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K O V I E W

Games In The Time Of Corona

More than 900 athletes from 20 states are in Gulmarg for first Khelo India Winter Games. This despite the fact that the world-over major sports and cultural events are being deferred or cancelled in view of the ongoing Coronavirus outbreak which has so far spread to 60 countries and killed more than 3000 people. The players are taking part in 30 events, including snowboarding, skiing, cross-country games and a snow show at the venue located at an altitude of 8,694 feet.

Government has gone ahead with the games in defiance of the health advisory, public criticism and common sense. Even a very real prospect of the games increasing the vulnerability of the Valley to Coronavirus hasn't dissuaded the government from holding the event. Ironically, hours before the games went ahead, the same government ordered the closure of the primary schools in parts of J&K as the two positive cases were reported from Jammu and one person who had returned from Iran has died from the disease.

But no such precaution was adopted in case of winter games. Union Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports Kiren Rijju flew to Gulmarg to inaugurate the event. In his address he termed the event historic not only for J&K but the whole country. He said the games were a beginning of mega sports events in Gulmarg to be held in near future.

People in Kashmir and outside have accused the government of holding these games to send out an image of normalcy in Kashmir to rest of India and the outside world. Be that as it may, flaunting normalcy in the Valley is not such a bad thing and government needs it to shore up its reputation around the world. More so, after a protracted security lockdown and communication blackout following revocation of Article 370 in August last. But in the process it cannot hold an event that poses a grave health risk to the people of the state including the participants themselves.

And this has generated anger in Kashmir. With the internet and social media being restored, people are expressing their objections online. They are highlighting the fact that while New Delhi is cancelling Holi celebration gatherings and outside the state many IT and the other companies are asking their employees to work from home, J&K Government is holding a major sports event. Many of such objections are being shared online now that Kashmir is back on social media. Now since government has decided to go ahead with the games and they can't be stopped midway, it should take every precaution that event doesn't become a carrier for the spread of Coronavirus in Kashmir.

OTHER OPINION

Decoding the YES Bank crisis

The tragedy at YES Bank has been averted — all depositors of the bank have been assured by the government that their money is safe, and the State Bank of India (SBI) has been asked to step in as a white knight — but the crisis at one of India's largest lenders is far from over. There's work to be done in terms of recapitalising the bank; SBI is to hold a maximum of 49% in the bank (for which it will pay around Rs 11,760 crore), and existing shareholders are seeing a significant dilution in their holding to 11%, so other investors will have to be found to pump in around Rs 9,600 crore. While some State-controlled companies and corporations will, no doubt, be scripted to do this, the government should ensure that banking remains attractive to investors. With YES's restructuring plan writing down to zero, the value of so-called additional tier-1 bonds (there are reports that bond-holders may seek legal recourse), it's not going to be easy for Indian banks to raise money through this route any more. There's also the painstaking process that the bank's new management will have to undertake of sifting through all the lenders' loans to see whether there are any hidden surprises.

Even as this is being done, investigative agencies have been tasked with probing the role of the bank's founder and former chief Rana Kapoor played in fostering the crisis. Mr Kapoor sold his and his family's entire stake in the bank after being told, in 2018, that he could no longer remain chief of the bank. While it is clear that many of YES's loans were to companies with questionable abilities to repay — around Rs 30,000 crore of its book is junk-rated debt — the question to be asked is whether this was a result of poor risk-assessment practices, herd mentality (everyone, including many State-owned banks were lending to some of these companies), or plain old-fashioned kickbacks.

YES's aggressive lending wasn't a secret operation — it has been known for sometime. That, the Reserve Bank of India's treatment of Mr Kapoor, and the promoters' promptness in selling their stake in the bank, are all issues that need investigation, as do other financial transactions involving Mr Kapoor and his family. Meanwhile, both the finance ministry and RBI would do well to assess whether the latter did all that was necessary, and when it was required. In hindsight, Mr Kapoor and YES Bank may have been given too long a rope.

Hindustan Times

Covid 19 Spreads Like Nuclear Chain Reaction

What J&K Govt Should Do

DR SUHAIL NAIK

Human coronaviruses (HCoV) are old family of RNA viruses. They are most frequently associated with the common cold and upper respiratory tract infections characterized by rhinorea, nasal congestion, sore throat, sneezing, cough and fever.

