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MAPPING THE HISTORY OF KALAPANI DISPUTE BETWEEN INDIA AND NEPAL

The issue in itself goes back to the early 19th century, when the British ruled India and Nepal was a conglomeration of small kingdoms under the reign of King Prithvi Narayan Shah.

VIDEO OF THE DAY



CARING FOR BIRDS DURING LOCKDOWN

For sake of birds, two migrants didn't return to village

STORIES OF STRENGTH



COVID-19 FIGHTERS

From beggar boy to protector of Kerala's homeless

EXPRESS AUDIO

Understanding Covid's toll on mental health

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Listen to the Sandip Roy Show where Dr Pratima Murthy (NIMHANS) talks about the rise of mental health problems during this pandemic

FROM PAGE ONE

Aarogya app

any symptoms and are found negative in a test, then there is no need for quarantine). Why quarantine?" "We have clarified that if anyone has the Aarogya Setu app, it's like a passport, why should anybody want any quarantine," Puri said.

Confusion, however, reigns with many states requiring passengers to quarantine themselves for two weeks. Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel Saturday said in a letter to Puri that passengers be sent for 14 days to paid quarantine or government-run facilities. Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh too said those coming to the state including via domestic flights, trains and buses, would have to undergo quarantine for 14 days. Travelers showing Covid symptoms will be sent to institutional quarantine for 14 days, but those without symptoms would be allowed home quarantine.

Five other states — Kerala, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Assam, and the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, also decided to quarantine passengers upon arrival.

On Saturday, Maharashtra's Nodal Officer in-charge for air movement, wrote to Mumbai International Airport Ltd, the airport operator in Mumbai, to initiate just minimum possible domestic flights from the state which are purely emergent in nature like for international transfer passengers from other cities, medical emergencies, students, and cases on compassionate grounds.

Many states including Chhattisgarh, Kerala and Rajasthan, have been demanding that they be consulted before the Centre takes decisions on commencement of transport operations. On Saturday, Pinarayi Vijayan, Chief Minister, Kerala, wrote to Railway Minister Piyush Goyal saying the state should be informed in advance about special trains being sent. Pointing out that Kerala was not informed about the special train on May 22 from Mumbai to Thiruvananthapuram, he said not sharing details of passengers and their local address would pose a major hurdle for the state's mitigation work against Covid-19.

Baghel too wrote to Goyal asking for all passenger details to be shared with the state.

On Thursday, the Centre had announced domestic commercial flight operations, which were grounded for two months, will resume May 25. The next day, the civil aviation ministry issued a set of standard operating procedures (SOPs) to be followed by passengers, airlines and airport operators. The SOPs issued by the civil aviation ministry for passengers, state: "On arrival at their destination, the travelling passengers will have to adhere to such health protocols as are prescribed by the destination state/UT."

With just a day to go, airlines

expressed anguish at the lack of coordination between the Centre and states. Responding to a question on why airlines weren't informing passengers if their destination state would require them to be quarantined, a senior executive at a low-cost airline said, "Airlines cannot take responsibility, just like they cannot and don't take responsibility for visa rules. It is not their domain of expertise, and they cannot be expected to be on top of multiple changing local requirements not directly related to the operation of airlines."

In his letter to Puri, Chhattisgarh CM Baghel wrote about lack of clarity on the domestic flights resumption. "It has come to our notice through different media that the Civil Aviation Ministry has decided to resume domestic flight services from May 25 and no separate standard operating procedure (SOP) has been issued for passengers who will be travelling," he said.

Observing that further spread of coronavirus infection could not be averted if domestic flight services are resumed at the time when there is a spike in corona positive cases in the country, Baghel said the civil aviation ministry should resume operating flights only under effective measures and guidelines to curb the spread of the virus.

In his letter, Baghel also demanded "elaborate details" about the flights and passengers aboard them be shared with the states, and said passengers should be informed about the mandatory quarantine period at the time of booking itself.

The Chhattisgarh government has already issued guidelines to districts regarding train and air travels, which mandates quarantining of all arrivals by the authorities. "For the passengers coming in flights, they need to register at the government's portal as well after booking tickets. At the Raipur airport, the Raipur Municipal Commissioner has been asked to set up multiple kiosks for primary screening after which the passengers will be sent to isolation centers or quarantine centers, depending on symptoms," a senior government official told *The Indian Express*.

(WITH INPUTS FROM EMS MUMBAI, CHANDIGARH, KERALA)

Amphan

especially in Kolkata and the Sunderbans, which were among the worst affected.

"There is less than 2 per cent green cover in Kolkata. Out of about 5 lakh trees, over 5,000 have fallen. That may not be a big number, but some of the trees that fell were very old and had a large canopy. The Great Banyan Tree, for instance, was spread over 4.67 acres. It will take about 10 to 15 years to get back some of the green cover that was lost in the cyclone," said Kolkata-based environmentalist Subhas Dutta.

Blaming wrong selection of

LAC tensions mount, Army chief takes stock

places — at Hot Springs and in two locations 15-20 km to the north-west, Patrolling Point 14 (PP-14) and PP-15.

At each of these places, around 800-1000 Chinese soldiers have crossed over to the Indian side of the LAC, sources said, at distances of around 2-3 km. Tents have been pitched by the Chinese soldiers in the area, along with a fleet of heavy vehicles and monitoring equipment. Chinese helicopter movement close to the LAC has also been monitored by the Indian side.

Sources said Indian soldiers in equal numbers have been deployed in the area, separated by a distance of 300-500 metres

from the Chinese — technically, the two sides are not in a faceoff. Movement of additional troops as part of "creation of reserves" and "contingency planning" have also been initiated by the Army, sources said.

Distance is being maintained by the Indian side to avoid fracas like the one on the night of May 5-6 at Pangong Tso, which led to injuries on both sides, sources said, adding that this should avert any "inadvertent escalation".

The motives for Chinese incursions into Indian territory are still not clear. One view among official circles is that it is triggered by local factors such as creation of more infrastructure

by Indians in areas close to the LAC.

Another view links it to a more assertive China which is intruding into a sector like Hot Springs where the perception of the LAC has not been in dispute.

Most officials agree that the situation at the LAC is "unprecedented" in recent memory, with tensions running very high. They also suggest that a solution to the crisis will have to be found soon since "the change in the status quo by the Chinese is not acceptable".

Official data show there has been a marked increase in the number of Chinese transgressions along the LAC in Ladakh in the western sector.

The first four months of this year, according to official data, witnessed 170 Chinese transgressions, including 130 in Ladakh. There were only 110 such transgressions in Ladakh during the same period in 2019.

But in 2019, the year when Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping met at Bishkek and Mahabalipuram, there were 663 Chinese transgressions, up from 404 in 2018. This included a 75 per cent spike in the western sector and a 55 per cent rise in the eastern sector.

Nearly three-quarters of the transgressions, data since 2015 show, have taken place in the western sector of the LAC.

Gaps in Covid testing map mark next challenge

Maharashtra (66), Karnataka (53), Andhra Pradesh (52), and Gujarat (39).

The states seeing a recent surge in cases — precipitated by the migrant influx — have fewer testing labs in their states: Uttar Pradesh (28), Odisha (17), and Bihar (15).

Almost all new labs added in May (194 out of 281) have been added to the country's hotspot states: Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Delhi, Gujarat, West Bengal, and Telangana.

Meanwhile, the new states that have begun to see some of the fastest growing case numbers — Bihar, Odisha, and Uttar Pradesh — only saw 26 new labs added this month.

Testing infrastructure is spread thin: In the 126 districts with more than 100 cases each, a third (47 districts) have no lab at all. Of the 99 districts with more than 50 cases (but less than 100), half (54) don't have any labs. And of the 218 districts with more than 10 cases (but

STATUS REPORT				
	New cases this month	Total cases as of May 23	No. of testing facilities	Testing samples per lakh population
Bihar	1785	2177	15	56
Chhattisgarh	134	172	7	188
Jharkhand	201	308	3	133
Madhya Pradesh	3609	6170	20	178
Odisha	1064	1189	17	270
Uttar Pradesh	3601	5735	28	107
West Bengal	2574	3332	34	132

less than 50), three-fourths (161) don't have a testing facility.

Of the 187 districts with 10 cases or fewer, more than 80 per cent (154 districts) do not have any facility for testing samples.

Meanwhile, India is steadily increasing its testing — the total number of samples has grown twice since the beginning of May to an average of over 1 lakh tests daily. There are currently

579 ICMR-approved testing labs that can provide results for samples — 407 are government-owned and 180 are privately-owned. Over the past month, ICMR has roughly doubled the number of functioning labs, adding 281 labs to the list.

When contacted, Prabhat Singh, AIMS Director, Patna, told *The Indian Express* that his lab is conducting roughly 300 sam-

ples a day from across seven nearby districts that are transported to his institution within a few hours.

With a current capacity of 500 samples a day, the establishment is procuring more machines to increase capacity. "Today, the state is comfortable as far as our labs go. But tomorrow, if the number jumps significantly, then certainly things could begin to fall short. That is always the case. Because that would be an issue, day-by-day we are increasing our facilities."

Singh reiterated that beyond heavy, mostly imported, lab equipment, trained personnel are key.

An April ICMR advisory delineated facility requirements such as RNA extraction, real-time PCR machines, deep freezers to store the samples, and personal protective equipment. ICMR also requires at least one medical microbiologist and four to six technicians who have experience in molecular virology.

plants and poor urban planning, Dutta said, "There are underground water lines, electrical wires, cable lines, gas lines and sewage lines. So trees planted on pavements could not have had a strong base. Besides, the selection of species was not right. Top-heavy trees like banyan, Ashoka, neem, royal poinciana, copper pod, peepal etc were used to line avenues. Also, since distance was not maintained between trees, their roots never went too deep."

Besides Kolkata, the Sunderbans mangroves, critical to the unique ecology of the region and which work as a buffer to cyclones and storms covers, too, were damaged. On the damage in Sunderbans, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said, "Mangroves were destroyed in huge numbers. Their restoration and planting is very important. Only mangroves can save Sunderbans."

Talking about the damage to the Great Banyan Tree, which is spread across 4.67 acres in Howrah's Indian Botanic Garden, director Kanak Das said, "It is one of the largest banyan trees in the world. Even during cyclones Fani and Bulbul, no major damage was done to it. But this time, it has been severely damaged. There are other rare trees which have been uprooted in the garden. We are trying to see if the tree can be healed," said Das.

Himadri Shekhar Debnath, former additional director of the Botanical Survey of India and former director of the Indian Botanic Garden, blamed poor tree management for the crisis. "There is no proper pruning mechanism. If the trees had been pruned before the season of cyclones and rains, the damage could have been minimised. Before Durga Puja every year, we see branches of trees be-

ing cut unscientifically, mostly along the side facing the road. That disturbs the balance of the tree," said Debnath.

Bonani Kakkar, Founder President of the NGO PUBLIC, which deals with environmental issues, says as Kolkata rebuilds its green cover, it must ensure big trees are not planted in small lanes.

Gujarat HC

J B Pardiwala and Ilesh Vora gave several directions to the state government on improving treatment and facilities for Covid patients.

Comparing the situation to "sinking of the Titanic", the bench said, "It is very distressing and painful to note that the condition prevailing as on date in the Civil Hospital, is pathetic... We are very sorry to state that the Civil Hospital Ahmedabad... appears to be in an extremely bad shape. As we said earlier, the Civil Hospital is meant to treat patients. However, it appears that as on date, it is as good as a dungeon. May be even worse than a dungeon."

The HC pulled up Additional Chief Secretary Pankaj Kumar, Secretary Milind Torwane and Principal Secretary, Health and Family Welfare Jayanti Ravi, who had been placed in charge of the Civil Hospital, and asked if the state Health Minister (Nitin Patel) and Chief Secretary (Anil Mukim) had "any idea" about the problems faced by patients and staff.

Linking high mortality rates to lack of ventilators, the court said, "Is the state government aware of the hard fact that the patients at the Civil Hospital are dying because of lack of adequate number of ventilators? How does the state government propose to tackle this problem of ventilators?"

The court directed the state government to issue a notification

making it mandatory for all multispecialty, private and corporate hospitals in Ahmedabad city and outskirts to reserve 50 per cent of its beds for Covid.

The bench also pulled up the government over its testing protocol after the state government told the court that it would play "gatekeeper" and decide when private laboratories could start testing samples for coronavirus.

In a report submitted before the court, the state government said, "...it has been observed that in many instances, unnecessary testing is being done by private laboratories and therefore, the State has decided to do gatekeeping for private labs," adding that the state has enough capacity for lab testing, which was being provided free of cost. "...the State has decided to conduct testing in government labs so that patients can avoid unnecessary expenditure. Private laboratories shall be allowed to perform the tests, if and when, the capacity of Government labs is exhausted."

There are 19 government laboratories in the state conducting the RT-PCR test for Covid patients. So far, 1,78,068 samples have been tested.

Directing the state government to immediately procure testing kits so as to enable even private laboratories in private hospitals to carry out the tests at government rates, the court questioned the state government's action as intended to "artificially control the data qua the number of cases in the State of Gujarat".

The court observed, "The argument that 'more number of tests which lead to 70% of the population testing positive for Covid, thereby leading to fear psychosis' should not be a ground to refuse or restrict the testing".

The court asked state authorities to keep a tab through the testing centres of all those who have tested positive and "may enforce isolation at home (as far as possible)" or at a quarantine facility, and only in case of symptoms may be considered for hospital admission. The HC also said it had been brought to its notice that there was no dearth of kits but they weren't being put to effective use since they required prior approval of the state authorities.

Rerouted train

been left in the lurch with no food or water. The passengers said they came to know of the diverted route only around 6 am on Saturday after cellphone networks sent messages welcoming them to Odisha. "When the train reached Rourkela, we began panicking and got off at the station to speak to the driver," said Santosh Gawde, 26.

"The driver asked us to talk to the administration. I began looking for contact numbers on the Internet in my mobile and called the Gorakhpur control room to tell them that the train had lost its way. That's when we came to know about the diversion," Gawde said.

"We got our last food packet, of khichdi, and a bottle of water in Nagpur on Friday evening. We finally got some puri and sabzi, and a bottle of water, at Gomoh after a whole day had passed," said Manoj Kumar, another passenger.

Zonal railway officials told *The Indian Express* that the system is currently running more trains that it can handle on routes to eastern UP and Bihar to clear the migrant rush. "When we run timetabled trains, the matter is different. Here, we are running 80 per cent of the trains to UP and

Bihar. There were some congestion issues, but we have sorted them out," Railway Board chairman V K Yadav said.

"As all the trains were converging to one route, some network congestion is experienced on North Central Railway & West Central Railway zones," the Rail Ministry tweeted. An official from Western Railway said rerouting of trains would continue over the next two to three days until the line cleared up.

In this case, officials said the train was to cross Bhusawal in Maharashtra, move to Itarsi in MP, enter UP via Jhansi, and pass Kanpur before reaching Gorakhpur — a distance of 1,750 km.

Instead, they said, the train was diverted from Bhusawal to Nagpur, and onward to Bilaspur (Chhattisgarh), Rourkela (Odisha), Asansol (West Bengal), Gomoh (Jharkhand) and Gaya (Bihar). It would enter UP at Mughalsarai, and reach Gorakhpur after covering a distance of 2,400 km.

Officials in Delhi said the Goods Marshalling Canpore (GMC) yard in Kanpur, the key converging point on the route, is "full to the brim". "Around 34 running lines carrying huge traffic from five directions in a short span of time has choked the network," said an official.

Officials said the congestion was also caused by delays "in boarding after various protocols by source states" and "in freeing up rakes at destinations by state authorities". They said the trains will now be run at "slower speeds than allowed" in several sections to ease the situation.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Anil Mishra, Divisional Railway Manager (Dhanbad), said that "around 13 trains were rerouted through Gomoh, Dhanbad, Singrauli and other areas". "We gave food, water, chocolates and cakes to the passengers," he said.

WITH ABHISHEK ANGAD IN RANCHI

Indian doctors

On why so many Indian and PIO medics were succumbing to Covid-19 in the UK, British Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (BAPIO) founding president and paediatrician Dr Ramesh Mehta told *The Sunday Express*: "There are about 65,000 doctors of Indian-origin working for NHS. We are the backbone. Since more BAME people are working in frontline services, they are like soldiers who face the bullets first. Of 32 doctors who have lost their lives, only two were White."

The first Indian NHS worker to die of Covid-19 was Eastbourne District General Hospital pharmacist Pooja Sharma (33) on March 26. It was a double tragedy for the family — she and her father Sudhir Sharma, a Heathrow immigration officer, died with 24 hours of each other.

Her brother Aman told media persons: "My sister was the superstar of our family. She had an irresistible laughter, sense of humour and good nature". Her childhood friend Amarjit Aujla remembers her "contagious laughter" and "random calls that brightened up" the day.

The first PIO doctor to die of Covid-19 in the UK was Dr Jiten-dra Rathod. He was a heart surgeon at University Hospital Wales, Cardiff, where he had spent 25 years. Dr Rathod, 62, was self-isolating due to a pre-existing health condition but died of complications caused by Covid-19.

Joseph Varkey, the bereaved husband of Philomina Cherian, a 62-year-old nurse at John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford, regrets not being able to bid her a final farewell on April 30. Philomina, originally from Kerala, had bought a house there and planned to retire soon. "It was really difficult to see her go like this," he said. A mother of three, Philomina served the NHS for 40 years.

At 80 and still working, Dr

Mohinder Singh Dhatt of Slough was one of the longest serving GPs in Berkshire. He died on April 28 after contracting Covid. His daughter, Dr Mini Dhatt, also a general practitioner, said her father worked for 54 years in the NHS.

Septuagenarian Dr Kamlesh Kumar Masson, who gave 47 years to the health service in the UK, died of Covid on April 16. Dr Masson founded Milton Road Surgery in Grays, Essex, in 1985 and worked there until 2017, after which he continued locum work across Thurrock and Basildon.

Dr Poornima Nair from the 1981 batch of the Frank Anthony Public School, Delhi, breathed her last on May 12 after a long battle with Covid-19 at North Tees Hospital. She was a GP at the Station View Medical Centre, Bishop Auckland, Durham.

"She felt no pain and my father was with her in her final moments. Thank you for all your thoughts and prayers," posted Varun on Poornima's Facebook page the day she died.

Scroll down a little and there's an unmissable sign of love for life. A picture of "Sumptuous crispy murukkus. Mummy's special recipe! I!" and a series of colourful ethnic jewellery, neckpieces and dangles pop up.

It was more than just tributes for 44-year-old Anuj Kumar Kutti-kkottu Pavithran, a nurse at Boston Hospital in Lincolnshire. The local Kerala Samaj took responsibility of conducting the final service as his friend Jerry Varghese's fundraiser reached £47,000.

"During the unprecedented Covid crisis, Anuj worked day and night when he contracted this illness," Varghese said. Anuj died on April 27. The fundraiser was set up to help with Anuj's funeral costs as well as to support his wife, Sandya, also a student nurse, and their two children.

On April 17, "kind, generous and gentle soul" Vivek Sharma lost his life to coronavirus. He was an occupational therapist at Medway Community Healthcare, Kent.

Consultant paediatrician Dr Rajesh Kalraiya of Queen's Hospital, Romford, died of Covid-19 on April 15. He was working as locum in Romford when he fell ill. His 40-year-long spell at NHS earned him huge respect.

The same day, Croydon GP Dr Krishan Arora, 57, and radiology support worker Amrik Bamotra of King George's Hospital in Goodmayes also died, leaving behind grieving families.

BAPIO founding president Dr Mehta, who is also mourning the loss of his friend and colleague Dr Kalraiya, doesn't deny that besides other contributing factors to the morbidity rate among the PIOs, Indians find it difficult to say 'no' even when the going gets tough. "For some, it's moral obligation, for others it may be fear of losing their jobs." The risks remain, but the fight goes on.

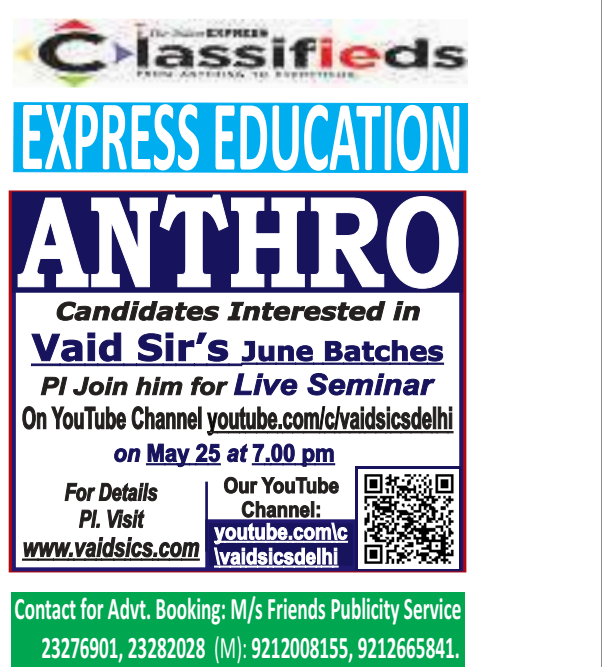
AIMS

department at Delhi's Sitaram Bhartiya Hospital.

"Dr Pande was under home care and seemed to be recovering. The cause of death is suspected to be cardiac arrest. Deepest condolences to his family and everyone who will miss him dearly," the hospital said.

Dr Pande had authored hundreds of papers on respiratory medicine, was a recipient of several prestigious awards, and was the personal doctor to President Ram Nath Kovind.

Dr Randeep Guleria, AIMS director, described Dr Pande's death as a personal loss. "He joined AIMS as an undergraduate and stayed with the institute till retirement. I have known him as a senior when I joined the department in 1992 and worked under him until his retirement. I have also known him since my childhood because he was my father's student. For me, it's a great personal loss," he told *The Indian Express*.



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NGOs – The Face of Humanity



Saviours of society

Serving with humility and limited resources, the NGO sector in India has emerged as a boon to the underprivileged sections of our society

■ ABHISHEK PATHAK

AS COVID-19 continues to wreak havoc, there are major disruptions that can be observed in our society today. The worst pandemic in over 100 years has already affected many aspects of our daily life and will undoubtedly give a new impetus for rearrangements in our globalised world. Life will now be referred as 'Pre- and Post-COVID-19'.

It's intriguing to think as to what will be the role of NGO sector once the pandemic subsides. Will we see a change in our own decision-making processes and the way we continue to interact with our environment and nature? Surely, there will be a sea change in our behavioural aspects once we're out of it all.

Currently, the government is doing its bit to alleviate the pains of corona-affected migrant population. However, the onus is also upon the common man and the NGOs to try and allay the aggravated conditions for the corona-affected working-class people.

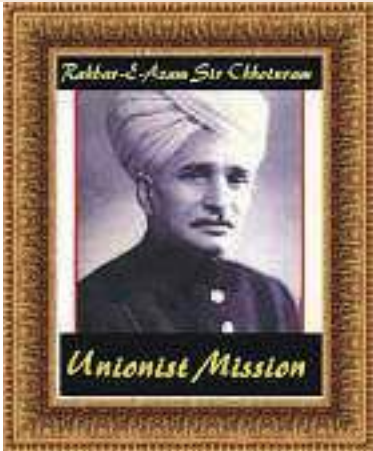
Over the years, NGOs have made definitive contributions to humanity in several ways. Their contributions can't be discredited. Wherever the government has failed to reach or provide relief to the downtrodden, NGOs have risen like saviours for people in distress. However, the work of NGOs has never been an easy one. There are growing constraints that have hindered the activities of NGOs. Across the globe, there are several legal and administrative barriers making it more difficult for NGOs to receive funds and support.

Since the pandemic has reached India,

NGOs ARE MAKING EFFORTS TO PROVIDE IMMEDIATE HELP AND RELIEF MATERIAL REQUIRED TO MITIGATE THE EFFECTS OF THE PANDEMIC AND HELP UNDERPRIVILEGED SECTIONS OF SOCIETY



pecially CSR funds, is required to keep these activities and programmes going. Due to the current crisis, the CSR funds of corporate companies are majorly directed towards government relief funds. This will surely reduce the CSR funding to NGOs



In the Corona Virus Pandemic, **Sir Chhotu Ram Vichar Manch** led by Shri Chand Singh distributed masks and provided food for the needy in Faridabad.

In Rohtak as well, Sir Chhotu Ram Vichar Manch under the leadership of District President Amit Kajal distributed food for the migrant labourers.

significantly. Corporates are the major contributors of funds for NGOs and have a long history of supporting the NGO sector through thick and thin. In 2017-18, the CSR funds were estimated to be around Rs 13,000 crore. Can the NGO sector expect the same contribution from the corporate houses, given that a lot of money is currently directed towards mitigating the crisis at various levels? The truth is that a lot of corporations are already contributing to various state and central relief systems from their CSR funds which will surely affect their funding to the NGO sector. As per reports, funding for traditional CSR activities – not linked with COVID-19 – in this fiscal year will reduce by 30 % to 60%. This is generally a significant portion of what the sector would have got. Thus, it is imperative for the sector to think beyond conventional routes to keep the funding intact. Clearly, it is time to envision a new work model that will help organisations in this sector evolve after the pandemic subsides.



Philanthropist Sunjoy Daddoo believes "Humanity is the best Policy"

Love Care Foundation (LCF), a Ghaziabad based NGO founded by Sunjoy Daddoo in 2010, has been uber active on ground, providing relief in various forms to the less privileged since lockdown, supported by its corporate partners. "I live in Vaishali and from my balcony I could see swarms of migrant workers walk on the highway. The scale of exodus was scary. We immediately tied up with 3 kitchens (Sita Rasoi, Kala ki kitchen & Star Caterers) to provide food. When numbers reduced, we focussed on providing ration to needy through our centers and partners. We also distributed masks, gloves, water, juices, at traffic check points and CRPF posts in Delhi and UP. For Ramadan we introduced "Ifaar ki Thali" (Donate a plate) in partnership with Revital H", informed Sunjoy.

LCF has distributed 2,56,897+ food kits to migrant workers till now. Ration distribution is a whopping 1,36,897 kgs rice, 79,000 kgs atta, 1,09,478+ kgs dal, 72,000 kgs sugar, 20,000 kgs salt, 5,700 liters oil, and 21,000 kgs snacks. Their relief work has touched 3,25,553+ lives across Delhi NCR in areas like Ghaziabad, Noida, Bhiwadi, Kalyanpur, Tilok Puri, Ghazipur, Seemant, Gurgaon, Okhla, Loni, and Faridabad.

"Disaster management relief work isn't new to us. We were at forefront during floods in Jammu & Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Chennai, and post Nepal Earthquake. We developed an efficient team of ground workers and a network of Corporate partners during these crises and it's helping us make the difference now", shares Sunjoy Daddoo, National Director Love Care Foundation, India.

To know more about us please contact 9899079000 or visit our website www.lovecarefoundation.org

BHARTIYA PARIVARDHAN SANSTHA

((A SOCIETY FOR THE UPLIFTMENT & DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN, WOMEN AND MASSES))

Bhartiya Parivardhan Sanstha a society registered under the Societies Registration Act 1860 has completed 29 years of registration. Started since 1991, Bhartiya Parivardhan Sanstha has achieved milestones in the field of HIV/AIDS, Drug Abuse Prevention, Vocational Education, Consumer awareness, Legal literacy, non-formal education and working with the older persons. Bhartiya Parivardhan Sanstha has been endeavoring to achieve its targets as per its aims and objectives.

