WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2020, NEW DELHI, LATE CITY, 16 PAGES

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INNEW DELHI'S COVID HOTSPOT

441 are symptomatic, sent to hospital

SPREAD SLOWER THAN ELSEWHERE,

government tells Supreme Court

PARTS OF NIZAMUDDIN WEST UNDER

strict lockdown, with drones, police personnel

As US deaths cross 3,400, ICMR compares: infection probability is low in India

ABANTIKA GHOSH NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

EVEN AS a Tablighi Jamaat congregation in the Capital has emerged as a common link between many COVID-19 positive cases, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) said on Tuesday that the "probability" of infection in India was still "very low" as compared to the US, now the global hotspot of the outbreak.

With 146 positive cases, including two deaths, being reported in the last 24 hours, the total count has gone up to 1,397 (124 recovered, 35 dead).

Dr R R Gangakhedkar, head of the department of epidemiology and infectious diseases,

INSIDE



DEADLIEST DAY YET IN SPAIN AND U.S.

FIRST TABLIGH LINK WAS SPOTTED ON MARCH 17

TUMKUR VICTIM TRACED TO DELHI **GATHERING**

PAGES 5, 12

ICMR, said there were many differences between the outbreaks in India and the US.

Responding to a question on whether India should change the guidelines on use of face masks, he said: "You need to understand, where risk of exposure is more, you need masks. You wear a mask so that you do not touch your face or nose. There is a hell and-heaven difference in the outbreak here and in America. My probability of infection is very low, that is why we are saying only a person who has symptoms should wear masks. If you make a habit of not touching your face, there is no need to fear. This de-

This comes amid reports that **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

pends on the risk of exposure."

Across nation, race to trace contacts of Tabligh meeting

Day 7: Alarm bells ring in 20 states & UTs, 50 test positive in a single day in Tamil Nadu

Buses head from Nizamuddin West to quarantine facilities in Delhi on Tuesday afternoon. Praveen Khanna

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE HYDERABAD, CHENNAI, BENGALURU, LUCKNOW, MARCH 31

AS MANY AS 20 states and Union Territories are scrambling to identify, quarantine and test all those who attended a gathering of almost 4,000 people at Markaz Nizamuddin, the headquarters of Tablighi Jamaat in New Delhi, in the middle of March.

Cases are showing up in different states, with Tamil Nadu announcing that 50 of the 57 COVID-19 positive cases Tuesday were of those who participated in the congregation. A day earlier, Telangana said five who died and tested positive for COVID-19 were present at the event.

The movement of people, including that of foreign nationals



from Indonesia, Thailand Malaysia and other countries, from Delhi to other states after the gathering, has presented a complex contact tracing task before the health and law enforcement authorities.

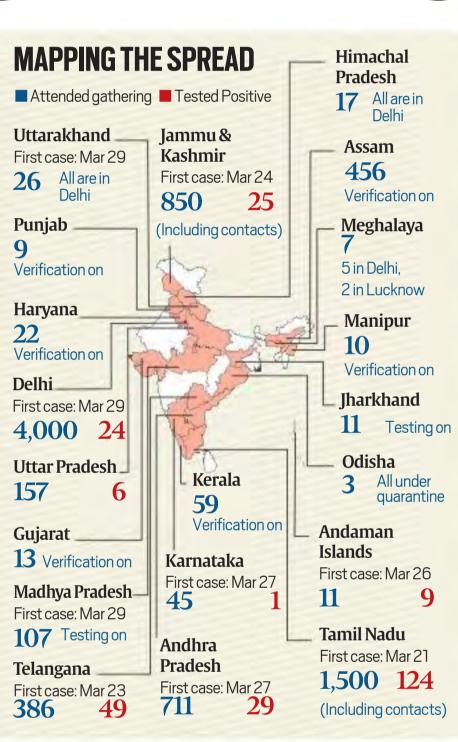
Delhi evacuated 1,548 people over the last three days, and with 18 from the area testing positive, the area was put under a strict lockdown.

Andhra Pradesh has identified 711 persons who were at the gathering. From neighbouring Telangana, at least 400 persons

participated in the meeting. While returning, a group from Karimnagar in the state brought along 10 Indonesians. They travelled from Delhi by train in a sleeper coach, alighted at Ramagundam in Peddapalli district on March 13, and visited mosques while travelling in autorickshaws. The next day, they went to Karimnagar, visited four mosques, and interacted with students. One of the Indonesians tested positive on March 17, and the remaining nine the next day.

Meanwhile, of the 711 identified, Andhra Pradesh guarantined 122 at private hospitals and isolation facilities, 207 at government hospitals, and 297 in their homes. The remaining 87 are untraceable. "We are trying to gather information if anyone

else travelled to Nizamuddin for CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



savings see deep cut in interest rates

PPF, senior citizens

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

IN A move that signals the transmission of lower rates that will end up pinching small savers especially amid the looming economic distress, the government has decided to cut small savings interest rates sharply by 70-140 basis points for the April-June quarter. This sharp cut follows the Reserve Bank of India's cut in the repo rate by 75 basis points, alongside a slew of liquidity-enhancing measures to counter the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The interest rate for Senior Citizens Savings Scheme has been slashed to 7.4 per cent from 8.6 per cent, while that for National Savings Certificate has been cut to 6.8 per cent from 7.9 per cent. Public Provident Fund will now fetch 7.1 per cent interest as against 7.9 per cent earlier. Kisan Vikas Patra will fetch 6.9 per cent interest (maturity in 124 months) from 7.6 per cent (maturity in 113 months) earlier. Interest rate for Sukanya Samriddhi Scheme has been reduced to 7.6 per cent from

8.4 per cent. This is the first sharp cut in Business as Usual By UNNY



small savings rates after a 10 basis points cut in July-September last year. On the other hand, the RBI has cut repo rate by 210 basis points over the last one year to 4.4 per cent, the lowest in at least 20 years.

To put this in perspective, after the 2008-09 economic crisis, the RBI had cut the key policy rate gradually from 9 per cent in September 2008 to 4.75 per cent in April 2009, and it stayed at the same level till February 2010.

Term deposits of one to three years will now fetch an interest rate of 5.5 per cent from the CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Pre-lockdown stocks running out,

Migrants: Govt blames fake news, SC says report the official version

ANANTHAKRISHNAN G NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

ACCEPTING THE Centre's submission that mass movement of mi grant workers during the lockdown was the result of "panic created by fake news" that it would continue for more than three months, the Supreme Court Tuesday directed the media to "refer to and publish the official version" of the developments.

Underlining that "we do not intend to interfere with the free discussion about the pandemic" the bench of Chief Justice of India S A Bobde and L Nageswara Rao said "we expect the media (print, electronic or social) to maintain a strong sense of responsibility and ensure that unverified news capable of causing panic is not disseminated".

"The migration of large number of labourers working in the cities was triggered by panic created by fake news that the lockdown would continue for more than three months. Such panicdriven migration has caused untold suffering to those who believed and acted on such news.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

As Tabligh's Nizamuddin centre is cleared, Kejriwal warns of a surge in cases

SOMYA LAKHANI & SOURAV ROY BARMAN NEW DELHI. MARCH 31

OVER THE past three days, 1,548 people have been evacuated from the Markaz Nizamuddin. the headquarters of the Tablighi Jamaat, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said Tuesday. Of these, 441 are symptomatic and have been sent to the hospital for coronavirus testing, while others have been quarantined.

Nizamuddin West continued to be under strict lockdown. with heavy police deployment

on Tuesday, a day after 18 people from the area tested positive for COVID-19. A gathering at a mosque in the area mid-March has emerged as the epicentre of the outbreak, with cases emerging not just in the national capital but in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, the Andaman islands, Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh and other states.

Beginning Tuesday morning, people were brought out in batches of 30-35 from the Markaz Nizamuddin building and taken to hospitals or quarantine centres in DTC buses. The drivers were **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**



Nizamuddin cluster will significantly alter the nature of spread of the novel coronavirus disease. But because the new cases are in large groups and linked to one source, it may be easier to reliably trace the contacts. But this comes at a time when there are more examples which suggest community transmission.

FULL REPORT PAGE 5

Contact tracing for Delhi cluster: 3 trains to South on the radar of Railways

AVISHEK G DASTIDAR

NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

IN A massive attempt at contact tracing, the Railways is helping states track down movements of those who participated in the Tablighi Jamaat congregation in Delhi in the middle of March and later tested positive for COVID-19.

Armed with a list of those at the congregation who tested positive for coronavirus, authorities are looking at passenger lists of at least three trains that set off from Hazrat Nizamuddin station in Delhi between March 14 and 19

— the Duronto Express to Guntur in Andhra Pradesh, the Grand Trunk Express to Chennai, and the

Tamil Nadu Express to Chennai. According to inputs from states, two people who attended the congregation and later tested positive travelled by the Duronto on March 18 in the S8 coach along with "two companions", two of them travelled by the Grand Trunk Express in the S3 coach with two minors, while a couple of others took the Tamil Nadu Express.

With the arrival and departure patterns of those who CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

PRANAV MUKUL, PRABHA RAGHAVAN, **AASHISH ARYAN** & AANCHAL MAGAZINE

NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

SHELVES IN stores are gradually emptying as pre-lockdown stocks run out and replenishment is a big challenge as labour migration poses fresh hurdles across the supply chain — from the manufacturing stage to lastmile delivery.

This is the growing concern among key players in consumer goods, from FMCG majors Dabur India and Hindustan Unilever to wholesaler Metro Cash and



Shortage of raw materials will hit production. File

Carry and a slew of stockists and

retailers. There is a sudden dearth of labour: be it for loading and un-

loading trucks to managing

In every case, he jots down the

person's name, address, contact

number and where they were

coming from. "But for instance,

if they are from Bhilwara or

warehouses, taking supplies from distributors and moving goods to the retailer.

On top of this, is the fact that **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

hospital or, based on our lists,

sent health workers to homes to

paste quarantine stickers," he

says. For instance, he says, "over

240" people needed either home

PAGE 1

At Rajasthan border, last check, first responder: 'Yeh toh jung hai'

DIPANKAR GHOSE BHARATPUR, MARCH 31

IT'S 10 pm, near pitch dark. In the middle of the road at the Rarah border between Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh is a barricade and three policemen. To the left, hanging from an electrical wire overhead, are three temporary stage lights. Under them is a table — a jug of water and a bottle of hand sanitiser on it — and

a doctor in a chair, with hairnet, mask and gloves. Meet Dr Rajveer Singh, the last line of defence against the



coronavirus entering Rajasthan, and among the first responders if and when the infection slips through. For the last two days, from 8 pm to 8 am, he has been screening hundreds of migrants returning on foot who are trying to beat a national lockdown en-

forced with four hours' notice. And across 800 km in four states, Singh, his work station and his work are emblematic of

a healthcare system creaking under the weight of an unprecedented crisis, propped up by doctors and health workers in the field, overwhelmed but committed to the cause.

After a quick dinner break, Singh's gloves are back on. He is ready to check a group of three men, with bags slung across their shoulders. His questions are calm, his tone patient: "Where are you coming from? Where are you going? Do you



Dr Rajveer Singh at work on the Rarah border. Gajendra Yadav

have any symptoms of fever and cough? Have you met anyone with symptoms of fever and cough?" Finally, he asks: "Have you by any chance travelled to

Bhilwara or Jhunjhunu?" Bhilwara, he knows, has emerged as a worry spot, after six persons working in a private hospital, including doctors, tested positive. Of the 93 cases in Rajasthan, 26 are from Bhilwara — 13 have since tested negative

— and the district's population of more than 24 lakh is under surveillance, the town locked down. Based on the answers, Singh

decides his next course of action.

This is what we have done for the last three days," he says. Last Thursday, the first day of the border checks, they marked people with quarantine stamps. But then, says Singh, there was a shortage of stamps. "So we ei-

ther sent them to the district

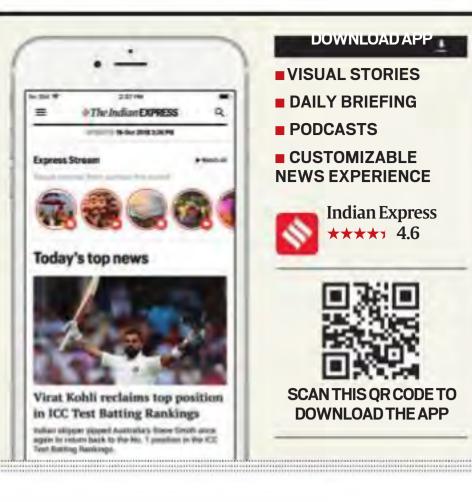
Jhunjhunu, or have fever or conor institutional quarantine between 8 pm on Sunday night tact, I will send them to the district hospital. From there, they and 8 am the next morning. could be sent to home quarantine or institutional quarantine.

Singh has also watched instructional videos of doctors and nurses in Hazmat suits, peeling off and on different layers. The only layers he has, though, are a pair of extra gloves in his coat pocket, and an extra mask. "Yeh toh jung hai. Har jung mein kami hoti hai (This is war. There are

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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THE DELHI EXODUS: WHAT WE FAILED TO LEARN FROM 1889 AND 1900

The nationwide lockdown announced by the Prime Minister on March 24 suffers from the same vices that haunted its predecessors in 1898 and 1900.

CORONAVIRUS



the meeting," Minister Perni

In Tamil Nadu, officials said

1,031 people attended the con-

gregation, but are yet to trace

300. "All of them have returned,

but many phones are switched

off and others could not be

traced at their addresses. About

400 people are still stranded in

Delhi," said K Shanmugam,

state chief secretary. "We have

Venkataramiah said.

SELECTIVE TESTING AND LOCKDOWN

Why these moves are more suitable for India than 'test, test, test'.

BEST MOBILE GAMES TO PLAY

VIDEO OF THE DAY

Here is a list of mobile games you can play while stuck at home

EXPRESS How a 93-year-old man

recovered from corona

NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY

Today on the 3 things podcast, we talk about the story of an elderly couple from Kerala that recovered after being infected by the coronavirus

FROM PAGE ONE

PPF, senior citizens savings

existing 6.9 per cent, down 1.4 per cent, according to a notification by the finance ministry. As against these small savings instruments, interest rate for subscribers of Employees' Provident Fund Organisation has been recommended to be at a higher level of 8.5 per cent for 2019-20.

Banks have often cited the high small-savings rates as an impediment to effective rate cut transmission since these prevent them from lowering their own deposit rates. Most public sector banks have passed on the RBI's recent 75 basis points rate

Since 2016, the government has been revising small savings rates quarterly in a bid to align these with rates of government securities.

SC: Report the official version

In fact, some have lost their lives in the process. It is therefore not possible for us to overlook this menace of fake news either by electronic, print or social media," the bench said.

It asked the Centre to make active within 24 hours "a daily bulletin... through all media avenues including social media and forums to clear the doubts of people as submitted by the Solicitor General of India".

The reference was to Solicitor General Tushar Mehta's submission that the government, in order to deal with fake news on the COVID-19 situation, was in the process of setting up a separate unit headed by a "Joint Secretary level officer in the Ministry of Health and consisting of eminent specialist doctors from recognised institutions like AI-IMS etc to answer every query of citizens and to provide real time and true facts" to people.

Mehta said the modalities will be worked out immediately and the government will publicise details of the portal that can be approached for "genuine information".

Incidentally, similar assertions were made in a status report filed before the bench by Union Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla. This was in response to two petitions being heard by the bench. The petitions by advocates Alakh Alok Srivastava and Richa Bansal sought directions to ensure the welfare of the migrant labourers who have been walking to their homes in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar from their workplaces in states like Delhi.

The Supreme Court said Section 54 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005 provides for punishment to a person who makes or circulates a false alarm or warning as to disaster or its severity or magnitude, leading to panic and that such person shall be punished with imprisonment which may extend to one year or with fine.

The bench also quoted WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, saying "we are not just fighting an epidemic; we are fighting an infodemic. Fake news spreads faster and more easily than this virus, and is just as dangerous".

Appearing for the Centre, Mehta referred to the financial package announced by the government for the welfare of the poor and said there was "no need" for such mass movement of workers since the package had taken care of their concerns. He attributed the development to panic created by fake news and social media messages and sought directions to check this.

The migration "defeats the very object of the preventive measures" and "put their lives and lives of others in danger",

Mehta said, adding that if these migrants reach their villages, "there is extreme and most likely possibility of their carrying" the infection to rural India "which has remained untouched so far".

am, there is no person walking on the roads in an attempt to reach his/ her hometown/ village".

tion with the measures taken by the government to check the spread of COVID-19 "at this stage". It asked police and other authorities to understand the anxiety and fear of the migrants and deal with them in a humane manner.

of surge

At least 24 of the 97 coronavirus cases in Delhi are from this area. On Tuesday, Kejriwal said the city should brace for a surge in cases as some of the 441 symptomatic people evacuated from the Markaz (centre) are expected to test positive.

"Of the cases so far, 24 are related to the Markaz, 41 are peocountries, 22 are relatives of those who have tested positive. far, we have not seen evidence of community transmission," Kejriwal said.

Calling the organisers of the gathering at the Markaz "irresponsible", Kejriwal said that on March 12 and 13, many people from across the country and abroad had gathered there. And while many left afterwards, several people stayed back.

"This disease has gripped the

Kejriwal said the Delhi government has written to the L-G requesting that an FIR be registered against the organisers. He also said action will be taken against any officer who is found to have not followed orders on limiting gatherings.

On Tuesday, the Delhi Police violation of government direc-

Delhi Police also released a video dated March 24, wherein SHO Hazrat Nizamuddin police station can be seen speaking to six members of the Markaz about "clear-cut instructions that more than five people cannot congregate and all religious institutions are shut". In the video, the SHO says, "Despite telling you several times, this problem is not getting solved... if you don't clear it immediately, I will be forced to take strict legal action". A member of the Markaz then says, "We have evacuated 1,500 people but there are more people inside... over 1,000 from outside Delhi...

borders are sealed." The SHO

then asks them to speak to the

SDM about the matter immedi-

The court expressed satisfac-

Kejriwal warns

ple who returned from other We are still looking at the nature of transmission in 10 cases. So

entire world. At a time like this, this (holding a gathering) was a very irresponsible thing. Navratras are on and there are usually many people in temples, but there is no one this time. Gurdwaras are shut, people are not coming to the masjid to pray and are praying at home. Mecca is empty, Vatican City is empty. At such a time, to have held such a big gathering was wrong," he

registered a case against Maulana Saad and other members of the Tablighi Jamaat under section 3 of the Epidemic Disease Act 1897, and several IPC sections, including 120-B (criminal conspiracy). Delhi Police spokesperson M S Randhawa said, "The FIR has been filed for tions given to the management of the Markaz regarding restriction of social/political/religious gathering and for taking safety measures, including social distancing."

They all want to go home but the

He told the court "as on 11

to quarantine them, screen all their contacts. We will do it in two or three days," he said. Karnataka has placed 78 persons, including 50 foreign nationals, in quarantine, after authorities discovered that the 60-vear-old man who died in Tumkur on March 27 was also infected at the Markaz. "We are made to wear protective suits. not sure if all 78 quarantined persons participated in the congregation in Delhi but they are all from the Tablighi

quarantine. In Kerala, officials said about 59 persons had attended the programme in Delhi, and the process of identification was still on.

were on to put everyone in

Day 7: Alarm bells ring in 20 states

Closer to Delhi, the Uttar Pradesh government said 157 persons from 19 districts attended the congregation, six of whom have tested positive for Coronavirus. On Tuesday, a police team checked the residence of all 157 persons to find that just nine had returned so far. After a medical examination, they were quarantined. In Bijnor, the police booked five members of a mosque for allegedly sheltering eight Indonesian nationals who had participated in the congregation. Before coming to Bijnor, they had travelled to Odisha from Delhi. Their travel details in Odisha are being acquired to trace the chain of contacts.

While both Assam and Uttarakhand said they had records of the persons who attended the programme in

most or all of them continued to remain in Delhi. A total of 456 persons from Assam were in Delhi for the congregation, and are said to be still in and around the Nizamuddin mosque. Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sharma said the government would quarantine anyone found to have returned from there. All 26 people from Uttarakhand who were in the gathering, are still there, said an official.

Delhi, they were relieved that

In West Bengal, the home and the health departments were still tracking such people. Sources said as many as 73 persons from the state attended the event. "The process of identification is on, and they are being quarantined for 14 days, and will be tested for Covid-19," said an official. While Jharkhand is still try-

ing to ascertain the number of persons who went from the state to Delhi for the congregation, Bihar Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Amir Subhani said the state did not

rently being supplied by two

have any data so far.

In Maharashtra too, state Minority Affairs Minister Nawab Malik said, the state did not have a precise number of people who went to the Delhi Markaz in March. But a Jamaat member, who did not wish to be named, said, "During March 7-9, there was an aalmi mushavra (discussion with experts) which may have been attended by over 40 people from the state."

Over the last week, the J-K administration too embarked on a mission to find how many visited the Tablighi Markaz in Delhi. It prepared a list of 800 persons, which included those who were in contact with persons present in the gatherings. Official sources said the administration had already contacted over 350 persons and put them under quarantine while the search for others was on.

(WITH INPUTS FROM ENS **GUWAHATI, MUMBAI,** RANCHI, DEHRADUN, PATNA, SRINAGAR, **NEW DELHI)**

Similarly, a success story today

can turn into a hotspot tomor-

been tested so far, including

hobbled by the lack of testing

While 42,788 samples have

from a time before the lockdown, when train services were fully operational. New Delhi railway station, for example, sees about 62 trains originating while 76 trains halt there with a combined daily footfall of around 5 lakh.

Stores wait for trucks, labour

production is projected to take a hit due to shortage of labour and raw materials.

Besides labour, the other key break in the supply chain has been the transport lifeline thousands of trucks stuck in jams at semi-sealed border entry points. Result: raw materials, too, are in short supply. "Shortly after the partial

lockdown was announced, everything came to a complete stop. There was no raw material available even for basic items as biscuits and other eatables. We had some raw input stock for disinfectants, handwash and hand sanitisers but we ran out soon as we ramped up production," said a senior executive at Hindustan Unilever. The largest FMCG player in the nation is unlikely to restart production or supply of its non-essential items anytime soon.

Over 75 per cent of dal mills are inoperative due to unavailability of labour and supply of raw material

Companies like Dabur India and Nestle are facing shutdowns and labour issues. "We are deploying special buses to help our workers and staff reach manufacturing units for producing essential products. However, availability of raw material and packing material continues to be a challenge with the restricted movement of trucks and this is hampering quick start-up of production," Shahrukh Khan, **Executive Director-Operations** at Dabur India, told *The Indian*

FMCG companies also flagged the lack of communication between the Centre, states and the local administration as another factor delaying normalisation.

"Proper implementation of guidelines would ensure seamless movement of raw materials and finished goods. There is a similar issue being faced at ports which is hurting smooth movement of imported raw materials and exporting of finished products," Khan said.

Nestle India said that manufacturing and distribution at the company's factories and warehouses had been either scaled down or suspended.

At the wholesale level, companies such as Metro Cash & Carry have seen attendance levels fall to 50 per cent over the last few days and plummeting footfall by retail customers.

"We have a stock of all essential food items - rice, dal, atta, at our stores for next two weeks," said Arvind Mediratta, MD & CEO of Metro Cash & Carry India. "We will eventually witness shortage in pulses and whole spices as these items are largely transported from states like Rajasthan, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh which were restricting movement of goods."

Also hard hit has been the pharmaceutical sector. "We're seeing a shortage of some Vitamin C and multivitamin brands on the medicine side. On top of this, the supply of brands like Whisper, Dettol and Savlon, Nanpro, Cerelac and even Dove shampoo in our store is all we have left, because we're not getting any more stocks of these products," said D K Chaudhary, pharmacy manager of Delhibased Globe Medicos.

The situation is dire in smaller towns where supplies take longer to reach. In western UP and Bihar, where the district

administration has identified and nominated shops to continue supply of essential items such as pulses, rice and wheat there has been no supply for the past one week, several shopkeepers told The Indian Express. On the ground, the trucks

wait for relief. Kultaran Singh Atwal, president of All India Motor Transport Congress, said that many truck drivers have fled to their homes fearful of contracting the disease and of the hold-up at the border. "Outside every state checkpoint hundreds of trucks are stuck." he said.

At Kajasthan border, last check shortages in every war)... At

least, there is a doctor here," he Across Madhya Pradesh,

A / D • /1

Harvana and Rajasthan, doctors have been besieged by the numbers. But at entry points to UP -Mathura from Bharatpur, Noida from Delhi, and Agra from Dholpur — there were no doctors Sunday, just one police jeep. Singh is also battling another

— time and sleep. He is posted at the Rarah Community Health Centre, with two colleagues. But now, from 8 am to 8 pm, two of them sit at the border. By night, it is left to one. Even through the day, there is work to do. The CHC itself may be shut, but Singh does his bit to spread awareness "every morning". "I tell people to wash their hands, and not to mingle. So far, there are no cases in Bharatpur, but if it spreads to the villages, God knows what will happen...," he says. Yogendra Singh, the local patwari who is giving the doctor company, completes the sentence: "There are three doctors. The CHC covers 15 villages, all with populations of over a thousand each Sochke dekhiye (Think about

At the District Hospital in Bharatpur, 15 km away, there is a queue of people, spread reasonably apart "for social distancing". Outside, there is anger and confusion. "They brought me from the border and took my name down. Can I go home now?" one asks. Another complains: "No tests are taking place." A third says: "They put a stamp my hand and told me to stay at home. But how will I get home now, my village is 50 km away?"

two doctors behind a table, and a cloth screen. The questions are the same. "Depending on what they say, we recommend isolation, or institutional quarantine or home quarantine. The government has set up quarantine stations in hotels across the city, says the lead doctor, who does not want to be identified. Over one hour, from 6 pm to 7 pm, as the light begins to fade outside. the doctors never stop, and the people too, most of them returning migrants.

At one end of the queue are

Inside the room, there are six doctors. Only two have full body protection, transparent and flimsy. Not one patient undergoes a temperature check in that hour. Four other doctors wear only gloves, a mask, and a white jacket. "Like the government, we are doing the best we can," the doctor says. Outside the section closed off

for possible COVID-19 cases, a building stands alone in an open field. The paint on the walls is coming off, and the cement ceiling is chipped. The blue poster in front reads: "Isolation Centre." The building is in the eyeline of Mahendra Rathore, standing in queue. "Looking at that building I have half a mind to run away What if I have the virus? They say they give food and water and a place to sleep. Lekin woh toh jail mein bhi dete hai (But that they give in jail, too)."

and March 11 — and efforts ICMR compares: infection probability low

the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the US, which had so far said only people who are sick should wear masks, is considering changing

Jamaat," he said. The police

claimed that as many as 300

people linked to the Jamaat

from Karnataka participated in

the event between March 8

the guidance. At 1,64,620 cases and 3,170 deaths, the US is now the worst hit country, overtaking both China (82,241 cases) and Italy (1,01,739 cases).

Globally, there are now 7,77,798 cases of COVID-19 and 37,272 deaths.

In India, officials have said the rate of increase in cases slowed down after the nationwide lockdown began from March 24 midnight.

"We request people that not everyone needs to wear masks. There are clear guidelines on

Members of the Tablighi

Jamaat, meanwhile, said that "at

least 1,500 members, including

280 foreigners, were evacuated

from the Banglewali Masjid and

Markaz Nizamuddin on March

23 — a day after the one-day

'Janta Curfew' announced by the

The Indian Express, "As of March

22, there were at least 4,000

people living at the Markaz. The

ernment's order that barred

large gatherings in the capital,

sources at the Markaz said, "This

is the international headquarter

of the Tablighi Jamaat and peo-

ple from all over the world come

and live here though the year.

There was a quarterly meeting

of members of the Jamaat in the

second week of March, but that

was before the lockdown. Also,

these people live inside the

Markaz. nowhere does it say

trains were running, people

were coming. and as long as

planes were flying, people were

coming to the area. As soon as

lockdown was announced, we

evacuated as many as we could

through the year for a few days

of teaching, and then go about

'chilla', which is 40 days of trav-

elling through the country,

across mosques, learning and

then imparting that knowledge

the Markaz claimed that "on

March 24, the SHO of Hazrat

An official spokesperson of

to Muslim households."

Ayyubi said, "People visit

Sources said that "as long as

that's not allowed.'

and then stayed put."

Asked about the Delhi gov-

1,500 were evacuated.'

Advocate Fuzail Ayyubi told

when a mask should be worn. If you are not feeling well and want to go to a hospital, you should definitely wear a mask. Our primary focus is on social distancing. There are reports of homemade masks, we are examining the matter," said Lav Agarwal, Joint Secretary, Health Ministry, emphasising that masks are a "scarce" commod-

Till last week, hospitals across the country had a total stock of 11.95 lakh N95 masks. An additional 5 lakh masks were distributed in the last two days, and another 1.40 lakh on Tuesday. Another 10 lakh masks will be part of the PPE kits be-

ing sourced from Singapore. The N95 masks are cur-

sued a notice that the Markaz

should be closed down, and we

stated that there are still people

the SDM to issue vehicle passes

so that the rest of the people

could be sent back to their

states... We did not get the per-

that most international visitors

come from Indonesia, Malaysia

and Thailand, and from within

India, many come from Tamil

Nadu, Assam and Uttar Pradesh.

Markaz said that "on March 25,

a medical team visited them for

inspection and lists of visitors

were provided to the authori-

ties... on March 26, the SDM vis-

ited Markaz Nizamuddin and

was apprised of the stranded

visitors and once again (we)

sought permission for the vehi-

cles arranged by us. The tehsil-

dar too visited with a medical

team and on March 27, six peo-

ple were taken for a check-up."

issued an order banning gather-

ings of over 200 people on

March 13. Responding to the

Tablighi Jamaat's statement, AAP

MLA Atishi tweeted: "The

'iztema' happened much before

the dates mentioned in this

statement, from 13-15th March.

On 13th, Delhi government is-

sued an order banning any gath-

ering of more than 200 people.

Why did markaz not stop the

event? Why did Delhi Police not

take action when police station

The Delhi government had

The spokesperson of the

Sources at the Markaz said

"We requested the SHO and

inside".

mission."

domestic manufacturers with a combined capacity to produce 50,000 masks per day. Efforts are on to increase daily production to 1 lakh by next week. The DRDO is also collaborat-

ing with local manufacturers to produce about 20,000 N99 masks per day within a week. Even as the entire contain-

ment strategy now focuses on identifying hotspots and putting them under surveillance with increased testing, Agarwal said: "From the government's perspective, even a single case is a hotspot... you have to understand that it is a very dynamic situation, what is a hotspot today will not remain one if containment is done.

4,346 in the last 24 hours, the 47 private laboratory chains which have been approved have together tested about 1,800 samples. Sources said some of them have written to the government, saying that that they are

> Meanwhile, a four-year project, with \$1 billion from the World Bank's COVID-19 Fast-Track Facility, called the India COVID-19 Emergency Response **Systems** and Health has been Preparedness launched.

supposed to be the largest Muslim religious movement in the world.

knowledge among Muslims. It is

Three trains on Railways radar

attended the congregation and who have since tested positive for COVID-19 or are suspected to be infected — unclear at the moment, complete passenger lists of these three trains every day between March 14 and 19 are being dug out and shared with authorities, sources said. "This is to map out how the cluster might have broken up and travelled," said a senior government official.