These viruses are not only human specific but are distributed through out universe in different birds, reptiles, amphibians. Sometimes two serotypes of coronaviruses or other viruses come together and exchange their genetic material and results in new virus with different structure, properties, virulence, secondary infective rate (number of persons who will get infection from case or carrier) and case fatality rate (number of persons who will die among infected cases)

Such exchange of genetic material can be natural, accidental or man made like software viruses are generated for laptops and cellular phones. As soon as a new series of android phones or laptops are launched, a chain of software viruses are simultaneously innovated and circulated to damage these devices. Therefore it becomes imperative on customers to purchase and install good number of antivirus softwares in their gadgets.

The creation, propagation and circulation of software viruses and antiviruses is notorious work of some mischievous human beings with vested interest.

Similarly Covid -19 is a new virus with very high virulence, infective rate and case fatality. It is still not known whether Covid 19 is naturally, accidentally or intentionally created. It's genomic and molecular structure is altogether new for human immune system and with the result every human being on this planet is susceptible to this novel virus. The immune system of human beings is not upgraded and ready to combat this novel virus. Further novel Covid 19 has surprised the modern medical science which doesn't have any antivirals or vaccines to combat, contain and curtail the Covid 19 pandemic, which has engulfed more than 100 countries and is still propagating.

What we have learned from Wuhan China about this virus in this short span of time is that it has high secondary infective rate with every single patient or carrier spreading it to at least three persons and subsequently these three to next nine persons and so on. This is akin to a nuclear fission chain reaction and is propagating to reach every nook and corner of this planet. To break down this chain every country has to take extraordinary measure to curtail the spread of this dreaded bug. Accurate response at correct time is going to save human lives and or humanity.

What J&K Govt Should Do

To disallow Covid -19 to enter in to Jammu and Kashmir UT the administration might think of total cancellation of flight operations, suspension of tourism, sports and cultural and political events. Closure of schools, colleges and universities. Prohibition on religious gatherings and cancellation of all examinations. Further every person coming to UT must be screened, traced and quarantined. The only hope right now is that with increasing environmental temperatures the activity and propagation of virus may slow down to a level where health care system will not crumble.

The biggest concern about Covid 19 is that it's spread to India which is second highly populated country after China can prove disastrous



and biggest human tragedies. China constructed a full fledged multi story dedicated hospital within days and equipped it with man ,machinery and unlimited number of Mechanical Ventilators. At least every patient who deserved ventilatory support got it at right time. Still the case fatality rate in Wuhan ranged between 2.5 to 2.9 percent.

India being a developing country where poverty, malnutrition, overcrowding, poor standards of life, illiteracy are still rampant and health system is fragile lacking in infrastructure, man and machinery power, the apprehensions are Covid 19 can prove disastrous and result in historical human tragedy, if right responses and slew of measures are not taken at right time.

In light of knowledge gained from Wuhan China on the effectiveness of non-pharmaceutical measures against COVID-19, like rapid detection, large scale case isolation and quarantine of contacts, the spread of virus can be contained.

Furthermore it is primary responsibility of society in general and leaders, doctors, teachers, preachers, scholars and media houses in particular to educate and propagate knowledge of basic respiratory hygiene so that spread of this virus can be halted.

People are advised to:

- **Wash hands frequently:**
Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water. Washing your hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand rub kills viruses that may be on your hands.
- **Maintain social distancing**
Maintain at least 1 metre distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
- **Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth**
Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth. From there, the virus can enter your body and can make you sick.
- **Practice respiratory hygiene**
Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately.
- **Seek medical care**
Stay home if you feel unwell. If you have a fever,

cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention and call in advance. Follow the directions of your local health authority.

- **Use face masks**
Healthy people should not use face masks, only patients with respiratory infections and workers in hospitals need masks. Public must understand that they can even use their handkerchief to cover mouth and nose. Handkerchief can be washed by soap & water and will be virus free. Masks must be changed when they become wet with saliva or other bodily fluids, as they lose their protective properties. Only attendants and health workers need to wear N95 mask. They need to be discarded after single use of less than 8 hours.
- **Avoid handshakes**
The virus spreads through air via droplets or when these droplets fall on any surface which someone touches. The virus spreads through handshake or touching as well.
- **Putting the hand sanitizer in a pocket does not kill virus.** One should use the sanitizer on hands or wash hands with soap and water for atleast 20 seconds. Some Myths

It is not known "how long the virus remains alive outside human body. Most probably it can survive for 12 hours and therefore It is unlikely that it will spread through "made in China products" as it will not survive weeks.