ONGOING PROJECTS

- (A) Targeted Intervention Projects on HIV/AIDS for female Sex Workers (FSW), sponsored by Delhi State AIDS Control Society, Govt. of NCT of Delhi since 2003-04. (B) Targeted Intervention Projects on HIV/AIDS for Injecting Drug Users (IDU), sponsored by Delhi State AIDS Control Society, Govt. of NCT of Delhi since 2003-04 and in partnership with AIIMS, Delhi.
 - (30 bedded Drug De-addiction-cum-Rehabilitation Centre in collaboration with Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt. of India running since year 2000 which has been a big success story.
 - (Recreation Centre for Senior Citizens, sponsored by Social Welfare Department, Govt. of NCT of Delhi.
 - (Vocational Training conducted by Technically qualified experts on various subjects.
 - (Out Reach Drop In Centre at East Delhi in collaboration with National Institute of Social Defence, M/O Social Justice & Empowerment.
 - (Alliance Integrated Harm Reduction Programme – HRIDAYA
- The Sanstha has been attempting to bridge up the gap between the Govt. and non-Govt. agencies, with the plan and programs of providing aid and assistance to sufferers and victims. The Sanstha in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India is running a 30 bedded full-fledged Drug De-addiction Centre at Basti Vikas Kendra, Nand Nagri in North East District, Delhi which has been a success story. The Sanstha in collaboration with Delhi State AIDS Control Society and AIIMS, Delhi is running successfully the Targeted Intervention projects in respect of Injecting Drug Users and Female Sex Workers in North East Delhi. Sanstha solicits the participation and collaboration with the general public for extending the outreach of its programs and interventions. Donations to the Sanstha are covered under Section 80 G of Income Tax Act.

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Building a better tomorrow



Empowering underprivileged children through education and other life-changing initiatives, 'Pahel' has come forward to help the impoverished section of the society during the COVID-19 crisis, staying true to its ethos of societal care and welfare



Education is one of the most important pillars of life, without it people often get caught in inter-generational cycles of poverty and backwardness. Realising the acute effects of illiteracy on children and their future, a group of like-minded people comprising eminent professionals from multi-discipline and multi-sector backgrounds came together to form "Pahel" – an NGO to put collective efforts in uplifting the lives of people who grow with inadequate education, healthcare, resources and psychological supports – often called as "Underprivileged". Through its many life-changing initiatives, Pahel endeavours to bring in the element of 'quality of life' by rendering literacy in the lives of these people not just for their sustenance but also to bring about a convincing alteration in their overall outlook.

In this regard, it is imperative to have access to quality education. However, the quality of education in government primary schools has always been questioned. Hence,

Pahel, in order to realise its vision of empowering children, engages with such schools in creating a welcoming environment for the children where they can have fun while learning and growing. The organisation's educational programmes are based on a well-woven process of Identifying, Supporting, Developing and Engaging with the children to ensure their overall academic and personality development. Each step in the process empowers the children with the right kind of attitude, knowledge and skills required to lead a life of dignity. Some of its educational programmes are Dropout Return, Remedial Classes, Child Development & Community Education Centre (CEC) program – aimed at taking school to people, providing literacy and knowledge to the most neglected communities.

Pahel regularly organises health camps for oral health, personal hygiene, cleanliness, blood donation and awareness and medical camps for seasonal illness to spread awareness among children, parents, school staff and less privileged communities.

Among its notable programmes is 'Child-Watch' – created to spread awareness among children and parents regarding child sexual abuse, using the terms good touch and bad touch. So far, 7,900 children have benefitted from this programme. Moreover, the 'SPORT in EVERY LIFE' programme is an innovative way of building life skills through sports. This initiative is a synergistic mix of 'Sports for Development' and 'Life-skills Education' approaches. So far, more than 2500+ children have actively participated in 'SPORTS in EVERY LIFE' programme.

Currently, the world is at loggerheads with COVID-19 pandemic and with lockdown still in force, it has become a stroke of bad luck for the weaker sections of the society, creating a wave of problems for them. Determined to stay true to its ethos, Pahel has activated its network of volunteers and supporters to initiate relief work to reach millions of people who are out on the streets facing the maximum brunt of the pandemic. To help these people, Pahel is supplying them with a 'GROCERY KIT' that can sustain their families for the upcoming 4 weeks, or even beyond that. The kit contains sufficient quantities to feed a family of 5 members with essential items – wheat, rice, oil, sugar, tea, lentils, masalas, soaps, sanitary napkins etc. Apart from this, the organisation is also creating awareness regarding social distancing, handwashing and other precautions, to support the society's fight against the pandemic.

www.pahel.org

the NGO community has been steadfast in its approach to mitigate the effects of the disease in whatever ways possible. Their focal point has been to address immediate relief activities, from providing supplies to migrants to end-beneficiaries. With slum dwellers, daily wage workers and migrant labourers finding it extremely difficult to sustain and earn their daily bread in a continuously worsening environment, it is the NGOs that have reached out to these troubled people to help and support them in times of this huge crisis. They are indeed their saviour – the face of humanity.

There are NGOs that are working primarily to make healthcare services accessible to the poor and underprivileged. The NGO foundations have kick-started massive efforts to provide coronavirus care kits to the poor, including distributing sanitisers, soaps, sanitary napkins, medicines etc. They are also distributing dry rations, packaged foods, and personal care material to over a million people affected by the pandemic. Some NGOs are also providing door-to-door facilities like providing masks, personal hygiene items, and even instructional material with the help of community and health workers.

NGOs have initiated several programmes to strengthen their emergency support activities. However, a lot of funds, es-



DIGNITY FOUNDATION MAKING OLD SMILE YOUNG ALWAYS

Dignity Foundation, an NGO working only for senior citizens for the past 25 years, it provides social support services, knowledge, life enrichment, shelter and advocacy for senior citizens. They are largely neglected by governments, by organizations, by individuals and even their own children. The need of the hour, therefore, is to exponentially increase interventions that improve the quality of life of the elderly.

PROGRAMMES:

- HELPLINE AND COUNSELLING FOR ELDER PEOPLE (**Mobile No: 8448317316**)
- RATION FOR VERY POOR SENIOR CITIZENS-Ration packs are provided to single and Couples on monthly basis
- LONELINESS MITIGATION CENTRES
- COMPANIONSHIP - To provide social support system to Elder people.
- MAGAZINE FOR SENIOR CITIZEN - "**DIGNITY DIALOGUE**"

HELP DURING COVID - In wake of COVID19 social distancing rules have led to a "complete lockdown" for them because old age and existing illnesses make them especially vulnerable to infection. Various programmes during lockdown are:-

- Reach out to senior citizen members
- Provide support of doctor and dieticians,
- Engage with them by motivational talks
- Reach to them over Zoom calls to keep physically active with yoga and meditation
- Supported with dry Ration packet with more than 300 senior citizens continuously

Individuals and organization can join hands with dignity foundation and support our activities by donating us.



DIGNITY FOUNDATION
CONTACT NO- 8448317316
EMAIL ID-shivendra.kumar@dignityfoundation.com

Delhi NCR chapter
Mr. Vijay Pahwa- Trustee
Mr. Ajit Sinha- Chief dignitarian
Mr. Shivendra Kumar- Chapter head

www.dignityfoundaiton.com

Dignity foundation Chapters – Delhi NCR, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru, and Pune.

4 THE OUTBREAK THE CITY

STARTING MONDAY, DOMESTIC FLIGHTS TO OPERATE FROM T3

In time of social distancing, IGLA prepares to open doors

AMIL BHATNAGAR
NEW DELHI, MAY 23

WITH DOMESTIC flights becoming functional Monday onwards, the Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) Saturday showcased standard operating procedures it has put in place to provide a "safe and healthy environment" to passengers, with an emphasis on contactless procedures.

"Delhi Airport is all set to open for commercial flight operations after a two-month shutdown, and we have implemented several unique initiatives to ensure passengers safety without compromising their comfort and experience. Our teams have worked round-the-clock to sanitise the vast terminal... and DIAL will continue... encouraging passengers to maintain social distancing at the airport," said Videsh Kumar Jaipuria, the DIAL CEO.

Domestic flights will operate out of T3 and passengers will be advised to arrive two hours before departure. At the entry road, hoardings and placards with flight details will be displayed, and there will be several entry gates to prevent crowding. All passengers will be required to have the Aarogya Setu app installed, where officials will check



All passengers will be required to have the Aarogya Setu app installed. *Tashi Tobgyal*

the person's status, along with his or her temperature on a thermal screening device.

If a person does not have the app, he will have to sign an undertaking that the phone was not compatible with the app's requirements. If the temperature is within the prescribed government limits — 100.4 F — and the app shows a 'green' status, the passenger will be allowed in.

At the boarding gate, a CISF officer will be standing behind a glass partition and passengers will have to display the confirmed web check-in document along with an ID without coming in contact with the security officer. Social distancing norms

will be maintained at the waiting queue, officials said.

Once crossing the automatic doors at the gate, passengers will be greeted with a squishy sanitising carpet, meant to disinfect the bottom surface of shoes. "As you step on the carpet, it releases a sanitising liquid that can clean the bottom sole of shoes," said an airport official. This will be followed by another thermal scan and the passenger will have to sanitise his hands with a contactless dispenser. Passengers will be encouraged to self-check-in using contactless kiosks where scanning the QR code will produce the boarding pass.

According to officials, all departure baggage will be sanitised through a UV light disinfection tunnel, developed by DIAL. Passengers will be expected to put the tags on the bags themselves, but they can ask ground staff for assistance. At every point of contact, a bottle of sanitiser has been placed.

For Delhi and Hyderabad airports, an app called HOI has been developed which provides information about departures and arrivals, among other things. Food courts and restaurants will also be open for passengers but will be functioning with fewer seats. A team of 500 professionals will disinfect the terminal every one hour.

According to officials, no shuttle buses will operate and passengers will use one of the 14 aerobridges to reach the aircraft. Masks will be compulsory for all passengers and all Covid-related norms listed by the Aviation Ministry will be followed during in-flight operations.

For those arriving at the Delhi airport from another city, a screening will be compulsory and medical staff, assisted by airport authorities, will have facilities to isolate suspected Covid passengers. After this, the government guidelines for isolation, quarantine or testing will follow.

Screening, transport options: What passengers can expect on arrival

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MAY 23

WITH AIRLINE operations restarting on Monday, Delhi, Noida and Gurgaon have different protocols for when you land and reach your destination. *The Indian Express* looks at what happens once you land, how you travel and if quarantine is mandatory.

What is the process once I land at the Delhi Airport?

A Delhi government medical team will be present at every arrival gate. The number of persons in the team can vary from two-six, depending on the requirement and the decision of medical authorities. Passengers will be thermally scanned and only those who display symptoms will be taken for quarantine or testing, as the case may be. The evaluation that a passenger is a suspected case will also be carried out by medical authorities.

Will I be tested on landing at



Delhi, Noida and Gurgaon have different protocols

Delhi airport? What happens if I display symptoms?

A person who displays symptoms before boarding will not be allowed on the flight. If symptoms develop en route, the in-flight crew will inform the airport authorities and medical officials will take over once the aircraft lands. The person will be either sent to a Covid care centre (if symptoms are severe) or home and be asked to take a Covid-19 test. The possibility of this happening, officials

said, is low since domestic flights are short and anyone developing symptoms in such a short time is not likely. Detailed guidelines are being prepared, a Delhi government spokesperson said.

What are the modes of travel available from the airport?

In Delhi, since the lockdown has been eased considerably, all modes of transport, except the Metro, are allowed. Only two people are allowed in a cab and only one person in an autorickshaw. Only 20 people will be allowed on a bus at a time.

In Noida, since borders between the national capital and the NCR town are sealed, only persons with a valid flight ticket will be allowed in Noida, either in a private vehicle or cab.

A person going to the airport from Gurgaon will only have to present their ticket at the border. However, for those who want to enter Gurgaon, an e-pass is mandatory.

Will I be sent to a quarantine

facility on landing in Delhi or entering Noida/Gurgaon?

In Delhi, no. The government will not send those landing in the city to quarantine. In Noida, a decision from the UP government is awaited.

Although quarantine is necessary for all those coming to Gurgaon from any other part of the country, officials say travellers can either quarantine themselves at home or opt for a quarantine facility arranged by the government for the purpose, including both free and paid facilities.

Will I be asked to quarantine at home?

In Delhi, no. Home quarantine is not a requirement anymore. In Noida, a decision from the UP government is awaited.

If a person has to go to Gurgaon from the airport and is asymptomatic, they are permitted to quarantine at home. A 14-day quarantine is, however, mandatory for anyone returning to Gurgaon from other parts of the country.

BRIEFLY

Maruti plant employee tests positive

Gurgaon: An employee at the Manesar plant of Maruti Suzuki tested positive Friday, with company officials saying there may be a second case, on which information is being sought. The employee is receiving treatment at a hospital and is said to be stable.

No active cases in Nuh

New Delhi: Haryana's Nuh district went from having 65 Covid positive cases — the highest in Haryana — to having no 'active' cases Saturday. As per the health bulletin, results on 131 samples collected during random sampling are still awaited.

Self-styled godman booked

New Delhi: Police registered a case against self-styled godman Daati Maharaj and his supporters, who were allegedly offering prayers at a temple in Asola, in violating of lockdown guidelines.

3 held for robbing mango seller

New Delhi: Two days after a mango seller was robbed of mangoes worth Rs 20,000 at Chandan Nagar, three men were arrested Saturday after they were identified from video footage of the incident.

NDMC dispensary sealed

New Delhi: The Palika Dispensary at the NDMC's Palika Kendra office on Parliament Street was sealed after a 61-year-old doctor of the dispensary tested positive Friday.

Heatwave sweeps Delhi

New Delhi: The impact of the heatwave continued to be felt in the capital, as it recorded a maximum temperature of 44.7 degrees Celsius, the highest it has seen so far this year. **ENS**

As cases spike, Kejriwal offers reassurance: 'Don't be afraid, many being cured of virus'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MAY 23

AS COVID-19 cases in the city continue to rise, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said there was no need to be afraid of the disease and that several people were being cured and returning home.

Responding to a tweet with a video of a woman, where she said she had recovered from Covid and thanked her doctors, Kejriwal said: "There is no need to be scared of corona. Many people are recovering and returning home daily."

On Saturday, 591 fresh cases were seen, taking the total number to 12,910. While no fresh death was recorded on Saturday, 23 deaths that have taken place over the last few days, but were not added to the records, have taken the toll to 231.

The number of patients who have recovered and been discharged, meanwhile, is over 48%. While there are 6,412 active cases in the city, 6,267 have recovered.

The number of people in ICU has also risen over the past week



Delhi recorded 591 fresh coronavirus cases on Saturday. *Amit Mehra*

from 155 to 184 but the number of people requiring ventilation has remained below 30 — it was 27 on Saturday.

Meanwhile, the tug-of-war between the administration and healthcare workers continued on Saturday, with several resident

doctors from Maulana Azad Medical College posted in the Northwest district being asked to vacate the accommodation provided by the health department.

The order, passed by the Chief District Medical Officer, dated May 21 states, "According

to the new advisory issued, only officers/officials who have high-risk exposure during duties in Covid area will be allowed quarantine for 14 days. Since no report of high exposure has been received from these officials, all are directed to vacate their ac-

commodation immediately and report to the respective place of posting."

The Resident Doctors' Association of the institute has also written to the Chief District Medical Officer of the area to revoke the order and provide adequate duration of quarantine to the healthcare workers.

As suggested by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the state government had issued an order saying that staff will go to quarantine only if they have had a "high-risk exposure" while dealing with Covid-19 patients or handling samples without PPE. "Regular quarantine of healthcare workers after performing duty in Covid-19 areas is not warranted except as elaborated under the protocol of high-risk and low-risk contact," explained the order.

A Delhi government spokesperson, meanwhile, said healthcare workers will not be asked to vacate accommodation. "No healthcare worker will be asked to vacate hotel accommodation as per the guidelines issued by the state government. We will look into the matter," said the spokesperson.

'Zero tolerance': Delhi govt official suspended over ad

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MAY 23

THE DELHI government Saturday suspended an official of the Directorate of Civil Defence after controversy broke out over the text of an advertisement, inviting applications for civil defence volunteers, clubbed Sikkim with neighbouring countries Bhutan and Nepal.

The advertisement, while laying down the eligibility criteria for volunteers, read: Citizen of India or a subject of Sikkim or of Bhutan or of Nepal and a resident of Delhi.

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal, under whom the Services department in Delhi government falls, tweeted on Saturday evening: "A senior officer of Directorate of Civil Defence (HQ) has been suspended with immediate effect for publishing an advertisement which disrespects the territorial integrity of India by making incorrect reference to Sikkim on the same lines as some neighbouring countries."

"Zero tolerance for such gross misconduct! Direction has also been given immediately to

withdraw the offensive advertisement," he said in another tweet.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal also tweeted: "Sikkim is an integral part of India. Such errors also cannot be tolerated. Advertisement has been withdrawn and action taken against the officer concerned."

Delhi BJP President Manoj Tiwari, meanwhile, took aim at the Delhi government, saying: "I don't believe such mistakes can be made. This is a big issue."

A senior Delhi government official, however, said the language of the advertisement was based on the MHA's Civil Defence Regulations, 1968, which lists Sikkim along with Bhutan and Nepal. Sikkim became an Indian state in 1975.

Earlier, Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang had tweeted condemning the ad and asking that it be withdrawn: "This advertisement published by the Delhi government in various print media mentions Sikkim along with countries like Bhutan and Nepal. Sikkim has been a part of India since 1975 and celebrated the State Day just a week ago... I would request the Delhi government to rectify this issue."

15 schools get showcase for not helping EWS students go online

PRITAMPAL SINGH
NEW DELHI, MAY 23

THE DELHI government's education department has said before the Delhi High Court that it is binding on all private unaided recognised schools in the city to ensure that students from the economically weaker section (EWS) or disadvantaged groups (DG) are not "deprived" of online classes. The Directorate of Education (DoE) also told the court that they have issued showcase notices to 15 private schools for not providing free laptops/iPad/phones with high speed internet to students from these categories.

Amid the pandemic, all schools have moved their classrooms to the virtual space. However, as reported by *The Indian Express*, EWS students in private schools have come up against challenges such as no laptops and smartphones as well as no internet connection at home.

Delhi government's Standing Counsel Ramesh Singh filed the counter affidavit for the DoE, stating: "DoE has issued showcase notice to the schools as to why cent per cent compliance has not been met and how the said schools are complying with the May 29 circular in letter in spirit." The DoE's response comes against the backdrop of a plea by an NGO, Justice for All, which



The DoE has issued notices to the schools. *Archive*

sought to provide free laptops, tablets, phones to EWS children so they can access online classes.

The NGO, in its plea filed through advocate Khagesh Jha, said private unaided schools' decision to conduct classes via video conferencing would affect over 50,000 EWS students, many of whom cannot afford laptops, phones and high-speed internet.

A bench of Justice Manmohan and Justice Sanjeev Narula had on May 8 sought replies from the Centre, Delhi government, New Delhi Municipal Council, MCDs and 10 private unaided schools.

The DoE, in its counter affidavit, said it had on April 29 issued a circular to all private unaided recognised schools about this: "In no case any EWS/DG/CWSN (children with special needs) category

students shall be deprived from online classes/learning material and shall ensure the same in the similar manner as being provided to general category students."

It also asked students to "ascertain" if any of these students are "not able to avail of the afore-said online facility".

"If the reason for the above shortcoming is on account of lack of equipment like laptop, desktop, smartphone or internet facility, then the school is to provide and/or ensure that such facility is made available till the education of such schools is being imparted through online means," the affidavit reads.

It said that under the Right to Education Act, it is the obligation of private unaided school to provide all facilities to EWS/DG category students.

Police arrest two women from Pinjra Tod over Feb protest

ARANYA SHANKAR & JIGNASA SINHA
NEW DELHI, MAY 23

THE DELHI Police Saturday arrested two members of Pinjra Tod, a women's student organisation, in connection with their alleged role in the anti-CAA Jafrabad sit-in protest in February this year. DCP (Northeast) Ved Prakash Surya confirmed the arrests.

The Jafrabad sit-in had prompted a pro-CAA rally by BJP's Kapil Mishra on February 23. A day later, riots broke out in Northeast Delhi.

The two activists, Devangana Kalita (30) and Natasha Narwal (32), are students of JNU and were arrested from their homes, a Pinjra Tod member said.

A senior officer said, "An FIR regarding the Jafrabad sit-in protest had been registered earlier. The women have been arrested under IPC sections 186 (obstructing public servant in discharge of public functions) and 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty)."

Police said officers from the New Delhi Range of Special Cell were questioning Narwal when local police from Jafrabad station came and arrested her.

In a statement, Pinjra Tod said the women were arrested around 6 pm. "They were arrested from their homes in an FIR registered by Jafrabad police station, after interrogation by the Special Cell... Police did not give



Devangana Kalita (30) and Natasha Narwal (32)

reasons to their families for their arrest," the organisation claimed. "Many students and activists have been arrested by Delhi Police in the last few months. We strongly condemn the witch hunt of democratic activists and students being carried out by the state and appeal to the student community and democratic-minded citizens to remain vigilant... in our struggles in face of this repression," it added.

While Kalita is an MPhil student at the Centre for Women's Studies, Narwal is a PhD student at the Centre for Historical Studies. They are both founding members of Pinjra Tod, formed in 2015, primarily in opposition to hostel curfews at Delhi's colleges and universities. Kalita and Narwal have done their graduation from DU's Miranda House and Hindu College, respectively.

Police had earlier arrested Jamia Millia Islamia student Safoora Zargar in connection with the Jafrabad sit-in. Zargar, who is pregnant, has been booked under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and is in jail.

NE Delhi riots: Lack of evidence, 20 get bail

PRITAMPAL SINGH
NEW DELHI, MAY 23

A DELHI court has granted bail to over 20 accused in Northeast Delhi riots cases in the last five days, saying that police were unable to show their involvement.

"The IO has opposed the bail application. Upon query, the IO replied that he is not able to collect any electronic evidence to show active involvement of the applicant (accused) in the incident. He (the IO) also stated he is unable to find any public eyewitness who have seen the applicant while committing the incident," Additional Sessions Judge (ASJ) Sunil Chaudhary observed in an order passed on May 22.

Most of the accused, while seeking bail, submitted that their names were not in the FIR and that they had been falsely implicated.

Riots broke out in Northeast

Delhi in the last week of February, resulting in the death of 53 people and injuries to hundreds. As per court records, about 750 cases were registered. Delhi Police said recently that 1,300 people have been arrested in connection with the riots so far.

Most of the accused who sought bail were arrested during the lockdown. Between May 19-May 23, the court has been dealing with 20-30 bail pleas a day.

On Saturday, of the 15 applications filed before ASJ Tyagita Singh, one accused was denied bail. On May 22, of the 36 bail applications filed, five were rejected as ASJ Chaudhary noted that in view of the "gravity of the offence and details of evidence collected so far", those applicants were not entitled to bail.

The court has directed all those granted bail download the Aarogya Setu app and furnish their numbers to the IO upon release.

9 FIREMEN WILL BE TRACKED FOR SYMPTOMS

Fire at South Delhi hospital, 8 Covid patients evacuated

SOMYALAKHANI
NEW DELHI, MAY 23

A FIRE broke out at a Covid-19 hospital in South Delhi on Saturday evening, following which eight patients had to be evacuated. The incident took place at Ujala Cygnus Orthocare Hospital in SDA around 5.55 pm. Eight fire tenders were rushed to the spot and the blaze was doused around 7 pm. No casualty or injuries were reported.

Delhi Fire Service (DFS) chief Atul Garg told *The Indian Express*, "The fire broke out on the third floor, where there are two operation theatres and a recovery room. Eight Covid-19 patients, including three women, were admitted. All of them were evacuated by firemen, with help from hospital staff. Prima facie, it appears there was a short-circuit in an OT. The third floor was not in use ever since the hospital became a Covid-19 hospital."

The patients have been shifted to Batra hospital.

Around 40 firefighters were deployed, of whom nine went inside the building, including divisional officer S K Dua (53). He told *The Indian Express*, "This was a risky operation as people who have been rescued are Covid-19 patients, and we can't wear a PPE as it will catch fire. We were all equipped with hand gloves, N95 masks and our usual suit."

He added that patients were on the ground and first floors only, and the third floor was empty.

Dua said most of the firefighters were young and he went in with them to keep them motivated: "Hospital staff cooperated with us and helped remove the patients. At least two patients were using oxygen cylinders, three were wheeled out on their beds, and others walked out with the firemen and hospital staff. The patients were obvi-



The fire broke out on the third floor at Ujala Cygnus Orthocare Hospital in SDA, Saturday. Tashi Tobgyal

apart from the eight Covid-19 patients," said Garg.

Hospital unit head Dr Amit Vig said: "DFS, along with the hospital's fire division, controlled the fire and are still on the job. There has been no loss of life."

Once the fire-fighting operation was over, the firefighters were sanitised at the hospital and briefed by a senior doctor. Firefighter Kumar said the doctor told them not to panic and what to do if any symptoms develop.

Dua said that as per government guidelines, the men will only go into quarantine if they develop symptoms: "We have briefed the nine men to maintain social distancing, take extra precautions, and not mingle with the rest of the DFS staff. We have asked them to alert us if they develop any symptoms. I have spoken to my family at home, and told them I will stay in a separate room for some time."

At 7.14 pm, DFS received another fire call from Metro

Hospital in Lajpat Nagar where a minor fire had broken out on the terrace. The fibre sheet caught fire and it was doused within 10 minutes, said Garg.

Spike as temperature soars

Garg told *The Indian Express* that ever since temperatures soared in the capital, and with the opening of several offices, fire calls have gone up. He said that before May 20, the number of calls daily was limited to under 50. "On May 20, we got 88 fire calls, 89 calls on May 21, and 101 on May 22," he said.

He said that for months, offices and shops have been shut, and suddenly when they opened, many short-circuits were reported that led to minor fires: "I strongly advise that people should get their ACs serviced before they switch them on. In several cases in the last three days, this is a recurring issue we have noticed."



DELHI POLICE
SHANTI SEWA NYAYA

Celebrate
EID
and offer namaz
at Home this year





Make India's fight
against Coronavirus successful

The auspicious festival of
EID falls on 25th May, 2020
amidst the scare of COVID-19 Pandemic.
So this year celebrate EID with precautions and follow these guidelines –



Maintain social distancing of 2 yards at all times



Refrain from personal greetings or hugs



If you step out for shopping wear face mask, carry sanitizer and maintain social distancing



No congregation at mosques or public gathering

Extended Lockdown along with Section 144 Cr PC is in force, so respect it

Stay home - Have a safe EID

E-mail to CP, Delhi at : cp.snsshrivastava@delhipolice.gov.in | Write to CP, Delhi at: P.O. Box No. 171, GPO, New Delhi

TO SHARE INFORMATION CALL 1090 **FOR IMMEDIATE POLICE HELP CALL 112**

ADVERTORIAL

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Time to concentrate on non-Covid patients



PN Arora, MD,
Yashoda Group of Hospitals,
Kaushambhi, NCR, New Delhi

THE lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic must have saved many precious lives, but it has hit non-COVID-19 patients hard. They could not afford even their routine treatment in a proper manner, let alone elective surgeries.

Now that the lockdown restrictions have been relaxed, steps should be taken on a war footing to ensure that such patients are able to attend or visit private facilities or government set ups in a normal manner.

I agree the caution barriers should not be lowered against our successful fight against the coronavirus that has already infected more than five million and killed over 300,000 globally. The message should be circulated among doctors that the virus has come to stay and it is the new normal and that vaccines, too, will come in months or a year's time.

With full precautions against the contagious virus, drills should be drafted for

each medical discipline along with strict protocols. It will infuse confidence both in patients and medical facilities.

A commendable step was taken in the recent past in dentistry. Such protocols should be issued for others too. It will help normalise the situation faster than we anticipate. If we delay in normalising the situation, it will be very difficult to put the country's health systems back on rails.

