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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

SATURDAY, APRIL 11, 2020, NEW DELHI, LATE CITY, 14 PAGES

KANCHAN VASDEV CHANDIGARH, APRIL 10

SETTING THE stage for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's videoconference 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 governlockdown 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

THE EDITORIAL PAGE

RECORD 980 DEATHS

SINGAPORE BATTLES

CASES OF MIGRANTS

INTERNATIONAL

ONLINE GAMING

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IN A DAY IN UK

PAGE 12

APLAN FOR THE

BY YASHWANT SINHA

AFTERMATH

WORLD

BUSINESS AS USUAL **By UNNY**

reaching 151 Friday, a jump of 21 ment said in a statement that the over the last 24 hours, the Cabinet decision to extend the Cabinet also approved the Puniab 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

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Good Friday prayers being telecast online as church goers 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

6761 206 DEATHS 516 RECOVERED **1,61,330** samples have been tested as on April 10, 2020

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

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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 CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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,

veteran of several public cam-

paigns in Bengaluru, who is work-

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 is still awaited from the government — 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-

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.

ative 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 **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

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-yearold 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 **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

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

SOHINI GHOSH

AHMEDABAD, APRIL 10

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

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Red faces in Maharashtra as top cop lets Wadhawans go on family trip, probe on the state to contain the spread of

MOHAMED THAVER, 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

COVID-19. He was sent on forced leave on Thursday. State Home Minister Anil Deshmukh told reporters a decision on Gupta would be taken

them as 'family friends'

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, CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Behind Aarogya Setu app push: 'At least 50% people must download for impact'

KARISHMA MEHROTRA NEW DELHI. APRIL 10

WITH 2.1 crore downloads, the Aarogya Setu mobile app — to track and alert those who physically come close to COVID-19 cases — is being aggressively promoted by the government at the highest level because its ef-

fectiveness depends on at least

half the population registering

as users, according to its devel-

On Tuesday evening, Prime

Minister Narendra Modi and Union Ministers, including Amit Shah, Ravi Shankar Prasad and Piyush Goyal, were part of a highlevel group that attended a presentation by the app's developers.

Since then, the Prime Minister and Union Ministers have tweeted about the app. The HRD and Rail Ministries have sent out advisories urging students, teachers and employees,

and their family members, to download it. And banks are sending alerts to account-holders.

The app, which is owned by the government and supported by the National Informatics Centre (NIC), was developed by a joint team of official entities such as NITI Aayog and tech industry volunteers, who also help manage it. The first line of code was written by March 19, and the app launched on April 2 after a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

To fight fake news, reach villages, Karnataka debuts on TikTok children talking about their superwhich is a modest number given fessionals. "For instance, I asked dle," says Bhardwaj.

AMRITA DUTTA

BENGALURU, APRIL 10

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

MANJAMMA POPS up on the screen, wearing a big red bindi and sari, and launches into a tirade in rustic Kannada: "Why va? 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 30second video on TikTok, the 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.

hyperkinetic short video social

"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. 23, Since March

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



Manjamma, whose videos emphasise social distancing

powers 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.

COVID-19 awareness. So far, the handle has mopped Alavilli has also roped in a pool up close to 70,000 followers, of TikTok influencers and film pro-

that TikTok "influencers" have fol-Kirik Keerthi (an actor with 517.9k followers) to do a video on how to lowings that run into millions. But the videos are relayed further wash hands, but without running water," he says. In the first few through a network of WhatsApp days, the handle barely got tracgroups run by panchayat officials tion, but it has since then picked or district administration. "It is an experiment. We need a counterup. "Till April 8, we had managed weight to the fake news and misto clock over 18 lakh views," says information, by reaching those Bhardwaj. who do not have access to either The exuberance of TikTok, however, needs a restraining inprint news or television," says fluence when it comes to public Srinivas Alavilli, an activist and

health communication. "All the

creatives have to be vetted by

ing with the government on the government before we upload them. We often end up rejecting a lot of videos because they don't fit a government han-

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.

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TOP TEN CLASSIC DISNEY ANIMATED FILMS YOU CAN WATCH ON DISNEY+ HOTSTAR The Walt Disney Company's history goes back almost 100 years, and the iconic studio has delivered entertainment continuously over the decades

VIDEO OF THE DAY



CHURCHES STREAM GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE

With churches closed, priests organised live streams of the service

CORONAVIRUS



GUIDELINES FOR BLOOD DONATION

No precedent for respiratory viruses being transmitted

EXPRESS

Doctors test positive, UP seals hotspots, and long lines for Rs 500

NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY

Frontline health workers test positive, UP seals coronavirus hotspots in 15 districts, and hundreds of women queue up for hours in West Bengal to get Rs 500.

FROM PAGE ONE

Punjab

Incidentally, a paper released by the ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research) on Thursday, on surveillance of patients with severe acute respiratory illnesses (SARI), as one indicator of community transmission, found a single coronavirus positive case among 158 tested (a rate of 0.6%) between February 15 and April 2. In contrast, Haryana tested 161 SARI cases and found four positive cases (2.5%).

The state government, meanwhile, decided to set up a multidisciplinary task force to formulate an exit strategy for "gradual relaxation" of the lockdown, and submit its report within 10 days.

The Cabinet also resolved to urge the Central government to establish an advanced centre of virology in Punjab with an investment of Rs 500 crore, with the state to offer land free of cost.

MEA claims

would have been 2.5 people per day, but with the lockdown, we have been able to reduce social exposure by over 75%, leading to an infection rate of around 0.625 persons per day.'

"Let me put this another way: without the lockdown, we could have had up to 820,000 cases by 15 April. With the lockdown, we are around 6,000 cases currently. More importantly, the cases are largely localised to 78 districts that account for over 80 per cent of the cases," Swarup said. His remarks were part of a prepared statement that was shared with members of the foreign media.

Later, during a question-andanswer session, he told them that the 8.2 lakh number was based on an ICMR study. However, when asked about

the 'ICMR study', the Health Ministry's joint secretary Lav Agarwal said on Friday, "There is no such report. Please understand that if we work collectively and very hard, we will manage the cases. If we make any mistakes, we will be back to the old place where we cannot be called successful." When asked a follow-up question, he didn't respond.

But, a senior government official - who is not from the Health Ministry or the MEA — said the study is based on extrapolation of data from other geographies. The report, meanwhile, has been quoted not just by the MEA but, according to highly placed government sources, has been discussed in at least one top-level meeting in the last one week.

Agarwal did not reply to messages by The Indian Express seeking further clarification.

Wadhawans

279, 270, 34 of the Indian Penal Code, Disaster Management Act section 51 (b) and COVID-19 sec-

tion 11," he said. The Opposition hit out at the government on the permission granted to the Wadhawans to travel, with BJP leader and former CM Devendra Fadnavis saying, "Asking a Principal Secretary to proceed on long leave is not enough... no officer takes such decisions alone. At whose behest did the police officer give permission? The real face behind this should

be exposed and made public." The Wadhawan brothers are being probed by the Enforcement Directorate for alleged money laundering and by the CBI for alleged fraud in a Yes Bank loan case. On Friday, the CBI wrote to Satara district authorities in Maharashtra, asking to not release them from the COVID-19 quarantine facility at Panchgani without

the agency's nod. Gupta, a 1992 batch IPS officer, who was appointed Principal Secretary (Home) in August 2018, had described the Wadhawans as "family friends" and given them written permission to move to their farmhouse Dewan Villa in Mahabaleshwar from their guest

"On April 9, information was received by CBI that both the accused (Kapil and Dheeraj Wadhawan) were located in Satara district and lodged at a Government Institutional Quarantine Centre at Panchgani. Thereafter, an email has been sent to District Magistrate and Superintendent of Police of Satara for not releasing them without an NOC and for taking other necessary steps to prevent the accused persons from absconding," the

he was not supposed to travel during the coronavirus outbreak. He had, in fact, even cited the govnationwide lockdown had not been announced till then.

The agency had registered an FIR against the brothers and nine others, including Yes Bank promoter Rana Kapoor and his family members, on March 7. According to the CBI, the brothers have been absconding since then. A Mumbai court had issued nonbailable warrants against the Wadhawan brothers on March 17.

Gupta, an IPS officer of the 1992 batch, was DCP Zone IX and later Additional Commissioner of Police (West region). A senior official said it was during this posting as Additional CP (West region) – whose jurisdiction spans from Andheri to Bandra — that Gupta came in contact with the Wadhawans who had their head office in Bandra (East).

Wadhawan brothers in November 2019. The agency also arrested four persons in connection with the Mirchi case. Interestingly, neither Dheeraj noi Kapil were arrested by the agency, even as ED in its chargesheet named Dheeraj Wadhawan as

company.

Mirchi case, the ED finally arrested Kapil Wadhawan. However, a lo-DHFL did not appear to be proceeds of crime as claimed by ED. Dheeraj too has obtained an anticipatory bail from a Mumbai court.

Despite the bail, the Wadhawans once again landed in trouble after the ED registered a money laundering case against Rana Kapoor for allegedly receiving kickbacks of over Rs 600 crore for loans given by the bank to DHFL.

agency said in a statement.

Kapil Wadhawan had skipped summons by the Enforcement Directorate for interrogation in the case early last month saying that due to health complications, ernment's advisory on avoidance of travel during the outbreak. A

trouble for the Wadhawans began in October 2019, when an ED probe into the alleged money laundering activities of late gangster Iqbal Memon alia Iqbal Mirchi, a close aide of Dawood Ibrahim, found a Rs 225 crore land deal between Mirchi and Sunblink Real Estate Pvt Ltd, a company associated with DHFL.

According to the agency, the land deal between Sunblink and Iqbal Mirchi was negotiated on behalf of Dheeraj Wadhawan. The same month, a fornesic audit conducted by KPMG on behalf of the lenders of DHFL found diversion of over Rs 19.000 crore of bank loans to DHFL's related entities. The ED first questioned the

one of the main accused.

DHFL, that owes Rs 83,873 crore owes to banks, mutual funds and investors, also became the first non-banking finance company (NBFC) to be referred to the bankruptcy court for resolution by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in November 2019. The RBI superseded the board of DHFL and appointed a three-member advisory body to advise the RBI appointed administrator of the

"The spread in the US is much In January 2020, a month after filing the chargesheet in the wider, so they had sought nine metric tonnes of APIs and about 4.8 million tablets. We have given cal court granted bail to the clearance, now it is up to them Wadhawan on February 21. The to pick the consignment," Ravi court in its order said the assets of added. "It was an internal consultation in discussion with the Department of Pharmaceuticals, the health ministry and various

(WITHINPUTS FROM SUSHANT KULKARNI IN PUNE)

No community spread yet, says Govt

Ministry reiterated that there is no community transmission so far. Joint Secretary Lav Agarwal underlined that "just 2%" of the 16,000 samples tested on Thursday were positive, and the number of positive cases with no history of travel or contact — as reported in an ICMR study — were primarily from areas which had

reported confirmed cases. And, a day before Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to speak to chief ministers to decide whether the lockdown should continue or not, Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan told state health ministers that the curve usually takes "two to four weeks to flatten".

"We have managed to control the situation to some extent... it is true that the disease has taken an extraordinary course in some states... Normally epidemiologists say that it takes two to four weeks to flatten the curve. We should not get impatient and not spare any effort," Vardhan said in his video conference, while pointing to to the importance of the next few weeks in breaking the chain of transmission.

Germany, Spain and SAARC coun-

tries Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh,

Maldives and Afghanistan are the

13 on the first list. In the first con-

signment, around 13.8 million

tablets of the antimalarial drug

and 13.5 metric tonnes of the APIs

will be shipped, said Dammu

Ravi, Additional Secretary in the

Ministry of External Affairs, who

is also the official coordinator for

the government's COVID-19

of countries have been approved

and the products have started to

leave. Now, we are working on the

second list and, subsequently, the

third list... But let me again under-

line and emphasise that the do-

mestic requirement and necessity

will be a priority for the govern-

Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

had also thanked Prime Minister

Narendra Modi for exporting hy-

droxychloroquine, though Israel

is not among the 13 countries

who are to get the first batch of

hydroxychloroquine. Earlier, US

President Donald Trump and

Brazil President Jair Bolsonaro had

thanked Prime Minister Narendra

Modi and India for agreeing to ex-

the US might also have been ear-

marked by them for Israel, as they

had Israeli input (Teva

Pharmaceuticals)," Ravi told *The*

Pharmaceuticals, headquartered

in Tel Aviv, is among those with

manufacturing capabilities for hy-

others in the empowered com-

mittees which decided how

much to make available for ex-

port," he said during a media

the exports through a "first come

first serve" basis — demands of

countries that made requests for

the drug first had been examined

hood is very important, there are

countries which are very vulner-

"Of course, our neighbour-

The government rationalised

briefing earlier in the day.

on priority.

droxychloroquine in India.

Express.

Teva

"Some of the consignment for

Late Thursday, Israeli Prime

"The first batch of the first list

measures globally.

ment." Ravi said.

port the drug.

Indian

the first to tell you because it is essential to bring it to your knowledge so that we can become more alert," he said.

He was responding to questions on an ICMR study which said that 104 people of a random sample size of 5,911 people with Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI) were found to be COVID-19 positive. Of these, 40 did not have any history of travel or contact with a confirmed case.

"I want to bring two figures to your notice. Of the 16,000 tests yesterday, only 320 were positive — just 2%. Secondly, this study on SARI cases shows 1.8% cases positive. These are from the VRDL labs. These labs are primarily in those areas where cases have already been found. Nowhere does the study say that these are in areas where there has not been a single case. The fact that some people have no travel or contact history, it only shows that it needs further investigation," said Agarwal.

He said there are impediments in proper contact tracing in areas with many cases.

should ask if we are practising social distancing with diligence to break that chain."

With 15,663 samples being tested in the last 24 hours, the total number of tests has now gone up to 1,61,330.

Agarwal also sought to allay fears about possible shortage of hydroxychloroquine after the government's decision to export it to some countries including the US. "Our projections show that we will need 1.6 crore tablets by the end of the month and we already have 3.28 crore tablets. In addition, 2 crore tablets have been sent to the states for distribution among field workers. All arrangements have been made to ensure adequate production, not just for our current domestic needs but also the future," he said

Additional Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, Dammu Ravi said while over 20,000 foreigners have been evacuated from India, the fate of Indians abroad will have to be decided at a later date.

Meanwhile, a meeting of the 11 empowered groups of officers was held on Friday under the chairmanship of Principal Secretary to the sues discussed were need to ensure percolation of the Home Ministry's guidelines to the ground level.

"The gathering expressed satisfaction on the detailed testing protocol and procedure... It was informed that all chief secretaries were issued instructions to arrange shelter for vulnerable groups like migrants and homeless," said a statement issued by the Press Information Bureau (PIB).

The meeting also discussed the need to increase user engagement with the Aarogya Setu app. According to the statement, 39 domestic manufacturers have been cleared for production of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE); about 20.4 lakh N-95 masks have been supplied to states and further procurement initiated; and order for 49,000 ventilators has been placed.

The National Health Authority has launched express empanelment to bring a large number of private hospitals under the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY) to ensure continued essential treatment for serious illnesses like cancer and heart ailment.

(PhFI), said that antibody tests are

not confirmatory and would only

turn up results around five to

behind why this (pooled testing

for factories) has to be done, but I

think only the data will be able to

inform us as to whether that strat-

egy should be adopted. It should

be clearer by the end of this

red-flagged the strategy of pooled

testing to restart factory opera-

tions, pointing out that the gov-

ernment and industry will have

to ensure sufficient precautions,

like regular pooled testing and

that day, that does not mean that

they would necessarily be clear

the next day or the day after. It will

only give you a snapshot of what

is happening at that time in an

evolving situation," said a re-

search scientist, speaking on con-

security audit conducted by IIT-

Madras and a tech consulting

Setu is that if the outbreak gets

worse, this is an early way of be-

coming ready. Unless a large

number of people download the

app, the effectiveness is limited,"

said Indihood founder Lalitesh

Katragadda, who is among about

20 volunteers behind the app's

are on it. That's why we are push-

ing to have it on every smart-

"This works better if all of us

development.

effective".

"One reason behind Aarogya

dition of anonymity.

Aarogya Setu

"If the samples would be clear

proper isolation of workers.

Some experts, however, have

week," he said.

"I completely get the rationale

seven days after the infection.

The app also tracks users' movement by collecting GPS coordinates every half-an-hour as

to the novel coronavirus."

ommend that you stay at home

well as continuous Bluetooth data about other users in the vicinity, according to Katragadda, who is a former Google India executive.

According to him, the data about location and physical contacts remains on users' devices – except under certain circumstances.

For instance, data is sent to the server at the time of registration, and if the self-assessment process deems users to be "at risk", or if information obtained from the ICMR declares them to be posi-

For "at-risk" or positive cases, the user's 30-day log of previous contacts is downloaded to the server, and an alert is sent to each contact. The "at-risk" decision is taken by an algorithm, but the team plans to add human moderators as another level of verification, Katragadda said.

"If determined to be 'at risk', the data is given to health author ities after we ask for a confirmation from the user that this information is accurate. A note is sent to the user that the information will be sent to the Health Ministry. The location is then used to determine where hotspots might develop," he said.

Health authorities will plan the next course of action, said NITI Aayog's Kumar.

According to project volunteers, the data is stored on Amazon Web Services servers a government-empanelled data storage service run by Amazon – temporarily until the transition is made to an NIC server.

The data is tagged with an ID number that can only be traced back to the user through a separate, encrypted database. The privacy policy states that locally stored data is only sent to the government and will be used in anonymised, aggregated datasets to visualise the outbreak — or if the user tests positive or has come into contact with a positive case.

The policy states: "The App does not allow your name and number to be disclosed to the public at large at any time.'

If users and their contacts are not tested positive, and not flagged by ICMR, the location data is deleted from the app after 30 days. However, it doesn't specify when the data will be deleted from servers.

Asked about the non-availability of location history of those who are positive before registration, volunteers agreed that contact-tracing history would be less effective in such cases.

To help with this, they said, the systems are integrated with data from other entities, such as the ICMR, National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), to help determine physical contact history.

According to Kumar, manually collected contact-tracing data about positive and quarantined cases from the NCDC and the ICMR is fed into the app through a real-time Application Programming Interface.

"takes the positive cases and understands where they have been using their phone data", even though cell tower data is not very accurate. Professor Kamakoti, however, said that the app "doesn't know where you have been before you installed it".

"This is a system problem. There is no one solution. We have to take feature phones. We have to take smartphones. We have to take Aarogya Setu users. We have to take non-users. We have to make sure everyone is covered one way or the other," Katragadda

phone version, along with an IVRS (Interactive Voice Response

to avoid any chance of exposure Gujarat

leased soon.

that come with such an undertaking, the patient can be kept at home. We are clear that the patient must be asymptomatic and should not have any other condition."

System), is expected to be re-

Apart from the fact that they don't require any treatment, Ravi said, "This decision has been taken as sometimes, if an aged person is taken to a hospital, they face trauma, and find menta strength in staying at home."

Till date the state has seen three positive cases over the age of 85 — out of its total count of 378 by Friday. On March 25, an 85year-old died in Ahmedabad, two days after testing positive. The other two, both in Bhavnagar one 92-year-old and another 90 — are symptomatic and continue to be in hospital.

In another decision, those in designated clusters in municipal corporation areas who may have come in close contact with a known positive patient but are found to be asymptomatic, will be quarantined for 14 days, and if necessary, a test may be conducted later, said Ravi.

The number of asymptomatic people positive for coronavirus has risen since the state widenence testing starting April 7, especially in Ahmedabad and Vadodara Testing was increased in clusters where a number of confirmed cases have been seen, in a move that the Health Department called "aggressive containment strategy". In three days, at least 100 asymptomatic postive cases

This is in line with revised guidelines by the Indian Counci of Medical Research (ICMR) allowing for testing of asymptomatic persons considered 'highrisk contacts'.

have been found in five districts.

Ravi said that on Friday the high-powered committee also took a decision to collect at least 100 samples from each of the 14 state districts with no cases, in a "cautious approach".

The Health Secretary said Gujarat had done 10% of the total tests across the country as per the ICMR data. Against its target of testing 1,000 samples a day, between Thursday 10 am and Friday 10 am, 978 samples were taken of which 635 tested negative.

In a first for the state, a medical professional deployed in frontline COVID-19 duty tested positive. The 35-year-old doctor was deployed at a healthcare centre in Ahmedabad city.

Bharuch became the 19th district in Gujarat to be affected, with seven cases linked to the Tabligh Iamaat. Vadodara reported eight more cases, taking its total to 47. Ahmedabad saw 55 new cases including of the doctor, who is stable.

The death count for Gujarat rose to 19 on Friday, with a 40year old patient hospitalised in Ahmedabad with kidney complications and an 81-year-old from Gandhinagar who may have got the infection from his Dubai-returned grandson passing away.

Thirty-three people have recovered, with seven discharged on Friday. WITH INPUTS FROM ADIT

RAJA IN VADODARA, GOPAL **KATESHIYA IN RAJKOT**

R N Kaul, former CBI Jt Director, passes away

Director R N Kaul passed away Friday morning at his home in New Delhi. He was cremated at the Lodhi Road crematorium in the afternoon. Kaul was 78. He is survived by his wife, son and daughter. **ENS**

New Delhi: Former CBI Joint

Prime Minister. Among the is-However, the Health ing, said, "If there is commuderstand what to do to break nity transmission, we will be the chain of transmission. We

Agarwal, in his daily brief-

Stating that the increasing cases are a cause for concern, Agarwal said, "We need to unable and (have) high demand and are in need of this medicine. So we went through that process of making an assessment as to who would need (hydroxychloro-

quine) first, and also the global sit-

uation... Accordingly, the first list

went through the process of

clearance (from the empowered

committee through to the Group

of Ministers)," Ravi said. According to Health Ministry joint secretary Lav Agarwal, India has 3.28 crore tablets - thrice the amount of hydroxychloroquine it requires. On Friday, the West Bengal government granted permission to the country's first and oldest pharmaceutical company to manufacture hydroxychloro-

quine. The government's decision to approve a first list of 13 countries, to which hydroxychloroguine will be exported, comes within three days of its decision to reverse an earlier order banning companies from exporting the drug. On Sunday, Trump had threatened retaliation in case India did not ease the export ban.

Bright spot

referred her to RML Hospital. On March 17. she tested positive, and on March 18, authorities traced 81 people she had met after returning from Saudi Arabia. On March 20, her brother and mother tested positive, followed by her two daughters on March 21. The local doctor she had seen, who also works in a mohalla clinic, tested positive on March 22," the government said in a statement.

This had prompted the authorities to put up a notice asking hundreds of people who had visited the mohalla clinic to selfquarantine. Health officials and the district

administration also had to seek help from the Delhi Police because the woman's son was not cooperating with contact tracing efforts. "When the woman tested

positive, we rushed to her residence to ask her family for names and addresses of people who had visited them since March 10. Her son was not cooperative, so we had to seek help from local police. We also used footage from CCTV cameras installed near their home to identify some people who needed to be put under surveillance," said Dr S K Nayak, District Administration Officer, Shahdara,

who handled the operation. Nine of the 11 entry points to

Sector L, Dilshad Garden, were sealed since most cases were reported from that area. People and vehicles were barred from leaving or entering, and announcements were made asking people, who had met the woman or her family, to reach out to authorities. During the screening of over 15,000 people, anyone who had

met the family was quarantined or shifted to GTB Hospital for treatment and testing. The screening and tracking process, however, is still not over, and the area continues to remain sealed. Once the government receives the antibody testing kits

that have been ordered, it will

start random testing in the area. Pooled testing

to enable partial operations, starting with exports so that the company does not default on its committed export obligations.

Bajaj's Chakan factory near Pune employs around 12,500 workers who produce a million vehicles a year. The company is learnt to have pushed a proposal to restart the plant, and has communicated to the Maharashtra government that plants where employer are willing to take responsibility for screening, meals and social distancing, should be allowed to restart basic opera-

tions. In a set of recommendations to the government for restarting the economy post-lockdown, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has proposed a progressive ramp-up of operations, as per which, sectors with difficult workfrom-home conditions and those which provide mass employment could be restarted first.

In the first phase, the CII has suggested that manufacturing, ecommerce and construction be restarted, alongside facilitation of logistics and transportation. The second phase, it said, which could follow two-three weeks later, would entail restarting of all the remaining sectors.

"The ramp-up could be 50 per cent employees to start with, for about three weeks. This could be increased gradually, based on how the curves are progressing in various cities and states," the CII noted. The trade body has also called for organisations to put em-Once the information is proployees through antibody tests to identify spreaders.

Giridhar Babu, Professor and Head Lifecourse Epidemiology, Public Health Foundation of India

phone in the country," said NITI Aayog's Programme Director Arnab Kumar, who has led much of the app's development. IIT-Madras Professor V Kamakoti estimated that "at least 50 per cent of the population needs to register to make the app

One key feature is self-assessment, which includes questions about age, profession (delivery service, healthcare worker etc), international travel history, contact with cases, potential symptoms, and pre-existing conditions such as diabetes, hypertension and lung disease.

vided, the app responds with a risk assessment. For instance, when this reporter registered with the app, the response was: "Your infection risk is low. We rec-

Katragadda said the NDMA

Volunteers said that a feature

US, Brazil Dominican Republic, the

house in Khandala.

THE () UTBREAK THE CITY



WATCH

137 booked for not wearing masks

New Delhi: A total of 137 cases were registered against people for stepping out of their houses without wearing masks to guard themselves against COVID-19 in the capital, police said. Of these, 32 cases were registered in Northwest district, 23 in South district, 20 in North district, 14 in Outer district and 14 in Shahdara. The Delhi government has made face masks mandatory for anyone stepping out of their home.

Gurgaon sets aside 6 areas for last rites

Gurgaon: With Haryana recording two COVID-19 deaths, the Gurgaon civic body Friday earmarked six locations — three cremation and three burial grounds — to perform the last rites of those who succumb to the infection. According to officials, the three cremation grounds identified for the purpose are located at Atul Kataria Chowk, Sector 32, and Madanpuri while the burial grounds are in Badshahpur village, near Sector 58 and the Power House in Ghata village. **ENS**

DELHI GOVT SEALS 7 MORE AREAS

183 cases, 2 deaths: Delhi sees biggest spike in COVID-19 cases

ASTHA SAXENA & SHIVAM PATEL NEW DELHI. APRIL 10

DELHI SAW its biggest spike in the number of COVID-19 cases Friday, with 183 fresh cases being reported, taking the total number of cases in the capital to 903. Two more deaths were also reported — an 80-year-old resident of Darya Ganj and a 56year-old cancer patient admitted at the Delhi State Cancer Institute — taking the toll to 14. Among the new cases, 154 are from the Nizamuddin Markaz gathering, while 12 either have a travel history or are cases of local transmission.

The Delhi government added seven new containment zones to its list, taking the total number to 30. This includes Nabi Karim, Chandni Mahal, parts of Paschim Vihar and Ashok Nagar.

The 80-year-old patient was admitted to Dwarka's Venkateshwar Hospital three days ago. He died of a heart attack on Thursday evening before his test results came back positive. According to details shared with the Southwest district administration, the patient had type II diabetes, hypertension and chronic kidney disease stage 5 and was on conservative management.

He was referred for urgent dialysis, in view of advanced renal failure, by ESI Hospital in **CORONA COUNT** 1,050 14 DEATHS 64 RECOVERED

Central Delhi's Basai Darapur. "On reporting to the Venkateshwar Hospital ER, the patient had no history of travel. He also had no fever, cough, shortness of breath or any features suggestive of COVID-19," as per details the hospital shared with the district administration.

He was admitted to the hospital on Tuesday at 1.41am. His X-ray was normal, and he went

for dialysis twice. Around 6 pm the next day, he had a cardiac arrest and was revived, following which he was put on ventilator support. On Thursday, a chest Xray showed some shadows, prompting the hospital to shift the patient to an ICU isolation ward and test samples for COVID-19 infection.

"But the patient's condition deteriorated; he had a cardiac arrest and died on Thursday at 7 pm. We received a positive report for COVID-19 after the patient's death," the hospital told the district administration.

Contacts of the patient have been traced, a district administration official said. Medical equipment used on the patient,

as well as areas he inhabited in the hospital, have been disinfected. The body was buried Friday.

In a separate incident, two patients admitted to Max Hospital in Saket for cardiac problems Thursday tested positive for coronavirus. They were initially admitted to Max Smart Hospital and were later moved to Max Hospital Saket, East Block, a coronavirus-only facility.

