

LPG, DRUGS, RLY FREIGHT
included in expanded exemption category

CENTRE, STATES SCRAMBLE
to come to the rescue of poor, daily wagers

NPR, CENSUS PHASE-I
processes postponed in view of outbreak

Day 1: Cracking the supply chain

Govt steps in after retailers and e-com players stopped



Minister Javadekar briefs on the Cabinet meeting. Anil Sharma

PRANAV MUKUL, PRABHA RAGHAVAN, SANDEEP SINGH, DEEPTIMAN TIWARY, AVISHK G DASTIDAR
NEW DELHI, MARCH 25

including Delhi Police, Gurugram Police, Noida Police and Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation instituted mechanisms for allowing home deliveries, including issuing curfew passes to the staff of Amazon, Flipkart, BigBasket, Grofers, Swiggy, Zomato, etc, many raised concerns over non-adherence of Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) orders in different states. Offline retailers such as Future Retail, which operates the Big Bazaar chain, also complained that police confiscated bikes and keys of its staff and even beat them up on their way to stores.

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Teething problems, we are streamlining free passage of essentials: Police chief

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
NEW DELHI, MARCH 25



Delhi Police Commissioner SN Shrivastava

Express, Shrivastava said: "This lockdown is unprecedented. Never in the past has it happened that the entire country is locked down. Because it has happened so suddenly, it is taking some time for things to settle down. As of now, the primary concern is that people, barring those not engaged in essential services, stay at home."

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Foreign missions start flying out stranded citizens on special flights

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, MARCH 25

INSIDE



MAHABHARAT WAS WON IN 18 DAYS, WE NEED TO WIN THIS WAR IN 21, SAYS PM
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WITH INDIA on a 21-day lockdown, foreign embassies are chalking out plans to evacuate their stranded citizens, mostly tourists. While some have already begun evacuation, others are working on it. Sources told *The Indian Express* that 10-12 countries, including Germany, France, US, UK, Canada, Israel, Russia and Afghanistan, have sought permission to evacuate their citizens. About 6,000-10,000 for-



Supply trucks stuck in Ghaziabad, near UP's border with Delhi, Wednesday. Prem Nath Pandey REPORTS, PAGE 4-7, 12, 13

On table: Cash transfers for unorganised workers, 7 kg subsidised grain per person

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, MARCH 25

THE GOVERNMENT is finalising an economic package, the broad contours of which are likely to include targeted monetary transfers to unorganised sector workers, especially daily wage workers, sops for small and medium enterprises and relaxations in banking sector prudential norms to help companies tide over the countrywide lockdown that is causing significant disruption across the economy.

While the government may use money available with certain labour welfare funds, a limited fiscal space would be its biggest constraint. The Centre may borrow more to fund the relief package, which is expected to be announced later this week, said senior officials.

"Measures for MSMEs, cash transfers for daily wage workers

BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY



and liquidity infusion are the key focus areas for the planned economic package," a Finance Ministry official said.

According to sources, the plan, being finalised in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India, also involves relaxing the non-performing asset classification

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Money transfer, food aid: States announce schemes for daily wagers, vendors

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 25

FROM FREE ration to cash in bank accounts, UP, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat are among a number of states that have stepped up to help the unorganised labour sector — construction workers to street vendors — get through weeks without work under the coronavirus lockdown.

In most of these states, the workers will get Rs 1,000-1,500 as one-time relief through direct cash transfers, apart from ration assistance.

India's unorganised workers **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

EXPLAINED Reducing economic disruption

These targeted measures for the poor and daily wage workers, along with a series of other steps for companies and the banking sector, are being finalised to ease the extraordinary disruption in economy, which is forcing the Centre to let fiscal deficit expand and borrow more.

No transport and no money, migrants take long road home



With public transport stopped, migrants start walking home from Ahmedabad Wednesday. Reuters

ANANYA TIWARI, VAIBHAV JHA, AISHWARYA MOHANTY & DEEP MUKHERJEE
NEW DELHI, AHMEDABAD, VADDARA, JAIPUR, MARCH 25

CORONA COUNT
606 CASES 10 DEATHS
43 RECOVERED
22,928 samples from 22,038 individuals tested

ANTRESH KUMAR, 21, started walking at 3 am on Wednesday from Dharampuri in Najafgarh, South West Delhi. Facing the prospect of no work due to the 21-day lockdown, the daily wage decided that heading home to Moradabad in Uttar Pradesh was his best option. Even if it meant walking most of the 175 km, spending two days on the road, and risking police wrath.

Antresh isn't the only one. Left stranded by a nationwide lockdown, which has halted all public transport, hundreds of labourers devoid of work have started leaving big cities on foot.

In Ahmedabad, a majority of the estimated 2,000-plus migrant labourers left Tuesday evening, around the time Prime Minister Narendra Modi began his speech announcing the lockdown. Headed for villages in Rajasthan, they had reached Bichhiwara tehsil, 125 km away from Ahmedabad, by Wednesday afternoon, walking and hitch-hiking.