A Pakistani airplane crashed yesterday as flights were resumed suddenly. It is a

matter of dispute whether adequate checking operations were carried prior to resumption of flights. It may not be the case but it is an eye opener. Before costly medical paraphernalia, prepared over the years, turn into junkyards, the services should start at a normal note with new lessons.

One more thing, we must recognise the pivotal role being played by the coronavirus warriors. Every segment of the society should hail them as they have delivered to the society even at the cost of putting their own lives in peril. Doctors, nurses, policemen, ambulances drivers and anyone who was involved in the task of fighting the pandemic from the front should be accorded social honour. We should tooth and nail oppose those who are ostracising them with the fear that they are carriers of the virus.

The writer is MD, Yashoda Group of Hospitals, Kaushambhi, New Delhi

Focusing on primary sector could revive economy



Shravan Charya,
Founder and CEO, SocioLadder

THE current coronavirus situation is a great opportunity to shift focus and change the economic frontiers of India. Invariably, given the dominance of the primary sector among the majority populace, it will be here that the most important scenario change can and ought to take place. Agriculture still adheres to a subsistence model, with little commercial exploration happening on a large scale. Now is a great opportunity for governments, both at the Centre and states, to recalibrate funds and shift focus on the primary sector, specifically on agriculture. There is already a reverse migration that has been triggered. Governments can capitalise on and deploy this wave of reverse migrants back into the primary sectors by providing some subsidies and investment mechanisms to motivate them. The large part of the relief packages that have been announced can be made use of to give an impetus to the agrarian sector.

The lack of opportunities in the villages drive people to migrate to large industry-heavy cities. This puts a lot of pressure on infrastructure and social systems in cities. If subsidies are properly calibrated, they can give rise to a lot of supporting industries in semi-urban and rural centres. If people are provided with enough incentives to stay in the primary sector, it can lead to decentralising resources from urban centres, as it also helps revive the rural economy.

The writer is Founder and CEO of SocioLadder

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chased from MSMEs. All those payments will be cleared within 45 days, he said.

Of the total purchases, almost 25 percent are to be done from micro and small enterprises, four percent from enterprises run by members of the SC/ST community, and three percent from enterprises run by women.

The Chief Minister also instructed district collectors to lay special focus on the MSME segment and assign a Joint Collector exclusively for the sector's development.

In addition to these, to help the MSME sector recover quickly, the state government will allocate Rs 200 crore as investment capital by providing loans in partnership with SIDBI at a low-interest rate.

Maharashtra plans phased reopening of schools from June 15

SANDEEP ASHAR
MUMBAI, MAY 23



Varsha Gaikwad

AT THE epicentre of the coronavirus outbreak in the country, Maharashtra is planning to re-open its schools from June 15 onwards. State School Education Minister Varsha Gaikwad has indicated that the return to regular classes will be gradual, with schools in non-red zones reopening first.

In the fourth phase of the lockdown, Maharashtra has identified municipal corporation areas in Mumbai, Pune, Thane, Nagpur and 15 other cities as red zones. From May 22, curbs have been considerably eased in the remaining areas of the state, which have been labelled non-red zones.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, the minister spoke on plans of running classes in shifts, shortening school hours, banning morning assemblies and sporting activities as measures to ensure social distancing. "The option of pairing students with odd roll numbers and calling them in the first shift and the ones with even roll numbers in the second shift is being considered. Another option is to call a batch of class students every alternate day," she said. "Only one student will be permitted on one desk," she added.

Of the opinion that continued school closures will have a detrimental impact on pupil progress, she said that the government was formulating new standard operating procedures (SOPs) for schools to lower the risk of infection for students and teachers

when they return to school. But as far as schools in Mumbai and other red zones are concerned, Gaikwad indicated that "things needed to improve further before they plan reopening of schools".

She said schools in these cities had switched to e-teaching. "Our bigger concern is continuity of education of poor children from rural and tribal areas who do not have access to a smartphone or live in areas without Internet connectivity. Classroom lessons are vital for them."

Meanwhile, as a precautionary measure, the state is examining the possibility of identifying spaces within educational complexes where students, teachers and staff who develop symptoms similar to a coronavirus infection can be quarantined. Under the new safety guidelines, parents may not be permitted inside school complexes.

While schools in Maharashtra are required to teach for 48 hours in a week, the minister indicated that the number of hours will come down significantly with the education department planning to reduce school timings by half to begin with. While admitting to unavoidable delays in paper assessment work for the state secondary and higher secondary board exams, she said there are plans to announce results of both by the third week of June.

DMK leader arrested for 'inflammatory remarks' at party meet

ARUN JANARDHANAN
CHENNAI, MAY 23

DMK ORGANISING secretary R S Bharathi was arrested by the Central Crime Branch of the Chennai city police on Saturday for allegedly making inflammatory remarks at a party meeting on February 15.

In his speech, Bharathi had reportedly said that it was only because of the Dravidian movement that Dalits were given alms and rose to become judges in Tamil Nadu. Referring to a judge, he reportedly said that many Dalits were inducted in the judiciary because of the indulgence of the DMK leadership during former chief minister M Karunanidhi's tenure. He later issued an apology for his remarks.

Meanwhile, top DMK leaders and former Union ministers T R Baalu and Dayanidhi Maran have also moved the Madras High Court for anticipatory bail fearing arrest on similar charges.

Taking cognizance of the speech, the High Court had directed police to probe the matter and file a case within 30 days. "The arrest was based on a case registered by city police under Section 3 (allegation that the accused has insulted intentionally or intimidated the complainant and such insult or intimidation) of the

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. The case was based on a complaint filed by Athi Tamilar Makkal Katchi leader Kalyanasundaram on May 12," a police officer said. The case was later transferred to the CCB.

Bharathi was taken to the city police commissioner's office from his residence for inquiry early morning and later produced at a district sessions court where he was granted interim bail till June 1. The court observed that prima facie there is a case against him but granted him bail saying that his family members are doctors. "In view of Covid-19 situation... there are possibilities of infection to other inmates of the jail due to the admission of the present accused in the jail," the court said, stating that it was better to grant him bail.

While police argued that a proper probe has already been conducted and remanding the accused in judicial custody was necessary, DMK's senior counsel N R Elango and P Wilson alleged that the arrest was politically motivated and lacked thorough investigation.

DMK chief M K Stalin condemned the arrest saying that it has come 100 days after the speech and that Bharathi had already apologised for the remarks. He said the DMK cannot be cowed down by intimidation through arrest.

Large remdesivir clinical trial in US shows new promise

ABANTIKA GHOSH
NEW DELHI, MAY 23

A TRIAL funded by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) in the United States has found that the broad-spectrum investigational antiviral drug remdesivir can speed up recovery in Covid-19 patients requiring oxygen therapy.

The results of the trial were considered encouraging enough to warrant publication even as the trial was ongoing.

"Preliminary results of the trial suggest that a 10-day course of remdesivir was superior to placebo in the treatment of hospitalised patients with Covid-19. This benefit was seen in the number of days to recovery... Even though the trial was ongoing, the data and safety monitoring board made the recommendation to unblind the results to the trial team members from the NIAID, who subsequently decided to make the results public.

"Given the strength of the results about remdesivir, these findings were deemed to be of immediate importance for the

'Preliminary results of the trial suggest a 10-day course of remdesivir was superior to placebo in the treatment of hospitalised patients...'

care of patients still participating in the trial as well as for those outside the trial who might benefit from treatment with remdesivir," the researchers reported in *The New England Journal of Medicine* on Friday.

The estimates of mortality by 14 days were 7.1% with remdesivir and 11.9% with placebo.

The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases is part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), an agency of the US Department of Health and Human Services.

Remdesivir, manufactured by the biopharma company Gilead Sciences Inc, has been previously tested in humans with Ebola virus disease, and has shown promise as a drug against Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute

Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), both of which, like Covid-19, are caused by coronaviruses.

The drug is under testing for specific treatment of Covid-19, and is seen as one of the most promising therapies against the disease. Six major trials or studies involving remdesivir are currently under way, including the World Health Organisation's (WHO's) Solidarity Trial, under which it is likely to be used in Indian patients as well.

Earlier this month, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorised emergency use of remdesivir for treatment of adults and children with severe Covid-19 disease.

In an earlier, truncated study published in *The Lancet* medical journal, Chinese researchers had reported they could not find any "statistically significant clinical benefits" of the drug.

The NEJM study flagged the high mortality despite use of remdesivir.

"These preliminary findings support the use of remdesivir for patients who are hospitalised with Covid-19 and require supplemental oxygen therapy. However, given high

mortality despite the use of remdesivir, it is clear that treatment with an antiviral drug alone is not likely to be sufficient," the researchers said.

"Future strategies", they said, "should evaluate antiviral agents in combination with other therapeutic approaches or combinations of antiviral agents to continue to improve patient outcomes in Covid-19."

Meanwhile, India reported a new high of 6,654 fresh cases on Saturday morning, taking the total number of cases to 1,25,101. There were 137 deaths, taking the toll to 3,720.

Health Secretary Preeti Sudan had a review meeting with senior state and municipal officials from the 11 municipal areas which have high case load of Covid-19. These municipal areas are in Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, and Rajasthan, and account for 70 per cent of India's active case load.

It was pointed out that testing needs to stepped up in some municipal areas to ensure early detection of cases, timely clinical management, and a reduction in fatality rate.

Rajasthan cop kills self, Oppn seeks CBI probe

DEEP MUKHERJEE
JAIPUR, MAY 23

A POLICE inspector posted in Rajasthan's Churu district allegedly committed suicide Saturday. The Opposition has demanded a CBI probe and alleged that the "politicisation of police force" was responsible for his death.

Police said the body of Rajgarh SHO Vishnu Dutt Bishnoi was found hanging at his quarters. "Bishnoi was around 45 and had been working in the force for 18-20 years. He used to live alone... We have recovered a note in which he has mentioned stress as the reason... he hasn't held anyone responsible... Investigation is on and a decision on registering a case will be taken later," Rajgarh Additional SP Bharat Raj said.

Screenshots of a purported chat between Bishnoi and a person have emerged on the social media. The inspector purportedly mentioned in the chat his keenness for voluntary retirement due to "dirty politics". "Bishnoi told me Thursday that he wanted to quit his job because of dirty politics," claimed Goverdhan Singh, who identified himself as an advocate and RTI activist, and said the screenshots were of a conversation between him and Bishnoi.

Bishnoi purportedly wrote in

the chat, "Efforts are being made to involve me in the vortex of dirty politics in Rajgarh. I am applying for voluntary retirement."

DGP Bhupendra Singh said in a statement that Bishnoi was among the best officers in the force. He said the investigation has been handed over to CID crime branch. He said some people were trying to spread misinformation.

The Opposition BJP has alleged "politicisation" of the police force. "Bishnoi committed suicide due to politicisation of police and the tying of the hands of honest officers who take action against criminals. We demand a judicial probe," said Deputy Leader of Opposition in the Assembly and Churu MLA Rajendra Rathore. He alleged that some politicians were making false complaints against Bishnoi to get him transferred.

"A WhatsApp chat... wherein he is talking about political pressure and then news comes he has committed suicide. People, where (he) had served, swear that he was incorruptible. The case needs to be handed over to CBI for truth to come out," tweeted former Union minister and BJP MP from Jaipur Rural Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore.

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot expressed his condolences over the death and tweeted that Bishnoi's services and dedication will always be remembered.

Man dies after 'attack' by cousins for not getting tested in Bijnor

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, MAY 23

A 23-YEAR-OLD man died after he was attacked by his cousins allegedly for not getting tested for the coronavirus after returning home to Malakpur village in Bijnor, from Delhi.

Manjeet Singh died on Friday during treatment in Meerut, police said.

Based on a complaint by his father Kalyan Singh, an FIR was registered against Manjeet's cousins Kapil and Manoj, their mother Puniya and Manoj's wife Dolly at the Nahtaur police station, said a police officer.

No arrests have been made yet, said SHO, Nahtaur police station, Satya Prakash Singh, adding that none of the accused is a minor.

He said death occurred due to a head injury. Manjeet's sample was not collected for a coronavirus test by doctors during treatment, said police.

Additional SP, Bijnor, Sanjay Kumar said, the underwent thermal screening when he reached Bijnor on May 19 from Delhi. The report was negative so his sample was not collected.

Chief Medical Officer, Bijnor, Dr Vijay Yadav said he has "no information" about the matter.

According to police, Manjeet Singh returned home on Tuesday.

SHO Singh said, "Since his return, Kapil and Manoj were regularly asking Manjeet, a daily wage labourer, to get his test done. On Thursday, cousins again asked Manjeet to get his test done after which an argument ensued between them. Manjeet blamed his cousins for not treating his grandmother properly."

"The accused brought sticks and started hitting Manjeet. He suffered injuries on the head and shoulder. When Manjeet fell unconscious, he was rushed to government hospital by his parents," said Singh.



GOVIND GURU TRIBAL UNIVERSITY

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No. : Estt./VC Appt. /GGTU/2020/ 2637 DATED : 23/05/2020

Advertisement for the Post of Vice-Chancellor

Applications are invited for the post of Vice-Chancellor, Govind Guru Tribal University, Banswara (Rajasthan) on behalf of the Chairman, Search Committee. The candidates are advised to apply in the prescribed application format by post and email to vcselection20@gmail.com so as to reach the office of the undersigned on or before 13th June, 2020 up to 5.00 PM. Details of advertisement and prescribed application format (Standard Format for C.V.) should be downloaded from the Govind Guru Tribal University, Banswara Website www.ggtu.ac.in / www.rajbhawan.rajasthan.gov.in.

REGISTRAR

PANDEMIC, AND AFTER: HOW BADLY BRUISED IS INDIA'S ECONOMY? THE WAY AHEAD.



with

Dr Rathin Roy

Director, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP)

Various research outfits have projected a recessionary crisis this year worse than in 1979-80. Join us for an engaging conversation with Dr Roy, one of the finest economic minds, to understand the challenges, the options India needs to consider and exercise, and the trade-offs involved, in the medium to long term.

Mr Roy will be in conversation with

P Vaidyanathan Iyer

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OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, FIRST CIRCLE, U.P. JAL NIGAM, MEERUT
E-TENDER NOTICE
 Letter No.: 577 / 731 / 54
 Dated : 20.05.2020

E-tenders are invited for Mangalpur Rausia Water Supply Scheme & Paratapur Water Supply Scheme under "Jal Jeevan Mission" works in district Bulandshahr is hereby invited by U.P. Jal Nigam. Tender document shall be available at e-procurement website <http://etender.up.nic.in> latest by 05.06.2020 at 15:00 hrs. Interested contractors may view & download tender document and upload their tender, duly filled online latest by 05.06.2020 up to 17:00 hrs. Uploaded tender document shall be opened on 06.06.2020 at 12:00 Hrs. onwards in the office of "Superintending Engineer, 1st Circle, U.P. Jal Nigam, Meerut".

SOUTH CENTRAL RAILWAY
 Follow us on [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [Instagram](#)
 Details of the Tender Inviting of S.C Railway can be seen on our website : www.scr.indianrailways.gov.in

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER (through <https://ireps.gov.in>)

1. Corrigendum No.1 dt.11.05.2020 to the following Tender notice Nos. 31/CAO/C/SC/2020, 32/CAO/ C/SC/ 2020 to 39/CAO/C/SC/2020

Intended bidders may please note the modified date of opening of tender as detailed below:

SI.No.: 1 NIT No: 31-CAO-C-SC-2020 Date:08.04.2020 **Original Tender opening date : 12.05.2020.**
Postponed date of Tender opening: 01-06-2020 at 15.00 hrs.

SI.No.: 2 NIT No: 32-CAO-C-SC-2020 Date:08.04.2020 **Original Tender opening date : 12.05.2020.**
Postponed date of Tender opening: 01-06-2020 at 15.00 hrs.

SI.No.: 3 NIT No: 34-CAO-C-SC-2020 Date:08.04.2020 **Original Tender opening date : 14.05.2020.**
Postponed date of Tender opening: 02-06-2020 at 15.00 hrs.

SI.No.: 4 NIT No: 35-CAO-C-SC-2020 Date:08.04.2020 **Original Tender opening date : 12.05.2020.**
Postponed date of Tender opening: 01-06-2020 at 15.00 hrs.

SI.No.: 5 NIT No: 36-CAO-C-SC-2020 Date:08.04.2020 **Original Tender opening date : 12.05.2020.**
Postponed date of Tender opening: 01-06-2020 at 15.00 hrs.

SI.No.: 6 NIT No: 37-CAO-C-SC-2020 Date:08.04.2020 **Original Tender opening date : 14.05.2020.**
Postponed date of Tender opening: 02-06-2020 at 15.00 hrs.

SI.No.: 7 NIT No: 38-CAO-C-SC-2020 Date:08.04.2020 **Original Tender opening date : 14.05.2020.**
Postponed date of Tender opening: 02-06-2020 at 15.00 hrs.

SI.No.: 8 NIT No: 39-CAO-C-SC-2020 Date:08.04.2020 **Original Tender opening date : 14.05.2020.**
Postponed date of Tender opening: 02-06-2020 at 15.00 hrs.

SI.No.: 9 NIT No: 40-CAO/C/SC/2020; Intended bidders may please note the modified condition of the Affidavit.

3. Corrigendum No.2 dt.11.05.2020 & No.3 dt.22.05.2020 toTender notice No.33/CAO/C/SC/2020: Intended bidders may please note i) the date of tender opening is postponed to 10.06.2020 ii) the modified conditions of the Ballast and the modified condition of the Affidavit.

All other terms and conditions of the above tender notices remain unchanged and unaltered.

For bid document and other details, please login to website <https://ireps.gov.in>

Chief Administrative Officer/Const./Secunderabad

For further tender conditions / details and for downloading the tender documents, Please visit website at <https://www.ireps.gov.in> or www.scr.indianrailways.gov.in

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ

E-Tendering Tender Notice

Divisional Railway Manager (Works), North Central Railway, Jhansi for and on behalf of President of India, invites sealed "Open Tender" through on Line (E-Tendering) for the following work.

E-Tender No.	Description of work	Approx Cost of work	Earnest Money
JHS-Engg-L-2020-51	Annual Sectional Contract for repair and maintenance work and supply of material under ADEN/Kanpur for year 2020-21 Zone No. 6 & 7 PRN (Incl.) to Juhi (Excl.) & Ait to Konch.	₹ 12500000/-	₹ 212500/-

Cost of tender form: ₹ 5250.00 **Date of closing tender:** 22.06.2020 at 15:00 hrs. **Date of completion/period from issue acceptance letter:** 12 Months. Tender online can be submitted upto 15:00 hrs on 22.06.2020 For full details and submission of bid please see the Indian Railways website www.ireps.gov.in 566/20(I)

[North central railways](#) www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in [CPRONCR](#)

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No. PMEC/Estt./751 **CORRIGENDUM** Date:- 23.05.2020

TENDER PACKAGE NO. PMEC/HOSTEL/01/2020 AND NO. PMEC/HOSTEL/02/2020

The extension of dates for submission & opening of Tender Documents and modification of some specifications have been made. For details, please refer college website i.e. www.pmec.ac.in. Sd/-
 Principal, PMEC, Berhampur

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 मेल/ Email: cbbareilly@dgest.org दिनांक/ Date 22 MAY, 2020

ई-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना
NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

Cantonment Board Bareilly invites e-tenders/bids through Central Public Procurement Portal of Govt. of India (www.eprocure.gov.in) under two bids/cover system i.e. Technical Bid (Cover-1) and Financial Bid (Cover-2) for engagement of the Paramedical staffs for Cantonment General Hospital Sadar Bazar Bareilly Cantt through outsourcing agency.

Sl. No.	E-Tender Notice No.	Description	Tender Fee/Cost (Non refundable)	Earnest money deposit (EMD)	Period of Tender / Contract.
01	BCB/Paramedical/20-21	Engagement of the Paramedical staffs for Cantonment General Hospital Sadar Bazar Bareilly Cantt.	Rs. 500/-	Rs. 50000/-	Upto 01 year

The schedule of Dates for E-Tendering is as follow:

S.No.	Activity	Date	Time
1.	Publishing date of E-Tender	26.05.2020	1000 hours
2.	Document Download start date (sale of Tender)	26.05.2020	1000 hours
3.	Document Download (sale of Tender) end date	17.06.2020	1400 hours
4.	Bid submission start date (cover-1 & 2)	26.05.2020	1000 hours
5.	Bid submission end date (cover 1 & 2)	17.06.2020	1600 hours
6.	Technical bid opening date & time (cover-1)	18.06.2020	1630 hours
7.	Technical bid opening date & time (cover-2)	After evaluation of the technical bids	

Notes:-

- Tender applications not accompanied by requisite cost of tender will be treated as rejected.
- Date of opening of Cover-2 (Financial Bid) will be informed online and the same will be opened only in respect of qualified and eligible individuals/contractors/firms/company who fulfill eligibility criteria according to their bid submitted in Cover-1 (Technical Bid).
- Uploading of bid does not constitute any guarantee for opening of Financial Bid (cover-2) of the tenderer.
- Any change/modification in the tender inquiry/NIT will be intimated by suitable corrigendum(s) through www.eprocure.gov.in only. Bidders are requested to visit the website regularly to keep themselves updated.

Sd/-
 Chief Executive Officer Bareilly Cantt (Dr. ANUPAM TALWAR)

CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR
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EXTENSION IN LAST DATE

The last date for submission of online Application Forms in respect of various non-teaching posts advertised vide Notification No. 03 of 2020 dated 27.04.2020, is hereby extended till 31st May, 2020.

The detailed notification and the online application form are available on University website: www.cukashmir.ac.in.

No. 03 of 2020 (NT) Sd/-
 Dated: 20 .05.2020 Registrar (I/c)

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TIME EXTENSION NOTICE 2

Due to unavoidable circumstances the date of submission and opening of NIT-01/EE(M)/MB-II/20-21: Polypropy Coating of Cooling and Drainage Pump pipe lines at Dharasu Power House invited by Executive Engineer (Maintenance), Maneri Bhati Stage-II, Chinyalisaur (Uttarkashi) are hereby extended as follows.

- Last date of downloading the tender - 29.05.2020 upto 15:30 Hrs
- Last date of submitting the tender - 28.05.2020 upto 15:30 Hrs
- Due date for opening the tender - 01.06.2020 at 11:00 Hrs

For Eligibility Criteria and full details kindly visit our website www.uttarakhandajalvidyut.com Bidders are advised to regularly visit our website for tender notice.

पत्रांक: 326 दिनांक: 22.05.2020 Executive Engineer (Maintenance)
 "Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

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क्रमांक: ननिका/निर्माण/2020/1242-49 दिनांक 22.5.2020

संशोधित निविदा सूचना-4

नगर निगम कोटा द्वारा संशोधित निविदा सूचना क्रमांक ननिका/ निर्माण/ 2020/6586-94 दिनांक 31.03.2020 से पूर्व में जारी की गई ई-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना संख्या 50/2019-20 दिनांक 11.03.2020 की तराखों में COVID-19 के कारण निम्नानुसार संशोधन किया जाता है।

क्र.सं.	विवरण	पूर्व में तिथि	संशोधित करीख
1	निविदा डाउनलोड व अपलोड करने की तिथि (वेबसाइट से)	11.03.20 से 23.05.20	11.03.20 से 02.06.20 (दोपहर 12.00 बजे तक)
2	डी.डी. एवं दस्तावेज जमा करने की तिथि	11.03.20 से 23.05.20	11.03.20 से 02.06.20 (दोपहर 3.00 बजे तक)
3	तकनीकी बिड खोलने की तिथि	23.05.20	02.06.20 को सांघ 6.00 बजे

शेष शर्तें यथावत रहेगी। हस्ता./-
 प्राधिकारी एवं आयुक्त नगर निगम, कोटा (उत्तर/दक्षिण)

Municipal Corporation Kota (Rajasthan)
Rajeev Gandhi Bhawan Dushera Ground Kota
 Tel Ph. No.: 0744-2500197, email: nknkota@gmail.com websites: www.kotamc.org

No:- NNNK/GENERAL/2020/6661-75 Date: 22.5.20

CORRIGENDUM-IV

The e-tender number 53/2019-20 and e-tender notice number NNNK/General/2020/21258264 Date 12.03.2020 was issued by Municipal Corporation Kota on 12.03.2020. Due to covid-19 Revised E-Tender time Schedule are as follows which can be kindly seen for reference on www.sppp.raj.nic.in, <http://eprocure.rajasthan.gov.in>, www.kotamc.org.

S.No.	Particular	Before	After
1	Period of on-line availability/ receiving of Bidding Documents (Starts/ End Date)	12.03.2020 to 26.05.2020 (upto 6.00 PM)	12.03.2020 to 04.06.2020 (upto 6.00 PM)
2	Submission of original Banker's Cheque/ Demand Draft for Bid Document cost, Bid Security, Bid Processing Fee & other documents listed herein after	27.05.2020 (upto 4.00 PM)	05.06.2020 (upto 2:00 PM)
3	Date & Time of Technical Bid Opening	27.05.2020 (6.00 PM)	05.06.2020 (4:00 PM)

Other condition will remain the same. Sd/-
 Superintendent Engineer Municipal Corporation, Kota

UJVN Limited
 H.O. "UJJWAL", MAHARANI BAGH, GMS ROAD, DEHRADUN-248006, CN No. 144101/UR2019/SGC/5586
 Tele.: 0135-2763808, Fax: 0135-2763508, website: www.ujvnll.com

Tender No. 331 **TENDER NOTICE** Date : 23.05.2020

Office of the Executive Engineer (Test), Vidyut Bhawan, Dakpathar invites sealed tenders for the following work.

Tender No: (1) 01/EE(Test)/Dkp/2020-21; SITC of Surge shaft & outlet water level sensor & web based remote monitoring system at Chibro PH, (2)02/EE(Test)/Dkp/2020-21; SITC of 220V DC DB Panel & rewiring of DC emergency lighting at Chibro PH, (3) 03/EE(Test)/Dkp/2020-21; Supply and installation of TBs of ODMK at 220kV Switchyard of Chibro PH.

Estimated cost (In Lakh) GSTextra : (1) ₹ 17.00, (2) ₹ 23.75, (3) ₹ 1.30

Earnest money deposit : (1) ₹ 34,000/- (2) ₹ 47,500/- (3) ₹ 47,500/-

Tender Fee : (1) ₹ 1180/- (2) ₹ 1180/- (2) ₹ 296/-

Last date of availability of : 26.06.2020 upto 15:30 hrs.

bid on website

Last date for submission of tender : 26.06.2020 upto 16:00 hrs.

Date of opening of tender : 30.06.2020 at 15:30 hrs.

For further details, kindly visit our website. The tender documents can be downloaded from the Nigam's website www.ujvnll.com Executive Engineer (Test)

"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

HIMACHAL PRADESH STATE ELECTRONICS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED
 Ist & Ground Floor, I.T. Bhawan, Mehli, Shimla-171013
 Tel. No. 0177-2623259, 2623513, 2626320, 2623513
 2623043, FAX: 0177-2626320 Website: www.hpsehc.in
 No.: SEDC/SW/AMC/2020-198 Date:21-05-2020

e-TENDER NOTICE

e-Tenders are invited from eligible bidders for Selection of Agency for AMC of existing software & customisation for fresh recruitment of H.P. Police recruitment for two years 2020-2022.

Last date for online e-bid submission is 03/06/2020 (upto 02:30 PM) and shall be opened on 04/06/2020 at 2.30PM. Detailed Tender Document containing Technical Specifications and Terms & Conditions are available on HPSEDC website www.hpsehc.in and <https://hptenders.gov.in>.