"So far. all samples collected from our healthcare workers and those from contact tracing have tested negative. Both patients are stable. They had come to the hospital over a week ago for cardiac procedures and are unrelated," a statement from Max Healthcare said.

sources, both are critical. Health authorities believe the first case from the institute emerged on March 31, when a 34-

As reported by *The Indian*

Express, after the doctor tested positive, healthcare staff such as nurses had asked for personal protective equipment, but the institute had been lackadaisical in its approach.

perintendent at DSCI, had said, "Ours is a cancer institute and healthcare workers are dealing with cancer patients. We are not a dedicated hospital for COVID-19, which is why there was no need to have PPE kits. PPE kits are needed for those posted at isolation wards or flu centres. The gov-



Among the dead,

A DAY after he tested positive for COVID-19, a 56-year-old cancer patient undergoing treatment at the Delhi State Cancer Institute (DCSI) died Friday afternoon. Suffering from gallbladder cancer, the man had been shifted to Rajiv Gandhi Super Speciality Hospital on Thursday evening after his test results were positive. Located in Dilshad Garden,

ASTHA SAXENA

NEW DELHI, APRIL 10

the cancer institute has emerged as one of the coronavirus hotspots in the national capital with 22 healthcare workers and three cancer patients, including the deceased, testing positive.

The two other patients are a 40-year-old woman suffering from ovarian cancer and a 49year-old man diagnosed with a brain tumour. According to

year-old resident doctor working in the department of preventive oncology tested positive. He had last visited the hospital on March 21. According to sources, his brother and sister-in-law had come from Europe last month.

Dr B L Sherwal, medical su-



The 56-year-old man was undergoing treatment at Delhi State Cancer Institute

ernment is trying its best to provide these kits to those who actually need them."

As cases spiked, the hospital had shut down its OPD for a sanitisation process and cancer patients were shifted to Dharamshila Cancer Hospital for further treatment. "We had sent the samples of 19 patients for testing and three tested positive. The health department is trying to find out the chain of contact transmission in this case. Our hospital is only open for emergencies, other services have been shut. The patient area is being sanitised now as all indoor patients have been shifted, said Dr Sherwal.

While there are no specific guidelines on treatment of cancer patients diagnosed with COVID-19, Dr Vinod Raina, executive director of Fortis Memorial Research Institute, said: "With regard to COVID-19, we divide cancer patients in two categories — those whose line of treatment can be deferred by two-three months without causing any undue harm, and those where treatment cannot be deferred and immediate intervention is needed. Cancer patients, if they are receiving treatment, are immuno-suppressed because of the treatment. So they have to take extra precaution as compared to the general population. They are at higher risk of succumbing or getting an infection.

Why you've been noticing more mosquitoes: Breeding checkers busy with coronavirus fight

ABHINAV RAJPUT

NEW DELHI, APRIL 10

WITH THE workforce of the three MCDs being deployed on the ground to sanitise areas and prevent the spread of COVID-19, operations to prevent vectorborne diseases such as dengue have taken a hit. With domestic breeding checkers (DBCs), who are in-charge of carrying out fogging, tackling the virus spread, officials remain apprehensive of an outbreak of vector-borne diseases.

Around 3,500 DBCs are employed across the North, South and East civic bodies. At the moment, DBCs along with staff in other departments are also engaged in checking for violations among those who are home quarantined.

At this time of the year, these workers would typically inspect 60-70 houses a day — spraying medicines inside coolers and tankers and checking breeding The capital had seen a

dengue outbreak in 2015, with 15,867 reported cases. In 2016, the city saw an outbreak of chikungunya, with over 1,000 cases. Since then, the civic bodies have stepped up operations.

Budh Ram, senior vice-president of the Anti-Malaria Ekta



3,500 DBC workers are employed across the North. South and East civic bodies

Karamchari Union and a DBC worker in the South zone, said: "We are presently engaged in disinfecting several areas. Some

of us have also been engaged to rently, anti-coronavirus operago door to door, along with officials of other departments, in areas sealed by the government. We will be conducting a survey of people in these areas as we know the area better."

Another DBC worker, who did not want to be named, said, "People don't let us inside their homes as they are afraid of the virus... we too don't want to risk someone's life as we work in open."

Civic body officials said that while they are spraying antimosquito medicines inside nullahs, house operations have been halted. "We are figuring out a way to carry those out... cur-

mosquito larvae," said an official. President of the Federation of East Delhi RWAs, BS Vohra, who lives in Krishna Nagar, said several residents have complained of mosquitoes in the area:

tions are a priority. So we request

people to inspect water tanks

and coolers at their homes for

"RWAs from other areas have also said fogging is not taking place." Leader of the House in SDMC. Kamalieet Sehrawat, however,

said workers are doubling up and carrying out both duties.

East body mayor Anju Kamalkant said fogging will start next week.

INTERNATIONAL ONLINE GAMING Traffic Skyrockets During Lockdown An initiative by R E D **ADVERTORIAL**

COVID-19 driving Poker players to online platforms

Driven into self-isolation by the lockdown, people from across the globe are turning to online Poker rooms for fun-filled get-togethers with their friends and relatives in the midst of turmoil and uncertain times

ABHISHEK PATHAK

FTEN considered as a mind sport, Poker has seen tremendous growth in the past few years. Of late, since the advent of COVID-19, people from across the globe have been forced to self-isolate themselves in a bid to contain the spread of the disease. This has led to, as per new and emerging reports, many Poker players and enthusiasts migrate to online Poker rooms, leading to an incredible cash game traffic for online Poker game platforms. One report also suggests that online Poker traffic is currently experiencing a five-year high globally.

Poker is also considered as a skillenhancing game, involving strategy building, observational tactics and mathematical knowledge. Indeed, these three are the pillars of Poker. Though a card game, it is different than other card games, considering that in Poker skill trumps over the luck factor predominantly. To be a longterm winning player in Poker, you need to be able to figure out the odds quickly and accurately. You also need to be able to read the people at the table. You also need the ability to manage your bankroll and temperament. The luck element plays a large part in the short term, but you can't win long term without the necessary skills -mathematics, strategy, and observational power. However, the game of



Poker has faced several blows and brickbats in the past.

With the passage of time, Poker has been legitimised across several nations in the world and that it has been kept out of the ambit of gambling speaks volumes about it. That Poker is not just about luck and that it involves a lot of strategy making to have the last call right elucidates is a matter of using one's grey cells.

The reason that all Poker variants involve betting should not take away from the fact that it is the use and sharpening of one's skills. If betting is an inherent part of it and if that is condemned, are we not throwing away the baby with the bathwater? After all, the charm of Poker lies in its sheer unpredictability. Playing Poker is all about the continuous sharpening of your skills of permutations and combinations in the face of limited environmental information. Its surprise element is what draws the big crowds into playing it.

The game is already a hit at parties, at Diwali bashes and attracts crowds where age, race, sex, economic status is no bar, though the frontrunners are the youth. While playing, you involve the use of mathematical concepts of probability, of individual psychology, of game theory and manufacture a nature of the game where all are game for it.

Currently, the rules regarding online Poker are safeguarding the games from becoming tools to launder money. Being a state subject, some states have passed laws on gambling gaming activities inviting fines and jail terms under the IPC. Nagaland Prohibition of Gambling and Promotion and Regulation of Online Games of Skill Bill, 2015, is a case in point as are the laws in Maharashtra that leave a scope for games of mere skill. Sikkim has liberal laws compared with Maharashtra. Here operators of Roulette, Black Jack, Pontoon, Punto Banco, Bingo, Casino Brag, Poker, Poker Dice and others need state government licence to operate legally in online medium. In Goa, hotels need permission from the state. These rules and regulations are making online gaming more acceptable and are giving huge revenues to the governments as well.

Online Poker start-ups mushrooming in India proves that the stakes are high; there is a lot of profitability and player interest is rising. The government needs to understand this and brush up their acts by providing authoritative backing to the Poker space. Poker is not a part-time fascination to rake in the moolah. It is a necessary skill-based endeavour that has come of age and must find its true meaning with evolving communities such as ourselves.

Spartan Poker launches Elite 'VIP Club'

N a bid to woo the Indian Poker enthusiasts, Spartan Poker has introduced an all-new programme -- The VIP Club -- to ensure that online Poker becomes even more engaging, fascinating and rewarding.

It is often considered that Poker is a game of wits, involving not just your mind and mathematics but your ability to read your opponent. With lockdown currently in place in the country, a huge surge has been observed in the way people are consuming online gaming, especially Poker.

Founded in 2014 under the banner of Quadrific Media Pvt Ltd, Spartan Poker is India's leading digital gaming platform known for being instrumental in propelling an incredible 600% growth of the Poker gaming industry in India. In brief spaces of time, Spartan Poker has witnessed unparalleled landmark in its numbers with over 266% growth in player participation, thanks to higher engagement levels and incremental revenue opportunities. According to recent reports, the platform bets on 500% expected growth of the brand by 2022.

Spartan Poker has cemented its leadership position in the industry through specially curated tournaments, high-paying rewards, and a robust gaming system. Recently, in a bid to reach out to more Poker players during the lockdown phase, Spartan Poker has stepped up its gaming platform a notch higher with the launch of its elite 'The VIP Club', designed to reward all Poker players with VIP points, right from small stakes to even the highest stakes players. Officially launched on April 5, 2020, The VIP Club is a world of endless rewards and will prove to be a milestone for Poker players as they engage in a mind boggling game of online Poker.

The new VIP Club membership ensures an extravagant joyride with exciting cash prizes, tournament tickets, rewards like luxury cars, bikes, smartphones, international travel packages to name a few. To enroll in The VIP Club and unlock these exciting offers, a player needs to have an account on Spartan Poker and consequently, he will be auto-registered for The VIP Club.

The highlight of The VIP Club is that now a player can earn VIP points on both Cash Games

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE VIP CLUB REWARDS

Play any game format on Spartan Poker to get VIP points

Each VIP Point can be redeemed at Rs. 5.

Claim rewards, cash prizes and tournament tickets in exchange

Get access to exclusive VIP tournaments

Tournament tickets and cash prizes can be redeemed instantly

Redeem numerous rewards any day, any

Up to 60% cashback for cash games for

tournaments 100% TDS-free withdrawals as you

move up the VIP levels

No expiration of your VIP points

and tournaments. Also, VIP Points come with no expiry, meaning the players can claim any reward irrespective of the games and stakes that they play. To claim endless rewards, a player needs to keep playing and start accumulating all the VIP points. In addition, the high rollers will have the advantage to get bigger prizes, where luxury cars such as Range Rover Evoque can be redeemed at Level 40.

Commenting on this new development, Amin Rozani, Managing Director and Cofounder, Spartan Poker, said,

"We are extremely delighted and proud to take Spartan Poker to another level and reward all our loyal players with the introduction of The VIP Club. We have introduced this pro-

gramme to encourage and appreciate the skills of Poker enthusiasts from varied and dispersed parts of the country. I am certain that players will have a great time playing and winning enormous rewards at Spartan Poker."

* 🔞 📵 🛈 (READ. ENGAGE. DELIVER.) IS THE MARKETING SOLUTIONS TEAM OF THE INDIAN EXPRESS GROUP

THE INDIAN EXPRESS, SATURDAY, APRIL 11, 2020 THE () UTBREAK THE CITY

AS PART OF HOTSPOT IDENTIFICATION

Cut off, NCR's containment zones wonder what next

In Gurgaon, residents unclear about why their societies have been sealed

SAKSHIDAYAL GURGAON. APRIL 10

A DAY after nine areas in Gurgaon were declared "containment zones" to prevent the spread of COVID-19, RWA officials said they were still awaiting direct communication from the district administration.

In Sector 54, for instance, residents woke up to uncertainty. With the order issued Thursday evening unclear about whether the area was a containment zone, it was the barricading at the entrance to Park Drive in DLF5, which houses three major condominiums, that became the first sign of sealing.

"It was only when we heard of police having barricaded the entrance that we realised our condominiums were also sealed," said a resident of The Summit.

As per the order issued by the District Magistrate, the areas declared containment zones are Sector 9, Nirvana Country, Palam Vihar, Emaar Palm Gardens, Laburnum Society, Sector 39, Fazilpur Jharsa village, ward 11 of Pataudi, and Raipur village in Sohna. Gurgaon has recorded 32 cases, with 12 having recovered.

In an order Friday evening, the DM clarified that both Sector 54

Police personnel stand guard at Laburnum Society in Gurgaon's Sushant Lok area, Friday. Abhinav Saha

and Nirvana Country were containment zones. A spokesperson of the district administration said: "The area SDM, along with the ACP or SHO. has to determine the boundary of the containment zone and manage entry and exit."

"Identifying and declaring containment zones is a dynamic process, which will be reviewed every five days," he said.

Many residents, however, wondered why the sealing was taking place now when cases had been reported from these localities weeks ago. At Nirvana Country, a couple who returned from London had tested positive last month. They have since recovered. But the area, which officials say houses over 3,000 families, has been sealed. "We have not received any communication from the district administration on why our area was sealed. We had two cases around 20-22 days

secretary of the RWA. At Laburnum in Sushant Lok. home to around 230 families, and where one person had tested positive last month and was dis-

ago; both have been discharged.

No new cases have been reported

since," said Rohit Chopra, general

charged on Friday, RWA officials said they had received no communication from the administra-

"We have been in touch with the Deputy Commissioner and the Badshahpur SDM, they said they will give us a clarification," said a member of the RWA.

Residents said access to essentials items is unlikely to be an issue. A resident of Unitech Fresco said, "We have a lot of general needs stores and chemists operating within Nirvana Country."

Officials from the district administration also assured residents that the sealing would not hinder supply of items, and that online delivery of essential items would be allowed.

The Gurgaon health department also began door-to-door screenings of residents to identify those with symptoms. "Nineteen teams have been constituted to screen members of all houses and note their travel history. If anyone has influenza-like symptoms, a rapid antibody test will be done. If there is an infection, their swabs will be taken for further testing," said Dr Jaswant Singh Punia, Chief Medical Officer of Gurgaon.

At Nirvana Country, the RWA General Secretary confirmed a team arrived on Friday morning and began screening.

AMIL BHATNAGAR NOIDA, APRIL 10

CONFUSION PREVAILED in the containment zones in Noida on day two, with thousands of families behind locked gates complaining that arrangements for delivery of essential items are inadequate. The orders to seal 12 areas in Gautam Budh Nagar district were passed Wednesday.

According to locals, long queues were seen at society gates as people lined up to buy vegetables, fruits and milk. Since the societies are sealed, no one except health and district administration officials are allowed to enter or exit the areas.

While in some societies, online suppliers are being allowed till individual towers, some residents said some vendors declined citing logistical difficulties. Locals also claimed that many of the vendor contacts given by the administration are non-functional.

"There is chaos, lots of people are gathering at the society gates for supplies. A few delivery companies have told us they will not deliver. If a system is not devised soon, not only will supplies run out, but there will be quarrels too," said a resident of a society in Sector 137, where three members

imise inconvenience," said Suhas LY, DM Gautam Budh Nagar.

In Noida, queues for essential supplies

At the entrance to Noida's Chaura village. Gajendra Yadav

of a family were found positive.

supplies were sporadic.

administration officials visited

each hotspot to ensure that resi-

dents get all essential supplies.

We have tied up with local gro-

cery stores and medical shops for

this. Fruit and vegetable vendors

have been stationed at the gates

and supply of milk too has been

ensured. We are trying to min-

While the administration in-

defeat idea of social distancing

formed RWAs that fruit and veg-"We are trying to figure out a etable vendors will be stationed mechanism in which societies at the gates of the societies, and that can manage deliveries till other essential deliveries shall not within the tower will be allowed be stopped, locals alleged that the to do so. At this point, we will have to look at the area and num-Officials said they are working ber of people at each hotspot and towards streamlining the system. devise a plan accordingly," he "Late Thursday night, police and

said. In Noida, a majority of the 64 reported coronavirus cases have been linked to a fire safety firm in Sector 135. According to medical officials, the screening process in the hotspots will remain the same as before and teams will take feedback on symptoms from residents. In each zone,

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

AN FIR has been registered

against a former Congress coun-

Delhi, and their daughter have

NEW DELHI. APRIL 10

there have been at least two

Authorities have ruled out any instance of community transmission as of now.

"At this point it seems that the chain of cases that had begun with the first fire safety firm official will cease in the coming few days. Due to our extensive screening, we had identified family members who had tested positive. With that link breaking, the cases will go down as well. The teams will be calling up families to track symptoms and samples will be taking accordingly," said Dr Anurag Bhargava of the Gautam Budh Nagar Health

Department.

Ex-Cong councillor

about Tablighi meet

booked for 'lying'

Italian had tested corona negative before death: Hospital

SAKSHI DAYAL GURGAON, APRIL 10

A DAY after a 78-year-old Italian woman, who had tested positive for coronavirus last died at Medanta - The Medicity in Gurgaon, Dr Sushila Kataria, who leads the hospital's COVID response team, said: "The immediate cause of her death was not coronavirus. It was related to leaky gut syndrome, wherein bacteria and fungi translocated into the blood, and she eventually died of septicaemia, but the whole process was related to coronavirus, though she had become COVID negative."

"There are two ways of looking at it. One is what is the immediate cause – immediate cause is not COVID, but why did the immediate cause happen? Had she been up and about, the translocation of bacteria would not have happened. Technically this has been classified as a non-COVID death, but indirectly it could be a result of that," she said.

The patient, doctors said, had been in the ICU for 24 days prior to her death. She was supposed to be transported back to Italy by air ambulance on Saturday, after she tested negative for coronavirus twice, but died at 11.55 am on Saturday. She was among 14 Italian tourists who were admitted to the hospital as suspected cases of COVID-19, with the other 13 subsequently being discharged after testing negative for the virus.

Lockdown can't be unilateral, one state can't stop virus, has to be national effort: Sisodia

MALLICA JOSHI NEW DELHI, APRIL 10

A DECISION on extending the lockdown in Delhi will depend on the Centre's position on the matter, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said Friday.

After Odisha extended its lockdown till April 30, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh said Friday that the state will extend restrictions till May 1. Sisodia said that a final deci-

sion on the matter will be taken after the PM's meeting with Chief Ministers on Saturday morning. "We will go by the Centre's

decision on extending the lock-



Sisodia said a final decision on the lockdown will be taken after the PM's meeting with chief ministers Saturday. Archive

down. A meeting is scheduled with the Prime Minister tomor-

row. The decision to extend the lockdown can't be taken unilat-

spread of coronavirus. It has to be a concerted national effort," Sisodia told *The Indian Express*.

erally as one state cannot stop the

Delhi had declared a complete lockdown, wherein only essential services and industry associated with these services were allowed to function, starting March 23. Public transport was also suspended and borders were sealed. Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a nation-wide lockdown starting March 25.

Sources in the Delhi government said that the present situation in Delhi as well as several other states indicates that an extension is required.

"If we look at the trajectory of

the number has shot up starting March 27-28 and the number of COVID-19 related deaths has also gone up considerably. At a time like this, easing the lockdown will be self-defeating. We are ready to share this view with the Centre. Delhi, with several areas declared containment zones, is not in a situation to ease the restrictions," said a senior government officer.

cases over the past two weeks,

government notified seven more containment zones, including Dinpur village in Southwest Delhi and Nabi Karim and Chandni Mahal Areas in Central Delhi, after several cases were recorded from these areas.

cillor who allegedly lied to police about his visit to the Tablighi Jamaat event at Nizamuddin last month, and has since tested pos-On Friday alone, the Delhi itive for COVID-19. His wife, an SDMC councillor in Southwest

also tested positive, said police. DCP(Dwarka) Anto Alphonse said Deenpur village in Najafgarh, where the family lives, was declared a containment zone this week after the family tested positive. However, the SDMC councillor denied the allegations and said her family is being framed.

> mosque at Nizamuddin. He was busy with charitable work after the lockdown and must have come in contact with a patient. We have been distributing food to residents daily," she claimed.

"My husband didn't visit the

Senior police officers alleged that the accused moved out of his house during home quarantine.

"On March 31, we started tracking those who attended the Markaz event and returned to their homes in the area; we zeroed in on five such persons. They were traced and they told police about their travel history," said a senior officer.

As a precautionary measure, other residents of the village were home guarantined. "During physical verification of home quarantined persons, health authorities did not find the accused at his

The ex-councillor's wife, who is an SDMC councillor in Southwest Delhi, and their daughter have also tested positive for coronavirus, according to police

house in Deenpur village," said the DCP.

When police found the man and questioned him, he allegedly hid facts about his past travel and movements. Later, the man complained of fever and tested positive for COVID-19. Within days, his wife and their daughter also tested positive. "Even during repeated medical and police enquiry, he lied about his movements and did not disclose it to the authorities," claimed police.

A senior police officer said. "We analysed his call detail records and conducted a physical enquiry. It was found that he had attended the Jamaat congregation at Nizamuddin between March 13 and 15." Police said legal action has been initiated against him and a case under IPC sections 188 and 269 and Section 3 of the Epidemic Diseases Act has been registered.

The health department has, meanwhile, identified 1,495 households falling within a one kilometre radius of the village. Close to 8,000 people in this area will be screened for symptoms, officials said.

Hours after protest, nurses at Lok Nayak hospital provided separate accommodation

SOMYA LAKHANI NEW DELHI, APRIL 10

AFTER WEEKS of demanding that nursing staff be allotted separate accommodation at Lok Nayak hospital, which is now a COVID-19 hospital, the nursing staff were Thursday told that at least 72 rooms have been set aside for them at the Gujarati Samaj in Civil Lines. This came a few hours after nursing officers protested outside the medical director's office.

Jeemol Shaji, general secretary of the nurses' union at Lok Nayak hospital, said, "In the 72 rooms,

there will be double occupancy. so at least 144 nurses can stay there. Apart from this, we have been assured that by Wednesday, another 160 rooms will be arranged for the nurses. In all, there are 1,300 nursing staff at

A nursing officer *The Indian* Express spoke to said that "while doctors were provided accommodation at five-star hotels days ago, the nursing staff was ignored. Why are we expected to return home to our families?"

Another nursing officer said that while many would return home after finishing their duty,

some would stay at the dental college next door. The nursing officer said she refused to live there as over 10 people were staying in the same room, and shared toilets. "My colleagues would have to stand near the tap and take a bath. If one nurse in that room gets coronavirus, all of them might get it. I go home and isolate myself but it's hard," said the nurse. Those staying at the dental college will now move to the Civil Lines accommodation, as the college is being turned into a COVID-19 ward.

An official at the Delhi government's health department said

that arrangements have been made by the government to accommodate nurses from Lok Nayak Hospital at the Gujarati Samaj at Rajniwas Marg, Civil Lines, which is approximately 15 minutes away from the hospital. "The rooms have been made ready and they will be shifted tonight or tomorrow," said the official. Meanwhile, Nitin Acharya, General Secretary, Shri Delhi Gujarati Samaj, said that over 70 rooms have been set aside for the nurses."We have been preparing the rooms and getting them cleaned since the government conveyed the message to us on

Thursday night. We are ready to host the nurses and are waiting for government guidelines on how to sanitise the rooms and go

ahead with the plan," he said. A nursing officer who went to check the accommodation on Thursday evening said that due to the lockdown, the place had not been cleaned for a while, and some hospital staff too helped clean the rooms. A senior nursing officer said that apart from accommodation, a lack of PPEs, long shifts, and inadequate transportation facility remained concerns.

> (With inputs from Ashna Butani)

IN AREAS AROUND NIZAMUDDIN

As capital's firemen begin sanitisation efforts, applause from balconies

SOMYA LAKHANI NEW DELHI, APRIL 10

AS A fire tender pulled up in southeast Delhi's Jangpura Thursday morning, firefighter Nirbhay Singh Meena (52) made a polite announcement to the residents: "We are here for you. We will be very careful but if any of the sprayed liquid damages something, forgive us in advance. Bura mat maaniyega." And then began the sanitisation process of homes, shops, parks, temples, gurdwaras and mosques, bus stops and lanes in Jangpura, Jangpura Extension

and Bhogal — areas close to Nizamuddin, a coronavirus hotspot.

Meena was accompanied by three more firefighters, Jai Prakash, Chap Singh and Deepak Dagar, and while the men expected people to cooperate, what they didn't see coming was resounding applause from balconies of residents who thanked the four for a job well

A video of people applauding was posted on Twitter by Darya Ganj councillor Yasmin Kidwai. Delhi Fire Service (DFS) has been recruited to sanitise areas in the capital closest to



coronavirus hotspots. DFS director Atul Garg said, "Two fire stations, four fire tenders and 16 firefighters have been set aside just for the sanitising assignment."

On Thursday, the men used 18,000 litres of sodium hypochlorite mixed with water across the three localities, and were guided by South MCD officials.

18,000 litres of sodium hypochlorite with water was used to sanitise langpura, Jangpura **Extension and Bhogal.** Express

"Thankfully, the reach of the hose attached to the fire tender - 30 metres - is such that the men don't have to enter any lanes or confined spaces. I spoke to the health department officials who said that since the men don't come in contact with COVID-19 patients or even enter confined spaces, they are under low risk," Garg said

"The men are equipped with cotton dungarees, gumboots, gloves, a special helmet with goggles, face shield and a mask. They have been instructed not to go in," he added.

He said that in case the men do have to enter a confined

space to sanitise, there are six personal protective equipment (PPEs) that have been provided to the department by the South MCD.

Meena, who joined service in 1996 and was one of the men who was a part of the firefight ing team during the 1997 Uphaar Cinema blaze, said that he "doesn't fear anything".

The father of four said, "Firefighters take risks to save people, it's our job and this is no different. I am proud of the work I do, but today, the applause was overwhelming, and extremely encouraging. We will return tomorrow."

THE INDIAN EXPRESS, SATURDAY, APRIL 11, 2020 THE ()UTBREAK NATION





A quarantine centre at Sarusajai sports complex in Guwahati. Dasarath Deka

Minister stopped by TN police

Bengaluru: Karnataka Home Minister Basavarai Bommai was on Thursday questioned by Tamil Nadu police personnel guarding the state border who were unaware of his identity. The policemen briefly stopped him, sought to know the purpose of his outing during a visit to the area, and asked him for a pass. The police personnel from Tamil Nadu had also allegedly put up barricades inside Karnataka limits, Karnataka police claimed. The incident occurred near the Karnataka-Tamil Nadu border at Attibele in Bengaluru Rural district on Thursday.

RAJASTHAN School principal booked

Barmer: A government school principal, who tested positive for COVID-19, was Friday booked for violating lockdown norms and disobeying orders. The principal travelled from Jaipur's Ramganj area, a coronavirus hotspot, to Barmer on April 5 without permission, and concealed the journey from the authorities, District Collector Vishram Meena said. He later tested positive and was admitted to a Jodhpur hospital.

MADHYA PRADESH 47 locked inside homes for 12 hours

Chhattarpur: Authorities in Chhattarpur district locked up 47 people in their houses for around 12 hours on Friday as they kept violating quarantine, an official said. These people had returned to Raj Nagar tehsil from cities such as Indore and Bhopal, which have been hit by the coronavirus pandemic. "They often left home and loitered on roads, forcing us to lock them up,' Sub-Divisional Magistrate Swapnil Bankhede said.PTI

India asks US to extend expiring H-1B visas

SHUBHAJIT ROY NEW DELHI, APRIL 10

FOREIGN SECRETARY Harsh Vardhan Shringla has taken up with the US the issue of extending the expiring H-1B visas of skilled Indian professionals stuck in the country because of the lockdown in India, sources said.

He raised the issue with the US Deputy Secretary of State Stephen E Biegun on Wednesday-a discussion that comes amid concerns that some H-1B visa holders could lose their jobs due to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This was about 10 days after External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has asked US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to extend the visas of Indian students and skilled professionals. Many of visas are due to expire in the coming weeks, said sources.

While the visa extension issue is part of an "ongoing conversation" between the two countries, there has been no US government order to lay off H-1B visa holders-even though such a step may be taken by private companies.

Sources said that visa holders get a 60-day period to find another job when their job contracts expire - they have to come back if they fail to do so.

The Congress, too, on Friday asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to impress upon the US not to terminate the H-1B visas of Indians living in the country.

ICMR asks 13 institutions to help increase corona testing

Institutions to mentor medical colleges, facilitate establishment of test facilities

DIPANKAR GHOSE NEW DELHI, APRIL 10

THE INDIAN Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has written to 13 medical "institutions of eminence" across the country to act as "mentors" in the process of in-

creasing testing for COVID-19 in

In a letter to directors of these institutions, ICMR director-general Dr Balram Bhargava stated that the move has been made after directions from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare "to increase capacity for COVID-19 testing in all government and private medical colleges of the country". The letter reads, "This work

will involve significant due diligence, interaction with various medical colleges, training and handholding. Therefore, it has been decided to distribute the responsibility evenly across various institutions of eminence all across the country. These institutions are expected to serve as mentors of the medical colleges in their catchment areas and facilitate the establishment of COVID-19 testing facilities in their respective states. All these institutions will work in close coordination with their respective state governments."

While six of these institutions



While six of these institutions are AIIMS, most have the responsibility of mentoring medical colleges in multiple states. Praveen Khanna

are All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), most have the responsibility of mentoring medical colleges in multiple states — in one case as many as seven. For instance, the North Eastern Indira Gandhi Regional Institute of Health and Medical Sciences, Shillong, will look at th whole Northeast sector: Assam, Meghalaya, Sikkim, Tripura, Manipur, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland. Similarly,

Chandigarh is in charge of Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Chandigarh and Uttarakhand. JIPMER, Puducherry, will look at Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Puducherry,

SCTIMST, while Thiruvananthapuram, is in charge of Kerala, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep. AIIMS-Delhi has

charge of Delhi and Bihar, while AIIMS-Jodhpur has Rajasthan and Gujarat. Armed Forces Medical College Pune will look at two cities - Mumbai and Pune while the increase in testing in the rest of Maharashtra, Goa. Dadra and Nagar Haveli, and Daman and Diu will be mentored by AIIMS, Pune.

