



FROM JAAN HAI TO JAHAN HAI,
motto now jaan bhi jahaan bhi: Modi

NO FREE INTER-DISTRICT MOVEMENT YET,
Haryana announces three zones

MOST CMs HIGHLIGHT SHORTAGE OF
financial resources, want FRBM relaxed

Two more weeks of lockdown, at least

PM-CM meet: States seek graded easing for economic activity

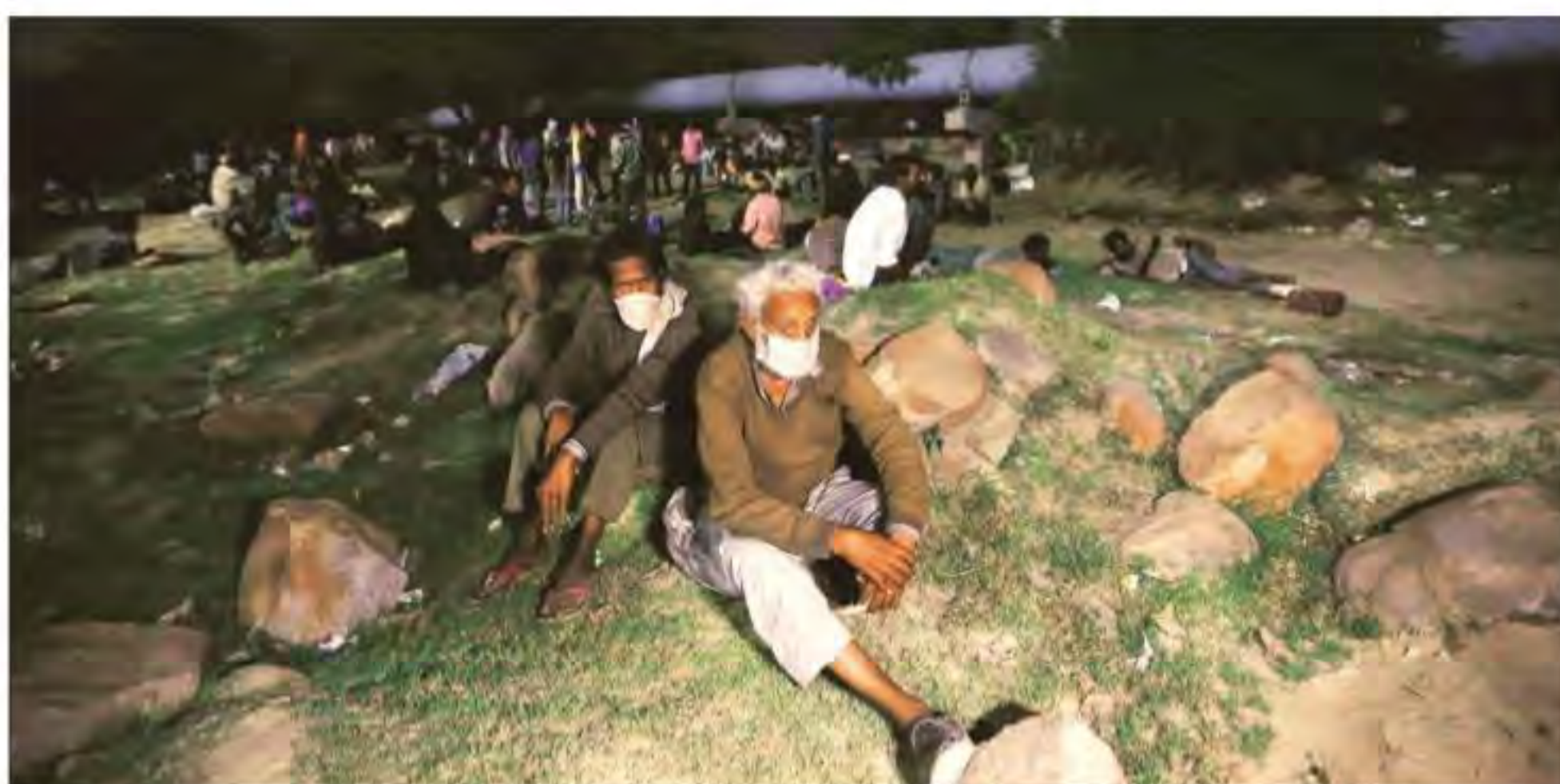
DIPANKAR GHOSE, VARINDER BHATIA, LIZ MATHEW & MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI/CHANDIGARH, APRIL 11

A BROAD consensus that the national lockdown should be extended by at least two weeks till April-end emerged Saturday after an almost four-hour meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and state Chief Ministers. But with several states pushing for resumption of some economic activities in regions with no COVID-19 cases, Modi said a final strategy would be announced at the earliest after studying their suggestions.

In what perhaps gives a clear indication that the Centre may accede to states' demands for easing, a statement from the Prime Minister's Office after the meeting said, "He (Prime Minister) underlined that the motto of the government earlier was 'jaan hai to jahaan hai' but now is 'jaan bhi jahaan bhi'." This points to a nuanced change in strategy from saving lives a month ago to saving lives as well as livelihoods now.

Another indication came from an announcement by the Chief Minister of BJP-ruled Haryana, Manohar Lal Khattar, who said his state would be divided into three zones — red

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Occupants wait in the open on Saturday night after three shelter homes caught fire near ISBT in Delhi. *Gajendra Yadav*

Fire at crowded Delhi shelters, residents held

JIGNASA SINHA & SOMYA LAKHANI
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

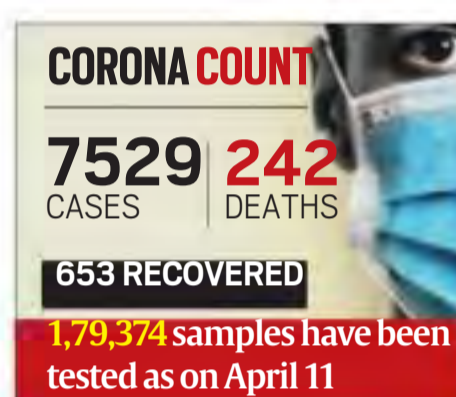
THREE SHELTER homes near Kashmere Gate Inter State Bus Terminal in Delhi, which received migrant labourers after the lockdown started, were set on fire on Saturday, a day after occupants and civil defence volunteers got

into a heated argument during distribution of food. The area also saw stone-pelting in the evening between those living at the shelter homes and police.

By Saturday night, six men from the shelter homes had been arrested, Delhi Police's Additional PRO Anil Mittal said.

The shelters, housed in porta cabins, had received many of the

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INSIDE

MAMATA HITS BACK AT MHA WARNING

GOVT SHOWCASES AGRA MODEL P 3, 4, 5, 6

States flag migrant plight, but in a bind: homecoming vs health risk

DIPANKAR GHOSE, LIZ MATHEW & MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

THE PLIGHT of migrant workers stranded in shelter homes across the country — several questions about their health and livelihood — was a key issue raised by many state governments Saturday in the third meeting between

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and their Chief Ministers.

While there was a broad consensus on extending the lockdown to counter the COVID-19 outbreak, this issue saw different opinions. Some states pushed for the migrants to be allowed to travel back to their home states amid apprehension of social unrest — there was violence in Surat Friday by workers asking a pas-

down should continue in these 81 mandals while there should be relaxation in the unaffected mandals ('green zones'), but with conditions. Malls, cinema halls, places of worship, public transport and schools should remain closed, and physical distancing should be strictly maintained," Jagan said.

At the same time, the CM said the country should remain united in the fight against the virus and it would support and implement any decision the Centre finally takes.

With 21 new cases reported

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Our aid not for Tablighis, jihadis, write Assam FT members

ABHISHEK SAHA
GUWAHATI, APRIL 11

A LETTER offering a donation of over Rs 60,000 for COVID-19 relief work, with names of 12 members of Assam's Foreigners' Tribunals (FTs) listed as contributors, has specified that the money should not be used for providing relief to those who attended the Tablighi Jamaat gathering in Delhi, "jihadis" and "jahil".

The letter, dated April 7, is addressed to state Health and Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and is signed by Kamallesh Kumar Gupta, member of an FT in Baksa district.

When contacted, Gupta, a former advocate and notary, confirmed to *The Sunday Express* that he had written the letter but said he has withdrawn it and that it was not sent to the government. On its contents, he said, "Whatever is there in the letter. I do not want to discuss further."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Odisha shut till April 30, workers from state hit the streets in Surat

KAMAAL SAIYED & LEENA MISRA
SURAT, AHMEDABAD, APRIL 11

NEARLY 20,000 migrants employed in powerloom units in Laskana area of Surat took to the streets on Friday night, resorting to arson and stone-pelting, demanding that they be allowed to go to their homes, mostly in Odisha. Police arrested 81 people, who were released on bail on



At a migrant labour colony in Surat on Saturday. *Express*

Saturday. The FIR also mentions a mob of 1,200 unidentified people.

The anger was provoked by Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's decision to extend the lockdown prompted by coronavirus till April 30 in the state. The labourers said they had been getting frantic calls from families to return.

Akshaykumar Pradhan, 23, belonging to a farming family from Gopalpur village in Ganjam

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Seeing a fall in rise of cases, says govt, plans for 1 lakh tests a day

VARINDER BHATIA
CHANDIGARH, APRIL 11

THE GOVERNMENT is planning to increase daily testing from about 15,000 a day now to 1 lakh by May 31. This target was shared with all the states and Union territories during the video-conference chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Saturday.

By April 30, the government also plans to have 300 testing laboratories in place. A presentation by the Health Ministry shared at the video-conference pointed out that from one testing laboratory on January 31, the number was 220 by April 10, and the target was to have 80 more labs.

The ministry presentation also showed that the 'Compound Growth Rate' (calculated over five days) of cases was declining in several states. For instance, Rajasthan came down from a

EXPLAINED
E Still waiting for kits
THE LACK of enough tests has been a question repeatedly raised since COVID-19 first surfaced in India. While testing has been expanded, the delivery of kits is delayed.

WORLD



US CROSSES 2,000 DEATHS IN A DAY; TRUMP SAYS HOPE I AM RIGHT PAGE 10



A SUBLIME NOTE
PAGES 11, 12, 13

After woman's SOS for child, train brings 20 lt of camel milk

ABHA GORADIA
MUMBAI, APRIL 11

ON APRIL 4, Chembur resident Neha Sinha tweeted tagging Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "Sir, I have a 3.5 yrs old child suffering from autism and severe food allergies. He survives on Camel Milk and limited qty of pulses. When lockdown started I didn't have enough camel milk to last this long. Help me get Camel Milk or its powder from Sadri (Rajasthan)."

The tweet activated people across geographies, from Odisha-cadre IPS officer Arun Bothra to railway officials in Rajasthan, and set off an entire chain of events that ended in 20



The consignment came to Mumbai from Rajasthan

litres of frozen camel milk and 20 kg of camel milk powder landing at the Sinhas' doorstep.

On seeing Sinha's tweet, Bothra reached out to the Chief Passenger Transport Manager of North West Railway, Tarun Jain, to seek ideas on how to transport frozen camel milk from the sup-

plier in Rajasthan to Mumbai. Jain, in turn, discussed the matter with Senior Divisional Commercial Manager Mahesh Chand Jewalia, after which parcel cargo train number 00902, running from Ludhiana to Bandra Terminus, was given permission to make an unscheduled halt at Falna station, near Ajmer.

"The supplier of the milk said he could send the consignment to Falna station, since that was the closest. But the station was not a scheduled halt and it was decided that the train would stop there nonetheless. The goods booking counter at the station was also opened to collect the parcel. Last night, we received confirmation that the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

STAY HOME, STAY HEALTHY & SAFE

WHO has declared COVID-19 (Coronavirus) as Pandemic for which there is no vaccine available yet

Patience & discipline demonstrated by the entire nation during lockdown is an example of restraint in the interest of health

- ▶ India is experiencing testing times while we brave through COVID-19. Isolation and social distancing will help us overcome this. To control further spreading of COVID-19 disease, there is a need to remain cautious and careful for the next few days.
- ▶ By observing Social Distancing we can control the COVID-19 pandemic in the very near future.
- ▶ Use masks nevertheless and not only if you have cold, and cough, to stop the spread of COVID-19 disease. Also, sanitise or wash your hands and to the extent possible do not touch your face, eyes or ears.
- ▶ If you come in contact with a COVID-19 positive individual, stay at home, check for fever twice and immediately inform Health Officials. Use **Aarogya Setu**-App designed to keep the informed in case one has crossed paths with someone who has tested positive.
- ▶ Remain updated with latest information and follow government recommendations, they are for your safety. For right information on COVID-19, please WhatsApp 9013151515.

We acknowledge and abide by the various positive measures undertaken by the Government to control COVID-19 pandemic. With our 750 bed hospital and 1200 strong team of doctors, paramedics and other workers, we stand committed, 24x7 towards the State & Central Government and towards your safety.

MOVE TOWARDS THE FUTURE WITH POSITIVE THINKING

Medical Helpline Phone: +91-11-23978046, Toll-Free Number: 1075
Register yourself and encourage family & friends to register on **Aarogya Setu App**

SGT Medical College, Hospital & Research Institute
(A Constituent of SGT University)

Budhera, Gurugram-Badli Road, Gurugram (Haryana) - 122505, www.sgtuniversity.ac.in | 1800 102 5661, 9205894938, 8527090325



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EXPLAINED



COUNTRIES WITH THE HIGHEST COVID-19 DEATH RATE RANK POORLY IN HDI TOO

With the global coronavirus death toll touching around one lakh, Johns Hopkins University tracker data shows that the five countries with the highest mortality rate are the ones which lack a sufficient and robust health system and have fared poorly in the latest Human Development Index (HDI) report released by the UN.

HOW PLASMA THERAPY WORKS

The govt is preparing to frame a protocol for plasma therapy

VIDEO



WHAT TO EXPECT IN A SEALED AREA

Many states have sealed coronavirus hotspots

EXPRESS AUDIO

Atari to Xbox: Console gaming of the past, present and future

NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY

On this episode of our tech podcast, we talk about how the newer gaming consoles are taking a retro turn for nostalgia's sake, and what the future of gaming may be.

MADHYA PRADESH
 Man held under NSA for attack on cop tests positive

MILIND GHATWAI
 BHOPAL, APRIL 11

ONE OF the four accused booked under NSA for attacking a police constable in Indore last week has tested positive for coronavirus, forcing jail and police authorities in Madhya Pradesh to be on alert.

Two accused were taken to Jabalpur jail and the other two to Satna — NSA detainees are not kept in jails in their native district.

One of the two accused at Jabalpur jail had shown symptoms while he was being taken to prison after which both the accused in Jabalpur were taken to the isolation ward in Victoria hospital, a top jail officer said.

The other accused has tested negative but will be kept in quarantine, ADG (Jail) Gaziram Meena said, adding Indore police has been informed and personnel who accompanied the accused will also be quarantined.

The other two were shifted to the jail in Satna and Meena claimed they were kept in a separate barrack. He said they may not have got in touch with other prisoners but admitted jail staff has interacted with them. Their samples were collected Saturday.

FROM PAGE ONE

1 lakh tests a day

CGR of 33.6% on March 20 to 21% by April 10, even as its number of cases rose from 17 to 463.

Similarly, Telangana registered a decline in CGR from 41.5% to 24.5% during the same period, while its cases rose from 17 to 473. In Kerala, the CGR fell from 4.9% to 3.9%, despite cases increasing from 28 to 357.

The states and UTs that have shown an increase in CGR in the same period include Punjab (a rise from 14.9% to 20.2%, while its cases went up from two to 132); Uttar Pradesh (from 12.1% to 19.9%, as cases rose from 23 to 431); and Jammu & Kashmir (from 14.9% to 19.7%, as cases increased from four to 184).

By April 10, the government had a list of 142 hotspots. While at least 60 districts had more than 15 cases each and are kept under the category of "Large Outbreaks Containment" zones, 82 districts with less than 15 cases are in the category of "Cluster Containment" zones.

The ministry data shows that from 1,200 tests per day in 75 laboratories, comprising a total of 15,000 till March 20, testing had been expanded to 7,800 tests per day in 190 laboratories, adding up to 77,000 tests by April 2. Now 15,000 tests are being conducted per day, with 1.6 lakh tests done till April 10.

