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The Indian EXPRESS

JOURNALISM OF COURAGE

MONDAY, MARCH 23, 2020, NEW DELHI, LATE CITY, 18 PAGES

SINCE 1932

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दिल्ली सरकार
आप की सरकार

ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT DELHI LOCKDOWN

Delhi will be under lockdown from 23-31 March, 2020

The Government of NCT of Delhi has issued the Delhi Epidemic Diseases, COVID-19 Regulations, 2020 under the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 for prevention and containment of COVID-19. In exercise of the aforesaid powers, it is hereby notified that a lockdown in the whole of territorial jurisdiction of NCT of Delhi from 0600 hrs on Monday, 23rd March, 2020 to midnight of Tuesday, 31st March, 2020, stipulating the following restrictions:

a. No public transport services including operation of private buses, taxis, auto-rickshaws, rickshaws and e-rickshaws etc. shall be permitted. Only DTC buses shall operate at not more than 25% capacity to cater to personnel engaged in essential services.

b. All shops, commercial establishments, factories, workshops, offices, godowns, weekly bazaars etc. shall close their operations.

c. The motorable and unmotorable borders of NCT of Delhi with the neighbouring states of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh shall be sealed.

d. Movement of inter-state buses/trains/metro (DMRC) shall be suspended.

e. All domestic/international flights arriving to Delhi during this period shall be suspended.

f. Construction activity of any kind shall be suspended.

g. All religious places of any denomination shall be closed.

h. People are required to stay at home and come out only for basic services (as enumerated below) within the vicinity of their residences while strictly following the social distancing guidelines issued earlier.

EXEMPT CATEGORIES:

However, the following services/establishments are excluded from the purview of this order and shall continue to function normally:

a. Offices charged with law and order and magisterial duties

b. Police

c. Health

d. Fire

e. Prisons

f. Fair Price Shops (Public Distribution System)

g. Electricity

h. Water

i. Municipal Services

j. Activities related to functioning of Legislative Assembly of Delhi

k. Pay and Accounts Office (only for salary /wages /contingent/ health & essential services related expenditure)

l. Print and Electronic Media

m. Cashier/Teller operations of banks (including ATMs)

n. Telecom, Internet and Postal services

o. E-commerce of all essential goods including food, pharmaceutical and medical equipments

p. Food items, groceries (fruits/ vegetables/milk/ bakery items, meat, fish etc.)

q. Milk plants

r. General Provision stores

s. Take away/ home delivery in restaurants.

t. Chemists and Pharmacies.

u. Petrol pumps, LPG/Oil agencies (including their godown and transportation-related activities)

v. Animal fodder

w. Manufacturing , processing , transportation, distribution, storage , trade/commerce and logistics related to all the above services/establishments and commodities required for delivery of these above services

x. Any other essential service/ establishment that may be exempted by the Government

IMPORTANT POINTS:

1. The aforesaid services/establishments that are permitted to function shall strictly follow the guidelines and protocol related to social distancing, without deviation.
2. People who come out to provide or avail essential services shall be allowed on their self-declaration.
3. Any congregation of more than 5 persons is strictly prohibited and punishable as per law.
4. The employees of private establishments (including temporary/ contractual/ outsourced etc.) required to stay at home in view of this order shall be treated as "on duty" and be paid in full.
5. Order in respect of the offices of the Government of India shall be issued by the Government of India accordingly.
6. Any person found violating this order shall be prosecuted as per the relevant provisions of law.

DIP/Shabdarth/D/0359/19-20

Department of Health & Family Wefare & Directorate of Information and Publicity, Government of NCT of Delhi

epaper.indianexpress.com

WORDS TO THE RESCUE

British poet Simon Armitage has written a new poem, *Lockdown*, even as the UK braves the coronavirus. The poet laureate references the bubonic plague of the 17th century, and Sanskrit poet Kalidasa's poem *Meghaduta (Cloud Messenger)*.

ON THE LOOSE

Clear and Present Danger

When the normal rules don't apply

LEHER KALA

LAST WEEK West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee was visibly angry that an IAS officer's son evaded testing for COVID-19, sending top officials in her administration into self-quarantine, and the state secretariat in Kolkata, into lockdown mode. Though the teenager received a mail saying some of his friends had tested positive, he took 48 hours to report to hospital. Meanwhile, his mother continued to attend meetings in government circles, ironically enough, on the coronavirus. "I will not tolerate any VVIP, VIP, LIP (Less Important Person) culture here. This is very irresponsible behaviour," denounced Banerjee at a meeting.

In a developing situation it's anybody's guess and a frightening one at that, of how many people may have escaped scrutiny in a country as large as India. As citizens however, we should be aware of how limited any government's capacity can be, faced with a crisis of this magnitude. Ultimately, it comes down to us as a people and our ability to adjust to a new normal: of 100 per cent hunkering down. The full page ads by the government initially didn't emphasise quarantine. There were no precise warnings of our increasing fragility, or that roaming the streets, asymptomatically unaware, is risking the lives of grandparents at home. While it was most remiss of this teenager and his parents to take testing so casually, it's possible they weren't being deliberately reckless but simply, they just didn't get it.

Maybe some of us are exceptionally dense, but none of this feels real. It is worth contemplating how many of us would actually have acted differently if we were in this teenager's position. While there can be no excuse for an educated person to flout the urgent rules of social distancing, it's unrealistic to expect people to drastically alter their way of life, overnight. Maybe the PM understands this psychological reluctance to adapt and is giving citizens time to ponder. It would explain the perplexing call for a Janata Curfew three days later, instead of immediately. Life, literally more than metaphorically, is now. Meanwhile, as the days crawl by, many of us can reflect on how thrilling it all was to begin with, to have a genuine excuse to work from home. It's the utopic situation office-goers crave for but when it's thrust on us like this, it can feel more prison like than a work cabin.

Like many people all over the world I have not been leaving my house for a while now. My learning is this: it's disorienting to watch Netflix in the morning. On the third day of being home, my neighbour dropped in and like irascible teenagers, we opened a bottle of wine at 11 am (a privilege I allow myself once a year, only on holiday). It felt wonderfully decadent but by the fourth day, I had exhausted all options of further dissipation. Ideal then, to notice it's spring and Delhi has never been more beautiful. The Semal and Kachchnar trees are blooming everywhere. It's almost like their brilliant colours serve as consolation for people who've been blind to their gorgeousness, being too wrapped up in daily struggles. When every day has a Sunday like quality, the sights and sounds of nature reverberate with a peculiar intensity that eludes us on regular working days.

In lockdown mode, we're all experiencing time standing still, but don't understand it very well. Without getting into complicated theories of how it exists elsewhere in parallel versions, it's ordinary, everyday time — tick tock — that sparks recognition and fear, that we're living through a surreal moment. It is one of the maddening perversities of life that we only notice how good we had it when things become far worse. Our mundane preoccupations from a fortnight ago — traffic, AQI, board exams — need to be put in their true perspective, in the dreary days ahead.

hutkayfilms@gmail.com

In This Together

As schools remain shut and social distancing means more time indoors, here's a guide to resources that can keep children entertained and informed

PAROMITA CHAKRABARTI

Illustration: Suvajit Dey

FOR AGE GROUP 4+ YEARS

■ With no school buses to catch in the morning, if bedtimes have gone for a toss, you could try tuning in to Instagram Live every night at 11.30 pm, to listen to Oliver Jeffers read out one of his picture books. One of the most celebrated picture-book writers of our times, Jeffers, 43, is known for his sensitive, humorous books, that include *How to Catch a Star* (2004), *The Day the Crayons Quit* (2013), *Here We Are: Notes for Living on Planet Earth* (2017). The reading sessions are also available on his website *oliverjeffers.com*.

■ Other picture-book writers, who are hosting reading sessions on Instagram, include Sophie Blackall and Mac Burnett.

■ On the Instagram page Save With Stories, Hollywood actors such as Amy Adams, Brie Larson, comedian and talk show host Ellen Degeneres, Democrat leader Kamala Harris and musicians such as Al Yankovic have come together to read out stories and sing nursery rhymes to the young 'uns.

■ The International Children's Digital Library is a gift that doesn't stop giving. With a mission for building a free resource base for diversity in children's literature, a simple registration will make books available from different cultures. The website *en.childrenslibrary.org* is easy to navigate and can also be used as an educational resource tool

FOR AGE GROUP 7+ YEARS

■ Generations of Indian children have grown up with these comics. Now, Amar Chitra Katha and Tinkle have made available their entire catalogue free till March 31 to help fight quarantine boredom. Available on: *bit.ly/ACKFree; bit.ly/TinkleFree.*

■ Award-winning American illustrator Carson Ellis has formed a Quarantine Art Club on her Instagram handle, where she gives out art assignments for children and interested adults. Some of these assignments include self-portraits, creating images from prompts given by her or determined by oneself, and learning to contour draw with continuous lines.

■ Scholastic is offering free access to its Litpro library, that has material appropriate from kindergarten upwards. It also comes with audio recorder facilities to practise diction and fluency, among other things. Parents will need to sign up on *bit.ly/SchlLitPro* for access.

■ In India, writers such as Bijal Vachharajani, Natasha Sharma, Venita Coelho, Tanu Shree Singh and many others have come together for a #ThodaReadingCorona campaign with readings at 11 am across social media. These are for both primary and middle grades.

■ Inspired by picture book writers, writer Meghna Singhee is reading out books appropriate for middle graders (think *Captain Underpants*) on Instagram.

■ A spot of physical activity might help expend all the pent-up energy. *www.cosmickids.com* provides videos of yoga routines for the young ones, especially helpful to soothe frayed nerves and "why-can't-I-go-to-the-park" whines.

FOR AGE GROUP 12+ YEARS

■ If delayed academic sessions is keeping any parent up, there is help to alleviate the guilt. *brainpop.com* provides lessons in maths, english, social sciences, besides access to films, games and quizzes on different topics. There are rigorous thematic worksheets and innovative teaching aids that make learning fun. There are two kinds of free accesses — for schools and families — and the material will be made available on any screen device.

■ The non-profit educational organisation, Khan Academy, started by the US-based educator Salman Khan, needs little introduction, given its prolific track record in providing free education to children. To help children cope with the self-quarantining period, it has put up routines and worksheets for students from pre-school to Class XII on their website, *www.khanacademy.org*. Even though it follows the American curriculum, some parts of it, mathematics and science, for instance, is generic enough for children across the world to benefit from.

■ Introduce your child to good, old diary writing. It will keep them away from the screens, sure, but also help them engage better with their emotions.

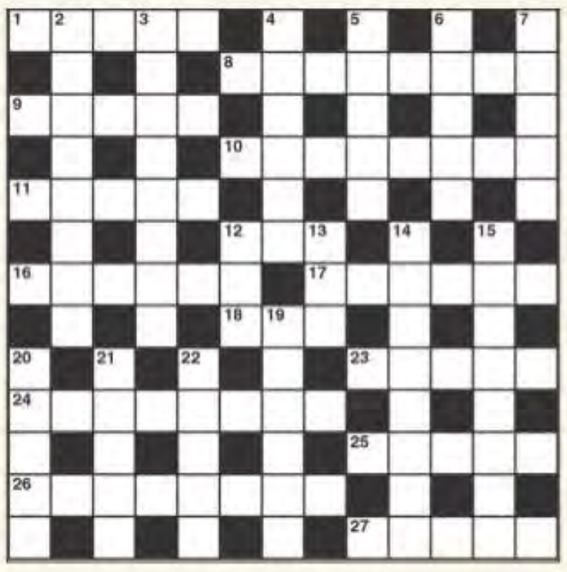
SNAP SHOT

Button Up

KEEPING IN mind the shortage of face masks, Ahmedabad-based designer Anuj Sharma has come up with a viable solution — a DIY face mask. The video posted on YouTube by Sharma, founder of the label Button Masala, shows his innovative technique. With buttons and rubber bands, he makes a white mask from simple strips of cotton fabric. The alumni of National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad, reveals that the mask would cost merely Rs 30, and can be made in three minutes.

Sharma debuted his Button Masala line at the Lakme Fashion Week in 2007, where he has showcased over six times in the past. His aim has been to create garments that are simple, require little effort in making and can be made without stitching. He arrived at his Button Masala technique after seeing a man put his buttons in the wrong holes. It led him to create clothes using only buttons in 2009, the same year when he launched his label.

CROSSWORD 4072



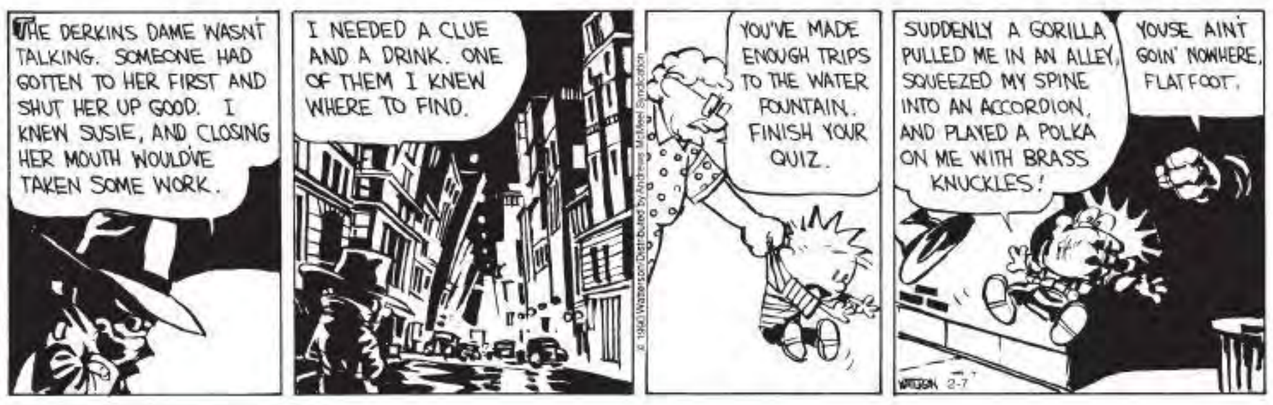
ACROSS
1 Teachings that follow closely on a degree (5)
8 Paid back though completely in the red (8)
9 Strange evils and disguises (5)
10 A letter I composed is well-expressed (8)
11 News articles from the Times (5)
12 Quiet Old English writer (3)
16 A motor on fire perhaps (6)
17 Eddy tore between five and ten (6)
18 One in service (3)
23 Such insects used to be an afterthought (5)
24 Devious ways to avoid overcrowding in cities (8)
25 Carriage looking upset? (5)
26 Press forward with debts, though not genuine (8)
27 Agency to change names (5)

DOWN
2 Subtle implication, but a patently obvious one (8)
3 Her hands produce lower output (8)
4 Sheep doctor going round Ireland (6)
5 Smoked but has kicked the habit (5)
6 Band parts put out (5)
7 Sides and top cut off hedges (5)
12 It may be vegetable or sweet (3)
13 She is a bit clever (3)
14 New rate certain for wealth (8)
15 Is said to be ordered in advance (8)
19 Soundly examine a bill of exchange (6)
20 A foot lower (5)
21 Issue raised by a whale (5)
22 Moving stair perhaps (5)

Solutions Crossword 4071: Across: 1 Conscience, 6 Plum, 10 Lyric, 11 Ill temper, 12 Chairman, 13 Crete, 15 Actions, 17 Steeped, 19 Martyrs, 21 Mastery, 22 Orlop, 24 Accredit, 27 Kidnapped, 28 Siena, 29 Rued, 30 Anemometer. **Down:** 1 Colt, 2 North star, 3 Cacti, 4 Enigmas, 5 Calends, 7 Lapse, 8 Market days, 9 Teachers, 14 Farmworker, 16 Olympiad, 18 President, 20 Sharpen, 21 Macadam, 23 Lodge, 25 Epsom, 26 Fair.

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis

CALVIN & HOBBES by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong

DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)
In spite of appearances, the important developments this week may be the ones that normally pass unnoticed. You will have to be quick-witted and fast-moving to catch other people out, if that is what you are intending to do. But it still looks to me as if partners have the best ideas.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)
There may soon have to be a substantial alteration in your personal life, one which could well have repercussions in your professional or related activities. Don't think of yourself as a martyr or victim, though. It's time to stand up and be counted.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
A general abundance of challenging aspects may let you off the hook as far as at least one interesting matter is concerned, yet the atmosphere will be tense and I would be surprised if you escaped without at least one minor confrontation. Still, you might even come out on top.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
You may have become accustomed to soothing words, especially where long-term financial commitments are concerned. Happily, Mercury's witty performance must have now made you realise that it is better to talk about all those personal differences than ignore them.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)
It is not part of your nature to suffer fools gladly or to watch partners making silly mistakes. However, an examination of the current situation should make it clear that others must be allowed to go their own way. You might even want to lend a hand.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)
This is no time for self-doubt or second thoughts about new plans or projects at work. You must press ahead, arranging meetings and discussions until you receive the assurances you need. And, if you are concerned about the outcome, make sure that partners understand your predicament.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)
Look on the bright side. Financial obligations have caused a certain amount of heart-searching although, when all is said and done, it's difficult to see that you could have acted other than you did. You will not make the same mistake twice. At least, not in exactly the same way.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)
It is well worth reminding you that the main difficulty now lies in your failure to let go of the past. It is by refusing to face up to the present that you allow opportunities to slip by and so let yourself down. If you tackle all those old regrets and resentments, you will soon be much happier.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)
You are reaching a turning point in your financial situation. What is really at issue, though, is a number of your priorities and the completely irrational values you put on various people and objects. Have you misjudged somebody? If so, make amends now.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)
There is nothing to be gained from suppressing your dreams and adopting a crude materialistic approach. You must have faith in your imagination plus the courage to follow your intuitions, even when this means putting yourself out on a limb.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)
You may think you are good with money, but you must now endeavour to be more selective in your choice of business companions. Sensitive friends and family members may righ encourage you to be too influenced by first, and perhaps misleading, impressions.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)
Does it seem that other people, including those whom you count among your friends, have been unnaturally cold, unfriendly or secretive? It is possible that part of the problem lies with your own failure to communicate? In that case, break down personal barriers as soon as you can.

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.

There is no ___ like that of the ___ - Lord Byron (8,,,,5)

FERIA

PATTEN

HXIST

EETCHN

SOLUTION: AFIRE, SIXTH, PATENT, THENCE
Answer: There is no **instinct** like that of the **heart** - Lord Byron

SUDOKU 4157

Difficulty Level 1s
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

		5				2		
	9							3
		2	4	3	8			
	4	9		8		5		
				4				
		8		5		3	2	
			6	7	2	8		
1							5	
		3				4		

SOLUTION SUDOKU 4156

4	3	5	2	1	8	6	9	7
8	6	2	9	4	7	1	5	3
1	9	7	3	5	6	8	2	4
3	5	1	4	2	9	7	6	8
9	7	4	8	6	1	2	3	5
6	2	8	7	3	5	9	4	1
5	1	3	6	8	2	4	7	9
2	8	9	5	7	4	3	1	6
7	4	6	1	9	3	5	8	2

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75 DISTRICTS IN 22 STATES placed under complete lockdown | **PASSENGER TRAINS, BUS,** Metro services stand suspended | **BEGINNING OF LONG BATTLE,** says PM after Janata Curfew success

A billion plus hunker down

A 14-HOUR CURFEW AND A BURST OF APPLAUSE FOR CORONA FIGHTERS SETS STAGE FOR THE CHALLENGE AHEAD

The deserted Bandra Worli Sealink in Mumbai during the Janata Curfew on Sunday; people in Noida applaud those fighting the virus threat. *Prashant Nadkar/Abhinav Saha*

15 injured personnel were airlifted. *Express*

Naxal ambush: Bodies of 17 personnel found inside Bastar forest, their weapons looted

GARGI VERMA
SUKMA, MARCH 22

CONFIRMING THE worst fears, bodies of 17 security personnel, who had been declared missing after an encounter with Maoists Saturday in the jungles of Minpa in Sukma district of Chhattisgarh, were recovered Sunday. Officials said this is the biggest Maoist attack on security forces since the attack in Sukma in 2017 when 24 CRPF personnel, part of a road opening party, were killed.

Chhattisgarh DGP Durgesh Awasthi said: "We have recovered all 17 bodies. All of them are from Chhattisgarh. Our men came under very heavy fire for over five hours, and they fought valiantly."

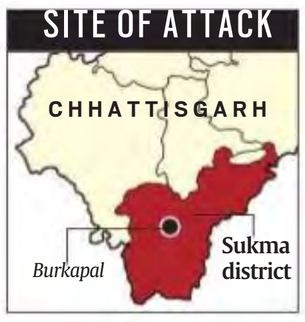
Bastar IGP P Sundarraj said: "We are unable to trace 12 AK-47s, one each of UBGL, INSAS, LMG that the men had on them. We have reason to believe that these were stolen by the Naxals."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in a tweet, said: "Strongly condemn the Maoist attack in Sukma, Chhattisgarh. My tributes to the security personnel martyred in the attack. Their valour will never be forgotten. Condolences to the bereaved families. I pray for a quick recovery of those injured."

Based on information that a large number of Maoists were gathering near Elmagunda, a team of over 600 personnel of the District Reserve Guard (DRG) and the Special Task Force (STF) of the state police and CoBRA commandos of the CRPF were sent on an operation on Saturday morning. The personnel didn't find any Maoist presence near Elmagunda and were on their way back when they were ambushed by over 250 Maoists in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

SITE OF ATTACK



EXPLAINED

Why this is a worrying sign

THE FIRST such major attack in nearly three years, it reinforces the suspicion that the relative calm is misleading. There are worrying signs, pointers to tactical anomalies — the men remained untraceable till their bodies were recovered. There are suggestions within Chhattisgarh that its heartland politics is turning the focus away from anti-Naxal operations, and that Bastar needs priority, efficient handling.

Delhi, Mumbai too under lockdown till March 31 to check the spread of virus

AVISHEK G DASTIDAR & ABANTIKA GHOSH
NEW DELHI, MARCH 22

AS THE Janata Curfew called by Prime Minister Narendra Modi wound up Sunday with people across the country responding by staying indoors and applauding those working to battle the coronavirus threat, the government prepared the nation for a long lockdown to contain the spread of the virus.

In a slew of extraordinary measures, authorities announced a complete lockdown of 75 districts in 22 States and Union Territories and suspended all passenger trains, inter-state buses and metro services across the country till March 31.

Delhi, Jharkhand, Punjab and Nagaland declared a statewide lockdown, exempting only essential services, while similar

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

AMONG EXEMPTIONS

- Food, grocery stores
- Ration shops
- Petrol pumps
- ATMs, cashier, teller operations
- Chemists and pharmacies
- Cleanliness, sanitation staff
- Print and electronic media
- E-commerce
- Telecom and Internet services

All passenger trains stopped for 10 days, 2.3 cr people daily

AVISHEK G DASTIDAR
NEW DELHI, MARCH 22

MOVING TO shield crores of people from the risk of community transmission of the coronavirus, the government has suspended all passenger train operations across the country till March 31.

The decision was taken after a meeting chaired by Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister P K Mishra and Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba with Chief Secretaries of states Sunday morning. Officials said the move will also cover local trains and Metro rail systems, but exclude freight operations.

Government sources told *The Indian Express* that some of the sanitised trains can be earmarked for isolation facilities — possibly two patients in one coach — as part of preparedness, if needed.

While medical experts have described the government's decision as "a timely step", its impact on the Railways is significant, especially in terms of numbers.

According to latest figures, the national transporter carried 2.3 crore passengers on 13,523 trains across the country on an average every day — daily commute and long-distance. And officials estimate that given the pattern of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Stranded passengers at Sealdah station during the Janata Curfew in Kolkata on Sunday. *Partha Paul*

CORONA COUNT
360 CASES | 7 DEATHS
24 RECOVERED
18,127 samples from 17,237 individuals tested

38-yr-old man among three new deaths, toll climbs to 7

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MUMBAI, PATNA, AHMEDABAD, MARCH 22

THREE MORE deaths of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) patients, including a 38-year-old man, were reported on Sunday — one each in Bihar, Gujarat and Maharashtra — taking the toll to seven, the highest in a day so far.

While the total number of cases climbed to 360, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) maintained that there is no community transmission so far. Dr Balram Bhargava, ICMR Director General and Secretary, Health Research, said a lockdown is the most effective way to break the chain of transmission.

In Mumbai, a 63-year-old businessman, with underlying conditions of high blood pressure,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

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THE GOVERNANCE PAGE

PAGE 13

Inside a Delhi screening lab: 100 tests a day, 17 hours at work, no family time

THE CORONA FIGHTERS
AN EXPRESS SERIES

FROM TESTING SAMPLES TO TRACKING CONTACTS AND TREATING PATIENTS, MEET THE MEN AND WOMEN, UNSEEN AND UNHEARD, ON THE FRONTLINES OF INDIA'S FIGHT AGAINST CORONAVIRUS

ABANTIKA GHOSH
NEW DELHI, MARCH 22

THE DOCTOR is out. And, that's a rare sight at the Civil Lines campus in Delhi of the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC). Especially over the last two months, where he has been putting in 17-hour workdays at the microbiology lab, dressed head to toe in protective gear.

Dr Partha Rakshit is not out for a morning break, though. The deputy director is on the phone with a manufacturer, discussing specifications for more equipment to boost his lab's fight against the coronavirus.

The lab that Rakshit heads is one of 111 across the country, where tests are conducted on blood samples of suspected cases — close to 100 a day at his lab alone these days, he says, from Delhi, UP, J&K and even Ladakh.

"We cannot see the virus, so we try to detect its genes in a

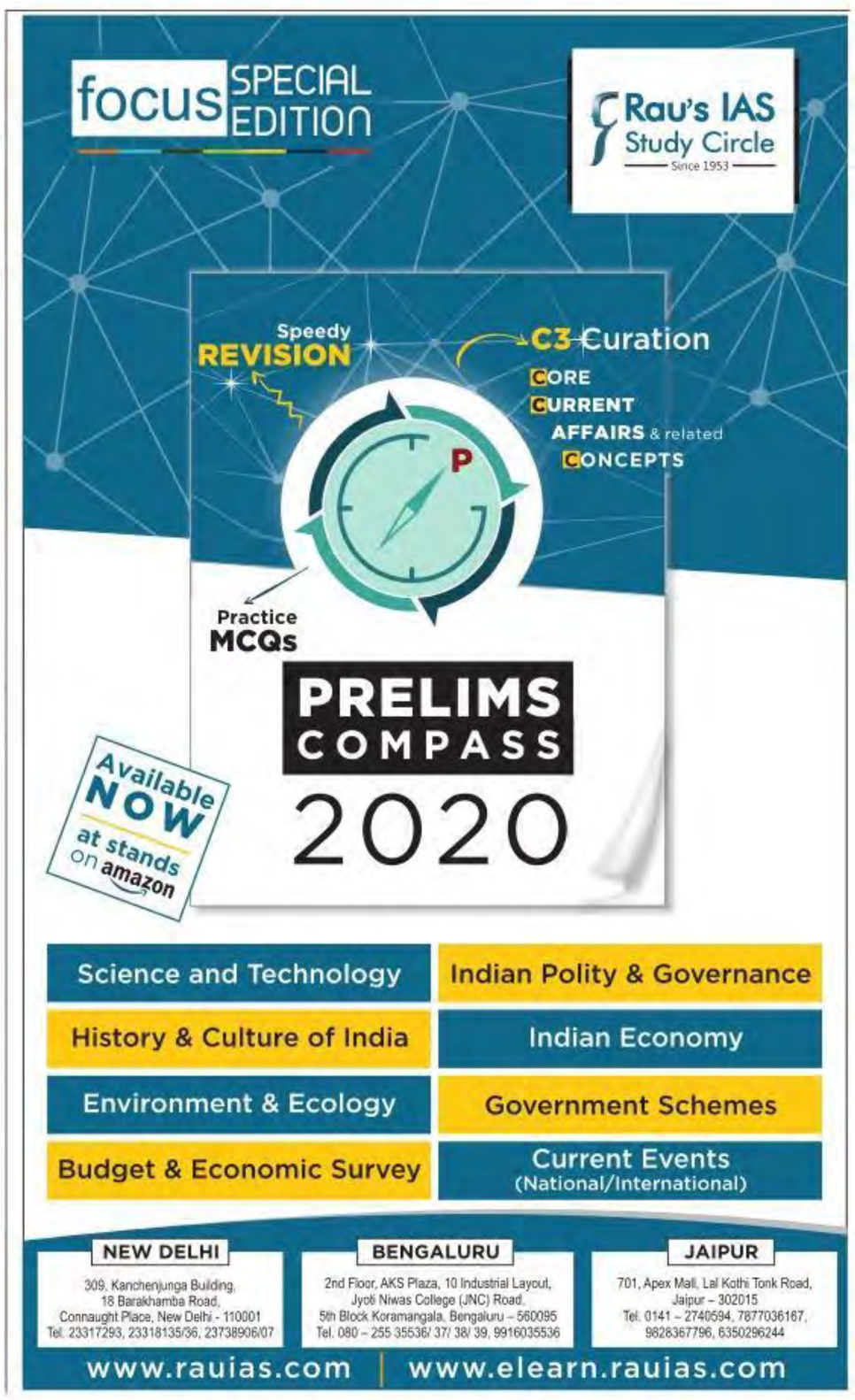
CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Samples for testing at NCDC lab in Delhi. *Abantika Ghosh*

INSIDE

RWAs OSTRACISING CREW: AIR INDIA
OVER 300,000 CASES, HALF IN EUROPE
PAGES 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14

BUSINESS AS USUAL
BY UNNY



A thank-you and some notes from a hospital ward

For every belief or action, let's ask the question, writes the author who tested positive and is in hospital, what if every other citizen were to think or act like me?

AJIT MISHRA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 22

SPECIAL TO THE EXPRESS

IT WAS shortly before midnight that I, along with another gentleman, was moved from Ram Manohar Lohia to Safdarjung Hospital, after having tested positive for COVID-19. As we moved down the stairs and through the gate towards the waiting ambulance, there were onlookers, about a dozen, even at this time of the night.

They were, of course, maintaining a sufficiently safe distance; not that there was any chance of anyone catching anything from us as we were in full protective gear. It was obvious that they were trying to get a good look at us. It didn't feel too bad because we were indistinguishable from the medical staff and ambulance driver accompanying us, until we reached the rear door to the ambulance.

This may or may not be a stray incident but it describes our general attitude to the current corona crisis: obsessive curiosity, fear and ignorance. Despite loads of useful information supplied by various government agencies and WHO, and continuous updating of information and instructions, people still treat WhatsApp (or similar media) as the source of their life-saving information and recipes.

There is a tendency by many to treat the infected (or even potential patients) as dangerous criminals. I read reports that some residents objected to asymptomatic individuals, under home isolation or observation, stepping out to their balcony or verandah to get some fresh air — even though they were at a distance more than 10-15 metres.

Mind you, these people objecting are not uneducated, they probably know that the virus is not going to travel that far, but being self-centered that they are, they don't want to take any chance. Very soon they may refuse to breathe the same air! We may degenerate into some of the unthinkable World War II scenarios.

The sad part is that we refuse to learn from the exemplary courage and dutifulness of our

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Safdarjung Hospital, where the writer is admitted. *Tashi Tobgyal*

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WEB EXCLUSIVE

HERE IS HOW YOU CAN MAKE A HAND SANITISER AT HOME

Amid the rising demand due to the coronavirus outbreak, hand sanitisers have run out of stock at many places or are being sold at exorbitant prices. A more convenient and cost-effective alternative is to prepare it at home.

VIDEO OF THE DAY

INDIAN TRADERS HIT BY VIRUSOUTBREAK
Various industries are seeing a downturn in business

FULL COVERAGE

CHHATTISGARH NAXAL ENCOUNTER
Seventeen security personnel killed in Sukma

EXPRESS AUDIO
A day in the life of a healthcare provider working with COVID-19 patients
NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY
On the 3 Things podcast, a doctor treating COVID-19 positive patients details the challenges faced by healthcare providers

FROM PAGE ONE

Naxal ambush

the jungles of Minpa, police said.

The encounter happened in two clearings in the jungle, hardly a few kilometres away from each other, to where the personnel were apparently herded before being killed.

In a statement late Saturday night, police had said 15 personnel, all DRG, were injured in the encounter in Sukma. While the 15 injured were airlifted, 17 personnel — 12 DRG and five STF — could not be found and were declared missing.

However, on Sunday, when a team of over 500 men were sent to the jungles for a recovery operation, the personnel came across the bodies of their colleagues. All 17 bodies were brought to the Burkapal camp and later taken to the Sukma headquarters Sunday evening.

At Ground Zero of the attack, between Minpa and Rengapara, bullet markings on tree trunks, five to six feet from the ground, tell the story of an operation gone wrong. The Indian Express saw boots, caps and food packets, which the security personnel had on them, scattered in the bushes. A syringe and an empty packet of cotton wad, apparently part of the first-aid kit that the men carried, lay in a thicket, slightly away from one of the clearings. Wooden plaques, carrying messages from the Maoists, were nailed to tree trunks. One of them read, "Boycott the fake Rajya Sabha election in Chhattisgarh."

All the 15 injured DRG personnel, who were airlifted to Raipur on Saturday night, are stable, said a spokesperson at the hospital where the personnel were admitted. "Three people with bullet injuries are under observation, but as of now, are stable," he said.

Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel will attend a wreath-laying ceremony in Sukma Monday morning for the 17 personnel. On Sunday, the Chief Minister and State Home Minister Tamradhwaj Sahu visited the injured personnel in hospital.

Delhi lab

sample. The first test narrows down the identity of the virus to the coronavirus family. This is what we call a screening test. In the next test, we try and detect genes that are specific to the novel coronavirus. The second test is done only when the first is positive," he says.

At the NCDC building, the samples are collected in small boxes in a room downstairs and carried up in lots to the lab, where entry is severely restricted.

"So far, about 2,000 tests have been done and the normal 9.30 am-7 pm workday is stretched, sometimes from 7 am to even 2 am for all the 50 staff members. Our regular work, mostly on hepatitis, has taken a backseat," says Rakshit.

