

## Unorganised workers have been hit hard, need direct payments, India Inc tells PM

Modi calls for trust; Kotak suggested one-off transfer of Rs 5,000 to those over 25, Rs 10,000 to those above 65

**PVAIDYANATHAN IYER**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

AT LEAST six top corporate leaders are said to have recommended to Prime Minister Narendra Modi that the government should make payments to unorganised sector workers since they bear the brunt of the severe lockdown measures to arrest the spread of COVID-19 disease.

N Chandrasekaran, Chairman, Tata Sons, who spoke first after the Prime Minister's 15-minute opening remarks, called for a relaxation of the fiscal deficit target by at least one percentage point of GDP. He strongly advocated DBT (Direct Benefit Transfer) of funds to the



PM interacts with media heads through video conferencing on COVID-19, in New Delhi on Monday. PTI

lowest rung of the society. Uday Kotak, Vice-Chairman and Managing Director, Kotak Mahindra Bank, had a more specific suggestion. Given the exceptional circumstances, the government must, as a one-off

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## Migrant workers' rush chokes transit points in the East: Where do we go, what do we do now?

**ABHISHEK ANGAD, SANTOSH SINGH & RAVIK BHATTACHARYA**  
RANCHI, PATNA, KOLKATA, MARCH 23

FROM JHARKHAND to Bihar and West Bengal, governments scrambled Monday to cope with the return of thousands of migrant workers from cities and states as far away as Kerala amid an unprecedented 10-day shutdown of rail and inter-state bus services to contain the coronavirus outbreak.

Officials said thousands of people have returned over the last 10 days, mainly from Mumbai, Pune, Delhi and Chennai, and cities in Punjab and Kerala.

BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY



An official in Ranchi said about 3,000-4,000 people reached the city on an average every day over the past week on

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

**30 STATES/UTs, 548 DISTRICTS** are now enforcing the shutdown

**NO RELAXATION IN PUNJAB** till morning of March 25

**HYDROXYCHLOROQUINE** only for healthcare workers: ICMR

# Lockdown spreads, state by state



As public transport services start shutting down, people scramble to get onto a long-distance bus in Kolkata on Monday. PTI

## Curfew across Punjab, Maharashtra; internal flights too suspended

**ABANTIKA GHOSH & PRAVAN MUKUL**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

THE GOVERNMENT Monday extended the shutdown to contain the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) to domestic commercial aviation, stopping all flights from Tuesday midnight till March 31. Thirty states and Union territories have now announced a complete lockdown in 548 districts, while in 58 districts of three states, the curbs are partial.

Monday's orders follow the cessation of bus, Metro and train services across the country. The state/UTs with complete lock-

**CORONA COUNT**

**4689** CASES DEATHS

**35 RECOVERED**

**20,707 samples from 19,817 individuals tested**

down include Delhi, Chandigarh, West Bengal, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Haryana, Gujarat, Karnataka, Assam, Uttarakhand etc.

The total number of positive cases has now touched 468

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## Delhi borders sealed: IDs for essential staff, curfew passes for rest

**MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

AFTER STRUGGLING to implement CrPC Section 144 which prohibits assembly of four or more persons in an area, the Delhi Police Monday tightened curbs in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, sealing border pickets with immediate effect and making curfew passes mandatory to enter and exit the city.

This was done after police observed that execution of prohibitory orders in the capital was "not up to the mark".

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CITY



**LOCKDOWN LAX, KEJRIWAL SAYS UNACCEPTABLE**

**SPAIN DEATH TOLL TOPS 2,000 AFTER 462 NEW DEATHS**

PAGES 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 14

**HARIKISHAN SHARMA**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

NITI AAYOG member Dr V K Paul, heading a panel to coordinate coronavirus efforts, said Monday that India has not started seeing community transmission as yet, and the strategy as of now was to guard against it and intensify containment measures.

In an interview to *The Indian Express*, a day after the country observed Janata Curfew, Paul said, "Today, you can say, as of now we are preparing for Stage 3 and intensification of containment to the best possible extent."



**'TOOK NUANCED STEPS... CHANGED WITH SITUATION'**  
V K PAUL  
NITI AAYOG MEMBER

Asked if India was in Stage 3, or community transmission, CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## Shutdowns weigh heavy on sentiment, Sensex tanks 13% in biggest daily crash

**ENSE ECONOMIC BUREAU**  
MUMBAI, MARCH 23

THE STOCK market selloff intensified Monday with the BSE Sensex plummeting 3,935 points, or 13.15 per cent, to 25,981.24 — the biggest daily crash in the history of the capital

market — in the wake of the lockdown announced by several states following a spurt in the number of coronavirus cases. The NSE Nifty nosedived 1,135.20 points or 12.98 per cent to settle at a four-year low of 7,610.25 and close to Rs 13.9 lakh crore of investors' wealth was wiped out in the selloff during the day.

## Cap on fuel excise duty up Rs 8 to mobilise resources

**ENSE ECONOMIC BUREAU**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

OPENING A window to increase excise duty on fuel, the government has raised the cap on special additional excise duty on petrol and diesel to Rs 18 and Rs 12 per litre, respectively, as per amendments in the Finance Bill passed in Parliament Monday.

Last year's Finance Act had put the cap at Rs 10 per litre for petrol and Rs 4 per litre for diesel. The change in the cap will enable the government to raise duties on petrol and diesel by another Rs 8 per litre each.

Every rupee hike in excise duty is expected to yield roughly Rs 13,000-14,000 crore annually. The slump in global crude oil

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

The rupee also came under pressure and plunged below the 76 level to close at 76.22 against the dollar on capital outflows and strengthening of the dollar abroad.

When the market opened for trading, the Sensex plummeted over 10 per cent, triggering the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## Chouhan back in MP, takes charge as CM to start his fourth innings

**MILIND GHATWAI**  
BHOPAL, MARCH 23

FIFTEEN MONTHS after he stepped down from the power seat in Bhopal, Shivraj Singh Chouhan returned Monday to take oath as Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister for a record fourth term.

Governor Lalji Tandon administered the oath of office Monday night, hours after Chouhan was elected BJP Legislature Party leader.

Chouhan's first crucial test will be the Assembly bypolls to 24 seats — 22 held by Congress rebels who resigned and two which fell vacant following the death of the MLAs (one each from THE Congress, BJP). The BJP has 107 members in the 230-member Assembly, so the bypoll results can decide whether its



With BJP leader Gopal Bhargava in Bhopal. PTI

government stays or falls.

All eyes will also be on the Cabinet selection — whether Chouhan accommodates the Congress rebels, or chooses to wait till the bypolls are held.

The Congress, which won 114 seats in the Assembly polls last December and formed the government with the support of four

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## Bengaluru to Mumbai: States prepare, earmark hospitals exclusively for coronavirus patients

**PAGE 1 ANCHOR**

**JOHNSONTA & TABASSUM BARNAGARWALA**  
BENGALURU, MUMBAI, MARCH 23

WITH EXPERTS foreseeing a rise in COVID-19 cases over the next few days, at least two medical facilities, the Victoria Hospital in Bengaluru and the

Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation-run Seven Hills Hospital in Mumbai, have been set aside exclusively for COVID-19 patients.

While the 120-year-old Victoria Hospital, run by the Karnataka government, has been designated as the first exclusive hospital for COVID-19 patients in the state, in Mumbai, the BMC has tied up with H N Reliance Hospital, owned by Reliance Industries Ltd, to set aside a 100-bed isolation ward in Seven Hills Hospital. The rest



States expect cases to rise, brace for challenge. Express

of the hospital is already being used to quarantine suspected cases of COVID-19.

On the COVID-19 ward at Seven Hills Hospital, a statement from H N Reliance hospital said, "This first-of-its-kind-in-India centre is fully funded by Reliance Foundation and includes a negative pressure room that helps in preventing cross-contamination and helps control infection."

The beds have been equipped with bio-medical equipment such as ventilators,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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WEB EXCLUSIVE DARJEELING'S ICONIC GLENARY'S HANDS OUT FOOD FOR FREE

The eatery announced that it would hand out all its baked goods for free till stocks last. However, despite the shutdown it will continue to bake bread to supply to charitable organisations.

VIDEO OF THE DAY



PRECAUTIONS FOR HEART PATIENTS Dr Vishal Rastogi suggests ways in which people can take care

EXPLAINED



VITAMIN C Can vitamin C prevent or cure novel coronavirus infection?

EXPRESS AUDIO What's killing India's elephants? NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY India has the world's largest population of wild Asian elephants. It also has a colossal human-animal conflict problem. India has the world's largest population of wild Asian elephants. It also has a colossal.

FROM PAGE ONE

India Inc

measure, immediately transfer Rs 5,000 into the bank accounts of all those who are over 25 years. For those over 65, he advocated a one-time payment of Rs 10,000. Sanjeev Goenka, Chairman, RP-Sanjiv Goenka Group, also said DBT for unorganised sector workers was critical. Sangita Reddy, Joint Managing Director, Apollo Hospitals Group, and Ketan Desai, President, Southern Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industry, too, spoke in favour of financial support to workers at the bottom of the pyramid.

(Whatever data is there and has been shared with you, is correct)." With several experts calling for more testing, Paul said they had chosen a more balanced approach. "Ours has been a strategic approach, to make the best use of our efforts and yet, not expose ourselves to risk... We chose that strategy given the resources we had at that point, and to make sure we did not miss anything. We took a nuanced approach." Paul also contested the claims that India's strategy was dictated by its lack of testing kits. He said, "Maybe in the beginning the numbers were limited but, in the middle of the whole thing, there was no dearth. As the disease progressed, availability was not an issue at all. Our issue was we wanted to do it (testing) in a systematic way, so that there is no wasting of resources." Of the cases that appear to have no travel or contact history, thus indicating community transmission, the NITI Aayog member said they would be in a position to say about these patients only "after the investigation and tests are done".

Sensex

circuit breaker system. Trading was halted for 45 minutes as lockdowns across the world stoked fears of a massive global recession. Though trading resumed around 11 am, indices fell further on across the board selling. This was the second time that the circuit breaker was applied and trading halted for 45 minutes in the last ten days. The Sensex has now fallen 12,316 points, or 32 per cent, in the month of March. In another words, nearly one-third of investors wealth has been wiped out during the month. Bank stocks led by Axis Bank led the selloff and all sectoral indices closed with sharp losses. "The markets closed much lower in percentage terms compared to the Asian and European markets, which indicated increased uncertainty regarding the spread of the virus," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

NITI head

Paul said, "It's local transmission as yet... All in all, the numbers show we haven't reached the stage of serious deaths or disease." The government has changed its strategy though in "anticipation" of Stage 3, he added. "Yesterday too we said that there is no community transmission. But change is there. When did this happen? Change 10 din pahle hua jab pradhan mantri ne aahwan de diya, maan liye uss point se le liye, ki bhai containment bhi karu aur yahan tak to theek hai, lekin desh ko agle stage ke liye taiyyar karu (The change happened 10 days ago, consider it the point the PM called upon people, that take containment measures but also prepare the country for the next stage). God forbid we enter the next stage, but whatever efforts we are making are for that." At the same time, Paul reiterated, "Jo bhi data abhi tak hai aur officially apko bataye gaye hain, main manta hoon ki theek hain

Curfew across Punjab, Maharashtra

(34 recovered), while deaths now stand at nine. Two more deaths were reported Monday, a 55-year-old man in Kolkata with history of heart disease and a 68-year-old man in Kangra, Himachal Pradesh. It was not immediately clear if the latter had co-morbidities. In a tweet, Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged people to follow the lockdown, while in a video conference meeting, the Home Secretary told DGPs to invoke legal provisions to enforce the same. Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba also issued similar instructions to chief secretaries of states. "Some people are still not taking the lockdown seriously. Please save yourself, your family by following instructions seriously. I request the states to ensure enforcement of the rules and laws," Modi tweeted. In Maharashtra, where cases rose to 97, with the sharpest rise of 23 in a day, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray announced curfew-like measures, issuing strict orders for people to keep indoors, and sealing borders. Rajasthan, the first state in India to have proactively imposed a 'complete lockdown', could go in for arrests to enforce it. Health Minister Raghu Sharma told The Indian Express. After Punjab (24 cases) announced state-wide curfew,

airline executives expect a rush of people flying to their home cities ahead of the shutdown on Tuesday. "We are planning to mount some additional flights," a senior official at a low-cost airline said. In a note, aviation consultancy CAPA India said services are unlikely to be restored by March 31. "The timing of the resumption of services is entirely in the control of the government, but it will most likely be beyond 31 March. As a result, the entire Indian commercial fleet of around 650 aircraft lies grounded," it said. At the same time, CAPA welcomed the government's initiative. "The government clearly sees heightened risks related to COVID-19... This is the right decision in the prevailing circumstances." Health Ministry sources said that while the official position remains that there is still no community transmission - when the virus starts affecting people without any known history of travel or contact - there are "four-five" cases where contact tracing is not conclusive. "This is an ongoing process. It is possible that for four or five cases which have been reported recently, the sources are yet to be traced. But you have to understand that there is no community transmission yet," a Health Ministry official said.

Rush of migrant workers chokes transit points

the Alappuzha-Dhanbad Express. The Pune-Danapur Express transported over 4,000 people to Bihar on Sunday alone. The rush has led to migrant workers being left stranded at key transit points in these states - and at the mercy of private transporters. In Bihar, authorities are facing an added problem of residents in villages objecting to the return of their neighbours from virus-hit regions. In Patna, the home department directed district magistrates to make arrangements to accommodate those who have returned, at village schools, panchayat buildings and other government facilities. Speaking to The Indian Express, Bihar Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Amir Subhani said: "Some villagers are apprehensive of infection... We have asked all districts to make arrangements for those reaching from other states. These places will work as self-quarantine or observation places, too." In Kolkata, police officers were seen trying to arrange private transport for a group of about 50 migrant workers re-

turning from Kerala, waiting at the Esplanade crossing. "We reached Howrah station on Sunday. But we could not get buses to travel to our homes. Many of us are from Malda and Murshidabad, which are far away," said Sheikh Mozammel, a resident of Hasnabad in Basirhat and employed as a mason in Kerala. In Patna, the Mithapur bus stand witnessed chaotic scenes, prompting District Magistrate Kumar Ravi to reach the site and relax norms to let the stranded passengers leave, many huddled on the roofs of buses. In Jharkhand, Chief Minister Hemant Soren said facilities are being provided for migrant workers to reach their homes. On the ground, however, The Indian Express came across a logistical nightmare at the Khadgada bus stand in Ranchi, where three nursing staff were noting down contacts of those who approached them. There were no thermal scanners, or help desks. "In Kerala, we listened to news on the coronavirus and decided to leave on the Dhanbad train. We spent two days in the packed train, getting space only to sit, and reached Ranchi today. My home is in Nawada in Bihar, and I thought I could get a bus from here," said Siwan, a 28-year-old employee in a marble factory in Kerala. Siwan and the 20 others with him haggled with a private bus operator to take them home. "The bus operator wanted Rs 45,000. We agreed but then he said he would drop us at the border. We had to abandon the idea," he said. "There is no arrangement from the government," said Mohammad Bechu Ansari, who worked in a tile-making unit in Kerala. Mohammad Jibrail, another migrant worker, said they were screened multiple times in Kerala. "But here, authorities noted down my name and put a stamp on my forehead, 'HQ' (Home Quarantine). We were on the train for days, and I don't know what I have got," he said. Jibrail and others with him booked two vehicles to reach their homes in Nawada, paying Rs 7,000 each.

a global recession. Further, market regulator Sebi reduced the position limit in specific stock futures to half. It had also curbed short selling in index derivatives and raised margin rates for some stocks to curb abnormal volatility in the midst of the pandemic. "Going forward, we expect the markets would continue to remain volatile as increase in number of cases in India would lead to selling pressure," Mishra said. Excise duty prices enables the government to raise these duties substantially without immediately putting the burden on the consumer. But there is expected to be a demand slowdown for fuels with a nearly countrywide lockdown in the wake of coronavirus. With airlines, railways, trucks and passenger cars going off the roads, petrol, diesel and ATF (aviation turbine fuel) consumption is expected to

fall drastically. On March 14, the government had increased the excise duty on petrol and diesel by Rs 3 a litre each. An additional Re 1 per litre was also levied on both petrol and diesel under the road and infrastructure cess (RIC). The excise duties on petrol and diesel include basic excise duty, special additional excise duty, and road and infrastructure cess, which is levied as additional excise duty. Central and state taxes account for 54 per cent of the price of petrol and 45 per cent of the price in Delhi after the hike. The government is increasing duties on petrol and diesel to raise revenues in view of the tight fiscal situation. The slump in global crude oil prices, alongside the possibility of a global economic recession, has forced the government to look at avenues to raise revenues to support growth. With major companies going

all revenues were falling, and may need the flexibility offered by this move. "The government doesn't have too many levers as, on the one side, healthcare costs could be rising, and on the other side, your overall revenues may fall because of the slowdown," Pan said, adding that this situation is the reason that they have given themselves the flexibility of raising the special additional excise duty. Earlier, Saudi Arabia had triggered the crash in prices by announcing a sharp increase in oil production after Russia declined to reduce oil supply to contain a fall in oil prices due to declining demand at a meeting of petroleum exporting countries. Delhi curbs Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal also said that several people had not followed the lockdown guidelines and called the behaviour "unacceptable". He said the lockdown conditions would be enforced more stringently if people did not stay indoors. Even though the lockdown came into effect 6 am Monday and will last until March 31, police said many people had violated it by claiming they were part of "essential services". As a result, a message was sent by Delhi Police Commissioner S N Shrivastava to all police personnel in the afternoon, stating that only those employed with providing essential services should be allowed. In Puducherry, the government declared curfew for a week. In Uttar Pradesh, 17 districts are now under lockdown, with Jaunpur added on Monday. At the BJP Legislature Party meeting earlier, he asked cadres not to burst firecrackers or venture out of their homes. "It's not the time to celebrate but to tackle the coronavirus epidemic," he said. "There will be a change in the way the state is governed," he said. While Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar was a strong contender, the BJP seems to have chosen Chouhan for his experience and popularity. The BJP Legislature Party meeting was expected to be held Saturday, but it was postponed without a fresh date being set. The meeting was suddenly called Monday, with the party making it clear that it would take the opinion of legislators who couldn't come to Bhopal on the phone. Amid the lockdown in most parts of the country, a video conference was arranged with the party's central observers. Most BJP legislators who turned up for the meeting wore masks and sat on alternate chairs. States gear up pacemakers, dialysis machines and patient monitoring devices. The hospital has also offered to set up quarantine facilities for international passengers. In Bengaluru, following meeting with healthcare experts on Sunday and Monday morning to assess the COVID-19 situation, Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa announced that the 1,200-bed government-run Victoria Hospital - which currently caters to patients from low income groups - in the old City Market in Bengaluru would be converted into a dedicated COVID-19 hospital. "We have decided to create a separate block of 1,200 beds at the Victoria Hospital and another 1,200 will be pooled up at a private hospital," the CM said. The decision means that the hospital, with an average occupancy of 60 per cent beds, will have to, over the next few days, clear all its existing patients, who will either be discharged or shifted to other government facilities. One of the key factors behind the government identifying Victoria Hospital as a dedicated COVID-19 facility is the fact that the government hospital has the highest number of ventilators among Bengaluru hospitals, something that will have to be pressed into service if patients slip into acute respiratory distress. "We have started discharging patients in order to free up beds to prepare to be officially designated as a COVID-19 hospital. We have as many as 45 ventilators," Resident Medical Officer at the hospital, Dr R Srinivasa, said. Being a teaching hospital, Victoria has a large supply of medical staff in the form of PG students and house surgeons, apart from its regular medical, nursing and general staff. "No other patients will be allowed. This is the thinking," said a doctor from the respiratory clinic at the hospital. At present, Victoria Hospital only checks suspected COVID-19 cases and has an NIV-linked testing facility for the virus in its microbiology department. There have been some concerns about the choice of Victoria Hospital as a COVID-19 hospital with some medical experts suggesting that facilities for infectious diseases are usually located on the outskirts of cities. "The choice of the Victoria Hospital is strange. It has a huge turnover of poor patients on a daily basis and it may be difficult to restrict the flow of people through the hospital premises," said a medical expert. FULL REPORTS ON WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM



# At centre of tussle, Ayushman Bharat comes to Delhi

ASTHA SAXENA  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

IN A significant announcement, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said during Monday's budget that the Aam Aadmi Party government will implement Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ambitious health project, the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana — Ayushman Bharat (PMJAY-AB) in the fiscal year 2020-2021.

"The Delhi government will implement the Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana in Delhi in 2020-21 to provide health insurance cover up to Rs 5 lakh per family every year," said Sisodia.

The scheme has been a bone of contention between the Delhi and central governments. The AAP government had asked the National Health Authority to rename the scheme to Mukhya Mantri Aam Aadmi Swasthya Bima Yojana — Ayushman Bharat in Delhi. During the assembly polls, BJP leaders had criticised the AAP government for not implementing the scheme, depriving Delhi residents of its benefits.

Launched in 2018, PMJAY-AB provides a cover of up to Rs 5 lakh per family per year, which includes 1,400 packages spread over 23 specialties.

Last year, Kejriwal wrote a letter to Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan stating the Delhi Health Scheme is ten times better than Centre's Ayushman Bharat. Comparing both, Kejriwal had said while the Centre's scheme has restrictions, Delhi government's health scheme is available to all. In 2018, he had called the scheme a "publicity stunt".

Reacting to the decision, BJP Media Incharge Pratyush Kant said, "Kejriwal government shouldn't have waited for this calamity to strike for implementing the scheme."

On Monday, Sisodia said: "One of the most important and talked about principles of the Kejriwal-led government is to have healthcare facilities for all. Making health facilities available for a certain section of society was followed earlier in Delhi. But under the Kejriwal model of gov-

## BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

₹65,000 cr  
Total budget proposed

₹6,828 cr  
Financial support to local bodies

Contribution of Delhi to the national GDP

3.97% in 2014-15

4.20% in 2019-20

### EDUCATION

■ Government to setup Delhi's own State Board of Education

■ At 24.33%, or ₹ 15,815 crore, the highest budget allocation remains in education

### TRANSPORT

■ 2,485 new buses (1,300 DTC and 1,185 cluster buses, including 685 electric buses) to be added to the fleet during 2020-21

■ 1,880 buses (444 DTC and 1,436 cluster buses) will be purchased in 2021-22.



Finance Minister Manish Sisodia arrives at the Delhi Assembly on Monday. Amit Mehra

### HEALTH

■ Bed capacity of hospitals to be increased from 10,000 to 26,000

■ Govt to implement Ayushman Bharat in Delhi



### TOURISM

■ New scheme — 'Branding Delhi' — to be introduced to ensure that tourists spend at least two days in Delhi on an average



### CAMPAIGNS

■ In the wake of Northeast Delhi riots, gov't to launch a 'Campaign for Communal Harmony'



■ Govt to introduce an awareness campaign — 'Behavioural Change for Safety of the Women' — aimed at effecting behavioural change in society

ernance, we have given identity to mohalla clinics and government hospitals; and with the introduction of projects like Farishtey scheme and free testing in private hospitals, we have taken the Delhi healthcare system to a different level."

The Delhi government has allocated Rs 7,704 crore in 2020-2021 towards healthcare. In the previous budget, a total outlay of Rs 7,485 crore was allotted. The number of mohalla clinics will be increased to 1,000, with an outlay of Rs 365 crore being made for these and polyclinics. "From April to December,

over 55 lakh patients have availed services at mohalla clinics. Around 2.15 crore people have been treated at polyclinics and the government hospitals in Delhi," Sisodia said.

Talking about coronavirus, Sisodia said the Delhi government has been working diligently in coordination with the Centre. A provision of Rs 50 crore has been made for 2020-21 and Rs 3 crore in the current financial year. "We will continue to allocate as much as required to deal with this epidemic," he added.

The state government has also started the work of upgrad-

ing and expanding existing hospitals and construction of new hospitals to increase the bed capacity from 10,000 to 26,000.

The government will also provide free treatment, surgery, radiology, diagnostic schemes and medical treatment through the Delhi Arogya Kosh (DAK) under the the Mukhya Mantri Swasthya Yojna. Under the new scheme, 1,016 surgical, 123 oncology and 10 neonatal procedures, as well as six medical packages, have been made part of the 86 surgeries already covered under the DAK — a corpus that funds various health schemes for residents of Delhi.

## Education key focus as Sisodia presents first budget of AAP 2.0

SOURAV ROY BARMAN  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

AN OUTLAY of Rs 65,000 crore will keep Delhi running in 2020-21, helping it fund its existing services as well as new projects, Finance Minister Manish Sisodia said on Monday, presenting the first annual budget of the AAP government in its second term.

The highlight of Sisodia's nearly hour-long speech was his attempt to repack the AAP's initiatives in bringing about improvements in fields of education, health, water and power as the "Kejriwal model" of governance and economy, having returned to office powered by the AAP chief's mass appeal.

Sisodia stressed that the city's economy was sound with the basic economic components remaining "very strong". The

Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) was likely to record a growth of 10.48 per cent in 2019-20 (at current prices), he said, pegging the per capita income at Rs 3.89 lakh.

He reminded that the size of the AAP government's first budget was Rs 30,000 crore while per capita income was Rs 2.70 lakh. Incidentally, Sisodia's last budget had an allocation of Rs 60,000 crore, which was later revised to 54,800 crore.

The fine print indicates that the government is likely to miss its budgetary target of GST collection of Rs 29,000 crore in 2019-20. The total GST and VAT collection till February 2020 stand at Rs 22,808 crore, states the budget, against the revised estimate of Rs 27,000. Excise duty collection has seen a shortfall, with Rs 4,669 crore being collected till February against the

budgeted target of Rs 6,000 crore in 2019-20.

For the year 2020-21, the target of GST, including VAT, has been proposed at Rs 30,000 crore, while excise revenue has been targeted at Rs 6,300 crore.

The budget, which did not impose any additional taxes on citizens, largely revolved around making allocations to fund existing schemes, while most of the fresh initiatives are in the education sector. The government's decision to implement the Centre's Ayushman Bharat scheme are among the highlights, apart from the plan to rebrand Delhi's tourism sector.

No separate announcements were made for relief and rehabilitation efforts in the communal riots-hit Northeast district.

As the budget session was made a day-long affair due to the coronavirus, Sisodia also tabled

the economic survey for 2019-20 and the outcome budget of the ongoing financial year (till December 2019) on Monday.

"We had promised to make Delhi a world class city. Today, Delhi is considered a model of development. This has come to be recognised as the Kejriwal model of governance across the country...The Kejriwal model of governance has proven that every child can receive standard education. Same goes for health...many states are replicating these schemes," Sisodia said.

While Rs 467 crore has been set aside for the free lifeline water subsidy scheme for providing 20,000 litres of water free to 6 lakh beneficiaries, Rs 2,820 crore has been allotted for the power subsidy scheme. Sisodia promised to keep the free bus rides scheme for women running in the coming year as well.

## Plan for a new education board in capital

SUKRITA BARUAH  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

IN AN unprecedented step, the Delhi government has set aside a portion of its Rs 65,000 crore budget estimate for developing a new school education board for the state.

Since it came to power in 2015, the Aam Aadmi Party-government has been dedicating the largest section of its budget to education, particularly schools. This time too, it has dedicated 24.33% of the total budget — or Rs 15,815 crore — to the education sector.

Of this, it has set aside Rs 62 crore for setting up a separate state board of education for Delhi and developing a new curriculum for its schools. While almost all schools run by the state governments in other states follow their respective state boards,



An expert committee will prepare curriculum for the new board

Delhi's government schools follow the Central Board of Secondary Education.

"Our government believes that education should play a guiding role in society. This is possible only when we connect education with the contemporary needs of society, and the possibilities of tomorrow. For this, we will also have to make

changes in our curriculum and examination system so that our students can go beyond book knowledge and gain practical knowledge and use it properly. The aim of the new Board is to establish such a system of education and examination in which children focus on understanding and learning rather [than] score marks by rote learning, so that they prepare themselves for the possible challenges of the upcoming world," said Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia while presenting the budget.

He also stated that an expert committee of "eminent scholars" will prepare a new curriculum for all classes of its schools, beginning from nursery. Last year, Sisodia had raised the need for a separate Board in Delhi after the CBSE introduced a significant exam fee hike.

He also announced that stu-

dents of Delhi government schools will be prepared to appear for the 2024 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) exam. An international test of education quality and student ability, the exam takes place once every three years for 15-year-old students in participant countries.

Among the other education initiatives mentioned include providing newspapers to students and organising "parent workshops" for parents of government school students, and setting up five schools of excellence specialising in specific streams in each of the 29 zones in Delhi.

The infrastructure proposals include construction of 17 new school buildings in 2020-2021, creating at least 10 "digital classrooms" in every government school and converting 90 double shift schools into single-shift ones.

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare  
Government of India

# NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

## Protective measures against Coronavirus

**A distance of at least 1 meter is necessary to ensure safety for all**

Wash your hands with soap and water regularly

If soap and water is not available, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol

Wash hands before touching eyes, nose and mouth

Throw used tissues into closed bins immediately after use

Cover your nose and mouth with handkerchief/tissue while sneezing and coughing

Avoid mass gathering and crowded places

If you are experiencing symptoms like fever, cough or difficulty in breathing, please call the state helpline number or 24x7 helpline numbers of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India and follow the instructions.

# 1075 (Toll Free) | 011-23978046

Email to: [ncov2019@gov.in](mailto:ncov2019@gov.in) , [ncov2019@gmail.com](mailto:ncov2019@gmail.com)

davn 17102/13/0028/1920



# Funds for 40 lakh saplings and smog towers in budget



Delhi witnesses a pollution crisis every year from October to December. The government has proposed installing smog towers, designed to work as large-scale air purifiers. *Archive*

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

**SMOG TOWERS**, green citizen awards, planting 40 lakh saplings a year, deployment of marshals for implementing the Environment Protection Act — these are some of the highlights of the environment and forest section of the new budget.

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia proposed Rs 20 crore to carry out "intensive campaigns" in the city to create awareness and public participation.

"This is for segregation of waste at home, avoiding single-use plastic, rooftop plantation, gifting plants instead of offering bouquets, use of public transportation and carpooling, cycling for short distance..." he said.

A 'green citizen award' would be constituted to encourage environment protection. Sisodia also proposed an outlay of Rs 2 crore to provide additional manpower to the district administration for implementing the Environment Protection Act, 1986, under a scheme named 'Deployment of Marshals'.

The Deputy CM also men-

tioned the need to install smog towers and proposed an outlay of Rs 30 crore under a 'Pollution Control and Environment Management' scheme to control air pollution in Delhi.

To increase green cover in the city, 40 lakh saplings would be planted by 22 green agencies in the coming financial year, with a target of planting 2 crore in the next five years.

In terms of water, Sisodia proposed a budget of Rs 3,724 crore for the implementation of the Delhi Jal Board's projects and Rs 467 crore for the water subsidy scheme that provides 20,000 litres of free water to 6 lakh beneficiaries in Delhi.

Besides this, Rs 110 crore has also been allocated for the 'Mukhyamantri Muft Sewer Connection Yojana', under which the DJB would provide free connections to houses in areas that have sewer lines.

"The total allocation for water supply and sanitation in 2020-21 is about 70% higher than the revised estimates of 2019-20. The reason for this is that more funds have been allocated for unauthorised colonies, sewer treatment plants and interceptor sewerage," said Sisodia.

# HOSPITAL HAS ADMITTED CORONAVIRUS PATIENTS

# Lok Nayak doctors flag lack of precautions, say shut OPDs

**ASTHA SAXENA**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

DAYS AFTER Delhi government's Lok Nayak Hospital was authorised to treat COVID-19 patients, a section of doctors has alleged that the hospital was not following set guidelines while dealing with patients. Senior doctors in the hospital have also requested the medical director to completely shut OPD services, like AIIMS did Monday.

Located in Central Delhi, the hospital caters to 7,000-8,000 patients in the OPD on a daily basis.

A letter by the Maulana Azad Medical Association (MAMC) teachers' association to the medical director stated that suspected and diagnosed COVID-19 patients are being allowed to move from one ward to another, within a radius of 500 metres, leading them to mix with other patients.



The hospital sees 7,000-8,000 patients in OPD daily. *Archive*

"Standard guidelines mandate that all such patients should be in isolation in one building block and various categories of patients should be isolated in different floors after the triage. On the contrary, diagnosed and suspected cases are currently kept at three separate blocks —

namely new special ward, emergency ward (6th floor) and orthopaedics block (5th floor). These cases are moved from one floor to other leading to mixing of infected cases with other patients and health care workers. This is huge hazard and can be disastrous at any time," the let-

ter stated.

Lok Nayak has 27 patients admitted to the isolation ward, of which six are confirmed cases of COVID 19. The hospital has curtailed OPD timings and cancelled all elective surgeries in wake of the outbreak. There are 54 beds in the isolation ward, which can be extended up to 100 beds.

Doctors also suggested that the isolation should be done in one block and the entire orthopaedics or Maulana Azad Institute of Dental sciences (MAIDS) should be declared as "corona treating block" with different floors managing various categories of patients.

"We have asked the doctors for suggestions but they did not come forward. If the doctors will come and give suggestions from their departments, we will implement them. We are trying to manage the situation," said Dr Kishore Singh, medical director of Lok Nayak Hospital.

# To decongest city jails, Delhi government considers releasing some prisoners on parole

**PRITAM PAL SINGH**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

AMID RISING concerns over the COVID-19 pandemic, the Delhi government Monday told the Delhi High Court that it is considering decongesting jails across the national capital.

Delhi government Additional Standing Counsel Anuj Aggarwal and advocate Chaitanya Gosain, appearing for the L-G, Delhi government and police, submitted that the Home department is proposing to issue a notification to introduce "60 days parole in one

spell instead of two spells of 30 days each in a year and, further, introduce a temporary facility of special furlough to such category of prisoners and for such numbers of days as may be specified in the order".

"In view of the submissions made by the counsel for respondents, it is directed that the Delhi government and Delhi Police shall take immediate steps, preferably within two days, to implement its decisions," said a bench of Justice Hima Kohli and Justice Subramonji Prasad.

Delhi Prisons Director General Sandeep Goel said, "We

will try to release around 1,500 convicts (on parole/furlough) and around same number i.e. 1,500 UTPs (on interim-bail) in coming 3-4 days." He said this exercise is being carried out across three prisons — Tihar, Mandoli, Rohini — and clarified that they will be brought back once the crisis is over. "We are planning to release for limited period of say six-eight weeks," he added.

Aggarwal said a proposal has been mooted to amend the Delhi Prison Rules to introduce the expression "emergency parole", which will authorise the government to grant parole for

up to eight weeks in one spell, in addition to the regular parole.

A Home department official said: "We're looking at special provisions to release them for around two months to ease the congestion."

Aggarwal submitted that in case of undertrial prisoners, who are booked in only one case in which the maximum sentence is seven years or less and who have completed minimum three months in jail, it is proposed to grant them interim bail for 45 days upon a request made by them, preferable on a personal bond.

# High-rises restrict entry, domestic helps fear pay cut

**AMIL BHATNAGAR & SAKSHI DAYAL**  
NEW DELHI, GURGAON, MARCH 23

AS NCR locks down amid the coronavirus epidemic, domestic helps working in Noida and Gurgaon high-rises are a worried lot. While most societies have advised families to not cut wages if helps cannot come to work, it remains to be seen whether the advice — which also found a mention in the PM's recent address — is actually followed.

Last week, several societies restricted entry of maids to minimise spread of the infection. In several sectors across Noida — *The Indian Express* spoke to domestic helps in sectors 30, 50, 76, 100 and Greater Noida's Gaur City — hundreds have been left in the lurch with little clue on how long they have to stay away from work.

"We advised families to not cut salary. As far as we know, they are following it. This is the time for everyone to cooperate," said K K Sharma, secretary of Supertech Capetown in Noida's Sector 74.

But a domestic help in Sector 50 said: "Without any notice, we were asked not to enter the society premises. My employer said salary will be provided 'later'. Many helps I know have not been given even such a guarantee."

Several helps also said they were asked about symptoms before being let inside societies. "I work in a number of houses in Noida's Sector 25. Society officials stopped me from entering this morning... workers are being asked to sign a declaration saying they don't have any symptoms. We are only allowed to enter if our employers talk to the guards. I managed today but I don't know if they will let me enter tomorrow," said Anita Kanaujia.

In Gurgaon, while no specific direction has been given, officials said they have "advised" people



A notice barring delivery boys and house helps at a Noida society. *Abhinav Saha*

not to call domestic helps to work. An official from the district administration said, "It is not advisable for domestic helps to go to work while this lockdown is in place, since mobility means greater chances of contamination. However, no order has been issued in this regard so far."

While some condominiums are taking it upon themselves to ban entry, others are leaving it up to individual families. At Heritage City, for instance, the RWA appealed to residents Sunday to "voluntarily release" their helps, drivers, and any staff that may not be essential until March 31.

At Valley View Estate, the RWA has decided to "not allow maids/drivers/dog walkers/car cleaners, etc." until March 25, when the situation will be reviewed. "We've heard rumours about the virus but unless people themselves tell us to stay home, we have to go to work. Some employers even say they will cut salary if we don't show up," said Sonia, a domestic help in Phase 4.

According to the Gharelu Kamgar Union, a series of measures can be taken by the district administration for domestic helps, including a "rehaul" of the PDS to ensure domestic workers and other informal workers receive a month's rations "and a quota of other essential commodities".

**पंजाब नैशनल बैंक Punjab National Bank**  
Branch Office : Kankarbagh, Patna

**POSSESSION NOTICE**  
Common Possession Notice for Immovable Properties of more than one borrower by the same Authorised Officer (For Immovable property)

Whereas Punjab National Bank/ the Authorized Officer/s of the Punjab National Bank under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13 read with the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued demand notice/s on the dates mentioned against each account calling upon the respective borrower/s to repay the amount as mentioned against each account within 60 days from the date of notice(s) date of receipt of said notice(s).

Sr. No.	Name of the Branch	Name of the Account	Name of the borrower (Owner of the property)	Description of the property mortgaged	Date of Demand Notice	Date of Possession Notice Affixed	Amount outstanding as on date of demand notice	Name of the Authorised Officer/s
1.	Kankarbagh, Patna	M/s Maa Annapurna Agro Industries Prop.-Mrs. Meera Singh	Mrs. Meera Kumari urf Meera Singh W/o Sh. Nirmal Singh	All that part and parcel of land and building situated at Mauza-Fazilabad, P.S. Gopalpur, Tauzi No.5152, Thana No.99, Khata No.102, Survey Plot No.250 (Part), within the jurisdiction of District Sub Registrar, Patna, area- 2 Katha 14 Dhur, covered by Sale Deed No.17456 dated 11.09.2009 in the name of Mrs. Meera Kumari W/o Sh. Nirmal Singh. Bounded by:- North-Purchaser, South-Survey Plot No.250(P), East-Sh. Ram Babu Singh, West-Road.	19.11.2019	21.03.2020	₹ 2534092.82 (Rs. Twenty five lac thirty four thousand ninety two and eighty two paise only) + Intt. and other costs	Sri Aksh Bohara

Date : 21.03.2020  
Place : Patna

(Authorised Officer)  
Punjab National Bank

**पंजाब नैशनल बैंक Punjab National Bank**  
Branch Office : East Gandhi Maidan, Patna

**POSSESSION NOTICE**  
Common Possession Notice for Immovable Properties of more than one borrower by the same Authorised Officer (For Immovable property)

Whereas Punjab National Bank/ the Authorized Officer/s of the Punjab National Bank under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13 read with the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued demand notice/s on the dates mentioned against each account calling upon the respective borrower/s to repay the amount as mentioned against each account within 60 days from the date of notice(s) date of receipt of said notice(s).