The government has been changing its testing strategy since January 30, when India saw its first coronavirus case. While only foreign travellers were being scanned on January 31, the catchment scope was expanded to healthcare workers, patients with severe acute respiratory illnesses and contacts. On April 10, the government included clusters and antibody tests also in its strategy.

As of now, there are 586 dedicated COVID-19 hospitals across the country with 1.04 lakh isolation beds, 11,800 ICU beds and 6,400 ventilators. The health centres are divided into three categories: for mild or very mild or suspect cases; for clinically moderate patients; and for severe and critical patients.

The government said it had 2.84 lakh personal protection equipment kits while 2.7 lakh were expected by April 30, and 28.52 lakh N95 masks with another 48.52 lakh expected by month end.

States in bind

across India attempting to reach home without means of public transport.

They walked, some hitched rides, many scrambled to board buses hastily organised by local governments. Since then, many are stuck in states without work or pay. Borders have been sealed, provisions are coming from the government with strained NGOs chipping in.

Earlier this week, the Centre, in its affidavit to the Supreme Court, said that there were as many as 22,567 and 3,909 shelters run by the government and NGOs respectively catering to a total of over 10.36 lakh stranded people. This is besides the close to 74 lakh people provided for in food camps and 15 lakh getting food and shelter in the premises of the industry or factory employing them.

Sources said Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray made a forceful plea for arrangements to help stranded migrant workers travel home. He said, it is learnt, that it was the responsibility of the state to arrange for their

safety. Sources said Thackeray said: "How long are industries going to keep migrant workers there...then the lockdown is extended. Industries do not have the capacity to provide shelter. Moreover, migrant workers want to go to their home states. So is any provision being made?"

States like Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, too, suggested that people from their states stranded elsewhere be brought back or there could be "problems." Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said that if the situation wasn't addressed, serious social unrest could take place and so the government must have a plan in place. He suggested that the government look at non-stop special trains that would take them straight to their home states. The Jammu and Kashmir administration added that if this was done, workers should be tested before they are moved.

Not all states were on the same page, though. Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren called it a Catch-22 and said returning workers could bring the risk of infection. He left it to the discretion of the Centre and red-flagged possible "law-and-order issues," if workers return amid the pandemic. This would necessitate the deployment of police or even the Army, he is learnt to have said.

Soren said that, on an average, while those who returned from cities earned as much as Rs 500 a day, the daily wage under MNREGA in Jharkhand has been fixed at just over Rs 200 a day. "This is the lowest in the entire country...I have written to the Union Minister to give the state unemployment allowance under MNREGA as many people with active job cards haven't been able to get jobs because of the need for social distancing."

Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh raised the issue of those from the North-East being stranded all over the country and asked Chief Ministers to take care of them. Sources said that the Prime Minister told the CMs that those from the N-E and from Jammu and Kashmir be protected and treated with sensitivity.

(WITH INPUTS FROM ABHISHEK ANGAD)

FT letter

"Our only prayer is that the help may not be extended to the members of violators Tablighi Jamaat, Jihadi and Jahil. Kindly accept our donations as above for saving the humanity from the clutches of COVID-19 pandemic infection." it read.

FTs are quasi-judicial bodies that sit in judgment on whether a person is an 'illegal foreigner' or not as per the Foreigners Act, 1946. The over 19 lakh people excluded in the final National Register of Citizens (NRC) published last year will also appear before FTs to file their appeal for inclusion once they get their rejection orders. Their citizenship status will be decided by FT members.

Pompa Chakravarty, one of the 12 contributors mentioned in the letter, had declared Mohammad Sanaulah, who retired as an Indian Army subedar after 30 years of service, a 'foreigner' last year. Sanaulah was put in a detention centre, and later granted bail by the Gauhati High Court. Sanaulah's appeal against the FT order is pending in the court.

The letter on the COVID donation was published by a local daily on Saturday, after which it started doing the rounds on social media. Response from government officials is awaited on whether they received the letter.

PM talks of lives plus livelihoods as CMs seek graded approach

(districts with maximum Covid cases), orange (vulnerable districts with increasing number of cases) and third zone (districts with zero or negligible cases). "The districts with negligible number of Covid cases will have maximum relaxations," he said.

After initiating the interaction with a less than five-minute address, the Prime Minister asked Home Minister Amit Shah to moderate the video conference. This is the third meeting with CMs after March 20 and April 2.

Among the dozen-odd CMs who spoke, Bhupesh Baghel (Chhattisgarh), Pinarayi Vijayan (Kerala) and YSR Jagan Mohan Reddy (Andhra Pradesh) demanded they be given the freedom and authority to decide and allow economic activities, be it farming or industry.

A source present at the meeting said, the areas where activities could be allowed may depend on population density (rural-urban), and the incidence of outbreak, without compromising on social

distancing. Normal public may not be allowed to freely move around the way they could before the lockdown, the source said. Guidelines for this graded approach are likely to be spelt out by the Centre at the earliest.

Further, the Prime Minister is learnt to have pitched for Aarogya Setu - an app to track and alert those who come physically close to Covid-19 cases, and referred to the possibility of it being an e-pass which could facilitate travel from one place to another.

Most state CMs also pointed to the shortage of financial resources in their fight against the pandemic. Some including Punjab's Amarinder Singh and Kerala's Pinarayi Vijayan wanted the Centre to relax the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act, and let the fiscal deficit expand, so that the Centre can borrow more and on-lend to states. While Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrababoo Naidu asked for 'helicopter money', West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee

demanding a Rs 10 lakh crore fiscal relief package (6 per cent of GDP).

The Prime Minister, according to Puducherry Chief Minister V Narayanasamy, told the meeting that farm activities should continue and the government must find ways and means to help workers and fishermen. Construction industries should be divided into three zones - green, orange and red, he quoted the Prime Minister as having said after all the CMs presented their views.

According to Narayanasamy, Modi said lockdown should be enforced even at the district level. "From one district to another district, people should not move around. The APMC Act would also be amended so that farmers produce can be purchased at the doorsteps of the farmer instead of the farmer coming to the mandi," he quoted the Prime Minister as having said.

Another source present in the meeting said, a graded exit post the extended lock-

down seemed to be the way going forward. "India will be divided into two kinds of districts - those which reported cases of COVID-19 where restrictions will continue, and the others that are virus free. In the second category, intra-district movements could be permitted," the source said.

A third source who was part of the video conference said senior officials would be required to attend work but maintain social distancing. "All officers who are entitled to official transport facility are expected to come to office from Monday," the source said. Class 3 and Class 4 officials could attend at 30, 40 or 50 per cent strength.

A source from a Hindi heartland state said a lot would depend on the progress over the next few weeks. "The Prime Minister was clear that there would be no inter-state opening of traffic, nor inter-district. He said that the same set of rules will apply to all states, and the priority at this point is to save lives," the source said.

6 deaths, only 12% mandals hit, Andhra Pradesh for a limited lockdown

on Saturday, the total number of COVID-19 cases in the state stands at 402. Eleven have recovered and six have died.

Sources said the state is ready to deploy additional forces in the containment zones and COVID-19 clusters to implement a strict lockdown while allowing relaxations in the green zones.

Jagan emphasised that the state was suffering huge financial losses due to the lockdown, and the financial situa-

tion was precarious. The CM had pointed this out in an earlier meeting with the PM too.

At the video-conference, Jagan told the PM that officials had visited 1.4 crore families in the state to know about their well-being. "Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms is being tested and if necessary sent to isolation and given treatment," he said.

Jagan said they were strictly enforcing lockdown in the 141 identified contain-

ment clusters, and established exclusive coronavirus hospitals in all the 13 district headquarters. The hospitals and COVID-19 care centres have a combined capacity of 26,000 beds.

Stating that agriculture was the mainstay of Andhra's economy, Jagan said it contributed 35% of its GDP and 62% of its workforce. "The lockdown has halted inter-state transportation and less than 25% trucks or goods con-

tainers are on the roads. We do not have enough storage for all the agriculture output. As the markets are closed, the government has to purchase all the paddy, corn, chillies, tobacco, vegetables. But how much can we? And where do we store and use them? If the situation continues like this, lakhs of families dependent on agriculture will be affected. In the industrial sector, of the 1,03,986 units, only 7,250 are running."

A member who is listed as among the 12 contributors told The Indian Express on condition of anonymity that the members had decided to contribute a day's salary towards COVID-19 relief. He said Gupta did not share the letter with them. "It was only after the controversy broke out that he accepted writing the letter. It does not reflect our views," he said.

Another of the 12 contributors, however, said the letter was withdrawn after some members raised objections. He said the document was internally discussed and then discarded.

Delhi shelters

migrant labourers in the Capital left destitute by the lockdown, swelling their numbers to hundreds in a space meant to accommodate around 250. The Capital's shelters are currently home to around 12,000 people.

Blankets and personal belongings of the occupants, such as clothes, phones and water dispensers, were among the items destroyed. The government is arranging temporary accommodation for them.

"We received a call around 6 pm about a fire at the shelter homes. The blaze was brought under control within an hour," Delhi Fire Service Director Atul Garg said.

Nishu Tripathi, in-charge of the three shelter homes, told

the body is older than a day." Ajay Singh, 26, a waiter who has been coming to the shelter home for over two years, says friction had been building up since the past two weeks after the migrant labourers came. The shelters earlier housed largely beggars and vagabonds. He said the civil defence volunteers usually took a heavy-handed approach, and complaints about the lack of food, space, the heat and mosquitoes had increased of late.

A government spokesperson said that "for now, those living in the three porta cabin shelters are being relocated to a municipal school nearby".

DUSIB (Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board) member Bipin Rai said, "Around 250 people will be shifted to the school tonight itself. Arrangements have been made."

On Saturday evening, the road leading to the three shelter homes was strewn with stones and bricks, as smoke continued to billow from the structures. Hundreds of men waited on a ground at the back as night fell. "We are waiting for someone to take us somewhere; else we will just sleep here," said Ajay Singh.

When contacted, Bothra said, "I was told that if the child doesn't get camel milk, he could collapse within a week. The milk supplier had sent 20 litres of camel milk and 20 kg of camel milk powder through the train. I then received a similar request from another parent."

The Sinhas then shared a portion of the milk and the powder with this other Mumbai-based family. "My child is autistic and is allergic to several kinds of foods. He is only able to digest camel milk and has organic food. However, the availability of organic food has stopped because of the lockdown. Supplements were hard to find and my child was not able to eat anything. Eating only dal gave him an upset stomach, weakness and dysentery," said Sinha, adding that the government should think of ways to help children with mental and physical challenges deal with the lockdown.

On Saturday evening, the road leading to the three shelter homes was strewn with stones and bricks, as smoke continued to billow from the structures. Hundreds of men waited on a ground at the back as night fell. "We are waiting for someone to take us somewhere; else we will just sleep here," said Ajay Singh.

When contacted, Bothra said, "I was told that if the child doesn't get camel milk, he could collapse within a week. The milk supplier had sent 20 litres of camel milk and 20 kg of camel milk powder through the train. I then received a similar request from another parent."

Camel milk

was picked up from Bandra station and reached the lady's house by 8.30 pm," said a senior official from the North West Railways.

In the meantime, given that

every month. Since the lockdown started, Pradhan said, his family was unable to venture out nor had it got anything from the government. "Take us home and then you can shut down for a year, it does not matter," he said.

Pradhan added that the mess they eat in will be shut from April 15, because there is no supply. "A vehicle comes with food, but is able to feed only half the people here."

Migrant labourers like him usually go home twice a year, on Diwali and Kali Puja, but now there is no work to keep them in Surat while food is running out.

Laskana, located on Surat's suburbs, has 1,000-odd powerloom factories. Of the lakhs employed in these units, 80 per cent are believed to be from Ganjam in Odisha alone.

Bhagirath Behera, the vice-president of the Surat Odia Welfare Association, said they got a call from Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan, who belongs to Odisha, to sort out the issue. "We will ensure food for at least 10,000 people," he told The Indian Express.

Earlier, on March 29, migrants employed in the powerloom, dyeing and printing units of Surat had clashed with police when it tried to stop them from setting out on foot for home states, including Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Chhattisgarh, as the lockdown was in place.

President of the Gujarat Weaver Association Ashok Jirawala said that the workers had been paid their wages. "We have checked and found that a majority of the factory owners got paid till March."

Another worker, Chitrasen Bhola, 27, who said he was tired of eating the khichdi being arranged by local volunteer groups, asked where were the people who could help them, like "the factory owners, local leaders, policemen, or municipal officials". "The Odisha government and Naveen Patnaik should have talked to Gujarat so that we get food and other items. After last night, we are receiving calls from the Odisha government as well as BJP MP Dharmendra Pradhan."

Another powerloom worker, Kalu Pradhan, said he and four others had been sharing a rented room since the Janata Curfew day on March 22. "There is no ventilation and a single fan. I got Rs 8,000 from the owner on the last working day and paid off the mess dues... Now we are running out of money and even shops from where we could buy snacks and other food items are closed. The mess owner only serves dal-chawal. How long will we survive on it? When we come on the road, police beat us. Our life is pitiable... My parents back home keep telling me to leave everything and come."

About Friday night's incident, Surat police said a large number of migrant labourers had come out of their quarters and started pelting stones on bystanders and a police patrol vehicle. Some NGO vehicles distributing food were also attacked. Police called additional forces and used lathicharge to bring the situation under control. Pickets have been put up outside labour colonies in Laskana now.

Surat Police Commissioner R B Brahmbhatt said, "The labourers are getting food, but with no work, they want to go back to their native places. We have made temporary camps outside the labour settlements and our police are patrolling the area round the clock."

Surat has 28 coronavirus cases, two of them from the labour colonies at Sachin and Pandesara.

3 THE OUTBREAK THE CITY

BLAZE AT THREE SHELTER HOMES

Anxious migrants reel under new crisis



At the shelter home near Kashmere Gate on Saturday. Gajendra Yadav

JIGNASA SINHA
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

ON SATURDAY evening, Salim Baig (40) sat near the banks of the Yamuna with a single thought in his head: "Where do we go from here?" On March 31, he and his brother decided to walk from a construction site in East Delhi to their home in UP's Moradabad, only to be turned away by police at Ghazipur.

The brothers, who are migrant labourers, landed at the porta shelter cabins near Kashmere Gate ISBT. On Saturday, they lost the roof over their head again—like hundreds of others—after three shelter homes were set ablaze at 5.45 pm, a day after occupants clashed with civil defence volunteers over "food distribution".

"There is no work, money or food, no way to get home. The shelter home was our only option. I had puri-bhaji in the morning and nothing since. Due to the stone-pelting and fire, volunteers are abusing us; they won't feed us. If we have no place to stay tonight, we will sleep next to the dumpsters and animals," said Baig.

Among the occupants are beggars, vagabonds, labourers who worked in the area and had been here for a few years, and migrant workers turned away at the borders after the lockdown.

While no lives were lost, several men said they lost their belongings including phones, toothbrushes, soap and clothes. "Phones were the only way to stay in touch with our families..." said an occupant, as policemen and district authorities, told them to maintain "social distancing".

Many claimed they weren't given masks. "Some people bought them with their own money, we haven't been given any by authorities. They talk about social distancing but how is it possible? There are so many of us," said construction worker Suraj Singh.

Rajinder Sharma (35), who works at a hotel and has been staying at the shelter home for two years, said the number of occupants has increased since the lockdown and so have daily clashes over food and bedding.

"I saw volunteers manhandle a man yesterday as he was fighting over food... At 5.30 pm, there was stone pelting and a few people torched the rooms. Police are still shouting at us... I don't care about the virus, I just want to be some place safe."

Meanwhile, civil defence vol-

unteers and DUSIB employees denied the allegations. Veerpal, head of the volunteers, said, "We have been working day and night for them. How can they say we haven't fed them anything? We take photos, videos every day for records. They had lunch at 2 pm... after that, they fought with us. We sustained minor injuries."

Joint CP (Central range) Suvashis Chaudhary wrote to the Delhi government that the men should be moved to others shelters as these are over-occupied.