The 44-year-old is the father of two girls, and his wife is a pathologist. But given the countless queries from hospitals and the need to get the results out as fast as possible, he and his colleagues have missed most of their family engagements, including Holi.

They just don't want to take any chance, he says. The first test takes about 5-6 hours, and is repeated to ensure no mistake, which means each report takes about 8-9 hours.

"In the third week of January, the director called me to his office and asked if our lab had the capacity to test for COVID-19. I said 'yes' immediately. Since then, everything else has taken a backseat. We have no holidays, and planned leaves are being cancelled. My colleague had a puja at home, and was on leave. But I told her to leave everything and rush back, she did. But the amazing part is our families are proud of us. My two daughters, aged 8 and 13, know about the virus and that their father is working on it. We are not complaining," he says.

Says Rakshit's colleague Simrita Singh, who heads the respiratory medicine lab: "I missed my cousin's wedding, and they were upset. But these are difficult times. I reach office at 8 am and sometimes stay back past 10 in the night."

Singh has been with NCDC for 12 years and worked on swine flu. She says her days are packed during the flu season, this is the busiest she has ever been. "We are woken up at night, we come early in the morning, stay back late, all in a day's work," says the alumni of Maulana Azad Medical College and University College of Medical Sciences, Delhi.

Rakshit, meanwhile, is in charge of two national hepatitis programmes, and is busy through the year. His lab is a part of the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) network that tracks 33 diseases.

But now, he says, life is all about the coronavirus. "We are procuring a gel documentation system through funding from our development partners. I hope it comes as soon as possible. It will really help in increasing our capacity to conduct tests," he says.

3 new deaths

heart disease and diabetes, died Saturday night.

According to local authorities, the businessman didn't have any history of travel abroad or contact with a confirmed COVID-19 patient. He had travelled to Surat and returned by train earlier this month.

While he first reported fever about 13 days ago, he was hospitalised with acute respiratory distress on March 19. His condition remained critical, and he was put on ventilator support. His nasal swab tested positive on Saturday. He died later at night.

His wife has also tested positive. Local officials are trying to trace his movement and contacts. "So far we have not managed to find a confirmed case who came in contact with him," a civic official said.

"We are not calling it community transmission yet. We will first investigate to find a close contact who may have transferred the virus," Anup Kumar Yadav, Director, National Health Mission, Maharashtra, said.

In Patna, a 38-year-old man who died Saturday was found to be COVID-19 positive. So far, all the deaths in the country have been of senior citizens.

The man, a resident of Munger, had returned from Qatar on March 13. He was admitted to AIIMS-Patna on March 20 with "acute renal complications". He had earlier gone to Kolkata for treatment.

"The patient died on Saturday morning, but his report testing positive for COVID-19 arrived today," Bihar Principal Secretary (Health) Sanjay Kumar said.

AIIMS-Patna Medical Superintendent C M Singh said: "He was being treated for acute renal complications. As he had travel history, he was also tested for COVID-19. He was kept in the isolation ward."

In Gujarat, a 67-year-old man who had tested positive died at a hospital in Surat. The man did not have any history of travel abroad, but had recently visited Delhi and Jaipur.

He was admitted to hospital on March 17 with several complications related to asthma. He tested positive on March 21.

"One death was reported today of an elderly person with comorbidities in Maharashtra; the total toll so far is 5. We are getting details of the Patna case," Lav Agarwal, Joint Secretary, Union Health Ministry, said at his daily briefing. Later, in the evening, the Ministry updated the toll to include the other two deaths.

In an apparent retort to WHO's prescription of "test test test", Bhargava said: "We have 111 government labs and 60 private labs are registering with us. They have thousands of collection centres. Indiscriminate testing is not to be done. I repeat, isolation, isolation, isolation."

Six private laboratories have already received approval — Thyrocare, Suburban Diagnostics, Metropolis Healthcare, Sir H N Reliance Foundation Hospital and Research Centre (all in Mumbai), Unipath Specialty Laboratory in Ahmedabad, and Neuberg Anand Reference Laboratory in Bengaluru. States have been asked to earmark separate hospitals for COVID-19 patients and 1,200 ventilators have been ordered in preparation.

In reply to a question, Dr R R Gangakhedkar, head of epidemiology and infectious diseases, ICMR, said: "We are not in a position till now to say community transmission is happening, we will get some impression by Tuesday through the modelling studies."

Agarwal said the focus on social isolation is because there is local transmission and it is important to break the chain of transmission. In a statement, ICMR said: "A total of 18,127 samples from 17,237 individuals have been tested for SARS-CoV2 as on 22nd March 2020 6:00 PM IST. A total of 396 individuals have been confirmed positive among suspected cases and contacts of known positive cases."

Hospital ward

own people. Inside the ward, I see how doctors, nurses, attendants, housekeeping staff go about their work in treating patients with diligence and without fear. They do wear protective gear but let us not forget they are treating individuals who are infected with this virus.

They are in close contact: taking blood, temperature, blood pressure and giving medication. I met someone in the ward who was being tested for possible infection because he/she was caring for a patient who turned out to be COVID-19 positive. I hope he/she is not infected, but imagine the cost this nurse has to bear for doing the job during this crisis.

How will this individual feel if he or she and his/her family were to be treated as a dangerous nuisance? They deserve compassion, at the least. It is right that the service of the care staff has been being highlighted during the Janata Curfew.

It is not just the caring staff but thousands of medical professionals, data scientists, lab technicians and various officials who are at the forefront of this war. Private citizens have also shown great civic-mindedness and public spirit.

All of us should learn from their examples.

We can do the following simple thought experiment, taking a cue from the moral philosophers. For every belief we hold or action we take, let us ask the question: what if every other citizen were to think or act like me? Then the outcome will be clearly visible to us and helpfully guide us.

— (Ajit Mishra is a professor based in New Delhi)

Passenger trains

cancellations since March 1, the system would have carried about 14-16 crore people on regular services over the next 10 days.

"There would still have been a huge number of potentially exposed people, carrying the virus all over the country, exposing thousands of others along the way," a senior official said.

"If there is a large community spread of clusters, it will most likely happen in one region or one area. So in that case, we don't want it to spread from that region to other areas. The epicentre of a cluster was in Italy. But because borders were not closed and people continued to travel to other countries from Italy, every EU country has cases now, and they are in the thousands," Dr Randeep Guleria, Director, AIIMS, said.

"So the issue is if we have to stop the spread all over the country, we have to limit movement of people from one area to the other," he said.

For instance, the Spanish Flu of 1918-19, which killed about 50 million across the world including in India, was carried from Europe by soldiers who returned to their homes after World War I.

'The evolution of pandemic influenza: evidence from India, 1918-19', a paper published by the US-based National Centre for Biotechnology Information, states: "In the case of India, the Sanitary Commissioner in his report noted that 'The railway played a prominent part as was inevitable'."

Significantly, the volume of rail passengers in India is several times that of its counterparts in Europe.

The number of daily passengers in Italy, with nearly 54,000 infected people, is about a tenth of India. Germany, which has so far detected around 13,000 cases, carries around seven million. In UK, where the number of confirmed cases is 5,000, the system transports about 4.8 million.

"Considering that the number of cases is still fewer here, and community transmission has not yet happened, this is a timely step to break the human chain for the virus. By not travelling, especially in trains, the chances of it spreading is greatly reduced," Dr Anil Kumar, former Director-General (Health), Railways, said.

However, Professor Mohan Rao of Centre of Social Medicine and Community Health in Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) said the government has not factored in the "human suffering". "Hostels are being emptied, tourists are asked to go home. Lots of construction workers are not getting jobs. How are they going to go home?" he said.

For the Railways, meanwhile, the decision is expected to entail losses totalling about Rs 1,600 crore. Over the past two months, officials said, the transporter lost business worth about Rs 700 crore due to cancellations — at least 60 per cent more in March alone than the same month last year.

But officials said these are "extraordinary measures" for public safety, which cannot be valued in terms of money. Besides, they pointed out, freight operations have not been interrupted, with 61,000 wagons in play Saturday.

Officials also said the entire ticket amount will be refunded to those who had booked in advance to travel during this period. But the refund period has been extended from three days to 90 days.

Meanwhile, around 300 trains, which has started their run before the Janata Curfew Sunday, would reach their destinations by Monday evening, officials said.

The latest decision follows a string of meetings over the weekend, up to 4 am Sunday, at various levels in the Railways. The PMO took the final call after railway stations in cities, such as Mumbai and Pune, witnessed large crowds of people scrambling to return to their villages.

On Saturday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had urged people to not travel as this could help spread the virus in the villages.

Tweeting in Hindi, Modi said: "Due to the scare of Corona, a lot of my brothers are trying to leave the cities where they work and go to their villages. Travelling in crowded spaces increases the risk of its spread. It will increase danger for the people where you are going and the difficulties for your village and families will also increase. I urge you to stay wherever you are for a few days. With this we can all stop this disease from spreading. We are playing with our health by crowding the stations and bus terminals. Please think about yourself and your families. Don't venture out of your homes if not absolutely necessary."

Delhi, Mumbai too under lockdown

curbs were announced in a number of districts in Bihar, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

Mumbai's local trains have been suspended till March 31, and Section 144 of the CrPC is being invoked in several cities and towns in Maharashtra to prevent people from gathering at a spot.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray suspended the services of state transport and private buses but allowed bus services within cities so that people involved in essential services can get to work. He also pared down the number of employees at government offices to 5 per cent of the total staff strength.

Several states including Maharashtra, Kerala, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand had earlier imposed a partial or complete lockdown. Announcing measures in Delhi, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Lt Governor Anil Baijal told a press conference that Delhi will be on lockdown from 6 am Monday to midnight March 31. Gurgaon, Noida and Ghaziabad will also suspend all but essential services. Public transport, including private cabs such as Ola and Uber, the Metro, religious places, and international flights as well as construction will be suspended. Buses under the DTC will work at 25% capacity. State borders will also be sealed, allowing only those involved in essential services to cross over. Assembly of more than five persons has been outlawed.

Shortly after the Delhi government's order, a spokesperson for the Central Civil Aviation Ministry clarified that the IGI Airport will continue to operate. "Domestic flights to and from IGI Airport, Delhi shall continue to operate and the Airport shall remain functional," the spokesperson said.

As his government issued orders to lock down 75 districts from where positive cases or deaths have been reported, Prime Minister Modi, taking to Twitter, said: "Janata Curfew will end at 9 pm but it doesn't mean we start celebrating. It's the beginning of a long battle. People shouldn't come out of houses in states which have announced a lockdown. In rest of the states, if it's not very important, don't come out of the houses."

At 5 pm Sunday, people across the country clapped, banged metal vessels, blew conch shells to applaud those working to battle coronavirus. "The country thanked each person who led the fight against the corona virus. Many thanks to the countrymen," Modi tweeted.

Officials said the decision on these extraordinary steps were taken at a high-level meeting of Chief Secretaries of all States and the Cabinet Secretary and the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister.

"It was agreed that there is urgent need to extend the restrictions on the movement of non-essential passenger transport including inter-state transport buses till 31st March 2020," an official statement issued after the meeting said.

"The state governments were advised to issue appropriate orders to allow only essential services to operate in the 75 districts which have reported confirmed cases or casualties relating to COVID 19," it said. "The state governments may expand the list depending on their assessment of the situation."

The decision to stop interstate public transport was taken after people, especially migrant workers in big cities, scrambled to take trains to return to their villages, mostly in the eastern states.

The 75 districts identified after the meeting account for nearly 24 crore of the total population — about 20 per cent of the population according to the 2011 census. The total lockdown population could be higher since many states have decided to widen the lockdown.

These districts will remain under lockdown:

ANDHRA PRADESH: Prakasam, Vijayawada and Vizag
CHANDIGARH: Chandigarh
CHHATTISGARH: Raipur
DELHI: Central, East Delhi, North Delhi, North West Delhi, North East Delhi, South Delhi and West Delhi
GUJARAT: Kutchh, Rajkot, Gandhinagar, Surat, Vadodara, and Ahmedabad
HARYANA: Faridabad, Sonepat, Panchkula, Panipat and Gurugram
HIMACHAL PRADESH: Kangra
JAMMU & KASHMIR: Srinagar and Jammu
KARNATAKA: Bengaluru, Chikkaballapura, Mysore, Kodagu and Kalaburgi
KERALA: Alappuzha, Ernakulam, Idukki, Kannur, Kasaragod, Kottayam, Malappuram, Pathanamthitta, Thiruvananthapuram and Thrissur
LADAKH: Kargil and Leh
MADHYA PRADESH: Jabalpur
MAHARASHTRA: Ahmednagar, Aurangabad, Mumbai, Nagpur, Mumbai Suburb, Pune, Ratnagiri, Raigad, Thane and Yavatmal
ODISHA: Khurda
PUDUCHERRY: Mahe
PUNJAB: Hoshiarpur, SAS Nagar and SBS Nagar
RAJASTHAN: Bhilwara, Jhunjhunu, Sikar and Jaipur
TAMIL NADU: Chennai, Erode and Kanchipuram
TELANGANA: Bhadradri Kothagudem, Hyderabad, Medchal, Rangareddy and Sangareddy
UTTAR PRADESH: Agra, GB Nagar, Ghaziabad, Varanasi, Lakhimpur Kheri and Lucknow
UTTARAKHAND: Dehradun
WEST BENGAL: Kolkata and North 24 Parganas

— WITH ENS REPORTS FROM NEW DELHI, MUMBAI

In Gujarat, 93 flouted self-isolation rules in 10 days, FIRs against 10

SOHINI GHOSH, VAIBHAV JHA & GOPAL KATESHIYA
AHMEDABAD/RAJKOT

AS MANY as 93 people in Gujarat flouted home quarantine/self-isolation in the past 10 days in the wake of Coronavirus pandemic in Gujarat, even as the police filed around 10 FIRs against such people and forced dozens of them to stay indoors.

As per information released by the Gujarat government, 433 people have been kept in government quarantine while 6,092 are in home quarantine so far.

Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel on Sunday expressed concern over those flouting home quarantine/self-isolation. In an example of heightened surveillance by AMC to screen out any suspicious case, 10 people residing at Vikramnagar ISRO colony, the living quarters of the ISRO-Space Application Centre (SAC) employees, were picked up by AMC health officials for a preliminary check.

An email by a Vikramnagar Resident Association (VRA) representative to all the colony residents cautioned people against panicking and assured that the AMC's move was for their own safety. The precautionary move from AMC came on the back of the fact that a family had recently arrived from Delhi and a member of the family had developed some symptoms.

"All the family members and people who came in close contact with them, have been taken by AMC health officials for quarantine..." The group included a doctor. They were all allowed to go back after health officials cleared them.

In Ahmedabad, police booked two people on Sunday for deserting home quarantine and attending a birthday party, despite a clear advisory issued by the health department to them. According to police, an FIR was lodged at Maninagar police station at the behest of health department officials against the duo, who had recently returned from Muscat and were asked to undergo home quarantine for 14 days. "However, when health department officials conducted a surprise check, the two were found attending a birthday party. We have booked them under IPC sections 188 and 270 for disobedience and malignant act likely to spread infection of a disease, along with section of the Epidemic Disease Act," said a senior police officer at Maninagar police station.

The Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) has come across 19 such instances, where authorities had to quarantine people.

While COVID-19 regulations stipulate home quarantine or self-isolation upon landing in the state from abroad, more so if arriving from a country affected by COVID-19, Ahmedabad municipal commissioner Vijay Nehra believes the biggest challenge for tackling the outbreak in the city is not in terms of infrastructure-shortage, but rather towards changing people's attitude where "they refuse to understand the importance of quarantine".

The Gujarat government on March 13 had notified the framing of COVID-19 Regulations, 2020 under the ambit of Gujarat Epidemic Diseases Act. The regulations had empowered the health commissioner, municipal commissioners and district collectors or any other authorised officer by the health department to forcefully admit, retain, keep and isolate for a period of 14 days if a suspected patient resists or refuses hospital admission. AMC is now relying upon this to quarantine those who are flouting their stipulated home quarantine/self-isolation.

Municipal Commissioner Nehra said they are tackling the issue of effective quarantining on a two-pronged basis. One, where they are relying on "feedback" from people on the helpline numbers where they are "calling on" their neighbours or others, complaining of non-adherence to home quarantine. "In such cases, we will check the travel history (of the said person) and if not followed, we will institutionally quarantine them," said Nehra.

The second method requires large-scale data mining, where the state government provides the urban local body with a list of those who were issued passports locally. The state government sources this list from the MEA and according to officials, the tough part is identifying those on the list as there are no contact numbers provided.

"We have received 7,000 such names. A special data centre has been established where the data is first sorted on the basis of pin-code so as to allocate it zone-wise and further ward-wise. This data is then further sorted on the basis of arrival date, where say if someone arrived on March 3 and someone on March 14, we will prioritise in locating the one who arrived on March 14. We are deploying hundreds of teams with thousands of members across departments of AMC," added Nehra.

The past few days have seen rigorous checking on the adherence of home quarantine.

Of the 362 currently institutionally quarantined in the AMC jurisdiction across six such facilities, 19 are such who had to be forcibly institutionally quarantined while the remaining are those who were brought in from the airport.

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ASHOK VIHAR	SIRIFORT	SHADIPUR	DWARKA- SECTOR 8
Poor	Poor	Moderate	Poor
227 AQI PM: 2.5	262 AQI Pollutant: OZONE	122 AQI PM: 2.5	225 AQI PM: 2.5

0-50 Good | 51-100 Satisfactory | 101-200 Moderate | 201-300 Poor | 301-400 Very Poor | 401-500 Severe

Delhi's day indoors

Pollution, power consumption dips; police greet 'curfew' violators with a rose

Delhi Police handed out roses to those who violated the 'janata curfew' and urged them to return home

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 22

WITH THE national capital strictly observing the 14-hour 'janata curfew' Sunday, air pollutants such as particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide (NO2) recorded a sharp dip.

The curfew also resulted in the city's power demand reducing by 40-45%, as offices, malls, railways and all commercial activities remained closed. The peak demand load Sunday was 663 MW, while Friday's peak load was 1,198 MW, a Tata Power-DDL spokesperson said.

Particulate matter of 2.5 and 10 micrometres (PM 2.5 and PM 10), as well as NO2, primarily released by burning of fossil fuels and vehicular emission, remained under prescribed standards during the day.

Sharat Kumar Sinha, DCP (PCR) said, "We sent our teams to keep a check on the streets in 15 districts in Delhi. Only a handful of people violated the curfew. We advised them to go back to their houses. Roads were mostly empty and only a few people were out on their two-wheelers for work."

Delhi Police handed out roses to those who violated the curfew, urging them to head back home. Kumar said, "Police personnel were deployed across 15 districts to guide people who violated the curfew. We gave them a red rose and encouraged them to stay indoors and respect the government's order. They listened to us."

At 5 pm, in keeping with the Prime Minister's suggestion, residents across the capital came out on their balconies and clapped or beat utensils to show their appreciation for those still carrying out essential services.

The average NO2 levels recorded in the city as of 6 pm Sunday, as per the Delhi Pollution Control Committee, was a little over 30 micrograms per cubic metre air (µg/m3), well under the prescribed standard of 80 µg/m3. This is the lowest average reading of NO2 in the city since the beginning of this month.

Data from eight out of 26 monitoring stations in the city showed that concentration of pollutants had been reducing since 7am and largely fell under prescribed standards after 12pm.

Experts also said that the average concentration of PM2.5 in the air between March 5 and 20 has reduced as compared to the previous two years.

As per an analysis by the Centre-run System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR), in March 2018 and 2019, the average PM 2.5 concentration was 70 µg/m3, whereas this year it has been 50µg/m3. It also recorded a slight reduction in nitrogen oxide levels between March 8 and 13.

After 12pm on Sunday, the PM2.5 levels at the eight DPCC stations also began falling under the standard of 60µg/m3.

Police meanwhile registered cases against four gym owners in West Delhi and arrested two of them for violating the Delhi government issued showdown. Police said that the violators were operating their gyms despite government orders.

Two of the violators, Kanhaiya Lal and Vishal, residents of Punjabi Bagh, were arrested Sunday. Cases have been registered under IPC sections 188, 269 and 3 of Epidemic Diseases Act 1897.

DELHI METRO SHUT TILL MARCH 31

New Delhi: Delhi Metro, the country's largest urban mass rapid transit network, will not be operational till March 31, authorities announced Sunday. The announcement came minutes after the Centre conveyed the message to halt operations to the top management of the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC). DMRC announced the suspension of services Sunday, and said regular commuters would be allowed to avail Metro services only during peak hours on Monday. However, with the Union government declaring a complete shutdown of all Metro services across the country till March 31, the DMRC also extended the shutdown of its operations. **ENS**

Chief Minister says need to increase COVID-19 testing

ASTHA SAXENA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 22

Lok Nayak Hospital has kept seven of 107 ventilators for COVID-19 patients. *Archive*

TO DEAL with a possible rise in the number of coronavirus cases in the capital, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has asked the hospitals to ensure all ventilators are in working condition. During treatment of COVID-19, ventilators are crucial in case the patient's condition deteriorates.

Kejriwal also called for more testing, along the lines of what South Korea did to contain the spread. "We need to increase our testing facilities substantially, just like Korea is doing," he tweeted on Sunday.

In Delhi, there are 56 100-bed private hospitals. These have 2,400 beds in the ICU, of which 888 are with ventilators. As much as 10% of the ventilator-beds are earmarked for the neonatal ICU. In a meeting held on Friday, private hospitals in Delhi were told to keep beds ready for coronavirus patients, if the need arises.

Last year, the state government had informed the Delhi High Court that of at least 400 ventilators in the city's government hospitals, 52 are non-functional. The court, while seeking to know the status of ventilators, had expressed dissatisfaction with the manner in which the Delhi government had responded to the issue of putting online details of medical facilities available at its hospitals. The number is expected to rise as 15 government hospitals have initiated the process to procure 63 ventilators.The court was responding to a plea filed by advocate Ashok Aggarwal about three-year-old Farhan, who was suffering from a critical neurological condition. The boy, admitted to Lok Nayak hospital in January, was in dire need of the breathing apparatus but was making do with a manual resuscitator. He died on February 10, the Delhi government's status report said.

"We have 107 functional ventilators in the hospitals at present and seven have been kept apart for COVID-19 patients. The 107 ventilators are always 100% in use. There is always a huge demand for ventilator support throughout the year," said Dr Kishore Singh, medical director of Lok Nayak hospital.

For each ventilator, the waiting list is around 10-15 patients in every hospital, with the number growing year after year. In the absence of a ventilator, a patient's family is handed an ambu-bag that acts as a manual ventilator. To provide oxygen support to the patient, the attendant has to push the bag so that air can go inside the body.

Safdarjung Hospital, where several coronavirus patients are admitted, is making a 'city in a city'. A special space has been created in the super-specialty block of the hospital. There are eight floors in the building and the 3rd and 4th floors have been kept specifically for COVID-19 patients. "Seventy-five beds have now been earmarked for patients but the hospital can stretch it to 90 in case of emergency. Nine beds have been put in the ICU for COVID-19 patients," said Dr Balvinder Singh, medical superintendent, Safdarjung hospital.

On the government's decision to put up posters that a person or family in a residential area has been put under quarantine to warn people against visiting them, Kejriwal said: "Delhi government is marking all homes with persons advised to home quarantine. I appeal to all not to stigmatise such families. Please be empathetic and supportive towards them. The marking is aimed only at cautioning others for their own safety."

Petrol bombs at Shaheen Bagh, Jamia, no injuries

JIGNASA SINHA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 22

HOURS INTO Sunday's 'Janata Curfew', petrol bombs were hurled by unidentified persons at the Shaheen Bagh protest site, where women continue to hold a sit-in protest against the CAA. Police said no protester was injured as the inflammable substance was thrown near the police barricades. Around the same time, an unidentified man allegedly fired a bullet and hurled petrol bombs at the vacant protest ground outside Jamia Millia Islamia.

While protesters at Shaheen Bagh blamed 'outsiders' for the incident, police sources said they are probing the possibility of an internal feud between protesters over calling off the protest that eventually escalated.

Discussions have been on at Shaheen Bagh over calling off the sit-in because of the coronavirus outbreak. The protest outside Jamia had been called off earlier this week.

On the Shaheen Bagh incident, DCP (Southeast) R P Meena said, "We got a call around 9.15 am and the SHO of Shaheen Bagh police station visited the spot. We found a banner, blanket and bamboo stick, all of which were burnt. A few broken bottles were lying around. The FSL team has inspected the spot."

Protesters said only five women were under the canopy when the incident took place.

A senior police probing the incident said: "An unidentified accused hurled the petrol bombs and escaped through the lanes nearby."

Shagufta (45), one of the protesters, said, "I was sitting on the bed when I heard an explosion and informed police. A fire broke out near the barricades, which police came and doused. We are following the PM's orders and only five women now sit under the canopy. Why are people still attacking us?"

On claims that an internal feud may be behind the incident, she said, "It was a planned move to remove us. Last night, people tried to create a scene. They called police to remove us."

Protesters claimed three men came on bikes had hurled petrol bombs, though police said they are verifying this claim.

On the Jamia incident, DCP Meena said, "Around 9.15 am, a man fired outside the gate. Nobody was hurt since the protest site was vacant. A broken bottle, a lighter and an empty cartridge were found near the divider outside the campus gate."

The Jamia Coordination Committee, comprising students and alumni, said they already suspended their protests due to the coronavirus outbreak.

Police barricades near the Shaheen Bagh protest site where the petrol bomb was hurled, Sunday. *Abhinav Saha*

Govt mulls how to get food to mid-day meal beneficiaries

SUKRITA BARUAH
NEW DELHI, MARCH 22

Schools are likely to remain shut beyond March 31

AS THE capital gears up for the possibility of schools remaining shut beyond March 31, options being considered for substituting mid-day meals in Delhi government schools are Direct Benefit Transfers (DBTs) and compensatory meals later in the year.

On Friday, the HRD Ministry asked state governments to begin providing hot cooked mid-day meals or a food security allowance to all students in Classes I-VIII till schools remain closed to contain the spread of COVID-19.

The Delhi government has not yet announced or implemented a way to supply meals to students since schools closed on March 12, as this was an exam and post-exam break period.

One of the two options being considered is to provide the expenditure on each meal to the accounts of beneficiaries in the form of DBTs. "When these meals are produced on a mass scale, preparation cost per beneficiary is very low. This will result in a very small amount being transferred to the accounts, which will translate to very little in terms of nutrition. The other option being considered is providing meals lost in the closure period during the summer break. But this does not solve our immediate problem of getting nutrition to children at the time," said a government official.

The official said the option of supplying food to schools and asking a family member to collect it was discussed but later dropped, as it might lead to crowds at schools. The home delivery option is also being approached with some caution. "Many workers will have to be roped in across the city. With all of them going door-to-door, monitoring hygiene protocol will be very difficult," said an official.

EXPRESS Careers

UNIVERSITY OF ALLAHABAD
Prayagraj- 211 002, U.P. (INDIA)

Invitations are invited from the faculty of University of Allahabad and its constituent colleges for the appointment on the post of Coordinator National Service Scheme, part time programme. Interested teachers may submit applications along with their brief Bio-data in person or through registered post to the office of undersigned on or before 10th of April 2020. Detailed information & eligibility condition may be viewed at University of Allahabad website **www.allduniv.ac.in**

Registrar

CHAUDHARY CHARAN SINGH UNIVERSITY, MEERUT (U.P.)
(A State University Established by the Uttar Pradesh State Universities Act 1973)

RECRUITMENT NOTICE

Online Applications are invited from Indian citizens for appointment against following posts of Professors, Associate Professors and Assistant Professors in the University :

Advertisement No.	Post	Number of Posts & Department	Level
Academic 1185/01/2020	Professor	Economics (SC-1), Mathematics (SC-1), Sociology (OBC-1), Microbiology (SC-1)	14
Academic 1186/02/2020	Associate Professor	History (UR-1), English (SC-1), Psychology (SC-1 & UR-1), Botany (EWS-1), Statistics (OBC-1)	13A
Academic 1187/03/2020	Assistant Professor	Genetics & Plant Breeding (UR-1), English (OBC-1), Physics (UR-1), Political Science (OBC-1), Education (SC-1), Sociology (UR-1)	10

The Last date of online submission of application form is 21/04/2020.
Last date of submission of the printout of online filled form (downloaded) is 27/04/2020.
Link for the form and other details : http://www.ccsuniversity.ac.in/ccsu/recruitment

Registrar

Government of India
BHABHA ATOMIC RESEARCH CENTRE
Advertisement No. 01/2020(R-IV)

Last Date for submission of on-line Application : 15/04/2020

Government strives to have a workforce that reflects gender balance and women candidates are encouraged to apply

BHABHA ATOMIC RESEARCH CENTRE (BARC) invites on-line applications for the following posts:

Post No.	Name of the Post	No. of posts	7th CPC Pay	Qualification and Experience
DR/01	Medical/ Scientific Officer/D (Obstetrics & Gynecology)	One (01)	₹67700 (Level 11) + allowances as admissible under Central Govt. Rules	MD/M.S./DNB equivalent in Gynecology from a recognized University. Preference shall be given to the candidates with experience of post graduate residency. Additional preference shall be for the candidates with experience in endoscopic surgery and teaching.
DR/02	Medical/ Scientific Officer/D (Dental Surgeon - Pedodontia)	One (01)	₹67700 (Level 11) + allowances as admissible under Central Govt. Rules	M.D.S. (Pedodontia) from a recognised University
DR/03	Medical/ Scientific Officer/D (Radiology)	One (01)	₹67700 (Level 11) + allowances as admissible under Central Govt. Rules	M.D./ DNB or equivalent in Radio-diagnosis from a recognised University
DR/04	Medical /Scientific Officer-C (General Duty Medical Officer)	One (01)	₹56100 (Level 10) + allowances as admissible under Central Govt. Rules	MBBS with one-year institutional experience. Mandatory internship shall not be counted as experience.
DR/05	Medical /Scientific Officer-C (Medical)	One (01)	₹56100 (Level 10) + allowances as admissible under Central Govt. Rules	MBBS with one-year institutional experience. Mandatory internship shall not be counted as experience.
DR/06	Technical Officer/C (Chemistry)	Three (03)	₹56100 (Level 10) + allowances as admissible under Central Govt. Rules	M.Sc in Chemistry with ≥ 60% marks or equivalent CGPA from a recognized University.
DR/07	Technical Officer/C (Mechanical Engg.)			B. E. / B. Tech. in Mechanical discipline ≥ 60% marks or equivalent CGPA from a recognized University.
DR/08	Technical Officer/C (Instrumentation/ Electronic Engg.)			B. E. / B. Tech. in Instrumentation/Electronic Engg. discipline ≥ 60% marks or equivalent CGPA from a recognized University.

Scan QR code for details

The facility of online application will be opened from 30/03/2020 to 15/04/2020
For further details please visit BARC website: http://www.barc.gov.in & https://recruit.barc.gov.in

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Head Office: 2, Netaji Subhash Road, Kolkata-700001

POSSESSION NOTICE FOR (IMMOVABLE PROPERTY)

Whereas:
The undersined being the authorised officer of the **Allahabad Bank** under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rules 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued a Demand Notice u/s 13(2) on the date noted against the Account as mentioned hereinafter, calling upon the borrower to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.
The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the said rules.
The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Allahabad Bank for an amount and interest thereon.
The borrower's attention is invited to the provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured asset.

Name of the Branch	Name of the Account	Name of the Borrower/ Guarantor (Mortgagor)	Date of Demand Notice	Date of Possession Notice	Amount outstanding as on the date of demand notice
Buxar	**Shri Amit Kumar** S/o- Smt Nirmala Devi resident of – Vishwamitra Colony, Near Power House, Charitrban, Dist- Buxar, Bihar 802101	Mr. Mahesh Singh S/o Mr. Kedar Singh	05.03.2019	20.03.2020	**₹13,60,402/-** (Rs. Thirteen lacs Sixty Thousand four hundred two only) plus Interest w.e.f. 05.03.2019

Description of the charged/mortgaged property: All that part and parcel of the land and building along with present and future construction thereon in the name of Mr. Mahesh Singh S/o Mr. Kedar Singh, admeasuring 1-katha, Sale Deed No. 12948 dated 08.12.1988, Comprising in Khata No 427, Khesra No. 321 & 324 Thana No. 332, Situated at- Ward No.9, Charitraban Buxar Mauza – Charitraban Buxar, PS – Buxar, Pargana- Bhojpur, District – Buxar, Bihar and bounded as per deed: North-Mathura Rai, South-Madhuri Devi, East-Niz West-Niz Road.

Buxar	**Smt. Meera Pandey & Sri Himanshu Chaturbedi,** At- Thana Road, Ward No.-17, Post- Buxar, Bihar-802101	Smt. Meera Pandey W/o Bhagwan Chaturbedi	14.01.2020	20.03.2020	**₹17,28,251/-** (Rs. Seventeen Lac Twenty Eighty Thousand Two Hundred Fifty One Only) plus Interest w.e.f. 13.01.2020

1) All the part and parcel of the land and building along with present/future construction thereon;
In favour of Allahabad Bank by Smt. Meera Pandey W/o Bhagwan Chaturbedi, Area admeasuring 3.125 Decimal, At Mauza Buxar Killa, PS- Buxar, Thana No-332, Khata No-3(Old), 76(New) Khesra/Plot No-29(Old) 53(New), Tauzi No- Bihar Govt. Ward No.-09(Old), 01(New), District- Buxar, Bihar. Bounded by (as per deed) North: Self, South: Geeta Devi, East: Rasta, West: Plot No-30.