0084/HP General Manager (Technical)

कार्यालय प्रबन्धन निदेशक
परिचमोचल विद्युत वितरण निगम लि.
विद्योतीया पार्क, मेरठ
अति अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना

निविदा विधिकीयता संख्या: पब्लिकनिविदा मे नु./ 02 /Swift Dzire/ Tours/ Tata Tigor (Diesel) 2020-21 के अन्तर्गत पब्लिकनिविदा, मुद्रावाह मेरठ पर नैमान अधिकारियों हेतु 06नग जवान (चरि अलग-अलग फर्म कम से कम 02-02 नग जवान भी उपलब्ध करानी है, जो वह भी मान्य होगा) वाणिज्यिक पंजीकृत Swift Dzire/ Tours/ Tata Tigor (Diesel) यान, वाहन चालक सहित, (संलग्न वर्ष 2018 से पुराना न हो) किराने पर रखने हेतु दिनांक 05.06.2020 को 12.00 बजे तक ई-टेंडरिंग के माध्यम से अति अल्पकालीन ई-निविदाएं आमंत्रित है। निविदा से सम्बन्धित विस्तार में सभी जानकारी विवरण एवं संशोधन विस्तार वेब साईट सम्बन्धित सूचना www.pvvnll.org एवं www.etender.up.nic.in पर उपलब्ध है। हस्ता/- अयोध्या अभिनन्दन (नु.) कृते प्रबंध निदेशक, मण्डलीय में बिजली बचाव "बिजली बचाव की सूचना हेल्पलाइन नम्बर पर है: 1800-180-3002 (मेरठ), 1800-180-8752 (लखनऊ)" RO NO- 4196, Dt. 23.05.2020

HIMACHAL PRADESH STATE ELECTRONICS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED
 I.T. Bhawan, Mehli, Shimla-171 013
 Tel. No. 0177-2623259, 2623043, FAX: 0177-2626320 ,Website: www.hpsehc.in

TENDER NOTICE

No.: HPSEDC/CC/Digitisation/2020-199 Date: 23.05.2020

HPSEDC invites RFEs for Selection of Agency For Digitization of Records of (Scanning, Indexing, Meta Data Entry, Data Entry) and management of Digitized records through computerised Document Management System i.e. Digital Store System, Retrieval system and Integration with Document Management System (DMS) of Various Department(s) in Himachal Pradesh. Last date for submission of RFE is 04/06/2020 (upto 02:30PM). Detailed Tender Document is available on HPSEDC website www.hpsehc.in.

0083/HP General Manager (Technical)

कार्यालय नगर निगम (उत्तर/दक्षिण), कोटा (राज.)
 website: www.kotamc.org, email: nknkota@gmail.com, Tel Ph: 0744-2502293

क्रमांक: ननिका/निर्माण/2020/1234-41 दिनांक 22.5.2020

संशोधित निविदा सूचना-4

नगर निगम कोटा द्वारा संशोधित निविदा सूचना क्रमांक ननिका/ निर्माण/ 2020/6586-94 दिनांक 31.03.2020 से पूर्व में जारी की गई ई-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना संख्या 54/2019-20 दिनांक 16.03.2020 की तराखों में COVID-19 के कारण निम्नानुसार संशोधन किया जाता है।

क्र.सं.	विवरण	पूर्व में तिथि	संशोधित करीख
1	निविदा डाउनलोड व अपलोड करने की तिथि (वेबसाइट से)	19.03.20 से 23.05.20	19.03.20 से 02.06.20 (दोपहर 12.00 बजे तक)
2	डी.डी. एवं दस्तावेज जमा करने की तिथि	19.03.20 से 23.05.20	19.03.20 से 02.06.20 (दोपहर 3.00 बजे तक)
3	तकनीकी बिड खोलने की तिथि	23.05.20	02.06.20 को सांघ 6.00 बजे

शेष शर्तें यथावत रहेगी। हस्ता./-
 प्राधिकारी एवं आयुक्त नगर निगम, कोटा (उत्तर/दक्षिण)

CENTRAL WAREHOUSING CORPORATION
 (A Govt. of India Undertaking)
 ENGINEERING SECTION, REGIONAL OFFICE : DELHI
 WAREHOUSING FOR EVERYONE

No.CWC/RO-DLI/Engg. Section/PRESS NOTE/2020-21/125 Dated: 19.05.2020

PRESS NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

CWC invites online tenders from the approved contractors of appropriate class for the following works:-

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (in Lakh)	Last date of on line submission of tenders
1.	Replacement of AC Sheet with pre-coated Galvalume Sheets at CW, Narela, Delhi.	42.14	03.06.2020 Upto 15.00 Hrs.
2.	Annual Maintenance Contract (AMC) for Repairs and maintenance of civil works at CW, Kirti Nagar, Narela, Okhla-I, Okhla-II, ICD PPG, RP Bagh in Delhi Region.	26.18	03.06.2020 Upto 15.00 Hrs.
3.	Annual Maintenance Contract (AMC) for Repairs and maintenance of civil works at CW, Gr. Noida, Kasna, ICD Noida, Noida Sec. 68, Noida NSEZ, SBD-I, SBD-II, Surajpur in Delhi Region.	35.91	03.06.2020 Upto 15.00 Hrs.

Detailed Tender Notice along with conditions of contract and Notice Inviting E-Tender may be seen and downloaded from the website www.cwceprocure.com/CWC or www.cwacorc.in or www.tenderhome.com.

Sd/-
 EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (HOE)

TAMIL NADU FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES DEPARTMENT
 Egmore, Chennai - 600008
NOTICE INVITING OPEN TENDER - NOTICE NO: 1 / 2020

Separate sealed tenders are invited directly from reputed manufacturers or from their authorized distributors / dealers for the following item:-

Supply of 50 nos. of "Water mist technology System consisting of Water Tank of atleast 300 litres capacity and foam tank of 50 litres" and should be designed and to be mounted by the supplier on Mahindra Bolero Camper cab chasis - B.S.VI type units proposed to be provided by the department as indicated in the tender specification"

For more details of the tender such as Tender document fees, EMD, Specifications etc. and for the tender documents please visit ["https://www.tnfrs.tn.gov.in"](https://www.tnfrs.tn.gov.in) and the tender documents can be downloaded at free of cost from the Department website:

- The last date and time for sale of Tender documents : 29.06.2020 at 12.00 hours
- The last date and time for receipt all tenders : 29.06.2020 at 14.00 hours
- Date and time for opening of the Tender Documents : 29.06.2020 14.30 - 15.30 hours

Tender Inviting Authority
 DIPR / 1887 / TENDER / 2020 Directorate of Fire and Rescue Services Tamilnadu

उ.प्र. पावर ट्रांसमिशन कार्पोरेशन लिमिटेड ई-निविदा सूचना निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु कार्य/ आपूर्ति हेतु ई-निविदाएं दो भागों में (जी.एस.टी.) में पंजीकृत, प्रतिष्ठित एवं अनुभवी ठेकेदारों/ फर्मों से ऑन-लाइन ई-निविदा पोर्टल वेबसाइट 'http://etender.up.nic.in' पर आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा मूल्य जीएसटी सहित तथा धरोहर राशि आर.टी.जी.एस./ एन.एफ.आई.टी./ बैंक गारंटी के माध्यम से अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, विद्युत परीक्षण मण्डल, मुद्रादावाद के भारतीय स्टेट बैंक, मुख्य शाखा मुद्रादावाद में संचालित चालू खाता सं.- 10896364702, IFSC Code- SBIN 0000682 (MICR No. 110024101) में निमार्जित समस्त तक जमा करें। अन्य नियम व शर्तें विभाग के निर्धारित नियम व शर्तें उ.प्र. पावर कारपोरेशन लि. के फार्म एवं/के अनुसार होंगी जिन्हें किसी भी कार्यदिवस में अधोहस्ताक्षरतांक के कार्यालय में देखा जा सकता है। विस्तृत विवरण ई-निविदा पोर्टल वेबसाइट पर निविदा खुलने की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय तक उपलब्ध रहेगा। निविदा में किसी भी संशोधन या तिथि विस्तार ई-निविदा पोर्टल पर अवश्य देखा लिया जाए। निविदा खुलने का दिनांक- 22.06.2020- 1. ई-निविदा संख्या-35/ ई.टी.सी.एम./ 2020-21- विद्युत परीक्षण खण्ड सम्पन्न के अंतर्गत 132 के.वी. सम्पन्न- असमौली डी.सी. लाइन के टावर नं.- 14 (बी.-5) पर रिसेन्समेटर का कार्य। धरोहर राशि रु. 11000/-, निविदा मूल्य रु. 1770/-, 2. ई-निविदा संख्या-36/ ई.टी.सी.एम./ 2020-21- विद्युत परीक्षण खण्ड रामपुर के अंतर्गत विभिन्न 220 एवं 132 के.वी. उपकेंद्रों पर हॉट स्पॉट स्कैनिंग का कार्य। धरोहर राशि रु. 2000/-, निविदा मूल्य रु. 590/-, 3. ई-निविदा संख्या-37/ ई.टी.सी.एम./ 2020-21- विद्युत परीक्षण खण्ड सम्पन्न के अंतर्गत विभिन्न 220 एवं 132 के.वी. उपकेंद्रों पर हॉट स्पॉट स्कैनिंग का कार्य। धरोहर राशि रु. 2000/-, निविदा मूल्य रु. 590/-, 4. ई-निविदा संख्या-38/ ई.टी.सी.एम./ 2020-21- विद्युत परीक्षण खण्ड रामपुर के अंतर्गत विभिन्न 132 के.वी. ट्रांसमिशन लाईन पर हॉट स्पॉट स्कैनिंग का कार्य। धरोहर राशि रु. 2000/-, निविदा मूल्य रु. 590/-, 5. ई-निविदा संख्या-39/ ई.टी.सी.एम./ 2020-21- विद्युत परीक्षण खण्ड-प्रथम, मुद्रादावाद के अंतर्गत 132 के.वी. आवास विस्तार एवं 132 के.वी. उपकेंद्र टाकुरादरा पर स्प्लिटिंग टाइपर एयर कंडीशनिंग का वार्षिक अनुरक्षण कार्य। धरोहर राशि रु. 2000/-, निविदा मूल्य रु. 590/-, 6. ई-निविदा संख्या-40/ ई.टी.सी.एम./ 2020-21- विद्युत परीक्षण खण्ड-सम्पन्न के अंतर्गत 132 के.वी. उपकेंद्र संभल पर बस को सिंगल पेंथल से बदलने एवं 132 के.वी. मेन बसबार का एक संरक्षण सेंसिलस मूज कंडक्टर को डबल जेबरा से बदलने का कार्य। धरोहर राशि रु. 6000/-, निविदा मूल्य रु. 1180/-, निविदा खुलने का दिनांक- 23.06.2020- 7. ई-निविदा संख्या-41/ ई.टी.सी.एम./ 2020-21- विद्युत परीक्षण खण्ड-सम्पन्न के अंतर्गत 132 के.वी. एवं 33 के.वी. 'बे' एवं हाई मास्ट लाइट की शिफ्टिंग से सम्बन्धित कार्य। धरोहर राशि रु. 13000/-, निविदा मूल्य रु. 1770/-, 8. ई-निविदा संख्या-42/ ई.टी.सी.एम./ 2020-21- विद्युत परीक्षण खण्ड-रामपुर के अंतर्गत 132 के.वी. 'बे' का निर्माण कार्य, विभिन्न प्रकार की

WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM
THE SUNDAY EXPRESS, MAY 24, 2020

Bihar School Examination Board
CORRIGENDUM TO TENDER NOTICE NO- PR 120/2020
 With reference to Tender Notice No. PR-120/2020 issued in various Newspapers on 10th May, 2020 for "Selection of agency to provide 50 Mbps, 20 Mbps and 10 Mbps (1:1) Internet Lease Line Connectivity on OFC media to Bihar School Examination Board, Patna," changes have been made in Scope of Work & Eligibility Criteria. Updated Tender document is uploaded on e-procurement website <https://www.eproc.bihar.gov.in> Secretary

WESTERN RAILWAY-BHAVNAGAR DIVISION
HIRING OF DIESEL PUMP TO DRAIN OUT RAIN WATER / SLUDGE / MUD AND PROVIDING ROAD SIGN BOARDS & INDICATOR BOARD
 No. W/118/NIT/IE-Tender/2020-21/WA/ 06; Dated: 18/05/2020; Subject: E - Tender No. 24/2020 - 21 to 25/2020-21. Divisional Railway Manager (Works), Western Railway, Bhavnagar para invites e - tenders on behalf of President of India for the following works: Sr. No.(1) E-Tender No: 24/2020-21; Name of work: Sr. DEN (C) Jurisdiction: Hiring of diesel pump to drain out rain water / sludge / mud at surrounding area of LHS side as per attached list. Tender Value (₹): 826375.92; EMD (₹): 16500.00; Date of Bidding Start Date: 02/06/2020; Date of Bidding Closing: 18/06/2020; Sr. No.(2) E - Tender No. 25/2020-21; Name of work: Providing road sign boards and indicator board on L/Cs with retro reflective strips on ADEN - Junagadh's sub division; Tender Value (₹): 18031694.14; EMD (₹): 240200.00; Date of Bidding Start Date: 02/06/2020; Date of Bidding Closing: 18/06/2020; The NIT has been uploaded on Railway website www.ireps.gov.in on 18/05/2020

Government of Jharkhand

THE OUTBREAK

MIGRANTS ON THE ROAD

LUDHIANA: 1 PM



Sameer Ali and his family take shelter under a truck as they wait for confirmation of their train tickets to UP. *Gurmeet Singh*

DELHI: 1:10 PM



Shivnath, from Darbhanga, Bihar, waits to register for a train from New Delhi on Saturday. *Tashi Tobgyal*

IN TRANSIT

LUCKNOW: 2:15 PM



On a train at Lucknow's Char Bagh station on Saturday. *Vishal Srivastav*

PUNE: 4:30 PM



Police lathicharge a crowd of migrants hoping to get on a train from Pune railway station. *Pavan Khengre*

GREATER NOIDA: 1:55 PM



Razia, from West Bengal, ahead of boarding a bus from Greater Noida in Uttar Pradesh on Saturday. *Yogendra Yadav*



CORONA WATCH

SIKKIM

Student back from Delhi is state's 1st case

Gangtok: Sikkim reported its first Covid-19 case on Saturday with a 25-year-old student who recently returned from Delhi testing positive for the viral infection, an official said. The student, from Rabangla in South Sikkim district, is being treated at a hospital in Gangtok. He was in Delhi to prepare for competitive examinations. He travelled on a private bus from New Delhi to Siliguri, and then took another bus to the state. The official said the student had been lodged at a quarantine centre. After showing symptoms of Covid-19, he was shifted to hospital on May 21. **ENS**

MEGHALAYA

Top Shillong hospital reopens

Guwahati: Shut for around 40 days after its founder succumbed to Covid-19, Bethany Hospital in Shillong — one of Meghalaya's most prominent hospitals — opened for patients on Saturday. The founder, Dr John L. Sailo Rynthathiang (69), was the hill state's first Covid patient and its first casualty. Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma, who visited the hospital and joined the family in prayers for Dr Sailo, said the biggest tribute to the doctor will be to "continue with his good work and fulfil his vision for the people". Meghalaya has reported a 14 Covid cases so far. Twelve of the infected persons have recovered. **ENS**

UTTARAKHAND

92 new cases, biggest rise in single day

Bhopal: Fifty-five people who returned to Uttarakhand earlier this week in a Shramik Special train were among 92 new coronavirus cases reported in the state on Saturday. This is the highest single-day increase in the hill state. Now, the total number of coronavirus cases reported in Uttarakhand has touched 244. The 55 returnees tested positive in Nainital. They had returned from Mumbai to Haridwar. Officials said there were 1,600 people in that train and their samples were taken at different places. **ENS**

HC: Gujarat should pay or Rlys must waive migrants' fare

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, MAY 23

THE GUJARAT high court has said that the state government should bear the fare of the migrants returning to their home states, or the Railways should provide a waiver.

This comes after the state government told the court on Friday that since several migrants had come to the state on their own, provisions of the Inter-state Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act 1979 that covered displacement allowance and journey charges did not apply to them.

The state government said this in a report filed before the court in connection with several petitions by advocate Anand Yagnik which are being heard as part of a public interest litigation related to the management of the Covid-19 outbreak in the state. "The provisions of the



Volunteers from a local NGO distribute water and food to migrant workers headed to a railway station for their journey home, at Kalupur in Ahmedabad. *Javed Raja*

Interstate Migrant Workers Act 1979 are applicable to the registered migrant workers under the said Act. There are 7,512 workers registered under the Act. Based on the available data, there are around 22.5 lakh migrant workers across the state. Most of them have come on their own and pro-

visions for payment of travelling allowance and displacement allowance as required by Sections 14 and 15 of the Interstate Migrant Workers Act, 1979 is not applicable to them," the government had said in the report.

The report stated that governments of Odisha, Uttar Pradesh

and Tamil Nadu have agreed to deposit travelling charges with the Railways.

Meanwhile, a survey conducted by the labour department, a copy of which was annexed to the report, has shown that half of the migrants in Gujarat are based in and around Surat.

The report put the total number of migrants in Gujarat at 22.5 lakh, "prior to them being allowed to return to their native states".

"Total number of inter-state migrant workers from other states, in and around Surat (i.e. South Gujarat) is approximately 11.5 lakh... Total number of inter-state migrant workers, in the rest of the state: approximately 11 lakh," said the report, citing a survey by the labour department.

The report also said that by May 31, only 1.5 lakh migrant workers would be left in Surat, "of which 1,15,000 have already resumed work in various factories and industries".

Kerala reports 62 cases, highest single-day spike

Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala on Saturday reported 62 Covid-19 cases, the biggest single-day spike since the first case was reported in the state on January 30.

What has sent alarm bells ringing in the state administration is the fact that 33 per cent of the state's 794 cases have been reported in the past two weeks.

The surge in case count is primarily due to the return of migrants from the Middle East and from hotspots in other parts of the country, especially Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.

On Saturday, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan wrote to Railway Minister Piyush Goyal that the state should be informed in advance about special trains being sent. **ENS**

2,600 more Shramik Specials in 10 days: Rlys

AVISHEK G DASTIDAR
NEW DELHI, MAY 23

THE RAILWAYS has planned 2,600 Shramik Specials for the next 10 days after running a similar number over 23 days. Railway Board Chairman V K Yadav said the services will continue as long as migrants need them. "We will continue to run the Shramik Specials as long as migrants need them," Yadav said on Saturday at the government's official media briefing on the issue of migrants.

These trains have transported around 36 lakh migrants to their home states so far. A similar number is expected to be moved over the next 10 days on board trains bound for 16 destination states, including Assam, UP, Bihar, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Odisha, Rajasthan and others.

Railways has kept rakes ready at its divisions for intra-state movement of the stranded. "We have issued instructions to run trains for movement within the states as well, upon requests from states," Yadav said.

Another 200 mail or express



Rly Chairman V K Yadav: 'As long as migrants need them'

trains will be introduced on June 1 and sources indicated that services may resume next month, adding to the congestion on routes.

Of the 2,600 trains so far, nearly 80 per cent have gone to UP (1,246) and Bihar (804), and most of the trains began their journey from Gujarat, Railways said.

Railways has added a "dashboard" in its internal software to monitor the movement of Shramik trains and ordered officers to be present in train control offices round-the-clock to manage them.

There have been cases of irate passengers onboard delayed trains resorting to vandalism at sta-

tions, allegedly looting food stalls and the like. There have been internal complaints of passengers forcefully taking snacks and water bottles, leading to scuffles. Officials also reported inadequate power and running water in many of these trains.

An Indian Express analysis earlier found that around 50 per cent of Shramik trains took migrants from red zones to areas under green and orange categories.

Asked about returnees testing positive on their arrival in several states, Yadav said the trains are run as per the protocol issued by the Centre and in states as per "local conditions".

"There is protocol by the Home Ministry and also by the Ministry of Health. Only asymptomatic passengers are allowed to travel. They have to wear masks, and upon arrival, every state is screening them, keeping them in quarantine as per local conditions. States have created their protocols. Wherever needed, they are being sent to quarantine facilities. There is not much difficulty faced because the journeys are taking place following these processes."

Cong slams govt after UP train diverted to Odisha

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MAY 23

THE CONGRESS on Saturday hit out at the government and the Railways after a Shramik Special train from Mumbai to Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh reached Odisha's Rourkela, apparently without informing the passengers about the change in the route. The opposition party said the incident showed lack of planning by the Railways.

The opposition party also rubbished Chairman, Railway Board, Vinod Kumar Yadav's assertion that it is normal for the railways to divert some trains running on a single route to other routes to avoid congestion.

Earlier in the day, Singh tweeted a video clip in which a passenger is seen talking about the plight of those in the train. "Any resemblance to current government strategy is purely coincidental. Hope the exhausted passengers get home safely soon," Singh said in the post.

"What will happen to the people on board. When they sat on the train, they did not think it would take more than 48 hours to reach Gorakhpur. It seems to me that there is no protocol or standard operating procedure in place... half of the trains are not running in these sectors... then what is the big problem... they (railways) obviously have no SOP in place. This is nothing but lack of planning and complete disarray," Singh said.

Mayawati blames Cong for migrants' plight

Lucknow: BSP chief Mayawati on Saturday blamed Congress for the "very sad condition" of migrant workers across the country.

She had on Friday termed "inhuman" the Congress-led Rajasthan government's demand to seek Rs 36 lakh in payment for buses for students.

"The real responsibility lies with the Congress for the condition of migrant workers. Despite long tenures of the Congress at the Centre and in states, had it made arrangements for bread and butter of people, they would have not been forced to migrate," she said in a statement. She also said videos issued by Congress leaders amid the crisis "also look pretentious and not genuine". **ENS**

MIGRANTS BACK IN JHARKHAND

'Give us a reason to stay... something beyond MGNREGA'

ABHISHEK ANGAD
RANCHI, MAY 23

RAKESH VERMA and **Suresh Yadav** had left their homes in Jharkhand for jobs in metro cities and were in no hurry to return. Verma, 22, had a data entry job at a Delhi hotel, while Yadav, 48, worked in a dye factory in Mumbai. Both managed to send home Rs 5,000 monthly. Then lockdown struck.

Yadav hitched rides on trucks to his home in Giridih and Verma came to his Palamu home aboard a Shramik train.

"I don't have much savings, so can't start a new business. I will certainly not dig ponds under MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act)," said Verma who left Jharkhand two years ago after

graduating in Chemistry.

"If I have to, I might start a candle business. Only because the initial investment is less," he said.

Poultry business too has crossed his mind: "It requires a large place, which I don't have... I have to do something, I will have to stay here for at least four-five months," He believes that it will take a few years before Jharkhand can give him a stable income. "It will take time for Jharkhand to change."

On a weekday, Suresh Yadav is busy sorting out a land dispute. He said there was a minor problem, but the piece of land is crucial for his survival. Yadav said, "Only two-three bigha land is available where we grow rice and vegetables."

MGNREGA can be a lifeline but Yadav, who did not study after Class X, is reluctant — he does not have a job card, and the wages are



Hoarding outside Hatia railway station welcoming migrants.

very low. "In Mumbai I used to earn 18,000 a month. If I work under MGNREGA, I will not even get Rs 6,000 a month. Also, I will not get wages on time," he said. Still, Yadav said he will demand work once the job card is ready.

The *Indian Express* spoke to a cross-section of migrant workers back from different parts of the

country. These are day labourers and skilled workers such as carpenter, embroiderer, welder, among others. One thread connects them — demand for something beyond MGNREGA. Till Friday, more than 3 lakh such migrants labourers have arrived in Jharkhand. Many more are expected to return.

New schemes

Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren recently requested the Centre to increase by 50 per cent the current wage and mandays under MGNREGA, which guarantees 100 man-days of work per household at Rs 200 per day.

Anticipating the crisis, the state government has launched three schemes under MGNREGA, the main being an afforestation scheme. Around two lakh acres of land will be used for plantation by five lakh families with 100 fruit plants for every family — its plantation, maintenance, land work to be taken up through MGNREGA. "Each family is estimated to receive an annual income of Rs 50,000 every year from the produce from the third year onwards," said an official.

But Sandeep Kumar, 26, of

Ramgarh says he doesn't know where to go and whom to approach for jobs. He had left for Gujarat four years ago, and then moved to Hyderabad. He reached home on May 1. He is upset that the mukhiya is not proactive in reaching out to people with MGNREGA work.

"At this point, I will do anything, and if I get Rs 5,000 a month under MGNREGA, there is nothing like it," he said. Kumar says his money is over, and he has a family of six to provide for.

On paper, wages are deposited in the bank accounts of workers within 15 days of the work done. However, village-level Panchayat Sevaks said payments have been "very late". Rights body Jharkhand Janadhikar Mahasabha suggested that under MGNREGA, weekly cash payments should be made and dry food should be provided

daily at the worksite.

A 34-year-old cab driver from Surat arrived in Garhwa in the second week of May and is at a quarantine centre after testing positive for Covid-19. "Now if the government tells me to dig pits under MGNREGA, it won't be possible for me... Give me something more to stay."

Mapping skills

The government is mapping the skills of labourers returning to their home state at district level.

Chief Secretary Sukhdev Singh said: "We are building an app where the skilled labourers are mapped and we ask the local industries to absorb the talent pool."

Verma and Yadav are hopeful. "If the government provides a job where I earn half of what I did earlier, I will stay in Jharkhand."

10 ECONOMY

RISE IN COVID-19 CASES HINDERING OVERSEAS PASSENGER FLIGHT OPERATIONS

Hopeful of starting good percentage of international ops before Aug-Sept: Puri

PRANAV MUKUL
NEW DELHI, MAY 23

EVEN AS the Centre hinted at a resumption of almost all international commercial passenger flights before August-September, officials in the Civil Aviation Ministry have alluded to the possibility of the rise in number of COVID-19 cases in India acting as a hindrance in the country's plan to allow overseas flight operations.

On Saturday, Union Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said that India will try to restart a good percentage of international passenger flights before August or September, or even ahead of that.

"I am fully hopeful that before August or September, we will try to start a good percentage of international civil aviation operations, if not complete international op-

EXPLAINED

Govts world over looking to prevent second wave

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL is considered to be one of the chief sources of the virus spread and given that many countries are still working on flattening the curve of number of COVID-19-positive cases, restriction on international travel is among the biggest tools at the disposal of governments to contain the outbreak, or to prevent a second wave.

Given this, governments are expected to exercise extreme caution while opening up their borders for non-essential travel.

erations," Puri said during a Facebook Live session. "I can't put a date on it (restarting international flights). But if somebody says can it be done by August or

September, my response is why not earlier depending on what is the situation," he said.

The government had banned all international flights from

March 23.

A senior government official, on condition of anonymity, said that the Civil Aviation Ministry has been monitoring the situation in countries like the US, the UK, Italy, the UAE, Singapore, Thailand, etc to assess whether it will be safe to resume commercial operations to these destinations.

A number of European countries including France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, etc are likely to begin relaxation of travel restrictions next month, but some nations like Canada are still adhering to strict arrival protocols. Singapore, which banned short-term visit and transit passengers, is also expected to "gradually" lift the restrictions on transiting passengers from next month.

"With number of cases spiking in India, we are also considering the possibility that some of these countries may not allow

regular flights from India. But from our end, we will exercise the highest caution," the official said, adding that the Ministry was also taking lessons from the Vande Bharat repatriation mission.

The official said that a number of factors needed to be taken into account, including whether it will be safe for airline crew to be in lay-over at a hotel in an overseas destination and whether it will be safe to bring passengers in large numbers from those locations to India.

In the third phase of the Vande Bharat mission, which will commence from June 13, the government has also roped in private airlines in addition to Air India to fly Indian citizens wanting to come back to India. In the second phase, which started on May 16, around 32,000 citizens are expected to be flown back on more than 160 flights from 47 countries.