Sunil Kumar Aledia, founder of the Centre for Holistic Development (CGH), said: "Even before the lockdown, there were many problems that people faced at the homes. They are occupied beyond capacity; there is a food and bedding crisis as the government has decided to house migrant labourers as well."

MCD school becomes a temporary home

ASHNABUTANI
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

OVER 250 people who stayed at three porta cabin shelters at Yamuna Pushta, which were damaged in a fire Saturday, were shifted to a municipal school nearby. Officials said that while there were close to 7,000 people being fed at the 15 porta cabin shelter homes at the Pushta earlier, the number of people staying in and around the area had come down to 2,000 over the past few days.

The fire, according to Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB), broke out at 5 pm and was soon brought under control. DUSIB member Bipin Rai said, "A fight broke out between people from the shelter and those from outside over rumours about a body in the river. Stone pelting began, followed by a fire lit using a matchstick. No one was injured. Blankets, personal belongings, water dispensers and garbage were among the many things that caught fire. An FIR has been registered and arrests have been made."

Of the 15 porta cabins, three were destroyed. The incident took place hours after Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal announced that the Prime Minister had decided to extend the lockdown. Officials, however, said that the fire was not related to the shelter home residents.

"The three homes have been evacuated. Arrangements have been made to shift around 250

SHELTERS IN DELHI	
For homeless	223
Capacity	18,478
Occupancy	7,222
110 Specially set up for migrant workers (mostly in schools)	
Capacity	30,000*
Occupancy	5,000* (*approx)
Meals served across the city (Sat afternoon)	
	5,28,982

people to an MCD school nearby tonight," said Rai.

"Those at the remaining shelters are safe. These things happen from time to time. If and when they do, police are deployed. Even though this was a one-off incident, we are taking all possible measures to avoid incidents like this," he added.

Ramesh Chand, a civil defence officer in charge of the shelters, alleged that outsiders were involved in fanning tensions: "People came from outside and created a scene. There was confusion about a body in the river. We are certain that the body was not related to the shelter home residents."

The Yamuna Pushta shelter home, a stone's throw from the Nigambodh Ghat, is among the most crowded in the city. Since the shelters have limited capacity and often get unbearably hot during the summer, hundreds sleep out in the open nearby. The numbers usually swell during lunch and dinner.



Kejriwal called for a lockdown until April 30. Express

CM bats for extended lockdown but will wait for Centre nod

MALLICA JOSHI
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

WITH CHIEF Minister Arvind Kejriwal, during Saturday's meeting between the Prime Minister and chief ministers, advocating for the extension of the ongoing lockdown until at least April 30, the Delhi government will now wait for the Centre's decision on the matter.

The Delhi Chief Secretary and health secretary were also part of the meeting, where Kejriwal said that the decision should be applicable to the whole country. In a tweet post the meeting, the CM wrote: "PM has taken the correct decision to extend lockdown. Today, India's position is better than many developed countries because we started lockdown early. If it is stopped now, all gains would be lost. To consolidate these, it is important to extend it."

According to sources, Kejriwal also asked the PM to allocate funds which are on a par with other states as Delhi is bearing the "added responsibility" of those who returned from different parts of the world before flight operations were stopped.

Many of them are quarantined in different centres across the city.

As per officials, most states ad-

vocated an extension while some also spoke about its economic implications. "While everyone agreed that the only way to stop the spread of the disease was to extend the lockdown, many states raised the issues of economic hardship being faced by people and the state's drying coffers. While these issues were raised and the PM responded favourably, the nature of extension has not been deliberated upon in detail so far. Most states are looking at the Centre for guidance," said a senior government official.

Earlier this week, the Delhi government had announced it would stop all expenditure, except on COVID-19 related activity such as ration distribution and shelter homes and providing salary to employees, because of a slump in tax collection.

On the impact of an extended lockdown in Delhi, and if the state is looking at easing restrictions in a few areas, a senior government official, who is familiar with discussions in the meeting, said: "Since the government's lockdown was imposed on March 23, tax for the month had already been collected and we are managing in the month of April. But from this month, tax collection is expected to be nearly zero... We have to think about how to pay salaries and what we sacrifice."



CORONA WATCH

FIR against Palwal man

Gurgaon: Palwal Police filed an FIR against a man who had recently travelled to Andhra Pradesh with 11 members of the Tablighi Jamaat and returned earlier this week by hiding in a truck. He later tested positive for COVID-19.

SHOs face action

New Delhi: Two SHOs were sent to district lines by the Delhi Police chief Saturday after he received videos showing lack of social distancing at vegetable markets in their areas. **ENS**

Quarantine over but many remain stuck in city hotels

SHIVAM PATEL
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

LAST SUNDAY, Ramakrishna Kapa celebrated his 43rd birthday alone in a hotel room in Delhi, where he was quarantined after returning from the US. The hotel brought him some *laddoos*, with 'happy birthday' written on the container's lid. And medical authorities drew some samples from him to test for COVID-19.

The results came out negative three days later and he was allowed to leave, but Kapa is now faced with the decision to travel more than 2,000 km by road, for 40 hours, to get home to his wife in Bengaluru: "I have a flight ticket booked for the 15th, but I'm not sure if they would fly in case the lockdown is extended."

There are others like Kapa who completed their 14-day quarantine period at government-monitored facilities after arriving in Delhi from abroad, but are now stuck waiting for the



Many were quarantined at hotels in Aerocity

lockdown to end.

These are largely people with a medical condition or around the age of 60, who were categorised as 'high risk' but completed their quarantine and did not test positive for the virus. From far away cities like Mumbai, Bengaluru and Visakhapatnam, they have already spent over Rs 50,000 to be quarantined in a hotel room. They are now spending thousands more each day to continue stay-

ing in a hotel until they can travel. Many have made flight bookings for April 15, as travelling by road, especially for the elderly, might not be feasible. That too, is uncertain, if the lockdown is extended.

"It's not about money, it about the mental stress. My wife is in Bengaluru and my children in a village with my parents in Andhra Pradesh. After I get home, I will try making an arrangement with the authorities to bring my kids back," said Kapa. He added that after being released from quarantine, he was given a one-day pass to leave the city but hesitated travelling such a long distance by a cab.

A N Rao (58) and his wife were quarantined after arriving in Delhi from Dubai on March 20. Their home is in Visakhapatnam. "The hotel does not know how we are supposed to get home. We have spent over Rs 1 lakh in quarantine, as my wife and I were kept in separate rooms. We're now spending Rs 7,000 per day at another hotel. We are suffering," said Rao.

CENTRAL UNIVERSITIES COMMON ENTRANCE TEST CUCET-2020 (www.cucetexam.in)



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IMPORTANT DATES			
Opening of Online Application Form	16 March, 2020	Exam Date (UI & PG)	30 - 31 May, 2020
Closing of Online Application Form (Last Date Extended)	25 April, 2020	Exam Date (RP)	6 - 7 June, 2020
Issue of Admit Cards	18 May, 2020	Result	26 June, 2020

GENERAL INFORMATION:

- * Detailed information about CUCET-2020 is available on CUCET website: www.cucetexam.in
- * Candidates are required to apply **online** through CUCET-2020 website
- * Candidates who are appearing in the final examination of the qualifying degree/certificate are also eligible to apply
- * Details of Programme of Studies, Eligibility Criteria, Programme Structure, Faculty Profile etc. are available at the respective website of Participating Universities (PU) and candidates are advised to check the eligibility criteria of each PU for a given programme before applying for CUCET-2020
- * All Research Programmes (RP) examination will be conducted in Computer Based Test (CBT) mode
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- * CUCET-2020 provides facilities for applying to admission to these universities by single examination process with nominal examination fees
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19 DEATHS IN DELHI SO FAR

Five new coronavirus deaths as cases in capital cross 1,000 mark

ASTHA SAXENA
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

FIVE NEW coronavirus deaths were reported in Delhi on Saturday, taking the toll to 19. This is the highest number of COVID-19 deaths reported from the national capital in a single day so far. A total of 166 fresh confirmed cases were reported, with the total number reaching 1,069. Among the new cases are 128 from the Markaz Nizamuddin gathering, 30 are cases with a travel history or local transmission, and eight are under investigation.

A 68-year-old man from Tamil Nadu who had attended the Markaz gathering is among the five dead. Admitted to Lok Nayak hospital, he had tested positive earlier and died on April 9. So far, four people who were a part of Markaz gathering have died in Delhi.

The other four deceased are a 79-year-old woman from Karol Bagh suffering from kidney disease; a 60-year-old woman from Sadar Bazar suffering from heart disease; a 65-year-old man from Bara Hindu Rao Azad market suffering from hypertension; and a 44-year-old woman from Malka Ganj. All four were admitted to RML hospital.

Two days after the Delhi Minorities Commission (DMC) asked the city's health department to stop mentioning



'Nizamuddin Markaz' in its daily bulletin on coronavirus cases, the department changed the name of the category to 'Under special operation'. In a letter to the secretary, Delhi Health department, chairman of the

At the Trauma Centre at RML Hospital. Praveen Khanna

Commission Zafarul Islam Khan had asked the department to drop any mention of "religious undertones" in its daily bulletins.

According to the data, almost 68% of the 2,400 hospital beds for COVID-19 patients are currently occupied.

Fifty-four patients are admitted to the ICU ward and eight are on ventilator. "Cluster containment plan for COVID-19 is im-

plemented at various locations of the city. Houses in containment zones are being surveyed by medical teams and people are being made aware of signs and symptoms of COVID-19, methods of prevention, social distancing measures, importance of hand washing, etc," said a senior health official.

The health department received around 13,500 more PPE kits on Saturday. The central

procurement agency (CPA), responsible for buying medicines, consumables and equipment for Delhi government-run hospitals, had placed an order of 1,20,000 PPE kits. So far, over 35,000 have been received.

On Saturday, three more containment zones were created, taking the total to 33. These include parts of Mansarovar Garden, Jahangirpuri and Deoli Extension.

MAHENDER SINGH
MANRAL &
ASTHA SAXENA
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

FIVE COVID-19 deaths in the past week from congested Old Delhi areas have emerged as a fresh concern for health officials, with the Delhi government Friday putting three areas — Sadar Bazar, Nabi Karim and Chandni Mahal — in the list of containment zones where all movement will be barred.

The dead include a 60-year-old woman from Delhi Gate, a 70-year-old man from Sadar Bazar, a 62-year-old man from Farash Khana and two people from Darya Ganj — a woman aged 65 and a man aged 80.

"Contact tracing in the area is divided into three parts — first-level containment includes actively tracing contacts of positive cases; second-level containment includes taking symptomatic patients to quarantine facilities and placing asymptomatic ones under home isolation; third-level containment includes random sampling. Since the three areas designated as containment zones are highly congested, we are actively conducting surveillance programmes and trying to find travel and contact history of the victims," said a senior health official.

Adding to their concerns is the fact that 283 people, including 192 foreign nationals, who attended the Tablighi Jamaat gathering in Nizamuddin West last month, have been traced by police to areas in Central and North Delhi.

The Indian Express has learnt 184



A worker sanitises a masjid at Chandni Mahal on Saturday. Praveen Khanna

people, including 138 foreign nationals, were traced to 13 mosques in Chandni Mahal, and 55 eventually tested positive for the virus.

Following the evacuation from Hazrat Nizamuddin, directions were given to SHOs across the city to check mosques in their areas. "Local police traced them and shifted them to quarantine centres or hospitals," said a senior officer.

DCP (Central) Sanjay Bhatia denied rumours that the people evacuated from Central Delhi were hiding in mosques: "We have traced them after directions were given to us. They were not hiding and we shifted them to the quarantine centres after coordinating with the departments concerned."

There are 30 COVID-19 hotspots in the national capital. Delhi Police data suggests that apart from the 184 evacuated from Chandni Mahal, 26 were traced in Hauz Qazi and 18 people in Nabi Karim. "In North

Delhi, 14 people were traced in Bara Hindu Rao area; 13 in Sadar Bazar; 15 in Wazirabad; and 13 in Sarai Rohilla," said an officer.

The 184 from Chandni Mahal were shifted to centres in Gulabi Bagh and Rouse Avenue. "Tests conducted last week, results of which came back recently, showed 55 of them were COVID-19 positive. Reports of others are awaited," said a senior officer.

According to sources, the health department's next strategy is to look at micro-level areas where cases are being reported. Senior health officials said any area in Delhi that has two or more cases that are linked to the same place and person will be considered for containment. "Four people tested positive from Zakir Nagar area and we have ordered the administration to contain it. Similarly, another area in South Delhi has also reported a few cases and we are preparing a containment plan," said an official.

Ex-Armyman assaulted, FIR filed against 8 men

SAKSHI DAYAL
GURGAON, APRIL 11

A RETIRED armyman currently deployed as a Special Police Officer at the Nuh City police station in Haryana was allegedly assaulted by a group of men who said he was "spreading corona", at Sangel village last week.

According to the victim's wife, Shameena, her husband Saimuddin was headed to Danibas village on his motorcycle on April 6 when he was stopped. "The sarpanch of nearby Sangel village, Rajendra...used casteist slurs and abused my husband, and said 'these people are spreading the illness of corona'," the complainant alleged.

Afterwards, the accused, eight of whom have been named in the FIR, allegedly tied the rope around Saimuddin's neck and "pulled hard and made all efforts to kill him". "My husband fainted and fell on the ground... when he became conscious again, he found he had been left in an empty room," said Shameena.

Saimuddin was taken to the government hospital in Nuh and later referred to Artemis Hospital in Gurgaon, where he underwent an operation and is currently on ventilator support.

"An FIR has been registered against eight people by name, including the sarpanch of Sangel village. No arrest has been made yet," said Inspector Vishal Kumar, SHO of the Nuh police station.

Graveyards turning families away, burying the dead is a new challenge

ANAND MOHAN J
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

There's no tombstone and no customary namaz. His son cannot touch the sand where his father — a 62-year-old from Sadar Bazar who died of coronavirus — is buried. The scene played out on Friday at the Jaidid Qabristan near Delhi Gate, which has been set aside to bury coronavirus victims.

The 62-year-old's family was turned away from two graveyards before they found this one. Even here, grave diggers refused to dig or stand near the body. Healthcare workers from Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, who came equipped with personal protective equipment (PPE), kept watch from a distance.

Eventually, his family spent Rs 1,500 each on two PPE kits, and conducted the last rites. As the man's body was thrown into the 15-foot deep grave — there were no ropes to lower it — his son broke down. At the end, the family members took off their PPEs and dumped those into the grave,



At the graveyard at Delhi Gate on Saturday. Amit Mehra

to be buried along with the man. "Nobody gave us support. We spent hours roaming around Mangolpuri and Bara Hindu Rao areas, visiting local graveyards," his son said.

The Delhi Waqf Board had designated a graveyard for coronavirus victims at Millennium Park but since bulldozers could not enter due to a narrow entrance, burials are being conducted at Jaidid Qabristan, whose caretaker manages both graveyards.

The bodies of four Tablighi Jamaat members, however, were refused even here. The family members were told to head to a graveyard in Dwarka's Sector 14. A senior Waqf Board official said, "Nobody can refuse to bury the dead in this graveyard, even if they belong to Tablighi Jamaat. If grave diggers are not helping, it is their prerogative as this is voluntary work. A bulldozer is used to dig the graves."

Sitting outside his house nestled between graves, caretaker Maskoor Alam (70) said he is left with seven workers as several fled when the first coronavirus burial took place. So far, seven who died from the virus have been buried here. "There is no question of helping the families bury them; we don't want to get the virus. No bodies of Tablighi Jamaat mem-

bers will be allowed; they come in large numbers and may create a problem for us," said Alam.

Alam said they were not given PPE kits, only a standard mask, gloves, a bottle of hand sanitiser and soap to carry out the burials. As per guidelines issued by AIIMS, it is mandatory for those handling bodies of COVID-19 victims to wear PPE kits, and not to remove the body from the body bag or carry out embalming. The guidelines also advise cremation.

"We don't even touch hospital documents. What if they are not sanitised?" said graveyard supervisor Mohammad Shahmeem.

The graveyard is located on a 50-acre plot and the dead are buried in small niches at the back. The gate to this area is locked, and opened only when hospital authorities inform them of a burial.