Buxar	**Sri Yogendra Kumar** S/o Sri Manejar Ram & **Smt. Gauri Devi** W/o Sri Manejar Ram, both R/o Ward No.9, Musafir Ganj, Buxar, Bihar-802103	Smt. Gauri Devi W/o Manejar Ram	20.11.2019	20.03.2020	**₹9,16,905/-** (Rs. Nine Lac Sixteen Thousand Nine Hundred Five Only) plus Interest w.e.f. 19.11.2019

1) All the part and parcel of the land and building along with present/future construction thereon;
In favour of Allahabad Bank by 1. Smt. Gauri Devi W/o Manejar Ram, Sale Deed no-12018 dated 16.11.1998 at Mauza Pandeypatti, Khata No 08(Old) 285 (New), Plot No.1912 (Old) 925, 926 (New), Thana No 324, PS Buxar, having area of 10 dhur.
2. Sale Deed No 12068 Dated 17.11.1998 at Mauza pandeypatti, Khata No. 08 (Old) 285 (New), Plot No 1912 (Old) 925,926 (New) Thana No 324, PS Buxar, having area of 10 dhur. Bounded by as per deed of Sale Deed No. 12018: North: Bhola Ram, South: Gauri Devi, East: Ram Narayan Ram Gond, West: Rasta. Bounded by as per deed of Sale Deed No. 12068- North: Gauri Devi, South: Dev Narayan Singh, East- Ram Narayan Ram Gond, West: Rasta.

Buxar	**Sri Yogendra Ram** S/o Late Neur Ram, Address: Arjunpur, Churamanpur, PS- Buxar, District- Buxar, Bihar	Sri Yogendra Ram S/o Late Neur Ram	20.11.2019	20.03.2020	**₹3,52,750/-** (Rs. Three Lac Fifty Two Thousand Seven Hundred Fifty Only) plus Interest w.e.f. 19.11.2019

1) All the part and parcel of the land and building along with present/future construction thereon;
In favour of Allahabad Bank by Sri Yogendra Ram S/o Late Neur Ram, Sale Deed No.7950, Dated-14.07.2013 at Mauza-Arjunpur, Thana No-355, PS-Buxar, Khata No-6, Plot No.-1281,1282, District Buxar, having area of 1 Kattha. Bounded by (as per deed): North: Rajnet Ram, South: Niz, East: Plot No.-1282, West: Road.

Date : 20.03.2020
Place : Gaya

Authorised Officer
(Allahabad Bank)

Closed shops in Connaught Place during the 'janata curfew' on Sunday. *Abhinav Saha*

CHIEF MINISTER CITES 'EXTRAORDINARY TIMES'

Capital lockdown until March 31

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 22

DELHI WILL be on lockdown between 6 am Monday and March 31 to arrest the spread of coronavirus. Gurgaon, Noida and Ghaziabad will also suspend all but essential services.

In a press conference jointly addressed by him and L-G Anil Baijal, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal called the measures necessary. "They say extraordinary times require extraordinary measures. The whole world is battling the virus... We are lucky it reached our country a little later. There is not a lot of research on the coronavirus but we can learn from a lot of other countries — both that took timely measures and those that didn't," he said.

Kejriwal also said the health infrastructure might get overwhelmed if the number of cases shoots up. "There are 27 cases in Delhi so far. Of these, 21 are those who came from abroad and got sick. Six are cases of local transmission. If we suddenly get 1,000 or 1,500 cases, the lockdown will not be effective. The existing health infrastructure might not be able to deal with it," he said.

Essential services will remain operational. This includes law and order, magisterial duties, hospitals, banks, media, grocery and vegetable stores, takeaway services, e-commerce websites and pharmacists. Public transport, including private cabs such as Ola and Uber, the Metro, religious places, international flights and construction are suspended. DTC buses will work at 25% capacity.

State borders will be sealed, allowing only those involved in essential services, to cross over. The assembly of more than five people has been outlawed.

"The less you go out, the safer you are. Stay in, unless it is very important, like for buying milk or food. Anyone out on the roads who says they are providing an essential service or out to get food will be trusted," Kejriwal said. Establishments that violate the orders will be prosecuted.

The CM also said that all private establishments will have to pay full salaries for permanent and contractual employees.

"If we are able to save even 10 lives through these measures, I think taking these measures will be worth it," he said.

Meanwhile, three more people tested positive for coronavirus in Delhi, taking the total number of confirmed cases to 30.

One is a 30-year-old man who was in contact with the 38-year-old woman from Dilshad Garden who tested positive Wednesday. The other two positive cases are a 58-year-old man from North Delhi and a 21-year-old man who lives in Ghitorni. He tested positive in Gurgaon Saturday.

The Delhi government has found that around 35,000 people with a travel history to foreign countries are in the city at present. The government has asked district magistrates to undertake a thorough verification and carry out surveillance to ensure that they remain in home quarantine for 14 days.

ACROSS DELHI-NCR

CLOSED

PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES
- Delhi Metro
- Private buses
- Taxis (Ola, Uber included)
- Autorickshaws
- Shops, commercial establishments, factories
- Offices
- Godowns
- Weekly markets

EXCLUDED

- Officers on law and order, magisterial duty
- Police
- Health and welfare staff
- Power supply, water supply depts
- Fire
- Ration shops
- Cleanliness and sanitation staff
- Pay and accounts office
- Print and electronic media
- E-commerce
- Food items and grocery stores
- Petrol pumps
- Cashier and teller operations in banks (including ATMs)
- Chemists and pharmacies
- Animal fodder shops
- Manufacturing units engaged in production of essential and agriculture commodities, food items
- Telecom and internet services

CM Kejriwal and L-G Anil Baijal at the press conference, Sunday

OTHER SERVICES

DELHI'S BORDERS with other states sealed – only essential services allowed to continue. Section 144 imposed. Restrictions in Delhi are also for interstate travel, construction activity and religious places

IN NOIDA and Ghaziabad, tuition centres are also closed

IN GURGAON, interstate bus travel is restricted. Wholesalers, retailers of essential commodities including food, govt offices, postal services excluded

CORONA WATCH

IIT-D team develops new virus test

New Delhi: Researchers at the IIT Delhi say they have developed a "detection assay" to test for novel coronavirus at an affordable cost. A team of nine teachers and students at the Kusuma School of Biological Sciences said they developed the procedure, which is currently being validated on clinical samples at NIV, Pune.

20 FIRs registered

New Delhi: Delhi Police has registered over 20 FIRs against commercial establishments and people for violating government orders issued in the wake of coronavirus. Sources in the police said most cases were against people who continued to operate gyms, salons and spa centres. **ENS**

Man, his mother test positive in Noida, district cases touch 8

AMIL BHATNAGAR
NOIDA, MARCH 22

A 27-YEAR-OLD man and his 62-year-old mother tested positive for coronavirus on Sunday, taking the total number of cases in Gautam Budh Nagar district to eight.

According to officials, the man had a travel history to Denmark. Officials believe he contracted the infection there. "The man was sent to Denmark on official work and it is possible he contracted it in Europe. His mother also got infected. Ten members of the family are now in isolation as a precautionary measure; their reports are awaited. Every precaution is being taken," said Dr Anurag Bhargava, CMO.

CORONA COUNT - DELHI-NCR
46 CASES | 1 DEATH
2 RECOVERED

According to officials, a 31-year-old resident from Greater Noida with a travel history to Dubai had also tested positive Saturday evening. Medical officials screened 1,506 flats and 6,050 persons, out of which five were found to have travelled abroad. Currently, 134 people have been admitted in isolation wards set up at various hospitals.

Meanwhile, Ghaziabad and Noida will be among 16 districts in UP under lockdown from March 23 to 25.

At the Delhi-Noida border, Sunday. *Abhinav Saha*

Doctor involved in testing among 2 new Gurgaon cases

SAKSHI DAYAL
GURGAON, MARCH 22

A DOCTOR at the Civil Hospital is among two people who tested positive for coronavirus in Gurgaon Sunday, taking the total number of patients in the district to eight.

The Haryana government, meanwhile, notified a lockdown on seven districts — Gurgaon, Faridabad, Sonepat, Panipat, Rohtak, Jhajjar and Panchkula — from 9 pm Sunday until March 31.

While the shutdown will see closure of all offices and establishments, "essential services" including food wholesalers and retailers, chemists, ATMs, e-commerce services and home delivery and takeaway restaurants have been excluded from its purview.

"Two people, a 22-year-old who recently returned from the UK and lives in Palam Vihar, and a doctor at the Civil Hospital, have tested positive for coronavirus today," said Dr Jaswant Singh Punia, Gurgaon's Chief Medical Officer.

Officials said the woman doctor was a part of a team taking samples of people for testing. Samples of 10 such staff members had been sent for testing, but only hers returned positive, said officials.

At Gurgaon's Sadar Bazar, Sunday. *Express*

As streets in Gurgaon remained deserted Sunday, with residents observing 'janata curfew', Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar announced the lockdown through social media. "We are going to take it one step further. The same way districts across the country have been locked down, we have also locked down seven districts. I appeal to all residents of these districts to maintain discipline," said Khattar. "There is no need to fear or worry, I believe we are very close to our goal in this fight."

The order states, "Over 6,600 persons are under surveillance in Haryana. Therefore, it is imperative to adopt strict social distancing and isolation measures."

As part of the lockdown, no public transport services will be permitted, including taxis and autorickshaws. But transport to and from hospitals, airports and railway stations will be permitted.

The order states that all foreign returnees should remain under "strict home quarantine", and others should come out "only for basic services". Those found violating these directions will "be deemed to have committed an offence punishable under IPC Section 188".

Sunday's order also prohibits "congregation of more than five persons" in public places" and appeals to RWAs to alert police in case of a violation. The civic body also prohibited people from entering parks and community centres "till further order".

Centre overrules Delhi, says domestic flights will continue

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 22

DELHI'S DECISION to impose a complete lockdown in the city, including on operations of domestic flights, was Sunday evening overturned by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). The state government's order, announced around 6.30 pm, stated: "All domestic/international flights arriving in Delhi during this period shall be suspended."

Shortly afterwards, a spokesperson for the Central Civil Aviation Ministry said that the IGI airport will continue to operate. "Domestic flights to and from IGI Airport, Delhi shall continue to operate and the airport shall remain functional," the spokesperson said.

According to sources in the civil aviation ministry, Delhi government's order was deemed null as civil aviation was a Central subject, and that while entry into the NCT via road can be prohibited by the Delhi government, only the Centre had powers to restrict flight movement.

"The subject falls under the central government (aviation ministry), and they have decided that all domestic flights to and from IGIA Delhi shall continue to operate and the airport shall remain functional," said DGCA Chief Arun Kumar.

At IGI airport, Sunday. *Express*

Officials in the Delhi government said the decision had been taken keeping the L-G in the loop. "He is the representative of the Centre. He signed the order and was present at the press conference. Our order is very clear. We do not think flights should be allowed to function. We have to go into complete lockdown," said a senior government official.

There is also confusion over how those who land at the airport will reach home since private buses, taxis, and autorickshaws are off the roads. "Only 25% of the DTC bus fleet will be on the roads. We don't understand why the Centre doesn't want to stop domestic travel," said the official.

CORONA WATCH

Uttarakhand labourers to get Rs 1,000 each

Dehradun: In the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, the Uttarakhand government on Sunday announced that it would transfer Rs 1,000 to the bank accounts of all registered labourers so that they do not face problem in buying food. "I assure that no one will remain hungry," Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat said. Labour Minister Harak Singh Rawat said: "The list will be handed over to the banks on Monday so that the amount can be transferred to their accounts soon. So far it is one-time help to the labourers," the minister said. **ENS**

Hotel owner in J&K arrested

Jammu: A hotel owner in Jammu and Kashmir's Banihal town was arrested for allowing a British national stay at his hotel in violation of the order of the Ramban District Magistrate. Identifying the hotel owner as Ajaz Ahmad of Kaskoot area, sources said police got information that a British national had stayed at his hotel bear Banihal railway station on the intervening night of March 19-20. The police arrested the hotel owner, sources said, adding that a case under Section 188 of IPC was registered against him. **ENS**

3 men break curfew, made to sit-ups

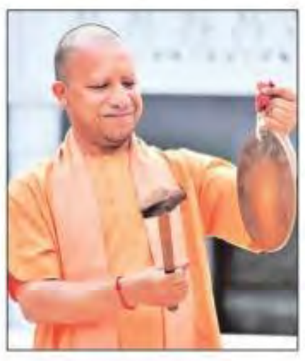
Pune: A video of a policeman making three people do sit-ups in Pune for loitering during Sunday's Janata Curfew went viral on social media. "During our checkpoint near Manchar stand, these three people were found roaming on the street without any reason," an official said. "They told us they did not know about the curfew. Seeing their callous attitude, we made them do sit-ups." **PTI**

MUMBAI'S LAST TRAIN TILL MARCH 31: The last local on Sunday leaves Karjat station at 11.20 pm. *Pradip Das*

States go into lockdown mode

Uttar Pradesh

ON A day Uttar Pradesh reported three new cases, taking the total number of cases in the state to 29, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday announced that 16 districts would be under lockdown till Wednesday. The Centre had asked the state government to impose lockdowns in six districts. "In the first phase, we are going to completely lock down 15 districts where either coronavirus-affected people are...The Janata Curfew will extend in these districts," Adityanath said. Later in the day, Pilibhit was added to the list of districts. At a time when a large number of migrant labourers are returning to UP, the Chief Minister instructed the administration to ensure self-isolation of these people.Meanwhile, cities and towns in the state shut down on Sunday for Janata Curfew. Lucknow Commissioner Sujeet Pandey said, "People have cooperated with the authorities in maintaining the curfew."



Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath rings a gong during the Janata Curfew in Gorakhpur on Sunday. *PTI*

Andhra Pradesh & Telangana

ANNOUNCING A total lockdown, Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao said that about 87 lakh people with ration cards would be given 12 kg rice and other essential commodities worth Rs 1,500 for a month. While the Centre had advised a lockdown in five districts, KCR said the state government had decided to shut down the entire state. He said essential commodities and emergency services will be available. "After a review on March 31, we will take further action," he said.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy announced closure of all interstate borders and said the entire state would be under lockdown till March 31.

West Bengal

AS WEST Bengal recorded three more COVID-19 cases on Sunday, taking the total number to seven, the state government announced a lockdown in almost all municipal areas, including Kolkata, from Monday evening to March 27 midnight. Only essential goods and services will be available during the lockdown. The order said said no public transport services will be permitted.

In a separate order, the government announced that other than essential services, all employees from government and private sector should remain at home in this period.

Karnataka

AS KARNATAKA reported six new COVID-19 cases on Sunday and the total number of cases in the state rose to 26, the B S Yediyurappa government decided to impose a partial lockdown till March 31 in nine districts where people have tested positive for COVID-19. The move followed a meeting between Yediyurappa, the ministerial task force on COVID-19, experts and officials.

"All commercial activities, except medical stores, grocery and agriculture services, in Bengaluru Urban, Bengaluru Rural, Mangaluru, Mysuru, Kalaburagi, Dharwad, Kodagu and Belagavi districts are suspended until March 31," Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai said.

With the Finance Bill pending passage in the state legislature, the government has not cancelled the meeting of the legislative assembly and council. After the passage of the Bill, the state legislature may be adjourned sine die, a minister said.

Among measures to help people tide over the curfew-like situation, the government has decided to provide ration for two months in advance.

Maharashtra

SECTION 144 of CrPC will come into force in several cities in Maharashtra from Monday and remain in effect till March 31. On Sunday, one more COVID-19 patient died in the state. Ten fresh cases were reported from the state on Sunday, taking the total number to 74.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray also suspended the services of state transport and private buses, Buses within cities will continue to ply so that people involved in essential services can get to work.

Appreciating the people's response to Janata Curfew, Thackeray said, "People should maintain this until tomorrow morning and should not venture out of homes after 9 pm if not essential. From tomorrow morning, I have been left with no option but to impose Section 144 in all urban areas across te state."

"I want to see the determination and restraint shown today during Janata curfew till March 31. If required, we will need to extend the period," he said.

Jammu and Kashmir

THE UNION Territory will go into lockdown from 8 pm on Sunday until March 31. Districts in J&K will also restrict assemblies at public places to "not more than three persons".

And order issued on Sunday notes that "all goods vehicles including those carrying essential items shall be allowed to ply during the shutdown period with proper permits/passes issued by the district administration who will make necessary arrangements for this purpose."

Districts have also been urged to make appropriate arrangements for persons engaged in providing essential services.

Bihar sees first COVID-19 death, two test positive

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
PATNA, MARCH 22

A 38-YEAR-OLD man from Munger has become Bihar's first confirmed COVID-19 positive case-and its first casualty-even as the state ordered a lockdown till 31 March to prevent the spread of the virus. The affected person died on Saturday in the state capital's AIIMS hospital, where another person too tested positive for coronavirus.

The Munger man had been admitted to AIIMS on 20 March with chronic renal complications. He had returned from Qatar on 13 March and had also gone to Kolkata for follow-up treatment.

Bihar's Principal Secretary (Health) Sanjay Kumar told The Indian Express: "The patient had died on Saturday morning but his report of being tested positive for COVID-19 arrived today. Another person admitted in AIIMS a 45-year-old man from Patna district, has also tested positive. Now, it is an arduous task to reconstruct and find out all those who met these patients at the hospital. We have been tracking them to quarantine them." The patient from Patna, too, has a history of travel outside the country.

Separately, as per a health department order, all private institutions and offices will remain closed and commercial vehicles won't be not allowed to ply till 31 March across the state. Essential services, including groceries, hospitals, petrol pumps, LPG are exempted.

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar convened a meeting to assess the situation and announced Rs 4 lakh as compensation to next of kin of the victim. Kumar lauded the Centre's decision to stop rail services and inter-state bus services till 31 March. The Chief Minister appealed to the people avoid community contact, and to venture out of their homes only if was necessary.

AIIMS, Patna medical superintendent C M Singh said: "The Munger person was being treated for acute renal complications. As he had a travel history, he was also tested for COVID-19. He was kept in the isolation ward."

The hospital authorities have asked his relatives to go into mandatory quarantine for the stipulated period of 14 days.

Health secretary Kumar said: "We have asked all district hospitals to set up a control room to guide patients on treatment of suspected COVID-19. While district hospitals will have additional facilities, it will also send teams to villages in case of suspicion of any suspected cases."

Meanwhile, the Bihar State Religious Trust Council has closed down all 4,500-odd temples across the state. The upcoming Ram Navami procession for 2 April at Patna's Dak Bungalow has also been called off.

So far, 550 people have been kept under observation. Of them, 120 have been discharged after completed 14-day quarantine period.

Police in Navi Mumbai stop a motorist during curfew on Sunday. *Narendra Vaskar*

Second death in Mumbai, 12 fresh cases in Maharashtra

TABASSUM BARNAGARWALA & LAXMAN SINGH
MUMBAI, MARCH 22

THE SECOND person in Mumbai to succumb to COVID-19 was a 63-year-old businessman, who lived in Malabar Hills, with no history of recent foreign travel, nor any known contacts with a confirmed coronavirus case.

He died in HN Reliance hospital on Saturday night, hours after he was diagnosed positive for the infection. He is the fifth casualty in India. Both deaths in Maharashtra have occurred in the city.

As Maharashtra's positive cases jumped to 76, with 12 new cases detected on Sunday, six surfaced in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region. One of these was the wife of the 63-year-old businessman. She was shifted from Kasturba hospital to HN Reliance hospital on Sunday. A 32-year-old man and his wife, aged 30, who had returned from the US, tested positive in Kasturba hospital. A 21-year-old youngster, who travelled from Edinburgh, also tested positive on Sunday.

A 60-year-old woman, who had travelled to Saudi Arabia, tested positive. And a 35-year-old man from Navi Mumbai tested positive after visiting Istanbul.

The man who died had travelled to Surat and returned by train earlier this March. His wife, aged 64, also tested positive and remains admitted in Kasturba hospital.

"We are checking whether any other person from his family or his office had international travel history," a civic official said. The businessman's office in H East ward (Satancruz and Khar) has been sealed and ward officers have been asked to inquire with his staff members on Monday. "Since offices are shut today, by Monday we will start tracking," said an official from the BMC.

The BMC has advised all residents of the Malabar Hill building in which the man lived to remain at home for 14 days and immediately inform if anyone develops symptoms.

The state officials suspect this could be a case of community transmission but have not labelled it so.

On Sunday 156 people with suspected symptoms of coronavirus were admitted in Mumbai hospitals.

Meanwhile, Pune recorded six new COVID-19 cases. Six contacts of a 41-year-old anganwadi worker who had tested positive for coronavirus two days ago were, on Sunday, found to have been infected with the virus. Five of them were her close family members, while the sixth was a woman employee of IT major Infosys working at the company's Pune office.

Diamond trader from Surat is first casualty in Gujarat

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, SURAT, VADODARA, MARCH 22

GUJARAT ON Sunday confirmed its first death related to coronavirus after a 67-year-old diamond jewellery trader with pre-existing health conditions died in Surat.

The trader was admitted in Mahavir hospital on March 17 after he complained of cough and cold. He tested positive for Covid 19 on March 21. With no known travel history, SMC officials suspect the victim may have had contact with some patient in Jaipur.

The total number of positive cases of the virus in the state has reached 22, with eight new cases on Sunday—two in Surat, two in Gandhinagar, two in Vadodara and two in Ahmedabad.

Deputy health commissioner of SMC Dr Ashish Naik said two positive cases are a 32-year-old male resident of Surat city with a travel history of Dubai and a 45-year-old male resident of the city who had come in contact with a corona positive patient. The two were admitted in Surat New Civil Hospital on March 21.

In Vadodara, two women who were part of a group of 20 that travelled to Sri Lanka earlier this month have tested positive. The two aged 20 and 27, kept in isolation at SSG hospital in Vadodara, are related to the 59-year-old man who tested positive on Friday. While the 27-year-old reported her symptoms on March 17, it was only on March 21 that her sample was sent for test after the administration brought the entire group that toured Sri Lanka for a check-up. The total count of positive cases in Vadodara is up to five. Four of these are from the group that toured Sri Lanka.

Chief minister Vijay Rupani said in a social media video on Sunday that Gandhinagar reported fresh two new cases because a man, who was confirmed positive on Saturday, had failed to go into isolation after coming back from Dubai.

"The 26-year-old Dubai-returned man failed to self-isolate and ended up infecting his 80-year-old grandmother who is now under treatment," Rupani said. The man's 26-year-old wife too tested positive on Sunday, although the infection is attributed to her travel to Dubai.

To check local transmission and ensure home isolation, Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel announced that the state government has decided to make public the names of those who have been tested positive in the state.

Stranded Indians seek embassy help to find accommodation

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, MARCH 22

WITH THE government banning the operation of international flights amid the coronavirus outbreak, Indians stranded in the UK and Malaysia have approached the Indian missions for help in finding accommodation as they wait for flights after March 31.

Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla told The Indian Express, "There maybe be many people returning from abroad who would be feeling inconvenienced. The government is fully aware of the situation and is doing its best. Officers and employees are putting in hours and days of work to make their safe return possible."

About 280 Indians are stuck in Kuala Lumpur. The Indian High Commission there has tied up with some local NGOs to provide temporary accommodation to them. In London, about 19 Indians are in the Indian High Commission and have demanded that they be put on a flight immediately. Initially, 59 Indians had gone to the High Commission and about 40 of them have been provided temporary accommodation.

A 34-year-old businessman, who is one of the Indians stranded in Malaysia, told The Indian Express, "Some NGOs have arranged for our accommodation in guest houses, apartments. Right now, accommodation and food is ok. We are safe now."

Passengers said that while the Indian High Commission was initially not responding to their calls for help, they swung into action after some MPs from Andhra Pradesh approached the central government in this regard.

Indian diplomats said Indians stranded in Malaysia due to the restrictions were on Saturday taken to different hostels and hotels. Malaysia has so far reported 900 cases of coronavirus infection, the highest figure for any Southeast Asian country.

The Indian High Commission in Kuala Lumpur said they coordinated with local NGOs and community organisations and moved those stranded to safer locations.

"Hundreds of Indians stranded in Malaysia waiting at KLIA2 taken to different hostels, hotels etc. by @hcikl in close coordination with local NGOs and community organizations," the official Twitter handle of the High Commission in Kuala Lumpur posted.

In London, a group of 19 Indian students sought refuge on the premises of the Indian High Commission in London on Saturday night and demanded to be put on a flight to India despite the travel restrictions.

The group of students, mostly from Telangana, refused offers of alternate accommodation arranged with the help of Indian diaspora groups. India's ban on travellers from the UK and Europe will remain in place until the end of this month.

Initially, there were 59 students and 40 of them have been allocated alternative accommodation, but the remaining 19 are refusing to move.

Many of them had flights booked back to India for later this month in time for what is usually an Easter break period at the universities in the UK. However, India issued an updated travel advisory earlier this week, saying that no travellers would be allowed entry after 1200 GMT on March 18 until March 31.

"There simply are no flights and we cannot be putting lives in danger at this stage. They were allowed entry into the High Commission building and provided food, water and temporary shelter, but they are now just camping out with their bags and baggage," a local Indian community leader said.

The students have been placed within a quarantined space, which houses the visa and consular section within the Indian High Commission building at Aldwych in central London.

(WITH PTI INPUTS FROM LONDON)

Air India had sent two flights to Wuhan to rescue Indians.

Air India says 'vigilante' RWAs ostracising crew

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 22

AIR INDIA on Sunday called out "vigilante" Resident Welfare Associations for "ostracising" its crew members who had travelled to international destinations, including coronavirus-hit countries, and appealed to law enforcement agencies to ensure that they are treated with respect.

The national carrier said the RWAs and neighbours were obstructing its crew from turning up for duty and even calling the police on them.

"These vigilantes have conveniently forgotten that many a spouse, parent, sibling, child and near and dear ones have been brought home safe and secure from affected countries, thanks to the heroic efforts of these Air India crew," it said in a press release.

"... it is alarming to note that in many localities, vigilante RWAs and neighbours have started ostracising the crew, obstructing them from performing their duty or even calling in the police simply because the crew travelled abroad in the course of their duty," it said.

Air India has sent two flights to Wuhan to evacuate 647 people, besides another special flight to Rome to airlift 263 Indians.

"We would like to appeal to all concerned, particularly the law enforcement agencies, to ensure that our crew are treated with the courtesy, respect and freedom that every citizen of this country deserves especially in light of their having undertaken flight duties to affected countries to bring back Indian citizens," it said.

Kerala records highest single-day spike as count moves up to 67

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MARCH 22

KERALA REPORTED 15 new cases of COVID-19 infection on Sunday, taking the total number of cases in the state to 67. This is the largest single-day jump in the number of cases for the state. As many as 59,295 people are under observation in Kerala.

While three of those infected have already been discharged after treatment, 19 of the 64 people under treatment are in Kasaragod district and 10 in the neighbouring Kannur district. Out of the 14 districts in the state, 10 have reported COVID-19 cases so far.

Nine districts of Kerala feature in the list of 75 districts where the Centre has recommended a lockdown, but the state government is yet to take a final decision in this regard.

The Chief Minister's Office said in a statement that the government has not taken a decision on imposing fresh restrictions. Instead, direction has been given to strictly implement existing guidelines, it said. More restrictions would be imposed in Kasaragod, the statement said. All district collectors, however, have been given the power to take necessary action to maintain public health and order.

In Kasaragod district, which has reported the maximum number of cases in the state, prohibitory orders under Section 144 under CrPC will come into effect from Sunday night. The district would be under lockdown, with a ban on all means of transport, gatherings and events. Only shops selling essential commodities would be allowed to remain open, from 11 am to 5 pm.

Prohibitory orders have also been clamped in Kozhikode district, which reported its first two positive cases on Sunday.

THE EDITORIAL PAGE

WORDLY WISE

NO DISEASE SUFFERED BY A LIVE MAN CAN BE KNOWN.

— LEO TOLSTOY

The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

AFTER JANATA CURFEW

People's response to PM's call is a first step. Fighting COVID-19 calls for coordination among health bodies, research agencies, states

LAST WEEK, PRIME Minister Narendra Modi reached out to the people, warning them against complacency but also assuring them that there is no need to panic in the fight against the coronavirus. He asked everyone to make behavioural changes and called for restraint and resolve. The PM spoke about the importance of social distancing and emphasised that only an alert and compassionate society can tide over the public health emergency that is upon the world. It's a testament to PM Modi's communication skills and the goodwill he commands, that the people responded wholeheartedly to his call for a 14-hour "Janata Curfew" on Sunday. In a country where the seriousness of infectious diseases is not always appreciated, it's heartening that the PM's call for social distancing has struck a chord. The participation in the 7 am to 9 pm "voluntary" curfew is a reassuring indication of incipient national purpose in dealing with the COVID-19.

Pandemics are cruel, not just in terms of the demands they place on the health and immune systems of people and the hardships they create for families, but also because of the economic — and social — disruptions they cause. There have been reports of migrants, whose livelihoods have been hit, heading back to their villages. A large number of them live in unsanitary conditions and do not always have access to adequate water supplies. Their exodus in overcrowded trains has raised fears of the virus spreading to the country's rural areas and health experts apprehend community transmission of the infection. A high-level meeting of state chief secretaries convened by the cabinet secretary and the principal secretary to the PM on Sunday directed that all inter-state and suburban trains and metro rail services be suspended till March 31. But in the coming days and weeks, the Centre and state governments will have to find ways to mitigate people's economic hardship while addressing public health imperatives. The states have, so far, by and large, fought their own battles against COVID-19. The tough demands made by the virus require them to be in constant conversation with each other, and with the Centre.

On March 21, a meeting of the Centre's Empowered Committee for COVID-19 Response asked all hospitals "to cooperate with national labs for clinical sample collection". Given India's high population density and already stressed and under-resourced public health infrastructure, much more coordination will be required between healthcare institutions, research bodies and government agencies to prevent community transmission of the infection. It is imperative that science remains the cornerstone of the country's response to the pandemic. This requires public health bodies and research outfits to be attentive to all signs on the ground, frame their responses accordingly and communicate the challenges posed by the virus to the people in a language they understand. The success of Sunday's Janata Curfew indicates that the people appreciate the gravity of the situation. But their response to PM Modi's call should be seen as only the first step in the fight against COVID-19.

ALLEVIATING PAIN

State governments' measures for most vulnerable, Centre's task force — managing economic fallout will require both

WITH SEVERAL PARTS of the country under lockdown, it is difficult at this juncture to gauge the extent of the economic fallout from the coronavirus. It is likely that the disruptions in economic activity will continue well into the upcoming financial year. The immediate pain is being felt by the services industry. But as household discretionary spending starts falling, the manufacturing sector will also feel the pain. And even when the spread is contained domestically, with the virus spreading across Europe and the US, exports will also take a hit. The policy response to deal with this public health crisis requires coordinated action at both Central and state levels. It should aim to limit the immediate economic fallout through some forms of targeted income support, especially for those in the more vulnerable segments of the informal economy, ensure continuity in supply chains for essential items, and easier financing conditions.

Some state governments have announced measures. They are a combination of cash transfers for workers in the informal economy, and provision of food. For instance, the Uttar Pradesh government has announced direct cash transfers for daily wage labourers in the construction sector, and self-employed cart owners, small shop owners and rickshaw pullers, in addition to one month's stock of food grains for vulnerable sections. The Delhi government has announced the provision of meals for the homeless, and enhanced rations and pensions for vulnerable socio-economic groups. The Kerala government has announced a Rs 20,000 crore financial package, of which Rs 14,000 crore is for clearing pending arrears, and Rs 500 crore is towards a health package. The state's move aims to cover loan assistance, pensions, and subsidised meals. Other states could adopt similar measures. Jan Dhan accounts could be used for targeted cash transfers, while excess stocks maintained with the FCI could be disbursed though the public distribution system.

The Centre has formed a task force under the finance minister to assess the economic impact of the pandemic and suggest measures, which could include regulatory forbearance, government guarantee for loans to SMEs, deferment of taxes, and livelihood support for unorganised workers. As demand collapses, firms' cash inflows will fall, impairing their ability to service their loans, pay their employees, suppliers. Thus some sort of regulatory forbearance, relaxation of classification norms of loans as NPA, a moratorium on interest payments, and a sort of a bridge loan to help the more vulnerable businesses will be required. The funding of such measures should be borne jointly by the Centre and the states even as they continue to implement measures to limit the spread of the virus, and mobilise and strengthen capacity to treat the infected.

FREEZE FRAME

E P UNNY

New crisis, old lessons

Pandemic reiterates need to strengthen public health systems, review production and consumption patterns

K SRINATH REDDY

THE GLOBAL pandemic of COVID-19 virus, initially labelled the "novel coronavirus", has forced most of the world into a lockdown, with sweeping spread, mounting mortality and eviscerated economies. While national responses have varied, there are key messages that India must heed as it shapes and strengthens her own response. This is not new wisdom but past prescriptions that were not implemented.

For any outbreak investigation and epidemic containment, we need well-trained human resources at the primary care frontline. The health sub-centres and primary health centres, both rural and urban, must have staff who are not only trained for clinical care but also for early detection, outbreak investigation, counselling, basic tests, triage and referral, community health education and participation, citizen engagement and mobilisation for collective inter-sectoral action. At higher levels, we need epidemiologists, microbiologists, social scientists, statistical modellers and public health management experts to identify the origins, spread, projected course, health system needs and capacity in a dynamic adaptive response to an evolving epidemic. Such multidisciplinary capacity is needed not only for infectious diseases but also for other public health challenges, be they non-communicable diseases like cardiovascular illnesses or childhood malnutrition.

The recommendation to strengthen primary health services has been around for long. The setting up of public health cadres was recommended by the High Level Expert Group (HLEG) on Universal Health Coverage in its 2011 report to the Planning Commission. The National Health Policy also calls for public health management cadres to be established. Only Tamil Nadu and Odisha have such defined cadres now.

The fear of viral pneumonitis needing intensive critical care and ventilatory support calls for more tertiary care facilities. The fact that 80-85 per cent of the patients will have milder forms of the illness, requiring home or hospital quarantine and less intensive supportive care, is ignored. Most patients will need to be treated, counselled and monitored in the primary and secondary care chain, ranging from the sub-centre to the district hospital, depending on the severity of the ailment. Even district hospitals should be equipped to provide critical care. The health workforce, too, needs to be substantially expanded, at all levels of care, to meet India's needs, as the HLEG emphasised.

