, said, "Cyber criminals have launched a false coronavirus map website to steal personal information from a panicked public. Victims who visit the page are shown a map of the globe highlighting which countries the virus has spread to, together with statistics on the number of deaths and infections recorded. The malware can be used to steal browsing history, cookies, IDs/passwords, credit card information, cryptocurrency and other information."

An independent analysis conducted by the End Now Foundation, a non-profit organisation which deals with advocacy on digital safety, also revealed some details, stating his findings. End Now founder Anil Rachamalla said, "Cyber criminals use fear to create a sensation of urgency in the victim reducing their security awareness. Initially, they gain the trust of victims impersonating reliable sources such as the ministry of health, centres for public health or important figures in a relevant country."

SAFETY TIPS

- Do not click any unknown emails/attachment /links/maps, mentioning Covid-19
Allow remote access to an organisation's network strictly with multi-factor authentication.
Have an antivirus and a malware protection programme on systems and make sure they are always up to date with the latest signatures.
Check all services and devices for remote access for updates of firmware and security patches. Internet-facing open ports of remote control services are a key target for attacks.
Do not click on coronavirus maps as there are distributing instances of malware stealing data.

Mr Rachamalla added that some of the top malicious files being used by cyber criminals include '23 Covid-19 update!', 'Remittance copy (Covid-19 delay)', 'Covid-19 Interception Plans', 'Covid19'. Latest tips to stay immune to virus and 'Announcement' issues to be considered for Covid-19. These subjects contain

attachments with executable files, when clicked, lead to data theft and other cyber frauds, said Mr Rachamalla. Recently, Cert-in, the Indian computer emergency response team, issued an advisory in view of increase cyber crimes targeting employees working from home. "We use virtual private network

Beware of frauds while availing EMI relaxation

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 5

Cybercriminals are never short on use of every trick to dupe potential victims. What's more, they also change the modus operandi to keep pace with the times. The latest is that they are duping the public by tricking them to reveal their one-time password (OTP) in the name of postponement of Equated Monthly Installments (EMIs).

Recently, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das had announced a three-month moratorium for all term loans, thereby giving a massive relief to millions of borrowers. The moratorium meant that borrowers would not have to pay EMIs, either for the loan or the interest amount. Accordingly, some banks are approaching customers keen on availing the facility through texts, calls or email.

Meanwhile, cyber crooks are taking advantage of the same by approaching software or virtual desktops to connect to office. These have a number of vulnerabilities which can be one reason for data

WhatsApp groups for safety of health staff

JAYENDRA CHATHANYA T. | DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 5

In the wake of attacks on doctors and frontline health workers fighting Covid-19, all police stations in the state have created WhatsApp groups for effective communication and timely sharing of information, so that effective action could be taken. Included in the group are representatives of departments involved in taking anti-coronavirus measures.

In a statement on Sunday, DGP M. Mahendar Reddy instructed his staff to establish effective communication channels with doctors and healthcare workers in their jurisdictions to ensure the number of coronavirus cases and deaths in the state increasing. Aasha workers have to trace primary, secondary and tertiary contacts of those patients. Police should remain in touch and ensure safety while these healthcare workers are dealing with the situation on the field. "The police force has

been directed to ensure round-the-clock safety and security of all doctors and healthcare professionals dealing with Covid-19 cases," the DGP said.

In this regard, all district superintendents of police and commissioners of police have been directed to form WhatsApp groups comprising local jurisdictional police officers, doctors and healthcare professionals. This would ensure their safety and security while they are discharging their duties, whether at the various government hospitals or in the field.

"WhatsApp groups will ensure seamless communication between police and health officials in real time and enable effective action," the DGP said. Recently, there were incidents of patients and their relatives attacking doctors and Aasha workers while performing their duties in the state. Several such incidents have also been reported across the country during the last week.



M. Gowri Naidu

COP SACRIFICES MOTHER'S LAST RITES FOR DUTY

JAYENDRA CHATHANYA T. | DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 5

Despite the demise of his mother, a police constable working in Rachakonda commissionariat call targets to draw their attention. Speaking as a bank representative, they sound legitimate while talking of the entire process. One, a person falls for the trick, his banks details and OTP are gathered and in no time his money in the bank is siphoned-off."

On Saturday noon, Naidu received information about his mother M. Yamma (48), who was paralysed and also suffering from ill-health, passed away.

The unfortunate incident did not stop him from continuing the duties and attending the duties the next day. Learning about the incident, the senior officials have expressed their condolences and also lauded the spirit and commitment of the constable towards his duties.

GOWRI NAIDU hails from Metpally village in Cheepurupalli mandal in Vizianagaram district of AP.

DRDO'S COVID SAFETY KIT HELP TO DOCS

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, APRIL 5

To help the Nellore district administration overcome the shortage of personal protection equipment (PPE) for doctors dealing with the increasing number of coronavirus cases, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has agreed to supply sizeable number of PPEs. DRDO chairman Dr G. Srinivasan gave his nod for the supply of PPEs from the DRDO facility at Coimbatore.

LOCKDOWN | IMPACT

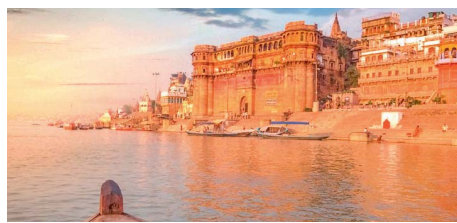
Many govts had spent thousands of crores in cleaning the river but failed

Ganga breathes easy as pollution goes 40 pc down

VIKRAM SHARMA | DC HYDERABAD, APRIL 5

Every year, a whopping 350 tonnes of partially burnt human flesh and bones, 10,000 tonnes of ash and cremation-related material, dead cows, buffaloes, monkeys, goats and shockingly even human dead bodies (without cremation) - all are dumped in this holy river. If that is not enough, millions of litres of sewage, heavy metals from industries go into it even as millions of people are heavily dependent on this river for their daily needs.

For the first time in history, the holy Ganga is breathing easy. Courtesy: Coronavirus and the lockdown. The Ganga, which flows through five states and is most polluted in Varanasi, India, has come down. Modi's constituency, is now regaining all its lost glory, slowly Poller down by over 40 per cent and it is likely to increase as the lock down continues across the country. Though successive governments including the present Modi government spent thousands of crores in cleaning the ganga and still failed miserably, looks like nature always finds its



File photo of a ghat in Varanasi.

own way of healing. According to experts who have previously carried out extensive research of river Ganga, the river is now breathing easy with 40 per cent less pollution in all forms, something they call as historic. "About 100 deaths has increased the dilution capacity of the river. Once the lock down comes to an end, the professor is looking forward to conduct a detailed study. Having done several researches on river Ganga and submitted his findings to the Centre over the last five decades, Tripathi says that though there are 30 drains, both big and small in and around Varanasi which discharge 300 mil-

lion litres of sewage everyday. But luckily, the three sewage treatment plants are still working despite the lock down. In fact, large traces of food in fruits and vegetables found using the water from the river, as the lock down has come as a blessing in disguise for the river. In all five states from where it flows, the Ganga is cleaner by 40 per cent. Never in the history this has happened," adds Tripathi, who in his earlier reports had underlined that Ganga cannot be cleaned now and efforts have to be made to save it now. Another expert RP Mishra feels that though thousands of crores were

INDIA'S LIFELINE

GANGA FLOWS THROUGH FIVE STATES: UP, UTTARAKHAND, BIHAR, JHARKHAND AND WEST BENGAL.

- The Narendra Modi led government had earmarked ₹20,000 crore for cleaning the river under the Namami Gange programme.
The dilution capacity of the river has gone up since the lock down.
In 2009, the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh declared Ganga as the national river.
For Hindus, being cremated on the banks of Ganga and having their ashes immersed in the river is the highway to heaven and attain 'moksha'.
Earlier researches have shown that the amount of toxins, chemicals and dangerous bacteria found in the river water is almost 3,000 times higher than the safety limits prescribed by the WHO.

spent on cleaning of the river by successive governments, no one knows where the money went. "Close to a lakh people live along the river's 2,500 kms length who are dependent on it for their daily needs. All of this has

stopped now though locals continue to burn the dead bodies, but the number is very less and therefore, "Close to the river is far less," he says. He says that the blasting works in Uttarakhand, which is a seismic zone has stopped now due to the lock down, which is good news for the river.

IN BRIEF

**NIT ISSUES
NEW ACADEMIC
CALENDER**

**HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 5**

The National Institute of Technology (NIT), Warangal, has made significant changes to its academic year in the wake of Covid-19 outbreak. In a notification, the institute announced that summer vacations for students will be from April 6 to June 6. A decision on the vacation for faculty will be taken later. It added that the faculty is required to complete the remaining three weeks of classwork online by sharing the lecture material and other resources with the students. The NIT said students must have a minimum 75 per cent attendance till March 14. It said it will not be conducting the annual day or sports day for the year.

**COP GAVE IDEA
TO LEAVE EARLY
MORNING**

From Page 1

Anand, who left Hyderabad for his hometown of Warangal, Kothagudem district says the idea of leaving in the morning was given to him by an inspector of the Osmanpet police station. He shared the information with 10 others, who left for their destinations in Karimnagar, Warangal, Mahabunagar, Nizamabad, Siddipet, Khammam and Adilabad districts.

When *Deccan Chronicle* contacted district collectors, one of them, requesting anonymity, disclosed that as many as 450 people have arrived in the district. They are using permits like duty forms of hospital managements and permissions to transport essential commodities or medical equipment. In one case, while four people entered the district in a truck, only two returned to the city.

Another district collector, who does not want to be named, said a private firm had sought permission to transport personal protective equipment (PPE). The firm's agent said that the PPE material had come to Ongole through the waterway from Chennai.

"I was shocked to learn that as many as eight people left in the truck for bringing PPE but only two returned with the material," he said.

According to reports, people are even crossing state borders missing official permission obtained from district collectors.

**FIRE ENGINES
USED FOR
SANITISATION**

**DURGA PRASAD SUNKU | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 5**

The fire department these days is putting out fires of a different kind.

Instead of the searing, hot flames that its crews have to deal with, the department, its officials and staff have, of late, been contending with competing requests and demands from the municipal administration, the health department, and a large number of politicians who want fire engines to arrive at a spot of their choice and put up a spectacle of spraying disinfectant to control and prevent the spread of coronavirus.

Over the past few days, it has become a common sight in the city and state as fire engines spraying sodium hypochlorite on streets, along buildings and other structures. The government began pressing the fire engines after officials realised that resources with GHMC here in the city and state were not other municipalities across the state, were not enough to cover large areas in short periods of time.

Consequently, fire engines were put into service as the most feasible option to cover larger areas quickly.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, regional fire officer (central region) V. Papiah said, "There are 132 fire engines throughout the state which are being used in the sanitisation drive. We are getting requests from municipal corporations, collectors, several politicians and also we ourselves are identifying some areas where there is particular need of sanitisation."

Apart from 132 fire engines, the state fire department has 136 bikes and 10 Mist vehicles. Papiah further added "Fire calls are very low these days. Every day we spend four or five hours in sanitisation drives from 7 am to 10 am in the mornings and 4 p to 6 pm in the evenings."

Healthcare drivers work without PPE kit

Two GVK EMRI teams sent to quarantine after transporting Covid positive patients

**ADITYA CHUNDURU | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 5**

Drivers and technicians of 108 ambulances, who are on frontline of the war against Covid-19, have that they are being forced to work without any personal protective equipment (PPE).