Sr. No.	Name of the Branch	Name of the Account	Name of the borrower (Owner of the property)	Description of the property mortgaged	Date of Demand Notice	Date of Possession Notice Affixed	Amount outstanding as on date of demand notice	Name of the Authorised Officer/s
1.	East Gandhi Maidan, Patna	M/s Arya Educational & Cultural Society A/c No.- 304100 IC00000079	M/s Arya Educational & Cultural Society	Land measuring 498.4 Decimal and Building Constructed thereon situated at Mauza Bthnauil, Khemchandra, PS - Kriyanand, P.O. - Bithnauil, Khemchandra, K. Nagar, Distt. - Purnia, Bihar, Khata No. 2013, 2104/ 2103/ 2451/ 2103/ 2104, Khesra No. 1190/1191 1190/	07.09.2019	19.03.2020	₹4,67,06,676.00 (Rs.) Four crore sixty seven lakh six thousand six hundred seventy six only) plus Interest w.e.f. 01.08.2019 onwards less deposit made after demand notice date	Shri Nishant Kumar (Chief Manager)

1212/1215/1190/1191/1197, Thana No. 24 owned by M/s Arya Educational & Cultural Society having combined boundary: North - NH 170, South - Mangan Rishi, East - Lekhyakari, West - Kacchi Rasta vide Following Sale Deeds:  
(i) Sale Deed No. 5862 dt. 23.05.2015 bearing khata no. 2103 & 2104, Khesra No. 1190 & 1191 situated at Bithnoui, Khemchand, ParganaDharampur, Thana- KriyanandNaga,Thana No-24, Tauzi No-1/1309, Sub Regd. Office - Purnea, Area-21 Decimal.  
(ii) Sale Deed No. 3718 dt. 19.03.2016 bearing khata no. 2451 & 2452, Khesra No. 1213, 1212 & 1215 situated at Bithnoui, Khemchand, ParganaDharampur, Thana- Kriyanand Nagar, Thana No-24, Tauzi No-1/1309, Sub Regd. Office-Purnea, Area-57 Decimal 4 kkarri  
(iii) Sale Deed No. 3739 dt. 30.04.2015 bearing khata no. 2451 & 2452, Khesra No. 1213 situated at Bithnoui, Khemchand, ParganaDharampur, Thana- Kriyanand Nagar, Thana No-24, Tauzi No-1/1309, Sub Regd. Office- Purnea, Area - 18 Decimal  
(iv) Sale Deed No. 5697 dt. 20.05.2015 bearing khata no. 2103, Khesra No. 1190 situated at Bithnoui, Khemchand, ParganaDharampur, Thana- Kriyanand Nagar, Thana No-24, Tauzi No-1/1309, Sub Regd. Office - Purnea, Area - 33 Decimal  
(v) Sale Deed No. 4990 dt. 30.04.2015 bearing khata no. 2103 & 2104, Khesra No. 1190 & 1191 situated at Bithnoui, Khemchand, ParganaDharampur, Thana- Kriyanand Nagar, Thana No-24, Tauzi No-1/1309, Sub Regd. Office- Purnea, Area - 57 Decimal.  
(vi) Sale Deed No. 4987 dt. 30.04.2015 bearing khata no. 2103 & 2104, Khesra No.1187, 1190 & 1191 situated at Bithnoui, Khemchand, ParganaDharampur, Thana - Kriyanand Nagar, Thana No -24, Tauzi No -1/1309, Sub Regd. Office - Purnea, Area -1 Acre 11 Decimal.  
(vii) Sale Deed No. 4988 dt. 30.04.2015 bearing khata no. 2452, Khesra No. 1212 situated at Bithnoui, Khemchand, ParganaDharampur, Thana- Kriyanand Nagar, Thana No -24, Tauzi No- 1/1309, Sub Regd. Office - Purnea, Area - 83 Decimal.  
(viii) Sale Deed No. 4980 dt. 30.04.2015 bearing khata no. 2452, Khesra No. 1212 situated at Bithnoui, Khemchand, ParganaDharampur, Thana- Kriyanand Nagar, Thana No - 24, Tauzi No - 1/1309, Sub Regd. Office - Purnea, Area - 42 Decimal.  
(ix) Sale Deed No. 3719 dt. 19.03.2016 bearing khata no. 2451, Khesra No. 1213 situated at Bithnoui, Khemchand, ParganaDharampur, Thana- Kriyanand Nagar, Thana No-24, Tauzi No-1/1309, Sub Regd. Office - Purnea, Area - 76 Decimal.

Date : 19.03.2020  
Place : Purnea

(Authorised Officer)  
Punjab National Bank

**HIMACHAL PRADESH STATE CIVIL SUPPLIES CORPORATION LIMITED**  
(A Government of H.P. Undertaking)  
Regd. Office: Block No. 16-17, SDA Commercial Complex, Kasumpti, Shimla-09, H.P. CIN U99999HP1980SGC004263, GSTIN: 02AABCH4054K1ZV Phone No. 0177-2621583, 2621178, Fax: 0177-2625537 Email: himapurind@gmail.com, Web: www.himapuril.com

**SHORT TERM GLOBAL E-TENDER NOTICE**  
Himachal Pradesh State Civil Supplies Corporation Limited, Shimla invites Global E-Tenders for the procurement of FORTIFIED EDIBLE OILS (Fortified Mustard Oil and Fortified Soya Refined Oil for three months supply. The detailed tender notice, tender documents and other instructions can be down-loaded or viewed on-line from the portal https://hptenders.gov.in. The last date of submission of sample, earnest money deposit tender document fee, processing fee and on-line tenders shall be till 07.04.2020 upto 5.00 PM. The tenders of Fortified Edible Oils shall be opened on 18.04.2020 at 11.00 AM.

Managing Director

**CENTRAL ORGANISATION FOR RAILWAY ELECTRIFICATION**  
1, HAWAB YUSUF ROAD, CIVIL LINES/Prayagraj-211001  
FAX No.: 9532-2497150 www.core.indianrailways.gov.in

**CORRIGENDUM-1**  
No. 07/PR/CORE/Empanelment/2020-22 Date: 23.03.2020  
Corrigendum to Tender Notice No. 07/PR/CORE/Empanelment/2020-22 due to be opened on 23.03.2020 for Empanelment of fully INS Accredited Advertising Agencies for CPRO/CORE/Prayagraj is as under:-

Sr.	Subject	Previous Date & Time	New Date & Time
1.	Tender Submission Last Date & Time	23.03.2020 upto 15.00 hrs.	30.04.2020 upto 15.00 hrs.
2.	Tender Opening Date & Time	23.03.2020 15.30 hrs	30.04.2020 15.30 hrs.

All other terms and condition remain unchanged.  
CHIEF PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER/ CORE/ PRAYAGRAJ, FOR & ON BEHALF OF PRESIDENT OF INDIA  
PR/289/2020 ADK "Serving Customers with a Smile"

**SALUTE THE SOLDIER**  
Martyr of CISF  
CT/GD MALKIT SINGH  
DSP DURGAPUR  
24-03-1997  
CISF proudly remembers the supreme sacrifice of this brave-heart. On this day, he laid down his life at the altar of duty while fighting with criminals His courage and bravery would remain an abiding source of inspiration for the force. The force will remain eternally in debted to him for this noblest deed.

**Karnataka Renewable Energy Development Limited**  
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)  
# 39, "Shanthigruha", Bharath Scouts & Guides, Palace Road, Bengaluru-01. Mobile: 9820945670/9449817158 Website: www.kredinfo.in  
No: KREDL/07/SOG-1/227A/2019-20/Call-1 Date: 24.03.2020

**e-TENDER NOTIFICATION**  
Solar Power Pack for Anganawadi Kendras (Through e-Procurement Platform)

Tenders are invited for Design, Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning with 5 years Comprehensive Maintenance of Solar Powered Lights and Fans for 1027 Nos. of Anganawadi Centers of "Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD)" throughout the State of Karnataka through e-Procurement portal under Two Cover System. Intending bidders can download the Tender documents from the e-Procurement website: www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in on or after 24.03.2020.

Sd/- Assistant General Manager-Solar Off Grid-1, KREDL

**OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR (OPERATIONS)**  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Public Health Engineering Office Complex, Near Rajiv Bhawan, Unit-V, Bhubaneswar-751001, Odisha, India  
Phone No. (0674)2391444/2390145 E-mail - maiddirectorops@watcodisha.in  
NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-PROCUREMENT  
Invitation For Bids (IFB)  
WATCO (O)-05/2019-20 Dt. 21.03.2020

SN	Name of Work	Appx. Estimated Cost (Rs. in Lakh)	Period of Completion	Availability of Bid Document for Online Bidding		Name & Address of Officer Inviting Bid
				From	To	
1	Improvement of Water quality to Bindusagar Pond using source as Daya River	340.63	04 (Four) Months	11.00 Hrs. Of 27.03.2020	17.00 Hrs. Of 17.04.2020	The Director(Operations) WATCO Unit-V, BBSR, Odisha.

Name & Address of Officer Inviting Bid: The Director (Operations), WATCO, Unit-V, BBSR, Odisha, Odisha.  
Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal "https://tendersodisha.gov.in"

Sd/- DIRECTOR (OPERATIONS) WATCO, BHUBANESWAR OIPR-13083/11/0017/1920

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER  
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE: SUNDARGARH  
E-Procurement Notice, Online- RWSESN-20 of 2019-20. Letter. No. 628/Dtd. 17.03.2020  
E-mail address-serw sundargarh@yahoo.com

1. Type of the Work: Road Works (OMBADC)  
2. Total No. of works: 2 No. of Road (Percentage Rate Tender)  
3. Estimated cost: Varies from Rs. 190.35 Lakh to Rs. 290.69 Lakh  
4. Class of Contractor: 'B' Class & 'A' Class  
5. Period of completion: Nine Calendar Months.  
6. Cost of tender paper: The Bidder shall transfer online the cost of bid document for Rs. 10,000/- towards cost of Bid through a process as mentioned under DTGN.  
7. EMD Required: The Bidder shall transfer online the Earnest Money Deposit/Bid Security at the rate of 1% of the estimated cost put to tender as mentioned under DTGN. Exemption from EMD is permissible as per codal provisions of Govt. of Odisha.  
8. APS: Additional Performance Security shall be obtained from the Bidder when the bid amount is less than estimated cost put to tender. In such an event, only the successful bidder who has quoted less bid price/ rates than the estimated cost put to tender shall have to furnish the exact amount of differential cost i.e. estimated cost put to tender minus the quoted amount as Additional Performance Security (APS) in the shape of Term Deposit Receipt pledged in favour of Division Officer/ Bank Guarantees in favour of the Divisional Officer from any Nationalized/ Scheduled Bank in India counter guaranteed by its local branch at Bhubaneswar within seven days of issue of Letter of Acceptance (LoA) by the Divisional Officer (by e-mail) to the successful bidder otherwise the bid of the successful bidder shall be cancelled and the Earnest Money Deposit/ Bid Security shall be forfeited. Further, proceeding for blacklisting shall be initiated against the bidder".  
9. GST: Rate quoted by the Contractor shall be excluding GST. The GST as applicable for the work contract shall be payable to the contractor on each bill amount on production of tax invoice. The prevailing rate of GST on the gross amount of bill will be deducted from the contractor bill as tax deduction at source (TDS) as per rule.  
10. Other details:

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender On-line for bidding		Last Date & Time of seeking Tender clarification	Technical Bid Opening	Financial Bid Opening
		From	To			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Superintending Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sundargarh	RWSESN-20 of 2019-20	25.03.2020 11:00 A.M.	21.04.2020 3:00 P.M.	20.04.2020 3:00 P.M.	24.04.2019 11:00 A.M.	Will be intimated separately

Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in  
N.B. Corrigendum if any may be seen in this website. www.tendersodisha.gov.in  
Authority reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reasons thereof.

Sd/- Superintending Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sundargarh OIPR-25133/11/0026/1920



# 5 THE OUTBREAK THE CITY

**POLICE AT BARRICADES SAY PEOPLE NOT LISTENING**

## Lockdown lax, Kejriwal says unacceptable

### Roads betray lack of concern about epidemic Don't think it won't happen to you, stay indoors, says CM

**SOMYA LAKHANI & JIGNASA SINHA**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

DAY ONE of the lockdown of Delhi-NCR saw crowded markets, traffic on the roads and stranded commuters who belong to the essential services category.

Borders that Delhi shares with Noida and Gurgaon saw winding queues, rampant checking of IDs and traffic snarls. In Noida, police officers said the maximum traffic was seen at the DND Flyway between 6 am and 8 am, and similar scenes played out at the Delhi-Gurgaon border.

An IPS officer in the Delhi Police said, "People aren't listening and if you ask why someone is out, the most common excuse is that they're visiting a doctor. We have to believe them. One man pretended to be a firefighter, and when his ID was checked, it turned out that he worked at a private firm." An ACP-rank officer who was on field in Delhi said some commuters stuck 'essential services' print-outs on their cars to evade questioning. "This is not government sanctioned," he said.

Several commuters alleged police stopped them despite their being a part of "essential" services. In the absence of cabs, many people also said they had a hard time getting to or returning from the airport.

The owner of an IVF centre in UP's Indirapuram said 9 of the 15 staffers could not make it to work from their homes Monday. A senior physician in Noida said his clinical assistant, who lives in East Delhi's Trilokpur, was stranded at the border, and police did not let him through as he didn't have an ID. "I had to send an ambulance to pick him up," he said.

Amid the lockdown, the



At the Delhi border in Ghazipur, Monday. Prem Nath Pandey

health department directed all department heads to hire private vehicles for transportation of officials working in Delhi government hospitals. Delhi Police too started hop-on, hop-off services for their staff. Joint CP (Northern range) Manish Agarwal said, "Some police personnel live outside Delhi. In the absence of public transport, we have our own service for them."

Delhi Fire Services director Atul Garg said "as many staffers comes from outside Delhi for their 24-hour shift, they have been given the option of staying back in the barracks in case they can't figure out a way to get home."

At Outer Delhi's Singhu border, heavy traffic was reported from 6 am till noon as people lined up to travel from Delhi to Sonapat. DCP (Outer North)



Gaurav Sharma said, "We sealed the borders around 5.30 am and only allowed emergency services and those heading home. There was a delay due to a lot of private vehicles; we had to check each vehicle and the driver's ID."

Meanwhile, Delhi Police filed over 100 cases against people under IPC section 188 (disobedience to order), 475 cases under Section 65 of the Delhi Police Act, and 326 cases under Section 66 of the Delhi Police Act Monday. At DND, 20 Noida traffic police

personnel and several district officials said many commuters tried to enter the district from Vasundhara Enclave border. "Several travellers said they have to go to office even though work from home has been announced," said DCP (Traffic-Noida) Rajesh S.

In Gurgaon, as per traffic personnel, two checkpoints were set up along the Expressway to manage congestion — one at Shankar Chowk to deal with vehicles coming from Udyog Vihar and Cyber Hub, and another near Sirhaul toll for those travelling from IFFCO Chowk and Signature Towers.

"Only people involved in essential services, going to the airport or hospitals were allowed to head towards Delhi, and were asked to show their ID, air tickets or prescription," said an officer. In Delhi, police roamed

around market areas announcing that only ration shops, grocers and pharmacies will remain open, and each person should stand at a distance of one metre.

An employee at Apollo Pharmacy in East Delhi's Savita Vihar said, "We only let one buyer inside the shop." A police personnel in Central district said that one metre marking was done outside shops.

"We have taken photographs of certain shops that sell non-essential goods, as they may start keeping ration items in a bid to stay open from tomorrow," said a police officer, who resorted to showing violators "news of the Canadian PM's wife being tested positive for coronavirus" in a bid to "explain that anyone can get it".

(With inputs from Anil Bhatnagar & Sakshi Dayal)

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

DELHI CHIEF Minister Arvind Kejriwal Monday said several people had not followed the lockdown guidelines and called such behaviour "unacceptable". He also said conditions of the lockdown would be enforced more stringently if people did not stay indoors. Replying to PM Narendra Modi's tweet urging people to stay indoors, Kejriwal wrote, "I agree with you. Many people violated the lockdown today. This is unacceptable. This endangers everyone's lives. This (lockdown) will be strictly imposed in Delhi."

After several people and cars stayed off the roads during Sunday's 'janata curfew', Monday — despite the Delhi government announcing a lockdown until March 31 — saw a substantial number of vehicles and people out on the roads. Many claimed they were part of 'essential services' — which are allowed to function — or that they were out to buy groceries. On Sunday, Kejriwal had said that no proof would be asked and the system would be based on trust.

As roads remained populated despite the lockdown, Kejriwal said Monday: "We need your cooperation. Everyone will have to follow the lockdown. It started today and maybe you had urgent work and had to go out. From tomorrow, we will have to be stricter." He did not elaborate on what the stricter measures were.

As per officials, police could be asked to have a zero tolerance policy and everyone will be asked for proof if they are outside. On Monday too, police had started



Kejriwal arrives at the Assembly Monday. Amit Mehra

checking IDs to see if people were out for a legitimate reason.

Pointing to the quick spurt of COVID-19 cases in Italy and US, he said: "We don't want to cause you trouble but we are doing it for the sake of your health and life. Coronavirus is very dangerous, it is a global pandemic. We have observed how even in developed countries, thousands of people have died... We are lucky that the virus reached Delhi a little late and we could learn from others... We have learnt and taken steps. If we take a look at Italy, it had 100 cases a month ago on February 23. Today, it has around 40,000 cases and over 5,000 people have died. In America, there were 68 cases on February 29 and one person had died. Today, they have 35,000 cases and 418 people have died... Don't think it won't happen to you, the virus does not consider gender or class. The only way to stop it is to stay indoors during lockdown and break the chain of transmission."

Delhi has seen 30 cases so far and one death.

Kejriwal said there were 23 cases in Delhi where patients had travelled abroad: "They have

transmitted the virus to several other people. It seems the situation in Delhi is under control so far... If it spreads, and Delhi gets 15,000-20,000 cases, it won't have adequate hospital beds. We will have to lockdown then as well but it will not be effective."

Kejriwal also said the government will take strict action against private operators who cut wages of employees: "Show humanity — don't let anyone starve, continue paying people wages. The government will be very strict about this. In fact, pay people some amount in advance... Large landlords to delay rent collection."

The government also decided to distribute mid-day meals to children at homes. While only 25% of the DTC fleet was operational on Monday, it will be increased to 50% starting Tuesday. "Several essential staff faced problems. We will increase operational bus fleet," Kejriwal said.

Meanwhile, a Ghaziabad-based private doctor with a travel history to France tested positive late Sunday night, taking the total number of cases in the district to three. No new cases were reported in Gurgaon and Delhi.

## FIR filed after woman from Manipur spat on, called 'corona'

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

A 25-YEAR-OLD woman from Manipur approached police after a man misbehaved with her in Northwest Delhi's Mukherjee Nagar area on Sunday night.

The woman has alleged that when she objected, he spat on her and shouted 'corona' before escaping on his two-wheeler.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Northwest) Vijayanta Arya said they have registered an FIR and are trying to identify the accused.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal also asked Delhi Police to take strict action. "Am shocked to read this. Delhi Police must find the culprit and take strict action. We need to be united as a nation, especially in our fight against Covid-19," he said in a tweet.

According to police, the in-

cident came to light on Sunday night when the woman approached them, informing them that she was heading to her house in Vijaynagar, after buying groceries from the local market, when the incident took place.

"In her complaint, she has stated that she was passing through a dark stretch when a man, who appeared to be in his early 50s, passed lewd comments at her. When she objected, he spat on her and managed to escape after shouting 'corona,'" said a senior police officer.

On the basis of her complaint, police said an FIR was registered under IPC Section 509 at Mukherjee Nagar police station.

"We have started scanning all CCTV cameras in the area to ascertain the identity of the accused. He was on a white two-wheeler," said a police officer.

## AIIMS shuts all OPDs, some left in the lurch outside

**ASTHA SAXENA & ANANYA TIWARI**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

STARTING TUESDAY, AIIMS will not cater to any patient coming to the OPD, including new as well as follow-up patients, to avoid any form of community transmission in the wake of rising coronavirus cases. "All OPD services (including super-specialty services) inter-alia all new as well as follow-up patients' registration in AIIMS hospital and all centres will remain closed from Tuesday till further notice," stated an order by medical superintendent Dr D K Sharma. The country's top medical institute sees over 15,000 patients in its OPD every day.

On Sunday, the government issued orders for a complete lockdown in 75 districts, including Delhi, in the country.

On March 18, the medical institute had sent an advisory to OPD patients, requesting them to postpone appointments. The hos-



Food served at a shelter near AIIMS, Monday. Tashi Tobgyal

pital had already curtailed elective surgeries since March 20.

The move, however, has left families of patients from states such as UP and Bihar stranded and many are either staying in shelters outside or on the streets.

Shambhu Ram (53), a farmer from Basantpur in Bihar, had come to Delhi with his family for the treatment of his six-year-old granddaughter Ragini, who has leukemia. "We have been here since March 17... Doctors now say we should get her treated else-

where," he said.

Salma Khatun (35), whose baby suffers from a neurological ailment, said: "I have been getting Ayaan treated here for six months. We arrived here from UP's Gorakhpur on March 21. We usually go back home immediately by train." With her child due to be operated on in a fortnight, Khatun said they have no option but to stay in a shelter.

Jai Pratap Singh (47) from Bihar's Muzaffarpur, who is getting his 16-year-old son treated for a spinal injury, said: "My son had an operation just yesterday and they have discharged him from the ICU. We have no option but wait at the shelter for now."

Complaining about hygiene at the shelter, he said, "We get food and the beds are fine. But there has been no water in the toilet for four days, and it is very dirty."

Other hospitals have already restricted services. Elective surgeries in Lok Nayak, Safdarjung, GB Pant and Guru Nanak Eye Centre have been cancelled.

## As cabs go off capital roads, owners say they have EMIs to pay and mouths to feed

**ANAND MOHAN J**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

PUNEET CHADHA, owner of a cab service in Connaught Place, had recently acquired a Maruti Ertiga to supplement his fleet of 12 vehicles. However, ever since the lockdown in the capital due to coronavirus — as part of which cabs and taxis will not be allowed to operate until March 31 — Chadha fears his decision to buy the vehicle on an EMI of around Rs 19,000 will take a toll on his finances.

"If you would have told me this during Holi, I would not have believed it. Nobody would have," said Chadha.

Like Chadha, many drivers and taxi service providers across the city depend on commuters for their daily survival. They have to pay EMIs on their vehi-



Outside Kashmere Gate ISBT Monday. Amit Mehra

cles, meet daily expenses to sustain their family members, and pay rent.

Many drivers said they had been saving up money for months to buy land in Outer Delhi or back home in their villages. But

with the lockdown in effect, they have to dip into their savings to keep themselves afloat.

Some, though, have found a silver lining. "I used to sleep for three-four hours a day as I used to drive around the Gurgaon-

Delhi border, ferrying mostly call centre employees. Now with no work, I can at least sleep for eight hours," said Gurvinder, a driver.

On the other hand, Shiv Kumar, who runs Baba Haridass taxi service in Dwarka, has not found work for the past 15 days. His last earning was Rs 800 on March 6.

"I have just been sitting at home. I have a fleet of 20 vehicles and EMI for each is in the range of Rs 8,000 to Rs 20,000. I was looking forward to a trip to Manali this summer, not a lockdown," he said.

Similarly, taxi service provider Hridesh has around 12 drivers who depend on him for their livelihood. They used to earn Rs 450 for an 8-hour shift; now they have asked him for an advance payment.

"Most of our customers work

at corporate offices. They pay us on a monthly basis; now those payments are stuck. People are saying we should give paid leave to our drivers. But how can I when I don't have money to last till March 31?" said Hridesh.

Manoj, a driver who lives in a rented accommodation in Delhi, said: "I live alone in Delhi and my family is in UP. In such a scenario, I could have gone back home. Now with the border sealed, I'm stuck in the city. I won't be able to pay my rent this month."

Hukum Singh, a driver with a cab aggregator, drove his last customer a week ago. With Uber suspending its services in the city, he said: "I have a big family, including three children. There are going to be daily expenses. Thankfully, I have no EMI but it will be difficult to survive without a job after three days."

## Delhi HC, 7 district courts suspend operations till April 4



Emergency hearings would be done through 'video conference', the HC order said. Archive

**ANAND MOHAN J & PRITAM PAL SINGH**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

WITH THE number of coronavirus cases touching 30 in the capital, the Delhi High Court on Monday suspended its functioning as well as of seven district courts till April 4. The order clarified that in cases of emergencies, hearings would be done through "video conference".

The High Court and the trial courts were functioning under restrictions since March 1.

"The respective district and sessions judges shall prepare a roster of judicial officers for dealing with remand related to fresh arrests. For fresh matters of extreme urgency, one administrative officer (judicial) be nominated in each district who can be contacted telephonically by the advocates/party. Necessary directions be issued and uploaded on the websites by the district and sessions judges concerned," read the order.

At Rouse Avenue court, lawyers are being informed through the internet that their matters have been adjourned. Several important corruption cases, like the Augusta Westland scam, corruption charges against former Orissa HC Judge I M Qudusi and several other CBI and ED cases have been deferred till April. "There were three cases

against Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal, including the chief secretary assault case, which were on argument stages," said Advocate Mohd Irshad.

At Karkardooma court, where the Northeast Delhi riot cases are being heard, court life has come to a standstill and only bail applications are being heard. Police are not producing any accused before the judge after the expiry of their police or judicial custody.

Reshma (32) had been visiting court room number 68 at Karkardooma with her two-month-old son, trying to convince the judge to release her husband — an accused in the riots.

"Coronavirus is spreading. I kept telling the judge. I did not want to go to court because of the virus. Now the courts are closed and my lawyers tell me that my husband will be stuck a little longer in prison. I cannot stand this, first the riots and now this disease," she said.

Advocate Abdul Gaffar, who is representing several riot accused, said, "I take a big risk by coming here. I make do with a hand sanitiser. Today, I managed to file six bail applications."

With litigants not coming to courts for the past week, many lawyers have also been affected. At Saket court, advocate Yash Thakur said, "It goes both ways. Even if a client pays, his work is not done. We, lawyers, have all gone back one year."



# States shut doors to break chain

India divided itself into dozens of tight silos on Monday, with all states and UTs sealing themselves in, and ordering all their residents indoors in a bid to break the chain of transmission of the novel coronavirus and prevent the COVID-19 outbreak from moving to the next stage.



A municipal worker sprays disinfectant inside a bank in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, on Monday. PTI

## Bihar: Pension, ration in advance

Patna: Following a state-wide lockdown enforced from Monday, the Bihar government announced that all doctors and health service workers will be paid an amount equal to their salary as an incentive, over and above their salary. The government also announced that every ration-card holder would be given one month's free ration. All pension holders — old age, differently abled and widows — will be given three months pension in advance. A ration card holder at civic units, block headquarters and panchayat levels will be given Rs 1,000. Also, scholarship amounts of students will be transferred to their bank accounts by March 31. ENS

## Learnt severity only after PM meet: Goa CM

Panaji: Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Monday admitted not having gauged the severeness of the COVID-19 situation earlier and said he was able to grasp the enormity after attending the Chief Ministers' video conference with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Sawant till March 20 continued to attend meetings across Goa, campaigning for the Zilla Panchayat elections, even as his government invoked the Epidemic Act. His government is now taking advice from Union Home Minister Amit Shah every day, with the latter's office updating them on the efforts, he said. Meanwhile, Goa Forward Party chief Vijai Sardesai asked the Pramod Sawant government to form an "inter-departmental cum inter-disciplinary taskforce". ENS



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: A deserted railway station in Mumbai; locals stand in queue to buy essential commodities in Guwahati; Lohia Path road in Lucknow on Monday.

## Food helpline, apps help Kota students stay on track

ANKITA DWIVEDI JOHRI JAIPUR, MARCH 23

ON MARCH 22, as part of the Janata Curfew — the 14-hour lockdown announced by the Prime Minister to arrest the spread of COVID-19 — the mess at Nihal Gautam's hostel was shut. "I ate biscuits and Maggi the entire day. I thought the lockdown was only for a day and that the shops and services would open the next day," says the 17-year-old student of Resonance Coaching Institute in Rajasthan's Kota city.

However, on the same day, the Rajasthan government announced a complete lockdown in the state that has so far recorded 32 positive cases, and all of Gautam's plans fell flat. "I was supposed to take an overnight bus to Delhi and then a flight from there to Patna. But the borders were shut and I couldn't go," he says.

In the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, most of Kota's 1.5 lakh outstation students left the country's coaching hub to return to their hometowns or find accommodations near their exam centres. However, Kota District Magistrate Om Prakash Kasera says with trains, flights and buses getting cancelled, approximately 30,000-35,000 students continue to live in the city. Kota has reported no positive case so far.

"The IIT-JEE exam has been postponed and so I wanted to return home. Our course is finished, classes ended on March 15, everything is shut... I have been staying indoors and studying all day now. It's been two days and there has been no food," Gautam said.

DM Kasera says that while the shutdown decision was last minute, the administration is now taking necessary steps to ensure students and residents are comfortable. "We have set up zone-wise helpline numbers for students. Food, hostel and travel teams have also been constituted, and we are also planning to open ration shops from 12-6 pm every day," says Kasera, adding that most of the calls on the helpline numbers have been regarding food.

The student welfare committee of Allen coaching centre — one of the biggest in Kota with about one lakh outstation students — is working with the district administration on taking calls from students and providing them food. "Around 50 of our staff members are involved in this. Some take calls while the others collect and deliver food. We don't have a kitchen. We have asked all hostels to prepare 10-15 extra packets of food daily. We collect and send it to students. We have been taking lunch and dinner calls for two days now," says an official of the institute. On Sunday, their teams distributed 1,100 packets of food.

Vipul Kanthali, 18, and his friend were among those who received the meals — a packet of *puri aloo*. A resident of a village near Indore, he vacated his private hostel on Friday only to find that his bus had been cancelled. "I had nowhere to go. I finally went to a friend's hostel, but I had to vacate that today... Now, I am going to a village, 90 km away from Kota, to friend's home," says the son of a farmer, who has been preparing for the IIT-JEE exams for the past year.

"Since there is no public transport, my friend's brother is coming to pick us up," he adds. While there is fear about the virus, Pramod Maheshwari, director of Career Point coaching centre, said he believes the students' schedule will not be disrupted. "The NEET (medical entrance) exams are in May, and we will get the dates for the IIT exams soon. The Class XI and XII students had already left, and most of the courses are complete. Now, we have about 30-35% outstation students left in the city. Most centres, including ours, are providing live digital classes for revision and doubts. We have also launched a Career Point app..." he says.

But even as he works to stay on track, Kanthali says can't help but feel a little scared. "I have been preparing for the entire year. I don't want anything to go wrong... I just want the pandemic to end," he says.

## In Punjab's NRI hub, 14 cases, only one hospital and anger against 'outsiders'

ANJU AGNIHOTRI CHABA JALANDHAR, MARCH 23

IN BHAGAT Singh's native district of Nawanshahr, his martyrdom day made hardly a stir Monday. Life in this NRI hub of Punjab has come to revolve around its 15 coronavirus patients, plus the few thousand people who are now in quarantine in five villages. Punjab's only death can also be traced back to Nawanshahr — leaving one of the state's small districts with its highest burden (15 cases of the state's total of 24).

At the centre of the fight against the virus is the district's Civil Hospital, whose patient numbers, plus three suspected cases isolated in a 40-bed ward, are the highest for a hospital in the state.

Senior Medical Officer of the hospital Dr Harwinder Singh said the condition of all 15 is stable. "In case we need ventilators, the patients will be referred to Jalandhar," he said. The Civil Hospital has no ventilators.

Handling the crisis are three teams, comprising doctors, nurses and helpers, working round the clock. They monitor the patients, for temperature and blood pressure, as well as ensure the delivery of medicines and eatables in the isolation ward.

"The medical teams are not allowed to eat anything once they

## PUNJAB

Curfew with no relaxations. All residents to stay indoors. Punjab was the first state to act on Monday after people flouted lockdown orders. In Bathinda, people who were seen on roads were made to hold a pamphlet that read, "Main samaj da dushman haan, main ghar vich nahih rahanga (I am an enemy of the society, I will not be at my home)." In a video message, Chief Minister Amarinder Singh said he was forced to take the step "in the larger interest of the state, and in the interest of all of you". Singh said he received reports that people were moving around as usual in towns, mohallas and cities despite the lockdown that came into effect on Monday morning. In Barnala, shopkeepers objected to police strictness in getting shops and grocery shops closed, though they were under essential items.

## MAHARASHTRA

Curfew. Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said the government had been forced to act because "Despite multiple requests, people are not following rules". The BSE will remain open. Although a curfew has not been imposed in the state, Thackeray used the word curfew as he announced steps the government had decided to take to keep people from

stepping out. "We have enforced Section 144 in the state. Now I am compelled to enforce the curfew in the state as I got information in the morning from many places about people being on the streets. So I am compelled to impose curfew across the state and not more than five people should gather," said Thackeray, in a speech livestreamed over social media.

## CHANDIGARH, PUDUCHERRY

Curfew, borders sealed.

## GUJARAT

Statewide lockdown from Monday midnight until March 31.

## KARNATAKA

Non-essential services, commercial establishments in 9 districts shut until March 31.

## NORTH-EAST

Lockdown in Tripura from 2 pm on Tuesday; Manipur locked down till March 31; Assam to be locked down from 6 pm on Tuesday until March 31, but grocers, pharmacists and petrol pumps exempt; Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram under lockdown.

## UTTARAKHAND

No public transport except to/from hospitals and airports; all shops, offices, factories shut; borders closed. After 10 am on Tuesday, only petrol pumps open; private vehicles also not allowed.

## TAMIL NADU

From Tuesday 6 pm until March 31, only essential services; district borders sealed.

## J&K, LADAKH

Borders sealed, only essential services vehicles allowed.

## RAJASTHAN

All inter-state and intra-state movements stopped. Limited public transport to ferry people to airport, stations, hospitals. Curfew in urban limits of Bhilwara and Jhunjhunu.

## TELANGANA, AP

Both states under total lockdown; borders sealed.

## WEST BENGAL

Lockdown extended to over six districts and several other cities and towns, from Darjeeling to Kolkata, till March 27 midnight. CM Mamata Banerjee wrote to PM Narendra Modi, requesting him to issue necessary instructions to stop all flights from landing in the state. ENS



Police enforce the lockdown in Punjab's Ludhiana. PTI

enter the ward. They have only water and tea," said Dr Singh.

A staff member said once home, they maintain a distance from family members. A team member said he had asked his family not to enter his room. "Small negligence can cause us dear," he said.

A nurse has been staying back at the hospital as she has young children whom she doesn't want to put at risk.

On Monday, instead of a fair, also attended by many NRIs, to mark Bhagat Singh's martyrdom day, Nawanshahr Deputy

Commissioner Vinay Bublani was alone in paying tributes to his statue at his native village Khatkar Kalan.

The president of the traders' association, Gurcharan Arora, said, "This time we don't want NRIs to come to Punjab because they are the carriers of this disease."

Arora accused the Punjab government of having been lax in checking for symptoms at entry points. "Every NRI was allowed to enter without educating them to isolate and quarantine themselves. My granddaughter came 10 days

back and we put her under home quarantine but our NRI relatives are coming without taking any precautions."

Raman Murgai of Murgai Cloth House on Geeta Bhawan Road said he was keeping his shop closed because of the same fear. "I closed my shop when the first case was reported on March 18," he said.

"Earlier our entire focus was to get more and more NRI customers because they form the bulk of our buyers, but this time our focus is to save our district from this deadly virus," said Sameer of Puja Handloom.

## JOBLESS AND FORCED TO RETURN HOME

# Unorganised workers ask: Who will compensate for loss of income?

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE BENGALURU, CHENNAI, GUWAHATI, JAMMU, LUDHIANA, MUMBAI, RANCHI, JAIPUR, MARCH 23

MEHBOOB ALAM, 45, a daily wagger, who loads and unloads containers at a dry port in Ludhiana, is without a job for the last 10 days. Containers have stopped moving in and out of the city since the COVID-19 slowly spread across the country over the last two months. Shanker Mandal, 30, and Harmeshwar Rai, in his 30s, are among the dozen others working in Alam's group, who no longer get paid Rs 500 a day.

"We had some savings, but we don't know how we will survive in April. No job means no income for daily wagers. Will the government support us?" ask Mandal and Rai. Punjab on Sunday finally announced it would pay construction workers Rs 3,000 a month.

The dry port workers may have to wait since the assistance is only for construction workers registered with the state.

But for unorganised workers across many states, the situation isn't getting any better. For contractors and employers in states with large migrant worker population, the worries are bigger. Dush Rattan, 59, who runs a restaurant at Parade Ground in Jammu, downed the shutters last Tuesday, and asked his 10 workers to return home. "When authorities ask me to shut down, what option do I have," he said.

Rattan is more worried that the workers, including cooks, may not return from their native places in Bihar and Nepal when normalcy is restored. "I have given them a salary advance of a month or two. But I am not sure if they will return at all," he said.

India's unorganised workers make up 82.7 per cent or 39.14 crores of the total 47.41 crore esti-

mated employed persons, according to the last NSSO Employment and Unemployment Survey, 2011-12. The contribution of the unorganised or informal sector to the economy, according to a National Statistical Commission report of 2012, varies between 48 per cent and 56.4 per cent.

"Timely financial support will ensure they do not return home in large numbers, and this will play a key role in arresting the spread of the virus and the disease," said Pronab Sen, former Chief Statistician of India.

While the Central government is yet to announce any financial package for unorganised sector workers, Kerala took the lead, followed by Uttar Pradesh last week, and Punjab and Uttarakhand, on Sunday.

In Maharashtra, two of the state's and India's most industrialised cities, Mumbai and Pune, were witness to an exodus of thousands of workers, including



Daily wagers in tents near Vadgaon area in Pune. Pavan Khengre

autorickshaw and taxi drivers, to their homes in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar last week. "Taxi drivers are struggling to earn enough to fetch food for the day," said AI Quadros, union leader of Mumbai Taximen Association, pointing out that less

than 8,000 of the 20,000 taxies plied in the city last week, with many drivers returning to their hometowns.

App-based cab aggregator services have also been hit. For Sanjay Kumar Mishra, 45, who is

associated with Ola, the biggest worry is to pay for the expenses of his son, who is preparing for the civil services examination in Delhi. "The trips are down 50 per cent," he said. For Uber driver, Pradeep Das, the number of trips a day are down to three or less now from the average 10.

Similarly, of the 2.5 lakh auto drivers with badges, many have left for their hometowns. "Drivers who have to pay monthly installment to banks have stayed on," said Shashank Rao, Union leader of the auto-rickshaw association.

Labour department officials in Maharashtra said the lockdown and closure of private establishments impacted the daily wagers, especially in the construction sector. "There are 21 lakh registered construction workers in the state, with over 25 per cent in Mumbai. Many have preferred to return to their homes. We do not know the numbers though," the official said.

Sudheer Sarkar, a migrant

labourer from West Bengal who works at a construction site in Jaipur, says that the lockdown in Rajasthan has his family staring at an uncertain future. "I used to earn at least Rs 600 everyday from working in construction sites. But now I don't have any work... There are families whose savings will run out soon, and without any government assistance it will be difficult to find sustenance for them," he said.

The sharp demand destruction is not restricted to transport and construction, but is quite pervasive, in the services sector. Not just construction workers, those employed as security guards, and for cleaning and maintenance services in malls and commercial establishments, hotels and restaurants, are staring not just at income loss, but also uncertainty over how long this will last.

In Bengaluru, catering and food services have been among the worst hit due to measures of

social distancing and isolation over the past 10 days. "Many of my staff have returned to their villages. The demand for food is down 85 percent. We are making only basic stuff now," says Shivaramaiah, who runs a small, low-cost kitchen that caters to employees in the IT sector and other services in central Bengaluru.

Another large segment of unorganised workers are those who are vendors on the street. Renu Devi, 70, who has lost her husband and son, and earns her living by selling mosambi juice near Morabadi Maidan, said her sales were down 80 per cent. "I have to pay the fruit vendor, but I don't have money. It is up to God now."

- ZEESHAN SHAIKH, RAAKHI JAGGA, ABHISHEK ANGAD, ABHISHEK SAHA, ARUN SHARMA, ARUN JANARDHAN, JOHNSON T A AND DEEP MUKHERJEE CONTRIBUTED TO THIS REPORT



# 7 THE OUTBREAK NATION

## 'Still local spread... no harm over-reacting'



Tourists leave Srinagar on Monday. Shuaib Masoodi

### Woman stung to death while clanging plate

Surat: A 35-year-old woman, who was on the terrace of a building with others to commemorate the services of personnel who are on the frontline of battle against coronavirus, was stung to death by honeybees in Navsari district of south Gujarat, Sunday. According to police, three others were injured after a swarm of bees attacked them in the evening when the group at Kasturi Apartments in Navsari town, abiding by the commemoration call by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, disturbed a beehive on the roof. ENS

### Pune: IT firm evacuates two buildings

Pune: After a woman employee of a leading IT firm here in Maharashtra tested positive for coronavirus, the company said it has evacuated two buildings here and asked the employee's colleagues who came in contact with her to quarantine themselves. The woman is among the four people who tested positive on Sunday. PTI

### Gujarat: Grant paid leave to domestic help

Ahmedabad: The Gujarat Labour and Employment department on Monday asked citizens to grant voluntary leave to domestic help and other domestic workers until March 31. "Domestic help, maids, cooks, and people engaged in housekeeping activities be granted voluntary leave until March 31. We also appeal that they be paid their wages in full for this period," a circular said. The workers should be encouraged to stay indoors and observe proper hygiene, it said. ENS

## Rajasthan considers arresting those who violate lockdown

MANOJ CGG NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

RAJASTHAN, THE first state in India to have proactively imposed a complete lockdown to check the spread of coronavirus, could now adopt harsh steps to strictly enforce the same. Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot said the shutdown will have to be implemented with "surgical precision". "The only way we can 'flatten the curve' and limit the spread (of the virus) is through pre-emption and distancing," Pilot said. He said the state government is aware of the hardships which the daily wage earners will face because of the shut down and is working overtime to ensure that there are cash transfers, easy accessibility to food grains, cooking oil. "Nobody is happy to impose a lockdown, but I see no other option for our country as a

A B R Ambedkar Centenary Award winner for Excellence in Biomedical Research, NITI Aayog member **DR V K PAUL** is co-chairman of an empowered committee coordinating among agencies, scientists and regulatory bodies to fight coronavirus. As in-charge of health-related issues at NITI Aayog, the former AIIMS heads of paediatrics formulated the Centre's POSHAN Abhiyaan to fight malnutrition and the Ayushman Bharat initiative. Paul speaks to **HARIKISHAN SHARMA** on the government's strategy, the stage India is in, and Janata Curfew. Excerpts:

### Are we under-reporting cases? We have screened over 1.5 million in-bound passengers and tested less than 20,000.

When we are reporting this number, it is based on a well-known methodology. And, that methodology is, you have a traveller, and you track that traveller. Then, there are symptomatic cases, a cluster of people who are tracked systematically. In addition, the ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research) has mounted another screening system, of a few thousand random samples. We are also looking at how deaths of serious pneumonia,

respiratory diseases are happening... What does it mean? It tells us, first, that there was no excess increase in admissions for respiratory failure and serious conditions that may mimic COVID-19 till yesterday.