> A weak public sector and excessive dependence on the private sector can derail timely, effective and equitable responses in a national health emergency. Recent trends which place a premium on private sector leadership for India's evolving UHC architecture must be reviewed in the context of COVID-19, by revisiting the private, tertiary care dependant models that are being considered for long term delivery of UHC. The World Health Organisation also calls for a primary health care-led UHC. This demands a strong public sector

The Gorakhpur encephalitis tragedy taught us that we should not depend only on a medical college to cater to the sick, but must strengthen district and primary care facilities. The HLEG also emphasised this need and the National Health Policy reiterates it. We should not lose sight of this in the clamour for more intensive care beds in urban tertiary care facilities. Our referral chains, for directional flow between primary and advanced care, must be systematically strengthened. That cannot happen with a weak public sector.

Evidence suggests that countries with Universal Health Coverage (UHC) respond with efficiency and equity to health emergencies. The standout examples of a coherent and efficient response to the corona pandemic have been South Korea and Singapore. South Korea restricted COVID-19 mortality to less than 1 per cent. The United States, in contrast, is fumbling in deciding how to test and treat and at what cost, in its chaotic health insurance system. There is no doubt that countries which have adopted UHC and have a strong public sector component in healthcare delivery can provide an early, effective and organised response to any health emergency.

The HLEG advocated a strong public sector-led UHC, with contracted private sector engagement as per need and availability. A weak public sector and excessive dependence on the private sector can derail timely, effective and equitable responses in a national health emergency. Recent trends which place a premium on private sector leadership for India's evolving UHC architecture must be reviewed in the context of COVID-19, by revisiting the private, tertiary care dependant models that are being considered for long term delivery of UHC. The World Health Organisation also calls for a primary health care-led UHC. This demands a strong public sector.

The HLEG had also recommended an increase in the domestic capacity for producing active pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs), which are basic chemicals for manufacturing medicines, and also for producing more quality assured generic drugs and essential vaccines. Apart from incentivising the domestic private sector capacity, it also called for public sector capacity to be revived and boosted. The recommendation to revive the public sector in pharmaceuticals was criticised by some economists as return to socialist dogma.

The corona crisis shut down the API supply chain from China, which meets over 60 per cent of India's needs. This is a signal to rev up the country's domestic manufacturing capacity. Apart from APIs, we also need the public sector for using the compulsory licence route to produce life-saving but patent-restricted drugs, if the need arises. The need to protect and promote domestic pharmaceutical security goes beyond COVID-19.

It seems the planet, exasperated by our collective failure to act decisively to slow down climate change, has decided to release the coronavirus to shut down travel and transport globally to reduce emissions and pollution. Even if that thought appears to be a flight of dramatic speculation, there is little doubt that zoonotic viruses are now prancing around with greater frequency and gay abandon, because humans have set up conveyor belts for their easy travel - from wildlife to captive-bred veterinary populations and then on, to human habitat. We need to review our production and consumption patterns - in agriculture, food, mining, urbanisation, transport of persons and commodities - and see how we can break this chain, from stopping deforestation to shifting to mostly plant-based diets.

The writer is president, Public Health Foundation of India. Views are personal

THE CASE FOR LAUGHTER

In distressing times of pandemics and violence, it can alleviate pain

IN GOOD FAITH

RAJNI BAKSHI

"MORE PEOPLE DIE of worry than of natural causes" — this quotation from Mahatma Gandhi can be extended in scope to include fear. At present, fear is as big an enemy as the actual coronavirus that has shut down normal life across the globe. If you are, like most, scrambling to find ways to not catch the coronavirus, please do consider laughing really hard.

Don't get me wrong. Laughing is not a substitute for basic precautions — the right kind of mask when in public places, exercise, nutritious food and drinks, and, immediate medical attention in case of symptoms. But, the one thing that can build a strong foundation for all these material precautions to build upon is laughter.

This is not about laughing "at" the situation or trivialising the gravity of the epidemic. Please treat this advocacy of laughter in the same spirit in which airlines exhort you to first wear the oxygen mask yourself before trying to assist others. Building your immunity to the virus is very much like putting on the oxygen mask so you can help others.

Laughter clubs across the world are proof of a widely-held belief about laughing your way to good health or, at least, good mood. Forty years after it was first published, the book *Anatomy of an Illness as Perceived by the Patient: Reflections on Healing and Regeneration*, by Norman Cousins, remains a classic. Cousins, a political journalist, described how he worked with his doctors to make laughter the crucial element of overcoming his life-threatening degenerative disease.

> A large number of people who die following a snake bite are killed by fear and shock, not just the venom in their bloodstream. Laughter as an antidote to fear works at two levels. It can serve merely as a distraction and a form of healthy exertion — which is largely what happens in laughter clubs. Far more importantly, it is laughter-as-defiance that counters fear: Be it the fear of an epidemic or a tyrant.

Cousins was not claiming that laughter alone can cure grave illnesses. Instead, he was drawing on his own success to make a case for holistic healing. Whatever laughter may do for your body, it is certainly a powerful counter to fear.

A large number of people who die following a snake bite are killed by fear and shock, not just the venom in their bloodstream. Laughter as an antidote to fear works at two levels. It can serve merely as a distraction and a form of healthy exertion — which is largely what happens in laughter clubs. Far more importantly, it is laughter-as-defiance that counters fear: Be it the fear of an epidemic or a tyrant.

A hugely popular novel by Umberto Eco, *The Name of the Rose*, explores how, from ancient times, those in power have feared laughter. Those who can laugh when confronted by the threats and oppression of a tyrant, somehow rise above the violence inflicted on them.

Laughter in the face of grim realities arises from an inner core that remains untouched by the vicissitudes of the moment. Consider this reality check for Indians at the moment, for example.

Imminent, unpredictable threat of random communal violence: Check. Worsening pains of domestic economic slow-down: Check. Threat of mass deaths due to pandemic: Check. Threat of mass unemployment following global economic meltdown triggered by pandemic: Check. Threat of war in the Middle-East following Saudi crashing of oil price: Check. Threat of extreme weather events wiping out entire cities: Check.

Abject despair would be understandable in these conditions. Except, despair is guaranteed to make you feel worse off. The other option is to see all of the above through the lens of the absurd. For instance, those given to black humour could look at this list and say: "At least a huge meteor won't crash into earth".

Being alive to absurdity does two things. It enables us to see the same over-powering circumstances in a much wider frame, thus taking the bite out of what seems threatening. More importantly, locating our own "self" in this much wider context saves us from the hell of fatal self-preoccupation, or even, self-obsession.

What does this mean in practice? For Cousins, it meant watching comedy films from his hospital bed and laughing so loudly that patients in adjoining rooms complained. Maybe they felt left out.

Have fun finding your own way to LOL, or laughing out loud. Let's make it a defiant laughter that vaporises fear and anxiety.

Bakshi is author of Bapu Kuti: Journeys in Rediscovery of Gandhi

MARCH 23, 1980, FORTY YEARS AGO

INDO-US DIALOGUE

THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE issued at the end of the two-day meeting of the US-India Economic and Commercial Subcommission contains an Indian warning that the continuance of India's liberalised import policy "would depend on international support", on "suitable multilateral mechanisms being devised for tiding over this crisis" and "sympathetic responses from developed countries to its requests for market access". The Indian delegation was led by Manmohan Singh, secretary to the department of economic affairs. The communique brought out mutual sympathy for each other's economic plight, points of common concern and shared viewpoints. But they also revealed the apparently unbridgebale chasm between the countries.

URANIUM TALKS STUCK

THE PROLONGED DIALOGUE between India and the US on the supply of enriched uranium for the Tarapur atomic power plant has reached an impasse. Exercises seem to be on in both countries to find ways to improve relations without tackling the nuclear hurdle. There has already been an exchange of letters between Indira Gandhi and Jimmy Carter: Thomas Pickering, a senior US official, was in Delhi earlier this month and had talks with the atomic energy chairman, H N Sethna; a US official broached the subject to Eric Gonsalves, secretary in the external affairs ministry, who visited Washington recently.

NO TO IRAN PLAN

THE IRANIAN PRESIDENT, Bani-Sadr, disclosed that he had proposed setting up a five-nation commission to investigate the crisis in Afghanistan last month, but the Soviet Union rejected his secret initiative. Bani-Sadr said his proposal was relayed to the Kremlin through Yasser Arafat. The Iranian president said the suggestion was prompted by Moscow's claims that it sent Soviet troops into Afghanistan three months ago because the Americans, the Chinese and the Pakistanis were plotting against the Marxist regime.

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"A common enemy presents a window of opportunity for all countries at odds to put aside their differences - at least, for the time being - and take on the virus on a war footing."
— DAWN

Test of regional solidarity lies ahead

If PM Modi's gesture to SAARC is to go some way towards a solution for the region, India, which will be picking up the pieces itself, must have something to offer to its neighbours six months to a year down the line

NIRUPAMA SUBRAMANIAN

C R Sasikumar

SINCE 2014, WHEN the last SAARC summit was held in Kathmandu, India had made it more than clear that it no longer considers the South Asia grouping viable. It was Islamabad's turn to host the next summit in 2016, but the Uri attack intervened, and India refused to attend. Under the SAARC charter, the summit cannot be held even if a single nation stays away, and the grouping has remained in limbo since.

In the last five years, India has actively sought to isolate Pakistan in the region, and hyped up its engagement with other regional groupings such as BBIN (Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal), and BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation), which includes Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Nepal and Bhutan.

"SAARC has certain problems and I think we all know what it is, even if you were to put the terrorism issue aside, there are connectivity and trade issues. If you look at why BIMSTEC leaders were invited for PM's swearing-in, because we see energy, mindset and possibility in BIMSTEC," S Jaishankar said, immediately after taking charge as External Affairs Minister.

At a meeting of SAARC foreign ministers in New York, seven weeks after India had stripped Jammu & Kashmir of its special status and statehood, Jaishankar said: "In our view, elimination of terrorism in all its forms is a pre-condition not only for fruitful cooperation but also for the very survival of the region itself." The Pakistan Foreign Minister had declared he would not attend the lunch meeting as he could not sit with the "killers of Kashmiris".

So, how should we read the sudden resurrection of SAARC by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with the stated aim of working out a regional approach to the COVID-19 pandemic sweeping through all the countries of the region? Does it mean anything for the future of the regional grouping?

Despite hopes that this might be a SAARC revival, officials have discounted such speculation. That would require India to climb down from its position that Pakistan has taken verifiable steps to address India's concerns on terrorism. There is no evidence at all that Delhi is about to do that. Or, it would need Pakistan to turn over a new leaf, stop playing with free radicals to use against India, in Kashmir or elsewhere, when the time is ripe. Neither is about to happen.

Still, at a time when leaders across the globe appeared to be engrossed in the COVID-19 calamity of their own nations, Modi was the first to think of calling the neighbours. Full marks. Almost all South Asian countries are bound to each other by land borders and frequent inter-travel, and it is important that the region liaises to stop the disease from spreading across the Subcontinent.

It was a trifle disappointing, therefore, that beyond the experience of witnessing a unique video summit, that was beamed live into homes in every country in the region, since the meeting, there is not much to suggest that a cooperative response is in the works, with the urgency that is required for the swiftness with which the disease is spreading. There is no evidence that each country is willing to learn from the other's experiences, or public health systems, or that we are tracking each other's data and responses.

Two proposals were made: One by India for a regional fund that Modi has generously offered to put aside $10 million for. Pakistan proposed the setting up of a diseases surveillance centre for sharing real time data. India has said it would prepare emergency response task forces to help out the member countries in need. Delhi is said to be in the process of sending medical supplies worth $1 million to Nepal, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Maldives, which sounds like a fraction of what they may eventually require. Pakistan has said China will give it testing kits, protective gear and portable ventilators, as well as a cash grant for a state-of-the-art isolation centre. Beijing, eager to live down its image as the point of origin for this global mayhem, will make the same offer to other South Asian countries soon.

If the intention was to try and restore the aura Prime Minister Modi enjoyed in the region at the beginning of NDA-1, as some have not improbably suggested, it has to go beyond this Big Boss event. SAARC leaders have been used to Modi's out-of-the-box ideas from the time they were all invited to his 2014 swearing-in ceremony, and also to these not leading anywhere in particular. The video summit saw polite attendance by all SAARC leaders, with the exception of Pakistan which sent its health minister, who predictably raised the issue of Kashmir. But going by the scant media coverage that the summit, the first after six years, received in the neighbourhood, no one is holding their breath.

For many countries in the region now, India has lost the heft it used to have in the last century. A proximate reason is because it is no longer an economic powerhouse nor holds the promise of being one in the near future. The other reason is that it no longer offers itself as a model nation, pulling together its complex diversities, pluralism and political ideologies in a broad-minded vision. The real damage to India's standing was, of course, done by the badmouthing of the Muslim countries in the neighbourhood to justify the Citizenship (Amendment) Act 2019. Seen from the eyes of other countries in South Asia today, India is now just a larger version of themselves and their political and economic dysfunctions, while additionally possessing and wielding the instruments to be vengeful and punitive in its foreign policy — including arm-twisting them now and then in its constant quest to isolate Pakistan.

For many countries in the region now, India has lost the heft it used to have in the last century. A proximate reason is because it is no longer an economic powerhouse nor holds the promise of being one in the near future. The other reason is that it no longer offers itself as a model nation, pulling together its complex diversities, pluralism and political ideologies in a broad-minded vision. The real damage to India's standing was, of course, done by the badmouthing of the Muslim countries in the neighbourhood to justify the Citizenship (Amendment) Act 2019. Seen from the eyes of other countries in South Asia today, India is now just a larger version of themselves and their political and economic dysfunctions.

The real test of Modi's leadership of South Asia, and by extension of India's, will come after the pandemic subsides, when each country has to deal with what remains of its economy. The tourism economy of Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka would have been crushed by then. Pakistan will be worse off than it is now. There will be more unemployment and hardship everywhere in the region.

Some of these countries will inevitably turn to China. If Modi's gesture is to go some way as part of the solution for the region, India, which will be picking up the pieces itself, must have something to offer to its South Asian neighbours six months to a year down the line. Is there such a plan? Can India put aside the prejudices of its domestic communalism, and its own economic woes, demonstrate large-heartedness to all the countries of the region, irrespective of what religion its people follow, irrespective of its historical hostilities with at least one? There may be more economic refugees knocking on India's doors, apart from a host of other inter-regional problems.

Can India be the generous big-hearted leader that SAARC may need in the post-COVID-19 world, or will the hunt for "termites" keep the vision narrow, the party line strong, and the leadership unfulfilled?

nirupama.subramanian@expressindia.com

A time to stay

Congress is at long last rediscovering its voice. Congressmen should seize the moment — not defect to the other side

MANI SHANKAR AIYAR

IN HIS LETTER of resignation, Jyotiraditya Scindia, wrote, "It is time for me to move on". It may be, for him. But is it, for us?

True, the Congress has never been more dysfunctional than it is now. True, there is little or no interaction between the leadership and the party. It is also true that the Congress Working Committee is a shadow of the extraordinary forum for democratic debate, discussion, and dissent that it was in the hoary past. True, too, that the party's general secretaries inspire none of the awe in which they were held in the Congress's heydays. There is also no denying that the Congress, which used to pride itself on being a mass movement, has virtually lost its rapport with the people at large. And, finally, that the party which, quite correctly, once regarded itself as the "natural party of governance" has little or no prospect of recovering that position.

But, even recognising all this, has "the time come to move on"? No. For two reasons. One, that more than any other party, the Congress is heir to the "Idea of India" that inspired our freedom movement and guided us in building the modern nationhood of India. That "idea" is being challenged now more than ever in the last one hundred years. To move out of the Congress is not only to abandon the ship, but to do so when it is most required for all hands to be on deck. Running away now is on par with the Scindia Maharaja deciding to field forces on behalf of the British against the Rani of Jhansi and Tatya Tope. Gwalior was defended by one brave woman with her son strapped to her back. 1858 redux? "Khoob ladi mardani/ Woh to Jhansi wali rani thi".

Second, the Congress is at long last rediscovering its voice. Many of its most distinguished intellectuals — even hacks like myself — are exploring in the public space (in view of the lack of adequate opportunity in the party space) ways in which the party may be revived, rejigged, rejuvenated. And as no disciplinary action is being instituted against them, it would appear that their efforts are being regarded as constructive criticism. When just as we begin to see the green shoots of inner-party democracy emerging, should we be running away, defecting, changing sides — or seizing the occasion to make ourselves heard to the party and the people?

Far from being the time to move on, it is, more than ever, the time to ask, "Move on to where?" I could, at a pinch, agree that there is much to suggest that those who are speaking out from within the party might find themselves in the position of the legendary dogs who bark while the caravan moves on. But is this the right time "to move on" to the enemy camp when the imperative is to fight against the grossest violation we have ever witnessed of everything the Congress has held most dear? No, the only reason I can see for the "time" to be ripe "to move on" is that on the day Scindia defected, only 24 hours were left for the filing of nominations to the Rajya Sabha.

A hundred years ago, give a year or two, there arose an alternative Idea of India, that postulated a Hindu India (as against the all-inclusive India that the Congress was championing); it was an alternative idea founded on the "othering" of the Muslim minority who, it was said quite bluntly, might live in India but was "wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges... not even citizens' rights." (Golwalkar, We or the Nation Defined; Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in Jyotipunj, his collection of bio-sketches, hails Golwalkar as "Pujniya Shri Guruji", a guru worthy of worship).

Although the BJP has seized power intermittently since the last quarter century, Atal Bihari Vajpayee lulled the nation into believing that the BJP was listening to saner, more secular voices. But over the last six years, those dulcet tones have been increasingly replaced by the drumbeat of the more extremist voices that founded the idea of the Hindu Rashtra, symbolised by the proposal to award the "Bharat Ratna" to V D Savarkar. To begin with, those of us who raised the alarm by several decibels back in 2014 were "shushed" into giving the BJP a democratic chance since they had won the elections fair and square. It was also a time when the same elections had reduced the once Grand Old Party to a ridiculous 44 seats. It seemed to be more the time to set our own house in order than to be carping at the promise of "acche din".

Then came 2019 and proof that saffron support had risen. Emboldened, the BJP slipped into full saffron gear. In the space of a mere six months, the NRC was completed in Assam, J&K was quite literally cut to size and the Supreme Court handed over the site of the demolition of the Babri Masjid to the tender care of the demolishers. And there was not a whimper from the minority community as a whole. They seemed resigned to their fate, suffering silently, as much in Kashmir as in the rest of the country. With little effective opposition from the Opposition in Parliament or outside, the government moved into the kill, with its "trishul" of CAA, NPR, and NRC.

Suddenly, Shaheen Bagh happened. From the least expected quarters, emerged hijab-covered women keeping 24-hour relay vigils, holding not the Holy Quran in their hands but the holy Tricolour, reading not from the scriptures but from the Preamble to the Constitution, seeking not violence but justice. They have been followed by their menfolk and all around the country, in hundreds of mini Shaheen Baghs, by full-throated supporters from every class and creed. This is unprecedented not only in the history of our country but also in the history of Islam. It was only in December last that Scindia was proclaiming the CAA to be violative of the "Constitution and culture of India". How can this possibly be the right time "to move on", not just leaving the Congress but, worse, defecting to the other side?

The writer is a senior Congress leader and former Union minister

VIEW FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

A weekly look at the public conversations shaping ideas beyond borders — in the Subcontinent. Curated by Aakash Joshi

COVID-19 LESSONS

THE COVID-19 pandemic has led to uniformity in the concerns of people — and by extension the media — across the Subcontinent. Given the overlaps on various fronts between the countries — social, economic, demographic and in terms of infrastructure — the lessons from each may well serve all of South Asia

Last week, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's video conference call with the leaders of SAARC nations was broadly well-received, though it hardly received any coverage. *Dawn*'s editorial on March 17 only mentions the meeting in passing, saying only that. "A common enemy presents a window of opportunity for all countries at odds to put aside their differences — at least, for the time being — and take on the virus on a war footing".

On March 20, the newspaper was far grimmer. On Wednesday, Pakistan recorded two deaths from the virus and "contrary to what appears to be the general pattern of fatalities worldwide, the individuals were well under 60 years of age". In addition, according to *Dawn*, the country has "entered the next stage of this pandemic when the first case of community transmission was confirmed in Karachi. That number is bound to rise, perhaps exponentially, with each passing day." The editorial calls for political unity and honest assessments actions, not platitudes, by those at the top — a lesson for many in the Subcontinent. Also, while acknowledging the hardships that COVID-19 prevention may lead to, it seems to recognise their necessity: "Rapid transmission of COVID-19 has been checked in China and South Korea through lockdowns. Such a drastic step, given the realities of Pakistan, would cause untold misery to the multitudes that survive on daily wages or those with small businesses dependent on a steady income to make ends meet. However, there may come a point when the government decides it has no choice but to impose such a lockdown at least in some parts of the country."

QUARANTINE WOES

AN ARTICLE BY Nahela Nowshin in *The Daily Star* on March 22 takes a realistic, if disturbing, look at whether quarantines can be effectively implemented in Bangladesh. Her arguments hold true for many of the country's neighbours, especially India. While Bangladesh frequently faces calamities —"natural disasters, mosquitoes, onion prices, you name it" — the coronavirus is a completely new phenomenon. The term "quarantine" is alien to most Bangladeshis and if and when the disease progresses, isolating large swathes of the population may become impossible for a variety of reasons.

First, "the option of home quarantine is itself a luxury for most. Think of the farmers, the part-time housemaids, the rickshaw-pullers, the roadside tea stall owners". Second, "has anyone at the policy level thought about what home quarantine would look like for slum-dwellers, who make up around 40 per cent of Dhaka's population?" And third, "The element of "self-enforcement" in "home quarantines" can be misleading, ineffective and even dangerous, when we are dealing with a population that severely lacks health literacy and has a general neglect for wellbeing and personal hygiene".

The article ends by saying: "If there is one thing that the coronavirus pandemic has made clear, it is that there are countless complexities in containing infectious diseases in populations. It, once again, goes to show why people-centred development — investing in quality education and health and closing the gap between the rich and poor — is crucial for the prevention of public health catastrophes."

RUMOURS FROM INDIA

DEEPAK THAPA, WRITING in *The Kathmandu Post* on March 20, begins his article on an optimistic note: "With only one confirmed case of infection [in Nepal] more than two months ago and when even that sees a complete recovery, the only conclusion we can come to is we have been extremely lucky — so far at least."

However, Nepal is having to deal with many rumours being spread about the pandemic on social media, and Thapa seems to hold a certain type of thinking emanating from India at least partially responsible for the trend. He cites some of the ridiculous "myths" WHO has had to bust recently but cautions that the "WHO is no match" for what's been coming out of social media. The article adds: "What is alarming though is that the WHO did not care to include among the 'myths' the supposedly magical properties of cow urine and dung that very influential people in India are peddling. It is a wonder that anyone pays heed to rants by charlatans that even promise to 'kill the novel coronavirus and end its effects on the world' through the performance of a yagya, as the current president of the Hindu Mahasabha announced more than a month ago (but has not got around to yet)."

Thapa is particularly upset by, understandably, dangerous nonsense being circulated, such as cow urine being able to heal COVID-19 or providing protection against it.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LISTEN TO HIM

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Protecting India' (IE, March 20). The author, Ban Ki Moon, is not only the former general secretary of the UN but also the leader of The Elders. His observations cannot be easily ignored. His comments about the violence in Delhi must be taken seriously. The role of the administration and Delhi Police was not beyond criticism. But surprisingly, the Union home minister congratulated the police.

Tapomoy Ghosh, *Burdwan*

REVENGE POLITICS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'On the way UP' (IE, March 18). It is amusing that UP Chief Minister Adityanath regards the demand for video proofs of students at madrasas singing their national anthem as "bringing them to the mainstream of society". The "effective control" of the anti-CAA/social elements by sending notice to "miscreants", most of whom were coincidentally members of the minority community, is in line with the "badla" promised by the chief minister.

Yusuf Ghazali, *Patna*

PLAYING SAFE

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'The prescription' (IE, March 20). Prime Minister Narendra Modi appeared to take the path of volunteerism rather than inform people on the steps his government intended to take in facing the COVID-19 pandemic. He merely repeated what is generally known — social distancing and stepping out of one's homes only if necessary. He placed the ball squarely in the people's court, asking them to observe a self-imposed "Janata" curfew on Sunday, March 22. This seems to be a dry run for a possible nationwide shutdown.

Sanjay Chopra, *Mohali*

TIME TO REFLECT

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Let's listen to the crisis' (IE, March 20). The only silver lining in our chaotic times is introspection about the way we lead our lives at the cost of nature. Differences based on religion, region, economic claims and jobs seem trivial now.

Divya Singla, *Patiala*

LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

To encourage quality reader intervention, The Indian Express offers the Letter of the Week award. The letter adjudged the best for the week is published every Saturday. Letters may be e-mailed to editpage@expressindia.com or sent to The Indian Express, B-1/B, Sector 10, Noida-UP 201301.

MP Governor to Speaker: Quit when session is reconvened

MILIND GHATWAI
BHOPAL, MARCH 22

FOLLOWING A complaint by the BJP against Madhya Pradesh Assembly Speaker N P Prajapati, Governor Lalji Tandon has suggested that he quit his post in accordance with a tradition that requires a Speaker to resign in the event of the party that chose him losing power.

The Governor wrote to Prajapati, asking to take up the no-confidence motion moved against him by the BJP in the Assembly secretariat on priority when the session is convened.

"Until the no-confidence motion is decided by the house, I expect you to work in accordance with the constitution, assembly rules and morality by studying the legality of every subject," Tandon said in the letter.

MP Governor Lalji Tandon; (right) Speaker N P Prajapati

The Speaker and Principal Secretary (Assembly) A P Singh did not respond to phone calls. After Chief Minister Kamal Nath stepped down before facing a trust vote on Friday, the Speaker had adjourned the Assembly sine die.

At the centre of the latest dispute is the resignation letter sent by BJP MLA Sharad Kol on March 6. Kol claimed he had sent another letter on March 16 requesting the Speaker not to accept his resignation as he had signed it "under duress". Prajapati, however, insisted that he accepted the resignation because he did not receive any other letter or was called upon by the legislator.

On Friday evening, the BJP met Governor Tandon with a request to intervene in the dispute over Kol's resignation. "At the moment there is no leader of house and the house is not functional and the Speaker should not take any policy decision that harms or protects someone's interests. Yet, politically motivated decisions are being taken," Leader of Opposition Gopal Bhargava said in the complaint informing the governor that a no-confidence motion had been submitted against the Speaker but he did not act on it.

The BJP demanded a pro tem speaker should be appointed to ensure "constitutional values and democratic traditions" are followed. The BJP accused the speaker of following unlawful procedure to accept Kol's resignation.

The tussle between the BJP and the Governor on one side and the Speaker on the other began over the resignation letters of 22 rebel Congress legislators. The speaker had refused to accept their resignation letters saying he would take a call only if they appear before him to let him verify if they signed voluntarily or under duress. The speaker had accepted resignation letters of six MLAs, all ministers, but accepted the remaining 16 resignations late on March 19.

TMC asks its MPs to skip House

Kolkata: The TMC on Sunday instructed all its MPs to skip Parliament and return to their constituencies in view of the coronavirus outbreak. TMC's Rajya Sabha member Derek O'Brien has written to presiding officers of both the Houses urging them to wind up the Parliament session on Monday.

"The Prime Minister himself has spoken about the urgent need for social distancing and the need to not assemble in large groups, and that those above the age of 65 should take abundant care. Around 44 per cent MPs in Rajya Sabha and 22 per cent MPs in Lok Sabha are 65 years of age and above. It is not only about MPs, but the thousands who enter the Parliament complex every day. This conflicting messaging is downright dangerous," the letter stated.

"As required, in a couple of cases our MPs are following self-isolation protocols," it added. The TMC has 22 MPs in Lok Sabha and 13 in Rajya Sabha. **ENS**

Apex court to sit for two days this week

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 22

THE SUPREME Court on Sunday further restricted its work and decided to sit for only two days in the coming week given the situation emerging from COVID-19 spread.

Chief Justice of India S A Bobde on Sunday held consultations with other judges and directed that the court would sit only on Monday and Wednesday. Though it was notified earlier that four courts would function on Monday, a subsequent notification clarified that only court number 1 where the CJI sits will hold hearing on Monday.

It added that the cause list, which mentions the cases that will be be taken up, will be notified a day earlier.

In a related development, the apex court in a first will start hearing cases via video conferencing from Monday. A bench of CJI Bobde and Justice D Y Chandrachud will hear three cases using video conferencing after another bench comprising the CJI and Justices L Nageswara Rao and Surya Kant finishes regular hearing in the other matters already listed before it.

Gehlot seeks relief packages

Jaipur: Following a state-wide lockdown of Rajasthan in wake of the COVID-19 outbreak, Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi asking for relief packages for 29 lakh families along with several sectors which are suffering because of the lockdown. **ENS**

DELHI CONFIDENTIAL

WHAT'S COOKING

ON JANATA Curfew day, while every BJP leader as well as some other leaders such as NCP chief Sharad Pawar and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy posted videos of them clapping to laud the fighters against coronavirus, senior BJP leader Kailash Vijayvargiya was different. Otherwise busy in West Bengal as he is the general secretary in charge, Vijayvargiya was at home, spending time in the kitchen. In the video he posted, he was seen cutting vegetables and preparing a dish for the entire family. He said he did everything by himself, without any assistance. He also asked his followers to come up with what they did during the day. Incidentally, the RSS in a note had instructed men to prepare breakfast at the instruction of their wives on Sunday.

SHUT DOWN

EVEN AS state after state announced lockdown to check the spread of COVID-19, another kind of lockdown was initiated at the Press Information Bureau on Sunday. Since morning, it was pointed out that several 'likes' by the official Twitter handles of PIB and PIB Hindi included pornographic content. It turns out PIB had faced a similar problem a few weeks ago after which they had asked Twitter to sanitise the account. The issue was resolved, but emerged again on Sunday. PIB then locked down its accounts on Sunday, got the passwords changed and asked for the account to be sanitised again. Officials said it was not a human error, and apart from approaching Twitter, PIB has asked the Information and Technology Ministry as well cyber response agency CERT-In to do a proper forensic investigation to find the root of the problem and fix it.

JOINING THE FIGHT

SINGAPORE HIGH Commission also joined in to support the Janata Curfew on Sunday. In a tweet, it said that its staff from the missions in Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai are also supporting this move. And they also paid their gratitude to the frontline workers, as India fights coronavirus. It posted pictures of staffers holding placards saying, "Fighting COVID-19 together".

Need to be vigilant for two weeks, says Nadda

New Delhi: BJP president J P Nadda on Sunday lauded people for following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal for a Janata Curfew and asked them to be vigilant for about two more weeks as it is the "beginning of a long battle".

In a statement, Nadda said the manner in which people followed Modi's appeal in fight against coronavirus is laudable.

"Any amount of praise will not be adequate for the resolve people have shown today in fighting coronavirus. The whole nation is aware, alert and united in this," he said.

The Centre has launched its exercise against the coronavirus outbreak on a war footing, he said, asserting that this fight will be definitely won. **PTI**

Classifieds

PERSONAL

I, Tarun S/O Mr. Harbans Chitkara born on 26th November 1982 residing at B-91, B. K. Dutt Colony, Near Jor Bagh, New Delhi-110003, have changed my name to Tarun Chitkara vide affidavit dated 18th March 2020 at Delhi. 0050164120-1

I, Aarti Devi (Existing name of spouse as per Service Documents) spouse of Sqn Ldr J.P. Gupta (Retd) Resident of 3/1267, Vasundhara Ghaziabad have changed my name from Aarti Devi to Aarati Devi (New Name) vide affidavit dated 17/3/20 at Ghaziabad UP. 0040536377-1

I Sandeep Kumar Padia S/O Mahavir Prasad R/o H.No-1212, Sector-17, Faridabad, Haryana-121002, Changed My Name To Sandeep Padia. 0040536470-2

I Niraj Kumar R/o Flat No-302, Aakash Apartment, Sector -46, Faridabad-121003 have changed my minor daughter name from Prisha to Prisha Singh. 0040536380-1

I Mahavir Prasad Padia S/O Gajanan, R/o H.No-1212, Sector-17, Faridabad, Haryana-121002, Changed My Name To Mahavir Prasad. 0040536470-1

LOST & FOUND

I, Mithlesh Devi, D/o Late Hira Singh W/o Late Ombir R/O 465/2 Village Nangel Thakran, Bawana, Delhi-110039 have lost original Family Will Property paper (11.08.2014) in the name of Late Maman Singh S/o Late Madu. If find please contact above address. 0040536375-1

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public at Large is hereby informed that My client Mrs. Saroj W/o Kunwar Pal declared that she is purchasing the mention property from Shubham Tyagi S/o Chanchal Kumar Tyagi.

Property Address is Third Floor with roof rights area measuring 60.50 Sq. Yds. of property bearing no. 1/3057 falling under khasra No. 794/604 situated at village sikdarpur in the abadi of Ram Nagar Ext., Illaqa Shahdara, Delhi.

This property is mortgage by AU Small Finance Bank.