It usually takes two hours to manually dig a grave but a bulldozer does it in 20 minutes. Sher Singh, the machine's driver, said he is scared of getting out: "I have dug some graves in the past. This is the first time I dug a grave for a COVID-19 victim."

Contractors who lease the bulldozer charge Rs 6,000 from each family. An additional Rs 2,000 is taken by Qabristan Committee members as burial charges. Mohd Hafeez, a committee member, said "We have decided to waive the Rs 2,000 fee, it will be borne by the committee. We will help bury these people."

From Sisodia, some tips for parents on how to be teachers too

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

FROM MINDFULNESS exercises to word and counting activities, Education Minister Manish Sisodia led an online discussion on Saturday on how parents can engage with their children's learning during the lockdown.

"There are some negative effects to children not being able to go to school at this time but their education is not something we should give up on because of this. The role of parents is undergoing a change at this time. Our homes will have to transform into schools...and parents will need to take on the roles of teachers," said Sisodia, who was leading the second part of the Delhi government's initiative "Parenting in the time of coronavirus".

Since the beginning of this month, parents of all students till class VIII in Delhi government schools have been receiving SMSes everyday with learning activities for the children. On Saturday, Sisodia announced that starting Sunday, parents of these children will start receiving voice messages with simple learning and mindfulness activities, along with explanations on how to help children perform these activities. Director of Education Binay



He conducted an online discussion

Bhushan, who was part of the online session, said that the Delhi government intends to carry forward Mission Buniyaad, its flagship foundational learning project, through parents. "We wanted to begin the activities under the mission for this academic year in April but since that could not happen, we have to give that work to parents. It will be a very different experience for parents and will create a good environment at home as well. We will help to the best of our ability," he said.

In the online session, Bhavana Sawhani, a teacher, spelled out simple activities through which parents can teach their children. Sisodia also encouraged families to perform mindfulness activities — meditation exercises practiced in happiness classes — together to "spend quality time together".

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 CT/GD S.K. KUMAR NALCO DAMANJODI 12.04.09	 CT/GD BIDHAN MANJHI NALCO DAMANJODI 12.04.09	 CT/GD SARABJEET SINGH NALCO DAMANJODI 12.04.09
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Gurgaon, Faridabad, Nuh, Palwal declared 'red zones'

SAKSHI DAYAL
GURGAON, APRIL 11

Gurgaon, Faridabad, Nuh and Palwal, the districts with the highest number of COVID-19 cases in Haryana, will be treated as 'red zone' areas or hotspots in the coming days as part of efforts to divide the state into three zones to better combat the virus.

This was conveyed by Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar Saturday, who also said that the other 18 districts will be divided into 'vulnerable' areas or the 'orange zone', "where cases are fewer", and a third zone of largely unaffected areas.

"In Haryana, four districts — Gurgaon, Faridabad, Nuh and Palwal — will be in the red zone... In these, we will not be able to run too many economic activities very quickly," said Khattar.

The four districts have recorded the highest number of COVID-19 cases in the state so far. While Nuh leads with 44, includ-



At Laburnum in Gurgaon. Abhinav Saha

ing six on Saturday, Gurgaon is second with 32 cases. Palwal and Faridabad have 29 cases each, including one each on Saturday.

"Of the six cases in Nuh, one had attended the Nizamuddin Jamaat, while the rest are contacts of a truck driver who had recently travelled to Gujarat," said Virender Yadav, CMO, Nuh.

The new case from Palwal is also of a person who had at-

tended the Nizamuddin Jamaat. In Faridabad, officials said the person who tested positive Saturday is a 46-year-old who runs a chemist shop. "He appears to have been infected either by someone who came to the shop, or from a hospital where he delivers supplies. He concealed his symptoms but we traced him after a tip off. Ten of his contacts, have also been traced and quarantined," said a spokesperson of the Faridabad district administration.

The CM's announcement comes two days after several parts of Gurgaon were declared as 'containment zones', with RWA members continuing to raise concerns about access to essential items. Some RWAs also wondered why their societies are being sealed after coronavirus patients reported from their premises had returned after recovery, and expressed apprehension that the administration may be keeping them in the dark about new cases.

5 THE OUTBREAK NATION

PM'S MEET WITH CHIEF MINISTERS

From carry on lockdown to help for migrants: what states want

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday held a video-conference with several Chief Ministers to decide the way ahead as the 21-day lockdown ends on Tuesday. A look at what some state heads told the Prime Minister during the discussion:

TAMIL NADU: GIVE US RAPID TEST KITS

In the video conference with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami demanded rapid test kits from the Centre. "Testing of the contacts has to be done immediately, for which I require rapid test kits," he told Modi, according to a government note. Palaniswami informed Modi that he had written to the Union Health Minister seeking two lakh test kits. The state had placed orders for 4 lakh antibody-based rapid kits from China and, in addition, has sought a share from the Indian Council of Medical Research's (ICMR) kitty.

JHARKHAND: IT'S CATCH-22 FOR US

It's catch-22 for the state. "Lockdown khulega toh musibat hai, nahi khulega toh musibat (It's a problem if lockdown is lifted, and if it not, it is still a problem), Chief Minister Hemant Soren told Modi. "A substantial workforce in the unorganised sector is going jobless in Jharkhand due to the lockdown, and more than 5 lakh labourers will return from various states with more COVID-19 cases once the lockdown is lifted," he said.

He also flagged the steep difference between a migrant labourer's daily wage outside the state (Rs 500) and a day's wage under MGNREGA fixed at just over Rs 200. "This is the lowest in the country," Soren said. He appraised Modi that money due from PSUs such as SAIL and CCL is needed, as revenue source has dried up. He left it to the discretion of the Centre to decide on the lockdown.

MANIPUR: STOP RACIAL ATTACKS

Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh highlighted racial attacks on people from the Northeast in many parts of the country amid the coronavirus outbreak. He requested the Prime Minister to direct state authorities to do the



RUNNING AROUND FOR HELP: A couple with their ailing baby at a hospital in Kolkata on Saturday. Partha Paul

needful to stop harassment of people from the region. An official statement said Biren Singh urged Modi to help bring back around 30,000 people from Manipur stuck in different parts of the country due to the lockdown.

TELANGANA: LOCKDOWN SHOULD CONTINUE

Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrababhan Rao urged the Prime Minister to extend the COVID-19 lockdown for another

two weeks. The state extended the lockdown till April 30. During the lockdown period, the food processing industry should be allowed to function to ensure that farmers don't suffer loss and supply of essential commodities is not hit, he told Modi. "Lockdown has helped in containing the spread of Corona to a great extent. It is better to extend the lockdown for two more weeks. There is no other better solution than this," he suggested.

WEST BENGAL: ATTACK ON FEDERAL STRUCTURE

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said she differed with the Prime Minister on multiple points, including the decision to include donations made by companies to PM CARES Fund as expenditure on CSR, a facility not available for the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. "We opposed this. I told the Prime Minister that this is an attack on the federal structure of the country," Banerjee said. She also called for strong monitoring of the international borders. "We don't want any coronavirus infection through the border."

Banerjee urged the Centre to create a package of Rs 10 lakh crore for all states. She said, "Countries such as Japan, the US and the UK announced disaster fund more than 10% of the GDP...our government only announced Rs 1.7 lakh crore, which is less than 1% of the GDP. We demanded to increase this fund to 10 lakh crore, which 6% of the GDP." She said, "The Prime Minister has listened — thanks to him. He said he would take 2-3 days to look into it".

Banerjee also asked Prime Minister Modi to advise his "leaders and Governor (Jagdeep Dhankar)" not to interfere in the state government's efforts to contain COVID-19 spread. The Chief Minister stated that a medical board constituted by the state government decides if a death is due to COVID-19 or not.

PUNJAB: EXTEND IT, INCENTIVISE FARMERS

Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh recommended extension of the national lockdown by at least a fortnight as India cannot afford to take chances, given the trend in China and several European countries. Amarinder sought a Special Risk Insurance for government employees working on the frontline. He said the Centre should have

ten the supply of 10 lakh testing kits sought from ICMR, allot Rs 500 crore to quickly upgrade government hospitals in Punjab and approve an Advanced Centre for Virology. Singh urged the Centre to defer recovery on industrial loans for six months. He reiterated the demand to incentivise farmers for staggered procurement of wheat, and called for quicker movement of foodgrain from the Food Corporation of India godowns in the state.

MADHYA PRADESH: NO SHORTAGE OF MONEY

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan lavished praise on the Prime Minister saying the country will definitely come out of the crisis, thanks to the foresight and determination of the Prime Minister. In the video conference, he said the state was going to add more testing kits. He said Rs 120 crore has been released under Social Security Scheme and National Health Mission. "There is no shortage of money to fight the COVID challenge. Enough money has been deposited in the PM Care fund and CM relief fund," he told PM.

RAJASTHAN: PLAN 'FOOD FOR WORK' SCHEME

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot requested the PM to plan a scheme on the lines of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's 'Kaam Ke Badle Anaj Yojana' or 'Food for Work' scheme and emphasised that a collective decision should be taken by the Union government after considering the situation of individual states. Gehlot said that such a scheme was urgently required for providing relief to garbage pickers, pushcart or rickshaw-pullers, nomads and other people whose livelihoods are under threat due to the lockdown. *Inputs From ENS Chennai, Ranchi, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Chandigarh, Kolkata, Bhopal & Jaipur*



CORONA WATCH



Food being prepared at a gurdwara in Shimla. Pradeep Kumar

MADHYA PRADESH

Three more deaths, toll now 40

Bhopal: Three deaths were reported in the last 24 hours, taking the death toll in Indore to 30 and the state's count to 40. With 44 more cases, the number of positive cases in Indore reached 281 on Saturday. Meanwhile, the Madhya Pradesh government asked 32 senior doctors from districts not affected by the coronavirus and 60 junior doctors to immediately reach the city. With 12 more cases the number of positive patients in Bhopal reached 131 on Saturday. **ENS**

TAMIL NADU

IndiGo staffer dies, govt says no virus link

Chennai: Private carrier IndiGo on Saturday said one of its employees in Chennai had died of COVID-19. A statement by the airline said it was "providing all support to the family". State health secretary Beela Rajesh said that the deceased man had tested negative for coronavirus. The deceased was a 57-year-old aircraft engineer posted in Chennai, said a health department official. **ENS**

J&K

Woman tests positive day after delivery

Jammu: A 28-year-old woman from Akhnour tested positive for COVID-19 on Saturday, a day after delivering a child at a Jammu hospital. A senior doctor said the woman was asymptomatic. Both the mother and the girl child are healthy, but have been kept in isolation, he added. The woman's husband is a labourer and she has no relevant travel history. The operation theatre and the ward in which she was kept have been sanitised. **ENS**

HRD Ministry asked to roll out single education platform

RITIKA CHOPRA
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

WITH SCHOOLS and universities staring at a more protracted shutdown to contain the spread of COVID-19, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has asked the HRD Ministry to roll out a common learning platform for students of Class I up to postgraduation, *The Sunday Express* has learned.

According to ministry sources, schools and higher education institutions are likely to remain closed until June end. India had announced a countrywide classroom shutdown on March 16 as one of the measures to contain the outbreak. Chief Ministers of most states who attended a meeting with the Prime Minister on Saturday were in favour of extending the nationwide lockdown beyond April 14. According to sources, whenever the lockdown is lifted, it will be done in phases, and educational institutions will be among the last to reopen. Hence, online learning will re-

place brick-and-mortar classes for a couple of months at least. The HRD Ministry has a week to launch the platform.

"All higher education institutions have been asked to consult stakeholders and pitch in their ideas. Meetings to discuss these ideas will be held starting Monday," said a ministry official, who did not wish to be identified. It's against the backdrop of the PM's order that the HRD Ministry on Friday sought public feedback on ways to make online learning more effective.

Currently, there is an institutional push for online learning during the shutdown, but the government's resource are scattered across different platforms such as Swayam (India's MOOC platform), Swayam Prabha (DTH educational channels) and National Digital Library, among others.

"The outbreak had led to a novel experiment in the largest online learning exercise ever...we will have to keep a lot of things in mind since not all students can access online resources," said the director of an ISER.

Inside Bihar control room, team of 40 works to disburse help

SANTOSH SINGH
PATNA, APRIL 11

ENFORCING RESTRICTIONS, monitoring hotspots, tracking cases, and disbursing aid to migrant workers — a crack 40-member team in Bihar has been doing it all since March 24, working round the clock to navigate the fallout of the nationwide lockdown, and break the chain of COVID-19 infections in the state.

On a typical day, the disaster management department gets 2,000-2,500 calls, mostly from workers stuck in other states. In the initial days, the calls — around 4,000 a day — would mostly be requests to be brought home. Now, a majority of them are pleas for speedy transfers of the interim relief of Rs 1,000 to their bank accounts, as announced by the state government.

Led by principal secretary Pratyaya Amrit, the team holds daily meetings with the state's chief secretary to discuss updates.



The disaster management team in Bihar. Express

After tracking the results of 6,200 tests and 60 positive cases, it has narrowed down hotspots in three districts — Panjwar and Pachrukhi villages of Siwan, Kaidarabad village of Begusarai and Kaukol of Nawada.

"The borders of Siwan, Begusarai and Nawada have been completely sealed," said disaster management secretary Amrit.

Civil Defence ADGP Kundan Krishnan, a member of the team, said they had traced travel and contact details of positive cases found from Siwan and Nawada

and had been trying to track down the source of contact for four positive cases from Begusarai.

No migrant has so far tested positive in Bihar.

Elaborating on the tracking system, displayed on a big screen, IAS officer Shyam Bihari Merna said they had used the Garud app to trace migrants' return and their current status.

After tracking 2.8 lakh migrants and their home quarantine status, they had recommended that the health department take 26 samples for testing, he said.

The call recipients at the control room, meanwhile, are flooded with questions from migrants on when they will receive their money, even as members of the team disburse the funds. Of the 62 lakh migrants who registered so far with the disaster management department, 2.87 lakh people have received the money.

For the team, the next big task is to transfer money to 1.3 crore ration card-holders.

POST-LOCKDOWN

Haryana, Kerala plan graded withdrawals

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH,

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, APRIL 11

WHILE SEVERAL states on Saturday preferred an extended lockdown, and others urged the Centre to extend it till at least the month-end, Haryana and Kerala governments sought a graded relaxation.

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar said the state has decided to ease the lockdown in the coming days, at least in some districts, over two weeks beginning April 15, while his Kerala counterpart, Pinarayi Vijayan, said the state has demanded a special economic package. "In places identified as hotspots, the present restrictions should continue until April 30. In other districts, the state should be given freedom to allow activities ensuring social distancing. The state government should be given the authority to grant that," Vijayan said.

This comes on a day the Centre said it is considering a request by most states to extend the nationwide lockdown by two more weeks beyond April 14, following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's interaction with the CMs.

Khattar, after participating in the video conference, said that depending on the number of COVID-19 cases reported, his government will create three zones in the state to ease restrictions in certain areas.

The state will be trifurcated into Red Zone (comprising districts with maximum cases), Orange Zone (districts vulnerable and with increasing number of in-

fections), and Green Zone (districts with negligible number of cases).

Green Zone districts will have maximum relaxations, even though restriction on movement of people will continue to remain in force, Khattar said. "For instance, districts such as Gurgaon, Faridabad, Palwal and Nuh, which have most COVID-19 cases, will be in Red Zone. We will have to impose certain strict measures in these areas to curtail further spread of the virus," he said.

At least four Haryana districts — Mahendragarh, Rewari, Kurukshetra and Yamunanagar — have not reported any confirmed case as yet.

Khattar also said that "social distancing committees" will be constituted at district level to assess the impact of the virus' spread in their respective areas. "Factories, industries, MSMEs and other establishments can be allowed to function if they provide food and accommodation to their workforce on the premises. Small scale industries can be allowed to function, but they will have to strictly follow the norms of social distancing," he said.

Vijayan told Modi during the interaction that migrant workers want to return to their home states, so non-stop trains should be allowed for their return after April 14. He also said the state government will accept all suggestions made by the Centre.

He said: "The Prime Minister said the next three to four weeks are very crucial in controlling the spread of COVID-19. The state is of the opinion that time is not ripe to go back to the pre-lockdown days. Lockdown should be lifted only step by step."