You can't make the entire country suffer... Based on this, we are getting this 400-odd number. The ICMR system also shows that even by random numbers, the spread is very limited. There is no major outbreak in the community.

Why is strategic testing needed? Because it is a very complex, two-stage test. So, based on the stage of the outbreak then, the earlier strategy was thought to be good, efficient, feasible and doable in a way that we understood the disease... *Kul milaakar ham kah sakte hain ki serious death wali, serious disease wali mahamari ki stage abhi dikhti nahin hai* (All in all, we can say that We haven't reached the stage of large-scale deaths, disease).

Now that there are more numbers, we have changed our testing strategy. If you say, what is the absolute number in the US, who can say this? The number of people who went for testing, it is only that number. Not everybody is going for tests. Who is going for tests? The one who has symptoms. Understand



THE EXPRESS INTERVIEW WITH **DR V K PAUL** NITI AAYOG MEMBER

that... So, we have adopted a balanced approach.

### It is being said the reason we chose this strategy is that we don't have enough test kits.

We chose that strategy given our overall resources and to make sure we don't miss anything. Maybe in the beginning we didn't have test kits, but now there is no dearth. As the disease

progressed, availability was not an issue at all.

### Why did we not let private players do tests till now?

Please understand, there are two things. One, you do surveillance to find out how big the disease is. No one can collect samples of all people... That is where the private sector comes in. The private sector is not part of our surveillance system, that is only the NCDC (National Centre for Disease Control) and ICMR. This is because it is not the private sector's job to catch people at the airport. Second, I am a patient with cough and fever, that is a different thing.

### Why delay even private labs?

There is no delay, this is the right time. When the numbers were limited and we were in the entry phase, it was not needed. Now we are seeing a possibility that we could have a much larger outbreak, we could enter Stage 3. Then, the whole mobilisation, resources have to be stepped up.

### What happens when we reach Stage 3? How does the strategy change?

The strategy changes then to mitigation. Surveillance goes on, but individual patients then become more important. Then this

issue of tracing every contact becomes non-effective. When it is limited, you do tracing and containment. When there are too many infected people, your whole strategy is mitigation, which means you look after the patient. Avoid any problem with health workers, doctors, nurses... and then avoid serious disease and deaths, that becomes your main strategy. But continue to ensure that spread is controlled. *Abhi local transmission hae hai* (till now, it remains local transmission).

### There appear to be at least three cases of no history of travel or contact...

After investigation and tests are done in these cases, we will have no problem making a statement that we are in community transmission stage. *Doosri baat yeh hai ki iske anticipation mein, aapne kal bhi suna ki community transmission nahin hai, lekin change kahan hua, change 10 din pehle hua jab pradhan mantri ne aahwan de diya, maan lijiye uss point se le lijiye, ki bhai containment bhi karo aur yahan tak to theek hai lekin desh ko agle stage ke liye taiyyar karo* (You heard yesterday too that there is no community transmission, but there has been a change in strategy. When did the change take place? The change happened 10 days ago, consider it

at the point the PM called upon people, that take containment measures but also prepare the country for the next stage).

God forbid, if we reach the next stage, the efforts we are making now are against that. But *jo bhi data abhi tak hai aur officially aapko bataye gaye hain, main manta hoon ki theek hain* (But whatever data is there till now and has been conveyed to you, that is correct).

### Is it in preparation for Stage 3?

Today you can say, as of now, yes, it's preparation for Stage 3 and intensification of containment to the best possible extent.

### However, it can be argued that the government introduced lockdown, as Stage 3 has already arrived.

There is no harm over-reacting. Stage 3 will happen. That's a scientific fact based on the data available to us through multiple sources... That is why, we have to be prepared, and to ready the people for the fullest mitigation strategy. In fact, the preparation began even earlier, when talk started of social distancing.

### Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address to the nation... was Janata Curfew a *desi tareeka* to sensitise people, or

### was it done on the advice of medical professionals?

*Unka jo faisla hai, unko jo saare input aayen hain, sab taraf se jo aayen hain, scientific community se aayen hain, microbiology experts se aaye hain, unke apne system se aayen hai, sarkaron se aaye hain* (Whatever he has decided, it's based on all inputs, from everywhere, scientific community, biology experts, his own system, different governments). He has other advisers, across sectors, because such decisions are not related just to health. They are related to other sectors. It is based on a holistic assessment.

### What will be the benchmark when we start relaxing the measures? Will it be the number of new cases or patients?

It is too early, I cannot say anything.

### What do you find reassuring and what worries you?

That India's response has been robust, that people have cooperated, they have faith. The nation is prepared for the worst scenario and people have come together to make it happen. Both these are reassuring. However, because it's a new disease, it's a new virus, a new animal in the zoo, we do not know the overall extent and the consequences.

## Arrests for defying Janata Curfew, FIRs for violating Sec 144

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE AHMEDABAD, RANCHI, SRINAGAR, MARCH 23

ARRESTS WERE made at several places across the country for defying restrictions put in view of the coronavirus pandemic.

In Ahmedabad, a day after dozens of people came out on the streets in Khadia area, allegedly to "celebrate the 5 pm commemoration call" during the Janata Curfew against the spread of coronavirus, the police booked 40 people, of which 19 have been named, for defying Section 144 imposed in the city.

According to Ahmedabad city police, 25 men and 15 women along with children were seen as part of a procession on the road near Raipur police chowki in Khadia area of old city around 5 pm on Sunday. The group of 10-15 women participated in garba dance during the procession.

A senior police official at Khadia police station said, "Around 5 pm, one of our patrolling teams noticed dozens of people out on the streets, near a shop called Labh Card near Raipur police chowki, who were part of a procession with drums and utensils. A warning was immediately issued by senior inspector of Khadia police station, AM Tadvri, asking the people to return to their homes. However, a few still remained on the streets and police identified and booked them later," said

In Jharkhand, the police on Monday registered 12 FIRs

against Ranchi residents for violating lockdown orders and for unlawful assembly under Section 144. Jharkhand announced a complete lockdown on Monday evening and suspended all bus services within the state and within the state as well in an attempt to contain the outbreak.

The police said three cases were registered against violators of lockdown at Doranda police station, six at Jagganathpur police station for violating lockdown orders and unlawful assembly, and one case under Argoda Police Station for unlawful assembly. Ranchi SSP Anish Gupta said that two FIRs were also registered against "evening walkers".

In a statement issued late on Monday, the Jammu and Kashmir Police said that 49 people have been arrested from Srinagar, Sopore, Handwara and Anantnag in the Valley in action against violation of prohibitory orders issued under Section 144 CrPc. In north Kashmir's Handwara, the police said they have booked 35 people for violating the lockdown orders on Monday.

With the Kerala government imposing a lockdown from midnight, the police on Monday asked people to remain indoors and not to venture out without any valid reason, failing which stern measures, including arrests, would follow. State police chief Loknath Behara said there will be an effective lockdown and it will be coordinated by IGS, DIGs and District police chiefs.



Police punish people for stepping out without masks in Fatepura, Vadodara. Bhupendra Rana

## ICMR: Hydroxychloroquine only recommended for health workers

### Says has stock of same; waives FDA nod for private kits, clears two indigenous ones

ABANTIKA GHOSH NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

DR BALRAM Bhargava, ICMR Director General and Secretary, Health Research, told the media on Monday that they were recommending hydroxychloroquine (used for the treatment of autoimmune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis) for preventive use in only health workers or people at home caring for COVID-19 patients. US President Donald Trump had recommended hydroxychloroquine and antibiotic Azithromycin to be used for coronavirus.

Answering a question about available stocks of hydroxychloroquine in the country, Dr Bhargava said, "We have recom-

mended its use as prophylactic in two very specific groups of people. For that, there is enough stock."

The drug can be given only on the prescription of a registered medical practitioner and cannot be given to children aged less than 15 years or with conditions such as retinopathy and hypersensitivity to hydroxychloroquine and 4-aminoquinoline compounds. The ICMR also underlined that the intake of the medicine should not instill "a sense of false security".

Twelve private laboratory chains with some 15,000 collection centres between them have been approved for COVID-19 testing now and the requirement of FDA-approved kits has been relaxed for them. Two indigenous testing kits have been cleared after validation by the National Institute of Virology.

The additional laboratories that have been approved are Dept of Clinical Virology, CMC, Vellore; Department of Laboratory Services, Apollo Hospitals Enterprise Ltd, Chennai (Tamil Nadu); SRL

Laboratories in Mumbai; Supratech Micropath Laboratory & Research Institute in Ahmedabad; Apollo Hospitals in Hyderabad; Dr Lal Pathlabs, Dr Dangs Lab, and Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals in Delhi; and Strand Life Sciences and SRL Laboratories in Gurgaon. On Sunday, six laboratories had been approved.

In a paper in the Indian Journal of Medical Research, ICMR scientists approved of the lockdown. "Based on the initial understanding of the spread of COVID-19 infection, the mathematical modelling done by ICMR suggests that entry screening of travellers with symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 can delay the introduction of the virus into the community by 1-3 weeks. Strictly implemented social distancing measures such as home quarantine of symptomatics and suspected cases will reduce the overall expected number of cases by 62% and the peak number of cases by 89%, thus 'flattening' the curve and providing more opportunities for interventions," the paper said.

## Labs set to begin work on cracking the virus code

AMITABH SINHA PUNE, MARCH 23

WITH THE government allowing public laboratories outside the ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research) ecosystem to access and handle the novel Coronavirus samples, work is finally set to begin on extracting its genome sequences that could lead to information about the origin, transmission routes, and possible lines of treatment of the virus.

It could also reveal information on whether the virus was showing any signs of weakening, or whether the spread of the virus in India was likely to follow similar trajectories as elsewhere. Some top government laboratories hope to start getting the virus isolates from the Pune-based National Institute of Virology (NIV) in the next few days and begin work on the sequencing later this week.

So far, only two genome sequences of the virus have been extracted from Indian patients and shared publicly with the scientific community. These were done by scientists at NIV. Globally, more than 950 genome sequences have so far been extracted.

Genome sequence refers to the unique genetic structure of any organism. Over a period of time, owing to several factors including climatic conditions, organisms develop minor but permanent changes in their genetic codes, called mutations, which are responsible for the diversity that is seen in any organism. For example, the virus strain now circulating in the Indian population could have undergone some mutation, and could be different from what is present in other populations or regions. These mutations can be observed only if the gene sequences are extracted from several samples of

the virus.

"We are hoping to start getting the virus samples from NIV in the next couple of days. It was only two days back that regulatory approvals were granted for letting non-ICMR laboratories access the virus samples. We should start the genome sequencing pretty soon," said Rakesh Kumar Mishra, director of the Hyderabad-based Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB). CCMB is part of network of laboratories run by Council of Scientific and Industrial Research.

Other CSIR laboratories like the Delhi-based Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB) and some of those working under the Department of Biotechnology, are likely to join in the effort.

A key question scientists would be looking to answer is whether there has been a change in the potency of the virus, its ability to infect and harm humans.

"We would need to do several sequences, possibly 50 to 100, before we can obtain any statistically significant data indicating any interesting mutation that could be meaningful or useful. If we just look at a few sets, they might not show any change," Mishra said.

"The actual job of extracting the genetic codes takes a couple of days and, these days, several laboratories and scientific groups are capable of doing it. It no longer is a very high-technology job," he said.

While India has shared only two genome sequences of the virus, China, the country where it originated, has publicly shared over 220 sequences. Countries do not have to mandatorily share all their data with the international scientific community, but sharing does speed up the global effort towards a vaccine or drug discovery.

## Rlys looking to manufacture protective gear

AVISHEK G DASTIDAR NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

AS PART of its preparedness to check the spread of COVID-19, Indian Railways is looking to manufacture personal protective equipment (PPE) on a large scale after procuring the raw material. It is also looking to explore manufacturing ventilators and train its medical staff to add to overall capability to fight the outbreak.

Railways has already manufactured hand sanitisers at a low scale as part of a trial run. Even though the shutdown

of all passenger services continued, the top brass of the Railways met on Monday to explore ways to utilise their resources against the outbreak.

"We have already made our own hand sanitisers and masks, not N95 masks, but good enough for basic protection. It was discussed that we keep exploring ideas to contribute in this extraordinary situation," said a senior railway official.

The Northern Railway carriage and wagons department in Firozpur with chemicals and metallurgical unit officials produced hand sanitisers at Rs 310



Doctors stamping passengers from other states at Guwahati railway station on Monday. Dasarath Deka

per litre. The product carries brand name: "IR". Earlier, Railways was procuring hand sanitiser at Rs 190 per 100 ml. Currently the system is busy getting all the rakes of the stopped trains back to their base depots. Over 600 empty rakes are scattered across India.

At the same time, the on-board staff left far away from their home bases when trains were operational have also been instructed to use these empty rakes and return home.

Freight services continued on Monday, although demand was around half of usual.



BPL card holders to get two months of ration in advance: Chhattisgarh CM

GARGI VERMA RAIPUR, MARCH 23

THE CHHATTISGARH government Monday announced that BPL card holders and above poverty line (APL) card holders will get two months and one month of ration in advance, respectively. The state Power Board also declared that low consumption customers will be given a rebate of 50 per cent in their bills for two months. The government has ordered sus-

pension of public and private buses, auto and e-rickshaws and taxis with immediate effect.

The decisions came after the Bhupesh Baghel government ordered a lockdown in urban areas in 28 districts till March 31. The lockdown is being implemented strictly by the authorities.

In rural areas, including districts in Bastar region, all shops, dhabas and other stores were shut following Sunday's Janata Curfew. The state government has also ordered shutting down of industries till March 31.

28 new coronavirus cases in Kerala, spike in other states too

KERALA

WITH 28 fresh COVID-19 cases in Kerala taking the total number of cases in the state to 95, the state government on Monday decided to enforce a lockdown till March 31. Of the 28 positive cases reported on Monday, 25 had come back from Dubai with symptoms of infection.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said, "Kerala is going for a lockdown from Monday midnight till March 31. State borders would be sealed and there would be no public transport...Private vehicles will be allowed."

In Kasaragod, where 39 cases have been reported so far, the government would take more stringent actions, said the Chief Minister. "Nobody would be allowed to come out unnecessarily. If someone ventures out, they would face arrest and a hefty fine would be levied," he added.

He said shops selling essential commodities, medical shops and fuel outlets would function from 7 am to 5 pm and banks till 2 pm. "Entry for public at all places of worship should be stopped. Government offices would be functioning with necessary precautions," he said.

MAHARASHTRA Maharashtra on Monday reported 23 fresh cases, taking



People stranded at Kalamboli, where the Mumbai-Pune Express Highway begins, took any transportation available to leave Mumbai on Monday. Narendra Vasakar

the total number of cases in the state to 97. The wife and father of a 34-year-old security guard at Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport tested positive for COVID-19 on Sunday. It is likely that the guard caught the infection at the airport, said civic officials. The guard had also travelled by a local train, sources said, to the western suburbs to meet his mother.

Meanwhile, an expert committee will decide if the death of a 68-year-old Philippines national late on Sunday, apparently due to renal failure and respiratory issues, was actually caused by complications arising out of a

COVID-19 infection. The patient had tested positive for COVID-19 and then tested negative twice.

KARNATAKA

The Karnataka health department on Monday reported seven COVID-19 cases—the largest single-day hike in cases so far for the state. The new patients include two persons from Kerala who returned recently from Dubai and a 30-year-old woman whose husband tested positive after returning from Amsterdam.

Among the other new cases are a 38-year-old man who returned from Dubai on March 17; a 41-year-old man who returned

through London on March 13; a 24-year-old who travelled to the UK and Dubai and returned on March 18 and a 60-year-old man who travelled to Germany.

The health department has also asked people who attended a concert by Rajasthani sufi singer Mir Mukhtiar Ali in Bengaluru on March 12 to voluntarily disclose their health situation after a member in the audience recently tested positive. "Audience who attended Mir Mukhtiar Ali musical concert on 12-03-2020 at 7:30 pm in Chowdaiah Memorial Hall are requested to inform helpline number voluntarily. This advisory is being issued in view of a participant being tested COVID-19 positive," the department said Monday.

GUJARAT

Eight new COVID-19 cases were reported from Gujarat on Monday, taking the total number of cases in the state to 30. Among the new cases reported on Monday, the 49-year-old father of a man who travelled from Dubai to Gandhinagar tested positive. This is the third member in the family to test positive.

UTTAR PRADESH

The districts of Pilibhit, Kanpur, and Jaunpur registered their first COVID-19 cases on Monday as the total number of cases in the state rose to 33. Ghaziabad reported its third case on Monday.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath told the media that the situation was under control in the state. The government had reserved 2,000 beds in isolation wards, he added. Adityanath said he was continuously supervising the situation.

MUMBAI

BMC to begin home testing facilities

SANJANA BHALERAO MUMBAI, MARCH 23

IN A first for the country, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) will begin home testing facilities for COVID-19. The facility will be rolled out in the next 48 hours with a helpline number. A person with travel history to COVID-19-affected countries and showing symptoms, or who has been in close contact with a patient, are being tested for infection at the civic-run Kasturba and KEM Hospital and four private labs approved by the Central government on Sunday.

According to BMC, once the helpline is functional, the doctor on call will categorise the home collection facility, depending on the history of the citizen, his/her travel history, contact history, symptoms and co-morbid conditions. According to World Health Organisation's (WHO) myth-buster guidelines, older people and those with pre-existing medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease) appear to be more vulnerable to becoming severely ill due to the virus.

At present, travellers from abroad are screened at the Chhatrapati Shivaji International

Airport for suspected symptoms and divided into three categories - A (with symptoms and sent to isolation and testing facility at Kasturba), B (with no symptoms but are senior citizens and have co-morbidity, are sent to quarantine facilities in the city and C (who have no symptoms or co-morbidity, and will be advised 14-days of home-quarantine).

Civic officials at the ward level keep track of those suggested to home quarantine through calls and daily visits. If the person shows symptoms, he/she is referred to the testing centre for throat and nasal swabs and the suspected case is admitted to Kasturba or private hospitals approved by the civic body. Once the helpline number is in place, suspected cases will not have to travel to the testing centre and private labs, will facilitate home testing for citizens.

Till now, Maharashtra has placed 1,210 passengers under observation for suspected symptoms like cough, cold, pneumonia or fever. Out of them, 72 were admitted on Monday. Of the 1,210 suspected patients, 1,064 patients have been discharged. A total of 130 patients are admitted in isolation facilities. Currently, 418 international travellers are admitted in the isolation facilities.

Delhi HC suspends breath analyser tests for all air traffic controllers

PRITAMPAL SINGH NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

THE DELHI High Court on Monday suspended Breath Analyser Test (BAT) through tube process for Air Traffic Controllers at all airports in view of the coronavirus outbreak. The court observed that at present there is "a medical emergency not only in India but across the world".

"Under such circumstances, to permit the same BAT equipment which could pose a threat to Air Traffic Controllers (ATCs), to continue to be used would be non-pragmatic and unwise," Justice Prathiba M Singh said.

"The same could also have a deleterious impact if any of the ATCs contract the COVID-19 virus after undergoing BAT. Considering that BAT equipment are stored in airports where the

incidence of the virus is extremely high, use of the said equipment which would require ATCs to breathe into/out of the said equipment is likely to expose them to the COVID-19 virus," the court said.

The court also observed that there is a need for the authorities to decide on an alternate, less invasive and less risky equipment for conduct of breath analyser tests.

"The BAT currently being conducted shall remain suspended with immediate effect at all airports till further orders," the court said and listed the matter for further hearing on March 27.

As per the HC's direction, instead of the test, ATCs will now give an undertaking and a self-declaration, stating that they did not report to work under the influence of alcohol.

2 held in Dehradun, FIR in 3rd case over false virus info

LALMANI VERMA DEHRADUN, MARCH 23

TWO PEOPLE were arrested in Dehradun in separate cases on charges of spreading false information on social media.

In one case, Manish Jolly, 40, was arrested on Monday for spreading rumours that the family of a popular jeweller tested positive for COVID-19. In another case, disaster control room informed police that a message was being circulated in WhatsApp groups alleging that the daughter of a medical shop owner has tested positive and that people should not visit that shop. Police found one Prakash Gupta had generated that message, and he was arrested.

In Pauri Garhwal district, a resident complained that a person spread false information about her daughter. A case against an unknown person was lodged.

MUNICIPAL CORPORATION, KOTA. Rajeev Gandhi Bhawan Dushera Ground, Kota. No: NNK/GARAGE/2020/3659-3673. Date: 23.03.2020. CORRIGENDUM-II. The e-Tender number 41/2019-20 and e-tender corrigendum nnk/Garage/2020/3579-93 was issued by Municipal Corporation Kota on 17.03.2020.

BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE. Office of the Executive Engineer, (Project-West) Division, Joint Commissioner (West) Office Premises, 2nd Floor, Sampige Road, Sheshadripuram, Bengaluru-560020. No.: EE/(P-W)/PR/02/2019-20. Date: 23.03.2020. CORRIGENDUM. Ref.: EE/(P-W)/TEND/15/2019-20, Dt.: 06.03.2020.

BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE. Office of the Executive Engineer, Kengeri Division, 2nd Main Road, Jagajyothi Layout, Bengaluru. No.: EE/Ken/Tend/54/2019-20. Date: 23.03.2020. TENDER POSTPONEMENT NOTIFICATION. Ref.: (1) This office Tender Notification No.: EE/Ken/Tend/54/2019-20, Date: 24.02.2020.

ADITYA BIRLA CAPITAL. REGISTERED OFFICE: India First Corporate, Vertical, Gujarat - 362 209. APPENDIX IV [See rule 8 (1)]. Possession Notice (for Immovable Property). Whereas, the undersigned being the authorized officer of Aditya Birla Housing Finance Limited under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand notice dated 13.01.2020 calling upon the borrower Mrs. Punam Sharma, Mr. Kuldeep Sharma and M/s Kuldeep Enterprises (Borrower/Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors) to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs. 15,02,669 (Rupees Fifteen Lakh Two Thousand Six Hundred Sixty Nine Only) within 10 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

ADITYA BIRLA CAPITAL. NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS. The Executive Engineer, Civil Division, No. III, I&FC, Delhi invites on behalf of the President of India, online tender for the following works. 1. NIT No. EE/CD-III/NIT/46/2019-20. HOA: 4225 Improvement of SC/ST Basties.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER. ITANAGAR SMART CITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LTD. BLOCK IV, FLOOR, ROOM NO.1, CIVIL SECRETARIAT ITANAGAR. File No. ITA/SC(SPV)-69/2018-19/ Dated Itanagar, the 23rd March 2020.

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS. 1. The Joint CEO (Technical), Itanagar Smart City Development Corporation Limited (ISCDDL) invites online e-tender (items rate tenders) in selection of agencies for Supplying, Installation and Maintenance of Outdoor Fitness Equipment at Indira Gandhi (IG) Park, Itanagar, under Smart City Mission in two bid system, from eligible bidders who are registered in appropriate class in any Central Govt Department / State Government Department/ PSU/ Local Bodies for below mentioned work :-

NAME OF THE WORK: No. ITA/SC(SPV)-69/2018-19/ 01. Supplying, Installation and Maintenance of Outdoor Fitness Equipment at Indira Gandhi (IG) Park in Itanagar with defect liability period of one year and maintenance period for 3 years after the defect liability period. ESTIMATED COST: Rs. 35,42,433/-. EARNEST MONEY: Rs. 35424/- (For APST Contractor) Rs. 70848/- (For Non-APST Contractor). Cost of Tender Paper: Rs. 10000.00. Period of Completion: 3 Months. Start date and time: 24/03/2020 from 1500 Hrs of submission of bid. Last date and time: 02/04/2020 up to 1600 Hrs. of submission of bid. 2. The interested bidders can purchase bidding papers online from the departmental e-Tendering website http://dud.ar.etenders.in. The full details of work with scope are uploaded in website. The press notice is also available in the same website.

Procurement of wear plates for BCM machines. E-Procurement Tender Notice No. TMC/Wear Plate/08/2020-21. Date: 20.03.2020. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work. Tender No.: TMC/Wear Plate/08/OT/2020. Brief Description of Item: Wear Plate Part No. 64.08.1620 (RDSO drawing no. TM/9415/6), Wear Plate Part No. 64.08.1823 (RDSO drawing no. TM/6315/2), Wear Plate Part No. 64.08.1624 (RDSO drawing no. TM/8315/4), Wear Plate Part No. 64.08.1450 (RDSO drawing no. TM/9415/6), Wear Plate Part No. 64.08.1409 (RDSO drawing no. TM/9415/5). Estimated Cost: ₹13,86,579.00. Earnest Money: ₹27,900.00. E-Procurement tender will be closed upto 15.00 hrs. on 23-04-2020 & will be opened upto 15.30 hrs. on 23-04-2020.

NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY. E-TENDER NOTICE. DRM (Electrical) NWR Ajmer on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders for the following work up to 15.00 Hrs. on the mentioned date. Tender No. DRM-Elect-79-2019-20. Name of work: All Div. Electrical work due to development to Beaver, Marwar Jn. & Mavli Jn. stations as Adarsh Station. Approximate cost of work: Rs. 2089149/- Earnest Money: Rs. 41400/- Tender No. DRM-Elect-80-2019-20. Name of work: Electrical work due to Raising of Rail level to High level platform at Mavli Junction & Ranapratnagar stations between Chittorgarh to Udaipur section. Approximate cost of work: Rs. 1198814/- Earnest Money: Rs. 24000/- Date & Time of closing E-Tender - 14.04.2020 at 15.00 Hrs. Date & Time of opening E-Tender - 14.04.2020 at 15.30 Hrs. The details of above E-tender are available on website www.iirps.gov.in. [330-AJ20]

NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY. NOTICE OF INVITING e-TENDER. Dy. CME (Carriage Workshop, Ajmer North Western Railway acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tender no. Carriage-06-2020 Dated 21.03.2020. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Details are as under: 1. Name of work with its location - "Scrap collection, transportation from different shops to General Stores (As per Scope of Work)". 2. Approx. cost of the work: Rs. 1947348.00. 3. Earnest Money to be deposited: Rs. 39000.00. 4. Date and time for submission of E-Tender: Submission of E-Tender up to 16.04.2020 at 15.00 Hrs. 5. Website particular: www.iirps.gov.in. 6. Eligibility Criteria: Not Applicable. Note: Tender document cost & Earnest Money to be deposited online through payment gateway facility on the IREPS website only. [327-AJ20]

NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY. Open Tender through E-Tendering 2020. NIT No. 08-LWS-OPN-CW-2020. Dated-21.03.2020. 1. Name of Work: Cutting and Welding Repair Work on Wagons at Diesel Loco and Wagon Workshop Ajmer for 02 Years (As per Scope of Work). 2. Estimated cost of work: Rs. 42,39,065.04/- 3. Address of the NIT issuing office: Dy. Chief Mechanical Engineer (Works), Diesel Loco & Wagon Workshop, Lal Phatak, Ajmer (Raj) -305001. 4. Earnest Money to be deposited: Rs. 84,800/- (Only through net banking or payment gateway using IREPS portal). 5. Last Date and time for submission and opening of E-tender: 16.04.2020 up to 15.00 PM E-tender will be opened at 15.30 PM on same day. Due to indispensable reasons bid opening schedule may change. 6. Website particular where complete details of e-tender can be seen and participated: www.iirps.gov.in (Note: This is E-tender so tenderer can participate through e-tendering process only on mentioned website without bidding period) [326-AJ20]

BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE. Office of the Executive Engineer, Kengeri Division, 2nd Main Road, Jagajyothi Layout, Bengaluru. No.: EE/Ken/Tend/54/2019-20. Date: 23.03.2020. TENDER POSTPONEMENT NOTIFICATION. Ref.: (1) This office Tender Notification No.: EE/Ken/Tend/54/2019-20, Date: 24.02.2020. With reference to the above subject, tender was invited as per reference (1) and due to technical reasons the said tender works has been postponed. The rescheduled tender dates are as mentioned below. Revised Time Schedule: (1) Tender Documents downloaded through e-portal: 30.03.2020, 4:00 p.m. (2) Pre bid meeting: 02.04.2020, 4:00 p.m. Venue: Office of the Chief Engineer, R.R. Nagar Zone, R.R. Nagar. (3) Last date for submission of Tenders: 07.04.2020, 4:00 p.m. (4) Opening of bid: 09.04.2020, 4:00 p.m. All other conditions remain same. Sd/- Executive Engineer, Kengeri Division, BBMP "Pay Development Charges, Help to Develop Bengaluru"

GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI. IRRIGATION AND FLOOD CONTROL DEPARTMENT. EXECUTIVE ENGINEER CD-III, L.M. BUND OFFICE COMPLEX, SHASTRI NAGAR, DELHI-110031. NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS. The Executive Engineer, Civil Division, No. III, I&FC, Delhi invites on behalf of the President of India, online tender for the following works. 1. NIT No. EE/CD-III/NIT/46/2019-20. HOA: 4225 Improvement of SC/ST Basties. Name of work:- Renovation/Construction of Jatav Choupal Bhogal New Delhi in AC - 41. Estimated Cost: Rs.29,23,797/- Earnest Money: Rs. 58,476/- Period of completion: 270 Days; Last date & time of submission of tender: upto 3:00 PM on 27.03.2020. (Tender I.D 2019\_IFC\_189676\_1). 2. NIT No. EE/CD-III/NIT/47/2019-20. HOA: 2711 MAINTENANCE DRAINAGE. Name of work :- Maintenance of Ghazipur Drain from RD 0 M (Chilla Regulator) to RD 6150 M including Supply & installation of floating trash barrier at desired location of drain. Estimated Cost: Rs.44,90,689/- Earnest Money: Rs.89,814/- Period of completion: 365 Days; Last date & time of submission of tender: upto 3:00 PM on 27.03.2020. (Tender I.D 2019\_IFC\_189677\_1). 3. NIT No. EE/CD-III/NIT/48/2019-20. HOA: 2711 MAINTENANCE DRAINAGE. Name of work:- Maintenance of Trunk Drain No. II from RD 0m to RD 4550m including supply & installation of floating trash barrier at desired location of drain. Estimated Cost: Rs.30,81,349/- Earnest Money: Rs.61,627/- Period of completion: 365 Days; Last date & time of submission of tender: upto 3:00 PM on 27.03.2020. (Tender I.D 2019\_IFC\_189678\_1). 4. NIT No. EE/CD-III/NIT/49/2019-20. HOA: 2711 MAINTENANCE DRAINAGE. Name of work :- Maintenance of Shahdara Link Drain from RD-900m to RD-4550m. Estimated Cost: Rs.10,42,071/- Earnest Money: Rs.20,841/- Period of completion: 365 Days; Last date & time of submission of tender: upto 3:00 PM on 27.03.2020. (Tender I.D 2019\_IFC\_189679\_1). 5. NIT No. EE/CD-III/NIT/50/2019-20. HOA: 2711 MAINTENANCE DRAINAGE. Name of work :- Maintenance of Trunk Drain No. I from RD 0m to RD 5260m including supply and installation of floating trash barrier at desired location of drain. Estimated Cost: Rs.39,61,806/- Earnest Money: Rs.79,236/- Period of completion: 365 Days; Last date & time of submission of tender: upto 3:00 PM on 27.03.2020. (Tender I.D 2019\_IFC\_189680\_1). 6. NIT No. EE/CD-III/NIT/51/2019-20. HOA: 2711 MAINTENANCE DRAINAGE. Name of work :- Maintenance of Shahdara Outfall Drain from RD- 0m to RD-5900m including supply and installation of floating trash barrier at desired location of drain. Estimated Cost: Rs.38,83,438/- Earnest Money: Rs.77,669/- Period of completion: 365 Days; Last date & time of submission of tender: upto 3:00 PM on 27.03.2020. (Tender I.D 2019\_IFC\_189682\_1). Other details can be seen at website https://delhigovt.nic.in/tender. Sd/- Executive Engineer CD-III DIP/Shabdarth/1500/19-20

TAMIL NADU SLUM CLEARANCE BOARD. MADURAI CIRCLE. FORM OF CONTRACT "LUMP SUM (TWO COVER SYSTEM)". For and on behalf of Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board, sealed tenders consisting of two separate sealed covers one for Procurement of EMD to be deposited in A cover and another for price schedule with cover of work to be submitted to be forwarded to the office of the undersigned on or before 08.04.2020 and the same will be opened at 3.15 PM on the same day at the Tender Scrutiny Committee. TABLE: NAME OF WORK, Tender value (INR Lakhs), EMD (INR Lakhs). 1. Construction of 336 nos. tenements (G+2) with internal water supply, sanitary and electrification arrangements with all other development works at Erupurakudi in Alankottai Division in Palakkad District under AHP of PMAY. CER.No.85/HFA/2019-20. 2. Construction of 720 nos. tenements (G+2) with internal water supply, sanitary and electrification arrangements with all other development works at Karanambayam in Pattukkottai Taluk in Thanjavur District under AHP of PMAY. CER.No.86/HFA/2019-20. 3. Construction of 840 nos. tenements (G+2) with internal water supply, sanitary and electrification arrangements with all other development works at Seshambadi North in Kumbakonam in Thanjavur District under AHP of PMAY. CER.No.84/HFA/2019-20. 4. Construction of 616 nos. tenements (G+2) with internal water supply, sanitary and electrification arrangements with all other development works at Seshambadi South in Kumbakonam in Thanjavur District under AHP of PMAY. CER.No.84/HFA/2019-20. 5. Construction of 840 nos. tenements (G+2) with internal water supply, sanitary and electrification arrangements with all other development works at Seshambadi South in Kumbakonam in Thanjavur District under AHP of PMAY. CER.No.84/HFA/2019-20. 6. Construction of 96 nos. tenements (G+2) with internal water supply, sanitary and electrification arrangements with all other development works at Karanambayam in Pattukkottai District under AHP of PMAY. CER.No.87/HFA/2019-20. 7. Construction of 84 nos. tenements (G+2) with internal water supply, sanitary and electrification arrangements with all other development works at Pottanambayam in Pudukkottai District under AHP of PMAY. CER.No.88/HFA/2019-20. 8. Re-Tender. Construction of 284 tenements (G+3) including internal water supply, sanitary and electrification arrangements with development works at Pottanambayam in Pudukkottai District under AHP of PMAY. CER.No.89/HFA/2019-20.

CLASSIFIEDS. PERSONAL. I, Arun Navalagi, R/o-Ward No.5, Jayanagar, Mudhol, Tq:-Mudhol, Distt.Bagalgot, in Karnataka my surname wrongly written Navalagi in my (Army No.15736296N Havaladar) mention Navalagi, have changed my Surname from Navalagi to Navalagi for all future documents. 0040536513-2

CLASSIFIEDS. PERSONAL. I, Navjyoti Singh D/o Lehbar Singh Nanak Singh W/o Patrick Brilliant R/o E/501 Sukun Residency, 1 B/H, New CG Road, Chandkheda, Ahmedabad, Gujarat-382424, that name of mine has been wrongly written as Navjyoti Ronak Sandil in my Marriage Certificate. The actual name of mine is Navjyoti Singh 0070703714-1

CLASSIFIEDS. PERSONAL. I, Himanshu S/o Sanjeev Kumar R/o MCF-70, Gali No-5B, Bhudatt Colony Ballabgarh Faridabad-121004 Have Changed my Name to Himanshu Bhardwaj. 0070703715-1

CLASSIFIEDS. PERSONAL. I, Laisram Trueman S/o Tezamani Singh R/o 166A, Humayunpur Safdarjung Enclave, Flat No-8, New Delhi-110029 Have changed my name to Trueman Laisram. 0070703712-1

CLASSIFIEDS. PERSONAL. I No JC-341579, Priy Pravin Kumar (Branch HQ) MOD (Army), inform that my Wife name & D.O.B. is wrongly mentioned in field service Documents as Kumari Neelam (01.01.1974) instead of Neelam Kumari (11.12.1974). Her Actual and correct name & D.O.B. is Neelam Kumari (11.12.1974) as per Aadhar Card, Pan Card & other Documents. 0040536513-1

TAMIL NADU HOUSING BOARD. OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, SALEM CIRCLE. Due to administrative reasons, in the Short-Tender Notice No.20/2019-2020 dated 25.02.2020 (in item No.3) the following amendment is issued. TABLE: Sl.No, Description, As published, Read as. 1. Name of work, 2. Approximate value, 3. EMD.

GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU. HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT. NABARD AND RURAL ROADS CIRCLE, SALEM-1. TENDER NOTICE. Tender Notice No. 20/2019-2020/SDO/Dated:20.03.2020. For and on behalf of Government of Tamilnadu percentage tender through online only will be received upto 06.05.2020 - 11.00 a.m hours by the Superintending Engineer (H) NABARD & Rural Roads Circle Erode Division Package No.37 under Upgradation of Panchayat and Panchayat Union Roads 2019-20 pertaining Erode (H) NABARD & Rural Roads Division. Details of works, approximate value of works, EMD, availability of tender documents and all other details are available from the Government web site http://tenders.gov.in. If any changes / Corrections etc in the tender, it will be published on the above website(s) only. SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (H) NABARD AND RURAL ROADS CIRCLE, SALEM-1. DIPR/1539/TENDER/2020



# 9 GOVT & POLITICS



DELHI CONFIDENTIAL

## Parliament adjourned sine die due to coronavirus

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY & SHUBHAJIT ROY  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

PARLIAMENT ON Monday was adjourned sine die almost two weeks ahead of schedule in wake of the COVID-19 outbreak in the country. While Lok Sabha was adjourned around 3.30 pm after passing the Finance Bill, 2020, without any discussion, Rajya Sabha was adjourned around 7 pm.

Speaker Om Birla adjourned the Lok Sabha minutes after the passage of the Finance Bill and introduction of two Bills by the Ministry of Home Affairs. Reading out a message on the Janata Curfew and how the country had come together to fight the coronavirus, Birla said the House was being adjourned to maintain the discipline of social distancing in order to contain the spread of the virus.

"Yesterday was such a day when there were no political differences and the entire country was one. It came together to fight an epidemic. We thank all those who are engaged in fighting the spread of the virus. We are with them in this fight. We will go to our constituencies, join the crusade and follow all government directives on the epidemic. We will help others," Birla said, asking all members to stand and clap to acknowledge the work being done by health workers.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah were present in the House.



Union ministers Ravi Shankar Prasad and Gajendra Singh Shekhawat with Congress MP Shashi Tharoor. Prem Nath Pandey

Proceedings began at 2 pm and the Finance Bill was taken up with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman moving the motion to pass amendments. No discussion was held as per the arrangement agreed upon during the all-party meeting earlier.

However, the Congress and DMK protested over the lack of a financial package for those suffering economically due to the outbreak and said the government was only interested in rushing through the Bill.

Congress Leader of the House, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhary, rose up multiple times demanding a financial package. "We are supporting you. You please pass everything without discussion. But you please announce a financial package... public life has been massively disrupted. All economic activity has come to a

standstill. There is an extraordinary situation in the country. Everyone is hoping you will announce something. But you are saying nothing," Chowdhary said.

DMK's TR Baalu raised similar objections and was supported by several Opposition members. "Finance minister should come forward and announce a financial package for the poor, unorganised sector workers," Baalu said.

After repeated disruptions, Birla told Chowdhary and Baalu that he would allow them to speak after the Bill is passed. Chowdhary said, "Once the Bill is passed, the minister will not stay here. She will leave the House without announcing anything. We want you to announce a package before the Bill is passed."