NIMHANS, Bengaluru, is in charge of Karnataka, while King George Medical University, Lucknow, has charge of Uttar Pradesh. AIIMS-Bhopal and Raipur will oversee Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh and

Jharkhand, respectively; AIIMS-Bhubaneswar looks at Odisha and West Bengal.

The move comes after the Union ministry has been told by state representatives for greater clarity and streamlining of processes, including the intricacies of expanding testing. It is learnt that in several meetings, state leaders and officials have conveyed the need for more clarity on expanded testing, and the steps that should be taken in this regard, which has prompted ICMR to rope in these medical institutions across the country.

The letter by Bhargava to directors of these institutions come with terms of reference, "detailed guidance on requirements for infrastructure and consumables for real time RT-PCR laboratory" and a suggestive list of good quality consumables.

The need for greater clarity from the Union government on the directions and help being given to states has been repeatedly raised, it is learnt, including at a meeting of the Union Health Minister with state Health ministers on April 10. An official from a state, who was privy to the details, said, "States raised the issue that they need to know what is coming and when from the Centre, so they can make arrangements around that. Only if there is clarity from the centre. can states really push ahead."

In another addition to its

guidelines on lockdown, the

Ministry of Home Affairs on

Friday exempted fishing and

aquaculture activities from the

"Operations of the fishing (ma-

rine) aquaculture industry, including feeding & maintenance,

harvesting, processing. packag-

ing, cold chain, sale and market-

ing; hatcheries, feed plants,

commercial aquaria, movement

prohibitions.

COVID-19

Resumption of less labour-intensive units gets Govt look

HARIKISHAN SHARMA NEW DELHI. APRIL 10

AMID INDICATIONS of a possible extension of the lockdown beyond April 14, the government is considering allowing the operation of factories that are less labour-intensive, it is learnt. Sources said the Ministry of

Commerce and Industry, which is in the process of drafting a staggered lockdown exit strategy for industries, is considering allowing factories to open on the basis of certain parameters. According to sources, the ministry may first allow operation of factories that are less labour-intensive, and where most of the work is done by robotic arms and there are few workers on the floor. Medium labour-intensive sectors such as chemical factories may also be allowed to open.

Highly labour-intensive sectors like small garment factories may not be allowed to open as of now, the sources said, adding that a few may be allowed on case-tocase basis. It was also learnt that food-processing industries can be allowed to operate. The Centre has allowed agricultural activities, and farmers will find it difficult to sell their produce if food processing industries cannot run.

As of now, preference will be given to low labour-intensive factories. Highly labour-intensive factories will be considered later, said sources.

This comes days after Prime

Minister Narendra Modi spoke about a "common exit strategy" to ensure staggered re-emergence of the population after April 14 and asked states to send suggestions for the "exit strategy"

During an interaction with central ministers Monday, Modi had said, "The ministries should prepare a Business Continuity Plan." "He noted that a graded plan to slowly open departments where hotspots aren't existing should be made, adding that the crisis offers an opportunity to become self-dependent in the medical sector," said an official statement.

"Highlighting the impact on India's exports, he asked the ministers to submit actionable suggestions on boosting manufacturing and exports and ensure that new sectors and countries are added in India's export net," it added.

On March 30, exporters had demanded that India allow the export of certain products. During an interaction with Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal, exporters said that if India does not begin shipments at this juncture, its export market would be taken over by Chinese products. They cited the example of certain pharmaceuticals exports which have been banned in the wake of the pandemic.

Giving relief to domestic pharma companies, the Centre has lifted restrictions on exports of 24 active pharmaceutical ingredients(APIs) and their formulations.

Two top officials to monitor each of 100 hotspots in UP

MAULSHREE SETH, **ASAD REHMAN** & AMIL BHATNAGAR LUCKNOW, NOIDA, APRIL 10

OUTLINING THE containment policy for over 100 hotspots, spread across 15 districts of Uttar Pradesh, the state government on Friday said that one magistrate and one police officer would be in charge of each of the hotspots that were sealed from Wednesday midnight.

During the review of the situation with the heads of 11 committees set up in view of the lockdown, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath ordered strict monitoring of suspected cases in the hotspots. Stating that 75 per cent of the

433 coronavirus cases in the state were from the 100-odd hotspots, Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Awanish Kumar Awasthi said, "Each of the hotspots will be barricaded. Vehicles and people will be challaned if they are found moving in the area. Exemption will be given to take newspapers the hotspots, which needs to be arranged before hand."

The government also said that even as 50 lakh litres of milk is being produced in the state on a daily average, 33 lakh litre has been distributed through doorto-door delivery. The government also said that 80 per cent of the total 3.50 crore ration card holders have been distributed

Ramping up testing facilities in hotspots and other affected districts, Awasthi said that the CM ordered monitoring of western UP and opening of testing facilities in Noida, Greater Noida and Saharanpur. "During the review meeting, the Chief Minister also instructed that sample collection centres be opened in each of the 75 districts in the state," he added.

He also said that on the instructions of the CM, masks have now been made mandatory in the state and orders have been issued to take action against people who do not cover their face while leaving their houses. "If people do not have face masks, then they can use cloth or gamcha or a dupatta for covering their faces," said Awasthi.

In Lucknow, the district administration, with the help of local vendors, has started homedelivery of essential items to 12 hotspots in the district. However, some residents said that the volume and frequency of deliveries had reduced.

Meanwhile, apprehension and chaos prevailed in the containment zones in Noida with thousands of families behind locked gates complaining that arrangements for delivery of es-

sential items were inadequate. According to residents, long queues were seen at society gates as people queued up to buy vegetables, fruits and milk.

Festivals coming up, MHA tells states to ensure ban on religious gatherings to inform District authorities and March 27.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, APRIL 10

WITH OVER half a dozen festivals scheduled in April and the lockdown expected to be extended beyond the 21-day period - which ends on April 14 the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has written to all states to ensure no religious congregations take place anywhere.

Easter, Baisakhi, Bihu and Ramzan are coming up in April, along with smaller festivals such as Bengali new year and Akshaya

"It has been communicated

Surat: Several powerloom work-

ers from other states living in the

labour colonies in Laskana area on

the outskirts of Surat allegedly re-

sorted to arson on Friday, police

grant workers pelted stones on

people passing by in their vehicles

after reports about extension of

lockdown in the wake of COVID-

factories in Diamond nagar

Industrial area blocked the roads.

are over 20,000 power loom

workers, who are from, Odisha,

Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, broke

open a timber godown on the

main road, took out wooden

blocks and set them on fire.

The workers employed in the

Police sources said that there

19 pandemic surfaced.

According to police, the mi-

Migrant workers in

Surat resort to arson

field agencies on the specific

The ministry has reminded states of its consolidated guide-

prohibitions, as mentioned in the Consolidated Guidelines on Lockdown Measures, and that they should take all required precautionary/preventive measures for maintenance of law and order, peace and public tranquillity. Appropriate vigil on social media should also be maintained against circulation of any objectionable content," a home ministry statement said regarding the communication sent to

lines on the lockdown, sent on

The workers had also allegedly

pelted stones on the vehicles of

the Patidar Anamat Andolan

Samiti (PAAS) of the Surat unit

that is regularly provided cooked

food packets to around 500 work-

ers. Surat Police Commissioner R

B Brahmbhatt said, "Their only de-

mand was that they wanted to go

back to their homes. We have con-

trolled the situation and police

staff has been deployed. Police ve-

hicles were also damaged in the

Association president Ashok

Jirawala said, "They wanted to go

home. The Odisha government

had announced that the lock-

down will be extended to April 30.

These labourers are worried about

ENS

their families in Odisha."

Federation of Guiarat weavers

incident."

of fish! shrimp and fish products, fish seed/feed and workers for all these," would be exempted, an addendum issued by

the ministry said.

20 arrested for attack on cops in Ahmedabad

Ahmedabad: Over 20 people were arrested on Friday night for attacking a police team in Juhapura area of Ahmedabad when the latter arrived to disperse the crowd, amid nationwide lockdown to contain the spread of coronavirus. According to police, the incident occurred around 7.30 pm on Friday when a police team reached Gulab Park area of Juhapura, Ahmedabad as part of regular patrolling exercise. The mob attacked police vans and pelted stones, injuring two policemen. "We arrested 20-22 people and an FIR is being lodged against them for rioting and assault. We are also identifying other accused through CCTV,"LD Odedara, in-charge officer, Vejalpur police station.

Sonia holds video meet with state Cong chiefs, Priyanka writes to Yogi

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, APRIL 10

CONGRESS PRESIDENT Sonia Gandhi on Friday held a meeting with presidents of state units via video conference to take stock of the situation arising out of the continuing nationwide lockdown. She hoped the central government would come up with a detailed plan to mitigate the sufferings of the poor, farmers and unorganised workers.

During the meeting, the party said almost every state president has spoken about how lack of testing is hampering the fight against coronavirus. They also said that states are starved of funds.

AICC general secretary incharge of organisation K C Venugopal said the Centre's failure to ramp up testing was a major concern expressed by almost all state party presidents. "The lockdown is going to put a lot of burden on our economy. The economy was already in crisis and now it seems difficulties will increase. We have to be ready for it," Gandhi told the state chiefs.

AICC general secretary incharge of Uttar Pradesh Priyanka Gandhi Vadra wrote to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, asking him to ramp up testing, saying it



can prove to be a life saver in a state like UP, which has a huge population. While the population of UP is nearly 23 crore, only 7,000 samples have been sent for

testing so far, she said. "In this battle, there is need to take steps by keeping our political ideologies away and help bring people together and create a fear-free atmosphere," she said in her letter. She also asked the UP CM to set up more isolation

wards and quarantine centres. The Congress also accused the Centre of failing to secure the safety and livelihood of Indians in America. "The sword of H-1B visa job terminations looms large or the heads of an estimated 75.000 Indians, with the United States giving them only a 60-day period to find a new job in case of a layoff. There are 309.986 Indians working on H-1B visa in the USA and given the COVID-19 lockdown in the two countries, it is lo-

gistically impossible for them to

come back to India," Congress

communication department

head Randeep Surjewala said.

Uddhav should break silence on letting Wadhawans visit Mahabaleshwar: Fadnavis

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE MUMBAI. APRIL 10

MAHARASHTRA CHIEF Minister Uddhav Thackeray should break his silence on scam accused and DHFL promoters Wadhawans being allowed to visit Mahabaleshwar during the lockdown, former chief minister and senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis said on Friday.

"Does Maharashtra have two different sets of rules for the rich and the poor," Fadnavis said.

At a time when even emergency cases are being repeatedly verified before police relax norms, and a death or emergency in a family are also subjected to highest scrutiny before allowing people to travel within the city, "here we have a family of 23 granted travel permission for holiday at a hill station", Fadnavis said.

The former CM said, "Asking a principal secretary (Amitabh Gupta) to proceed on long leave



is not enough, as no officer takes such decisions (to let the Wqdhawans travel) on his own. At whose behest did the police officer give permission?"

While state Home Minister Anil Deshmukh has ordered a probe, Fadnavis said, "That is not enough. The Home Minister should take entire responsibility and the chief minister should speak on why such permission was given and by whom..."

A state BIP leader said "Allowing the Wadhawans to go on a holiday cannot be perceived as an oversight or a general error. After all, CBI has served look-out notice. Therefore, to presume a senior officer was not mindful of ram-

ifications is ridiculous."

STATE ONLY MANUFACTURER OF HARVESTERS IN THE COUNTRY

No harvesting anxiety for Punjab thanks to 17k combine harvesters

ANJU AGNIHOTRI CHABA JALANDHAR, APRIL 10

WHILE PROCURING around 13 million tonnes (130 lakh metric tonnes) of wheat amid coronavirus outbreak poses a significant challenge for Punjab, the state seems less worried about harvesting the standing crop in the coming days.

Thanks to the mechanised harvesting in the state, which owns over 17,000 combine harvesters, 90 per cent wheat here is cut mechanically without the use of much labour in the fields.

Farm organisations, however, suggest that the government should have advanced the wheat harvesting date from April 10-11 instead April 14-15 so as to avoid

glut in the grain markets.

Usually, wheat harvesting in Punjab begins in the first week of April in certain pockets every year. But this time due to rain in the month of March, the harvesting got delayed by a week to 10 days.

In Punjab this year, 35.05 lakh hectares (86.57 lakh acres) area is under wheat production and the state is expecting to produce around 17 million tonnes out of which around 13 million tonnes is expected to reach the purchase

Out of nearly 17,000 combines, around 4000 to 5000 have gone to other states like Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Bihar etc. where the harvesting of wheat started in the month of March. Remaining around 11,000 to 12,000 combines are currently "In Punjab, there are around

17,000 combine harvesters out of which nearly 25 per cent have gone to harvest wheat in other states where the harvesting is almost over and now these machines will head back to Punjab and would reach back here by April14-15," said Baldev Singh Amar, The chairman of All India Mechanical Agriculture Machinery Association (AMMA) Farm Implement Association, adding that the peak harvesting season will start in Punjab between April 15 to 20 and by that time all machines will be back in state. Also in Punjab, harvesting first starts in Malwa region followed by Doaba and then Majha region, he revealed, adding that Centre has allowed hassle-free

movement of the combines to make harvesting smooth.

According to Amar, 95 per cent harvesting in Punjab is mechanical which makes social distancing during these operations a given.

Jagdeep Singh, a farmer and combine owner from Kanoi village in Sangrur district, said that a combine operation needs just 3-4 persons including a driver, a codriver, a foreman, who takes care of any mechanical fault in the running machine, and one labourer.

"These four persons are already working at a distance from each other during the operation and now we have made them aware that after the operation also they need to maintain the distance while eating or moving to other places in the combine," he said. Punjab is the only manufacturer of the combine harvesters in the country and every year 5,000 to 7,000 combines are manufactured here out of which 40 per cent are being purchased by the other states.

He added: "Most combine operators are Punjabis. But we need outside labour only to make fodder from wheat stubble after harvesting. For making fodder farmers, we need to run a reaper machine which needs 7-9 labourers, including a driver." ".... Mostly these machines run

simultaneously with the combines," said farmer Dharminder Singh from Ugrahan village in Sangrur district. He added that the state had ready availability of labour for these operations.

However, Director, Punjab

ing because it does not need many people, but we have decided to run the reaper machines a little later not simultaneously so that combine machine and reaper machine labour is not working together in the fields." *The Indian Express* spoke to Gurdeep Singh, a combine owner

Agriculture Department, Dr.

Sutantra Kumar Airy, pointed out:

"There is not worry about harvest-

from Changal village in Punjab's Sangrur district who had gone to Harda in Madhya Pradesh (MP) on February 15 with two combine- harvesters. He said: "I have already completed harvesting here and am about to start back for Punjab on April 10. I would be back by April 14 or 15. I already have several bookings in my village and around."

THE OUTBREAK NATION





A Whodunit

WITH CONGRESS president Sonia Gandhi's suggestion to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to impose a complete ban on media advertisements by the government and Public Sectors Undertakings for two years drawing much criticism, party leaders are now wondering who crafted the letter, or who was the brain behind the suggestion. Many party leaders believe the letter was either drafted or the inputs were given by a former Union minister. This leader has in the past played a key role in drafting the party's manifestos and common minimum programmes, but with the suggestion rubbing the media the wrong way, no one is now taking ownership for the letter. Speculation, though, has not died down.

TAKING CARE

Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Ram Vilas Paswan has announced an initiative to grant ex-gratia compensation for workers and officers of Food Corporation of India (FCI). Under its provisions, during the six-month period from March 24 to September 23, if anybody dies due to COVID-19 infection while on duty with FCI, regular FCI workers will get an ex-gratia of Rs 15 lakh, those on contract will be entitled to Rs 10 lakh, Category-1 officers Rs 35 lakh, Category-2 officers Rs 30 lakh and Category-3 and -4 employees Rs 25 lakh. At present, families of FCI employees are entitled to compensation in the event of death due to terrorist attack, bomb blast, mob attack or natural disaster.

HELPING OUT

Indian industry has responded to the government's call to help it tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. As many as 300 companies from different sectors — from biotech to pharma — have registered with the Technology Development Board of the Department of Science and Technology. Out of these, 140 companies have rushed in with proposals — from masks with antiviral coating and rapid diagnostic tests to AI solutions and technology to mass sanitise large spaces such as hospitals.

School closures may have limited benefit in slowing **COVID-19: Lancet paper**

RITIKA CHOPRA NEW DELHI, APRIL 10

A NATIONWIDE shutdown of schools may have "limited benefit" in slowing down the spread of COVID-19 even as its economic and social costs are high, a paper, published in *The* Lancet Child and Adolescent Health this week, has found.

India had announced a countrywide classroom shutdown on March 16 as one of the measures to contain the spread of infections. According to UN-ESCO, till date, the pandemic has pulled more than 90 per cent of the world's student population out of schools and universities.

However, the recently-published research, led by a team of University College London (UCL), says the evidence to support national closure of schools to combat the outbreak is "very weak". UCL professor and the President of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, Russell Viner, is the lead author.

The decision on classroom shutdowns, the paper states, is "largely based on assumptions that the benefits (of classroom shutdowns) apparent in influenza outbreaks are also likely to be true for COVID-19". However, the study says the as-

sumption is not entirely correct as children contribute more to influenza transmission than adults.

school closures are likely to breaks. Reported Rvalues for COVID-19 are high (?2.5). the disease and appear to be

Indore accounts for high MP toll, but dead were ailing, came in late

MILIND GHATWAI BHOPAL, APRIL 10

WITH THREE more deaths in the last 24 hours. Indore is now looking at a case mortality rate of nearly 10%, more than three times the national average. The number of dead in the largest city of Madhya Pradesh stands at 26, of the state's total of 36.

Indore, that got its first case on March 23, also accounts for 235 of the state's total of 451 cases. In comparison, Bhopal with 116 cases has one death.

The worrying numbers come at a time when almost the entire top health bureaucracy had to remit charge after testing positive. Madhya Pradesh continues to be without a health minister, with Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan functioning as a one-member Cabinet. More than 45 state health of-

ficials are currently in hospital and at least two isolated at home — a result both of negligence in declaring travel histories and in observing coronavirus isolation protocol set by the department itself.

Another spot of worry for the state is Ujjain, where five of 15

ARUN SHARMA

JAMMU, APRIL 10

in J&K to 209.

Lieutenant-Governor G C Murmu

on Friday said that restrictions will

continue in the 34 red zones of

Jammu and Kashmir even after

April 14. Meanwhile, the Union

Territory reported 25 new Covid-

19 cases, taking the total number

in Kashmir and 10 in Jammu,

Murmu said, "We have decided to

undertake intensive surveillance

and care at that those places. If we

test them and treat them. I do not

think there will be further in-

crease in the number of positive

cases as most districts in the UT

are still not affected by the dis-

handled. We will soon have

80,000 rapid testing kits which

down in J&K was initially success-

Pointing out that the lock-

will be used in red zones."

Speaking to a news channel

Referring to the 24 red zones



Medics arrive for COVID-19 duty at a Jabalpur locality. PTI

has recovered so far. However, the numbers have remained low, with no new case reported Friday.

Dr Jyoti Bindal, Dean of Indore's MGM Medical College, which analysed the city's 23 deaths till Thursday, said, "Comorbidity and late reporting were the main reasons. We had patients with tuberculosis, HIV and severe diabetes. Most of them came so late that they had to be put straightaway on ventilators." MGM is one of Indore's main

COVID-19 hospitals. An analysis by college and

hospital experts says, "All the pacases have died and no patient tients had extensive irreversible death. "The storm led to rapid

J&K's red zones after April 14

Restrictions to continue in

disease in both the lungs that was not responding to the best of ventilation strategies. All the patients had severe oxygen deficiency at the time of admission... Though ventilation started immediately on admission, their oxygen levels could not be improved."

The report estimates that most patients had "more than eight days of respiratory symptoms". "There was a delay in seeking medical care."

In relatively young patients, "cytokine storm (fast flare of disease)" due to coronavirus was identified as the major cause of

progression of ARDS (respiratory failure) as evidenced by raised WBC (white blood cells) count, raised lever enzyme levels and requirement of inotropes (low BP). There is more than 90 per cent risk of mortality in patients with cytokine storm."

Indore Chief Medical and Health Officer Dr Praveen Jadia said people are reporting so late that recovery becomes difficult. "Some deaths have occurred within four hours and two days of admission. There was no time for treatment." A second doctor, 65, died of

COVID-19 in Indore on Friday. Like the physician who died Thursday, he was not involved in treating coronavirus cases.

So far, 29 patients from Indore have recovered. Dr Jadia said 20 more are likely to be discharged in a day.

In the midst of this, the negligence at the top is striking. The infected bureaucrats include two IAS officers who were part of the core group to tackle the COVID-19 crisis, as well as Principal Secretary (Health) Pallavi Jain Govil.

Sources said most officials were reluctant to move to hospital. Four of them moved into the Academy of Administration.

Pulwama officials say police not honouring curfew passes

BASHAARAT MASOOD SRINAGAR, APRIL 10

CIVIL ADMINISTRATION officials in Kashmir's Pulwama have alleged that the police are not honouring curfew passes issued to officials on emergency duty and are assaulting said officials. The police say the allegations are "exaggerated".

While several officers have sent letters to their seniors, many have raised the issue with the district administration. The officials have also raised the matter in an official WhatsApp group.

"Magistracy, or for that matter any other COVID-related duty is as important as policing in this hour of crisis. A food department official sent to fetch food items for a migrant labourer camp in Pampore and carrying a valid pass was beaten up near Circle Road Pulwama, even after I spoke to PCR Pulwama," reads one of the complaint posts on

In a written complaint to the Pulwama Deputy Commissioner on Friday, an Executive Magistrate alleged he was stopped by the police and his driver was assaulted. "My vehicle was forcibly stopped in the presence of some police officers, who was there in BP (bullet proof) vehicles with a flag. My driver was ruthlessly beaten..., the Magistrate has written.

Pulwana SP Ashish Mishra, said the allegations were "exaggerated". But when one officer on the group narrated an instance where he was stopped and asked to turn back despite "having a pass and disclosing my identity", SP Mishra replied: "CrPC has provisions."

A senior official claimed: "He (SP) himself tore down valid passes and in a reply (on the group) he justified beating people and officials citing CrPC." Mishra denied the allegation.

22 of Maharashtra family recover negative but they do not want to

After dist sealed,

ANURADHA MASCARENHAS PUNE. APRIL 10

TWENTY-TWO members of the same family from Islampur in Sangli district, who were all infected with coronavirus (COVID-19), have recovered. The patients, six of whom are above 50 years of age and one suffers from congestive heart failure, were discharged on Friday. "They were extremely happy

and have been directed to remain in home quarantine for the next 72 hours," Sangli District Collector Abhijeet Chaudhary told *The Indian Express*. Initially, four members of the

family had tested positive on March 23 after they returned from Haj in Saudi Arabia. "They were kept in the isolation ward at the government medical college on March 19," said district civil surgeon Dr Sanjay Salunke.

The four included a 62-yearold woman, a 52- year-old woman and a 65-year-old man, who also suffered from congestive heart failure. Soon, five others from the same family, three women and two men, tested positive. Others who tested positive during subsequent testing included a 70-year-old woman who used to do domestic chores at their place and a family member who came to meet them at

Islampur from Kolhapur. The youngest member of the family, a two-year-old, had also contracted the virus. "The parents of the toddler have tested leave him alone in the isolation ward," said Dr Salunkhe.

After several members of the same family tested positive, the district administration's main task was to trace all the people the family had come in contact with, said District Collector Abhijeet Chaudhary.

The District Rapid Response Team traced 53 high-risk contacts and 436 low-risk ones. The 14 symptomatic contacts were shifted to isolation and tested while 32 asymptomatic close contacts were put in institutional quarantine, said Chaudhary. All low-risk contacts have been home quarantined, and they are visited daily by 16 health teams.

In Islampur, the district administration also declared a containment zone of 1 km radius around the area the family resided in, with an additional buffer zone of 1 km.

"We ensured doorstep delivery of essential items in both containment and buffer zones and we even disinfected vehicles that come out of containment zones," said the district collector.

An active surveillance effort by 31 teams includes daily visits to over 1.600 houses in the containment zone.

Only one identified person from each family was allowed to come out to purchase essential items. Information booklets were given to each family member and hydroxychloroquine prophylaxis was given to all close contacts and health workers.

As ICMR ramps up rapid testing, WHO says use only in research settings

ABANTIKA GHOSH NEW DELHI, APRIL 10

DAYS AFTER the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) finalised a testing strategy involving the use of rapid antibody tests in clusters or where there is large-scale migration or gatherings, the World Health Organization (WHO) on Friday advised the use of a host of rapid tests only in research settings. This is the latest in a series of divergences in India's strategy to fight the Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-2019) from what the WHO considers appro-

"However, before these tests can be recommended, they must be validated in the appropriate populations and settings. Inadequate tests may miss patients with active infection or falsely categorize patients as having the disease when they do not, further hampering disease control efforts. At present, based on current evidence, WHO recommends the use of these new point-of-care immunodiagnostic tests only in research settings. They should not be used in any other setting, including for clinical decision-making, until evidence supporting use for specific indications is available," WHO has said in a scientific brief dated April 8. The WHO brief covers sev-

eral rapid tests including those that detect both the virus and the antibodies against it.

India is currently in the process of introducing rapid antibody tests in some settings. This test screens the plasma for antibodies that the body devel-

ops against the virus. It is faster than the usual nucleic acidbased test for the virus- a poly-

merase chain reaction (PCR) test. The rapid test takes less than 30 minutes. It is important to note however, that only the PCR test is capable of identifying an early infection. Only after the antibodies have developed, which takes several days, can the serological test come in. Even for serological tests, the positives

will have to go through the PCR

Four days before the WHO document, on April 4, the ICMR issued the advisory to start antibody tests in high density settings. "As a matter of abundant precautions, all symptomatic influenza-like illness (ILI) persons should be advised home quarantine for 14 days. At facility level, symptomatic ILI individuals to be tested using rapid antibody tests." If the test is positive, "After clinical assessment, treatment in hospital or isolation as per protocol. Action as per protocol to be initiated for contact tracing. If symptoms worsen, refer to designated COVID-19 hospitals. When home quarantine is not feasible, consider facility-

Till date, 16 antibody-based rapid tests have been validated at NIV Pune,

based quarantine," says the ad-

On rapid tests based on detection of antibodies, WHO says: "Based on current data, WHO does not recommend the use of antibody-detecting rapid diagnostic tests for patient care but encourages the continuation of work to establish their usefulness in disease surveillance and epidemiologic research."

Odisha petrol pumps say: No mask, no fuel

Bhubaneswar: Petrol pumps across Odisha on Friday came out with a stringent 'no mask, no fuel' rule, to enforce the government's order making face masks mandatory while stepping out.

"The decision has been taken to ensure that people follow guidelines, said Sanjay Lath, general secretary, Utkal Petroleum Dealers Association. Reports from various parts of the state said grocers and vegetable sellers too are refusing to sell items to customers without masks. PTI

SMITA NAIR PANAJI, APRIL 10

THE GOA government on Friday ensured fresh supplies reached Assagao, with North Goa Collector R Menaka arriving in "Goa's Tuscany" with dry

The Indian Express had on Thursday reported the plight of migrants and workers stranded and without food during the lockdown in Assagao, which is known as a summer pincode

for millionaires. "We have a food helpline

"Systematic reviews of in-

have the greatest effect if the virus has low transmissibility (R<2), particularly if attack rates and transmission are higher in children than in adults. Although our information on SARS-CoV-2 remains incomplete, this appears not to be the case with COVID-19 out-Although children appear to contract infection at the same rate as adults, they largely have mild or asymptomatic forms of less likely to spread the virus through coughing or sneezing; however, a precise understanding is as yet lacking," the paper

here, Murmu said: "If we isolate these areas and treat these people, the situation could be easily

fluenza outbreaks suggest that

The paper reviewed findings from 16 studies looking at the effects of school closures on coronavirus outbreaks in China, Hong Kong, and Singapore, including the 2003 SARS epidemic. "Data from the SARS outbreak in mainland China, Hong Kong, and Singapore suggests that school closures did not contribute to the control of the epidemic," it states.



ful, he said the number of positive

cases started increasing in the last 5-6 days when the administration identified people and intensified testing.

"The good thing is that none of the 149 active positive cases in the UT is on ventilator," he said. The UT has 200 beds with ventilators and is procuring 200-300 more ventilators, Murmu said. He said the situation is satisfactory in J&K, where 15 hospitals have been de-

clared Covid hospitals and 2,000 beds each identified for treating patients in both divisions. However, if the number of patients increases, the Army's help may be sought to set up more hospitals, he said.

Of the 25 new cases reported in J&K, 18 are in Kashmir and seven from Jammu. About the four COVID-related deaths, the L-G said it was difficult to treat them as they had come very late.