P.K. Singh (Advocate) Enrl No. D-7806 Ch.No. D-409, KKD Court, Delhi-32 M-9811562662

सार्वजनिक सूचना

मेरे मुवक्किल श्री अशोक महतो पुत्र श्री राम इकबाल महतो व श्रीमती सुनीता देवी पत्नी श्री अशोक महतो निवासी ए-14/6 गली नं. 11, संजय कॉलोनी, संजयपुरा, कुतुबी दिल्ली-110094, ने अपने पुत्र श्री जितेन्द्र कुमार व पुत्रवधु श्रीमती सीमा जी हुई आदर, दुर्व्यवहार व गलत कार्यों के कारण दोनों को अपनी समस्त चल व अचल सम्पत्ति से बेदखल कर दिया है और उपरोक्त से सभी प्रकार के सम्बन्ध विच्छेद कर लिए हैं। यदि कोई व्यक्ति उपरोक्त से किसी प्रकार का लेन-देन व अन्य सम्बन्ध बनाता है या उपरोक्त कोई गलत कार्य करते हैं तो उसकी जिम्मेवारी खुद जितेन्द्र कुमार व श्रीमती सीमा की होगी न कि मेरे मुवक्किल श्री अशोक महतो व श्रीमती सुनीता देवी की होगी।

मांगेराम, एडवोकेट
चै.126, कोर्ट, करमचारी नगर, दिल्ली-05

U.P. Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Ltd. Anpara Thermal Power Project, Anpara, E-Tender Notice

1. Short Term E-Tender No: 03/BMD-I/ATPS/2020-21, **Office:** Superintending Engineer, O&MC-II, 3X210MW, ATPS, Anpara. **Work:** Overhauling of two nos. of air preheater type 27VI (T) 80 (700) of unit-01 of 3x210MW, ATPS, Anpara. **Earnest Money:** Rs. 30,000.00 (Rs. Thirty Thousand Only) (Refundable). **Tender Cost:** Rs. 500.00+ 18% GST, (Non Refundable) Earnest money deposit & tender cost to be deposited through NEFT/RTGS of DY. C.A.O., CFA&BO, ATPS, Anpara. **E-bid submission end date:** 03.04.2020, **date of opening e-bid Part-I**: 04.04.2020, **Part-II**: Shall be intimated later. **Period:** 20 Days. **For participation and detailed information log in to website** http://etender.up.nic.in. **2. Short Term E-Tender No**: 04/BMD-I/ATPS/2020-21, **Office:** Superintending Engineer, O&MC-II, 3X210MW, ATPS, Anpara. **Work:** Inspection and repairing of pressure parts of unit-01 of 3x210MW, ATPS, Anpara. **Earnest Money:** Rs. 30,000.00 (Rs. Thirty Thousand Only) (Refundable), **Tender Cost:** Rs. 500.00+ 18% GST, (Non Refundable) Earnest money deposit & tender cost to be deposited through NEFT/RTGS of DY. C.A.O., CFA&BO, ATPS, Anpara. **E-bid submission end date:** 03.04.2020, **date of opening e-bid Part-I**: 04.04.2020, **Part-II**: Shall be intimated later. **Period**: 20 Days. **For participation and detailed information log in to website** http://etender.up.nic.in. **3. E-Tender No**: 02/BMD-I/ATPS/2020-21, **Office:** Superintending Engineer, O&MC-II, 3X210MW, ATPS, Anpara. **Work:** Preventive/Breakdown maintenance of pressure part of all three units at 3x210MW, ATPS, Anpara. **Earnest Money:** Rs. 20,000.00 (Rs. Twenty Thousand Only) (Refundable), **Tender Cost:** Rs. 500.00+ 18% GST, (Non Refundable) Earnest money deposit & tender cost to be deposited through NEFT/RTGS of DY. C.A.O., CFA&BO, ATPS, Anpara. **E-bid submission end date:** 28.04.2020, **date of opening e-bid Part-I**: 30.04.2020, **Part-II**: Shall be intimated later. **Period**: One Year. **For participation and detailed information log in to website** http://etender.up.nic.in. पत्रांकः 626/ मु. अभि./कार्य/अताप/ 1बी–8, दिनांकः 21/03/2020

Publication Notice
Before Debts Recovery Tribunal –III , Delhi
4th Floor Jeevan Tara Building Parliament Street, New Delhi-01

Notice under section 19(4) of the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Rule 12 & 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rules) 1993).

In the matter of
O.A No 531/2019
ICICI BANK LTD. Vs **Pankaj Bhola**
Applicant **Defendants**

D-1 Pankaj Bhola S/o Sh. Ram Kumar Bhola 84, New Gandhi Nagar, Near Hanmandir, Ghaziabad-201001

Whereas the above named applicant has instituted a case against you and whereas it has been has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in this Tribunal **26.03.2020 at 10:30 A.M.** Take notice that in case of your failure to appear on the above mentioned day before this Tribunal, the case will be heard and decided in your absence. Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal the 15th day of Jan. 2020.

By Order of the Tribunal – Assistant Registrar
DRT –III, New Delhi

Publication Notice
Before Debts Recovery Tribunal –III , Delhi
4th Floor Jeevan Tara Building Parliament Street, New Delhi-01

Notice under section 19(4) of the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Rule 12 & 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rules) 1993).

In the matter of
O.A No 696/2019
ICICI BANK LTD. Vs **Rajeev Singh @Rajiv Dalal & Anr.**
Applicant **Defendants**

D-1 Rajeev Singh@Rajiv Dalal S/o Sh. Roop Chand, 254, New Colony, Near Sanatan Dharm Mandir, Palwal-121105. Also at: Room No. 17, Vir Hakikat, Rai ISBT Sarai Kala Khan Delhi-110013

D-2 Capital Bus Service Pvt Ltd. Room No. 17, Hakikat Rai ISBT Sarai Kala Khan Delhi-110013

Whereas the above named applicant has instituted a case against you and whereas it has been has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in this Tribunal **25.03.2020 at 10:30 A.M.** Take notice that in case of your failure to appear on the above mentioned day before this Tribunal, the case will be heard and decided in your absence. Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal the 18th day of Jan. 2020.

By Order of the Tribunal – Assistant Registrar
DRT –III, New Delhi

एचएलएल लाइफकेयर लिमिटेड (भारत सरकार का उद्यम)
HLL Lifecare Limited (A Government of India Enterprise)
CIN: U25193 KL 1966 GOI 002621
HLL Bhavan, Poojappura, Thiruvananthapuram- 695 012, Kerala, India. Tel: +91 471 2354949

TENDER NOTICE FOR COVID-19 EMERGENCY PROCUREMENT

Tender No. HLL/SD/RBD/2019-20/TENDER/15 DTD 05.03.2020

HLL Lifecare Ltd., a Mini Ratna PSU under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of India, invites bids from interested manufactures/distributors for the **supply of COVID-19 Emergency medical supplies namely N95 mask, 2 ply & 3 ply surgical mask, Coveralls, Hand Sanitizer, Goggles, Nitrile Gloves etc.** The tender is already published in our website and list of products along with specifications are mentioned in the tender document. You may kindly refer our below website link and may participate in the tender. You may also provide your offer to below email ids;
sdcovidep.hll@lifecarehll.com, sdcovidep.hll@gmail.com

Please visit our website: **www.lifecarehll.com** or access the below website link for further details.
Main tender Link
http://www.lifecarehll.com/tender/view/reference/bd6fd2052455 3da5f0504d31e4134500jleHfQ
Amendment no.1 link
http://www.lifecarehll.com/tender/view/reference/22bb543b251 c39ccdad8063d486987bbjleleQ
Amendment no.2 link
http://www.lifecarehll.com/tender/view/reference/9fd7c9fc436c 0b439e0b56159eafacc8jliDgg
Amendment No.3 link
http://www.lifecarehll.com/tender/view/reference/07fc15c9d169 ee48573edd749d25945djliFgQ
In case of any clarification you may contact following officers;
Mr. Aswin AS, Manager (Sourcing), Mob. 9400027975
Mr. Vinod G Pillai (Vice President-Sourcing), Mob: 7824001017
Amendments if any will be published in our website only.
Vice President (Sourcing)

स्वस्थ पीढ़ियों के लिए नवान्वेषण | Innovating for Healthy Generations

Publication Notice
Before Debts Recovery Tribunal –III , Delhi
4th Floor Jeevan Tara Building Parliament Street, New Delhi-01

Notice under section 19(4) of the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Rule 12 & 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rules) 1993).

In the matter of
O.A No 959/2019
ICICI BANK LTD. Vs Sh Balthiveel & Anr.
Applicant **Defendants**

D-1 Sh. Sakthivel S/o Sh. Rangaswamy R/o H. No. 103, 3rd Floor, Block G, Pocket4, Sector-11, Rohini, Delhi-110085.
Also at: M/s Sri Balamurugan Transport, A-50, Ambaly Garden, Libaspur Village, Delhi-110042.
Also at: B/6/101, 1st Floor, Sector-11, Rohini, Delhi-110085.
Also at: R/o B 6/94, 2nd Floor, Sector-11, Rajapur Kalan, Rohini, Delhi-110085
D-2 Sh. R. Rajendran S/o Sh. R. Rangaswamy R/o B6/94, 2nd Floor, Sector-11, Rajapur Kalan, Rohini Delhi-110085.
Also at: R/o H. No. 103, 3rd Floor, Block G Pocket4 Sector-11, Rohini, Delhi-110085
Also at:- G-253, G Block, Bhalswa JJ Colony, New Delhi-110035
Whereas the above named applicant has instituted a case against you and whereas it has been has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in this Tribunal **23.03.2020 at 10:30 A.M.** Take notice that in case of your failure to appear on the above mentioned day before this Tribunal, the case will be heard and decided in your absence. Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal the 09th day of Jan. 2020.

By Order of the Tribunal –Assistant Registrar
DRT –III, New Delhi

"IMPORTANT"
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WESTERN RAILWAY - BHAVNAGAR DIVISION
VARIOUS ENGINEERING WORKS
No. W/118/NIT/E-Tender/2019-20/WA/29 Date : 18.03.2020 Sub : E-Tender No. 94/2019-20 to 96/2019-20.

Sr. No.	E-Tender No.	Name of Work	Tender Value (₹)	EMD (₹)
01	94/2019-20	Bhavnagar Division: Replacement of existing weld joints between Kanalus-Porbandar Section	₹ 2,26,05,047.73	₹ 2,63,000.00
02	95/2019-20	Porbandar: Repairs to old station building roof at.	₹ 12,62,564.38	₹ 25,300.00
03	96/2019-20	Porbandar: Shifting of Line No. 6 along with widening of Island Platform against the sanctioned work of Porbandar: Replacement of Mechanical Signalling with existing yard at:	₹ 2,67,47,128.33	₹ 2,83,700.00

For all above Tender: Date of Bidding Start Date : 02.04.2020, **Date of Bidding Closing** : 16.04.2020. Web site **www.ireps.gov.in** 161

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MANGALORE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY COMPANY LIMITED
(Government of Karnataka undertaking)
MESCOM Bhavana, Kavoor Cross Road, Bejai, Mangaluru-575004
Phone: 0824-2885795 E-mail:sepmescom@rediffmail.com

No. MESCOM/SEE(P)/EEE(P)/2019-20/ 18926 **Date: 17.03.2020**

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION
(THROUGH E-PROCUREMENT PORTAL ONLY)

MESCOM invites short term tender for Manufacture and Supply of the following material:

Tender	Name of the Material proposed for Procurement	Quantity
MESCOM/2019-20/IND687	Polymeric Type Lightning Arrestors for 33 KV system	150 Nos

The interested eligible bidders may log on to **www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in** on or after **23.03.2020.**

Superintending Engineer (Ele.), (Procurement), MESCOM, Mangaluru

For Power Related Complaints and Assistant Call Toll Free Number 1912

Government of India
DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY
Board of Radiation & Isotope Technology

Chief Executive, BRIT/General Manager/TD, BRIT, Vashi Complex, Sector 20, Vashi, Navi Mumbai 400703, hereby invites sealed tenders on behalf of the President of India for item rate tender for following work.

01. TENDER NOTICE NO. :- BRIT / CIRUS / TFS&TLC / ELECTRICAL / 2020 / 01 Date :20/3/2020 **02. NAME OF WORK :-** Laboratory Electrification work complete in all respect along with the CCTV system, OFC based networking for the TFS & TLC lab in the basement of CIRUS building and the preclinical evaluation facility of BRIT in modular lab of BARC, Trombay, Mumbai and BRIT Vashi complex, Navi Mumbai. **03. Estimated cost (Incl. GST):-** Rs. 28,00,000/- (Rupees Twenty Eight Lakh Only) **04. Earnest money deposit:-** Rs. 56,000/- (Rs Fifty six thousand only) **05. Sale of Tender documents:-** 24-3-2020 to 7-4-2020 **06. Date of submission & opening of tender:-** Up to 14:00 hrs on or before 22/4/2020 and will be opened by him/her in his/her office at 15:00 Hrs, on 22/4/2020. For detail NIT, kindly visit website **http://www.britatom.gov.in**

General Manager, TD/BRIT

OFFICE OF THE
PRINCIPAL CHIEF COMMISSIONER OF INCOME TAX, DELHI
C. R. BUILDING, I. P. ESTATE, NEW DELHI-110002
TENDER NOTICE FOR HIRING OF OFFICE SPACE

The Income Tax Department, Delhi intends to hire office space having carpet area of 2 lakhs sq. ft. (excluding covered /underground parking area, if any) for its various offices in Delhi, for an initial period of 3 (Three) years which may be renewed from time to time, if required by the Income Tax Department.

2. In this regard fresh sealed tenders under two bid system are invited from the interested parties having the required space. Only those parties having available ready to move commercial space of more than one lakh sq. ft. carpet area in one building, approved for office use, need to apply. Preference would be given to Premises belonging to Public Sector Units /Govt. Department / Public Financial Institutions.
3. The net carpet area should be in a single independent building and consisting of minimum 1 lakh sq. ft. carpet area, having an independent entrance and parking space, along with other requirements as mentioned in the tender document.
4. The contract will be awarded to the best suitable evaluated bidder [in accordance to the Evaluation Criteria mentioned in the Tender Document] whose bid has been found to be responsive and who is eligible and qualified to perform the contract satisfactorily as per the terms and conditions incorporated in the corresponding bidding document. The award of the contract shall also be subject to certification by CPWD / Rent Negotiation Committee and final approval/sanction by the Government of India as per the rules framed in this regard.
5. The interested persons can obtain the tender document from the Income Tax Officer (Hq)(Infra New Projects), Room No. 337B, 3rd Floor, C.R. Building I.P. Estate, New Delhi-110002 on payment of Rs. 1000/- (Rupees One Thousand only) by way of Demand Draft in favour of ZAO CBDT, New Delhi on any working day between 25.03.2020 till 30.04.2020 between 10:30AM and 01:30 PM or alternatively it can be downloaded from the official website at **www.incometaxindia.gov.in** or **www.eprocure.gov.in**. In case the tender document is downloaded from the website, a non-refundable tender fee of Rs.1,000/- (One Thousand only) is to be paid by way of demand draft in favour of ZAO, CBDT, New Delhi payable at New Delhi at the time of submission of the duly filled tender application. The office may be contacted at 011-23705398 on working days (MONDAY TO FRIDAY) between 10:30 AM to 5:30 PM for any query.
6. The tender must be submitted in Tender Box/Drop Box kept in the Room No. 337B, 3rd Floor, C.R. Building, I.P. Estate, New Delhi-110002 in a single sealed envelope superscripted as "Tender for Hiring of Office Premises by Income Tax Department at New Delhi" containing two separate sealed envelopes for technical and financial bids each, under envelope marked clearly as "TECHNICAL BID FOR OFFICE ACCOMODATION" and "FINANCIAL BID FOR OFFICE ACCOMODATION" respectively. Tenders received after the due date and time for whatever reason, shall not be entertained/opened and the Department shall not be responsible for any loss or delay in delivery /depositing of tender documents.

Important Dates:

I. Issue of tender form commences	:	25.03.2020 at 10.30 AM
II. Last date of submission of Tender form	:	30.04.2020 by 05.30 PM
III. Opening of "Technical Bid"	:	01.05.2020 at 10:30 AM

Sd/-
(Amitabh Sah)
Dy. Commissioner of Income Tax (Hqrs.)
(Infra New Projects), New Delhi

davp 15403/11/0029/1920

INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR AUTOMOTIVE TECHNOLOGY
Plot No. 26, Sector-3, IMT Manesar, Gurgaon - 122050.

TENDER NOTICE

ICAT invites sealed tender in 2-Bid system for the following works :
Tender No.: ICAT/OT/TTL/DSTER/2019-20/78
Description: SITC of Heavy Duty & Multipurpose Tyre Endurance and Load Speed Performance Test Rig (DUAL STATION) at ICAT (Centre-II), Manesar, Gurugram, Haryana.

For further details of tender visit our website www.icat.in or e-procurement portal, E-mail: prem.purang@icat.in Ph.: +91 124 - 4586111, Fax: +91 124 -2290005

Publication Notice
Before Debts Recovery Tribunal –III , Delhi
4th Floor Jeevan Tara Building Parliament Street, New Delhi-01

Notice under section 19(4) of the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Rule 12 & 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rules) 1993).

In the matter of
O.A No 874/2019
ICICI BANK LTD. Vs. **Rakesh Patel**
Applicant **Defendants**

D-1 Sh. Rakesh Patel S/o Sri. Chandrika Prasad R/o 44A, Street no. 2, Indian Railway Mail, Godam, Main Shyam Park, Shahibabad, Ghaziabad-201005, U.P.
Also at: Proprietor of M/s Sai Nath Logistics Shop no. E, S-22, Ganesh Complex, Vrindavan Garden, Amethana Road, Shahibabad, Ghaziabad-201005 U.P.
Whereas the above named applicant has instituted a case against you and whereas it has been has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in this Tribunal **24.03.2020 at 10:30 A.M.** Take notice that in case of your failure to appear on the above mentioned day before this Tribunal, the case will be heard and decided in your absence. Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal the 15th day of Jan. 2020.

By Order of the Tribunal –Assistant Registrar
DRT –III, New Delhi

Publication Notice
Before Debts Recovery Tribunal –III , Delhi
4th Floor Jeevan Tara Building Parliament Street, New Delhi-01

Notice under section 19(4) of the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Rule 12 & 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rules) 1993).

In the matter of
O.A No. 844/2019
ICICI BANK LTD. Vs M/s Webwork Trade Links Pvt Ltd.
Applicant **Defendants**

D-1 M/s Webwork Trade Links Pvt Ltd Flat No. B-93,B, Sector-2 Opp SBI Bank Noida-201301
D-2 Sh. Anurag Garg S/o Sh. Satya Prakash Garg R/o Flat No. C-304, 3rd Floor, Proview Laboni Crossing Republik, Ghaziabad-201016, Uttar Pradesh
Whereas the above named applicant has instituted a case against you and whereas it has been has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in this Tribunal **23.03.2020 at 10:30 A.M.** Take notice that in case of your failure to appear on the above mentioned day before this Tribunal , the case will be heard and decided in your absence. Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal the 09th day of Jan. 2020.

By Order of the Tribunal –Assistant Registrar
DRT –III, New Delhi

भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण
AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA

NOTICE INVITING TENDER
(Department of Commercial)

Airports Authority of India, NSCBI Airport invites tender through sealed bids for grant of license for installation and operation of Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) at three locations of New Integrated Terminal Building for a period of 7 years with Minimum Reserve License Fee of **Rs. 4,39,230/-** per month. Tender documents can be downloaded from **23.03.2020.** For downloading and details regarding eligibility criteria and other tender conditions visit AAI website **www.aai.aero** Further Corrigendum/addendum, if any, will be published in AAI website/portal only.

Publication Notice
Before Debts Recovery Tribunal –III , Delhi
4th Floor Jeevan Tara Building Parliament Street, New Delhi-01

Notice under section 19(4) of the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Rule 12 & 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rules) 1993).

In the matter of
O.A No 605/2019
ICICI BANK LTD. Vs **Vinit Gupta & Anr.**
Applicant **Defendants**

D-1 Vinit Gupta S/o Sh. Radhey Shyam Gupta H. No. A-15, First Floor, Bhalla Mor, New Panchwati Colony, Near Lohapur Masjid, Ghaziabad-201001
Vinit Gupta S/o Sh. Radhey Shyam Gupta Proprietor, Mohan Namkeens, A-122, New Panchwati Colony, Bhalla Mor, Near Lohapur Masjid, Ghaziabad-201001
D-2 Santosh Gupta W/o Sh. Radhey Shyam Gupta H. No. A-15, First Floor, Bhalla Mor, New Panchwati Colony, Near Lohapur Masjid, Ghaziabad-201001
Santosh Gupta W/o Sh. Radhey Shyam Gupta Proprietor, Mohan Namkeens, A-122, New Panchwati Colony, Bhalla Mor, Near Lohapur Masjid, Ghaziabad-201001
Sunil Kumar S/o Sh. Charan Singh R/o F-502, Pearls Gateway, Sector-44, Noida-201301
Also at: Sh. Sunil Kumar S/o Charan Singh Village Rajpur, Manuharsa, Bulandshahr, Uttar Pradesh-202398
Whereas the above named applicant has instituted a case against you and whereas it has been has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in this Tribunal **26.03.2020 at 10:30 A.M.** Take notice that in case of your failure to appear on the above mentioned day before this Tribunal, the case will be heard and decided in your absence. Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal the 15th day of Jan. 2020.

By Order of the Tribunal –Assistant Registrar
DRT –III, New Delhi

Publication Notice
Before Debts Recovery Tribunal –III , Delhi
4th Floor Jeevan Tara Building Parliament Street, New Delhi-01

Notice under section 19(4) of the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Rule 12 & 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rules) 1993).

In the matter of
O.A No 856/2019
ICICI BANK LTD. Vs **Achin Gupta & Anr.**
Applicant **Defendants**

D-1 Achin Gupta S/o Sh. Ajay Gupta , 3, First Floor, Ishwar Colony, Near Gurudwara Nanak Pyau, Delhi-110009
Also at: Achin Gupta S/o Sh. Ajay Gupta Wallis N Water, Plot No.193, Pitampura Village, Opp. Sunrise Market, Near Tibetan Market Road, Delhi-110034
D-2 Sh. Ajay Gupta S/o Sh. Brij Kishor Gupta, 3, First Floor, Ishwar Colony, Near Gurudwara Nanak Pyau, Delhi-110009
Also at: Ajay Gupta S/o Sh. Brij Kishor Gupta (Proprietor), M/s Bath Section, 267, Shivaji Market, Village Pitampura, Delhi-110034
Whereas the above named applicant has instituted a case against you and whereas it has been has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in this Tribunal **23.03.2020 at 10:30 A.M.** Take notice that in case of your failure to appear on the above mentioned day before this Tribunal, the case will be heard and decided in your absence. Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal the 09th day of Jan. 2020.

By Order of the Tribunal –Assistant Registrar
DRT –III, New Delhi

FORM NO. NCLT. 3A
NATIONAL COMPANY LAW TRIBUNAL, CHANDIGARH BENCH
CP (CAA) No. 8/Chd/Hry/2020
In the matter of the Companies Act, 2013
AND
In the matter of Sections 230 to 232 of the Companies Act, 2013 r.w. Companies (Compromises, Arrangements, Amalgamations) Rules 2016
AND
In the Matter of
Scheme of Amalgamation between
Shiroki Auto Components India Private Limited (Transferor Company) with Shiroki Technico India Private Limited (Transferee Company) and their respective shareholders
And
In the Matter of

Shiroki Auto Components India Private Limited, a Company, incorporated under the Companies Act, 2013, Regd. office at Unit 108, 1st Floor, Suncity Success Tower, Sector 65, Golf Course Extension Road, Gurugram-122002, Haryana. CIN : U35923HR2017PTC071355, PAN : AACCO5929P
Petitioner Company 1/ Transferor Company

AND

Shiroki Technico India Private Limited, a Company, incorporated under the Companies Act, 2013, Regd. office at Unit 108, 1st Floor, Suncity Success Tower, Sector 65, Golf Course Extension Road, Gurugram 122002, Haryana CIN : U35122HR2014PTC056763, PAN : AAFCT0104J
Petitioner Company 2/ Transferee Company

NOTICE OF PETITION

A joint petition under section 230-232 of the Companies Act, 2013, for sanctioning of the Scheme of Amalgamation between Shiroki Auto Components India Private Limited (Transferor Company) with Shiroki Technico India Private Limited (Transferee Company) and their respective shareholders was presented by petitioner companies on 02.03.2020 and the said petition is fixed for hearing before National Company Law Tribunal, Chandigarh on 28.04.2020. Any person desirous of supporting or opposing the said petition / application/ reference should send to the petitioner's advocate, notice of his intention, signed by him or his advocate, with his name and address, so as to reach the Petitioner's advocate not later than two days before the date fixed for the hearing of the petition. Where he seeks to oppose the petition, the grounds of opposition or a copy of his affidavit shall be furnished with such notice. A copy of the petition will be furnished by the undersigned to any person requiring the same on payment of the prescribed charges for the same.

Dated: 23.03.2020 *Sd/-*
Mr. Dhritiman Bhattacharyya/ Ms. Deeti Ojha, Advocates
at 607, Sector – 18B, Chandigarh and also at :
Unity Legal, S-369, GK-

North to South, East to West: Empty

Overwhelming response across the country to the Prime Minister's call for a Janata Curfew. At 5 pm, people everywhere applauded those at the forefront of the battle against the coronavirus threat. From the states, *The Indian Express* captures the day

CHENNAI

Chennai Central during the nationwide Janata Curfew on Sunday. *Arun Janardhanan*

JAMMU & KASHMIR

FROM THE hilly terrains in Chenab Valley and Pir Panjal regions adjoining Kashmir Valley to the plains of Kathua bordering Punjab, people across Jammu region stayed indoors in response to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for Janata Curfew. The Muslim majority Pir Panjal-Chenab Valley and the predominantly Hindu inhabited plains of Jammu, Samba and Kathua had often sparred — 2008 Amarnath land row claimed lives of a dozen people across Jammu province and the 2013 Kishtwar communal riots on Eid killed three people. Recently, the Centre's move to abrogate Article 370 drew sharp protests from Pir Panjal and Chenab Valley areas, while the plains of Jammu were muted. People in Kashmir too stayed off the streets. But unlike the rest of the country, it was the security forces that imposed a curfew on Sunday. People didn't beat clap or clank utensils as requested by Prime Minister Modi.

UTTARAKHAND

IN THE most visited tourist towns, residents stayed indoors. Mussoorie and Dehradun, which were full of tourists weeks ago, looked like ghost towns as the state has banned entry of tourists. Meditative calmness descended on the religious cities of Rishikesh and Haridwar. At Dehradun station, only five trains chugged in during the day with less than half the usual passengers, who were screened by doctors. Many passengers walked lugging their bags as taxis and buses stayed off roads. The police stopped commuters and quizzed them for moving out during the curfew and requested them to stay at home "in the interest of the nation".

ANDHRA & TELANGANA

PEOPLE stayed indoors and health officials trooped out to sanitise public places. While neighbourhood temples closed after prayers before 6 am, the government ordered shut all main religious places, including the Lord Venkateshwara temple at Tirumala. In Hyderabad, bustling areas such as Kukatpally, Hitec City, Begum Bazar, Charminar and Abids were deserted. Police patrolled the streets, and turned back home curfew-breakers. A bus was intercepted at Telangana-Maharashtra border and 40 passengers, who had returned from Qatar, were detained. They were travelling to Hyderabad from Mumbai and had quarantine seals on their wrists. Several others who had arrived at Hyderabad airport late and advised quarantine were handed over to police by people who found them at bus station and railway stations trying to go to their native places across Telangana or AP. One more person tested positive for Covid 19 today at Hyderabad, taking the number of cases to 26.

GOA

GOANS LET go the sun, the sand and tourists for a day. The tourists spots, beaches, iconic Mapusa and Panjim markets, food stalls, shacks and cruise jetties remained shut. But fearing that people might go out at 9 pm, the chief minister advised people to stay in after the curfew end-time. As the curfew was drawing to a close, Goa extended it by three more days . At tourist stretches like Baga, Calangute and Anjuna and Candolim, the beaches were empty. At the mouth of Calangute Beach, owner of Ratna Sagar Mohan Shetty said, "If this is the only solution then might as well." The loss to the entire industry with the shutters coming down is expected to be in lakhs. At Porvorim in north Goa, four taxies ferrying Dubai-returned tourists were asked to go to a local police station and fill in their details before being taken to a testing centre. Since Saturday night, the tourist vehicles were asked to return to their respective states with no entry to heavy passenger vehicle buses.

RAJASTHAN

PEOPLE IN Rajasthan, which has reported 26 cases, remained indoors, with the latest case being reported from Jodhpur. Transport Minister Pratap Singh Khachariyawas took a round of the old city in Jaipur where the historic sites of Hawa Mahal, the walled city, Badi Chaupad, Tripolia Market, Mirza Ismail road, etc. in Jaipur remained silent. Around 5 pm, men, women and children came out, breaking social distancing norms, to thank the essential service providers. The civil society and human rights organisations, meanwhile, appealed to Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot to supply ration and money to the daily wage labourers, destitutes, vendors who could go hungry in the state-wide lockdown. There are at least 24,880 people in Jaipur who face an uncertain future following the loss of livelihood, said activists, led by Kavita Srivastava of the Rajasthan president of People's Union for Civil Liberties .

KERALA

KERALA, A state that's not alien to dawn-to-dusk shutdowns, took the self-imposed curfew in its stride and stayed indoors. The CPM-ruled government gave a thumbs up to the call by Prime Minister Modi. Cities, public places, roads wore a deserted look from the morning. Buses, taxis and even private vehicles kept off roads, and shops remained closed though there was nobody on the road to impose the curfew. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and his cabinet colleagues stayed home. The state government urged people to clean the premises of their homes on the day, which some of the ministers too practised. At 5 pm, people turned up at the courtyards and balconies of their homes, to pay tribute to the health workers fighting COVID-19.

TAMIL NADU

AS THE state remained indoors on Sunday, not less than 1,000 passengers at the Chennai Central railway station, mostly migrant workers from northern states, struggled to convince the authorities to not send them back to their workplaces. Around 4pm on Sunday, railway police personnel and a few city police officers were seen trying to pacify the people, who were raising slogans seeking a train to Howrah and other places in North India. Many of them, starving from the previous night, were seen using towels or their shirts as masks. On Sunday, the state reported three more cases of infection, taking the total number of cases to nine. The state on Sunday extended the Janata curfew till 5am on Monday. In the three districts of Chennai, Kancheepuram and Erode that will be under lockdown, authorities have suspended all train services till March 31.

WEST BENGAL

AS PEOPLE stayed indoors to break the chain, the city enjoyed a collateral benefit — clean air. The PM 2.5 readings more than halved at many places. The Janata curfew was successful across West Bengal. The number of passengers in the suburban trains was low. Under South-Eastern Railway, a few suburban trains ran, but found few takers. Few government buses plied and taxis too stayed off the streets. The state government has also ordered a ban on inter- state buses to and from West Bengal till March 31. At 5 pm, residents in houses and housing complexes went to their balconies and courtyards to ring bells and clap to express their gratitude to people engaged in essential services in the time of the novel coronavirus outbreak.

MUMBAI

The Gateway of India on Sunday. *Nirmal Harindran*

KOLKATA

Esplanade in Kolkata on Sunday. *Partha Paul*

•••

At some places, policemen asked those venturing out during the Janata Curfew to return to their homes in the "interest of the nation"

•••

HYDERABAD

NDRF personnel at work near Charminar on Sunday. *AP*

AHMEDABAD

A view of an otherwise busy street in Ahmedabad. *Javed Raja*

JHARKHAND

THE PEOPLE of the state, which is yet to report a positive case, stayed indoors. The traders downed shutters, public and private transport stayed off the roads in Ranchi and other areas. On Sunday, the Ranchi administration pasted posters outside the houses of people who are in home quarantine. It read: "Home under quarantine. Do not go inside".

MAHARASHTRA

PEOPLE IN Mumbai and Pune responded enthusiastically to the call for Janata Curfew. In most places, people remained indoors during the day. At 5 pm, they clapped, beat utensils and burst firecrackers. A policeman on patrol at Versova said, "We have been on the roads since morning... Hardly anyone has stepped out". In Andheri (East), many people were seen chanting slogans such as Bharat Mata ki Jai and Vande Mataram from their balconies. Several people played musical instruments such as dholak, flute and guitar. Some members in housing societies in Goregaon played songs and chanted Ramdas Athawale's 'Go Corona' slogan. Police in Pune imposed a curfew from 9 pm on Sunday till 5 am on Monday. Officials said the orders were issued because of concern that people may come out of houses in large numbers after the time of the Janata Curfew. "I would say it was almost 100 per cent response across the city," said Pune City's Joint Police Commissioner (Law and Order) Ravindra Shisve.

BIHAR

BIHAR, WHICH reported the first death from novel coronavirus infection in Patna on Sunday, heeded to the Prime Minister's call and stayed indoors. Opposition RJD, which initially called it a "farce", supported it. RJD spokesperson Mrityunjay Tewary said: "We have supported it fully because it is for the health and well-being of all. We have also joined in beating utensils and decided to close our party headquarters till March 31". Aurangabad town, where communal tension has been simmering, exhibited a show of solidarity with both Hindus and Muslims beating utensils together. Bihar CM Nitish Kumar said Janata curfew was "a very effective way of social distancing".

ODISHA

STATE CAPITAL Bhubaneswar remained deserted throughout the day. Overall, 40 platoons of police force were stationed at various points in Bhubaneswar. Puri's Grand Road, one of the busiest in the state, was empty. Similarly, shutdowns were observed in districts such as Cuttack and Ganjam. Empty buses lined up at the bus stand as the state shut down public transport. Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy, 5T Secretary V K Pandian and Skill Odisha Chairperson Subroto Bagchi were seen clapping outside Lok Sewa Bhawan at 5 pm. Odisha State Medical Services Association has released a letter to the state health department, informing that "in the District Headquarter hospital and other periphery institutions there are insufficient masks, sanitizers and PPE (personal protective equipment) kits". The letter warns, "There is high chance of infections to health care providers. If that happens, we will enter into phase III of pandemic and that is very dangerous".

NORTH-EAST

FROM FIVE minutes before 5pm, Guwahati started reverberating with clanging of utensils, claps and blowing of conch shells as a mark of respect for those on the frontline of the battle against coronavirus and partly in relief over the news that a four-and-a-half-year-old girl from Jorhat who tested positive in the first test last evening tested negative in the second confirmatory test. As of now, Assam has not reported COVID-19 cases. Chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal urged people to continue Janata Curfew till 8 am Monday. Nagaland ordered a near total shutdown from Monday. Commercial passenger vehicles, both public and private, would not be allowed to ply and movement of all public is restricted. The government of Mizoram also announced a near lockdown from Sunday.