RSP's N K Premachandran

and Congress's Dean Kuriakose moved an amendment each — both were defeated by voice vote. The Finance Bill was eventually passed by a voice vote without any Nos from the Opposition.

As the government did not make any announcement of a financial package, Chowdhary said, "Our hopes have been dashed sir. What is the minister doing? The Prime Minister is here. He should make an announcement."

Amid the din, MoS (Home) G Kishan Reddy also introduced two Bills related to the Ministry of Home Affairs. The National Forensic Sciences University Bill, 2020, and The Rashtriya Raksha University Bill, 2020, were introduced with the Speaker saying that discussion on the same would be taken up in the next session.

The Opposition protested the introduction of the Bills, saying they had not been circulated. Om Birla said the Bill had been circulated on Saturday.

The two universities will be set up in Gujarat and were announced earlier by Home Minister Amit Shah.

Meanwhile, the Rajya Sabha, which met at 2 pm, witnessed passing of the J&K appropriation Bill after a brief discussion. Thereafter, the House bid farewell to 55 retiring members, including Moti Lal Vora, B K Hariprasad and Satyanarayan Jatiya. Taking a cue from the Lok Sabha, the House then decided to pass the Finance Bill without any discussion.

## Rs 1-lakh crore Budget Bill for J&K cleared by Rajya Sabha

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

THE RAJYA Sabha on Monday approved a Bill for the budget of Rs 1-lakh crore for the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir for 2020-21.

After approval, the Bill was returned to the Lok Sabha. Replying after a discussion on the Jammu and Kashmir Appropriation Bills, Minister of State for Finance, Anurag Thakur, said only 10 per cent of the funds will be spent on security in the region and the remaining has been earmarked for developmental objectives.

Thakur said the government has made a provision of over Rs 1 lakh crore towards the UT's budget in 2020-21, as against Rs 88,911 crore in the previous financial year.

According to him, one crore people from J&K were earlier left out of the Centre's flagship health scheme Ayushman Bharat, but now every resident will be covered.

The Upper House also approved and returned to Lok Sabha another bill for the budget of Ladakh — as required under rules for money bills. The Bills were approved with voice vote after a debate of over two hours.

The Jammu and Kashmir Appropriation Bills were passed by Lok Sabha on March 19.

In J&K's budget, the total estimate for the fiscal is Rs 1,01,428 crore, of which, developmental expenditure is estimated at Rs 38,764 crore — an increase of 27 per cent.

## Parliament passes amendments to Finance Act

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

PARLIAMENT ON Monday passed amendments to the Finance Act, with the introduction of a monetary threshold of Rs 15 lakh for taxing non-resident Indians (NRIs), an equalisation levy for e-commerce operators, increased TDS compliance for cash withdrawals by those who haven't filed income tax returns for three years, and a lower rate of tax collected at source (TCS) for remitting education loan money overseas as some of the amendments introduced.

The amendments introduced a Rs 15 lakh threshold for taxing NRIs' Indian income if the person qualified as a deemed resident by staying in India for 120 days or more as against no monetary limit earlier in the Budget.

The government also expanded the ambit of the equalisation levy for non-resident e-commerce operators involved in supply of services, including on-line sale of goods and provision of services, with the levy at the rate of 2 per cent. Equalisation levy at 6 per cent has been in force since 2016 on payment exceeding Rs 1 lakh a year to a non-resident service provider for on-line advertisements.

The amendments also lowered TCS rate to 0.5 per cent from 5 per cent for transfer of money overseas through Liberalised Remittance Scheme if the fund is borrowed from banks and specified institutions to fund education.

FULL REPORT ON [www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)

## MILES TO GO...

MOTILAL VORA, the 92-year-old Congress veteran who retired as a Rajya Sabha member on Monday, revealed how he used to tackle Parliament questions when he was a minister in Indra Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi's Cabinet. Vora said he used to give such long answers that then Vice President Shankar Dayal Sharma used to ask him to be brief. Before he signed off, the veteran leader recited Robert Frost's poem, "Miles to go before I sleep". Among the retiring members from the Upper House, he got the loudest applause — Home Minister Amit Shah was also seen thumping the table with gusto.

## LONG-DISTANCE RUNNER

SATYANARAYAN JATIYA, 74, who was Social Justice and Labour minister in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government and among the retiring members in Rajya Sabha on Monday, revealed in his farewell speech that he was a long-distance runner in his youth — an athlete, he ran 3,000 and 5,000 metres. Known for his ability to recite poems and couplets in Urdu, Sanskrit and Persian, he got compliments from Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad. The veteran Congress leader recited a Urdu couplet for Jatiya, and said that he is only the second leader in the BJP — after Vajpayee — for whom he has recited a couplet.

## POLL POSTPONE PLEA

With Parliament adjourning sine die on Monday, political parties want the Election Commission to postpone elections to 18 Rajya Sabha seats this week in view of the lockdown imposed in most states. The Commission has now sought feedback from state CEOs on restrictions on movement in the states concerned. It will decide whether elections need to be postponed after studying feedback received from states.

## CONFUSION IN CORRIDOR

EVEN AS all government departments get used to working at half their strength because of lockdown, there is much consternation in the Health Ministry over the lack of any orders. Officials in departments such as dental, immunisation and adolescent health, with little bearing on management of COVID-19, continue to come to office every day.

## Jharkhand House passes resolution against NRC, seeks NPR in 2010 format



Hemant Soren

ABHISHEK ANGAD  
RANCHI, MARCH 23

AMID A lockdown to arrest the coronavirus outbreak, the Jharkhand government on Monday passed a resolution against the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and National

Population of Register (NPR).

The Assembly's Budget session was suspended after state Parliamentary Affairs and Rural Development Minister Alamgir Alam passed the resolution and requested the government to take into account the 2010 NPR manual. He announced that the state

government has requested the Union government to not implement the NRC and the NPR based on 2010 manual.

Immediately after the announcement, Speaker Bindra Nath Mahato postponed the Assembly proceedings indefinitely in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Opposition leaders, however, raised the issue that there was no discussion on the resolution against the NRC and NPR in the House.

BJP leader Deepak Prakash said: "At a time when the entire country is under a lockdown, the Jharkhand government's decision to pass a resolution is

unfortunate without any debate on this serious issue. Both issues are subject to Central government's decision. The government is doing appeasement politics."

The JMM-Congress-RJD alliance came to power in Jharkhand late last year, dethroning the BJP.

## SC to states: Consider bail to some prisoners to check overcrowded jails

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

ACTING TO decongest the country's prisons in view of COVID-19, the Supreme Court on Monday asked states and Union Territories to consider releasing on bail or parole those undertrials whose offences carry a maximum sentence of seven years, and prisoners who have been convicted in similar offences but sentenced for less than the maximum seven-year period.

A bench of Chief Justice of India S A Bobde and Justices L Nageswara Rao and Surya Kant, "taking into consideration the possibility of outside transmission", also directed that "the physical presence of all the undertrial prisoners before the Courts... be stopped forthwith and recourse to video conferencing must be taken for all

purposes".

The court also exercised its extraordinary powers under Article 142 of the Constitution to extend the limitation period on all legal proceedings with effect from March 15 till further orders. The bench took into consideration "difficulties that may be faced by litigants across the country in filing their petitions/applications/suits/appeals/all other proceedings within the period of limitation prescribed under the general law of limitation or under Special Laws (both Central and/or State)".

The apex court, which had taken suo motu cognisance of the overcrowding of prisons in view of COVID-19, had asked states and UTs to constitute a High Powered Committee "to determine which class of prisoners can be released on parole or an interim bail for such period as may be thought appropriate".

## Counter spread of superstition with scientific reports, PM tells media

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

APPLAUDING THE work done by journalists, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said that the media should "counter pessimism and panic through positive communication" and also asked news channels to counter the spread of superstition through scientific reportage.

Modi on Monday interacted with representatives of some TV news groups, and said COVID-19 is a "lifetime challenge (that) needs to be tackled through new and innovative solutions".

Modi said the global pandemic has to be tackled through "new and innovative solutions". He said, "A long battle lies ahead of us, whereby awareness for social distancing has to be spread and information about latest developments and key decisions needs to be communicated



PM Modi at the interaction in New Delhi. PTI

swiftly and professionally by the channels through easy to grasp language."

Interacting with stakeholders from channels through a video-conference to discuss the emerging challenges, Modi thanked the media for "understanding the gravity of the pandemic threat from day one" and appreciated the role played by the channels in spreading

awareness", according to a government statement.

Modi "commended the dedication and commitment of reporters, camerapersons and technicians working tirelessly in the field and in newsrooms across the country, calling their work a service to the nation", the release stated.

He asked the channels to spread scientific reports, involve

informed people in their discussions and counter the spread of misinformation. He underlined the importance of discipline from citizens and maintaining social distancing to counter the spread of the virus. He also said the media should spread more awareness about digital payment mechanisms to avoid spread of the virus through currency notes.

The government said in its statement that the media representatives suggested that a department of doctors should be available not only to check on reporters but also to help combat rumours.

Modi is likely to hold a similar interaction with leaders of the print media industry on Tuesday.

Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting Prakash Javadekar, and senior officials of the I&B and health ministries also participated in the interaction.

## Video conference of SAARC health experts set for March 26

SHUBHAJIT ROY  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

A VIDEO conference of senior health professionals of SAARC nations has been proposed on March 26 to exchange experiences of combating the spread of COVID-19, officials said on Monday.

This will be a follow-up to the video-conference of SAARC leaders on March 15.

The major themes of discussion in the March 26 video conference will be "practical joint action on online training capsules for emergency response teams, setting up of an Integrated Disease Surveillance Portal, creation of a Common Research Platform and coordination of research on controlling epidemics within the South Asian region".

It will also include specific protocols dealing with screening

at entry points, contact tracing, quarantine and isolation facilities.

A statement by the Ministry of External Affairs on Monday said that the conference, which was initiated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, "demonstrated the shared resolve of countries in the SAARC region" to fight together the challenge of COVID-19.

The number of COVID-19 cases in all SAARC countries has been growing steadily, further reinforcing the need for all to act in fullest solidarity to address the challenge and mitigate its impact, it said.

As of noon on March 23, Afghanistan had 34 cases, Bangladesh had 24 cases and 2 deaths, Bhutan had 2 cases, India had 390 cases and 7 deaths, Maldives had 13 cases, Nepal had 1 case, Pakistan had 646 cases and 3 deaths and Sri Lanka had 86 cases — a total of 1,196 cases and 12 deaths in the SAARC region.

## Apex court begins hearing cases via video conferencing

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday commenced hearing cases by video conferencing, thereby eliminating the need for lawyers to come to the court to argue their case. This is the first time in its history that the court has adopted such a measure.

A bench of Chief Justice of India S A Bobde and Justice D Y Chandrachud took up two cases and interacted with the counsel through a monitor.

SC officials said once the causerlist which mentions the business of day is finalised, the court's Registry will send a digital link to the Advocate on Record or the arguing counsel of the contesting parties. The counsel can then join the hearing. ENS

## Postpone RS polls: Rajasthan BJP

HAMZA KHAN  
JAIPUR, MARCH 23

WHILE RAJASTHAN remains under a lockdown following the spread of coronavirus, uncertainty remains over the elections to three Rajya Sabha seats from the state, with BJP leaders demanding that the polls be postponed.

Leader of Opposition in State Assembly, Gulab Chand Kataria, said on Monday, "We have spoken to the Speaker that it is not easy to invite the MLAs and make them stay right now. Especially from places such as Bhillwara where public representatives might have come in contact (with coronavirus patients); although, right now, no MLAs have tested positive for coronavirus." "We have [former Rajasthan Chief Minister] Vasundhara ji in

isolation. There is a Congress MLA who is also in isolation. So it is indeed difficult, but the decision has to be taken by the Election Commission, since it will be a national decision, not just for Rajasthan," Kataria said.

Some within the Congress are also apprehensive. Expressing concerns over MLAs gathering at the Assembly to vote, Tourism Minister Vishvendra Singh has said that he will not go.

Talking to *The Indian Express*, Speaker C P Joshi said, "We have an Assembly session scheduled for March 26. So even if we postpone it the election will have to take place. So we are waiting for EC to take a decision."

The Rajya Sabha elections are scheduled for three seats in the state as BJP's RS members Ram Narain Dudi, Vijay Goel and Narayan Lal Panchariya are set to

retire next month. Voting is scheduled for March 26.

While the Congress is expected to win two seats, BJP is expected to sail through with one seat. BJP, however, queered the pitch for Congress by fielding two candidates: Onkar Singh Lakhawat and Rajendra Gehlot. Congress has fielded Neeraj Dangi and K C Venugopal.

Last week, the Rajasthan High Court had deferred elections for the six newly-formed municipal corporations in the state for six weeks following the coronavirus outbreak.

Rajasthan has ten Rajya Sabha seats and nine of them, including the three whose tenure is going to complete next month, are held by the BJP. The Congress' only Rajya Sabha MP from Rajasthan is former prime minister Manmohan Singh.

## Varun targets Pilibhit DM, SP over Janata Curfew video

Pilibhit: A day after a video of the Pilibhit District Magistrate and Superintendent of Police hailing anti-corona fighters while in a crowd during the Janata Curfew went viral, local BJP MP Varun Gandhi termed their behaviour as "irresponsible" and sought action against them. "Times like these need mature conduct like the PM advised. I urge action against those who violated the #Janata curfew," he tweeted.

## MHA tells states to act against those harassing people from N-E

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

WITH MULTIPLE cases of people from the North East being harassed and associated with coronavirus over the last few weeks, the Ministry of Home Affairs Monday issued an advisory to all States to take appropriate legal action against people who indulge in such activities.

Multiple instances of racial slurs against people of the North East, including sportspersons, have come to light, the advisory said. "There have been cases where people of the Northeast... have been harassed by linking them to COVID-19. This is racially discriminatory, inconvenient

and painful to them," the advisory said. "It is requested that all law enforcing agencies in your state, UT may please be sensitised to take appropriate action in cases of harassment when these are reported."

Sources said at least three such incidents have been reported from Delhi. In one case, a woman from Manipur was spat on by a biker who called her "coronavirus" in Vijay Nagar.

A student was hit by a water balloon on Holi and called "corona" in Delhi University's North Campus. In another case, a woman from the North East was chased out of a Pandara Road restaurant by guests. Delhi Police took cognisance of both the cases, sources said.

"Some incidents of racial remarks against North-East people have emerged in some parts of India in the wake of #Coronavirus due to cultural ignorance, prejudice and lack of understanding. Matter discussed with NE Division, MHA. Strict advisory is being issued to the States," Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju had tweeted Wednesday.

Media reports from across the country suggest that people from the North East have faced racial slurs due to their features. While one woman from Manipur was called coronavirus while buying groceries at a market in Pune, another was called "Chinese" by a traffic constable in the city while fining her for not wearing a helmet.





“CHEKHOV IS THIS POET OF MELANCHOLY AND ISOLATION AND OF WISHING YOU WERE SOMEWHERE ELSE THAN WHERE YOU ARE.” — SALMAN RUSHDIE

## The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY  
RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

# Anatomy of a response

Policy to address corona crisis must be guided by need to support easy reversibility, subsidiarity, sustainability



SUMAN BERY

## THE REALITY CHECK

Response to coronavirus must be guided by science. Fear must be tempered by reason

ON SUNDAY, AIR India issued a statement saying that members of its crew, who evacuated Indian citizens from coronavirus-hit Italy, Iran and China, were being ostracised by “vigilante” resident welfare associations (RWAs). In some localities, “RWAs even called in the police,” the state-run carrier’s press release said. People are known to overestimate the likelihood of catching an infection — and associated health risks — during public health emergencies. History is replete with instances of people losing their poise during pandemics. There is good reason, therefore, to read the reaction of the neighbours of Air India officials as a natural response to a stressful situation. But the danger is that these anxieties can sometimes lead some people to behave irresponsibly. Last week, for instance, this paper reported that four private hospitals in Maharashtra’s Jalgaon district refused to treat a doctor with a respiratory disease until he produced a certificate confirming that he did not have coronavirus. The delay in treatment aggravated his ailment and he had to be put on ventilator support.

The World Health Organisation’s designated term for the COVID-19 outbreak, “pandemic”, is not a signifier of the lethality of the virus. It only denotes that the pathogen is extremely contagious and has spread across the globe. But as of now, more than 80 per cent of those infected by COVID-19 only experience mild symptoms. According to available evidence, only 5 per cent of the patients turn critical. It isn’t clear what the death rate is — but even the most pessimistic studies reckon that the virus kills less than 3 per cent of the people it infects. This, of course, should not be a reason for complacency. The coronavirus is a new pathogen. And since it has been transmitted to humans from animals, all its mechanisms are not known. It is, however, known that it spreads from person to person via respiratory droplets — as when someone coughs or sneezes. The only way to contain the infection is prevention. The experiences of China, South Korea and Singapore show that social isolation, accompanied by large-scale testing, can check the spread of COVID-19. And elderly and people with other afflictions are more vulnerable to the virus. The need for social isolation can, therefore, not be overstressed.

The genome sequence of the coronavirus was known to the world within a month of the outbreak. Science has come a long way from the time when scientists had to struggle for more than two years to unravel the HIV’s genome sequence. There is much to be optimistic about in the fight against COVID-19. But fear must be tempered with reason and uncertainty with information backed by science.

## BRINGING DOWN WALLS

Post-COVID world will need a new model of diplomacy, more compassionate, to deal with hardships all nations will face

THE WORST GLOBAL crisis of our times recognises no national borders. Historic enmities between nations have never seemed as irrelevant as they do now. Fighting the coronavirus needs a global response. Some nations will need assistance more than others, some will have more resources to summon than others. Iran is a country that needs help urgently — it has reported more than 20,000 confirmed coronavirus cases; at least 1,600 people have died. The Iranian Health Ministry said last week that one person dies every 10 minutes of the infection rampaging through the country. This deadly crisis in Iran has coincided with an economic paralysis due to US sanctions, which have, since last year, crippled the country’s health system along with its economy. *Lancet* has said that despite efforts by the WHO and international health organisations, the speed of the outbreak in Iran and the effects of the sanctions have combined to create a shortage of vital medical equipment and drugs. The situation in Iran has forced even the Trump administration, whose track record in dealing with the outbreak at home in the US has been found wanting, to offer medical assistance to a country it describes as “evil”. It may have been forced to make this offer to save its own conscience. However, for Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei to invoke conspiracy theories about the spread of the virus in order to refuse US assistance, is as reckless and as endangering of Iranian lives as the US sanctions themselves.

Khamenei’s rejection is a warning that while COVID-19 is changing the world, it may not necessarily turn out to be for the better. A new Cold War is brewing between the US and China, with President Donald Trump’s racist “Chinese virus” slurs, and restrictions on Chinese journalists in the US, and with China responding in the same coin. Trump’s bid to allegedly poach German scientists working on a vaccine against the coronavirus has evoked outrage. The squabbles are many, and they distract attention from the problem at hand and the ones that will ensue.

The post-COVID world needs a new model of diplomacy, one that is more compassionate and humane, and that will tailor itself to deal with the economic hardships all nations will face. India took an important first step in trying to forge a regional approach to the pandemic by getting all South Asian countries on the SAARC platform, and the G-7 followed with its own COVID video conference. But the world, India included, will need to do much more than indulge in tokenisms to deal with the economic illness that is set to follow the coronavirus. It will need to open borders, not shut them. It will need to bring down walls, not build new ones.

## COMING HOME

Kenny Rogers was a master of jumping genres, who still found a way to bring his listeners home

ON FRIDAY, EVEN as the world went into lockdown, fans of country music stochically bore the news of Kenny Rogers’s passing. There wasn’t much to say for many of them but to pour a dram or two of whiskey, play his greatest hits, and turn to that gravelly baritone for succour: “Every gambler knows/That the secret to survivin’/Is knowin’ what to throw away/And knowin’ what to keep/Cause every hand’s a winner/And every hand’s a loser/And the best that you can hope for is to die/in your sleep.” Rogers, who died at the age of 81, was one of country music’s greatest exports, a master of jumping genres, who still found a way to bring his listeners home.

Country music, according to Kris Kristofferson, Rogers’s contemporary, was the “white man’s soul music” — steeped in nostalgia of a time gone by, when the world was simple and people were true to each other. But it wasn’t so, Johnny Cash told us, and Merle Haggard too; their songs bristled with despair, were scarred by addiction and prison-time. But Rogers was soft, his pillow voice comforting lovers in hits such as *You Decorated My Life*, *Lady* and that duet with Dolly Parton, *Islands in the Stream*. But to listen to Rogers closely is to know that in the midst of sweet nothings, he wrote *Ruby Don’t Take Your Love to Town*, about a paralysed Vietnam War veteran pleading with his wife not to leave him; slipped in a story about Tommy, the *Coward of the County*, who avenges the gangrape of his girlfriend; and sang about *Reuben James*, a black man who raises a white sex worker’s son after her death. As a songwriter, Rogers knew he didn’t have to hammer the truth home: The world is what it is, and everyone tries their best, till they do their worst.

In these quarantined times, it might be helpful to turn to Parton and Rogers one more time: “Sail away with me/To another world/And we rely on each other, ah ha/From one lover to another, ah ha.”

A GROUP HAS been convened under the leadership of the Union finance minister to coordinate the government’s response to the economic and financial consequences for India of the COVID-19 virus. Some of these consequences are already evident; others will follow. Policymakers, here and elsewhere, are dealing with massive uncertainty on both medical and economic fronts. Yet they need to act, as the costs of delay could be large.

In all affected countries, medical and economic imperatives are deeply intertwined. A lockdown — as imposed in New York, Milan and now New Delhi — is a medical act with profound economic implications that will differ hugely in the work environment of the service sector in urban India from countries far richer than it. This requires that the policy response is coherent, and that actions in each sphere reinforce the other.

In the midst of uncertainty, there is one thing to hold on to. As Martin Wolf has observed in the *Financial Times*, a key difference between the present scourge and the 2008 financial breakdown is that the present shock, though potentially devastating, is expected to be temporary. “Temporary” itself remains uncharted territory: An influential modelling exercise conducted at Imperial College, London, simulates isolation between three and five months in order to reduce the reinfection rate, but warns that reinfection remains possible until an effective vaccine is available. The challenge for the ministers’ working group is to fashion an appropriate, graduated response for the period till India’s next scheduled budget 11 months from now.

With regard to likely economic impact, it is useful to distinguish between first-round measures to contain the virus; second-round (or cascading) effects of these measures; and the impact on the economy of developments abroad. This classification echoes a recent analysis by Crisil that differentiates between domestic and external sources of the shock. Such a taxonomy can help to anticipate the scale and timing of the economic impact. It can also help to identify the level of government where action is likely to be most effective: The principle of “subsidiarity”.

As in other affected countries, the first-round economic effects are primarily linked to the need to restrict international travel and measures taken to impose “social distancing” to slow the spread of infection. India, in

a patch-work way, has chosen to follow the social distancing path in its urban areas, largely led by state governments. The direct impact of these health-driven measures is so far largely on urban incomes in the affected service sectors, both formal and informal: Tourism and travel, formal sector retail, formal and informal catering and trade, and (largely informal) private transport.

Second-round effects are those that result from this initial reduction in incomes, both through the expenditure multiplier but, additionally, through uncertainty among those not directly affected (leading them to postpone discretionary purchases) and, more importantly, uncertainty among creditors of affected enterprises, particularly micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), especially in the impacted service sectors. Uncertainty has already affected the financial markets, both reflecting a re-rating of the earnings prospects of listed firms, but even more, because of the retreat of foreign portfolio investors (FPIs).

The overseas channel is relatively straightforward. Global demand for India’s exports, both goods and services, already weak, will decline further. India’s supply response, domestic and export, will be affected by shortages of intermediate inputs, perhaps even reduced logistics and transportation services. In addition, changing global risk aversion has already encouraged the outflow of portfolio capital, affecting both the stock market and the rupee-dollar exchange rate. These financial channels diminish spending by reducing perceived wealth and increasing stress on those corporates (and banks) with net unhedged foreign exchange liabilities.

Not all is gloom, however. The dramatic reduction in the price of crude oil represents a major improvement in the terms of trade of the nation, which is like a positive income transfer.

Given the expectation of time-bound reversal, the core goal of the economic response should be to contain “hysteresis” effects of the downturn: Avoiding longer-term, even irreversible consequences, facilitating a “V-shaped” recovery when the time comes. A less urgent objective could be to use the crisis to achieve policy goals that may seem difficult in more normal circumstances. As the overused but valid phrase has it, a crisis is a terrible thing to waste.

These three principles: Minimising hys-

Action on this agenda will largely be at the local and state level, except for the relaxation of credit guidelines. There will be the usual choice to be made between targeting those directly affected versus programmes that are open to all. In this emergency, state action should incline towards the latter, with civil society organisations taking on the burden of handling individual cases.



D RAJA

## LIKE A METEOR

Bhagat Singh’s commitment to people can inspire fightback against our crisis

FOR THE first time in the history of independent India, the martyrdom day of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev could not be observed in any meaningful way because of the state and self-imposed restrictions on public gatherings introduced as a precaution against the coronavirus epidemic. It was on March 23, 1931 that the colonial administration executed Singh and his comrades in the Lahore conspiracy case.

The country, already facing multiple challenges, has to contend with a serious health crisis now. The situation demands strong political will and commitment for the people, the sort that Singh had. In jail, Singh and comrades had addressed a letter to the then British governor in which he said that “the court order is based on two assumptions: One, there exists a state of war between the British state and Indian state, and that we are part of the war... The second assumption is really flattering for us”. The letter ended by saying that “the days of capitalist and imperialist exploitation are numbered”.

Singh was born on September 28, 1907. His father and two of his uncles had been released from jail the very same day — they were imprisoned for participating in a land agitation. Punjab saw numerous land struggles in the last years of the 19th century and

the beginning of the 20th century. All those born in those years inherited the legacy of resistance, just as Singh did.

From the mid-medieval period onwards in Indian history, Punjab had been in turmoil and reshaping its destiny. Historians named it as the Indo-Islamic period. Bhai Gurdas, poet, philosopher and disciple of Guru Nanak, described it the time when “the Ganges started flowing in the opposite direction”. It was a period of social transformation. Many poets and thinkers of this period — among them Guru Nanak, Kabir, Ravidas, Baba Farid, Meera Bai, Namdev, and Eknath — engaged with social realities in radically different ways. It was a period of social revolution — a time when a new kind of history was being written.

It was an age when Kabir pronounced the names of Ram and Allah in the same spirit and announced that he was their son; Baba Farid dared to unite Sufi spirituality and Hindu philosophy in one tune; and when Ravidas redefined the idea of oneness and equality in its real social context. These were philosophers who hailed from the bottom rungs of the society. They produced a new spirituality for the new world. Indeed, great efforts were made to ensure that “the Ganges flows in the opposite direction”. Everything became part of an age, nay tradition, that was

popularly called by Kabir as Ulat Bansi, or Upward Down. Bhagat Singh inherited this tradition of fundamental change, not just to interpret the world, but also to change it. It is not difficult to derive the idea of socialism in the Indian context from this period of enlightenment.

From the founding of the Naujawan Bharat Sabha and Hindustan Socialist Republican Association in the 1920s to emerging as a seasoned communist revolutionary, the whole life of Bhagat Singh is one of great inspiration and enlightenment. He should be understood not only in the historical context of his times, but also through the perspective of the great cause for which he lived and laid down his life.

As Ajoy Ghosh, a co-prisoner of Singh who later became the general secretary of the Communist Party of India, said: “Like a meteor, Bhagat appeared in the political sky for a brief period. By the time he passed away, he had already become the cynosure of millions of eyes and the symbol of the spirit and aspirations of a new India: Dauntless in the face of death, determined to smash imperialist rule and raise on its ruins the edifice of a free People’s State in this great land of ours”.

The writer is general secretary, CPI



## MARCH 24, 1980, FORTY YEARS AGO

**CHAMPION PADUKONE**  
PRAKASH PADUKONE UPSET defending champion Liem Swie King of Indonesia 15-3, 15-10 to win the men’s singles title at the All-England Badminton Championship. Prakash, a 24-year-old bank executive from Bangalore, is the first Indian to win the title.

**GOVT ON RSS PRESENCE**  
THE CENTRE WILL hold a full-scale inquiry into “the infiltration by the RSS and other disruptive elements into government services”, Union Home Minister Zail Singh announced. He also announced that the nine state assemblies that were dissolved by the Centre are likely to go to the polls together.

**SANGH ON MEMBERSHIP**  
THE THREE-DAY CRUCIAL meet of the RSS concluded in Nagpur after deciding not to bar MPs and MLAs from participating in day-to-day activities of the organisation. In a cryptic 67-word press note, RSS office secretary K N Gorey said the sabha endorsed the decision of the executive committee that there is no need to do anything about the dual membership issue. The note said RSS general secretary Rajendra Singh explained to the executive committee the spirit behind his statement made in July last year. Singh had offered to consider barring legislators from participation in day-to-day activities of the RSS, shortly after a discussion with Janata

Party president Chandra Shekhar in the wake of the dual membership controversy.

**JANATA MAY SPLIT**  
THE RSS DECISION to maintain the status quo on the dual membership issue, plaguing the Janata Party, has come as a real blow to the party high command. Party leaders feared that the decision will cause a split in whatever remains of the party as it might strengthen the hands of those demanding a complete de-linking of the Janata with the RSS. Senior leaders were disappointed as they had expected that the RSS will honour its assurance that a way will be found to get over the problem.



## WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"In a democracy of 70 million people, this is not how policy should be made. As we career into highly dangerous and uncharted waters, it is right to ask whether our ship's captain is up to the job."  
— THE GUARDIAN

# China and WHO, a new story

China has carefully calibrated its rise in UN system. World, including India, must deal with consequences



RAJA MANDALA

BY C RAJA MOHAN

ONE OF THE casualties of the US-China wrangling over the coronavirus is the World Health Organisation, which is supposed to be at the very heart of the global effort to cope with the pandemic. The WHO leadership, especially its Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, has been accused of serving China's interests rather than preparing the world against the spread of the virus.

The basis for these charges is the WHO's endorsement of the Chinese claim in mid-January that there was no evidence of human-to-human transmission of the virus, consistent support for Beijing's handling of the crisis and criticism of other nations for imposing travel restrictions to and from China. Critics also believe the WHO lulled the world into complacency by delaying the decision on calling it a global emergency. Whatever the merits of these arguments, they point to the new geopolitics of multilateralism, disprove the assumptions in both the West and India on China's role in the UN, and underline Beijing's success in the leveraging of international organisations for its national advantage.

On the face of it, the sentiment that nations must work together against common trans-national threats is an eminently sensible one. But it does not easily translate into concrete actions. Take climate change. Attempts at developing collective solutions to the problem over the last three decades have foundered. Most leaders agree on the problem and the solutions; but are not willing to accept the framework — either the domestic or international — for distributing the costs associated with the solutions.

The problem of the cost-benefit distribution is compounded by great power rivalries. The coronavirus has shown up at a moment of deepening tensions between the US and China. The grave collective challenge that the virus constitutes has only sharpened the conflict. The US blames Beijing for letting this virus become a global monster and Beijing is doing all it can to deny that the virus came out of China.

That brings us to the WHO, which is caught in the crossfire. The charge that the WHO leadership might have become a "tool of Chinese propaganda" shows how dramatically the relationship between Beijing and the world body has transformed in recent years. Nearly two decades ago, during the SARS crisis, WHO was at the front and centre of pressing China to come clean on the unfolding pandemic. In 2003, it had issued the organisation's first travel advisory ever on travel to and from the epicentre of the pandemic in southern China. As the SARS crisis escalated, Beijing's traditional arguments about the centrality of state sovereignty yielded place to a new policy of working with the WHO and taking proactive steps to reassure neighbours in South East Asia.

Some attribute the turnaround in the relationship between Beijing and WHO to China's growing financial contributions. Others suggest that China's political support was crucial in the election of Tadros in

2017. Observers of the UN point to something more fundamental — a conscious and consequential Chinese effort to expand its clout in the multilateral system. China, which was admitted to the UN system in the 1970s, was focused on finding its way in the 1980s, cautiously raised its profile in the 1990s, took on some political initiatives at the turn of the millennium and seized the leadership in the last few years.

Neither the West nor India have been prepared to deal with the impact of China's rise on the UN system. The US and its allies bet that China will be a "responsible stakeholder". Put another way, they hoped that China will play by the rules set by the West. China, of course, wants to set its own rules. Only the political innocents will be shocked by China's natural ambition. India, which considered US dominance over the international institutions in the 1990s as a major threat, chose to align with China in promoting a "multipolar world". Delhi convinced itself that despite differences over the boundary, Pakistan and other issues, there is huge room for cooperation with China. To their chagrin, the West and India are being compelled to respond to a very different environment at the UN. China wants to replace America as the dominant force in the UN. The US is now fighting back. Last month, Washington went all out to defeat the Chinese candidate for the leadership of an obscure UN agency called the World Intellectual Property Organisation.

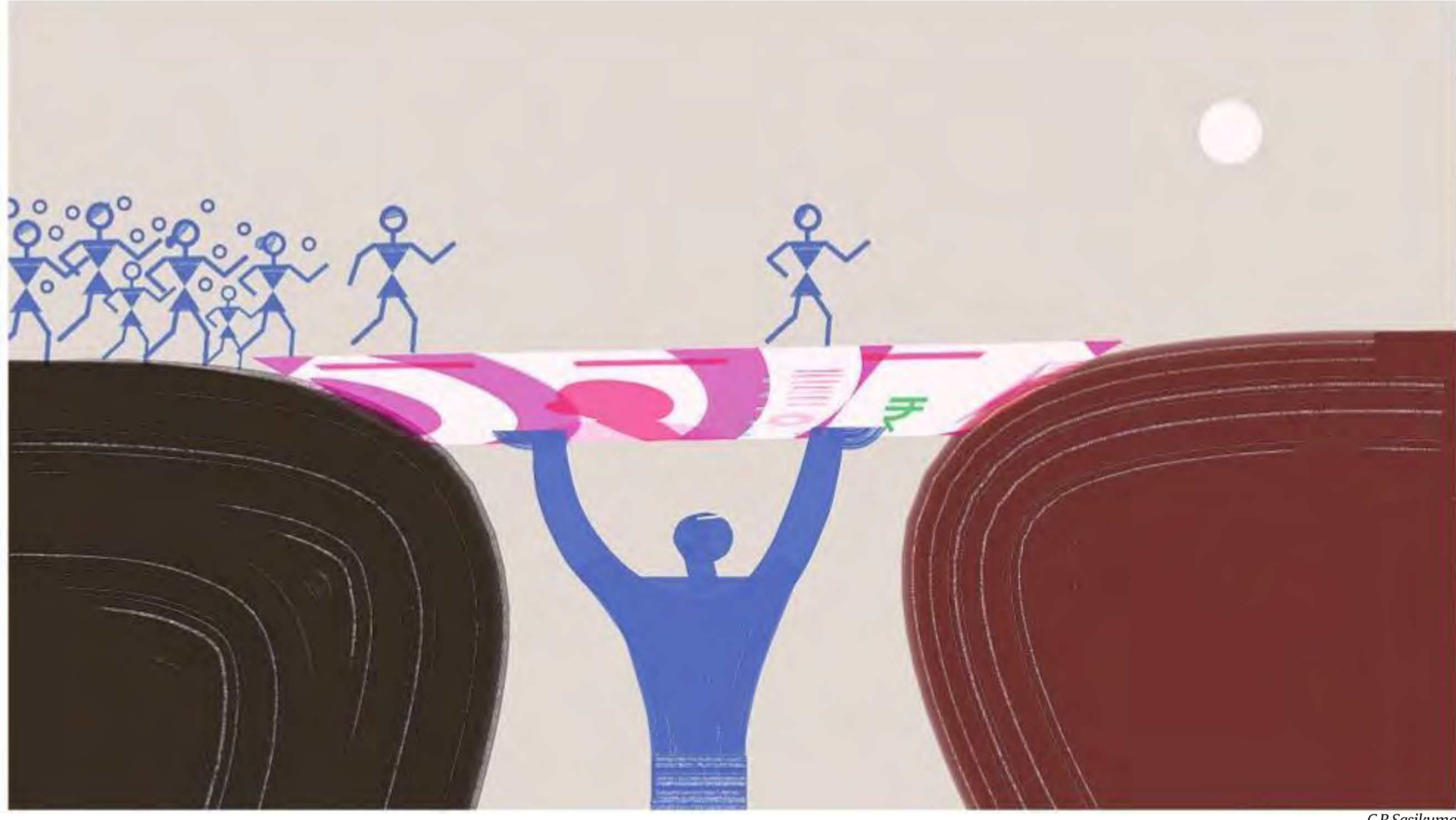
Delhi discovered that Chinese global hegemony could be a lot more problematic than American primacy. After all, it is China that complicates India's plans for membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, protects Pakistan against international pressures on cross-border terrorism, and relentlessly pushes the UN Security Council to take up the Kashmir question. India now turns to the US and its allies to pursue some of its interests in the UN.

Political ironies apart, if there is one lesson that India could learn from China's experience with WHO and the UN, it is that multilateralism is not an end in itself for major powers. It is an important means to secure one's national interest and shape the international environment. As a nation battered by the Cultural Revolution, China used international cooperation and global institutions to rebuild itself in the last decades of the 20th century. Having developed its economy and advanced its scientific and technological base, China is now ready to reorder global governance and become a rule-maker.

The effects are visible in the arena of global health. China's expanding global engagement with the WHO, its substantive international health assistance programmes, and an impressive domestic health technology sector are poised to boost China's ambition to build a "Global Silk Road for Health".

On its part, Delhi needs to intensify the recalibration of India's multilateralism, rewrite its diplomatic lexicon at the UN, and build new political coalitions that will simultaneously contribute to India's internal modernisation and enhance its international influence. The corona crisis is a good moment to start writing a new script for India's own health diplomacy.

The writer is director, Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore and contributing editor on international affairs for The Indian Express



CR Sasikumar

# How policy can bridge the gap

Income support to most vulnerable is key. India cannot complain that it does not have the fiscal space or infrastructure to provide it



JAHANGIR AZIZ

MINUS 40 PER cent, -30 per cent, -22 per cent, and -14 per cent. These are the estimated impacts (at an annualised rate) on the quarterly growth rates of China, the UK, Eurozone, and the US because of the Covid-19 virus. Even excluding China and those that are closely tied to its supply chain — Korea and Taiwan — emerging markets (EM) are expected to go into recession in the first half of 2020, with the second quarter taking the biggest hit at over an 8 per cent quarterly decline. India will not be spared this growth shock. In fact, the economic impact could be deeper and longer in emerging markets where the capacity of public health systems is limited at the best of times.

I am not an epidemiologist but casual observation suggests that the virus infects a large number of people who do not show any symptoms and therefore unknowingly spread it extensively. After remaining seemingly dormant for an extended period, the infection suddenly explodes exponentially. We also know from the experiences of the countries already infected that the way to control the spread of the virus is through aggressive containment and social distancing that inevitably brings economic activity to a sudden stop. There doesn't seem to be a middle path. We also know that unlike natural catastrophes like earthquakes, capital stock is not destroyed by the virus. Thus, once the containment period is over and social interaction normalises, there is every reason to believe that activity can recover very sharply. Unless the containment period is long because of capacity constraints in the healthcare system which could turn supply chain disruptions into a long-term problem, or the credit stress created by the

lack of earning by households and firms during the sudden stop stymies the recovery.

So, unfortunately, India, where the virus still appears to be in the early stage, needs to brace for such a sudden stop. The lockdown could be for an extended period given the already stretched public health system. The swathe of the economy that depends on social interaction — retail sales, entertainment, restaurants, and importantly construction and manufacturing — is very large. Even if one believes that rural areas with relatively low population densities will not be affected much, the impact on urban economic activity could be very large.

So what is the role of economic policy in such circumstances? It needs to "bridge the gap" between the brutal downturn and the eventual recovery. While public health policies force a sudden stop in the economy to save lives, economic policies need to ensure that the impact from the shutdown is cushioned, incomes of households and firms supported, credit stress is contained, and the recovery is not hamstrung by policy headwinds. This requires policy support to be operated on various fronts. Central banks not only need to cut rates but also need to provide adequate liquidity and extend regulatory forbearance to prevent credit stress and non-performing loans from clogging up the already strained financial system when the economy starts to recover. The role of fiscal policy is even larger, from direct and indirect tax cuts or postponement, to targeted credit support for sectors that are likely to be most affected such as airlines and retail trade.

However, the key is income support to the most vulnerable: From daily wage earners to SMEs (small and medium enterprises). And it is here that the government's efforts over the last five years make India one of the best-placed economies to deliver such cash transfers. Since 2015, substantial time, effort, and resources have been expended to establish Jan Dhan (bank accounts), Aadhaar (the biometric universal identity card) and mobile banking (JAM), and Mudra, the programme that dispenses loans to SMEs. The objective of

For a country with a population of 1.3 billion and about 63 million SMEs, even if there are duplicate accounts, JAM and Mudra should be able to cover almost all households and SMEs. With Aadhaar accurately targeting beneficiaries, leakages should be minimised. If there ever was a time that India needed JAM and Mudra it is now.