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, several drivers complained that their managements are not providing even masks or sanitising solutions. A few drivers said GVK EMRI, which runs the ambulance service, terminates their jobs if they complain.

Three days ago, two GVK EMRI teams, each comprising a driver and an emergency medical technician, were sent to quarantine with Covid-19 positive patients. One of the teams had picked up a family of four from Gdwal, one of whom had later tested positive for the virus. The team that transported the family and the team that operated the vehicle were asked to report for quarantine the next day.

One of the drivers in quarantine, speaking on condition of anonymity, said, "We were given no

PPE kits or masks; even the family we transported was not given them either." Many of the staffers are afraid of going on record for fear of being sacked.

Mr Mahender, one of the few drivers willing to go on record, said he has been off the roster since March 12. He said "I have been assigned to the Kothagudem division. On March 12, I was asked to drop a patient and report to Palvoncha to transport a coronavirus case. I refused as I had no PPE kit or mask. That was the last day on duty."

He said most drivers and emergency medical technicians (EMTs) are expected to work without asking questions. "If you are given a case, you must go without asking questions. You can't ask for any extra equipment. If you do, you will be fired," he said.

Mr Ashok Palle, president of 108 Employees Association, said several staffers like Mahender have been laid off for asking questions in the past month. "Officially, only 108 ambulances are supposed to transport Covid-19 positive/suspect cases. But no one cares about the

staff's health. They are expected to travel in the same vehicle as a coronavirus patient. But they can't ask for PPE kits," he said.

Mr Palle, a former 108 employee who has been jobless since a year owing to his union activities, said the staff's duties have become tougher after the pandemic. "There are only a little over 1,500 drivers and EMTs in the state who run 350 ambulances. Due to shortage of staff, they have to serve 12 hours a day for six days a week. This is much higher than the prescribed 48 hours

limit," he pointed out. He said has written to almost all district collectors seeking help. "I have also written to the CMO and health department, but haven't received a satisfactory response."

He said that GVK EMRI does not acknowledge the employees' union, even though it is a registered body.

Chief operating officer (COO) of GVK EMRI P Brahmananda Rao denied these allegations. He said the organisation was in possession of over 1,000 PPE kits and the government was supplying the

kits to drivers. "We have ensured that each vehicle has 10 PPE kits. We are also providing doctors to attend to these cases as EMTs are not required," he said.

Mr Rao denied that any of GVK EMRI's employees are under quarantine.

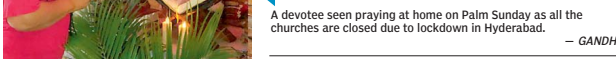
The driver in quarantine, when informed of Mr Rao's response, said, "They will deny everything. Even his claims about PPE kits are bogus. I can guarantee you not a single ambulance, at least in Gdwal and Palvoncha, has even one PPE kit."

Palm Sunday



Archbishop Thumma Bala seen distributing free meals to the poor and the needy on the occasion of Palm Sunday in Hyderabad.

—S. SURENDER REDDY



A devotee seen praying at home on Palm Sunday as all the churches are closed due to lockdown in Hyderabad.

— GANDHI

**Do not communalise
Covid, says Uttam Reddy**

**REDDY SRINIVAS
REDDY | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 5**

President of the Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee N. Uttam Kumar Reddy on Sunday said that the coronavirus pandemic should not be given communal colour and expressed deep concern over attempts made some to target a particular community.

Interacting with Congress workers on Facebook, Mr Reddy said it was wrong on the part of a section of the media to portray a particular community in bad light and blame them for the spread of coronavirus in the country.

The Lok Sabha member from Nalgonda alleged that the TRS-led government has failed miserably in providing help to the poor during the lockdown which was now nearly two weeks old. He condemned the K Chandrashekar Rao-led government for "slow pace of distribution" of promised 12 kgs of free rice among holders of white ration card.

Mr Reddy said that out of nearly 87 lakh white



N. Uttam Kumar Reddy

ration cardholders in the state, as of now, only 22 lakh families have received rice. Asking the state government to hasten up the process of rice distribution, he said the Congress would meet the Governor on the issue if authorities don't complete process of rice distribution in next two days.

The TPC president said that distribution of rice and cash among migrant workers was not being carried out in a proper manner. He said that a majority of migrant workers were yet to get the promised 10 kgs of rice and \$500 cash. Mr Reddy expressed concern about the slow pace of distribution of promised 12 kgs of free rice among holders of white ration card.

He said that over 25,000

people per suspect have been quarantined or kept on vigil. The number of samples tested so far is too low although Mr Rao spoke about increasing number of testing labs.

He said that more Covid-19 suspects should be tested on time to establish whether or not they were suffering from the coronavirus disease and those found positive could be treated quickly. He condemned the municipal administration and urban development (MA&UD) department and the GHMC for imposing a ban on distributing of food, rice and other items by NGOs and philanthropic individuals and asked the civic body not to create hurdles in measures aimed at helping poor people.

The state Congress chief asked all district unit presidents and other party leaders to keep the control room informed about their response to the respective areas. He advised them to form dedicated WhatsApp groups at all district levels to better coordination so they could help needy people in an effective manner.

Lockdown sees drop in crime rate

**JAYENDRA
SATHANAYA T. | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 5**

The ongoing lockdown has had a direct impact on the crime rate in the city and it shows two diametrically opposite trends in March.

Compared to the first three weeks of the month, there has been a 24 per cent reduction in crime in the last week, from March 22 to be precise, with fewer cases of murders, rapes

and road accidents being reported. However, on the flip side, statistics show that the total cases reported in March are higher compared to those in February.

From March 1 to 21, 12,561 cases, among which 7,216 were petty cases, 1,151 thefts, 210 kidnaps, 775 cases of cheating, 92 rapes and 1,373 road accidents, 89 attempt to murder and 33 murders were reported. From the commencement

of the lockdown period, the total cases reported are 4,984 in which over 3,500 are petty cases.

However, eight cases of rape, 101 cases of cheating, 48 fatal road accidents, 10 cases of attempt to murder and 148 accidents have been reported. Even though it was a lockdown, 172 cases of thefts, including 19 burglaries, were reported. The total cases reported in March are about 16,380, while the total number of

cases reported in January and February stand at 15,919 and 14,700 respectively.

A senior police officer said, "The average number of cases reported every day has come during the lockdown period. In January, the average cases in a day reported was 513, 525 in February. Until March 21, the average was 598 cases, but, during the lockdown, the average is 498 cases a day which is a 24 per cent drop."

Modi, KCR talk over Covid crisis

**S.A. ISHAQUI | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 5**

Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan at Raj Bhavan and Chief Minister N Chandrabab Naidu on Sunday night lit lamps at Pragathi Bhavan to represent the night light up by the entire country against the spread of the coronavirus.

The government lit lamps along with family members and while Mr Rao did

so along with senior officials and some of his Cabinet colleagues in response to the appeal of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Mr Rao lit a candle in 10 minutes.

Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi called Chief Minister K Chandrabab Naidu as part of his outreach to leaders of different parties. According to sources in the government, the PM inquired about the situa-

tion in Telangana state and also the measures taken by the government to deal with Covid-19. Sources said that Mr Rao briefed Mr Modi on the measures taken by the state government to prevent the facilities in place to treat patients as also to quarantine and isolate suspected of carrying the virus.

It was learnt that the PM asked the opinion of Mr Rao about the shifting of the lockdown after April 14 in a phased manner.

**103 tremors,
since lockdown**

**T.S.S. SIDHARTH | DC
HYDERABAD, APRIL 5**

The lockdown, which has taken vehicles off the roads, has brought a new learning experience for seismologists. They have recorded 103 tremors in the two Telugu speaking states since the lockdown began on March 24.

There was a tremor on Sunday, measuring three on the Richter scale, in the Bhadradi Kothagudem district. Since January 1, this year, there have been 1,947 earthquakes around the Pulichintala area. Most of these are about three on the Richter scale, and are to be mild to be experienced.

"Earlier there was a lot of outdoor noise like movement of vehicles and industries that used to disrupt the seismograph. These noises made it difficult for the equipment to differentiate between the vibrations from vehicles and that of an tremor. The anthropogenic activities have high frequencies. Now, the quietness that we usually of a certain one usually — have come down," Mr D. Sringesh, chief seismologist, National Geophysical Research Institute, told *Deccan Chronicle*. He added that the lockdown period has provided them with cleaner readings from the seismo-

graphs. According to Mr Purnachander Rao, director, National Centre for Earth Science Studies, "These smaller earthquakes were happening always, but we are now learning more about them. Usually, these smaller movements under the earth's crust were lost in the noise but since the lockdown they have become clearer."

Usually, people only feel earthquakes of over three on the Richter scale. It is these smaller tremors that were also getting lost, and even missed by seismographs in many cases, amidst the chaos of the lockdown. "India usually sees earthquakes of magnitudes three and four and they are recorded. In this silence we can pick up the silent quakes as well," he added.

Both scientists said that the readings taken during this time will prove beneficial to understand the movement of tectonic plates. "We will get better readings and we can get better logs of seismic activity in the country. Now, with these new records, we can map out the seismic activity of the area and redraw the maps to figure out where we have hotspots for earthquakes along with their intensity," Mr Purnachander Rao told *Deccan Chronicle*.

City residents light up the night

**DC CORRESPONDENTS
HYDERABAD, APRIL 5**

Hyderabad turned Sunday night into a mini-Diwali of sorts, joining the rest of the country in lighting up lamps, holding candles and flashing torchlights from 9 pm, as per Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call to express solidarity in the fight against the coronavirus disease.

Many people also set off fire crackers, lit fiery torches and ventured out of their houses. In Secunderabad's Jyothi Colony, most people switched off lights in their homes, and came out in the streets to light diyas, torches and candles. Some residents also burst firecrackers while a few came out on the road.

Ms Aniketa, a resident of Jyothi Colony, said, "I feel happy when I see people lighting up in solidarity with the victims of this deadly virus. But some people, not understanding the reason, are celebrating this moment like a festival. It does not do justice to the purpose."

Another resident, Mr Surya Reddy, said, "this may be the government's way to unite the country in a successful time, they should also do something for the doctors and healthcare staff."

In Jawaharnagar near Musheerabad, all the homes in the lane, save a few, went dark. Two apartment complexes had switched off their common area lights as well. As early as 8.45 pm, some



Residents within the vicinity of the historic Charminar light up diyas to express solidarity with the country's unity in fight against Covid-19, amid the nationwide lockdown in Hyderabad on Sunday.

— P. SURENDRA

God for healing this world." In our apartment complex that has 400 families, everyone took part in gratitude to all who are working hard for us in these hard times," said Ms Madhuri Ganadini, who lives in TNR Shakuntala Apartments, in LB Nagar.

TS Trassico and TS Genco chairman and managing director D. Prabhakar Rao oversaw power generation schedules and changes as well as transmission related issues at the utilities' headquarters at Viduth Soudha here in the city on Sunday evening.

"Despite the sudden drop

**KCR REQUESTS
PM TO OPEN
GUNNY FACTORIES**

**DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, APRIL 5**

Chief Minister K Chandrabab Naidu on Sunday evening telephoned Prime Minister Narendra Modi and requested him to open gunny factories at West Bengal as Telangana state requires 40 crore gunny bags for the procurement of paddy in the current Rabi season. According to the Chief Minister's office, Mr Rao informed the Prime Minister that Telangana state is facing acute shortage of gunny bags due to the Covid-19 lockdown as most of the mill mills which are located in West Bengal have closed down. He informed the PM that Telangana state every year requires gunny bags from West Bengal. The CM also requested the Prime Minister to ensure that the power sector can overcome the challenge and I believe that the country will overcome the challenge of the challenge," he said after the nine-minute period ended.