The virus can stay on hands for hours and not just "10 minutes". It may remain for days on clothes and not "9 hours". Remaining in sun for 2 hours is not proven to kill virus.

There is no risk of infection in eating chicken or meat after cooking it properly. Presently virus is spreading from human to human although it may have originated from snakes, bats or some other animal.

Finally heat inactivates the most of the respiratory viruses. Though for Covid 19 it is still not known that at what temperature it's activity and propagation will come to halt. We are hopeful that with rising atmospheric temperatures the coronavirus pandemic for which we don't have any weapons (antivirals and vaccine) to combat will suddenly come to an end.

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Dr Suhail Naik is a consultant pediatrician and president of a faction of Doctors Association of Kashmir. Views expressed are authors own.

Economic Slowdown In India

Until this year, India was considered the world's swift growing sizable economy. But growth has slowed enormously as consumers spend less and appeal for exports decreases i.e. fall in the aggregate demand.

MIR MUHAMMAD NAYYAR AZAM

Indian economy decelerated strongly to a six-year low in the most recent quarter, heightening concerns about the challenges facing one of the world's largest economies.

Until this year, India was considered the world's swift growing sizable economy. But growth has slowed enormously as consumers spend less and appeal for exports decreases i.e. fall in the aggregate demand.

The latest GDP figure was "definitely much lower than what we expected," said Dharmakirti Joshi, chief economist. Worth worrying was the weak enterprise in the manufacturing sector and the slowdown in private consumption, which he described as the "bulwark of the Indian economy."

The state of the economy has emerged as the biggest challenge for India.

India needs its economy to expand for an uninterrupted period of time if it has to get rid of poverty and bring about jobs for the millions of unemployed young people.

The unemployment rate rose to a 45-year high in 2018.

At the current growth rates, prime minister's 5 trillion economy dream seems impossible.

The GOI Recently designed a committee aimed to find ways to push the economy and create jobs, easing restrictions on foreign investment to attract funds.

The slowdown in GDP growth came as a "surprise," for K.V. Subramanian, India's chief economic adviser.

In the prior quarter, the economy had expanded by 5.8 percent.

It is not clear how the economy will make a speedy return to its prior health..

"I don't see how this is going to turn around" in the near term, said Santosh Mehrotra, a labor economist. Former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram when asked to rate budget out of ten.

He replied "10 has two digits, one and zero.. you can pick either"

When asked what would you suggest for present finance minister .

“The GOI recently designed a committee aimed to find ways to push the economy and create jobs, easing restrictions on foreign investment to attract funds. The slowdown in GDP growth is a “surprise,” says K.V. Subramanian, India's chief economic adviser. In the prior quarter, the economy had expanded by 5.8 percent. It is not clear how the economy will make a speedy return to its prior health. “I don't see how this is going to turn around” in the near term, said Santosh Mehrotra, a labor economist.

He replied “she should resign”.
“The India that we know and cherish is slipping away fast. Willfully stoked communal tensions, gross economic mismanagement and an external health shock are threatening to derail India's progress and standing,” former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh wrote.

Is there a way to accelerate recovery?
Former chief economic adviser to the government, Arvind Virmani, says the economy likely bottomed out in September .

“So I expect Q3 growth to be higher than Q2.

The issue now is what the government can do to accelerate growth recovery and reduce the time the economy takes to return to the 7.5% growth track,” he says.

“Besides monetary easing by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the government must simplify the goods and services tax (GST) and introduce a new tax code to clear the tax jungle created by our ancient income-tax law ,” Virmani added.

Former Statistician of India, Pronab Sen, disagrees with the FM's recent packages having focused too much on the supply side, wondering if

these measures would propel a quicker recovery.
“The FM's measures don't address the problem of demand contraction. I don't see a recovery out of those,” he says, adding that the economy would recover in two or three quarters only if the government shifts its attention from large high-way projects to smaller core sector activities that have a faster turnaround time.

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