

PRIME MINISTER TO CONSULT CHIEF MINISTERS TODAY

Punjab goes Odisha way, word on national lockdown awaited

Amarinder govt says state to remain shut until May 1, brings in ordinance

KANCHAN VASDEV
CHANDIGARH, APRIL 10

SETTING THE stage for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's video-conference Saturday with chief ministers to discuss exit strategies after the 21-day national coronavirus lockdown period ends on April 14, Punjab became the second state after Odisha to announce that it would extend the restrictions till the month-end.

Punjab was among the early states to impose a lockdown, on March 22, two days before the central government imposed restrictions nationwide to contain the outbreak.

On Friday, the state government said in a statement that the Cabinet decision to extend the lockdown till May 1 was taken to check community spread and prevent overcrowding at mandis. It said that Chief Minister Amarinder Singh will convey the decision to the Prime Minister Saturday.

While Odisha had said Thursday that the curbs after April 14 could be less stringent in rural areas to facilitate farm activities, officials in Punjab said the state would start procuring wheat from April 15 under strict conditions of social distancing.

In other key decisions, officials said, the Chief Minister told the Cabinet, which met through a video-conference, that he would request former Planning Commission deputy chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia to help the state devise a strategy to revive its economy after the COVID-19 crisis is over.

With the state's case count

BUSINESS AS USUAL
By UNNY



reaching 151 Friday, a jump of 21 over the last 24 hours, the Cabinet also approved the Punjab Clinical Establishment (Registration and Regulation) Ordinance 2020, to enable private hospitals to treat coronavirus cases.

"It is necessary for private hospitals to join the battle against COVID-19," an official quoted the Chief Minister as telling the Cabinet.

The law will provide for registration and regulation of private establishments to ensure compliance with protocols and transparency in functioning. It will be applicable to all clinical establishments with a minimum capacity of 50 beds, officials said.

Before the Cabinet meeting, the Chief Minister had claimed that the state was witnessing community transmission, as most of the 27 cases reported Thursday did not have a travel history.

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Good Friday prayers being telecast online as church goes stayed away in Lucknow. Vishal Srivastav

Highest single-day spike in cases but no community spread yet, says Govt

ABANTIKA GHOSH
NEW DELHI, APRIL 10

SEVENTEEN DAYS into the 21-day lockdown, India on Friday recorded the highest single-day spike in novel coronavirus (COVID-19) cases, with 896 new cases and 37 deaths being reported in the last 24 hours.

The total number of cases is now 6,761 (516 recovered), while the death toll has gone up to 206, of which 82 deaths were



reported in the last three days. Maharashtra (97) accounts for almost half the total deaths.

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Over 8 lakh case count if no lockdown, MEA cites ICMR; Health says no such report

SHUBHAJIT ROY & ABANTIKA GHOSH
NEW DELHI, APRIL 10

EXPOSING LACK of coordination within the government, the Health Ministry has rejected a statement made by the Ministry of External Affairs, which had quoted a study by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) to say that India would have had up to 8.2 lakh COVID-19 positive cases by April 15 had

it not been for the 21-day nationwide lockdown. The Health Ministry on Friday said there was no such ICMR study.

On Thursday, briefing members of the foreign media in New Delhi, MEA's Secretary (West) Vikas Swarup said, "Most importantly, epidemiologically speaking, the lockdown has reduced the reproductive rate of the virus here. Scientific estimates suggest that without social distancing measures, the reproductive rate

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A PLAN FOR THE AFTERMATH

BY YASHWANT SINHA
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WORLD



RECORD 980 DEATHS IN A DAY IN UK

SINGAPORE BATTLES CASES OF MIGRANTS
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INTERNATIONAL ONLINE GAMING

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Patients older than 85 with no symptoms can stay at home: Gujarat

SOHINI GHOSH
AHMEDABAD, APRIL 10

THE GUJARAT Health Department announced Friday that those above 85 years of age who test positive for COVID-19 but are asymptomatic can stay at home, subject to an undertaking by the family.