Sources said that over the last week, district authorities from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana have reached out to Railway authorities. Delhi government sources confirmed to The Indian Express that they have been collaborating with the Railways.

The three trains from Hazrat Nizamuddin to Andhra Pradesh. Telangana and Tamil Nadu covered a distance of over around 2,000 km through multiple states. The Grand Trunk Express, for example, has some 37 stops between the departure and destination stations. Civil authorities have, as per

protocol, asked Railways to advise its train staff to be on home quarantine and monitor symptoms, if any.

puts from the state authorities,' said a senior railway official.

ous services.

"Please share widely: Any passenger who travelled by train number 20840 (New Delhi-Ranchi) Rajdhani Express coach B1 on 17.3.2020 kindly contact immediately," Deputy Commissioner of Ranchi R Ray

as progress" stations in Delhi, sees 56 longdistance trains departing every day. Added to that, every day, 130 trains from other sources halt here. Besides, there are a age daily footfall of 2 lakh.

ity that those who attended the congregation and later took trains out of Delhi did so not only from Hazrat Nizamuddin station. "Some could have left the facility and taken trains from other stations like New Delhi or Anand Vihar, so a very specific input is vital," said a senior offi-

lem is that the travel dates are

ried about 1,200-1,500 passengers, one way, including the onboard staff who would have moved across coaches for vari-

and contractual personnel who travelled on the New Delhi-Ranchi Rajdhani Express on March 16-17 to determine if a person who took this train, and later tested positive for COVID-19, has any links to the cluster.

tweeted Tuesday. Authorities are calling the contact tracing effort a "work in Hazrat Nizamuddin, one of the prime

few unreserved inter-city trains as well. The station sees an aver-Besides, there is the possibil-

What is adding to the prob-

being done based on specific in-

Maulana Ilyas to spread religious Nizamuddin police station is-

is next to markaz?"

"The set protocol is to send The Tablighi Jamaat is a conout SMSes to the passengers of servative Muslim organisation the coach, call them and also that was set up in 1926 by monitor the staff. The tracing is Each of the three trains car-

Authorities in Jharkhand have also sought details of staff

cial.

3 THE OUTBREAK HOTSPOTS





DTC bus staff wear protective gear before transporting people from the Nizamuddin area to a quarantine facility on Tuesday; (right) police cordoned off the area amid the search for symptomatic patients. Praveen Khanna

THOSE WITH SYMPTOMS MOVED TO HOSPITALS

Nizamuddin finds itself under COVID shadow

SOURAV ROY BARMAN NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

ONE AFTER another, men lined up and walked in single file to buses parked over a kilometre along one barricaded stretch of Mathura Road. The other stretch of the road,

open for vehicular movement, had cars slowing down to catch a glimpse of what was happening, only to be shooed away by policemen, who also kept an eye from a safe distance.

Nizamuddin West, an otherwise bustling neighbourhood known for its Sufi dargah, was filled with fear and anxiety Tuesday after the Centre declared it as one of the 10 COVID-19 hotspots in the country.

At the centre of the outbreak is the four-storey Markaz Nizamuddin building, headquarters of the Tabilghi Jamaat. One batch after another, of 30-35 people, were brought out of the building and taken to quarantine centres in Narela.

Some who showed symptoms were taken straight to hospitals in ambulances. A medical camp was set up outside the building, where followers of the sect were made to undergo thermal screening. Following quick checks, they boarded DTC buses as drivers wore protective suits inside. Around 1.30 pm, a drone was brought for surveillance.

Outside the lane, Delhi Civil Defence Volunteers stood clutching lists with names of Nizamuddin basti residents who had come in contact with the

ing by home quarantine norms," a civil defence volunteer said. Amir Chaudhary, a resident

of Nizamuddin West, said: "The

Tablighi members. "We will visit houses of those people to check if they are abid-



At the Nizamuddin area on Tuesday. Praveen Khana

area has been disinfected several times but people are very scared. No one wants to step out, even to buy milk and bread. The area is congested and there were hundreds inside the Markaz."

nearby Jangpura Extension, too, people are worried. "Nizamuddin West and Nizamuddin basti are across the road. The situation has escalated over the past week but earlier, hardly anyone practised social distancing, and the flow of people from one area to the other was continuous," said Rajesh Seghal, a resident of A Block.

A resident of the basti said it would be ideal to test everyone to put people's mind at ease. Another resident said: "One cannot step out at all... the areas have been quarantined but some ration shops in lanes are open because daily wage labourers live here and we are trying to provide them food." A resident said that since "no one knows what tomorrow brings, we have stocked up on ration at home".

Calling it a "damaging narrative for the two colonies", another resident of the basti said, "It's being portrayed as if the virus originated from here... I am not associated with the markaz and my family and I are anxious about the infection."

City cases touch 120, another 80 from Nizamuddin in hospitals

ASTHA SAXENA NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

WITH 23 new COVID-19 cases being reported from the capital Tuesday, the total number of cases crossed the 100 mark to reach 120. Among the new cases, eight have a travel history, seven are contacts, and eight cases are still under investigation.

Meanwhile, 80 more people from Nizamuddin West – one of the hotspots of the virus — were admitted to hospitals after they showed symptoms of COVID-19. Over 350 people from the area have already been hospitalised. Lok Nayak Hospital, which has been designated as a COVID-19 hospital, received 12 new people from Nizamuddin West Tuesday.



resident of the area tested positive after which health authorities swung into action. So far, 24 people have tested positive from the area and the health department is tracing over 1,600 people.

So far, there are patients from Andamans (6), Tamil Nadu (4), Kolkata (4), Kashmir (2), Assam (1), Bihar (1) and Haridwar (1). Three international patients each are from Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal and the department is trying to access the details of the other two patients.

"At present, over 400 suspected COVID-19 patients from the area are admitted in isolation wards: more than 1.400 people have been sent to quarantine centres. Three new quarantine centres have been set up in DUSIB's facilities in Dwarka, Sultanpur and Bakkarwala, apart from the five-star hotels," said a senior health department official.

Sources said hospitals are facing trouble communicating with people from Nizamuddin West. "There are many who do not understand English and Hindi. Others do not have any contact numbers. It's difficult to find out which state or country they are from," said a senior doctor from a Delhi government hospital.

SHOs told to check mosques

MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL

NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

AS MANY as 205 foreign nationals who attended a religious gathering at a mosque in Nizamuddin West – which is now one among the 10 COVID-19 hotspots in the country — have been traced by Delhi Police's special branch unit.

"Places where they are staying are for common use. No social distancing would be possible there, causing grave danger to public health," said DCP (special branch) Suman Nalwa in her letter to the health secretary.

Delhi Police chief S N Shrivastava has also directed special branch teams to check all mosques in the capital, with help from local police, to find out if foreign nationals are still in Delhi. Police teams are also trying to identify those who attended the programme at the mosque, in order to screen them and send them into quarantine if required.

The direction came after Nalwa sent a list to Shrivastava, stating that "as per our information, persons/foreigners associated with Tablighi Jamaat are presently staying at various masjids in Delhi. They had been sent from Tablighi Jamaat head-

contacts, it came to light that an

audit conducted by the British

national was not conveyed to

the authorities. Since then,

quarters situated at Masjid Banglewali, Hazrat Nizamuddin." "We have so far traced 23

Indians; 127 Indonesians; 9 from Bangladesh; 13 from Kyrgyzstan; one each from Italy, Belgium and Tunisia; eight from Malaysia; seven Algerians; and seven others," said a senior police officer.

After identifying them, police are informing the district administration concerned and shifting them to quarantine centres for further medical help.

Meanwhile, Delhi Police have arrested two men after they found eight Kyrgyzstan nationals staying at his flat in Northwest Delhi's Bharat Nagar.

Mohalla clinic doctor tests positive, 1,200 being traced

ASTHA SAXENA NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

THE DELHI health department has initiated contact tracing of more than 1,200 patients who visited a mohalla clinic in Babarpur between March 12 and 20, days after the 48-year-old doctor running the clinic tested positive for coronavirus. The doctor is the wife of a 49-year-old doctor who tested positive for COVID-19 on March 22 after he treated a patient in a private clinic. The woman he contracted the disease from had returned from Saudi Arabia and is a resident of Dilshad Garden, officials said. The 49-year-old, apart from practicing at a private clinic, also worked

at the Maujpur mohalla clinic. The department has put up a board outside the Babarpur mohalla clinic requesting people who visited during the period to go into home quarantine. The chain of transmission started from the 38-year-old woman from Dilshad Garden, who tested positive on March 18, almost 10 days after she returned from Saudi Arabia. Dilshad Garden is among the 10 hotspots identified by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to trace the COVID-19 cases.

"She is admitted to GTB Hospital and her 17-year-old daughter, who also tested positive, is in Safdarjung Hospital. Her daughter had appeared for the Class XII board exams this year and we are tracing 24 students who are her contacts. Both are stable and being constantly monitored. Patients directly and indirectly linked to both Babarpur

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Patients wait outside a mohalla clinic at Seemapuri during the lockdown on Monday. Praveen Khanna

and Maujpur mohalla clinics are being traced. On Monday, a 47year-old male, indirectly linked with the Maujpur mohalla clinic doctor, tested positive," said a senior health department official.

On an average, a mohalla clinic witnesses 160-200 patients per day. The Delhi government has already decided to conduct tests for all healthcare workers who are directly involved in treating coronavirus patients. The health department is tracing over 3,000 people across the city who have come in contact with 10 of the cases linked with the 38-year-old woman from Dilshad Garden.

Till Tuesday evening, Delhi had confirmed 120 cases of COVID-19. Three of these are healthcare workers — two mohalla clinic doctors and a doctor from a private set-up. Out of the total 120 cases, 41 came from abroad, 24 belonged to Nizamuddin Markaz and 22 are families of those who came from abroad. The department is tracking the nature of transmission in the remaining 10 cases.

Fearing community transmission, many doctors working in mohalla clinics have not been coming to work. Health department officials said that of the 470 total clinics, around 200 are functional at the moment Sources said many senior doctors who don't want to expose themselves to the risk have applied for leave.

Meanwhile, at Dilshad Garden, the lanes were barricaded every few metres. The presence of police personnel stood out as well.

A resident, who was headed to get ration from a fair price shop in Seemapuri, said most people were unhappy with the relief arrangements and were on the streets to wave down vehicles of NGOs or government teams.

NOIDA COMPANY HID INFORMATION ON FOREIGNER VISIT

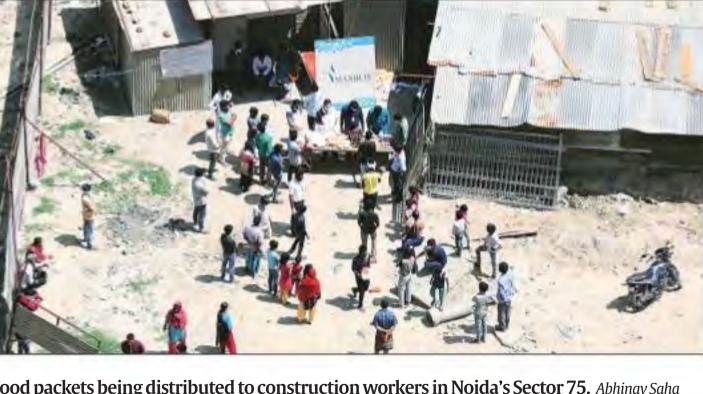
Linked to 23 cases, firm is sealed

AMIL BHATNAGAR NOIDA, MARCH 31

A FIRE safety firm at the epicentre of the rising number of cases in Gautam Budh Nagar district, particularly Noida, was sealed by administrative officials on Tuesday. More than 23 persons, including 16 employees of the firm and others who came in contact with them. have tested positive for coronavirus so far.

According to officials, a British national had visited the firm for an audit between March 15 and 19 — a fact the firm hid from authorities. The British national is alleged to be the source of the infection.

The MD of the company had also traveled to the UK in the first week of March and has tested positive along with his wife. "The premises of the firm in Sector 135 have been sealed to prevent further spread of the disease. The area has been sanitised, and no one is allowed to enter or use the establishment until further notice. Anyone



Food packets being distributed to construction workers in Noida's Sector 75. Abhinav Saha

found in violation will be booked," said Prasun Dwivedi, Divisional Magistrate, Gautam Budh Nagar.

According to officials, the company was founded 25 years ago and specialises in providing fire equipment such as extinguishers to houses and commercial set-ups. The company's

clients include the embassies of Ireland and UAE, buildings in Delhi University, BHEL and Bharat Petroleum. The company also has operations abroad, an official said.

more than 20 people across four districts have been found posi-It was two weeks ago when tive. The administration has prepared a list of 160 employthe company's MD tested posiees who are being screened. tive. After the Health Department began tracing his Until Monday evening, 87 con-

tacts of the employees were under quarantine, with the number set to rise, an official said.

The Health Department's handling of the cases connected to the firm came under heavy fire from Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday. A team from Lucknow that visited the district had raised technical objections on the Health Department's contact tracing efforts. After a heated discussion between the CM and officials, Noida District Magistrate B N Singh wrote to the administration that he did not wish to continue in the post. Late Monday evening, Singh was transferred to Lucknow, and a departmental enquiry was set up against him.

Former Prayagraj DM Suhas LY took charge as Gautam Budh Nagar DM early Tuesday morning. He held several meetings during the day and assessed the coronavirus situation in the district.

Until Tuesday evening, the Date Time & Place of interview for number of cases in the district selection will be intimated to candidates had risen to 39, with one fresh by e-mail/telephonic contact. case reported during the day.

Careers

SAINIK SCHOOL GHORAKHAL,

DISTT NAINITAL (UTTARAKHAND)-263156 POSTPONE OF WALK-IN-INTERVIEW FOR THE POST OF

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of Hostel Wardboy (02) and Matron (01) on contractual basis scheduled on 07 Apr 2020 in Sainik School Ghorakhal has been postponed. The same will be now held on 20 Apr 2020 at 9.00 A.M. Rest no change in the advertisement published on 21 Mar 2020. Ph: 05942-220051 PRINCIPAL

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Name of the Post No. of Post Reservation Open to all 1) Educational Qualification, Experience, Pay Scale etc. applicable as per norms specified by UGC, Government of Maharashtra, Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune.

UGC 5th Notification, dated 18th July, 2018 certificate from Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune. 3) T.A./D.A. will not be paid for attending the Interview.) Application along with all the necessary documents should reach within 15 days from date of Publication

2) Candidates submit their application form along with all certified documents and verified API — as per

of this advertisement to The Secretary, Anekant Education Society, (T. C. College Campus) Post Box No. 51, Baramati Dist. Pune — 413 102 (M.S.) 5) Preference will be given to 'Jain' Religious Candidate.

Secretary Anekant Eduacation Socie

THE OUTBREAK THE CITY

FOR MANY, HOME IS WHERE FAMILY IS



SUNIL KUMAR, 32 Family members: 3 **Profession:** Tailor in Bhajanpura

Earning: Rs 10,000 per month; **Headed towards:** Etawah

WHY HE LEFT: "I had to stop working after the lockdown was imposed... it has been very difficult... If they extend the lockdown, I can't be stuck at the shelter."



RAMESH KUMAR, 40 Family members: 3 **Profession:** Catering staff

Earning: Rs 600 a month; **Headed towards:** Jaipur

WHY HE LEFT: "I tried to return home but police stopped me due to the lockdown. Though this shelter has been my home for the past one year, I need to get back to my family in Jaipur."



SURENDER CHAUDHARY, 48 Family members: 5

Profession: Works at a local hotel

Earning: Rs 450 a day; Headed towards: Gorakhpur

WHY HE LEFT: "I used to stay at Lahori Gate, near Khari Baoli. I don't even have a phone with me to speak to my family."

REPORTING BY ANAND MOHAN J, PHOTOS BY ABHINAV SAHA

CORONA WATCH

South, East MCDs call off house meetings

New Delhi: For the first time ever, the South and East Delhi MCDs could not hold their mandatory house meetings in March. Holding a house meeting is mandatory each month, in which all councillors participate. Else, the power of the deliberative wing is considered null and void and transferred to the executive wing. The North body had held its meet in the beginning of the month. Leader of the House in the South MCD, Kamaljeet Sehrawat, said a file has been moved to the L-G seeking permission to not dissolve the deliberative wing as it is an "emergency situation".

HC urged to look into gathering at Nizamuddin

New Delhi: The Delhi HC was urged to take suo motu action against officials concerned for allegedly failing to prevent a religious congregation in Nizamuddin, during the Delhi government lockdown, which led to the spread of COVID-19 in the country. Central government standing counsel Gaurang Kanth wrote to the court in his personal capacity. ENS

269 city schools double up as relief centres for migrant workers stopped at the border On Sunday night, 150 people about this (shelter), so I'm here.

SUKRITA BARUAH NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

LACCHMI (26) is four months into her pregnancy. On Sunday, she walked over 30 km with her husband and two children, aged two and four, from Nangloi -- after their landlord locked them out of their rented home -- to Anand Vihar in the hopes of catching a bus to their village in Etah. They were unsuccessful, but found cover in a school turned into a shelter in Patparganj.

The shelter has been readied for migrant workers in Delhi who have found themselves without a place to stay because of the lockdown.

Lacchmi, though, is restless. "My stomach has been hurting. I haven't met any female caretaker here so I haven't told anyone about my pregnancy. Yesterday, after all the walking,



At the school in Ghazipur. Mattresses have been laid out in 16 **classrooms.** *Prem Nath Pandey*

we found buses were not taking us across the border. I fainted out of exhaustion, and someone told my husband and children about this shelter. He brought me here," she said.

Both the schools-turned-

shelters at Patparganj and Ghazipur, near the Uttar Pradesh border, are largely occupied by people who had reached the Anand Vihar Interstate Bus Terminal on Sunday, expecting a ride home.

slept at the Patpargani centre, while 243 slept at Ghazipur. At both shelters, 9-12 mattresses have been laid out on the floors of each classroom, with some distance between them, and food is being provided by midday meal suppliers.

Occupants are also not allowed to exit the school buildings. Families are sharing rooms with each other, but have been asked not to sit on each other's mattresses.

Jeetender (37) said he is impatient to get home to Kheri, Uttar Pradesh. "People here walked till Anand Vihar because they heard news that buses were taking people to villages in UP. I walked from Subhash Nagar, but all of us ended up running around in circles. A bus took some of us from Anand Vihar to Ghazipur bus stand. We got hit by *lathis* at different points. Finally, some people told me

I have received food here, but the moment the border is opened, I need to get back to my wife and four children," he said. The Ghazipur shelter has

mattresses stocked in empty classrooms, in preparation for new occupants.

"We have around 40 classrooms but are using only 16 as of now. We are arranging for electricity points so that they don't have to leave the rooms to charge their phones. We will also provide kits comprising bathing soap, detergent, toothbrush and toothpaste," said a member of the school administration.

The government has published a list of 269 schools which are to function as hunger relief centres and be converted into shelters, and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has announced that arrangements have been made to feed 4 lakh people on a daily basis.

gan in 1901. The record for the

being pushed out by the winds."

22. In the last week since March

25, it largely remained in the 'sat-

isfactory' range and further im-

Centre's System of Air Quality

and Weather Forecasting and

Research (SAFAR), of the lock-

down period between March 24

and 31, showed 63% reduction in

nitrogen oxide (NOx) and 49%

reduction in PM2.5 presence in

Delhi's air — as compared to the

same period in 2019 and 2018.

An assessment done by the

proved to 'good' on Saturday.

is 97.4 mm in 2015.

Gurgaon sees no new cases in 7 days, says testing enough

SAKSHI DAYAL GURGAON, MARCH 31

EVEN AS the number of COVID-19 cases saw a spike in Delhi and Noida, no new cases have been recorded in Gurgaon in the past week. According to officials, this is not due to a lack of testing.

Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Jaswant Singh Punia said it is, in fact, the result of a lack of "community transmission".

"All the people who have tested positive in Gurgaon so far have either had a travel history or have been in contact with people who have a travel history and had tested positive. The fact that there have been no new cases in the last week indicates there is no community transmission here as of now," said Dr Punia.

Dismissing allegations of "under testing", he said, "The samples sent are of a good volume, but fortunately most of them are not positive." A total of 10 people have tested positive in Gurgaon so far. Six have recovered and been discharged from hospital.

The district has a population of over 15 lakh, and 448 samples have been sent for testing so far, according to data released by the Gurgaon health department Tuesday. Of these, 384 people have tested negative and results of 54 samples are awaited.

The number of samples sent for testing daily varies. While 30 samples were received for testing on March 25, the figure was 24 the following day, and 30 on March 27. On March 28 and 29, the number of samples received was 26 and 23, and on Monday it was 29.

Tuesday saw almost double the number of samples being received, at 54.

"The number of samples received today are higher because most of them are of people who were found living together in a house in Pataudi. Some of them have been moved to the quarantine facility at the Civil Hospital,' said the CMO.

In Faridabad, two new cases were recorded on Tuesday, taking the total cases to six. Among them is an employee of a fire safety firm in Noida, where 16 people have already contracted coronavirus. His wife had tested positive Monday.

"The other patient resides in Faridabad but runs a shop in Delhi," said a spokesperson of the Faridabad district administration.

Migrant move: In UP, Delhi sparring a message suggests local role

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

AMID A tussle between the Uttar Pradesh and Delhi governments on the exodus of migrants from the national capital, a purported message on the 'SDM Seelampur Group' has come to light, which states that "people who are roaming on the streets and wish to cross the border may be escorted to Shastri Park", and from there "DTC buses will take them to Ghaziabad border". The message is attributed to the "Div Com and Home Secretary".

second highest rainfall in March This comes two days after two senior Delhi government officers Six Western Disturbances that were suspended and two others affected the city in March and were issued showcause notices for "failing to maintain absolute brought on strong winds and rainfall. The average wind speed integrity and devotion to duty" recorded was 15-20 kmph, said during the lockdown. A Delhi Srivastava, adding, "Due to raingovernment official said they are fall, suspension of dust remained "not aware of any such message", low and pollutants in the air kept and maintained that "there was no decision by the Delhi govern-Air quality kept improving afment at any level" to escort peoter the 'Janata Curfew' on March ple to the border.

> Additional Chief Secretary (Transport) Renu Sharma and Principal Secretary (Finance) Rajeev Verma were suspended Sunday, while disciplinary showcause notices were issued to Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Satyagopal and the Seelampur sub-divisional magistrate Ajay Arora.

The Indian Express sent the purported message to Arora, the Seelampur SDM, but he did not comment on the issue. Sharma.

Verma and Satyagopal did not comment on the issue either.

After the lockdown was an-

nounced, thousands of migrant workers have been trying to walk to their villages. The numbers had swelled Saturday, when thousands gathered at Anand Vihar and Lal Kuan in the hope of getting a bus to UP. The Uttar Pradesh government had claimed Delhi deliberately government dropped migrant labourers at the border with UP — a charge denied by Delhi Deputy CM Manish Sisodia, who called the allegations petty and ridiculous. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has repeatedly appealed to migrants to stay in the capital, assuring them that food and shelter

will be taken care of. Delhi government officials said they had not taken any decision to facilitate the exodus. "The government is not aware of any such messages sent by any officer," said an official, who did not

wish to be named.

The officers were involved in relief operations started by the government, especially coordination between different district officials regarding setting up of shelters and distribution of food A government official said both had been working hard to ensure help is given to migrant workers.

"Perhaps there was a misunderstanding. The officers have been working hard and are quite senior. Since the matter of services does not fall under the elected government, we did not have a say in the matter." the official said.

City sees cleanest March air in 5 years for the month since counting be-

SHIVAM PATEL NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

DELHI'S AIR quality in March was the cleanest on record in the last five years. Experts said this was achieved through favourable meteorological conditions, including an all-time record high rainfall, unseen since the count began in 1901, along with the absence of major emission sources as a result of the coronavirus lockdown.

"What we are seeing is extraordinary. This is the baseline of what Delhi's air quality should be after factoring in only limited emissions from very few sources," said an official from the Delhi environment department.

Emissions over the past 10 days have reduced, the official said, due to restrictions imposed on movement of private vehicles, public transport, commercial flights and trains, and closure of all non-essential services.

Data from the Central

Pollution Control Board (CPCB), analysed by The Indian Express, shows the average monthly air quality index (AQI) this March was 128, significantly lower than average AQIs of the same month since 2016 when records began.

There were 10 'satisfactory' air quality days this March, where the AQI is between 51 and 100, and one 'good' air quality day, where the index ranges from 0 to 50 — an AQI of this measure was not achieved in this period since 2016, as per the CPCB data.

In the previous four years in March, only 'moderate', 'poor' and 'very poor' air quality was seen in the capital. This year, the number of 'poor' air days, where the AQI is between 201 and 300, was only two, while the remaining days saw 'good', 'satisfactory' and 'moderate' air quality.

Kuldeep Srivastava, head of IMD's regional forecasting centre in Delhi, said the total rainfall recorded in the city in March was 109.6mm — an all-time high



An aerial view of the capital. Amit Mehra

WEATHER, LOCKDOWN PLAYED A PART

AVG AQI FOR	RMARCH
2020	128.22
2019	184.16
2018	203
2017	211
2016*	237.85
*Data of 27 days;	Source: CPCB

128.22	CONTROLIV	IEASUKES
184.16	NOx	PM2.5
203	reduction	reduction
211	63 %	49%
237.85	PERIOD: Ma	rch 24 to 3

IMPACT OF COVID-19 CONTROL MEASURES

2.5 uction

to 31 Source: SAFAR

AT KALINDI KUNI CAMP

Living amid medical waste, these refugees don't fear virus, only hunger

ANAND MOHAN J NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

"THE ONE who collects the maximum number of syringes wins the game," shouted 11-year-old Irshad as he ran around Sharan Vihar camp's Assamese quarters, carrying a plastic tray and filling it with discarded syringes. Two of his friends only managed to find some plastic bottle caps and parts of what used to be a drip feed, and gave up after a few minutes.

"I won the game today. We collect the syringes and play with them later. We do this every day," said Irshad.

located near Kalindi Kunj, houses several hundred Rohingya refugees in addition to migrants from Assam, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh. Many at the camp work as medical waste collectors, going from hospital to hospital and bringing back waste to the campsite to segregate.

The Sharan Vihar campsite.

The campsite, which *The* Indian Express visited Monday, was filled with rows and rows of medical waste – surgical masks, gloves and empty tablet packets, among other items — packed into sky blue bags.

The shutdown in Delhi over the coronavirus pandemic has

source of livelihood, but residents are also at risk because they can't dispose of the waste, which has been accumulating around their homes. Most who work as medical

not just taken away their only

waste collectors mainly reside in the Assamese quarters. One of them, Anwar Islam (39), said the last time he went to a local hospital to collect medical waste was a month ago. He said he "pays an authorised medical waste contractor to collect his quota from the hospital". It takes him over five hours to

collect the waste, which his wife, Ashada Begum (37), then segre-



The camp is home to Rohingya and migrants from Assam, **UP. Many work as medical waste collectors.** Abhinav Saha

gates for a whole day. A kilogram of plastic medical waste fetches them Rs 12. Surrounded by a mountain of

medical waste, their house is hard to find: Discarded face masks, tunics, gowns and caps jut out from the blue bags while a box of discarded injections lie near the entrance.

Cooking some rice and dal from the ration distributed a day ago, Begum said: "There has been no work in months. First, it was because of the Shaheen Bagh protest... now the lockdown. I don't fear the disease, I fear my five children starving."

"We have borrowed Rs 2,000

from camp residents. I don't know how long we will survive," she added. Further away, a dirt road lit-

tered with broken ampoules and empty tablet strips snakes its way around a mountain of medical waste, where Zaiful (36) stays with her three children in a one-room house.

Around 15 days ago, she segregated the medical waste and is now thinking of ways to sell it in Nangloi. "I know it is dangerous to work in these conditions. But we can't even dispose of the waste now as police are not letting us leave the camp," she said.

Her next-door neighbour

coronavirus: "I have a mask that will help me. The garbage around my house does not scare me. The empty plate does." Dr Ashok Aggarwal from the

Dilshad fumed when asked about

Indian Society of Hospital Waste Management said hospital waste must be disposed of within 48 hours as the risk of infections from a wide range of diseases from Hepatitis B to HIV — is high "Private contractors are offered the contracts. The waste is disposed of in burial pits or incinerators after it is shredded," he said.

When contacted, South MCD officials said they will examine the issue.

THE INDIAN EXPRESS, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2020 THE OUTBREAK NATION





Chishti Dargah in Ajmer being disinfected. PTI

ODISHA Salary of CM, ministers deferred

Bhubaneswar: The Odisha government on Tuesday issued an order deferring a portion of the salary of the chief minister, ministers, and All India Service officers as part of austerity measures to tackle COVID-19, an official said. As per the order, there will be a deferment of 70 per cent in the gross salary in respect of the CM, ministers, MLAs, chairpersons of all staterun corporations and elected representatives of all local bodies.

HARYANA Varsity sets up isolation beds

Bahadurgarh: PDM University in Bahadurgarh has joined hands with health authorities and has set up 50 isolation beds for those suspected to have been infected by coronavirus, 30 beds for confirmed cases and 8 ICU beds for emergency cases at the 100-bed PDP general hospital with the support of district health authorities. University CEO Chitresh Lather said more wards can be made available, assuing cooperation. **ENS**

JEE Mains to be held in May-end

New Delhi: The Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) for admission in engineering colleges, which has been postponed due to coronavirus situation, is likely to be held in the last week of May, the HRD Ministry's **National Testing Agency** said Tuesday. "As of now the examination is proposed to be held in the last week of May 2020. Exact date will be announced after assessing the situation...," the ministry said. PTI

Assam registers first corona case, patient stable, says minister

Guwahati: A 52-year-old man from Assam's Karimganj district tested positive for coronavirus on Tuesday, becoming the first patient in the state to do so.

Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said, "A 52-year-old person has been found positive for Coronavirus and is Assam's first #Covid19 patient. He is undergoing treatment at Silchar Medical College. His condition is stable."

Health officials have not given details regarding whether the man had any foreign travel history.

Meanwhile, the Assam government announced that from April 1,58 lakh families would get free rice under the National Food Security Act. Moreover, a onetime cash assistance of Rs 1,000 would be given to families without an NFSA card. Around 2.7 lakh registered construction workers would also be given Rs 1,000 each as a on-time assistance. **ENS**



EARLY RELEASE

Prisoners at Naini Central Jail near Prayagraj prepare to be released on parole to prevent overcrowding in wake of the spread of COVID-19. A total of 5,468 undertrials have been released across UP, with 25,000 convicts said to be released. Ritesh Shukla

1,200 PEOPLE FROM ANDHRA, TELANGANA TOOK PART IN JAMAAT

10 Indonesians return on train, test positive; officials tracing others

SREENIVAS JANYALA HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

WHILE MANY of the 1,200 or so people from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana who took part in the Tablighi Jamaat congregation at Delhi's Markaz Nizamuddin said there was no government advisory against travelling or congregation when they reached Delhi in early-March, and that most people from the twin-states returned within two or three days of the events, officials are now tracing contacts of all those attended the congregation.

Officials said all contacts of the 10 Indonesians who took a train back to Karimnagar district after the event, and subsequently reported positive for coronavirus, have been tested.

Eighty-seven of 711 people from Andhra Pradesh who attended the congregation remain untraced yet, and multiple teams are trying to locate them, officials said.