CM K. Chandrabab Naidu complimented the power utilities and Mr Prabhakar Rao saying that though the sudden fall in demand was to the tune of 1,500 Mega Watts, much more than the anticipated 300 MW to 500 MW drop, the state power utilities have performed very well and ensured trouble-free supply.

The CM while holding a meeting with senior officers concerned pertaining to the procurement of the paddy, instructed them to ensure that the inconvenience shall not be caused to the farmers due to the lockdown.

IN BRIEF

Wear masks or pay fine: Odisha

Bhubaneswar: Odisha's Ganjam district collector Vijay Amruta Kulange on Sunday issued an order to all the people for compulsory use of mask while stepping out of home or pay fine up to ₹1000. The collector said persons living in urban areas have to pay ₹1000 for violation of the order while rural violators have to pay ₹500. "We have to control the spread of Covid-19 and hence everyone has to wear mask. Violation of order will be treated as an offence and the violators have to pay penalty up to ₹1000," said Mr Kulange.

COPS USE CALL DATA TO TRACE T.J. ATTENDEES

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, APRIL 5

The Delhi police is tracing all those people who attended the religious gathering in Delhi's Nizamuddin area, which was hosted by Tablighi Jamaat through cell phone data.

The crime branch has been investigating the attendees who were identified as a hotspot for the spread of the highly contagious coronavirus.

More than 1,000 people — around a third of the coronavirus cases in the country — have been found to be linked to the gathering, which was attended by a large number of foreign nationals.

It is believed that 8,000 people attended the event, held in March, defying the government's message of social distancing.

Many of them then travelled across the country, setting off a surge in infections.

The police is checking all those people whose GPS location in March signalled their presence in that area for several days, sources said.

The Delhi police is being assisted by the police in other states in the mapping process.

Currently, contact tracing, testing, and home quarantine are the main modes of containing the coronavirus outbreak.

Over the last week, contact tracing is being conducted on a war footing across most states to locate people who attended the Tablighi Jamaat and those who have been directly in contact with them.

ASSAM TACKLES COVID-19 ON WAR FOOTING

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, APRIL 5

In a bid to persuade people who are hiding after attending the Tablighi Jamaat event at Nizamuddin, Assam's minister, Himanta Biswa Sarma, on Sunday, said that he personally met the head of the Guwahati Lakshmi masjid and requested him to share the list of all who were at the Delhi event.

Stressing that it was necessary to quarantine them, the minister said that they could be silent carriers of coronavirus. The Lakshmi masjid is the headquarter of Tablighi Jamaat in Assam.

One more person who visited the Delhi event tested positive in Cachar district, taking the total number of Covid-19 positive cases in the state to 29.

The minister who visited Goalapara where three Covid-19 positive patients are admitted also expressed his gratitude towards the Akshay Patra Foundation, which, on Sunday, donated 500 essential grocery kits, each weighing 20 kgs, for the 21-day lockdown.

After taking stock of the situation in western Assam, the minister said that he was expecting reports on 105 samples late on Sunday evening.

Informing that the 20th case was of Saribur Rahman, of Silchar, the minister said that only 20 per cent of the infected persons show early symptoms. "We need to quarantine all those who have come in contacts with Covid-19 positive patients. Meanwhile, the Assam health department has introduced yoga therapy to motivate and refresh the minds of Covid-19 positive patients during the treatment in isolation.

It was introduced in the Mahendra Mohan Chatterjee Hospital in Guwahati. The authorities said yoga therapy among the patients has been introduced as part of the necessary steps for physical and mental well-being of patients.

Light to drive away the corona contagion



Residents of a society in Mumbai light lamps and candles in their balconies on Sunday amid the nationwide lockdown in the wake of Covid-19, following Prime Minister Narendra Modi urging people to light lamps to express unity in fight against the pandemic. — RAJESH JADHAV



Prime Minister Narendra Modi lights a 'Diya' at Lok Kalyan Marg in New Delhi on Sunday.

WB: Four die of Covid-19 in last 24 hours; govt issues no update

RAJIV CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, APRIL 5

Four patients, detected with Covid-19, have died in the last 24 hours in West Bengal.

If the latest deaths are counted, the state-wide death toll would jump to 11. However, the government put the figure at three till Saturday.

AT NIL Ratan Sircar medical college and hospital in Kolkata, a youth from Maheshtala in South 24 Parganas died. He was suffering from haemophilia.

The 34-year-old was admitted there with haemophilia on March 30, after he was examined at the outpatient department at three hospitals: Calcutta national medical college and hospital, infectious diseases hospital, Beliaghata and SSKM hospital.

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SEVEN PERSONS have been arrested by the police in connection with the clash.

BOMBS WERE hurled and a shop was torched

Trinamul Congress, hurled bombs and opened fire as well.

Shyam Babu died after he suffered bullet and splinter injuries. Bombs were hurled at his home as well. A shop was torched. Seven persons have been arrested by the police in connection with the clash.

Meanwhile, district police officers in South 24 Parganas faced angry protests by the villagers at Bhangar on Sunday when they went to inspect Bamanghata high school where a quarantine centre has been planned.

Shouting slogans, the protesters locked the school and blocked the road, demanding that a quarantine centre should be allowed at the school. The team had to leave the area without inspection.

GUJAR, BAKARWAL TRIBES TOLD TO DELAY MIGRATION

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, APRIL 5

A front organisation of Jammu and Kashmir's nomad Gujjars and Bakarwals has asked them to put off their seasonal migration towards the hills and pastures of Kashmir Valley and Ladakh in view of the growing Covid-19 threat and ongoing lockdown.

The victim was identified as Shyam Babu Sheikh (45), said superintendent of police (Birmingham), Shyam Singh. The injured, Safuddin (21), has been admitted to a district hospital with bullet injuries on his right leg.

In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Birbhoom district administration decided to open quarantine centres at more than 200 educational institutions, Talibpur high school at Bonshonka

Violent clashes in WB over Covid-19 quarantine centre

RAJIV CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, APRIL 5

A man was killed and another injured in a violent clash which broke out between two groups of villagers in Birbhoom of West Bengal on Saturday night over arrangements to open a quarantine centre for the Covid-19 pandemic.

The victim was identified as Shyam Babu Sheikh (45), said superintendent of police (Birmingham), Shyam Singh. The injured, Safuddin (21), has been admitted to a district hospital with bullet injuries on his right leg.

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Gravediggers donate 1 month salary

AKMISREE KARTHIK | DC BENGALURU, APRIL 5

While help is pouring from all the corners to fight the Covid-19, here is a contribution coming from the least expected section which is already running on paltry income.

The gravediggers who put the dead to rest from Bengaluru have set an example by contributing a month's salary to the Chief Minister's Covid-19 Relief Fund.

Gravediggers who were getting just ₹1,000 a month all these years have been donating ₹14,000 per month recently, which too isn't enough to run their families.

But the gravediggers have contributed their one month's salary as they do not wish to see dead bodies getting lined up at the grave yards and crematoriums due to Coronavirus.

Sovri Raj who is the state secretary of Burial

Ground and Electric Crematoria Employees' Association said, "All are doing their bit to fight Covid-19. When we were getting a paltry income, it was the people who supported us by giving whatever they can when they do for the last rites of their near and dear ones.

And now is the time for us to return the favour. We all have decided to contribute one month's salary."

There are 148 grave diggers in Bengaluru limits

and their monthly salary of ₹14,000 adds up to ₹20,72,000.

On Friday they met BBMP commissioner Anil Kumar and handed over a letter stating their consent to hand over a month's salary.

They want the money to be utilised by Pw Person Protective Equipment to the health workers who are leading this fight from the frontline and also support the ones who are in need of food and ration.

DRAFT COVID-19 PROTOCOL, APPEAL NURSES

PRAMOD KUMAR | DC NEW DELHI, APRIL 4

The United Nurses Association has moved the Supreme Court seeking direction to the central government to formulate National Covid-19 management protocol for addressing the "imminent and extreme" risks to the health and safety of health care professionals attending to the coronavirus patients in the country.

The Kerala based United Nurses Association in a slew of directions have sought direction to the Centre to ensure that Covid-19 protection kits are made available to every health care professional working in the isolation wards, or those who work in close proximity of patients suspected to be infected with the virus.

Pointing to the insufficient availability of the personal protective equipment in the hospitals across the country, the UNA in its PIL, have asserted that a number of PPE kits are available are sub-standard. It has claimed that more than 3,300 nurses, doctors and other hospital staff across the country were infected, many because of insufficient PPEs.

Shivraj sees corona conspiracy attack

Attack on medics to create communal situation, says CM

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, APRIL 5

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Sunday indicated that the police was probing the conspiracy to create communal situation to the April 1 attack on a medical team in Indore.

There was an attempt to create a hostile environment to stop the team from entering the area to undertake health screening of locals, Mr Chouhan told the media here.

"Police is probing to find out why the attack was carried out and who was behind it", he said, adding, "Call details of people involved in the attack are being gathered" to unearth the conspiracy, if there was any in the incident Mr Chouhan warned that such incidents would no longer be tolerated since the issue concerned the lives of people.

Mr Chouhan said that he had talked to the gazis of Bhopal, Indore and Ujjain and other places to seek their cooperation in launching the drive

against the coronavirus by medical personnel. Preliminary investigation into the Indore incident has indicated that there was a conspiracy to create communal situation to derail the anti-coronavirus drive launched in the state.

"There was a plan to disrupt the ongoing drive against coronavirus by creating a communal situation with the attack on the medical team. However, the plan was nipped in the bud after the local gazis asked the people to cooperate with the medical personnel," a senior police officer of Indore told this newspaper, requesting that he not be quoted.

At least 13 people have been arrested in connection with the incident so far, while National Security Act was slapped on four of them.

A medical team comprising two women doctors was attacked by a mob in Tattar Baghal in Indore when they were conducting health screening of suspected coronavirus persons.

AIIMS to attend meet on Covid-19

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, APRIL 5

All India Institute of Medical Sciences is all set to share its experience on successful treatment of Covid-19 patients with South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation nations.

Doctors of AIIMS Delhi and AIIMS Raipur are going to represent India in the week-long webinar on coronavirus pandemic of SAARC countries which will be discussed during webinar," the spokesman said.

AIIMS Raipur has adopted ICMR protocol and gained insightful information during treatment of Covid-19 patients. Prof. Nitin M. Nagarajan of AIIMS Raipur said, "case by case" in combating Covid-19 cases, a spokesman of AIIMS Raipur in Chhattisgarh told this

newspaper on Sunday. "On April 1, we will include doctors and scientists from different SAARC countries who will discuss pandemic situation in South Asia and will share their experience with each other. It would be great initiative as all protocols and their effectiveness will be discussed during webinar," the spokesman said.

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Kerala reports 8 more +ve cases

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, APRIL 5: Eight more Covid-19 positive cases were reported from Kerala on Sunday, four of whom were Tablighi Jamaat returnees and six people were cured of the infection, Health Minister K K Shailaja said.

A total of 1,58,617 people are under observation in the state, out of which 776 are in isolation wards in hospitals.

Out of the six people cured on Sunday, four are from Kannur district and two from Thiruvananthapuram and Kannur districts.