UN remark on 'stigmatisation' objectionable: Indian official

LIZ MATHEW
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

FOLLOWING THE United Nations' call for the government to fight "stigmatisation of certain sectors of people", an Indian representative in a UN body Saturday labeled the remark as "highly objectionable".

"Such matters are being looked after by the government, enlightened citizens and the civil society in the country," said J S Raput, India representative in the UNESCO Executive Board.

"In a recent NITI Aayog meeting, it was reported that Renata Lok-Dessallien, UN Resident Coordinator in India, brought out the issue of targeting of a particular community. I found that highly objectionable," Rajput, also a former director of NCERT, told *The Indian Express*.

"I am confident that the role of UN agencies shall be seriously and deeply analysed in the post-coronavirus world," he said.

In Ahmedabad, six discharged patients offer to be volunteers

SOHINI GHOSH
AHMEDABAD, APRIL 11

WITH CASES from Ahmedabad making up more than half the total number of cases statewide, the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) on Saturday made operational a COVID-19 care centre that will be used for treatment of asymptomatic positive patients in the age group of 18 to 60 years.

The AMC has also decided to deploy patients, who have been discharged, as volunteers at the centre.

As of Saturday, six of the 11 discharged from Ahmedabad upon complete recovery, have approached AMC offering to volunteer at the care centre. The oldest among the six who volunteered is 70 years old.

Ahmedabad Municipal Commissioner Vijay Nehra said "they shall be involved with simple assistance such as serving food, water and replenishing basics... subject to sufficient protection gear."

At a later stage, these volunteers can be potential blood donors for plasma therapy, in case Gujarat chooses to adopt the plasma therapy treatment for the COVID-19 patients.

Ahmedabad district has reported 243 cases until now with 159 cases reported in the past three days. On Saturday, the city reported a total of 46 positive patients.

In a bid to take the pressure off tertiary healthcare, an earlier institutional quarantine facility in Ahmedabad has now been converted to a 'COVID care centre', which will house asymptomatic positive patients aged between 18 and 60 years from now on, said AMC municipal commissioner Vijay Nehra.

The state government on Friday had announced its decision to permit asymptomatic positive patient and if aged more than 85 years to stay at home, subject to an undertaking from the patient's family. The move, the state health department said, was to ensure that health of aged patients doesn't deteriorate.

SUPPLIES HIT IN REGION

In Bastar's tribal villages, festivals take a backseat amid lockdown

GARGI VERMA
DANTEWADA/KANKER, APRIL 11

FOR 68-YEAR-OLD Gomti Markam, a resident of Arbe in Dantewada district of, this is a summer of many firsts. She has always spent her mornings in the summer picking tora, the ripe fruit of mahua trees that grow aplenty in Bastar; the nights are spent preparing for the many pandums or festivals the season brings. Not this year. "Because of this corona, nobody visits anyone anymore. I am told the police will arrest us if we gather to celebrate our own festivals," she said, perplexed. Despite reporting no COVID-19 cases, news of the virus and ways to prevent it have reached some

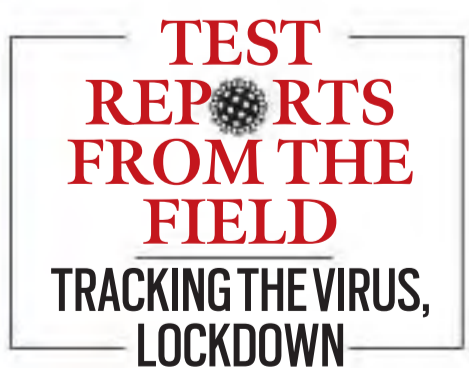


Outside a kirana store in Sameli village, Dantewada. Gargi Verma

of the most interior districts of the Bastar region.

"We know we need to wash hands and cover our faces when we step out. After the lockdown

began, we heard on news that people can't gather at one place," said Masa Bhudam, a shopkeeper in Sameli, 45 km from Dantewada's headquarters.



Villagers here are also clear that they don't want outsiders to bring the virus. Anything from logs of wood to big rocks, cement blocks to barbed wire, thorny bushes, old tyres or even just a rope tied across a frame are being used to deter entries, even on the inaccessible roads. "Corona ke karan bahari vyakti pravesh nishedh (Due to corona, no entry for outsiders)," reads a message on a cloth banner in Amabeda

village of Kanker district. But for a region among the most backward in the country, the restrictions have meant further shortages. Despite the government promising "free ration", the villagers are only getting free rice and salt from the PDS shop, and pay for everything else. Villagers allege that PDS shopkeepers have, in fact, been asking them to pay double.

"We don't have the money. We are exchanging our toras for jaggery and potatoes. If the government has said free, then why are we paying almost double?" asked Bhima, 28, from Kuakonda block. PDS shops in Dantewada and Kanker were found to be shut. Weekly haats (market-places) were stopped in the second week of March.

"We would buy meat, vegetables and other items from the haat. In our village, we only grow tomatoes and some local vegetables. It has been almost a week since I have fed my children any vegetable. If the lockdown extends, where will we get our supplies from?" said Nande, 38, a resident of Potali.

Soaps are some of the first few commodities that went off the shelves.

Even in the health centers, the staff bring their own soaps. "The hospital's stock ended in March. Since then, we have been getting our own liquid soaps," said a health worker from the PHC at Geedam.

Gomti Markam, however, has a contingency plan. Sitting under a mahua tree near her

house, she said, "In the village someone or the other helps. If nothing comes, we will cook our tora and make peji."

For the mother of five and grandmother of seven, the empty roads and the inaccessibility to her shrine in the forest in a different district is a bigger issue.

She scoffed as her children and grandchildren protested at the thought of eating tora and peji.

"The time before Beej pandum is meant for recuperation before the toiling hard begins again. But now, if we can't celebrate the pandums, won't the forest Gods get angry at us?" she said.

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Mamata hits back over MHA lockdown warning

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, APRIL 11

A DAY after the Home Ministry wrote to the West Bengal government to take action against "gradual dilution" of coronavirus lockdown measures, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee hit back sharply. "This is not a communal virus," Banerjee said, adding that everyone is aware of the community that resides in the areas mentioned in the letter.

"This is not a communal virus. This is a disease," Banerjee said at a press conference in the state secretariat here.

In a letter on Friday, the MHA

said that West Bengal was allowing sale of non-essential items and gatherings at vegetable and meat shops, and that police were allowing religious gatherings.

Drawing reference to a letter it had written to the state on April 4 about violation of lockdown measures, the letter said, "As per further reports received from security agencies, gradual dilution of lockdown has been reported from West Bengal with an increase in the number of exceptions being provided by the state government. For instance, shops relating to non-essential items have been allowed to function. There is no regulation in vegetable, fish and mutton markets where people have been



'This is not communal virus'

thronging in complete violation of social distancing norms in Rajabazaar, Narkel Danga, Topsia, Metiaburj, Gardenreach, Ilkbalpur and Manikata in Kolkata... areas such as Narkel Danga are reportedly witnessing more COVID-19

like cases."

It asked the state to take strict action and send a report to the Union government.

At the press conference, Banerjee said, "The Indian government has asked to keep a watch on some specific areas, I hope you all understand which are the areas the Centre wants us to keep special vigil." She said she has raised the matter of politics being played by central leaders at a time when everyone should cooperate.

Reacting to Union minister Babul Supriyo's allegation that COVID-19 figures in West Bengal were not accurate, she said, "We are maintaining cooperation with the Centre. I said the Prime

Minister, Centre should also maintain this. Don't play dirty games."

Supriyo had on Friday alleged that Kolkata Municipal Corporation listed 10 people who had been cremated after testing COVID-19 positive, which was in contradiction to the state's count of five deaths.

On Saturday, a BJP delegation led by Dilip Ghosh met Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar and alleged that the state government was suppressing information. Later, a Raj Bhawan statement said, "The delegation felt that the government is suppressing real time information... It urged the Governor to take steps to ensure that the data is accurate..."



A woman sanitises her hands at a bank in Meja village of UP's Prayagraj district. Ritesh Shukla

2 models shine in different corners

Route map, geo-tag, screening: How a Kerala district did it

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
APRIL 11

AMONG THE people to test positive for coronavirus in Kerala following an alert about the Tablighi Jamaat gathering in Delhi was a 19-year-old, whose sample was taken after she had been asymptomatic and in home quarantine for 14 days, because she had boarded a train from a railway station nearby.

As Kerala hotspot Pathanamthitta is discussed as one of the successful examples of how to contain COVID-19, what makes it different is this level of detail, including successful use of technology.

The district has kept under observation almost all those who have entered it via air, rail or road, and put out route maps of positive cases to ensure no contacts slip through, even as it tests groups determined as high-risk. By Saturday evening, the district had tested 2244 samples.

During a meeting on last Sunday, Union Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba said the strategy adopted by Pathanamthitta was worth emulating.

The district saw its first cases in early March, with a three-member Italy-returned family and their relatives testing positive. The count would eventually go up to 16.

As a first step, Pathanamthitta sealed its borders. Unlike other parts of the country where only persons with travel history from abroad were being screened, it decided to do so for all entering the district, from overseas, other states or even districts, creating a database of the same. Details of those who entered the district from



Medical staff collect swabs to carry out tests for COVID-19 in Ernakulam, Kerala. Reuters

abroad and across the country since January were added to the database.

About their first challenge, Collector P B Nooh said, "The importance of social isolation, quarantine and containment strategies was not familiar to people then."

In a first, the district administration also decided to prepare route maps of the positive cases. "This was not a part of the contact-tracing procedure. A flow chart was publicised to help people see if they had been present at a stated travel path at a particular time. After the chart was published, we could trace more people, and many voluntarily reported to us. Later, all districts emulated this model," said National Health Mission District Programme Officer Dr Abey Sushan.

The administration launched a call centre from where enquiries were made twice daily to those under quarantine, regarding medical and non-medical requirements. Fourteen teams of health workers monitored nearly

4,000 road and rail entrants on a daily basis.

A group of engineering students of IHRD College, Chengannur, designed a 'Corona RM' app, where the call centre counsellors would upload requirements of those under home quarantine.

The administration next put in place geo-mapping of those under observation.

Nooh said selecting the right population for sampling was a key intervention. "With limited kits, we could test only 200 samples a day. So we chose categories like international travellers, inter-state travellers, health workers, and their primary contacts, migrant workers, senior citizens under observation, symptomatic persons and those who had returned from COVID-19 hotspots, including in India." The Collector said this is how they zeroed in on the 19-year-old college student from Delhi, an asymptomatic person from Dubai, and three people from Dharavi in Mumbai.

Success of local shutdown: Centre holds up Agra model of containment

ABANTIKA GHOSH
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

A POSITIVE report at 2 am, 259 teams swinging into action and intensive contact tracing in pre-lockdown era covering over 1,65,000 households in Lohamandi area of Agra. As Bhilwara model gains currency as a viable model for cluster containment of coronavirus, the Agra model has emerged as an alternative way of achieving the same results.

The Centre showcased the Agra model on Saturday at the daily COVID-19 briefing, and it is also being shared with other states as best practice.

It was discussed in the meeting of the Cabinet Secretary convened a few days ago with district magistrates, and also came up for discussion on Tuesday during a meeting at the highest political level, top sources in the government said.

Agra, which saw early cases after two people who had travelled to Austria along with a resident of Delhi's Mayur Vihar — Delhi's first confirmed coronavirus case — travelled back home to Agra in early March. Soon, six cases were reported from the city.

A senior official associated with the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme, who oversaw the combing operations that followed, said: "The confirmation from the airport tests came at 2 am; we got into action immediately. A 3-km radius around the house was sealed and 259 teams were formed of two members each. We covered 1.63

As the Bhilwara model gains currency, the Agra model has emerged as an alternative way of achieving containment of the virus

lakh households in a few days, took about 1,000 samples, used S N Medical College as our base. It was an exercise where nothing could be left to chance — a security guard was roped in to supply daily needs to the families."

Each team covered about 100 homes per day; doctors sat at a nearby civil dispensary, and people who showed symptoms could visit them.

The Union Health Ministry said: "The State, district administration and frontline workers coordinated their efforts by utilising their existing Smart City Integrated with Command and Control Centre as war rooms... the district administration identified epicentres, delineated impact of positive confirmed cases on the map and deployed a special task force as per the micro-plan made by the district administration."

Agra, incidentally, was also the earliest reference to community transmission in an official statement; experts such as AIIMS director Dr Randeep Guleria are now talking about "localised community transmission" in hotspots.

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Unlike Wadhawans, essential services pass for travel does not come easy for others

MOHAMED THAYER
MUMBAI, APRIL 11

FOR TWO days in a row, Prof Laxman Kamble has been forced to wait outside the Mumbai Police headquarters to get an essential services pass to move his father to Kolhapur.

His father, who has to undergo dialysis, is facing difficulty using the common toilet, located nearly 200 metres from Kamble's residence at a chawl in Ghatkopar (East). "Two people have to carry him to the toilet," Kamble said.

Their Kolhapur residence has an attached bathroom that will be safer and more convenient for his father, who came to Mumbai to undergo treatment for his kidney ailment.

"Yesterday (April 10), I submitted an application seeking permission for six people, including a driver, which was rejected. Today (April 11), I have come with an application for four people," he said, as he waited for his turn on the fifth floor of the new police commissioner office on Saturday.

Kamble's case is in stark contrast to the ease with which the Wadhawan brothers — Kapil and Dheeraj — managed to get police permission to move from Khandala to Mahabaleshwar without even having to approach the police. The brothers have been on the run since being named as accused in a multi-crore scam

connected to Yes Bank.

The brothers received an authority letter from IPS officer Amitabh Gupta, who described them as "family friends" and granted them permission to travel with a cavalcade of five cars carrying 23 people, including family members and a retinue of domestic help. Gupta is now on forced leave.

According to rules, those who want to travel within the city can approach the local police station, while those who want to move across the state or cross state borders in cases of emergency have to approach the office of DCP (Operations) Pranaya Ashok.

"Eight out of 10 cases are rejected," Ashok said. "We have to screen every application carefully and ensure that only essential cases get permission."

Another staffer from the department said in some cases, even after the Mumbai Police gives the essential services pass, the SP in a particular district may not allow entry. "Given that there is a high number of cases from Mumbai, other districts, especially those with lower number of cases, aren't keen on allowing entry to anyone coming from Mumbai... police permission is no guarantee," the staff member added.

According to an estimate, the Mumbai Police headquarters has received anywhere between 6,000 and 10,000 applications seeking "essential" passes.

Ayurveda practitioner from UP dies, patients quarantined

AMIL BHATNAGAR
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

A 58-YEAR-OLD Bulandshahr-based Ayurveda practitioner died due to COVID-19 in Delhi's Safdarjung Hospital on Saturday.

The Ayurveda practitioner was admitted to the hospital on April 8. On Saturday, the Bulandshahr administration sealed parts of Shikarpur area where his clinic was situated.

"The doctor first fell ill on April 3 and his condition deteriorated in four days. As his condition worsened, he got himself admitted to a private hospital in the district and was later referred

to Delhi. The health department has begun the sanitisation of his residence and clinic to prevent further spread," said Bulandshahr District Magistrate Ravindra Kumar.

According to officials, the Ayurveda practitioner tested positive on Friday. "The patient reached the hospital in a critical condition... a sample was collected for testing. He was initially not screened for COVID-19 at any hospital," said a senior doctor at Safdarjung hospital.

His family has been placed in home quarantine while his patients are being sent to institutional quarantine. Their samples are being taken.

Valley residents take up station outside localities to bar entry of outsiders

ADIL AKHZER
SRINAGAR, APRIL 11

WITH CORONAVIRUS cases increasing in Jammu and Kashmir, local residents in some parts of the Valley have taken to sealing their areas to prevent the movement of vehicles and entry of outsiders. Doctors in the region, however, have expressed concern over these blockades and their effect on smooth functioning of health services.

In parts of Srinagar, residents have setup barricades to stop people from entering. "Till date, we have no coronavirus case in our area and residents decided to block entry. We have to take pre-

cautions of our own," said a resident of Yatoo Mohalla in Shiwpora area in Srinagar.