Amarinder cites 'PGI study' claiming 58% may get infected, institute 'unaware'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE CHANDIGARH, APRIL 10

HOURS AFTER Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh claimed that 58 per cent of the country's population is likely to get infected with coronavirus while quoting a PGIMER study, the premier medical and research institute on Friday evening said it was unaware of any such study by its depart-

During a video conference with the media, hosted by the AICC from New Delhi, the CM quoted a study of the Post **Graduate Institute of Medical** Education and Research (PGIMER) and said the virus was likely to touch its peak by mid-

North Goa Collector R

Menaka at Assagao

September and may likely to affect 58 per cent of India's population and 87 per cent of Punjab's and other states' population.

"COVID19 epidemic in India is estimated to reach its peak in mid-September 2020 at a point where 58 per cent of population has been infected," he said, quoting the projections made by the Department of Community Medicine in PGIMER.

Quoting another figure from the "projections by the institute", he said the virus can infect up to 87 per cent of the population of Punjab and other states.

Soon afterwards, PGIMER denied this in a statement issued by the public relations office. PGIMER in a press release stated the institute is "not aware that any expert/faculty member

where requests are recorded,

with officers on special duty

taking charge and ensuring dry

rations reach. Every day our

data sees a marginal change

with fresh calls," said the

people without food, I person-

ally went there. We also took

help from the volunteers

quoted in the report," she

vegetables and instant noodles, which we got as a CSR initia-

tive. At one point 100 people

came. At another point we esti-

"We supplied groceries,

"When I read of so many

Collector.

added.

from the Department of Community Medicine and School of Public Health has carried out any study or estimate that COVID 19 may peak by mid September and can affect 58 per cent of the population".

Following this, CM's media adviser Raveen Thukral tweeted the name of the doctor who had presumably authored the report.

"Please note the report cited by @capt_amarinder is assessment of Dr. Shankar Prinja, Addl Professor of Health Economics, Dept of Community Medicine & School of Public Health PGIMER Chandigarh & his team, using standard mathematical models with Punjab data provided to him," Thukral tweeted.

> Prinja refused to comment. **WITH PTI INPUTS**

mated 50 people would arrive

but 200 came. They will be reg-

istered in our database, and we

are making sure they get sup-

plies. We are also coordinating

teers to get the system in

who was quoted in *The Indian*

Express report, said, "The lists of

the unaccounted people have

been shared with the collector.

We are offering to help to en-

sure everyone is fed. We had a

busy day with phones calls

from New Delhi, Mumbai and

even from abroad of people

Felly Gomes, a volunteer

place," said Menaka.

with the sarpanch and volun-

Govt rushes supplies to migrants in 'Goa's Tuscany' who have summer homes here,

Some enquired, some offered help. We hope we get their sup-Gomes added that many

after having read the story.

Goans also offered support. Collector Menaka said, "Many people have been abandoned by sub-contractors. In some cases, contractors initially supplied food but did not check once the rations dried up. We found similar cases in other pockets of Goa too. All these people are being added to our records to ensure government

supplies reach them."

Man held for 'morphing' Ahmedabad Police letter

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE AHMEDABAD, APRIL 10

AHMEDABAD CYBER Crime Cell officials arrested a 53-year-old man in Vadodara late Thursday for allegedly editing a confidential letter of Ahmedabad Police and propagating hate speech on social media, in connection with Tablighi Jamaat members and the spread of COVID-19.

The accused has been identified as Rajesh Sarang (53), a resident of Pranav society in Manjalpur of Vadodara.

On April 1, a purported confidential letter from the special branch of Ahmedabad Police had emerged on social media — which in actuality was meant to warn police stations of a hate message - that stated, "2,500 Tablighi Jamaat workers had attended the Nizamuddin Markaz event in Delhi and have been confirmed positive for coronavirus and the workers have entered various states of India to spread the disease which is a terror act. All Hindu brothers are requested not to buy an fruit or vegetable from Muslim vendors in their areas..."

THE INDIAN EXPRESS, SATURDAY, APRIL 11, 2020

In Maharashtra, key meal scheme for children, women hits lockdown hurdle

State minister admits to delays in 'take home ration' in some parts, says work on to resolve issues

KAVITHA IYER

MUMBAI/PALGHAR, APRIL 10

A FLAGSHIP pan-India programme to provide supplementary nutrition to economically marginalised mothers and children is faltering in large pockets across Maharashtra just as beneficiary families run out of earnings and savings during the ongoing 21-day national lockdown.

Under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) programme, anganwadi centres across India serve nutritious meals to children up to the age of six years and to expectant and nursing mothers. But with anganwadis now closed, the delivery of these meals has completely halted in some pockets. Elsewhere, beneficiaries are beginning to receive grocery supplies — often inadequate — instead of hot, cooked meals. Meanwhile, an army of anganwadi workers, all women, grapples with long-pending payments while trying to keep the critical scheme afloat.

About 87 lakh children under six are beneficiaries of the centrally-supported scheme, served by nearly 90,000 anganwadis. Of 553 ICDS 'projects' in the state, 364 are in rural areas.

Even in scheduled areas of Palghar district where malnutrition is a recurring problem, anganwadis such as those in Karajgaon-Vasa, Kurze-Dhodipada and Kurze Kompada haven't received grocery material yet, over two weeks into the national lockdown and more than 20 days since Maharashtra's anganwadis were shuttered. Similarly, supplies have not arrived in large parts of Aurangabad, Parbhani, Akola



and Sangli. In some districts, groceries have arrived only at urban anganwadis.

For the places that have received the material — packages containing 2 kg each of rice, wheat, dal and chana as well as cooking oil, salt and spices multiple operational problems have sprung up. "In many villages, it's not possible to go doorto-door, houses are far apart and I wouldn't be able to carry more than one parcel at a time," said Swati Meshram, anganwadi sevika at the Talasari-2 unit. With the government not providing any additional funds for gloves and masks, she instructed beneficiaries to gather at the anganwadi where she distributed the parcels, insisting that everyone first wash their hands at the door.

Another dilemma is that the

grocery packages will most certainly be consumed by the entire household. Women, including those who are pregnant or lactating, could benefit the least as they're usually the last to eat. "There is no work, nobody has earned any wages since March 15-16, so obviously whatever comes home is shared by every-

one," said Jamni Rama Valvi, the

60-year-old helper at the

Patilpada anganwadi. "Two kilo

packets won't last more than

eight-10 days for average families,

less for larger families," she said.

In tribal-dominated, remote villages where disparities in nutrition and health services are already wide, the missing meal for children and new mothers could long-term effects. "Incidence of malnutrition is almost certain to rise in some areas," says Shubha Shamim of the Maharashtra State Anganwadi Workers Action Committee. "More so if the lockdown continues and these problems persist."

Anganwadi worker Archana Bhoye said: "We're asked to supply a full nutritious meal for Rs 35. It's already impossible within that cost, and then the government does not clear our dues for months on end."

In Vidarbha's remote areas, anganwadi workers are not sure how to distribute the foodgrain when it arrives — without any transportation. "Where hamlets are located a long way off, distribution is going to be a challenge," said Dileep Utane, president of the CPI-affiliated All India Trade Union Congress's union for anganwadi workers.

Then there is the problem of

PM dials counterparts in Japan, Nepal, discusses COVID-19

SHUBHAJIT ROY NEW DELHI, APRIL 10

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi spoke to Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe Friday and said the special strategic and global partnership between the two countries can help develop new technologies and solutions for a post-COVID 19 world.

Modi also spoke to Nepal Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli and both agreed that their experts and officials would continue to closely consult and coordinate with each other on all issues arising out of the COVID-19 situation, including for facilitating "cross-border supplies of essential commodities".

After speaking with Abe, Modi tweeted: "Had fruitful discussion with my friend, Japanese PM @abeshinzo about the COVID-19 pandemic. The India-Japan Special Strategic & Global

(Left) Staffer Archana Bhove

anganwadi, which is yet to

(Top) An anganwadi worker

inadequate supplies. "Unable to

count everything when it ar-

rives, anganwadi workers are

finding items short while dis-

tributing, maybe a packet of oil

or a packet of rice, and then there

Minister for Women and Child

Development, admitted that the

'take home ration' is delayed in

some parts, either due to the

supply chain problems amid the

lockdown or unavailability of

specific items, such as masoor

dal. "But we are working to re-

solve problems. The hot cooked

meal is an impossibility right

now, but the supply of nutrients

will be continued," she told *The*

Indian Express. Protective gear

for anganwadi workers is also

being provided at various

places, she said.

Yashomati Thakur, the state

are complaints," Utane said.

receive grocery packages.

carries khichdi in a vat on

way to deliver meals in

Kurze village. *Express*

at Kurze-Dhodipada



PM Narendra Modi

Partnership can help develop new technologies and solutions for the post-COVID world - for our peoples, for the Indo-Pacific region, and for the world."

An official statement later said the two leaders discussed the global health and economic challenges emerging out of the COVID-19 pandemic. They also discussed the steps taken in their respective countries to deal with this crisis.

Modi also tweeted: "Spoke today with Prime Minister of Nepal, Shri @kpsharmaoli. We discussed the prevailing situa-

tion due to COVID-19." "I appreciate the determination of people of Nepal to fight this challenge. We stand in solidarity with Nepal in our common fight against COVID-19,'

the Prime Minister said. "The two leaders agreed that their experts and officials would continue to closely consult and coordinate with each other on all issues arising out of the COVID-19 situation, including for facilitating cross-border supplies of essential commodities," an official statement by

Oli reiterated his appreciation for the Prime Minister's initiative in coordinating the response to the pandemic among SAARC countries. He also expressed his gratitude for the bilateral support provided to Nepal by India.

MEA said.

India swipe at Pak insistence on bringing initiatives under SAARC framework

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, APRIL 10

INDIA ON Friday said the degree of seriousness of each SAARC member-nation in collectively fighting COVID-19 can be gauged by their behaviour. The statement is in clear reference to Pakistan's opposition to India's leadership in dealing with the crisis in the region.

New Delhi's reaction comes a day after Pakistan pledged to contribute \$3 million to SAARC Coronavirus Emergency Fund, but demanded that any initiative to deal with the situation must be brought under the bloc's framework.

On Wednesday, Pakistan boycotted a video conference of trade officials of the SAARC countries, saying such initiatives could only

be effective if spearheaded by the group's secretariat instead of India. New Delhi maintains that initiatives taken under extraordinary circumstances are focused on jointly dealing with the pandemic without being bounded by any procedural formalities.

"It is for each SAARC memberstate to decide on the timing, manner and implementation of their SAARC COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund commitments. Where India is concerned, the commitment made by the Prime Minister is today in an advanced stage of implementation," Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said.

Srivastava was responding to a guery on Pakistan's announcement of the contribution to the emergency fund and insistence

that it should be utilised in accordance with the SAARC charter.

"Assistance in material and services has been extended to Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka These SAARC countries have also made early commitments to the Fund. The degree of seriousness of each nation can be gauged by their behaviour," he said.

In a video conference on forming a joint strategy to fight COVID-19 in the SAARC region, Modi on March 15 proposed the emergency fund with an initial offer of \$10 million from India. Subsequently, Nepal and Afghanistan pledged \$1 million each, Maldives pledged \$200,000, Bhutan \$100,000, Bangladesh \$1.5 million and Sri Lanka pledged to contribute \$5 million to the fund.



CIRCLES OF REASON

People follow social distancing norms at a vegetable market in Shimla on Friday. Express

Uttarakhand starts GIS mapping of areas lockdown extension affected by outbreak in state till April 30

LALMANI VERMA DEHRADUN, APRIL 10

AS THE number of COVID-19 cases doubled and the number of people in quarantine increased by five times in the state within a week, the Uttarakhand government has started GIS mapping of areas affected by the outbreak for

The number of people in quarantine in the state was 8,559 on April 3 but surged to 44,183 (both home and institutional) on April 10.

a better management strategy.

The mapped information will be accessible through a website and will have key information, including the number of positive cases, number of people in isolation, home and institutional quarantine and number of contacts of affected people identified in that locality. The mapping exercise is expected to conclude over the

weekend. "This mapping will help in drawing up a strategy for supply of essential services in that particular locality and also decide more areas that need to be sealed as buffer zones. COVID-19-related

information of the entire state will be on a single page," said Riddhim Aggarwal, Additional CEO, Uttarakhand State Disaster Management Authority.

Buffer zones will also be displayed on the website and changes in the number of cases and people in quarantine would be updated. There are 109 relief camps in the state where over 4,500 people have been provided shelter. These camps will also be marked on the website.

While some information will only be accessible to officials engaged in identification of affected areas and decision-making for COVID-19 management, citizens will have a limited access to information, such as locations of nearby hospitals, phone numbers of control rooms and helplines, relief camps, contact details for nodal officers and awareness slides.

NGOs working to supply food and essential services will also be able to access the information.

So far, 35 people have tested positive for the infection and five have already been discharged. Out of 13 districts in the state, positive cases have been reported in six.

Rawat govt to seek

LALMANI VERMA DEHRADUN, APRIL 10

UTTARAKHAND GOVERNMENT on Friday decided to propose to the Centre that the lockdown in the state be extended till April 30.

The state has prepared a strategy for exit from the lockdown. As part of this, social distancing shall remain in force up to May 31, wearing masks shall be compulsory at all public places till May 31 and educational institutions in the state shall remain shut till May 15.

An official said the state will present this plan in the Prime Minister's video conference with Chief Ministers on Saturday. "Final decision on the extension of lockdown and exit policy will be taken by the Centre," the official said. Sources said the Prime Minister on Friday spoke to Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat over the phone on the COVID-19 situation.

As per the plan prepared by the state, government and private offices and shops, except those stocking essentials, will remain closed till April 30. Some relaxations will be granted to residents of category A districts (those that

have not reported a single COVID-19 case prior to April 14). Districts that have reported even a single case will be in category B.

Areas identified as hotspots will face more restrictions, including a ban on movement. The local administration will ensure delivery of essential commodities at the doorstep of residents in such localities, according to the plan.

The plan proposes that restrictions under Section 144 of CrPC will remain in force till April 30.

No inter-state movement will be permitted till April 30 and intra-state movement of cargo will be permitted as per MHA guidelines, states the plan.

As per the plan, industrial, construction and mining will be permitted in all districts, except the hotspots. Such permission will be granted by district magistrates after a review of the situation. However, importation of labour from outside the state or from category B district will not be permitted.

Hotels, cinema halls, restaurants and religious institutions will continue to remain closed, states the plan. The plan proposes that agricultural activities will be permitted, except in the hotspots.

lockdown by 2 weeks the doctor did not have goggles, **ARUN JANARDHANAN** N95 masks or protective cloth-CHENNAI, APRIL 10

TN: Case count 911,

expert panel pushes

for extension of

WITH 77 more samples testing positive, the number of COVID-19 cases in Tamil Nadu climbed to 911 on Friday. State chief secretary KShanmugam said the new cases being reported now are all primary or secondary contacts of people with a travel history.

Meanwhile, an expert committee formed to track the spread of COVID-19 in the state has recommended to the government that the lockdown be extended by two more weeks.

Shanmugam said there were 77 new cases reported on Friday. "Of total cases (911), only 23 cases remain in mystery for having no specific contact history. Otherwise, we cannot say that we have already entered into a community transmission stage. But experts have advised that any hurried decision to lift the lockdown will spoil advantages that we gained already with this lockdown," he said.

A senior government official said Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami may take a final decision after the cabinet meeting on Saturday.

Meanwhile, among the 911 positive COVID-19 cases in Tamil Nadu so far, five are doctors.

A woman doctor contracted the infection on March 18 while working at a railway hospital in Erode, epidemiological data has shown. According to officials at the hospital, she contracted the infection on March 18 from a 63-year-old patient, who was a co-traveller of two Thai nationals who had tested positive. While attending to the patient, ing, said the officials. By the time the doctor

started showing symptoms, she had infected four family members, including her 10-monthold child. About 35 health workers

were put in isolation as they had come in contact with the doctor at a send-off ceremony they had organised for her. "It was her final week at Erode hospital as she had been transferred to a Coimbatore hospital. Not knowing she was infected, they organised a small gathering. Luckily, none of them were infected," said a health official.

The health department has found that three of the five doctors who have tested positive contracted the infection at

A senior official said one of the doctors was infected while on airport duty. "Another doctor was working for a private hospital and was infected there. Their condition is stable."

positive were on leave when they were infected. One of the doctors was part of the Tablighi Iamaat congregation in Delhi and another doctor contracted the infection from her husband, who attended the same event.

Rajesh has said, "We have enough stock of masks, gloves, PPEs and essential safety gears.'

Dr K Kolandaswamy, state public health director, said, "Police, prison authorities, selfhelp groups and garment workers in Tirupur and several industrial units are producing hundreds of masks and PPEs on a daily basis."



Onion sacks being unloaded in Chennai on Friday. PTI

Office of the Chairman, NEET PG Medical & Dental Admission/ Counseling Board-2020 and Principal, Govt. Dental College, Subhash Nagar, Behind T.B. Hospital, Jaipur, Rajasthan, Phone: 0141-2280090 IMPORTANT NOTICE

/ COUNSELING 2020 All the candidates are informed that in view of the ongoing Coronavirus outbreak and the rescheduling of Central NEET PG Counseling by Medical Counseling Committee (MCC), fresh schedule for Rajasthan State NEET PG counseling is as below:

NEET PG MEDICAL & DENTAL ADMISSION

S. No.	Event	Date (s) for Medical Courses	Date (s) for Dental Courses	Date(s) for 6 months Ultra-Sound Course under PCPNDT Act
1.	Deposition of the counseling fee (Online) Those who have already deposited earlier (from 18.03.2020 to 26.03.2020) need not deposit again	11.04.2020 to 13.04.2020 by 5.00 pm	11.04.2020 to 13.04.2020 by 5.00 pm	11.04.2020 to 13.04.2020 by 5.00 pm
2.	On-line registration for first and second round of counseling and information form filling	11.04.2020 to 13.04.2020	11.04.2020 to 13.04.2020	11.04.2020 to 13.04.2020

The two other doctors to test

State health secretary Beela

by the candidates 14.04.2020 14.04.2020 ertificate of all persons Verification of status 14.04.2020 14.04.2020 of NRI applicants 5. Verification, Allotment 14.04.2020 14.04.2020 and Joining by Sr. candidates for In-Service Quota (sub quota) 15.04.2020 6. Publishing of merit list 15.04.2020 7. Deposition of 16.04.2020 to registration amou Not applicable 18.04.2020 as per forfeiture by 4.00 pm (Online) 8. On-line choice filling 16.04.2020 to 16.04.2020 to and locking by the 18.04.2020 18.04.2020 by 11.55 pm by 11.55 pm 9. Processing of seat 21.04.2020 to 21.04.2020 to Dates to be allotment (on-line) by 22.04.2020 22.04.2020 declared later Admission Board-2020 10. Declaration of the result 22.04,2020 22.04.2020 a generation of on-line (midnight) (midnight) allotment letters Physical reporting OR 23.04.2020 to 23.04,2020 to on-line reporting and 29.04.2020 29.04.2020 document verification by 5:00 pm by 5:00 pm at the allotted college along with printout of allotment letter, all original documents. deposition of prescribed admission ee, required bonds and other focuments as listed in instruction booklet and as per the procedure nentioned in the allotment letter Guidelines for reporting shall be available at

Refer the website for detailed notification.

he website separately

Second round of

Commencement

of academic session

counseling

Chairman NEET PG Medical & Dental Admission/ Counseling Board-2020 and Principal, Govt. Dental College, Jaipur

To be announced later

To be announced later

THE EDITORIAL PAGE

WORDLY WISE

If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a MOUSE AND YOU SAY THAT YOU ARE NEUTRAL, THE MOUSE WILL NOT APPRECIATE YOUR NEUTRALITY.

— DESMOND TUTU

The Indian EXPRESS

S FOUNDED BY S RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

TESTING MATTERS

Directive to ramp up tests is welcome. Testing regimens must heed epidemiological realities, make best use of resources

N FRIDAY, PUNJAB became the second state, after Odisha on Thursday, to announce a fortnight's extension of the lockdown in the state — the 21-day nationwide lockdown is scheduled to end on April 14. Karnataka, Telangana and Maharashtra have also expressed their reluctance to lift the restrictions. With the country's COVID-19 caseload surging past 6,000, some states are, reportedly, unsure about the spread of the virus. The challenges of community transmission have also increased after an Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) study reported COVID-19 in patients of severe acute respiratory illness (SARI) in 36 districts, given that these patients had no history of international travel or contact with a COVID-19 positive person. In such a situation, the salience of the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's directive to all states and Union Territories to ramp up testing cannot be overstated. On Friday, it asked all states to increase the number of samples for testing to at least 2.5 lakh by April 14 — so far, about 1.6 lakh tests have been conducted in the country.

India has, so far, and rightly, scaled up testing gradually. Rather than follow WHO's testtest-test advice, the ICMR held that selective testing would ensure optimum utilisation of test kits. The health ministry's Friday directive seems to signal a timely recalibration. For, it fits in well with the strategy, framed last week, to target the virus aggressively in hotspots. Epidemiologists have warned, however, that India doesn't yet have an accurate picture of COVID-19 hotspots. As Harvard Global Health Institute's Faculty Director, Ashish Jha, told this paper, "If a place is not doing a lot of testing and doesn't have a lot of cases, that doesn't mean it's not a hotspot." It is welcome, therefore, that the government intends to conduct tests in the 430-odd districts that do not have a single COVID-19 case. Its plan to use the pooling method for this purpose is also apt. The method uses the highly accurate realtime polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) test in a combined sample from several people. If this sample tests positive, each person in the group is tested separately. These tests could reduce the time, cost and resources required in identifying infected people — a negative test rules out the necessity for further tests in a cluster while a positive sample helps identify areas for targeted public health intervention. This could also be a powerful tool to screen labour so that economic activity can start coming back on track.

Last week, the ICMR released guidelines for serological tests, which deliver results in 15 minutes, work on blood samples and tell whether a patient has ever been exposed to the virus. But these tests cannot detect the virus at an early stage of the infection. As India brings more people under the ambit of testing, it is critical that testing regimens and the surveillance mechanisms of healthcare authorities take into account the epidemiological, social and demographic realities, while making the best use of stretched resources.

FEAR AND PREJUDICE

Attacks on healthcare professionals, migrants and minorities underline need to uphold rule of law in anxious times

HYSICAL DISTANCING AND isolation continue to be the most effective weapons in the fight against the novel coronavirus. But given the hardships and disruptions that such measures have caused to the people — particularly the socioeconomically vulnerable among them — they also need to be accompanied by social solidarity and respect for the law. What is increasingly coming to the fore, however, is the opposite of that — there are unfortunate and troubling acts of exclusion, violence and mob justice, along new and pre-existing cleavages.

On Wednesday, the Delhi Police confirmed that a 22-year-old man who had returned to the city from Bhopal after attending a Tablighi Jamaat conference, and was brutally assaulted by his neighbours, died of his injuries. He had been tested for the disease earlier and released by the police. On Thursday, a man and his sister, both doctors, were beaten up in South Delhi while buying groceries, accused by their assailant of spreading the virus. In Haryana, in a village in Palwal, a family was assaulted by a mob for turning on their lights last Sunday during the prime minister's "diya jalao" call, even though they switched them on after 9 pm. In Manesar, migrant workers were beaten up by a group of men appointed by the local panchayat to distribute rations to the locals. These attacks target the more vulnerable. Medical workers are most at risk of serious infection; migrants, largely daily wagers, have borne the brunt of the economic disruption. The violence against minorities, prompted in this case by a seemingly irrational fear and anger, can only exacerbate anxieties and insecurities that have built up over the last few years.

The coronavirus pandemic is an unprecedented challenge to both the state and society. For all the claim that it is flattening differences — posing a danger to all, across social and economic divides — it could also be deepening inequalities along class and communal and other faultlines. Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for applause for essential service providers during the "janata curfew" and for the lighting of lamps on another day both were attempts to bring people together, reinforce solidarity. These must now be supplemented with a clear message that even in a crisis, the rule of law — not of fear or brute force — will prevail. Healthcare professionals, already at risk from the virus, need to feel secure as they do their job. Migrant workers deserve empathy and aid. Every Indian must be assured that the government and society stand with the public, not the mob.

ECHOES OF SUNDAY

Sri Lanka's road to healing and recovery from last year's bombings is affected by COVID-19

URING EASTER SUNDAY last year, bombings during mass in churches in three cities across Sri Lanka and blasts in five-star hotels killed 259 persons and injured at least 500. The terror attack was co-ordinated by a local affiliate of the Islamic State, the National Thowheeth Jamaat, which claimed that the killings were in retaliation to the gunning down of 51 persons during Friday prayers in two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, in March. The incident led to a wave of attacks on Muslims in the island nation, and strengthened existing prejudices against the community. Anti-Muslim politics has a long history in Sri Lanka, with the community having had to face abuse and exclusion from the Sinhalese majority as well as Tamils in northern and eastern parts of the country. The violence and subsequent polarisation threatened to derail Sri Lanka's tourism sector, which had been rebuilding itself from the wreckage of three decades of civil war.

People will have to remember and mourn their loss privately as attendance in churches is severely curtailed in the wake of the COVID-19 epidemic. The many wounds in Sri Lanka's multi-ethnic society have been slow to heal. But its economy, especially tourism, had sidestepped the social faultlines, and had started to attract tourists and investors. All that looks a distant prospect now in the wake of the epidemic. It will take a while before tourism becomes a viable business again. Remittances, too, are likely to dry up since the economies in West Asia, where a lot of Sri Lankans work, have been hit hard by COVID.

The COVID spread has so far been limited in Sri Lanka, with 190 cases of infection and seven deaths as on April 9. However, India, Europe, and China, three regions that supply the maximum number of tourists to Sri Lanka, have been greatly affected. As the country mourns the victims of the Easter bombings and sets out on a path of healing, the process has got even more arduous.

A plan for the aftermath



If government of India runs huge deficit to tackle crisis and asks RBI to monetise part of it, so be it

The more important issue,

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month. The task force under

government of India both in

the finance minister could

this matter with the state

within a period of one

work out the needs of

the short as well as the

businesses and the

medium term.

the finance commission

WE HAVE ABIDED by the advice of the prime minister; observed the Janata Curfew; clapped our hands and utensils; followed the lockdown and and lighted the divas. It is a moot question whether the government has done all that it should have in the meanwhile and at the right time. We shall postpone these questions for the future because the need of the hour is to fight the disease together and with all our might. The purpose of this article is to talk about

management of the aftermath. Everyone is agreed that the whole world is hurtling towards an unprecedented economic recession. India, already facing a massive slowdown, is going to get hurt perhaps more than the others, because our economic immune system is already weak. What should we do in the given situation?

The first is containing the spread of the virus. Apart from the manpower, medicines, protective equipment for frontline workers and other methods, it will need massive resources to tackle it. Second, the poor are already suffering in more ways than one, including the daily wage earners. They will have to be taken care of, again needing massive resources. And third, economic activity will have to be revived as soon as conditions return to normal or near-normal, for which businesses will have to be helped, again needing massive resources; both in terms of revenue foregone and actual cash outgo. The question, therefore, on everyone's mind is how much money will be needed for all this and where will it come from? What the government and the RBI have done so far is clearly awfully inadequate. Other countries have done much more. India can be no exception.

It is difficult at this stage of the crisis to make a correct estimate of how much money will be needed and for how long. I think as a nation we must decide that India will spend whatever it takes to tide over the pandemic and its aftermath. Resources should not be allowed to be a constraint. But where will the money come from? government of India. The state governments are already short of resources and can make little contribution to this effort. Where will the government of India get

Obviously, it will have to come from the

the resources? We need an expert committee to work this out. But broadly speaking, it will come partly through market borrowings and partly from the RBI. Manmohan Singh had decided in 1994 that in future the government of India would not monetise its deficit; in other words, would not borrow from the RBI but go to the money market and borrow from there. In these unprecedented times, we may take leave from that very sound principle, which all governments have followed religiously since then, and borrow from the RBI. This means printing of more currency notes with all its attendant problems including inflation. Government of India will have to take the steps necessary to tackle the after-effects to the extent possible. It must ensure that the supply chains work smoothly.

I am making this suggestion with the fullest sense of responsibility. After all, I am guilty of imposing on the country the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act. I am today publicly declaring that I shall have no problem if the government of India runs a huge deficit to tackle the present crisis and asks the RBI to monetise a part of it.

The more important issue, however, is - how will the money be spent and efficiently. Clearly, the states will have to play a very important role in this, as much of the work will have to be done by them. I have already tweeted that since the finance commission continues to be in existence and has a clear idea of the state finances, it should be immediately tasked with the responsibility of discussing this matter with the state governments and making its recommendations available within a period of one month. The task force under the finance minister could work out the needs of businesses and the government of India both in the short as well as the medium term.