JAM and Mudra is to use Aadhaar as a way of accurately identifying beneficiaries and use mobile banking to digitally and seamlessly transfer cash/subsidies directly to households' bank accounts and provide loans to SMEs without any leakages. According to government reports, the total number of Jan Dhan accounts stand at around 380 million and 59 million MUDRA loans were sanctioned last year. For a country with a population of 1.3 billion and about 63 million SMEs, even if there are duplicate accounts, JAM and Mudra should be able to cover almost all households and SMEs. With Aadhaar accurately targeting beneficiaries, leakages should be minimised. If there ever was a time that India needed JAM and Mudra it is now.

So, where is the problem? Some will argue that India doesn't have the fiscal space. But it does. In the last month or so, the crude oil price has dropped from around \$60/bbl to around \$30 and is likely to stay at this level given the breakdown in agreement among oil-producing countries and the massive collapse in global demand. If the government simply taxed the oil windfall by raising excise duties, as it did during the 2014-15 oil price collapse, it could potentially raise almost 1 per cent of GDP or a staggering Rs 2.25 trillion. If 50 million households have to be provided assistance because of the shutdown, it comes to about Rs 14,000 per month for three months or about Rs 24,000 a month to half of the 63 million SMEs. And this without even having to increase this year's budgeted deficit.

Of course, the government might have other uses for the oil windfall. But if India is forced into a lockdown, the economic costs will be very large and the recovery will crucially depend on whether the pilot-light of the economy is kept lit through this period. This critically requires income transfers to vulnerable households and SMEs. India cannot complain that it does not have the fiscal space or the infrastructure to provide it.

The writer is chief emerging markets economist, JPMorgan Chase Bank. Views are personal



SHAZIA ILMI

# The fault in our design

COVID-19 brings a moment of reckoning with our unbridled consumerism, greed

THE COVID-19 pandemic looms large. But how close are we to making the magic vaccine? Does this virus justify the paranoia? Nature is a great experimenter, known to discard species that cannot adapt to its environs and contribute to the "Whole". I believe that as humans, we have not evolved enough to realise that we can only survive if we harmonise our species' way of living with life in totality.

Amid the ceaseless pillaging of our planet, is this nature's way of saying "enough is enough!"?

Anthropocentrism, that pervades human thought and obsession, is the philosophy that homo sapiens are the supreme owners of the planet — the sole commanders of its fate. This human supremacist perspective condones the barbarity of the human race towards every other sentient or non-sentient species, and justifies all wrongs against the planet in the name of 'development'.

In 1973, the famous scientist, Carl Sagan, viewed it as a form of "human chauvinism", excluding the possibility of extraterrestrial life. Sagan's contention was that humans are so restricted by their own narcissism, they

find it difficult to even conceive of other life forms with radically different biochemistries. Victor Stenger, a prominent astro-physicist, denounced "carbon chauvinism" — the premise that life necessarily requires carbon. According to him, it was "molecular chauvinism" to assume that molecules are required at all. In an ever-expanding universe, it would be terrible to claim knowledge of everything: It is this "higher intelligence" of the so-called "evolved human species" which seems to now threaten the ecological grid of human society.

The vices of greed and human consumption cannot, evidently, be reined in. And it is perhaps the predestined predicament of human design that works towards its own extinction. As self-indulgent consumers, many of us use, on a daily basis, products which we don't necessarily need, feeding into a global culture of competitive consumption that makes for unsustainable living habits.

From forest fires to global warming, rising sea levels to deforestation, loss of plant species to animal extinction — one ecological crisis after another that we battle are all linked with our desire to want more, own

more, spend, consume and dispose more. All this is much more than Earth can endure. This also renders impossible any positive shift in climate change, any fulfilment of the sustainable development goals and any move towards clean energy economies.

Our commercial greed ravages the biodiversity of the plant world, forcing hybrids and other seed varieties that deplete our soil, reduce water tables and crop cycles — besides creating dependence on chemicals, leading to monocultures in agriculture.

Our livestock are kept in pathetic conditions despite the knowledge that more than 60 per cent of infectious diseases are zoonotic by nature. Whether it is the Nipah virus in South Asia or the closely-related Hendra virus in Australia, or, Lyme disease in the US, there are many examples of how plundering an ecosystem can cause disease and epidemics.

Our conversations at large have to change from "What to buy" to "How to live without buying more". A big challenge of unbridled consumerism is its consequent waste-creation and disposal. Urban India is the world's third largest garbage generator and 10 mil-

lion tonnes of garbage is spewed out, in metropolitan cities like Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Chennai and Bengaluru.

The world's consumption of materials has crossed 100 billion tonnes every year, but the proportion that is being recycled is gradually falling. The use of materials by the global economy has quadrupled, far faster than the population, which has doubled since 1970.

Our insane levels of greed have become the fault in our design, ominously inviting upon ourselves viral onslaughts and epidemics. Humanity's greatest obsessions — religion and science — have offered us a lot, but not enough to go beyond our mortal misgivings.

While religion has contributed to notions of "otherness" within the human race, science has created technology that can obliterate the human species itself. Perhaps it is time to invoke William Blake once more: "To see a World in a Grain of Sand/ And a Heaven in a Wild Flower/ Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand/ And Eternity in an hour".

The writer is a spokesperson of the BJP

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### SHED PREJUDICE

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'Air India says 'vigilante' RWAs ostracising crew' (IE, March 23). The coronavirus pandemic is an international humanitarian emergency. People engaged in emergency services and rescue work anywhere in the world deserve respect. This was emphasised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his address to the nation while likening the coronavirus outbreak to a war. The RWAs seem to have their own prejudices which could be more damaging in the long run than the virus.

LR Murmu, Delhi

### FOCUS ON POOR

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'After Janata curfew' (IE, March 23). The people's response to the prime minister's call for a Janata curfew was heartening. However, with respect to public health imperatives, much work needs to be done in the national capital itself where a substantial of the people live in slum areas and unauthorised colonies. The effectiveness of social distancing in such areas is anybody's guess. The state governments and the Centre should be on the same page in dealing with this issue. For example, after the Delhi government cancelled domestic flights

### 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](mailto:editpage@expressindia.com) or sent to The Indian Express, B-1/B, Sector 10, Noida-UP 201301.

from the city, the Centre overruled the decision on the ground that the matter is not a state subject.

Krishan Kumar Chug, Delhi

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'After Janata curfew' (IE, March 23). Several reports have highlighted that a substantial chunk of the country's workforce is employed in the informal sector. The government should devise policies to mitigate the hardships of such people.

Rajesh Patni, Lucknow



AN EXPERT EXPLAINS

# 'Tests needed, but each country has priorities'

As community spread of the novel coronavirus in India looms, answers to some key questions over testing for the virus



JAYA SHRIVASTAVA

AS INDIA begins to discover its first cases of community transmission of the novel coronavirus, the number of infections is expected to shoot up very rapidly. Two days ago, the government decided to test all patients with severe respiratory disease in hospitals across the country, expanding the net beyond only those with recent overseas travel and contact histories. Several experts have argued that India's testing has been inadequate, and that the virus may be spreading widely outside the selected group.

**What would be an adequate number of tests for any country?**

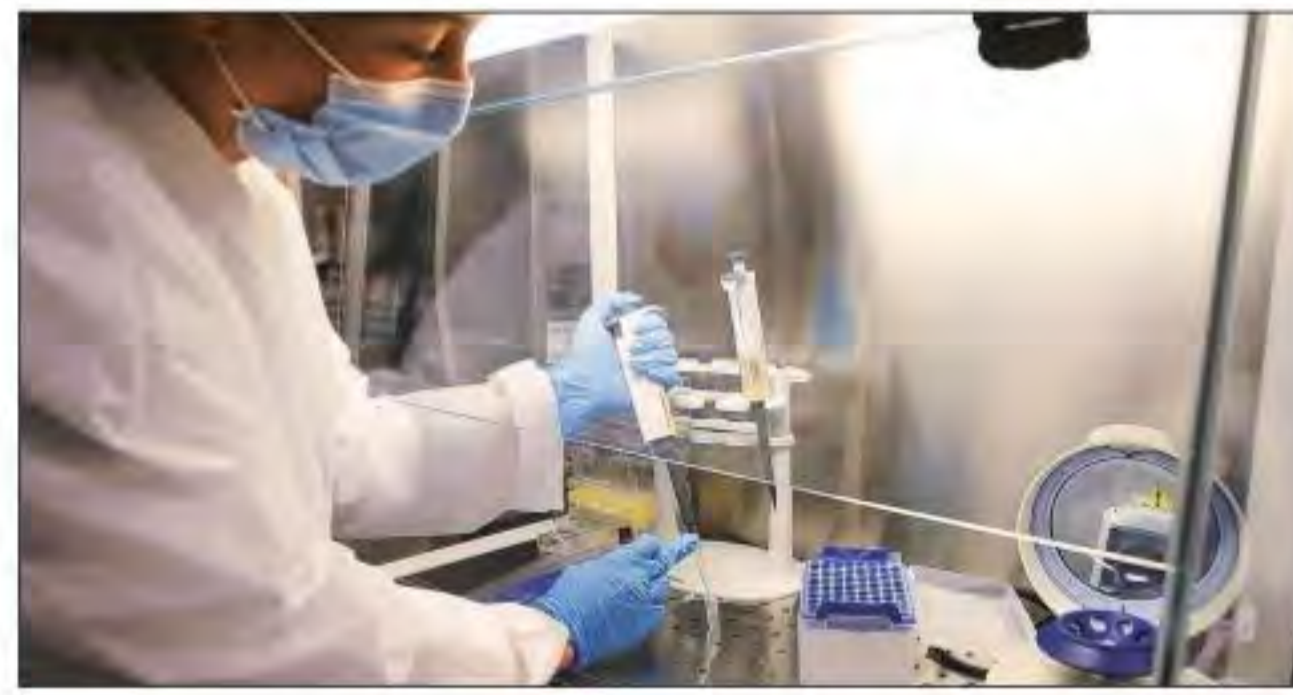
COVID-19 is a barely three-month-old disease, and there is not enough data to recommend an adequate number for testing. What we need to understand is that testing is not a treatment, nor is it sustainable to test every suspected case, let alone every individual. In most cases, we test in order to decide on clinical management of the case. We also test because we need to identify if the infections are occurring through travellers and migrants or whether community transmissions have started. Tests are also used to ascertain levels and transmission trends of

the infections within a population in order to decide intervention strategies like self-isolation, social distancing and quarantine procedures. Outcomes of testing also directly feed into a nation's response, health strategy, and governance policies. Collectively, they help to break the chain of transmission.

We have to realise that in an epidemic-like situation for a highly infectious disease, when transmission happens rapidly, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to get ahead of the curve simply by testing more and more people. However, we do need to test as many people as we can. This was stressed by the WHO Director-General, who said his key message was to "test, test, test or we will be fighting a fire blindfolded".

However, all countries have limits to their capacity to test. Diagnostic prowess, trained manpower, lab infrastructure, all are limited. Countries, therefore, have to define their priorities based on their local risk assessments. And that is what they seem to be doing. We should remember that what holds true for Singapore or South Korea might not hold true for India.

In the current situation, I find the advice from Professor Graham Medley (professor of infectious disease modelling at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine) the most pertinent: "Act like you are infected, not just avoiding infections." People should act like they have already tested positive for COVID-19, and then follow all the instructions that an infected person is being asked to follow, to the maximum extent possible: isolation, social distancing, minimal contact with other people.



No one test for the virus is technically superior to another; all tests are reliable. AP

**What exactly is a 'testing kit' for COVID-19? What is in it?**

There is no composite 'kit' as of now. What we refer to as a "kit" is actually a bunch of chemicals and biochemicals that are required at different stages of testing, which include nucleic acid extraction and amplification. These chemicals and biochemicals usually do not come together, and have to be procured separately.

The presence of a virus is detected by looking for unique identifiers in a given sample. In the present case, we look for genetic material that we know are unique to this virus. The tests vary according to the particular genetic material that we are looking for. The WHO has published a list of several such tests in use in various countries. No one test is technically

superior to another. Each of them is equally reliable. Countries are free to adopt any of these tests. The choice usually depends on factors like what works in the hands of a specific lab in terms of specificity, sensitivity, and logistics, including ease of availability of the chemicals required. The current molecular assays usually take between four and six hours to give the final result.

**India has placed an import order for 1 million testing kits. What can be a realistic timeline for delivery?**

There is no dearth of manufacturers who produce and supply the high-quality chemicals required in these tests, but they may not have the capacity to cater to the unprecedented and unexpected global demand vol-

umes. I guess there would be a backlog of orders in most countries. For example, orders for these chemicals during 'peace-time' would materialise within 48 to 72 hours. Currently, however, it might take longer.

**Can't these chemicals be produced by Indian companies?**

Indian companies already manufacture these chemicals. In fact, most research labs that perform molecular assays in India would have these chemicals; they are not uncommon at all. But the labs may not have them in the amounts they are currently required. Similarly, Indian companies that make these chemicals may be facing production issues. In my opinion, the bottleneck right now is of scale. Small manufacturers may not be in a position to supply such huge amounts.

The second issue is that of quality. With large and established players, quality is usually assured, but such quality assurances may not be readily available with suppliers that start production to address this new situation. Regulatory processes should be introduced to tackle this.

The third issue is that of cost. The bigger and established players can probably provide the chemicals for cheaper than small manufacturers can.

**How much do these tests cost?**

The overall cost of the test would include the cost of materials that are required for the testing, as well as the cost incurred on lab infrastructure, technical expertise, and logistics. It would vary from country to country.

Many new tests are entering the market on a daily basis. These include molecular and

serological assays; even artificial intelligence. These new tests will definitely drive down costs. However, the tests will need to be fit-for-purpose. Such analyses are already under way on a global level for all relevant new kits and assays.

**Has India delayed roping in private hospitals and labs for testing?**

This is a novel disease, and we are all learning more and more with each passing day. Most countries began their COVID-19 incidence handling through their public health systems, and later drew in the private sector. In India, the initial testings were done by ICMR and their approved labs. ICMR also provided reagents, primers and probes, controls, testing protocol and guidance to its approved labs, possibly also testing material for the time being, training and software.

I should point out a very important factor regarding handling and processing of this virus in the laboratory. SARS-CoV-2 is currently categorised as a hazard group 3 (HG-3) organism that poses severe disease risk. As a result, certain stages of sample handling need to occur within appropriate containment facilities, which might not readily be available at all diagnostics labs. Also, while many private hospitals and laboratories in India may be able to meet the generic quality standards, their competency to perform COVID-19 specific assays would need to be approved and monitored on an ongoing basis.

*Dr Jaya Shrivastava, a molecular biologist of infectious diseases for over 20 years, works for Public Health England. She spoke to Amitabh Sinha. Views are personal.*

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

## Hydroxychloroquine is recommended for very specific cases — here's why it's no silver bullet

ABANTIKA GHOSH  
 NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

HYDROXYCHLOROQUINE, A drug that has existed for several decades, could see a resurgence of demand, after the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) on Monday recommended its use as a post-exposure prophylactic (preventive medicine) against the novel coronavirus disease.

Last week, US President Donald Trump had said a hydroxychloroquine-azithromycin combination could be a "game changer" in the fight against COVID-19.

**What is known about hydroxychloroquine's efficacy in COVID-19 patients?**

Hydroxychloroquine (not to be confused with anti-malaria drug chloroquine) is an oral drug used in the treatment of autoimmune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis. On March 19, an article in *The Lancet Global Health* explored its therapeutic and prophylactic properties. "Notably, the drug shows antiviral activity *in vitro* against coronaviruses, and specifically, SARS-CoV-2 [the virus that causes COVID-2]. Pharmacological modelling based on observed drug concentrations and *in vitro* drug testing suggest that prophylaxis with hydroxychloroquine at approved doses could prevent SARS-CoV-2 infection and ameliorate viral shedding." It also mentioned clinical trials currently under way in China on whether the drug can be used for treatment.

In a note for physicians on the therapeutic options for COVID-19, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says: "Hydroxychloroquine is currently under investigation in clinical trials for pre-exposure or post-exposure prophylaxis of SARS-CoV-2 infection, and treatment of patients with mild, moderate, and severe COVID-19. In the United States, several clinical trials of hydroxychloroquine for prophylaxis or treatment of SARS-CoV-2 infection are planned or will be enrolling soon."

The CDC says both hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine have *in vitro* activity against SARS-CoV, SARS-CoV-2, and other coronaviruses, with hydroxychloroquine having higher potency against SARS-CoV-2. "A study in China reported that chloroquine treatment of COVID-19 patients had clinical and virologic benefit versus a comparison group, and chloroquine was added as a recommended antiviral for treatment of COVID-19 in China..."

**What has India recommended?**

The National Taskforce for COVID-19 has recommended hydroxychloroquine for prophylaxis in case of asymptomatic healthcare workers involved in the care of suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 and asymptomatic household contacts of laboratory confirmed cases. The new guidelines say: "Hydroxy-chloroquine is found to be effective against coronavirus in laboratory stud-

ies and in-vivo studies. Its use in prophylaxis is derived from available evidence of benefit as treatment and supported by pre-clinical data... The following recommendation... is based on these considerations, as well as risk-benefit consideration, under exceptional circumstances that call for the protection of high-risk individuals."

Doctors in the private sector are, however, cautious. "ICMR guidelines are very specific for specific people. We have to limit it to them. It cannot become something that everybody uses," said Dr S Chatterjee, consultant at Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals.

"As infection spreads there would be many more cases maybe for the next couple of months. You cannot give chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine to anybody and everybody... We don't know whether it is effective, we are only extrapolating available data. Also if it becomes something everybody takes, there would be stock issues too... Let more evidence emerge on its efficacy before we take a call," Dr Chatterjee said.

**So should you stock the drug?**

The short answer is, no. If you suspect you have contracted the infection, you should visit a doctor. You must not attempt to self-medicate. Even the government's guidelines on hydroxychloroquine say the drug has to be given only on the prescription of a registered medical practitioner.

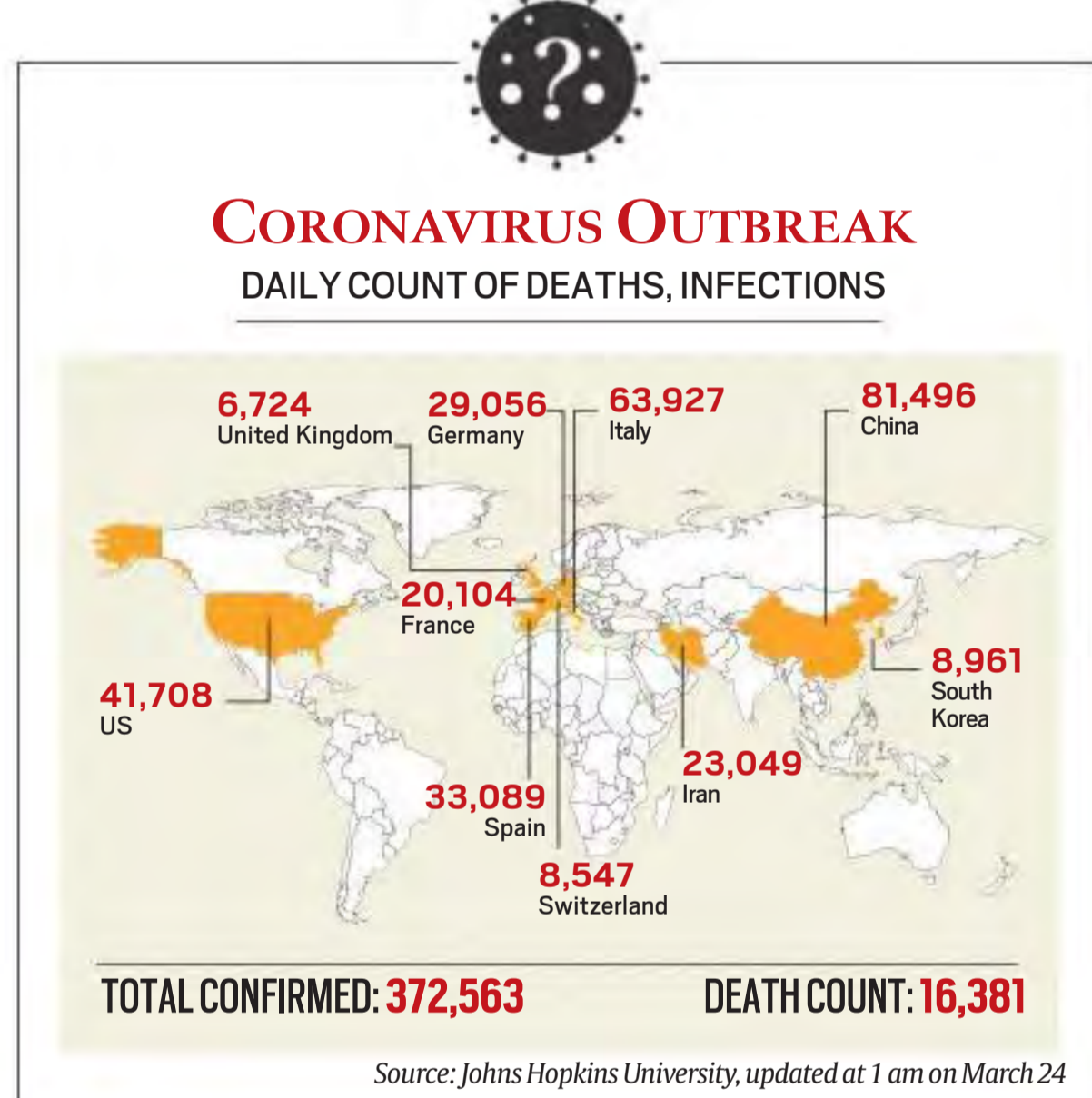
**What combination did Trump speak of?**

The combination is hydroxychloroquine with azithromycin, a commonly used antibiotic. On Saturday, following a press conference in which he endorsed the combination, Trump tweeted: "HYDROXYCHLOROQUINE & AZITHROMYCIN, taken together, have a real chance to be one of the biggest game changers in the history of medicine. The FDA has moved mountains - Thank You!..."

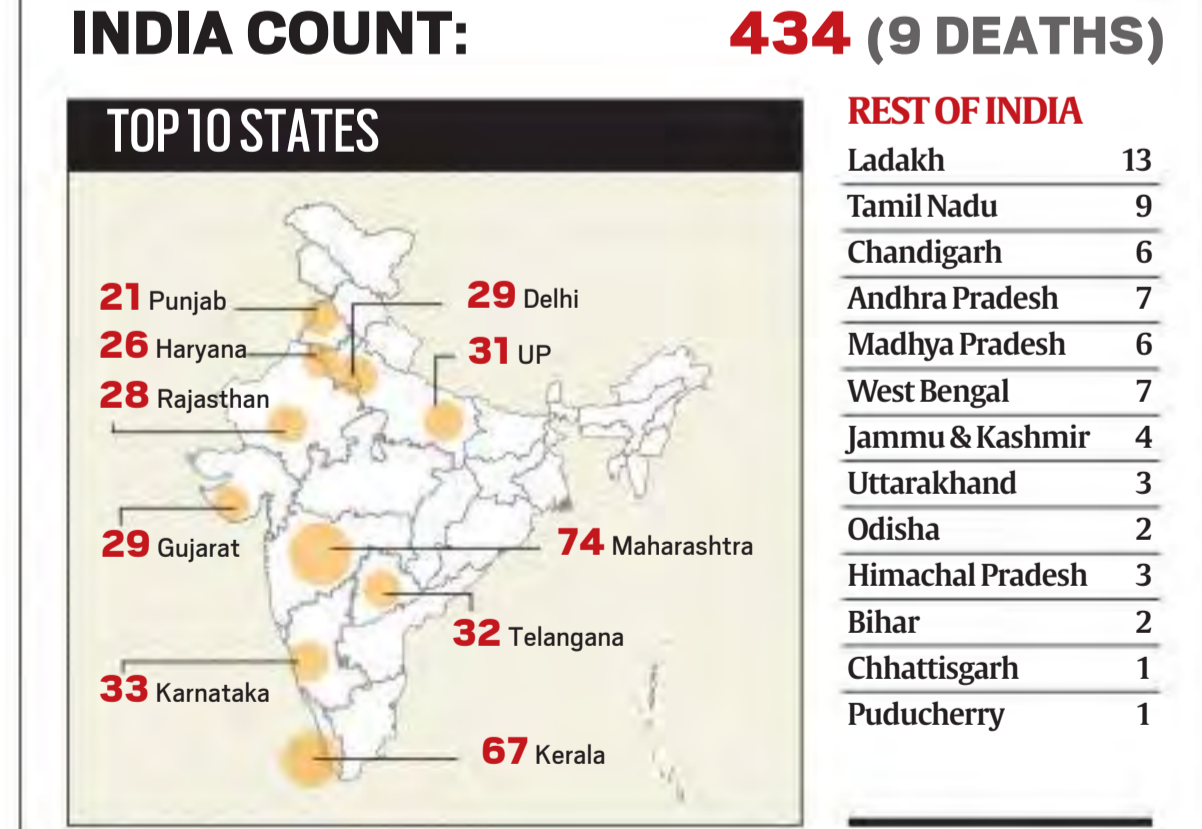
While the roles of chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine in management of COVID-19 are still open questions for the scientific community, the azithromycin-hydroxychloroquine combination is part of an upcoming multicountry trial anchored by the WHO in the fight against COVID-19.

The azithromycin-hydroxychloroquine combination has sometimes been administered to COVID-19 patients in the US, the CDC says. In a small study in the *International Journal of Antimicrobial Agents* published on March 17, French scientists reported: "Twenty cases were treated in this study and showed a significant reduction of the viral carriage at D6-post inclusion compared to controls, and much lower average carrying duration than reported of untreated patients in the literature. Azithromycin added to hydroxychloroquine was significantly more efficient for virus elimination."

Simply put, the combination did reduce the viral load but the size of the study is too small to draw a definitive conclusion.



**ITALY TOLL PAST 6,000, NEARS DOUBLE CHINA'S**  
 ITALY sees over 10,000 new infections in last 24 hours, number of dead now more than China and Spain put together.  
 SPAIN the new European hotspot after Italy, following a widely predicted trajectory of infections and deaths.  
 CHINA deaths continue to flatline, a trend that began at the beginning of the month, as the number of recoveries continues to increase.



Numbers from Union Health Ministry update at midnight, March 23. Some state may have reported higher numbers. Not all states are listed.  
 35 DISCHARGED IN 8 STATES ACROSS THE COUNTRY

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

FACT CHECK GROUND REALITY

## Can throat-nose swab test rule out virus? A study in *The Lancet*, a case in Mumbai

TABASSUM BARNAGARWALA  
 MUMBAI, MARCH 23

A DEATH review committee set up by Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) will assess the cause of death of the 68-year-old Philippines national who passed away in a private hospital in Mumbai on Sunday night. The man was initially admitted to the BMC-run Kasturba Hospital. Days before his death, he had tested negative for SARS-CoV-2, the virus from the coronavirus family that causes COVID-19.

The BMC committee will assess whether he died of COVID-19, or renal failure with acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS).

**What is the history of this case?**

The man was part of a group of nine Philippines nationals who arrived in Mumbai on March 3. He then took a train to New Delhi, and returned to Mumbai on March 10. On March 12 afternoon, he developed symptoms of flu, and was taken to a local doctor. On March 13, he tested positive for COVID-19, and was admitted to Kasturba Hospital.

With co-morbidities like diabetes and asthma, his condition remained critical, and he was put on ventilator support. In between, he developed kidney complications, and was taken to the BMC's B.Y.L. Nair Hospital for dialysis. He was tested in accordance with protocol and, a few days ago, his nasopharyngeal swab (swab taken from the back of the nose and throat) tested negative for the novel coronavirus.

The man was then discharged, and was shifted to a private superspecialty hospital for treatment of his kidneys. This is where he died. Dr Daksha Shah, BMC's deputy executive health officer, said that since the man had tested negative, his death is so far not being considered a COVID-19 death.

**Why must the case be studied further?**

The key question is: Is a nasal or throat swab sufficient to rule out the virus? That is, can a person have the virus in their body even if their respiratory samples test negative?

A new study in *The Lancet Gastroenterology and Hepatology* shows that the novel coronavirus can remain in the faeces of patients for five weeks after their respiratory samples test negative. ("Prolonged presence of SARS-CoV-2 viral RNA in faecal samples", Yongjian Wu et al.: published March 19, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-1253\(20\)30083-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-1253(20)30083-2))

The researchers analysed respiratory and faecal matter of 74 COVID-19 patients from January 16 to March 15 at the Fifth Affiliated Hospital of Sun Yat-sen University in Zhuhai, China. In 55% of cases (41 of 74 patients), the respiratory samples (throat swabs) tested positive for coronavirus for 16.7 days, and faecal matter tested positive for 27.9 days after the first onset of symptoms, the study found.

The implication is this: Even if a confirmed case returns negative for the novel

coronavirus in a nasal swab test, the virus may still be in body.

**What does this finding mean in the context of the 68-year-old Filipino?**

That there is a possibility that he may have still had the virus in his body fluids, even though his respiratory samples tested negative. Given his age, asthma, diabetes, and later renal complications, the virus added to the problem and worsened his condition.

*The Lancet* study found that the virus was "actively replicating in the patients' gastrointestinal tract" even after clearance from their respiratory tract. It also said that there is a possibility of viral shedding for nearly five weeks in the faeces of infected person. The virus could remain in the environment for days, and could be transmitted by the faecal-oral transmission mode, although this is yet to be detected in a COVID-19 case.

Similar transmission patterns were observed during the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) outbreaks, both of which were caused by pathogens of the coronavirus family. Dr Om Srivastava, an infectious diseases expert who is a member of the death review committee, said: "Further tests are needed to check viral load in saliva, tears, semen as well. Zika virus remained in semen for nine months."

Blood, urine, and stool samples of confirmed COVID-19 patients at Kasturba Hospital are being sent every day to the National Institute of Virology in Pune for analysis of viral shedding.

**What will the BMC's panel do now?**

A member of the committee said that stool, urine, and blood samples of the Philippines national will be analysed to test for the presence of the virus, and whether viral shedding continued after he was discharged from Kasturba Hospital. The committee comprises infectious disease experts, intensive medicine doctors, and civic health officials.

BMC has earlier taken a similar approach in deaths caused by dengue and H1N1 infection as well. In deaths of patients with several co-morbidities, a review of the medical condition is done to understand whether the infection was the direct or indirect cause of death.

The first COVID-19 death in Maharashtra, a 64-year-old who had travelled to Dubai, too had tested negative for coronavirus a day before his death. He was still considered a COVID-19 death because he passed away before a second confirmatory test for the virus could be carried out. As per government guidelines, two tests must be conducted within 24 hours to rule out the presence of the virus in an infected person.

In the case of the 68-year-old Filipino, both these tests were carried out before the presence of the virus was ruled out.

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## Andhra govt seeks CBI probe into Amaravati capital plan

SREENIVAS JANYALA  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

THE ANDHRA Pradesh government on Monday decided to seek a CBI probe into allegations of corruption against TDP leaders on a proposed new capital when the party was in power in the state.

The in-principle consent of the state government to the CBI probe under Section 6 of Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946 was conveyed Monday through a Government Order.

The Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy government had constituted a Cabinet Sub-Committee last year to probe the matter.

"The Cabinet Sub-Committee, after verifying government records, conclusively opined in its report submitted on December 12 last year, that public servants at the head of affairs in the erstwhile government misused and abused their official position to pre-determine the location of the new capital and subsequently purchased lands to unjustly and illegally benefit their associates, their companies and businesses, family members and/or political party members. The boundaries of the capital and its infrastructure were designed and modified to suit their personal interests. Further, the said officials in violation of their oaths, revealed the privileged information about capital city location to their associates," an official said.

The report also said that the Cabinet Sub-Committee had found several irregularities and illegalities with respect to procedure followed by the erstwhile government in acquiring lands and offences committed by dispossessing landless poor of assigned lands. These transactions, the report said, were penal offences under the IPC, the Prevention of Corruption Act, the Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Act and Prevention of Money Laundering Act.

"Owing to the high profile nature of the accused involved and the need to carry out investigation in other states and abroad, it was felt that this is a fit subject to be investigated by a national agency such as the Central Bureau of Investigation. Hence, a reference and the report of the Cabinet sub-committee were forwarded to the Ministry of DoPT, with a request for CBI to take up investigation," an official said.

## Uber suspends cab services in several cities

Mumbai: Cab aggregator firm Uber on Monday said it was suspending taxi services in several cities across the country.

The cities include the National Capital Region in Delhi, Mumbai, Pune, Nagpur, Ahmedabad, Surat, Vadodara, Rajkot, Amritsar, Chandigarh, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Ajmer, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Kota and Udaipur.

UberPool and Uber Intercity services have also been suspended across the country. PTI



Municipal staff sanitise Lucknow's Ghanta Ghar after anti-CAA protesters halted the agitation in view of COVID-19. Vishal Srivastava

## Amid COVID-19 fears, protests at Ghanta Ghar, Prayagraj halted

ASAD REHMAN  
LUCKNOW, MARCH 23

THE WOMEN protesting against CAA and NRC at Lucknow's Ghanta Ghar "halted" their agitation on Monday in view of the COVID-19 outbreak. The decision was taken after discussions between the protesters, police officers and members from the civil society.

In a letter to the Lucknow police commissioner Sujeet Pandey, the protesters wrote, "This is to inform you that the protest going on against CAA, NRC and NPR has been halted due to the sudden epidemic of coronavirus. When the government order related to coronavirus is over, we will come back and sit where we were sitting."

Thakurganj police station SHO Pramod Kumar Mishra confirmed, "They (protesters) have left the spot and the place is empty now."

Sumaiyya Rana, one of the organisers of the protest, told *The Indian Express*, "We have been assured by senior police officers that we can come back and sit once the orders related to the epidemic are no longer in place." The sit-in at Ghanta Ghar started on January 17.

In Lucknow's Ujaniyaon under the Gomti Nagar police station, another sit-in against CAA-NRC was halted by the protesters.

ACP (Gomti Nagar) Santosh Singh confirmed that the protest

has been halted for the time-being. "We received a memorandum from the women that they are halting the protest owing to the spread of the virus. They have said that once the coronavirus situation is brought under control, they will restart the sit-in," said Singh.

In Prayagraj, SSP Satyarth Aniruddha Pankaj said people had halted a protest there owing to the pandemic. A protest against CAA-NRC had been going on at Mansoor Ali Park there since January 12.

"On Monday evening, the protesters submitted a memorandum to the administration, saying that they will halt their protest," said Pankaj on Monday evening.

Sarah Ahmed, an organiser of the protest, said, "We have only halted the protest till the coronavirus issue is resolved. We will continue the protest once the lockdown is over. The coronavirus fear is the bigger issue at the moment and hence, we are temporarily halting the sit-in. Our fight against CAA-NRC will continue."

In Moradabad, police have lodged a case under the Epidemic Diseases Act and other sections of the IPC Monday over the protest being held under the Gul Shaheed police station at Eidgah mosque.

"We have lodged a case against 12 named and 150 unidentified people after the protesters gave a call for more people to attend the sit-in after we asked them to halt it due to coronavirus pandemic."

## In Andhra, ward volunteers double up as front-line testers

SREENIVAS JANYALA  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

THE VILLAGE and ward volunteers hired by the Andhra Pradesh government to ensure delivery of government services and schemes to beneficiaries are now being deployed to visit households across the state to identify foreign returnees and check for any suspected cases of COVID-19.

About 4.5 lakh volunteers are visiting households in 11,158 villages and 3,786 wards to spread awareness on the precautions families should take and also to check for anyone showing symptoms. So far, these volunteers have traced over 13,000 people who recently returned from foreign travel and ensured that they remain under a 14-day isolation since the first week of February.

"As part of the control measures taken up by the government, all the village and ward volunteers have been instructed to go on a house-to-house survey, check on foreign returnees, take their details and most importantly, make sure that every foreign returnee is home-isolated. So far, of the 1.41 crore targeted households, 1.33 crore have been covered in the survey. So far, we have traced 13,301 foreign returnees. Of all those identified, 2,222 have completed 28-days in observation, 11,026 are still under home isolation and 53 are under hospital ob-

servations," said M Sucharitha, Home and Disaster Management Minister. "As all the positive cases (in the state) are foreign-returnees so far, it is important to identify and track them as quickly as possible and put them in isolation and the village volunteers are the first ones to get that information. They are risking their lives as much as the doctors, nurses and health officials," she said.

The visits by volunteers are followed up by Auxiliary Nurse Midwife staff and Accredited Social Health Activist workers to check if the family members or others came in contact with the foreign returnees or if any of them are experiencing symptoms. "In case they come across a suspected case, they are immediately alerting the medical teams and keeping them isolated," a health department official said.

The government has also asked health officials to check and sanitise all households within 3 kms of the residences of the six people who have tested positive so far. The government has also launched a massive screening exercise across all airports and seaports. "Apart from airports we have seaports like Visakhapatnam, Kakinada, Gangavaram where ships from various countries come. Only after checking the health of crew members of a ship for 14 days, ships are being allowed to berth. Quarantine facilities have been arranged," an official said.

## MAOIST AMBUSH IN CHHATTISGARH

# Paying tribute, Baghel vows to root out rebels

GARGI VERMA  
SUKMA, MARCH 23

"MY BROTHER was the youngest in the family. He was studying, but he joined the force midway, just two years ago. The cowards killed him. How long will this go on?"

This was asked by the brother of one of the 17 security personnel killed on Saturday in a Maoist ambush at Sukma districts in Chhattisgarh's Sukma forest. The security personnel were given a farewell at a wreath-laying ceremony on Monday morning that was attended by Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, Home Minister Tamradhwaj Sahu and senior officers from state police and CRPF.

The bodies of the 17 security personnel, including 5 from Special Task Force (STF) and 12 from District Reserve Group (DRG), were recovered by a back-up force sent on Sunday. A platoon commander and an assistant platoon commander of the STF were also among the dead.

"Our men fought valiantly and we are all proud of them. We value their sacrifice and we won't let it go in vain. The fight with Naxals is ongoing and we will root them out," the Chief Minister told the media at the ceremony.



Chhattisgarh CM Bhupesh Baghel at the wreath-laying ceremony at Sukma police lines on Monday. PTI

Senior security advisor for the Union government K Vijay Kumar, too, reached Sukma and participated in a closed-door meeting with the Chief Minister and senior officers of CRPF and state police.

"We are assessing the situation. As of now, we have information of the Naxals suffering losses too, although we haven't recovered bodies," said a senior police officer.

Meanwhile, Governor Anusuya Uike on Monday visited the 15 security personnel who were injured in the attack and are now at a private hospital in Raipur.

Following the incident, two Superintendents of Police were posted in Bijapur and Sukma as supporting officers for a short term. K L Dhruv, a former SP at Bijapur, has been asked to support the Bijapur SP and Jitendra Shukla, who is former SP, Sukma, has been asked to support the current Sukma SP. Sources said the two officers have a keen understanding of Maoist operations.

## 6 operatives of LeT module held: Police

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, MARCH 23

THE JAMMU and Kashmir Police Monday claimed to have busted a module of terror outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba in the Valley and arrested six operatives. Police said they recovered a huge cache of arms and ammunition in the operation.

A J&K Police spokesperson said that six members of the The

Resistance Front (TRF) — a module of LeT — have been arrested in connection with the case.

"This is first ever TRF module of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) identified and busted by the police, which was going to be armed very soon. This consignment of weapons has arrived from Keran sector of Kupwara district. As per reports, some narcotics have come from the same Neelam river route, opposite Keran vil-

lage," said the spokesperson.

Police said they recovered eight AK-47 rifles, 77 grenades, 21 detonators, 25 magazines, 750 bullets and other ammunition from searches conducted in Keran. Police said during questioning, those arrested revealed they received arms and ammunition from a resident of Keran.

"The accused was arrested and led to the apprehension of another person," the police said.

## DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (STATE CHILD PROTECTION SOCIETY) GOVERNMENT OF NCT OF DELHI 5th Floor, ISBT Building, Kashmiri Gate, Delhi-110006 PUBLIC NOTICE

All the Child Care Institutions/Organisations providing child care services to the children in need of care and protection and children in conflict with law must be registered/recognised under section 41(1) of Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015 and rules framed there under.

All CCIs/organisations providing child care services in National Capital Territory of Delhi and running without registration/recognition should apply for the registration/recognition to "The Director, Department of Women and Child Development, Govt. of NCT of Delhi, 1st Floor, ISBT Building, Kashmiri Gate, Delhi-110006" along with relevant documents. Such organisations may visit [www.weddel.in](http://www.weddel.in) for the application and other details.