Addressing mediapersons, Principal Health Secretary Jayanti Ravi said, "It was decided on Thursday at a high-powered committee meeting at the chief ministerial level that those aged more than 85 years who are testing positive but remain asymptomatic can remain at home subject to specific conditions, wherein the family has to give an undertaking that they wish to keep the patient at home in isolation. As they are asymptomatic, they may not require any treatment per se. In such cases, subject to the fact that they will strictly follow all the conditions

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Red faces in Maharashtra as top cop lets Wadhawans go on family trip, probe on

MOHAMED THAYER, KHUSHBOO NARAYAN & DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
MUMBAI/NEW DELHI, APRIL 10

THE MAHARASHTRA government has ordered an inquiry against IPS officer and Principal Secretary (Home) Amitabh Gupta for helping DHFL promoters Kapil Wadhawan and Dheeraj Wadhawan along with 21 others, including relatives, evade the lockdown enforced by



Amitabh Gupta described them as 'family friends'

the state to contain the spread of COVID-19. He was sent on forced leave on Thursday.

State Home Minister Anil Deshmukh told reporters a decision on Gupta would be taken after the government receives the inquiry report. "We have sent Gupta on forced leave and have asked Additional Chief Secretary Manoj Saunik to conduct an inquiry. Apart from that, we have registered an FIR against the Wadhawans under sections 188,

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US, Brazil on first list of 13 countries to get India HCQ

PRABHA RAGHAVAN
NEW DELHI, APRIL 10

THE GOVERNMENT has cleared a list of 13 countries, including the US and Brazil, that will be among the first to receive hydroxychloroquine, the drug that has garnered global interest in the treatment and prevention of COVID-19.

A senior official from the Ministry of External Affairs said Friday that the government had to "rationalise" exports of the drug, which has been in high demand globally, and has approved the first list of 13 countries on a "first come first serve" basis.

Nearly 35 per cent of the hydroxychloroquine tablets being exported and over 65 per cent of the active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) used to make the drug will be sent to the US. The US has emerged as the epicentre of the pandemic now with more than 4.63 lakh cases and over 16,000 deaths.

Besides the US, Brazil, Bahrain, Mauritius, Seychelles,

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CII HAS A PLAN FOR GOVT

Industry asks for pooled testing to resume limited ops

PRABHA RAGHAVAN, PRANAV MUKUL & ANIL SASI
NEW DELHI, APRIL 10

PREPARING FOR a life after the ongoing nationwide lockdown — clarity on its possible extension — the Indian industry has drawn up plans for staggered reopening of facilities. This includes a proposal being pushed to governments in manufacturing states, where unit owners are saying that they be allowed to keep a limited pool of workers available, to restart units and operate, even if the operations are under-optimal.

This is predicated on the labour, including migrants, undergoing pooled testing, which will help isolate healthy batches of workers, so they can remain available. Unit owners will give an undertaking to keep workers within premises, provide meals and boarding, and ensure they stay quarantined from society.

Under pooled testing, samples from several people are pooled or combined at a time, allowing expanded testing in large population groups given limited test kit resources. In this, swab samples from the mucous membranes of the throat or nose are combined, using specified procedures in a buffer solution, and subsequently tested using the PCR/NAT test. In case of a neg-

EXPLAINED
Factories stalled, its fallout

THERE IS growing realisation within the government that indefinitely halting industrial production, besides the impact on the economy and jobs, will make it more difficult to eventually restart output. The industry's pitch to facilitate mass testing of workers, followed by limited restart of operations with a small group of workers, comes amid indications that the lockdown could get extended.

active result, all included samples are termed negative and the included people cleared for work. In case of a positive pool result, individual testing is carried out in previously reserved samples. The positive sample can then be identified within 4-12 hours.

Bajaj Auto, which exports half its two-wheelers, is among the companies that are learnt to have requested the state government

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GOVT LOOKS AT LESS LABOUR INTENSIVE UNITS PAGE 5



In March, Dilshad Colony, with case of a mohalla clinic doctor, was named one of 10 hotspots across country. Praveen Khanna

Bright spot on day of record jump in Delhi: A hotspot is 'virus-free'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 10

ON A day the Capital recorded 183 new COVID-19 cases — the highest single-day jump so far — the Delhi government declared East Delhi's Dilshad Garden "coronavirus-free", saying no new cases have been reported in the area for the past 10 days.

Dilshad Garden had been identified as one of 10 hotspots in the country last month. This was after a 38-year-old woman, who had returned to Delhi from Saudi Arabia, tested positive for COVID-19 and was eventually linked to several others, including a mohalla clinic doctor, testing positive.