Amid lockdown, gas output falls by one-fifth in April

India's natural gas production dropped by almost one-fifth in April due to lower offtake by industries during the nationwide coronavirus lockdown, data from the Oil Ministry showed



2.16 bcm: Gas output in April, 18.6 per cent lower than 2.65 billion cubic metres (bcm) production in April 2019

15.3%: Decline in production by the country's top producer Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) last month, at 1.72 bcm

10%: Fall in output of Oil India Ltd (OIL) in April, at 202.05 million cubic metres

REASONS FOR LOW GAS OUTPUT BY OIL

■ Loss of potential in Deohal, Assam due to presence of CO2 in production stream
■ Less gas offtake by consumers

2.5 mn tonnes: India's crude oil production in April, falling by 6.35 per cent

1.7 mn tonnes: Crude oil output of ONGC in April, falling marginally

REASONS FOR LOW CRUDE PRODUCTION BY ONGC

■ Closure of wells in Western Offshore due to less offtake by GAIL
■ Movements restriction for field operations in onshore fields

615,000 tonnes: Crude oil produced by private companies, like Cairn, falling 19.2 per cent

Source: Oil Ministry/PTI

490,560 tonnes: Oil produced by Cairn's Rajasthan fields, showing fall of 19.2%

30%: Decline in production by refineries in April, at 18.9 million tonnes

Essel Infra defaulted on bonds: Franklin Templeton MF

ENSE ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, MAY 23

FRANKLIN TEMPLETON Mutual Fund on Friday said Essel Infra projects Ltd (EIL) has defaulted on debt issued by EIL.

The fund house said four of its fixed income schemes — Franklin India Dynamic Accrual Fund, Franklin India Credit Risk, Franklin India Short Term Income Plan and Franklin India Low Duration Fund — have invested in zero per cent Essel Infra Series 1 and zero per cent Essel Infra Series 2, which matured on May 22, 2020.

The fund house said four of its fixed income schemes have invested in zero per cent Essel Infra Series 1 and zero per cent Essel Infra Series 2, which matured on May 22, 2020

"At maturity, the issuer was unable to meet the maturity obligation. These NCDs are currently valued at 15 per cent of value after taking an 85 per cent hair cut. The NCDs are backed by a pledge of listed shares of Zee Entertainment, Dish TV, unlisted shares of EIL, personal guarantee of

Subhash Chandra and corporate guarantee. There is no impact on NAV of the schemes in comparison to that of May 21," Templeton said in a note to investors.

There is no impact on net asset value (NAV) as the value of shares held as collateral is greater than the current valuation of the

bond. Templeton has not yet sold the collateral. It has appointed a legal counsel to maximise recovery value in EIL bonds.

The fund house decided to close down six credit risk schemes in April due to heavy redemptions. Credit risk schemes and several other debt funds witnessed outflows during the month of April as the Franklin Templeton fiasco prompted worried investors to pull out funds from risky schemes.

Credit risk schemes of various fund houses witnessed outflows of Rs 19,238 crore in April after Templeton abruptly decided to wind down six credit schemes.



In a conversation with BJP leader Nalin Kohli, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said there is no clarity on when the pandemic would retreat. File

Sitharaman said making a "realistic assessment" of economic growth would be difficult at this point of time as there is no clarity on when the pandemic would retreat. "I'm not closing the door at all. I want to keep getting inputs from industry, implement what we have announced and depending on how things pan out we have to respond accordingly. We are only 2-month old in this year, we have 10 months to go," Sitharaman said in a conversation with BJP leader Nalin Kohli.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Friday had said the impact of COVID-19 is more severe than anticipated and the GDP growth during FY21 is likely to remain in the negative territory. It projected some pick-up in growth impulses from second half (October-March) of 2020-21 onwards.

Last week, the FM had announced an economic packages five tranches, which included a Rs 3.70 lakh crore support for MSMEs, Rs 75,000 crore for NBFCs and Rs 90,000 crore for Power distribution companies, free food grains to migrant workers, increased allocation for MGNREGS, tax relief to certain sections and Rs 15,000 crore allocated to the healthcare sector to deal with the pandemic.

The package was done in consultation with economists, academicians, ex-bankers, ex-finance ministry officials and industry, Sitharaman said, adding the idea

‘Extend loans to all eligible borrowers’

New Delhi: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday said banks have been asked to extend loans automatically to eligible borrowers without fear of 3Cs — CBI, CVC and CAG. She said clear instructions have been given to public sector banks and financial institutions on Friday that they should not be scared to extend loans as 100 per cent guarantee is being given by the Centre. **PTI**

was to make available more liquidity in the economy and revive demand, Sitharaman said.

"The package was designed keeping in mind that we are facing a situation which is exceptional and therefore whether the contraction is going to be this much or that much, we didn't have the luxury of data to guess-estimating them.

"However, the spirit of that thought has been kept in mind that we have to now look at complete contraction and if we have to stimulate the economy keeping that in mind what is that we have to do," she said.

CRUDE WATCH

OIL ENDS WITH WEEKLY GAINS

New York: Global oil prices end the week with gains, with the benchmark Brent gaining gained 8 per cent and the US West Texas Intermediate rising 13 per cent, even as some analysts said they may have come too far, too fast. **REUTERS**

States compete to bring in sweeping changes to labour laws, ‘competition to attract capital’, say analysts

AANCHAL MAGAZINE
NEW DELHI, MAY 23

WITH AT least 10 states moving to amend their labour laws ahead of restarting economic activities post the COVID-19 lockdown, an overhaul in the central labour laws is being seen in the offing. It is learnt that most states are expected to move towards extended working hours and are likely to follow the model of suspension of labour laws like Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, with the Centre according the requisite backing for the changes following which it will move towards an overhaul of central labour laws as well.

A blanket suspension of labour laws, as has been in the case of UP, however, may not find favour, with the Centre leaning towards putting caveats in order to protect the rights of bonded labour, children and women. While UP and MP have opted for a suspension of labour laws for 1,000 days, as many as ten states — including Rajasthan, Punjab, Odisha, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, MP, Haryana, Assam and Gujarat — have allowed extension of working hours to 12 through issuance of orders under the Factories Act during the ongoing lockdown against the COVID-19 pandemic.

While states like MP have taken a more nuanced approach, other such as UP and Gujarat have opted for a broader, more sweeping relaxation of the labour laws, leaving drafting loopholes that could see potential legal challenges in the days ahead.

Madhya Pradesh has exempted employers from some obligations under various labour laws like Factories Act, Madhya Pradesh Industrial Relations Act and Industrial Disputes Act, and Contract Labour Act for a period of 1,000 days, i.e. nearly 3 years. This gives employers the freedom to hire and fire, and contractors not needing a licence to supply labour of up to 49 persons.

The state has also exempted new factories under the Factories Act, 1948 from inspection by the Labour Department and permitted the flexibility to conduct third party inspections at will. It has also issued an Ordinance to the Madhya Pradesh Labour Welfare Fund Act, 1982, exempting all newly established factories from filing annual returns and paying Rs 80 per labourer per year to the Madhya Pradesh Labour Welfare Board for the next 1,000 days.

UP has given a 3-year exemption to all factories and establishments engaged in manufacturing from all labour laws, except provisions of Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act and those relating to employment of children and women. The Ordinance has been sent by the state for the President's assent, prior to which

STATE-WISE CHANGES TO WORK HOURS				
State	Establishments	Maximum weekly work hours	Maximum daily work hours	Time period (months)
Gujarat	All factories	From 48 hrs to 72 hrs	From 9 hrs to 12 hrs	3
HP	All factories	From 48 hrs to 72 hrs	From 9 hrs to 12 hrs	3
Rajasthan	Some factories*	From 48 hrs to 72 hrs	From 9 hrs to 12 hrs	3
Haryana	All factories	Not specified	From 9 hrs to 12 hrs	2
UP	All factories	From 48 hrs to 72 hrs	From 9 hrs to 12 hrs	3**
Uttarakhand	Some factories*	Maximum 6 days of work a week	Two shifts of 12 hrs each	3
MP	All factories	Not specified	Not specified	3

*Note: *All factories distributing essential goods and manufacturing essential goods and food; **All factories and continuous process industries that are allowed to function by government; *The Uttar Pradesh notification was withdrawn*

the Union Labour Ministry will also give its comments on the Ordinance.

On May 15, however, the UP government, in a communication to the Allahabad High Court following a notice for a public interest litigation, withdrew its earlier order regarding extension of daily working hours in industrial units to 12 hours from 8 hours.

Gujarat has also announced the intent to follow suit with a 1,200-day exemption of labour laws for new industrial units, with the state also having sent the Ordinance for the President's approval following comments from the Union Labour Ministry.

While a section of experts is viewing these changes as a competition by states to attract capital after the lockdown, many see the blanket suspension of labour laws as a rushed move without details and leaving it ambiguous and open to litigation. "In Madhya Pradesh's order, there is clarity as to which clauses would be applicable and clauses which won't apply. Uttar Pradesh's Ordinance mentions that provisions of Factories Act and Building and Other Construction Workers Act relating to safety and security of the workers shall remain applicable. Any provision can be safety or security related even if it's related to lighting or temperature control at the unit. But details are missing. The order is ill-conceived, misplaced and lacks clarity," said KR Shyam Sundar, labour economist and professor of Human Resources Management at XLRI.

Trade unions have opposed the changes being made in labour laws. Ten central trade unions — including Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC), All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) — registered an initial complaint with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on May 14, terming these moves as "an attack on human and labour rights", asking for ILO's intervention "on the extremely precarious and regressive moves" for the working class in the country. RSS-

affiliated Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) has also instructed its state units to oppose the unilateral withdrawal of labour laws.

Former Labour Secretary Shankar Aggarwal said many labour laws are archaic and leave scope for harassment at the hands of labour inspectors or require multiple levels of approvals for those running manufacturing units. "Manufacturing units require no objection certificates from various departments. Bribes are taken by labour inspectors and violation of some of the provisions have imprisonment as punishment. These are exceptional circumstances, smaller units are already at the brink of closure due to a risk of shortage of inputs from China and lack of consumption demand. States should be allowed to move forward with their labour reforms," he said.

Labour is a concurrent subject, with both the Centre and states having powers to enact laws. Where there is any conflict between a central law and a state law on the same subject, the central law is expected to prevail. If some of the laws that states have moved to suspend have a corresponding act in the central domain, the suspension is open to legal challenge.

Both the Centre and states have separate machinery to enforce the labour laws, including the Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act, 1970 and the corresponding Rules. The enforcement in the Central Sphere is done through the officers of the Central Industrial Relations Machinery (CIRM). The country-wide network of Deputy Chief Labour Commissioners (Central) under the Chief Labour Commissioner (Central) is mandated to settle the complaints/claims under rule 25(2)(v)(a)&(b).

The respective state governments are entrusted with implementing labour laws and undertaking inspections in the state sphere independently "for proper implementation of the Acts".

‘UK planning to require employers to pay 20-30% of furloughed wage cost’

REUTERS
LONDON, MAY 23

THE UNITED Kingdom has drawn up plans to require employers to cover 20 per cent to 30 per cent of furloughed employees' wages from August to reduce the vast burden of the coronavirus crisis on government finances, *The Times* newspaper reported.

The United Kingdom extended its job retention scheme

— the centrepiece of its attempts to cushion the coronavirus hit to the economy — by four months on May 12, but told employers they would have to help to meet its cost from August.

"The Treasury has drawn up plans that would require employers to cover between 20 and 30 per cent of people's wages," *The Times* said. "They would also be required to cover the cost of employer's national insurance contributions, on average 5 per cent of wages."

Car rental firm Hertz files for US bankruptcy protection

REUTERS
NEW YORK, MAY 23

THE MORE than a century old car rental firm Hertz Global Holdings Inc filed for bankruptcy protection on Friday after its business was decimated during the pandemic and talks with creditors failed to result in much needed relief.

Hertz's board earlier in the day approved the company seeking Chapter 11 protection in a US bankruptcy court in Delaware, according to court records. Its international operating regions including Europe, Australia and New

Zealand were not included in the US proceedings, Hertz said.

The firm, whose largest shareholder is billionaire investor Carl Icahn with a nearly 39 per cent ownership stake, is reeling from government orders restricting travel and requiring citizens to remain home. A large portion of Hertz's revenue comes from car rentals at airports, which have all but evaporated as potential customers eschew plane travel.

With nearly \$19 billion of debt and roughly 38,000 employees worldwide, Hertz is among the largest companies to be undone by the pandemic.

‘Boris Johnson plans to scale back Huawei role in UK’s 5G network’

ADITIKHANNA
LONDON, MAY 23

UK PRIME Minister Boris Johnson plans to reduce Chinese telecom giant Huawei's involvement in Britain's 5G network in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, according to a British media report on Saturday. *The Daily Telegraph* said Johnson has instructed officials to draw up plans that would see China's involvement in the UK's upgraded telecom network scaled down to zero by 2023.

He still wants a relationship with China but the Huawei deal is going to be significantly scaled back. Officials have been instructed to come up with a plan to reduce Huawei's involvement as quickly as possible, the newspaper quoted a well-placed source as saying.

He has taken a great many soundings from his own MPs on this issue and shares their serious concerns. The deal was struck before the pandemic hit but coronavirus has changed everything, the source said. The move follows a tough stance taken by the US against China over spying concerns related to its involvement in the 5G network. **PTI**

11 SUNDAY STORY



15 APRIL | With restrictions on movement, the couple would spend all their time at home. The window was a favourite spot



28 APRIL | With no cabs or autos, Mamata went for check-ups with Kailash on his bike. "I drove very slowly to avoid jerks. We were stopped at barricades, but fortunately, the policemen saw her and let us go," says Kailash; (right) at the diagnostic centre, the couple maintained a safe distance from others



HOURS AFTER the C-section, as the new mother slowly came around, her *bua*'s voice rang through her drug-induced stupor — "Lockdown aa gaya, Lockdown aa gaya". And a bundle thrust into her arms: her baby, her first born.

"My bua, who stayed in hospital with me, just came up with the a nickname for the baby for fun — Lockdown," laughs Mamata Dudi, 25, speaking on the phone from her in-laws' home in Rajasthan's Nagaur district, where she is recovering after the delivery on May 6.

In this season of a pandemic and all the associated uncertainties, at least one thing had gone to plan — Mamata was now the mother of a baby boy.

With Covid and the accompanying nationwide lockdown forcing a rewrite of almost every calendar, what couldn't have waited was the arrival of newborns. In Nagaur district alone, where Mamata's child was born, 10,322 births were registered between March 1 and May 20.

Across the world, several expectant parents have been spending anxious moments about welcoming their babies into the world, in what are extraordinary times.

For over a month and a half, from the start of April to now, *The Sunday Express* chronicled this journey, through photographs and phone calls, of Mamata Dudi and her husband Kailash Bajja — the excitement, the apprehensions, an unplanned 400-km journey to Rajasthan, till the time they held little "Lockdown" in their arms. Their story so far:

■ ■ ■

In August last year, two years after Mamata and Kailash married, a match arranged by their families, she conceived. "It wasn't planned," laughs Kailash, 30, a civilian employee of the Indian Air Force. "But I had a plan in place for the next nine months — a normal delivery for Mamata at a government hospital, with my mother in Delhi to help us out".

There were few surprises in the first two trimesters, but since March 24, when the Prime Minister announced the first phase of the Covid-19 lockdown, their plans began unravelling.

Almost every moment came with its share of anxieties: the restrictions on travel, having to visit hospitals and diagnostic centres, the lack of help at home.

"In August last year, over tea one evening, she told me she was pregnant," smiles Kailash. I had been working for seven years, I earned Rs 40,000 every month, and soon I was going to get government accommodation too. The timing was perfect," he says.

"We were very happy," adds Mamata, a graduate with a BEd degree from Rajasthan.

Till her second trimester, most of the issues that came up were routine. "She had very bad morning sickness. Every morning, when she made my lunch *dabba*, the smell of *chhaunk* (tempering) made her nauseous. But she insisted on cooking. Her haemoglobin was a little low, so while returning home from work, I got her grapes, oranges and bananas to eat," he says.

The couple also went to great lengths to choose the right hospital "for a normal delivery". "It was our first child, and I wanted to do everything right. To select a hospital for the delivery, I spoke to everyone I knew — friends, relatives, colleagues. Most private hospitals insist on C-sections to earn more money. I didn't want that. We finalised a government maternity hospital in RK Puram. Even a senior at my office delivered her baby there," he says.

Mamata did her bit too. "We used to live in a small one-room house in Palam and I didn't have a help at home. I did all household chores to stay active. I also downloaded the Mylo app (to help "millennial moms raise happy & healthy families"), and also logged on to YouTube and other websites to clear my doubts and questions," she says.

While Kailash would accompany her for check-ups on Saturdays, for those on weekdays, she would take the bus from RK Puram to Palam.

By March, as Mamata entered her third trimester, the couple moved into a government quarter in West Delhi's Mayapuri.

"That is when the first positive Covid-19 case in Delhi was reported, and then the numbers began to rise..." recalls Kailash.

Then, on March 22, the Prime Minister announced the Janata Curfew, followed by the first phase of the lockdown on March 24. "Honestly, even then, I wasn't scared, but that was the first time we realised all our plans may not work," he says.

Good News

While Covid-19 has forced a rewrite of almost every calendar, some plans stayed on course. For over a month and a half of the lockdown, RENUKA PURI & ANKITA DWIVEDI JOHRI chronicled the parenthood journey of Mamata Dudi and Kailash Bajja: the bike rides to the clinic, the complications, a sudden 400-km trip to Rajasthan, a happy ending — and a new phase

PHOTOGRAPHS: RENUKA PURI



15 MAY | After her delivery on May 6, Mamata is now undergoing a 40-day period of rest for new mothers. "I am happier than in Delhi. There was a higher chance of contracting the virus in the city," she says.



26 APRIL | After a long day, Mamata would stand by the window in the evenings to make calls, comb her hair or just have tea

His mother, who was slated to come to Delhi in April to help with the delivery, had to cancel her visit.

Mamata grew anxious too. She had thought she would hire a help, but had to put the idea on hold. "Of course, I was scared. We couldn't move out of the house. *Mai har din puja karne lagi. Agar zyada dar lagta, toh dhyan lagati* (I started praying every day. If I felt too anxious, I would meditate)," she says.

The couple's unease gave way to fear when they had to step out of the house for Mamata's check-ups. "On April 10, we went out for the first time since the lockdown. There were no cabs or autos. We went to the RK Puram hospital on his bike. Both of us wore masks. I also wrapped my *dupatta* tightly around my face. It wasn't comfortable," says Mamata.

"I drove very slowly to avoid jerks. We were stopped at barricades, but fortunately, the policemen saw her and let us go," adds Kailash.

After one such trip, around mid-April, they had some bad news: Mamata was diagnosed with "fatty liver", and the doctor said there could be complications in the delivery. Now, it was Kailash's turn to feel scared.

"If there were complications, the doctor said she would have to be shifted to Safdarjung Hospital, which also had a Covid-19 ward. I didn't want that to go there," says Kailash.

Worse, the lockdown had now been extended till May 3, and all plans to bring his mother or any other relative to Delhi had come to naught.

On their way home, the couple came up with a plan — that they would control Mamata's condition through diet and exercise, and then get a family member over after May 3.

"*Ye zyada tel, masala khati thi* (She liked oily, spicy food). I changed all that. I prepared a diet chart for her — *roti-chai* for breakfast, almonds, banana after that, *khichdi* for lunch, and *doodh-roti* for dinner. I also removed the *malai* from the milk," says Kailash, as Mamata quips, "*Ghee bhi nahi khane diya* (He didn't even let me have ghee). That's mandatory during pregnancy."

He also decided his wife needed more exercise. Since during the day there were restrictions on movement in their neighbourhood, the couple began waking up at 5 am and going for a quick walk in the park. Back home, where the couple usually divided their chores, he pulled back. "I let her do everything — *jhadu-pocha, bartan*, washing clothes. I would sit close by to ensure she was safe," he says.

But the change of routine at home soon began to wear Mamata out. She realised that hers would never be a "normal pregnancy" — there was no freedom to eat, to move around or be with family.

"I had to be home the entire day. I didn't even go out to buy groceries for fear of contracting the virus. I would stand by the window to make calls to family and friends, comb my hair or just have tea. That was my only pastime," she says.

"I would also join Mamata for tea at the window at 5 pm. Soon, it became a ritual. *Woh hamara relax area ban gaya* (It became our space to relax)," says Kailash.

In the last week of April, Mamata went for another ultrasound scan at a nearby diagnostic centre, maintaining a safe distance from patients as she queued up. When she

went to her doctor with the results, there was more bad news: "The fatty liver condition had improved. But now, the doctor said, the umbilical cord had looped around the baby's neck. A C-section was inevitable. I knew I would need help to take care of her after the delivery. We needed women with experience around," says Kailash.

They began to explore their options. Mamata didn't want to go to her parents' home in Nagaur because her mother had been unwell. She was also unsure about going to Kailash's home as she feared people might "mock her". "The first delivery is usually at your parental home... that is the norm in our village. But we had no option. I had to take her to my parents' home in Nagaur," says Kailash.

The first hurdle was to get a pass to cross the Delhi-Haryana border, which had been shut on May 1. "I reached out to the SDM office, the local police station, and filled out the application form online... I also messaged the Chief Minister on Twitter. It took me an entire day but I finally managed a pass," says Kailash.

At home, Mamata began preparing for the journey — packing traditional clothes she would have to wear at her in-laws' and food for the journey.

Kailash then had to arrange for a taxi. "Most of them were not willing to go or demanded huge sums. An ambulance would have been the safest, but they asked for Rs 20,000. Finally, we managed to get a taxi," says Kailash.

On May 2, at 3.15 am, they set off.

In Nagaur, Kailash's brother fixed an appointment for the same evening at a maternity clinic on the outskirts of the district. "My pass was valid only for a day, so I had to return to Delhi the same evening. But before that, I took Mamata to the clinic, where they examined her and said she would need a C-section. But now I was comfortable with the idea. We were home, there was family around her," he says.

Despite her initial apprehensions, Mamata too was now relieved. "*Itne log the, Delhi mein hum akele the* (There were so many people. In Delhi, we were alone). My *bua* also came down. I felt safe. Of course, Kailash had to leave," she says.

■ ■ ■

Now, with the baby in her arms, Mamata is undergoing '*jaapa*', a 40-day mandatory period of 'rest' for new mothers that comes with several restrictions. "I am not allowed to talk much or use the phone. But I am happier than in Delhi. I have so much help here. Every evening, I do a video call with Kailash... that's all I am allowed," she says.

The fear of the virus too, she says, has receded. "In the city, there is a higher chance of contracting the virus. I am in a village now, the threat is much lesser," she says.

Still, she has a rule for anybody who carries the baby: "They will have to sanitise their hands. That's the only precaution I am taking," she says.

Back in the Capital, Kailash is still waiting to meet his first-born. "Mamata has named him Reyansh, the first ray of sunlight. She found it on the Internet," he says. But this time he isn't planning anything. "Most of my plans didn't work out. Now, I will go to Nagaur only when the lockdown is lifted completely," he adds.

Across
THE AISLE



PCHIDAMBARAM

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Mr Modi refuses to follow the path adopted by most countries to counter the economic consequences of the pandemic. The model advocated by almost all economists is fiscal stimulus. That means only one thing: spend more

Spend, borrow, monetize

LAST WEEK, I had analysed the Rs 20-lakh crore stimulus package announced by the Prime Minister on May 12. In the past week, the details announced by the Finance Minister in five tranches have been dissected by analysts and economists. The unanimous conclusion is that the **fiscal stimulus** part of the package was in the range of 0.8 to 1.3 per cent of GDP. With a detailed break-up, I placed the size of the fiscal stimulus at Rs 1,86,650 crore equivalent to 0.91 per cent of GDP. No one in the government has contradicted my numbers.

ORIGINAL SIN

Before I go forward, I wish to draw attention to the economic situation of India when Covid-19 hit the country. We had witnessed seven successive quarters of declining GDP growth. It was unprecedented. On March 11, WHO declared COVID-19 as a pandemic. Our attention was turned away from the dire economic situation. Now, the government will blame the pandemic, although the truth is that the origin of the economic crisis was the government's misguided policies.

The initial decision to lockdown was unavoidable because, in March, the only known antidote to the rapid spread of the virus was 'social distancing', which meant a lockdown. In the absence of an alternative strategy, the government went from one lockdown to another. Each successive lockdown has yielded diminishing returns. Besides, it has

spawned a humanitarian crisis of gargantuan proportions.

Post Lockdown 1.0, every decision of the government has proved questionable in terms of the outcomes. At the first opportunity — on the eve of Lockdown 3.0 — the Prime Minister withdrew from national TV and cleverly passed the buck to the state governments.

But the control of the economy is not in the hands of the state governments. The Central government is now like an imperial power. All authority has been taken over by the PMO. The states have been left to beg the Centre for funds, including their legitimate and constitutional entitlements. The ostensible 'help' extended — liquidity to discoms, higher borrowing limit — are so loaded with riders that no state government would be able to fulfill the pre-conditions and avail of the money in the current fiscal year.

THE DREADED 'R' WORD

Which leads to invoking the dreaded 'R' word — Recession. India has not suffered negative GDP growth in the last 40 years. That distinction could go the Modi government, which will blame the pandemic, but the original sinner was the Modi government. It is not necessary to recall the numerous sins of omission and commission since that fateful day on November 8, 2016 (D for Demonetisation day).

In fighting the pandemic, Prime Minister Modi adopted the path followed by China, Italy, Spain, France and Britain. First, a lockdown. Then testing, tracing, isolating and treating the infected persons. Additions were made to the medical and health infrastructure. The results of these measures are mixed. We have a state like Sikkim with zero cases and a state like Maharashtra that accounts for 35 per cent of all infections. It is clear that the virus does not have a defined path and its spread depends on many yet-unknown factors.

Yet Mr Modi refuses to follow the path adopted by most countries to counter the economic consequences of the pandemic. The model advocated by almost all economists is **fiscal stimulus**. That means only one thing: spend more. The Expenditure Budget for 2020-21 estimated the expenditure at Rs 30,42,230 crore. Whether it would have been enough in a slowing down economy is a moot question, but there is no doubt it would not be enough when the economy is hurtling toward negative territory.

We need a new Budget. The assumptions made on February 1 are no longer relevant. The government must present a New Budget on June 1, 2020. The total expenditure must be in the order of Rs 40,00,000 crore. The present sources of revenue (tax, non-tax, capital receipts) may be expected to yield only Rs 18,00,000 crore. For the rest, we must borrow. The borrowing will go up from the BE of Rs 7,96,337 crore to

Rs 22,00,000 crore.

A LAST CHANCE

If, as the year progresses, the borrowing/fiscal deficit reaches a level that is uncomfortable — in the sense there are other consequences — we must not hesitate to monetize part of the fiscal deficit, that is print money. Many countries did that in 2008/2009 and saved their economies from a deep and prolonged recession.

The alternative is too horrendous to contemplate. A recession will mean greater unemployment (it is already at 24 per cent), a longer wait for job-seeking youth, lower wages and incomes, less consumption, more morbidity and more poverty.

The defining image of India in 2020 will be the migrant worker, a hard working person supporting oneself and one's family and just above the poverty line, who, reduced to being without work/job, without cash, without a shelter and without food, was forced to trudge hundreds of kilometres, sometimes with children, desperate to go back to his 'home', even if it meant reaching home only to die.

The Modi government has one last chance. It must get off its horse named 'Ostrich' and Spend, Borrow and Monetize. Otherwise, the people will never forget or forgive the Modi government for setting India's economy back by at least a decade.

Fifth
COLUMN

TAVLEEN SINGH

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Nothing to celebrate

WHAT A terrible year it has been for India. And, for Narendra Modi. Next week marks the end of the first year of his second term as Prime Minister, and it would be no exaggeration to say that it has been the worst year of his long political career. Try and think of one shining moment, one dazzling achievement and you will probably end up agreeing that there have not been any. Before sitting down to write this piece I tried to establish exactly when things started to go bad and came up with August last year, when Arun Jaitley died. Suddenly, the priorities and the image of the government changed dramatically.