GUJARAT

THE CITIES of Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Surat and Rajkot remained quiet till they decided to say thanks with drums, bugles, fireworks, and claps at 5 pm. Dariapur, a communally sensitive area of Ahmedabad, witnessed complete shutdown following the PM's call for 'Janata Curfew'. The Muslims offered (prayers) for the well-being of all, especially those working to check the spread of COVID-19. Rafiq Nagriwala, a senior citizen from Dariapur and a social worker, said, "To check the spread of the virus and for well-being of all, we performed mass prayers." Though shops remained closed and roads were relatively empty, many people were seated outside either enjoying a game of cricket, or a cup of tea. Nearly 7 km away from where the first positive case was reported in Vadodara, in Makarpura area, young and old blew trumpets, clapped and banged steel plates at 5 pm. Across the Ellisbridge on the eastern bank of the Sabarmati river, the Bishop of the CNI church, Gujarat, Silvanc Christian conducted the Sunday service online.

PUNJAB

"AFTER THE 1984 anti-Sikh riots, it is for the first time that I have seen such a lockdown when markets were closed and people did not come out. It reminded me of the old days in Punjab," said Satwant Kaur (74), a resident of Mohali. The Janata Curfew was complete in Punjab. The industrial city of Ludhiana wore a deserted look. Jalandhar also witnessed complete shutdown. It was all quiet in the holy city of Amritsar, with the Golden Temple witnessing only a few devotees. Akal Takht Jathedar Harpreet Singh chose this day to send a message to Sikhs across the world to observe self-quarantine. People began to step out around 5 pm when they gathered at the gates of their houses with plates, bells and conch shells to express their gratitude to doctors, police and others. To ensure success of 'Janata curfew' in rural areas, announcements were being made from religious places asking people to not step out.

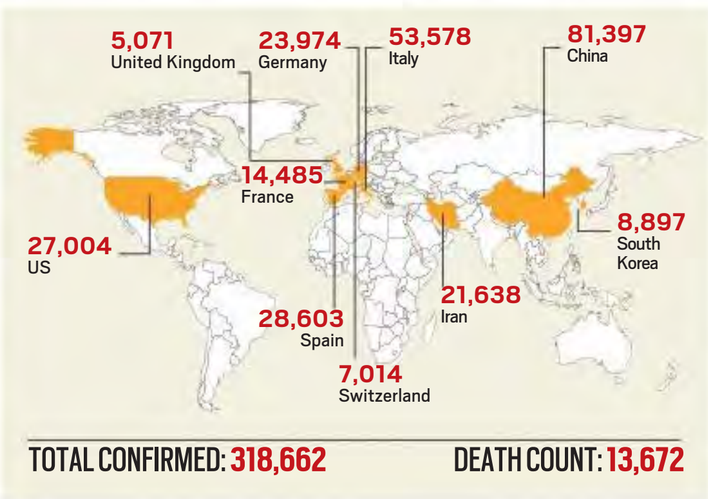
KARNATAKA

STREETS IN Bengaluru and other parts of the state wore a deserted look as the Janata Curfew proposed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to help check the spread of coronavirus received a tremendous response across Karnataka.

The Chief Minister complimented and thanked people of the state for supporting the Prime Minister's call.

Appealing to people in the cities not to travel to villages for the next 15 days to control outbreak in rural areas, Yediyurappa said a decision has also been taken to screen all domestic passengers henceforth at the airports.

CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK
YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED DAILY



Source: Johns Hopkins University, updated at 11 pm on March 22

Can vitamin C prevent or cure novel coronavirus infection?

CAN VITAMIN C help you ward off the novel coronavirus infection? This has been one of many theories on social media since the outbreak spread globally, but the answer is no.

There is no evidence that vitamin C can prevent an infection. Vitamin C is, however, still good for you, and can help the body's immune system fight the virus if it does infect someone. But again, there is no evidence that it can cure a patient either.

When the body is fighting an infection, it experiences "oxidative stress", a process that eventually leads to inflammation in cell tissue. Vitamin C not only helps cells fight oxidative stress but also helps clean up this cellular mess by producing specialised cells to mount an immune response. "So the role of vitamin C here is a bit like cleaning up the football ground after the game," University of Newcastle nutritionist and dietician Prof Clare Collins wrote in *The Conversation*.

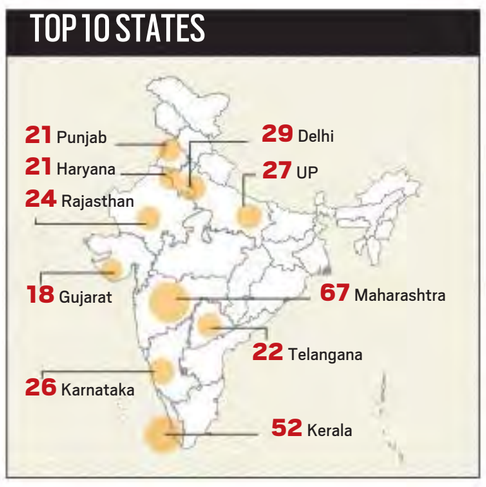
Given that vitamin C has never been conclusively established as a cure against the common cold, which is also caused by a coronavirus, experts believe it is unlikely that vitamin C can cure or prevent a novel coronavirus infection.

Again, while vitamin C is good for the body's immune system, too much of it can be harmful. *The New York Times* quoted Dr Frank Esper, a paediatric infectious disease specialist, as saying that excessive vitamin C can be damaging to the stomach and kidneys. Dr Mark J Mulligan, another infectious diseases specialist, told The *NYT* that there is no evidence that supplements like zinc, green tea and echinacea are beneficial to prevent coronavirus.

The flu shot is also being propped up in social media — falsely — as a novel coronavirus cure. A flu shot helps against the flu by boosting the recipient's health, but it is not known to have any impact on the coronavirus.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

INDIA COUNT: 360 (7 DEATHS)



REST OF INDIA

Ladakh	13
Tamil Nadu	7
Chandigarh	5
Andhra Pradesh	5
Madhya Pradesh	4
West Bengal	4
Jammu & Kashmir	4
Uttarakhand	3
Odisha	2
Himachal Pradesh	2
Bihar	2
Chhattisgarh	1
Puducherry	1

Map based on Union Health Ministry update at 11 pm, March 22. Some state may have reported higher numbers. Not all states are listed.

24 DISCHARGED IN 7 STATES ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Have a question on the COVID-19 outbreak and what you should/should not do?
Write to explained@indianexpress.com

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SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

Stage by stage in a pandemic

As the COVID-19 outbreak progresses, India's concerns are about eventual community transmission. How and when does a pandemic reach this stage, and how has it been progressing in other countries so far?

ABANTIKA GHOSH
NEW DELHI, MARCH 22

OVER THE past few weeks, the country has been dreading the possibility that the novel coronavirus outbreak will move to the stage of community transmission. What is community transmission, and how does a pandemic progress to this stage?

What are the stages of a pandemic?

In the first stage of a disease epidemic that eventually takes the form of a pandemic sweeping the globe, cases are imported into a country in which the infection did not originate. An infection whose spread is contained within the boundaries of one or a few countries is obviously not a pandemic. The first case of COVID-19 outside China was reported in Thailand.

The second stage is when the virus starts being transmitted locally. Local transmission means that the source of the infection is from within a particular area and the trajectory the virus has taken from one person to the next is clearly established.

The third stage is that of community transmission. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), community transmission "is evidenced by the inability to relate confirmed cases through chains of transmission for a large number of cases, or by increasing positive tests through sentinel samples (routine systematic testing of respiratory samples from established laboratories)". In layman terms, it means that the virus is now circulating in the community, and can infect people with no history either of travel to affected areas or of contact with an infected person. If and when community transmission happens, there might arise the need for a full lockdown because in that situation it is theoretically possible for every person, regardless of where they are from and who they have been in contact with, to spread the disease.

Community transmission is usually localised; one state can record it. For example, the UK reported community transmission in Northern Ireland.

There is also a fourth stage in every pandemic. It is when the disease, COVID-19 in this case, becomes endemic in some countries. The Indian government's containment plan takes this possibility into account. Among diseases that are currently endemic in India — meaning they occur round the year across the country — are malaria and dengue.

Migrants seeking to leave Mumbai ahead of Sunday's *janata* curfew. At the stage of community transmission, a complete lockdown might be needed. *Pradip Das*

How does categorising an outbreak in this manner help?

The stages of a pandemic are uniform the world over. This is so because in today's interconnected world, it is important to have a standardised phraseology that conveys the same thing to every person around the world, and helps countries prepare better.

The categorisation helps countries take specific actions that are necessary to target just that particular scenario.

For example, India imposed travel restrictions to China from very early on as the cases then were all imported from China. Later, as cases started being imported from other European countries, flight and visa restrictions were put in place for those countries. India has now shut itself to individuals coming from all countries — this is because the virus is now confirmed as circulating in at least 177 countries and territories.

However, there are also cases of local transmission — that is why large numbers of people are in government quarantine facilities, in home quarantine, or under community surveillance. The official position in India is that no community transmission has been detected, inferred from the testing of over 1,000 random samples taken since February from people who had symptoms like COVID-19, but no travel or contact history. None of them, according to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), has tested positive for novel coronavirus.

Are these stage categories watertight?

Scientific definitions are usually very precise, but classifications can also draw on informed judgment. For example, the transition from one pandemic stage to the next is something that can happen in a day, but a lone case would probably not be the basis of such a declaration.

That is also why, even though the Health Ministry had released a statement some days ago on the evidence of "community transmission" in Agra, scientists say it was not classic community transmission, but local transmission at the community level. There have to be more of these cases of infection from untraced sources for the outbreak to move on to the next stage.

However, as the number of cases increases, so also do the chances of transition to the community transmission stage. States would have different approaches to fighting the disease, and that would impact neighbouring states as well.

Worldwide, in which stage is the COVID-19 pandemic now?

The pandemic has spread to nearly every country on the planet. In most, though, it is in the stage of either imported cases or local transmission. Among the countries where community transmission seems to be operating are China, Italy, Iran, South Korea and Japan. China adopted a graded approach in dealing with the infection but the epicentre, Hubei, was in a state of complete lockdown at the peak of the infection — something that Italy has now effected in a bid to stop the virus from wreaking more havoc, given the country's ageing population. South Korea has brought down infections with mass free testing and treatment. For imported cases, vigilance at the borders and airports suffices.

The escalation pattern in countries has differed as much as their response. Assuming that reports of the first case having occurred in November are true, China took almost a month to escalate to a stage where the outbreak became a global concern. Community transmission would like have started already.

Italy, on the other hand, took just a few days to reach that stage. The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control says: "The speed with which COVID-19 can cause nationally incapacitating epidemics once transmission within the community is established, indicates that in a few weeks or even days, it is likely that similar situations to those seen in China and Italy may be seen in other EU/EEA countries or the UK."

How long before India enters community transmission?

Nobody knows. Dr Balram Bhargava, secretary, Department of Health Research and D-G, ICMR, has said that community transmission is inevitable; other experts feel it may have already happened.

Dr Anurag Agarwal, Director, Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology, said: "In India so far, we have found an explanation for every case, so there is no background community transmission yet. But we do not really know how this will pan out. There are some reports of one strain having less mortality. If indeed a milder strain has come to India, it could change the course of the epidemic. There is another theory that all the various viruses circulating in South Asia and the generally lower levels of hygiene may give us some immunity. This is an evolving phase; we have not done badly so far. But there is more to come."

How long can virus 'live' in air, and on steel?

AMITABH SINHA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 22

SCIENTISTS ACROSS the world are still learning about the novel coronavirus, and among the questions they are looking to answer is how long it can survive in different environments. A paper published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* on Tuesday has come out with new information on the longevity of the virus in the air — and on different surfaces. An understanding of how long the virus survives is crucial to understanding how contagious it could be.

In the air: 3 hours, but weaker

The scientists, affiliated to different laboratories in universities in the United States, found in their experiments that the SARS-CoV-2 virus could survive in air for about three hours, although its ability to infect was severely weakened during this time. Until now, the virus was believed not to be able to survive in the air. As such, there was little risk of people getting infected through the air. The fact that it does survive in the air, even for a short time, could force scientists and health officials to reassess the risk to people, especially to health workers who spend a lot of time near an infected person.

"Our results indicate that aerosol (air) transmission of SARS-CoV2 is plausible, since the virus can remain viable and infectious in aerosols for hours...," the study says.

Strongest on plastic and steel

The new study also finds that plastic and stainless steel surfaces are the most conducive for the virus to survive. The virus was found to be "viable" for as long as three days on these surfaces. On cardboard surfaces, the virus could survive for up to 24 hours, while on copper, it could barely last for four hours.

The longevity on each of these surfaces has implications for the kinds of things that people can be advised to come in contact with, or avoid. For example, during times of extended isolation, or forced homestays, people are likely to interact more with cardboard boxes while getting food and other products shipped to their residence. The fact that the virus does not survive beyond 24 hours on these surfaces might reduce worries on this front.

But there is a lot more to learn

The scientists said the survivability of the SARS-CoV-2 virus on these surfaces was not drastically different from that of the SARS-CoV-1 virus, which had a similar but less deadly outbreak in mainly Asian countries in 2003. Therefore, they conclude that the reason for the much greater spread of SARS-CoV-2, as compared to the 2003 virus, "could arise from other factors (not any difference in their life spans), including high viral loads in the upper respiratory tract and the potential for persons infected with the SARS-CoV2 to shed and transmit the virus while (remaining) asymptomatic (without showing any symptoms of the disease)".

However, the latest findings may not be conclusive yet. Several similar studies have been done in the last few weeks, and more are ongoing. A study published in *The Journal of Hospital Infection* in February, for example, had surveyed the results of 22 earlier studies on different kinds of coronaviruses. It had found that coronaviruses had the ability to survive between two and nine days on different dry surfaces such as metal, paper, glass, plastic, and wood. That study was not specific to SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus behind the current pandemic. That study concluded that since no specific therapy was available for SARS-CoV-2, "early containment and prevention of further spread" was the most crucial step in controlling its spread.

From loans to salary cover to healthcare, how govts are helping citizens

SEEMA CHISHTI
NEW DELHI, MARCH 22

AS THE country braces for the economic fallout of the coronavirus pandemic, the Uttar Pradesh government on Saturday announced aid of Rs 1,000 each in the bank accounts of 35 lakh labourers, and free rations for a month to 1.65 crore construction workers and daily wagers. Kerala had moved earlier — announcing on Thursday a Rs 20,000-crore package, including a Rs 2,000 crore loan to members of the poverty eradication and women's empowerment scheme Kudumbashree, and another Rs 2,000 crore for the MNREGS over the next two months.

Worldwide, many governments have announced large spending programmes to help individuals and businesses stay afloat. Some examples:

UK: The government will pay grants covering up to 80% of the salary of workers if companies keep them on their payrolls, rather than lay them off. These will cost the government up to a maximum of £2,500 per month, just above the median income. The UK has unveiled financial measures including £330 billion in loans, £20 billion in other aid, and grants for retailers and pubs. Statutory sick pay of £94.25 per week will be available from the first day of illness rather than the fourth.

United States: The White House is negotiating a package with Congress, which could exceed $2 trillion, *The New York Times* quoted White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow as saying. Republican Senators have already unveiled a package of $1 trillion. This could include direct payments to Americans under a certain income threshold, $200 billion in loans to distressed industry sectors, and $300 billion in forgivable bridge loans for small businesses.

Canada: The government will provide up to $27 billion in direct support to workers and businesses, plus $55 billion to meet the liquidity needs of businesses and households through tax deferrals. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has said the combined $82 billion represents more than 3% of Canada's GDP.

Italy: The government has adopted an emergency decree worth € 25 billion. It suspends loan and mortgage repayments for companies and families, increases funds to help firms pay workers temporarily laid off, provides € 3.5 billion to support the healthcare system, and € 10 billion to support families and workers, *CNBC* reported quoting ministers. It suspends all firing procedures that began after February 23.

France: Bruno Le Maire, France's Finance Minister, has detailed € 45 billion in direct tax breaks and direct state payments in addition to € 300 billion in loans. The government stands ready to nationalise large companies, he has said.

Spain: Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez announced € 100 billion of loans and guarantees for companies in need of cash as part of the "biggest mobilisation of resources in the country's democratic history". Spain has nationalised all hospitals. The government will subsidise workers who have been temporarily laid off by giving them access to the benefits system.

Germany: The government is expanding *Kurzarbeitergeld*, a scheme that provides subsidies to employees sent home during economic crises. Chancellor Angela Merkel has termed the COVID-19 pandemic the biggest crisis faced by the country since World War II.

Netherlands: The government will cover 90% of salaries lost because of reductions in work hours.

Denmark: The government will shoulder 75% of wages to prevent companies from carrying out layoffs. This will be up to a maximum of 23,000 kroner (£2,840) a month, if firms promise not to fire employees.

Sweden: The government will subsidise workers' salaries. Employees will collect 90% of their wages, and will work reduced hours.

Taiwan: On February 25 itself, Taiwan's Parliament approved a $2 billion stimulus package. This will help small businesses and tour agencies, and provide tax cuts for tour bus drivers.

Japan: The government has announced grants and loans to small and medium businesses. It is considering handing out 12,000 yen to each citizen.

Australia: The government will pay $750 to all lower-income citizens on March 31. Small and medium-sized enterprises can apply for up to $25,000 to cover employees' wages.

COUNTERING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

'I don't expect Covid-19 fatalities to be comparable to those from 1918 influenza'

SIDDHARTH CHANDRA is the Director of Asian Studies Center and Professor in the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics at Michigan State University. His work on the intersection of demography, economics, health and history in Asia is exemplified by his seminal research on the propagation, evolution and the death toll of the 1918 influenza epidemic in India. He spoke to SUSHANT SINGH about the parallels between 1918 and current pandemic, and the lessons it holds for India.

Prof Siddharth Chandra believes that it is best for people to stay at home and have little to no contact with others *Express*

Are there parallels between the 1918 influenza outbreak and now?

Yes, one parallel is the overwhelming of medical infrastructure to serve patients. In the case of the 1918 outbreak, there were so many patients that buildings not normally used for medical purposes were re-purposed to accommodate patients. We are seeing the same phenomenon today.

In the case of India in 1918, however, this overwhelming of infrastructure was more extreme than it has been so far with Covid-19. For example, in his 1918 report, the Sanitary Commissioner of India reported that some rivers were becoming clogged with corpses because of the lack of firewood to carry out proper cremations.

A second parallel is the grinding to a halt of much economic and social activity. We are seeing a very similar pattern today.

A third parallel is the disruption of education as school and university campuses close. Fortunately, Michigan State University, where I work, as well as many other US universities...the disruption has been limited. In 1918, however, schools remained completely closed for the duration of the pandemic, depriving young people of the opportunity to attend classes for a number of months.

How did 1918 influenza spread in India?

The 1918 influenza reached India by ship, most likely carried by troops returning from Europe at the end of World War I. If you look at the maps, you will notice that the first place where the wave of deaths peaked was Bombay, which was a major port at the time and a destination for returning soldiers. Madras, another major port and destination for returning soldiers, peaked shortly after Bombay.

The other interesting phenomenon is the early peak in a few districts in eastern India near Puri, one of the Char Dham locations. We know that pilgrimage sites are also high-risk areas for the spread of pathogens during an epidemic, and this seems to have happened in the neighbourhood of Puri.

Why did it cause more than 14 million deaths?

India (and Indonesia), were disproportionately affected by the influenza pandemic of 1918. There are at least two reasons why this happened.

First, large numbers of people were under-nourished and therefore exceptionally vulnerable to the disease. Second, it appears that high population density was also a factor. We have shown in our paper that in India, districts with higher population density experienced higher death rates than those with lower population density. Java, an island in Indonesia, which is even more densely populated than much of India, experienced even higher death rates than most districts in India.

THE POLICY INTERVIEW
SIDDHARTH CHANDRA
Professor, Michigan State University

Should we expect a similarly high number of fatalities even now?

I do not expect that the fatalities from Covid-19 will be comparable to those from the 1918 influenza, but it is difficult at this early stage to predict how the pandemic will unfold.

Here are a few reasons to be optimistic.

First, populations in India and across the world are better nourished than they were in 1918. This is enabling us to fight off infection more effectively than our ancestors in 1918 were able to do.

Second, we have better technologies available to us today to help severely ill patients recover from respiratory illnesses like influenza and Covid-19.

Third, the availability of free and instant communication technology is enabling a process of learning and implementing best practices at all levels of government and public health infrastructure as well as at the individual level that would have been impossible in 1918.

We should also be very thankful that Covid-19 (which the US Centers for Disease Control is reporting has a case fatality rate of 0.25% to 3%) is not as virulent as the MERS-CoV, which was first detected in 2012, had a much higher case-fatality of 37%.

However, there are many unknowns as well. For example, in July and August 1918, India experienced what epidemiologists now refer to as a 'herald wave'. During this herald wave, death rates in many locations, including Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta, doubled or even tripled, causing panic. Fortunately, this herald wave soon subsided and people went back to business as usual in late August. Little did they know what was in store for them in October, when the truly lethal wave of the pandemic arrived in India.

So we do not know whether this wave of Covid-19 cases is a one-time wave that will subside or whether there will be more to come, and whether what comes next will be more or less harmful.

What are the big lessons from 1918 that can be applied today?

Lesson number one is to imagine how you would behave if you knew that everybody around you was infected and act accordingly. This means keeping a safe distance from everybody and assuming that surfaces that others have recently touched are contaminated. It is best to stay at home and have little to no contact with others.

Second, the public health system needs to prepare for a surge in emergency cases, many of whom will need ventilation. Surge capacity in our hospitals is going to be of critical value. There is still time to prepare and improvise as best we can.

Third, going forward, the recommendations of the 2003 Government of India paper prepared by the then-Deputy National Security Advisor of India, which warned against such an outcome way back in 2003 during the brief and thankfully limited SARS epidemic, should be implemented without delay. These include enhancing public health infrastructure while also creating capacity in the pharmaceutical production and vaccine research and testing sectors.

Fourth, nutrition was an important factor in determining outcomes for people infected with the 1918 influenza virus. It will very likely be a factor in outcomes for Covid-19. Continued focus on and improvements in nutrition for poorer sections of society will be a determining factor in how India deals with the current pandemic.

Fifth, the 1918 influenza exacted a disproportionately heavy toll on doctors and nurses. Every effort must be made to ensure that they are given adequate protection and support.

Sixth, the 1918 influenza had a severe impact on pregnancies and births. At the time that deaths were peaking, there was a parallel peak in stillbirths, preterm births, and maternal mortality. These effects continued in the months after the mortality peak. While there is no hard evidence yet... to show similar effects for Covid-19...out of an abundance of caution, pregnant women should take extreme precautions to avoid infection.

Despite developments in medical science why is the world struggling even today?

The world is struggling today because, while there have been many developments in medical science and improvements in modelling, forecasting, and research, we still do not have the capability to come up with quick and effective vaccines and cures for novel viruses. Our technologies and regulatory processes are slow enough that, in many cases, solutions will only be ready after significant damage has been done. However, we have come a long way since 1918.

FULL INTERVIEW ON INDIANEXPRESS.COM

Punjab govt listens to its youth to help them get jobs, avoid drugs

S S Bindra, Chairman of the PYDB, seeking feedback from youngsters. *Gurmeet Singh*

RAAKHI JAGGA
LUDHIANA, MARCH 22

IN PUNJAB, as in the rest of the country, youngsters are increasingly bothered about the lack of employment opportunities. In Punjab, in particular, they often fall prey to drug addiction. Those that are good in studies, tend to leave the state for foreign shores, either to study further or work. Those who stay back and fail to get a job can be seen protesting on the streets. Now, the Punjab government has started a unique initiative which aims to reach out to the state's youngsters and understand from them the problems plaguing their life.

Under this initiative, which is being spearheaded by the Punjab Youth Development Board (PYDB), the government is conducting meetings with the youth across the state — cities, blocks and villages — and urging them to tell the government what needs to be done to remedy the situation.

Sukhwinder Singh Bindra, the newly appointed Chairman of PYDB, says, "I took charge 2 months ago and after taking the charge, I thought of finding out as what is ailing the youth of the state. Why are they so keen to go to Canada, Australia or other countries abroad? What is the reason for their unrest?" Bindra's idea was to connect with the youth in a better way. "We are doing meetings in every district in which the youth is invited to give us feedback. Several government officials are also involved in these meetings and at times, we redress their issues on the spot," says Bindra. "They are also writing to us. Daily, our office in Chandigarh gets 20-25 written responses from youngsters from across the state," he claims.

So what has been the typical feedback? Bindra says many of them who come from the cities complain about overcrowded roads, traffic congestion, increasing road accidents. In the villages, people give feedback about the smuggling and use of drugs. "We do intimate the local police when we come across such information," says Bindra.

But beyond the lack of adequate civic amenities in the cities and the use of drugs in the villages, the main issue troubling the youth is unemployment, according to Bindra. "I have written to all the universities in Punjab seeking details of the success of their placement camps. Normally, it is the duty of the colleges to organise placement camps and help children get employment as these students pay a fee. But the placement record of many colleges is not very encouraging. Though their feedback is yet to come back, as per rough estimate, placements are not more than 30 per cent in most colleges while it should be more than 90 per cent," says Bindra. He believes that if the Punjabi youth can find jobs within the country they will not run abroad.

Beyond the lack of adequate employment, the PYDB members also found that they received several complaints about pending cases in the police department. To set this right, PYDB approached the concerned officers.

"Our meetings have just started and we have conducted over 25 such meetings and these meetings will continue to happen. The Board will be giving overall feedback to the Chief Minister of Punjab," Bindra added.

But the PYDB is going beyond just redressing complaints and following up with universities and police departments. It is also trying to build confidence in the youth and encourage and help them get a job as soon as possible. To this end, they have decided to honour the youngsters who are doing credible work in any field — be it sports, social sector or academics. The idea is for the youth to find it easy to get a job and make their job application better.

Further, in the village level meetings, the PYDB is trying to revive sports clubs. Not too long ago, there were over 13,000 such sports clubs across the state but now nearly 6,000 of them are lying unused. New elections of club management bodies are being conducted so as ensure more youngsters connect with each other and get involved in different sports.

Chennai's novel waste management mantra: Converting city's waste to ash and turning that ash into pavement tiles

ARUN JANARDHANAN
CHENNAI, MARCH 22

IN THE past, Chennai had never achieved its goals in waste management. However, a new project that has been running successfully for the past two months could change that record. The initiative, in which waste is converted into ash and then this ash is used to make colourful tiles, started as a pilot project at one of the city's landfill sites — Manali, which has a capacity to process 10 metric tonne waste a day — but soon it will be soon replicated at larger landfills in other parts of Chennai. G Prakash, Commissioner of the Greater Chennai Corporation is hopes to process larger capacities by September.

"Another incinerator with 50 metric tonne capacity will be operational at Kodungaiyur landfill by May," Prakash said.

Incinerators turn 10 million tonnes of city's waste into just 150 kg of ash *Express*

Kodungiyur and Perungudi are two of Chennai's largest landfill sites and they are often blamed for polluting and destroying the city's groundwater, air and wetlands.

Prakash added that the government will add six more incinerators with 100 mt capacity each, by September. The advantage of this technology is that it turns a great quantity of waste into a small quantity of ash. For instance, 10 mt of waste is turned into just 150 kg ash. But waste management doesn't just stop here. An add on technology converts the ash residue into beautiful tiles and bricks.

"We haven't started using these tiles for commercial purpose. Whatever (tiles) are being produced are at present being laid at the recycling plant facility itself to beautify the pavements. We will soon escalate production and find a market," Prakash said. The corporation also uses a colouring machine to paint the bricks in many other colours.

IN NUMBERS

INEQUALITY AND GROWTH IN THE BRIC COUNTRIES: 2000 TO 2018

COUNTRY	AVERAGE INCOME GROWTH (%)	BOTTOM 40% GROWTH	DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INCOME GROWTH OF THE BOTTOM 40% AND AVERAGE INCOME GROWTH (% POINTS)	TOP 1% GROWTH (%)
Brazil	5	20	14	16
China	361	263	-97	518
India	122	58	-64	213
Russian Federation	72	121	49	68

Source: HDR, 2019

MAKING FARMING REMUNERATIVE

Maharashtra appoints farm trade representatives to helps its farmers

PARTHA SARAHTI BISWAS
PUNE, MARCH 22

ONION GROWERS of Nashik have always wondered how the onion they produce and sell at Rs 1,000 per quintal at Lasalgaon's market, fetches more than double that price for traders who sell in markets of Chennai or Delhi. The key factor that allows traders to corner higher profits is their in-depth knowledge of markets and their access to market intelligence.

It was this market intelligence which the Maharashtra State Agricultural Marketing Board (MSAMB) wanted to tap when it became the first such Board in the country to appoint trade representative in other states to help Maharashtra's farmers sell their produce in markets outside the state.

Sunil Pawar, Managing Director of the Board, pointed out how the promotion of domestic inter-state trade had often taken a back seat to export promotions from the perspective of increasing earnings of farmers. "The fact is that inter-state trade is much larger than exports both in terms of volume and value. However, it is in the hand of traders who have developed the supply chains over the last many years," he confided. Traders, Pawar said, knew the demand, the markets as well as the mechanism necessary to ensure inter-state trade. Citing the example of onions Pawar said how Maharashtra produced 32-35 per cent of the nation's total and supplied the bulb to almost all markets in North and North East India. "But it is the traders who control the trade. So if they have to send onions from Lasalgaon in Nashik to say the Kohima in Nagaland, the supply chain is only known to them. Farmers or farmer groups who wish to tap these markets would certainly be at a disadvantage," he explained.

The best way to understand markets, Pawar said, was to be in them. Thus, the Board decided to post their officers in the markets. "Their brief was simple -- try to understand the demand of the markets, identify the key players and see how our farmers can tap in the system," stated Pawar. Officers were posted in the major consumption states such as Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Delhi.

These officers map mandis across India and share trade trends with farmers *Express*

In the first phase, which was launched in December 2018, the emphasis was on fruits such as grapes, pomegranate, banana and the quintessential onion for which Maharashtra is the leading grower in the country. Thus, in the case of Delhi, officers sent there stated that the Azadpur mandi receives 10 to 15 trucks of pomegranates from Maharashtra during a season. "The potential for our farmers is immense — they can tie up with agencies like Mother Dairy that run retail fruit and vegetable shops in the national capital," a report read. Similarly, for Rajasthan, the officer in charge identified markets where fruits and vegetables from Maharashtra can make inroads.

But understanding the scope of the market and tapping that markets are too different things. "In case the farmers go the markets they should also know who to sell their produce. So our reports also included identification of major traders who would be willing to buy," explained Pawar. Also, the officers liaison with their counterparts with other state agricultural marketing boards to ensure action is taken in case farmers do not receive payments within time.

The reports and the contacts developed by the officers were shared online with the marketing Board sharing the same with farmer groups who wished to take part in this trade. Market intelligence, Pawar was shared with farmers on various forums organises by the Board. As a corollary to this scheme, the Board is also fine-tuning another scheme which will provide farmers with road transport subsidies to carry out trade outside Maharashtra.

In the first year of its launch, Pawar said the state had seen increased activity in farmers producer companies trading in onion in Chennai and Delhi. Also, farmers from the state were seen taking grapes, bananas and pomegranates to markets of Rajasthan, Punjab, Delhi.

"This scheme needs to be taken up at the national level. We hope the central government would pitch in with a similar scheme at the national level which would see states appointing officers in other states to find markets for their farmers. Thus, if officers from Maharashtra are appointed in Rajasthan to find markets for their onion growers, officers from Rajasthan can be appointed here to find markets for their mustard or wheat growers. Overall, it will help farmers better access to markets thus enabling them to double their income," signed off Pawar.

TOP OF THE WORLD

In Colombo. *Reuters*

SRI LANKA

340 arrested for defying curfew

Colombo: Nearly 340 people have been arrested in Sri Lanka for defying a nationwide curfew imposed by the government to contain the fast-spreading coronavirus pandemic that has claimed over 13,000 lives globally, police said on Sunday. The suspects were apprehended from areas coming under several police stations. Most were arrested for drinking at public places, driving on the roads, keeping their restaurants open, for unruly behaviour after drinking and selling merchandise during the curfew, the Colombo Page quoted police spokesman S P Jaliya Senaratne as saying.

CYPRUS

First coronavirus death reported

Nicosia: Cyprus' health ministry has announced its first coronavirus death and said there were 83 cases. The number of COVID-19 cases in the island's breakaway Turkish Cypriot north has meanwhile risen to 35, including 31 German tourists, with no deaths, officials there said. The eastern Mediterranean island is divided between the internationally-recognised Republic of Cyprus and the northern third under Turkish control. The deceased was a 70-year-old British man who had contracted the virus from another Briton while being treated at Paphos general hospital's ICU, said news site Philelefteros.

FRANCE

Doctor dies of COVID-19

Paris: France on Sunday reported its first death of a hospital doctor from coronavirus. Health Minister Olivier Veran said that as far as he knew the man -- who died on Saturday -- was the "first hospital doctor to be hit". The accident and emergency practitioner worked at a hospital in Compiegne, north of Paris, AFP was able to confirm. Veran refused to give any more information about the victim, saying details were being withheld for medical reasons and to respect the wishes of the doctor's family. Compiegne is in the Oise department, the first area in France to be badly hit by the outbreak.

Over 300,000 cases, half in Europe

651 more deaths in Italy; China diverts all intl flights; Merkel in quarantine

AGENCIES
MARCH 22

THERE ARE more than 300,000 declared cases of the new coronavirus around the world, according to an AFP tally on Sunday.

At least 300,097 infections have been confirmed globally, including 12,895 deaths, in 169 countries and territories, according to data collected from national authorities and the World Health Organisation. The cases in Europe topped 150,000, as per the AFP tally. The raging pandemic has forced lockdowns in 35 countries, disrupting lives, travel and businesses as governments scramble to shut borders and unleash hundreds of billions in emergency measures to avoid a widespread virus-fuelled economic meltdown.

Italy's world-topping toll from the coronavirus pandemic approached 5,500 on Sunday after the Mediterranean country reported another 651 deaths.