On Tuesday, of 17 fresh positive cases were reported in Andhra, including eight who attended the cingregation; six were of contacts of those who at-

ABHISHEK ANGAD

IHARKHAND RECORDED its first

COVID-19 case on Tuesday after a

Malasiyan national, a member of

Tablighi Jamaat, tested positive

at Ranchi's Rajendra Institute Of

Officials said the 22-year-old

woman attended an event at

Delhi's Nizamuddin area in mid-

March, following which she

boarded a train to Ranchi. A

source said, "She along with 23

others was part of event. She

boarded Rajdhani Express on

March 16 and reached Ranchi the

next day. We are tracing the con-

tact and the entire travel history."

Nitin Kulkarni said, "The woman

was part of 17 foreign nationals

who were sent for isolation.

Principal Health Secretary

Medical Sciences (RIMS).

RANCHI, MARCH 31

Jharkhand records first

COVID-19 case, search

on for woman's contacts

tended it.

On Tuesday, the number of confirmed cases in Andhra was 50, while in Telangana it was 77.

"We are trying to gather in-

formation if anyone else travelled to Nizamuddin for the meeting," Andhra minister Perni Venkataramiah said. According to officials who

traced the movement of the Indonesians, the entire group travelled in a second class coach (S9) of AP Sampark Kranti Express. They first got off at Ramagundam, in Telangana's Peddapalli district, on March 13, an officer said. "They visited several local mosques and travelled in a six-seater autorickshaw, and participated in four meetings. We traced the auto driver and put him in quarantine; he tested negative," a police officer said.

The group went to Karimnagar on March 14. Circle Inspector of Karimnagar's One Town Police Station, Vijay Kumar, said: "They visited four mosques in Mukarrampura, Ajmatheiya, and collector's office area — hundreds of people joined them in prayers, and they also held meetings. Jameel Ahmed, owner of Institute of Mathematics, a

Among them were seven

Indians too... The woman tested

Manoj Kumar said, "The worry-

ing part is that she did not have

any symptoms. All others who

came with her have been found

to be COVID-19 negative, but will

stayed at five different houses

since she came to Ranchi. "All

have been quarantined and

there is complete lockdown in

Hindpiri area where she stayed.

We are ascertaining her pre-

ficial said they all were asymp-

tomatic, but will be tested soon.

On March 24, 11 foreign na-

Delhi travel details," he said.

Ray said that the woman

be tested again."

RIMS head of microbiology

positive Tuesday afternoon."

coaching centre, invited the Indonesian group, and some local religious leaders, to interact with his students. This was in violation of orders to keep all educational institutions closed."

Jameel, Kumar said, took them around town to several religious places and homes of some prominent Muslim families. "He was arrested for the violation and released on station bail," Kumar said.

Officials estimate that at least 300-400 people came in contact with the group. Several Special Branch officials, as also Health Department officials and workers who went around trying to ascertain places they visited were also quarantined.

On Monday, two persons tested positive in Karimnagar (total confirmed cases in district now 13) — all in the area where the Indonesian group moved around.

'No idea of virus' when they went to Delhi

Shaik Meeravali Mansur, president of Tablighi Jamaat in Eluru, in Andhra's West Godavari district, told *The Indian Express* that there was no advisory on COVID-19 when he left for Delhi on March 6. "I reached New Delhi on March 6; at least 25 others from Eluru arrived a week later. We were there until March 17. During this entire time the government did not issue any warning or advisory, so we felt we were not at any risk," he said.

said they learnt about the virus threat "only after returning" Of 25 members from Eluru put under quarantine, five were

leave by March 17 or 18", Mansur

While "most of us decided to

put under observation last week after they developed symptoms. officials said.

According to one member from Guntur, who did not want to be identified, more than 2,500 people from across India and abroad stayed at Nizamuddin for several weeks, and were eventually left stranded after the Centre announced the lockdown. "A convocation was held from March 15 to March 17 afternoon. Most Telugu people (from Andhra and Telangana) left on March 17, as by then news of coronavirus had started coming in."

FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com

Telangana limits release of info, officials deny clampdown charge

SREENIVAS JANYALA HYDERABAD, MARCH 31

AS THE number of COVID-19 cases in Telangana rises, the state government has limited the information being shared about the outbreak on a day-to-day basis.

Till the number of cases was around 45, the state government had been releasing daily information on the number of fresh cases, the number of people under quarantine and the steps being taken to tackle the outbreak.

However, after the number of fresh cases daily went up, the government limited the information tionals — all members of Tablighi provided. On Monday, the govern-Jamaat — who stayed at a ment first said in a release there mosque in Ranchi's Tamar area were two new cases, Within minwere sent for quarantine. An ofutes, the CMO issued another release, stating that five persons from the state died of COVID-19.

On Tuesday, a late release by Health Minister Etela Rajender – but not with his official letterhead

stated 15 fresh cases had been reported in the state. Those who tested positive either attended the Tabhligi Jamaat meeting in Delhi or came in contact with those who did, said the release.

The release, however, did not provide information about the districts the dead, or those who have tested positive, belong to or their travel history.

Asked why information on the number of people who attended the jamaat and those who are showing symptoms was not released, Rajender said the data is still being compiled.

G Srinivas Rao, Chief Director of Public Health, said that information was being released only after proper verification and that is why there was some delay.

TABLIGHI JAMAAT CONGREGATION

First link was spotted on March 17; list of foreigners took till 21st

Medical screening at Markaz started only from March 26

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

THE CONNECTION between a Tablighi Jamaat congregation at Nizamuddin in New Delhi and the spread of COVID-19 first emerged on March 17, after a case was detected in Telangana. However, it was only by March 21 that the Home Ministry (MHA) was able to draw up a list of over 800 foreigners associated with Tablighi activities across the country.

"Information about a Tablighiassociated COVID patient in Telangana first came to us on March 18. An Indonesian who attended the conference at Nizamuddin and travelled to Telangana tested positive on March 17. From the next day, intelligence agencies and the Ministry began tracing all foreigners associated with the Talighi Jamaat in various parts of the country," an MHA official said. According to the Ministry, as

of March 21, more than 1,000 Tablighi workers of foreign nationalities were in India. Of these, 216 were staying in Nizamuddin Markaz, the epicentre of the spread associated with the Tablighi Jamaat congregation.

"Additionally, about 824 foreigners had been, as on March 21, doing Chilla (proselytising) activities in various parts of the country... Details of these 824 foreigners had been shared on March 21 with the State Police for identifying them, getting them medically screened and quarantining them," the Ministry said in a statement.

It added that as on March 21,

some 1,746 persons were staying at the Hazrat Nizamuddin Markaz. It is not clear what action was taken between March 18 and 21 to screen these people, or to get the Markaz vacated. The Delhi government had on March 13 issued orders banning assembly of more than 200 people for any kind of "sports activity or seminars".

Interestingly, medical screening of those at the Markaz started only on March 26, after the death of a Tablighi-associated COVID-19 patient was reported from Telangana.

According to the MHA, nationals of Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Nepal, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Kyrgyzstan generally come for proselytising activities of the Tablighi Jamaat to India. They normally report their arrival at the Tabligh Markaz at Banglewali Mosque in Nizamuddin, from where they are detailed for Chilla activities to different parts of the country.

Apart from the March 21 missive to states, the MHA has claimed, on March 28, state police were advised to collect the names of Indian Tablighi Jamaat workers from the local coordinators, locate them on the ground, get them medically screened, and quarantine them. "So far, about 2,137 such persons have been identified in different States...," the MHA statement said.

Markaz residents were being screened from March 26 onward, the MHA said. "So far 1,203 Tablighi Jamaat workers have been medically screened. (As many as) 303 of them had symp-

toms of COVID-19 and were referred to different hospitals in Delhi. Rest of them have been moved to different quarantine centres."

According to an MHA estimate, since January 1, about 2,100 foreigners arrived in India for Tablighi activities. Many left before the lockdown, but over 1,000 stayed on.

"Bureau of Immigration has been sharing (since February 1) with State authorities, details of all international arrivals from af fected countries based on Self Declaration Form filled in by them. In addition, since March 6, Bureau of Immigration had also been sharing details of all the international arrivals (both Indians and foreigners) at all the international airports in the country...," the MHA statement said.

According to MHA figures as on March 21, among the Tablighi foreigners who fanned out across the country, most (125) went to Tamil Nadu, followed by Uttar Pradesh (132), Haryana and Maharashtra (115 each), and Telangana (82).

In its March 28 letter, MHA said that about 2,000 foreigners of Tablighi association from 70 countries were in different parts of India on tourist visas valid for six months. Most of these foreigners are from Bangladesh (493), Indonesia (472), Malaysia (150), and Thaliland (142).

Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla said, "All those who have travelled to India on tourist visas recently and have violated visa conditions will be proceeded against legally. This includes being blacklisted."

Tumkur death mystery solved, victim traced to Delhi event

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE BENGALURU, MARCH 31

A MYSTERY surrounding the source of the COVID-19 infection that killed a 60-year-old man in Sira town of Karnataka's Tumkur district has been resolved, with the state health department ascertaining that he attended the Tablighi Jamaat congregation in Delhi in March.

The man had no foreign travel history.

"We were racking our brains on the source of the infection. We have now connected it to his participation in the religious event in Delhi," said a senior doctor involved in contact tracing by the state health department.

Karnataka Health Minister B Sriramulu confirmed in a tweet Tuesday that the Tumkur man attended the Tablighi Markaz in Nizamuddin.

As many as 10 people who participated in the congregation have died so far. After discovering that the 60-year-old man who died in Tumkur on March 27 was infected at the event, health authorities in Karnataka have placed in quarantine 78 people linked to Tablighi Jamaat.

"We don't have specific information on which days they attended. They have been home quarantined and are now being



Two policemen wearing coronavirus-themed helmets during an awareness programme in Bengaluru. PTI

moved to government quarantine facilities," Karnataka health secretary Jawaid Akhtar said. "We are not sure if all 78 quarantined persons participated in the congregation in Delhi but they are all from the Tablighi Jamaat basically and a lot of mixing has happened."

among the Tablighi Jamaat members quarantined in Karnataka are 50 foreign nationals – 19 from Kyrgyzstan, 20 from Indonesia, four from South Africa, three from Gambia, and one each from the US, the UK, France and Kenya. The police have said as many as 300 people from Karnataka linked to Tablighi Jamaat participated in the event in Delhi and efforts are on to put each one of them in quarantine.

According to officials, the 60-

year-old man from Tumkur

boarded Kongu Express in Delhi

on March 11 and reached

Yeshwantpur on March 14. From there, he took a bus to Sira, said officials. His 13-year-old son tested positive for COVID-19 Police Tuesday said that Monday, officials said. Health authorities have called upon passengers who

boarded the train 11 to contact the helpline. So far, three persons have

died due to COVID-19 in Karnataka. Thirteen fresh cases were reported in the state on Tuesday, taking the total count to 101.

Clusters lead to surge in spread but could help contain it too

AMITABH SINHA

PUNE, MARCH 31

THE EMERGENCE of human clusters in which several people together have been found to be infected with coronavirus is likely to significantly alter the nature of spread of the disease in the country. While the number of infected persons has increased much faster in the last three days than at any other time since the outbreak, experts believe that from the perspective of containing the spread, the emergence of these clusters might be a good thing.

The number of positive cases in the country has more than dou-

bled in the last five days, from just under 700 on March 26 to over 1400 today. Many of the new infected cases are concentrated in large groups, like in those linked to a religious meeting of Tablighi Iamaat in New Delhi. Such clusters, not all of them linked to the Tablighi Jamaat, have emerged in Meerut, Sangli, Ahmednagar, Delhi and Telangana.

Besides the fact that the source of transmission in most of these cases can reliably be traced, experts say such concentrated cases could also be easier for the health authorities to handle compared to isolated cases dispersed in population, in terms of isolating them and preventing further spread



An official takes the temperature of migrants entering a **shelter home in Lucknow.** Vishal Srivastav

"The emerging news that nearly 100 cases in India could be traced back to people who attended a gathering in Delhi further strengthens the possibility that until

so far, in almost all cases, the infection is traced back to a person coming from overseas. Such clustering of infections suggests that there is no community transmission," said LS Shashidhara, a professor of biology at Ashoka University.

LAINED

"Scientists should analyse the dynamics of infection in all clustered groups across India to un-

climatic conditions and pre-medical history would influence the spread. A major caveat. however. is the absence of data on asymptomatic positive cases as we

derstand how geo-

have not tested them at all," he said.

Gautam Menon, a professor of computational biology at the Institute of Mathematical Sciences, agreed with the contention that clusters could be easier to handle, but said that there were many other cases, outside of these clusters, that looked like very good evidence of community

transmission.

"It is no doubt easier to track and isolate a large group of infected people in one place. But we are also seeing an increasing number of isolated cases now where the original point of transmission is not known, or is unclear. This is pointing towards what many of us have been saying for long, that community transmission is a reality and we cannot escape from that." he said.

The government has already declared some of the locations where these clusters have emerged as 'hot spots', and has said that it will increase surveillance and testing of samples at these places.

THE OUTBREAK NATION





A makeshift quarantine facility at an indoor stadium in **Guwahati.** PTI

MEGHALAYA Liquor sent home, for health reasons

Guwahati: The Meghalaya government has allowed home delivery of liquor for those who need it on health grounds, an official said Tuesday. B Syiemlieh, the Deputy Secretary of the Excise Department, wrote in a letter that the liquor will be delivered "strictly against medical prescription issued by the registered medical practitioner". As per the letter, there will be a online platform where those aged 21 and above can upload a prescription and order the **ENS**

Free rice, relief measures announced

ASSAM

Guwahati: The Assam government will provide free rice to 1.58 lakh families under the National Food Security Act, and one-time cash assistance of Rs 1,000 each for families without an NFSA card. According to the cabinet decisions taken late Monday, around 2.7 lakh registered construction workers too would be given Rs 1,000 each as onetime assistance. Farming and tea garden activities will be allowed from April 1. Rice mills, flour mills and biscuit factories, too, will function.

Dalai Lama donates to PM fund

Chandigarh: The Dalai Lama Tuesday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressing support for his efforts to tackle the COVID-19 outbreak. The Tibetan spiritual leader also donated to the PM-CARES Fund, and the staff of his office contributed a day's salary to the fund. The amount was not disclosed. "I appreciate the enormous challenges that this crisis poses to the world community and the need for strict measures to be taken to meet them," the Dalai Lama wrote.ENS

MAHARASHTRA



Anitha Chavan (20), part of a group of 13 construction workers, reached Loni on the Pune-Solapur highway after walking for six days on Tuesday. The group had left Mumbai on March 25 for their village in Gulbarga district in Karnataka. Arul Horizon

MUMBAI

Hospital staffer tests positive, others point to discrimination

TABASSUM BARNAGARWALA MUMBAI, MARCH 31

A CLEANER at Kasturba hospital tested positive for COVID-19 becoming the first healthcare worker from a government hospital in the city to catch the infection while caring for coronavirus patients. Kasturba Hospital remains the nodal centre for admitting COVID-19 cases and testing in Mumbai.

Hospital staffers have complained of discrimination claiming that doctors and nurses get N-95 masks and proper protective gear while cleaners are given an inferior quality knee-length gown and 2-ply or 3-ply mask. "Every time we ask for a mask, we are handed a 3-ply mask. The gown tears easily and does not even cover the entire body. Our legs remain exposed. The doctors and nurses are given two piece suit as protective gear," a cleaner said.

Cop tests positive

Mumbai: A 52-year-old constable in Mumbai, attached to the Government Railway Police (GRP), on Tuesday became the first police personnel to test positive for COVID-19 in Maharashtra. The GRP has come up with a list of 32 people he had come in contact with so that they can be quarantined. The constable is being treated at Kasturba Hospital.

The female cleaner who tested positive is in her thirties. The Titwala resident had to sleep in ward 13, meant for children suffering from other illnesses, for three days because she could not go home. When she developed cough and cold, her nasal swab was taken. On Tuesday she was ward after she tested positive. Close contacts of the cleaner have been quarantined.

Her husband, who works in the dairy industry, son and daughter are currently in their native village. "We last received training on infection control during H1N1 outbreak. It is scary to handle dead bodies," a hospital staffer said, adding that they are made to do double shifts for 16 hours due to the outbreak. "I fell ill for the last two days and could not come. They said my salary will be deducted. But for extra shift we are not given any extra money," he said.

Another staffer said they are scared to go home to their family from the hospital. "If we get protective gear like doctors even we would feel reassured," he said.

The hospital's superintendent Dr Chandrakant Pawar did not respond to calls. The state health department said they have not been notified about the case yet.

11 of family test positive, Jaipur Walled City under total lockdown

DEEP MUKHERJEE JAIPUR, MARCH 31

ON MARCH 12, a 45-year-old man returned from Oman from a business trip and after landing at Delhi airport, he took a bus the same day to his hometown Ramgani — a densely-populated locality inside the Walled City of Jaipur, a UN-ESCO World Heritage Site.

The next day, he met a friend, also a resident of the locality, and several other acquaintances. According to his friend, the man also spent time at the local market.

A fortnight later, 12 people from Ramganj have tested positive for COVID-19, including the man who travelled to Oman, his friend and 10 family members of the friend.

These 12 cases form the majority of 21 positive cases reported from Jaipur. A curfew is in place in the entire locality and other parts of the Walled City.

"The man with travel history to Oman was under home-quarantine but he did not follow it. We will go door-to-door to check everyone for symptoms and to ramp up testing," Additional Chief Secretary, Health, Rohit Kumar Singh told *The Indian Express*.

The man who visited Oman, however, denied that he was asked to stay at home. "After I landed in Delhi, airport authorities screened me but nobody told anything about staying at home."

Officials from state health department agree that a widespread outbreak inside Walled City will be difficult to contain owing to its

"I met him the day after he arrived from Oman. He seemed absolutely fine. He met several other friends and we also spent some time in the market," the friend of

deployed 25 teams to screen peo-

also revealed that after returning from Oman, the man met at least 53 people – some of whom were from other areas of Jaipur.

"Ever since the man tested positive, we have surveyed 14,982 houses inside the Walled City and screened around 77,000 people. We are doing all we can to prevent a large outbreak as the area is densely populated," said Dr Narottam Sharma, Chief Medical and Health Officer, Jaipur.

He said one of the challenges the department is facing is the reluctance of local residents to cooperate. "At many places, locals are not cooperating and we have to make an extra effort to convince them for screening. Several doctors and medical staff have complained to us," said Sharma.

Policemen have been deployed in the area in large

Local residents say some of them are trying to convince others to undergo screening. "We are trying to sensitise people and urging them to allow screening and cooperate with the health officials. We are also helping them get supplies amidst the curfew," said Mohammed Afzal, one of the residents of the Walled City.

large population.

the man told *The Indian Express*.

The health department has ple for possible transmission.

A survey by the department

numbers.

The Ramganj locality of Jaipur. Rohit Jain Paras

17 quarantined in Army facilities test positive

HAMZAKHAN JAIPUR, MARCH 31

WITH AS many as 17 people in Indian Army quarantine facilities in Jaisalmer and Jodhpur testing positive for coronavirus, over a thousand others at these facilities now face the risk of the disease. As of Tuesday, nine people in the Jaisalmer facility and eight in Jodhpur have tested positive, according to the state health department.

As part of Operation Namaste, 1,036 people evacuated from Iran were brought to Rajasthan between March 15 and March 29. The first batch of 236 evacuees arrived at the Jaisalmer centre on March 15. A second batch of 53 people arrived on March 16 and the third batch of 195 on March 18. The next batch of evacuees

was brought to Jodhpur. On March

Sources said the activities provided by Army for physical and mental well-being of the evacuees may have put them at risk. While all efforts were made to

25,277 evacuees were brought fr-

om Iran and another 275 arrived

on March 29, taking the total to

552. All passengers were screened

by medical teams upon arrival.

maintain hygiene, photographs and videos accessed by *The Indian* Express show the evacuees in close proximity of each other. The authorities had made facilities for recreational activities

of the evacuees, including football, carrom board, cards, badminton, etc. Moreover, namaz was offered in congregation. Then, the festival of Navroz was also celebrated in Jaisalmer on March 21: a high tea was organised in morning, apart from a feast in evening.

Kerala district with links to Dubai Kerala reports second death among those with most cases

Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala Tuesday reported its second COVID-19 casualty after a 68year-old patient with no specific travel history died at a medical college hospital here.

The retired sub-inspector had consulted a primary health centre after noticing symptoms on March 18. He was admitted to the medical college hospital on March 23 and was on life support for the last five days.

Medical college hospital superintendent Dr M S Sharmad said the 68-year-old had hypertension and thyroid-related problems and was subjected to dialysis following kidney failure.

The source of transmission has not been established even as the government has denied that it was a case of community transmission. The government has declared a lockdown at his village in Thiruvananthapuram. ENS **SHAJU PHILIP** THIRUVANANTHAPURAM. MARCH 31

KERALA'S KASARAGOD district has among the highest number of coronavirus patients in the country. Of the 215 cases under treatment in Kerala, this district accounts for 108. Also, 163 people are hospitalised with suspected symptoms in Kasaragod – the highest in the state.

According to the state's Health Department, a major chunk of the cases can be traced to Dubai's commercial hub Naif, where hundreds of people from the district work. "Naif is a crowded trading area as well as meeting place of traders from several countries, including China and Italy. A lot of people from Kasaragod have been

Special plan for Kasaragod: CM

Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan said a special action plan will be prepared for Kasaragod district. After a review meeting Vijayan said those with symptoms would be sent for testing and a list of such names will be prepared at the panchayat level. The CM said ICMR has given sanction for testing at Central University, Kasaragod. **ENS**

traditionally either running shops or working in outlets as salesmen. They have come back on leave or on a distress trip before India suspended international flight operations," said an official.

Till March 19, Kasaragod district had only three positive cases. including a student from Wuhan who tested positive in early February. However, the number of cases soared within 10 days. Of the 108 positive cases, only 19 are primary contacts of those with travel history. To prevent spread of the virus, five panchayats and a few regions in Kasaragod municipality have been brought under

Senior IAS officer Alkesh Kumar Sharma, who has been appointed special officer in Kasaragod, said stern action would be initiated against those who violate the quarantine regimen. "Those under observation should not venture out of their homes."

special police surveillance.

Bihar man complains about 'untested' migrants, they beat him to death

PATNA, MARCH 31

A 20-YEAR-OLD man from Bihar's

Kumar, called the authorities, a medical team arrived and tested the two men, ruling out COVID-19

When the team left, the migrants, Munna Mahto and Sudhir Kumar, along with their family members thrashed him. The injured man was taken to a primary health centre where his condition deteriorated. He was then referred to a hospital where he was de-

Mahto and Kumar were held and five others were booked.

Meanwhile, residents of a Jehanabad village attacked a local administration team that had arrived to 26 test migrants in the village. Two people, including Okri in-charge Chandrashekhar Prasad and the

driver of the administration team, were injured. A case has been registered against three known and 20 unknown people.

J&K: Six new cases, 20 villages declared as 'red zones'

ADIL AKHZER SRINAGAR, MARCH 31

WITH SIX fresh positive cases reported in Kashmir on Tuesday, the administration has declared at least 20 villages in the Valley as "red zones". There are 55 cases in J&K and 43 of these are from Kashmir, according to the government.

The six cases include a 10-

year-old from Srinagar who had come in contact with a person who tested positive. Officials said that 861 sam-

ples have been sent for testing so far of which 804 have tested negative, 55 positive and two reports are awaited till March 31.

I&K Directorate of Information and Public Relation (DIPR) tweeted, "20 villages including Parray Mohala Hajin, Chandergeer Hajin Batagund Hajin in Bandipora dist, Gudoora, Chandgam, Pinglena Parigam, Abhama, Sangerwani & Khaigam in Pulwama dist Waskura in Ganderbal, Sedew &

"Mehjoor Nagar, Natipora, Lal Bazar, Eidgah & Shalteng in Srinagar dist. & Chadoora in Budgam district of Kashmir div have been declared as Red Zones," DIPR tweeted.

Ramnagri in Shopian."

Kansal earlier confirmed the six new cases in Kashmir Division and said all of them are contacts of the previous positive cases.

Bengal reports 3 deaths in 24 hours, one patient was kept in general ward

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE KOLKATA, MARCH 31

THE DEATH of a 48-year-old woman afflicted by coronavirus in the general ward of a Howrah hospital on late Monday night led to panic with 29 hospital staff members being quarantined.

By late Tuesday night, two more coronavirus patients died — one in Howrah and another in

With three more deaths in the last 24 hours, the total number of fatalities jumped to five in West Bengal where 37 people have tested positive till Tuesday.

According to sources in the state health department, the woman, a resident of Salkia in Howrah, had gone on a family vacation to north Bengal with family and friends earlier this month. She returned to Howrah on March

13 and complained of fever a week later. The family took her to a nearby government hospital nine days later on March 29 when she complained of respiratory problem. The same day, health officials said, she was referred to Howrah General Hospital and admitted to general female ward.

Sources in the state health department said that an investigation will be ordered into lapses on part of the hospital.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

Sitamarhi district, who informed the authorities about two men who returned to his village from Maharashtra allegedly without undergoing any medical tests, was on Monday beaten to death by the migrants and their families.

symptoms.

clared brought dead.

After the deceased, Bablu

With smile and thumbs-up, anganwadi worker pulls through

ANURADHA MASCARENHAS PUNE, MARCH 31

"TAI, MALA ghari zayche (Sister, I want to go home)," the 41-yearold, an anganwadi worker with the Pune Zilla Parishad who was briefly suspected to be the first case of community transmission of COVID-19 in the country, told her sister on a WhatsApp call on Tuesday, minutes after she was taking off the ventilator after a critical 12 days at the

city's Bharati Hospital. Hours after that call, at another hospital in the city, the 41year-old's elder sister, Sunita Pawale, a 44-year-old nursing supervisor, told *The Indian*

lieved I am that my sister is fine." Sunita is in isolation at Naidu

Express: "I can't tell you how re-

Hospital along with her husband and daughter, and the anganwadi worker's husband and 16year-old son. The anganwadi worker's daughter tested negative for the virus and is under home quarantine. While both the sisters and their

families – six of them in all – had tested positive for coronavirus, the anganwadi worker's condition had deteriorated rapidly since she tested positive on March 20. Though the anganwadi

worker's case was initially suspected to be one of community spread of the virus, with her husband, who works for a hotel in the city, later testing positive, author-



Was suspected to be first case of community spread. Express

ities are now investigating if he could have passed the virus on to her. State health authorities are

now trying to establish if the husband got the infection from guests at the hotel where he worked.

her contacts and, barring five of her family members, none of them had tested positive for COVID-19. A Zilla Parishad official said it

Authorities had traced 108 of

was a "daunting task" to trace the anganwadi worker's contacts. "She lives in Vadgaon Budruk and used to travel to the anganwadi at Varasgaon, around 25 km away. So that meant a fair amount of daily travel. Plus, she had been travelling for personal reasons and to attend meetings organised by the zilla parishad," he said.

It was on March 8 that she first developed symptoms — a sore throat and dry cough. Over the next few days, she attended a few zilla parishad programmes until March 16, when she was

admitted to a local hospital. A chest X-ray here suggested viral pneumonia, after which she was shifted to Bharati Hospital. Though she had no underly-

ing conditions, the 12 days that she was on ventilator support were crucial, said Dr Sanjay Lalwani, medical director at Bharati Hospital. "The patient was under total sedation and the challenge was to ensure that there is no hospital-acquired infection. We had to sometimes change her position in bed, make her lie on her chest and stomach, and that was challenging as we had to ensure the ventilation tube was in place. At one point we even kept the Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO) machine on

standby as it functions like an ar-

enough to be weaned off ventilator support. "She has been on 12 days of mechanical ventilation and is naturally very weak. But she is

responding and gave us a thumbs-

up sign and is now alert. We have

decided to take her off the ventila-

tor for 48 hours and check. We will

wait and watch," Dr Lalwani said,

But at the end of 12 days, doc-

tors decided she had recovered

tificial lung," he said.

adding that two samples of the 41year-old have now tested negative for coronavirus. Back at Naidu Hospital, someone else is waiting and watching — the anganwadi worker's husband. "I did a videocall with my wife. I could only manage a smile and a wave. I

J&K spokesperson Rohit want to meet her now," he said.

HE ()UTBREAK NATION





New Message Medium

ADVERSITY, IT is said, brings out the best in a person, and politicians are no exception. At a time when migrant workers are facing the brunt of the lockdown, Kerala's Leader of Opposition in Assembly, Ramesh Chennithala, has taken to TikTok, the video-sharing social networking platform, to reach out to them. In the 56-second video, Chennithala, in fluent Hindi, asks migrants working in Kerala not to try and return to their states now, and tells them that the fight against COVID-19 should be fought unitedly. He asks them to get in touch with the administration if they face difficulties regarding food and shelter, and asks them to stay wherever they are. Hindi is a handicap for most politicians from Kerala, but Chennithala is an exception there as well.

Yoga Fan

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi's yoga videos have a new admirer in US President Donald Trump's daughter and special adviser Ivanka. Modi tweeted, "Whenever I get time, I practice Yoga Nidra once or twice a week," and that it furthers overall well-being, relaxes the mind, reduces stress and anxiety. Ivanka replied, "This is wonderful! Thank you @naren-

UNITED WE FIGHT

VICE-PRESIDENT M Venkaiah Naidu on Tuesday urged everyone to show to the world a united front in the time of the coronavirus crisis. He said the present context does not allow the people to present a divided front, as it warrants a united effort. Naidu urged intellectuals and others to hold back issues, if any, till the crisis is over and instead come forth with suggestions for effectively tackling the challenge.

Industry raises key issues in supply of PPEs, ventilators

HARIKISHAN SHARMA NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

INDUSTRY BODIES have flagged the key issues of design, demand and import in augmenting supply of ventilators and personal protective equipment (PPEs) to arrest COVID-19 spread, it is learnt.

According to sources, in the first meeting of the empowered group of officers on 'coordinating with private sector, NGOs, and international organisations' for COVID-19-related response activities, top office-bearers of four major industry associations — CII, FICCI, ASSOCHAM, and NASSCOM

 raised these issues. During the meeting, chaired by NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant on Monday, the industry is learnt to have raised the issue of demand assessment of ventilators in India.

It is learnt that one of the industry chambers told the empowered group that a consortium comprising DRDO, the IITs, and the aerospace and automobile in-

dustries has developed a "prototype of ventilators and is looking for industry partners for mass production". They also requested that a demand assessment be made by relevant government departments for this, a source said.

Corporate India also raised the issue of design approval of ventilators, and funding for their manufacturing, in the meeting, according to the source.

Raising the issue of design, one industry representative is learnt to have said in the meeting that prototype designs of ventilators have been developed by "startups, which are currently awaiting design approval and funding". This representative is learnt to have also suggested using funds under corporate social responsibility (CSR) for PPEs.

The industry associations also raised the issue of substantial price increase of PPEs by Chinese manufactures, and observed that these manufacturers are reluctant to accept bank guarantees, a source said.

'Went to ICMR with rapid test idea, it said India system is foolproof'

TN Chief Secy dismisses allegations of undertesting, says following guidelines

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE CHENNAI, MARCH 31

THE TAMIL Nadu government had approached Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) for permission to follow the 'South Korea-China model' of rapid tests, but ICMR said the real-time reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR)-based test being followed in India is more foolproof, state Chief Secretary K Shanmugam said.