Late last month, most parts of the area were completely sealed off, much like the 30 'containment zones' in the Capital that

have been sealed now. The Delhi government Thursday named the exercise 'Operation SHIELD'.

Fourteen people have died of coronavirus in the Capital so far. "Under this operation, 123 medical teams screened more than 15,000 people living in 4,032 houses in Dilshad Garden. Thousands of people were quarantined and tests were done. The hard work of health officials and successful implementation of the operation has made Dilshad Garden coronavirus-free," Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain said Friday.

The woman and her 19-year-old son had gone to Saudi Arabia to meet her husband, and came back on March 10. "On March 12, she developed fever and cough and went to see a local doctor. On March 15, she was taken to GTB Hospital, from where the doctors

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PAGE 1 ANCHOR

To fight fake news, reach villages, Karnataka debuts on TikTok

AMRITA DUTTA
BENGALURU, APRIL 10

MANJAMMA POPS up on the screen, wearing a big red bindi and sari, and launches into a tirade in rustic Kannada: "Why ya? When you go out to buy vegetables and fruits, why you have to fall over the next person? Can't you listen to what they are saying? Stay 3 feet away no! Stay one metre away no! 3 feet means one metre. Keep it in your head. Or else, remember these numbers: 3 feet by 6 feet — the size of your grave."

This could be just another 30-second video on TikTok, the

hyperkinetic short video social networking app with 200 million active users in India, except that it marks the debut of the government of Karnataka on it — the first state to use TikTok to reach out to the rural hinterland with information on COVID-19.

"One of the many suggestions we got was to look at TikTok because it has a huge reach, especially in rural areas. All the other social networking apps, whether Facebook or Instagram or Twitter, are largely urban. We needed to reach out to the remotest parts of the state," says Shikha C, the IAS officer heading the taskforce for public health communication and

social media. "It is not a conventional medium for a government because of how uninhibited the platform is, but I think the pros of TikTok far outweighed the cons. The way it works, we have to reach out through humour and sarcasm, which also cuts down the panic," says Sushma Bhardwaj, who runs a digital marketing agency that is overseeing the TikTok creatives and scripts.

Since March 23, @covid19awarenessgok, a verified handle on TikTok, has posted videos of Kannada actors like Puneeth Rajkumar asking people to stay home, animation videos for



Chitral Rangaswamy as Manjamma, whose videos emphasise social distancing

children talking about their superpowers against the virus (staying home, coughing into the elbow and not listening to rumours), and, of course, Manjamma berating fellow villagers for violating lockdown rules.

"I imagined Manjamma as a village woman, not very educated. I modelled the way she speaks on my mother, who also speaks a rustic Kannada typical of the Mandya region," says Chitral Rangaswamy, a 28-year-old actor who stars in the videos. With a follower base of 182.7k followers, she posts the videos on her timeline as well.

So far, the handle has mopped up close to 70,000 followers,

which is a modest number given that TikTok "influencers" have followings that run into millions. But the videos are relayed further through a network of WhatsApp groups run by panchayat officials or district administration. "It is an experiment. We need a counterweight to the fake news and misinformation, by reaching those who do not have access to either print news or television," says Srinivas Alavilli, an activist and veteran of several public campaigns in Bengaluru, who is working with the government on COVID-19 awareness.

Alavilli has also roped in a pool of TikTok influencers and film pro-

fessionals. "For instance, I asked Kirik Keerthi (an actor with 517.9k followers) to do a video on how to wash hands, but without running water," he says. In the first few days, the handle barely got traction, but it has since then picked up. "Till April 8, we had managed to clock over 18 lakh views," says Bhardwaj.

The exuberance of TikTok, however, needs a restraining influence when it comes to public health communication. "All the creatives have to be vetted by the government before we upload them. We often end up rejecting a lot of videos because they don't fit a government han-

dle," says Bhardwaj.

Background music, songs or dialogues from films cannot be spliced with the videos — a common feature of TikTok videos — to avoid copyright tussles. Some videos have been rejected because they had double meaning, Alavilli says. "In one, the artist was holding a mask in one hand and a sanitiser in another — and talking about how they are the most important things in his life now. It was a funny video, but because he was holding the mask all wrong, we rejected it. Even visually, a government handle cannot give out wrong information," says Bhardwaj.