In a village in north Kashmir's Bandipora, volunteers guard the entry points. "We have to take these steps because no one knows if someone is carrying infection. They can infect others," a villager said. "Volunteers from the village guard the main entry of the village so that everyone in the village remains safe," he added.

Doctors in the Valley, however, have a word of caution.

"This is stopping nothing; this will only impede your way to reach a hospital in case of an emergency. Please understand that corona doesn't live in another mohalla. He (suspected case) is

not the other; he can be you, me, anybody. Understand and maintain social distance and stay home," Kashmir's leading psychiatrist Dr Arshad Hussain wrote in a post on Facebook.

Residents said that alternate routes were available in order to deal with any emergency.

A senior government official said that "they have come to know about some cases and they are looking into it".

Several in the Valley said the administration should ensure that blocks are placed in a way that medical emergency services are not hampered.

"Areas should be blocked in a manner that it should not block entry of vehicles in case of a med-

China test kits for TN delayed

ARUN JANARDHANAN
CHENNAI, APRIL 11

TAMIL NADU's plan to increase the number of sample tests with rapid antibody test kits has hit a roadblock, with consignments from China getting delayed.

State Chief Secretary K Shanmugam confirmed reports that the kits from China were delayed because a consignment for India was sent to the US.

It will take 24 hours to get the consignment after China allows the shipment, but there was no indication of a decision until Saturday evening, said a senior official of Tamil Nadu Medical Services Corporation.

Meanwhile, Tamil Nadu reported 58 confirmed cases of COVID-19 on Saturday. One death was reported in Erode, said Shanmugam. The total number of tested samples also increased from 8,410 on Friday to 9,527 on Saturday.

The state had placed orders for 4 lakh rapid antibody-based kits in addition to those expected from the ICMR. The first despatch of 1 lakh kits was to reach Tamil Nadu on Thursday.

The administration also sealed the private hospital in which the Ayurveda practitioner first got admitted on April 7. The district magistrate has initiated proceedings to declare the residence and clinic area in Shikarpur as hotspots.

The body was brought for cremation at Nigambodh Ghat in the capital at around 4 pm. His wife and son were accompanied by two mortuary attendants of Safdarjung Hospital, apart from the driver of the hearse.

However, the cremation was held up for nearly two-and-a-half hours due the "absence of an operator" for the CNG crematorium, the hospital staffers said.

While rapid antibody tests to check for novel coronavirus (COVID-19) were set to begin this past week in high density clusters (containment zones) and large migration gatherings/evacuee centres, the plan has hit a roadblock as the testing kits are yet to arrive.

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) had ordered 5 lakh kits, of which 2.5 lakh were to be delivered this past week.

"The supplier said he will deliver (the rapid testing kits) but it has not come so far. He says he will deliver in the next two-three days... kits will come," Dr R R Gangakhedkar, head of epidemiology and infectious diseases at ICMR, said on Saturday.

Following the successful South Korea model, the serological tests were to be used to speed up the rate of detection of cases and isolation to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The delay will affect the government's plan of incremental testing to get a more accurate assessment of the status of transmission.

With 768 new cases and 36 deaths reported in the last 24 hours, the total number of cases

detected across the country is now 7,529, of which 242 died while 652 recovered.

With 18,044 samples being tested in the last 24 hours, the number of tests has now gone up to 1,79,374.

Responding to a question on the World Health Organisation (WHO) recommending rapid tests only in research settings, Dr Gangakhedkar said: "The tests will show whether a person has been exposed to the virus and whether the virus is still inside the body. This has two advantages: in hotspots, it gives you an idea about the spread of the disease; and in healthcare workers, it reduces the fear factor by telling you whether the person has become immune and can get back to work. This is a first generation test. It will get better with time."

Meanwhile, a day after denying a study that the Ministry of External Affairs had attributed to the ICMR, which said the number of COVID-19 cases in India would have crossed 8 lakh by April 15 if there was no lockdown, Health Ministry Joint Secretary Lav Agarwal said on Saturday: "I would like to bring to your notice that this is not a study but a modelling exercise we had done to extrapolate the course of the disease in India without a lockdown, based on

the rate of growth."

"Before the lockdown we were at a cumulative growth rate of 41%. Then the number of cases would have been 8.2 lakh by April 15. Post-lockdown, the growth rate is down to 29%; we have 7,447 cases today, it would have been 45,000 without a lockdown. We could be at 1.2 lakh cases by April 15 had there just been containment and no lockdown; would have been 2 lakh today without any measures. But this is a modelling exercise we had done internally, not an ICMR study."

On the state of preparedness, Agarwal said 586 dedicated COVID hospitals with 1,04,613 isolation beds and 11,836 ICU beds were ready so far, and the numbers were increasing.

"The Government of India in its continual efforts, following a graded response approach, is ensuring that there is no shortage of supplies of critical items, which includes PPEs, N95 masks, testing kits, medicines and ventilators, with each state across the country," the Health Ministry said in a statement.

In a letter to states, the Ministry of Home Affairs has asked them to provide police security to doctors and other medical staff whenever required, especially when they go for screening.

Until Friday, Tamil Nadu reported 911 confirmed COVID-19 cases and tested 7,267 samples. Amid criticism that testing was not adequate, the state has maintained that it has been following ICMR guidelines. On Friday, the state ordered district health departments to test all secondary contacts and everyone with Severe Acute Respiratory Illness irrespective of travel history.

Over 20,000 health workers, including those attached with local bodies, are surveying vulnerable spots for potential cases and people with symptoms. For example, 11,000 health workers and volunteers visited 9 lakh houses in the Greater Chennai region on Friday and identified 515 people with symptoms. G Prakash, Corporation Commissioner, said that 2488 people were identified with symptoms like cold and fever since the containment operations started.

Dr K Kolandaswamy, Director of Public Health, said they would continue the existing procedure of screening and testing samples until the rapid test kits arrive from China.

Cleric among 8 arrested for stone-pelting on health workers, NSA invoked

AMIT SHARMA
MEERUT, APRIL 11

EIGHT PERSONS, including a cleric of a mosque, were arrested and booked under stringent National Security Act (NSA) here on Saturday in connection with the attack on a team of health workers and administrative officials in the town's Jaali Kothi area late Friday night.

According to police, a team of health workers and officials had gone to Jaali Kothi to seal off the area after three of the four Tablighi Jamaat members, who had attended Delhi Markaz last month and were traced to a mosque in the area, tested posi-

tive for coronavirus. Police said as soon as the team reached the area, they faced resistance from residents who opposed barricading of the area. Stones were thrown from rooftops in which Meerut City Magistrate Satendra and Sub-inspector Mukesh were injured, said police.

"All eight, including a cleric, have been arrested and booked under the National Security Act. We took out a flag march in the area after the incident on Saturday morning and have appealed the residents to not come out of their homes. We have warned them of direct action if such acts are reported in future," SSP (Meerut) Ajay Sahni told The Sunday Express.

7 ECONOMY

DIIIs, LED BY LIC, WERE MAJOR BUYERS, THUS PREVENTING A MAJOR CRASH

Domestic institutions bought stocks worth over ₹55K cr in Mar amid panic selling by FPIs

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, APRIL 11

WHEN FOREIGN investors and some retail investors were resorting to panic selling in Indian stock markets last month, domestic institutional investors (DIIIs) led by Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) were major buyers, thus preventing a major crash in the markets.

DIIIs made net purchases of stocks of worth Rs 55,595 crore in the month of March this year. Investment by DIIIs in March is the biggest monthly net purchases by DIIIs in the last 15 years, according to data available with BSE. DIIIs had made net purchases of Rs 16,933 crore in February.

DIIIs include banks, development financial institutions, insur-

EXPLAINED

DIIIs acting as contrarian players in market

DOMESTIC INSTITUTIONS, especially LIC, are contrarians in the market. These institutions, which hold sizeable stakes in most companies, are not alarmed by knee-jerk sell-off in the markets and normally buy shares when others sell and vice versa.

This strategy has enabled them to make decent profits from the stock markets. LIC alone had made profits of over Rs 23,000 crore from equity markets till January this year.

ance companies, mutual funds and New Pension System.

The benchmark Sensex had crashed 23 per cent to 29,468.49

in March, mainly on account of heavy selling by foreign portfolio investors (FPIs), who pulled out Rs 65,816 crore — also the

biggest monthly withdrawals by FPIs so far.

“Domestic institutions, especially LIC, are contrarians in the market who buy shares when others sell and vice versa. Many of the blue chips were available at rock bottom prices in March,” said an institutional source.

However, the trend has changed in April when the Sensex staged a partial recovery of around 3,000 points. FPIs bought stocks worth Rs 1,345 crore and DIIIs sold Rs 2,025 crore till April 9.

LIC is the biggest player in the stock market, with an average investment of over Rs 50,000 crore every year.

As on January 31, 2020, the Corporation had booked profits to the tune of Rs 23,273 crore from its investment in equities in 2019-

20. The state-owned insurer realised a lower profit of Rs 23,621 crore from its equity investment in 2018-19, down 7.89 per cent from Rs 25,646 crore in the previous year. It had made a gross equity investment of Rs 68,621 crore during 2018-19.

FPIs were exiting from emerging markets like India in the wake of the uncertainties created by coronavirus pandemic and the business and trade dislocations across the world.

Wall Street and European markets had also tanked amid worries over the looming recession in developed countries. “DIIIs, especially institutions like LIC, have the financial capacity to hold on to stocks for several years. They have been booking profits year after year,” said an analyst.

INTERVIEW WITH MD & CEO, PUNJAB NATIONAL BANK

‘Planned for credit growth of 8% ... now we’ll have to see how COVID impacts and it may be around 6%’



“Our credit growth happened till second week of March and it was 3 per cent year-on-year. We were running negative till December 2019”

SS MALLIKARJUNA RAO

How is the moratorium relief working out for customers?

RBI has given moratorium for three instalments and we have passed it automatically to all customers. Among other things, we are looking at the fact that the daily cash withdrawal requirements are met and electronic transactions go through. We are seeing that the money is going to Jan Dhan account holders under direct benefit transfer.

In the last week, we have released four new schemes. For Kisan Credit Card holders, additional funding of 25 per cent of their limit or Rs 50,000, repayable in periods. For self help groups, we are releasing funds of up to 5,000 for each member or Rs 1,00,000 for the group, and this is also repayable in three years. We are also giving personal loan equivalent to three months of average monthly salary up to a maximum of Rs 3 lakh, which again is repayable in three years. Then, we have another scheme for big customers which is additional working capital funding. Now, we are reaching out to them for utilisation of funds.

How is the pace of PMJDY withdrawal?

Till yesterday, around 15 per cent had taken it. It has gained pace over the last 2-3 days, both at ATMs and through banking correspondents. We are following certain measures to maintain social distancing and to avoid crowding.

Do you see any uptick in credit growth?

Our credit growth happened till second week of March and it was 3 per cent year-on-year. We were running negative till December 2019. We don't expect in-

8 per cent and now we will have to see how COVID impacts and it may be around 6 per cent. Considering that, we will plan for QIP or other means in H2. The quantum we will finalise after June quarterly result.

Why are banks not extending moratorium to NBFC term loans?

It has not been extended automatically because the other window of targeted long-term repo operations (TLTRO) is working. Already RBI has come with two biddings and whatever fund we get from TLTRO bidding, we will be required to invest in bonds or CPs of the companies. Out of that, 50 per cent is earmarked for primary issuances and 50 per cent for the secondary market. Suppose a MF (mutual fund) has invested in NBFC and the MF is having a liquidity problem, we can purchase from the secondary market. Besides, NBFCs can also come in the fourth window that I spoke earlier about — the emergency credit facility regarding working capital.

While state-owned banks are passing on rate cuts to customers, private banks do not seem to be so prompt. Why this stark divergence?

If you look at the repo linked lending rates, it is mandatory for banks. When RBI cut the repo rate by 75 basis points last month, this got automatically transferred to retail and MSME borrowers beginning April 1. I don't think there is any option for private sector lenders to not pass on that. However, in case of MCLR linked rates, the reductions are not on expected lines. We have already reduced 30 basis points from April 1. RBI is talking to everybody.

The paradoxical position is that in spite of that, their credit growth is much higher.

Can you see a reason to that?

I think that because of the settlement of cases under the IBC process, the loan outstanding has gone down. Suppose if Rs 10,000 crore is settled, while the amount received is only Rs 5,000 crore (50 per cent haircut), but the loan outstanding is reduced by Rs 10,000 crore. Majority of the IBC cases are in public sector banks and private banks have few. So, the credit growth of public sector banks should be understood more intrinsically with the outstanding that gets reduced because of the settlements.

PRADHAN MANTRI GARIB KALYAN YOJANA

₹28,256 cr disbursed to 31.77 crore beneficiaries

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

CASH AMOUNTING to Rs 28,256 crore, or 17 per cent of the estimated value of the Rs 1.7 lakh-crore package announced by the Centre, has been transferred to the bank accounts of 31.77 crore beneficiaries as on April 10.

On March 26, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced the relief package under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY) for the poor to

help them amid the lockdown. The package was a mix of fresh sops, front-loading of some of the planned expenditures and utilisation of some of the autonomous funds (no implication on the Budget) at the state/district level.

By front-loading PM-KISAN, the Centre has transferred Rs 13,855 crore as the first instalment of Rs 2,000 to each of the 6.93 crore farmers as on Friday, the Finance Ministry tweeted. Under the scheme, the government has been providing Rs

6,000 to each farmer spread over three equal instalments in a year.

It also transferred Rs 500 to each of 19.86 crore women Jan Dhan account holders (97 per cent of the total beneficiaries), involving an outgo of Rs 9,930 crore. Two more instalments to these account holders will be provided in the subsequent months.

From the one-time grant of Rs 1,000 each to senior citizens, widows and differently-abled people, the Centre has transferred one portion of that

amounting Rs 1,405 crore to 2.82 crore beneficiaries through direct benefit transfer (DBT) mode.

To give support to building and other construction workers, Rs 3,066 crore was transferred to 2.16 crore beneficiaries.

As part of the package, the Centre had asked states to use roughly Rs 31,000 crore available with them under the Welfare Fund for Building and Other Construction Workers (created under a Central Act) to protect such workers against economic disruptions. **FE**

20 control rooms set up to address issues of workers

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

THE UNION Labour and Employment Ministry has set up 20 control rooms across the country to address distress calls and complaints for workers in central sphere, amid the ongoing 21-day national lockdown to contain the COVID-19 pandemic.

About 60 officers, three each in the 20 regions, have been given the task of monitoring the complaints and issues being faced by workers in the central sphere, i.e. establishments under the central government, Railways, mines, oil-fields, major ports or any other central public sector undertaking.

The Centre is learnt to have taken this step to deal with complaints coming from low-income and MSME (micro, small and medium enterprise) workers, who are expected to be among the worst hit by the slow economic activity due to the coronavirus-induced lockdown.

The Ministry had earlier issued advisories to all public sector and private sector employers to not terminate any employee — casual or contractual — and not reduce wages.

BRIEFLY

Apple, Google plan software to slow virus

Bengaluru: Apple Inc and Google said on Friday that they will work together to create contact tracing technology that aims to slow the spread of the coronavirus by allowing users to opt into logging other phones they have been near.

‘Oil output cut decision to have major impact’

Cairo: United Arab Emirates' energy minister Suhail Al Mazrouei said Saturday that a decision by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies to cut oil supply will have a major impact on rebalancing the oil market amid the COVID-19 outbreak.

Malpass upbeat on debt relief progress

Washington: World Bank Group President David Malpass on Friday said he was confident of progress on his joint call with the International Monetary Fund for a temporary standstill in official bilateral debt payments by the world's poorest countries. **REUTERS**

Contribution to CM relief funds, paying wages during lockdown not part of CSR

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

CONTRIBUTIONS BY companies to the chief minister's disaster relief funds of various states and payment of salaries and wages to temporary workers will not count towards mandatory corporate social responsibility (CSR) expenditure, said a Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) release on Saturday.

It did, however, note that ex-gratia payments to temporary or casual workers specifically for “fighting COVID-19” may be counted as CSR expenditure as a

Ex-gratia payment to temporary or casual workers for fighting COVID-19 could count as CSR expenditure, an MCA release said

one-time exemption. The release did, however, say that contributions made to state disaster management authorities to combat COVID-19 would qualify as CSR expenditure.