Responding to allegations that Tamil Nadu had been reluctant to test an adequate number of samples for COVID-19, the Chief Secretary said the state is following guidelines laid down by the Centre.

He said the state did approach ICMR with suggestions to go for rapid tests like in South Korea. Elaborating ICMR's reply against the idea, Shanmugam said the state was following the Centre's guideline that insists on testing peo-



People queue up to buy vegetables in Chennai on Tuesday. PTI

ple with symptoms as the result will often be negative if people without symptoms are

Out of the 2,354 samples tested in Tamil Nadu till Tuesday, 74 turned in positive and 1977 have tested negative - results of the remaining samples are pending.

On Tuesday, Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami met Governor Banwarilal Purohit and briefed him about the state's preparedness if there is a major spike in the number of cases. The meeting was also attended by the Chief Secretary, DGP J K Tripathy and Health Secretary Beela Rajesh.

After the meeting, the Chief Secretary said that apart from the supplies the state expects from the Centre, it has placed

orders with various suppliers for about 1.5 crore masks. "We already have 7.2 lakh masks in our stock. No doctor or patient exposed to the hospital environment will have to face a shortage of masks. We have also ordered 25 lakh N95 masks from abroad... The state already has 3,018 ventilators and has ordered for 2.500 more. We have 17,000 isolation beds ready and 14 government-run and three privateowned labs to test samples for COVID-19 cases," he said.

On Tuesday, DMK offered Kalaivanar Arangam near the party headquarters to Greater Chennai Corporation officials for use as a quarantine facility if there is a surge in the number of cases in the coming days.

Amid the lockdown, Chief Minister Palaniswami has issued an order for a threemonth extension of the last date for payment of property tax, drinking water charges, renewal of driving licences and fitness certificate for vehicles.

HIV DRUGS JUNKED

Malaria drug, antibiotic combo now on treatment list

ABANTIKA GHOSH NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

ANTI-HIV drugs Lopinavir and Ritonavir are no longer India's drugs of choice against the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Instead, a combination of hydroxychloroguine (HCQ), used for treatment of auto-immune disorders, and the antibitoic azithromycin has now been recommended for use in severe patients in new clinical management guide-

night. The earlier guidelines, dated March 17, which included use of Ritonavir-Lopinavir in high risk patients, now stand repealed.

lines issued late on Tuesday

The revised guidelines state: "No specific antivirals have been proven to be effective as per currently available data. However, based on the available information (uncontrolled clinical trials), the following drugs may be considered as an off-label indication in patients with severe disease and requiring ICU management."

Earlier this month. India had also recommended use of HCQ as a prophylactic in medical workers managing coronavirus patients and caregivers at home, leading to a huge surge in demand. The drug regulator had then stepped in to put it on a schedule of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, which requires stricter control of sales. The drug cannot be sold without prescription.

Azithromycin is a commonly used antibiotic, while HCQ is used in treatment of autoimmune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis. It is also used in treating malaria. The azithromycin-hydroxychloroquine combination is part of an upcoming multi-country trial anchored by the World Health Organization to examine the efficacy of various drug combinations against COVID-19.

It had found an advocate in

US President Donald Trump, who had recently 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! Hopefully they will BOTH (H works better with A, International Journal of Antimicrobial Agents)....be put in use IMMEDIATELY. PEOPLE ARE DYING, MOVE FAST, and

GOD BLESS EVERYONE!" The tweet, however, caused outrage in the US, as the combination is yet to get regulatory approvals in that country. The US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases' director, Dr Anthony Fauci, called evidence of the efficacy of the combination "anecdotal".

In a small study published in the 'International Journal of Antimicrobial Agents' 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.'

In other words, the combination did reduce the viral load but the size of the study is too small for the conclusion to be treated as definitive.

India's earlier drugs of choice had suffered a blow when 199-subject Chinese trial returned a negative. At 22.1 per cent, the mortality reported in the trial was substantially higher than the 11 per cent to 14.5 per cent mortality reported in initial studies of patients hospitalised with COVID-19.

mortality of COVID-19, as given out by the WHO is 3.4 per cent India had announced its decision to be part of the WHO

The overall documented

global trials, which are also looking at these two drugs.



BIDDING GOODBYE

A flight evacuating foreign nationals, mostly from European countries, took off from Kolkata Airport Tuesday morning. The Air India flight was scheduled to leave for Frankfurt after a brief stop in Delhi. Partha Paul

Portal launched for stranded foreigners

DIVYA A NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

AIMING TO offer support to thousands of foreign tourists stranded in India post the grounding of international flights, the Ministry of Tourism has launched a portal to disseminate information about services that can be availed by them in any part of the country.

The portal — strandedinindia.com — aims to act as a support network that has informa-

tion on the Ministry of External Affairs control centres and state-based/regional tourism support infrastructure, the Tourism ministry said in a state-

The website lists the COVID-19 helpline numbers for tourists besides the tourist helpline numbers 1363 or 1800111363. However, for specific queries, it has a form seeking individual details.

On March 19, the DCGA had issued an advisory stating that no international commercial

passenger flights will operate here from March 23 to March 29. The advisory was later extended and all international flight operations remain suspended till April 14. The government recently announced visa extensions for stranded foreign-

Sources said the government is also concerned about the whereabouts of several foreign tourists who came to India days before a ban on visiting foreign nationals on March 13. Some of them had arrived from

ers till flight operations resume.

high-risk countries such as Iran, Italy, France, Japan and South Korea.

"The entire world is facing a truly unprecedented situation arising out of coronavirus and it is a constant endeavour to ensure the wellbeing of tourists, especially the ones that travel from foreign countries," said a ministry spokesperson, adding that the portal has "comprehensive information on COVID-19 helpline numbers or call centres that the foreign tourists can reach out to for help".

Chhattisgarh expands Researchers work on 40 different COVID corona testing criteria vaccines around world, 1 in India: Journal

GARGIVERMA RAIPUR, MARCH 31

THE CHHATTISGARH Health Department on Tuesday updated its COVID-19 testing criteria to include a bigger group of people at risk. The state will now also test people who have travel history to Delhi, Mumbai, Pune, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Kerala since March 10 and are showing symptoms like cough, fever, diarrhoea and/or breathing difficulty.

The Health Department released a document informing the change in its testing strategy.

"We are already following ICMR guidelines of testing anyone who is suffering from Severe Acute Respiratory Illness and testing asymptomatic high risk contact of the confirmed cases. Now, we want to test people who have travel history from

February 1 till today. While only symptomatic patients who have travel history from February 1 to March 1 will be tested, from March 1, anyone who has traveled abroad, even if they are asymptomatic, they will be tested," said a senior health offi-The state will also test people

who have travelled domestically and are showing symptoms. "With the spread of the diseases in these areas, we deem it prudent to test for virus if they show symptoms," the official said.

State Health Minister T S Singh Deo had earlier told *The Indian Express* that the state was in the process of revising its

guidelines for testing. The state has currently conducted over 600 tests, of which eight have tested positive. Of the eight, two were discharged from hospital on Tuesday after they

consequently tested negative.

ABANTIKA GHOSH NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

OVER 40 VACCINES against the Novel Coronavirus (SARS-CoV2) are in various stages of development across the world, an article in the New England Journal of Medicine has listed, noting that one of these is being developed by the Serum Institute of India.

Only two are currently in clinical trials, it states.

Although approaches to the making of these vaccine differ, there is general consensus among experts around the world that a vaccine against coronavirus can be available only in the next 12-18 months at the earliest.

The two vaccines that are into trials currently are Moderna's RNA vaccine whose trials began at the National

Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) in the US earlier this month, and one developed in China that is being tried by Hong Kongbased CanSino Biologics.

The first vaccine is called mRNA-1273 and was developed by NIAID scientists and their collaborators at the biotechnology company Moderna, Inc., based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA. The trial will enroll 45 healthy adult volunteers between 18 and 55 years over approximately six weeks.

Trials of the CanSino vaccine will be conducted at China's Academy of Military Medical Sciences, affiliated to the Chinese People's Liberation Army. The trial will recruit 108 people between March and December. It will be partnered by Hong Kong-listed biotech firm CanSino Biologics, the journal noted.

The NEIM article, written by researchers affiliated to the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), an international nongovernmental organisation funded by the Wellcome Trust, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the European Commission, and eight countries (Australia, Belgium, Canada, Ethiopia, Germany, Japan, Norway, and the UK), highlights the importance of speed in this quest, as the unique challenges posed by the new virus.

The researchers write: "Even with novel platforms, SARS-CoV-2 vaccine development poses challenges. First, although the virus's spike protein is a promising immunogen for protection, optimizing antigen design is critical to ensure optimal immune response. Debate

continues over the best approach...preclinical experience with vaccine candidates for SARS and the Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) have raised concerns about exacerbating lung disease, either directly or as a result of antibody-dependent enhance-

"Such an adverse effect may be associated with a type 2 helper T-cell (Th2) response."

That speed is of essence is not just a matter of the millions if people around the world; there is also a business side to it. As the article points out, SARS and Zika epidemics ended before vaccine development was complete, and federal funding agencies reallocated funds that had been committed to vaccine development, leaving manufacturers with financial losses and setting back other vaccine-development programmes.

IITs join COVID-19 fight, offer low-cost ventilators, test kits **RITIKA CHOPRA**

NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

THE INDIAN Institutes of Technology (IITs) on Tuesday offered a range of inexpensive solutions developed by their faculty to assist the government in the fight against the COVID-19 outbreak.

From low-cost ventilators and testing kits to personal protective equipment for health workers, the directors of IIT-Delhi, IIT-Guwahati, IIT-Bombay and IIT-Kanpur shared their institute's work on containing the spread of the virus with the HRD Ministry, which, in turn, has forwarded it to the Health Ministry.

The premier engineering schools have sought the government's assistance in facilitating tie-up with Public Sector Units to scale up production of prototypes and to mitigate difficulties faced in procuring raw material because of the lock-

down. IIT-Delhi, for instance, has developed a cheap testing kit but needs help in procuring COVID positive samples to test the efficacy of its innovation. Similarly, a start-up incubated by the institute can produce one lakh N95 masks a day, says director Ramgopal Rao, but it needs the government's help in securing permission to keep the production facility running during the lockdown.

IIT-Bombay has informed the government that it has a COVID-19 testing lab ready on its campus, but needs testing kits. The engineering school has a research collaboration with CIPLA for "appropriate drug discovery" and is currently working on developing the prototype of a low-cost ventilator in three months,

among other things. IIT-Kanpur has three young faculty members of the biosciences department working on vaccination against the virus.

"The team has managed to isolate the RNS extract of the virus. They are in the process of sourcing a similar extract from IIT Indore. We are hopeful of developing a possible vaccine in the next couple of months, which can then be tested in a clinical trial," IIT Kanpur deputy director Manindra Agrawal told The Indian Express.

IIT-Guwahati has offered to pitch in with its 3D-printed full-face shield and headgear for health workers, robotic cart to deliver food to isolation wards and high-grade sanitiser. "We are completely ready with the full-face shield. We are an educational institution, and can only demonstrate the manufacture of 100 to 200 shields at best. We need the government's help to tie up with a PSU for large-scale manufacturing," said institute director TG Sitharam.

WORDLY WISE

GRIEF IS DESTROYED BY KNOWLEDGE.

— THE MAHABHARATA

The Indian EXPRESS

S FOUNDED BY S

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

STEPPING UP THE FIGHT

As they focus on COVID-19 hotspots, healthcare officials must take people into confidence about their methods

TH THE IDENTIFICATION of 10 COVID-19 "hotspots" in different parts of the country, the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) has scaled up its fight against the virus. Two of these places, where the MoHFW will focus on an intensive containment strategy, are in Delhi — Dilshad Garden and Nizamuddin. Noida and Meerut in Uttar Pradesh, Mumbai and Pune in Maharashtra, Kasaragod and Pathanamthitta in Kerala, Ahmedabad in Gujarat and Bhilwara in Rajasthan will also come under the ambit of this strategy. The government's plan, reportedly, is to implement "rigorous surveillance measures" in these areas. Given that, in the last 10 days, the infection seems to have spread rapidly from pockets such as Nizamuddin and Bhilwara, the move to give special attention to areas with a high caseload is welcome. The new plan is also timely because 227 cases and five deaths were reported on Monday. The MoHFW intends to "step up testing" in these areas. The salience of this move cannot be overstated, especially because India's low rate of testing has led to fears of community transmission. The country's healthcare authorities must now ensure that due procedures and protocols are followed in identifying coronavirus cases in the hotspots.

Till March 19, only people who showed symptoms of a COVID-19 infection after international travel, and the people they had come into contact with, were deemed eligible for a test. On March 20, the Indian Council of Medical Research expanded this regime to extend testing to all hospitalised patients who had pneumonia-like symptoms. The new criteria also covered asymptomatic direct and high-risk contacts of a confirmed case — they are tested once between the fifth and 14th day of coming in contact with the patient. The new protocol has led to an appreciable increase in coronavirus tests in the country — from less than 7,000 on March 19 to more than 38,000 on Monday. The number of testing laboratories has also increased to more than 150 on March 30, from 56 on March 19. Even then, India's testing rate — about 28 tests per million of population — compares poorly with that of some of the leaders in the fight against the virus. South Korea, for example, has tested 6,800 people per million of its population.

The government, so far, has not announced any new protocol for testing in the 10 hotspots. It is unclear, therefore, just how it plans to bring an appreciable number of people in these areas under the ambit of its testing centres. Global experience, most notably of South Korea, has demonstrated the importance of transparent methods in the fight against COVID-19. As India intensifies its fight, healthcare officials must not lose sight of the imperative of building trust in the country's healthcare system. They must take the people in the hotspots into confidence about their methods and protocols.

PARTS OF A WHOLE

Exodus of migrant labour from cities is an enormous human crisis, and an impending economic one

N A WELCOME MOVE on Sunday, the Centre removed the restrictions it had imposed on the transportation of goods, allowing the movement of both essential and non-essential goods across the country. As some non-essential items are key ingredients in the production of essential goods, and certain items deemed non-essential may well be essential for some, ensuring an uninterrupted supply was of critical importance. But this step alone may not be enough to ensure the smooth flow of goods across the country. The massive exodus of casual wage labour from the metropolis that is being witnessed across the country is now beginning to lead to labour shortages not only in the transportation sector but across the supply chain. These labour shortages will lead to disruptions not only in the production of essential goods, but in the supply of essential and non-essential items as well. Given the situation, it is conceivable that the situation is unlikely to return to normal immediately even when the lockdown is lifted.

Truck drivers have reportedly fled to their villages following the sealing of inter-state borders, with some leaving behind vehicles loaded with goods along the highway. There are reports of a building shortage of agriculture labour. In Punjab and Haryana, where it is time to harvest wheat, and in Telangana which is sitting on a bumper paddy crop, farmers are struggling to find labour during the lockdown. For Punjab and Haryana, the lockdown has also meant that harvesting machines are stuck in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh where harvesting happens earlier. This could potentially cause disruptions in the supply of essential goods down the line. Add to this the fact that factories across the country draw on migrant labour from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and other eastern states. For them, getting the workforce back to re-start production, after the lockdown is lifted, might be difficult.

Currently, the sale of goods is largely being fed by drawing on the pre-lockdown inventory. As and when these stocks run out, given the curtailment of production and problems with transportation, this will restrict supply to the end consumer. There are already reports of erratic supplies of food and essentials causing panic and confusion in Goa, for instance. It is imperative for the government to formulate protocols to enable factories to start production as soon as possible, and for ensuring the uninterrupted supply of essential goods.

THROWBACK LOCKDOWN

Doordarshan re-telecasts Ramayan and Mahabharat for people to binge on — as they wait for Shaktimaan to deliver

HE UNION MINISTRY of Information and Broadcasting seems to have discovered something known to social media users for a while now. Nostalgia sells. Buzzfeed and its many imitators have made a tidy sum with lists of memes about "10 things only '90s kids will get", and Throwback Thursday keeps returning to Instagram like a bad rash, week upon week. Now, India's middle and upper classes have all the time in the world. And the government has decided to service this captive audience by airing on Doordarshan, "by popular demand", according to Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting Prakash Javadekar, Ramanand Sagar's Ramayan. Also on offer in the menu of state-sponsored memories are Mahabharat, Shaktimaan, Circus, Chanakya, Byomkesh Bakshi and Upanishad Ganga.

Many of the shows that are being re-telecast are classics. In the 1980s and 1990s, some of the best film-makers, writers and technicians had turned to television and DD gave them space and freedom to make relevant, relatable programmes. But the moment it began to face competition after the airwaves were liberalised, it could not match up in terms of viewership. Unlike in England, or even the US, where the BBC and NPR still provide quality programming that more market-driven studios will not, DD became the state's broadcaster, instead of a public good. That all it has to offer in 2020 is a highlight reel of its past glory is hardly something to celebrate.

The government must know that every show being re-telecast is available online. Or, perhaps, the point is not nostalgia, but to actually go back. During pre-liberalisation scarcity, neighbourhoods would gather around a single TV-set to watch the only entertainment available — DD. Appointment viewing, though, has given way to binge-watching — armed with a smartphone, people have gotten used to a bounty of content. As another crisis looms, and state capacity is put to the test, the *Ramayan*, *Mahabharat* and *Upanishad Ganga* may be just the coping mechanism Indians need, as they wait for *Shaktimaan* to deliver.

An eerie quiet

At the stroke of midnight on March 24, India suspended 'politics'. The effects will stay with us



Suhas Palshikar

A PANDEMIC WITH unknown behaviour and prospects of fatality is bound to alter everything — life cycles, rhythms of the economy, social mores. It will have a deep impact on politics as we understood it. Globally, it would undercut the idea of the public, or, at best, seek to transform it into the spurious phenomenon of the digitised public. In a world that is ready to turn interpersonal relations into digital artefacts or, worse, embrace the latter as interpersonal relations, the current wave of social distancing may as well end up finding virtue in distant digital proximity. India, with only limited penetration of this form of distancing, but with its own variant of post-people publicness, is faced with a choice: Suspension of politics, or the search for a new politics.

Deliberation, decentralisation and dissent constitute important gains made through democracy during the last century. We are about to lose those — and the irony is that we may lose these of our own volition. A first step in that direction is decisions without consultation; the next is to overemphasise the virtue of quick decisions; the third would be to delegitimise different viewpoints; finally reaching a point of conformity where no dissent is possible. India may not be alone in this. The crisis gripping many other societies across the globe, too, has all the possibilities of enhancing bureaucratic authoritarianisms represented by the spectacle of the cult of leadership. So, we should brace ourselves not only for the deep impact the Corona crisis will have on routine lives and the economy; this crisis will also leave its imprint on the idea of the public and our politics.

Suddenly, the months of January and February begin to appear irrelevant. All contested issues, pre-Corona, have not only become distant, but in all likelihood, will be shelved indeterminately. The government has quietly "postponed" the NPR without a word about the contention it involved; the detentions in Kashmir are selectively withdrawn — but without a judicial probe into their legality in the first place; the scandals surrounding the judiciary are forgotten; and above all, the fall of India's economy goes without earmarking any responsibility — post-Corona, all economic disaster will be blamed on the virus.

Some of these erasures might be inevitable, but the moot point is, what space for genuine politics do we now have? Can the crisis usher in a new politics of democratic governance? For that to happen, three things

Suddenly, the months of January and February begin to appear irrelevant. All contested issues, pre-Corona, have not only become distant, but in all likelihood, will be shelved indeterminately. The government has quietly 'postponed' the NPR without a word about the contention it involved: the detentions in Kashmir are selectively withdrawn — but without a judicial probe into their legality in the first place; the scandals surrounding the judiciary are forgotten; and above all, the fall of India's economy goes without earmarking any responsibility — post-Corona, all economic

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are needed.

First, the urgent need is to go beyond personality and charm offensives through national addresses. Both the government and Opposition need to move beyond "What Modi did" and "Only Modi could do this". Instead, the arena of deliberation needs systematic expansion: Between government and Opposition, between Centre and states; between experts and the administration and even between the Union and state administrations. Unless we do this, no amount of grandstanding and no number of disaster management laws can help us democratically address situations of crisis.

Two, we must frankly debate the kneejerk reactions in creating "funds" ("PM CARES" included — surely we all care, not just the PM?). Such moves mark petty one-upmanship, evoke emotions, but don't build national infrastructures. Since the current crisis is a public health crisis, the politics around it should be about how much we spend on public health through regular budgets. The issue is about pumping money into building longterm and broad-range testing facilities across the country, supporting more virology labs, funding public hospitals in small towns, paying government doctors and support staff well. MPs and MLAs donating their salaries is only a useless blind to assuage an anxious public. They should be asking for these substantive shifts in public policy.

The third arena of politics relates to how we understand the link between economic inequality and suffering during such crisis. Obviously, when crisis erupts, in agriculture or like this one, governments are expected and inclined to announce "relief". The Rs 1.7 lakh crore package smacks of a contingent relief mentality. Notwithstanding the necessity of economic packages, public policy should not be confined to such largesse. We need a new politics around collective obligation for welfare. Ten years ago, a feeble beginning was made with the language of welfare as rights, but we keep running from one relief package to another. We would have done great service to both the poor and to democratic politics if the crisis spurs us to think beyond the politics of sentimentalising largesse. The question of how to structurally include the issue of welfare into public policymaking needs to enter the political arena.

The present moment, alas, does not hold a promise in these directions. Democracy and

debate are supposed to be out-of-turn matters in times of crisis. They are seen as luxuries best reserved for "normal" times. "Politicising" is a pejorative term reserved for any dissenting view. But beyond hoping for a different political agenda, even by routine standards, the current mismanagement of the crisis requires a closer look. And that task cannot be postponed; it has to be carried out right now and in earnest.

Over the one week since the national lockdown, what can we say about procedures and processes? The most important platform of policy and governance debates, Parliament was not only adjourned but the PM bypassed it, speaking to the public via national address. And how will we remember the lockdown? In all honesty, a future historian will have to pick the images that constitute national shame: Thousands of poor, daily wage earners walking through the lockdown and random but certainly not isolated use of the baton by the police in times of a health emergency. These are not merely matters of detail where the decision of lockdown and its implementation might have gone wrong. These instances show what happens when routine democratic politics is effectively suspended.

What we have probably not realised is that at the stroke of midnight on March 24, India suspended "politics". The effects of that suspension may not be confined to the mismanagement of the current crisis; they will stay with us. A qualitative shift in the agenda of politics might appear as daydreaming in the present context because, with our love for conformity, we have left no room for criticism, much less for politics.

A curious coincidence of the arrogance of authority, surrender by the Opposition, impatience of the public and acquiescence by media has conspired in producing this moment. Through the fight against the pandemic, a noiseless footstep of depoliticisation of the idea of public policy has crept in. In the process, the democratic gains of the past are bound to shrink and even get consigned to the history of "normal times". It is not adequate consolation that India is not alone in experiencing this eerie quiet characterised by its current lockdown — the lockdown of the idea of public domain.

The writer, based in Pune, taught political science and is chief editor of Studies in Indian Politics



WORLD IS NOT A VILLAGE

Corona pandemic is a reminder of the need for a database of local knowledge

YOGINDER K ALAGH

A FRIEND IN Delhi suggested that the lockdown announcement was prompted by a global simulation model by Johns Hopkins University that made dire predictions for India beginning March 24. Many friends reiterated it. Statistics is not quite the strength of Indian medicine. The prediction may turn out either way, but not because of the simulation model. Such cross-section models using multi-country data are, at best, a good way of organising data to give informed judgements. It's like fitting a straight line between illness numbers and some speculative "cause" numbers of information on Indian states, from Tamil Nadu to Arunachal Pradesh, and using that line to make policy decisions.

Incidentally as the date for the Hopkins simulation went by without any earth-shaking events, that professional body released a very useful "do-it-yourself kit", with valuable insights: For example, the effectiveness of the fat content of the soap and washing away of the virus, and the air conditioning affecting the coronavirus as you sleep.

It is important to generate and have ready knowledge for one's own country for such crises, rather than rely on global simulations where you are just a dot on a line. But we only look at information filtered by our corporates from their international collaborators for

INDIAN EXPRESS

At this time, it is important to go easy on shibboleths. So, the government should not insist on Aadhaar and bank account numbers and biometric identification for handing over that lifesustaining grain or income payment. Reform can wait, death does not. Leakages are inevitable at this time, but the part which reaches will be literally life-saving.

solving "local problems".

Actually, the world is not a "big village". This should become the first lesson of the lockdown. At the beginning of the 21st century, the then Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, had asked some think tanks in large countries (China, India, Indonesia, Russia) to look ahead at their problems of the millennium. It was clear that nuclear wars did not constitute a problem any longer – game theory showed that. Pandemics, on the other hand, were. But people were so scared of China that they predicted pandemics would originate from Africa! While some of us were professionally involved and policy-makers like the late B N Yugandhar were interested, governments generally cold-shouldered the idea. It is of interest that Rahul Gandhi has raised it now. He is becoming the Adlai Stevenson of Indian politics and has scored on a health minister's somewhat ill-considered remark concerning government response to the pandemic – ironically, the minister is a doctor. More seriously, why can't we keep knowledge-based files in a computerised decision support system, for quick decisions on such critical matters — a suggestion we had made in a professional piece decades ago?

At this time, it is important to go easy on

shibboleths. So, the government should not insist on Aadhaar and bank account numbers and biometric identification for handing over that life-sustaining grain or income payment. Reform can wait, death does not. Leakages are inevitable at this time, but the part which reaches will be literally life-saving. Frankly, I find the concern on the economic downturn at this moment disgusting. As the governor of the Reserve Bank of India said, the crisis will pass, strong institutions

will survive. A part of the problem is the sheer anti-science beliefs that prevail in our society. Some viral trolls, for example, are still at the game of using religion or caste as a handle. That the coronavirus is quite comfortable with a Muslim, a Savarna, or any other caste "body" woman or man, is an understanding that doesn't come easy to men with untreatable doctrinal beliefs. That the skin, the heart and the lungs are the same in all Indians has to be the foundation not only of the fight against the coronavirus, but the body politic of India of the new decade. That message is critical now, and should remain so even after the lockdown is lifted.

The writer, a former Union minister, is an economist

THE ing De low an pla ro pij co ou be

APRIL 1, 1980, FORTY YEARS AGO

CRACKDOWN IN OFFING THE ASSAM GOVERNMENT is contemplating the promulgation of the Preventive Detention Act in the state in a day or two following reports of a secessionist tendency among some people in the state, a highly placed source said in Siliguri. Meanwhile, round-the-clock picketing at Oil India's pipeline headquarter at Narengi (Gauhati) continued to prevent the supply of crude outside the state. Since yesterday, the number of pickets has gone up as people are coming from the rural areas to participate in the picketing. The security arrangements have been tightened along the 600 km-long pipeline as a precautionary measure.

LEFT HELP JYOTI BASU, WEST Bengal chief minister, urged Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to find a "political solution" to the Assam problem as early as possible and offered the "help" of the Left Front, especially of the CPM which has a unit in Assam, if necessary. Intervening in the debate in the Assembly on a Janata Party resolution asking the Centre to arrange for withdrawal of the Chhatra Parishad (I) movement in West Bengal, Basu wondered: "Why is Mrs Gandhi not intervening in Assam? Where is the difficulty? She has to tell it to the people.' He said the more a solution was delayed, the more difficult it would be as fissiparous forces would feel encouraged.

Jana Sangh Vs Janata UNLESS THE JANATA Party leadership decides to amend or reject its parliamentary board resolution on dual membership, the Jana Sangh faction is set to formalise the third split in the three-year-old party on April 5. Sundar Singh Bhandari, a senior Jana Sangh faction leader, said the convention of "those who believe the RSS issue to be a bogey and want to bury it" will pass a resolution on the first day of the convention on April 3 rejecting the March 18 resolution of the Janata Party. Unless the national executive rejected or amended the resolution, the convention would take a decision on follow-up action leaving its implementation to one or two leaders.

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THE IDEAS PAGE

How to make lockdown succeed

Urgent steps need to be taken to ramp up capacity of healthcare sector, and to address psycho-social consequences



Ravikumar CHOCKALINGAM

THE NATIONAL LOCKDOWN announced by the prime minister must be unanimously supported, even if a country of 1.3 billion will be inconvenienced. Frankly, some inconvenience should be endured as a necessary price, given the scale of the catastrophe that other countries are already facing. Measures should be taken to ensure that essential services continue unabated, especially for the disadvantaged and disenfranchised, who suffer the most during such times. While relief through economic stimulus packages will be announced, often the implementation of such interventions invokes considerable distress among the most vulnerable. The Indian people need to recognise that we have gained some time to arrest the spread of the pandemic that we cannot afford to squander. Urgent steps need to be taken, so the caseload does not explode soon after the lockdown is lifted.

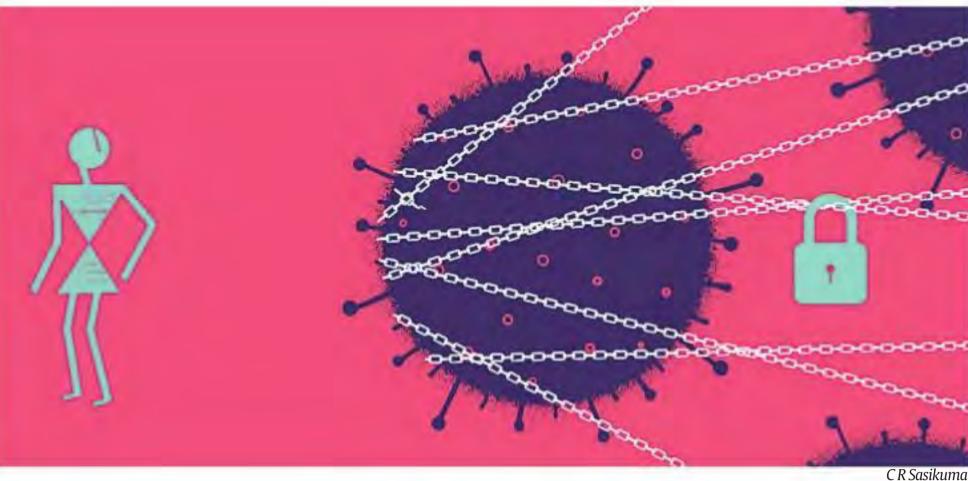
During the lockdown Protecting health workers: India has a di-

minishing healthcare workforce. Our human resources for health and their disparity across the country have been a concern for a long time. Goa has 41.6 doctors per 10,000 people but Chhattisgarh 3-4 times fewer. Based on 2016 numbers, Bihar has only 4.8 nurses per lakh people while Kottayam in Kerala has 396.6. These disparities will translate into differential outcomes. These problems may not be fixed soon, hence protecting the existing workforce is imperative. As testing becomes more readily available, there has to be a national ordinance that makes it mandatory for all healthcare workers to be tested, not just once, but regularly. Cumulative exposure has been cited as a reason for increased mortality among health workers around the world. All health workers who test positive should be promptly treated and quarantined. Besides individual testing, we should explore pooled testing, which has been validated for testing up to 60 subjects at a time in Israel. The results should be updated online, and technology should be used liberally. As the government is working to create better access to PPE (Personal Protective Equipment), industry leaders around the country, irrespective of their expertise, should come forward to work with the government to scale up manufacturing and supply of PPE, ventilators, and other resources for the frontline

Creating healthy pockets: We have operationalised the single-largest quarantine in the world's history. The coming weeks will throw up two developments: One, the silent spread of the disease within pockets that are created by the national shutdown from asymptomatic carriers and two, existing patients will show up in hospitals around the country, increasing the utilisation of services related to COVID-19. Our caseload, as of today, stands at 1,251 and is constantly growing. Given the population density and the timeline regarding India's first case, one can assume that the spread has been less virulent compared to Italy or the US –

both countries had their first case only days

health workers and hospital systems.



before India. While rational thinking would point to a lack of testing as an explanation, we have also not witnessed patients flooding our hospitals with mortality rising, as in the US or Italy. However, we are also around the time when an explosion of cases, both mild and severe, has been witnessed in other countries. Having said that, it is possible that the current social distancing efforts have resulted in the contagion still being within our control. Concerted efforts can mitigate the risk of explosive growth. It is, therefore, imperative to expand testing capabilities during the lockdown to identify and isolate the exposed, particularly pre-symptomatic cases, to create health pockets within society. This will substantially reduce the risk of explosion of cases when the lockdown is lifted.