Meanwhile, police has registered 2,221 cases in the state against non-local people for lockdown violations. "A total of 2,221 cases have been registered today and 2,250 persons have been arrested," the police department said in a release. —PTI

Delhi congregation have tested positive. A total of 314 cases have been reported from Kerala so far and 56 people have been cured, she said, adding that 10,221 samples have been sent for testing.

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UNLAWFUL ATTEMPT Cleric asks J&K Muslims not to sell or rent out properties to non-local Hindus

Pakistani cleric issues decree to J&K Muslims

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, APRIL 5

In the backdrop of new domicile law enacted by the Central government for Jammu and Kashmir, a Pakistani cleric is reported to have asked Muslims of the Union Territory not to sell or rent out their immovable properties and other assets to non local Hindus

saying any such deals are not lawful as per the Islamic Sharia law.

Mufti Muhammad Muneeb-ur-Rehman, who is chairman of Pakistan's moon-gate Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee and a professor at Jinnah University for Women, has, as per Pakistan media reports, issued a formal fatwa or decree

saying, "India has forcibly occupied Jammu and Kashmir." Therefore, as per teachings of Islam and Quran and the Sharia law, selling, renting out or gifting immovable properties and other assets to non-local Hindus and other non-Muslims is not lawful.

And now is the time for us to return the favour. We all have decided to contribute one month's salary."

There are 148 grave diggers in Bengaluru limits

and their monthly salary of ₹14,000 adds up to ₹20,72,000.

On Friday they met BBMP commissioner Anil Kumar and handed over a letter stating their consent to hand over a month's salary.

They want the money to be utilised by Pw Person Protective Equipment to the health workers who are leading this fight from the frontline and also support the ones who are in need of food and ration.

tantamount to giving a hand to zulm (cruelty or oppression)"

The 75-year-old cleric who is also a member of Pakistan's National Academic Council of Institute of Policy Studies and heads the Shariah Board of the neighbouring country's Islamic commercial Bank and is president of Karachi's Tanzem-ul-Madaris and Dar-

ul Uloom Naemia, has also said that J&K was a "Dar-ul-Islam (territory of Islam)" where Muslims constitute the majority of population for centuries.

He alleged that the Indian government was abrogating Articles 370 and 35A of the Constitution violated its own agreements and commitments made to the people of the erst-while state.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

Late Dr. GOKA PADMA
(Wife Late B. Venkateshwar Rao, Retired CE)
Passed away on 29th April 2020 at 10:30 AM
D.O.B: 08-11-1941 D.O.D: 17-04-2019
May your soul rest in peace.
(Instituted by...)
Sons: B. KALYAN CHAKRAVARTHY, IAS

SAD DEMISE

OMPRAKASH BAJAJ
Chartered Accountant,
With Profound grief we inform that CA
OMPRAKASH BAJAJ Left for heavenly abode on 04th April 2020.
M.G Road, Sec-3ad - 3.
In Grief: Bajaj Family

WE MISS YOU

Mr. AJMEEL AHMED
From
JAMU, NAWAB,
CHATTARA FAMILY
HABIB FAMILY
(CA-3258)

IN BRIEF

Chernobyl N-zone fire: Radiation up

Kiev: Ukrainian authorities on Sunday reported a spike in radiation levels in the restricted zone around Chernobyl, scene of the world's worst nuclear accident, caused by a forest fire. "There is bad news - radiation is above normal in the fire's centre," Yegor Firsov, head of Ukraine's state ecological inspection service, said on Facebook. The post included a video of a Geiger counter showing radiation at 16 times above normal. The fire has spread to about 100 hectares of forest, Firsov wrote. Kiev has mobilised two planes, a helicopter and around 100 firefighters to fight the blaze.

Colombia coal mine blast: 11 die

Bogota: Eleven people were killed and four injured in an accidental explosion at a Colombian coal mine in Cucunubá, near Bogota, on Saturday, according to the local fire department. The victims were miners who were working despite the health emergency caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Most Colombians are quarantined by government order, but mining is among the activities exempted. Captain Alvaro Farfan, head of the fire department of Cucunubá, told local media that the accident occurred in a legally operated coal mine, although he did not give details of the type of explosion.

Russian kills 5 for 'noisy talk'

Moscow: A man in central Russia shot and killed five people for talking noisily at night under his windows, investigators said Sunday. The shootings took place in the Ryazan region during stay-at-home orders aimed at slowing the spread of the Covid-19. A 32-year-old man from the town of Yelatina opened fire on a group of four young men and a woman who "were talking loudly in the street under his windows" at around 10 pm on Saturday. Yelatina is located near the city of Ryazan, 200 kilometres southeast of Moscow. The man opened fire from his balcony to complain to the group and a dispute erupted before he reached for his single-barrel hunting rifle.

19 killed in Mexico drug gang clash

Mexico City: A big shootout between rival drug gangs killed 19 people in the southern Mexican border state of Chiuhahua, state prosecutors' office said Saturday. A total of 18 corpses, including grenades, vehicles and guns were found at the scene of the clash in the hamlet of Chuchuchupa in the town of Madera. Two other men were found armed and wounded on the dirt road where the confrontation occurred late Friday. One died later at a hospital, and the other is in custody, an official said. Police and soldiers are sent to secure the area, where groups allied with the Sinaloa cartel have been fighting other gangs.

DANIEL CASE: SC ON SINDH GOVT RADAR

Islamabad, April 5: The Sindh provincial government in Pakistan will file a criminal appeal in the Supreme Court against a lower court's verdict overturning the death sentence of the prime accused and acquitted three others in the murder of US journalist Daniel Pearl in Karachi in 2002, according to a media report. The Sindh High Court on Thursday overturned the death sentence of the prime accused and top al-Qaeda leader Ahmed Omar Saad Sheikh to seven years in jail and acquitted the three others - Fahad Naseem, Salman Saqib and Sheikh Adil - serving life sentences in the case. However, the provincial government invoked the Maintenance of Public Order Ordinance to keep Sheikh and his three associates in jail. Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said on Saturday that the government will challenge the verdict in the apex court. A senior official in the Sindh government on Saturday said that they will engage a private counsel to file a criminal appeal against the verdict. However, name of the counsel is yet to be decided, he said.

Prayers without public



A general view inside St. Peter's Basilica. Pope Francis (inset) celebrated Palm Sunday Mass without the public because of the Covid-19, which he said should focus people's attention on what's most important - using one's life to serve others. - AFP

S. African cleric of India TJ meet dies

Johannesburg, April 5: An 80-year-old South African Muslim cleric, who recently returned from India after attending the Nizamuddin congregation, has died after contracting the novel Covid-19, according to his family members. Moulana Yusuf Tootla attended the March 1-15 Tablighi Jamaat congregation in the Nizamuddin area, that has emerged as the epicentre for the spread of the Covid-19 in different parts of India and abroad after thousands took part in it. Tootla, who died on Tuesday, was buried after his body was collected in a bag by the Islamic Burial Council (IBC). Nationals from Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Nepal, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Kyrgyzstan come for Tabligh activities in Delhi. Tootla's daughter Saeda said that the cleric began showing flu-like symptoms on his India return. "Since he travelled and was in a car, as a precaution we took him to Lancet for testing. The results were confirmed by

7 BOOKED AFTER 400 GATHER FOR PRAYERS IN PAK

Islamabad, April 5: A case has been registered against a cleric in Pakistan for gathering around 400 people for Friday prayers at a prominent mosque here, despite a ban on such religious congregations imposed by the authorities to prevent the spread of the novel Covid-19. A case was registered against former Lal Masjid cleric Maulana Abdul Aziz and six others. Police informed the cleric of the ban and misuse of loudspeakers, but he ignored. Aziz was also charged for spreading fear and inciting people against the state, it said. -PTI

OVER 300 TABLIGHI JAMAAT MEMBERS TEST +VE IN PAK

Lahore, April 5: Over 300 Tablighi Jamaat members have been tested Covid-19 positive till Sunday in Pakistan's Punjab province, amid efforts by authorities to track down and quarantine thousands of people who attended a massive congregation of the Islamic group that was held last month. Authorities have placed the entire city of Raiwind that houses headquarters of the Pakistani faction of the Jamaat under quarantine and completely restricted the mobility of people within or outside the city. -PTI

CHANGING NORMS

Pandemic is altering how people bereave their loved ones

At funerals, mourning is from a distance

Lexington (US), April 5: No one stands in line to embrace the widow and share memories of her husband of 50 years. No rows of family and friends file toward the flag-draped coffin to pay their last respects. No symphony of snuffies is heard across the room as the minister gives a final prayer. Instead, a handful of people are scattered around one chapel row as if they're strangers, not blood. White roses are pinned to the room as the minister gives a final prayer. "But one thing that will be common is that as we conduct this service today, we're going to open with a prayer: 'Godspoke us with the reason on this funeral, and untold others across the world, is different: The Covid-19 outbreak, stay-at-home orders and the rules of social distancing are dramatically altering the way families and communities mourn the passing of loved ones.' It's hard enough to lose a loved one, but then to have the traditions that usually bring comfort at a

time like this seemingly not available just kind of compounds the grief that families feel," said Justin Baxley, of Woodridge Memorial Park & Funeral Home. Like many funeral homes, Woodridge is limiting the number of people allowed for services. Many families find it hard to choose which loved ones will be invited to the in-person gathering and which will be relegated to watch via livestream, if at all. But Coleman's family said in their case, travel restrictions due to the virus and the nature of their small, close-knit family

haven't needed to be tested and, after seven days of rest, I'm on the mend." In another post, Johnson's partner, who is around six months pregnant and expecting the baby in the coming months, added a link to guidance from the UK's Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists for pregnant women during the pandemic. "Being pregnant with Covid-19 is obviously worrying. To other pregnant women, please do read and follow the most up to date guidance which I found to be reassuring," she said. -PTI

London, April 5: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's pregnant fiancée, Carrie, has said she is well and is in a stable condition, India's High Commissioner Jawed Ashraf said on Sunday. 10 of the 72 Indian nationals infected with the virus in Singapore have recovered and the rest are mostly in stable condition, India's High Commissioner Jawed Ashraf said on Sunday.

London, April 5: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's pregnant fiancée, Carrie, has said she is well and is in a stable condition, India's High Commissioner Jawed Ashraf said on Sunday. 10 of the 72 Indian nationals infected with the virus in Singapore have recovered and the rest are mostly in stable condition, India's High Commissioner Jawed Ashraf said on Sunday.

Pink Floyd 'virus party' busted

New York, April 5: "When we informed everyone that they must leave, we were met with well wishes of 'E for the police' and 'Welcome to Nazi Germany,'" said the town's police department on Facebook late Saturday. Officers then instructed the band to cut the night short as they were halfway through the performance of Pink Floyd's 1975 anthem "Wish You Were Here." Fittingly, a song often played at an anthem for absent friends. "The Russian Police Department expressed any amount of mourning anyone had, the police statement said. -AFP

Trump seeks Modi's aid to release tablets

India has already banned export of hydroxychloroquine

Washington, April 5: President Donald Trump has sought help from Prime Minister Narendra Modi to allow the sale of hydroxychloroquine tablets ordered by the US to treat the growing number of Covid-19 patients in his country, hours after India banned the export of the anti-malarial drug.