The move will likely channel a greater portion of corporate con-

tributions to the PM-CARES Fund, which was set up for disaster relief after the virus outbreak. The MCA had earlier clarified that contributions to the PM-CARES Fund would count towards mandatory CSR expenditure by companies.

The release also clarified that payment of salaries and wages during the lockdown would not be counted as CSR expenditure. “... payment of salary/ wages to employees and workers even during the lockdown period is a moral obligation of the employers, as they have no alternative source of employment or livelihood during this period,” it noted.

‘COVID-19 severe demand shock for Indian economy’

The coronavirus pandemic is a “severe demand shock” for the Indian economy and could lead to further moderation in the country's GDP growth, *Dun & Bradstreet* said in a report

4.8%: ESTIMATE FOR GDP GROWTH FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020, REVISED DOWNWARDS BY 0.2 PERCENTAGE POINTS

6%: ESTIMATE FOR GDP GROWTH FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021, REVISED DOWNWARDS BY 0.5 PER CENT

6,606: INDIAN ENTITIES THAT HAVE LEGAL LINKAGES WITH FIRMS IN COUNTRIES WITH A LARGE NUMBER OF CONFIRMED CASES

ADVERSE EFFECTS OF CORONAVIRUS-INDUCED LOCKDOWN:

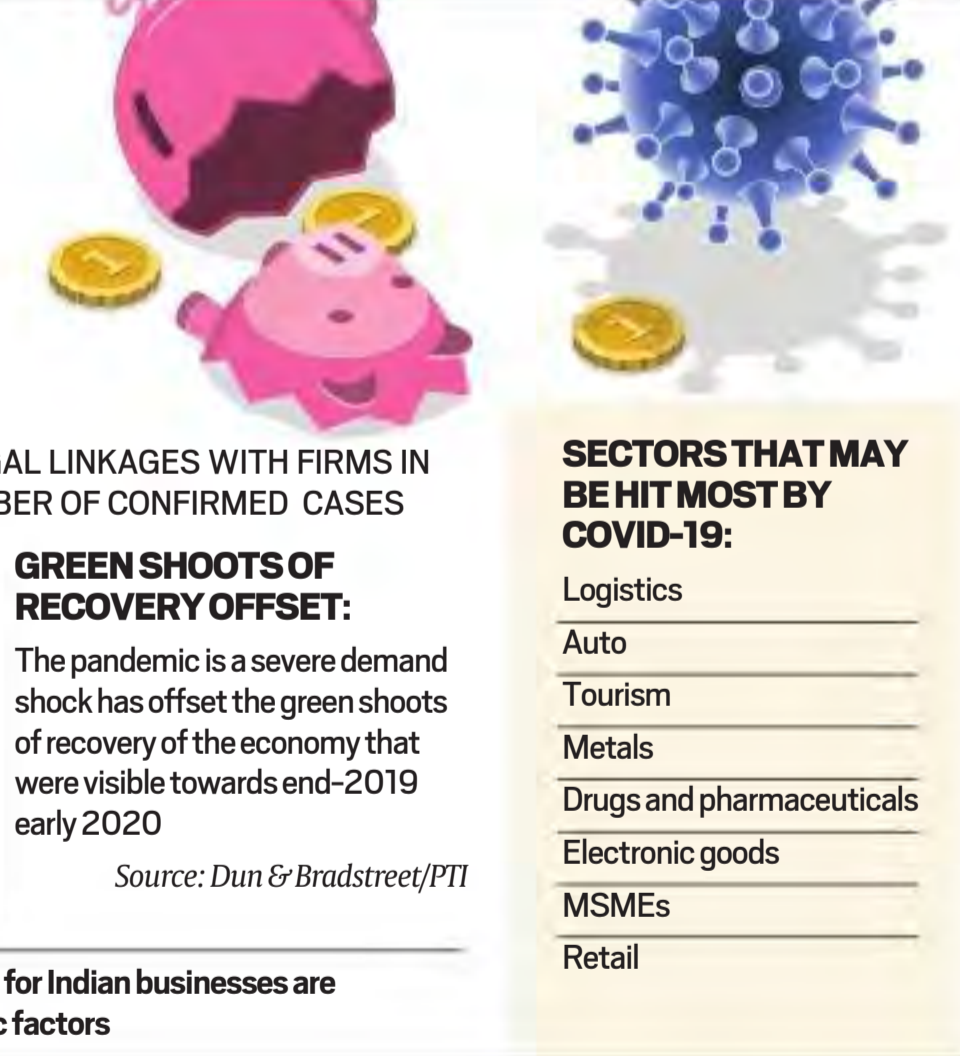
- Significant disruption across multiple sectors
- Affect on human lives
- Hampering global supply chain
- Steep fall in consumption

GREEN SHOOTS OF RECOVERY OFFSET:

The pandemic is a severe demand shock that has offset the green shoots of recovery of the economy that were visible towards end-2019 early 2020

Source: *Dun & Bradstreet/PTI*

According to the D&B report, the three major channels of impact for Indian businesses are legal linkages, supply chain and macroeconomic factors



Banks seek govt guarantee for lending to some sectors, says SBI Chairman

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, APRIL 11

BANKS HAVE asked the government to offer guarantees for lending to certain sectors amid the COVID-19 lockdown, so that they have greater comfort while sanctioning loans, State Bank of India (SBI) Chairman Rajnish Kumar said on Saturday.

Speaking to representatives from the real estate industry over a video conference, Kumar said this guarantee-based model is ideal in the current circumstances. “The risk capital comes from the government, liquidity

“The risk capital comes from the government, liquidity comes from RBI and the intermediation is done by the public sector banks. So that is a workable model because the risk appetite of the banks is limited”

RAJNISH KUMAR
CHAIRMAN, STATE BANK OF INDIA

comes from RBI and the intermediation is done by the public sector banks. So that is a workable model because the risk appetite of the banks is limited,” he

said. “Whether the government will be in a position to guarantee ending by the private sector or to restrict guarantees to lending by the public sector only is up to them, he added. It will be quite helpful even if the government guarantees only incremental lending to these industries.

“I believe there are various suggestions and the government has appointed various empowered groups so all that information will be gathered and analysed and then we can expect some package and an exit plan from the lockdown,” the SBI chief said. **FE**

Trai suggests interoperable STBs, changes in FM radio auction prices

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

THE TELECOM Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) has suggested that all set-top boxes (STB) in the country must support interoperability, meaning that a user can change their direct-to-home (DTH) and cable service provider without having to change the box every time in its recommendations, the telecom regulator said that this would foster innovation in the segment, and make STBs more affordable.

“The lack of interoperability of STBs between different service providers not only deprives customer of the freedom to change his service provider but also creates a hindrance to technological innovation, improvement in serv-

ice quality, and the overall sector growth,” Trai said.

It also noted that though STBs provided by DTH companies comply with licence conditions to support common interface module-based interoperability, in practice most of them were still not very readily interoperable.

The regulator has suggested that the Information and Broadcasting Ministry could make the required change in licensing norms so that interoperability could be introduced as a mandatory requirement.

In addition to STBs interoperability, Trai has released its recommendations for the reserve price for auction of frequency modulation (FM) radio channels. In its fresh suggestions, the regulatory body said that the reserve price for the valuation of FM ra-

dio channels should be calculated by taking into consideration the population of the city, the latest per capital gross state domestic product, and the listener-ship of radio channels, among other factors.

“The reserve price for FM radio channels for each of the 273 new cities has been fixed at 80 per cent of the valuation for each city, except for the cities situated in north east region, and Jammu and Kashmir, for which reserve price has been fixed at 40 per cent of the valuation of each city,” the Authority said.

Among the major cities up for auction, the reserve prices for Kolkata has been kept at Rs 53.39 crore, while that of Ludhiana in Punjab and Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh have been kept at Rs 7.83 crore and Rs 7 crore, respectively.

As IMF calls it ‘WORST CRISIS SINCE GREAT DEPRESSION’, SOME BET ON A SOLID REBOUND V-shaped or U-shaped? Economists divided on virus recovery

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON, APRIL 11

THE CORONAVIRUS pandemic has hit like a worldwide hurricane, shutting activity in most economies simultaneously, but some forecasters are more optimistic about the prospects for recovery once the worst has past.

International Monetary Fund managing director Kristalina Georgieva has called it the worst crisis since the Great Depression a century ago, and warned the damage could linger. And yet there are private economists betting on a solid rebound as soon as people can get back to work.

With 1.5 million confirmed cases and 100,000 deaths, the virus has forced economies



A Marshalls department store, closed due to the outbreak of coronavirus in Washington, DC, US. *Reuters*

worldwide to shut down, which in the United States caused 17 million workers to lose their jobs in just three weeks.

Economists at the New York Federal Reserve Bank said the

impact is more akin to a natural disaster like a hurricane, rather than a traditional financial or economic crisis. “Recessions typically develop gradually over time,” researchers Jason Bram

and Richard Dietz said in a blog post Friday.

“The coronavirus pandemic, in contrast, came on suddenly, hitting the economy at full force in one month.” And like a hurricane, it first hit the travel and tourism industry, they said.

But unlike a natural disaster, the authors said the pandemic has not left physical destruction in its wake, “which may well facilitate a quicker economic recovery.”

Karen Dynan, a former US Treasury chief economist, is looking at a 20 per cent drop in the American economy in April and May, leading to an eight per cent contraction for the year.

But Dynan, who helped produce the semi-annual forecast put out by the Peterson Institute

for International Economics, is more upbeat about the recovery, projecting a 7.2 per cent US rebound in 2021 year-over-year.

While US officials have expressed hope about a “V-shaped” recovery, with a sharp, rapid return to growth, private economists are more cautious given the uncertainty around the duration and severity of the pandemic.

“We’re getting the ‘checkmark’ not that classic V,” Dynan told reporters, referring to the steep decline and gradual recovery. “We’re going to have to proceed slowly, in terms of opening up the economy again. And we’re going to have some setbacks,” she said, while acknowledging that many of her Peterson colleagues disagree with her more upbeat view.



(Left) A ward at a Delhi government hospital; (below) outside Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Hospital in Delhi, which has over a hundred COVID-19 patients.

Express/
Amit Mehra

Inside the COVID ward

The hazmat suit can get oppressive, the separation from loved ones painful, and fear of the virus paralyzing. ANKITA DWIVEDI JOHRI recounts 24 hours in the life of four doctors and nurses on the frontlines of the battle against coronavirus in the Capital, armed with a few PPE kits, bottles of sanitisers, and — when the stress gets unbearable — Mohammad Rafi songs

SOAKED IN sweat after a gruelling shift, every night, she returns to the Dental Block of her hospital to sleep. The goggles and mask stretched across her face all day leave bruises; the heat, she says, has set off pimples. Her limbs ache from wearing a PPE suit a size too small. What she craves then is a bath, but dreads it too.

"My room is not a dormitory, it's a laboratory. There are three toilets, no bathroom... I use the jet spray to take a shower. Then I wash my clothes near the toilet and hang them on a railing where clothes of 17 other nurses — all of them exposed to COVID-19 patients all day — are also left for drying. That's the moment I break down every day," says the 50-year-old nurse who was assigned to the special ward of a dedicated COVID-19 hospital in the National Capital on April 4. "Dar lagta hai, rona aata hai (I feel scared, I feel like crying)... But I just take a painkiller and sleep."

In another part of the city, a 25-year-old doctor, who has been working in the COVID-19 ICU of a Delhi government tertiary care hospital since March 26, is relying on a pill to stay safe. "I have been taking a dose of hydroxychloroquine. I went to 15 shops to get it, but it was not available anywhere. I finally had to borrow from a friend. Its effectiveness in treating COVID-19 has not been proven but it's recommended. I know it can have serious side effects. I read that a doctor in Guwahati died after consuming it. But I am taking my chances," he says.

On a continuous 14-day shift in the COVID-19 ward before he gets a break for a fortnight of quarantine, the post-graduate resident doctor from the internal medicine department says he loves his job, but fears putting the lives of his elderly parents in danger. "The ICU is the most infectious zone. I have to insert tubes through the patient's mouth into his airways, put food tubes, catheter, if needed... I am constantly exposed to their body fluids," he says, adding, "My parents are very paranoid, and insisted on taking the hydroxychloroquine tablets too. But I didn't let them."

As the country remains in lockdown, with people barred from stepping out of their homes, a large army of doctors and nurses have been making their way to COVID wards each day and night, treating patients even as they fight their own fears. With the novel coronavirus cases in India crossing 7,000, the burden of treatment has largely fallen on the country's creaking government healthcare system and its over-worked staff. In Delhi, with over 20 virus hotspots and 19 deaths, at least six hospitals/blocks have been dedicated to the treatment of nearly 1,000 COVID-19 patients, and thousands of suspected cases.

"All the six floors of my hospital are brimming with people, there's hardly any social distancing that happens. Ambulances are dropping off family after family, all suspects. I am not in a PPE kit all the time, so when I first come in contact with suspected cases, I usually have only a surgical gown and a three-layered mask for protection. If any of them coughs, I shudder... At times such as these, I simply plug in my headphones, listen to Mohammad Rafi songs for a few minutes, calm down, and return to

the job," says the 50-year-old nurse.

Before the shift

These days, the 25-year-old doctor begins his day with a WhatsApp video call to his parents. Since the Cardiac Care Unit at his hospital was transformed into a COVID-19 ICU, he has moved to a separate floor of his house.

"I tell them to prepare my food and leave it at the door. I was given the option of staying at a hotel, but my family got extremely worried and insisted that I stay at home," he says. He also makes calls to a few friends, mostly doctors, across the country, to catch up with them. "They have been my support. I have to admit that I have been calling them more than usual," he says. The post-graduate resident doctor, who is now three years into his job, has been working in three shifts — 9 am to 3 pm, 3 pm to 9 pm, and the night shift every third day, from 9 pm to 9 am, after which he gets a day off.

Given the infectious nature of the disease, separation from family is a reality for many doctors across the country, like for a 40-year-old cardiac surgeon from a Delhi government hospital who has also been staying on a separate floor of his house.

"In the mornings, my daughters, 5 and 8, come out in the balcony and we shout out and talk to each other. They have also invented a game — they have named me corona and pretend like they are out to catch me," says the doctor, who volunteered for a position in the COVID-19 ward in early March.

"The distance was necessary because my father, in his 70s, has both a lung and heart condition... I have worked in tuberculosis wards earlier, so my family is used to me taking precautions. But this time it's a pandemic and so the stress levels are higher," he smiles.

For the 50-year-old nurse, a diabetic mother and a 10-year-old son at home made her opt for the hostel facility at her hospital. "I have been in the profession for 22 years. I married late to focus on my career. My shifts have usually been long, but this is the first time that I have been away from home for this long," says the nurse who hails from Goa.

So now she spends her mornings talking to her child and husband, often "hiding my worries". "They read about the staff at the Delhi State Cancer Institute getting infected, they ask me all kinds of things. I just say everything is fine. I have also told them that I don't have a phone with me, so don't call me till 10 pm. But I have one; I just don't want them to call me when I am busy with the patients or when I am too stressed," she says. "Since it's Lent season, I also pray for the safety of my family before leaving for work. I have bought some dry fruits and fruits from outside which I eat to strengthen my immunity," she says.

As she enters the toilet in the Dental Block to freshen up, she says, she cringes at the sight of the bucket, mug and towel. "They were used by the staff here before us. I don't know if they have been disinfected," she says.

But she is relieved that she does not have to go back home after the shift. "Two nurses at the hospital have been travelling from Noida every day. Their families are exposed to the virus. Once my 14-day duty ends, I hope they test me before sending me home. The 50 nurses who worked before us were not tested, just sent for 14-day quarantine."