Establishing safe houses: Safe-houses need to be reserved for those who test negative, especially if they cannot exercise safe social distancing. Quarantine houses at the district level should be reserved for those who test positive so they can be safely monitored. District hospitals or community health centres can be used for quarantine while public schools can work as safe houses. Seventeen states are planning to establish hospitals specifically for COVID-19 patients. This needs to be expanded to all the states through the Essential Services Prevention Act (ESMA). Addressing psychosocial consequences: As

we brace to protect the elderly and those with co-morbidities, it is important to recognise that they are also at a very high risk of getting isolated without access to essential services. Pharmacies will have to ensure that the elderly have an unabated supply of medications. State governments should ensure continued provision of mid-day meals through their existing network of public schools. All employees in the organised sector should continue to receive a paycheck. Landlords should be given a subsidy by the government to facilitate a rent-free period of up to three months, banks should waive off interests and/or EMI on housing payments for at least a month, groceries should be supplied at a subsidised cost and so on. While no interventions will completely address the gaps and concerns experienced by the common man, the overarching need of the hour will remain the preservation of human life, with mitigation of social and economic consequences.

Ending the lockdown As we approach the end of the lockdown, There will be new norms that

will be created for every sector including health, education, IT and public works. In times when we are quick to criticise the government, troll people on social media, take sides based on political ideologies or religious conventions, let us not be overcome by our pettiness. It is time for us to remain true to a larger purpose. Let us not be divided by language or religion, but be united by our indomitable will to fight.

the aim is to have identified clusters of individuals who are exposed and separate them from the non-exposed. It seems like many other countries have deployed the use of technology to track and enforce quarantines using GPS tracking. While this may seem an invasion of privacy, it is only temporary and will serve a much higher common good. The government should quickly overcome any barrier for testing and make it easily available across centres. This will significantly reduce any chance of resurgence soon after lifting the lockdown. State-wise command centres will gather important data on viral caseload, spread, utilisation of services and other state-specific metrics. This will facilitate the movement of resources from states with larger healthy pockets to ones that need them the most.

After the lockdown

Preparation will be key. The large-scale hysteria around the virus with the panacea still elusive brings about uncertainty and fear. The government should hold daily press conferences by designated health care providers to alleviate stress and not reinforce sensationalism. There will not be a better opportunity for interdisciplinary collaborations between private and public entities with equal regard for the people as stakeholders. This will be the greatest challenge that this generation has faced and it is now up to all of civil society to come together to show the world that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

New norms will be created for every sector including health, education, IT and public works. In times when we are quick to criticise the government, troll people on social media, take sides based on political ideologies or religious conventions, let us not be overcome by pettiness. We must remain true to a larger purpose. Let us not be divided by language or religion, but be united by our indomitable will to fight. Let us not be divided by prejudice and bias. We will no doubt be inconvenienced, some of us will fall sick, some even die, but there is no doubt that the human race will prevail. I hope that we can look back and see that even at the height of this adversity, we stood steadfast alongside each other, where everyone mattered equally.

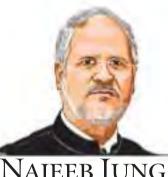
The writer is a public health scholar and a psychiatrist at Veteran Affairs Medical Center, St Louis, USA

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"As Pakistan grapples with Covid-19, one thing is clear: there are no easy choices for the government. Given the havoc it has wreaked in far more developed countries, the government has taken an unpopular yet practical decision to halt international flights."

The crisis, in a larger frame

By its thoughtless action, the markaz in Nizamuddin has thrown light on a malaise — and a challenge



NAJEEB JUNG

THE MARKAZ of the Tablighi Jamaat at Nizamuddin is singularly responsible for the death of several persons and for passing on the coronavirus infection. Whoever runs the markaz is culpable and must be punished under the relevant sections of the IPC. It is incomprehensible that when the country is under lockdown and the Union and state governments are fighting a relentless war against a monstrous pandemic, a microscopic section of religious fundamentalists exposes large sections of the population to disease and fatality. However, it was also incumbent on the local administration to have been more aware and enforce an early evacuation.

This brings me to the larger malaise facing the Muslim community in India. No one can deny the sad situation they face. Most live on the margins of society: Poor, ill-educated and fast losing faith in a government they believe is not, and indeed, will not be fair to them. Not that their situation has been better under earlier governments but the understanding is that the "hand" of the government was not that heavy. But blaming the governments of the day has become a habit. It is time the Muslim community understood the faultlines that lie within.

It is abundantly clear that the pedagogical system of education in madrasas is outdated. Efforts are being made in some madrasas to teach English, the sciences and mathematics, but there are not many such schools. Students are taught to memorise the Quran, and it's a matter of immense pride for a family if a child of eight or 10 years of age becomes a "hafiz". No doubt a large number of Muslim boys and girls are studying under the regular education system of schools and colleges, but a larger number is confined to the madrasa system.

Therefore, the larger problem is that the community is being dominated by maulvis and maulanas, who sit in seminaries and mosques, and make a fashion of issuing fatwas. I have a vast number of non-Muslim friends who have enormous sympathy for the Indian Muslim community. They are extremely concerned about their economic conditions, lack of education, and poor and inadequate political leadership. They talk of India's inherent secularism, the strength of its Constitution and they challenge the cow urine-drinking parties as a means to fight the virus. However, they are also fighting an increasingly losing battle against the Hindu right, and the fence sitters, when challenged on Muslim conservatism and archaic beliefs.

The fact is, as I have said before, today's Indian Muslims suffer from an intellectual paralysis. An earlier generation of scholars used to study such thinkers like Ibn Arabi, Fakhruddin Razi, Einstein, Bergson, Russel and Freud. The task, once again, is to rethink Islam without completely breaking from the past. The only course open is, as Allama

Iqbal articulated, "to approach modern knowledge with a respectful but independent attitude and to appreciate the teachings of Islam in the light of that knowledge." It is never possible for any society, more so a religion, to entirely forget or reject its past. And there is no doubt that in the years succeeding the Prophet's (peace be upon him) death, Islam and Islamic history can indeed boast of a glorious era. What is equally true is that Islam, particularly India's Muslims, have to free themselves from the medieval fantasies of maulanas, and embrace more contemporary attitudes. The Quran has to be understood for its inductive reasoning and a revolt against traditions and speculative philosophies. The dynamism of debate (ijtihad) must be reignited.

Traditionally, from the days of the Prophet (PBUH), debate and pursuit of scientific knowledge was encouraged. The Prophet (PBUH) exhorted his people to travel as far as China for acquiring knowledge, and in the same vein Iqbal said: "Manzil se aage badhkar manzil talaash kar/ Mil jaaye tujh ko dariya, samandar talaash kar (search ever onwards for a destination that lies beyond where you reach/ If you discover a river, then search onwards for the sea)".

Through the anti-CAA, NRC and NPR protests, the Indian Muslim found a new voice. The greatest upside to this movement was the women who, for the first time in India (I do not refer to women in Islamic history who participated in wars along with men), found a voice. The men were left to help with logistics. Hopefully, this new lease of life is a harbinger of better times for the women. But what hopes do we have from the men? Institutions like the Tablighi Jamaat, however well-intentioned they may be, and whatever good religious activities they may perform, are not helping the community move forward. The religion isn't to blame — it is the closed minds of these self-proclaimed leaders. By one thoughtless action, the markaz in Nizamuddin has harmed the Muslim cause many fold.

On the other hand, the government is not helping. The constant and repeated "othering" of the Muslims is pushing them further into a darker corner. The repeated lynchings and beatings, ministerial gloating over the abolition of Article 370, the challenges posed because of the CAA, the threat of the NRC/NPR, statements by minsters-members of the ruling party to punish "ghaddars", the scorning of liberals and harassment of NGOs that work among Muslims, and the pogrom in Delhi, have worsened fears among the Muslim community.

And herein lies the challenge. The challenge is not just for the Indian Muslim, it is for the country as a whole. The Muslims have the example of the Sikhs before them. Sikhs, too, follow a strict religious regimen. But they continually set examples of courage, generosity and prosperity. The community has put behind the tragedies of Partition, followed by those of 1984. Now, it's time for the new Muslim to step forward and engage with contemporary times as well. And, it is for the government to understand that the operative word in the context of the community is "affirmative action", not "appeasement".

The writer is a former civil servant



Virus, in social context

India's anti-COVID strategy so far is premised on a mistaken idea and a pretence

Saniay Srivastava

THE ODD thing about an epidemic is that though it might be global in nature, it is impossible to understand its impact without paying close attention to the local conditions within which it circulates. Calls for global solidarity in a time of crisis are well-meaning. However, epidemics are social dramas whose plots are made from the bricks and mortar of local material. An understanding of this will tell us who lives, who dies and what kind of society emerges in the wake of a calamity that no poor country is equipped to handle.

The most significant aspect of life in countries such as India is informality — of jobs, living arrangements, healthcare, mobility and much else. We know, for example, that around 90 per cent of the population works in the non-formal sector, around 20 per cent of Indians are internal migrants (the vast majority moving across district and state boundaries for informal employment) and that, in many of our major cities, as much as 40 per cent of the population lives in informal settlements. Informality is the state of life beyond regulation. It is also a condition of great helplessness, where the capacity to exercise choice over one's destiny is limited. For the majority of India's (and the world's) population, informality is not a staging post on the way to formality. It is a persistent condition of life with no indications of a dramatic change.

Yet, in India, we seem to have decided to not address the context that is most relevant to the conditions of life that have the greatest relevance to the majority of the population. This is the population that has no choice but to stay outdoors, live 10 to a room and be mobile as a livelihood strategy. There can be no universal strategy — or computer simulation — that can provide solutions for the present crisis. For, there is no "universal humanity". While we share biology, we are fundamentally distanced by the histories that produce the social and economic conditions within which we live. This calls for specific strategies for dealing with COVID-19.

First, the issue of livelihoods. This has, so far, been primarily addressed through an antivirus strategy that is premised on the idea that India is primarily a land of formal offices, industrial establishments and hotels. Indian cities contain some 10 million street vendors and street vending — just one form of informal work — makes up approximately 15 per cent of the urban workforce. If we were to add the circuits of interdependence — family members and those part of the product supply chain — then, according to sociologist Ritajyoti Bandyopadhyay's estimates, street vending is second only to agriculture as a source of livelihood. Our cities are, then, spaces of intense and involuntary intermingling and a ban on such activity is a matter of further immiseration for millions. Should the government not have consulted bodies such as the National

Hawkers Federation for policy measures that

take account of the kind of cities we have rather than the imagined ones?

Second, while Indian cities are home to long-term rural migrants, these are not populations who have severed ties to their villages. They return home for a variety of reasons, the most significant being in moments of catastrophe such as slum demolitions, illnesses and job losses. And, of course, now the virus. The village is the hospice of the city. It provides treatment, rehabilitation and healing to the city's underclass, returning them, without charge, to the city as an endless supply of labour. As might be imagined, circular migration is the highest among the poorest of urban populations and Muslims, Scheduled Castes and Tribes form the largest number of such migrants.

Those who have no means of support in the city head home to the village in times of hardship. While some complain that circular migration holds back urbanisation, were it not for this extraordinary and constant to-and-fro movement between the city and the village, the former would be overwhelmed with the debris it makes out of the bodies of the urban poor. As the poor build the city (literally, since the construction industry is the largest employer of seasonal migrants), their key hope of relief from its misery is the ability to retreat to the village. Under current circumstances, they neither have the means of survival in the city nor are able to return to their villages. And

those of them who have managed to scramble back will continue to live — for how long, who knows? — in the shadow of a virus they might carry. But they are out of sight of the broad-brush policy of lockdown.

Notwithstanding the persistence and overwhelming evidence of informality as a social and economic fact — across cities in particular - processes of policy-making and governance are based on the pretence that the model most suited towards administering people and places is one that borrows from an ideal-type. That is, while the actually existing conditions of urban life might call for methods of governance based on a localised understanding of actual conditions of life, what we invariably get is aspirational policymaking. Aspirational policymaking – we want our cities to become like Singapore and New York, so we think we can apply their policies at home — has little concern for the common good. It is based on the spurious idea of an India that must keep pace with the "global" world through acting "globally". We build gated communities to keep problems out, rather than deal with them. Similarly, the consequences of aspirational policymaking are rarely considered. For, like much else, the task of dying and suffering is easily outsourced to those who can be locked out.

The writer is professor of sociology, Institute of Economic Growth

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TAKING A TOLL

March 31). Mental health is one aspect which is ignored in our society in general, let alone in exceptional circumstances such as now. But, undoubtedly, mental health will take a toll both during and post the lockdown, and the gravity of the impact will vary from individual to individual. While the government is doing all it can to control the damage, it is also imperative that it creates more awareness of mental health issues. Simultaneously, it should invest in mental health education institutes and professionals to build our strength in that area.

THIS REFERS TO 'Corona Anxiety' (IE,

Bal Govind, via email

EXIT PLANS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'A mask and a shield' (IE, March 31). The authors have rightly written about the need for an escape route: "As India enters three weeks of nationwide lockdown... we must plan an exit strategy from this scenario". Earlier, PM Modi had asked every citizen for 50 days, during demonetisation, to end black money. But nothing happened because the government had no vision of what to do post demonetisation. This time as well the government sought 21 days from every citizen. But from the publicly available information, it seems that this time around, too, the government does not have any concrete plan for a post lock-

down scenario. Suchak D Patel, Ahmedabad

LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

To encourage quality reader intervention, The Indian Express offers the Letter of the Week award. The letter adjudged the best for the week is published every Saturday. Letters may be e-mailed to

editpage@expressindia.com or sent to The Indian Express, B-1/B, Sector 10, Noida-UP 201301.

Workers' exodus

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'A long way from home' (IE, March 28). The government should have factored in the millions of migrants who are a long way from their homes and can't stay on rent without any income. The State's inability to provide workers means of livelihood in the interim, and assuring them of shelter and food at this difficult time, has triggered an exodus. This exodus in turn undermines social distancing: Those returning home can spread the infection to rural India, where it will be far more difficult for our ill-equipped healthcare system to isolate and treat severe cases. A great human tragedy is under way.

Lal Singh, Amritsar

10 THE OUTBREAK

THE H.P. STATE COOPERATIVE MILK PRODUCERS' FEDERATION LIMITED Totu, Shimla-171011

No.: 426/P&I-8/15-XXIII Dated: 01:04.2020 Short Term Tender Notice

H.P. Milkfed invites the online bids on item wise, in electronic tendering system, in 2 cover system for the following item on FOR basis:-

01. Black Gram = 560qtls, Soyabean (Yellow) = 960 qtls.

Ground Nut Seed = 240 qt/s, Sugar (S-30) = 2000 qt/s, Coco Powder = 80 gtls and Cotton Seed Refined Oil (Branded Loose oil in Tanks) = 1200 qtls. (For Wheat Sevian)

02. Maida = 90 qtls and Suji (Barik/Fine) = 60 qtls.

(For Panjiri Bar)

कार्य का विवस्प

जल सराधन विमाग के मुख्य अभियाग

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विशिष्टी के अनलप 1.2 cft क्षमता के

जल संसाधन विभाग के मुख्य अभियता.

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जल संसाधन विभाग के मुख्य अभियता.

प्रमंडलीय / कंन्द्रीय गोदामों में विशिष्टी के

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समस्तीपुर कविहार एवं गोपालगंज के

परिक्षत्राचीन विभिन्न प्रमङ्लीय/कन्द्रीय

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पटना एवं मजफ्परपुर के पारिश्वाचार्यान

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समस्तीपुर, कटिहार एवं प्रदना के

जल संसाधन विभाग के मख्य अभियंता

वारपर, कटिकार एवं गांपालगंज के

विकास मिर्गत करने की विधि

परिशेत्राचीन विभिन्न प्रमंडलीय / फेन्द्रीय

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शिक वेगसाइट www.eproc.bihar.gov.in

कांदेशन अपलोड करने की अंतिम तिथि एव समय

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वितीय बीड खोलने की विधि एवं समय

कार्टशम की वेदाना की अंतिम तिथि

10 विज्ञापनदाता का पदनान एवं पता

काटहान खोलन का रथान

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विस्पर कटिहार, पटना एवं मुजयपन्युर के

परिक्षेत्राधीन विभिन्न प्रमञ्ज्लीय / कन्द्रीय

प्रमें ब्रोस केन्द्रीय योदामा में विशिष्टी

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कटिहार, गोपालगंज, पटना एव

विभिन्न प्रमङलीय / कन्दीय गाँवामाँ सं

आयाए के नन बोमेंन मेगा जिया बैग का

वीरपुर, पटना एवं मुजबकरपुर के

गोंदामों मे तिशिष्टी के अनुरूप

क्रटिहार के परिक्षेत्राधीन विभिन्न

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बोरों का आपूर्ति कार्य

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आपति कार्य।

खाली सोमंट बीरों का आपत्ति कार्य।

The Bid document is available/published online on di 03.04.2020 upto 03:00 PM. Bidder would be required to register in the web-site which is free of cost. For submission on bids, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized certifying Authorities (CA). Aspiring bidders should visit website in https://hptenders.gov.in & https://hpmilkfed.org for complete details. Bidders should visit the website from time to time to note the corrigendum, if any: Sd/ Managing Director

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दिनांक 15.04.2020 से 20.04.2020 के अपराहन

18.04.2020 को पूर्वाहन 11:00 यजे निवेशक

जल रासावन विभाग, बिहार, पटना का कार्यालय

दिनाक 21,04,2020 समय अपराहन 3:00 वर्ज तक।

तिथि एवं समय की सचना तकनीको वीड पर निर्णय

निदेशक क्रय मंडार एवं सामग्री प्रवंधन निदेशास्त्र

पट-II-800001 व्रुपाम संख्या:-9334107013

निदेशक

जल संस्तावन विभाग, न्यू बैरक संख्या-5 हार्डिंग रेख,

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(www.eproc.hihar.gov.in.)

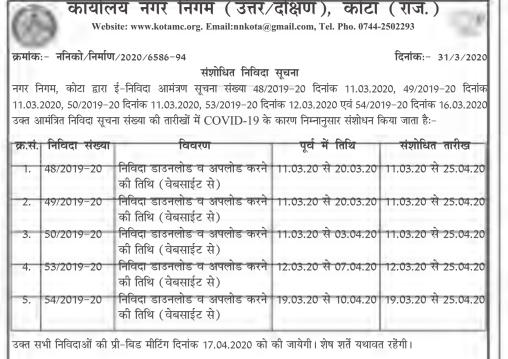
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क्रे बाद वयसाईट पर दी जायेगी।

25.10.2020 (बाह अचिध तक)

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अधिशाषी अभियन्ता (खण्ड द्वितीय

PM speaks to Macron; experts from India, France to share virus info

SHUBHAJIT ROY

NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

ingan

स्थापना का कार्य। धरोहर राशि रु. 1,100/- (रु. एक

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi on Tuesday had a telephonic conversation with French President Emmanuel Macron and they agreed that the expert teams of both countries would "actively share information on measures to prevent the spread of the virus, and research on treatment and vaccines".

The leaders discussed the

domestic and international aspects of the crisis, and underlined the importance of global collaboration and solidarity in the present situation, a statement by the Ministry

External Affairs said.

According to the MEA, Macron "strongly agreed" with Modi's view that the COVID-19 crisis is a "turning point in modern history", and offers the world an opportunity to forge a new human-centric concept of globalisation.

Modi had emphasised on the human-centric concept of globalisation during his intervention at the G-20 leaders' virtual summit. the MEA said. The two leaders underlined

the "importance of not losing sight of other global concerns like Climate Change, which impact humanity as a whole. They also stressed the need to devote special attention to the needs of less developed countries, including those in Africa, during the present crisis", the statement said.

Macron "warmly welcomed" Modi's suggestion that the practice of yoga offers a convenient means of ensuring

mental and physical well-being for people confined to their homes by the pandemic, the MEA said. "Both leaders agreed that the India-France partnership could contribute to advancing a spirit of human-centric solidarity in the present difficult times," the statement said.

Last week, on March 26, Modi had spoken to UAE's Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahvan, the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi.

The two leaders had exchanged information and views on the COVID-19 pandemic, the situation in their respective countries, as well as the steps being taken by their governments. They had agreed that the next few weeks would be crucial to control the spread of the virus, and required concerted and coordinated efforts by all countries.

The UAE's Crown Prince had assured Modi about the welfare of the over two million Indians living in UAE and contributing to its economy. Modi thanked the Crown Prince for his personal attention to the health and safety of Indian expatriates in the present situation.

On March 26, Modi had a telephonic conversation with Qatar's ruler, Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad al Thani.

The two leaders had also discussed the ongoing developments related to the COVID-19 pandemic and its social and economic impact.

Both leaders had expressed hope that the efforts and the measures being taken to stop the spread of the disease by all affected countries, would yield early and positive results.

Modi had thanked Sheikh Tamim for his personal attention to the welfare of the Indian nationals living and working in Qatar, particularly in the present situation.

जल संसाधन विभाग क्रय भंडार एवं सामग्री प्रबंधन निदेशालय for the work of "Hiring of Commercial policies for the patrolling of Bascurty Persons wern Stiguri and Rangpo of Sivok-Rangpo Rail Line Project under execution of WEDN राष्ट्रीय प्रतिस्पर्घात्मक निविदा Estimated cost of work (services) (बाढ 2020 के पहले बाढ संघर्षात्मक सामग्रियों के लिए कोटेशन) संचिका सं0 02 क्रय-03-01/2020-167 For further details, visit website lettes the meleciacy give integracularizable. Correspondent if any would be hosted only on the website. अल्पकालीन कोटेशन आमंत्रण सूचना सं0 01/2019-20 Budgmann, King Laren, Janet Progra केवल ई-टेन्डर (पद्धति के अनुसार वेबसाईट www.eproc.bihar.gov.in पर) P.O. Warms From Milliants 7 kells (Conduct for Append 1166)

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आमंत्रण सूचना अनुभवी क श्रेणी कार्यदायी संस्थाओं/आपूर्तिकर्ताओं से विद्युत पारेषण मण्डल, ग्रेटर नोएडा के अन्तर्गत निम्न सामग्री/कार्यों हेतू ई-निविदायें ई-पोर्टल etender.up.nic.in पर दो भागों में निविदा खोलने की दिनांक को 12.00 बजे तक आमंत्रित की जाती है। जिसका प्रथम भाग उसी दिन क्रमशः 03.00/03.15/03.30/03.40 बजे (यदि अवकाश/अन्य कारण हो तो अगले कार्य दिवस में) खोला जायेगा। निर्धारित निविदा शुल्क आर.टी.जी.एस./एन.ई.एफ.टी. तथा धरोहर राशि आर.टी.जी.एस./एन.ई.एफ.टी./बैंक गारन्टी के माध्यम से (निविदा शुल्क एवं धरोहर राशि पृथक-पृथक हस्तांतरित की जानी है) अधिशासी अभियंता, विद्यत 400 के.वी. उपकेन्द्र खण्ड, ग्रेटर नोएडा के पक्ष में पंजाब नेशनल बैंक की आई.सी.डी.. तिलप्ता. दादरी (गौतम बुद्ध नगर), उ.प्र. शाखा में संचालित चालू बैंक खाता संख्या 0109012100000756 (IFSC Code PUNB0466300) में जमा करया जायेगा। निविदा के प्रथम भाग में आर.टी.जी.एस./ एन.ई.एफ.टी. द्वारा जमा किये गये निविदा शुल्क एवं धरोहर राशि की पे-इन स्लिप यथा योज्य य.टी.आर. संख्या की प्रति, निविदा प्रपत्र, पैनकार्ड, जी.एस.टी. संख्या, इन्कम टैक्स रिटर्न की स्वयं प्रमाणित छायाप्रति, तकनीकी अनुभव यथा क श्रेणी अद्यतन (विद्युत सुरक्षा उ.प्र. सरकार द्वारा प्रदत्त), ई.एस.आई., ई.पी.एफ., बीमा सम्बन्धी प्रपत्र (जोकि अनिवार्य है) इत्यादि ई-पोर्टल पर स्कैन्ड प्रतियाँ (PDF format) तथा ई-निविदा के द्वितीय भाग में दरें एवं वाणिज्यक नियम व शर्तें ई-पोर्टल पर अपोड की जायेगी। निविदा की वैधता खुलने की तिथि से 90 दिन होगी।

उ.प्र. पावर ट्रांसमिशन कारपोरेशन लि. ई-निविदा

1. निविदा संख्या टी-14/2020-21: विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड, हापुड के अन्तर्गत 132 के.वी. उपकेन्द्र, डासना पर 145 के.वी. सर्किट ब्रेकर की ओवरहॉलिंग एवं रिपेयर का कार्य। धरोहर राशि रु. 2,000/- (रु. दो हजार मात्र)। निविदा प्रपत्र शुल्क रु. 590/- (कर सहित)। खुलने की दिनांक 02.05.2020। 2. निविदा संख्या टी-15/2020-21: विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड, खुर्जा के अन्तर्गत विभिन्न उपकेन्द्रों हेतु सामग्री की आपुर्ति। धरोहर राशि रु. 2,000/- (रु. दो हजार मात्र)। निविदा प्रपत्र शुल्क रु. 590/- (कर सिहत)। खुलने की दिनांक 02.05.2020। 3. निविदा संख्या टी-16/2020-21: विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड, हापुड के अन्तर्गत स्थापित लाईन पर नम्बर प्लेट की आपूर्ति एवं

हजार एक सौ मात्र)। निविदा प्रपत्र शुल्क रु. 590/-(कर सहित)। खुलने की दिनांक 02.05.2020। 4. निविदा संख्या टी-17/2020-21: विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड, खुर्जा के अन्तर्गत अधिशासी अभियन्ता कार्यालय के परिसर में लाईटिंग सम्बन्धित कार्य धरोहर राशि रु. 2,000/- (रु. दो हजार मात्र) निविदा प्रपत्र शुल्क रु. 590/- (कर सिहत)। खुलने की दिनांक 02.05.2020। 5. निविदा संख्या टी-18/2020-21: विद्युत 400 के.वी. उपकेन्द्र खण्ड, ग्रेटर नोएडा के अन्तर्गत विद्युत 400 के.वी. उपकेन्द्र ग्रेटर नोएडा हेतु सामग्री की आपूर्ति। धरोहर राशि रु. 2,000/- (रु. दो हजार मात्र)। निविदा प्रपत्र शुल्क रु. 590/- (कर सहित)। खुलने की दिनांव 05.05.2020। 6. निविदा संख्या टी-19/2020-21: विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड, खुर्जा के अन्तर्गत 220 के.वी. उपकेन्द्र जहाँगीराबाद पर विभिन्न उपकरणों पर नेम प्लेट की आपर्ति एवं स्थापना का कार्य। धरोहर राशि रु. 2,000/- (रु. दो हजार मात्र)। निविदा प्रपत्र शुल्क रु. 590/- (कर सहित)। खुलने की दिनांक 05.05.2020। 7. निविदा संख्या टी-20/2020-21: विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड, खुर्जा के अन्तर्गत 220 के.वी. उपकेन्द्र खुर्जा पर अनुरक्षण सम्बन्धित कार्य। धरोहर राशि रु. 1,700/- (रु. एक हजार सात सौ मात्र) निविदा प्रपत्र शुल्क रु. 590/- (कर सहित)। खुलने की दिनांक 05.05.2020। ई-निविदा के प्रथम भाग उसी दिन निर्धारित समय पर सार्वजनिक रूप से खोला जायेगा एवं भाग द्वितीय (प्राइजबिड) खुलने की तिथि तदोनसार वेबसाइट पर सचित की जायेगी। निविदा भाग प्रथम में सम्बन्धित प्रपत्रों का अपलोड ना किये जाने की स्थिति में निविदा का भाग द्वितीय (प्राईस बिड) नहीं खोल जायेगा। ई-निविदाओं को बिना कोई कारण बताये अस्वीकार/विभाजित करने का अधिकार अधोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता के पास सुरक्षित रहेगा। कृपया विस्तृत जानकारी, डाउनलोड, अन्य संशोधनों एवं ई-निविदा प्रस्तुत करने के दिनांक तक विस्तार आदि के सम्बन्ध में कृपया etender.up.nic.in पर लॉग ऑन करें। हस्ता./- अधीक्षण अभियन्ता विद्युत पारेषण मंडल उ.प्र.पा.ट्रा.का.लि., ४०० के.वी. उपकेन्द्र, पाली ग्रेटर नोएडा ''राष्ट्र हित में ऊर्जा बचायें'' पत्रांक 495 वि.पा.मं./ग्रे.ना./T-14 to 20/2020-21

'Asked to quit' amid lockdown, Meghalaya worker kills self in Agra stated he was discriminated

AMIL BHATNAGAR

NOIDA, MARCH 31

A MIGRANT worker from Meghalaya committed suicide on Tuesday, allegedly after he was asked to leave his job at a restaurant in Agra amid the coronavirus lockdown, police said.

Aldrin Lyngdoh worked in a restaurant owned by the daughter-in-law of BJP MLA from Fatehpur Sikri and Uttar Pradesh minister Uday Bhan Singh.

In a purported suicide message which went viral on social media. Lyngdoh ostensibly

IDFC FIRST

against, and that he had "nowhere to go" in wake of the lockdown.

Denying that the death had anything to do with the restaurant or his family, Singh said that the establishment — Shanti Food Restaurant — is run by his widowed daughter-in-law. "He (Lyngdoh) might have been an employee previously as a waiter for a short while (but) in this time of coronavirus it is not advisable to keep just about anyone (as employee). It appears he was a bit of a sarphira (slightly unstable)... he also had a criminal background," Singh alleged Saurabh Dixit, ASP, Agra, said:

"The body has been sent for postmortem and we are in the process of establishing contact with an acquaintance, as the youth had no immediate family (in Agra). In his message... he alleged that he committed suicide due to the lockdown after being asked to leave. We are investigating all angles."

ASP Dixit said, "We are looking into all angles, including his allegations. We are also hoping to establish contact with someone known to him in the next 72 hours."

IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (Formerly known as Capital First Home

Finance Limited/Capital First Limited) CIN: L65110TN2014PLC097792 Registered Office: KRM Towers, 8" Floor Hamington Road, Chelpet,

Chennai - 600031. TEL: +91 44 4564 4000 FAX: +91 44 4564 4022 NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that i view of the outbreak of the pandemic of COVID 19 and the lockdown announced nationwide by Govt of India, we are withdrawing all the online auctions of the mortgaged properties scheduled across ndia until further notifications."

Authorised Office IDFC FIRST Bank Limited

(Formerly known as Capital First Home Finance Limited/ Capital First Limited

ICAR-CENTRAL INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH ON GOATS

MAKHDOOM, P.O. FARAH-281122, MATHURA U.P.

NOTIFICATION

In continuation to this office tender no. 2-3 (18)/R&P/2019 dated

Phone: 0565-2763380 Fax No. 0565-2763246

Govt advises farmers to delay wheat harvest New Delhi: Amid the lockdown

due the outbreak of COVID-19, the government has advised farmers to delay wheat harvesting till April 20.

Issuing an advisory on Tuesday, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), which comes under the Agriculture Ministry, said, "The temperature in the most of wheat growing areas is still below longterm average and therefore likely to delay wheat harvesting... farmers can delay wheat harvesting till April 20 without incurring any significant loss..."

The advisory further said "Amidst the threat of COVID-19 spread, the rabi crops are approaching maturity... farmers are to follow precautions and safety measures to be taken to prevent the disease spread."

The advisory comes at a time when wheat harvesting has already started in several parts of the country. **ENS**

Goods trains deliver N95 mask samples for DRDO tests

AVISHEK G DASTIDAR

NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

THE DRDO laboratory in Gwalior is testing N95 masks after receiving samples from bulk manufacturers via goods train drivers as the country prepares to mass-produce protective gear for medical staff on the frontlines of the COVID-19 outbreak.

As per government estimates, 2.4 crore N95

masks will be needed up to June amid rising infections and this vital transportation has come through a collaboration between Indian Railways and the Textiles Ministry. Not taking chances with quality, the defence lab has beesn pressed into service and it has so far received samples from manufacturers in Ludhiana, Delhi and Ambala,

"No one wants to take any chances with the quality. So we had been given standards, based on which we have made the prototype and now they have been sent for testing. We are awaiting results,' said Ashwani Garg of Pious Textiles in Ludhiana which can produce around 3,000 masks per day.

Sample packs carrying a couple of masks are handed over to train drivers who pass them on to station functionaries in Gwalior who then provide

them to DRDO officials. Government officials said that stringent testing is also needed for body suits for which the government is working with a projected requirement of

1.5 crore pieces up to June and that there can be "no room for error in quality". "There has been feedback from medical profes-

sionals that body suit is vital even while treating non-corona patients to protect themselves against asymptomatic transmission. We are looking at huge numbers based on our projection," said a senior government official working on the project.

The Textiles Ministry has sounded out all the major players and is pulling samples through strict testing protocol. The DRDO testing is in addition to its testing regime at the South India Textile Research Association in Coimbatore.

With a lockdown in place, sending samples to labs has been a challenge. "It was discussed that this is a vital transportation need, and taking the road was practically not possible. So the solution worked out was that since our goods trains now run as fast as mail/express trains, we could help send those packages through our drivers," said a senior railway official.

Department of Forest, Environment and Climate Change, Jharkhand, Ranchi Office of Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forest, CAMPA, Jharkhand Van Bhawan, Doranda, Ranchi

दिनांक:- 28.03.2020

NOTICE The advertisement issued vide Advt. PR No. 214520 dated 17.08.2019 and 214586 dated 18.08.2019, is hereby cancelled due

to unavoidable circumstances. Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forest, CAMPA Department of Forest, Environment and Climate Change

Jharkhand, Ranchi. PR 227654 Forest, Environment and Climate Changes(19-20)D VISVESVARAYA JALA NIGAM LIMITED

(A Government of Karnataka Enterprises)

Office of the Executive Engineer, VJNL. U.B.P Division no.3, Ajjampura-577547. Ph:08261 245686 e-Mail:eeubp3.1@gmail.com CIN No. U41000KA2016SGC097260

No: EE/VJNL/UBP/D-03/Ajjampura/PB-1/TLIelectrical/ Tendernotificatn/2019-20/1590 Dated: 30.03.2020

CORRIGENDUM-01

(Through e procurement) Ref: 1. Tender notification no.: EE/VJNL/UBP/D-03/Ajjampura/

PB-1/TLIelectrical/Tender notificatn /2019-20 /1567 dated: 21.03.2020

The tender invited for work of "Providing 11KV power supply to 14 no zonal pumping stations coming under Package 1 of Tarikere Lift Irrigation Scheme. (I No: VJNL/2019-20/PS/ WORK_INDENT1442)" vide reference (1) is re-scheduled due unavoidable circumstances. The revised calendar of events s be as follows:

(1) Last date & time for tender queries/ clarification 16.04.2020 upto 17.30 hours. (2) Pre bid meeting will held at O/o the Chief Engineer, VJNL, UBP Zone, Chitradui 18.04.2020, at 11.30 hours. (3) The last date for submiss of completed tender documents (Cover-1 & cover-2) through e-portal: 24.04.2020, upto 16.00 hours. (4) Date & time opening of Technical Bid (Cover -I) by Executive Engineer, V.J.

UBP, Division No.3, Ajjampura: 27.04.2020 at 11.00 hours. Tender documents can be downloaded from www.epi karnataka.gov.in. Further details can be obtained from the of of the undersigned. All other conditions remain the same.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, VJNL, UBP Division No.03, Ajjampu 04/03/2020, the last date for submission of bids for job work contract for providing agricultural/Horticultural Field and allied Services viz. Livestock, Maintenance Services, office Assistant, Lab Attendant, Helper etc. at ICAR-CIRG, Makhdoom is hereby extended upto 20.04.2020 by 11:00 AM. Interested parties may participate in online tender on CPP (Central

Procurement Portal) at www.eprocure.gov.in. NIT may b downloaded from our website www.cirg.res.in. (Sumit Kumar Jindal)

Government of India (Department of Personnel & Training) Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie

F. No. 2-3(18)/R&P/2019

No. T-30027/1/2020 dated 1-4-2020 NOTICE INVITING REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

LBSNAA invites proposals for On boarding eLearning providers fo eLearning development and authoring for Pre-Foundation Course as a part of iGOT at LBSNAA, Mussoorie in conformity with the Terms & Conditions detailed in the RFP. For details, please refer to our website www.lbsnaa.gov.in. Last date for submission of bids is 22-4-2020 at

> Sd/- Deputy Director Senior L.B.S. National Academy of Administration Mussoorie - 248 179

NATIONAL FERTILIZERS LIMITED (A Govt. of India Undertaking)

Sr. No.	130300000000000000000000000000000000000	Estimated Cost	of Tender	Last date & time of receipt of tenders	& time
f	Online tenders are invited from experienced and financially aound contractors for internal Handling of Fertilizers, Cleaning, De-Scaling & Misc. Jobs in Bagging Plants (I & II) for the year 2020-21.	Rs. 350.62 Lacs	Rs. 1000/	Upto 10 A.M. on 21 04 2020	10.30
2.	William Control of the Control of th			Upto 2.30 P.M. on 13.04.2020	

PUBLIC NOT Sr. Name of Name of Work/Notice/ Amount/EMD Website of the **Nodal Officer** Tender **Opening Date/** Ref. No./ No. Department/ **Tender Closing Date** (Approx.) **Department** Contact Board/Corp./ Details/ (Time) (In Rupees) Tender No. **Email** Auth. HPHC/ 01.04.2020/ 2967.52 dbpanchkula@ Haryana Police Construction/Up-gradation/ https://etenders.hrv.nic.in Special Reapir/ Renovation/ 21.04.2020 Lacs 2020/07 Housing yahoo.com Cleaning works in various Corporation, (Appx.) www.hphc.org.in Panchkula Districts of Harvana State. 80554/HRY.

समार्क किया जा सकता है। ई-टन्डरिंग की प्रक्रिया से तबंधित किसी शी प्रकार की जानकारी / सुधना हेतु ई-टेन्डरिंग सल. प्रिन्वाई भवन पटना (0812--2235241) एवं सहायता कक्ष तिक ऑफ इंडिया बिल्डिंग, एम / 22. प्लाट नं0.--25 एस० कं0 नगर जटना से दुरुगण संख्या-07542028184 एवं 0812-2523008 पर संघर्क किया जा सकता है। 14 विशय जानकारी के लिए www.eproc.bihar.gov.in, www.wrd.bih.nic.in एत www.prdbihar.gov.in पर चेखा जा सकता है।

PR. No. 018122 (WRD) 2019-20

क्रय भण्डार एवं सामग्री प्रबन्धन निदेशालय जल संसाधन विभाग, बिहार, पटना नोबल कोरोना के संबंध में विस्तृत जानकारी एवं सहयोग हेतु 🐼 Ton Free No.: 🕇 🚺 🕰 पर संपर्क कर सकते हैं।

11 'ई ंटन्डरिंग प्रक्रिया में भाग लेने हेतु संवेदकों को प्रजीकृत होना होगा, जिससे कि उन्हें तमयोगकर्ता का नाम User ID)

13 विशेष जानकारी हेत् अबोहरताक्षरी के कार्यालय में कार्य अविधि में दूरभाष संख्या-9334107013 एवं 7463889198 पर

eproc.bihar.gov.in रा डाजनलीड करने / ई-- टेन्डिरिंग की प्रक्रिया में माग लेने की योग्यता प्रदान करेगा।

12 ई-सिविदा मात्र वेबसाईट www.eproc.bihar.gov.in पर शातनलोड एवं अपलोड किया जा सकता है।

पासवर्ष (Password) एवं अंकीम हस्ताक्षर (Digital Signature) प्राप्त होगा। यह उन्हें वेबसाईट

खाय सामग्री- संबंधी किसी तरह की जानकारी अथवा मुझाव हेतु दूरभाष संख्या 0612-2217636 पर सम्पर्क किया जा सकता है। श्रमिकों के सहयोग एवं सहायता हेतु श्रम संसाधन विभाग का Toll Free No.: 18003456138

CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED DAILY 82,278 25,474 68,180 United Kinadom **165,87**4 **Switzerland**

Source: Johns Hopkins University, updated at 11pm on March 31

How does alcohol in sanitisers (and soap) kill the virus?

ABANTIKA GHOSH

THE LAST few weeks have seen hand sanitisers go off the shelves, to the extent that there is now a government order to ensure availability and to prevent profiteering. How do these protect you against the novel coronavirus? Alcohol's function in killing the virus is much the same as that of the common soap, which has emerged the greatest weapon against COVID-19 with the limited availability of sanitisers. Handwashing for 20 seconds at least kills the virus. When using a sanitiser, it should ideally have an alcohol content of 60% or more.

TOTAL CONFIRMED: 809,608

Dr Shobha Broor, former professor of microbiology at AIIMS, explained: "The novel coronavirus has a lipid envelope. Soap being a detergent destroys the envelope. The same is true for alcohol. You see even when the virus comes out through droplets when an infected person coughs, it is still within a cell. Even if it isn't, it can stay alive in surfaces for some time. It replicates only when within the cell. That is how soap or alcohol attacks the virus."

The US National Institutes of Health explains the structure of the virus: "Like other coronaviruses, SARS-CoV-2 particles are spherical and have proteins called spikes protruding from their surface. These



DEATH COUNT: 39,545

copied, producing more viruses. Recent work shows that, like the virus that caused the 2002 SARS outbreak, SARS-CoV-2 spikes bind to receptors on the human cell surface called angiotensin-converting enzyme 2

fatty layer, called an envelope. That is the layer that is disrupted when it comes into contact with soap or a hand sanitiser with more than 60% alcohol, as Dr Broor explained. Disruption of the envelope causes the virus to come undone, and kills it.

health institutes across the world agree that handwashing for at least 20 second is the most failsafe prevention of COVID-19.

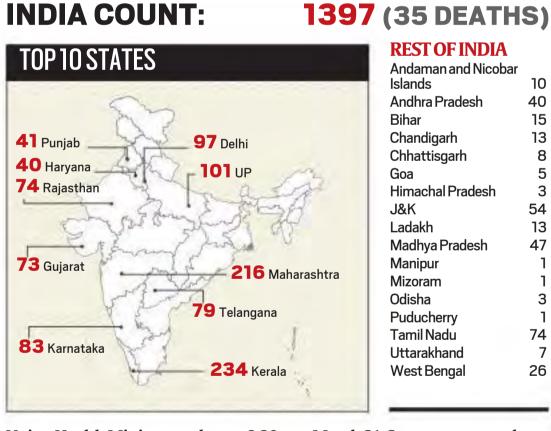
spikes latch onto human cells, then undergo a structural change that allows the viral membrane to fuse with the cell membrane. The viral genes can then enter the host cell to be

(ACE2)." All of this is held together by a

That is why experts and public

1397 (35 DEATHS)

3



Union Health Ministry update at 8.30 pm, March 31. Some states may have reported higher numbers. Only states with most cases are listed above. 124 PATIENTS DISCHARGED IN 15 STATES ACROSS THE COUNTRY

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

SIMPLY PUT

Rate of spread in India, world

Although COVID-19 cases have grown faster over the last one week, the transmission rate in India is lower than elsewhere, experts note. A comparison of growth in cases, deaths between India and other countries

KARISHMA MEHROTRA NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

TRANSMISSION OF COVID-19 in India has increased to an extent over the past week, yet the rate remains significantly lower than that the global rate.

On March 19, every positive case in India was transmitting the virus to 1.7 people on average. By March 26, that number had risen to 1.81, but remained significantly lower than in countries such as Iran or Italy, according to Institute of Mathematical Sciences in Chennai scientist Sitabhra Sinha.

For comparison, a study in The Lancet estimates the global transmission rate of COVID-19—the number of persons infected by every positive case — to be between 2 and 3.

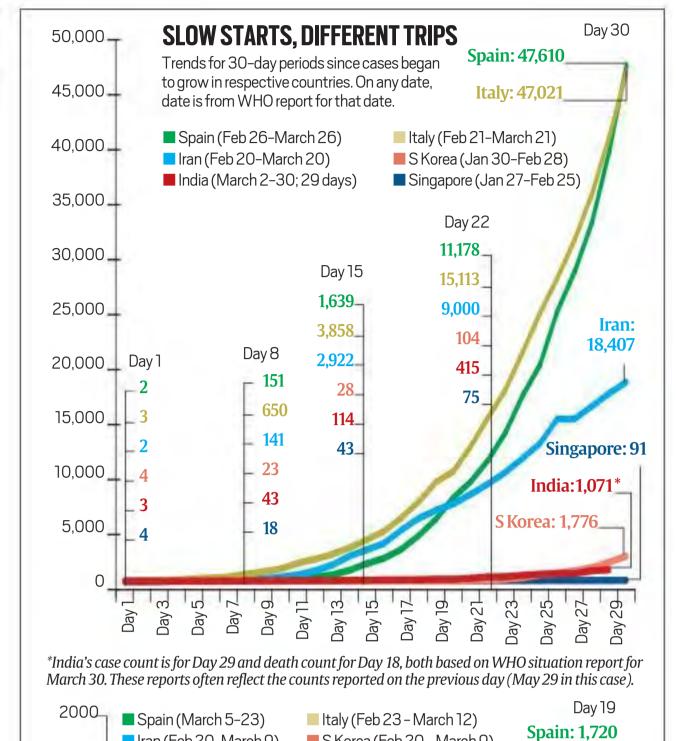
"By the end of the month about 1,500 live infections," Sinha estimated, speaking on March 26. "By April 5, just upward of 3,000, and in the worst case, will just cross 5,000. There has been a slight upward shift of the slope of the exponential curve after March 16. However, the effect of the lockdown should also bring down the growth rate somewhat, but we'll only know by how much after a week."

30 days, six countries

With this low growth rate, it took one month for India's COVID-19 case numbers to climb from three to one thousand. Comparing this month's case growth to South Korea's first month of cases shows that India's curve has recently become flatter than that of the other country at a corresponding stage. The death rate has remained flatter as well.

In fact, a comparison of the first 30 days of six different countries' case counts shows that India has had a lower growth than South Korea, Spain, Iran, and Italy, but not Singapore.

It is important to note, however, that due to testing discrepancies, these country-reported numbers taken from the World Health Organization are dependent on the amount of conducted tests. Also, these numbers are subject to change depending on a variety of factors, such as the effectiveness of



S Korea (Feb 20 - March 9)

Day 15

Korea:51

29*

ran:194 India:

India's 21-day quarantine.

Week by week

Looking at week-long periods, India's cases grew from 3 to 43 to 114 to 415 to 1,071 on the 29th day.

South Korea climbed from 4 to 23 to 28 to 104 to 1,766 on the 29th day (1,776 on the 30th). Reports show South Korea experienced an anomaly; a "Patient 31" was a superspreader, transmitting the virus to an unusual number of people before testing positive.

Weekly, Singapore climbed from 4 to 18 to 43 to 75 to 90 on day 29, and 91 on Day 30. Spain climbed from 2 to 151 to 1,639 to 11,178 to 39,673, then over 47,000 a day later. Italy climbed from 3 to 650 to 3,858 to 15,113 to 41,035 (29th day) and 47,021 (30th). Iran climbed from 2 to 141 to 2,922 to 9,000 to 17,361 (29th) and 18,407 (30th).

Deaths across the six countries showcase a relatively low growth in India thus far.

In the two weeks after each country's first coronavirus death, India's numbers grew from 1 to 4 to 17 from one week to the next South Korea's rose from 1 to 13 to 35. Spain climbed from 1 to 48 to 598. Iran went from 2 to 22 to 92. Italy soared from 2 to 29 to 234.

Rate of transmission

Compare India's low transmission rate (1.81) to that of Italy - between 2.76 and 3.25, according to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control.

This number is called a "reproduction number" or RO, used to describe the contagiousness of a disease. When the RO less than one, meaning not every infected person spreads the virus to another, the disease ceases to become an epidemic. Above one, and the country witnesses exponential growth in cases. Epidemiologists study outbreaks by watching this exponential growth.

Epidemiologists have championed "social distancing" in order to "flatten the curve." This means that by preventing people from interacting, each infected person is likely to transmit the virus to less people, slowing the speed of its spread and allowing healthcare systems to handle the influx of patients.

Tablighi Jamaat: its purpose, how it runs

KAUNAIN SHERIFF M NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

OVER 200 have tested positive for COVID-19 from among 4,000-odd who had gathered in Delhi's Markaz Nizamuddin, the headquarters of the Tablighi Jamaat. A look at what the movement is about:

What is Tablighi Jamaat?

Tablighi Jamaat, which literally means a society for spreading the faith, is a Sunni Islamic missionary movement. The proselytising movement aims to reach out to ordinary Muslims and revive their faith, particularly in matters of ritual, dress, and personal behaviour.

How did the movement begin?

Its roots lie in the Deobandi version of the Hanafi school of jurisprudence. It was launched by Deoband cleric and prominet Islamic scholar Maulana Muhammad Ilyas Khandhalaw in 1927 in Mewat. Its emergence also coincided with Hindu proselytising movements. While Maulana Ilyaz taught at the Mazaharul Uloom in Saharanpur in the mid-1920s, a few hundred kilometers away were the economically and educationally backward Meo peasants, mostly Muslims who were largely practicing Hindu traditions. Maulana Ilyaz began bringing Meo Muslims back into the fold of traditional Islam; he trained several young men from



■ Iran (Feb 20–March 9)

1000

500

■ India (March 13–30; 18 days)

Nizamuddin area cordoned off after several who attended Tablighi Jamaat event tested positive. Praveen Khanna

Deoband and Saharanpur and sent them to Mewat, where the Tablighi Jamaat established a network of madrasas and Mosque.

How wide is its reach?

In two decades after its launch, the Tablighi Jamaat had spread beyond the Mewat region. In the first Tablighi conference held in 1941, approximately 25,000 people from across North India attended.

After Partition in 1947, a Pakistan chapter was started in the town of Raiwind, Lahore. Currently, Bangladesh has one of the

a significant base in the United States and Britian, which has a large Indian subcontinent diaspora. It also has a presence in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore.

largest chapters. The Tablighi Jamaat also has

How does it promote Islam? The Tablighi Jamaat is based on six prin-

ciples. The first is the *kalimah*, an article of faith in which the Tabligh accepts that there is no God but Allah and that Prophet Muhammad is his messenger. The second is salaat, or prayer five times daily. The third is ilm and dhikr, the knowledge and remembrance of Allah conducted in sessions in which the congregation listens to preaching by the imam, performs prayers, recites the Quran and reads the Hadith; the congregation also uses these sessions to dine together, thus fostering a sense of community and identity. The fourth principle is *ikram-i-*Muslim, the treatment of fellow Muslims with honour. The fifth is ikhlas-i-niyat, or sincerity of intention. And the sixth is dawat-otabligh, or proselytisaton.

What happens at the gatherings?

Between 8 and 11 am, the gathering is divided into groups of roughly 10 people each, and each group chooses a leader, preferably an elderly person. The group is given a destination, the distance depending on how much money the individuals have brought for this purpose. Between 3 and 5 pm, there is a talk on Islam for newcomers. After sunon the life of the Prophet, with explanations.

set, there is a recitation from the Quran, and

What is the structure of the Tablighi Jamaat, as an organisation?

There is no defined structure, but there exists a hierarchic network of elders and mosques. Originally, it used to be headed by the Ameer, who would preside over the shura (council), the core of the organisation, and deal with important matters including international congregations known as Aalmi Ijtama.

After the death of Maulana Inamul Hasan Kandhlawi, the third Ameer (1965-95), the post of Ameer was abolished, and Aalmi Shura (international advisory council) was appointed. After the death of Maulana Kandhlawi's son Zubair ul Hasan Kandhlawi in 2015, the movement has been marked by factionalism.

What are these factions?

There are camps in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The "Nizamuddin camp" is headed by Maulana Saad Kandhalwi, greatgrandson of Maulana Muhammad Ilyas while a rival faction is based in Raiwind, Pakistan. Bangladesh, which hosts the biggest annual Aalmi Ijtama in Tongi, with around two million people attending, is another faction. In the Ijtama this year, the first phase was held on January 12 with the Tongi faction and the second phase on January 17 with the Nizamuddin faction.

Testing, tracking, protecting elderly: why Germany has relatively few deaths

ANNA SAUERBREY BERLIN

EUROPE IS in crisis.

Countries across the continent are in lockdown. Borders are closed off. Healthcare systems are dangerously overstretched. Economies are contracting. And people are dying, in terrifying numbers.

Here is much the same. Though not in full lockdown, schools, shops, restaurants and theatres are closed; gatherings of more than two people are banned. The economy will shrink and jobs will be lost. Even Chancellor Angela Merkel self-quarantined after learning that her doctor was infected. (She tested negative.) Germany, it seems, is

not immune to the ravages of the pandemic. Except in one way: Very few people seem to be dying. As of Tuesday (evening in India), of the 68,180 confirmed cases of the coronavirus, 682 patients have died. That's

a fatality rate of just over 1%. By contrast, the current rate in Italy — where 12,482 people have died — is over 11%. In Spain, it's about 9%. Over twice as many people have died in Britain, where there are around three times fewer cases, than in Germany.

The startling numbers are something of an enigma. Some have hailed the country for breaking the spell of catastrophe; others have been far more guarded. What is going on here? And what can we learn from it?

First and foremost: Early and persistent testing helps. And so does tracking people.

Take the country's first recorded case. On January 28, a man in Bavaria who works for a car parts company that has two plants in Wuhan, China, was confirmed to have the virus. Within two days, the authorities identified the person who had infected the patient, tracked his contacts and quarantined them. The company stopped travel to China and shut down its plant in Bavaria. The outbreak — several other employees tested

positive — was effectively contained. Across the country, the pattern was repeated. Local health departments and federal authorities worked together to test, track and quarantine exposed citizens.

Germany has also been better at protecting its older residents, who are at much greater risk. States banned visits to the elderly, and policymakers issued urgent warnings to limit contact with older people. Many seem to have quarantined themselves. The results are clear: Patients over the age of 80 make up around 3% of the infected, though they account for 7% of the population. The median age for those infected is estimated to be 46; in Italy, it's 63.

And many more young people in Germany have tested positive for the virus than in other countries. In part, that's attributable to the country's more extensive testing. But there's also an element of chance and culture. Germany is a skiing nation — around 14.5 million Germans go skiing every year —

and the Austrian and northern Italian Alps are popular locations. This year, after vacationers travelled to one of the centres of the European outbreak, Tyrol, they seemed to bring back the virus with them — and spread it.

Closer to home, there's carnival. One of the most substantial early outbreaks occurred at one of the centres of carnival, which involves parades and parties, popular with the young. Hundreds of cases seem to be traceable to a couple who took part in festivities in the town of Langbroich. "Both skiing and carnival may have affected the low average age of the first wave of confirmed cases," said Karl Lauterbach, a physician and a member of the Bundestag.

Both early testing and incubation of the virus among the young go part of the way in explaining why the country's fatality rate is so comparatively low. "It's how much and whom we test," Martin Stürmer, a virologist who is the director of a lab that is running coronavirus testing in Frankfurt, said.

In general, countries that test less and reserve it for those already very ill, like Italy, have higher fatality rates.

But we should be wary of reading too much into the statistics at all, particularly at this early stage. Though Germany's healthcare system is overall in good shape recently modernized, well staffed and funded, with the highest number of intensive-care beds per 100,000 patients in Europe — it hasn't really been tested yet. Patients have only recently entered hospitals. On average, a severely ill COVID-19 patient dies 30 days after being infected. "We are only at the beginning of the epidemic," Lothar Wieler, the president of the Robert Koch Institute, said. "How it is going to develop is an open question."

It's quite possible that Germany is just behind the curve. Opinions vary on how hard the strain on the system will be in the next weeks. "I think we are unlikely to experience a situation like in Italy," Stefan

Social Medicine, Epidemiology and Health Economics at Charité University Hospital in Berlin, said. Others are more pessimistic. Dr Lauterbach, for example, warned that Germany's fatality rate may yet rise.

Willich, the director of the Institute for

And there have been signals that the healthcare system could soon be overwhelmed. More hospitals and doctors are reporting shortages of vital materials such as masks and other protective gear. A paper published by several medical associations last week predicted that it is likely that within "a short period of time, there won't be sufficient intensive care resources in Germany to treat all patients, despite recent capacitybuilding." The worst may be to come.

So there is perhaps one lesson we can draw from Germany's experience. Don't count your blessings — or your data — too

THE NEW YORK TIMES

(Figures of cases and deaths updated to press time)

12 THE OUTBREAK THE WORLD

PANDEMIC WATCH



Sales jumped by 20.6 pc in March. Reuters/File

UK

Supermarkets record busiest month in history

London: British supermarkets had their busiest month in history as demand soared from people preparing to stay at home avoid coronavirus.New figures from market research firm Kantar show British grocery sales jumped by 20.6 per cent in March compared with a year earlier, making it the fastest rate of growth on record. As Britain prepared for a lockdown, images of shelves stripped of essentials like pasta and toilet paper circulated on social media, prompting British supermarkets to take out newspaper ads urging people not to panic buy.

FRANCE

Charlie Hebdo attack trial pushed to Sept

Paris: The trial of 14 people accused of aiding jihadist gunmen who targeted the Charlie Hebdo newspaper and other Paris targets in January 2015 has been postponed till September, after courts were almost totally shut down in France's coronavirus fight, prosecutors said Tuesday. Seventeen people were killed over three days after brothers Cherif and Said Kouachi massacred 12 people at the offices of the satirical paper, heralding a wave of Islamic attacks on French soil in the following years. The trial is now to open on September 2 and run until November 10, France's anti-terrorism

PAKISTAN Pak increases its testing

capability

prosecutors said.

Islamabad: Pakistan said on Tuesday that it considerably increased its testing capability since the outbreak as the number of the cases crossed 1,900, showing a constant upward trajectory despite efforts to pull it downwards. "The country had the capacity to test 30,000 people on March 13, and this will rise to 280,000 by tomorrow... By April 15, we will further increase it to 900,000," minister Asad Umar, who was flanked by Prime Minister's Advisor on Health Dr Zafar Mirza and Minister Revenue Hammad Azhar, said.

US, Spain witness deadliest day yet

Over 800,000 confirmed cases, 40,000 deaths recorded worldwide

STEPHANIE KELLY& **DANIEL TROTTA** NEW YORK, MARCH 31

THE US death toll from the coronavirus pandemic climbed past 3,000 on Monday, the deadliest day yet in the country's mounting crisis, while New York cheered the arrival of a gleaming 1,000-bed US Navy hospital ship as a sign of hope in the city's desperate fight.

In a grim new milestones marking the spread of the virus, total deaths across the United States hit 3,017, including at least 540 on Monday, and the reported cases climbed to more than 163,000, according to a *Reuters* tally.

The coronavirus pandemic has killed more than 40,000 people worldwide with nearly threequarters of the deaths in Europe, according to an AFP tally. Over 800,000 cases have been registered globally.

People in New York and New Jersey lined both sides of the Hudson River to cheer the US Navy ship Comfort, a converted oil tanker painted white with giant red crosses, as it sailed past the Statue of Liberty accompanied by support ships and helicopters.

The Comfort will treat noncoronavirus patients, including those who require surgery and critical care, in an effort to free up other resources to fight the virus, the Navy said.

"It's a wartime atmosphere and we all have to pull together," said New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio.

United States health officials are urging Americans to follow stay-at-home orders until the end of April to contain the spread of the virus, which originated in

1 MILLION HEALTH WORKERS NEEDED, SAYS CUOMO

NEW YORK Governor Andrew Cuomo said up to 1 million more healthcare workers were needed to combat the pandemic

CUOMO SAID New York added 6,984 cases and the total number of confirmed patients statewide is 66,000 with 1,218 deaths

WE NEED supplies desperately and we're working on that...we're in a situation where you have 50 states competing for supplies,' he said



China and has infected about three-quarters of a million people around the world.

"If we do things together well – almost perfectly – we could get in the range of 100,000 to 200,000 fatalities," Dr Deborah Birx, coordinator of the White House's coronavirus task force, told NBC's "Today" show. **REUTERS**



People prepare places to sleep at a makeshift camp for the homeless in Las Vegas on Monday. AP

849 new deaths, Spain's hospitals struggle

ASSOCIATED PRESS MADRID, MARCH 31

SPAIN'S CORONAVIRUS deaths jumped by a record number Tuesday as the country's medical system strained to care for its tens of thousands of infected patients and the world total climbed to more than 800,000 case.

Spain and Italy are still struggling to avoid the collapse of their health systems, with Spain saying hospitals in at least half of its 17 regions are at or very near their ICU bed limits and more than 13,000 medical workers are



In Sabadell, Tuesday. AP

among the country's reported 94.417 infections.

Dozens of hotels across Spain have been converted into recov-

pitals in sports centres, libraries and exhibition halls. So far they have added 23,000 beds. Overnight, Spain recorded

are building makeshift field hos-

849 new deaths, the highest daily toll since the pandemic hit the southern European country. It has now claimed the lives of 8,189 people in Spain, forcing Madrid to open a second temporary morgue this week after an ice rink pressed into service last week become overwhelmed.