China donates 1k ventilators to NY

New York, April 5: China donated 1,000 ventilators to New York, the epicentre of the Covid-19 pandemic in the US, as the authorities grappled with an insufficient supply of the life-saving equipment amid a surge in the number of cases that has crossed 1,00,000 in the state. Governor Andrew Cuomo on Saturday said New York had ordered 17,000 ventilators from the federal government, which had a stockpile of about 10,000 ventilators for the nation. He said demand for the life-saving medical equipment surges across the US, which now has more than 3,12,100 Covid-19 cases. "China is remarkably the repository for all of

NEW YORK SEES A STAGGERING 630 CASUALTIES

New York, April 5: New York State, the epicentre of the Covid-19 pandemic in the US, continued to record the highest count of daily deaths as a staggering number of 630 people died in a 24-hour period and Governor Andrew Cuomo said the outbreak in the state could peak in about seven days. "The state had recorded the highest single increase in the number of deaths in a single day between April 2 and 3 when 562 people had died, one person dying from the viral infection almost every two-and-a-half minutes. The number of deaths since April 4, the death toll grew to 630, "all-time increase" up to a total of 3,565, up from 2,855 on Friday morning, Cuomo said.

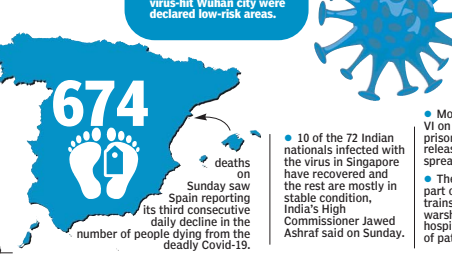
"The daily death toll in New York continues to grow as the state remains the most impacted in the US. Cases in New York State peaked at 113,704, out of the country's total number of 312,146. New Jersey's second most impacted state, has about 30,000 cases. New York City has 63,206 patients, up from 57,169 the earlier 24 hours, and 2,624 deaths. -PTI

GLOBAL IMPACT AS CONTAGION SPREADS TENTACLES

34 people died of the virus in Australia on Sunday as the number of positive cases reached 5,687.

30 new cases of the novel Covid-19, including 13 locally transmitted infections, have been reported in China on Sunday. The 13 administrative districts of virus-hit Wuhan city were declared low-risk areas.

Jordan said it is to use drones and surveillance cameras to monitor compliance with a nationwide curfew. Priests delivered blessings from the back of trucks and motorised tricycles in the Philippines Sunday, adapting the deeply Catholic nation's traditions.



674 deaths on Sunday saw Spain reporting its third consecutive daily decline in the number of people dying from the deadly Covid-19.

10 of the 72 Indian nationals infected with the virus in Singapore have recovered and the rest are mostly in stable condition, India's High Commissioner Jawed Ashraf said on Sunday.

Morocco's King Mohammed VI on Sunday pardoned 5,654 prisoners and ordered their release in stages to avoid virus spread in overcrowded jails. The TVG (speed train)-ICU is part of France's mobilisation of helicopters, jets and a warship to relieve congested hospitals and shuffle hundreds of patients and medical staff.

U.S. TO AIRLIFT 22K AMERICANS STUCK ABROAD

Washington, April 5: The US is working "aggressively" to airlift around 22,000 Americans stranded overseas since April 4, the death toll grew to 630, "all-time increase" up to a total of 3,565, up from 2,855 on Friday morning, Cuomo said. "The daily death toll in New York continues to grow as the state remains the most impacted in the US. Cases in New York State peaked at 113,704, out of the country's total number of 312,146. New Jersey's second most impacted state, has about 30,000 cases. New York City has 63,206 patients, up from 57,169 the earlier 24 hours, and 2,624 deaths. -PTI

CORPSES LEFT ON ROADS: ECUADOR VP APOLOGISES

Quito, April 5: Ecuador's vice president Otto Sonnenholzner has apologised after scenes of bodies were left on the streets of Guayaquil as the Covid-19 ravages the horror-struck port city. Residents published videos on social media showing abandoned bodies on the streets in the city. Authorities collected at least 150 corpses earlier this week, but did not confirm how many died of virus. "We have seen images that should never have happened and as your public servant, I apologise," he said. -AFP

"On the mend" from Covid-19, says Boris' pregnant fiancée

London, April 5: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's pregnant fiancée, Carrie, has said she is well and is in a stable condition, India's High Commissioner Jawed Ashraf said on Sunday. 10 of the 72 Indian nationals infected with the virus in Singapore have recovered and the rest are mostly in stable condition, India's High Commissioner Jawed Ashraf said on Sunday.

DEADLY VIRUS 'AMPLIFYING' POVERTY IN UK

London, April 5: The Covid-19 is increasing poverty in Britain, where levels are already high after a decade of austerity triggered by the global financial crisis, according to experts. Official data shows that more than 14 million people in the UK are classed as living in poverty, or nearly a quarter of the population. -AFP

7 FLIGHTS NEXT WEEK TO BRING BACK BRITONS

London, April 5: The UK government on Sunday announced the first seven chartered flights next week to bring home British nationals stranded in India amidst the international travel lockdown over the Covid-19 pandemic. An estimated 35,000 British nationals are in India, of whom over 20,000 have contacted the British High Commission in New Delhi to say they wish to return as soon as possible. -PTI

DECCAN
Chronicle
6 APRIL 2020

Track inter-state rows over corona spread

A directive of the Supreme Court last week to the Union government to intervene in the dispute between Kerala and Karnataka over the latter's decision to close its border with its neighbour ostensibly to prevent the spread of Covid-19 signals to an additional role the government will have to play in the backdrop of the pandemic. The court's fiat came on a petition Karnataka filed against an order of the Kerala high court directing it to open the national highways connecting the two states which the Karnataka authorities blocked by erecting mud walls. The court, which will hear the case on Tuesday, has asked the Union health secretary to talk to both the states and come up with guidelines on the opening of borders. It has also instructed the states not to precipitate the matter during the time of a national crisis.

The Kerala high court, in its order, had pointed out that the provisions of the National Highways Act mandate that the Union government has the administrative jurisdiction and the right for their maintenance. Petitioners from Kerala had contended that the border sealing had resulted in the disruption of supply of food and other essential items and that of urgent medical help from across the border. Reports also said about the police stopping ambulances carrying seriously ill patients at the border, resulting in the death of at least seven persons. Karnataka pointed out that its hospitals are ill-equipped to treat all the patients in the region and the blockade was essential to keep the virus spread in control.

The nation is about to step into the most decisive phase of its fight against coronavirus in the next few weeks. The country is in the final of the 21-day national lockdown on April 14. The Union government has already sought the help of the states to come up with an action plan for a staggered process. Once inter-state traffic is restored, people are bound to travel across the borders, and until such time we have completely conquered the pandemic, there is threat of a spread. It is highly likely that disputes similar to that between Kerala and Karnataka will come up between states. Some states would feel that they are doing well in the fight and would be vulnerable to the next wave of the virus. This is the time when the nation should demonstrate its deep resolve to take on the enemy as one united entity and not as a divided house with selfish targets. If some states think that they can win the war on their own, then the Union government should disabuse themselves of such thoughts. States can compete with one another on the topic of development, devising investment policies or of offering freebies. But divisive policies cannot be allowed to thrive when we face a common enemy. The government should make the states see reason and come up with guidelines that help stop the spread of the pandemic and not normal human endeavours. This is a collective fight; we win or lose it together as a nation.

Law tweak won't satisfy J&K

The Centre's move to make some significant changes in its new domicile law in the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir, notified early last week, which would open up a variety of government jobs to people from all over India, has almost everything to do with the Jammu region's unhappiness, which was forcefully conveyed by the BJP's Jammu unit to Union home minister Amit Shah, and not any real rethinking on its merits. Under the amended law, announced by the home ministry late on Friday, all government jobs in the UT — not just Grade D posts — would be kept reserved for its residents. This may go some way to calm tempers, but is unlikely to completely dole out the anger and discontent, both in Jammu and in the Kashmir Valley, because the real point of friction is over the definition of "domicile". Prior to August 5, when J&K was a state, all jobs were kept for "permanent state subjects", while under the new law a J&K "domicile" is anyone who has lived there for 15 years, has studied in schools/colleges in J&K for 10 years, and has appeared for the Class 10 or Class 12 exams, or is the child of a Central or all-India service officer, PSU or bank official who has served there for 10 years. This creates a large pool of non-Kashmiris who would now be eligible for government jobs in the UT.

Not surprisingly, all Kashmiri political parties have rejected this law, and said only a popularly-elected legislature must decide such crucial issues. It's not only mainstream outfits like the PDP and National Conference that are outraged, even the supposedly pro-government "Apni Party" of Syed Altaf Bukhari has demanded that the Centre scrap the new law. They have also demanded the immediate restoration of J&K's statehood. Since it seems extremely unlikely that New Delhi will move in that direction anytime soon, yet another point of discontent has been introduced in an already troubled land.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

ADITYA SINHA
Editor

T. VENKATESWARLU
Printer & Publisher

DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at:

- Hyderabad: 36, Sarajini Devi Road, Secunderabad - 500 003, Ph: 040-2780930-4, Fax: 040-2780526
- Vijayawada: No.C-3 & 4 Patnamata, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada (A.P.), Ph: 0866-255284-255287, Telefax: 0866-2552534
- Visakhapatnam: Survey No. 5A Road, Near Kallagiri Koppoys, Sector-9 M.V.P Colony, Visakhapatnam - 530 017 (A.P.), Ph: 0891-2552332/2523234, Fax: 0891-2752528
- Rajamahendravaram: Vemagiri, Dhruvaleswaram Rd, Rajamahendravaram, Ph: 0883-2417616/2417208, Telefax: 0883-2417208
- Anantapur: Thapovan Colony, Bangalore By-Pass Road, Anantapur - 515004, Ph: 08554-276903, Fax: 08554-276904
- Karimnagar: Survey No 1341, Vaidalipally Colony, Jagtjala Road, Karimnagar - 505 001, Ph: 0878-2228908, Telefax: 0878-2220433
- Nellore: Survey No.527/2, Burampara Village, Venkatachalam (M), Chennamangalapuram Panchayat, Nellore, Ph: 0861-2348518/2, Telefax: 0861-2348518
- Chennai: SP-3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, Ph: 044-2224747/48/50/51, Adv: Fax: 2224766/2224766/4205223
- Bengaluru: 5th Floor, BMTC Commercial Complex, 80 Feet Road, Koramangala, Bengaluru-560 095 Ph: 080-4360050, Fax: 080-2296052
- Coimbatore: 77, Vivekananda Road, Ramnagar, Coimbatore - 641 009, Ph: 0422-2231255
- Kochi: No.3-4, 3rd Floor of DD BPO Tower, Kaloonkadu/Kadambur Road, Ernakulam, Ph: 0484-4034048
- Thiruvananthapuram: St. Joseph's Press, TC 151040, Cotton Hill, Thycad (PO), Thiruvananthapuram 695 014
- Kozhikode: Door No 61/002 E, First Floor of City Mall, Opp. YMCA, Kannur Road, Kozhikode - 673 01, Fax: 0495-4019 018

DECCAN CHRONICLE Postal registration no: No. H/SD-348/2006-08



Why didn't PM focus on steps to help the needy?



Pavan K. Varma
Chanakya's View

At 9 pm on Sunday, many Indians responded to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call to shut out the lights and light a candle, diya or even a mobile flashlight for nine minutes to display solidarity with the nationwide struggle against the Covid-19 pandemic. The call had a symbolic value in reinforcing national resolve, and no doubt gave most citizens a sense of hope and confidence.

But it is sobering to remember that many citizens were not at home, did not have a threshold or a balcony. They were on the roads or in makeshift shelters, without having eaten a proper meal for days, and with no money, not even to buy a candle. They were mute spectators to middle class and affluent Indians illuminating India, but indistinguishable from the engulfing darkness all around, wondering about how they were going to survive the next day.