"Scores of people can be seen **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

At least 25 killed in IS attack on Kabul gurdwara, India calls it diabolical, cowardly



A wounded Afghan Sikh woman in a Kabul hospital. AP

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, MARCH 25

AT LEAST 25 people were killed and more than eight others were wounded during an attack Wednesday on a gurdwara in the Afghan capital Kabul. The Islamic State has claimed responsibility for the attack. A spokesperson for the Taliban denied any involvement.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi condemned the attack, and New Delhi said "such cowardly attacks" at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic is reflective

of the "diabolical mindset" of the perpetrators and their backers. Afghanistans' Interior Ministry said security forces rescued at least 80 people, including women and children, who were inside the gurdwara complex.

Tariq Arian, a spokesperson for the Ministry of Interior, was quoted by Khama news agency as saying a group of suicide bombers entered the gurdwara in Shor Bazar area of Kabul around 7.45 am local time.

Arian said security forces rescued the majority of people who were trapped inside. The attack **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

Floyd Cardoz, man who 'helped make Indian food cool', dies of virus in NY

POOJA PILLAI
NEW DELHI, MARCH 25

RESTAURATEUR AND Indian-origin chef Floyd Cardoz, the man who introduced the world to Indian food beyond curry and chicken tikka, passed away in New York on Wednesday after testing positive for coronavirus a week ago.

In a statement issued late on Wednesday, a spokesperson for Hunger Inc. Hospitality, the company Cardoz founded in Mumbai in 2015 and which runs the popular The Bombay Canteen (TBC)



Tested positive on March 18, 10 days after he left India

and O Pedro restaurants, said, "Floyd tested positive for COVID-19, in USA, on March 18 and was being treated for the same at Mountainside Medical Center, New Jersey, USA." He was 59.

Earlier this month, Cardoz was in Mumbai to celebrate the fifth anniversary of his TBC and to launch The Bombay Sweet Shop, a modern take on Indian mithai, before leaving for New York on March 8. On March 17, Cardoz posted on Instagram that he had checked himself into the Mountainside Medical Center after testing positive for COVID-19. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

Recovered, Mumbai, Pune cases return home to cheers by neighbours

ANURADHA MASCARENHAS, TABASSUM BARNAGARWALA & LAXMAN SINGH
PUNE, MUMBAI, MARCH 25

AMIDST REPORTS of coronavirus suspects facing harassment in several parts of the country, neighbours in Pune and Mumbai joined hands to welcome home Maharashtra's first COVID-19 patients.

Jivandhar, 51, and Prashanti Awati, 44, spent a sleepless night Tuesday at Pune's Naidu

Hospital waiting for an all-clear. The state's first positive cases, they finally got the second result confirming their negative and ending their 14-day isolation, at 5.30 am Wednesday. They had tested positive on March 10. On Wednesday evening, their daughter Ankita too was discharged.

Delighted to be back home on the day of Gudi Padwa, an emotional Prashanti, 44, said, "Can you imagine the sense of relief? Since Tuesday evening, our bags were packed."

As the couple stepped out, people from chawls around

Naidu Hospital lined up along the road to wave at the ambulance that took them home, escorted by a police van. "It was heart-warming," said Jivandhar, a senior manager with a Pune firm.

When they reached their society on Sinhadga Road, another surprise awaited them. Said Jivandhar, "The society has 350 flats across seven buildings. Several came to their balconies, clapping and cheering." Added Prashanti, "Some brought groceries, others offered to get food packets."

In Mumbai, a similar reception awaited the city's first two



The Awatis were discharged on Wednesday; daughter expected back home soon

cases, a 70-year-old and his 69-year-old wife, who tested positive on March 11 and were discharged from Kasturba Hospital on Tuesday. The couple had travelled along with the Awatis to Dubai last month.

When the two reached their building in Andheri, four neighbours carried the 69-year-old in a plastic chair into the lift, and later to her second-floor apartment. Said the husband, "She was not able to walk, she has a stomach infection." Society members also had dinner ready for the two.

A domestic help who had

tested positive for coronavirus was among those cleared Tuesday night in Mumbai. The 68-year-old, whose family staying in a slum had faced much harassment following the case, said, "I hope people will now realise that this disease can be cured."

She said one of her employers, who tested positive after returning from the US on March 17 and who is believed to have infected her, came to visit her in hospital. "He said he was sorry. But I told him he did not do it deliberately." The 68-year-old said the hospital took good care, and answered all her doubts. "From

day one that I was admitted, there was not much change in my health," she said.

The Pune family and Mumbai couple were part of a group of 40 people who went to Dubai last month, of whom 15 tested positive. The Awatis had gone to mark their 25th anniversary.

The group returned on March 1, and the Awatis got themselves tested at the municipal corporation-run Naidu Hospital after Jivandhar developed symptoms. Apart from the family, a fellow passenger from Yavatmal and a driver of a taxi hired by them tested positive on

March 10. Now all are negative and have been discharged.

Once news came of the Pune family being positive, the aged Mumbai couple, who had no symptoms, decided to get themselves admitted in Kasturba Hospital's isolation ward along with four others from their tour group.

Incidentally, the Andheri couple's two children are also under home quarantine — son in Singapore and daughter in the US, where they stay. A medical officer in Andheri West, Dr Gulnar Khan, said her staff visited **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**