The more important question which remains is of properly and efficiently spending this money. Obviously, it should not be wasted and each rupee spent creates its own multiplier effect. Our system leaves much to be desired. And the moment it is known that funding is not a constraint, the system can go berserk. We must guard against that and ensure that rules are in place, specially at the field level to ensure the proper use of resources. During the Bihar famine of 1967, we as district collectors were required to get as many kutcha wells dug as possible. The payment was to be made based on the depth and width of the well. It was a simple formula and the payments made could be easily verified. The methodology adopted for the construction of quality roads under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana is also a good guide. We can devise even better methods with all the technology that is

The banks and other financial institutions will have to be provided with resources to help the private sector, specially the agricultural and MSME sectors. In the rural areas, we must ensure that durable assets are created out of the funds made available. The rules governing the MGNREGA scheme should be tweaked to the extent necessary in order to ensure that more material than labour is used wherever necessary.

available to us today.

India should and can come out of the present crisis with as little damage as possible if we tackle it together. The battle is already lost if some of us decide to use the crisis for personal projection or for serving petty selfish interests. We cannot control what happens in other countries, but we can surely learn from them and adopt their best practices. We must also play our role in defining the new global order because the world is more intertwined now than ever before.

The writer is a former finance minister



As Fridays Come And Go

Watching movies at home, missing the magic

SHUBHRA GUPTA

WHAT ARE YOU doing next Friday?

That's one question I've never had trouble answering. A film critic always knows where she will be on Fridays: Inside dark theatres, doing one of the two things — revelling in the movie as it unspools, or clenching teeth and marking time till the end credits roll. The second happens much more than the first, for we all know that there are many more bad films in the world than good ones.

Which is also why you will never catch a film critic saying, Thank God It's Friday. Tossing off an airy TGIF is for others. For us, who watch movies for work, it's the busiest day of the week, where we are allowed to be annoyed with people who disturb us, both while we are watching (crunch popcorn if you're sitting next to me at your peril), and later when we are racing against the deadline, writing up the review.

But for the last couple of Fridays, my infallible first day-first show ritual, assiduously maintained for over 20 years, has been disrupted. Theatres are closed. For those of us who measure out our lives in movies, this lockdown feels like we've been cut off from our moorings. Apocalypse

Once the virulence of the virus is mapped, once we rise from the ashes, will the world — post-pandemic — be a different place? While we struggle to find things to tether ourselves to, I take refuge in the fa-

It's not like we don't leave the theatre when the movie is on. No ropes tie us to our seats. We step out, momentarily, to answer nature's calls, buy a soda because we can't wait until the interval, take phone calls, or because we can't stand what's happening on the screen. But we miss that part when we go out: The movie doesn't stop for us. At home, the movie will stop and start, run forward and back, loop, all on your command.

mand to oust foreignrs from Assam.

miliar. The movies have nurtured me, and I find myself turning to them, not just because it's what I do, but because it's sustenance. Once the mundane clean-cookprovide stuff is done, magic is what I reach

Except it's not magical enough, even if I'm busier than ever. The streaming platforms, constantly adding "content", can conceivably keep me busy for a lifetime. But there's something missing. Of course, it's the community of us — the viewers — communing in the dark. Of course, it's having access to overpriced, greasy snacks. Of course, it's the velvety dark that can blind you when you step in: Something you can never quite achieve at home, even when you draw every single blind. But there's more. The chief difference is being able to press pause, take off to do whatever urgent work we need to, and resume.

It's not like we don't leave the theatre when the movie is on. No ropes tie us to our seats. We step out, momentarily, to answer nature's calls, buy a soda because we can't wait until the interval, take phone calls, or because we can't stand what's happening on the screen. But we miss that part when we go out: The movie doesn't stop for us. At home, the movie will stop and start, run forward and back, loop, all on your command. It will do whatever you want it to do.

The meaning of the image is never the same when you do the breaking up, and not when the image maker intended it to be. As John Berger put it in his seminal work, Ways Of Seeing: "The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled. Each evening we see the sun set. We know that the earth is turning away from it. Yet the knowledge, the explanation, never quite fits the sight."

In a deeply profound way, the stopping of a scene or a sequence, when it is not meant to, changes everything. It may appear trivial: Once you press play, it will start from the exact place it stopped, so what's the problem? The problem is the in-between space that you've filled in with something else. Your eyes were elsewhere. Your brains were elsewhere. You were not there. That absence makes a difference. Yes, you can hit replay. But it's not the same thing.

"A classic film cannot translate the real rhythm of modern life", wrote French film director Alain Resnais, "Modern life is fragmented, everyone feels that". The art of placing those fragments together on the screen to create meaning is something all filmmakers do, whether they challenge the "traditional" linear narrative or not. Life is full of jump cuts, and we need to be fully present, to bear witness.

And yes, another Friday has come and

The writer is film critic and columnist with The Indian Express

APRIL 11, 1980, FORTY YEARS AGO



Assam Satyagraha SUPPORTING SCs IT WAS AN explosion, a human explosion, THE UNION CABINET decided that for 1980not a satyagraha — where nearly three lakh 81, Rs 100 crore would be given to states as people courted arrest. The state government special supplementary central assistance for employees openly defied orders of suspenthe Scheduled Castes. Some other decisions taken at the cabinet meeting were: The special sion or dismissal and joined a several-mile serpentine queue of satyagrahis. Except the food for work programme will continue till IAS officers, practically everybody from the the end of September and as much foodgrains administration was in the streets. The satyaas would be needed for this would be supgrahis assembled in a maidan opposite the plied. Cement would be given on a priority bastudents union office, collected their badges sis for irrigation and power projects, and also inscribed with the slogan "Long Live Assam" for food for work programmes. An additional and walked in twos to the deputy commis-Rs 11 crore would be given to the drought-afsioner's office. The office represents the govfected areas for procuring 98 rigs from indigeernment which has not yet conceded the denous sources for drilling wells — especially in

the hard-rock areas.

IRAN-IRAQ TENSIONS IRANIAN NAVAL VESSELS left port and steamed out into the Persian Gulf to "counter any aggression" from neighbouring Iraq Teheran radio reported as the two nations remained locked in a tense border showdown. Some 25,000 Iranians expelled from Iraq have poured across the border into western Iranian provinces, Iranian officials reported. Iran's army chief staff, General Mohammad Hadi Shadmehr, said the border region had been quiet since last evening, the radio reported. He was quoted as saying there was fighting yesterday in the Gasr-e-Shirin area in Kermanshah province but only light arms were used.

THE IDEAS PAGE

The new multilateralism

With global institutions in turmoil, and headed towards restructuring, India needs to be pragmatic and fleet-footed



AS MANY INTERNATIONAL institutions, including the World Health Organisation and the United Nations Security Council, come under great stress in the corona crisis, Delhi's multilateral strategy is going through a rapid reorientation. Realists in Delhi recognise that India's engagement with the UN is not about the pursuit of some higher ideological calling, but the navigation of hardball geopolitics. Consider the fact that China repeatedly

pressed the UN to discuss the Kashmir question after Delhi changed the constitutional status of the region last August. But through last month, as the rotating chair of the UNSC, China blocked any discussion of the Covid crisis. Beijing insisted that the crisis was not a matter of international peace and security that the UNSC ought to bother itself with. A mere internal administrative change in Kashmir, Beijing continues to insist, is a grave threat to international peace and security. Great powers do what they can, for they

can get away with it. With its veto power, Beijing can simply prevent the UNSC from doing anything against China. But what about the secretary general and the UN bureaucracy? Their credibility is not very high these

Secretary General Antonio Guterres, for example, jumped quickly into the Indo-Pak arguments over Kashmir, and raised concerns over India's Citizenship Amendment Act and the National Register of Citizens. As the virus began to wreak havoc on the world, Guterres went on an extended visit to Pakistan in February and made an ostentatious public offer to mediate between Delhi and Islamabad on Kashmir.

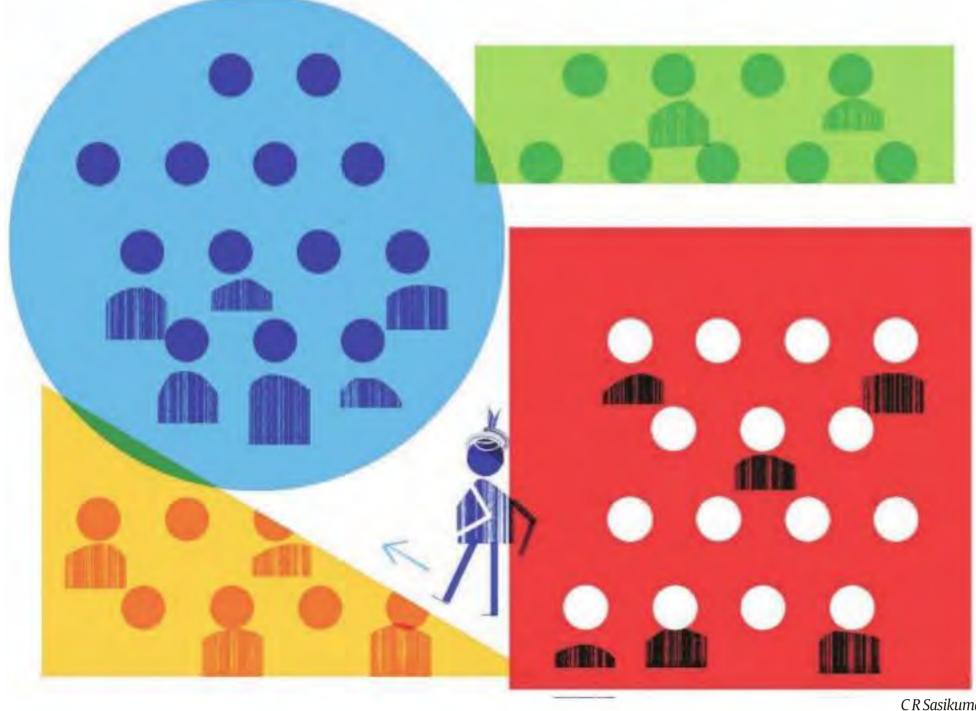
But when it comes to China's role in the spread of the coronavirus, Guterres can't seem to find the words. He speaks of a generational challenge that the virus poses to humanity. The UNSG's exhortations are to the collective and consciously avoid getting into anything specific.

The situation at the WHO is a lot worse. The Director General of WHO, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus warns against the dangers of "politicising" the Covid crisis. Many in Europe and the US think that is exactly what Tedros has done at the WHO in the last few months.

Some are calling the criticism of WHO as "scapegoating". Maybe. When you have nearly 50,000 people dead in just three European countries — Italy, Spain and France - and nearly 17,000 in the US, it is not unreasonable to ask questions about the WHO's performance during the crisis.

The current argumentation about the WHO is not just about apportioning blame. There is plenty to go around. What we are witnessing is the breakdown of the multilateral system that emerged from the ashes of the Second World War amidst the deepening contestation between the world's foremost powers — the US and China.

India's new multilateralism — as a pragmatic response to external change — involves downplaying some past associations and strengthening new partnerships. Take, for example, two innovations India has made since the end of the Cold War. One was the BRICS forum with Brazil, Russia, China and South



C R Sasikumar

Africa and the other was the so-called Quad — a coalition of democracies with Australia, Japan and the US. As India reorders its multilateral priorities amid the corona crisis, the BRICS forum is losing some of its salience and the Quad is gaining traction.

Two of India's partners in BRICS — Russia and South Africa — had reportedly backed the efforts of a third, China, to prevent a discussion of the COVID crisis in the UNSC. If Delhi were sitting in the UNSC right now as a non-permanent member, it would have had every interest in pressing for a discussion of the COVID crisis that has severely damaged India's economic and social

Meanwhile, India is in regular consultations on managing the corona crisis with the "Quad Plus" grouping that draws in South Korea, Vietnam and New Zealand. Neither the BRICS nor the Quad square with the conventional narrative on India's multilateralism that was dominated in the past by the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the G-77. As circumstances change, India is finding new international partners to secure its interests.

Recall, for example, the context which gave rise to the BRICS. It started out as a triangular coalition with Russia and China in the mid-1990s. India's interest in the RIC was borne out of fear of the unipolar moment and Russia's relentless efforts to draw it into a "strategic triangle" that would resist "American hegemony".

In the early 1990s, Delhi was rather wary of the Bill Clinton Administration's plans to relieve India of its nuclear and missile programmes. What made matters worse was the Clinton Administration's formulation that "Kashmir is the world's most dangerous nuclear flashpoint". This was not just a description; it was accompanied by a prescription for Delhi: Resolve the Kashmir question by sitting down with Pakistan and the Hurriyat. If Delhi needs any help, Washington will be happy to chip in.

Going into a political tent with Russia and China seemed a sensible bet to ward off

Kashmir questions. Two decades later, we are in a very different place. Take the same two issues — Kashmir and the nuclear programme — that drove India into the BRICS. It is Beijing that wants the UNSC to take up the Kashmir question, and it is Paris and Washington that are preventing it.

Besides the active "internationalisation" of the Kashmir question, China has also resolutely blocked India's effort to become a full member of the global nuclear order by joining the Nuclear Suppliers Group. On the nuclear front too, it was France and the US that helped India break the nuclear blockade.

China shields Pakistan from international pressures to end cross-border terrorism. And it is India's partners in the West and the Muslim world that are helping Delhi cope better with violent extremism. These partnerships don't fit into the paradigms that dominate the public discourse on India's foreign policy.

Consider the criticism and praise for India for abandoning NAM after the Cold War. Delhi, however, has now begun to reconnect with the so-called global south and is rebuilding its political equities across this vast swath of the developing world.

India has also discovered the new possibilities for engaging Europe in the multilateral arena. If India's definition of multilateralism — Afro-Asian solidarity — immediately after Independence was defined in opposition to colonial Europe, Delhi now sees Europe as a valuable partner in rearranging the global order. India has joined the "alliance for multilateralism" initiated by Germany and supported by its European partners.

India needs all the pragmatism it can muster to pursue its interests in a world where all the major global institutions from the WHO to the WTO – are experiencing unprecedented turmoil and are heading towards an inevitable restructuring.

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

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"The wealthy are particularly successful in blocking changes they don't like." — THE NEW YORK TIMES

Trust your MP

MPLADS is a nimble tool for targeted intervention. Scrapping it in crisis is counterproductive



WITH A brusque proclamation on April 6, the government decided to suspend operation of the Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) for the next two financial years, and divert Rs 7,900 crore to the fight against COVID-19. The decision is both misconceived and mischievous. It would subvert the fight against COVID-19 rather than strengthen it.

It is important to understand the MPLADS, and why these resources are needed now more than ever. In the classical constitutional construct premised upon the principle of separation of powers, the legislature is not supposed to play an executive role. It is charged with the remit of enacting legislation and exercising sharp oversight over government functioning.

However, in any developing nation, the aspiration for better quality public goods and an enhanced standard of living is a legitimate desire. The expectation, therefore, from public representatives to contribute to this paradigm is strong.

That is why on December 23, 1993, the government announced the MPLAD Scheme. It was formulated to enable the members of Parliament to identify small works based on locally felt needs in their constituencies. The objective being to recommend works of developmental nature with emphasis on the creation of durable community assets. These are customised solutions unique to the situations that they address. However, the broad focus is on clean drinking water, primary education, public health, sanitation and roads. Each Lok Sabha MP gets Rs five crore per year for his/her constituency; Rajya Sabha MPs have the flexibility to spend it across the state from where they have been elected. This money is allocated through a parliamentary appropriation.

MPLADS was challenged in the Supreme Court as being violative of Articles 275, 282, the 73rd and 74th Amendment, and the constitutional design itself. In 2010, a five-judge bench of the SC held the scheme to be intra vires of the Constitution and declared "Indian Constitution does not recognise strict separation of powers. Even though MPs have been given a seemingly executive function, their role is limited to 'recommending' works and actual implementation is done by the local authorities. Therefore, the scheme does not violate separation of powers. Panchayat raj institutions, municipal as well as local bodies have also not been denuded of their role or jurisdiction..."

Contrary to popular perception, MPLAD funds cannot be spent at the discretion of an MP in any manner he/she wants. There is a set of guidelines mandating the utilisation of the monies. These diktats are updated regularly and are available on the website of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. A complete breakdown of how the money is utilised is also available under the Right to

Information (RTI). The funds spent are subject to audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India. Moreover, the MPs can only recommend development works and the money is electronically transferred to the concerned executing agency directly by the district administration. Most MPs use their MPLAD funds judi-

ciously and guard them zealously. For us, it is a constant battle between great hopes and scarce resources. A perpetual effort is, therefore, always afoot to extract the maximum advantage from every paisa spent. Coming to COVID-19, it is in fact the MPs who acted even before the government got its act together, for they have their ear to the ground always. Individually and collectively, they represented to the presiding officers of both the Houses to relax the guidelines in order to enable them to procure the necessary wherewithal to fight this pandemic.

On March 24, the government came out with a notification that permitted MPs to utilise their funds for the purchase of infrared thermometers, personal protection equipments, thermal imaging scanners, corona testing kits, ICU ventilators, face masks, gloves and sanitisers and other necessary medical equipment. Mysteriously, 11 days later, the scheme was scrapped. What changed in those 12 days? Were there any reports of malfeasance? The answer is no.

What did change was that, on March 28, another letter was received requesting MPs to give their consent for the release of Rs 1 crore from their next MPLAD instalment for the fiscal 2020-21 "to such central government pool or head of account as may be decided by the Government of India for prevention and control of COVID-19 in the country". Not many MPs responded. Not because they are insensitive, but primarily because most of us were dealing with the human fallout of the ill-conceived and badly implemented lockdown. Did someone's "ego" get hurt at this lack of response? The jury still remains out on that.

Turning to the bigger picture, just a fortnight ago, the Parliament passed the Union Budget of Rs 30,42,230 crore. The receipts, other than net borrowings, are projected at Rs 22,45,893. The fiscal deficit is targeted at 3.5 per cent of the GDP lower than the Revised Estimate of 3.8 per cent in 2019-20. The new financial year has just commenced. The government can easily find Rs 2 lakh crore to fight COVID-19 just by rationalising and re-targeting government expenditure. The appointment of an expenditure rationalisation commission is, in fact, the need of the hour. As an estimate pointed out, Rs 93,562 crore can come from 15 central public sector enterprises alone without much effort. Taking away Rs 3,950 crore for 788 MPs is not even a drop in the

MPLADS is a very nimble and effective scalpel of targeted micro-level intervention. In the months and days ahead, when distress - medical and economic - will haunt the countryside, these discretionary interventions will help save lives. The MPs should be trusted. What is required is cooperative federalism and not unrestrained authoritarianism.

The writer is an MP, national spokesperson, INC, and former Union minister

world's foremost powers - the US and China. American pressures on the nuclear and Revealed by the virus

The pandemic has exposed the limits of capitalism

tially.

D RAJA

THE LOCKDOWN period announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is about to end. The CPI supported all the government's measures to keep people safe from the coronavirus pandemic despite apprehensions over its impact on workers, migrants and others, poor farmers, the homeless and the other downtrodden. Unfortunately, our fears have come true.

The world had started noticing the coronavirus by end-December. But, even as late as the first week of February, no thermal testing had been introduced at most airports in the country. No proper assessment was made about how many hospital beds, masks, diagnosis equipment, ventilators, trained medical personnel would be required if the coronavirus reached India through travellers coming from foreign lands. PM Modi and his home minister were busy with polarising issues such as the NPR and NRC, and the vicious election campaign

So, when the coronavirus finally began to spread, the government was caught unprepared. It realised there were not enough public hospitals and medical colleges in the country — the CPI had opposed the legislation on medical education passed by the

Modi government since it further privatised medical education.

However, even while fighting the corona pandemic, communal groups are not keeping communalism out. The latest example is the profiling of the Nizamuddin incident. Yes, many devotees remained at the markaz despite warnings, including hundreds of foreigners.

But the challenge now is different. Some of them have already been infected and with many people dying, we are facing an enormous problem. Instead of confronting it, vicious campaigns on social media want to build the impression that the Nizamuddin incident was deliberately done to create a disaster in the country. These campaigns are not just nasty but deeply polarising. It will hurt India's image internationally. There is no evidence other than rumours that the government's instructions on the coronavirus pandemic were purposefully ignored. The coronavirus does not infect people on the basis of community and caste. All those who may be infected should voluntarily come forward for testing, as they have done in states such as Tamil Nadu.

The number of infections are sure to go

The prime minister's video-conferences with state chief ministers reveal lack of coordination between the Centre and the states. The Centre should be held responsible for the late response to the crisis. In comparison, the Left government in Kerala had taken several measures well in advance. That helped the state to contain the spread of the virus and limit the mis-

up in the coming days. Do we have enough

medical facilities ready? All of us are aware

of the unscientific atmosphere intention-

ally created by communal forces in the

past six years. Even the prime minister

made statements that went against the

spirit of scientific temper. Some outfits

close to the government even paraded cow

urine as a remedy against coronavirus ini-

The current argumentation

about the WHO is not just

blame. There is plenty to go

witnessing is the breakdown

that emerged from the ashes

of the multilateral system

of the Second World War

contestation between the

amidst the deepening

about apportioning the

around. What we are

ery of people. Humanity is, in fact, confronting a health disaster of gigantic proportions. The corona pandemic has been infecting and affecting people of every nation from Asia (China) to America and from Europe to Africa. The worst hit are the poor and the working class. This pandemic has exposed the inherent character and cruelty of the capitalist social order.

Neo-liberal capitalism has produced unprecedented inequality and injustice. Housing, healthcare, education and employment are not guaranteed as fundamental rights. Neo-liberalism has been promoting consumerism and individualism ruthlessly. It has been destroying the social consciousness of human beings. Private property and profit cannot uphold ideals or values such as "we" and "ours".

The corona pandemic has exposed the limits of capitalism. The time has come to explore alternative social structures and economic systems. Socialisation of healthcare, housing, education and the means of production have become fundamental issues in the present context.

The present situation has shown that capitalism is unjust and irrational. Let me quote what Winston Churchill said way back in 1954 — "the inherent vice of capitalism is the unequal sharing of blessings; the inherent virtue of socialism is the equal sharing of miseries".

It is becoming more and more evident that socialism is the alternative. It is the future and hope.

The writer is general secretary CPI

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WHO DID IT

in the middle' (IE, April 10). The (WHO) is not just in the middle but also in a muddle of its own making. It is particularly shocking that in the initial phase when China went public, albeit belatedly, with the outbreak of a novel virus in the country, WHO did not show any urgency to tackle the disease. Instead, it glossed over China's inordinate delay in sharing the news with the international community. Besides not following the norm, it refrained from naming the virus after the country of its origin.

THIS REFERS TO the editorial 'WHO

Kamna Chhabra, Gurugram

CONSUME LESS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Heed nature's warning' (IE, April 10). It'll be a pity if we are unable to mend our ways after the current crisis ends. We have behaved in an extremely self-centred manner for all these years. Whenever we are told of climate change and the like, most of us don't care thinking that this is an issue which won't affect us. We have already started facing the result of threatening nature. The writer is accurate in describing consumerism as a self destructive virus. One is reminded of Gandhi ji, who said that the earth provided enough for everyone's need but not for anyone's greed. Abdullah Ghazali. Patna

BERNIE AND JOE

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'A little

LETTER OF THE WEEK

LET THE PRESS BE THIS REFERS TO the editorial

'Out of the old box' (IE, April 9). Indian media has already been feeling the pinch of the lockdown. As advertisement revenues continue to plummet, Sonia Gandhi further calls for a two-year blanket ban on government ads in the media. Not only is her message badly timed, but the suggestion is completely unhelpful in these trying times. The Indian Newspaper Society is right to call out her awful idea as an attempt of "financial censorship" of the free press.

Varun Das, Zirakpur

to the left' (IE, April 10). Immediately after his withdrawal from the US presidential race, Bernie Sanders vowed to work with Joe Biden, the prospective nominee for the Democrats, to defeat the American president, Donald Trump in the 2020 election. Since both candidates share a common vision on the need to make healthcare more affordable, reduce income inequality and curb climate change, the Democrats believe that Biden is the best person to do it. Whether that shared vision translates into anything concrete, though, remains to be seen. **SS Paul**, Nadia

ess.com

10 Express Network

TAMIL NADU WATER SUPPLY AND DRAINAGE BOARD INVITATION OF BIDS-TWO COVER - ITEMWAR TENDER SYSTEM IFB No. 01 / F. CWSS to 73 (2020) SDO/ CE-TNJ/ dt : 07:04:2020 Providing Combined Water Supply Scheme to 73 rural habitations in Veppur union of Name of Work Perambalur District (Period of completion: 12 months, Trial run: 6 months and Pald maintenance: 12 months) NABARD Loan Assistance under RIDF XXV -2019-2020 and MNP state share Approximate value of work Rs. 14.28 Crore Rs. 10.71.000/-Bid Security Eligible class Class-I The Chief Engineer, TWAD Board, No. 37.1" Floor, Easwart Nagar, Medical College Road, Tender Invites From 17.04.2020 to 15.05.2020 lipto 17.45 hours at O/o the Executive Engineer, TWAD Board, RWS Division, Perambatur by cash or Sale of Bid & Place of sale Demand Draft on any Scheduled/Nationalized bank, payable at Perambalur for Rs 1120/ (Rs. 1000+GST@ 12% each by post Rs. 500-adubonal (each) Downloading. www.tenders.tn.gov.in and www.twadboard.tn.gov.in (free of cost) 08.05.2020 at 11.00 Hours at the office of the Tender Invites Pre Bid meeting 18.05.2020 before 15.00 Hours at the office of the Tender Invitee in person of through Bid Silbmission post. This office will not be held responsible for postal delay, if any Bid Opening 18.05.2020 at 15.30 Hours at the office of the Tender Invitee DIPR/ 1804 /TENDER/2020

कार्यालय कार्यपालन अभियंता

क्रमांक 2445/2019-2020/संशोधन दुर्ग,

दिनांक 04/04/2020

(NIT) क्रमांक 20,21,22,24,25/व.ले.लि. दिनांक 21/03/2020 एवं आपके द्वारा प्रकाशित Reference ID No. 202003009807 Advt No. 78154 दिनांक 23.03.2020 एवं Reference ID No. 202003009692. Advt No. 78101 दिनांक 19.03.2020 को अपरिहार्य कारणों से निरस्त किया जाता है:-

कार्यपालन अभियंता

लोक निर्माण विभाग दुर्ग संभाग दुर्ग 80030

दक्षिणांचल विद्युत वितरण निजम लिए

वाई-पास गांड, सिकन्दरा, आगरा -282007 (CIN No.U31200UP20035GC027460) अल्पकालीन ई-निविद्य सूचना

between Asifabad (including) and Bellampalli (excluding) stations Estimated Cost: ₹ 7,93,46,752/-, EMD ron Stripe 24 Gouge (skee 19 mm.) 5,46,700/- Completion Period: 12 Twelve Months), Date of Opening: Iron Lock for Strips (little 20 mm.) S.No.:4. NIT No.: 34-CAO-C-SC-2020 Date: 08.04.2020 Name of work Secunderabad Division-Proposed Thin Round Bindy Transformer) #7 #1978 ine between Balharshah-Kazipe stations-Construction of High Level platforms, Extension/ Modification to को दिनाक: १५-१३-३५३० विकास अस्टूबर । र existing platforms, Circulating Areas 3.340 | St. 198. St. Wint | • Suffredi-Approach Roads, Compound walls Station Buildings, Gate Lodges, PW करणा कंट क्रीबीसीएनएल-एपएम/2473-Store Rooms at Makudi, Sirpur Town Vempally and Sirput Kaghaznagar tations Estimated Cost: arytic series solds of thousand 7.24,52,018/-, EMD: ₹ 5.12.300/ Completion Period: 12 (Twelve Months), Date of Opening: 14-05-2020 S.No.:5. NIT No.: 35-CAO-C-SC-2020 Date:08.04,2020 Name of work Providing House-keeping and maintenance services for the office Corrector of steps, writer refer building of CAO/ C/SC (Rail Nirman र 50,000 निविदा सुलने को दिनांक Nilayam) and outside circulating area connected to RNN building and Camp क के के 3000 मिथिया शुल्काः € 8,340/ Office cum construction ORH for 24 months. Estimated Cost: .05,61,245/-, EMD: \$ 2.02,800/ Completion Period: 24 (Twenty Four norths), Date of Opening: 12-05-2020 www.dvxnl.org के माञ्चम हो हो जिल्हा किया सामित्र र सिक्टरमं के रिक्रा क्रूपण निर्मिट S.No.:6, NIT No.: 36-CAO-C-SC- 2020 प्रवास प्राप्तक पह से। इस्ताम पितिह Date:08.04.2020 Name of work Secunderabad Division: Proposed Third निवारित दिनोंक की समय 13.00 बार्ज सा ine between Kazipet-Balharahah Stations - Proposed Construction of Foot Over Bridge and Cover Over Platform at ित्य को साथ 16.00 कर कोली जायेगी Makudi, Sirpurtown, Rechni Road,

बाउच्छा - L/ बारमा निर्वाचन दिनक्षिक DA 2020 TENDER NOTICE No.