If such organisations are found running without registration, they are liable for prosecution under section 42 of the Act which provides for imprisonment which may extend to one year or a fine not less than one lakh rupees or both.

Director,

Department of Women and Child Development

DIP/Shabdarth/1497/19-20

## J&K issues advisory after some hid travel history

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, MARCH 23

POINTING OUT that some travellers, including students returning to Jammu and Kashmir, have not provided their correct travel history in self-declaration formats that were provided to them at

designated travel desk counters at the point of entry, the Union Territory administration on Monday appealed to the people, including family members and neighbours, to bring such cases to the notice of authorities so that necessary measures can be taken.

The appeal by authorities comes in the wake of apprehen-

sion of two students who concealed their travel history to Pakistan and Bangladesh, and who recently returned home in Awantipora area - to ostensibly evade the necessary quarantine process.

A case has been lodged against them and they have been sent to Entrepreneurship Development Institute Pampore for quarantine.

## RELIANCE JIO INFOCOMM LIMITED

CIN: U72900GJ2007PLC105869

Registered Office: Office - 101, Saffron, Nr. Centre Point, Panchwati 5 Rasta, Ambawadi, Ahmedabad 380006  
Website: [www.jio.com](http://www.jio.com); E-mail: [Jio.InvestorRelations@ril.com](mailto:Jio.InvestorRelations@ril.com); Tel.: 079-35031200

### NOTICE TO THE DEBENTUREHOLDERS

Pursuant to the Scheme of Arrangement amongst Reliance Jio Infocomm Limited (the "Company") and certain classes of its creditors (the "Scheme") sanctioned by the National Company Law Tribunal, Ahmedabad Bench vide its Order dated March 13, 2020; the Company has fixed Friday, March 27, 2020 as the 'Record Date' for changing the issuer of the Non-Convertible Debentures ("Debentures") from Reliance Jio Infocomm Limited to Reliance Industries Limited, for the Debentures issued by the Company, as per details provided herein below:

Series	ISIN	ISIN Description
PPD1	INE110L08011	8.95 NCD 15SP20 FVRS10LAC LOA UPTO 13DC10
PPD2	INE110L08029	8.95 NCD 04OT20 FVRS10LAC LOA UPTO 13DC10
PPD3	INE110L08037	9.25 NCD 16JU24 FVRS10LAC LOA UPTO 27OT14
PPD5 Option 2	INE110L08060	SR-PPD5 9 NCD 21JN25 FV10LAC LOA UPTO 23JULY15
PPD8	INE110L07047	SR-PPD8 8.25 NCD 30OT25FVRS10LAC LOA UPTO 14MR16
PPD11	INE110L07070	SR-PPD-11 8.32 NCD08JL21 FVRS10LAC LOAUPTO16MR17
PPD12	INE110L07088	SR-PPD-12 8 NCD 09AP23 FV10LAC LOAUPTO19AG18
PPD13	INE110L07096	PPD-13 8 NCD 16AP23 FVRS10LAC LOAUPTO19AG18
PPD14	INE110L07104	PPD-14 7.97 NCD 24AP22 FV10LAC LOAUPTO19AG18
PPD15	INE110L07112	PPD-15 8.7 NCD 15JU21 FVRS10LAC LOAUPTO19AG18
PPD16	INE110L07120	PPD-16 8.7 NCD 18JL21 FVRS10LAC LOAUPTO19AG18

Place : Mumbai  
Dated : March 23, 2020

For Reliance Jio Infocomm Limited  
Sd/-

Jyoti Jain  
Company Secretary

## EXPRESS Careers

KOCHI METRO RAIL LIMITED  
(A joint venture company of Govt. of India & Govt. of Kerala)  
4th Floor, JLN Stadium Metro Station, Kaloor, Ernakulam-682017  
Ph: +91 484 2846700

CAREERS  
Applications are invited for the post of  
**GENERAL MANAGER (DESIGN)**  
For more details and online submission of application, log on to [www.kochimetro.org/careers](http://www.kochimetro.org/careers)  
Last date of submission of online applications: 01<sup>st</sup> April 2020

भारतीय रिज़र्व बैंक सर्विसेज़ बोर्ड, मुंबई  
RESERVE BANK OF INDIA SERVICES BOARD, MUMBAI  
Recruitment Advt. No. 3/2019-20

1. Applications are invited for Lateral Recruitment of Consultants/Specialists/Analyst (on contract basis) to the following positions in the Reserve Bank of India.

S. No.	Name of the Post	Vacancies
1	Consultant - Applied Mathematics	3
2	Consultant - Applied Econometrics	3
3	Economist - Macroeconomic Modelling	1
4	Data Analyst / MPD	1
5	Data Analyst / (DoS-DNBS)	2
6	Data Analyst / (DoR-DBR)	2
7	Risk Analyst / (DoS-DNBS)	1
8	Risk Analyst / (DEIO)	2
9	IS Auditor	2
10	Specialist in Forensic Audit	1
11	Accounts Specialist	1
12	System Administrator	9
13	Project Administrator	5
14	Network Administrator	6

2. For all other details such as eligibility criteria, reservation of vacancies, scheme of selection, submission of on-line application and other instructions, please refer to the detailed advertisement to be published on the Bank's website ([www.rbi.org.in](http://www.rbi.org.in)) on **March 27, 2020**. Candidates can apply for these posts only by online mode through the Bank's website.

3. IMPORTANT DATES:  
Website Link Open - for online Registration of Applications and Payment of Fees/ Intimation Charges: **09.04.2020 to 29.04.2020 (upto 6 pm)**  
NOTE: Corrigendum, if any, issued on the above advertisement, will be published only on the Bank's website.  
(Hindi version of this advertisement will be available in *Dainik Bhaskar*, *Dainik Jagran*, *Rajasthan Patrika* & *Navbharat Times*).

"Don't get cheated by E-mails/SMS/Calls promising you money"

Government of India  
Department of Atomic Energy

Advt.No.01-R/IMSC/2020 Date: 20.03.2020  
Invites applications for the post of  
**DIRECTOR, IMSC**  
(Level - 15 under 7<sup>th</sup> CPC)

(The Institute of Mathematical Sciences (IMSC), Chennai is one of the Grant-in-aid Autonomous Institutions under the Department of Atomic Energy)

Last date for receipt of applications : 30.04.2020  
For detailed advertisement log on to the following websites  
i) [www.dae.gov.in](http://www.dae.gov.in) under "Vacancy notices"  
ii) <https://dopt.gov.in/> under "Notifications"  
iii) [www.imsc.res.in](http://www.imsc.res.in) under "Opportunities"

Vishweshwar Education Society's  
**INDIRA INSTITUTE OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT**

Bldg. 'B', Plot No.2, Sector-9, Sanpada, Navi Mumbai-400 705.  
UNAIDED

APPLICATIONS ARE INVITED FOR THE FOLLOWING POSTS FROM THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2019-20

Sr. No.	Cadre	Total no. of Posts	Posts Reserved for					
			Open	SC	ST	DT/NT	OBC	SEBC
1	Director	01	01	-	-	-	-	-
2	Professor (Marketing)	01	01	-	-	-	-	-
3	Associate Professor (Marketing & Finance)	03	01	01	-	-	-	01
4	Assistant Professor (Marketing, Finance, HR & Operations)	08	02	01	01	01	02	01
5	Librarian	01	01	-	-	-	-	-

The posts reserved for the Backward Class candidates will be filled in by backward category candidates (Domicile of State of Maharashtra) belonging to that particular Category only.

Reservation for women will be as per University Circular No. BCC/16/74/1998 dated 10<sup>th</sup> March 1998. 4% reservation shall be for the persons with disability as per University Circular No. Special Cell/ICC/2019-20/05 dated 05<sup>th</sup> July, 2019.

Candidates having knowledge of Marathi will be preferred.

The Educational Qualification, Experience and pay - scale for the posts of Director, Professor, Associate Professor and Assistant Professor and Librarian are as prescribed by the University of Mumbai, AICTE & DTE from time to time.

Applicants who are already employed must send their application through proper channel. Applicants are required to account for breaks. If any in their academic career.

Candidates belonging to reserved categories should send two Xerox copies of their application along with the attested copy of the Cause Certificate to the Deputy Registrar, Special Cell, University of Mumbai, Mumbai-400 032.

Applications with full details should reach THE SECRETARY, Vishweshwar Education Society, Plot No. 2, Sector-9, Sanpada, Navi Mumbai-400 705 within 15 days from the date of publication of this advertisement. This is University approved advertisement.

Sd/-  
SECRETARY



# 14 THE OUTBREAK THE WORLD

TOP OF THE WORLD



At the Hong Kong airport, Monday. AP

**HONG KONG**  
Non-residents, barred from entering country

**Hong Kong:** Hong Kong will ban all non-residents from entering from midnight on Tuesday evening in a bid to halt the coronavirus, its leader said Monday, as she also ordered restaurants and bars to stop serving alcohol. In the last two weeks, the number of cases has more than doubled to 356 infections after locals and foreign residents flooded back. "From midnight of March 25, all non-Hong Kong residents flying in from overseas will not be allowed into the city," chief executive Carrie Lam said, adding the order would be in place for at least two weeks.

**PAKISTAN**  
Army deployed to enforce lockdown

**Islamabad:** Pakistan on Monday deployed army to assist the civil administration to enforce nationwide lockdown and perform other duties as the number of coronavirus cases sharply rose to 875. Army will assist federal and provincial governments in their respective plans to deal with COVID-19. Army spokesman Maj Gen Babar Iftikhar said in Rawalpindi. The decision was taken as police faced problems in enforcing measures after all provincial governments announced complete or partial lockdown.

**BANGLADESH**  
10-day holiday, Army called to enforce curbs

**Dhaka:** Bangladesh on Monday declared a 10-day nationwide holiday from March 26 and called out the Army to enforce social distancing to curb the spread of the coronavirus pandemic which has claimed over 15,000 lives globally. All government and private offices will be closed from March 26 to April 4. "The holidays will begin with the March 26 Independence Day holiday in view of the COVID-19 situation," Cabinet Secretary Khondker Anwarul Islam told a media briefing in the capital. Bangladesh has reported 33 coronavirus cases so far.

**SYRIA**  
Syrians brace for lockdown after 1st case

**Damascus:** Syrians rushed to stock up on food and fuel Monday amid fears that authorities would resort to even stricter measures after reporting the first coronavirus infection in the country, where the healthcare system has been decimated by nearly a decade of civil war. The arrival of the global pandemic in Syria as well as the Gaza Strip has raised concerns it could run rampant in some of the most vulnerable areas in the Middle East. War-torn Libya and Yemen, which have yet to report any cases, are also a source of concern.

## Pandemic accelerating, warns WHO

UN chief calls for global ceasefire as toll crosses 15,000; Spain's fatalities up by 462 to cross 2,000

AGENCIES  
MARCH 23

The new coronavirus pandemic is clearly "accelerating", the World Health Organisation warned on Monday, but said it was still possible to "change the trajectory" of the outbreak.

"The pandemic is accelerating," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told journalists in a virtual news briefing, saying "it took 67 days from the first reported case to reach the first 100,000 cases, 11 days for the second 100,000 cases and just four days for the third 100,000 cases."

But he said "we are not helpless bystanders. We can change the trajectory of this pandemic." The death toll from the virus surged to more than 15,000, with over 340,000 infections, according to an AFP tally on Monday, with Europe the new epicentre of the outbreak that first emerged in China late last year.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Monday called for an "immediate global ceasefire" in all corners of the world, emphasising that it is time to put armed conflict in lockdown and focus on the fight against the coronavirus.

"The fury of the virus illustrates the folly of war. That is why today, I am calling for an immediate global ceasefire in all corners of the world. It is time to put armed conflict on lockdown and focus together on the true fight of our lives," the UN chief said.

Italy's world-worst toll from the pandemic approached 5,500 with another 651 deaths reported on Sunday.

Italy also banned travel and shut down a range of industries and businesses on Monday, a new wave of restrictions designed to finally slow the rate of deaths and infections.

The coronavirus death toll in Spain surged to 2,182 after 462 people died within 24 hours, the



ENFORCED DISTANCING: Benches arranged to enforce social distancing at a bus station in Thailand. Reuters

health ministry said on Monday. The death rate showed a 27-per cent increase on the figures released a day earlier, with the number of cases of COVID-19 rising to 33,089 in Spain.

Despite an unprecedented national lockdown which was put in place on March 14, the number of deaths and infections have spiralled in Spain, with the figures growing as the country steps up its capacity for testing.

In Germany, Chancellor Angela Merkel announced the ban on gatherings of more than two people. She did so while in quarantine herself because she had met an infected doctor.

Residents across France, where the death toll jumped to 860, remained shut in their homes. A curfew was imposed in some regions and the mayor of Paris called for even more drastic confinement measures in a city under lockdown.

As the pandemic over-

whelms hospitals, doctors are having to quickly prioritise patients based on their chances of survival, inflicting a huge moral burden. "We go into medicine to heal people. Not to make choices about who can live," said Philippe Devos, an anaesthesiologist in Belgium.

China on Monday reported no new local cases of the virus, but confirmed another 39 infections from overseas.

Meanwhile, Britain inched towards similar tough measures, with the government under pressure to clamp down after crowds flocked to holiday hotspots and beaches at the weekend, defying social distancing recommendations.

"This is the biggest economic shock our nation has faced in generations," Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison said as he warned the pandemic could lead to a crisis akin to the 1930s Great Depression.

## Iran toll over 1,800, EU says it needs global aid

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
TEHRAN, MARCH 23

IRAN ON Monday announced 127 new deaths from the novel coronavirus, raising the official toll to 1,812 in one of the worst hit countries along with Italy, Spain and China.

The EU on Monday urged the international community to send humanitarian aid to Iran to help its coronavirus fight, arguing that such steps would not breach US sanctions.

The bloc is preparing to send 20 million euros' (\$21.5 million) worth of humanitarian aid to Iran, where the coronavirus has killed more than 1,800 people. Health ministry spokesman

Kianouche Jahanpour said 1,411 new cases had been recorded in Iran over the past 24 hours, bringing the total of those infected to 23,049.

Jahanpour, who was speaking during his daily news conference devoted to the pandemic, said he would no longer give a breakdown of cases by province.

This was necessary, he said, to avoid sparking undue concern among residents of the most stricken areas and ensure that those in less affected zones remained cautious.

Josep Borrell, the EU's chief diplomat, said Brussels would support requests for help made by Iran and Venezuela — also heavily sanctioned — to the International Monetary Fund.

## Trillion-dollar aid package crashes in US Senate, toll 400

AGENCIES  
MARCH 23

A TRILLION-DOLLAR Senate proposal to rescue the reeling US economy crashed to defeat Sunday after receiving zero support from Democrats, and with five Republicans absent from the chamber because of virus-related quarantines.

The US has seen a significant spike in coronavirus cases with the total confirmed infections jumping to nearly 34,000 while over 400 fatalities were recorded, even as one in every three Americans has been told to stay home.

Democrats said the Republican plan failed to sufficiently protect millions of American workers or shore up the critically under-equipped health care system during the coronavirus crisis. The bill proposed an estimated \$1.7 trillion or more in funding to cushion the blow for American families and thousands of shuttered or suffering businesses.

Despite intense negotiations between Republicans, Democrats and President Donald Trump's administration, the roll call was 47-47, far short of the 60

votes needed to advance.

President Donald Trump has said that illegal and undocumented immigrants, including from India, would not be denied from a test for the coronavirus.

The United States currently has some 11 million undocumented people, several hundred thousands of which are from India and South Asia.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell blasted the Democratic opposition and warned of economic devastation ahead if Congress does not act promptly. "The notion that we have time to play games here with the American economy and the American people is utterly absurd," he fumed.

Top Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer insisted the bill falls well short of sufficiently protecting US employees, millions of whom are at risk of losing their jobs as the economy grinds to a halt, while offering a "large corporate bailout with no protections for workers and virtually no oversight". He accused Republicans of trying to "skimp on funding" to address shortfalls for hospitals, equipment, medical personnel and other health care infrastructure.



President Donald Trump at the White House. AP

## Pompeo rushes to Kabul to jumpstart flagging peace deal

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
KABUL, MARCH 23

US SECRETARY of State Mike Pompeo arrived on Monday in Kabul on an urgent visit to try to move forward a US peace deal signed last month with the Taliban, a trip that comes despite the pandemic, at a time when world leaders and statesmen are curtailing official travel.

Since the signing of the deal, the peace process has become stalled amid political turmoil in Afghanistan, with the country's leaders squabbling over who was elected president.

President Ashraf Ghani and his main rival in last September's presidential polls, Abdullah Abdullah, have both declared themselves the country's president in dueling inauguration ceremonies earlier this month.

During his visit, Pompeo is expected to try to help end the impasse, which has put on hold the start of intra-Afghan peace talks that would include the Taliban. Those talks are seen as a critical next step in the peace deal, negotiated to allow the



US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo (right) in Kabul. AP

United States to bring home its troops and give Afghans the best chance at peace.

The final pullout of US forces is not dependent on the success of intra-Afghan negotiations but rather on promises made by the Taliban to deny space in Afghanistan to other terror groups, such as the insurgents' rival Islamic State group.

But within days of the US and the Taliban signing the peace deal in Qatar on February 29, Afghanistan sunk into a political crisis with Ghani and Abdullah squaring off over election results and Ghani refusing to fulfil his part of a promise made in the US-Taliban deal to free up to

**EXPLAINED**  
**Many hurdles to overcome**

THERE ARE a number of hurdles in the ongoing peace talks. The Afghan government and Taliban have so far not made any concessions regarding a planned prisoner exchange. Within the government, both Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah had declared themselves the winners of a recent election. This, too, has contributed to the ongoing impasse.

5,000 Taliban prisoners.

The insurgents were for their part, to free 1,000 Afghan officials and soldiers they hold captive. The exchange was meant to be a good-will gesture by both sides to start the negotiations.

## Nepal orders nationwide lockdown

SHIRISH B PRADHAN  
KATHMANDU, MARCH 23

NEPAL ON Monday announced a nationwide lockdown for a week amidst concern over the possible spread of the deadly coronavirus pandemic.

A meeting of the high-level committee for the prevention and control of COVID-19, led by Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Ishwar Pokhrel, took the decision on Monday evening, hours after a second coronavirus case was confirmed.

There will be a nationwide lockdown from Tuesday 6 AM, officials said, adding that the mobility of people, except for emergencies, will be halted.

The Ministry of Health on Monday said that a 19-year-old Nepali student who returned from France via Qatar tested positive for COVID-19.

"We have decided to go for a lockdown from 6 AM Tuesday for a week," said Bhanubhakta Dhakal, minister for health and population, who is a member of the high-level committee. PTI

## Netanyahu opponents take battle to court, citing threat to democracy

ISABEL KERSHNER  
NEW YORK, MARCH 23



BENJAMIN NETANYAHU

CITING A threat to Israeli democracy, opponents of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu asked the Supreme Court on Sunday to block what they described as a power grab by the caretaker government under the guise of combating the coronavirus epidemic.

The petitioners asked the court to restore the full powers of Parliament, which has been largely blocked from functioning by a Netanyahu ally, Yuli Edelstein, the speaker. He has claimed public health concerns.

A new Parliament was sworn in last week, but among the key votes Edelstein has prevented is one on replacing him as speaker.

The paralysis in Parliament has only compounded the country's political deadlock and chaos in the wake of three inconclusive elections in the past 12 months.

Netanyahu, Israel's longest-serving prime minister, has every interest in remaining in power. The coronavirus outbreak has provided him with a new opportunity to try to maintain his grip on power.

Netanyahu has been trying to push his main rival, Benny Gantz, to join him in an emergency unity government.

Gantz's party, one of the petitioners to the Supreme Court, responded: "The ultimatum, while harming our democracy, makes evident that Netanyahu would like to drag this country into a fourth round of elections, even in the throes of a crisis that demands that we all act on behalf of the people, both in government and in Parliament." NYT

### 'THEY ARE GOING TO CALL MY 8-YEAR-OLD SON A CHINESE VIRUS'

## Spit on, yelled at, attacked: Chinese-Americans fear for safety

SABRINA TAVERNISE & RICHARD A OPPEL JR  
NEW YORK, MARCH 23

YUANYUAN ZHU was walking to her gym in San Francisco on March 9, thinking the workout could be her last for a while, when she noticed that a man was shouting at her. He was yelling an epithet about China. Then a bus passed, she recalled, and he screamed after it, "Run them over."

She tried to keep her distance, but when the light changed, she was stuck waiting

with him at the crosswalk. She could feel him staring at her. And then, suddenly, she felt it: his saliva hitting her face and her favourite sweater.

In shock, Zhu, who is 26 and moved to the United States from China five years ago, hurried the rest of the way to the gym. She found a corner where no one could see her, and she cried quietly. "That person didn't look strange or angry or anything, you know?" she said of her tormentor. "He just looked like a normal person."

As the coronavirus upends American life, Chinese-

Americans face a double threat. Not only are they grappling like everyone else with how to avoid the virus itself, they are also contending with growing racism in the form of verbal and physical attacks. Other Asians-Americans — with families from Korea, Vietnam, the Philippines, Myanmar and other places — are facing threats, too, lumped together with Chinese-Americans by a bigotry that does not know the difference.

In interviews over the past week, nearly two dozen Asian-Americans across the country said they were afraid — to go grocery shopping, to travel alone on subways or buses, to let their children go outside. Many described being yelled at in public.



Yuanyuan Zhu said a man started shouting at her and then spat at her as she waited to cross the street. NYT

Trump and his Republican allies are intent on calling the coronavirus "the Chinese virus," rejecting the World Health Organisation's guidance against using geographic locations when naming illnesses, since past names have provoked a backlash.

"If they keep using these terms, the kids are going to pick it up," said Tony Du, an epidemiologist in Howard County, Md, who fears for his son, Larry, 8. "They are going to call my 8-year-old son a

Chinese virus. It's serious."

While no firm numbers exist yet, Asian-American advocacy groups and researchers say there has been a surge of verbal and physical assaults reported in newspapers and on tip lines.

Benny Luo, founder and chief executive of NextShark, a website focused on Asian-American news, said the site used to get a few tips a day. Now it is dozens.

Edward Chew, the head of the emergency department at a large Manhattan hospital, is on the front lines of fighting the coronavirus. He said that over the past few weeks, he has no-

ticed people trying to cover their nose and mouth with their shirts when they are near him.

Chew has been using his free time to buy protective gear, like goggles and face shields, for his staff, in case his hospital runs out. On Wednesday night at a Home Depot, with his cart filled with face shields, masks and Tyvek suits, he said he was harassed by three men in their 20s, who then followed him out into the parking lot.

"I heard of other Asians being assaulted over this, but when you are actually ridiculed yourself, you really feel it," he said the following day. NYT



# 15 ECONOMY

<b>GOLD</b>	<b>RUPEE</b>	<b>OIL</b>	<b>SILVER</b>
₹41,705	₹76.20	\$26.15	₹38,100

Note: Spot gold markets shut due to lockdown in major states. \*Indian basket as on March 19, 2020

SENSEX: 25,981.24 ▼ 3934.72 NIFTY: 7,610.25 ▼ 1,135.20 NIKKEI: 16,887.78 ▲ 334.95 HANG SENG: 21,696.13 ▼ 1,108.94 FTSE: 5,194.71 ▲ 3.93 DAX: 9,068.16 ▲ 139.21

\*International market data till 1900 IST

## UNCERTAINTY OVER CORONAVIRUS TRIGGERS FLIGHT TO SAFETY

# Rupee plummets 100p to all-time low of 76.20

**ENSE ECONOMIC BUREAU**  
MUMBAI, MARCH 23

THE RUPEE on Monday dived by 100 paise to settle at an all-time low of 76.20 against the US dollar as the stock market witnessed a sell-off and dollar rallied abroad amid a sharp surge in coronavirus cases in India.

Most emerging Asian currencies fell sharply on Monday as investors continued hoarding dollars in a bid to stay liquid amid a worsening coronavirus epidemic.

The huge outflow of over Rs 1,00,000 crore from the equity and debt markets has put severe pressure on the rupee, forex traders

said. Market participants are worried that the sharp rise in coronavirus cases, which has crossed over 400 in the country, could weigh on the economy. The rupee which opened on a weak note at 75.90 saw a high of 75.86 and a low of 76.30.

The rupee had settled at 75.20 against the US dollar on Friday.

According to analysts, the uncertainty over coronavirus has triggered a flight to safety. "There is a scramble for US dollars. US treasury yields have dropped on account of risk aversion. Asian and emerging market currencies are weaker by 0.5-1 per cent against the US dollar. Investors would be watching closely as India enters a crucial phase. Next couple of weeks would be extremely critical in terms of how the infection spreads," said an analyst from IFA Global Research.

According to market sources, the RBI would have to continue to ensure ample liquidity. "There is a scramble for US dollars. US treasury yields have dropped on account of risk aversion. Asian and emerging market currencies are weaker by 0.5-1 per cent against the US dollar. Investors would be watching closely as India enters a

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### EXPLAINED Scramble for dollars

DESPITE THE recent easing of measures by the Fed, the dollar has maintained its strength as the uncertainty around the virus and its impact has accelerated the flight to cash and pushed investors to liquidate holdings across asset classes. FPIs are already on the exit mode in India.

## Fed goes for no limit asset buy, pumps in \$300 bn for loans; market fall continues

**REUTERS**  
WASHINGTON/TOKYO, MAR 23

THE US Federal Reserve on Monday said it would begin back-stopping an unprecedented range of credit for households, small businesses and major employers in an effort to offset the "severe disruptions" to the economy caused by the coronavirus outbreak.

The steps include establishment of new programmes that will lend against student loans, credit card loans, and US government-backed loans to small businesses, as well as new programs to buy bonds of larger employers and make loans to them.

Existing purchases of US Treasury and mortgage-backed securities will be expanded as much as needed "to support smooth market functioning and effective transmission of monetary policy to broader financial conditions and the economy."

Also, the New York Fed announced new facilities that will give US businesses an additional \$300 billion in credit in the form of

### RBI to pump more liquidity into system

**Mumbai:** The RBI Monday announced the central bank will pump liquidity to the tune of Rs 1,30,000 crore into the financial markets. It also decided to advance the second tranche of purchase of securities under OMOs for Rs 15,000 crore to March 26. **ENS**

loans, loan guarantees and bond purchases.

US stocks opened lower on Monday as a brief spurt of optimism from an aggressive credit boost by the Federal Reserve was overshadowed by the still rapidly spreading coronavirus pandemic.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 145.62 points, or 0.76 per cent, at the open to 19,028.36. The S&P 500 opened lower by 14.21 points, or 0.62 per cent, at 2,290.71.

### FIGHTING COVID-19

#### SBI commits funds

**Mumbai:** SBI has said it will commit 0.25 per cent of its annual profit (FY21) to fight the outbreak. The fund used to fight the pandemic will be spent from CSR funds.

#### RIL dedicates centre

**Mumbai:** Reliance Industries said HN Reliance Foundation Hospital in collaboration with BMC has set up India's first dedicated 100-bedded centre at Seven Hills Hospital, Mumbai, for patients who test positive for COVID-19.

#### HLL to procure protection kits

**New Delhi:** In view of the spread of COVID-19, the Health Ministry has authorised HLL Lifecare as the nodal procurement agency for personal protection kits from various institutions. The firm has been entrusted with procurement of N95 masks, 2-ply & 3-ply surgical masks, personal protective garments, nitrile gloves, goggles, handheld infrared thermometers, hand sanitisers etc on an emergency basis. HLL has floated an open tender inviting manufacturers of the above products to submit offers. **ENS**

#### Grace period for premium renewal

**New Delhi:** Irdai has asked life insurers to provide customers an additional window of up to 30 days for paying renewal premiums. **PTI**

### Rating agencies cut India's FY21 growth forecast

**S&P Global Ratings cut its estimate for India's GDP growth in FY21 to 5.2% from 6.5%, while UBS Securities cut it to 4% from the 5.1%**



**ESTIMATES BY S&P**  
-\$620 billion: Total and permanent income loss expected for Asia-Pacific

5%: Real GDP growth estimate for current fiscal

It has revised estimates for real GDP, inflation and policy interest rates for Asia-Pacific

Sources: S&P Global Ratings, UBS Securities/PTI

4.2%: Inflation rate expected in 2021-22, which may rise to 4.4 per cent in following financial year and then to 4.5 per cent

4.4%: Expected inflation rate for upcoming fiscal, moderating from 4.7 per cent in the current

## LabourMin urges employers to not cut jobs, pay

**ENSE ECONOMIC BUREAU**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

IN AN advisory to chief secretaries of all states and Union Territories in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Union Labour and Employment Ministry has urged all public sector and private sector employers to not terminate any employee — casual or contractual — and not reduce wages. The Centre has issued similar advisories to employers' associations and public enterprises.

"In the backdrop of such a challenging situation, all the employers of public/private establishments may be advised to ex-

tend their coordination by not terminating their employees, particularly casual or contractual workers from job or reduce their wages," the letter dated March 20 from Labour Secretary Heeralal Samariya stated.

In case a worker takes leave, he or she has to be considered as 'on duty' without any deduction in wages, the letter further stated. Also, the employees should be considered to be on duty if the place of employment becomes non-operational due to COVID-19, the letter said.

"The termination of employees from the job or reduction in wages in this scenario would further deepen the crisis and will not

only weaken the financial condition of the employee but also hamper their morale to combat their fight with this epidemic. In view of this, you are requested to issue necessary advisory to the employers/owners of all the establishments in the state," it said.

India's unorganised workers make up 82.7 per cent, or 39.14 crore, of the total 47.41 crore estimated employed persons, according to the last NSSO Employment and Unemployment Survey, 2011-12. The contribution of the unorganised or informal sector to the economy, according to a National Statistical Commission report of 2012, varies between 48 per cent and 56.4 per cent.

In a separate directive, Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has asked the field offices to reconcile pensioners' details and amount statements in time.

"Due to the coronavirus pandemic, lock down has been declared in various parts of the country. In order to ensure that no inconvenience is caused to the pensioners on account of the prevalent situation, the Central Provident Fund Commissioner has directed the field offices of EPFO to generate and reconcile pensioners' details and pension amount statements for the current month by March 25, 2020," it said.

## Telcos assure they are ready for contingency measures amid rising loads

**AASHISHARYAN**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

THE THREE major telcos — Reliance Jio Infocomm, Bharti Airtel, and Vodafone Idea — on Monday sought to assure users that they were prepared for additional load on their networks in view of many people working from home to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Bharti Airtel CEO Gopal Vittal said the company was in talks with all tower and other infrastructure companies and service providers to prepare for any contingency plans in case the ongoing crisis due to the outbreak deepens.

Reliance Jio said it would provide basic JioFiber broadband with connectivity with speeds of up to 10 Mbps without any service charges for this period, while its existing broadband users would get twice the data. Vodafone Idea said it was continuously monitoring the traffic pattern, and was confident of "handling the growing demand of voice and data services during the lockdown period".

## IBA: Banks to suspend non-essential services

**ENSE ECONOMIC BUREAU**  
MUMBAI, MARCH 23

THE INDIAN Banks' Association (IBA), the apex body of banks in the country, on Monday said banks will suspend non-essential services from March 23. However, all banks will undertake cash deposits and withdrawals, clearing of cheques, remittances and government transactions from March

23, IBA said. "IBA requests all customers to be supportive and patient, as other non-essential services during the period may be suspended," it said. IBA asked customers to avail non-essential services through the mobile and online banking channels. "IBA is working round-the-clock to ensure all digital channels are up-to-date and have all the information that customers may need during this period," it said.

## Priority sector tag for bank loans to NBFCs extended

**ENSE ECONOMIC BUREAU**  
MUMBAI, MARCH 23

THE RESERVE Bank has decided to extend the priority sector classification for bank loans to NBFCs for on-lending for FY2020-21.

"Further, existing loans disbursed under the on-lending model will continue to be classified under the priority sector till the date of repayment/maturity,"

the RBI said. The RBI said bank credit to registered NBFCs (other than MFIs) and HFCs for on-lending will be allowed up to an overall limit of five per cent of individual bank's total priority sector lending. Further, banks should compute the eligible portfolio under on-lending mechanism by averaging across four quarters, to determine adherence to the prescribed cap, the RBI said.

## Lockdown impact: Internet consumption skyrockets as people stay home

**PRANAVMUKUL**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

WITH SCORES of cities being locked down to arrest the spread of COVID-19, infrastructure of telecom and internet service providers has started to clog as consumption of data in the last few weeks has grown at a level generally witnessed by operators over a period of two years.

Just within the last two weeks, internet service providers have seen a 40 per cent increase in traffic on their networks, with the numbers inflating on a daily basis. This has led to telecom players

reaching out to video streaming platforms like Amazon Prime, Netflix, and Hotstar to rationalise their services to ease the pressure on telecom networks. "This sudden surge in digital use is already putting pressure on the network infrastructure of the Telecom Service Providers (TSPs). The TSPs are taking requisite steps to manage this load and facilitate the smooth functioning of the networks during this critical time," COAI said in a letter to the video streaming platforms.

"We understand that there are various measures that the streaming platform companies can undertake in this present situation to

continue to provide a suitable level of service to their customers at the most appropriate bitrate required, one such measure being temporarily moving to SD (Standard Definition) rather than HD (High Definition) streaming," it added.

Responding to the telecom companies, streaming platforms including Amazon Prime and Hotstar have begun to optimise their bitrates to have them in line with the strained telecom networks. In addition to video streaming platforms, work from home policies adopted by corporates have led internet traffic to rise to unprecedented levels as evident from the information made avail-

able by internet exchanges of India. On March 18, Mumbai Internet Exchange — pegged to be the largest one in India — saw peak traffic of 2.45 terabits per second. On March 26 last year, the traffic peak on the exchange was at 772.60 gigabits per second, or nearly a third of what it has been this year.

Telecom service providers use internet exchanges to connect to content delivery networks (CDNs) and much of the data that is consumed by users, flows through these internet exchanges. CDNs are platforms that do not operate on public internet and do not interact directly with

the consumer. They are essentially a system of servers deployed at geographical proximity to the internet service provider and are used by content companies to distribute their content.

Globally, too, content service providers including Netflix, Facebook and Disney have downgraded video quality on their platforms to ease the pressure on the internet infrastructure.

Meanwhile, telecom operators in India, including state-owned BSNL and MTNL and private company Reliance Jio have offered free data packs to their fixed broadband customers to support work from home.

### Netflix to reduce traffic in Israel by 25%

**Tel Aviv:** Netflix said Monday it would reduce network traffic in Israel over the next month following a government request to ease data congestion from people staying home due to the coronavirus.

It has also cut traffic on networks in Europe to help ISPs experiencing a surge in usage. **REUTERS**

### INTERVIEW WITH HDFC BANK MD

# Relax NPA norms, increase liquidity and cut rates, says Aditya Puri

AS THE spread of the coronavirus is creating a scare in society, business and markets, ADITYA PURI, MD at HDFC Bank, told SANDEEP SINGH that while monetary policy should look to relax NPA norms, increase liquidity and cut repo rate, the government should focus on limiting spread of virus, providing stimulus and not prioritise fiscal deficit. He added that HDFC Bank is ready to help out its customers who may face repayment issues and added NPAs on account of cash flows and coronavirus will not be treated as NPA and regulatory forbearance is the need of the hour. Edited excerpts:



**What is your biggest concern as of now?**

My biggest concern is control of the spread of the coronavirus and, in the sequence of events, this has to be solved first. I fully support the lockdown and I think that if

more lockdown is necessary, it must be done till we see the flattening of the curve in the number of new cases.

**What all things are required from government and regulatory authorities?**

As far as the monetary policy is concerned, three things are required. Since the lockdown affects the cashflow of firms, we need relaxation in NPA norms and banks must be ready to be able to give them liquidity so that they can tide this situation. There should be more than ample liquidity maintained, so that whoever needs the

money gets it. Also, just like the rest of the world has done, a cut in repo rate is needed. As for the fiscal, I would like to say it is not a priority today and we have ways to bring it down over a period of time. But today the first thing is to control the virus and the difficulties it is creating. We definitely need a stimulus and need more spending to ensure the requisite facilities for healthcare is in place. We need more spending and more money to be given to daily workers and whatever concessions the companies require.

**What is the concern for banks?**

Banks must be ready. At HDFC Bank, we have liquidity of about \$5 billion and we are ready for our customers and we are already moving to help them. We are sitting down with them, finding their upcoming dues and assessing his capability. If he asks for a postponement of instalment, then what we need at this point of time is regulatory forbearance, that this will not be treated as NPA. That's because it is more of a forced NPA due to cash flow and coronavirus, rather an issue of quality.

During the lockdown, some amount of effect can be had on growth. It may take 3-9 months,

however, if a vaccine comes or if we can break like China or Korea, then the recovery will be faster. It is a demand issue now and, for that, stimulus is required.

**While you say that it may take 3-9 months, what are you basing your business continuity plans on?**

We are basing it on the fact that people will need banking. What we have done is around 35 per cent is already working from home. We have hired some 100 buses, which will take employees to sanitised offices. All necessary precautions are being taken so that

## Priyanka's sale of Husain painting to Rana Kapoor could be proceeds of crime: ED

**RITUSARIN**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

THE ROW over the sale of M F Husain's Rajiv Gandhi painting by Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi to then Yes Bank CEO Rana Kapoor has escalated with officials of the Enforcement Directorate saying the transaction was being considered as part of "proceeds of crime" in the bank fraud case.

Moreover, Priyanka, sources told *The Indian Express*, was likely to be questioned by the ED after the round of summoning of major debtors and industrialists. Kapoor is currently in custody.

A senior official monitoring the Yes Bank case told *The Indian Express*: "The Rs 2 crore paid by Rana Kapoor to Priyanka Gandhi was received by him from the bank shortly before he gave it to her and thus becomes part of our investigation into the case. Both the buyer and the seller could attract action under Section 3 of the PMLA Act."

Under this Section of the PMLA (Prevention of Money Laundering Act), whosoever directly or indirectly was "connected with the proceeds of crime and (was) projecting it as untainted property shall be guilty of the offence of money laundering."

The painting was gifted by Husain to Rajiv Gandhi when he was Prime Minister and on the eve of the Congress party's centenary celebrations.

The Rs 2 crore withdrawn by Rana Kapoor and paid by cheque to Priyanka Gandhi in 2010 was already a subject matter of an ongoing probe by the Income Tax (IT) Department, sources said.

It was only after ED searches at the residence of Rana Kapoor in Mumbai on March 6 and after seizure of the painting that IT sleuths were informed that the Rs 2-crore transaction was linked to the painting.

It is also learnt that during the search, it was Rana Kapoor himself who "guided" members of the ED's raiding party to the painting.

Sources said that when he was asked how he procured the Rajiv Gandhi painting, the banker pro-

### The painting now sits among the other valuables seized by the ED from Rana Kapoor's residence

duced copies of messages exchanged between him and former Congress MP Milind Deora, a letter of acknowledgement and thanks from Priyanka Gandhi, and a copy of the Rs 2-crore cheque signed by him on June 3, 2010.

The material handed over by Rana Kapoor included copies of Blackberry messages between him and Deora between May 25, 2010 and June 6, 2010.

There is a letter from Deora to Kapoor stating that the banker had "expressed a desire" to purchase the Rajiv Gandhi painting and how "Yes Bank purchasing it seems to make sense" given the fact that he was an avid art collector.

In her letter to the banker, Priyanka refers to the "historical value" of the painting and says she hopes that as its new owner, Kapoor would "ensure its placement in an environment that benefits its stature."

The MF Husain now sits among the other valuables seized by ED from Rana Kapoor's residence. Following reports on its sale by Priyanka Gandhi, Congress spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi had stated that, "the entire amount of Rs 2 crore was received in cheque and disclosed fully in income tax returns by Priyanka Gandhi."

Asked about the possibility of the transaction being clubbed together along with other "proceeds of crime" in the bank fraud case, KTS Tuli, MP and Gandhi family lawyer, said this was illegal. Speaking to *The Indian Express*, he said: "How can this be said to be among proceeds of crime? This is purely a private commercial transaction and if the Congress party has said it was declared to Income tax, we have to believe them. By no stretch of imagination can the transaction become part of any money laundering activity."

## MCA: Expenditure on dealing with virus to count as CSR

**ENSE ECONOMIC BUREAU**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

THE GOVERNMENT on Monday clarified that expenditure done by companies towards addressing the COVID-19 pandemic will count towards mandated Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) expenditure. Companies with a minimum net worth of Rs 500 crore, turnover of Rs 1,000 crore, or net profit of Rs 5 crore are required every year to spend at least 2 per cent of their average profit for the previous three years on CSR activities.

"Keeping in view the spread of the novel corona virus in India... and decision of the Government of India to treat this as a notified disaster it is hereby clarified that spending of CSR funds for COVID-19 is eligible CSR activity," said a notification by the Corporate Affairs Ministry.