According to the government's latest Force Survey, some 127 million people are self-employed, casual labour or migrant workers, with no social security safety net. Once the lockdown was announced, where they were, they became nowhere, caught in a nightmare between where they stayed and their original homes where they wanted to go. If they stayed where they were, they would die of starvation. But if they wanted to go back and try and survive from where they had migrated, there were no means. Trains and buses were not running, and the police blockades prevented them from even walking all the way.

Such people form the ugly underbelly of our socio-economic system.

But for the fact that their services are essential, the relatively privileged would be happy if they just did not exist. However, the fact is that they do, and their plight should have been part of the planning that preceded the Prime Minister's announcement of the lockdown with only four hours of notice. It is true that the decision for a drastic step like a three-week total lockdown. But he should have been better prepared to handle the inevitable consequences of such a decision on a country with such vast economic discrepancies like ours. In the days after the lockdown, the country was witness to lakhs of migrant workers and others on the roads, walking with their families and meagre belongings, swamping bus stands, and making a mockery of the concept of "social distancing" which was the primary purpose of the lockdown.

The government has announced an economic package to help the poor. But given the magnitude of the distress, the package is inadequate. Of the roughly ₹1.7 lakh crores announced, ₹70,000 crores is part of the existing allocations. The additionality is thus only of about ₹1 lakh crores, which is much below one per cent of the government's budget. The United States allocated as much as 10 per cent of the government's budget to help the needy.

Such people form the ugly underbelly of our socio-economic system. But for the fact that their services are essential, the relatively privileged would be happy if they just did not exist.

Below even one per cent of the government's budget. Other countries, such as the United States, have allocated as much as 10 per cent of the government's budget to help the needy. There is also the question of delivery. The Direct Bank Transfer (DBT) will help, given the number of Jan Dhan accounts, but there are still some 190 million Indians who still do not have a bank account. Besides, how will the additional allocation of rations reach the beneficiaries since the entire transport network across the country is in total disarray.

Greater planning should also have been seen in the movement of essential goods. More than half of the 12 million trucks on the high ways have been arbitrarily stopped for carrying non-essential goods. As Prof. Deepak Nayyar writes: "Many truck drivers have abandoned their trucks and are being harassed by hoarding, are already driving about in distress, imposing a disproportionate burden on the poor."

It would also have been nice to hear from our Prime Minister — even as he spoke eloquently about candles and diyas — about what progress has been made in upgrading our woefully inadequate health infrastructure. Our health workers are doing their valiant best, but they need more protective equipment (PPEs) for their own safety. We need far more testing kits, hospital beds, and ventilators. More testing is the key to accurately establish the number of those

affected by the virus. Only this will enable more effective and extensive quarantining. The government has been applying its mind to these issues. Some progress has been made, including through vital public-private partnerships, which should be aggressively encouraged while keeping a strict eye on quality. If the PM would have briefed the nation in his address on such matters, it may have instilled as much confidence and solidarity as merely the symbolic act of lighting a candle and switching off the lights.

There is also the question of providing adequate resources to the state governments. Ultimately, in a national ripple to this challenge, the federal structure of our polity will have to be fully involved. But many chief ministers have complained that — among other things — their GST payments which are due have not been made yet, and this is hindering their relief efforts.

It is good to have a Prime Minister who can evoke symbolism in the goal of greater national solidarity. Such symbolism is important in building collective national resolve to face this unprecedented challenge. But it might have been better if, in addition to the call to light candles, our PM had also spelled out concretely what the government had done so far, what its vision was for the future, and what more it could do to help the poor, the needy and the marginalised.

The writer is an author, diplomat and in politics

More testing is the key to establish the number of those affected by the virus. Only this will enable more effective and extensive quarantining. The government has been applying its mind to these issues.

LETTERS

COVID PANDEMIC

The government's poor planning to fight coronavirus stands exposed with many of its hospitals still lacking ventilators and PPEs (India logs 700 cases, 12 deaths, DC, April 5). When the pandemic entered India in January 20, the government should have at least equipped its hospitals fully by this time. However, the issue was sidelined due to toppling of Madhya Pradesh government resulting in close to 100 deaths. The government must wake up now and procure all medical equipment on a war footing to save lives.

K. Ramesh
Hyderabad

Chief Minister K. Chandrababu Naidu has given a great gift to people of the state (NS to supply fruits through 3,500 mobile rythu bazaars, DC, April 5). It must be the first state in the country to think of nutrition security and not food security alone. As a resident of Telangana my prayers to the Chief Minister in saving several people who are at risk of contracting coronavirus due to low levels of immunity.

Dr C. Anjali Devi
Hyderabad

MNS chief Raj Thackeray's call to gun down people trying to spread the virus should be condemned by all. (Raj) People spreading virus should be killed, DC April 5). If Raj had his common sense, he had contracted the virus, what would have been his reaction? Who would have been his statement? While blaming other people and Tablighis, he should refrain from giving such irresponsible statements at least when humanity is living under fear and staying at home.

Syed Amjad Ali
Secunderabad

LIC may go in for cattle insurance

AHMEDABAD, APRIL 5: The Life Insurance Corporation may soon go in for cattle insurance, LIC Chairman T. A. Pai invited here today. Addressing a news conference, Mr. Pai discussed that one of the subsidiaries of the LIC

50 YEARS AGO IN
Chronicle

had been asked to take up a pilot project to help farmers set up a scheme of cattle insurance. The subsidiary had been recommended to reconsider the scheme of Kaira and Mehsana districts in Gujarat where co-operative bodies had been successful in dairy industry.



Aakar Patel

What will the new economy in post-Covid world be like?

I was speaking recently to a friend from Bengaluru who has lived in the United States for most of his life. He is employed by a software firm and would like to return to India three times a year. I have known him for about a quarter century and he has been coming with regularity. It has been his routine and he spends at least 60 days each year in India on work.

However he will not be coming to Bengaluru next month, as he was supposed to do, and he does not know when he would next be sent. Companies and businesses will not put their employees at risk any time soon, especially those firms based in America and Europe. They have laws which individuals can use if they feel they have been endangered and their safety jeopardised by their employer. Till there is a vaccine for Covid-19, this situation will remain uncertain. Of course this will have an impact on the airlines. Already there is a ban on international travel pretty much across the world. Europeans

cannot go to America and vice versa. No passenger flights are operating in India. Even when the lockdown is opened in mid-April, the number of people flying on work internally will be low and after an initial couple of days when those who are stuck go immediately to where they need to be, the traffic will be lower each month than it was last year.

How will airlines, which operate on very thin margins and sometimes operate at a loss as we have seen in India, manage? They will not be able to and the state will need to decide whether to bail them out. It is likely that they will be used on airplane leases and pilot and crew salaries or let them die. From a position where India was about to sell its national carrier, Air India, we are faced with the possibility that the government buys stakes in a few more and possibly all airlines. Tourism employs something like 10 per cent of the world's population. My friend stays in a hotel in Bengaluru and that place will also

lose income from business travellers for the foreseeable future. Restaurants will be hit for the new few months as people will continue remaining home unless absolutely necessary. Similarly, malls and cinema halls and all those sorts of places which have high levels of mingling and crowds will suffer crushing losses of revenue. How will we cope and what will our new economy look like? We do not know at this point and we will need to learn as we go along.

The chief economist of HDFC bank has written this week that the cost of Covid 19 to the Indian economy will be \$100 billion, or ₹7.5 lakh crore. That is the equal to what India spends on defence plus all Central government schemes (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, education, health, PM Awas, Smart Cities, Swachh Bharat, midday meals, drinking water, irrigation etc) combined. Meaning that either we do not spend on all these things, which is not possible, or we borrow

or print the money required to do so.

It is hard to imagine a sector which will not be violently affected by the health crisis, the lockdown and what will come after. The sales for cars and automobiles in March were 50 per cent lower in India than they were in March 2019. This is despite the fact that we lost only about eight days due to the lockdown that month. In April the hit will be bigger because half the month is part of the lockdown. Power consumption was 25 per cent lower this week than in April 2019. This is entirely because factories are shut down and will lose three weeks of output at least. After that, they will hope that their workers return from villages and that it is not going to happen soon.

There are three or four estimates on what the cost to the Gross Domestic Product of India will be. The most positive one says that we will lose two per cent of GDP growth. The most negative says we will lose four per cent. The truth is

that nobody knows at the moment what will come in April and May, just as nobody anticipated in February that March would turn out the way that it did though the coronavirus was already in the headlines then.

It will occupy the world for the rest of 2020 and perhaps even beyond that and will have medium and long-term ramifications. The short term ones, the ones that we have described above, are immediate and visible. There will be others, especially on the future of the global economy, that may impact us for an entire generation. Because we are currently in the middle of the immediate health crisis, there has not been much discussion of this so far but it will start soon.

It is a very difficult task ahead for the prime minister and for the nation, even after the lockdown ends.

Aakar Patel is a senior journalist and columnist

quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	27,590.95 -2.39
Nifty 50	8,083.80 -2.06
S&P 500*	2,488.65 -1.51
Dollar (₹)	76.13 0.70
Pound Sterling (₹)	93.64 1.41
Euro (₹)	82.34 1.21
Gold (Oz) (₹)	1,645.70 0.49
Brent crude (\$/bbl)	34.11 13.93
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.306 2.721
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.599 0.00

* As of Saturday

Govt extends validity of e-way bill till April-end

With trucks stuck at national highways due to the lockdown, the government has extended till April 30 the validity of e-way bills—required for inter-state movement of goods worth over Rs 50,000—whose expiry date fell between March 20 and April 15. In a notification, the Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST) Act, 2017, currently e-way bills have a validity of 1 day for every 100 km. For over dimensional cargo (ODC), like trucks, the validity is 1 day for every 20 km.

HDFC Bank bucks trend, reports rise in deposits

HDFC Bank has bucked what was emerging as a trend of private sector lenders facing a fall in deposit base during the March quarter. The largest private sector lender has reported a 7.41 per cent increase in aggregate deposits during the January-March period to ₹1,46,146 lakh crore, which was 24 per cent higher as compared to March 31 last year. HDFC Bank said its advances have risen by 21 per cent as of March 31.

The insurance regulator has instructed life insurers to explain clearly to policyholders about their withdrawal status-for instance, what will happen if they withdraw their funds immediately or later. "Life insurers have to

Extra 30 days grace period for life policies 5-year extension of Ulip-claims allowed

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO
NEW DELHI, APRIL 5

Amidst the ongoing 21-day lockdown and stock market crash, the insurance regulator has allowed a five-year extension of unit-linked insurance plans (Ulip) maturing in March-May and granted an additional 30-day grace period on life insurance premiums falling due in March-April.

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) has given the unprecedented relief to Ulip-holders to protect the returns on their investment in view of the steep decline in stock values over the last two months. Irdai said the Ulip-holders whose policy would mature in March, April or May could now postpone the maturity date for up to five years.

"Where unit-linked policies mature and fund value is to be paid in lump sum, life insurers may offer settlement options in accordance with Regulation 25 of IRDA (Linked Insurance Products) Regulations, 2013. This option is regardless of whether such option exists or not in the specific product," the Irdai said.

The insurance regulator has instructed life insurers to explain clearly to policyholders about their withdrawal status-for instance, what will happen if they withdraw their funds immediately or later. "Life insurers have to

explain clearly the possible downside risk of continued fluctuation of fund value based on daily NAV and clear consent has to be obtained from the policyholder. This is allowed for unit linked policies maturing up to 31st May 2020," Irdai added.