Authorities are shifting ventilating machines to regions with

ery rooms for patients in less-se- the highest number of ICU parious condition, and authorities tients, and moving the patients themselves between regions "has not been ruled out," said Dr. María Iosé Sierra of Spain's health emergencies centre. The death toll in Italy has

climbed by 837 to 12,428, the Civil Protection Agency said on Tuesday, with the daily tally rising, albeit slightly, for a second day running. The number of new cases

was broadly steady, growing by 4,053 against 4,050 on Monday, and bringing total infections since the outbreak came to light on February 21 to 105,792.

Epidemic far from over in Asia: WHO

REUTERS BEIJING, MARCH 31

THE CORONAVIRUS epidemic is "far from over" in the Asia-Pacific region, and current measures to curb the spread of the virus are buying time for countries to prepare for large-scale community transmissions, a WHO official said on Tuesday.

Even with all the measures, the risk of transmission in the region will not go away as long as the pandemic continues, said Takeshi Kasai, Regional Director for the Western Pacific at the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The new coronavirus first surfaced in central China in late 2019. Infections have now exceeded 770,000 cases worldwide, with the United States, Italy and Spain overtaking China. "Let me be clear. The epi-

demic is far from over in Asia and the Pacific. This is going to be a long-term battle and we cannot let down our guard," Kasai told a virtual media briefing. "We need every country to

keep preparing for large-scale community transmission."

Countries with limited resources are a priority, such as Pacific Island nations, he said, as they have to ship samples to other countries for diagnoses.

Kasai warned that for countries that are seeing a tapering off of cases, they should not let down their guard, or the virus may come surging back.

With 381 new deaths, UK toll sees spike

ADITI KHANNA LONDON, MARCH 31

THE UK on Tuesday registered its biggest single-day coronavirus toll of 381, taking the total number of deaths from the virus to 1,789 in the country with around 25,150 testing positive for COVID-19.

The UK's Department of Health figures came as the spokesperson for British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who remains in self-isolation at 10 Downing Street after his diagnosis with mild coronavirus symptoms, said the surge in figures is reflective of the urgent need to adhere to the government's advice to stay at home and follow social distancing norms strictly.

"The PM said the rising death toll in recent days showed the vital importance of the public con-

tinuing to stick to the social distancing guidance which has been put in place by the government, based on scientific and medical advice," the spokesperson said. Iohnson, who led his first vir-

tual Cabinet meeting via video conference from Downing Street earlier on Tuesday, reiterated the same message on Twitter alongside an image of the first-of-itskind remote ministerial meeting with his top team. "This morning I chaired the

first-ever digital Cabinet. Our message to the public is: stay at home, protect the NHS, save lives," the prime minister said.

"We recorded the highest single(day)increase in deaths as a result of COVID-19. Every death is the loss of a loved one and our thoughts and prayers are with those grieving," Cabinet Office minister Michael Gove said. PTI



CALL TO ALMS

Buddhist monks wearing face shields and masks collect alms in Bangkok, Tuesday. Reuters

Don't flout democracy: EU to Hungary on virus laws

REUTERS BRUSSELS, MARCH 31

THE EUROPEAN Union's executive warned Hungary on Tuesday that emergency measures adopted by governments to fight the coronavirus crisis must

not undercut democracy.

The Hungarian parliament on Monday granted nationalist prime minister Viktor Orban an

open-ended right to rule by executive decree and introduced iail sentences for anyone hindering measures to curb the spread of the virus or spreading false information related to the pandemic.

"It is of utmost importance that emergency measures are not at the expense of our fundamental principles and values ... Democracy cannot work without free and independent media," said European Commission President Ursula von der Leven. "Any emergency measures must be limited to what is necessary and strictly proportionate. They must not last indefinitely ... governments must make sure that such measures are subject to regular scrutiny," she added in a statement.

The Commission, the EU's executive body, said it would analyse Hungary's law and monitor its implementation.

'LOCKDOWNS MAY HAVE SAVED 59,000 LIVES'

measures might have already saved up to 59,000 lives across 11 European countries battling the spread of the coronavirus, experts in Britain say.

"With current interventions remaining in place to at

Posts On How To Behave During The Lockdown Spark Outrage; Govt Apologises

Paris: Strict containment least the end of March, we estimate that interventions across all 11 countries will have averted 59,000 deaths up to 31 March," researchers from Imperial College London said in the report, which was released Monday.

Europe delivers gear to Iran; US extends n-sanction waivers

AGENCIES WASHINGTON, BERLIN MARCH 31

THE TRUMP administration on Monday renewed several waivers on US sanctions against Iran, allowing Russian, European and Chinese companies to continue to work on Iran's civilian nuclear facilities without drawing American penalties.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo signed off on the waiver extensions but couched the decision as one that continues restrictions on Iran's atomic work. "Iran's continued expansion of nuclear activities is unacceptable.

Meanwhile, European nations have delivered medical goods to Iran in the first transaction under the Instex mechanism set up to evade American sanctions on Tehran, the German foreign ministry said Tuesday. "France, Germany and the

United Kingdom confirm that Instex has successfully concluded its first transaction, facilitating the export of medical goods from Europe to Iran. These goods are now in Iran," the ministry said in a statement.

"Now the first transaction is complete, Instex and its Iranian counterpart STFI will work on more transactions and enhancing the mechanism," Berlin said.



time when the US is facing pressure for refusing to ease sanctions on Iran. The waivers were issued with the intention of allowing foreign companies to get involved in non-proliferation work in Iran,as per reports. Their argument is that such projects would make it harder for nuclear weapons to be developed in the nation.

Britain, France and Germany were among a list of countries that Iran reported receiving medical aid from earlier this month as it battles a serious outbreak of the novel coronavirus.

Iran on Tuesday said 141 more people have died from the novel coronavirus, raising the official toll to 2,898. Health ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour said 3,111 new infections have been confirmed.

12-year-old COVID-19 patient dies in Belgium

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE BRUSSELS, MARCH 31

A 12-YEAR-OLD girl confirmed infected with COVID-19 has died in Belgium, health officials

said Tuesday. Fatality at such a young age "is a very rare occurrence," said government spokesman Dr Emmanuel Andre, adding that her death "shook us". The girl had had a fever for three days before her death, and tested positive for COVID-19, said another

spokesman, Steven Van Gucht. No other details were given about her case, including whether she had any other un-

It was the first death of a child in the coronavirus crisis in Belgium, which has now recorded a total 705 deaths from the disease it causes, according

Last week, France reported the death of a 16-year-old girl from coronavirus in the greater Paris region. Although serious COVID-19 infections are uncommon among the young, some exceptional cases have been taken to hospital intensive-care wards, as US health au-

Belgium's toll on Tuesday represented a jump of nearly 200 fatalities from that given the previous day, which stood at 513.

derlying health problems.

to the latest official toll.

thorities have pointed out.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE KUALA LUMPUR. MARCH 31

MALAYSIAN AUTHORITIES have advised women to wear makeup, not to nag their husbands and speak with a cartoon character's soothing voice during the virus lockdown, sparking a flood of mockery online.

Like many countries, the Southeast Asian nation has ordered all citizens to stay at home to stem the spread of the coronavirus, which has killed over 30,000 people globally. In a series of now-deleted

Facebook posts, the Malaysian women's ministry offered tips for how wives should behave during the lockdown.

One showed a picture of a couple hanging up clothes together next to a caption that advised women to "avoid nagging" their husbands, and to imitate the squeaky voice of Doraemon, a cartoon robot cat from Japan that is popular across Asia. The post was removed Tuesday afternoon following a flood of criticism, with many accusing the government of sexism.

Other posts advised women



Wear make-up, speak like Doraemon: Malaysia to women

Firefighters spray disinfectant in Kuala Lumpur. Reuters

working at home to wear makeup and dress neatly, rather than in casual clothes.

"This must be a pressing issue," said one Facebook post. "How will dressing up and putting on make-up at home (prevent) COVID-19? Pray, tell?" "It's already 2020, please progress. Focus on more important matters for women," read another.

There have been fears of a surge in domestic violence worldwide, as the stress caused by confinement and job insecurity increase the likelihood of conflicts.

A government run helpline for vulnerable people, including victims of domestic abuse, in Malaysia has seen an increase in calls of more than 50 percent since the start of the lockdown on March 18, local media reported. The women's ministry apolo-

gised on Tuesday, conceding the

posts may have offended some

people, and said it would "remain cautious in future". But it insisted the sugges-

tions were merely aimed at "maintaining positive relationships among family members during the period they are working from home".

13 ECONOMY







\$26.15



₹38,100

COVID-19 EFFECT BANK DEPOSITS

Even as FDs turn dull, stay with safe instruments in current times

SUNNY VERMA& SANDEEPSINGH NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

EVEN AS the sharp cut in RBI policy rate to 4.4 per cent lowest in at least 20 years (4.75 per cent between April 2009 to February 2010) — will bring relief to borrowers, depositors and savers may now have to contend with post-tax returns of below 5 per cent on their fixed deposits (FDs) and in some cases just 4 per cent.

Led by State Bank of India, which slashed its deposit rate to 5.7 per cent on FDs of 1-10 year tenure along with cutting its lending rates, most large banks' FD rates are likely to slide below 6 per cent on term deposits of more than onevear duration, banking industry sources said.

There could now be limited attractive avenues for conservative investors, looking for monthly interest income on FDs, to safely park their surplus funds. While small savings schemes offered

by the government, GoI bonds and tax-free bonds offer an alternative for higher returns, they are less liquid than bank FDs which come with

premature withdrawal facility. Another options available is fixed income funds.

EXPLAINED

While SBI already cut its lending and deposit rates, many private banks will have their asset liability committee meeting this week and are set to cut FD rates. Small lenders, such as Jana Small Finance Bank and AU Small Finance Bank, and NBFCs, like Bajaj Finance and HDFC, offer interest rates that are higher by about 1-2 percentage points when compared with large

commercial banks. "AAA-rated NBFCs are in the process of slashing deposit rates further starting April. They are expected to slash rates by 50-100 basis points," an official with a leading nonbanking financial company (NBFC) said.

However, it will be difficult for small banks and NBFCs to raise deposits easily as the perception of deposits being safe have taken a hit after troubles at PMC Bank and Yes Bank.

For a fixed deposit of 1-2 years and 5-10 years, HDFC Bank offers interest rate of 6.15 per cent. On a deposit of 2 years 1 day to 3 years, it is 6.25 per cent. ICICI Bank's rates vary from 6.2-6.4 per cent for term deposit between 1-10 years. These rates are for deposits up to Rs 2 crore. Most banks offer an additional 50-bp interest to

senior citizens. With inflation falling and

possibility of economic

PSU banks

offer 3-month

moratorium

on term loans

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU

PUBLIC SECTOR banks, led by

State Bank of India (SBI), on

Tuesday announced the offer of

the three-month moratorium on

term loan repayments to their

to defer the installments and in-

terest and EMIs on term loans

falling between March 1, 2020

term loans issued by them in-

clude UCO Bank, Bank of Baroda,

Punjab and Sind Bank, IDBI Bank,

Other PSBs that have an-

SBI said it has initiated steps

MUMBAI, MARCH 31

customers.

and May 31, 2020.

growth sliding further, it is unlikely that the market interest rates will rise anytime soon. Collapse in commodity prices, such as oil and metals, also mean the inflation will remain lower in the medium term. While low inflation would mean high real return on fixed deposits, still the fall in rates is sharp from a depositor's perspective.

What should you do?

With equities turning volatile, debt funds witnessing risk on account of defaults by companies and FD rates falling, experts say these are times to preserve capital. However, investors can consider other options such as GoI bonds, tax-free bonds and debt mutual funds.

Mumbai-based financial planner Vishal Dhawan said debt funds with high quality securities are a good option and are more tax efficient too. "There are pockets of opportunity available — GoI bonds offering around 7.7 per cent,

tax free bonds in secondary market (5.5 per cent post tax) and debt mutual funds," he said.

"It is a new paradigm, everyone is trying to understand the unknown. While investors

should stick to their asset allocation, they must make sure that money needed in the next two to three years is in safe liquid instruments. In the meantime, investors should look to stay with good quality debt securities and on the equity side with large caps only," said Surva Bhatia of Asset Managers.

As FD returns are falling and SBI is offering 5.7 per cent post-tax return of 4 per cent for someone in the highest tax bracket—fund managers feel that fixed income schemes are better for investors.

In a recent note, ICICI Prudential AMC said that since yields can soften further, debt funds can generate better returns. Some reasons that the fund house noted for moderation in yields include RBI's continued accommodative stance; spread over repo still attractive for G-Sec and corporate bonds; RBI's measures like LTRO, CRR cut and cutting reverse reporate by 90 bps that should nudge banks to participate more in secondary market: more rate cuts due to slowdown in growth and low

inflation; among others. The fund house said, "The complete fixed income space looks attractive, as in the coming weeks you will see further softening of yields and there is opportunity to lock-in your investments at current elevated levels."

COVID-19 SPENDING: TO HANDLE LIKELY CASH FLOW MISMATCH IN FY21

SENSEX: 29,468.49 ▲ 1028.17 NIFTY: 8,597.75 ▲ 316.65 NIKKEI: 18,917.01 ▼ 167.96 HANG SENG: 23,603.48 ▲ 428.37 FTSE: 5,589.39 ▲ 25.65 DAX: 9,819.04 ▲ 3.07

Govt hikes WMA limit with RBI by 60%; frontloads borrowing

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

THE GOVERNMENT Tuesday increased the ceiling on its temporary loan facility with the Reserve Bank of India — known as Ways and Means Advance (WMA) — by 60 per cent to tide over the cash flow mismatch in FY21 expected from higher spending to combat the spread of COVID-19. Announcing the government's borrowing plan for April-September period, Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) Secretary Atanu Chakraborty said the "WMA limit is proposed to be revised to Rs 1.20 lakh crore and would be reviewed

on a need basis (from Rs 75,000 crore last year)."

Answering a query on whether the Centre will issue securities directly to the RBI to finance COVID-19 related extra spending, he said: "Certainly, that's not in the borrowing plan." The WMA facility enables the government to take a temporary short term loan from the central bank, mainly to address the mismatch between its inflow of revenues and outflow of expenditure. A higher limit provides the government flexibility to raise funds from RBI without borrowing them from the market.

The government will do "whatever is required" for poor

ENABLES TEMPORARY SHORT-LOAN FACILITY

■The Ways and Means Advance facility enables the Centre to take a temporary short-term loan from RBI, to address mismatch between inflow of revenues and outflow of expenditure

the government also plans to issue the debt exchange traded fund (ETF) comprising of government securities (G-Sec) to widen the base of investors

■In financial year 2020-21,

and vulnerable sections and for the resurgence of the industry. Chakraborty said, without specifying whether the fiscal deficit target for 2020-21 will be breached or not. The government has announced a Rs 1.7 lakh crore package to provide income support,

free food and other facilities to the poor to help them during the 21day national lockdown.

"The packages, three announced already, are all along that lines. Therefore, our fundraising resources — not only from market but also from multilateral institutions and our end — are all geared towards that end."

Out of gross borrowings of Rs 7.8 lakh crore in FY21, the Centre has proposed to borrow Rs 4.88 lakh crore, or 62.56 per cent, in the first half of the fiscal, as against 62.25 per cent done in the previous fiscal. The Budget 2020-21 has pegged the Centre's net market borrowing — including government securities, treasury bills and post office life insurance fund at Rs 5.36 lakh crore.

When asked if the government has taken into account need of a stimulus in the upcoming fiscal, the DEA Secretary said, "The borrowing plan essentially takes care of the requirement of the

cash flow of the government on account of the expenditure that had already been planned, and also anticipated, and some with certain level of probability, and therefore borrowing plan captures that certainly."

In FY21, the Centre also plans to issue the debt exchange traded fund (ETF) comprising of government securities to widen the base of investors. "The Budget announcement related to debt ETF would be operationalised during second half," Chakraborty added

This will enable retail investors, who otherwise find it difficult to buy government bonds directly, take an exposure in this risk free instrument.

FIGHTING COVID-19

FM addresses G20 meet

New Delhi: Speaking at the 2nd Extraordinary G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meeting, via video conference, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday said the IMF can develop innovative methods to meet COVID-19 related financing requirements. PTI

TAIPA seeks DoTintervention

New Delhi: The Tower and Infrastructure Providers Association(TAIPA)Tuesday wrote to Department of Telecommunications (DoT) Secretary Anshu Prakash seeking immediate government intervention to augment the capacity of telecom tower infrastructure across the country.

NMDC to donate ₹150 cr

New Delhi: Mining PSU NMDC Ltd on Monday said it will contribute Rs150 crore to the PM CARES Fund to help in the fight against COVID-19. ENS

INTERVIEW: NAUSHAD FORBES, CO-CHAIRMAN, FORBES MARSHALL

'Income support scheme runs risk of leaving some needy out'

WITH THE country under a lockdown, NAUSHAD FORBES, cochairman of Forbes Marshall, told SANDEEP SINGH that it is the only way of preventing and delaying rise in number of cases and, in the meantime, beef up the country's medical infrastructure. He, however, raised concerns on implementation of the same and said that while better coordination was needed between Centre and states, the FM's income support scheme should have been simpler and broad-based. Excerpts:

Do you think the lockdown was the right thing to do?

My sense is that the lockdown was the right thing to do and it does seem like that was the only way of preventing and delay the rise in number of cases and, in the meantime, prepare the facilities, medical equipment and infrastructure to fight it out.

But don't you think it has hit the lives of many, especially the poor?

Yes, and I feel that the way it was implemented, we could have avoided some needless pain by better coordination between the centre and the states. The clarity on announcements was missing initially. For example, while grocery was termed as an essential item, there was no clarity on how



people can buy it and that the transportation of the same should be facilitated. While it has been sorted now, we saw local policemen interpreting the announcement the way they wanted to. All of it was not required.

Also, the whole issue around migrant workers has been too painful. The lockdown was announced and people rushed to catch trains and buses to leave for their villages and families, but those had already been stopped. But, at the same time there was no clarity on what they could do. Both the states and Centre should have planned for them. While Delhi CM made some good announcements for them, it could have come on the first day itself.

How do you see the impact on economy and do you think RBI and the Finance Minister did what was required?

There are no questions about the impact on economy and it is going to be dramatic. I think the

Reserve Bank of India were substantial and in the right direction. While the Finance Minister's announcement on income support was in the right direction, it could have been simpler and wider.

measures announced by the

So what do you think could have been done?

We should not have worried too much about giving it to some who did not need the income support. Why not give income support to everyone who needed. Many categories were created to provide benefits and while it aimed at not providing it to some who did not need it, it runs the risk of leaving some needy out of it and that is a bigger worry.

There are many who gave up the LPG subsidy on the PM's appeal and here also people who do not need it would have given it up on their own. I would want income support for people at the bottom of the pyramid, maybe Rs 5,000 to all who are needy. The government could have looked to support the income of workers at shops, cleaning services and other small establishments with mass employment exits. It could have been done by giving support through the employers in the form of funds every two weeks, and that could have been topped up by their employers.

Sensex gains 1,028 pts, ends FY20 31.23% lower It was also a bad financial year for mutual funds with all of them

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU MUMBAI, MARCH 31

STOCK MARKETS remained volatile yet again with the benchmark indices rallying on the back of strong global cues on Tuesday, the last trading session of the fiscal 2019-20. The Sensex rose 1.028.17 points, or 3.62 per cent. to 29,468.49, while the NSE Nifty gained 3.82 per cent, or 317 points, at 8,597.75.

Despite Tuesday's gain, the Sensex lost 31.23 per cent, or 9,204 points, in FY20. Most of the losses happened in March in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak.

on Tuesday after data showed that manufacturing activity in China rebounded from record lows in March, even though China's economy remains under huge pressure from the coronavirus. The rupee, meanwhile, ended

showing huge losses in their net

asset values and facing redemp-

kets and US futures moved higher

tion pressure. Global stock mar-

on a flat note at 75.60 against the US dollar but logged a massive 9.36 per cent or 646 paise loss during 2019-20, mostly due to weakened sentiment in the wake of COVID-19 outbreak.

Oil steady on US-Russia talks, but still near 18-year lows

REUTERS

NEW YORK, MARCH 31

OIL PRICES steadied on Tuesday, with the US crude benchmark climbing off 18-year lows after US President Donald Trump and Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin agreed to talks on stabilising energy markets.

May Brent crude futures was 2 cents lower at \$22.74 a barrel by 1648 GMT ahead of expiration after closing on Monday at \$22.76. US crude was up 23 cents at

\$20.32 after settling in the previous session at \$20.09.

Global stock markets, meanwhile, dipped in volatile trading as investors assessed the economic damage from COVID-19. In early afternoon trading on

Wall Street, the Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 0.88 per cent to 22,130.4, the S&P 500 fell 0.96 per cent to 2,601.36 and the Nasdaq Composite dropped 0.37 per cent to 7,745.23. MSCI's gauge of stocks across the globe shed 0.19 per cent after modest gains in Europe and steep declines in Asia.

'11 mn could be driven into poverty in East Asia, Pacific'

About 11 million people could be driven into poverty in East Asia and the Pacific if *COVID-19 drives growth in* these regions to lower-case scenario. World Bank said

2.1%

BASELINE GROWTH PROJECTION IN THE DEVELOPING EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC REGIONS FOR 2020

2.3%

BASELINE GROWTH PROJECTION IN CHINA FOR 2020, SLOWING FROM 6.1 PER CENT IN 2019



35 million

Number of people who were estimated escape poverty in East Asia and the Pacific in 2020 in prior projections by World Bank, including over 25 million in China alone

24 million

Number of people who will be unable to escape poverty in 2020 under the baseline growth scenario, due to the COVID-19 pandemic

11 million Number of people who will be

driven into poverty in 2020 if economic situation were to deteriorate further and lower-case scenario prevails due to the virus situation

Source: World Bank/PTI

Ordinance to give effect to changed tax compliance deadlines promulgated

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

THE GOVERNMENT on Tuesday promulgated the Taxation and Other Laws (Relaxation of Certain Provisions) Ordinance, 2020 to bring into effect various tax compliance related measures — including extended deadline for filing income tax, customs and central excise returns — announced on March 24 in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic.

The Ordinance, which got Presidential assent Tuesday, also amended provisions of Incometax Act to provide the same tax treatment to the PM-CARES Fund as available to the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund. "The donation made to the PM-CARES Fund shall be eligible for 100 per cent I-T Act to provide same to the Prime Minister's **National Relief Fund**

deduction under section 80G of the I-T Act. Further, the limit on deduction of 10 per cent of gross income shall also not be applicable for donation made to PM-CARES Fund," a statement said.

With the promulgation of the Ordinance, the last date for filing I-T returns for FY19 as well as that for linking PAN with biometric ID Aadhaar has been extended by three months to June 30.

The Ordinance also amended provisions of tax treatment to the PM-**CARES Fund as available**

Kanungogets 1-yr extension

New Delhi: The government has re-appointed BP Kanungo as Reserve Bank of India Deputy Governor for another year. Meanwhile, Deputy Governor NS Vishwanathan demitted the

Eight core sectors growth up 5.5% in Feb

industries recorded a growth of 5.5 per cent in February, as per government data released Tuesday. **PTI**

A week into lockdown: Disruption in supply of essential medicines, dearth of staff at drug stores consultant Dr Naval Mendiratta.

PRABHARAGHAVAN& **RAHUL V PISHARODY** NEW DELHI/HYDERABAD,

MARCH 31

NEARLY A week after the 21-day nationwide lockdown was announced to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus (SARS-COV-2), India is still facing hiccups in ensuring adequate and timely supplies of medicines. The shortage of manpower, coupled with an ongoing fear of disciplinary action by law enforcement authorities, means that stocks of medicines have been slow to reach retail outlets despite them being consid-

nounced the moratorium on ered "essential" For instance, hydroxychloroauine and chloroquine medicines like Ipca Laboratories' HCQS and Lariago are still stocked out in several pharmacies in Delhi.

FEAR OF ACTION BY AUTHORITIES

■ Shortage of manpower and fear of disciplinary action by authorities means that medicines have been slow to reach stores

■ Stocks of blood pressure medicines, insulin etc have stopped

making their way to distributors Hydroxychloroquine, especially, is used by several patients

with auto-immune diseases like

rheumatoid arthritis and lupus,

according to Fortis Memorial

Research Institute rheumatology

Further, stocks of blood pressure medicines, insulin and other medicines to treat diabetes have

stopped making their way to distributors, said All India Chemists and Distributors Federation president Kailash Gupta. The All India Organisation of

Chemists and Druggists (AIOCD), too, on March 29 wrote to various pharmaceutical associations to "support and ensure" adequate stocks of medicines at their depots and to coordinate transportation to chemists and druggists. "At present, it is reported from

all states that stock level is going down and may last for the next 15-20 days. Therefore, we request you to please look into the issue and ensure that sufficient stock is maintained at your stock points," stated AIOCD president JS Shinde and general secretary Rajiv

Singhal in the letter.

Meanwhile, a large number of medical stores in and around Hyderabad enlisted in the essential establishments during the lockdown have downed their shutters. If a disruption in supply leading to a shortage in stock is one reason, the absence of workers from attending to their duties is another.

According to Kishan Murary Shetty, general secretary of the Greater Hyderabad Retail Medical Shops Association, around 60 per cent of medical stores in the city are shut as of today.

"Employees are unable to come to work. Most of them depend on public transport and are unable to reach for work. Others who own vehicles are being stopped at police checkpoints and despite showing ID cards they are not being allowed to go," he said.

FinMin extends validity of lower withholding tax orders by three months

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU NEW DELHI, MARCH 31

CITING DISRUPTION in normal working conditions for almost all sectors due to COVID-19, the Finance Ministry on Tuesday extended the validity of all lower withholding tax orders by three months till June 30. The move is expected to ensure continuity of payments amid a cash crunch be-

ing faced by companies.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), in its order, said that cases where the application is pending and where such certificates were issued for FY20, the validity of certificates would get extended to June 30 for lower or nil deduction of TDS/TCS is pending for disposal.

The same deadline extension would apply for those assessees who have not been able to apply for such lower/nil deduction certificates for FY21 but were issued such certificates for 2019-20. In cases where the assessee has not applied for issuer of lower or nil deduction of TDS/TCS and does not have any certificate for 2019-20, the CBDT has prescribed a modified procedure for application and subsequent handling by the assessing officer.

The order also prescribes a 10 per cent withholding tax rate on payments to non-residents (including foreign companies) having Permanent Establishment in India and not covered by the above scenarios) till June 30 or disposal of application, whichever is earlier.

10 PSBs to

merge, become four from today Mumbai: Ten PSBs will

BRIEFLY

Wednesday merge into four banks. Oriental Bank of Commerce and United Bank of India will be merged with Punjab National Bank; Syndicate Bank will be merged with Canara Bank; Indian Bank will be merged with Allahabad Bank; and Andhra Bank and Corporation Bank will be merged into Union Bank of India.

Fuel compliant with BS-VI at retail outlets

New Delhi: Petrol and diesel pumps from leading Oil marketing Companies (OMCs) will be ready with supply of BS- VI petrol and diesel at fuel stations across the country on April 1.

as RBI Dy Guv

office Tuesday. **ENS**

New Delhi: Eight core sector

epaper in

Canara Bank, Andhra Bank and Indian Bank.

INCLUDING SELECTIONS FROM THE ECONOMIST

MEXICAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS

Distancing neighbours

Mexico and the United States shut their border, sort of



People crossing the US-Mexico border into El Paso earlier this month. Reuters

TIJUANA AND San Diego are rumbustious siblings. The San Ysidro border crossing, which links them, is the world's busiest. Some 5m people a month make the northward journey between the cities. But covid-19 has brought about an abrupt change in their relationship. On March 19th California's government ordered the state's 42m residents to stay home to slow the spread of the new coronavirus. The next day Donald Trump, the American president, announced that the United States-Mexico border would be closed to all but "essential" traffic.

San Diego immediately became a ghost town, its streets bare but for a few dog walkers and homeless people. At each stop on an empty tram, a gloved attendant wiped clean the buttons that operate its doors. Traffic at San Ysidro slowed to a trickle. But at Tijuana beach, a few hundred metres across the border, couples strolled, vendors sold hot dogs and party-goers congregated around fires. Despite the notable absence of Americans, the pandemic seemed far away. "If we die, we'll die among

friends," said one Mexican.

If COVID-19 was a golden opportunity for Mr Trump to erect the wall that he has long sworn to build, he did not seize it. Although a dozen Latin American countries have shut their borders completely, Mexico and the United States have kept theirs porous. Mr Trump's definition of "essential" travel is wide enough to let through lorries full of electronics. Both governments seem wary of disrupting commerce; some \$1.4bnworth of goods crosses the border daily. The annual flow is the equivalent of nearly half of Mexico's gdp. Besides, border closures do little good once an epidemic has taken hold on both sides.

The decision to block partially the 3,200km (2,000-mile) border was mutual, announced by joint press release. Talks with the White House were "quite different from the take it or leave it" approach of past discussions, says a Mexican diplomat. Mr Trump forced Mexico (and Canada) to renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement, but the process helped build relationships. The manner of the border tight-

ening shows that bridges built in those talks are still standing, says Agustín Barrios Gómez of the Mexican Council on Foreign Relations.

In theory, the restrictions keep out border-crossers who want to shop or visit people. Mexicans with work permits are exempt from the restrictions, as are Americans heading south for cheap dentistry. A supermarket attendant in Tijuana grumbles that despite California's quarantine San Diegans raid the shelves for toilet paper, pasta and rice. But in a pandemic an open border can be an asset as well as a threat. Nearly 200,000 Mexican recipients of seasonal H2-A visas will harvest American crops. Mexican-made sensors of blood-oxygen levels and virus-blocking n95 masks will be used in American hospitals. Drugs and medical equipment will head south.

Although a dozen Latin American countries have shut their borders completely, Mexico and the United States have kept theirs porous

Even so, traffic has slowed sharply, which will hurt output and employment. "We are gonna have to close," says a sales manager for a small firm in Tijuana that resells industrial materials. His workers cross into San Diego with tourist visas every other day to pick up supplies, which they deliver to factories on the Mexican side of the border. That is no longer possible. American citizens could do the job but will not accept the

are shut, he adds.

The future is more uncertain still for the thousands of Central Americans and others on the border who await word on their applications for asylum in the United States. Their faint hopes of refuge have dimmed further: the Trump ad-

firm's low wages, the manager says.

Besides, half of the factories he serves

have dimmed further: the Trump administration has stopped receiving apican countries have shut plications and suspended hearings. Migrant camps are potential virus hotspots.

The numbers suggest that it is Mexico that should fear contagion more. They indicate that the outbreak in Mexico lags two weeks behind that of the United States. On March 25th California had 2,998 confirmed cases of covid-19. The neighbouring state of Baja California had 16. That is surely an under-count. By that date Mexico had tested about 4,500 people, compared with 422,000 in the United States.

Mexico's populist president, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, is doing little to prepare Mexicans for what is coming. He continued to travel and hug supporters and encouraged families to visit restaurants, as "this strengthens the economy". Other officials are taking the virus more seriously. On March 22nd the mayor of Mexico City shut bars and banned large gatherings. Two days later the federal health ministry ramped up testing and advocacy of social distancing. That would have happened earlier if the government had collected better

evidence by testing more, say experts. The financial markets are predicting massive economic harm, from an American recession, low oil prices and a domestic outbreak of covid-19. The Mexican peso has dropped to its lowest-ever level against the dollar (see article).