From an agenda of economic priorities, we moved to an agenda that seemed designed to take India towards becoming a Hindu Rashtra. It did not take long for Muslims to notice that there was an exercise underway to make them acknowledge that their position in the 'new India' would be lower than that of Hindus. In August last year, the special status of our only Muslim-majority state was altered by the removal of Article 370. Jammu & Kashmir lost its status as a state and was broken into a divided Union territory. Jaitley was alive but his health was too poor for him to be able to offer advice or caution. If he had been able to, I believe that Kashmiris would not have been humiliated the way they have been.

As someone who has reported on our Kashmir problem for more than 40 years, I personally believe that Article 370 had to go, sooner rather than later, because it had given jihadist secessionists in the Valley the false hope that Kashmir will one day become an independent Islamic Republic. But, I would have been happier to see Article 370 removed with the support of political leaders in Kashmir who have been on India's side. Instead, what Kashmir got was the jackboot and a brutal lockdown. The consequences have been awful. Omar Abdullah tweeted last week that Kashmir is now in a state of being in a lockdown within a lockdown. Jihadists continue to strike as much terror as they did before despite attempts to control them by imposing the longest Internet shutdown in history.

The man who initiated the passage in Parliament of the law to remove Article 370 was the Home Minister. And, it soon became clear that he was to replace Jaitley as the face of Modi's government. Amit Shah has a natural belligerence that does not work well in public life, but it seemed to be part of the new image that the Prime Minister wanted to create for his second term. So, it was also left to the Home Minister to initiate the most controversial and discriminatory law that has ever been passed by India's Parliament. The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).

Had this law not had a prelude in which the Home Minister wandered the land making speeches in which he used the word 'termites' to describe those Bangladeshi Muslims who have entered India illegally, CAA may have been less divisive. His use of this ugly word sent a message to Indian Muslims that they understood well. When they linked CAA to the Home Minister's promise that it would be followed by an exercise to make a National Register of Citizens, Muslims understood that citizenship was being weaponized. Public protests followed, that culminated in Delhi exploding in a frenzy of communal violence even as the President of the United States was dining at a state banquet in Rashtrapati Bhawan.

By the time the pandemic arrived, communal tensions were so high that Bharatiya Janata Party spokesmen and social media trolls tried to blame the pandemic on Muslims. On top of this has come a humanitarian crisis that has shown the whole world that the majority of the Indian workforce is made of people so poor that they have been treated as if they were not human. It has also shown that the series of lockdowns we have been subjected to have been so badly planned that the purpose they were meant to serve has been defeated.

As the lockdowns begin to be lifted, they will reveal an economic crisis of grim proportions. If the poorest of our citizens have suffered the most, the richest have also seen their businesses badly damaged. Those in the middle, who survive from what they can earn from small businesses and from jobs in various service industries, have been reduced to a state of penury. The Prime Minister tried in his latest address to the nation to revive the dream of the 21st century being India's century and promised reforms that would make this dream a reality.

The pandemic gives him a second chance to achieve this old goal. But, he must return to the road that leads to 'parivartan' and 'vikas'. The road he has taken in this first year of his second term will lead not to a Hindu Rashtra, as most of his supporters on social media believe, but to more hatred and violence. When the lockdowns are lifted, we are likely to discover a country with a broken economy and a political atmosphere so poisoned that it could be as lethal as Covid-19.

There really is very little to celebrate on this anniversary of the first year of Narendra Modi's second term in office.

inside
TRACK

COOMI KAPOOR



PKS's CLOUT

P K MISHRA and Ajit Doval are considered the two most powerful bureaucrats in Delhi, and both have Cabinet rank status in Modi 2.0. When Mishra (PKM) took over from Nripendra Misra as Principal Secretary to the PM, it was assumed that he would automatically wield the most clout in Modi's secretariat. But the recent allocation of reporting authority for portfolios in government suggests that power equations may be changing. Former cabinet secretary P K Sinha (PKS), who was appointed Principal Adviser to the PM in September, has been entrusted with all economic and energy ministries. PKM handles mainly appointments and promotions, the cabinet secretariat and anti-corruption unit. Both men are in Modi's favoured mould for bureaucrats, low-key and loyal. With Amit Shah as Home Minister, Doval has lost his original turf, as well as RA&W. But he is the reporting authority for Defence and External Affairs which gives him enormous room to manoeuvre in back-channel diplomacy.

DOUBLE SPEAK

After the discovery of a major Covid-19 spike among followers of the Tablighi Jamaat who stayed at the Jamaat headquarters in Nizamuddin basti, the Home Ministry and TV went ballistic. Media reports claimed the police had launched a major manhunt for the "absconding" Maulana Saad, leader of the orthodox Muslim sect. The Tablighi Jamaat was served a 36-question notice, and, subsequently, there was a raid on the Maulana's farmhouse in Shamli, UP, the most obvious location to find him. But there has been no attempt to take him into custody and, significantly, the cases registered against his outfit can be tried as non-cognisable offences, amounting to carelessness, if the authorities so desire. It would appear that one hand of the government is working at cross purposes with the other. A section of the establishment believes that the Tablighi Jamaat is a major asset for India. The sect, which preaches the purest form of Islam as practised at the time of the Prophet, has never advocated terrorism or the path of jihad. Nor does it interfere in a country's politics. The Jamaat has a formidable following of many millions in 170 countries and is well respected in several important Islamic countries. To take action against Maulana Saad would only strengthen the hand of the small splinter faction in Pakistan.

Out of
MY MIND

MEGHNAD DESAI



IT HAS been not like a cricket test but more a golf tournament. A large number of national leaders are playing over the same 18 holes. If you can sink a hole in fewer than the required four holes, you are under par and winning. The game is not over yet but we know who is under par and who is over. The laggards are Europeans, led by the United Kingdom (how did just 5,000 of their ancestors ever manage to rule India?), and of course the United States of America is becoming great (number one in mortality) as Donald Trump promised he would make it. Hong Kong, South Korea, Singapore, Japan

BENCH MARK

Chairperson of the Rajya Sabha Venkaiah Naidu and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla met to discuss whether the customary opening of Parliament for the Monsoon Session in the last week of July is feasible. Opposition MPs and the media have already started making enquiries. Before the next session begins, the 24 parliamentary standing committees have to first submit their reports. The discussion centered on the modalities for arranging a technical platform for the 30 MPs from each committee to interact and submit recommendations. Some MPs are stuck in far-flung districts. With planes now flying, this hurdle could perhaps be overcome. But the problem of MPs maintaining a safe distance will be a challenge. In a full House, the parliamentary benches are overcrowded with MPs sitting cheek-by-jowl, since the House was originally designed for smaller numbers.

PAPER TIGER

Maharashtra Chief Secretary Ajoy Mehta is probably the most powerful man in the state. Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray assumes that the post of chief secretary is similar to that of a CEO of a company and his role is that of a hands-off chairperson. Thackeray rarely visits the Mantralaya, and shows up at the chief minister's official residence, Varsha, only when he makes a video recording for television. Mehta has been granted two extensions since retirement and hopes for an unprecedented third. He has worked earlier with Gopinath Munde, Sharad Pawar, and Devendra Fadnis, and knows how to keep his political bosses content. The removal of the dynamic Mumbai municipal commissioner Praveen Pardeshi, is attributed to him. Mehta perhaps viewed Pardeshi, who has since proceeded on leave, as competition. The Chief Secretary's clout can be judged by the fact that though the CM cleared PWD Minister Ashok Chavan's choice as secretary, it was changed after Mehta's intervention.

KILL WITH KINDNESS

The rule banning adults over 65 years from walking in parks even after lockdown relaxations makes little sense. Doctors routinely prescribe fresh air and exercise as the best medicine for all lifestyle diseases which usually strike in later life. Instead of corona, where the mortality rate is in any case relatively low in India, far more people than the yearly average are likely to die of stroke, diabetes, heart attack and other ailments because of the supposedly "helpful" ban. A more meaningful rule would be to segregate the elderly from rubbing shoulders with possible Covid-19 spreaders by reserving special spaces for them in hospitals and insisting on separate queues for the elderly for rail tickets and other essential supplies.

History
HEADLINE

SEEMA CHISHTI

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The British brought in the system of indentured labour in 1819 via the Bengal Regulations VII, which rendered workmen liable to criminal penalties for breach of contract and desertion. This set of Acts continued till 1865, when special police were used to stop workers from leaving.

Over 150 years later, amid a pandemic and an economic crisis that has rendered several jobless, as state governments such as Gujarat, UP, Madhya Pradesh and others bring in 'labour reforms' that, in some cases, have suspended almost all existing labour laws, the historical background of some of these laws provide a useful context.

For instance, the 'eight-hour working day' — an idea that is often attributed to Robert Owen, a mill owner-cum-Fabian socialist in Lancashire, who is said to have come up with it in 1817 — is closely connected to ideas about labour rights in India. Though it may seem odd now, a good deal of pressure on the British government in India was at the urging of British cotton manufacturers, who did not want Indian textiles to have a lead over them with very long working days, often 16 hours long, with women and children also employed!

But the first version of the Factories Act came in only after the Crown took charge, in 1881. Subsequent improvements were found necessary as the first ones satisfied not one, neither workers nor owners.

But it was the 20th Century that ushered in big strikes, actions and an awareness of work, rights and remunerations.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak's arrest and sedition trial in 1908 sparked a series of events in then Bombay, starting with a number of Greaves, Cotton & Co mill workers putting down their tools and walking out on July 13, despite a lot of tough measures by the British government. This was not to stop and by July 23, lakhs of workers joined in.

Mahatma Gandhi's movement with indigo farmers in Champaran and the role it played in the freedom struggle is known. But equally significant was the Ahmedabad mill workers' strike to which he rushed immediately after securing a win in Champaran with the Champaran Agrarian Bill in 1918.

Fasts followed and despite a strong under-current within the Congress, which frowned upon workers' actions and was largely pro-industrialist, the working-class movement was only to intensify with the impetus that the Russian Revolution gave after 1917.

So strong was the connection between securing workers' rights and calls for freedom that labour analysts say of that time that the trade union movement coincided

8-hour work days, and how we got there



with the building up of tempo for freedom and Independence of India.

So much so that interlinked events during 1917 to 1947 make it very hard to distinguish between "a purely economic struggle and a purely political struggle".

Says trade unionist JS Majumdar, editor of the monthly *The Working Class*, "The International Labour Organisation (ILO) was established in 1919 and just a year later, India got its first central trade union with Lala Lajpat Rai at its head. Hundreds of trade unions, several unregistered, followed suit. After the first attempt by the British to control Unions through the Trade Union Act in 1926, they introduced the Trade Disputes Act in 1928 to control strikes. Bhagat Singh and his associates in 1928 threw a bomb in the Central Legislative Assembly protesting this and gave the call for '*Inquilab Zindabad*'. So the trade union and the national liberation movement were joined at the hip."

The rights of workers to eight-hour days, guarantee of minimum wages and the right to organise were derived from a trinity of laws — the Industrial Disputes Act, the Minimum Wages Act, and the Factories Act — that came into force even before the Constitution was formalised. These laws went on to inform the Constitution and breathe life into the Directive Principles too, which mentions the promise of a decent living wage through a minimum wage.

The idea that labour had rights, and that too mediated through trade unions, had their heyday before opening up and 'informalisation' of the Indian economy in 1991.

SA Dange, BT Ranadive, Datta Samant, P Ramamurthy, Dattopant Thengadi came from different political stables but owed their heft to their influence among workers.

The intermeshing of politics and labour activities was clearly visible when Indira Gandhi was halted in her tracks by the All India Railwaymen Federation not letting trains run on time, eventually leading to the

Emergency that led to her downfall.

The 1990s and the New Economic Policy brought a new wave of ideas into dominance and 'contract labour' greatly diminished the power of organised trade unions.

Says Amit Basole of the Centre for Sustainable Employment at Azim Premji University in Bengaluru, "A lot of laws had remained on paper and were beginning to be seen as arbitrary. The laws were not wrong, but there was some degree of harassment and small businesses did feel stifled, and this started poisoning ideas about labour laws themselves."

The 21st century and the emergence of the gig economy, with inequality and asymmetry in the power equation coming to the fore again after the 2008 recession, have again steered the conversation to the precariousness of working lives.

The drive by certain states to take a "law holiday" for three years has met with some pushback.

Says Chinmay Tumbe, migration scholar at IIM Ahmedabad, "The debate on minimum wage laws across the world is on the level of the minimum wages, not their existence. Unfortunate that in India, some states are attempting to woo investment by scrapping this law in its entirety."

Delhi-based labour economist Prof Praveen Jha says, "Now even the most elementary provisions for labour are proposed to be suspended for about three years, all in the name of attracting investments, boosting growth etc, even though there is powerful evidence and strong theoretical arguments that such assumptions are fallacious."

Says Majumdar, "The challenge for trade unions is big and it is two-fold for informal workers and the migrants — those in and out of work, and those in and out of towns. Theirs is a shifting world. We need to be there, both at the village-level, at home and at work, and in the cities, too."

crease the GDP by a quarter even with average productivity. Three quarters of women do not work as paid labour. They can work from home given the power of digital technology, an extra bonus adding to household health and welfare.

When the lockdown is over, bring the workers back to their jobs but with free rail and bus travel.

Start now and build low-rent accommodation for them before they return. Encourage local industries or work from home to harness women's energy. The *shramik* has waited long enough. They deserve better. Other Asian countries have used their labour force well. India has to learn to value its people.

The economic pandemic

knew what to do and did it fast. Many 'strong' leaders — of Brazil, Russia, Iran — have done badly.

Everywhere, the surprise has been about the uncertainty surrounding scientific advice and the confusing ways in which different governments have adopted testing, tracing, and social distancing. People have been amazingly patient, willing to obey orders at enormous cost to themselves as was shown by the *atithi shramik* millions in India. Many are enthusing that the State has come back. But it has been shown to be grossly inadequate. What has been superb is the voluntary efforts of millions at helping each other and bearing the costs of State inefficiency patiently. MSMEs have adapted

and filled the gaps of the global supply chains. Charities and neighbourhood groups have wrought miracles.

The pandemic will depart in three or four months. But in each country, it has highlighted the weak spots in the economy. No surprise that the poor, the elderly, the ethnic minorities, the daily wage worker and women have borne the bulk of the economic pain as income growth rates have gone negative. Forget growth rates of even 4%; income will go down for a while before it comes up. India's weak spot was found by the millions of workers in the informal urban economy. Seventy years of planning concentrated on creating a protected formal sector for 10% of workers with protec-

tion, plus another 10% of public bureaucrats and politicians. No plan generated enough growth to absorb the growing population.

Those *shramiks* who are out of jobs whether *atithi* or not were never the subject of any debate in any Plan. The ignorance about their numbers, their region of origin, the nature of their employment in official economic policy-making circles should not surprise anyone. Planning and growth were never meant for them. Lockdown for people who have no homes to lock and no way to feed themselves without daily work raises serious issues of Democratic Justice.

The Great Sudden Stop allows the opportunity to change all that. If India could employ its labour force fully, it could in-

13 THE OUTBREAK THE WORLD

PANDEMIC WATCH



In Sydney. *Reuters/File*

AUSTRALIA Govt asks younger people to get tested

Sydney: Australia's most populous state said on Saturday it recorded just three new cases the previous day and urged younger people to get tested as it prepares to further loosen restrictions on pubs and restaurants. New South Wales (NSW), which includes Sydney, is home to nearly half Australia's roughly 7,100 coronavirus cases and plans to let pubs and restaurants host up to 50 seated patrons from June 1, from 10 now. That has prompted health officials to remind people to maintain social distancing measures and increase testing to prevent a "second wave" of infections.

GERMANY Merkel defends coronavirus restrictions

Berlin: German Chancellor Angela Merkel is defending her country's coronavirus restrictions and calling on her compatriots to keep respecting social distancing rules. Germany started loosening its restrictions on April 20 and since then has at least partly reopened many sectors. At the same time, it has seen frequent protests against curbs. Merkel said in her weekly video message Saturday that the measures were necessary, and that officials must continue to justify why some restrictions can't be lifted while ensuring that they are proportionate.

SPAIN Far-right protests against lockdown

Madrid: Thousands of cars and motor-bikes honking horns and waving Spanish flags drove in procession through Madrid on Saturday as part of a nationwide protest called by the far-right Vox party against the country's lockdown. Spain, which imposed one of Europe's toughest lockdowns on March 14, has started to ease restrictions, but Madrid and Barcelona have remained in lockdown for longer because of more severe coronavirus outbreaks.

Brazil now biggest Covid hotspot after US

Reports over 330,000 Covid-19 cases; Many Latin American nations see record infections, deaths

AGENCIES

RIO DE JANEIRO, MAY 23

BRAZIL BECAME the world No 2 hotspot for coronavirus cases on Friday, second only to the United States, after it confirmed that 330,890 people had been infected by the virus, overtaking Russia, the Health Ministry said. Brazil also has recorded more than 21,000 deaths, though experts believe the true numbers are higher.

A surging coronavirus is ravaging parts of Latin America, setting records for cases and deaths Friday in some countries in the world's most unequal region even as the pandemic's march slows in much of Europe, Asia and the United States.

Latin America's two largest nations — Mexico and Brazil — reported record numbers of infections and deaths almost daily this week, fueling criticism of their presidents, who have slow-walked shutdowns in an attempt to limit economic damage.

The virus "does not forgive," Uber driver Bruno Almeida de Mello said at the burial of his grandmother Vandelma Rosa, 66, in Rio de Janeiro. "It does not choose race or if you are rich or poor, black or white. It's a cruel disease,"

De Mello said his grandmother's death certificate reads "suspected of COVID-19," but the hospital didn't have the tests necessary to confirm it. That means her death was not counted in the official toll.

In Sao Paulo, the worst hit



Open and occupied graves at Vila Formosa cemetery, Brazil's biggest, in Sao Paulo. *Reuters*

city, aerial video showed rows of open plots at the Formosa Cemetery as it rushed to keep up with demand.

Experts said the surging deaths across Latin America showed the limits of government action in a region where millions have informal jobs and many police forces are weak or corrupt and unable to enforce restrictions. Infections also rose and intensive-care units were swamped in Peru, Chile and Ecuador, countries lauded for imposing early and aggressive

business shutdowns and quarantines.

Even in countries where cases are rising, many governments say they need to focus on jobs that are vanishing as quickly as the virus spreads.

Far-right President Jair Bolsonaro has been widely criticised for his handling of the outbreak and is at the center too of a deepening political crisis.

The former army captain has seen his poll ratings drop, hurt by his opposition to social distancing measures, support of the

unproven remedy chloroquine, and tussles with experienced public health officials.

Since the outbreak began, Bolsonaro has lost two health ministers, after pressuring them to promote the early use of anti-malarial drugs like chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine. Several high-profile public health experts have also left. Many have been replaced by soldiers.

Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador continued to travel the country after its first confirmed case. He let his

health advisers take the lead on the crisis but kept insisting Mexico's strong family bonds and work ethic would pull it through.

Mexico reported its highest one-day death toll so far, with 479 new fatalities Friday, up from the previous high Wednesday of 424. It also reported 2,960 new cases, capping a week in which daily confirmed infections have hit close to that number. However, the Health Department acknowledges that the real number is probably several times higher.

For first time since pandemic, China reports no new coronavirus cases

REUTERS

SHANGHAI, MAY 23

CHINA RECORDED no new confirmed COVID-19 cases on the mainland for May 22, the first time it had seen no daily rise in the number of cases since the pandemic began in the central city of Wuhan late last year.

The National Health Commission (NHC) said in a statement on Saturday that this compared to four new cases on the previous day. It said, however, there were two new suspected cases: an imported one in Shanghai and locally transmitted case in the northeastern province of Jilin.

New asymptomatic cases of the coronavirus fell to 28 from 35 a day earlier, the NHC said.

China has seen a sharp fall in locally transmitted cases since March as major restrictions on people movement helped it to take control of the epidemic.

However, it had continued to see an influx of imported cases, mainly involving Chinese nationals returning from abroad, while new clusters of infections in the northeastern border provinces of Jilin and Heilongjiang have emerged in recent weeks.



In Beijing on Saturday. *AP*

EXPLAINED Boost ahead of next steps

THE REPORT of no new cases being flagged will likely be a booster to China's leadership, as it comes after a key meet in which leaders hailed the country's success in tackling the virus. However, with Wuhan still undergoing mass testing and new local outbreaks reported a few days ago, experts said vigilance against new waves will continue.

Gaza reports first virus-related death amid fears of outbreak

ASSOCIATED PRESS

GAZA CITY, MAY 23

THE CROWDED Gaza Strip recorded its first death from the coronavirus on Saturday, officials said, amid fears an outbreak could paralyze the territory's already overstretched health care system.

The Palestinian health ministry said the deceased was a 77-year-old woman who had underlying health problems.

Gaza's authorities, led by the militant group Hamas, reported 35 confirmed new cases this week, bringing the total to



At a school in Gaza. *Reuters/File*

55. All of the infected have been in designated quarantine and isolation facilities hosting returnees from abroad. There were no reports of community transmission of the virus.

Gaza's health care system is fraying under the weight of an Israeli-Egyptian blockade, internal Palestinian division and repeated wars and skirmishes between Israel and Palestinian militant groups.

Home to 2 million people, the Gaza Strip has only a little over 60 ventilators and a chronic shortage of medication.

Since mid-March, Hamas has enforced mandatory quarantining at hotels, clinics and schools for all residents returning via Israel and Egypt. With the recent spike of cases, Hamas said it's closing Gaza's borders for all arrivals until the end of June.

White House questions US death toll as it nears 1 lakh

THE NEW YORK TIMES

NEW YORK, MAY 23

AS THE number of United States deaths from the pandemic approaches 100,000, President Trump and members of his administration have been questioning the official coronavirus toll.

Even as most experts say that the numbers are probably an undercount, White House meetings have turned to questioning whether the toll is inflated by the inclusion of people who died while infected by the coronavirus, but of other conditions.

Trump told reporters on Friday that he accepted the current death toll but that the figures could be "lower than" the official count, which is now above 95,000. Dr Deborah L Birk, the White House's coronavirus response coordinator, has said that America has taken "a very liberal approach" to what counts as a Covid-19 death.

Most statisticians and public health experts say the death toll is probably far higher than what is publicly known, because early Covid-19 deaths were probably misclassified and people are dying in their homes and in nursing homes without being tested.

The rising number of US coronavirus deaths comes as interviews show that Americans believe Washington has not been rising to meet the challenge.

‘Essential’: Trump demands states allow places of worship to reopen

PETER BAKER

WASHINGTON, MAY 23

PRESIDENT DONALD Trump may not consider church essential to his personal life, but it may be to his political future. And so he waded into the culture wars on Friday by demanding that states allow places of worship to reopen "right away" and threatening to overrule any that defy him.

Marching into the White House briefing room for a hastily called announcement, Trump declared places of worship "essential" operations that should hold services in person this weekend regardless of state quarantine orders stemming from the coronavirus pandemic that has killed nearly 96,000 people in the United States.

"The governors need to do the right thing and allow these very important, essential places of faith to open right now for this weekend," Trump said, reading from a prepared text before leaving after just about a minute without taking questions.

"If they don't do it, I will override the governors. In America, we need more prayer, not less."

The White House could not explain what power the president actually has to override the governors, and legal experts said he did not have such authority, but he could take states to court on religious freedom grounds, which could be time consuming. Attorney General



At a protest calling for lifting of curbs in California. *AP*

William P Barr, a strong advocate of religious rights, has been threatening legal action against California.

Churches, synagogues and mosques already are allowed to operate in more than half of the states, although many remain under social distancing instructions, and individual institutions have opted to remain closed for safety.

While Trump demanded that churches and other worship houses reopen this weekend, Deborah L Birk, the White House pandemic coordinator, offered more measured advice.

"Maybe they can't go this week if there's high number of Covid cases," she told reporters after the president left the briefing room.

"Maybe they wait another week. But there is a way to social distance, like you are here, in places of worship." **NYT**

FRANCE NOD FOR RELIGIOUS SERVICES

■ France is allowing religious services to resume starting Saturday after a legal challenge to the government's ban on such gatherings

■ Religious leaders welcomed the decision but said it will take time to put the necessary safety measures in place

■ To prevent further spread of the virus, visitors to places of worship must wear masks, wash their hands upon entering, and keep a distance of at least one metre from others

OTHER TOP GLOBAL STORIES

Death toll in Karachi plane crash now 97, two survived: Pak army

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

KARACHI, MAY 23

NINETY-SEVEN people, including three children, were killed and two passengers miraculously survived a fiery crash when a Pakistan International Airlines plane with 99 travellers on board plunged into a densely populated residential area near the airport here, the Army said on Saturday.

Flight PK-8303 from Lahore crashed at the Jinnah Garden area near Model Colony in Malir on Friday afternoon, minutes before its landing in Karachi's Jinnah International Airport. Eleven people on the ground were injured.

The Pakistan Army, leading the rescue and relief efforts, said 97 bodies have been recovered

ered and two passengers survived the crash.

Army spokesman Major General Babar Iftikhar tweeted, "Rescue operation in progress by Army Search & Rescue Team, Army troops, Rangers & social welfare orgs. 97 bodies recovered. 2 passengers survived. 25 affected houses cleared, their residents accommodated at various places with assistance of Civil Administration."

He said that residents of the 25 affected houses have been shifted to different places.

Aviation Minister Ghulam Sarwar Khan said that the crash inquiry would be completed as soon as possible.

"I will personally supervise the whole process and we will not spare anybody if held responsible for the crash," he said at a press

conference. "We will try that the report is completed in three months".

Chief Executive Officer of PIA Arshad Malik said that 21 bodies have been handed over to the families. Other 76 bodies were being identified after DNA matching. He said the plane's black box was also found and handed over to the investigation board.

Sindh Health Minister Azra Pechhu said that authorities have started taking DNA samples but it may take up to 21 days to match the samples.

She said that 68 men, 26 women and three children were among the deceased.

Sindh government spokesman Murtaza Wahab said that 16 people were injured on the ground but none of them fatally.



People carry coffins of victims during a funeral in Karachi on Saturday. *Reuters*

Plane jolted thrice before it crashed, says survivor

SAJJAD HUSSAIN

ISLAMABAD, KARACHI, MAY 23

THE PIA plane was flying very "smoothly" but while attempting to land, it "jolted" thrice and then the pilot "adroitly lifted" the aircraft off the ground, only to crash moments later, recounts Muhammad Zubair, one of just two passengers who miraculously survived the fiery crash.

"The plane was coming very smoothly, 8303 of PIA. My seat was 8F. When it was reaching Jinnah International Airport, the pilot announced that 'we are landing, fasten your seat belts'.

We fastened seat belts. While landing, the plane jolted three times. Then it came on the runway and was on it for a brief time. Then I don't know what happened, that the pilot adroitly lifted the plane off the ground," Zubair, who is being treated for burns in a hospital in Karachi, said.