China will redirect all arriving international flights from its capital Beijing to 12 other cities from Monday to control the surge of imported coronavirus cases as the country reported its first domestically transmitted COVID-19 case after a gap of three days, officials said on Sunday.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said Sunday that gatherings of more than two people will be banned in public to control the spread of the coronavirus. "Our own behaviour is the most effective way" of slowing the rate of infection, Merkel said.

Merkel will quarantine herself at home after being treated by a doctor who has since tested positive for the novel coronavirus, a government spokesman said Sunday.

Beds for COVID-19 patients are placed at IFEMA convention centre in Madrid, Spain on Saturday. Spanish health authorities have acknowledged that some intensive care units in the hardest-hit areas are close to their limit. *AP*

The country's National Health Commission (NHC) said that 46 new confirmed cases were reported on the mainland on Saturday, including one domestic infection transmitted by imported cases in Guangzhou.

Fatalities in France jumped to 562 as police said helicopters and drones were being deployed to boost the government's attempts to keep people in their homes. Britain has told pubs, restaurants and theatres to close and warned citizens to stop panic-buying.

The Canadian death toll from the coronavirus outbreak jumped almost 50% percent to 19 in less than a day and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau predicted on Sunday the crisis would last for months.

Canada has already closed its borders to all but essential travel and announced a C$27 billion aid package.

In Spain, toll up by 30%, PM to extend state of emergency

PTI & REUTERS
MADRID, MARCH 22

SPAIN ON Sunday announced 394 new deaths caused by the novel coronavirus, raising to 1,720 the official death toll in Europe's worst-hit country after Italy, a 30 percent increase over the previous day.

The number of confirmed cases of the disease rose by 3,646, or 14.6 per cent, to 28,572, according to health ministry figures, with officials warning infections will rise further in the coming days.

Meanwhile, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said Sunday his government would ask parliament to extend for another 15 days until April 11 a state of emergency it imposed this month to try to curb the spread of the coronavirus.

> **We must prepare ourselves emotionally and psychologically for very hard days ahead"**
>
> **PEDRO SANCHEZ**
> SPAIN'S PM

"I know that is a drastic measure... but experts agree that it is an effective measure in the fight against coronavirus," he told a news conference after holding talks via video conference with the heads of Spain's regional governments.

The country has mobilised 52,000 additional health workers and racing to finish construction of field hospitals.

"We must prepare ourselves emotionally and psychologically for very hard days ahead," Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez had earlier told the nation in a televised address.

"The cases are rising and are going to continue to rise in the coming days," ministry spokeswoman Maria Jose Sierra told journalists, saying nobody knew when the outbreak in Spain would peak.

TOLL UP BY 129 TO 1,685

Iran leader refuses US help, citing virus conspiracy theory

ASSOCIATED PRESS
DUBAI, MARCH 22

IRAN'S SUPREME leader refused US assistance Sunday to fight the new coronavirus, citing an unfounded conspiracy theory that the virus could be man-made by America.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's comments come as Iran faces crushing US sanctions blocking the country from selling its crude oil and accessing international financial markets.

But while Iranian civilian officials in recent days have increasingly criticised those sanctions, 80-year-old Khamenei instead chose to traffic in the same conspiracy theory increasingly used by Chinese officials about the new virus to deflect blame for the pandemic.

"I do not know how real this accusation is but when it exists, who in their right mind would trust you to bring them medication?" Khamenei said.

"Possibly your medicine is a way to spread the virus more." He also alleged without offering any evidence that the virus "is specifically built for Iran using the genetic data of Iranians which they have obtained through different means."

"You might send people as doctors and therapists, maybe they would want to come here and see the effect of the poison they have produced in person," he said.

> **...who in their right mind would trust you to bring them medication... You might send people as doctors and therapists, maybe they would want to come here and see the effect of the poison they have produced in person"**
>
> **ALI KHAMENEI**
> IRAN'S LEADER

There is no scientific proof offered anywhere in the world to support Khamenei's comments.

His comments come as Iran has over 21,600 confirmed cases of the new coronavirus amid 1,685 reported deaths, according to government figures released Sunday.

Iran is one of the hardest-hit countries in the world by the new virus. Across the Mideast, Iran represents eight of 10 cases of the virus and those leaving the Islamic Republic have carried the virus to other countries.

Lockdowns alone won't defeat outbreak: WHO expert

REUTERS
LONDON, MARCH 22

Countries can't simply lock down their societies to defeat coronavirus, the World Health Organisation's top emergency expert said on Sunday, adding that public health measures are needed to avoid a resurgence.

"What we really need to focus on is finding those who are sick, those who have the virus, and isolate them, find their contacts and isolate them," Mike Ryan said in an interview on the BBC's Andrew Marr Show.

"The danger right now with the lockdowns ... if we don't put in place the strong public health measures now, when those movement restrictions and lockdowns are lifted, the danger is the disease will jump back up."

Ryan said the examples of China, Singapore and South Korea, which coupled restrictions with rigorous measures to test every possible suspect, provided a model for Europe, which the WHO has said has replaced Asia as the epicentre of the pandemic.

US 'close' to $2 trn package, Pence tests negative for virus

AGENCIES
MARCH 22

TREASURY SECRETARY Steven Mnuchin said on Sunday that bipartisan negotiations over an economic relief package were nearing completion and that he expected a vote on stimulus legislation on Monday morning.

The package, which is expected to approach $2 trillion dollars, is designed to help small businesses keep their workers employed and offer direct payments to many Americans as more and more of the U.S. economy comes to a halt because of the coronavirus. "We've ordered a major part of the economy to shut down, and the president wants to protect them," Mnuchin said on "Fox News Sunday."

However, a top Democrat saidshe would introduce her own bill. "We will be introducing our own bill," Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said earlier as she left the meeting, while adding negotiators were still talking and that she hoped for a bipartisan agreement.

During his news conference,

A health worker at Times Square in New York. *Reuters*

McConnell suggested the differences were just part of the usual jockeying in Congress.

"It's still some elbowing and maneuvering for room as you can imagine, but this is a pretty solidly bi-partisan proposal agreed to by a lot of rank and file Democrats who were involved in drafting it," McConnell told reporters.

"We are poised to deliver the significant relief that Americans need with the speed that this crisis demands," McConnell said.

US Vice President Mike Pence and his wife Karen Pence have tested negative for the deadly novel coronavirus, a top White House official said on Saturday.

EXPLAINED

Direction of bill debated

US LEADERS didn't mention specifics about Democrat-Republican differences over the relief package. However, experts said areas such as helping corporations rather than workers and provisions on allowing companies to buy back their stock were likely the sticking points. The measures in the proposed bill include direct payments for Americans and loans for small businesses. The debate, then, appears to be where these funds should be injected: Corporate America or other avenues of reaching citizens.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC: FOUR KEY FIGURES

€150 bn
The amount German officials are preparing to make available in its budget to help the country weather the economic effects

$38 bn
The amount announced by Australia on Sunday as part of measures to limit the economic damage from the coronavirus pandemic

6 mn
The number of medical items sent to Ethiopia, including masks, testing kits and protective clothing by the Jack Ma Foundation in China

100
The number of army virus experts and medics being sent by Russia to Italy to help fight the outbreak

NHS could soon be overwhelmed like Italy, warns UK PM

REUTERS
LONDON, MARCH 22

BRITAIN'S NATIONAL Health Service (NHS) could be "overwhelmed" by the coronavirus like the Italian health system in just two weeks, Prime Minister Boris Johnson has warned in the face of rising numbers of deaths.

The death toll in Britain hit 233. In comments carried in Sunday Telegraph and other Sunday newspapers, Johnson again urged Britons to stay at home to stop the virus spread. "The numbers are very stark, and they are accelerating. We are only a matter of weeks - two or three - behind Italy," he said.

"Unless we act together, unless we make the heroic and collective national effort to slow the spread - then it is all too likely that our own NHS will be similarly overwhelmed," he said.

Italy overtook China as the country worst affected by the virus on Thursday. The Italian government has ordered that all businesses must close until April 3 in its latest desperate effort to halt the epidemic.

The last week has seen Johnson's government quickly step-up warnings over the virus. It has closed schools for most

In London on Sunday. *AP*

pupils, told pubs and restaurants to shut and asked people to avoid unnecessary social interactions.

On Saturday Britain's NHS struck a deal with the independent hospital sector, giving the institution more ventilators and thousands of extra beds and healthcare staff on hand from next week. Britain also urged 1.5 million people identified by the NHS as being at higher risk of severe illness if they contract coronavirus to not leave their homes, to protect themselves.

But Johnson cautioned that from the Italian experience, even the best hospitals could be overwhelmed by COVID-19. "The Italians have a superb healthcare system. And yet their doctors and nurses have been completely overwhelmed by the demand," Johnson noted.

As cases rise to 757, Imran rules out full lockdown

SAJJAD HUSSAIN
ISLAMABAD, MARCH 22

PAKISTAN PRIME Minister Imran Khan on Sunday ruled out a complete nationwide lockdown, saying it will create chaos and urged people to self-quarantine to curb the spread of the coronavirus pandemic which has so far claimed four lives and infected over 750 people in the country.

Addressing the nation as cases of the coronavirus surged, Khan reiterated that a lockdown will create chaos as more than 25 per cent people were living below poverty line and their lives will be shattered.

He said the situation in Pakistan does not call for a lockdown yet. "Let me first tell you what a complete lockdown is. It means imposing a curfew and locking people in their homes," said Khan.

"We cannot afford complete lockdown as it will create massive unrest," he said, adding that the situation in the country is not as bad as in Italy or France.

"If the condition was similar to that of Italy, I would have imposed a lockdown," he said.

He urged the people to follow the policy of self-isolation and stay inside their homes. He said the government was constantly watching the situation and all necessary measures will be taken accordingly. **PTI**

US SHUTS OFF ACCESS TO ITS ASYLUM PROGRAMME FOR FIRST TIME IN 40 YEARS

A closed border, dashed hopes and a looming disaster

AZAM AHMED, MIRIAM JORDAN & KIRK SEMPLE
CIUDAD JUÁREZ, MARCH 22

TANIA BONILLA arrived in this Mexican border city on Wednesday determined to apply for asylum in the United States.

With her 1-year-old in tow, she had defied the odds — evading a death sentence by a Honduran gang at home, she said, as well as deportation by the Mexican authorities at the southern border and kidnapping by smugglers en route.

But now, in eyeshot of an international bridge connecting the Mexican city of Ciudad Juárez to the United States, a new and much more serious problem presented itself: the coronavirus.

In response to its rapid spread, which has claimed about 13,000 lives worldwide, the United States government announced on Friday that in addition to closing the Mexican border to nonessential traffic, it would shut off access for anyone trying to claim asylum from the border.

In practice, the US will deport anyone caught crossing between official ports of entry, including

Outside the immigration office in Ciudad Juárez. *NYT*

those hoping to turn themselves in, denying them access to asylum and potentially sending them back into harm's way.

Analysts said this was the first time in memory since the creation of the current asylum system 40 years ago that the United States had shut down access to its program along the border. Some viewed it as an attempt to use a global pandemic as a pretext to summarily block access to the US asylum system for those coming from the south.

"I think when you have a crisis of these proportions, it's possible to get away with a lot, and that's possibly what they are doing here," said Sarah Pierce, an analyst.

For some migrants, the move felt existential, as though what little hope remained had been plundered by a virus that is far more widespread in the US than in their own countries.

"Right now, I don't know what I'm going to do," said Bonilla, 22, outside the state of Chihuahua's migrant affairs offices. Her son played with another group of children whose parents were also fleeing violence. "The one thing I can't do is go back." **NYT**

INSURANCE WATCH

NON-LIFE COVER PREMIUM RISES 14%

New Delhi: Non-life insurance firms reported a 14 per cent increase in the premium collection to Rs 1.73 lakh crore during April-February this fiscal, according to the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India data. **PTI**

SECTOR WATCH
AVIATION

Airport loads at lowest in years, airlines struggle to find parking space

PRANAV MUKUL
NEW DELHI, MARCH 22

WITH MORE than a 1,000 flights getting cancelled throughout the country on Sunday on account of weak demand caused by Janata Curfew, airport loads in the country have fallen to its lowest levels in the past several years. According to information sourced from flight-tracking portal Flightradar24, at Delhi airport alone — the country's largest — 255 departures were cancelled, 38 per cent of the day's schedule. Similarly at Mumbai airport, 233 departures, or 53 per cent, were cancelled on Sunday.

With large-scale grounding of aircraft, airport operators are also running out of parking space. At Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport, several aircraft have been parked at Runway 27 of the aerodrome for lack of enough parking bays available. For Sunday, India's largest domestic airline IndiGo said that it would operate only 60 per cent of its scheduled flights. The airline operates around 1,400 flights daily on domestic sectors. Its rival budget airline GoAir, on the other hand, said it was cancelling all of its around 330 flights on Sunday.

Further, in terms of passenger loads, airport sources said over the past 20 days, international air passenger load at Delhi airport has fallen by 50 per cent, while that for domestic sectors has fallen by 15 per cent. Every month, Delhi airport handles around 61 lakh passengers, including domestic and international. On Sunday, however, Delhi airport sources said international arrivals saw an uptick, given that India has prohibited arrival of international passengers, including both foreign and Indian citizens, from Monday early morning.

The sudden increase in international arrivals tested the available infrastructure at Delhi airport, causing the authorities to respond to the surge in traffic. "Before the week long ban on international flights, there is a surge in numbers of passengers. While things are smooth at other airports, in Delhi the situation is crowded but orderly.

Flights tracked in Indian airspace on March 23, 2019 (top) and March 22, 2020. *Source: Flightradar24*

We have increased facilities & number of doctors for mandatory secondary screening," Minister of State for Civil Aviation (Independent Charge) Hardeep Singh Puri said in a series of tweets.

"It has been a difficult two days, but with 90 health counters operational for secondary screening of incoming passengers at Delhi Airport, things are back to normal," he added later on Sunday.

Over the next one week though, an airline executive said, passenger loads on domestic flights may see a slight increase considering a blanket ban on all trains by the government. "This is contingent on the government not suspending domestic air travel across the country though," the executive said.

Meanwhile, low-cost carrier SpiceJet has let go of about 20 of its pilots, who were serving their notice period, without completing the stipulated 12-month period. In a communication to these pilots, citing the impact of the pandemic on aviation industry, SpiceJet said that it has accepted the pilots' resignation with a "reduced notice period".

In a statement, a SpiceJet spokesperson said: "SpiceJet has decided to waive off the notice period of a few pilots (around 20 in number) who had resigned from the Company. This is not a retrenchment as they were under notice period".

COVID-19 OUTBREAK HAS SEVERELY HIT DOMESTIC INDICES

Market slump hits govt's divestment plans, may see shortfall of ₹30K cr

SUNNY VERMA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 22

THE GOVERNMENT'S disinvestment programme is being hit by the slump in the stock market in recent weeks, making it difficult for the Centre to sell stakes at such low valuations. With just eight trading sessions pending till the end of the fiscal year and any decent recovery eluding the stock markets, the government looks set to miss its revised target for the year by a wide margin.

The government has revised its target down to Rs 65,000 crore from Rs 1.05 lakh crore for the current financial year. As per the latest data available with the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM), the government has, so far, raised Rs 34,845.06 through disinvestment. Unless the government is able to wrap up some sales in these remaining eight trading days, the Centre will face a shortfall of around Rs 30,000 crore in its disinvestment receipts.

"Given the volatility in Indian market is at its peak, it will be difficult to sell stakes even through routes such as offer for sale (OFS), which have fewer regulatory compliances and can be implemented quickly," said a Delhi-based investment banker who has worked on government stake sale plans in the past. "In my 20-year career in the markets, I have never seen such volatility," he said. The volatility index or Indian VIX, around 73, is within touching distance of the peak of 84 recorded in 2008, at the height of global financial crisis. During normal times, VIX is usually below 15. On February 20, for example, the VIX was at 13.

Low valuations of stocks, along with this high volatility, means that the government will be pushed to postpone its stake sale plans until the market stabilises. Sources said one viable option in these circumstances could be cash-rich state-owned companies conducting a buyback of their shares. Such a market also means no private company will be able to quickly raise funds through stock markets either through initial public offering or secondary market sale.

The Finance Ministry did not reply to queries seeking comments. Of Rs 34,845.06 raised so far this year, the government raised Rs 4,368.80 crore through a follow-on-offer of Bharat 22 ETF and another Rs 26,500.39 through more tranches of CPSE ETF. Exchange Traded Fund has been one of the main sources of fund raising for the government. Among the other stake sales this year, the Centre raised Rs 637.97 crore through the IPO of IRCTC, Rs 475.89 crore through the IPO of RVNL and Rs 730.33 crore through offer for sale of RITES shares.

For next year's Budget, the government has announced an ambitious disinvestment agenda, aiming to raise Rs 2.1 lakh crore through stake sales, including plans to list Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) on stock exchanges and sale of government stake in IDBI Bank. Privatisation of BPCL, Container Corporation of India, Shipping Corporation of India and Air India will be other key issues next year.

In the last six years, the government has thrice missed disinvestment collection targets and thrice exceeded it. The biggest shortfall in disinvestment receipts is estimated this year — shortfall of nearly Rs 70,000 crore from the original Budget estimate of Rs 1.05 lakh crore. For three years between 2016-17 and 2018-19, the government exceeded the BE targets for disinvestment. In 2015-16, the government collected Rs 23,997 crore through disinvestment as against BE of Rs 25,313 crore. The shortfall in 2014-15 was around Rs 2,000 crore from BE of Rs 26,353 crore.

EXPLAINED

Low valuations may force govt to postpone plans

LOW VALUATIONS of stocks, along with this high volatility, means that the government will be pushed to postpone its stake sale plans until the market stabilises. One viable option, in these circumstances, could be cash-rich state-owned companies conducting a buyback of their shares. Such a market also means no private company will be able to quickly raise funds through stock markets either through initial public offering or secondary market sale.

Virus locks gates: Maruti, Honda Cars, Hero MotoCorp, Toyota shut output

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, MARCH 22

THE COUNTRY'S largest passenger vehicle manufacturer, Maruti Suzuki on Sunday announced its decision to shut production and office operations at its facilities in Gurgaon and Manesar, Haryana, with immediate effect till further notice. The R&D Centre at Rohtak will also remain closed, it said.

Announcing halt of operations at all its global manufacturing facilities, including India, Colombia and Bangladesh and the Global Parts Centre at Neemrana with immediate effect until March 31, Hero MotoCorp said its chairman Pawan Munjal has already conveyed the organisation's commitment "to stand by the employees despite the severe disruptions caused by the ongoing situation."

On similar lines, Honda Cars India informed its associates and suppliers that production operations at both its manufacturing plants in Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, and Tapukara, Rajasthan, will be temporarily suspended from March 23-31. The company said while it intends to restart production on April 1,2020, however, it will be dependent upon advice from government/health authorities, and market and supply conditions. Gaku Nakanishi, president & CEO, Honda Cars India, said: "In these trying times, health, safety, and well-being of our associates, their families, and community at large is of utmost importance. We stand by them during this tough phase and urge everyone to take all possible measures to prevent COVID-19 from spreading further."

Fiat Chrysler Automobiles together with Fiat India Automobiles Private Limited (FIAPL), too has announced to temporarily close operations and suspend production, till March 31. FCA and FIAPL said: "There will be no retrenchment of any plant employees as a result of the plant closure and all will continue to receive their salaries during this closure period."

Even Toyota Kirloskar Motors announced the temporarily halt of production at its plant in Bidadi, Karnataka, till further notice.

The day also witnessed commitment by India Inc leaders to offer their support to fight the impact of coronavirus. Sensing the need of a more robust healthcare infrastructure in the country in order to tackle the looming threat of a spread of coronavirus in the country, Anand Mahindra, chairman, Mahindra Group, on Sunday said while he is ready to offer Mahindra resorts as temporary care facilities, the Group is also exploring on how its manufacturing facilities can start making ventilators. He also committed the help of his projects team to constructing temporary care facilities.

Mahindra Group chairman Anand Mahindra said the group is committed to support in building health infrastructure

In a series of tweets on Sunday, Mahindra said: "... we ... will immediately begin work on how our manufacturing facilities can make ventilators." While he also talked of creating a fund to assist the small businesses and self employed and to contribute his entire salary in the fund, he said his "projects team stands ready to assist the govt/Army in erecting temporary care facilities."

Anil Agarwal, executive chairman, Vedanta Resources Ltd, on Sunday announced a commitment of Rs 100 crore.

On Friday, N Chandrasekaran, chairman, Tata Sons, said the current situation is likely to have a large and deep financial impact on the weaker socio-economic segments of the society. "During this time of crisis, our group companies commit to ensuring full payments to the temporary workers and daily wage earners who are working in our offices and at our sites in India for the month of March and April, 2020, even if these workers are not able to work due to either quarantine measures, site closures, plant shutdowns or other reasons."

Hindustan Unilever, on Friday, committed Rs 100 crore to help in the fight against COVID-19 and announced a 15 per cent cut in the prices of Lifebuoy sanitisers, handwash and Domex floor cleaners.

'Hotels may see 20-40% fall in occupancy rates in Mar-May'

Hotels in India are staring at 20 to 40 per cent fall in occupancy rates in the three months ending May as lockdowns due to coronavirus rise, as per India Ratings

HIT HARD
THIS IS TWO TO FOUR TIMES THE IMPACT THE INDUSTRY HAD SEEN DURING THE 2008 FINANCIAL CRISIS

Revenue impact
HOTELS UNDER THE FOUR-STAR OR ABOVE CATEGORIES COULD SEE A 65-70 PER CENT FALL

HOTEL RANGE PLUNGE IN OCCUPANCY (%)
- Mid-scale 30-40 mid-scale
- Four-star hotels &
- above 20-25

OUTLOOK
- Occupancy rates across hotel categories are likely to fall to their lowest levels in the last decade, materially impacting earnings. The industry in general may face challenges in debt servicing. The crisis comes at the peak occupancy season due to vacations and weddings before the onset of the monsoons
- If the global financial crisis is a benchmark, then the magnitude and impact on the drivers of occupancy rate due to the pandemic is larger

GLOBAL SCENARIO
Singapore, Indonesia and Hong Kong, where the outbreak began in January, have seen a sharp decline in occupancy rates — higher than the SARS outbreak in 2003

Source: India Ratings/PTI

India Inc seeks rate cut, NPA norms dilution

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, MARCH 22

WITH THE rapidly spreading coronavirus threatening to derail the economy, India Inc has sought fiscal and monetary stimulus measures, including reduction in the repo rate, cash reserve ratio (CRR) and relaxation in norms relating to non-performing assets (NPAs), to bail out the economy.

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has proposed an immediate repo rate reduction of 50 basis points, along with a 50-basis point reduction in CRR to ensure low cost of funds. "The RBI may consider relaxing the NPA recognition norms from 90 days to 180 days till September 30, 2020 to provide relief to industry faced with payment issues as well as pressure on banks to classify loans as NPAs," said Chandrajit Banerjee, director general, CII.

Niranjan Hiranandani, president, Assocham, said, "The time is then perfectly ripe for the RBI to roll out monetary/fiscal stimulus to protect business from going bankrupt." The industry body has proposed a moratorium for debt servicing (principal plus interest), reduction of interest rates across the businesses, rescheduling of loan repayment and moratorium in rating surveillance.

"These measures, implemented on an urgent basis, have the potential to prevent the grave economic crisis which is on the horizon. It is no longer about investors and business, this is about the economic health of the country," Hiranandani said. "The time to take action is right now, we need implementation on a war footing if we are to save the Indian economy from tanking," he said.

An uptick in NPAs arising from the current economic disruption may further aggravate the challenges to the economy. "Therefore, the RBI may need to consider a special dispensation or temporary reprieve on NPA classification to banks and NBFCs for 1-2 quarters if the COVID-19 crisis does not peter out in the next few weeks," said Suman Chowdhury, president–ratings, Acuité Ratings & Research. Banerjee said RBI should create special liquidity lines for NBFCs and ARCs over and above the window available to banks. "This would be similar to the TARP (Troubled Asset Relief Program) instituted in the US after the global financial crisis and would ensure that credit transmission happens in a timely manner," he said.

India has been facing growth deceleration, with GDP growth having fallen to 4.7 per cent in Q3 of FY20. The impact of COVID-19 is likely to pull it down further in the fourth quarter and GDP growth could slide to below 5 per cent in FY21 if policy action is not taken urgently. "Fiscal and monetary stimulus measures need to be announced urgently," he said.

Crisil said clampdowns are increasing within and outside India, which would curtail consumer mobility and lead to deferral of spending. "While we expect most sectors to be impacted, this credit alert focuses on those at the front and centre of the pandemic-driven disruption. We foresee business reducing for airlines, hotels, malls, multiplexes and restaurants. Demand for some products such as eggs and poultry could also be impacted," it said.

In the services sector, information technology would be affected because of physical restrictions. "Lower business volumes and occupancies, and suboptimal efficiencies will impact the profitability of companies. While some affected companies may initiate cost-curtailment measures, these may not be enough given high fixed costs. That could impair the credit profiles," said said Subodh Rai, senior director, CRISIL Ratings.

Chowdhury said, "COVID-19 has triggered an unprecedented shutdown in many parts of India. We believe that this can have a very sharp impact on the GDP print not only in the current quarter but also in the next quarter Q1FY21. The largest impact will be in the services sector particularly travel, transport and hospitality while there will be a secondary impact on other services and manufacturing sector due to the large scale disruption."

As much as 47 per cent of the GVA is generated from services including transport, hotels, trade, construction, real estate and financial services. "We expect the hit on these sectors can shave off about 5 per cent of GDP estimates for FY20 and can lead to poor GDP figures in first quarter of FY21 if the disruption continues for over another 2 months," Chowdhury said.

RISK TO GROWTH

- **The impact of COVID-19 is likely to pull India's growth rate down further in the fourth quarter and GDP growth could slide to below 5 per cent in FY21, if policy action is not taken urgently**

CII seeks relief measures from govt: ₹2L cr direct income transfer, removal of LTCG

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, MARCH 22

IN LIGHT of the economic disruption caused by the coronavirus, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has suggested a series of measures to the government to alleviate stress, including Rs 2 lakh crore of direct income transfer to poor and elderly citizens, 50-basis point reduction in repo rate and easing of Non Performing Asset (NPA) classification norms among others.

Additional liquidity to the markets by the Reserve Bank of India and removal of long-term capital gains (LTCG) tax of 10 per cent in equities market are among the other recommendations of the industry chamber.

"Some of our members have already initiated steps to ramp up production of essential medical needs like hand sanitisers including some companies introducing sanitisers as a new product line. Efforts are being made to source formulations and reach out to makers of respiratory equipment across the world so that we can combat the challenge…However, given the magnitude of the problem and stage in which India is currently in more steps would be needed to minimise the impact of the outbreak," CII president Vikram Kirloskar wrote in a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Companies including ITC, Godrej Consumer Products, HUL and Patanjali have already reduced prices of hand sanitisers, which help in containing the spread of coronavirus.

The chamber also suggested that government should mandate GST payments on collection of Bills instead of the current norm of tax on raising of invoices.

Emirates to stop nearly all passenger flights, slash wages

Dubai: Emirates, one of the world's biggest long-haul airlines, said on Sunday it would stop nearly all passenger flights this week and cut staff wages by as much as half because of the coronavirus impact on travel demand.

The carrier had already announced the suspension of nearly 70 per cent of its network of 159 destinations, asked staff to go on unpaid leave and frozen recruitment as the industry faces one of its biggest ever challenges.

"As a global network airline, we find ourselves in a situation where we cannot viably operate passenger services until countries reopen their borders and travel confidence returns," Emirates Chairman Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed al-Maktoum said.

The airline said it will maintain some services to 13 countries for repatriation flights at the request of governments. **REUTERS**

Centre tweaks rules for companies under IBC

AASHISH ARYAN
NEW DELHI, MARCH 22

THE CENTRAL government on Sunday notified new rules, which mandated that companies obtain new Central Goods and Service Tax (CGST) and State Goods and Services Tax (SGST) registration numbers once the corporate insolvency resolution process (CIRP) of a company is initiated and an interim resolution professional (IRP) or resolution professional (RP) is appointed.

The said corporate debtor, which starts functioning as a new entity under the IRP or RP, shall register itself in all states and Union Territories where it had operations before undergoing CIRP process, the new rules said.

The new registration number of the company will be separate from the old registration number of the company, and enable the IRP or the RP to continue paying statutory dues and taxes as required, experts said.

The CGST system software mandates that companies under CIRP must first clear past dues in order to be able to pay new dues. The issue, however, is that once CIRP process is initiated against a company, a total moratorium is imposed, and no refunds are allowed.

Under the existing laws, once CIRP is initiated against a company and moratorium is imposed, the IBC rules take precedence over all other laws of the country. Central and state governments, which collect CGST, and SGST, are treated as operational creditors and must therefore file applications to claim their share of dues from the IRP, the experts said.

"The notification pragmatically resolves the system issue by obtaining new registration. However, old credits are denied in light of the refund provisions," Abhishek A Rastogi, partner at Khaitan & Co, said.

Once a new registration for the company under CIRP is obtained, it shall within 40 days file CGST and SCGT returns, the new rules said. The input tax credit for the corporate debtor with the new registration number shall be given since the appointment of IRP or RP.

The funds, which had been deposited by erstwhile IRP RP in the cash ledger of a corporate debtor undergoing CIRP, shall be available for refunds to company under new registration number, the rules said.

"While the notification provides that any amount deposited by an IRP in the cash ledger will be eligible for refunds, it appears that the intention is only to give refunds of taxes for the period prior to the appointment of the IRP", Rastogi said.

The said issue was also challenged by several companies before the Gujarat High Court in September last year. In their petition, the companies had then claimed that while the discrepancy between the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code and the CGST rules meant that the authorities had to wait several days to claim their dues, it could also result in them getting an unfair advantage if all lenders had to take a haircut on their claims.

WHAT CHANGES

- **The rules mandate companies obtain new CGST and SGST registration numbers once the corporate insolvency resolution process of a company is initiated and an interim resolution professional or resolution professional is appointed**

Turned back KLM flight gets clearance to land in Delhi

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, MARCH 22

AFTER HAVING to turn back from Russian airspace on Friday, KLM's Amsterdam-Delhi flight carrying over a 100 Indian citizens transiting through the Dutch capital from the US and Canada, the airline was granted clearance by the Indian civil aviation authorities late Saturday to land in Delhi.

The flight had taken off on Friday from Amsterdam without prior approval from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to carry passengers from the European country, and according to sources in the government, the flight was not permitted entry into Indian airspace once DGCA officials learnt of it.

"We have issued orders prohibiting any airline from boarding passengers — Indian or foreign — at any of the European Union countries. We are allowing special flights to be operated in a phased manner so that our infrastructure is not overloaded. As soon as we were informed by Ministry of External Affairs that a KLM flight was carrying passengers from Amsterdam, we had a NOTAM (notice to airmen) issued, asking the flight to turn back," a senior DGCA official said.

The flight was carrying 102 Indian citizens, including a pregnant woman and senior citizens, who were travelling from the US and Canada.

THE PANDEMIC

Closed

Paying to stop the pandemic

People wearing protective masks in Tokyo on March 12. As of March 18th SARS-COV-2, the virus behind COVID-19, had registered 134,000 infections outside China in 155 countries and territories. *Reuters*

PLANET EARTH is shutting down. In the struggle to get a grip on covid-19, one country after another is demanding that its citizens shun society. As that sends economies reeling, desperate governments are trying to tide over companies and consumers by handing out trillions of dollars in aid and loan guarantees. Nobody can be sure how well these rescues will work.

But there is worse. Troubling new findings suggest that stopping the pandemic might require repeated shutdowns. And yet it is also now clear that such a strategy would condemn the world economy to grave—perhaps intolerable—harm. Some very hard choices lie ahead.

Barely 12 weeks after the first reports of people mysteriously falling ill in Wuhan, in central China, the world is beginning to grasp the pandemic's true human and economic toll. As of March 18th SARS-COV-2, the virus behind covid-19, had registered 134,000 infections outside China in 155 countries and territories. In just seven days that is an increase of almost 90,000 cases and 43 countries and territories. The real number of cases is thought to be at least an order of magnitude greater.

Spooked, governments are rushing to impose controls that would have been unimaginable only a few weeks ago. Scores of countries, including many in Africa and Latin America, have barred travellers from places where the virus is rife. Times Square is deserted, the City of London is dark and in France, Italy and Spain cafés, bars and restaurants have bolted their doors. Everywhere empty stadiums echo to absent crowds.

It has become clear that the economy is taking a much worse battering than analysts had expected. Data for January and February show that industrial output in China, which had been forecast to fall by 3% compared with a year earlier, was down by 13.5%. Retail sales were not 4% lower, but 20.5%. Fixed-asset investment, which measures the spending on such things as machinery and infrastructure, declined by 24%, six times more than predicted. That has sent economic forecasters the world over scurrying to revise down their predictions. Faced with the most brutal recession in living memory, governments are setting out rescue packages on a scale that exceeds even the financial crisis of 2007-09.

This is the backdrop for fundamental choices about how to manage the disease. Using an epidemiological model, a group from Imperial College in London this week set out a framework to help policymakers think about what lies ahead. It is bleak.

One approach is mitigation, "flattening the curve" to make the pandemic less intense by, say, isolating cases and quarantining infected households. The other is to suppress it with a broader range of measures, including shutting in everybody, other than those who cannot work from home, and closing schools and universities. Mitigation curbs the pandemic, suppression aims to stop it in its tracks.

The modellers found that, were the virus left to spread, it would cause around 2.2m deaths in America and 500,000 in Britain by the end of summer. In advanced economies, they concluded, three months of curve-flattening, including two-week quarantines of infected households, would at best prevent only about half of these. Moreover, peak demand for intensive care would still be eight times the surge capacity of Britain's National Health Service, leading to many more deaths that the model did not attempt to compute. If that pattern holds in other parts of Europe, even its best-resourced health systems, including Germany's, would be overwhelmed.