The focus is on issues that may come up after the lockdown is lifted on April 15, an official said. There have been discussions about a package that has been finalised yet, the official said, adding that the idea is to revive consumption "so some measures might be needed."

If a package is announced, it would be the third major initiative by the central government to tackle the challenges thrown up by the rapid spread of the coronavirus.

On March 24, hours before Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared a countrywide lockdown, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced a slew of relief measures for taxpayers and businesses. Two days later, Sitharaman announced a ₹1.7-lakh-crore relief package for those hit hardest by the lockdown.

On Sunday, the authorities are also looking at the possibility of redesigning some well-ordered schemes to suit the post-lockdown situation.



29 FIRMS TO LAUNCH AROGYA SANJEEVANI

FC BANKING BUREAU
MUMBAI, APRIL 5

The Irdai has given clearance to 29 non-life and pure health insurance companies to market Arogya Sanjeevani Policy, a standard health insurance product, which will also cover the cost of treatment for Covid-19.

Arogya Sanjeevani Policy is a standard health insurance policy that will offer coverage of between Rs 1 lakh and Rs

5 lakh for treatment of illnesses and injuries requiring in-patient hospitalisation, including for infectious diseases like coronavirus (Covid-19) or similar such diseases and also provides cover for listed modern treatments and procedures. Besides covering pre-hospitalisation, post-hospitalisation, the policy also covers Ayush treatment and daycare treatments.

The policy will be for a period of one year. As per the Irdai circular issued on Saturday, "Additional grace period has been provided to the policyholders whose life insurance policies' premiums fall due in March and April 2020. In addition to the 30-day grace period given earlier on March 23, the policyholders who are liable to pay in March now have a total of 60 days."

Foreign investors pull out more money than in 2008

FC BUREAU
MUMBAI, APRIL 5

The sudden exit of foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) from the market last month in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic is worse than in the 2008 financial crisis. Foreign fund houses have sold equity and debt securities worth Rs 1,18,203 crore in March, data provided by national depository NSDL showed.

Long only funds like sovereign wealth funds and hedge funds have resorted to selling their emerging market investments in view of the unprecedented crisis in their home countries in the US and Europe.

Sata shows FPIs pulled



Air Deccan stops ops; staff put on sabbatical

DEEPAK PATEL
NEW DELHI, APRIL 5

Regional airliner Air Deccan announced on Sunday that it is ceasing its operations until further notice and all employees are being put on a sabbatical without pay, the first Indian aviation company to succumb to the coronavirus crisis that has led to a 21-day lockdown and virtually paralysed the sector.

An email to his employees, Air Deccan CEO Arun Kumar Singh said, "In view of the recent global and domestic issues and subsequent directive by the Indian regulator (to suspend all commercial passenger flights till April 14), Air Deccan has no choice but to cease its operations until further notice."

"With heavy heart, I am also compelled to inform that all existing employees of Air Deccan (permanent, temporary and contractual) will be put on sabbatical without pay with immediate effect," he added in the email.

Deccan has a fleet of four 18-seater Beechcraft aircraft to fly in regional routes in western India. "I personally assure you as and when Air Deccan recommences operations under conducive circumstances, all existing employees will be offered first priority of refusal," he said. —PTI

Foreign investors pull out more money than in 2008

FC BUREAU
MUMBAI, APRIL 5

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India Inc expects 2 quarters of pain

ASHWIN J PUNNEN
MUMBAI, APRIL 5

Indian Inc foresees the coronavirus-related pain to last over a couple of quarters with looming job losses, sharp decline in revenue and profit growth due to the lockdown and the resultant impact on GDP growth.

Consulting firm KPMG predicts India's growth may fall below 3 per cent in the lockdown, is extended. It said the lockdown is likely to have a sizeable impact on the economy, as it could impact three major contributors to GDP-private investment, consumption and exports.

According to a snap poll of 200 CEOs across sectors by the Confederation of Indian Industry, the coronavirus outbreak and the subsequent country-wide lockdown, have deeply impacted the domestic economy with a majority of the firms expecting a significant decline in their top line and bottom line in the current and the previous quarters.

"The survey results indicate that a significant majority of the firms expected revenue to fall more than 10 per cent and profits to decline more than 5 per cent in both the current quarter (April-June 2020) as well as the preceding quarter (January-March 2020)."

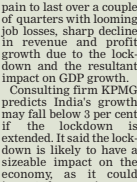
Further, a majority of the companies claimed that their inventory was lying idle and there could be a demand slowdown in the post-lockdown period.

On the jobs front, corporates are expecting there could be job cuts ranging from 15 per cent to 30 per cent once the lockdown ends.

According to KPMG, the severe disruption in demand caused by the pandemic has created large cash flow gaps for corporates and tight financial conditions will make it difficult for them to fill this gap through market borrowing.

"Abrupt stop of urban activity could lead to a steep fall in consumption of non-essential goods. The impact could be even more severe if domestic supply chain disruption caused by the 21-day lockdown were to affect the availability of essential commodities," the KPMG report said.

Factor-wise, supply chain restrictions and expected labour migration may be impediments to the recovery of the petrochemical sector; Textile and apparel production is likely to fall by 10 to 12 per cent in the April-June quarter. The



Toyota phases out Etios, Corolla Altis

MICHAEL GONSALVES
PUNE, APRIL 5

Toyota, the world's second biggest Japanese automaker, is mulling bringing new models to last year and technologies to fill the gap created by stopping sales last month of its popular Etios range as well as Corolla Altis in Asia's third biggest economy.

"We have many products in our global portfolio and we are currently evaluating which models will be suitable to introduce in the Indian market," Naven Soni, senior vice president, sales and service, at Toyota Kirloskar Motor told *Financial Chronicle*.

However, he said at present Toyota Glanza and Yaris would do well as alternatives to the Etios. Liva hatchback launched in 2011 and the Etios sedan in 2010, respectively.

"In fact, sales of Yaris, introduced in mid-2018, jumped 83 per cent in January and February compared to last year and Glanza has also been steadily selling an average of 2,500 to 2,700 units monthly," Soni pointed out. The company said a total of 4.48 lakh entry level Etios series vehicles in the domestic market and exported 1.31 lakh units to other markets.

Similarly, it sold close to 1.18 lakh units of the Corolla Altis in India since its launch in 2003. Soni said last month the last batch of the Etios series as well as the Corolla Altis were rolled out, bringing an end to the long journeys of the models enjoyed in India.

Saudi Arabia delays May crude prices, waits for Opec+ meet

RANIA EL GAMAL
DUBAI, APRIL 5

Saudi Aramco will delay the release of its crude official selling prices (OSP) for May until after April 10 to wait for the outcome of a meeting between Opec and its allies regarding possible supply cuts, a senior Saudi source familiar with the matter said on Sunday.

"It is an unprecedented measure that has not been taken by Aramco before. May OSPs will depend on how the Opec+ meeting concludes. We are doing what we can to make it successful, including taking this extraordinary step to delay the OSPs," the Saudi source said.



Relief package sought for tourism sector

The Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) urged the Centre to provide relief to the tourism industry as it reports experienced heavy losses due to the pandemic.

"To tide over the crisis, IATO is seeking scrapping of GST in entirety for period of one year for all outbound, inbound and domestic bookings," it said. The industry also wants advances paid to hotels, airlines and to states be entirely refunded.

Various options are on the table such as scholarships and fellowships given by ministries, harvesting of rain water and the government has started to address them one by one, they said.

Out of the 10 empowered groups of senior bureaucrats constituted by the prime minister to prepare India's response to Covid-19, one group is tasked to suggest economic measures. —PTI

Govt mulling another package after lockdown

Foreign investors pull out more money than in 2008

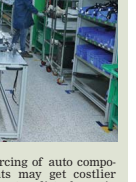
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Sata shows FPIs pulled

Sata shows FPIs pulled



Exporters want to operate partially during lockdown

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, APRIL 5

Exporters have sought permission from the government to partially resume operations during the lockdown period in order to fulfill pending orders in some sectors and to save perishable raw materials in some other.

Exporters want to operate their units at least with skeletal staff. "While in most sectors, new orders have dried up, a few are still getting orders, some have to prepare for the coming season and some have to complete pending orders," said K. Umnikrishnan, deputy general manager, Federation of Indian Export Organisations.

Marine export houses are stuck at sea and the operations need continuity considering the perishable nature of the commodity. For cashew exporters, the harvest season is starting and they need to procure the commodity at this time.

In the case of garments, the fashion teams have to start preparing for the

new season and create samples. Garment exporters have asked the government to allow at least the designing teams to work under sanitised conditions. In the textile sector, many of the exporters have pending orders which need to be fulfilled.

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TAFE offers tractors rent-free for farmers

MICHAEL GONSALVES
PUNE, APRIL 5

Tractors and Farm Equipment, or TAFE, India's third largest tractor maker, will provide 18,400 tractors and farm implements to be used by the Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan farmers during the coming April-June harvest season to mitigate the impact of the coronavirus lockdown hitting the food grain production in India, with the estimates

indicating a record food grain production this time, led by paddy, wheat along with corn/jowar crops.

"During this cropping season, the small and marginal farmers in India are facing a situation of including in movement of their agricultural produce," Mallika Srinivasan, chairman and managing director at TAFE told *Financial Chronicle*.

"At this crucial juncture, TAFE seeks to support the small and marginal farmers to tide over the crisis caused by Covid-19 by offering free rental services of Massey Ferguson and Eicher brand tractors," Srinivasan said.

In Tamil Nadu TAFE will offer 4,600 tractors and 10,500 implements to small and marginal farmers for 90 days in 30 districts.

In UP the company will deploy 3,000 tractors, facility, healthcare professionals who are Geojit clients need to mail duly filled declarations along with the professional photo ID to the company.

JCB India, maker of earthmoving and construction equipment, has partnered with Asian Institute of Medical Sciences, Faridabad, to support the fight against Covid-19. It will fund personal protective equipment (PPEs), medicines, testing kits for the medical teams.