48/2020 dt. 09.04.2020 SUPPLY OF STORES ITEMS. E-procurement Tender Notice

The following Tenders have been floated online, Tenderers are equested to visit the website www.ireps.gov.in and submit their offers online. The Tender Description, Qty, EMD, SD may be seen in website. Offers submitted manually will not be accepted. Offers by post will not be entertained. Tender Closing time is 14.30 hrs. of the Due date of the Tender. "For all indigenous offers, EMD will be accepted only via online system as available on

Tender No.:- 82.20.5059, Description :- Advanced Technology High End Ventilator for use in ICU, Tender No. :- 82:20.5075 Brief Description: - Personal Protective Kit Note :- Due date of Tender Opening: S.No. 01 on 20.04.2020; S.No. 02 on 27.04.2020:

Tender No. 1) 45.19.1043 due or 26.03.20. postponed to 16.04.20. (2) 45.20.1110 due on 13.04.20 postponed to 27:04:20. (3 38.20 1429A Brake Beam due on 01,04.20, postponed to 26,04.2020 (4) 38.20.1007 due on 31.03.20 postponed to 26.04.2020 (5 38.20 2294 due on 26.03.20 postponed to 26.04.2020. Beside above mentioned lenders there are other tenders having value below Rs. 25 lakhs. For details, please visit Railway website above.

For further tender conditions / details and for downloading the tender documents.

www.scr.indianrailways.gov.in

Assam reports first COVID-19 death

ABHISHEK SAHA

GUWAHATI, APRIL 10

A 65-YEAR-OLD man from Assam's Hailakandi district succumbed to COVID-19 on Friday, becoming the state's first casualty in the pandemic, authorities said Friday. A former government employee, the man had returned home on March 18 after travelling to Saudi Arabia and Delhi, where he visited the Nizamuddin Markaz.

On April 7, he tested positive for the infection, was admitted to Silchar Medical College and Hospital and later shifted to the ICU. His family is now in quarantine.

Assam Health Himanta Minister Biswa Sarma announced that the state

has so far conducted 2,736 tests and 29 positive cases have been reported. Sarma added that the state government intends to carry out rapid tests on at least 1 lakh people once it acquires kits.

Meanwhile, the state government has found during contact tracing that on the night of March 12, a meeting was held at a mosque in Guwahati in which around 100 people participated and three of them have tested positive for COVID-19. Two of them had attended the Tablighi Jamaat congregation and the third had come into contact with them. Sarma said the mosque would be sealed for 14 days.

Meanwhile, Assam police Friday started an odd-even policy for vehicles in Guwahati till Sunday. Ambulances, vehicles of doctors and other health workers, mediapersons, government officials on duty, water tankers and trucks carrying essentials are exempted.

(A Subsidiary of NBCC (India) Limited) (A GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ENTERPRISE) E-6A, Sector-01, Noida-201301

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER Driline item rate bids are invited on behalf of AIIMS, Naggur (Maharashtra), through e-tenderingfrom eligible applicants who fulfill qualification criteria as stipulated in Vol.-1 (NIT/PQ document) for the work "Supply, installation, testing & commissioning of Furniture work for Medical college, Medical Lab, Admin block. Library block and their maintenance during defect liability period for AIIMS at Nagpu Meharashtra/Estimated project cost is Rs. 7.14 Crore and Completion period is 03 calendar fontins. Further details are available in detailed NIT and Tender documents available online from 3/04/2020 on HSCC websites http://www.hscotkl.co.m.e-tender-portal vwww.tender-wizard.com/HSCC and CPP portal. Last Dale of submission of Bios: 28/04/2020 at 15:00 hrs

Configendum to this publication, if any, would appear only on said websites and not be published. Sr. Mgr.(C), HSCC (India) Limited

GUJARAT MEDICAL SERVICES CORPORATION LIMITED (A Government of Gujarat Undertaking)

Regd. Office: Block No. 14/1 Dr. Jivraj Mehta Bhavan Sector - 10 Gandhinagar Ph. 079-23250767, 23250766, 23257696

COVID-19 URGENT PURCHASE NOTICE: 01/2020-21

Quotations are invited for Medical Equipment/Instrument/surgical item & other miscellaneous Industrial product through E-Mail. Interested manufacturer/company/Authorised dealer are invited to send Quotations of equipment containing warranty and comprehensive maintenance details, Product Literature/Brochure and delivery time (with quantity) on md-gmscl@gujrat.gov.in till 11/04/2020, 16:00 Hrs. Detailed Notice is available on website http://gmscl.gujarat.gov.in of this office notice board,

INF/8/20-21

Targeted ammo dump, launchpads in PoK, says Army

ADIL AKHZER SRINAGAR, APRIL 10

Keran Sector.

THE INDIAN Army Friday said it carried out "precision targeting" with heavy artillery of gun areas, launchpads and an ammunition dump in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), following

an unprovoked ceasefire viola-

Sources said heavy artillery was used in the attack and the targets that were hit were in the same sector, where days ago, five Special Forces personnel were among 10 killed in an encounter with militants.

Srinagar-based defense spokesperson Colonel Rajesh Kalia said on Friday evening "Our troops retaliated effectively and strongly", to the ceasefire violation by Pakistan.

General public is hereby informed that a

lady namely Kajal Mittal, W/o Mukesh

Mittal, **R/o** L-2/76, Shastri Nagar, Delhi has

been missing since 07.03.2020. In this

regard, DD No. 10A dated 19.03.2020

has been registered at P.S. Sarai

Rohilla, New Delhi. Sincere efforts have

been made by the local police to trace out

the missing lady but no clue has come to

light so far. The description of the missing

inform SHO/P.S. Sarai Rohilla, New Delhi.

orange colour burfi cut long kurti.

lady is as under:

E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in

Fax: 011-24368639

DP/128/N/2020

The Army also released a short video in which an ammunition dump in PoK is seen being struck.

According to defence sources, the areas targeted in PoK included Dondiyal and Athmugam. "We have credible inputs that all targets were successful. We targeted known launchpads, and also gun areas." tion by Pakistan in Kupwara's a senior army officer said.

While shelling was going on, authorities also snapped mobile internet services in Kupwara. While the reason for the move was not known, a senior security officer said that the decision was taken at the top. Services were restored later.

Former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, criticised the decision. "...It's almost as if the authorities are looking for any excuse to flick the internet switch," he tweeted.

10 held in Valley for attending militant's funeral amid lockdown

ADIL AKHZER

SRINAGAR, APRIL 10

THE JAMMU and Kashmir administration Friday said it had arrested 10 people who had participated in the funeral of a Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) commander killed in a gunfight in Sopore in North Kashmir this week.

On Wednesday, a large number of people had thronged Sajad Nawab's house after he was killed in the encounter. Subsequently, Sopore Police had registered a case for violating the COVID-19 protocols.

SP Sopore Javid Iqbal told *The* Indian Express on Friday that they have arrested 10 people so far in the case and that identification of more people is underway.

A senior police officer in Sopore said that more people have been identified and more arrests would be made soon in the case. "A case has been registered for violating Covid-19 protocols and government advisories regarding social gathering. Investigation in the case is in process and we will arrest more people," said the officer.

According to Sopore police the "legal heirs had given in writings that they would adhere to social distancing when the body was handed over to them after completing medico legal formalities.

Classifieds

RECRUITMENT

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Kajal Mittal

Following Corrigendum of E-

KONKAN RAILWAY CORPORATION LTD. (A Government of India Undertaking)

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

Chief Engineer, Konkan Railway Corporation Limited Invites Open Tender in Single bid system through E-tendering on IREPS Portal from eligible contractors for the following work. Tender Notice No. KR-W-09-2020-04. Name of Work: Metallising and Protective Painting to Bottom Chord, Middle Chord and Top Chord Members of Steel Girder Spans of Zuari Bridge under AEN/MAO Section of KRCL in Goa State. Estimated Cost: ₹ 100.92 lakhs excluding GST. Closing Date/Time: 04/05/2020 up to 15:00 Hrs. for submission of online offers/bids. Completion Period: Eleven months including Monsoon, Manual Offers shall not be accepted. Please visit; www.ireps.gov.in website for details/participation. Corrigendum/addendum will be hosted in this website only.



KARNATAKA STATE WAREHOUSING CORPORATION Bheeja Bhavan, 4th & 5th Floor, Bellary Road, Hebbal

Bangalore - 560 024. Fax: 080-23415672, Ph: 080-23415679

No. KSWC/ACT/FGI/01/2013-14/2020-21

Website: www.karnatakawarehousing.in DATE: 08.04.2020

TENDER NOTIFICATION

Short term online e-tender Notification inviting online tenders from the reputed I.R.D.A. registered Insurance Companies for Insurance on Fidelity Guarantee Floater Insurance on 143 Warehouse Managers and A Cashier at Head office, Bangalore for a period of one year from 15.05.2020 to 14.05.2021. The value for the Fidelity Guarantee Insurance Coverage is Rs. 10.00 Crore (Rupees Ten Crore Only) per person totally Rs. 1440.00 Crore (Rupees One Thousand Four Hundred and Fourty Crore Only) for 144 persons.

(1) Date of Tender Publication : 15.04.2020 to 24.04.2020 (2) Pre-bid meeting: 17.04.2020 @ 3.00 pm (3) Last Date & Time for Submission of Tender through online: 24.04.2020 @ 3.00 pm (4) Date & Time for Opening of Technical Bid 27.04.2020 @ 11.00 am (5) Date & Time for Opening of Financial Bid: 29.04.2020 @ 11.00 am (6) Tender processing fee as per e-portal.

The tender details is available on website www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in. Further details can be obtained from the office of the undersigned during working

DIPR/DDU/2020-21

Sd/-Managing Director

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

SHER-I-KASHMIR INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES, SOURA

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, MECHANICAL

E-mail: mechanicalskims@gmail.com

उ.प्र. पावर ट्रांसमिशन कारपोरेशन लि. निविदा सूचना निम्नलिखित महरबंद निविदाएं दो भागों में अनुभवी ठेकेदारों से निम्न कार्य के सम्पादन हेत आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। प्रत्येक निविदा के प्रथम भाग में धरोहर राशि एफ.डी.आर./ सी.डी.आर. (राष्ट्रीयकृत बैंक) के रूप में अधीक्षण अभियंता, विद्युत पारेषण मण्डल मेरठ के पक्ष में देय हो एवं इन्कम टैक्स एवं पैन नं. इन्कम टैक्स रिटर्न, जी.एस.टी. पंजीकरण प्रपत्र की छाया प्रति तथा अनुभव संबंधी प्रपत्र अवश्य होने चाहिए अन्यथा की स्थिति में निविदा का भाग-2 विचारणीय नहीं होगा। द्वितीय भाग में वाणिज्यिक नियम, दरें एवं शर्तें होनी चाहिए। निविदा प्रपत्र कार्यालय समय में निविदा खुलने के एक दिवस पूर्व 16.00 बजे तक कार्यालय से ही आवापसीय निविदा प्रपत्र का मुल्य भगतान कर प्राप्त किये जा सकते हैं। निविदाओं के प्रपत्र निर्धारित शुल्क एवं निर्धारित धरोहर राशि आर.टी.जी.एस./ एन.ई.एफ.टी. के माध्यम से अधीक्षण अभियंता, विद्युत पारेषण मण्डल, मेरठ के पक्ष में State Bank of India, Cantt Branch. Meerut Account No. 11047201099, IFSC Code SBIN0000680 में भी जमा करायी जा सकती है बैंक जमा की साक्ष्य यथा योज्य यु.टी.आर. संख्या, पे-इन स्लिप मूल की प्रति निविदा के प्रथम भाग के साथ संलग्न किये जाये डाक द्वारा मंगाये जाने हेतु रु. 300/- अतिरिक्त देय होंगे, पोस्टल आर्डर जो कि अधीक्षण अभियंता, विद्युत पारेषण मण्डल मेरठ के पक्ष में देय हो, भेजकर प्राप्त किया जा सकता है। डाक द्वारा मंगाये गये निविदा प्रपत्र के प्राप्त न होने अथवा विलम्ब के लिये विभाग उत्तरदायी नहीं होगा। निविदाएं अधोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता के कार्यालय में निविदा खलने की निर्धारित दिनांक को 14.00 बजे तक प्राप्त की जायेंगी और उसी दिन सार्वजनिक रूप रं ठेकेदारों अथवा उनके प्रतिनिधियों की उपस्थिति में 15.00 बजे खोली जायेंगी उक्त तिथि को अवकाश होने पर निविदाएं अगले कार्य दिवस में निर्धारित समय पर खोली जायेंगी। आमंत्रित निविदाएं विभाग की वेबसाईट www.upptcl.org से भी डाउनलोड की जा सकती है जिसके लिये उपरोक्तानुसार निविदा प्रपत्र का मुल्य का डिमाण्ड ड्राफ्ट अधीक्षण अभियंता, विद्युत पारेषण मण्डल मेरठ के पक्ष में देय हो, निविदा के साथ संलग्न कर भेजना आवश्यक होगा अन्यथा निविदाओं को स्वीकार नहीं किया जायेगा। किसी अथवा समस्त निविदाओं को, बिना कोई कारण बताये, निरस्त करने का अधिकार अधोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता को सुरक्षित होगा। टी-27/20-21 अल्पकालिक (निविदा खोले जाने की तिथि 23.04.2020) मुख्य अभियन्ता (पारेषण पश्चिम), मेरठ हेत एक नग डीजल चलित कार, (चालक सहित) 12 माह की अवधि के लिये किराये पर उपलब्ध कराने का कार्य। धरोहर राशि रु. 3,500.00/- (रुपये तीन हजार पांच सौ मात्र), निविदा प्रपत्र का जी.एस.टी. सहित मूल्य रु 590.00/-, अधीक्षण अभियंता विद्युत पारेषण मण्डल, 130-डी. विक्टोरिया पार्क. मरेठ। ''राष्ट्रहित में ऊर्जा बचायें''। पत्रांक/ No. 975, वि.पा.म./ ETC/ मेरट/ MT Tender, दिनांक/ Dated 09/04/2020

U.P. RAJYA VIDYUT UTPADAN **NIGAM LTD PARICHHA** THERMAL POWER PROJECT **PARICHHA JHANSI**

SEARCH FOR MISSING

Name: Kajal Mittal, Gender: Female, Age: 36, Height: 5'5"

Complexion: Fair, Built: Heavy, Wearing: Red. blue and

If anyone has any information regarding this missing lady, kindly

1- E-Tender-ST-01/CHD-II/O&MC-I PTPP /2020-21 work of "Work of coal supervision, Liasioning with coal companies and Railways at loading end of different collieries of BCCL, CCL, NCL for Parichha TPS. Estimated Cost Rs. 26,20,000.00 ebid Submission dt.: 15.04.20 up to 14:00 Hrs. 2- E-Tender-ST-02/CHD-II/ O&MC-II /PTPP/2020-21 work of "Work of coal supervision, Liasioning with coal companies and Railways at loading end of different collieries of BCCL, CCL, NCI for Harduagani TPS." Estimated Cost Rs. 26,20,000.00 e-bid Submission dt.: 15.04.20 up to 14:00 Hrs. 3- E-Tender-ET-01/ECMEMD/PTPP/2020-21 work of "M&R of civil works of Auxiliary Buildings at 2x210 MW and 2x250 MW, PTPP, Parichha." Estimated Cost Rs. 12,25,464.00 ebid Submission dt.: 02.05.20 up to 13:00 Hrs. 4- E-Tender-ET-18/TMD-II/ PTPP/2019-20 work of "Round the Clock Deputation of Skilled Machinist for execution of various Jobs in mechanical workshop in 2x210MW, PTPP, Parichha." Estimated Cost Rs. 2,35,494.00 e-bid Submission dt.: 28.04.20 up to 14:00 Hrs. 5- E-Tender-T-01/AHD-II/PTPP/2020-21 work of "Operation and Maintenance (PLC Based) of Ash Handling System (Wet & Dry mode) of 2x210 MW unit 3&4 at Parichha Thermal Power Project, Jhansi." Estimated Cost Rs. 91.61,441.00 e-bid Submission dt.: 27.04.20 up to 14:00 Hrs. 6-

Tenders:- (i) E-Tender-T-29/CPD-I PTPP/2019-20 extended as follows: e-bid Submission dt.: 13.04.20 a 16:00 hrs. (ii) E-Tender-T-02/CPD-II, PTPP/2020 extended as follows:- ebid Submission dt.: 27.04.20 at 16:00 hrs. (iii) E-Tender-T-03/CPD-II/ PTPP/ 2020 extended as follows:- e-bid Submission dt.: 27.04.20 at 16:00 hrs (iv) E-Tender-ST-20/TMD-II/ PTPP /2019-20 extended as follows:- e-bid Submission dt.: 11.04.20 at 14:00 hrs (v) E-Tender-T-20/ C&ID-III/O&MC-VII/ PTPP/2019-20 extended as follows:- e-bid Submission dt 17.04.20 at 12:00 hrs. (vi) E-Tender-T- 90/BMD-VI/O&MC-VIII/ 2x250 MW/ PTPP /2019-20 extended as follows: e-bid Submission dt.: 04.05.20 a 14:00 hrs. The other terms and conditions and place of hard copies submission and opening shall remain same/ unchanged. NOTE:- 1. The details of tender cost, earnest Money and submission of bids/tender Extension are available in the bid document uploaded on the eprocurement website http://etender. up.nic.in. 2. The bidders are required to be registered with U.P. Electronics Corporation, Ashok Marg Lucknow by depositing requisite fees for participation in the e-Tendering. The bidder must also be registered with their Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) in the e-bidding system. Date of Opening of 2nd Price Bid shall be declared later on. "Save Electricity" Sd/- Executive Engineer E & TD PTPP. Parichha पत्रांकः 151/ई. एण्ड

टी./पी.टी.पी.पी. /दिनांक 09/04/2020

Mechanical, SKIMS.

Dated: 10.04.2020

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR SHER-I-KASHMIR INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES. SOURA EXECUTIVE ENGINEER. MECHANICAL. SKIMS MC&H

BEMINA & SKIMS, SOURA, SRINAGAR Tel.: 0194-2402617, Ext.: 2159, E-mail: mechanicalskims@gmail.com

Re-01

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTICE

e-NIT No. 02 of 20-21 Dated 10.04.2020 For and on behalf of Lt. Governor U.T. of Jammu & Kashmir, Executive Engineer, Mechanical, SKIMS, Soura, Srinagar invites online e-bids in Two (02) cover System from Manufacturer's/ Authorized Dealers/ Registered/ Reputed Firms and Experienced Firms having

expertise as detailed in the tender document for the following works:-			
Sr. No.	Name of the Work	Estimated Cost	
1.	Overhauling of AC Accel Make Compressor No. 01 (SMC 8-100) at SKIMS, Soura.	Rs. 5,84,800/-	

The complete tender document is available at website: http://jktenders.gov.in. Interested Bidders/Tenderers may view, download the e-Bid document, seek clarifications and submit their bids online upto the date and time mentioned in the table below. Tender Document contains qualifying criteria for bidders. Bills of Quantities & Terms and Conditions of the contract and other relevant details.

X.	Completion Time Budget Head	Annual Contract Non-Plan for the Year 2020-21
	Amount of Earnest Money Deposit (CDR/FDR)	Rs. 11,700/- (Rupees Eleven Thousand & Seven Hundred only)
_	Cost of e-Bid Document	Rs. 500/- (Rupees Five Hundred only)
_	Date & Time of Financial Bid (Cover-IInd) opening	Shall be intimated separately
V.	Date & Time of Commercial/ Technical Bid (Cover-I) opening	22.04.2020 at 11.00 hours (or next convenient day)
iv.	Date of Submission of hard copies (Original EMD/FDR & DD only).	21.04.2020 upto 14.00 hours
iii.	Last Date & Time of Bid uploading	20.04.2020 upto 16.00 hours
ii.	Date & Time of Bidding Queries/ clarification/Pre-Bid meet	16.04.2020 upto 14.00 hours
l.	Date and Time of downloading/ Sale of Tender documents (Starting Date)	11.04.2020 at 11.00 hours

SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING E-TENDERS e-NIT No. 01 of 2020-21 Dated 10.04.2020 For and on behalf of Lt. Governor U.T. of Jammu & Kashmir, Executive Engineer

Mechanical, SKIMS, Soura, Srinagar invites online e-bids in Two (02) cover System from Registered Contractors/ Companies/ Societies/ Firms having experience for providing of experi enced operational Staff required for the operation of Sarai 1st & 2nd as per the details in the ten der document:-

Re-01

Sr. No.	Name of the Work	Estimated Cost (In Rs.)
1.	Annual Contract for the Operation of Three (03) Nos. of Passenger Lifts at Sarai-I & II & Genetic Centre, SKIMS, Soura.	Rs. 15,40,100/-
The	complete tender document is available at website: http://iktenders	gov in Intereste

Bidders/Tenderers may view, download the e-Bid document, seek clarifications and submit their bids online upto the date and time mentioned in the table below. Tender Document contains qualifying criteria for bidders. Bills of Quantities & Terms and Conditions of the contract and other rel-

eva	nt details.	
i.	Date and Time of downloading/ Sale of Tender documents (Starting Date)	11.04.2020 at 11.00 hours
ii.	Date & Time of Bidding Queries/ clarification/Pre-Bid meet	16.04.2020 upto 14.00 hours
iii.	Last Date & Time of Bid uploading	20.04.2020 upto 16.00 hours
iv.	Date of Submission of hard copies (Original EMD/FDR & DD only).	21.04.2020 upto 14.00 hours
V.	Date & Time of Commercial/ Technical Bid (Cover-I) opening	22.04.2020 at 11.00 hours (or next convenient day)
vi.	Date & Time of Financial Bid (Cover-IInd) opening	Shall be intimated separately
vii.	Cost of e-Bid Document	Rs. 1000/- (Rupees One Thousand only)
viii.	Amount of Earnest Money Deposit (CDR/FDR)	Rs. 30,800/- (Rupees Thirty Thousand Eight Hundred only)
ix.	Completion Time	Annual Contract
X.	Budget Head	Non-Plan for the Year 2020-21

SAVE WATER, CONSERVE WATER, EVERY DROP COUNTS

SOUTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

Follow is on #@SCRailwayIndia Details of the Tender Notices of

S.C. Railway can be seen on our website: www.scr.indlanrailways.gov.ir

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER

(through https://ireps.gov.in)

CAO (Construction), S.C.Railway

Secunderabad invites e-tender of

behalf of the President of India for the

S.Na.:1. NIT No.: 31-CAO-C-SC-202

Provision of Foot-over-bridges/ Shelten

at Warangal, Chinthalpalli, Yelgut

Vekkonda, Mustabada, Gunadala

VNC and Gudor stations in

connection with 3rd line/bye-pass/yar

nodification works. Estimated Cost

6,85,98,817.56, EMD: ₹ 4,93,000.00

completion Period: 09 (Nine Months

S.No.: 2. NIT No.: 32-CAO-C-SC- 2020

Date: 08.04.2020. Name of work

Vijavawada Division - Propose

construction of bye-pass line between

Mustabada and Rayanapadu stations

(bye-passing Vijayawada Junction

connecting BZA-VSKP line & BZA-KZ.

line - Earthwork in formation including

blanketing to GE:0014 specifications

and other connected misc, works

including clearing of S&T utilities.

Estimated Cost: ₹28.33.54.460/- EMD

15,66,800.00, Completion Period: 08

(Nine Months), Date of Opening: 12

S.No.:3, NIT No.: 33-CAO-C-SC-2020

Date: 08.04.2020, Name of work

Secuperabad Division - Kazipet

Balharshah section - Proposed third lin

between Balharshan – Kazipet station

Supplying and stacking of machine

crushed, clean, hard angular and

durable stone Ballast for Railway track

along side of the proposed 3rd line

alignment from ch.215000 to ch.239000

05-2020 at 15.00 hrs.

12-05-2020 at 15:00 hrs.

at 15.00 hrs.

Date of Opening: 12-05-2020

Date: 08.04.2020. Name of work

Chief Engineer (I/c), TWAD Board, Thanjavur

लोक निर्माण विभाग, दुर्ग संभाग दुर्ग //संशोधन//

इस कार्यालय द्वारा जारी निविदा एन.आई.टी.

हस्ता/-

अर्जा भाषा, 120 के जो चित्रत उपसंख्यान, GSTIN No. 09AACCD069SD1Z5)

 विशिष्टाकरण संद्र द्वावीका रहान-एम 99/2472-2020: Cello Tape (25 mm). poxy duted inmining Craft Paper CS.0 Mix700 mm.) & Coutomized Rumber Strip (For Top Cover of धराबर राज्यः र २०,००० -, निविधा ग्यूलने 2020: LT-HT Braus Bushing Road Wil विकास सामने की दिलाका अन्य उपार fallen spec ? hour catteris. विशिष्टीकरण में। डीपीकीएन рм-вяви/2476-2020 LT-HT बो एक रो. भीता) निर्मात शहर के पत STATES, DVVNL AGRA OF STATES

बीरायाप्त अवलीह की जा सकेंगी एवं विकास नेविद्य प्रपन्न 2010 ज्ञासन के ब प्रीक्योरमेंट

पार्टन https://etender.up.nic.in पी EMD: ₹ 4,32,700.00, Completion Period: 12 (Twelve Months), Date of क्यूनीह को जातन, जर्म के लिखा प्रचार Opening: 12-05-2020 at 15.00 hrs. हारानोत्र प्रिया का मध्या 🖭 हाता./ S.No.:7. NIT No.:37-CAO-C-SC- 2020 Date:08.04.2020 Name of work: अधीक्षण ऑस्पन्त(साठप्रत) न, 'साट् हिल Proposed Bye-pass line at Vijavawada में विजली बचार्च पताक 1947 (क्वांश क्रिक

connecting Vijayawada-Visakhapatnan ine & Vijayawada-Kazipet line Construction of two Rall over Rail Bridge (Sub-Structure) and major Bridge No.9 noluding approach earth work and other connected miscellaneous works Estimated Cost: ₹25,03,92,611.69 EMD: ₹ 14.02.000.00, Completion Period: 12 (Twelve Months) Date of Opening: 14-05-2020 at 15,00 hrs.

S.No.:8. NIT No.: 38-CAO-C-SC-2020

Bellampaill and Mandamari stations

Estimated Cost: 7 5.65,30,366,95

Date: 08.04.2020, Name of work Vijayawada Division - Proposed construction of bye-pass line with Rail Over Rail (ROR) at ends between Mustabada and Rayanapadu stations (bye-passing Vijayawada Junction connecting BZA-VSKP line & BZA-KZJ line-Construction of Station buildings. Relay: Battery & equipment rooms, goomties, gate lodges, platforms and other connected miscellaneous works at VNC cabin. Gunadala & Mustabada yards. Estimated Cost: 6,83,99,837.30, EMD: ₹ 4,92,000.00 Completion Period: 09 (Nine Months)

at 15.00 hrs. S.No.:9, NIT No.: 39-CAO-C-SC- 2020 Date: 08.04.2020, Name of work Secunderabad Division-Kazipet Balarshah section - Proposed rebuilding of ROB No.165A as 1 60.00m clear span Bow String Arch Steel girder for 2 lane road traffic or open foundation duly dismantling the existing ROB at Km.247/25-27 between Bellampalli and Mandamarri stations. Estimated Cost: 7 6,37,96,000,26, EMD: \$ 4,69,000.00. Completion Period: 12 / Twelve Months). Date of

i) For bid document and other details, please login to website https://ireps.gov.in. ii) Payment of Earnest Money Deposit and Cost of tender document should be only through Net Banking/Payment Gateway facilities made available online in IREPS. III) Tenderers can submit their offers online during tender submission period which is the fifteen days period prior to closing of tender. iv) Tenderers should watch for any corrigenda (issued online only)

up to the date of commencement of the ender submission period. Chief Administrative Officer/Const. Secunderabad

www.ireps.gov.in." Date of Opening: 14-05-2020

CORRIGENDUM Opening: 14-05-2020 at 15.00 hrs.

> Principal Chief Materials Manager, Secunderabad

Please visit website at

Dated: 10.04.2020

No. SIMS 139 EX./MECH/2019-20/486/19-56-66-4471-74

Sd/- Executive Engineer Mechanical, SKIMS

#ExpressExplained

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SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

Plasma therapy: how it works, what India plans

As govt prepares to frame a protocol for convalescent plasma therapy, a look at the science behind injecting a recovered patient's plasma into a serious patient

ABANTIKA GHOSH

NEW DELHI, APRIL 10

EVEN AS trials are undertaken across the world, some independently and at least one under the aegis of the World Health Organization (WHO Solidarity Trial) to look for therapeutics to fight the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19), India is all set to try out a therapy that involves attempting to jump-start the immunity of a serious patient by infusing some of the blood plasma of a person who has already recovered from the disease.

This is called convalescent plasma therapy and has in the past been used in many other diseases.

What is convalescent plasma therapy?