"The pilot then flew the plane for 10 or 15 minutes. Then he again announced that the plane was landing. When this announcement was made, I looked down and it appeared to me that we were (flying) over the Malir Cantonment... Then when it was about to land, suddenly...(it crashed)," he said. **PTI**

On government's strategy to deal with the economic impact of COVID-19

We are fighting a war against coronavirus but we are also facing an economic war. Some of the state governments do not have money to pay salaries. Even the revenue of the central government has dropped. The banking system is also facing a big crisis. The MSMEs, migrant labourers, farmers, everyone is in a problem. This is a crucial time for the Indian economy, in fact for the world economy. In this situation, we need to finalise a policy where we need to first consider the problems of the poor, of *gaon, gareeb, mazdoor* and *kisan*. I have been told by the hotel and restaurant associations that one crore and fifty lakh waiters work in this field. Even wellness centres, salons have fifty lakh workers — of which 50 per cent are women. So everyone is in a problem. The government's vision is that we need to create more liquidity in the market, and increase purchasing power. That is the reason the government has deposited money into the accounts of the poor, 35 crore people, in the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana. The government opened up the food stock for the poor. We are now supplying wheat and rice on a large scale to them through state governments on a very reasonable rate. At the same time, due to the lockdown, the situation is very complicated and challenging. Now that the lockdown is in the fourth stage, we have liberalised many things. First of all, the country needs to understand the art of living with coronavirus. We need to stop the spread of coronavirus, we don't have any vaccine, so for the time being we need to plan everything.

The government's plan now is to pump 20 lakh crores with different schemes. Secondly, we need to launch infrastructure work immediately and we need maximum public, private and foreign investment in infrastructure, roads, railways, aviation, and even the power sector. These are the big infrastructure projects that we need to finance. By increasing liquidity in the market we will create more employment potential and at the same time we need to accelerate the wheels of the economy. The government is giving packages to different stakeholders. In the coal industry, we are opening the mines for the public-private sector and a lot of reforms have already been taken by the government. The government is committed to the ease of (doing) business and at the same time, we need to make economic reforms. First perform, then reform and then transform. That is the mission for the government. A lot of things have opened up for the international investor. In defence and other fields, this decision has already been taken. Hundred per cent FDI has been allowed in infrastructure. We need to bring in reforms in agriculture too. We have an import of nine billion dollars of edible oil and our farmers' production per acre for soyabean is only four-and-a-half quintal. The average per acre in Brazil is about 26-27, and in the US it is 30 quintal because of GM seeds. We have a difference of opinion in the country on GM seeds but we need more research. Self-sustainable — that is very important. 'Atmanirbhar Bharat', that is the consent.

On how the global mood towards China spells opportunity for India

We need to reduce imports and increase exports. This is a blessing in disguise for all of us. You already know the statement from the prime minister of Japan that those Japanese who have investments in China can ship out. The Japanese government is giving them a special package for that. This is the mood of the whole world community. From the US to everybody else, they want to shift many industries, they don't want to deal with China. The Chinese economy is one of the most powerful economies in the world, so this is the time for India. We have both skilled manpower and raw material here. The way in which we are developing India is a huge opportunity for all industries. First of all, upgradation of technology, and secondly the most important thing is that we can take foreign capital — FDI — in our different industries, particularly infrastructure.

For the first time we are facing this kind of crisis. I interact with many people, they are nervous, there is frustration and negativity. First of all, with the help of all stakeholders, including the media, we need to create positivity in the minds of the people. Self-confidence is equally important. We will face and win this war and go ahead and make India an economic superpower. We need to give a positive message to all stakeholders because without that confidence we cannot fight the war.

On how to get demand back in the market

When you pump money into the economy, it is going to create demand. We have already restructured six lakh MSMEs upto March 31 and we have a decision to increase the debt upto December 31. So by this way out, at least my expectation is that 25 lakh MSMEs will be restructured. Again for the restructuring, we have made a provision for a fund of Rs 10,000 crore, which will combine with other funds to create a fund of Rs 50,000 crore for equity infusion. We have extended the EPF support upto August 2020. The EPF contribution is reduced to 10 percent for three months... this is going to be helpful to the industry and when industry is going to get the money, when their limits are increased and working capital is increased, ultimately



Union Minister of Road Transport & Highways and MSME Nitin Gadkari at *The Indian Express* e-Adda on May 18

‘I am confident migrant labourers will return but we need to create confidence in their minds’

In an e-Adda hosted by *The Indian Express*, Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister of Road, Transport & Highways and MSME, spoke on clearance of dues to MSMEs, how to get demand back in the market and restarting industry



Gadkari was in conversation with *The Indian Express* Political Editor Ravish Tiwari (top) and National Business Editor Anil Sasi

they are going to spend. Circulation of money is very important, it is going to accelerate the wheels of the economy. But the government also has its limitations. We have given everything to people and we are trying how to convert this into an economic success story.

On pending payments to MSMEs

One of the major problems with MSMEs is that they are not getting their payment. This problem is not just with Bharat *sarkar*, its ministries and undertakings but also with the state governments, its ministries and their undertakings and the private industry. All this capital is the working capital of small MSMEs. So now the central government has taken a decision that whatever is the liability of different ministries and public undertakings of the central government, within 45 days they will give all payments to the MSMEs. Secondly, I have already written to all chief ministers and state governments to take immediate decisions. I have requested all major industry owners to issue payments to MSMEs. Take the example of the automobile industry. This is an industry that probably has the most employment potential in the country, it has a turnover of Rs 4,50,000 crore and 1,45,000 crore export. When I requested all of them, they said first we will issue the payment if there is a balance. So now this is a problem and I don't have any hesitation to accept it. We are now trying to find a solution but this is a time when we are not able to take any action against anybody. Now most people are giving money to the MSMEs on a priority basis. The SAMADHAN portal is there. If anyone is not getting their payment, he can come to the portal and we can find a way out. This is a problem, it's the reason they don't have working capital and working capital is like oxygen for an ICU patient. So today this is one of the issues but by giving additional 20 per cent working capital without collateral or any fee to the industry, I feel that there will be some advantage. We're expecting that governments will pay MSMEs as early as possible.

From the US to everybody else, they all want to shift their industries from China. They don't want to deal with China. This is the time for India. We have both skilled manpower and raw material available here. The way in which we are developing India is a huge opportunity for all industries

On banks lending to MSMEs

We are now giving permission to district cooperative banks, urban cooperative banks and NBFC for financing MSMEs. The banks are now giving loans and 75 per cent of the loan is secured. So there is no risk. The role of NBFCs in giving auto and other loans has been good but because of the ILFS problem, they stopped auto finance and that was one of the reasons the auto sector faced a lot of problems. So now the government has decided to help NBFCs. In Maharashtra, these urban cooperative banks have deposits of more than three lakh fifty thousand crore in small towns. I already have an idea of how to get foreign investments in NBFCs. The country needs foreign investments. In Bangladesh, the way they developed a bank culture is a success story. We need to support people (in small sectors). They are honest, they are paying their money back and there is no problem. So we have to make funds available to them.

Our village industry turnover was 88,000 crore up to the end of March and we have decided to make it five lakh crore in the next two years. We have huge potential, and we need to plan on how to create more employment in rural, tribal, agriculture and forest areas.

Actually, we have changed the definition of MSMEs. Now we have merged manufacturing and service as one sector. We are now thinking of increasing investment, particularly for medium industries, and take the turnover from 100 crore to 200 crore and investment from 20 crore to 50 crore. We need to make more industrial clusters. Now everyone wants to go to Gurgaon, Noida, Mumbai, Pune, Bangalore, Chennai and Hyderabad. We need decentralisation of industry.

On restarting industries and the issue of migrant labour

The impression in the minds of people is that all our industries, and our MSMEs, are dependent on migrant labour. This is not correct. It is around 10 per cent, 15 per cent, 20 per cent, and industry-to-industry volume is different. First of all, industry can start with 30 to 40 percent workforce. They definitely need migrant labourers. You are correct, there is a lot of frustration among the migrant labourers, they have started walking from Mumbai to Patna. They all come to Delhi, Gurgaon and Mumbai because of employment. *Aur koi khushi se nahi aaya hai, maj-boori se aaya hai* (they come because of their compulsions). We need to create confidence in them. I am confident that when we start industries, they will come back but we need to increase confidence in their mind. I feel in due course of time when the atmosphere will change, they will come back.

For longer text, log onto www.indianexpress.com

VOICE BANK

SUDARSHAN VENU, JOINT MANAGING DIRECTOR, TVS MOTOR

You have given support to the MSME sector through policy measures that include immediate liquidity. How can the MSMEs access this financing? Would it be through banks? Do NBFCs have a role? Since the government is giving guarantee, would it be at an affordable rate?

The interest rate will be the same. They will get additional 20 per cent working capital without collateral and no fee will be charged. We need to strengthen NBFCs as the most available resource for taking loan for MSMEs. In the automobile industry, NBFCs are doing well; they are creating jobs and a market. It is important to increase the purchasing power and we are trying through all ways — public-private investment, banks, NBFC. Reserve Bank can also support banks and create more capital in the market. We can also try to get FDI.

KK RATHI, MANAGING DIRECTOR, INDIANIVESH FUND MANAGERS PVT LTD

You had announced the vehicle scrappage policy two years ago but it has still not come into effect. What are the reasons for its delay?

The policy has been finalised by my ministry but we need approvals from different departments and the cabinet. Recently, I approached SIAM (Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers), as I need a financial package for tax rebates. If a manufacturer scraps its vehicles and issues certificates, then we should offer some discount. It will be a huge advantage for the automobile sector. We have recently increased the depth of Kandla port and JNPT port. The port will see the world's old vehicles. The aluminium, copper, steel, rubber, plastic will be recycled. Pollution will also reduce and demand for vehicles will increase. It will reduce the price of automobiles, which will help enhance exports.

PRAMOD KAPOOR, FOUNDER-PUBLISHER, ROLI BOOKS

Instead of giving such a complicated assistance, why couldn't the government cut the interest rates or give us income tax holiday?

There are a lot of companies fighting for survival. If we need to restructure them, we need to finance them. By increasing the working capital, we are helping them. How it is easier for the

government to do so is decided by different committees, the bank system, RBI, finance ministry; they have collectively given the package.

RAJEEV SETHI, FOUNDER-CHAIRMAN, ASIAN HERITAGE FOUNDATION

While you are planning freight corridors in the countryside, can we not include a small *pagdandi* for rural tourism? Secondly, how can we make daily-wage earners or cottage-level artisans beneficiaries of schemes that you have repositioned?

Whenever there is a possibility of public-private investment, the government should not invest. I constructed the Mumbai-Pune Expressway, Worli-Bandra ceiling project and 55 flyovers in Mumbai without government money. I raised the capital from the market. We are making some roads depending on the economic viability. We are also making roads from the Budget. In the Northeast, we are spending one lakh crore on road construction, for which we have developed the NHIDCL. All roads are not special highways, there is place for backward areas, tribal districts, border districts. Near the Rajasthan border, we are making 17 airports where the roads will also be used as airstrips. We are also making a new road from Dehradun, linking Char Dham. The all-weather road will lead to more tourists, also creating employment. We are also connecting Pithoragarh with Mansarovar.

MAHESH MUNJAL, CHAIRMAN AND MANAGING DIRECTOR, MAJESTIC AUTO LIMITED

I was manufacturing bicycle spokes but the landing cost was lower for someone importing them from China. We should compare our costing with the Chinese companies' costing to attract industries.

I will give you an example. Earlier, ceramic tiles were made in Morbi but the market shifted to China. The manufacturers in Morbi changed their technology and minimised the cost after greater production. Now we have stopped getting tiles from China. We are going to publish a book on three years of export and import. We will see how we can offer Indian alternatives to what is imported from China; we could also increase the import duty on it. You should also keep the costs competitive.



SPOTLIGHT, PAGE 16

Great Expectations

Actor Soumitra Chatterjee on the special bond he shared with Satyajit Ray



BOOKS, PAGE 17

- Historian Peter Frankopan on why this pandemic reveals a dangerous lack of global cooperation
- Two poets on the strange new rhythms of a world out of gear

As celebrations begin for Satyajit Ray’s centenary year, contemporaries remember the breadth of the auteur’s genius. First up, a tribute to the women in his films — feminists with agency, sexual and intellectual freedom in an unequal world

Sharmila Tagore

I DON’T KNOW why, as we approach Manikda’s 100th birthday, my mind keeps going back to the day when Ela Bhatt (social activist) told me about his passing. Perhaps, it is the lockdown effect. At the time, I was standing at the foyer of our house in Pataudi and although I was getting regular updates on his failing health, her words caught me unawares. The rest of the day was a blur. Later, when I was alone in my room, it finally hit me that I will never see him again. That when I visit his home, it wouldn’t be Manikda who would open the door and say, “Come in, Rinku. Tell me all about Bombay!” His chair next to the window where he sat surrounded with his books, paintbrushes and music would be empty. It was both surreal and heartbreaking.

It’s been now over 60 years since Manikda made his first film, and almost 30 years since his passing, yet his films continue to be a part of our discourse, our consciousness, seen and admired in other countries and cultures. This is a tribute not only to the artistic merits of his films but also to the essential humanism of Ray, which lives on across time and space. Manikda’s legacy is manifold but what I admire the most are the array of complex women characters he depicted in his films. Ray did not deny his women the right of choice. His women had agency. They were primary protagonists in their own right, which wasn’t the norm in those days. His understanding and portrayal of women were not contrived. This, perhaps, can be understood in the context of the two strong women in his life — his mother, a single parent who brought him up, and his wife, who was a constant companion and critic through his creative pursuits.

Out of all of Ray’s screen women, Sarbjaya (*Pather Panchali*, 1955) comes to mind immediately, a woman battered by the ravages of poverty, stoically bearing what fate hurls at her. This was the era of *Mother India* (1957), *Pyasa* (1957) and *Mughal-e-Azam* (1960) in Hindi cinema — all considered epitomes of iconic women characters. Or, Ritwik Ghatak’s *Meghe Dhaka Tara* (1960), among Bengali films. While Ghatak raises melodrama to an art, there is no denying that his women, much like the iconic women in Hindi cinema, were essentially “mother goddesses”. The difference with Ray is stark: in Sarbjaya, there is neither self-pity, nor glorification of her fortitude. In contrast to the world-weary Sarbjaya is the impish Durga — forever curious, with a sense of adventure, always courting trouble, and, sometimes, wanting to escape to another world. Protective about Apu, she dies before she can live her dreams but her absence seems to resonate in Apu’s life with a plangent wistfulness all through the trilogy.

Then there’s Indir Thakurun, wrinkled, bent double with age. We remember almost every nuance of her performance: how hungrily she looks on as Sarbjaya eats, her complete absorption with self-preservation, how she is immune to all insults and is ready to go door to door in order to survive, how she gobbles her food up and still has the urge to nurture a plant, and her bond with Durga and Apu.

Apur Sansar (1959) was my first film with Manikda. My very first scene was where Apu brings his bride home and invites her into his small one-room tenement. At first, we see how tentative Apama is. She is now away from the protective comforts of her home, alone

with a man she barely knows. She is overwhelmed by her situation. Then we sense her resolve as she comes to terms with her new beginning. *Apur Sansar*, among other things, articulates this wonderful sense of love and hope. Sixty years on, the romance of the film has not faded.

My next film *Devi* (1960) is the story of a feudal patriarch’s obsessive conviction that his daughter-in-law is the goddess incarnate. I play the role of Doyamoyi who becomes a victim of religious orthodoxy. Even as she is dressed and garlanded as a *devi*, even when she is shocked and overwhelmed and cannot fully comprehend what has happened to her, she cannot contemplate that the head of the family, her father-in-law, can ever be wrong.

● ●

Women in Ray’s films trace an arc that encompasses the entire gamut of the feminine experience

● ● ●

set, here I was constantly beset by a feeling of heaviness, as though I was carrying a massive weight on my chest. The claustrophobia was inescapable. It was as though the oppression of Doya had reached out to infect me. I think Manikda had told everyone not to interact with me, he wanted me to feel isolated. This worked very well for the character.

While I was committed to an outdoor shoot for *Aradhana* (1969), Manikda called me again to play Aparna in *Aranyer Din Ratri* (1970). But this Aparna, unlike the Aparna in *Apur Sansar*, is a modern, educated city girl. “Ray’s women in this film are of superior

Confused and disoriented, she is too timid, tradition-bound and too young to assert her will or her sense of self-preservation. This paralysis of rational thought which traps women in a space the patriarchal order has decided for them exists even now. Even today, like Doya, scores of women continue to suffer injustice in the name of family, tradition, culture and honour.

Unlike *Apur Sansar*, where I felt energised on the set, here I was constantly beset by a feeling of heaviness, as though I was carrying a massive weight on my chest. The claustrophobia was inescapable. It was as though the oppression of Doya had reached out to infect me. I think Manikda had told everyone not to interact with me, he wanted me to feel isolated. This worked very well for the character.

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LIGHTUP THE WORLD

(Top) Satyajit Ray; Sharmila Tagore in a still from *Apur Sansar* (1959)

moral sensibility and his men are all helpless children”, one critic bemoans. Like Aditi in *Nayak* (1966), I play the “conscience” in this film. Through her rational, non-judgmental outlook, the hero discovers his humanity.

Ray’s women characters struggle with countless odds: tradition-bound, young Doya’s capitulation before the fanatic will of the family patriarch, with economic freedom in *Mahanagar* (1963), the freedom of choice in marriage [*Kapurush*, 1965; *Samapti* (Teen Kanya, 1961)], transgressive erotic desires (*Charulata*, 1964; *Seemabaddha*, 1971; *Aranyer Din Ratri*) and her struggle to retain her dignity in an unequal and patriarchal world (*Aranyer Din Ratri*, *Mahanagar*, *Nayak*). These women are exceptional in the way they articulate their emotional, sexual and intellectual longings. In a gesture that predates the women’s movement in India, the protagonist

in *Mahanagar* stands up to her husband and his family and refuses to give up working simply because her identity as a working woman has hurt the husband’s ego. Similarly, when she resigns from her job, it is to protest against the wrongful dismissal of a woman colleague with whom she chooses to stand in solidarity. In the closing scene, as Aarti and Subrata walk uninhibitedly hand in hand through the crowded streets of Kolkata, it is almost as if Ray is heralding a new era of gender parity. The quiet revolution wrought by the daughter and the mother in *Kanchenjunga* (1962), where they emerge out of years of being dominated by the family patriarch to stand up for their own desires, is, without doubt, one of the most stirring onscreen statements on the overthrow of the deadwood of tradition, more powerful because it is understated. In *Charulata*, the protagonist does not have a cri-

sis of conscience. She is not apologetic about her passion. This in itself was a dramatic departure from a majority of the films that were being made at the time. Ray gifted his women protagonists the liberty which defied the cliché that the male desire is visual while the woman’s is sensory.

As researcher Writaja Samsal says, while contemporary society was unable to fathom a separate existence for women other than in relation to men, or the struggle inherent in such dynamic existences, Satyajit Ray recognised and depicted women as sexual beings with the same desires and needs as men — something patriarchy still can’t quite come to terms with — without ever filming overtly sexual scenes. In film after film, he explores the issue of women’s rights and the need to push the patriarchal envelope. In this, his films lend themselves to contemporary reading. Yet, they are not aggressively women-centric, anti-men or anti-society. After all, it is Nikhil who encourages his wife to step out of the *andarmahal* and into the world outside in *Ghare Baire* (1984). It is only through this exposure that she confronts herself and her emotions, evolving from a housewife to a woman with a mind of her own — even if that evolution comes at a price.

It is impossible for me to define the “half shades, the hardly audible notes” that he wanted “to explore and capture” in his women. From Sarbjaya to Bimala, they trace an arc that encompasses the entire gamut of the feminine experience. Even the secondary women characters speak eloquently of the time in which his films were made. One could go on and on, but for me, as a female member of the audience, it is at once humbling and empowering to see such enduring portrayals of womanhood on screen. I have no doubt that given the many concerns of his films, Ray’s cinema, with his unforgettable women protagonists, will return to enrich our lives over and over again.

Actor Sharmila Tagore is the former chairperson of Central Board of Film Certification

‘Ray’s artistry, filmmaking took my breath away’



THROUGH THEIR EYES

A still from *Pather Panchali*

The intimate image of India that Ray’s films presented to the world

Martin Scorsese

IN THE relatively short history of cinema, Satyajit Ray is one of the names that we all need to know, whose films we all need to see. And to revisit, as I do pretty frequently.

For those of us here in the West, the *Apu* trilogy — *Pather Panchali* (1955), *Aparajito* (1956) and *Apur Sansar* (1959) — was a milestone. We were used to seeing India on screen but through a purely colonial perspective, which obviously meant that the principal characters were Westerners and the “extras”, the people who provided the local colour and the background detail, were Indians. We had no idea whether the stories were happening in Gujarat, Kashmir, West Bengal or Maharashtra — it was just “India”.

Jean Renoir’s film *The River* (1951), on which Ray helped with location scouting, was a different kind of experience, a film made from a deep love for India and for Bengali culture. But all the major characters (with the exception of Melanie, played by Radha Burnier) are either English or American.

So, for most of us here in the West, seeing the trilogy for the first time was a bracing and eye-opening experience, and a very moving one as well. The people that had been in the background of so many movies were now the characters in the foreground. The pictures told stories of everyday life in a vein that was somewhat similar to Italian neo-realism. And the artistry? The filmmaking? It took my breath away. It was poetic, immediate, sweeping and intimate, all at the same time.


I saw all three pictures in one sitting in a theatre in Manhattan. I was mesmerised. That remarkable close-up of Apu’s eye in *Pather Panchali*, the way the cut works with the sudden burst of Ravi Shankar’s music — for me, that was one of those precious revelatory moments you have in a movie theatre, and it had a profound and lasting effect on me as a filmmaker.

And the trilogy was only the beginning of one of the greatest bodies of work in the history of cinema.

We all need to see the films of Satyajit Ray and re-see them, again and again. Taken all together, they’re one of our greatest treasures.

Martin Scorsese is an Oscar-winning Italian-American film director, screenwriter, producer, and actor

DOWN IN JUNGLELAND



Ranjit Lal

Ranjit Lal is an author, environmentalist and bird watcher

Mother Knows Best


Nature’s got enough tricks up her sleeve to keep us guessing for a while yet

WE REALLY have gotten ahead of ourselves, haven't we? We pride ourselves on being at the very top of the food chain, of being able to "conquer" and "control" Mother Nature according to our whims and fancies. In every way, our technology comes out tops. Ah, but does it? Here's a set of gentle reminders that will show that in most vital aspects of life and living, Mother Nature is way ahead of us and we're not going to catch up in a hurry (if ever).

Take that process which sustains nearly all life on the planet: photosynthesis. Silently and efficiently, green leaves use solar energy to make food (sugars) out of thin air and water as it were. Not only that, the "waste" gas that is emitted is what permits all life on earth: oxygen. We may now understand the intricate chemistry involved — but we're not going to be producing green leaves ourselves in the foreseeable future!

We now know exactly how a butterfly chrysalis turns into a butterfly with the ingenious help provided by miracle enzymes. Most of the caterpillar cells (making up its muscles, for example) are broken down into their protein constituents, while cells of the butterfly parts — the wings, proboscis, etc., which so far have been kept in a state of arrested development by another miracle enzyme — get activated as this enzyme level drops. The butterfly cells live off the erstwhile caterpillar cells and grow inside the chrysalis until ready to emerge. Let's see us do something like that!

Then, there's the absolutely astounding process of evolution. Sure, it's taken billions of years but it is astounding that all forms of life had a common ancestor. Every living creature that evolved did so to survive its particular environment and pass on its genes, but in doing so, it found its niche in the world, so that in the end it all fitted, like a giant jigsaw puzzle. Talk about Mother Nature taking a macro view of life while taking care of every micro detail too! Every living thing is tuned pitch-perfect: carnivorous predators are able to kill and eat just enough herbivores so that the latter don't clean up all



IT'S A WONDER

A butterfly chrysalis

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

plant life. If all plant life dies, well, herbivores will die of starvation — and then so will the carnivores. All that will be left are lifeless wastelands.

We did manage to study how birds fly and used the same principles of aerodynamics while designing aircraft. But at what cost? Think of the *bundobust* involved in getting a single flight off the ground. A million checks and counter-checks, thousands of gallons of aviation fuel, the emission of huge quantities of greenhouse gases — and the fact that you need to be at the airport at least three hours before your flight! A bird on a wire just raises its tail, craps (to lighten its load), spreads its wings and is up and away. Banks of computers guide the jet to its destination — a bird has all that navigation equipment tucked away in its bird brain and will fly across continents if on annual migratory trips.

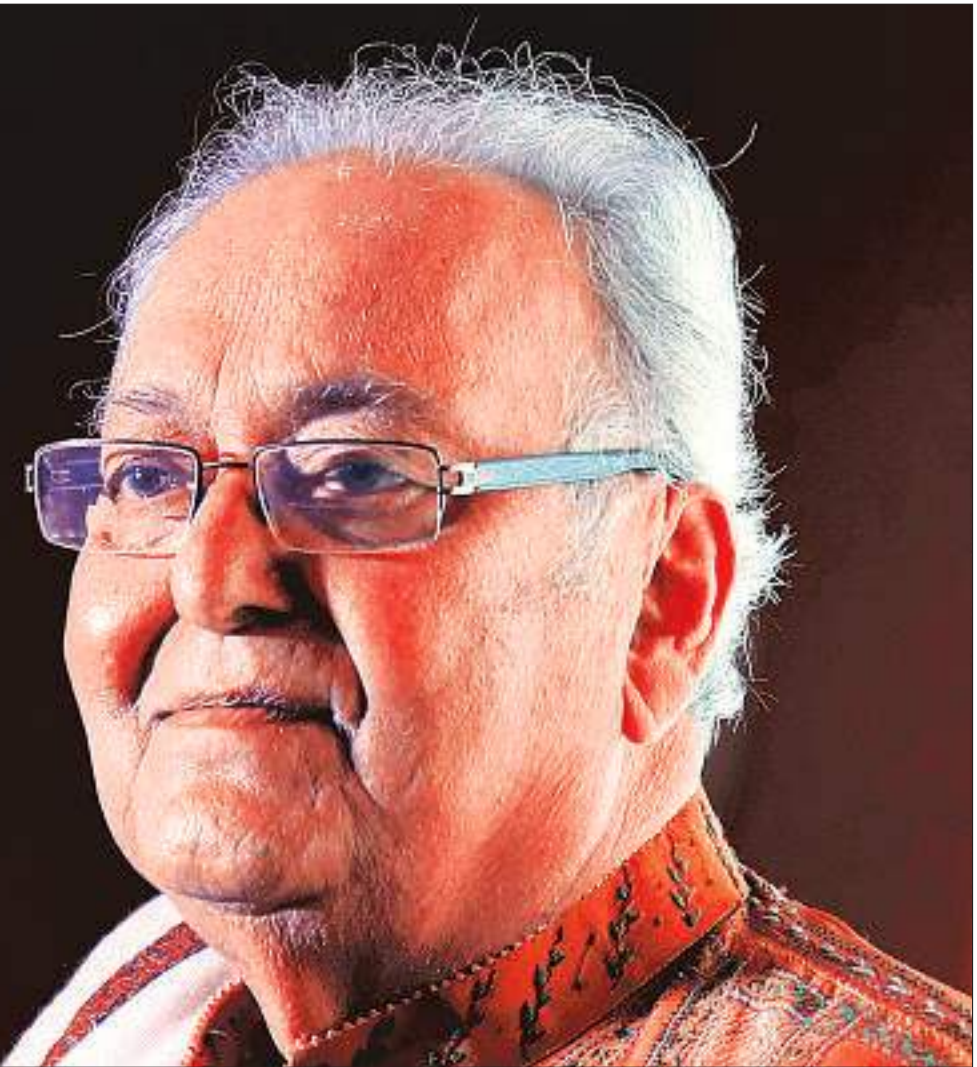
Again, it's only recently that we've unravelled the mystery around insect flight — which uses a completely different approach: basically an insect generates little tornadoes around its very flexible wings to attain lift. We're now frantically trying to emulate that. Every living creature has features which we would love to copy by bio-engineering. We've accepted, perhaps, that we can never create artificial mechanisms as wondrous, so are fiddling with genes to see if they can be borrowed to do the job.