—Reuters

SHORT TAKES

India bid for 2027 AFC Asian Cup

New Delhi, India has submitted its bid documents for hosting the AFC Asian Cup in 2027, a top official of the national federation confirmed on Sunday. If India wins the bid, it will be the first time the country will host the continental showpiece event. "We have already submitted our expression of interest to the AFC (Asian Football Confederation). That is what's required as of now. All India Football Federation General Secretary Kunal Das said. Recently, the AFC had extended the deadline to lodge expression of interest by three months from March 31 to June 30 in view of the Covid-19 pandemic. "The AFC had hoped to announce the tournament hosts as soon as possible to give them more time to prepare for the quadrennial continental championship, which was expanded to 24 teams for the 2019 edition in the United Arab Emirates," the AFC said. —PTI

Miandad wants fixers hanged

Karachi: Cricketers involved in match fixing should be hanged, former Pakistan batting great Javed Miandad suggested Friday. Match-fixing and spot-fixing — determining the outcome of a specific part of a game rather than the overall result — have stained the country's sport for several years. "Players who are involved in spot-fixing should be severely punished," Miandad, who scored Pakistan's second-highest Test runs with 8832, said on his YouTube channel. "Spot-fixers should be hanged because it is similar to killing someone, and so the punishment should also be on the same lines. An example should be set so that no player even thinks about doing something like this," he added. His remarks followed Mohammad Hafeez's protests over Sharjeel Khan's return despite a five-year ban. —AFP

Langer for games minus spectators

London: Australia coach Justin Langer believes resuming cricket behind closed doors when it is safe to do so will have "great value" for the public, deprived of action by the coronavirus shutdown. Like almost the entire sporting schedule around the world, cricket has been halted by the pandemic, with no return date set in stone. "One of the options being mooted is to have the sport resume after restrictions have been lifted, but in empty stadiums. "When you started playing cricket, when you were under age, there's no crowds there," he told BBC Radio. "You played it because you loved playing the game, you loved playing with your mates and you loved playing the game. For the love of the game, and for still being able to entertain people through TV sets or radio," he added. —AFP

TRUMP LOOKS AT SPORT IN SEPTEMBER

Washington: President Donald Trump said he would obviously suspend sports leagues hit by the coronavirus pandemic would resume "sooner rather than later" but declined to set a timetable for their return. On a conference call with the commissioners of the major professional sports leagues, Trump told National Football League commissioner Roger Goodell he believed the season would kick off in September. US sports have been upended by the coronavirus, with the NBA, Major League Baseball, Major League Soccer and National Hockey League all halting or suspending their respective seasons in March as the pandemic erupted. "I want fans back in the arenas... whenever we're ready. As soon as we can obviously, I can't tell you a date but I think it's going to be sooner rather than later," Trump said. —AFP

TAJIKIKS STILL

Tajikistan starts new football season sans fans

Dushanbe, April 5: Tajikistan's domestic football season kicked off on Saturday, as leagues around the world remained suspended to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus. The Super Cup game heralding the beginning of the football season took place behind closed doors, and saw perennial domestic champions FC Istiklol come from behind to beat FC Khujand 2-1 in the capital Dushanbe. Tajikistan, a poor Central Asian state of 9 million people, has yet to declare a single infection from Covid-19, which has reached over a million cases worldwide and caused more than 60,000 deaths. Last month authorities overaw extravagant state celebrations of the Nowruz springtime festival involving tens of thousands of people across the country. Strongman leader Emomali Rakhmonov is posing with dozens of young women clad in traditional garb at a time when leaders the world over were advocating social distancing. In the pandemic's shadow, the vast majority of leagues around the world have been stopped over fears for players as well as spectators. In most cases, there are no clear plans for restarts. Belarus, another ex-Soviet country, remains the outlier in Europe, and its league has attracted unprecedented international attention since it began with fans attending games last month. The Tajik Super Cup tie failed to generate the same levels of social media excitement as the Belarusian league fixtures but still prompted tweets from action-starved football fans in German, English and Spanish, among other languages. The game itself threatened to return an upset before Istiklol, a club founded by Rakhmonov's son Rustam Emomali, the current mayor of the capital Dushanbe, converted



Action from the Tajikistan Super Cup match between FC Istiklol (in red and black) and FC Khujand in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on Saturday. Istiklol won 2-1.

● The Super Cup game heralding the beginning of Tajikistan's football season took place behind closed doors, and saw perennial domestic champions FC Istiklol come from behind to beat FC Khujand 2-1 in the capital city of Dushanbe.

their dominance into goals and overturned an early Khujand lead. The other, reclusive Turkmenistan, has already announced the suspension of its domestic league. Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov made his first mention of the coronavirus in comments reported Saturday by state media. —AFP

CORONA | LOCKDOWN

Kyle walks out, is set to face music

London, April 5: Kyle Walker is facing disciplinary action from Manchester City despite apologising after breaching coronavirus lockdown conditions even though he advised people to stay at home. The England defender was widely reported he held a party at his home last week, breaking the government's rules on social distancing. "I understand that my position as a professional footballer brings the responsibility of being a role model," Walker said in a statement. "As such, I want to apologise to my family, friends, football club, supporters and the public for letting them down."



I understand that my position as a professional footballer brings the responsibility of being a role model. As such, I want to apologise to my family, friends, football club, supporters and the public for letting them down. —KYLE WALKER Manchester City player, after breaking the lockdown rules

"There are heroes out there making a vital difference to society at the moment, and I have been keen to help support and highlight their amazing sacrifices and life-saving work over the past week," the statement added.

3-MONTH HOME DETENTION FOR SERBIAN FOOTBALLER

Serbian football player Aleksandar Prijovic has been sentenced to three months of home detention for flouting a curfew imposed to curb the spread of coronavirus. The 29-year-old striker, who plays for Saudi Arabian club Al-Ittihad pleaded guilty at a video link trial in Belgrade on Saturday. Police had arrested Prijovic and 19 others for gathering at hotel lobby bar in Belgrade on Friday and violating the country's 5 p.m. to 5 a.m. lockdown orders. He is the second Serbian soccer player to be caught violating the stay-at-home orders after Real Madrid

striker Luka Jovic flouted the state of emergency decree when he attended his girlfriend's birthday party at a Belgrade cafe last month. Those who violate "responsible behaviour" could face up to three years in jail.

RUGBY PLAYERS IGNORE QUARANTINE, ARRESTED

Two Fiji rugby players have been arrested for ignoring the Pacific nation's coronavirus self-isolation rules, with local authorities saying their "irresponsible behaviour" would be reported to rugby's world governing body. The two men have not been publicly identified but the Fiji Rugby Union confirmed they were professionals and media reported them variously to be sevens players and internationals. —Agencies

FORMULA | ONE

SCRAP 2020 SEASON, SAYS ECCLESTONE

London, April 5: Bernie Ecclestone says this season's Formula One championship should be cancelled because it appears unlikely the enough races can be completed for it to be valid due to the coronavirus crisis. The opening eight rounds of the 2020 season have been either cancelled or postponed, with hubs over a million people globally and wrecked havoc on the economy. "By Blessings of Almighty God and I pledge to distribute ration to 5,000 families residing in Jalandhar, who are struggling to feed their families during these difficult times. We will continue to help and support our fellow citizens in whichever way we can lessen the burden of struggle," Harbhajan said. "I asked how is he co-ordinating from Mumbai, the star spinner said: "I used to live in Daulatpur earlier. My close friends today completed distribution of dry ration to 500 families in that area. I have personally spoken to DC (Punjab Police) Jalandhar. My team of friends will be following his instructions and accordingly food packets will be distributed. We are distributing 5kg of rice, 2kg of pulses and so on. This is the least I could do. I wanted to ensure that if I am able to help."

CORONA | CONTRIBUTION

Harbhajan, Yuvi extend support

New Delhi, April 5: Ace India off-spinner Harbhajan Singh has pledged to feed 5,000 underprivileged families in his native Jalandhar, who are suffering due to the Covid-19 pandemic which has infected over a million people globally and wrecked havoc on the economy. "By Blessings of Almighty God and I pledge to distribute ration to 5,000 families residing in Jalandhar, who are struggling to feed their families during these difficult times. We will continue to help and support our fellow citizens in whichever way we can lessen the burden of struggle," Harbhajan said. "I asked how is he co-ordinating from Mumbai, the star spinner said: "I used to live in Daulatpur earlier. My close friends today completed distribution of dry ration to 500 families in that area. I have personally spoken to DC (Punjab Police) Jalandhar. My team of friends will be following his instructions and accordingly food packets will be distributed. We are distributing 5kg of rice, 2kg of pulses and so on. This is the least I could do. I wanted to ensure that if I am able to help."

YUVRAJ DONATES T50L

Former India star cricketer Yuvraj Singh on Sunday pledged to donate ₹50 lakh to the PM CARES Fund to help fight the Covid-19 pandemic. "This is a period of uncertainty that we all rounder also appealed to the people to stay united in the fight against the pandemic. On his Twitter handle, all-rounder also pledged to donate ₹50 lakh to the PM CARES Fund to help fight the Covid-19 pandemic. "This is a period of uncertainty that we all rounder also appealed to the people to stay united in the fight against the pandemic. On his Twitter handle, all-rounder also pledged to donate ₹50 lakh to the PM CARES Fund to help fight the Covid-19 pandemic. —PTI

EPL players reject pay cut

London, April 5: The English Premier League players rejected a move Saturday by clubs to cut their wages by 30 per cent during the coronavirus pandemic, escalating a bitter public row as their union claimed the government would lose out on more than £200 million (around \$245 million) in tax. "This would be detrimental to our NHS (National Health Service) and other government funded services," the Professional Footballers' Association said in a statement. "Taking on the Premier League as a whole, the players association said the £20 million being given to the NHS by the world's richest football competition was "welcome" but "we believe it could be far bigger."



Liverpool's James Milner (centre) vies for the ball with Manchester United's Victor Lindelof during their English Premier League match in this file photo.

The union's strident stance came after further talks on Saturday involving clubs and the league as Liverpool became the latest Premier League club to defy political anger by using a government bailout scheme to furlough some non-playing staff. Health Secretary Matt Hancock had told players at clubs furloughing staff that a pay cut. Sports minister Nigel Huddleston reminded the Premier League to ensure it "helps the national effort."

Liverpool, which leads the league by 25 points, followed fellow 2019 Champions League finalist Tottenham, Bournemouth, Newcastle and Norwich in furloughing staff. A job retention scheme implemented to help businesses survive the national lockdown, staff can be put on furlough and receive 80 per cent of their salaries from the government, up to a maximum of £2,500 (\$3,000) a month. Liverpool said it would top up salaries to ensure staff still received the full amount but that still means using public funds to pay some staff. Former Liverpool defender Jamie Carragher called that a poor move, saying respect and goodwill is lost "by the club. The European champions have been owned for a decade by John Henry's Fenway Sports Group.

Liverpool made a pre-tax profit of 42 million pounds on a turnover of £533 million last year and it said complex talks continue with players about savings on salaries. A meeting of Premier League clubs on Friday had ended with agreement on the need to ask players to see 30 per cent of their pay cut or deferred. But the standoff between the players' union and clubs continues. —AP

Lockdown set to take a toll on cricketers



Hemant Kenkre Silly Point

The unforeseen lockdown, across the world, must be taking its toll on international cricketers. Considering that the present lot plays the sport throughout the year, living out of suitcases and sleeping on a different unfamiliar bed every other night, staying indoors must be a new way of living. For this lot, that's more than active twenty-four-by-seven more often than not, being with family (not friends) is something they will cherish. By now, the support teams of many interna-

tional cricket teams must have prepared and shared a regimen for their players to remain fit and not get carried away by dipping into the don't's while in quarantine. There will be restrictions on diet and exercises which will be doled out to athletes to enable them to stay in shape till the sport resumes. As we know, fitness is of paramount importance in modern cricket and we have seen many talents go waste thanks to their aversion for keeping up with newer regimes of maintain-

ing fit. Advanced aerobic exercises like the Yo-yo test are new forms of testing the fitness and endurance of players and these factors considered beyond mere art and form of a player. Talent's like Sanju Samson, Suresh Raina among others have had to give a miss to tours for failing this exam which has carried away by dipping into the don't's while in quarantine. The test, which involves the participants running back and forth between markers at a specified speed determines the fitness levels of athletes. Since 2017, when it was first introduced in Indian cricket, the test has caught the fancy of cricketers and authorities in India and is fully endorsed by skipper Virat Kohli who leads from

the front as far as fitness is concerned. The test is another important factor that has to be considered which has to do with the state of their minds. When the players come back they will also need to be mentally strong and raring to go back on the field, fit in the body and the mind. Coming back after a long halt is not going to be easy, especially when no one knows when cricket and the world will return to normalcy. Indian Test star, Ajinkya Rahane has stressed on mental health and said that this keeping one's mind strong during the lockdown is also important. During the cricket season, switching off and on during a game is an important element that has been used by many past masters. They knew how to relax in between matches

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