Convalescent plasma therapy, which was recently allowed by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for investigation purposes - clinical trials etc in a regulated way involves transfusion of the blood plasma of a recovered patient into another patient. Plasma is the matrix on which the blood cells float. It also houses crucial components of immunity known as antibodies. Antibodies are the immediate warriors who fight an invading pathogen - an antigen - to defeat it. Once that is done, some blood cells function as memory cells so that they can identify and defeat the same enemy if and when it invades again by quickly producing the same

Convalescent plasma therapy banks on the age-old concept of passive immunity when antibodies for some diseases, such as diphtheria, were developed in horses and injected into humans. Active immunity is what is achieved by introducing an attenuated pathogen (such as the BCG vaccine) into the body to generate an immune response. The other kind of immunity is passive immunity.

According to the *Textbook of Medical* Physiology by Guyton and Hall, "Temporary immunity can be achieved in a person without injecting any antigen. This is done by infusing antibodies, activated T cells or both obtained from the blood of someone else or from some other animal that has been actively immunised against these antigens. These antibodies last for two-three weeks and during that time, the person is protected against the invading disease. Activated T cells last for a few weeks if transfused from another person and for a few hours to a few days if transfused from an animal. Such transfusion of antibodies or lymphocytes to confer immunity is called passive immunity."

T-cells are blood cells that have a crucial role in immunity.

What is India planning to do?

The country's apex medical research organisation, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), is framing a protocol for infusing blood plasma from people who have recovered from COVID-19 into serious patients.

This will only be done by way of a clinical



Donated blood and plasma samples at a hospital in Germany. Reuters

trial, in patients who are in a severe condition, or on ventilator. "We are in the final stages of making a protocol for convalescent plasma therapy and after that we will need approval from the drug controller general of India. This is not for use in all patients. It will be done on trial basis. Abroad it has been found successful in limited trials. Here we will do it only on patients on ventilator or se-

vere patients," Dr Manoj Murhekar, Director, ICMR-National Institute of Epidemiology, said on Thursday.

In Kerala, Dr Anoop Kumar, member of the state-constituted expert committee for advising the government on COVID-19, said he had spoken to some who had recovered from COVID-19 and they are ready to be part of the plasma therapy trial. The state too would need

clearance from the national drug controller before going ahead with such a trial.

Though Kerala has expressed anxiety about the availability of kits for checking the antibody level in the plasma of a recovered person, the transfusion process itself is not very complicated. It requires separation of the plasma from whole blood, through a machine and then transfusion. The kit to check antibody level, though, is not available in India and has to be brought from Germany.

What is the position of other countries on such therapy?

The United States FDA said on April 8: "FDA has issued guidance to provide recommendations to health care providers and investigators on the administration and study of investigational convalescent plasma collected from individuals who have recovered from COVID-19 (COVID-19 convalescent plasma) during the public health emergency... Because COVID-19 convalescent plasma has not yet been approved for use by FDA, it is regulated as an investigational product."

In a study last last month in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, Chinese researchers reported about a pilot convalescent plasma therapy in 10 patients. They reported: "all symptoms in the 10 patients, especially fever, cough, shortness of breath, and chest pain, disappeared or largely improved within 1 d to 3 d upon CP transfusion. Prior to CP treatment, three patients re-

BREAKDOWN BY OCCUPATION, MOST VULNERABLE FIRST

Number of

URBAN INDIA

ceived mechanical ventilation, three received high-flow nasal cannula oxygenation, and two received conventional low-flow nasal cannula oxygenation. After treatment with CP, two patients were weaned from mechanical ventilation to high-flow nasal cannula, and one patient discontinued high-flow nasal cannula. Besides, in one patient treated with conventional nasal cannula oxygenation, continuous oxygenation was shifted to intermittent oxygenation." Most importantly, they reported, no adverse effects were observed.

When has convalescent plasma therapy been tried before?

It has been tried for several diseases, most recently for Ebola. The WHO had issued a detailed guidance document for its use in the wake of the Ebola outbreak, to be used as an "empirical treatment modality". "While there is no proven treatment available for Ebola virus disease (EVD), whole blood collected from patients in the convalescent phase of infection has been used as an empirical treatment with promising results in a small group of EVD cases. During the current ongoing EVD outbreak, whole blood and plasma collected from EVD recovered patients has been prioritized for investigation, as one of the treatment modalities. The concept that this treatment could be efficacious is biologically plausible, as convalescent plasma has been used successfully for the treatment of a variety of infectious agents,'

reads the WHO document.

RURAL INDIA

% of

Number of

NATURE OF

REQUIRED

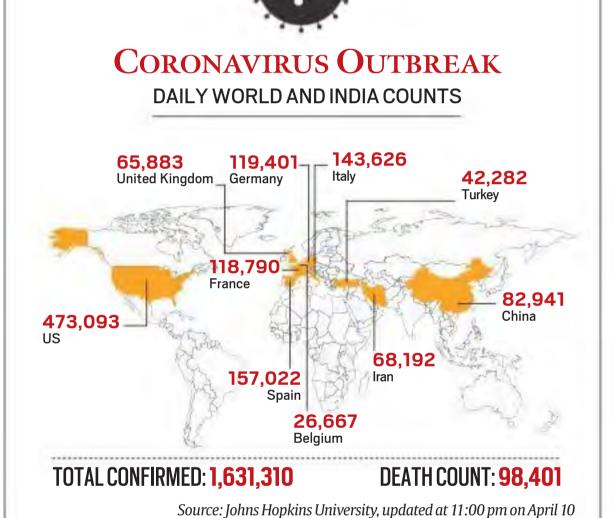
EXPERTS EXPLAIN

Loss of income: ground-up assessment of recovery support to households

Based on household-level data on occupation and income, a calculation for helping citizens get to their feet

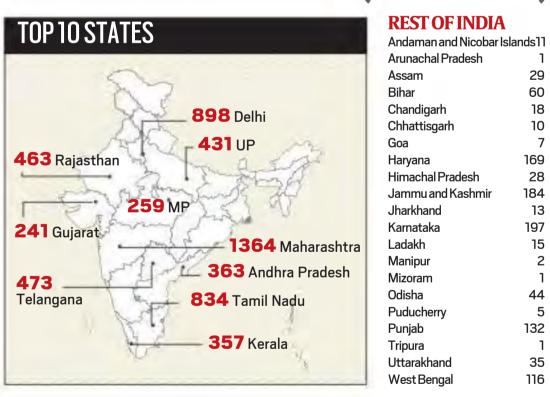
OCCUPATION MAINLY CONTRIBUTING

TO HOUSEHOLD INCOME

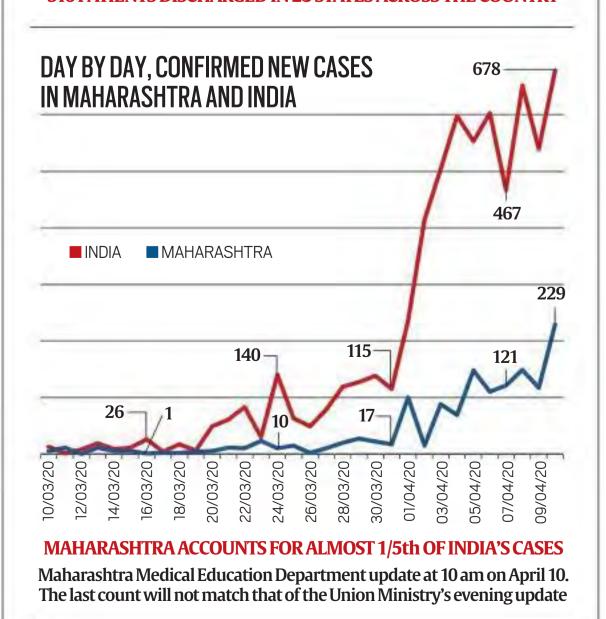


INDIA COUNT:

6761 (206 DEATHS)



Union Health Ministry update as of 11 pm. April 10. Some states may have reported higher numbers. Only states with the most cases are listed above. 516 PATIENTS DISCHARGED IN 23 STATES ACROSS THE COUNTRY



Have a question on the COVID-19 outbreak and what you should/should not do?

Write to explained@indianexpress.com

RAMA BIJAPURKAR & RAJESH SHUKLA

THIS COLUMN offers a 'people view' household-level data — of Indian households to feed into the ongoing macro-level discussion about the right level of financial support needed to help citizens get to their feet following the loss of income caused by the lockdown, and where it should be deployed.

Presented here is a ground-up calculation based on what categories of jobs and job arrangements mainly contribute to the income of households, and what that actual income level is.

Macro-level discussions are based on a broadbrush understanding of occupation large swathes of informality, agriculture dependence and migrants. We base our assessment on a more specific map of occupation and income level by town class for urban, and district development level for rural areas.

The data comes from our pan-Indian study, the ICE 360 database, 2016 and 2018, on how Indian households earn, spend, save, live, and access public goods.

Occupations & vulnerability

In the accompanying table, occupation categories are described and arranged in decreasing order of vulnerability based on the nature of work and income level; the table shows how large, how dominant, and how vulnerable or "at risk" each occupation category is, separately for urban and rural India.

We measure vulnerability by what percentage of households in each category fall into the bottom 40% of income earners, separately for urban/rural. We chose 40% to define the vulnerable

instead of the conventional definition of bottom 20% because our work shows that this entire group has very little cushion between income and expenditure even in good times; it's always touch-and-go for them. The poorest 20% don't manage to meet

even their routine expenditure required for day-to-day living, while the 20% above them have a slim margin in good times often destroyed by health or social emergencies or Row 1 of the table shows the most vulnerable group by far of 91 million house-

holds, dependent on casual labour, a quarter of all urban Indian and a third of all rural Indian households, largely low-income. Two months of income support at the

lower end of the group's earning level of Rs 10,000 in tier 3 and tier 4 towns, and Rs 8,500 in the less developed districts of rural, adds up to Rs 1.62 lakh crore - 0.85% of GDP.

Next most vulnerable are petty trader (hawkers, street vendors) households (row 2 of table), for whom one month's income support can also fund inventory, which they can start rotating.

% of **SUPPORT** households; category households; category % of total % of total who are who are urban low rural low households households income income Casual labour — daily wage / piece 23.7 mn 80 67 mn rate (eg construction, cleaning, 25% 36% months' income loading, agricultural labour) 47 33 Petty trader / hawker/ street vendor 6 mn 4.5 mn with no permanent establishment 6% 2% month's income Individual services providers with 7.3 mn 36 6.8 mn 25 varying degrees of skills (eg 8% 4% month's income only plumber, electrical, *dhobi*, delivery) for lower income Salaried workers, mostly no job 25 mn 27 20 mn Persuade employer to 14 pay OR pay those who contract, grade IV type (eg peon, 26% 11% messenger, security guard, driver, are lower income, office boy, household help, factory) 1 month's income Shop/business owners with 15 mn 27 11.3 mn Business concessions, permanent retail establishments low interest working 17% 6% /registered (eg. contractor, capital loans wholesaler, kirana, tailor, barber) Supervisory / clerical salaried Not required 4.5 mn 1.7 mn workers 1% 4% 3.4 mn Not required Self-employed professionals, 4.4 mn officers/executives 5% 2%

This group earns about as much or as little as casual labour with no U-R difference, and will require Rs 10,500 crore.

Agriculturists

Others who live off remittances.

rent, pension, welfare support

Next are the individual service provider households (row 3 of table) who are reasonably well off. Many have the skills for which pent-up demand already exists (beauticians and electricians for instance).

There is, however, a 30% segment within this occupation category that classifies as low-income, earns only slightly more than labour or petty traders, and needs support. One month of income support to them needs Rs 5,000 crore.

The support bill

The total support bill of Rs 1.78 lakh crore for this core vulnerable group of 10.6 crore households is about 0.92% of GDP. This group is only about one fourth of the Jan Dhan household base of 38.3 crore.

There is another large group of 45 million

salaried work-dependent households, mostly in the informal sector (row 4 of the table), but attached to an employer of sorts.

33

18 mn

8%

52 mn

30%

19

7.3 mn

If the Prime Minister could repeat his plea to the employers of this group to please share and pay full salaries through the lockdown period, it would secure this group - the "India 2" that shapes our cities, and is a big enabler of "India 1".

Most of them are fairly well off in large towns and rural areas, but with a small lower income segment equally distributed between small town urban and less developed rural. One month's income support to this segment at the casual labour rate amounts to Rs 8,250 crore.

In our assessment, all told, the total onetime income support bill, assuming lifting of the lockdown as planned, amounts to about Rs 1.86 lakh crore, or about 1% of GDP.

What of small shop and micro business

owners (row 5 of the table), who are hurt-

expenses? They are better aided through business

ing with no revenue, and who have fixed

Not required, no

income loss

Other support

mechanisms in place

concessions or directed small ticket 'working capital' lending at rates far lower than what NBFCs would charge for unsecured As rows 6 and 7 of the table show, the se-

cure formally employed salaried group are very small relative to the others and financially well off, more secure, and have a savings cushion. Yet, they get a larger than warranted share of concern as all the talk of job losses and layoffs shows!

Perhaps a change in our vocabulary to replace the word 'jobs' with 'livelihoods' would help us be more in tune with the reality of India.

> (Rama Bijapurkar and Dr Rajesh Shukla are co-founders of think tank and fact tank People Research on India's Consumer Economy)

12 THE OUTBREAK THE WORLD

PANDEMIC WATCH



Volunteers, police stand guard. AP

PAKISTAN

Suspension of domestic, intl flights extended

Islamabad: Pakistan on Friday further extended ban on domestic and international flight operations up to April 21 as the country stepped up efforts to contain the spread of the coronavirus, which has infected 4,695 people in the country, authorities said. The Aviation Ministry extended the ban on the domestic and international flight operations. The ministry in a statement said, "As per the decision of the Government of Pakistan, the suspension of International and Domestic flight operations as effected earlier has been extended up to April 21, Tuesday."

RUSSIA

Moscow at 'peak capacity' due to cases

Moscow: Moscow's hospitals and ambulance service are working at peak capacity after a sharp rise in those hospitalised with serious complications, a senior city official said Friday. The city with more than 12 million residents has the largest outbreak in Russia, with 7,822 confirmed coronavirus cases out of a national total of almost 12,000. The number in Moscow's hospitals has doubled since last week and more than 85 percent of these patients have pneumonia, deputy mayor Anastasia Rakova was quoted as saying on the city virus task force's Telegram account.

FRANCE

50 confirmed cases aboard aircraft carrier

Paris: The French aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle has registered 50 cases of novel coronavirus among the crew, the armed forces ministry said Friday. Three sailors had been evacuated from the vessel to hospital in the Mediterranean port of Toulon as a "precaution". However, none of the crew who tested positive for COVID-19 and remained on board have suffered "worsening health" so far, the ministry added in a statement. The origin of the virus was not yet known but all crew were now wearing face masks.

GHANA

Lockdown extended in key regions

Accra: Ghana will extend a lockdown on the country's two main regions for one week to help contain the spread of coronavirus, the president said. President Nana Akufo-Addo said the two-week restriction on movement around the capital Accra and in the Kumasi area would be prolonged from Monday. "It is important that we stay the course, and bear with the difficulties that come with it," the leader said in a national broadcast late Thursday. "The final result, hopefully, will be freedom from the virus."

Global death toll passes 100,000

Death count in United States crosses 16,500; Number of patients in New York ICUs sees dip for first time

NEW YORK TIMES NEW YORK, APRIL 10

THE NUMBER of confirmed coronavirus cases worldwide has surged past 1.5 million, according to data collected by *The* New York Times and Johns Hopkins University, and the death toll passed a grim milestone. Fatalities crossed 100,000, with the virus detected in at least 177 countries.

The death toll in the United States has surpassed that of Spain, with more than 16,600 fatalities from the virus reported by Friday morning. Only Italy has reported more deaths.

Although some governments are considering easing restrictions, lockdowns are being extended across much of the world heading into the Easter weekend, and policing measures stepped up.

Fewer coronavirus patients in New York State were in intensive-care units on Friday than on Thursday, Governor Andrew M Cuomo said — the first time the figure has fallen. The drop was small: 17 people, to 4,908, from 4,925 yesterday. But it provides an important data point indicating that the curve of infection is flattening, the governor said. A week ago, the number was growing by more than 300 people per day.

The virus continues to take a tremendous number of lives, however. Another 777 people died, Cuomo said, bringing the state's total to 7,844. But he noted that the one-day death toll has been relatively steady the past three days, and that Friday's figure was lower than Thursday's.

"As someone who searches

EU AGREES ON \$550-BILLION **RESCUE PACKAGE**

ON THE economic front. Europe attempted a fightback with EU finance ministers agreeing in late-night talks to a \$550 billion rescue package aimed at reducing pain across the 27-nation bloc. especially hardest-hit Italy and Spain.

EUROPE HAS decided and is ready to meet the gravity of the crisis," French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire tweeted after the talks.

HE WARNED earlier in the day that France's economy was expected to shrink six percent this year, even with the country's own 100billion-euro relief plan

for solace in all this grief, the leveling off in lives lost is a somewhat hopeful sign," he said.

Tokyo's governor parted ways with Japan's national government by requesting the closure of a range of businesses including nightclubs, karaoke bars, gyms and movie theaters — during a state of emergency.

Jakarta, the Indonesian capital, went into a partial lockdown amid fears that the country's underfunded and understaffed health care system could easily be overwhelmed.



DRONE DRIVE: A squad uses a drone to spray disinfectant in the streets of Cannes, in France on Friday. Reuters

UK daily death toll climbs by record 980

AFP&PTI LONDON, APRIL 10

HEALTH SECRETARY Matt Hancock said on Friday that Britain had recorded 980 deaths from coronavirus in the 24-hour period since the last report, the

highest daily toll yet. It brings the total number of fatalities from COVID-19 in UK hospitals to nearly 8,000, while the number of confirmed cases inside the country climbed to more than 65,000.

British Prime Minister Boris Iohnson, who was shifted out of the intensive care unit (ICU) of a

London hospital, has been able

ken to doctors about his to take short walks between peprogress, is thankful for the "inriods of rest during the early credible care" he has been restages of his recovery after testceiving at St. Thomas' Hospital, ing positive for coronavirus, his office said. Downing Street said on Friday.

"The Prime Minister has been Johnson, 55, after having spoable to do short walks, between

Italy eyes

A man

sunbathes

on the roof

London on

Friday. Reuters

of a canal

boat in

periods of rest, as part of the care he is receiving to aid his recovery," a Downing Street spokesperson said. "He has spoken to his doctors

and thanks the whole clinical team for the incredible care he has received. His thoughts are with those affected by this terrible disease," the spokesperson said.

Earlier on Friday, Johnson's father Stanley Johnson said the whole family was "tremendously grateful" that the Prime Minister had been moved out of the ICU, adding that he thinks his son's illness has "got the whole country to realise this is a serious event".

If lockdowns lifted too early, resurgence likely: WHO

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE GENEVA. APRIL 10

A HASTY lifting of restrictions imposed to control the COVID-19 pandemic could lead to a fatal resurgence of the new coronavirus, the World Health Organisation warned on Friday.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said it was working with countries on ways in which lockdowns could be gradually eased, but said doing so too quickly could be dangerous.

"I know that some countries are already planning the transition out of stay-at-home restrictions. WHO wants to see restrictions lifted as much as anyone,' he told a virtual press conference.

"At the same time, lifting restrictions too quickly could lead to a deadly resurgence. The way down can be as dangerous as the way up if not managed properly. Tedros also warned of an

"alarming acceleration" of the virus in some countries, highlighting Africa, where he said the virus was beginning to spread to "We are now seeing clusters

of cases and community spread in more than 16 countries" on the continent, he said.

The WHO also denied having brushed off a Taiwanese warning on human-to-human transmission of the virus soon after its outbreak in China late last year.

The US has accused the body of "putting politics first" by ignoring Taiwan's warning in late December, and thus helping Beijing conceal the pandemic's gravity.

Pandemic has provided window into how bio-terrorist attack might unfold: Guterres

Singapore battles in migrant workers' dorms

Handling of migrant worker

THE MIGRANT worker population is a significant one in

Singapore, which reportedly has a million such work permit

holders from many countries. This makes them a vulnerable

group during the pandemic, as they — unlike white collar for-

which makes social distancing difficult. The handling of these

cases could have considerable influence on the overall fight.

eign employees — live in dormitories in packed conditions

cases may play key role in fight

YOSHITA SINGH UNITED NATIONS, APRIL 10

THE COVID-19 pandemic has provided a "window" into how a bio-terrorist attack might unfold across the world, UN chief Antonio Guterres said, issuing a strong warning that non-state groups could gain access to "virulent strains" that could pose similar devastation to societies around the globe.

"While the COVID-19 pandemic is first and foremost a health crisis, its implications are much more far-reaching. The

KUALA LUMPUR. APRIL 10

AFTER MANAGING to keep on top

of the first wave of coronavirus

outbreaks, Singapore is grappling

with an alarming rise in infections

among migrant workers housed

nearly half of them staying in

close contact in such dormito-

ries, have tested positive, the

Indian High Commission here

Indian High Commissioner

About 250 Indians, with

in crowded dormitories.

said on Friday.

AP&PTI

pandemic also poses a significant threat to the maintenance of international peace and security — potentially leading to an increase in social unrest and violence that would greatly undermine our ability to fight the disease," Guterres said.

"The weaknesses and lack of preparedness exposed by this pandemic provide a window onto how a bio-terrorist attack might unfold – and may increase its risks. Non-state groups could gain access to virulent strains that could pose similar devastation to societies around the globe," he said. PTI

UNSC CALLS FOR UNITY, SOLIDARITY

United Nations: The UN Security Council underlined the need for unity and solidarity with those affected by the COVID-19 and expressed support for the efforts of Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on the potential impact of the pandemic.

Guterres stressed that the engagement of the council will be critical to mitigate the peace and security implications. "Indeed, a signal of unity and resolve from the

Such cases of migrant work-

ers now account for about a

quarter of Singapore's 1.910 in-

Council would count for a lot at this anxious time," he said.

"To prevail against the pandemic, we will need to work together. That means heightened solidarity," he said.

He said he is concerned the pandemic threatens to further erode trust in public institutions, "particularly if citizens perceive that their authorities mishandled the response or are not transparent on the scope of the crisis." **PTI**

workers' dormitories.

Prime Minister Lee has com-

mended the hard work put in by

foreign workers and assured

them of doing his best to take

care of their needs. "If any of

their family members watch my

video, let me say this to them:

We appreciate the work and

contributions of your sons, fa-

thers, husbands in Singapore.

We feel responsible for their

well-being," said Lee on Friday.

lockdown extension to May 3

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE ROME, APRIL 10

PRIME MINISTER Giuseppe Conte was reportedly ready Friday to extend most measures of Italy's month-long lockdown until early May in order to avoid a second coronavirus wave. Italy's main newspapers said

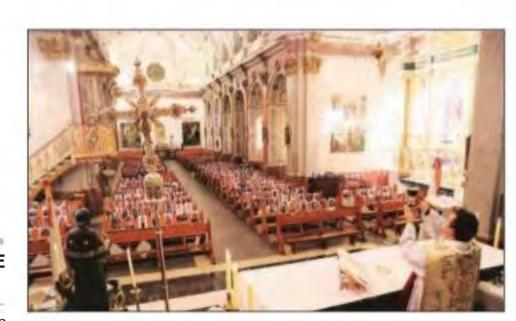
Conte will published a decree either Friday or Saturday prohibiting people from taking walks or lounging in parks until May 3. The reported decision fol-

lowed days of consultations with government scientists and regional leaders. Italy's death toll fections. The government refrom the novel coronavirus has ported 287 new cases Thursday. officially reached 18,279 since its biggest daily jump. More than the end of February, the highest 200 were linked to the foreign in the world. The Corriere della Serra

newspaper said Conte will bow to growing pressure and allow a tiny number of businesses to reopen when the existing restrictions expire on April 13.

It will represent "a small, cautious, symbolic opening," the Corriere della Serra wrote.

"We do not have the conditions to restart thing now," Conte reportedly told union and business leaders on Thursday.



Holy Week mass in a village near Valencia in Spain. Reuters

European nations bolster lockdown amid Easter

AGENCIES APRIL 10

AS AN extended Easter weekend in much of Europe threatened to derail efforts to maintain social distancing measures, police departments across the continent stepped up enforcement efforts.

The coronavirus death toll curve in Spain flattened further on Friday as the government discussed different strategies to start phasing out one of the world's strictest lockdowns. "Any step towards de-escala-

tion of such an intense lockdown must be done with extreme caution," Deputy Prime Minister Pablo Iglesias told a local channel.

In France, where sunny weather is expected over the

weekend, the police were increasing checks to dissuade people from flouting the restrictions on movement.

With the uncharacteristically warm weather, a growing number of places, like the city of Saint-Etienne, are following Paris's lead in banning or limiting physical activity like jogging or running.

Britain, which is expecting sunshine throughout much of the weekend, ramped up efforts to halt travel, with police warning potential visitors to stay away.

Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany cautioned people not to give in to the temptation to roam outside and congregate. "We can't be reckless," she said at a news conference on Thursday. "We can't allow ourselves to be lulled into a false sense of security."

'PEOPLE WERE WOUNDED AND CAME BACK TO THE BATTLEFIELD'

Rising from sickbeds, COVID-19 medics head back to frontlines

ASSOCIATED PRESS PARIS. APRIL 10

"BE STRONG, mum, we really love you," is what Dr Aurelie Gouel's kids tell the ICU physician when she sets off for long hospital shifts trying to save critically ill coronavirus patients.

Although aged just 4 and 6, Gouel's children are acutely aware of how dangerous the disease can be not only because their mother has briefed them but also because she is among the more than 1.6 million people worldwide who have fallen sick.

Tell-tale symptoms — fever,

cough, intense fatigue, difficulty breathing — floored Gouel in March. "It was very tough for three, four days," she told *The* Associated Press. But as soon as she felt well enough, she plunged straight back to work at her Paris hospital that treated Europe's first fatal case.

Jawed Ashraf told PTI that almost

all Indians who have the disease

are mostly stable or improving.

"It was quite frustrating being at home and seeing how badly the hospitals needed help," the 38-year-old said.

"We were trained for this,"

she added. "The world needs us." "It's a bit like what happened in the First World War. People were wounded and came back to the battlefield," said Dr Philippe



At an emergency COVID-19 centre near Paris on Friday. Reuters

Montravers, head of anaesthesiology and critical care at Bichat

Hospital in Paris. The hospital treated the 80-year-old Chinese

tourist who in mid-February became the first person outside Asia to die from COVID-19. "They feel ... very guilty stay-

ing at home," Montravers said. Health workers hope that

those among them who recovered and are returning to hospitals are now armed not only with a deeper, more personal understanding of the virus but also with some degree of immunity.

"It helps a lot for them to return to work, and especially for them to return with immunisation. That's really fantastic because it takes away the fear that we have for a second wave of infections," said Dr Julio Mayol,

Carlos Clinic Hospital in Madrid. Nearly 15% of its 1,400 staffers have been infected.

medical director of the San

In Italy, those back on duty include Elena Pagliarini, a nurse who was photographed before her diagnosis slumped exhausted next to a computer key-

board, an image that came to symbolise the plight of the worst-hit country, with more than 18.000 dead. Gouel also says the possibility of immunity reassured her when

"If there are things that need

she went back to dealing with the you," she said. crush of patients. "I feel that I'm now a durable strength," she said.

they also understand that her drive to fight it means she can't always be with them. "They give me a kiss and say, 'Be strong, mum, we really love

to be done with heavily infected

patients, things that are risky, I'm

easier with me doing them, rather

than my colleagues." Despite be-

ing "very worried" when she was

sick, Gouel's husband supported

her rapid return to work, she said.

all about the coronavirus, that it is serious and people die of it,'

And although her kids "know

"Even though they are small, they know that my rightful place is with the sick."

ECONOMY



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TO COUNTER LOCKDOWN EFFECT



₹38,100

SENSEX: 31,159.62 ▲ 1265.66 NIFTY: 9,111.90 ▲ 363.15 NIKKEI: 19,498.50 ▲ 152.73 HANG SENG: 24,300.33 ▲ 329.96 FTSE: 5,842.66 ▲ 164.93 DAX: 10,564.74 ▲ 231.85

TECHNOLOGY WATCH **INTERNET NEWS**

French competition watchdog tells Google to pay news cos for sharing their content

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, APRIL 10

IN A major fillip to the press and news wire agencies, the French competition regulator announced on Thursday that Google must start paying media for sharing their content, as its practices had caused serious harm to the press sector. The French regulator, in a statement, said it has asked the internet giant to "negotiate with publishers and news agencies the remuneration due to them under the law relating to neighbouring rights for the re-use of their protected contents".

The order is an interim decision, and the regulator is yet to decide if Google has actually breached competition rules of France. Though the order is only for the French press, it has global ramifications for Google and the press, as it can set a legal precedent and shape the discourse around the economics of news on the net.

Autorité de la concurrence, the French competition regulator, ordered "interim measures" and found that "Google's practices on the occasion of the entry into force of the neighbouring rights law were likely to constitute an abuse of a dominant position, and caused serious and immediate harm to the press sector".

"It, thus, requires Google, within three months, to conduct negotiations in good faith with publishers and news agencies on the remuneration for the re-use of their protected contents. This negotiation must retroactively cover the fees due as of the entry into force of the law on 24 October

2019," the regulator ordered. Google stated it will comply with the order. "Since the European Copyright law came into force in France last year, we have been engaging with publishers to increase our support and investment in news. We will comply with the (French Competition Authority's) order while we review it and continue those negotiations," Richard Gingras, vice president of News, Google, said.