The Ministry has previously

declared that expenditure undertaken for relief effort in the aftermath of both major floods in Kerala and Cyclone Fani in Odisha would be counted towards CSR expenditure. The notification clarified that funds could be spent on various activities related to COVID-19 under permitted CSR expenditures including "promotion of healthcare, including preventive healthcare and sanitisation and disaster relief".

Pavan Kumar Vijay, founder of Corporate Professionals group, welcomed the clarification and recommended that the government create a portal to outline requirements that companies may be able to contribute towards.

"It is suggested the government may immediately create a portal on which specific requirements by way of equipment, medicines may be posted and corporates may be permitted to contribute in cash or kind towards those requirements," he said.

### How do you see India doing once the crisis is over?

If we are able to flatten the curve, then there are other benefits that flow in. Today, oil, commodities — which are our major imports — is a major benefit to us. We are also not too much involved in global trade, so if global growth goes down, everybody will be hit, but we will be hit a little less. And if we can take appropriate actions and sort the issues one by one, then in the end we will come out as one of the shining countries.



**E-TENDER PRESS NOTICE**

The EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, CD-VI, I&FC Department, Govt. of Delhi, Bharat Nagar Office Complex, Delhi-110052, invites on behalf of the President of India, online item rate tender from the approved and eligible contractors registered with I&FC Department and contractor who are registered with other Deptt. and got their registration verified from I&FC Deptt. UPTO 3:00 P.M. on 28.03.2020 for the following:-

1. Name of Work:- Cleaning, removal of Malba/Waste Material / floating material and to keep the drain clean on daily basis under maintenance period including supply & installation of new floating trash barriers and repair of existing floating trash barrier at Drain No. 6 for collecting floating material, hyacinth etc. and its disposal to nearby MCD Nalco, Head of Account:- 2711-Non Plan Maintenance Drainage, Estimate Cost:- Rs. 54,56,856.00, Earnest Money:- Rs. 1,00,137.00, Time Allowed:- 09 Months, Last Date & Time of Submission of Bids Through E-Procurement Solution:- 28.03.2020 upto 3:00 P.M., Time & Date of Opening of Tenders:- 28.03.2020 at 3:10 P.M., Tender ID No. 2020\_IFC\_189866\_1.

Note:- The enlistment of the contractors should be valid on the last date of opening of tenders, in case the last date of opening of tenders is extended, the enlistment of contractor should be valid on the original date of opening of tenders.

The tenderer shall have to scan zerox copy of the mode of Earnest Money Deposit this office and other relevant documents as required in NIT and then upload the same scanned copies, duly signed by him owning responsibility for their correctness / authenticity in support of their eligibility, along with the tender at web site. Attested copy of relevant documents and Earnest money in physical form as stated above should be deposited in the office of EE, CD-VI, I&FC Deptt., Govt. of Delhi, Office Complex, Bharat Nagar, Delhi-110052 before the last date & time for submission of price bids in the form of treasury challan/deposit at call receipt of schedule bank/financial receipt of schedule bank/demand draft of a schedule bank issued in favour of Executive Engineer-CD-VI, I&FC Deptt. failure to furnish the original mode of Earnest money and all relevant documents before the closing of the tender will entail rejection of tender. Details of above mention work can be seen and downloaded from the web site <https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in> upto 15:00 Hrs. on 28.03.2020. No manual tender shall be accepted only tender submitted through E-procurement portal shall be considered.

Sd/-  
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER  
CD-VI, I&FC Deptt.  
DIP/Shabdarth/1493/19-20

**Government of Jammu and Kashmir  
Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences,  
Soura, Srinagar**  
E-mail: [ammoimports@skims.ac.in](mailto:ammoimports@skims.ac.in)  
Ph. No. 01942-401013 Ext: 2129  
Imports Section

**NOTICE**  
Subject:- Procurement of Disposable Concentric EMG Needle (Assorted Sizes) for NCS/EMG & EPS Machine.

SKIMS intends to procure disposable Concentric EMG Needle from M/s NUTUS Neurology Incorporated, for NCS/ EMG & EPS Machine (Model: Synergy on Nicroet EDX System) through their Indian Agent M/s Arena Medical Care Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi being their proprietary item as claimed by the Company.

In this connection, objections (If any) from Companies Manufacturing/ Marketing such consumable compatible to the above Machine and Capable of Delivering the same result as intended from the above item, regarding the proprietary nature of the above item should be communicated within 10 days on the above mentioned E-mail ID after which the claim of the company who has claimed for the proprietorship of the item shall be accepted.

Sd/  
Asstt. Materials Management Officer  
Imports SKIMS  
No.: SIMS-324-33-2019-Con-1034-4425-4426  
Dated: 23.03.2020.

**PARADIP PORT TRUST**  
e-TENDER CALL NOTICE  
NO.EM/IOHP/GW-06/18(P)/2/4  
Dt. 18.03.2020

Name of the work: "Design, fabrication, supply, erection and commissioning of stacker-cum-reclaimer of capacity 3000 TPH".  
Estimated Cost: ₹ 28,12,83,333/-  
Last date & time of submission of bid: 23.04.2020 up to 18:00 hrs.  
Refer our website for details <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>  
Executive Engineer (M) IOHP, PPT  
PPT/PR/725/19-20 Dt. 23.03.2020

**H.P. STATE HANDICRAFTS & HANDLOOM CORPORATION LIMITED**  
(An H.P. State Govt. Undertaking)  
D-2, SDA Commercial Complex, Kasumpti, Shimla-171008  
Tel.: 0177-2621957, Fax: 0177-2626234

**NOTICE**  
With reference to Tender published in The Indian Express (Delhi), Dank Bhaskar (Delhi), The Tribune, Amar Ujala and Divya Himachal (Shimla & Dharamshala edition) on 04th March, 2020 for inviting bids for allotment of Sales Counters in different emporia of the Corporation. The last date & time of receipt and opening of tenders is hereby extended upto 21.04.2020 at 1:00 PM due to administrative reasons. The other terms and conditions of tender document will remain unchanged.

MANAGING DIRECTOR

**NIVIDA No. 12 OF 2019-20 CORRIGENDUM No. 5**  
Following rectification is made in Tender Notice No. 12 of 2019-20 of Executive Engineer, Ver-II Project Division, Vyara PIN CODE No. 394 650, Phone No. 02626-222090, Dist. Tapi.

Event	Old Date	New Date
1 Online Tender Upload Date	06/01/2020 to 23/03/2020 upto 18.00 Hrs.	08/01/2020 to 08/04/2020 upto 18.00 Hrs.
2 Submission of Document Date	Up to 31/03/2020 at 18.00 Hrs.	Upto 17/04/2020 at 18.00 Hrs.
3 Opening of Pre-Qualification Bid date	01/04/2020 in the Office of the Superintending Engineer, Ukai Circle (Civil), Ukai at 12:00 Hrs.	16/04/2020 in the office of the Superintending Engineer, Ukai Circle (Civil), Ukai at 12:00 Hrs.

All other conditions remain unchanged. No. Mahiti/Surat/1766/2020

**DELHI JAL BOARD : GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI**  
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (NORTH WEST)-I  
H-BLOCK UDYOG NAGAR INDL. AREA, PEERA GARHI CHOWK, NEW DELHI-41  
NIT No. 76/ EE (NW)/(2019-20)  
Press Notice Tender

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Amount Put to tender (Rs.)	E/M (Rs.) & Processing Fee's	Dt. of release of tender e-procurement solution/I.D. No.	Last dt/ time of receipt of tender through E-procurement solution
1.	Making interconnection in 600mm dia PSC water main and P/Laying 300mm dia. D.I. Water line from Meer Vihar to Mubarakpur village UGR under EE(NW)-I	39,58,004/-	79,200/- 500/-	21-03-2020/2020_DJB_190015_1	03-04-2020 at 3.00 P.M.

Further details in this regard can be seen at <https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>  
ISSUED BY PRO (WATER) Sd/-  
Adv. No. J.S.V. 938/19-20 EX. ENGINEER (NW)-I

**Government of India**  
DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY  
Nuclear Fuel Complex  
Civil Engineering Division, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Sarathi building, ECIL Post, Hyderabad-500 062

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**  
Item rate e-tenders in single envelope system are invited On Behalf of President of India, Dy. Chief Engineer (CED, EP & PD), Sarathi Bldg., Nuclear Fuel Complex, Hyderabad-500062, at address mentioned above, phone No. 040-27184029 / 040-27183387 from eligible contractors for the following works.

Sr. No.	Tender Notice No.	Name of work	Estimated Cost (EC) (Rs. in Lakhs)	EMD (Rs.)	Cost of Tender book/ E-tender processing fee	Tender sale period	Last date of online submission of bids	Date for submission of hard copies	Due date of Opening bids
1.	E/597/2019 (Two Part)	"Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of AC System with AHU's & Condensing units along with GI ducting, insulation, refrigerant copper tubing, cabling, earthing, MCC panel, etc. at UOP-SCADA, NFC, Hyd."	78.85 Lakhs	1,57,700/-	4,652/-	26.03.2020 to 06.04.2020	16.04.2020	18.04.2020 At 14:30 hrs	18.04.2020 At 15:00 hrs
2.	E/583/2019 (Single Part)	"Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of AC System with Rooftop Package AC units along with GI ducting, insulation, cabling, earthing, MCC panel, etc. at ZFP-VVAF, NFC, Hyd."	25.90 Lakhs	51,800/-	1,528/-	26.03.2020 to 06.04.2020	16.04.2020	18.04.2020 At 14:30 hrs	20.04.2020 At 15:00 hrs
3.	E/603/2020 (Single Part)	"Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of AC System with Rooftop Package AC units along with GI ducting, insulation, cabling, earthing, MCC panel, etc. at Appendage Welding Area at NUFAP, NFC, Hyd."	69.24 Lakhs	1,38,480/-	4,085/-	26.03.2020 to 06.04.2020	16.04.2020	18.04.2020 At 14:30 hrs	22.04.2020 At 15:00 hrs

For eligibility criteria, terms & conditions and detailed notice inviting tender, please log on to [www.nfc.gov.in](http://www.nfc.gov.in)  
Dy. Chief Engineer (CED, EP & PD)  
For & On behalf of the President of India

**TAMILNADU CIVIL SUPPLIES CORPORATION**  
Head Office: 12, Thambusamy Road, Kilpauk, Chennai-600 010.  
Ph. No. (044) 26426773 Email id: [tnscs.tn@nic.in](mailto:tnscs.tn@nic.in)  
CIN:U15137TN1972SGC006157

**e-TENDER NOTICE**  
No.: B56/013770/2020 Dated: 23.03.2020

Short e-Tender No.: TNCSC/19-20/ET-19  
Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation invites Online electronic tender for "The purchase of 60,000 MTs of any one of dal namely Tur dal (Split-Husked & Fatka) / Canadian Yellow Lentil (Split - Husked & Laired No.2) as per Agmark specification".

Complete e-Tender document can be viewed and downloaded through <https://www.msstcommerce.com/eproc/home/tnscs> and also available in [www.tenders.tn.gov.in](http://www.tenders.tn.gov.in)

The bidders have to participate online bidding only with Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) of Class-II or Class-III.

For Registration and further details contact MSTC LIMITED, Phone: 25222842 / 25251910 / 25261005 e-Mail: [mstcsro@mstcindia.co.in](mailto:mstcsro@mstcindia.co.in)  
Last Date for Online Submission: 01.04.2020  
DIPR/1527/Tender/2020 MANAGING DIRECTOR

**GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR**  
SHER-I-KASHMIR INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES, SOURA  
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, MECHANICAL  
E-mail: [mechanicalskims@gmail.com](mailto:mechanicalskims@gmail.com)  
SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING E-TENDERS  
Gist of e-NIT No. 56 of 2019-20 Dated. 19.03.2019

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor U.T. of Jammu & Kashmir, Executive Engineer, Mechanical, SKIMS, Soura Srinagar, invites online e-bids in two (02) cover system from Manufacturers/Authorized Dealers/Registered Firms/Workshop holder having expertise as detailed in the tender document for the following works:

Sr. No.	Name of the Work	Estimated Cost (in Rs.)
1.	Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Hot and Cold, Inverter Technology based high wall mounted Split Type Air Conditioning Units at various areas of SKIMS, Soura.	Rs. 8,88,000/-

The complete tender document is available at website <http://jktenders.gov.in>. Interested Bidders/Tenderers may view, download the e-bid document, seek clarifications and submit their bids online upto the date and time mentioned in the table below. Tender Document contains qualifying criteria for bidders. Specifications, Bills of Quantities & Terms and conditions of the contract and other relevant details.

i)	Date and Time of Downloading/Sale of Tender Documents (Starting Date)	20.03.2020 upto 11.00 Hour
ii)	Date & Time of Bidding Queries/Clarification/Pre-bid meet	24.03.2020 at 14.00 Hours
iii)	Last Date & Time of Bid Uploading	28.03.2020 upto 16.00 Hour
iv)	Date of Submission of Hard Copies (Original EMD/FDR & DD only)	30.03.2020 upto 14.00 Hour
v)	Date & Time of Commercial/Technical Bid (Cover-I) Opening	31.03.2020 at 11.00 Hours (or next convenient day)
vi)	Date & Time of Financial Bid (Cover-I) Opening	Shall be intimated separately
vii)	Cost of e-Bid Document	Rs. 500/- (Rupees Five Hundred only)
viii)	Amount of Earnest Money Deposit (CDR/FDR)	Rs. 17800/- (Rupees Seventeen Thousand & Eight Hundred only)
ix)	Completion Time	15 Days
x)	Budget Head	Machinery & Equipment for the Year 2020-21

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer, Mechanical, SKIMS  
No. SIMS 139 EX/MECH/2019-20/485/19-3306-16-4402-4405  
Dated: 19.03.2020

**GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR**  
SHER-I-KASHMIR INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES, SOURA  
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, MECHANICAL  
E-mail: [mechanicalskims@gmail.com](mailto:mechanicalskims@gmail.com)  
SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING E-TENDERS  
Gist of e-NIT No. 59 of 2019-20 Dated. 22.03.2020

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor U.T. of Jammu & Kashmir, Executive Engineer, Mechanical, SKIMS, Soura Srinagar, invites online e-bids in two (02) cover system from Manufacturers/Authorized Dealers/Registered Firms/Workshop holder having expertise as detailed in the tender document for the following works:

Sr. No.	Name of the Work	Estimated Cost (in Rs.)
1.	Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Hot and Cold, Inverter Technology based high wall mounted Split Type Air Conditioning Units in newly created Covid-19 Isolation Centre at SKIMS, Soura.	Rs. 27,50,000/-

The complete tender document is available at website <http://jktenders.gov.in>. Interested Bidders/Tenderers may view, download the e-bid document, seek clarifications and submit their bids online upto the date and time mentioned in the table below. Tender Document contains qualifying criteria for bidders. Specifications, Bills of Quantities & Terms and conditions of the contract and other relevant details.

i)	Date and Time of Downloading/Sale of Tender Documents (Starting Date)	24.03.2020 at 11.00 Hour
ii)	Date & Time of Bidding Queries/Clarification/Pre-bid meet	28.03.2020 upto 14.00 Hours
iii)	Last Date & Time of Bid Uploading	31.03.2020 upto 16.00 Hour
iv)	Date of Submission of Hard Copies (Original EMD/FDR & DD only)	01.04.2020 upto 14.00 Hour
v)	Date & Time of Commercial/Technical Bid (Cover-I) Opening	03.04.2020 at 11.00 Hours (or next convenient day)
vi)	Date & Time of Financial Bid (Cover-I) Opening	Shall be intimated separately
vii)	Cost of e-Bid Document	Rs. 1500/- (Rupees One Thousand Five Hundred only)
viii)	Amount of Earnest Money Deposit (CDR/FDR)	Rs. 55000/- (Rupees Fifty Five Thousand only)
ix)	Completion Time	15 Days
x)	Budget Head	Funds Demanded

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer, Mechanical, SKIMS  
No. SIMS 139 EX/MECH/2019-20/488/20-3368-78-4421-4424  
Dated: 22.03.2020

**GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR**  
SHER-I-KASHMIR INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES, SOURA  
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, MECHANICAL  
E-mail: [mechanicalskims@gmail.com](mailto:mechanicalskims@gmail.com)  
SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING E-TENDERS  
Gist of e-NIT No. 57 of 2019-20 Dated. 20.03.2020

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor U.T. of Jammu & Kashmir, Executive Engineer, Mechanical, SKIMS, Soura Srinagar, invites online e-bids in two (02) cover system from Registered Contractors/Companies/Societies/Firms having experienced operational Staff required for the operation of Sarai 1st & 2nd as detailed in the tender document:

Sr. No.	Name of the Work	Estimated Cost (in Rs.)
1.	Annual Contractor for the Operation of Two (03) Nos. of Passenger Lifts at Sarai-I & II & Genetic Centre, SKIMS, Soura.	Rs. 15,40,100/-

The complete tender document is available at website <http://jktenders.gov.in>. Interested Bidders/Tenderers may view, download the e-bid document, seek clarifications and submit their bids online upto the date and time mentioned in the table below. Tender Document contains qualifying criteria for bidders. Specifications, Bills of Quantities & Terms and conditions of the contract and other relevant details.

i)	Date and Time of Downloading/Sale of Tender Documents (Starting Date)	24.03.2020 upto 11.00 Hour
ii)	Date & Time of Bidding Queries/Clarification/Pre-bid meet	30.03.2020 at 14.00 Hours
iii)	Last Date & Time of Bid Uploading	03.04.2020 upto 16.00 Hour
iv)	Date of Submission of Hard Copies (Original EMD/FDR & DD only)	04.04.2020 upto 14.00 Hour
v)	Date & Time of Commercial/Technical Bid (Cover-I) Opening	07.04.2020 at 11.00 Hours (or next convenient day)
vi)	Date & Time of Financial Bid (Cover-I) Opening	Shall be intimated separately
vii)	Cost of e-Bid Document	Rs. 1000/- (Rupees One Thousand only)
viii)	Amount of Earnest Money Deposit (CDR/FDR)	Rs. 30800/- (Rupees Thirty Thousand & Eight Hundred only)
ix)	Completion Time	Annual Contract
x)	Budget Head	Non-Plan for the Year 2020-21

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer, Mechanical, SKIMS  
No. SIMS 139 EX/MECH/2019-20/486/19-3329-39-4406-09  
Dated: 20.03.2020

**DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL, DEHRADUN**  
Government of India, Ministry of Finance, (Department of Financial Services)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Paras Tower, Majra, Saharanpur Road, Dehradun, UK - 248171  
PUBLICATION NOTICE  
IN O.A. No. 14 OF 2020  
SUMMONS UNDER SUB-SECTION (4) OF SECTION 19 OF THE RECOVERY OF DEBTS AND BANKRUPTCY ACT, 1993, READ WITH SUB-RULE (2A) OF RULE 5 OF THE DEBT RECOVERY TRIBUNAL (PROCEDURE) RULES, 1993 AS AMENDED FROM TIME TO TIME.  
Dy. No.: 199 Date: 16.03.2020

**Allahabad Bank V/s. M/s AR PVC Udhog & Ors.**  
4. Mr. Ashok Kumar Chaudhary S/o Late Laxmi Dutt Chaudhary, R/o Gali No. 3, Adarsh Nagarm, Mukhani, Haldwani, Distt. Nainital, UK-263139.

Whereas, the above name Applicant Bank has instituted O.A. No. 14 of 2020 against you for recovery of debts of Rs. 80,77,941.33/- in which Hon'ble Tribunal was pleased to issue Summons/Notice U/s 19(4) of the Recovery of Debts & Bankruptcy Act, 1993 and was listed before the Hon'ble Presiding Officer on 12.03.2020.

Whereas, it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore, this notice is given by way of this publication directing you to appear in person or through your duly authorized agent or legal practitioner before the Tribunal on 30.04.2020 at 10.30 A.M.

Take notice that in case of default of your appearance on the specified day and time before the Tribunal, the case shall be heard and decided in your absence.

Given under my hand & seal of this Tribunal on this 16<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2020.

By Order of Tribunal  
Registrar (I/C)  
Debt Recovery Tribunal, Dehradun

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, RAYAGADA (R&B) CIRCLE, RAYAGADA e-Procurement Notice**  
Bid Identification No. SE (RANDB) RGDA- 05/2019-20 (Online) No. 400 Date 20.03.2020

**INVITATION FOR BIDS**

1. The Superintending Engineer, Rayagada (R&B) Circle, Rayagada on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bids in double cover mode to be received in online mode only for the construction of works as detailed in the table below:

2. Name of work	Road & Building work
3. No. of work	3 (Three) nos. of work
4. Estimated Cost (Approximately)	Rs. 413.08 lakh, Rs. 841.32 lakh, and Rs. 127.16 Lakhs
5. Bid Cost	Rs. 10,000/- (each)
6. Class of Contractor	"B" Class / "A" Class / "Special Class/ Super Class as per Financial Eligibility
7. Availability of Bid Document in the website	11:00 Hrs of Dt. 30.03.2020 to 16:00 Hrs of Dt. 18.04.2020
8. Date of opening of Bid	11:00 Hrs of Dt. 20.04.2020
9. The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website <a href="https://tenders.orissa.gov.in">https://tenders.orissa.gov.in</a> . Any Addendum/ Corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website. The authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids without assigning any reason thereof.	

Sd/-  
Superintending Engineer,  
Rayagada (R&B) Circle, Rayagada  
OIPR-34128/1/0005/1920

**Bank of India ZONAL OFFICE, PATNA ZONE**  
1st Floor, Chanakya Place, R-Block Patna-1 (Tel.: 2220640-643)

**Possession Notice (for immovable/movable Property) Appendix - IV, Rule 8(1)**

Whereas,  
The undersigned being the authorized officer of the BANK OF INDIA 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 rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice Calling upon the borrower to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice with future interest and incidental charges.

The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower/guarantor 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 rule.

The borrower/guarantor in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the said property will be subject to the charge of the BANK OF INDIA for the amount with interest and cost incidental thereon.

The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time, available to redeem the secured assets.

**Description of the Immoveable Property**

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower	1. Branch 2. Date & Amount as per notice u/s 13(2)	Owner of the Property Description of the property mortgaged	Date of Possession Notice Affixed
1.	Smt. Suman Kumari W/o Mr. Sanjeev Kumar, (Prop.-M/s) Deep Jyoti Garments	1. Rajendra Nagar Colony 2. 07.11.2019 & Rs. 22,79,257.29	All that part and parcel of the property consisting of Flat No.-103, First Floor, Shristi Enclave in Plot No.DS33(P) Situated at Lohiya Nagar, Kankarbagh	18.03.2020

Patna-20, Super built up area 1325 sq.ft. within the registration sub-district Patna and District-Patna Sale Deed No.-4452. Boundary: North-Side set back, South-Flat no.-102, East-Side set back, West-Side set back

2.	M/s Welcome Industries (Prop.-Mrs. Manju Devi), Math Laxmanpur, Gulzarbagh, Patna, Bihar-800007	1. Gulzarbagh 2. 07.11.2019 & Rs. 17,13,300.78	All that part and parcel of the property consisting of Moh. Mirshikar Toli (Koiri Tola) P.S.-Alamganj, P.O. Gulzarbagh, Dist.-Patna bearing Circle No.70 Ward No.-18/24/40 Sheet No.-139, M.S. Plot	18.03.2020
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No.-186/143(Part), Gulzarbagh, Patna- 800007 admeasuring 770.50 sq.ft. Sale(Gift) Deed No.1444. Bounded: North-Sri Premnath Prasad (Part of Plot), South-Sri Shivcharan Mahto, East-Sri Prabhu Nath Prasad (Part of Plot), West-Govt. Road.

Date : 18.03.2020  
Place : Patna  
Authorized Officer  
Bank of India



EUROPE'S BORDERS

# Frontier theatre

Why Europe's new border controls won't help much



Border police officers wait to check vehicles at the last toll gate entering Spain from France, following an order from the Spanish government to set up controls at its land borders on March 17. Reuters

TWO HUNDRED kilometres of glistening slopes, a gorgeous Alpine setting and a boisterous après-ski scene make Ischgl, a resort in the western Austrian state of Tyrol, one of Europe's liveliest winter playgrounds. It has also turned out to be one of its worst coronavirus hotspots. Hundreds of European cases, especially in the Nordic countries and Germany, have been traced to Ischgl, many of them to a bar renowned for its crowded, dancing-on-tables parties. Air, road and rail links from Austria to other countries have been cut, and governments have quarantined visitors returning from the now-shuttered resorts.

The speed with which the virus has raced from country to country has driven several European governments to adopt a familiar remedy: border controls. In the past week, as governments woke up to the scale of the pandemic, several began limiting entry to outsiders, albeit in haphazard and un-coordinated

fashion. Central European and some Scandinavian countries moved first, sealing off entry to most foreigners. On March 16th Germany imposed controls at most of its land frontiers, citing the need to stop the spread of the virus but also to limit cross-border panic-shopping. Goods transporters and commuters were exempt, but for the first time in years they needed to show uniformed officials documentary proof of their right to cross the border. Hiccups were inevitable, especially at Poland's tightly controlled frontiers. There were reports of 18-hour traffic jams at one crossing with Germany. Some 21,000 people were turned away in two days.

Such measures contradict the spirit, if not the letter, of the European Union's Schengen zone. Schengen is meant to guarantee document-free travel across the borders of its 26 member-countries (four of which are not in the EU). It has provisions for emergencies. But the

speed with which governments erected checks revived unhappy memories of the crisis in 2015-16, when migrants poured across Schengen's external border into Greece and internal controls went up as far away as Sweden. Six Schengen countries have had partial controls in place ever since, making a mockery of what are supposed to be strictly time-limited exemptions. Now

**Several countries began limiting entry to outsiders, albeit in haphazard and un-coordinated fashion. Central European and some Scandinavian countries moved first, sealing off entry to most foreigners**

the virus is encouraging the barrier-builders.

The European Commission, as the body charged with keeping goods and services flowing across the EU's single market, frets more than most. On March 17th European heads of government approved a proposal from Ursula von der Leyen, the commission's president, to block foreigners from entering the EU for 30 days, with exceptions for legal residents, medical and health workers, and citizens of Britain plus the four non-EU Schengen members. Ms von der Leyen hopes that tough action at the external border will soothe leaders' nerves enough to ease the internal ones, which she fears could hold up the cross-border provision of food, medical supplies or transport workers. But there is little sign of that yet.

Around 80 countries have restricted travel in some way since the outbreak began, including America, which has im-

posed a travel ban on Europe and closed its land border with Canada. At the start of an outbreak, when a place has few or no infections, such controls can buy time for governments to put in place social-distancing measures. They might also reduce the likelihood that infections will resurge once a country has got its internal situation under control, as China and South Korea appear to have done.

Yet most experts think border controls are largely useless for protecting areas in which infected people are already mingling. "From an epidemiological point of view border controls are a distraction, and potentially a damaging one," says Christopher Dye of Oxford University. In a study in 2014, five analysts found that internal and international travel restrictions imposed during influenza outbreaks cut the number of new cases by less than 3%. During the Ebola crisis in west Africa, controls may have made things worse by encourag-

ing infected people to sneak across borders, evading health checks.

There may be a case for governments to introduce checks as part of a suite of actions to convince citizens that the threat is serious enough to warrant adjusting their behaviour: border controls as theatre. But that must be set against the costs of such measures, from the risk of blocking goods transport to shoving airlines into bankruptcy. Ultimately, says Dirk Brockmann at Humboldt University in Berlin, the effect of closing borders is marginal next to social-distancing measures designed to limit interpersonal contact. That lesson may be getting through. Five European countries, including Austria, have now introduced draconian rules banning citizens from leaving home under most circumstances. The new coronavirus will be defeated inside borders, not at them.

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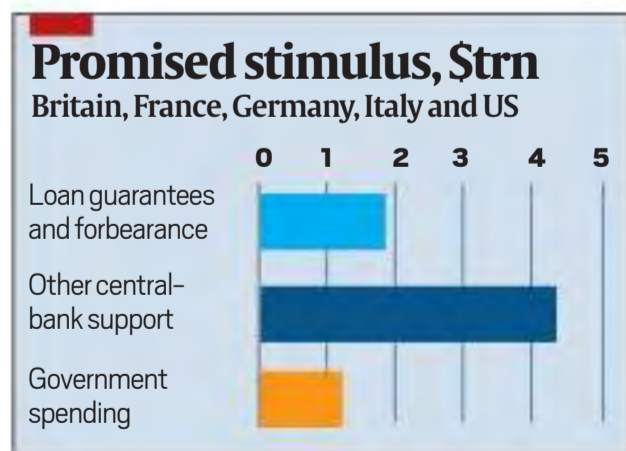
THE WORLD ECONOMY

# Fighting the slump

How to prevent a COVID-19 slump, and protect the recovery

IN JUST two months the world economy has been turned upside down. Stockmarkets have collapsed by a third and in many countries factories, airports, offices, schools and shops have been closed to try to contain the virus. Workers are worried about their jobs and investors fear companies will default on their debts. All this points to one of the sharpest economic contractions in modern times. China's GDP probably shrank by 10-20% in January and February compared with a year earlier. For as long as the virus rages, similar drops are likely in America and Europe, which could trigger a further downward lurch in Asia. Massive government intervention is required to ensure that this shock does not spiral into a depression. But scale alone is not good enough—new financial tools need to be deployed, and fast.

Western authorities have already promised huge sums. A crude estimate for America, Germany, Britain, France and Italy, including spending pledges, tax cuts, central-bank cash injections and loan guarantees, amounts to \$7.4trn, or 23% of their GDP. Yet central banks are responsible for over four-fifths of that and many governments are doing too little. A huge array of policies is on offer, from holidays on mortgage-payments to bail-outs of Paris cafés. Meanwhile, orthodox stimulus tools may not work well. Interest rates in the rich world are near zero, depriving central banks of their main lever.



Governments typically try to stimulate demand in a downturn but people trapped at home cannot spend freely. History is not much of a guide. The global pandemic of 1918 took place when the economy was wrecked by war. China has endured a lockdown but its social model is different from the West's.

What to do? An economic plan needs to target two groups: households and companies. And it needs to be fast, efficient and flexible so that if the virus retreats only to resurge, workers and firms can be confident that governments will dial assistance down and up again as needed. Start with households, where large government spending is needed. One aim is to protect vulnerable people, by subsidising sick pay and ensuring those without insurance have health care. But spending is also needed to discourage lay-offs at firms running far below capacity,



Passersby wearing protective face masks are reflected on a screen displaying stock prices outside a brokerage in Tokyo. Reuters

by subsidising workers' wages—an area where Germany has led the way.

Governments also need to jerry-rig digital systems so they are able to distribute cash to households directly, as Hong Kong hopes to. The aim should be to have the capability to ramp further support up and down quickly. Many places, including America, rely

on sluggish postal services and tax agencies to distribute cash. If funds can be sent instantly through mobile phones or online bank accounts, people will feel more confident and avoid hoarding cash and slowing the recovery when the virus recedes.

All this spending will cost governments dear, but the fiscal stimulus of about 1% of

GDP so far across Europe is clearly too low. America's plan to spend 5% is closer to the mark given the risk of a double-digit GDP drop. As fiscal deficits balloon, governments will have to issue piles of bonds. Central banks should step in to buy those bonds in order to keep yields low and markets orderly. Inflation is a second-order concern and there

is little danger of it taking off. To prevent a euro-zone crisis, the European Central Bank plans to buy €750bn of assets. But it and European governments should also give a clear guarantee of sovereign support for Italy and other peripheral economies.

The second priority is to get cash to millions of companies, whose failure would damage the economy's potential. They face a cash drought even as bills fall due. Bond markets are closed to many of them. Mass defaults would fuel unemployment and bad debts at banks, and make it harder for commercial activity to rebound. Most governments have intervened, but in flawed ways. France says nationalisation is an option—which firms will resist. America is propping up the commercial-paper market, but this funds only a fraction of all corporate debt and is used by big firms—not small ones, which employ most people. Germany and Britain have offered loan-guarantee schemes but it is unclear who will process millions of loan applications. The best approach is to use the banking system—almost all firms have accounts, and banks know how to issue loans. Governments should offer banks cheap funding to lend to their clients while guaranteeing that it will bear most of the losses. Borrowers could be offered bonuses for repaying loans early.

There are huge drawbacks to all of this. Public and corporate debt will soar. Handouts will be given to rich people and loans extended to firms that are badly run. But even with this fearful list of side-effects, the advantages are overwhelming. Cash will be distributed fast. Vulnerable people will be able to get by. Households will be confident enough to spend when conditions improve. And firms will keep their workforces and plants intact, ready to get back to action when this dark episode has passed.

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# 18 TALK ART, MUSIC, STYLE, FOOD



## TOUGH TIMES

Pop icon Madonna has called the Covid-19 pandemic 'a great equaliser'. In a new video, shot from a bath tub, the 61-year-old said, "It doesn't care about how rich you are, how famous you are, how funny you are, how smart you are, where you live, how old you are."

## SNAPSHOTS



### In Isolation

FORMER HOLLYWOOD film producer Harvey Weinstein (pictured), who is currently serving a prison term for sexual assault and rape, has tested positive for Covid-19. Weinstein is now in isolation at the Wende correctional facility in New York state, where he was shifted from the Rikers Island jail. Several staff members of the correctional facility are also under quarantine. Weinstein was sentenced to 23 years in prison, earlier this month.



### Sound Sense

M.I.A., a Lithuanian singer, songwriter, and TV host, has made good on her promise to release a new track, with *OHMNI 202091*. M.I.A. uploaded the track on Patreon, a membership platform for creators to run subscription content. The track is available for free. M.I.A.'s last album was in 2016, titled *AIM*, but she has put out a couple of tracks since then, including *P.O.W.A.* and the previously unreleased 2004 track, *Reload*.



### Streaming Away

WITH MANY cities worldwide under lockdown to prevent the spread of Covid-19, Netflix chief content officer Ted Sarandos (pictured) has said that the company has witnessed a surge in online viewership. "It's been a massive disruption. Every one of our productions around the world are shut down. It's unprecedented in history," said Sarandos.

"You can imagine, all viewing is up. It's up on Netflix, on television in general. The system has been very robust and can help out a lot of people. People certainly are watching a lot more Netflix." As for the content, he said the streamer currently has a good library of shows that can easily serve the subscribers for the next few months. "What's happening now is we work pretty far ahead with delivering all the episodes of our shows at once so no disruption over the net few months, maybe later in the year as physical production is not operational," he added. While many productions have halted work, Sarandos said they have started implementing the concept of "virtual reading rooms". "One of our shows, *Big Mouth*, the other day, did their first virtual table read. We had 40 actors and writers with Netflix executives doing a table read of a new episode. So, people are being quite adaptive on getting ready to — on getting geared up for a time when we do get back to work," he added.



## Drop Boxes

Food and grocery aggregators are bracing for the lockdown by turning to contactless deliveries and cashless transactions

### SURBHIGUPTA

IN THE wake of COVID-19 outbreak and subsequent lockdowns in all major cities, as people stay put inside their homes, food, groceries and other online orders continue to be delivered at the doorstep. "The challenge in hand is to keep the supplies going as there is a lot of confusion as to what essential services are," says Albinder Dhindsa, co-founder of Grofers, an online grocery delivery service. "We're facing threats from the authorities, who are asking our warehouses to be shut, even though we have the order from the Centre calling ours an essential service. This is making about 20,000 deliveries being delayed at a time," he says, adding that while Grofers made about 70,000 deliveries on Sunday alone, there is a backlog of over 60,000 orders, which had to be rescheduled.

Apart from shutting warehouses, other problems that online food and grocery aggregators are facing is the blocking of trucks carrying supplies at borders, and delivery agents being dissuaded from moving around on the streets. But the sales are increasing, Dhindsa says. "We operate through local

stores and have about 7,000 of them signed up with us. Still, the challenge is: will we be able to deliver?" he says. Online grocer Big Basket, which has seen its growth double in the past few days, also had to cancel and reschedule orders due to restrictions, and hasn't been accepting new orders due to "an unprecedented increase in demand". Amazon Pantry has made its service "temporarily unavailable", while Flipkart Supermart has "delayed delivery slots due to an unforeseen increase in demand".

"I have been trying to order groceries for my mother, who lives in another city, from Big Basket but there are no slots available for the next seven days. I had also ordered medicines for her and the delivery date is being pushed ahead again and again," says Amita Ghose, a Delhi-based employee of an advocacy group. "The companies are operating with fewer delivery personnel, while online orders have increased," says Rishav Kumar, who works in the corporate sector. "I had also ordered groceries last week from Flipkart but my delivery date is constantly getting pushed ahead," he says.

"These are unprecedented times. The government has provided strong guidelines, which we are adhering to. However, coordinating with multiple local authorities is challenging, and we are hoping to iron this out soon."

### STATEMENT BY ZOMATO



The government has provided strong guidelines, which we are adhering to. However, coordinating with multiple local authorities is challenging, and we are hoping to iron this out soon.

"These are unprecedented times. The government has provided strong guidelines, which we are adhering to. However, coordinating with multiple local authorities is challenging, and we are hoping to iron this out soon," a spokesperson for restaurant aggregator Zomato said in a statement. In the app, users will now find a new feature Zomato Market, for which the company has tied up with local *kirana* stores to deliver groceries home. But delivery boys on the field are facing

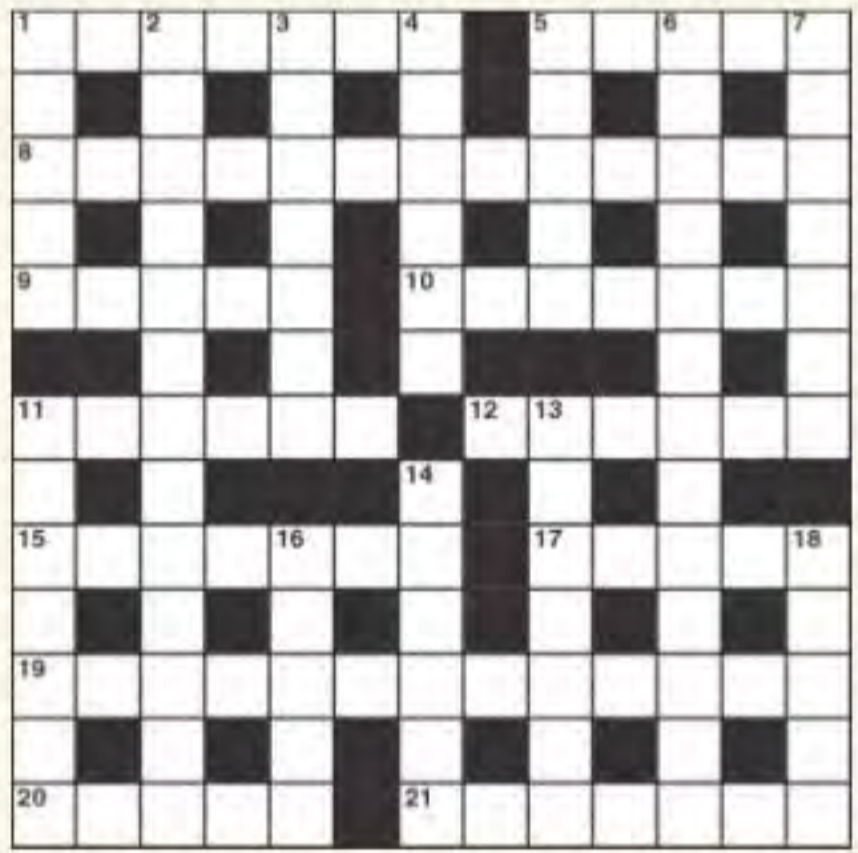
new challenges. Dhindsa says many of their delivery riders were stopped by authorities on Sunday, when the country observed Janta Curfew. While many residential complexes are not allowing them to enter their premises, others have now developed "drop zones" for prepaid orders, he adds.

E-commerce and delivery services have also started following social distancing with a practice that is now known as "contactless delivery", where users can have their food delivered to a designated area without having to interact with the delivery rider in person. Zomato has made the contactless food delivery available on their app through their 'delivery instructions' feature. When the customer chooses the option, the valet will leave a package on a clean surface outside the door; customers can leave a bag, stool or table outside, they will receive a photo of the delivered food and can pick it up at their convenience, shared Zomato Founder and CEO Deepinder Goyal on Twitter. Swiggy also has the feature now, along with delivery service Dunzo, which is asking customers to use the in-app partner chat option or by calling the delivery partner directly to avail the service.

Fast food chain Domino's Pizza has also promised "zero contact delivery" across its 1,325 restaurants on orders made on their app. The delivery person will keep the food in front of a customer's doorstep in a carry bag to prevent the risk of infection. So has Chaayos, whose outlets are open for take-away and online delivery. "About 25 per cent of our outlets have closed because of the lockdown and these were mostly in the malls," says Raghav Verma, co-founder of Chaayos. Apart from various hygiene measures taken at their outlets, including a mandatory 20-second hand wash every hour for all employees, they are also following contactless pickups, where a designated area has been assigned for delivery partners to collect the orders. McDonald's is also "offering limited services through delivery and take away, wherever possible". Meanwhile Karan Tanna, founder of Ghost Kitchens, a cloud kitchen company, says that they have "shut all their places to ensure the safety of all their employees and avoid human interaction".