Our ultimate boast is that we can destroy the planet in a matter of minutes. So can Mother Nature: there's a super-volcano sitting beneath Yellowstone National Park, which is a time bomb of sorts. Not to mention the ring of fire around the Indonesian islands. We all saw what the tsunami did back in 2004. But, unlike us, Mother Nature does not seem as intent on destroying the planet as she is on sustaining it.

Her absolute number one miracle is, of course, that of creating self-sustaining life. What was the magic formula that made an inanimate object, animate and alive? And then evolve into a million incredible forms of life? For thousands of years, we've polluted her air, water and soil, flattened her forests and behaved like power-crazed lunatics. Now she's showing us what she can do — with an infinitesimal, invisible enemy that has brought life as we know it to a grinding halt. Oh yes, we still dare to boast that sooner or later we'll get a handle on this — but, well, there's sure to be another more insidious and dangerous little bug waiting in the wings for its cue.

In effect, Mother Nature has put us across her knees and is giving us a resounding spanking. It really is time to say sorry and begin to mend our ways.

‘HE WAS POSSESSIVE OF ME, LIKE A FATHER IS OF HIS SON’



PARTHA PAUL

Actor Soumitra Chatterjee, 85, on the bond he shared with Satyajit Ray

Alaka Sahani

HOW DID you become an actor? Did Satyajit Ray consider you for any film other than *Apur Sansar* (1959)?

I was interested in acting from an early age when I was a student in Howrah Zilla School, and, later, in college (City College, Kolkata). I was in college when *Pathar Panchali* (1955) was released. When Manikda (as Ray is fondly called) was looking for someone to play the lead in *Aparajito* (1956), a friend of mine, who was assisting him, introduced me to him. He found me to be too grown up and tall for that role. *Aparajito* travelled to Venice Film Festival and got the best film award (the Golden Lion). At a press conference there, Manikda declared that he was going to make the third part of the trilogy. After he returned to Kolkata, he mentioned that he had someone in mind for the role of the adult Apu. I had no inkling that he was considering me. Some years after the making of *Apur Sansar*, I was told it's after meeting me that he made up his mind about making the third film of the trilogy.

***Apur Sansar* was your debut film. How did it change your life?**

The movie launched my career and gave me the opportunity to be a professional actor. Till then, I had only played small parts on stage. With Apu, I finally found what I was looking for.

You have spoken about Ray not interfering when you faced the camera. Was that the case from the start?



GOLDEN YEARS (From top) Soumitra Chatterjee; a still from *Sonar Kella*, in which the actor played the role of Feluda; and on a film set with Ray (far right)

It was like that from the beginning. Before the shoot of *Apur Sansar* began, he groomed me to a great extent. He gave me the film's synopsis and shared his idea of the character. Those days, theatres used to screen good Hollywood movies on Sunday mornings. I accompanied him to cinema halls. Occasionally, he would point out certain aspects of the performance. The greatest inspiration for me, however, was *Pathar Panchali*. While watching this movie, it struck me that this was how our performance should be.

You have worked with many top directors, including Tapan Sinha and

Mrinal Sen.

I was a sought-after actor from the beginning. After *Apur Sansar*, I acted in Tapan Sinha's *Kshudhita Pashan* (1960), and then with Asit Sen (*Swayambara*, 1961) and Mrinal Sen (*Punascha*, 1961). Apart from Manikda, Sinha is the other director from whom I have learnt the tricks of the trade.

In your book, *The Master and I* (2015), you have mentioned how Ray grew possessive about you later on.

When Sinha offered me the movie, I asked Manikda if I should accept it. Manikda told me that I must do it and never miss such opportunities. He was possessive in a different way, like a father is about his son.

How did you react to Ray casting other male leads in his movies?

Well, every time Manikda made a film, I would have been happy to do it. But that was not possible. I was working in many films. He became my mentor. It is from him that I came to know more about films. I was a keen student of literature. That helped me to converse with him about various things. I used to borrow books, including those about cinema and acting, from him. It was a complex but enjoyable relationship.

From being Apu to Feluda, you played a wide range of characters in his movies. Since Feluda was such a popular literary figure, did you feel a sense of responsibility?

Not really. Whenever I work in a film, I try to go deeper into the character. Manikda had already given me so many kinds of role such as Amulya in *Samapti* (Teen Kanya, 1961),

Narsingh in *Abhijaan* (1962), Gangacharan in *Ashani Sanket* (1973), which I could strongly relate to as I come from a small town (Krishnanagar in Nadia district) and had experienced the aftermath of the 1943 Bengal famine. However, I was happy about one fact when I became Feluda: I was finally playing a character that my children would love. But when Feluda became a cult figure, I used to wonder why should people, particularly the young ones, know me only for playing Feluda? Later on, I realised I was mistaken. Even if one young child remembers me as Feluda that makes me happy as an actor.

Can you pick your favourite characters from Ray's movies?

That's very very tough. I have worked with 14 of his feature films and two short films. I acted even in the very last film *Uttaran* (1994) that he wrote. We were to start shooting for it in February 1992 but he was hospitalised a month earlier. After he passed away (on April 23, 1992), his son Sandip completed it. After working with Manikda in so many films spanning so many years, it seems to me as if all this were one big film.

Any regrets?

All those Ray movies that I could not be part of bothers me. For instance, I asked Manikda to cast me as Goopy in *Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne* (1969). He told me that I did not fit the image that he had for the character. When I watched the film, I was completely bowled over by the magnificent performance of Goopy by Tapan Chatterjee. It was almost decided that I would play the role of Ashoke in *Kanchenjunga* (1962). My dates didn't match with its schedule. Eventually, Arun Mukherjee played it and he has done such a good job.

Vocal for Local

How actor-comic Danish Sait and his *aatmanirbhar* props became the discovery of the lockdown

Amrita Dutta

"BRO, HE is too Hindi, no?"
"No dude, we are too south Indian!"

THE QUICKEST, most entertaining dissection of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's May 12 speech announcing lockdown 4.0 was not by a raging TV news anchor but an actor-comic in Bengaluru speaking into a yellow paintbrush. Danish Sait, whose viral conversations with imaginary friends have been the discovery of the lockdown, wondered if there could be a "skip-intro button" to the PM's speech, before asking, "*Macha*, what is *aatmanirbharta*?"

Sait was speaking for a cohort of south-of-Vindhyas citizens flummoxed by the PM's Hindi, but if there is one person who has aced lockdown goals of self-reliance, it is this 32-year-old comic who has as many accents in his repertoire as Bengaluru autorickshaw drivers have excuses not to go anywhere. The baby-faced actor has been morphing into an ensemble cast of characters, who pop up in his immensely popular short videos to chat about lockdown blues. They are all glued to the phone — which could be a box of tissues or a Persian cat, a bottle of wine or a pack of chips, all repurposed into *aatmanirbhar* props.

Who are these people? Bro, you must have recognised the old boys of Bengaluru's con-

vent schools in these sketches, *da!* From trying to cadge a bottle of alcohol from uncle in a "military canteen" to racing to "put one kerchief" in the queue in front of the wine store, they are all there. There is the *chettan* of Family Supermarket, a loving hat-tip to the Malayali owners of city department stores and their phlegmatic response — "*aah*" — to all kinds of customers life throws their way. "From Dubai to Bengaluru, every supermarket conversation goes like that. What does that *aah* mean? I haven't been able to figure out," says Sait. There's Jaya, the domestic worker, whose *didi* has realised her worth in two months, and whose always-sloshed husband has found some serious online fandom. There's the redoubtable Razia, whose robust "*thoo, bewarsi*" is the full-bodied rebuff of a closet feminist. Also playing: the love story between Pyaari Bakhri and Gopal the Goat that has set several heartbeats aflutter.

"I have always had a fascination for voices, accents and characters," says Sait. As a child, he recalls hanging out with his sister, the actor Kubbra Sait, at a department store his mother owned, and soaking up the many kinds of people who would walk in, their verbal tics and odd singsong voices. It also helped that his mom Yasmin, who makes an appearance in one of the videos, is also "an unbelievable mimic". "My mother would press the recorder button and say, speak. My sister and I would blabber into tape after tape, making up voices and sto-



SOMETHING FRESH
Danish Sait

ries. In some ways, this is just an extended childhood," he says.

It was on radio that his voice became famous, long before Sait did. In 2011, an FM channel started a show that became a Bengaluru cult. It involved a series of men calling clueless listeners to play pranks on them. There was the Dakhani-speaking waiter from Shivajinagar, who called a vegetarian customer to tell him that he had been served

chicken Manchurian; and a wheedling receptionist congratulating a sperm donor on becoming a father. All those men — Nograj, Asghar, Charles, Abdullah and Manjunath — were the creations of Sait, the ventriloquist. "I have called people and told them I have put petrol in your diesel car, or told someone I am madly in love with your daughter and I want to elope with her," he says.

A big fan of the work of British comedian Sacha Baron Cohen, Sait realised that the mad success of the prank show — you can still find entire shows uploaded on YouTube — and especially Nograj, the corrupt politician, was a sign that he had to move to a bigger platform. "Nograj is someone you can find in Vidhan Soudha, who speaks English even if he doesn't know how to, who can say the most inappropriate things, and who prides himself on making money," says Sait. *Humble Politician Nograj* released in 2018, cementing the cult of Nograj.

In some ways, the nimble-footed jugglery of accents and thoughts that Sait pulls off is a Bengaluru thing — long-time residents of this multilingual city have been known to carry on conversations in three languages at once. Sait speaks "Kannada, Tamil, Malayalam, Hindi, English, a little bit of Telugu, Urdu. And Kodava *takk*, too, from my boarding school days in Coorg." The sketches might be about a worldwide experience of confinement, but they get their zing from being "vocal about local".

What they also do is laugh at the privileged — their obsessions and conspiracy theories, heroes and villains. While he stays away from contemporary politics, Sait sneaks in comments about class and Islamophobia. But most of all, in the sketches featuring the feisty Razia and her orange-bearded religious-minded brother, we see characters refusing to be victims, but laughing at themselves and the world. Stereotypes, yes — but made of flesh, blood and wit. "Comedy should always punch up, not down. I don't want to ever make the weak feel weaker," he says.



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THOSE MONTHS, THOSE MINUTES

Forced into an unprecedented lockdown, sport is staring at an unfathomable despair. Indian athletes, though, have given the country reasons to rejoice in the past.

J. SHOBHA tells ANDREW AMSAN her 2004 Athens Olympics tale of true grit etched in the annals of Indian sport.

BRIEFLY

‘La Liga can resume week of June 8’

pain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez announced on Saturday that La Liga can resume from its coronavirus lockdown on the week of June 8. "The resumption of major professional sporting competitions and in particular La Liga will be allowed from the week of June 8," Sanchez told a press conference. More than two months after the COVID-19 pandemic halted the season in Spain, players have begun training in small groups as they aim to be as ready as possible for the planned reboot next month. La Liga president Javier Tebas has said the preferred date for games to resume is Friday, June 12 and Sanchez's announcement means that plan has been given the green light from the government.

AFP

EPL chief ‘confident’ of June restart

Premier League chief executive Richard Masters is confident the top-flight season will resume in June as 'Project Restart' gathers pace. Clubs returned to socially distanced training in small groups this week and the league hope to begin playing the remaining 92 matches on June 12 or 19. Premier League players and staff have been checked for the coronavirus, with six people testing positive including Watford's Adrian Mariappa.

AFP

Setien keen on Neymar Barca return

Barcelona coach Quique Setien says he would love to coach Neymar and would be "delighted" if the Brazilian returns to the club from Paris Saint-Germain. Barca tried to re-sign Neymar last year but were unable to agree a deal with French champions PSG, whom he joined for a world-record fee of 222 million euros (\$264 million at the time) in 2017. "I would love to be able to coach him some day," said Setien, speaking to beIN Sport on Friday night.

AFP

‘Chawla’s non-cooperation proves his guilt’

Prime accused in Hansie Cronje match-fixing case didn’t divulge any details even when confronted with evidence, says chargesheet

PRITAMPAL SINGH & SANDEEP DWIVEDI
NEW DELHI, MAY 23

PRIME ACCUSED Sanjeev Chawla's "non-cooperation" in the investigation of the 2000 Hansie Cronje match-fixing case, despite confronted with evidence, is seen as proof of his involvement in the crime. This is mentioned in the latest chargesheet filed by Delhi Police. Earlier this month, Chawla had walked out of Tihar jail in the absence of the High Court's stay on the trial court's April 30 bail order. Following this relief, Delhi Police approached the Supreme Court on May 13, challenging the High Court order. The apex court is likely to take up the matter next month.

The other accused and Chawla's alleged associates - Krishan Kumar, Rajesh Kalra and Sunil Dara - are also out on bail. The Delhi Police chargesheet details the alleged role played by Chawla and others in fixing cricket matches during South Africa's 2000 tour of India.

Cronje, who admitted to the South Africa government-appointed King Commission that he had accepted money from bookmakers for underperforming, died in a plane crash in 2002. Following his death, proceedings against him were abated by a July, 2017 court order.

Meanwhile, the Delhi-born Chawla after moving to London became a UK citizen. In February this year, the Delhi Court brought the 50-year-old British national to India after a lengthy extradition process.

Delhi Police's final report in the case, that has now stretched for two decades, says: "The accused, Sanjeev Kumar Chawla, during his entire interrogation, remained non-cooperative and did not divulge any detail with regard to the offences committed by him... even after he was confronted with the evidences, which clearly prove his involvement in this case..."

However, the trial court, while granting bail, had observed that "in view of the fact that no cricket match was thrown/lost pursuant to alleged match-fixing, the applicant/accused Sanjeev Kumar Chawla is ordered to be released on bail..." Chawla's lawyer, Advocate Vikas Pahwa, says: "It is a case of no evidence. It will be very difficult to prove a case of cheating in this case, as the essential ingredients of offence are missing. Since the matter is subju-

LATE BCCI SECY LELE AMONG WITNESSES

The Delhi Police in its chargesheet mentions "that cited witnesses may be called through summons". Featuring in the list of 68 witnesses is former BCCI honorary secretary JY Lele who passed away in 2013. He held the post when the 2000 match-fixing scandal broke.

dice I can't say much. However I'm very keen to argue the case on the framing of charges."

However, the charge sheet in cricket's most high-profile match-fixing case says: "... on the basis of statements of the witnesses recorded during the investigation, conversation recorded between the accused in the seized audio and video cassettes, CFSL report and other documentary and oral evidence, it can be safely concluded that some of the matches were fixed and in some, an attempt was made to fix them..."

The matter is now fixed before Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Sudhir Kumar Sirohi on July 4 for hearing arguments on charge. The chargesheet also states that there is sufficient evidence to prove that accused "Chawla, Hansie Cronje, Krishan Kumar, Rajesh Kalra, Sunil Dara and Manmohan Khatter... had entered into a criminal conspiracy to fix the cricket matches played between India and South Africa from February 16, 2000 to March 20, 2000 in India.

"In furtherance of this conspiracy, the 1st Test Match at Mumbai and 1st One-Day International at Cochin were fixed and the same resulted in wrongful gain to the accused and wrongful loss in general to the public at large, who had gone believing that they would perform optimally. The accused persons have thus committed offences punishable under sections 420 and 120B of IPC," the chargesheet said. The investigators also stated in the chargesheet that they would file a supplementary as investigation with regard to voice sample and specimen hand writing of Chawla is yet to be collected. As per the trial court's direction, Chawla has already given his handwriting specimen to the investigator.

Mumbai Test, Cochin ODI were fixed: Delhi Police

In the charge sheet filed last month, Delhi Police has made the following remarks about the games played in the much-maligned India-South Africa series of 2000. The tour had seen the Hansie Cronje-led visiting side play two Test matches and five ODIs. In its conclusion, the report says: "... some of the matches were fixed and in some matches an attempt was made to fix them".

1st Test: Mumbai (FEB 24-28, 2000)

"It was decided that South African team will not score more than 250 runs in an innings. Though the South African team won the Test in three days, this was attributed to a very poor performance by India. The Indian team had batted first and scored 225 and the South African team scored only 176. In the 2nd innings, India scored a mere 113 and the South African team won the match by scoring 164 runs only. Thus, the South African team did not score more than 250 runs in both the innings, as committed by accused Hansie Cronje to the fixers. Thus, this match was a fixed one."

2nd Test: Bangalore (MARCH 2-6, 2000)

"Though Hansie Cronje had spoken to other players, as per the statements made before the King Commission, this match was not fixed although an attempt was made to fix it."

1st ODI: Cochin (MARCH 9, 2000)

"Constant calls made to Hamid



Cassim by Sanjeev Chawla and Hansie Cronje on the night intervening 8/9.03.2000 further corroborate the statement of Hansie Cronje made before King Commission that he was being regularly pressurised to underperform as per their bidding."

HANSIE: "No, no ... They were saying that they were already doing Cochin, the other guys are already angry with me because I have not received their money..."

SANJEEV: "I can deposit the money in your account, it is not a problem ... Tomorrow itself I can deposit the money."

2nd, 3rd, 4th ODIs

"Though the matches were not fixed, it can be inferred that Hansie Cronje helped in giving inside information to the accused persons and helped them in placing bets and earn huge profits."

5th ODI

"From the recorded conversation, it is evident that Hansie Cronje had agreed to fix the score of the match and he had also agreed to fix the individual score of Herschelle Gibbs. It was also agreed that if the result came as agreed, then Sanjeev Chawla will pay \$140000 to Hansie Cronje. Though the players forgot about the deal in the heat of the game and did not agree, it can be concluded that a serious attempt was made to fix the match."

BRIDGE

Declarer East (Contract: 6C)

WEST
♠ 8 6 3
♥ 9 2
♦ Q J 10 6
♣ A 5 4 3
EAST
♠ A 5
♥ A Q J
♦ A
♣ K Q J 10 7 6 2

South leads the SJ, and you win and draw trumps in one round. What is your best plan to make twelve tricks? Be specific about which cards you intend to play from each hand.

THE NORTH HAND: ♠ K Q 7 ♥ 10 7 6 4 3 ♦ 8 7 4 2 ♣ 9

THE SOUTH HAND: ♠ J 10 9 4 2 ♥ K 8 5 ♦ K 9 5 3 ♣ 8

At first glance it may seem that declarer has to stake everything on a successful heart finesse, but there's a much safer play. Declarer should take advantage of dummy's excellent diamonds. After winning the SJ, declarer should play CK to draw trumps, and then play the DA. Next declarer should lead a club - not the C2 - and overtake with dummy's CA. Now the DQ is led. If North were to play the DK, declarer could ruff with a high club and play the C2 over to dummy to take the established diamond winners, discarding the spade loser and a heart loser.

But North follows to this trick with a low diamond. Now declarer should discard the spade loser. This trick loses to South's DK, but that's the last trick for the defence.

South can lead a spade, but East ruffs with a high club and leads the carefully preserved C2 over to dummy. The HJ and GQ are discarded on dummy's two diamond winners and declarer makes, without risking the heart finesse. This technique is called discarding a "loser on a loser".

Declarer South

NORTH	WEST
♠ K 7 4 3	♠ 9 8
♥ Q 10 8	♥ 7 3 2
♦ 2	♦ A J 8 3
♣ 8 7 4 3 2	♣ A K Q 9

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1 ♥			
Pass	2 ♥	Pass	4 ♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

You lead the CA. Partner plays the C5 and declarer the C6. Do you have any chance of beating 4H? What do you play at trick two?

SUNDAY CROSSWORD 2270

QUICK CLUES

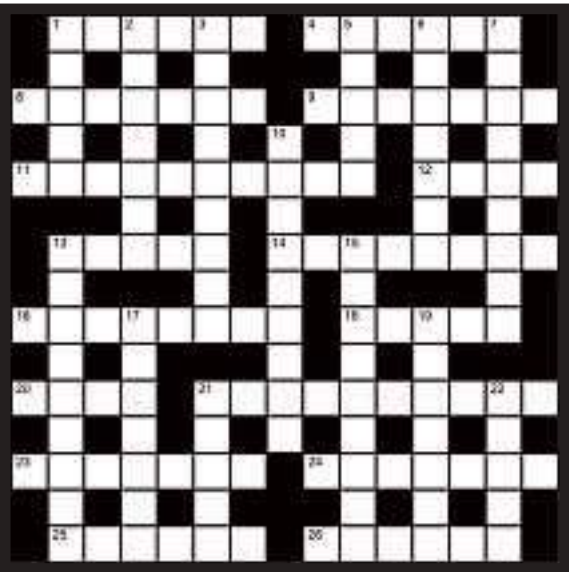
ACROSS

- Meadows (6)
- Sun-dried building bricks (6)
- Virtuoso passage (7)
- Unclear (7)
- Superior (10)
- All there (4)
- Ravioli or rigatoni (5)
- Was a resident of; dwelled in (8)
- Indicate, draw attention to (5,3)
- Finnish name of Finland (5)
- Brass instrument (4)
- Peripheral (10)
- ___ up; excavating or unearthing (7,7)
- Bit daintily (7)
- "Father of the Nation" (6)
- Hindu retreat (6)
- Down:
- Natural ability (5)
- Cricket teams (7)
- Boris Pasternak hero and movie (6)
- First performance (5)
- ___ to the hilt; gives full support (5,2)
- Tanzania's famous National Park (9)
- Stating as fact or news, giving an account of (9)
- Asking for marriage - "Spoon grip" anagram (7)
- Makeup (9)
- Nine-sided figure (7)
- The tenth month (7)
- Freshwater food fish (5)
- Revoke as a legacy (5)

CRYPTIC CLUES

ACROSS

- Crisp iron guarded outside (6)
- Eminent scientist getting about sick of unnecessary ornamentation (6)
- Having done the twist on one's head? (7)
- Head's sailor is well up in rock charts (3,4)
- Make the people pay, what's more (5,5)
- Having no sense of coming up with an allround student (4)
- The first motorway - and not unimportant (5)
- Opened out some sort of fun for the aged newspaperman (8)
- Spot Dorothy after the dance (5-3)
- Say why you twice see a shrub (5)
- Related group to wash the centre out (4)



- It takes the father and mother of a mind to produce it! (5-5)
- Encourage leader to be intellectual (7)
- Exertions directed to having amphibians about (7)
- Upset when lightly touched (6)
- Survives terminal illness amid elaborate farewells (6)

DOWN

- She looked hot in that futuristic white jumpsuit. Or was it that white dress and rock necklace? I get them confused (5)
- Shudder if father is offspring ... (7)
- Renée playfully grabs Albert's rear before Rose came in again (9)
- Radical in our town sometimes heads demonstrations (5)
- Naughty slut gets dirty, withholding nothing - being this (7)
- Propose a broadcast on the first of August - a serial drama (4,5)
- Extramarital pain - exult exuberantly (9)
- Sonata of great brilliance? (9)

Solutions to 2269

QUICK CLUES Across: 6 Choir, 7 Recessed, 10 Antigua, 11 Weapons, 12 Grapnel, 13 Patched, 14 Lose control, 19 Umpires, 21 Approve, 23 Purview, 25 Prefers, 26 Gargyle, 27 Dance. Down: 1 Football, 2 Oregon, 3 One-dickies, 4 Scow, 5 Zoroth, 6 Charge, 8 Starter, 9 Aside, 13 Pineapples, 15 Surging, 16 Looseend, 17 Puppy, 18 Lessee, 20 Portal, 22 Pleads, 24 Ways, CRYPTIC Across: 6 Spike, 7 Excesses, 21 Waffles, 11 Entitle, 12 Roadman, 13 Bahamas, 14 Fuel economy, 19 Einyes, 21 Kashmir, 23 Cuffing, 25 Eyetest, 26 Summored, 27 Clews. Down: 1 Riffraff, 2 Bedlam, 3 Messengers, 4 Acne, 5 Septurn, 6 Sowers, 8 Satirize, 9 Waleh, 13 Blockheads, 15 Elysium, 16 Yammered, 17 Peach, 18 Crates, 20 Influx, 22 Speech, 24 Gins.

If it's your Birthday

Sunday May 24

Emotions are still running high, but your strongest quality is romantic idealism. You dream of the perfect world, and expect the best. Whether people live up to it or not is another question.

Monday May 25

In partnerships there is one moral: look, listen and learn. People have a great deal to teach, and you have a great deal to learn.

Tuesday May 26

Your financial stars are growing stronger. Yet it could be next week before family members finally figure out what they want.

Wednesday May 27

New friends will be trying to draw you into a group activity, although you may be reluctant. You'll never know what you're missing unless you test the water, so have a go, you may be pleasantly surprised.

Thursday May 28

You can be as bright as a button, but others don't always agree. When it comes to ideas, you may lose sight of the facts in your determination to say just what you think about everything.

Friday May 29

Anything is possible - in theory. The trouble is that you might have to decide between hanging on to the past and leaping into the future. If you use your opportunities wisely, you may be get the best of both worlds.

Saturday May 30

You can be torn between the desire for emotional security and the need to break loose. You don't have to choose, and can spend some time in adventurous activities.

JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given quip.

Experience is a hard teacher because she gives the __ first, the __ afterwards. - Vernon Sanders Law (4,_,6)

KVEEO	EESXIT
AYSSS	AGSYLN

SOLUTION: EVKKE, SASSY, SECTER, LAWSONC

SUDOKU 4118

Difficulty Level 4s

Instructions

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Difficulty Level

1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard; 5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius



SOLUTION SUDOKU 4117



YOUR WEEK AHEAD

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

Little by little your money stars are growing stronger, with a peak towards the end of the week. With each day that passes a dream is more likely to come true, and your heart will benefit as much as your bank balance. That's why it's difficult to judge whether your emotional or material security requires the greater attention.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

A tricky aspect involving Mercury around the middle of the week could actually make it easier to reach agreement on a whole range of issues. This may be the best time to raise contentious financial questions - and make a profit. Professional types are due for a promotion or a new responsibility.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

Feel free to change your mind. Nobody can pin you down or hold you to any agreement you made over the past two weeks. So, if you want to opt out, you'll never have a better chance. Only in love are you keeping a secret, maintaining your loyalty to a special person.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

Least said, soonest mended, is one saying which comes to mind at this delicate emotional moment. However, although silence is the best approach to certain personal matters now, you will soon be happy to face up to the fundamental causes of disagreement.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

Your current planetary patterns are certain to bring monetary matters to a head, but possibly not until next week. You therefore have a few days' grace to plan your next money-making move. In the meantime, a love affair or close partnership could also take an intriguing turn.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

All in all, it would be wise to consider letting up the pressure for a little while. Within about three weeks you will have much more on your plate than may be desirable, so do be sensible and take time off midweek. Educational matters will take a turn for the better after Wednesday.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

You'll wonder why, just when everyone is enjoying themselves, someone else can be so jealous and possessive. The fact is that when there's passion in the air, there's no telling what will happen. At work the tables will soon be turned - in your favour.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)

You're bound to be mildly stressed as the week begins. Any emotional bruises will be soothed by Thursday, and family members will come to your aid, full of sweet words. Mind you, your secrecy doesn't help. If you don't tell people what's on your mind, how can they understand what you're really going through?

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 23)

You can't be blamed for changing your mind. You have as much right to alter your plans as anyone else. It does you no good to bury your head in the sand when it comes to your true, inner feelings. Within about two weeks certain fundamental emotions will come to the surface, probably to your very considerable relief.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

Venus, planet of love, is lining up with your house of love. And that must add up to a double dose of affection. Creative individuals are also favoured, while all athletic types are in line for a prize. At work, you may now be involved with the very latest, progressive ideas.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

An off-the-cuff decision might have a dramatic effect on your love life. It's amazing how a spontaneous act of generosity has the ability to completely transform a relationship, but that's just what will happen if you play your cards right.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

You hate bad feeling and will do anything you can to avoid confrontation. A dispute over partnership matters is on the horizon, but you can sidestep simmering discontent by taking the initiative now. People you live with will appreciate a positive approach at home.