BRIEFLY

G20 finance

ministers to

meet on Apr 15

New Delhi: Finance Minister

Nirmala Sitharaman and RBI

Governor Shaktikanta Das

will on April 15 participate

in the meeting of the G20

countries to discuss the

way forward in supporting

the economy after the

COVID-19 pandemic.

FINAL DECISION YET TO BE TAKEN

■Though only for the French press, the order could have global ramifications

■ The regulator is yet to take a final decision if Google has actually breached France's competition rules

The internet behemoth has also been asked by the regulator to file "monthly reports on how it is complying with the decision". Noting that Google holds a dominant position, the regulator stated that "Google may have abused its dominant position in the market for general search services by imposing unfair trading conditions on publishers and news agencies".

It further said: "Google's practices caused a serious and immediate harm to the press sector, while the economic situation of publishers and news agencies is otherwise fragile, and while the law aimed on the contrary at improving the conditions of remuneration they derive from content produced by journalists."

Google's dominant position leads it to bring significant traffic to the websites, which is "very important and crucial for publishers and news agencies who cannot afford to lose any share of their digital readership due to their economic difficulties". It also noted that Google's behaviour deprives publishers and news agencies of vital resources.

The neighbouring rights law that came into force July 24, 2019 "aims to set the conditions for a balanced negotiation between publishers, news agencies and digital platforms, in order to redefine, in favour of press publishers and news agencies, the sharing of the value between these actors". A complaint had been filed last November by several press publisher unions in France and news agency Agence France-Presse against Google.

NO INDICATION YET FROM GOVT ON MORATORIUM TO NBFCs

NBFCs stare at liquidity woes as banks offer them no moratorium

Total bank loan outstandings to NBFC sector were ₹7,37,198 crore as of January 31

GEORGE MATHEW MUMBAI. APRIL 10

BANKS ARE sticking to their position of not offering any moratorium on term loans taken by non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), though the RBI has asked NBFCs to offer moratorium on loans taken by their customers, putting significant pressure on liquidity profiles of many such companies.

The total bank loan outstandings to the NBFC sector — which was already facing liquidity problem – were Rs 7,37,198 crore as of January 31, showing a rise of 32.2 per cent on a year-onvear basis.

While collections are falling steeply in the wake of the lockdown, closure of units and job losses, an estimated Rs 1.75 lakh crore debt obligation of NBFCs will mature by June.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had asked banks, co-operative banks and NBFCs to offer three-month moratorium on loan repayments by their customers in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and the nationwide lockdown. However, banks have refused to give the same facility to NBFCs which have taken huge loans from the banking sector.

"A significant part of money disbursed by NBFCs is loan taken



FOLLOWING THE DHFL and IL&FS crises, the key challenge for NBFCs would be to tide over the lockdown crisis. They will have to tackle the likelihood of a sharp deterioration in the delinquency levels and repayment of bank loans amid the three-month moratorium.

While the lockdown implemented to contain the spread of COVID-19, may be gradually removed over the next few weeks, the impact on the businesses of the selfemployed and SME borrowers is likely to be severe, posing challenges for NBFCs.

from banks. It's true that the RBI has not specifically said NBFCs should not be given moratorium by banks. But banks have not extended the facility to NBFCs. The RBI has also not clarified its position on the NBFC moratorium," said a banking source.

While NBFCs — hit hard by the IL&FS and DHFL crises have taken up the moratorium issue with banks, the RBI and the Finance Ministry, they have not received any favourable decision so far. Industry chamber Assocham had proposed a special liquidity window for NBFCs, but the banking regulator has not shown any inclination so far. While a few banks are inclined

to offer moratorium on NBFC loans, some of the big banks have ruled out any such facility and the RBI and the government have not given any indication till today, said a source.

The central bank has made available Rs 1 lakh crore through its targeted long-term repo operations (TLTRO) window. However, only half of that is earmarked for primary issuances.

Moreover, an expected scramble for funds means corporates and government-owned financiers will also be interested in this window. Consequently, only higher rated NBFCs may end up benefiting.

According to a Crisil report,

with collections minimal and the moratorium only for their borrowers, raising fresh funds is critical, especially because NBFCs, unlike banks, do not have access to systemic sources of liquidity and depend significantly on wholesale funding. The rating agency said that

liquidity pressure will increase for nearly a quarter of NBFCs if collections do not pick up by June. These NBFCs have Rs 1.75 lakh crore of debt obligations maturing by then, it added.

In a report, Acuité Ratings & Research said, "While we can presume that most banks will provide back to back moratorium, there is no indication that it will be applicable for the nonbank lenders or investors, unless there are specific bilateral arrangements."

This implies that the bondholders, commercial paper investors and also fixed deposit holders (applicable for deposit taking NBFCs) in all likelihood, will insist on maintaining the existing repayment schedule, the agency said.

Almost 60 per cent of NBFC borrowings are from non-bank sources and require continuity in debt servicing. With minimal collections, NBFCs can only depend on their cash reserves and any backup credit lines from banks, if available for servicing such debt.

<50%: PERCENTAGE OF

ORGANISATIONS PREPARED

UNPRECEDENTED CRISIS

CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

TO MANAGE THE

CAUSED BY THE

EPFO contribution waiver: FAQs issued on eligibility of employees

\$26.15

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU NEW DELHI, APRIL 10

AN EMPLOYEE whose monthly wage is below Rs 15,000, universal account number (UAN) is seeded with Aadhaar, and who has a contributory member of EPF scheme and Employees' Pension Scheme (EPS) for any period between September 2019 to February 2020, will be eligible for the 24 per cent contribution waiver for March, April, and May under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana, the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) said in a set of FAQs released Friday.

Under the scheme, announced to counter the lockdown due to COVID-19, the 24 per cent contribution waiver (12 per cent for employers and employees each) will be for an establishment or a factory already covered and registered under the EPF Act, having up to 100 total number of employees, with 90 per cent or more of such employees drawing monthly wages less than Rs 15,000.

The eligible establishment under the scheme will have to disburse wages for all employees and file an Electronic Challan-cum-Return (ECR), which after verification will show the amount of employees' and employers' contributions due as central government relief.

After the employer makes the payments, the EPF and EPS contributions will be credited in the UANs of the eligible employees of the establishment by the Centre,

The EPFO will send communication to such eligible establishments for payment of wages to employees and filing of ECR, it added. "The central government shall bear the entire liability towards the EPF & EPS contributions of the eligible employees in the eligible establishment. The employer of eligible establishments shall continue to pay the EDLI contributions and EPF administrative charges for all employees as well as the EPF & EPS contributions for ineligible employees," an EPFO statement said.

An eligible employee under the scheme who is a member of the EPF scheme but not a member of EPS due to attaining the age of 58 years will also be eligible under the scheme, it said.

"So, there will be no deduction from wages of eligible employee so he/she will have a higher take home salary. Since the employer is also supported for employer's share by the government, it prevents loss of employment of low wage earners and ensures payment of wages to employees," the statement added.

Under the EPF scheme, employees and employers have to contribute an equal amount of 12 per cent of the employees' basic salary plus dearness allowance. From the employer's EPF contribution, 8.33 per cent is marked for EPS and the remaining to the PF account of the employer. The EPS component is subject to a wage cap of Rs 15,000, or actual basic pay, whichever is lower.

'Fall in productivity biggest concern among many firms'

Around 72 per cent of organisations feel that the impact of COVID-19 will be felt beyond six months, EY said in its report 'HR resilience planning: COVID-19 impact and preparedness'



70%: SHARE OF SURVEYED ORGANISATIONS THAT BELIEVE THE BIGGEST **CONCERN FOR CONTINUED** REMOTE WORKING IS FALL IN **PRODUCTIVITY**

>70%: Share of surveyed organisations that are moving to virtual methods of recruitment, with emerging technologies like Al, robotic process automation and machine learning leading this change

<35%: Share of organisations that are prepared if the crisis escalates

<10%: Percentage of organisations that have undertaken contingency and scenario planning

~87%: Share of respondents that currently have travel restrictions in place in addition to the mandated ones

55%: Percentage of respondents that foresee medium-to-significant impact on employee cost

22%: Share of organisations that are thinking of manpower optimisation in short term (maintaining an employeecentric view)

Source: EY/PTI

With \$2.2 bn immediate assistance, ADB chief assures FM of support

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU NEW DELHI, APRIL 10

ASIAN DEVELOPMENT Bank (ADB) president Masatsugu Asakawa Friday assured Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman of \$2.2-billion financial support to India in its fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. "ADB is committed to supporting India's emergency needs. We are now preparing \$2.2 billion in immediate assistance to the health sector and to help alleviate the economic impact of the pandemic on the poor; informal workers; micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises; and the financial sector," he said.

ADB is also engaged with the private sector to meet its financing needs during this period, the bank said. "ADB assistance for India will be further increased if needed. We will consider all financing options available with us to meet India's needs, including emergency assistance, policybased loans, and budget support to facilitate swift disbursement of ADB funds," Asakawa said in a call with Sitharaman, according to a statement by ADB.

Weakening global economic growth is causing disruptions in India's trade and manufacturing supply chains, along with the slowdown in tourism and other economic activities. This is straining a large number of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises, and the livelihood of formal and informal labourers across the country, ADB said. Asakawa said the policy meas-

ures announced by the government will provide much-needed relief and stimulus to the most vulnerable people as well as businesses, and become a basis for

faster recovery. The Centre had announced a national health emergency programme, tax compliance and other relief measures provided to businesses, as well as a Rs 1.7 lakh crore economic relief package on March 26 to provide immediate income and consumption support to the poor, women, and workers affected by the threeweek nationwide lockdown.

Last week, banks started depositing Rs 500 per month into Jan Dhan accounts of each of the women beneficiaries under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana. A total of 20.40 crore women account holders are expected to benefit from the government's plan to provide three monthly instalments of Rs 500 each. The Centre would spend Rs 31,000 crore for this purpose.

On March 18, ADB announced an initial package of approximately \$6.5 billion to address the immediate needs of its developing member countries including India, as they respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Earlier this month, the World Bank said it had approved an initial \$1.9 billion in emergency funds for coronavirus response operations in 25 developing countries, with more than half the aid earmarked to help fight COVID-19 in India. It had also said it was working to redeploy resources in existing financed projects worth up to \$1.7 billion.

FB sues Indian techie for fake news on virus New York: Facebook has filed

a lawsuit against Basant Gajjar, an Indian whose company LeadCloak pushed deceptive advertisements and misinformation about coronavirus outbreak on social media platforms by bypassing its advertising review process. **PTI**

ICSI donates ₹5.25 crore to **PM-CARES**

New Delhi: Following up on a contribution of Rs 25 lakh from its employees and against coronavirus. **ENS**

MCA SUGGESTS MANDATORY JOINT AUDITS FOR LARGE COS AND SETTING UP INDEPENDENT PANEL TO PICK AUDITORS Industry opposes proposal on joint audits, appointment panel

KARUNJITSINGH NEW DELHI, APRIL 10

TOP AUDIT firms and India Incare in lockstep in opposing mandatory joint audits for large companies and an independent panel for appointment of auditors for large companies by an independent panel, two suggestions floated in a consultation paper by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA).

The Indian Express has learnt that the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) has, however, supported the idea of mandatory joint audits and an independent panel to appoint auditors in its submission to the MCA.

The Ministry had invited comments on the above proposal as

well as on a proposal to limit the number of partners per audit firm, causing major concerns at the four big audit firms, Deloitte, KPMG, EY and PricewaterhouseCoopers, The Indian Express has learnt. The consultation paper also proposed barring auditors of large corporates from providing any non-audit services to their clients to avoid conflict of interest.

The MCA recently strengthened the reporting requirements for auditors as part of a drive to boost corporate governance, after major corporate failures at companies such as IL&FS and DHFL.

Leaders at top auditing firms said there was little evidence of mandated joint audits leading to better audit quality internationally. "Joint audits create an issue of

The ICAI has, however, supported mandatory joint audits and an independent panel to appoint auditors in its submission to the MCA

a lack of accountability. There is a risk of some issues falling between the cracks," said a partner at a leading audit firm who requested anonymity, adding that many other countries had considered and rejected joint audits as a measure to improve audit quality.

Another partner at a leading audit firm said, "It is important to leave the decision to appoint an auditor with an audit committee

as an independent panel may not have the necessary expertise to appoint the right auditor," adding that increased transparency in the functioning of a audit committee was a better solution. "The Centre should consider requiring audit committees to make greater disclosures on the selection process for auditors," said the person.

In its comments, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) said mandating joint audits for larger companies would "not help improve audit quality, but would result in increased cost." It also said that appointment of auditors be left to the company like all critical decisions.

A source aware of developments said that ICAI had recommended the implementation of an independent panel to appoint auditors, but noted that the panel may face issues in assessing auditors appropriate for a variety of companies.

A partner at another top audit firm said that the proposal to limit the number of partners in a firm was retrograde and the government needed to take steps to promote the merger of smaller firms into larger firms. ICAI, too, has opposed the proposal to limit the number of partners in a single firm according to sources.

Leading auditors have also opposed the proposal to increase the number of non-audit services that auditors would be barred from providing to audit clients to avoid a conflict interest, stating that current provisions were sufficient.

Mexico says Trump agreed to

help it meet global oil cut target 400,000 barrels per day (bpd), before the group lowered the target to 350,000 bpd, Lopez Obrador, who has made increasing oil out-

> stabilize prices are likely to provide some relief to US shale producers, some of which risk being pushed out of the market unless

Contribution to PM-CARES to be in Form 16 TDS certificate

PRESSTRUSTOFINDIA NEW DELHI, APRIL 10

EMPLOYERS WILL have to show donation made by employees from their salary to PM-CARES fund in Form 16 TDS certificate the Income Tax Department has stated.

Donations made to the Prime

Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations (PM-CARES) Fund are eligible for 100 per cent deduction u/s 80G of Income-tax Act, the Central Board of Direct Taxes said in a notice.

members, the Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) on Friday said it has made another contribution of Rs 5 crore from its corpus to the PM-CARES Fund, to support the fight

New Delhi: Bank credit growth decelerated to an over fivedecade low of 6.14 per cent in the fiscal ended March 31, 2020, amid a faltering economy, lower demand and risk aversion among

Bank credit growth

low of 6.14% in FY20

slumps to over 5-decade

banks, RBI data showed. Bank advances growth in FY20 was the slowest since the fiscal ended March 1962, when loans had grown by 5.38 per cent.

In the week ended March 27. 2020, advances stood at Rs 103.71 lakh crore as against Rs 97.71 lakh crore as on March 29, 2019, according to data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

"The economy during the year was weak which led to demand slowdown. Also, there was higher risk aversion among banks," Fitch Ratings Director (Financial Institutions) Saswata Guha said. The country's economic

growth slowed to a near sevenyear low of 4.7 per cent in October-December 2019 compared to 5.1 per cent in the second quarter and 5.6 per cent in the first quarter of the current fiscal. Guha said one has to see the June quarter numbers, when the impact of COVID-19 on the overall economy will be visible. **PTI**

Raghuram Rajan, 11 others named to IMF advisory group **LALITKJHA**

WASHINGTON, APRIL 10

IMF MD Kristalina Georgieva on Friday named former RBI governor Raghuram Rajan and 11 others to her external advisory group to provide perspectives from around the globe on key developments and policy issues, including responses to the exceptional challenges the world now faces due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Rajan, 57, is currently working as a professor at the prestigious University of Chicago. PTI

REUTERS MEXICO CITY, APRIL 10

"generously" agreed to cut American oil output by an additional 250,000 barrels per day to help Mexico contribute to global reductions, his Mexican counterpart said on Friday. During marathon talks Thursday inside the OPEC+ group, oil producers resolved to make cuts equivalent to around 10 per cent of global supplies, but Mexico balked at the initiative.

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump has

Speaking at a regular news conference, President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said



the OPEC headquarters in Vienna, Austria. Reuters

Mexico, which is an OPEC ally, had been pressed to make cuts of

ministration, said Trump had spoken to him on Thursday and offered to help before Mexico announced it would cut output by 100,000 barrels per day. The White House did not immediately reply to a request for comment on Lopez Obrador's remarks. Global production cuts that

put one of the priorities of his ad-

prices recover.



Let's say the NBA comes back without fans. Once you play one game without fans, you will adjust to not having fans there."

MAGIC JOHNSON NBA LEGEND

Tokyo Games 2021, feels CEO

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE TOKYO, APRIL 10

AS THE coronavirus spreads in Japan, the chief executive of the Tokyo Games said Friday he can't guarantee the postponed Olympics will be staged next year — even with a 16-month delay. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe issued an emergency declaration this week to battle the virus, putting the country under restrictions after it seemed it had avoided the spread. "I don't think anyone would be able to say if it is going to be possible to get it under control by next July or not," Tokyo organising committee CEO Toshiro Muto said at a news conference conducted remotely.

"We're certainly not in a position to give you a clear answer." The Olympics were postponed last month with a new opening set for July 23, 2021, followed by the Paralympics on

Abe has been criticised for being slow to act against the coronavirus. Opposition political leaders have suggested he downplayed the severity of the virus and have said it may have been tied to wanting to hold the Olympics this year. "We have made the decision to postpone the games by one year," Muto added.

"So this means that all we can do is work hard to prepare for the games. We sincerely hope that come next year mankind will manage to overcome the coronavirus crisis." Muto was asked if there are alternative plans to 2021. 'Rather than think about alternatives plans. we should put in all of our effort," he said.

"Mankind should bring together all of its technology and wisdom to work hard so they can develop treatments, medicines and vaccines." Japan has reported about 5.000 cases and 100 deaths. The country has the world's oldest population, and COVID-19 can be especially serious for the elderly.

Muto was asked several times about the added costs of postponing, which has been estimated by Japanese media at between \$2 billion-\$6 billion. He said it was too soon to know the price tag and who would pay.

He also acknowledged that Tokyo Olympic organizers had taken out insurance. Tokyo 2020 has taken out several insurance policies," he said. "But whether the postponement of the games qualifies as an event that is covered is not clear vet."

Tokyo Games doubtful even in Hockey skating on thin ice

With superpowers struggling financially and leagues suspended, the sport is treading an uncertain phase

MIHIR VASAVDA NEW DELHI, APRIL 10

ON APRIL 2, one of Netherlands' biggest clubs, Tilburg, suspended payments for their staff and coaches, among the first sides in the hockey world to take such a measure since the outbreak of the coronavirus. The club, in

its defence, said hundreds of thousands were lost in revenue after the season was abruptly stopped and the expenses kept mounting. In Australia, too, it has emerged that the salaries of coaches have been held up and the

clubs were refunding the registration fees to their members, according to *The Reverse* Stick podcast. Hockey has never been a big sport money-wise. For most nations, save for coun-

tries like India, Netherlands and Australia to some extent, it's a hand-to-mouth existence. Now, with top nations struggling, combined with the current fragile situation of the International Hockey Federation (FIH) and an uncertain future, it is feared that the sport could be headed for a tumultuous period. "Like for every company, all sports insti-

tutions, international federations, clubs, leagues... we will also be impacted. The question is, by how much? That is difficult to say right now not knowing when this crisis will end," FIH CEO Theiry Weil says. Weil was FIFA's marketing director dur-

ing the previous global recession, in 2008. Back then, he says, there was one major difference: "At least the matches were taking place." Right now, FIH's flagship tournament, the Pro League, has been suspended till July. On Friday, New Zealand called off their tour to India next month, where they were scheduled to play two matches. Weil says they will wait till mid-August to

see if a part of the season can be salvaged. "In September, a lot of domestic seasons start. So after mid-August, it doesn't make sense to continue (with Pro League). Then we might have to stop 2020 season and look forward to plan the new season in 2021," Weil says. That could result in the FIH having to re-

turn the sponsors and broadcasters their money, leading to a loss in revenue since the tournament isn't insured. For the FIH, which according to *The Hockey Paper* suffered a loss



While Indian hockey teams have so far remained unaffected in terms of financial losses following the outbreak of coronavirus, top countries like Australia and Netherlands have taken a massive hit. File

of £590,000 last year, could be a massive blow. To compound their woes, the postponement of the Tokyo Games means that International Olympic Committee could freeze the payment they are entitled to receive every four years.

The sports are divided in five categories, and each international federation receives money depending on their audience and size, with those in top-most bracket receiving around \$40 million and the lowest getting \$7 million. Weil doesn't reveal the category where hockey belongs but says it is a 'substantial amount." "We are one of those which are depending on that (IOC payout). With the postponement of the Games, this is another open question. (But) I am extremely confident that the IOC will not let down the international federations in that regard," he says.

So far. India has remained unaffected. Most of Hockey India's financial needs are fulfilled

by the government and its primary sponsor. too, is a state government. There have been no indications of a cutback by either the union sports ministry or Odisha, meaning the interest of Indian players and coaches remain protected. But that isn't the case elsewhere.

Leagues suspended

Across Europe, the most dominant region, the leagues have been suspended. There has also been a growing discontent because of the Pro League, with many feeling that the tournament had damaged the continental club hockey. However, with countries likely to feel the pinch of the impending economic crisis, it is speculated that some national federations might not have the funds to stay afloat and participate in events that involve excessive travel.

Weil says the current situation is 'concerning'. "We need to do an assessment... be frank with each other and see who has suffered an extreme loss and cannot participate, maybe, in the next season. Maybe, in two seasons' time they could come back. But today, all this is purely based on speculations," Weil says. In a way, hockey's story encapsulates the

gloomy future a lot of Olympic sports, which are devoid of hefty sponsorship and broadcasting deals, are staring at. Especially at a time when the IOC has been pushing for events that appeal to a larger audience, as well as e-sports.

Weil is under no illusion of the challenge he is facing, but is confident that the sport will turn the tide and remain relevant at the Olympic level. "It will hit us. The question is how big will it hit us," Weil says. "But when the crisis is over, I think hockey will have a future, when we are talking about the sport itself. Leagues will be there, international hockey will be there, maybe stronger than now."

England-Windies series in for a significant delay, reckons Giles

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE LONDON, APRIL 10

ENGLAND CRICKET team chief Ashley Giles has forecast a significant delay to the home series against the West Indies in June should the coronavirus relent sufficiently to allow the three Tests to go ahead. The county championship, comprising four-day matches, was due to start on Sunday but English cricket is shut down until at least May 28, with the expectation of further postponements.

England are meant to play a three-Test series against the West Indies in June, with the opening match at The Oval starting on June 4. But England team director Giles told reporters in a conference call on Thursday: "The deadline of May 28 still stands but it's looking less and less likely that we're going to be out there in June. We have to look at alternatives." Following the visit of the West Indies,

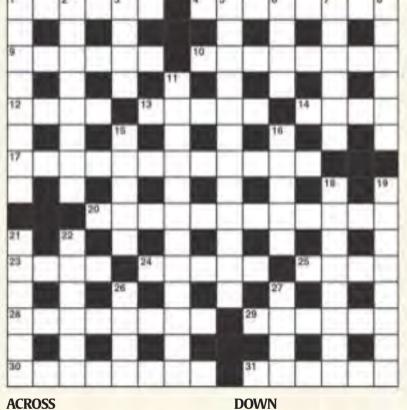
England are meant to play home series against Pakistan, Australia and Ireland as well. "We are looking at scenarios where we can push those matches back as far as possible without losing any cricket," said Giles.

"Whether eventually games start falling off the calendar right now we don't know. If we can't get it all, it's really important we work in partnership with all the other boards to fulfil those fixtures but with a priority on keeping people safe." Meanwhile the former England spinner

said an intra-squad match similar to the one Australia played before last year's Ashes could serve as a warm-up fixture for his side if the season can get underway. With Britain currently in lockdown, players cannot go straight from their homes into the international arena. "From a playing point of view certainly, I think we'll need to play a couple of warm-up games," Giles "They could be behind closed doors, they

could be among England players -- none of us really know until we get there." Following last year's one-day World Cup in England, the Australians played a three-day 12-a-side match at Southampton as their sole warm-up fixture for the Ashes.

CROSSWORD 4089



Highly bred? (6)

- The penalties of strife, perhaps (8)
- It's odd about the taxes (6)
- Bewildering, but delightful John Napier's records? (4)
- Short work for a barrister (5)
- 14 Run away when left in charge
- 17 Soldiers kept permanently
- on their toes? (8,4) Not far from following a
- private hobby (5,7)23 Carry to terrible extremes (4)
- They secure the normal
- shipping rates (5) 25 It gets me back in the
- Attempt to include a

garment as disguise (8)

short supply (6)

newspaper (4) In a European it is courteous

30 An ivory castle, perhaps (8) 31 Many agree it's new and in

mercy(8)Possibly relating to the

Girl belittled is without

- whole (8)Fewer beheaded means
- more jug(4)
- Bound to fight? (2,3,7) Money bringing pleasure to
- many(4)It is suspended when it is
- very cold (6) Fashion design made one's

name(6)

- Honest kind of artisan made records(5,7)
- 15 Though solid in form, they may have fragile footing (5)
- 16 Quick trim (5) 18 Travelling at high speed
- injured a fish (8) 19 Stock reaction to panic (8)
- 21 Make a cat sit still (6)
- 22 Faster form of attack (6)
- 26 Lockers A to G perhaps (4)
- 27 Left the last word to the

- auctioneer (4)

Solutions Crossword 4088: Across: 1 Whist, 4 Netball, 8 Arm, 9 Water polo, 10 Federal, 11 Issue, 13 Really, 15 Errata, 18 Cheat, 19 Orotund, 21 Forgiving, 23 Own, 24 Sleight, 25 Thyme. **Down:** 1 What for, 2 Immediate, 3 Tower, 4 Nettle, 5 Terrier, 6 Ago, 7 Loose, 12 Statutory, 14 Letting, 16 Andante, 17 Soviet, 18 Cuffs, 20 Ought,

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.

The books that ___you the most are those which make you ___the most. - Theodore Parker **ABIOHP**



OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis





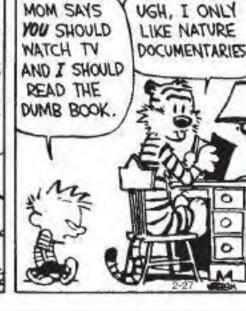


CALVIN & HOBBES by Bill Watterson









MARVIN by Tom Armstrong





Difficulty Level 4s Instructions To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal SUDOKU 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 6 3 9

SOLUTION SUDOKU 4175 5 8

DAY TODAY

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20) Life goes on, and on.

And on. Therefore, please don't be taken in by the thought that today's planetary aspects, reckless and imprudent as they can be, give you any sort of permission to let go or abandon course in mid-stream. Stick with it and you won't regret your determination.

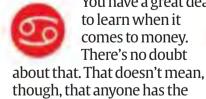
TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21) Venus, your

planetary ruler, now casts a rosy glow over home and family affairs. This is a very useful indication indeed, mainly if you're recovering from recent disagreements. More importantly, after today you'll be able to make up your own mind.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21) It doesn't matter whether you are

considering other people's proposals, or making your own. It's not a question of right or wrong, but of realising that once you have made a final decision you must stick with it. Once today has passed, there will be no going back.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23) You have a great deal



right to take advantage of you. Use this happy time to make a fresh start on a domestic matter or revitalise a family relationship.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23) Three cheers for

mischievous Mercury, which endows you with all your bright ideas. Now is the moment to make up your mind and aim for solid, lasting agreements. You have around seven days to reconsider your plans, in spite of all current distractions.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23) On a superficial level

your chart talks of positive trends around travel, excursions and overseas

contacts. The deeper perspective indicates that you have much to learn from tuning into your dreams. Strangely enough, a day-dream might show you the way forward in an unlikely personal goal.

BY PETER VIDAL

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

Coming events at home will test your bargaining power, not to mention your social skills. The catch? Well,

you need partners' support and approval. But how can you get it? Perhaps you could take a little trouble to find out exactly what they want. Listen carefully to every word.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)

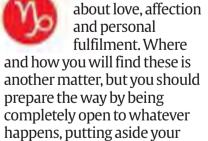
Never again must you allow yourself to be pushed into a corner. For the second day running, the Moon is giving you the chance to mend fences and build bridges. And about time too, you may say! It might be difficult to offer an apology, but the effort

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22) You appear to be searching for

something, but what? Any astrologer will tell you that the purpose of your journey through life is not to arrive, but to travel. Now, as ever, you will find that, having reached a goal,

should be worth it.

it soon ceases to satisfy. CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20) Today's stars are all



AQUARIUS (Jan 21- Feb 19) A great deal of good

prejudices and personal

preconceptions.

should come out of recent dramas. At the very least you should now have a much better idea of who your friends are. You may resolve family and domestic problems as soon as

you have faced up to awkward

possible cash crisis. PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

complicated matters as a

issues involving such

Just how much you owe other people will soon become apparent. Helpful changes at home over the weekend focus on relationships with reluctant people. Maybe you need to work harder at explaining to them just why it's

in their interests to back you all

the way.

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