No wonder governments are opting for the more stringent controls needed to suppress the pandemic. Suppression has the advantage that it has worked in China. On March 18th Italy added 4,207 new cases whereas Wuhan counted none at all. China has recorded a total of just over 80,000 cases in a population of 1.4bn people. For comparison, the Imperial group estimated that the virus left to itself would infect more than 80% of the population in Britain and America.

But that is why suppression has a sting in its tail. By keeping infection rates relatively low, it leaves many people susceptible to the virus. And since covid-19 is now so widespread, within countries and around the world, the Imperial model suggests that epidemics would return within a few weeks of the restrictions being lifted. To avoid this, countries must suppress the disease each time it resurfaces, spending at least half their time in lockdown. This on-off cycle must be repeated until either the disease has worked through the population or there is a vaccine which could be months away, if one works at all.

This is just a model, and models are just educated guesses based on the best evidence. Hence the importance of watching China to see if life there can return to normal without the disease breaking out again. The hope is that teams of epidemiologists can test on a massive scale so as to catch new cases early, trace their contacts and quarantine them without turning society upside down. Perhaps they will be helped by new drugs, such as a Japanese antiviral compound which China this week said was promising.

But this is just a hope, and hope is not a policy. The bitter truth is that mitigation costs too many lives and suppression may be economically unsustainable. After a few iterations governments might not have the capacity to carry businesses and consumers. Ordinary people might not tolerate the upheaval. The cost of repeated isolation, measured by mental well-being and the long-term health of the rest of the population, might not justify it.

In the real world there are trade-offs between the two strategies, though governments can make both more efficient. South Korea, China and Italy have shown that this starts with mass-testing. The more clearly you can identify who has the disease, the less you must depend upon indiscriminate restrictions. Tests for antibodies to the virus, picking up who has been infected and recovered, are needed to supplement today's which are only valid just before and during the illness. That will let immune people go about their business in the knowledge that they cannot be a source of further infections.

A second line of attack is to use technology to administer quarantines and social distancing. China is using apps to certify who is clear of the disease and who is not. Both it and South Korea are using big data and social media to trace infections, alert people to hotspots and round up contacts. South Korea changed the law to allow the state to gain access to medical records and share them without a warrant. In normal times many democracies might find that too intrusive. Times are not normal.

Last, governments should invest in health care, even if their efforts take months to bear fruit and may never be needed. They should increase the surge capacity of intensive care. Countries like Britain and America are desperately short of beds, specialists and ventilators. They should define the best treatment protocols, develop vaccines and test new therapeutic drugs. All this would make mitigation less lethal and suppression cheaper.

Be under no illusions. Such measures might still not prevent the pandemic from extracting a heavy toll. Today governments seem to be committed to suppression, whatever the cost. But if the disease is not conquered quickly, they will edge towards mitigation, even if that will result in many more deaths. Understandably, just now that is not a trade-off any government is willing to contemplate. They may soon have no choice.

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CHINA AND AMERICA

The blame game

Amid the pandemic, Sino-American relations are worsening

A CRIPPLING pandemic would seem to be an occasion for the world's two biggest economies to set aside differences and work together. Instead relations between America and China are nearing their darkest point since the crushing of the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989. Amid the crisis, the two countries are engaged in bitter name-calling and tit-for-tat struggles.

Some Chinese officials have been promoting a conspiracy theory that the American army brought covid-19 to China. President Donald Trump, meanwhile, has taken to calling SARS-COV-2 the "Chinese virus". One reason why he might wish to emphasise where the virus originated is that curbing travel from China was one of the few actions he took swiftly to fight it. More cynically still, Mr Trump is once again stoking a distracting media debate about his choice of words—whether he is being racist, as critics charge, or standing up for America by telling the truth. That is far more comfortable terrain than examining why he downplayed the virus for weeks.

On March 18th Sino-American feuding intensified. China announced the expulsions of almost all American citizens—about a dozen people—working in mainland China for the New York Times, the Washington Post and the Wall Street Journal. It was the biggest mass expulsion of Western journalists from China since Mao Zedong seized power in 1949.

The sparring has escalated quickly. Early in January China ignored requests for access to Wuhan by American disease-control experts who wanted to assess the early stages of the outbreak. It was furious when, later in January, Mr Trump barred non-American visitors from China. Now that the epidemic has waned, at least temporarily, in China, officials there are trumpeting their resolute handling of it, in contrast with America's fumbling—a victory for one-party rule, they suggest.

The relationship between the two great powers is far worse than during the presidencies of Barack Obama and Hu Jintao less than a decade ago. At that time there was also much distrust, but the two leaders co-operated on some vital issues, such as climate change and the global financial crisis.

Under Mr Trump and China's current leader, Xi Jinping, there has been no such detente. Mr Trump has packed his administration with China hawks, withdrawn from the Paris climate accord which Mr Obama and Mr Xi had signed, launched a trade war, hunted for Chinese spies in America and lobbied allies around the world to bar Huawei, a Chinese firm, from their 5G networks. Mr Xi in turn has pursued an increasingly aggressive foreign policy and intensified repression at home.

In January, as covid-19 began to spread beyond China's borders, the two countries at least managed to suspend their trade war. But tensions have persisted in many other areas. The trading of blows over journalists has been straight from the cold-war playbook. On February 18th the Trump administration designated five Chinese media organisations as "foreign missions" of the Chinese government. The next day China announced the expulsions of three Wall Street Journal reporters, ostensibly as punishment for a headline in the newspaper calling China the "real sick man of Asia". America then imposed a cap of 100 on Chinese nationals working for those five media: Xinhua, CGTN, China Daily, China Radio International and the distribution arm of People's Daily. That meant, in effect, the expulsion of 60 people.

China's response will have a far bigger impact on journalism, stripping the foreign press corps in China of many of its best correspondents. It will also worry many people in Hong Kong, where anger over Chinese interference has triggered frequent protests in recent months. China says the expelled reporters are barred from working there too. This scraps a convention under Chinese rule that foreign reporters, even if shut out of the mainland, can still work in Hong Kong. The central government has, in effect, made it clear that its rules for managing foreign journalists will take precedence over Hong Kong's far freer system.

Staff in protective suits accompany passengers outside a centralised facility for screening in Beijing on March 12. *Reuters*

In recent years Chinese officials have been confrontational with many Western countries, but more cautious with America. That era may be over. The harshness of China's retaliation suggests that its leaders are becoming more willing to risk open hostility with the United States.

China's insinuations over the origin of covid-19 are a sign of this change. For weeks fanciful theories had been circulating online in China and in Chinese media that the coronavirus was an American bioweapon, produced by the CIA or the US Army and released in Wuhan in October, when the city hosted the Military World Games. On March 12th Zhao Lijian, a spokesman for China's foreign ministry, stepped in on Twitter, where he now has more than 400,000 followers. "It might be US army who brought the epidemic to Wuhan," he tweeted. "Be transparent! Make public your data! US owe us an explanation!" Other Chinese diplomats have joined in spreading the rumour. Some American officials have also floated a baseless idea that covid-19 emerged from a research lab in Wuhan.

Mr Trump said China's conspiracy theory was one reason why he would keep calling SARS-COV-2 the "Chinese virus". He dismissed a reporter's suggestion that this might be racist. But his language seems likely to stoke racism, including among his own staff. On March 17th a Chinese-born American television reporter tweeted that a White House official had called the virus "Kung Flu" to her face.

For now the swapping of insults may appear infantile. But as the epidemic worsens, so too will the scapegoating. If far larger numbers die, perceptions in China and America of who is to blame will have profound consequences for a relationship that is already looking scarily frayed.

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Through these testing times India has seen a major drop in its air and noise pollution levels, Venice has dolphins playing in their harbours, boars running around their streets, and the pollution levels have dropped all over the world"

ROHIT SHARMA

'Zindagi rahi toh hi khel payenge'

Ace wrestler Bajrang has waited long for a chance at an Olympic medal, but realises that it's not the right time for the Games

MIHIR VASAVDA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 22

BEING CONFINED to the basement of a Sonepat high-rise building, working out in a small, under-lit area and then preparing a meal for his roommates - even as a distraction - was not quite how Bajrang Punia imagined marking the 125-day countdown for the Tokyo Olympics.

The plan, originally, was to be in Russia; sparring with some of the elite grapplers in wrestling-crazy Dagestan, applying finishing touches to a four-year slog that made him a favourite to medal in Tokyo. Instead, he is now locked in his apartment, flipping through news channels and tapping on the screen of his phone to get the latest on Covid-19.

The outbreak of the pandemic and its impact on lives globally has put into perspective the current scenario for Bajrang: most of all, he has realised that sport can take a backseat in such times. Not too long ago, just a week back, in fact, he couldn't wait to touchdown in Tokyo and step on the mat inside the Makuhari Messe Hall. Now, he wants the Olympics to wait.

"The way things are going on right now, it will be better if the Olympics are postponed. It will be beneficial not just for us, but for athletes from all countries. This is a difficult moment for everyone," Bajrang tells *The Indian Express*. "If they (IOC) go ahead as scheduled and other countries go, then we will also have to go. But it will be better if they wait for two-four months, or till the situation gets better. *Zindagi rahi toh hi Olympics khel payenge* (We will be able to compete at the Olympics only if we stay alive). But if you lose your life, then what's the point of the Olympics?"

The International Olympic Committee (IOC), which has come under severe pressure to defer the Games as the virus brings lives across the world to a grinding halt, is considering 'different scenarios' according to its president Thomas Bach. But any talk of a postponement or cancellation have been played down, for now, although some kind of a decision is likely to be taken in the coming few days.

Bajrang has waited for long to be at the Games. He had a chance to be at Rio 2016, but sacrificed it so that his mentor Yogeshwar Dutt, a bronze medalist at the 2012 Olympics, could go. Both wrestlers competed in the same weight class.

In the following four-year cycle, leading up to Tokyo, Bajrang consolidated his position among the world's best and is the favourite for a podium finish. But all that, the glamour of the Games and the glitter of a medal, can wait, he feels. "To be honest, I am not thinking about the Olympics right now. At the moment, we have to be careful from the virus. That doesn't mean I have stopped training. I have been training everyday but simultaneously, it's important to take care of our health too," he says. "Olympics will come again in 2024."

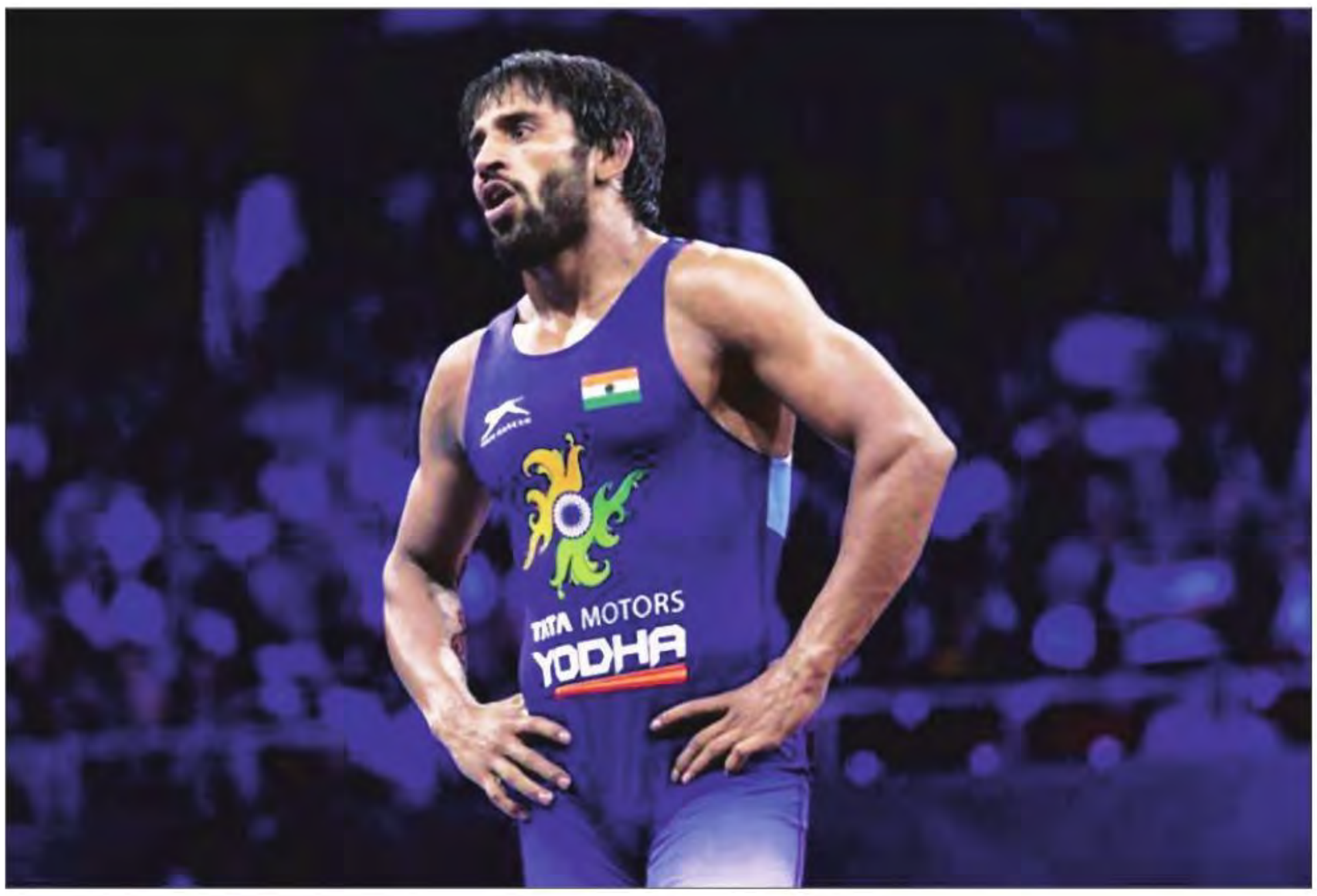
As has been the case with athletes across the world, the training programmes of several Indians has been disrupted in the last two weeks. Vinesh Phogat, for instance, had to cut short her training stint in Norway and return. She is now practising at an akhara near her home, while her coach Woller Akos sends her a daily plan on WhatsApp. Javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra has been in self-isolation after returning from Turkey while the boxers and shooters will not be training at least till the end of this month.

Bajrang's plan was to leave on March 6 for Dagestan, a popular training destination for some of the top wrestlers of the world. But he cancelled his plan after the coronavirus outbreak and decided to stay put in Sonepat. For around 10 days, he continued training at the Sports Authority of India centre there. Once the situation in India too got serious, he stopped that as well. "These are tough times for everyone. People in the USA, China, Russia, Iran, Italy… not just for us Indians. Even the Russian and Iranian wrestlers are training at home right now," he says.

On Sunday, his personal coach Shako Bentinidis returned home to Georgia. "So nowadays, I just do some physical training. There's a basement in my apartment, a small area, but I jog there for some time to warm up, then do around 500 to 700 sit-ups and a few stretching exercises," Bajrang says. "I have a sparring partner (Jitender Kumar) but we don't have a mat so there is no chance of mat practice."

The other reason not to spar is to make sure there's physical distancing between him and his training partners. Given that wrestling requires intimate contact between the two competitors, Bajrang is avoiding any risk. He and his training partners have virtually locked themselves up in their apartment, leaving only when unavoidable.

He knows athletes are not immune from catching this disease. "We are humans as well. So it's not like we won't get affected by this. This disease, as they say, spreads from human contact. And wrestling is a contact sport. So we have to be extra careful."



Bajrang Punia, India's finest contemporary wrestler, reckons it is better to postpone the Tokyo Games, given the precarious times. *File*

To be honest, I am not thinking about the Olympics right now. At the moment, we have to be careful from the virus. That doesn't mean I have stopped training. I have been training everyday but simultaneously, it's important to take care of our health too," he says."

BAJRANG PUNIA
WRESTLER

Hope, agony and defiance

With the clamour escalating to postpone the Games, some athletes are getting more vocal about re-scheduling the mega event, some are devastated at the prospect, some are waiting and watching while some claim they are unaffected by the situation

THE GUTTED

MIRABAI CHANU: Having missed the Asian Games due to a back injury, the weightlifter is keen to make amends. So she is understandably dismayed at the prospect of the Games getting postponed. Moreover, a spate of qualifying events, some of which she had planned to compete to keep herself match-fit, has been cancelled, leaving her disheartened.

■ "If the Olympics doesn't happen all our efforts for the last four years will all go to waste. I don't want it to cancel, I am praying to god every day. Even if it's postponed there will be a lot of problem."

THE PRAGMATIST

NEERAJ CHOPRA: The javelin thrower has been ordered by the Sports Authority of India (SAI) to remain self-isolated for 14 days after returning from a training stint in Turkey for an event in Patilia. So there is little training, but he's not frazzled. Rather, he says he is enjoying the rare break, which he calls a "forced leisure time."

■ "This is a completely different leisure time, not mixing with anybody, away from the world outsideI am enjoying my spare time listening to music, speaking on phone with family and friends, and reading a bit also."

THE UNAFFECTED

HOCKEY TEAM: Men's hockey coach Graham Reid insists his team is unaffected by the virus scare, despite a clutch of warm-up games being shelved. The 32 campers in Bangalore, he says, are keeping themselves in the groove by training regularly.

■ "We are isolated but we can carry out our normal schedule. Things are very smooth. We can't control the virus but we can control our environment. We have 32 campers here and we can play competitive hockey against each other. We are playing internal games."

The hopeful

MANU BHAKER: Like any impressionable youngster before her Games debut, Manu Bhaker is enthusiastically awaiting the Olympics. But she has accepted the possibility of rescheduling, though she has been training as hard as ever.

■ "Trials, events should be postponed in current situation as there are other very important things for the world to deal with. The current situation doesn't affect my preparation and mindset. I am continuing with my yoga sessions, meditation and and things that help me stay calm and composed."

AIFF should initiate PK lecture, says ex-coach

SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY
KOLKATA, MARCH 22

FORMER INDIAN football team captain and coach Syed Nayeemuddin feels that the All India Football Federation (AIFF) should start an annual PK Banerjee Lecture in memory of the departed legend. Three-time I-League winning coach Armando Colaco concurs. The AIFF technical committee chairman Shyam Thapa says he will take the proposal to the Federation general secretary Kushal Das.

PK passed away on Friday and usually the AIFF is not good at remembering the former greats. But PK, the two-time Olympian and an Asian Games gold medal winner, wasn't just another former footballer. A good majority in the Indian football fraternity wants the AIFF to preserve the legacy of the Fifa Order of Merit holder.

"Starting a PK Banerjee Memorial Lecture is the least the AIFF can do. He was one of the greatest in Indian football and like the Indian cricket board has the Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi Memorial Lecture, the AIFF, too, should take a leaf out of the BCCI's book and honour the legend," Nayeem, the only footballer to win the Arjuna and Dronacharya Awards, told *The Indian Express*.

"We as former footballers feel neglected by the AIFF. The way the Indian cricket board looks after the former players – pensions and other support – our football federation doesn't do that. Support from the AIFF is very, very important for the ex-players. So I think something should be done for the legend, PK Banerjee. It's very important," he added.

He enslists his credentials, unfamiliar to the younger generation of the country. "PK Banerjee is a legend and he deserves all the credit. He was not only a great player for India, but also a great coach. So his greatness should be compensated. The AIFF can name a tournament after him. I have a feeling that the AIFF will do something in his honour and I do welcome the idea of starting (an annual) PK Banerjee Memorial Lecture," Colaco, who took Dempo SC to the AFC Cup semifinals and also coached India, observed.

Colaco described PK as "inspiration personified". "That's what I have found. It's an asset in modern-day football. Sometimes when in the first 45 minutes things don't go well, you need somebody in the dressing-room who can inspire you."

Thapa, who was nurtured by PK at East Bengal and Mohun Bagan, welcomes the idea. "I think we should do it. I will talk to Mr Kushal Das. At the next AIFF meeting, whenever it (is scheduled), I will put forward this proposal," he tells this paper.

According to Das, it's for the AIFF's executive committee to take a call. "This is a decision, which will be taken by the executive committee, not by me. If the executive committee of the AIFF decides, it can be done."

Starting a PK Banerjee Memorial Lecture is the least the AIFF can do. He was one of the greatest in Indian football and like the Indian cricket board has the Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi Memorial Lecture, the AIFF, too, should take a leaf out of the BCCI's book and honour the legend."

SYED NAYEEMUDDIN
FORMER INDIA COACH AND CAPTAIN

Abandon four-day games: Cook

London: Former England captain Alastair Cook has suggested the four-day County Championship may have to be curtailed or abandoned completely so officials can salvage "the most profitable parts of the English summer" following the coronavirus outbreak.

Friday saw the England and Wales Cricket Board announced that no professional cricket would be played in England and Wales before May 28. The County Championship, which comprises four-day first-class matches -- and which Cook helped Essex win last season -- was due to start on April 12. The Champion County match, the annual curtain-raiser for the year, was to be played between the Marylebone Cricket Club and Essex later this month in Sri Lanka, but had been called off.

County Championship matches do not generate as much money as limited overs fixtures or internationals but are seen as vital as preparing players for five-day Tests, still widely regarded as the pinnacle of the game. "I could have retired from all cricket when I quit the international stage in 2018 but I stayed on because I loved playing for Essex and that means the County Championship," wrote Cook, England's all-time leading Test run-scorer in his Sunday Times column.

"None of this is ideal but we all have to see the bigger picture -- for our sport and the country as a whole," Cook wrote.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Puducherry cricket board opens dorm doors for patients

DEVENDRA PANDEY
MUMBAI, MARCH 22

CRICKET ASSOCIATION of Pondicherry has offered the dormitories in its cricket campus to be used for Coronavirus patients. In a letter to Lt. Governor of Puducherry Kiran Bedi, P Damodaran, former president of CAP and state cricket nominee for BCCI meetings, offered the services.

"We had built a dormitory for two cricket teams to stay comfortably i.e. 30 cricketers and dining, kitchen etc in our cricket campus in Tutipet, Pondicherry. We stopped cricketing activities due to outbreak of corona virus. We can offer these facilities to house up to 30 corona infected patients if need be with necessary medical tie-up through Laxmi Medical College, Pondicherry," Damodaran stated. Pondicherry has witnessed one positive corona case so far.

The CAP was inducted into the BCCI fold after Supreme Court appointed Committee of Administrators followed apex court orders to implement Lodha committee recommendations which gave power to each state to become a member and field one cricket team. Damodaran has said that state can use these services free of costs during any emergency situation. The Indian board had suspended all its domestic cricket including cash-rich Indian Premier League after the Indian government suspended all visas of foreign nationals.

The facility at Tutipet can house at least 30-40 people.

Closure of cricket

BCCI secretary Jay Shah had announced the closure of cricket in the country. "In view of the ongoing Novel Corona Virus (COVID-19) outbreak, the BCCI announced that all matches of the Paytm Irani Cup, Senior Women's One-Day Knockout, Vizzy Trophy, Senior Women's One-Day Challenger, Women's Under 19 One-Day knockout, Women's Under 19 T20 League, Super League and knockout, Women's Under 19 T20 Challenger Trophy, Women's Under 23 knockout, Women's Under 23 One-Day Challenger have been put on hold till further notice."

MP cricketer's father stranded in Iran

Mumbai: Anand Rajan, a Madhya Pradesh player who played for two Indian Premier League teams (Deccan Chargers and Sunrisers Hyderabad), has been anxious for a while as his father is stranded in Iran, a country struggling to cope with Coronavirus.

"As Indian government has brought back many Indians from Iran, I am hoping father comes back too," Rajan told *The Indian Express*. Iran has faced more than 20000 positive cases and 1556 have died due to Coronavirus till Saturday.

With Iran almost entirely cut off from the world, he is encountering various problems. "My father told me that the embassy will only clear travel of those people whose medical examination they conduct by themselves. I was told that the embassy doesn't have the necessary medical kit to deal with this, so time is running out. With no international flights allowed for next one week, we don't know what will happen," Rajan said.

Rajan is a medium pacer who played 40 first-class games for MP and represented Deccan Chargers and Hyderabad Sunrisers in the IPL. He has tweeted the Indian embassy in Iran for help and was promised that his father would be contacted but nothing has transpired till Saturday, he says.

He tweeted to the embassy in Iran, but is waiting for a response. "I tweeted to the Indian Embassy in Tehran, they said they will get in touch with my father but nobody got in touch till Saturday. At the moment he is fine and is staying inside his house in Qazvin which is some two hours' drive from Tehran. Back at home here there is some fear in our family as you can understand," Rajan said.

The Indian government has evacuated Indians from Iran, Japan, Milan and other parts of the world and kept them under isolation on return. Rajan, who played for India under-19, says his father has been working in Tehran for the last eight years and that he is fine now and has no symptoms of illness. "The sudden crisis has made us all worry. We want him back. At least he will be with us.

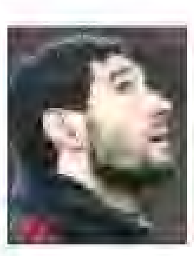
DEVENDRA PANDEY

COVID-19 FALLOUT

Maldini and Dybala test positive as ex-Real president dies

Coronavirus continues to take a toll on the beautiful game, with an Italian legend and one of the best current strikers testing positive, and a Belgian club firing its coach to cut costs

FORMER MANCHESTER UNITED PLAYER TESTS POSITIVE



Marouane Fellaini has tested positive for the coronavirus, his club Shandong Luneng said on Sunday, the former Manchester United player becoming the first known case in the Chinese Super League (CSL). The 32-year-old Belgian international midfielder has a normal temperature and is feeling fine, Shandong said, but "is under observation and having treatment at a designated medical facility". "The club will do its best... to help in the treatment and recovery of the player."

The diagnosis dealt a blow to the league's hopes of starting the season as early as next month.

The campaign was supposed to begin last month but has been indefinitely postponed by the outbreak.

Fellaini, also formerly of Everton, joined Shandong Luneng from English giants United in February last year for a reported €7.2 million.

DYBALA LATEST JUVE PLAYER TO CATCH COVID-19

Argentina striker Paulo Dybala said that he has become the third Juventus player to test positive for coronavirus.

"Hi everyone. I just wanted to let you know that we have received the Covid-19 test results and that Oriana (Sabatini, his girlfriend) and I are positive," the 26-year-old Dybala tweeted on Saturday.

"Fortunately, we are perfectly fine. Thank you for your messages."

Italian champions Juventus said that Dybala had been self-isolating since Wednesday. "He will continue to be monitored. He is well and is asymptomatic," said the club in a statement.

Juventus teammates Daniele Rugani and Blaise Matuidi have also tested positive for the disease which claimed almost 800 more lives on Saturday, bringing the total in Italy to 4,825.

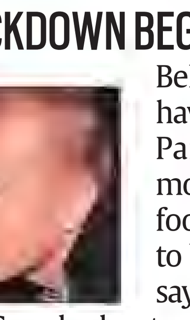
MALDINI, SON DANIEL AMONG COVID-19 VICTIMS

Paulo Maldini and son Daniel have both been diagnosed with coronavirus, according to AC Milan. Now the technical director of the club, Maldini and his 18-year-old son Daniel, a youth team player, have already completed two weeks at home without contact with others, according to the club.

"Paolo and Daniel are both well and have already completed two weeks at home without contact with others," said a statement from AC Milan. "They will now remain in quarantine until clinically recovered, as per the medical protocols outlined by the health authorities."

Maldini, 51, is considered one of the greatest defenders of all time. He won five Champions Leagues with Milan and appeared in 647 matches.

ANDERLECHT FIRE COACH AFTER LOCKDOWN BEGINS TO BITE



Belgian giant Anderlecht have fired assistant coach Par Zetterberg to save money as the coronavirus football lockdown starts to bite. The Brussels club say they fired the 49-year-old Swede due to major revenue losses since the championship was suspended because of coronavirus.

"Professional football, as with many other economic endeavours, is faced with major challenges by COVID-19. It is having a major economic impact on the club," said Anderlecht, who won their last three league games and sit eighth in the suspended league. "So that is why we are arming the club in the short term to better defend itself against major losses due to the championship being put on hold."

FORMER REAL MADRID PRESIDENT DIES AT 76

Former Real Madrid president Lorenzo Sanz, who was hospitalised with coronavirus, died at the age of 76, his son announced. Sanz was in charge of the Spanish giants from 1995-2000, overseeing two Champions League titles. Three days ago, Sanz Jr., a former professional basketball player, said that his father had been admitted to a Madrid hospital after suffering the symptoms of the coronavirus which has killed more than 1,320 people in Spain.

"Very sad day for Real Madrid. Lorenzo Sanz connected yesterday and today with two numbers for history - 7 and 8," tweeted Sergio Ramos in reference to the key Champions League titles.

"His death saddens us even more in these difficult days in which we find ourselves. My deep condolences to his family and friends. Rest in peace."

LIVERPOOL STEWARDS TO OFFER HELP AT SUPERMARKETS

The chief executive of English football giants Liverpool has offered the club's stewards to local supermarkets as customers clamber for goods amid the cornavirus outbreak.

"Our stadium stewards here @LFC are offering their time and expertise in volunteering to help with crowd control, queue management, parking control, assisting the elderly and infirm taking their groceries to their cars, etc," wrote Liverpool Football Club chief executive Peter Moore on Twitter. "They are truly the best in the business and would be delighted to help in whatever way you would deem appropriate (and safe)," he said. **(COMPILED FROM AGENCIES)**

IOC wrestles with logistics amid opposition to Games

REUTERS
ATHENS, MARCH 22

THE INTERNATIONAL Olympic Committee faced mounting opposition on Sunday to the current schedule for the Tokyo 2020 Games as athletes, teams and federations called for a delay because of the coronavirus pandemic. IOC President Thomas Bach, who has insisted the Games will go ahead as planned, said any decision to change an Olympic Games was not a simple matter like rescheduling a football match and would need careful planning and information.

"The Olympic Games cannot be moved like a football game next Saturday," he told Germany's SWR broadcaster. "It is a complex undertaking and you can only act responsibly when you have a clear decision-making foundation." He also ruled out cancelling the July 24-August 9 Games. "A cancellation of the Games would be the least fair solution. A cancellation would destroy the Olympic dream of 11,000 athletes of 206 Olympic committees."

Sources said on Sunday, however, that Tokyo Games organisers had started drafting possible alternatives to holding the Olympics this summer. "Finally, we have been asked to make a simulation in case of a postponement," a source close to the organising committee who is involved in drafting the scenarios said.

"We are making alternative plans - plan B, C, D - looking at different postponement time-frames," said the official, adding the scenarios included cost estimates for different delays. Other sources within the Olympic movement said the IOC was likely to hold an unscheduled executive board meeting as early as next week. One source said the meeting could be "very, very early next week." The IOC did not comment. Countries have sealed borders and enforced lockdowns to fight the pandemic. The virus has killed around 13,000 people since surfacing in China at the end of last year.

As the virus triggers more restrictions and claims more victims around the globe, pressure at least to delay the event is increasing.

Aussie Rules suspends season, but NRL still on

Melbourne: Australia's hugely popular Aussie Rules suspended its season Sunday in what it called "the most serious threat to our game in 100 years", but rugby league vowed to play on despite tough new restrictions to contain the coronavirus. The bombshell move by the Australian Football League (AFL) after just one match of the season, played in empty stadiums this weekend, was unprecedented for a sport that first established a league in 1896.

"To say this is the most serious threat to our game in 100 years is an understatement," chief executive Gillon McLachlan said, with lucrative broadcast commitments at stake. Australian Rugby League Commission chairman Peter V'landys told Sydney's *Daily Telegraph* his sport would not follow the AFL's lead unless forced to, insisting they were better placed logistically. "It is much harder for the AFL, to be fair to them, because they have got teams in Queensland, NSW, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia," said V'landys, who has warned suspending the season could financially destroy the game. **AFP**

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GOLD AUCTION NOTICE

CIN-L65910KL1992PLC006623
IV/470A (old) W638A(New), Manappuram House, Valapad, Thrissur, Kerala - 680 567.

The pledges, in specific and the public, in general, are hereby notified that public auction of the gold ornaments pledged in the below accounts is proposed to be conducted at the following branches on 16/04/2020 from 10.00 am onwards. We are auctioning gold ornaments defaulted customers who have failed to make payment of his/her loan amount despite being notified by registered letters. Unauctioned items shall be auctioned on any other days without further notice. Changes in venue or date (if any) will be displayed at auction centre and on website without any further notice.

List of pledges:-

ALIGARH, AGRA ROAD-ALIGARH, 129400700009719, 9760, 9775, 9794, 9813, 9824, 9825, 9847, 9852, 9854, 9866, 9868, 9873, 9877, 9883, 129400700010238, 0283, 0292, 0309, 0315, 0317, 0322, 0363, 0379, 0382, 0386, 0390, 0391, 0401, 0405, 129400730003706, 3711, 3712, 3714, 4604, 4627, 4662, 4665, 4692, NAURANGABAD-ALIGARH, 133120700009231, 133120700010614, 0646, 1197, 1252, 1718, 1738, 1739, 1894, 1992, 1995, 2050, 2112, 2131, 2136, 2159, 2181, 2185, 2224, 2231, 2232, 2244, 2262, 2263, 2781, 2820, 2823, 2836, 2851, 2855, 2856, 2867, 2868, 2886, 2887, 2894, 2905, 2920, 2921, 2932, 2933, 2941, 2942, 2944, 2952, 2956, 2961, 2962, 2970, 2971, 2972, 2975, 3001, 3007, 3011, 3024, 3027, 133120730004806, 4837, 4848, 4884, 4885, 4886, 4920, 4961, 4983, 4989, RAMGARH ROAD-ALIGARH, 129610700012491, 2523, 2767, 2787, 2827, 2842, 2859, 2861, 2880, 2881, 2883, 2895, 2907, 2910, 2911, 2930, 2931, 2932, 2944, 2951, 2959, 3017, 3024, 3030, 3032, 3557, 3591, 3615, 3616, 3622, 3623, 3632, 3636, 3667, 3683, 3702, 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Authorised Officer
For Manappuram Finance Ltd

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