E-commerce websites are also encouraging customers to avoid the exchange of cash and turn to digital payments. "Customers are requested to pay through digital payment gateways. They also have the option of requesting the delivery partner to leave their packages at the security booth of their residential complexes," says Amitesh Jha, Senior Vice President-eKart & Marketplace, Flipkart. But the moment Grofers announced that they will only allow online payments, their customer care service was bombarded with calls asking for cash-on-delivery to be back. "Cash is a reality in India and people are hesitant to make online payments, so we are thinking of releasing a short-term credit feature," says Dhindsa.

## CROSSWORD 4073



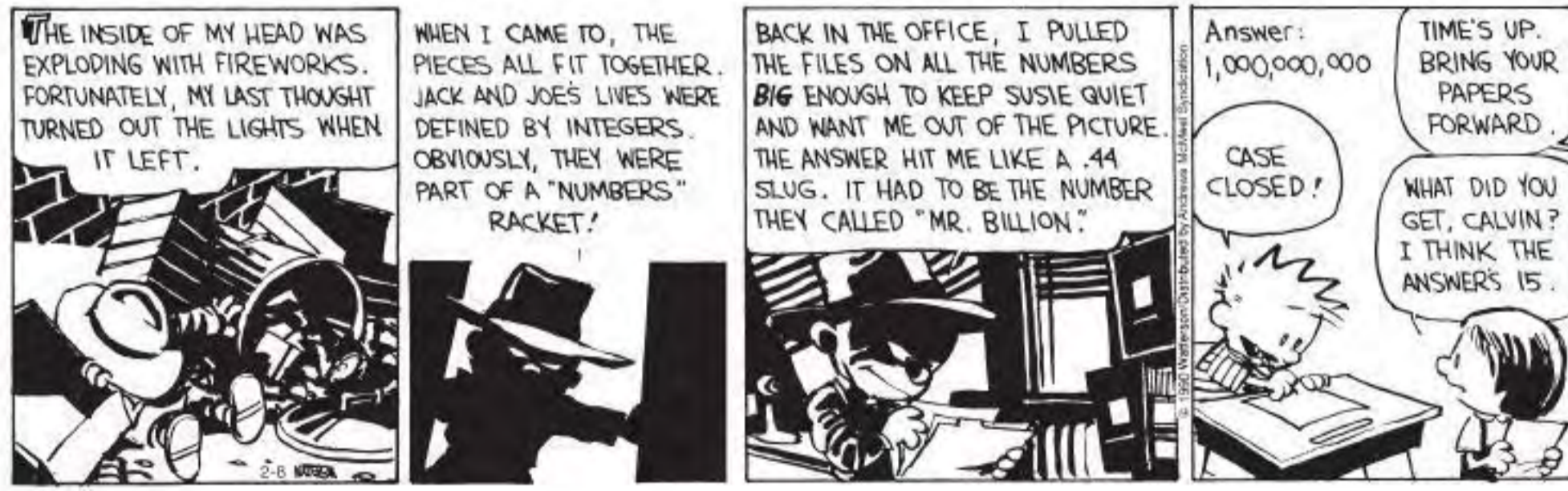
- ACROSS**
- 1 Stop the music (7)
  - 5 A fabulous writer takes a retrospective pose (5)
  - 8 Not an officer's training establishment, apparently (7,6)
  - 9 He composed some enjoyable harmonies (5)
  - 10 A commodity extensively used (7)
  - 11 Fumes when having to sort out a manuscript (6)
  - 12 A model employer (6)
  - 15 A slight but not trivial offence (7)
  - 17 Darkness is a strange thing (5)
  - 19 But his vocabulary is not necessarily limited (3,2,3,5)
  - 20 Return to deposit gold sovereign (5)
  - 21 The peace subsequently includes the French (7)
- Down**
- 1 Drive off quietly during the dance (5)
  - 2 An imaginary journey? (6,2,5)
  - 3 A mix-up with a horse and sheep (7)
  - 4 Relatives might make a scene about one (6)
  - 5 Capital is required to get a new car on account (5)
  - 6 It's used by one who does evening work (9,4)
  - 7 Stinker of a place to renovate (7)
  - 11 Speak in broken English? (7)
  - 13 Restoration novel in authentic setting (7)
  - 14 Tension disturbed rest on board (6)
  - 16 Refuse from almost everybody (5)
  - 18 Discrimination makes sense (5)

Solutions Crossword 4072: Across: 1 Dogma, 8 Requited, 9 Veils, 10 Literate, 11 Items, 12 Poe, 16 Engine, 17 Vortex, 18 Ace, 23 Wasps, 24 Bypasses, 25 Sulky, 26 Spurious, 27 Means, Down: 2 Overtone, 3 Milkmaid, 4 Merino, 5 Cured, 6 Strap, 7 Edges, 12 Pea, 13 Eve, 14 Treasure, 15 Bespoken, 19 Cheque, 20 Abase, 21 Spout, 22 Astir.

## OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



## CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



## MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



## DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

### ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

Even if you have to do things in a roundabout way you must keep your original goals in mind. You have suffered far too many delays to put up with further time-wasting now, just as things are moving your way. Why not take the lead? It's time for world conquest.

### TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

Your advice for the day is to take adventurous options and watch out for legal complications. It may be too early to try and buy your way out of a complex emotional situation. You would be better off making a stand on principles that you know to be right, and going it alone if necessary.

### GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

Something will come to the boil today. What or when is difficult to say, but it does seem certain that the air must be cleared, and that this may mean speaking, and accepting, a few home truths. The more honest you are with yourself, the more successful you'll be in an appeal to a partner.

### CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

In partnerships of all kinds, from the most intimate to the most public, today represents a profound turning-point. Someone who has come to feel that you owe them a debt may demand that you come up trumps. However, such pressures are not only unfair, they are likely to lead to a serious rift.

### LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

The fact is that different times bring different possibilities, and right now the trends are highly argumentative. Do not be put out if friends blame you for past misdemeanours that you thought were long dead and buried. Try to understand why they feel as they do.

### VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

What is said or implied today may upset your best-laid plans, yet with your organisational skills it seems that nothing can dent your ego. Your confidence is justified in view of your broad experience. At home, let children take the lead. At work, concentrate on developing your own unique skills.

### LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

The domestic situation will be in a state of flux, and that could be an understatement. Do not let up your efforts to get financial affairs in order, even if it seems that the pressure has relaxed. The moment you loosen your grip, partners will be able to accuse you of letting them, and yourself, down.

### SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)

You may stand the risk of feeling, or being made to feel, like an outsider in your own home. Such accusations are unfair, but may be rooted in the very real attempts you have made to shift domestic responsibility on to other shoulders. You might think that partners have to put in their fair share, but they don't.

### SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 23)

Adverse planetary aspects almost guarantee that misunderstandings will occur. Look upon this as a time when the stars are challenging you to communicate more clearly and lose no opportunity to say what really needs to be said. But whatever you say, say it with compassion.

### CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

Your horoscope has seldom held out a greater promise of change, including change for the better. No matter how hurt, angry or dismayed you feel, or if you seem to be swept by forces beyond your control, this a period of your life to treasure. Please do nothing that may diminish you in others' eyes.

### AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

What is revealed now may make you think that a close partner or colleague is really on your side — and could soon fulfil an obligation. Yet you really must keep your feelings in check, for it is certain that you are not yet in possession of the whole, complex story.

### PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

You may be one of the most tolerant and sympathetic individuals, yet there is a limit to how far you can devote yourself to other people and their private emotional disasters. You must make more time for yourself. In fact, you must make a point of pampering yourself for a change.

## JUMBLLED 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.

The discipline of writing something down is the first step toward \_\_\_\_\_ - Lee Iacocca (6,2,6)

BTA AE OOMNPP

ABII T INTGHK

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## SUDOKU 4158

### Difficulty Level 5s

Instructions To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

### Difficulty Level

1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard; 5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius



## SOLUTION SUDOKU 4157





In the second drinks break, Australia were two down with 15 overs to go, I told the 12th man tell the boys to be ready because I am going to go for everything, right here, right now."

RICKY PONTING, ON HIS 140 IN THE 2003 WORLD CUP FINAL

## IPL hopes fade, compensation ruled out

SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY  
KOLKATA, MARCH 23

THE ONGOING COVID-19 pandemic might see the cancellation of IPL 2020. It is learnt that while the franchises are bracing up for the worst, top BCCI officials too don't appear to be very optimistic.

On Tuesday, the IPL franchises were to have a teleconference to discuss the future course of action. But that is unlikely to happen now, it is learnt. "Given the present situation, I feel the IPL this year might not happen. That's what it looks like," a franchise official told The Indian Express.

A total cancellation will see the BCCI lose in excess of Rs 2,000 crore in revenue, while each franchise will lose more than Rs 100 crore. And compensation is not an option. "Franchises can't get any compensation. (In case of a cancellation) money is not going to anybody. So compensation is out of question," the official said.

A franchise CEO agreed, mentioning that there couldn't be any contingency plan in case of a cancellation.

Meanwhile, the BCCI is not even thinking about the IPL at the moment. "Nobody has the clarity about the future. We don't know when travel restrictions/visa restrictions (until April 15 as of now) will go, when things will settle down. Till then, there's no point (thinking about the IPL)," a top BCCI official told this paper. "And even if it settles down here but continues in some other country... we are not clear about that also. Japan, the host nation of the Olympics, is talking about a possible postponement. This (the outbreak) is far bigger than any sport or the IPL."

Even for a truncated IPL, the tournament has to start by April end or early May, for it can't be stretched beyond the first week of June. In 2009, when the IPL was held in South Africa, 59 matches had been played inside 37 days.

Unlike, the Premier League, for example, the IPL doesn't have the option to wait indefinitely. The Premier League is considering a June restart of the season, but the Indian T20 league can't go beyond the first week of June, for there's no other window.

The BCCI official didn't sound very confident about holding the IPL in September at the expense of the Asia Cup. Even if the BCCI lobbies for it, given that the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) will be hosting this year's Asia Cup, putting it on hold might not work, given the thorny relationship between the two boards. "At the moment, you can't start thinking about anything. This (the problem) has to end and only then you can go back to the drawing board," the BCCI official said.

## PCB planning to hold remaining PSL matches in November

The Pakistan Cricket Board is planning to hold the remaining matches of PSL-5 in November provided the situation arising out of the COVID-19 pandemic improves in the next few months, its CEO Wasim Khan has said.

The PSL was suspended last Tuesday after the PCB revealed that a foreign player showed symptoms of the coronavirus, but Khan said the remaining matches may be held during the 10-day window available in November.

"We have to first sit down and discuss the situation with all the franchise owners because there are also suggestions that Multan Sultans which topped the points table should be declared winners or to have these remaining matches before the PSL-6 early next year," he told the media in a teleconference.

He also confirmed that the Board had suffered some financial losses due to the rescheduling, changes and suspension of the league.

"Approximately our losses are around 200 million rupees due to loss of gate money and some sponsorship revenues," he said, adding that the Board had earned considerably from sale of television, radio, digital media and sponsorships in the PSL. **PTI**

# Two friends and a virus

A bloody fight made them close friends, time turned them into brothers who have each other's back. GAURAV BHATT on the special bond that the like-minded boxers Vikas and Neeraj share and how the 'corona gadbad' has come in the way of their shared dreams.

AT FIRST glance, one can't tell Vikas Krishan's Twitter apart from Neeraj Goyat's. Constant cross-posting means one can keep abreast of both lives by following just one. Pictures of trips together, videos from controlled sparring sessions, headlines either one makes.

March was especially tweet-worthy for the duo. Vikas punched a ticket to his third Olympics with a stellar run at the Asian qualifiers in Jordan. Neeraj returned to the ring in New Zealand, taking his pro record to 12-3 (2 No Contests) after an accident put him out of commission last June. This was to be a time to celebrate and recalibrate. Instead, the two 28-year-olds have been living in self-isolation since their returns.

"We had made great plans to meet up," says Neeraj, who braved several flight cancellations for the return trip to India. "Corona ne sab gadbad kar diya (Corona spoils everything), but we are always in touch. Always discussing everything."

There's much to discuss, too. Vikas, who has gold medals at the Asian and Commonwealth Games and a bronze at the World Championships, is aiming for his first Olympic medal. Neeraj, who has been slogging away on the professional circuit since 2012, is trying to get a lucrative fight against former world champion Amir Khan re-booked, after it was called off two weeks out due to his car crash.

The parallel career trajectories notwithstanding, one has always had the other's back. Vikas went after Vijender Singh for calling Neeraj a "kid". Neeraj, meanwhile, helped Vikas in his pro boxing sojourn, and urged him to drop down a weight class to 69kg.

Both also fire back if one drops the F-word. "Friends nahii. Friends kaafi mil jaate hain (Not friends, you can find many friends)," Vikas says, and launches into an analysis that would make horoscope-matchers proud. "You can become friends if 70 per cent of your traits match with the other person. If it's 80, you're good friends. If it's 10, you become enemies. You find a brother like Neeraj only if it's a 90 per cent match."

Asked to list some of the shared traits, Vikas rattles away: "We don't drink or smoke. Neither do his parents nor mine. We are both family men. We believe in god. Most importantly, we believe in speaking our mind even if it costs us."

"I won't call it friendship," Neeraj reiterates. "Alag alag ma ke pet wale bhai hain hum (we are brothers from different mothers). It's difficult to sustain a simple friendship for 15-16 years," adds Neeraj, 'tau' to Vikas' children and 'bada beta' to his parents.

Like any good friendship, this too began with one beating the pulp out of the other.

Pune's Army Sports Institute, circa 2006. Vikas was the brazen sub-junior champion everybody was talking about. An unassuming Neeraj, by his own account, "was absolutely nobody." Though they ran with separate crowds, Vikas would tease the mild Neeraj endlessly.

"Neeraj is from the Yamunanagar side. They are generally gentle people, who don't do a lot of cussing," Vikas cackles. "For us Bhiwani men, it's natural."

Neeraj recounts: "Bohot chhedta tha mujhe, pooro din (He used to tease me a lot, the whole day). Around here people say, Yadavs and Jats generally don't get along too well either."

One evening, Neeraj lost his cool and dished out a beating that left Vikas crying.

"It's not like now, when he's much bigger. Back then he was in 42kg, I was 50. After a while, I felt horrible and went to his room, asked him to shift to mine. I told him, 'this day onward, we will never fight nor would I let anybody mess with you'," Neeraj laughs. "Army Sports Institute. Room no. 18. People still re-



When not planning trips or discussing strategies, Neeraj Goyat and Vikas Krishan take time out to train together. File

member it as our *adda*."

The two also shared a growing boxer's appetite, and the chicken served in the mess wasn't enough. Neeraj would hop on his cycle and get a broiler, and his friend would cook up a mean chicken curry.

"We got into some trouble because of that too. He's a great cook," Neeraj says. "And he's the best when it comes to lighting a fire. Give him damp wood and he would still get it going. That way he's the best person to have around if you're camping."

The two broke into the national camp in 2007, and competed at the Commonwealth Youth Games 2008. Neeraj moved to the senior camp in 2009 and Vikas joined him a year later.

"In 2010, we were in the same (60kg) weight category. We have seen boxing friendships fall apart in such cases. But if you're able to keep the person separate from the rival boxer, these things don't matter much. In that sense, we have always tried to set an example for future generations."

There was another fight, more a friendly scrap on the road to the Rio Olympics. Bored in the evenings of an invitational tournament overseas, they decided to get into an impromptu test of strength. The grappling session spilled out of the hotel room into the lobby, leaving bystanders scandalised.

"It went on for 25-30 minutes. Proper kushti (wrestling). The foreigners in the lobby were shocked and urged us to break it up," says Neeraj. "After a while, we got up and carried on like nothing had happened."

Neeraj fell one win short of securing a berth to the Rio Olympics, and Vikas one win short of securing a medal. Three days before the quarterfinal loss against eventual middleweight finalist Bektemir Melikuziev of Uzbekistan, Vikas called up Neeraj. "Before that fight, a thought crossed my mind. 'Let's do something

different'. We created a common mail ID, thought of a great password and decided to start a promotion together. 'VN - Vikas Neeraj promotions'," he recalls. "We were seeing how promoters were taking Indian kids for a ride, making them fight for next to nothing. We still have that ID. In fact we have made similar accounts on all three, *Twitter, Facebook and Instagram*. We don't use those accounts often. After Tokyo, we will get started on that."

"The biggest thing is that we both follow a rule. Never be with a person who lies," Neeraj says. "Don't sweet-talk or try to fleece us. We have met many people in boxing who lie or manipulate youngsters. That doesn't work for us."

Neeraj was also instrumental in setting up PBOI (Professional Boxing Organisation of India) to help those looking to transition from amateur to professional ranks. So when Olympic bronze medallist and unbeaten professional Vijender Singh trash-talked Amir Khan for "fighting kids" and said "Neeraj Goyat is way junior to me", Vikas jumped into the fray.

"Vijender, Neeraj and Amir Khan are of same weight category let them fight. We are of same weight category, we must fight under their card in November this year (sic)" Vikas had tweeted.

"Tune isko baccha kaise bola, tu ladne aaja (How dare you call him a kid, come and fight)" Vikas says. "The ones who have guts call their opponents out. I have seen Neeraj make fighters out of kids who, frankly speaking, were useless. I have seen him help find a job for a petrol pump attendant he's just met," says Vikas. "If nothing else, he has helped boxers get roles in movies."

Neeraj helped actor Vineet Kumar train for Anurag Kashyap's *Mulkabaaaz* and also earned

an acting credit for a brief appearance, leaving the meatier roles for fellow friends. He is also training Farhan Akhtar for his upcoming film *Toofan* and suspects he might have a speaking role this time around.

It was also Neeraj who made the category switch decision for Vikas.

"It was hundred per cent his idea," says Vikas. "He said, 'tune saare band baja ke dekh liye hain but Olympic medal nahin mila (you've tried everything but haven't won an Olympic medal). Try it'. I was unsure whether I would be able to cut to 69kg. But he told me 'you take a lot of pride in challenging yourself. Take this as a challenge'."

Early goings in the transition from 75 to 69 were rough, and Vikas' father rang Neeraj up.

"Beta, he isn't eating properly. *75 hi theek hai*, uncle said to me. I told him, 'you will definitely see the results shortly. Please wait till Tokyo, uncle,' Neeraj says.

The other rough transition was from a pro boxer's life in New Jersey to the national camp return. "It was the qualifier trials in December, and I was feeling very restless. I called him up and he took the next flight to visit me at the national camp in Bellary," says Vikas. "He did that twice. The support that he has been for 16 years now, sometimes makes me feel I don't do enough for this man."

All Neeraj wants is for Vikas to fulfil his potential at the Olympics.

"Look at him now. He's looking deadly. He's got the 75kg power and 69kg speed. *Bas Olympic aache se ho jaaye ek baar* (Just let the Olympics take place properly)," says Neeraj.

Vikas, though, is his pragmatic self. "If Olympics happens, great. If it doesn't, life moves on. I have been to the Olympics two times. The plan is to do something big, something different for the future," says Vikas. "Let's put that joint 'VN' ID to good use."

## BRIEFLY

### Chawla seeks bail in Delhi court citing coronavirus, threats

New Delhi: Sanjeev Chawla, alleged bookie and key accused in one of the cricket's biggest match-fixing scandals that involved former South African captain Hansie Cronje, sought bail in a Delhi court citing imminent threat of coronavirus pandemic in the jail that is "not hygienic". Chawla, extradited from the United Kingdom last month, also alleged in his bail plea that he was receiving life threats inside Tihar jail from various persons and inmates have made extortion demands from him. Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Purshottam Pathak directed the police to file its reply on the plea by April 26. "Chawla was a British National and the conditions in the jail were not hygienic and there was a threat of Coronavirus there and therefore, in view of the eminent threat of epidemic Coronavirus in the jail as well, the applicant prays that he be released on bail," the plea said. Filed through advocate Vinit Malhotra, the plea claimed that it was the admitted case in the FIR that the entire allegation against him was hearsay and there was no material/witness to substantiate it

### Petitioner wants Ganguly to continue as BCCI president

New Delhi: The original petitioner in the 2013 IPL spot-fixing case Aditya Verma will appeal to the Supreme Court to exempt BCCI president Sourav Ganguly's compulsory three-year cooling off period which starts in July. "Being the original petitioner on whose PIL the whole constitutional revamp happened, I have decided to file a plea that apex court should let Sourav Ganguly and his team (secretary Jay Shah in this case) continue for a term of three years," Verma said on Monday. As per the new BCCI constitution based on justice RM Lodha committee's reforms, any person who has been an office bearer in state as well as BCCI for consecutive period of six years will have to go for compulsory cooling off period of three years. In case of Ganguly, a former Cricket Association of Bengal joint secretary and later president, who took over in October, he had roughly nine months in the BCCI office.

### Pathan brothers, Gambhir donate in fight against corona

New Delhi: Former India cricketers Irfan Pathan and his brother Yusuf have donated 4,000 masks to the needy amid the rapidly-spreading COVID-19 pandemic. Former India speedster Irfan, who played 29 Tests and 120 ODIs, tweeted: "Doing our bit for the society. Whatever u guys can do please go ahead and help each other as far as sanitation is concerned. But don't gather crowd! @iamyusufpathan #corona it's a small start hopefully we will be keeping helping more. Everyone of us... (sic)" Cricketer-turned politician Gautam Gambhir too pledged ₹50 lakh towards the treatment fund in state government hospitals. Meanwhile Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) decided to contribute 25 million Lankan rupees, to be handed over to the government immediately. Sri Lanka has so far reported around 90 positive cases while there has been no death. **PTI**

# In a parallel universe, test driver wins Bahrain GP, Real clinch silverware

F1 and football are on hold along with most live sports, but action continues on the gaming front. Renault's test driver Guanyu Zhou won the virtual race in Bahrain while injured Real Madrid forward Asensio was crowned champion of the eLa Liga FIFA tournament

**STALLED**  
Renault's Chinese test driver Guanyu Zhou won a virtual Bahrain Grand Prix on Sunday as Formula One sought to entertain fans with esports action in a season stalled by the spreading coronavirus. On Monday, Azerbaijan postponed the June 7 race, leaving the stalled series with a major rescheduling headache after cancelling or calling off the season's first eight races. Bahrain would have been the second race of the year on Sunday and Liberty Media-owned Formula One had hoped to enlist current drivers in a virtual replacement using the Codemasters F1 2019 game. In the end McLaren's Lando Norris and Williams' Nicholas Latifi, who has yet to make his F1 race debut, were the only ones present.

**CROSSOVER STARS**  
Others stepped up, however, with former McLaren F1 driver and current Mercedes Formula E racer Stoffel Vandoorne finishing second with Austrian Philipp Eng, who had started on pole position, third. English golfer Ian Poulter, 'The Postman' competing from the garage of his home in Florida, and Britain's six times Olympic cycling gold medallist Chris Hoy



**'LANDOBOT' TO THE RESCUE**  
Technical problems meant the race was reduced from half the real-life distance to 25% while Norris struggled with a poor connection that meant his car was controlled for much of the time by the computer, which he dubbed 'Landobot'. Norris also made some cheeky calls seeking advice from

other Formula 1 drivers, including real life teammate Carlos Sainz and Red Bull racer and fellow avid gamer, Max Verstappen, during the downtime. The McLaren driver had earlier raced in a separate 'Not the BAH GP' event organised by Veloce Esports and also featuring Poulter and Real Madrid's Belgian goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois.

also took part. So too did Nicolas Hamilton, brother of Britain's six times world champion Lewis Hamilton, singer-songwriter Liam Payne and retired ex-F1 race winner Johnny Herbert. Former F1 driver Nico Hulkenberg, who left Renault at the end of last year, took part in all of the day's action after also racing on Saturday in an All-Stars Esports Battle organised by Torque Esports. "Obviously in this current situation with the lack of activity, I thought I'd jump on the train and give it a try," said the German.

**SIMULATED NASCAR**  
Drivers in the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR) competed over a virtual replica of the Homestead Miami Speedway oval, where an actual race was to have been conducted on Sunday. Cars remained silent and race tracks empty as drivers turned to the internet for the eNASCAR iRacing Pro Invitational Series with simulated overtaking and realistic sounds. Denny Hamlin, a 38-time winner, passed Dale Earnhardt Jr. on the final turn and held on to capture the 100-lap virtual race. "It's sort of a comeback but I'm just happy to be a part of it," retired star Earnhardt said.



**ASENSIO ADDS TO THE CABINET**  
Real Madrid forward Marco Asensio has missed the entire season with a serious knee injury but the time away from the pitch paid unexpected dividends when he was crowned champion of La Liga's FIFA 20 video game tournament on Sunday. With Spanish soccer on hold, players traded the pitch for Playstation in an online tournament organised by esports commentator Ibai Llanos and endorsed by La Liga. Over 170,000 people watched Asensio, playing as Real, beat Aitor Ruibal of Leganes 4-1 in the final, the culmination of a weekend of action involving 18 La Liga sides.

**MATCH REPORTS, INTERVIEWS**  
The Spanish sports media covered the online tournament, with leading newspapers Marca and AS broadcasting the matches on their websites as well as publishing match reports and live blogs. La Liga commentator Miguel Angel Roman joined Llanos in presenting the matches, while players gave interviews afterwards in another move to replicate the feel of a real life match. However, Barcelona and Real Mallorca were not allowed to take part in the tournament as their clubs are sponsored by Konami, the creators of FIFA 20's main competitor Pro Evolution Soccer. **AFP/AFP**



# Withdrawal symptoms

With Australia and Canada threatening boycott, International Olympic Committee admits that postponing the Games to next year now a realistic possibility

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
TOKYO, MARCH 23

THE TOKYO Olympics are probably going to happen, but almost surely in 2021 rather than in four months as planned. That became clear after the IOC on Sunday announced it was considering a postponement and would make a final decision within four weeks. Major Olympic nations like Canada and Australia have added pressure by saying they will not send teams if the Games are staged this year.

International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach sent a letter to athletes explaining the decision, while also acknowledging the extended timeline might not be popular. "I know that this unprecedented situation leaves many of your questions open," he wrote. "I also know that this rational approach may not be in line with the emotions many of you have to go through."

The IOC's move seemed inevitable for weeks with pressure mounting from all quarters — athletes, sponsors, broadcasters, more than 200 national Olympic committees and international sports federations.

Shortly after Bach's statement, the Canadian Olympic Committee said it would not send athletes to the Olympics unless the Games are postponed by a year. Australia issued a statement saying it was advising its athletes to prepare for an Olympics in 2021.

John Coates is the head of the Australian Olympic Committee and the IOC member who heads the inspection team for Tokyo.

World Athletics President Sebastian Coe sent a letter to Bach saying that holding the Olympics in July "is neither feasible nor desirable." He outlined a number of reasons, including competitive fairness, the likelihood athletes would over-train if given a compressed schedule and the uncertainty caused by orders in many countries barring people from gyms and other workout venues.

National Olympic committees in Brazil and Slovenia had also called for postponement until 2021. Norway's Olympic body said it did not want athletes going to Tokyo until the global health crisis is under control.

The United States governing bodies of swimming and track — two of the three top-tier Summer Games sports — had called on their national Olympic officials to push for a postponement.

## Hosts get realistic

Japan's politicians fell in line quickly on Monday as they awakened to Bach's move, which was announced at 3 am in Tokyo as most of the city slept. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, speaking at a parliamentary session, said a postponement of the Tokyo Olympics would be necessary if the Games cannot be held in a complete way because of the coronavirus pandemic.

"If it is difficult to hold (the Games) in a complete way, a decision of postponement would be unavoidable," he said.

Abe said he hoped the IOC would announce a decision quickly, and Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike echoed him.



The IOC's move seemed inevitable with pressure mounting from all quarters — athletes, sponsors, broadcasters, more than 200 national Olympic committees and international sports federations. AP

The IOC holds most of the cards in any rescheduling, spelled out in a Host City Contract signed in 2013 between the IOC, the Japanese Olympic Committee and the city of Tokyo.

## Financial pitfalls

Japan is officially spending \$12.6 billion to organise the Olympics, but a national audit put the figure at more than twice that much. The bill is sure to increase with any postponement, and the vast majority of the spending is from the public treasury.

The IOC has a reserve fund of about \$2 billion to tide itself over, and also has insurance against postponement or cancellation.

Yoshiro Mori, the president of the organising committee, said he talked with Bach by teleconference about the delay and was joined by CEO Toshiro Muto. "Honestly speaking, four weeks is quite a short time to consider all the necessary elements," Mori said at a Monday news conference. "It requires a tremendous amount of time and we have to hurry to go through this." Both were asked about added cost, and who would pay. And both shied away from a direct response.

Mori said cost calculations had to be made, and the availability of venues — presumably

for next summer in the northern hemisphere — had to be examined. A decision also has to be made about who pays for the maintenance of venues if the Olympics are postponed. Similar questions will be asked about the massive Olympic Village, which is to house 11,000 Olympians and 4,400 Paralympians before the high-priced units around Tokyo Bay are sold off by private developers.

"I respect Mr. Bach," Mori said. "And we trust Mr. Bach. We have been always together walking side by side. I consider Mr. Bach as my best friend." The 82-year-old Mori, a former prime minister who has been undergoing treatment for an undisclosed illness, was asked if he could endure more work on the Olympics. He called it a "rude" question.

"I've got about two years left to live," he replied, half smiling as he said it.

## Public not keen

The Olympic torch arrived last Friday in northern Japan from Greece. The torch relay it set to begin on Thursday from Fukushima prefecture, the area devastated by the 2011 earthquake, tsunami and the meltdown of three nuclear reactors. Organisers said the relay is still on, but said plans could change

very quickly. On Sunday, thousands crowded the northern city of Sendai to view the flame, which forced organisers to restrict the entry for viewing. Jeff Kingston, who studies Japanese politics at Temple University in Tokyo, said postponed Olympics will be a minor worry for most people.

"The public is expecting and supports postponement, so it won't be a big deal," Kingston said in an email. "People are way more worried about the economic consequences and their jobs and if the number of cases ramps up." A recent poll by Japanese news agency Kyodo said 69.9 per cent did not expect the Olympics to open on schedule.

As of Sunday, Japan had 1,719 confirmed cases of the virus, including 712 from a cruise ship, with 43 deaths. Former IOC marketing director Michael Payne said the delay might work to the advantage of the IOC and Japan.

"What better platform is there going to be than the Olympic Games when the world has pulled through the virus," Payne said in an interview on Sunday, just before the IOC announcement. "You've got a dynamic that will be even more powerful for Japan and the rest of the world. But you are going to have a tough road getting there."

## 'Not like moving a football game'

Postponement will be an unprecedented and costly exercise that involves ripping up years of planning, and IOC chief Thomas Bach said as much. Here are some of the challenges:

### Competition scheduling

As specialist website Inside the Games put it, the Olympics "gravitate around... a four-year cycle. If you wake up and the sun is in a completely different place, there are going to be consequences".

Much depends on the length of any postponement but shoehorning an Olympics into what is already a packed sporting calendar in 2021, for example, will be a logistical nightmare for athletes, administrators and broadcasters.

One potential clash is the World Athletics Championships, currently scheduled for August 2021 in the United States — a lucrative pay-day for athletes and TV networks.

Swimming is also scheduled to hold its World Championships in Japan from July 16 to August 1, 2021.

Adding to the crowded schedule is football's European Championships, already postponed from 2020 to 2021.

Olympic legend Carl Lewis has put the case for holding the Summer Games in 2022 alongside that year's Winter Games in Beijing, creating a "celebratory Olympic year".

### Venues

There are 43 Olympic sites — some temporary, some purpose-built, others repurposed for the Tokyo 2020 Games — and all of them present difficulties in the event of a postponement.

The IOC highlighted this as one of the main concerns, warning: "A number of critical venues needed for the Games could potentially not be available anymore."

For example, one of the main selling points of the brand new 68,000-seater Olympic Stadium was that it would hold "cultural and sporting events" after the Games were over. Any such event would now need to be moved if it clashes with a rescheduled Games.

And it's not just sporting venues. Organisers have block-booked the enormous Tokyo Big Sight exhibition centre to host the thousands of international journalists covering the Games.

This is one of Asia's premier venues for hosting large-scale conferences, and is booked many months in advance. Finding a suitable slot or persuading others to move could also be a challenge.

### Athletes' village

A major question marks hangs over the athletes' village, which occupies some prime real estate overlooking Tokyo Bay with a view of the city sky-

line and its famous Rainbow Bridge.

It will have 21 towers of between 14 and 18 floors with a total capacity of 18,000 beds during the Olympics and 8,000 for the Paralympics.

The plan was to renovate and convert the village into thousands of luxury condos, which are being sold off or put up for rent.

According to the website of the Harumi Flag developers, some 4,145 units were to be put up for sale. Viewings and sales of a first batch of 940 apartments began in summer 2019 and the vast majority have already been snapped up, according to Japanese media.

Postponement would mean delaying the renovation process and huge uncertainty for those who have already signed contracts — including whether force majeure clauses would be triggered.

### Hotels

Among the "many, many" challenges the IOC mentioned, it highlighted that "the situations with millions of nights already booked in hotels is extremely difficult to handle".

In fact, one of the concerns before the coronavirus hit was a possible dearth of hotel rooms. One idea was to park a cruise ship offshore for emergency accommodation — now surely a non-starter given the experience with cruise ships and the virus.

Hotel rooms have been block-booked in advance for many months. Many have paid a large deposit in advance and could face losing this, in addition to having to re-book quickly for a postponed date.

The hotel industry would also face huge uncertainty if the Games are delayed, adding to the headache already posed by a catastrophic drop in tourism.

### Silver lining

A postponement by a few months to later in 2020 might solve what had previously been the biggest concern over the Tokyo Olympics: the sweltering heat of the Japanese summer.

It could even be conceivable to move the marathon back to Tokyo after it was shifted to the northern city of Sapporo amid fears over athletes' health in the summer heat and humidity of the Japanese capital.

However, going ahead in the autumn would also put the Olympics in prime typhoon season — as the Rugby World Cup found out to its cost last year.

A delay could also give sporting federations more time to prepare qualifying events, addressing one of the main concerns voiced by athletes.

AFP

# Will wait and watch for a month before decision: IOA after two countries pull out

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

THE INDIAN Olympic Association on Monday said it will "wait and watch" for at least a month before taking any call on Tokyo Olympics participation after Canada created a flutter by becoming the first nation to pull out of the showpiece due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The north American nation's withdrawal added to the International Olympic Committee's woes after a host of top athletes and powerful sports bodies rammed up pressure on the IOC to postpone the quadrennial extravaganza in July-August.

However, India is ready to wait for a while before arriving at a final decision as it monitors the fast-evolving situation triggered by the pandemic, which has killed more than 14,000 and infected over 300,000. "Being the head of IOA, the health and well being of our athletes and officials are of prime concern to me," IOA President Narinder Batra told PTI. "Whatever decisions the IOA takes will be for the welfare of our athletes. But right now we are just waiting and monitoring the situation on a daily basis."

"I assure the people that we won't let anyone down and our decisions will be in the best interest of our athletes," he added.

IOA Secretary General Rajeev Mehta put a timeline to this wait and watch approach, saying it would be at least a month before anything is decided. "We will wait and watch for 4 to 5 weeks and then come to any decision after consultation with the International Olympic Committee and the sports ministry," Mehta said.

"The situation is not that bad in our country as compared to other nations," he added. The Olympics are looking increasingly uncertain after the IOC admitted that it would consider all options, including postponement, in four weeks from now.

The virus, which was first discovered in



The Covid-19 pandemic has affected the Olympic preparations of India's top athletes such as PV Sindhu. Express

**"We will wait and watch for 4 to 5 weeks and then come to any decision after consultation with the International Olympic Committee and the sports ministry."**

RAJIV MEHTA,  
IOA SECRETARY GENERAL

China, has wreaked havoc on Olympic preparations of athletes, including those from India. Several qualifiers have been suspended and training trips abroad are off the table thanks to the travel restrictions all over the world.

When contacted and asked if India is also contemplating acting on the lines of Canada, Sports Secretary Radhey Shyam Julaniya said the ministry is not in consul-

tation with anyone at the moment.

"Your question is hypothetical and the government cannot react to hypothetical questions," he said. "We are not in consultation with anyone right now. The ministry can't keep giving advisories," Julaniya added. Canada became the first country to pull out of the Tokyo Games due to coronavirus and Australia told its athletes to prepare for an Olympics next year as Japan and the IOC flagged the prospect of a postponement for the first time.

Mehta said India's handling of the crisis has been decent till now. "We are not thinking about postponement at this moment. We will wait for a month and discuss with IOA President Narinder Batra and the Executive Committee of the IOA."

The total number of COVID-19 cases in India has crossed 400, including seven deaths so far.

ASSOCIATED PRESS/REUTERS  
GENEVA, MARCH 23

THE FUTURE of football could be fewer games and fewer top competitions to help avoid a financial crisis, FIFA president Gianni Infantino said in a newspaper interview published on Monday. With football around the world in near-total shutdown and no end in sight because of the coronavirus pandemic, Infantino said the sport risked going into recession.

"Maybe we can reform world football by taking a step back," Infantino said in the interview with Italian daily Gazzetta dello Sport published on his 50th birthday.

"There needs to be an evaluation of the global impact," the FIFA president said. "Let's all together save soccer from a crisis that risks becoming irreversible." Infantino said different formats could be an answer, with "fewer, but more interesting tournaments. Maybe fewer squads, but more balance. Fewer, but more competitive, matches to safeguard the health of the players."

Before the pandemic, Infantino added to the congested football calendar by expanding the World Cup from 32 to 48 teams for the 2026 edition, and by trying to launch a 24-team Club World Cup next year. The inaugural edition of the latter tournament in China was delayed last week after UEFA and South American football body CONMEBOL postponed their championships by one year to 2021. That was to give domestic leagues time to try to finish their seasons.

The shutdown means there are already too few dates in the FIFA-managed calendar to complete the scheduled qualification paths for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

The pressure now on football stakeholders — many with conflicting interests — is likely to force a debate on the squeezed schedule that the pandemic has exposed.

Some influential clubs in Europe are pushing to get more guaranteed games in a bigger Champions League, and 20-team top leagues could be under pressure to make cuts. Those include leagues in England, Spain and Italy. "It's not science fiction. Let's discuss it," Infantino said about the possibility



Gianni Infantino wants fewer games and fewer top competitions. Reuters

of changing football calendars.

FIFA announced last month a task force of officials from member federations, clubs, leagues and player unions that would look at drafting a new match calendar from 2024. That work could also now include the next four years to adjust to the current shutdown.

## La Liga postponed indefinitely as coronavirus crisis worsens

Barcelona: The Spanish football calendar has been postponed until further notice, La Liga and the Spanish football federation (RFEF) said in a joint statement on Monday.

All organised football in Spain had been postponed for two weeks due to the spread of the coronavirus but was initially due to resume on April 3.

The statement said a joint commission between the two bodies had agreed to postpone all professional football competitions until the Spanish government considered they could start again "without creating any health risk".

RFEF chief Luis Rubiales last week ruled out cancelling the current season, insisting the campaign would resume once the health crisis was under control. "Both the RFEF and La Liga wish to express our greatest public gratitude to all those who are dedicating their best efforts to provide essential services to the Spanish people," added the statement. "We also share our condolences for all the deceased and a warm embrace from the world of soccer to the many families that are losing loved ones."

More than 33,000 people have been infected by the virus in Spain, the second-worst affected country in Europe behind Italy, while over 2,180 people have died from it according to the country's health ministry.

## Arsenal cancel training despite completing isolation period

London: Arsenal have advised their players, who were to resume training on Tuesday, to stay at home even though they completed their 14-day isolation period after manager Mikel Arteta tested positive for the coronavirus.

Arteta's positive test forced the team to go into self-isolation, while the Premier League has suspended the football season until April 30. "As a result of the current situation, we are clear it would be inappropriate and irresponsible to ask players to come back at this time," Arsenal said in a statement on Monday. "Therefore our men's first team, women and academy players are all remaining at home."

The club also confirmed they would continue paying matchday and non-matchday casual workers until April 30 despite the suspension. Manchester United announced last week that they would keep paying their casual staff even if the season's remaining games were cancelled or played in empty stadiums.

"These are challenging times for everyone, but in particular our casual workers," said Arsenal Managing Director Vinai Venkatesham. "This gesture is intended to ease their financial uncertainty." Football Association rules say the season should end by June 1 but the FA, Premier League, EFL and women's professional game bodies, along with players' and managers' associations, have agreed to extend the formal end-date for the 2019-20 season.