Openness on the border was tested before Mr Trump and COVID-19 came along. After the terrorist attacks of September 11th 2001, the United States enacted stringent inspections. The delays they caused threatened such economic damage that they "would [have] deliver[ed] to al-Qaeda the victory that it sought" had they been kept, says Alan Bersin, a former boss of United States Customs and Border Protection. The two countries fixed that by waving through "low-risk" workers with registered fingerprints, which freed border agents to watch for terrorists. That will not avert panic during a pandemic. If the disease becomes rampant in Mexico, Mr Trump could slam shut today's semi-open border.

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IRAN AND COVID-19

Get serious

Iran cannot fight covid-19 with conspiracy theories

AS COVID-19 began spreading across Iran in February, the regime held a rigged election. Weeks later, when nearly 10% of Iranian mps were infected and it was clear the country had a problem, the ruling clerics refused to close crowded holy spots. Even as it dug mass graves, the government hushed up the scale of the epidemic. Now its leaders are propounding conspiracy theories, such as that COVID-19 is an American bioweapon. Rejecting an offer of American aid, Iran's supreme leader said: "Possibly your medicine is a way to spread the virus more."

Officially, Iran has suffered over 27,000 cases and 2,000 deaths. All countries undercount, but Iran wilfully minimised the numbers at the outset. Hundreds of thousands have been infected and many will die. That is partly because American sanctions have made it harder to cope. But Iran's leaders have also mismanaged the crisis. Like officials elsewhere, they have been refusing to quarantine cities or ban large gatherings. Worse, they are placing their confrontational worldview above public health.

The clerics claim they are doing a fine job. Iran has produced more face masks than Italy and tested more people than Britain. Military factories are now making personal protective equipment, oxygen canisters and hospital beds. The government has turned stadiums into isolation centres and increased the number of laboratories testing for the virus from two to almost 60. It has referred 62,000 people to health facilities. Volunteers are dis-

Iran is reluctant to enforce a complete nationwide lockdown because it does not have the money to pay people to stay at home. Yet despite pleas to relax sanctions, at least temporarily, America has recently announced new ones. That bolsters Iran's argument that sanctions are keeping it from getting the help it needs

tributing hundreds of thousands of food parcels to those who cannot leave their homes. The effort is "unparalleled" in the Middle East—and even much of Europe—says an official at the who.

However, the government is doing little to stop the spread of the virus. Malls are still open. Parks are packed. Popular shrines have at last been closed. Nevertheless, many converged on the holy city of Mashhad for Nowruz, the Persian new-year festival, on March 20th. Hundreds jammed the streets of Tehran three days later to touch the coffin of a prominent soldier. On March 25th President Hassan Rouhani at last promised travel bans between cities, but he has dismissed calls to lock down the country. Other



Members of firefighters wear protective face masks, amid fear of COVID-19, as they disinfect the streets, ahead of the Iranian New Year Nowruz, in Tehran on March 18. Reuters

officials deflect blame. "A huge part of the danger Iranians face is due to the United States," says Muhammad Javad Zarif, the for-

eign minister.

America could certainly do more to help Iran. Its offer of aid means little as long as its sanctions remain rigid. American officials claim that the sanctions allow for the import of medical supplies. But most trade is impossible because banks will not handle transactions with Iran, for fear of America's wrath. Workarounds set up by European countries, and even one by America, have failed to increase the flow of covid-fighting kit.

Iran is reluctant to enforce a complete nationwide lockdown because it does not have the money to pay people to stay at home. If millions do not show up for work, their families will go hungry. Yet despite pleas to relax sanctions, at least temporarily, America

has recently announced new ones.

That bolsters Mr Zarif's argument that sanctions are keeping Iran from getting the help it needs. But the foreign minister is being disingenuous: his government is also rejecting aid from Médecins Sans Frontières (msf). Two planeloads of equipment sent by the international ngo have been left on the tarmac at Imam Khomeini airport. A team of msf doctors was also turned away.

Perhaps they were not needed, as some officials claimed. But state media absurdly portrayed msf's efforts as part of an American spying operation. "Iran does not need hospitals established by foreigners," said a health official. Iran's leaders, it seems, prefer to confront the outside world rather than engage with it. Their prejudice will cost Iranian lives.

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15 TALK ART, MUSIC, STYLE, FOOD



UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

The documentary In His Own Words, directed by Reiner Holzemer, has designer Martin Margiela speak about his childhood, his love for fashion, and why he decided to leave his eponymous label in 2009. It will release on April 10.

The Way We Eat

What kitchen lessons from the current lockdown should we take into the future?

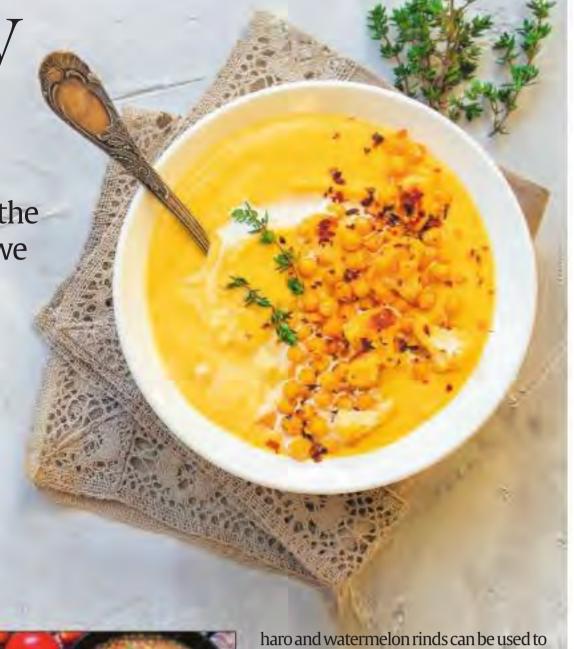
POOJA PILLAI

EVERY EVENING for the last fortnight, audiences around the world have watched Italy's Michelin Star chef Massimo Bottura open the refrigerator in his house, go over the ingredients that he finds in there and use these to cook dinner for his family. The show, which Bottura has dubbed Kitchen Quarantine, debuted on Instagram on March 14. It is a reminder that even though food content on TV and online seems to have created the perception that cooking is a high art, requiring hours of labour, a cornucopia of familiar and unfamiliar ingredients and equipment like a spiralizer or a sous vide machine, at the end of the day, it's one of the most essential activities that we perform, using resources that we can reasonably access.

As most of us (from the privileged classes, of course) stay home under lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic, without our usual support network of cooks, restaurants and food delivery services, cooking has become the activity around which we schedule our time. It's a rejigging of priorities that seems especially daunting when confronted by the paucity of ingredients in our pantries and the profusion of recipes and techniques that one finds online. How on earth, we ask ourselves, are we going to make soup without chicken stock cubes or eat rice every day with only one kind of dal? Everything, clearly, has changed in life under lockdown, including the food we eat.

In fact, many, including this writer, have wondered if the current circumstances will have a lasting impact on the way we eat and the way we cook. Will we, for example, worry more about what we're throwing into the waste bin and will all of us now always purchase pantry essentials in bulk?

Some things may change, for sure, but it's unlikely that COVID-19 will drastically alter the way we think about food. As the economy limps back to normal, we will



Most kitchen scraps can be used to make tasty and nutritious food

husband our resources and, perhaps, not go to restaurants so much, but supermarket aisles and local kirana stores will, in some months, be fully stocked again, online delivery services will run smoothly and those of us who can afford to will, in all likelihood, go back to our previously wasteful, thoughtless ways.

So what are the lessons learnt during this lockdown that we must carry into the future?

The first — and most important — lesson is that existing resources must be stretched before acquiring new ones. For example, most kitchen scraps can be used to make tasty and nutritious food. Potato peels can be stir-fried to make crisp Bengali-style aloo khosha bhaja, wilting carrots and cabbages can be grated and tempered to make a Gujarati-style sambmake the Konkani dosas.

The second lesson, as the New York Times food writer Sam Sifton notes in a recent newsletter, is that recipes are not definitive. Unless you're cooking for a living, or baking, most recipes are merely indicative, pointing in a general direction without necessarily charting out a detailed roadmap. Now's the time to understand this and extend the boundaries of your cooking. Get creative and improvise: use crushed peanuts to add texture to your cauliflower sabzi and stir-fry pieces of stale bread with onions and garlic and add tempered dahi to make a quick bread bhurji breakfast. Lesson three is that comfort or easy-to-

cook food is nothing to feel ashamed about. The food should be adapted to fit into our lifestyles and needs. The mass of food content on every online and offline platform can push the idea that the more complicated a recipe, the better the dish, but that's ridiculous. Sometimes, all you need to elevate your simple dal is a clove or two of garlic, fried in a spoonful of ghee. And if you're cooking khichdi and eating it with aloo bhujia and dahi because that's what soothes you, then do that. In anxious times like this, when we can't go out or seek solace in the company of others, food that is familiar to us - even if it is unfamiliar or incomprehensible to others — is one of the few comforts we have.

SNAP SHOTS

Back in Time

TWO STREETS in Paris's Montmartre district - Rue Berthe and Rue Androuet - have been

left in a time warp, as they were in 1942, during the Nazi occupation. This was the set for the film Adieu Monsieur Haffmann, directed by Fred Cavaye. The filmmakers were forced to abandon the set when France went into a lockdown due to the coronavirus outbreak, leaving the streets with fake facades for corset shops, tailors and a mirror-maker. It is also dotted with war propaganda, anti-communist tracts and signs in German. An adaptation of an award-winning play, the films tells the story of Joseph Haffmann, a Jewish jeweller in Paris, who hid in the cellar of his shop when the Nazis took over the city.

Life Lessons



ACTOR **ANNE** Hathaway will play the lead role in the film French Children Don't Throw Food, based on American jour-

nalist Pamela Druckerman's book Bringing *Up Bebe: One American Mother Discovers* the Wisdom of French Parenting. It is based on Druckerman's observations on how French children are very well-behaved.

Here Comes the Hammer

Artist Wajid Khan turns nails, bullets and automotive parts into art that tells tales

TANUSHREEGHOSH

Dil-e-nadan tujhe hua kya hai/ Aakhir iss marz (sic dard)ki dawa kya hai?(Foolish heart, what ails you?/What is the remedy of this ailment?) Tall, broad-shouldered, the statuesque sculptor Wajid Khan turns to poet Mirza Ghalib to describe the scourge of COVID-19. As migrant labourers walked home hungry in the last few days, Khan was distributing food to students stuck in Indore. But, he says, in an Instagram video, the police stopped that.

"Where are the 'superpowers' today? We were committing crimes against Syria, Libya, Africa, the poor, labourers, refugees. We've forgotten all that. We're now realising the meaning of life and death. We need to act unitedly, with the government, to fight this problem," says Khan, 39, with a slight stammer.

With more time on his hand now, besides going live on Instagram, he reminisces about his last work — a spider-like kinetic installation — and awaits to resume work on a Swami Vivekananda statue in Uttar Pradesh, a portrait for Oueen Elizabeth, and commissions for Dubai Expo 2020 and 2022 FIFA World Cup. So far, with studios in Indore and Dubai, Khan has made several iron-nail portraits of personalities like Mother Teresa, Jesus Christ, Dhirubhai Ambani, Salman Khan, shadow art of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, and nail art in-



stalled at Delhi's Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Last month, Namaste Orchha festival exhibited his celestial 40-feet hydra-like kinetic installation, made with 300 steel bowls which locked in and out itself with every gush of wind. Knowing zilch about physics, his art is all jugaad (improvisation). The work "denotes the balance in society with all kinds of divide: jaat (caste), rich-poor, Hindu-Muslim. Take a katori (bowl) out, it'll stop moving. India is like that," says Khan, who was once served a fatwa for speaking against a maulana. "I'm against fundamentalism of any kind. No religion teaches you to hate," he adds.

The boy from Songari village, in MP's Mandsaur district, wanted to do something "toofani (outlandish)". He assisted his maternal uncle in making robots using nails and auto parts, with a machine crusher and thresher as equipment. With over 200 inventions, like the tiniest electric iron, smallest ship that could

DAY TODAY

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

change of direction or moderately unusual

words, a well-deserved

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

bound to keep the emotional

indeed welcome, changes in

feelings you cannot face. Meet

them head-on and they might

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

Not until after

another few days

be entirely clear

about what should, or must, be

done. If you wish, you may

prevaricate until next week,

hopeful that other people will

share the prevailing sense of

indecision and uncertainty.

have passed will you

mood. Also don't hide from

just disappear.

situation moving along at a cracking pace. You may expect,

Today's celestial schedule is crammed

with planetary

alignments that are

increase in income.

Among the many

helpful planetary aspects today are

two which are

strongly suggestive of welcome

financial rewards as a result of a

achievement at work. In other



Artist Wajid Khan; (left) his installation in Orchha

sail, he found mention in world records, including Guinness World Records (for a peace symbol made of 14,992 nails in 2017). After he flunked in Class V, he took Rs 1,300

from his mother and took the train to Ahmedabad. He slept on footpaths, sold clothes, made and sold small machines for mills near Dilwara temple and played rugby in Mumbai. Life took a turn in 2002, when he got a patent for nail art through National Innovation Foundation-India. At the Urdu literature festival Jashn-e-

Rekhta in December 2019, Delhi saw a 12x8 feet metal Ghalib come to life, crafted with wine glasses, bottles and jugs. "When dedicating a work to someone, make it with the things/ideas associated with him," he says. The same belief guided his work that made him famous overnight but took five years to complete — a pointillist life-size image of Mahatma Gandhi. It was made with 1.25 lakh nails and "fake" bullets — which signify hinsa (violence) while Gandhi stood for ahimsa (non-violence) - hammered into an acrylic sheet.

The philanthropist, who turns a philosopher in his TED Talks, runs campaigns like Save Birds — installing on footpaths and tree trunks, small birds crafted out of steel spoons and forks, with water cans for birds to drink from.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

BY PETER VIDAL

Sometimes, you do one thing and the

universe does

you try and keep things as you want them, others will undo

perspective on the mid-week's

humour, is that everyone will

get what they want at least

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)

financial matters that you

should take such care. It's

exactly at times like these that

personal possessions can be

expensive. After all, there's no

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)

be exhibiting an irrepressible

urge to become number one.

time it seems that the tide is

going against you, don't force

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

clear that you cannot fight

battles on your own behalf.

There is an almost compulsory

idealism around at the moment

which means that you have no

You'll find

choice but to put others first.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21- Feb 19)

For all your

confidence, self-

determination and

fighting spirit, it is

the pace.

chances of success, but, if at any

There are indeed amazing

Try to remember

that with Mars now

presence, you may

exerting its powerful

such thing as a free lunch.

carelessness with resources and

your handiwork. A helpful

mixture of good and bad

some of the time.

another. As fast as

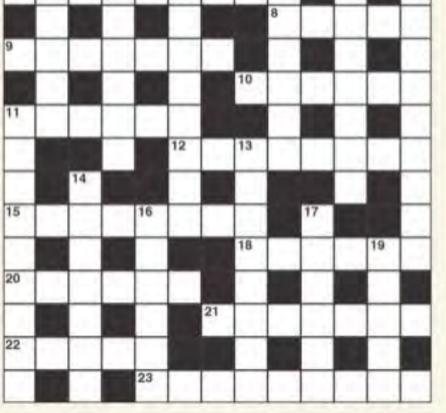
It's partly because

planetary aspects

some stunning

now relate to

CROSSWORD 4080



DOWN

2 Shut tight (5)

recently (6)

Chop-stick(6)

credit(9)

11 Main part of the

secret(7)

16 Ill-suited for work

Netherlands? (6.3)

good feeling (8)

13 It may be taken to promote

14 Mean to declare a woman's

17 Who had ordered a seat on a

Yet all has been changed

Not a positive denial (8)

Beat a doctor in the final

Little known, but giving one

ACROSS

- Cecil and I put out cold tongue (9)
- Permission to make a bequest(5)
- Broken magneto in artistic presentation (7)
- 10 Plant a bomb that explodes
- overhead (6) 11 For him to laze is unusual (6)
- 12 Put into water and simmered, perhaps (8)
- 15 A product of good stock (8) 18 Operatic heroine that is at
- 20 Something you won't come across very often (6)

heart betrayed (6)

- 21 Temple ornaments Sid made badly(7)
- 22 Bird but not birdie (5)
- 23 Their guns will be broken.

- You can bet on it (4,5)
- Jumbo?(6)

(6)

19 Runyon's upcoming

wanderer (5)

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis

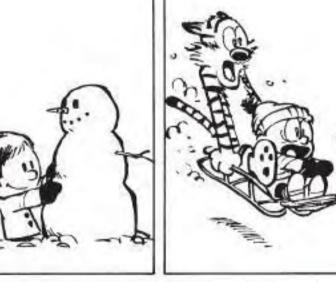




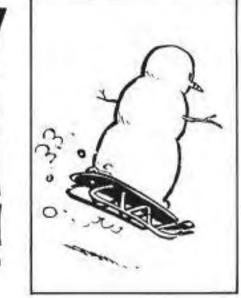


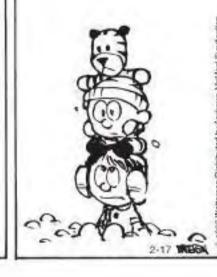
CALVIN & HOBBES by Bill Watterson













CANCER (June 22 - July 23) Concentrate on

activities which can be accomplished in harmony with other people, and realise that it may not be wise to fight crusades at work. The moment you start speaking your mind, it may become clear that you have forgotten what you were talking about.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

In spite of a wave of optimism, which is inclined to appear without warning and sweep all before it, this is a very dodgy moment to take risks. Your planets are casual and reckless, which means that you must therefore take very great pains to make sure that everything works out as planned.

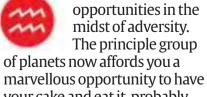
VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23) Powerful, challenging



complacency or carelessness,

everything will unravel. That's why you've got to keep awake

and stay alert.



your cake and eat it, probably several times over. Just make sure that everyone else is too preoccupied with their own little affairs to notice.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20) An intriguing but

are in demand.

challenging relationship between Jupiter, your planetary ruler, and Mars, is one to celebrate. While it can be good to let off steam, you need to do so in a manner which is not going to cause accidents or regrets. Your diplomatic skills

JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given guip. Elegance is ____. - Coco Chanel (7)

Solutions Crossword 4079: Across: 1 Calumet, 4 Metre, 7 Eros, 8 Personal, 10

Free-for-all, 11 Resolved, 12 Belated, 14 Pliers, 16 Strum, 17 Axle.

Moderation, 12 Bowler, 13 Adhere, 15 Collectors, 18 Taxpayer, 19 Aver, 20 Dwell, 21

Serfdom. Down: 1 Cream. 2 Look down. 3 Treaty, 4 Misconduct, 5 Tone, 6 Enlarge, 9

LATEX **IKYRS**

CDDYLU ALWYYF

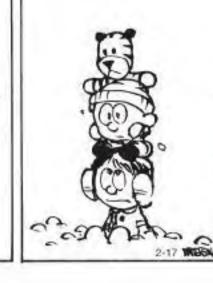
Answer: Elegance is refusal. - Coco Chanel SOUUTION: EXALT, RISKY, CUDDLY, FLYWAY





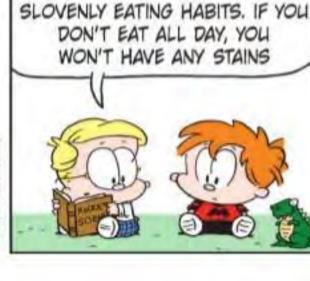






MARVIN by Tom Armstrong





STAINS ARE A RESULT OF YOUR



Difficulty Level 2s Instructions

SUDOKU

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Difficulty Level 1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium: 4s = Hard: 5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius

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

3

$\mathbf{\sigma}$		
Ď	8	1
X	7	-
SUDOKU	5	13
ns	2	1
	9	-
SOLUTION	3	1
5	1	4
7	6	1
S		

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



We have to take into account many things like a player's education and his understanding of his position and situation and his decision-making ability."

MISBAH-UL-HAQ

PAKISTAN COACH ON PLAYERS REPORTING FIXING APPROACHES

India was supposed to start its four-month countdown to the Olympics this moment. But forced into an unprecedented, grim lockdown as the world battles the Covid-19 outbreak, sport is staring at unfathomable despair. Indian athletes though have given the country reasons to rejoice in the past. *The Indian Express* looks back at a bunch of these memories.

3 days, 11 races, 5 gold medals



It's been 35 years since she monopolised the track at the Jakarta Asian meet but mentioning Usha can still get Indians free lunches in Indonesia

NIHALKOSHIE

RECENTLY, AN acquaintance of PT Usha was visiting Jakarta and wandered to a tourist shopping hub. A shopkeeper was curious about the country of origin. When the person replied India and Kerala, the next question was: So you know PT Usha? 'Yes' was the reply.

Immediately a discount was offered with a few freebies thrown in.

"Even after all these years, people I know sometimes use my name when they go to Jakarta. They even get things for free. I don't encourage them but it is a nice feeling that people remember you fondly and with respect for something which happened in 1985," Usha says after narrating the experience of the Indian traveller.

For those at the Senayan Madya Stadium in the Indonesian capital in late September of 1985, the Asian Athletics Championships remain etched in memory because of a 21-year-old from India who won five gold and a bronze in just five days.

Who knows, that shopkeeper may have been in the stands to witness the feat.

Gold medals came in the 100 metres, 200, 400, 400 metre hurdles and 4x400 metre relay, a haul unmatched by any Indian athlete at a continental championship till date. Usha set Asian records in the sprint events and the 400m as the whole of Asia was left spellbound by her medal-winning spree.

Usha begins by describing how she bagged the least talked- about medal, a bronze in the 4x100 metre relay. "When I got the baton for the anchor leg, the Indian team was in sixth place. The commentator was talking about the baton exchange and saying that India has PT Usha so the team could win a medal. It was really satisfying to get the team from sixth place to third and win a bronze. Remember, this was India's first medal in the 4x100 metre relay," Usha says about the start of a golden era for track and field in this country.

This was a period when cricket fever was gripping the nation like never before. Two years after Kapil Dev led India to the 1983 World Cup glory, Sunil Gavaskar's side lifted the World Championship of Cricket in Australia. In 1987, India hosted the 50-over World Cup, an event that marked the beginning of the shift of the game's power centre from its traditional bastions to the sub-continent. Cricketers had become







JULY-AUGUST 1985
'It was the first time I had travelled abroad to train. This was a new experience but I enjoyed it.'

SEPTEMBER 25–29
'On one day, I ran three races. After a race, I would run to the bathroom

and have a shower and be ready.'

household names yet one woman didn't let

"I didn't just run one event at one championship and win a medal. It was not a flash in the pan. Right through the 80s and for over a decade, I won gold medals for India. I peaked from 1984 onwards. To win gold after gold and medal after medal at the Asian Games, the Asian Championships and at Grand Prix events in Europe was no mean feat. It was a

wonderful period for Indian athletics and, if I may say so, I was to a large extent responsible for track and field being as popular as cricket in India back then. Jakarta was the start of the golden period," Usha says.

In Jakarta, just over a year after she missed out on a bronze medal in the 400 metres hurdles at the Los Angeles Olympics, Usha established herself as a great despite the great mental and physical strain of running over a dozen competitive races in just five days. There was no recovery expert by her side, no physio or masseur to help relax sore muscles. Her coach OM Nambiar was her guide and the man with multiple tasks.

When Usha was drained after running the heats and the semifinals of two separate events within a span of 30 minutes, she recharged herself with a cold shower in a bathroom at the stadium. There were no protein shakes to gulp down for recovery those days.

"On one day, I ran three races. After a race, I would run to the bathroom and have a shower and be ready for the next race. There was nothing fancy I followed as a routine. Run, rest, have a wash, and run again. Nowadays, there are experts you can turn to. If one part of your body is hurting, you can get a quick massage. I didn't need all that back then. But you had to be mentally strong, ignore the aches and pains and, of course, listen to your coach. It sounds simple, but it was not easy,"

Usha adds.
Over three days, she ran 11 races, including heats, in Jakarta's humidity.

The historic medal haul would not have come about, if she had listened to the coach of Filipino star Lydia de Vega. Lydia was coached by her father who went up to Usha and Nambiar and told them that an athlete was allowed to compete in just three events. Francisco had hoped Usha would drop out of the 100 metres — the event in which it was neck and neck between his daughter and the Indian athlete — and instead focus on the 400 metre hurdles and

two other events. However, they didn't take the bait.

Lydia was the fastest woman in Asia and the winner of the 100 metres gold at the New Delhi Asiad three years ago, where she had beaten Usha. For the two athletes, it wasn't just any 100 metres race, Usha recalls, "it was about pride and being the best in Asia."

"Coach Nambiar told me to run the first three events. The first event was the 100 metres in which I won gold (11.64 seconds). And then it was the 400 metres and the 400 metre hurdles. Later we realised that there was no rule that said an athlete can participate in just three events. Luckily, we didn't listen to Lydia's father."

In the 100 metres, Lydia finished third, pipped by Thailand's Ratjai Sripet. With her toughest competitor vanquished, the path ahead for Usha was relatively easy.

"It was only in the 100 metres that I had competition from Lydia. In the rest of the races, my confidence was sky high. I was sure I could win gold medals."

During the Asian Athletics Championships, Usha realised how popular she had become. Every time she stepped onto the track, the stadium resounded with her name. Missing out on an Olympic medal by one-hundredth of a second had brought her fame, but what she experienced in Jakarta was "unbelievable". At the Seoul Asian Games a year later - where she bagged four gold and a silver - her popularity

would surge to new heights.

"I was more popular than the local athletes in Indonesia. Hearing my name being cheered at a packed stadium really boosted me further. I always knew that I would win medals in all the events I had entered in. I was in such good form. In Jakarta, I realised that even spectators expected me to win."

Crystal Palace getaway

The foundations of the success at the Asian meet were laid at the leafy Crystal Palace Sports Training Centre in South London a few

months earlier. Back in the day, it wasn't the norm for Indian athletes to shift their training base abroad and take their personal coaches along. But when the opportunity knocked, Usha made the trip along with Nambiar.

■ In Jakarta, PT

medals came in

the 100 metres,

200, 400, 400m

hurdles and

4x400m relay.

■ She also won

4x100m, which

was India's first

relay category.

ever medal in the

bronze in

Usha's gold

"It was the first time I had travelled abroad to train. This was a new experience but I enjoyed it," Usha says. She also didn't mind the change in diet and weather.

"It was windy and cold on some days yet we adjusted to the conditions and trained hard. I also took a liking to the English breakfast. Iloved the bacon there. It was so juicy and tasty that I looked forward to breakfast. Eggs, toast, bacon and the salads, I hogged that. For dinner, I used to find an Indian restaurant and have tandoori chicken and rice. When I finished my stint in Crystal Palace, my haemoglobin levels were much higher compared to

what it was before I left India."
Another advantage of moving her training base was that it was easier to travel to Grand Prix events in Europe where some of the best athletes were competing. Usha ran in events at Bratislava, Prague, Budapest, Ostrava and London, winning medals including a 400 metre hurdles gold at the Coco Cola Cup in London. Her consistency earned her a berth in the Grand Prix final, an event for which only the best athletes on the circuit are invited.

Usha, though, chose to focus on the Asian Athletics Championships and headed back to India to train.

"By the end of my training in Crystal Palace and after all the competitions in Europe, I felt I was in really good form. I had done well in Europe and at the Olympics but now I wanted to excel in Asia."

When Usha hung up her spikes, she had won 23 medals at the Asian Athletics Championships with 14 gold.

In 2008, she travelled with her most famous trainee Tintu Luka to Jakarta for the Asian Junior Championships. "Jakarta had changed a lot but what I achieved in that city can never be erased."

BWF freezes rankings, placings on March 17 to decide seedings

New Delhi: The Badminton World Federation (BWF) on Tuesday decided to freeze the world rankings, saying standings as on March 17 will be the basis for entry and seedings when it restarts the international calender that has been thrown haywire owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. There was a clamour for freezing the world rankings with Indian shuttlers Saina Nehwal, B Sai Praneeth, Parupalli Kashyap and

"The Badminton World Federation (BWF) can announce it will freeze World Rankings and World Junior Rankings until further notice. The freezing of rankings will be backdated to Week 12, which is the week following the last international tournament that was played – the YONEX All England Open 2020," BWF said in a release. "The ranking lists issued on 17

March 2020 will serve as a basis for entry and

HS Prannoy leading the way in expressing their

concerns.

There was a clamour for freezing the world rankings with Indian shuttlers Saina Nehwal, B Sai Praneeth, and H S Prannoy leading the way in expressing their concerns.

seeding into the next international tournaments – although it is difficult to say at this stage when this may be.

"Shuttlers in the singles competition have to be inside top-16 of world rankings to qualify for the Olympics. The cut-off for doubles is also top-16. The BWF had suspended all tournaments post the All England Championships until April 12 due to the pandemic. PTI

Games bribe trail: \$8.2 million, watches & cameras Japanese companies. After his involvement in watches were handed out at parties organized

REUTERS TOKYO, MARCH 31

A BUSINESSMAN who received millions of dollars for his work on Tokyo's successful campaign to host the 2020 Olympics, which was postponed last week due to the coronavirus, said he played a key role in securing the support of a former Olympics powerbroker suspected by French prosecutors of taking bribes to help Japan's bid.

Harryuki Takahashi, a former executive at

Haruyuki Takahashi, a former executive at the advertising agency Dentsu Inc, was paid \$8.2 million by the committee that spearheaded Tokyo's bid for the 2020 Games, according to financial records reviewed by *Reuters*. Takahashi told Reuters his work included lobbying International Olympic Committee members like Lamine Diack, the ex-Olympics powerbroker, and that he gave Diack gifts, including digital cameras and a



Haruyuki Takahashi admitted having received payments.

Seiko watch. "They're cheap," he said.

The payments made Takahashi the single largest recipient of money from the Tokyo bid committee, which was mostly funded by

Tokyo's successful campaign, Takahashi was named to the board of the Tokyo 2020 organizing committee, a group tasked with running the summer Games after it was awarded to Japan.

Takahashi acknowledged receiving the payments but declined to give a full accounting of how he used the money. He said he urged Diack to support the Tokyo bid and denied any impropriety in those dealings. He said it was normal to provide gifts as a way of currying good relations with important officials like Diack. He said there was nothing improper with the payments he received or with the way he used the money. "You don't go emptyhanded. That's common sense," Takahashi told Reuters, referring to the gifts he gave Diack.

Banking records from the Tokyo 2020 bid committee, which were examined by Reuters, show it paid around \$46,500 to Seiko Watch. A senior official at the bid told Reuters "good"

watches were handed out at parties organized as part of Tokyo's campaign to win the Olympics, although he did not specify the

International Olympic Committee (IOC) regulations allowed for the giving of gifts of nominal value at the time of the 2020 bid, but didn't stipulate a specific amount.

Aday before the 2013 vote on the host city, Diack informed a meeting of African Olympic representatives that he planned to support Tokyo on merit, a lawyer for the influential Senegalese sports figure told Reuters. But he didn't instruct anyone how to vote, the lawyer said. The Tokyo bid committee also paid \$1.3 million to a little-known non-profit institute run by former Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori, a powerful figure in Japanese sports and the head of the Tokyo Olympics organizing committee. The payments to Takahashi's company and Mori's non-profit are enumerated in banking records from the Tokyo 2020 bid.

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