INFECTED IN THE LINE OF DUTY

More than 150* healthcare workers are now infected with coronavirus in India, including doctors, nurses, paramedics

DELHI Doctors 11, nurses 20, paramedics/other hospital staff 3

MADHYA PRADESH doctors 4, paramedics 3

MAHARASHTRA Including 10 doctors, 61 nurses

KARNATAKA Doctor 1

KERALA Nurse 1, paramedics/ health staff 1

UTTAR PRADESH Doctor 3, hospital staff 1

CHANDIGARH Doctors 2, nurse 1

PANCHKULA (HARYANA) Nurse 1, paramedics/hospital staff 9

J&K Doctor 1

GUJARAT Doctor 1, paramedic 1

TELANGANA Doctor 1

TAMIL NADU Doctor 3

RAJASTHAN Doctors 4, Nurses 14

*As of April 10

Inside the ward

As per norms, and accounts by doctors and nurses that *The Sunday Express* spoke to, the COVID-19 wards in the Capital are "well-ventilated spaces with beds placed at least six feet apart and no extra furniture". They are disinfected with sodium hypochlorite several times a day. Separate toilets would be ideal, but at most places, at least three to six patients share a facility.

"The rooms cannot have air-conditioners because that would lead to stagnant air, an ideal environment for the virus to thrive. This also means that a doctor or nurse can't wear a PPE suit for more than two hours, because it gets very uncomfortable in this weather. It is easier in colder countries," says the 40-year-old doctor, whose first challenge upon arriving at the hospital is ensuring social distancing among the large groups of patients who arrive at the reception every morning. The 450-bed hospital he works in has 200 COVID-19 patients now.

"I take two rounds of the wards in the day. I use the stethoscope for auscultation, I have to come in contact with positive patients and suspected cases," he says.



EXPLAINED

Strengthen hands of medical staff

OVER 150 healthcare workers, including doctors and nurses, have tested positive for coronavirus so far. On the frontlines of the battle against COVID-19, the country's health professionals have so far flagged issues such as shortage of personal protective equipment and lack of accommodation, besides being stigmatised as carriers of the virus. For the government, this then is the time to acknowledge some of these concerns and strengthen the hands of the medical fraternity. The ordering of 1.7 crore PPEs in the past week is a step in that direction.

Around seven people, including nurses, security and cleaning staff, are present in the hospital's COVID ward at any given time. When not in the ward — there are six COVID wards at the hospital, including the ICU and Flu Clinic — the doctor works from a 'COVID-19 office' that has been set up at the hospital recently.

"Recently, a man who had returned from Thailand and had COVID-19 symptoms kept holding his little son in his arms. I had to counsel him for long before he agreed to let him go," he says. Patients with fever, cough and sore throat first arrive at the hospital's Flu Clinic to get tested. At least 50 patients have been testing positive at the hospital every day.

"I then move on to take stock of PPE, about 15 of which are used in each shift, and then go through patient files, and finally brief all my staff — nurses, ward boys, cleaners — on how to deal with COVID-19 patients. I can also easily tell when one of them is scared, it's on their faces. I try to be jovial with them, that helps," says the doctor.

For the Goa nurse, the "fear" is mostly a sinking feeling as she slips into the pink kurta-

pyjama uniform at her hospital every day. "It's washed with clothes of all other nurses. I rub a lot of sanitiser over it," she says. Her hospital has 600 active and suspected COVID-19 cases, while her ward has six positive patients.

"We are four nurses on a shift, and only the one who goes into the ward gets a PPE kit. The rest are in surgical gowns and masks. But suspected cases are walking into the hospital all day long," she says. She is part of a group of 120 nurses working at the hospital in three shifts — 7 am to 2.30 pm, 2.30 pm to 10 pm and 10 pm to 7 am.

For a 32-year-old nurse, who is now at home after completing her 14-day shift, it was the "donning and doffing of the PPE that left me anxious... We didn't have a separate room for changing, about six of us did it together. I washed my hand after removing each part of the equipment," she says. However, she hails from Kerala and has been working at a Delhi government hospital for the past six years.

A single parent who lives with her elderly mother and child, she says she stays in a separate room at her house, uses a different toilet, and pours Dettol all over her shoes and clothes every day. "Unlike doctors, nurses are not tested after the 14-day shift ends. There was no thermal screening facility at my hospital either. So I am continuing with the precautions," she says. However, she says, she is relieved that she doesn't have to wear gloves until her next 14-day shift. "I am allergic to latex powder that is used while wearing gloves. My hands would remain itchy all day. I would wash them all the time."

Washing his hands 20-25 times is also among the many precautions that the 25-year-old doctor takes every day as he begins duty. "Even in the 20 minutes that it takes to wear the PPE, I wash my hands five-six times. I then head to the ICU, where I have four patients now," he says.

His three years in the job have seen him being posted in infectious wards before and he is "not scared of the work anymore". "I once got pricked by a needle used for a suspected HIV patient. It was 3 am and I rushed to get a test. It took six hours for the results to come. Fortunately, it was negative. Such incidents will happen, you can't avoid it," he says. He will be tested for the virus when his 14-day duty ends.

With no family attendants for the patients, doctors and nurses end up doing a lot more work. "Changing diapers of elderly patients, emptying urine bags... all of this carries chances of infection."

And then there are the "VIP patients". "Some of these patients are frustrated at not having found a place at private hospitals. Food complaints are a constant," he says.

VIP patients have made the 50-year-old Goa nurse's "life difficult" too. "They all have mobile phones, and they keep calling the landlines and our mobile phones, asking for *chai*, juice, their reports. Once, a patient accused me of hiding his reports... They complain about the cleaner, electrician, ward boy, and they blame nurses for everything. *Hum kisko bolein* (Who do we complain to)?" she says.

She serves food to patients three times a day in disposable plates and glasses. "It comes from the hospital kitchen — *roti-sabzi, dal-chawal*. If a patient is diabetic or has any other underlying condition, the diet is

changed accordingly," she explains.

The 40-year-old doctor says it's normal for patients to be frustrated.

"They are away from their family, there is no emotional support. For a significant part of my shift, I double up as a counsellor. Recently, a young patient sat on the window sill, flung his legs out and threatened to jump. I had to pull him in. I later realised he was a drug addict and was experiencing withdrawals," he says.

As for his own mental health, says the 40-year-old doctor, "Knowing the science behind the spread of the virus, and not relying on 'WhatsApp and Facebook science' keeps me sane. I have been following reports from Wuhan and Italy. It's going to be a long journey. We can't lose steam this early. My thoughts are similar to that of any soldier."

To keep his staff healthy, the 40-year-old doctor also ensures that they eat on time. "I get my food from home," he says, adding that the staff takes turns to eat, and ensure social distancing.

The 50-year-old nurse says food is one thing they don't worry about. "We recently got meals from Taj Hotel. It was very tasty," she says. However, she has been taking care not to drink too much water so as to avoid using the toilet. "We have to remove the entire suit to use the toilet, and then disinfect. Plus, going to the toilet, which the other nurses have also used, only adds to my stress. *COVID shift mein physical se zyada mental stress hai* (There's more mental than physical stress while in COVID shift)."

So what does she do to fight it? "Apart from listening to old Hindi songs, I lean on my friend of 22 years. We started out together as nurses. We share our concerns and motivate each other," she says. "I like to take care of people and that is why I became a nurse. But we need some care too."

After the shift

After a long day at the hospital — that can range between six and 14 hours — the 25-year-old doctor begins his "return home routine". "I first take a shower at the hospital and inform my parents that I am leaving so that they can leave my food outside my room. There is a sanitiser in my bag, in my car, at entrance of my house, at the door of my room and in my bathroom. I use them all. I keep the used plates and my clothes in a polythene bag outside my room. There is a separate bathroom for washing these," he says. "My parents often ask me if the risk is worth it. I think it is."

How often does the fear of contracting the virus cross his mind? "I have thought about it many times. If that happens, I will get admitted at Max or Medanta Hospital," says the 25-year-old.

As for the 50-year-old nurse, when she returned to the Dental Block on Thursday night, she was filled with hope. "There was a protest by off-duty nurses for accommodation. The doctors are being put up at five-star hotels, why not us? Today we were told that some of us will be shifted to a new place, where there will be two nurses per room and an attached toilet," she says. "I want to take a proper bath."

Till then, the painkiller and Mohd Rafi melodies will keep her company for another night.

Across THE AISLE



PCHIDAMBARAM
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THE FIRST positive case of coronavirus was identified in China on December 30, 2019.

As the virus spread across Wuhan city, and then across Hubei province, and then to other provinces of China and other countries, fear gripped the world. By the end of January 2020, 27 countries had been affected. On February 12, 2020, Mr Rahul Gandhi tweeted:

"The Corona Virus is an extremely serious threat to our people and our economy. My sense is the government is not taking this threat seriously. Timely action is critical."

By February 12, the Central government had taken only two significant steps: (1) on January 17, the first advisory was issued against travel to certain countries and (2) on February 3, e-visas issued to visitors from certain countries were suspended.

MR GANDHI WAS RIGHT

As expected, there were trolls. One Saral Patel wrote, "Hey genius. Have you checked the latest news." Another, Pooja, wrote, "Oh God, you can sense also. Stop joking and get back to watching Pogo...." I wonder where Mr Saral Patel and Ms Pooja are hiding today. On March 3, Mr Gandhi tweeted again demanding "an action plan backed by solid resources to tackle this crisis".

Beginning March 14, the Central government acted, quarantining visitors from certain countries, closing borders with neighbouring countries, restricting

The poor and the vulnerable have the first claim on the resources of the country. The Central government's Financial Action Plan (announced on March 25) was miserly, ignored many sections, and was a big factor in pushing migrant workers to leave towns and cites to go back to their villages — tragically, many would have

Remonetise the poor

international flights, banning domestic flights and, finally, declaring a lockdown with effect from March 25.

In retrospect, Mr Gandhi was right; he was among the first to warn of a grave crisis. Some states like Karnataka, Maharashtra, Punjab and Tamil Nadu acted earlier than the Central government and declared their own lockdowns of parts of the states. The debate whether the Central government should have taken firm steps in February rather than in March will continue long after the battle against COVID-19 is won.

The purpose of this column is not to dissect the past, the purpose is to goad the government to take bold measures so that India will remain ahead of the curve in the battle against the virus, in saving lives, in protecting livelihoods, and in rescuing and reviving a sliding economy.

NEED BOLD ACTION

There is unanimity on the broad heads under which the governments must act:

1. Containment and medical treatment.
2. Livelihood support for the poor and vulnerable.
3. Maintenance of essential household supplies and services.
4. Rescue and revival of a sliding economy.

On the first, the Central government, after several false starts, seems to be getting its act together. It is bearing down upon state governments to enforce the lockdown strictly. Under pressure from

epidemiologists and opposition leaders, it has finally come around to increased, if not extensive, testing using also the recently approved antibody tests that will yield quicker results. Healthcare facilities as well as procurement of medical and protective equipment are being enhanced, with the state governments taking the leadership role. There are still miles to go.

On the second, the Central government has woefully failed and has not extended financial support to the state governments. The poor and the vulnerable have the first claim on the resources of the country. The Central government's Financial Action Plan (announced on March 25) was miserly, ignored many sections, and was a big factor in pushing migrant workers to leave towns and cites to go back to their villages — tragically, many would have carried the virus with them.

POOR HAVE FIRST CLAIM

Despite the state governments providing them some cash, most of the poor are still without any livelihood support. We must remonetise the poor — that is, put cash in their hands. The goal is to cover up to 50 per cent of the 26 crore families in India, roughly up to 13 crore families.

For the *urban poor*, start with the Ujjwala lists of oil marketing companies. Refer to Jan Dhan (and the previous 'no frills') accounts. Refer also to those enrolled

under the Jan Arogya-Ayushman Bharat schemes. De-duplicate using Aadhaar. Authorise states to cross-check with their BPL lists and draw up the final list.

For the *rural poor*, start with MGNREGA payrolls of 2019. Refer to the Jan Dhan (and previous 'no frills') accounts. Refer also to the Ujjwala lists. De-duplicate using Aadhaar. Authorise states to cross-check with their BPL lists and draw up the final list.

In *tribal areas*, cover all families. I think it is possible to draw up state-wise lists (of up to 13 crore families), give or take a few hundred thousands. There will be some cases of duplication (and hence double benefit), but it does not matter in a national emergency. With the aid of information technology, state governments can do the job in five days. On April 14, the Prime Minister should go on national television and announce the decision that Rs 5,000 will be credited to the bank account of every identified poor family in three days, as a first instalment, and if the beneficiary-family did not have a bank account, the money will be delivered at their door. The cost will be a maximum of Rs 65,000 crore — absolutely affordable, perfectly feasible, fiscally prudent, economically justified and socially imperative.

Thereafter, even if the lockdown is extended, the poor will be able to bear the hardship.

That leaves points three and four above. Let's do first things first. Let's live up to our declarations that the poor have the first claim on the nation's resources.

Fifth COLUMN

TAVLEEN SINGH
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Destitution or disease?

IN THIS village by the sea in which I have been locked down since the lockdown began, the first thing we do every morning is check if there have been any cases of the Chinese virus. In fearful voices, we telephone those we know and make sure everyone is in good health. We have reason to be fearful. The nearest hospital is 20 km away and not equipped to deal with a virus that attacks the lungs so brutally that oxygen machines and ventilators become necessary. It is not a hospital in which doctors and nurses are armed with essential Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) either. Finding a hospital geared to deal with COVID-19 would mean driving two hours to Mumbai. Luckily, so far, there has not been a single case reported from anywhere in the district.

This village, like others along this stretch of the Konkan coast, used to have an economy based on fishing and marginal farming. But, in recent years, local people have come to rely on the more lucrative business of tourism. Every other house has become a hotel, a guesthouse or a home that offers 'comfortable a/c rooms' to the hordes of middle-class tourists who flock here from Mumbai on weekends and holidays.

Tourism has died since the lockdown because ferry services by sea have been stopped and travel by road severely restricted. The little hotels and seaside restaurants are empty. I begin my daily routine with a walk on the beach and social distancing is easy. I meet almost nobody on this morning excursion. But, fears of the virus hang over us like a contaminated pall. Now that there is talk that the lockdown will be extended beyond next Tuesday new fears have begun to spread. Issues of livelihood have become almost more important than issues of life and death.

Local people fear that they will not be able to survive much longer if all economic activity remains in a state of total suspension. There are also fears that if road travel becomes more difficult, the village grocery shop could soon run out of supplies. There is a consensus that if the lockdown continues then it should be made less severe so that small shops and businesses can start opening their doors again. Will this happen? Nobody is foolish enough to believe that life can go back to the way it was immediately, but they hope that it will in some measure.

Newspapers stopped coming long ago. So, after I have finished reading this one on my cellphone, I read others online. It is part of my routine to regularly cruise the news channels in order to discover what is happening in the rest of the locked-down world. Sadly, most of the channels seem to spend their time discussing the virus in studios instead of reporting what is happening on the ground. It is in pictures posted on social media that I saw those long, heartbreaking food queues in Dharavi. This is a slum in whose mean streets I have wandered often to report on the little factories and warehouses that in normal times buzz with frenzied activity day and night.

Those who do not own or work in these small businesses are just as entrepreneurial. A young man I know used to show up every morning on Marine Drive with steel containers filled with 'idlis' and 'sambhar' that his widowed mother worked at dawn to make. He made a good living till pavement shops were banned on Mumbai's most iconic promenade. He was forced to return to his village in Tamil Nadu, but thousands of enterprising people like him continue to live in Mumbai's many slums. They would be too proud to queue up for free food if some way was found for them to continue running their small businesses. But, Mumbai is the epicentre of the virus in Maharashtra and this state continues to report more cases than any other, so lifting the lockdown will not be easy.

This newspaper has done better than our competitors to draw attention to the economic hardship that ordinary Indians face since the lockdown. Stories of farmers unable to reach markets to sell their freshly harvested grain are as heartbreaking as the stories from Mumbai's slums. Vegetables and fruit are being allowed to rot in the fields because there is nothing else that can be done with them. And, from a man who runs a flower farm not far from this village, I hear that buds are being destroyed before they flower because flower markets in Mumbai have been closed completely. Big businesses are hurting as badly as small ones. A friend who works in the Oberoi Hotel in Mumbai says it has been completely empty ever since the lockdown began. This is true of every other hotel in the city, and true of airlines who cannot function because of the ban on air travel. Tales of despair filter daily into the village in which I am locked down and most of them are about economic despair and not health problems. It is hard to say what should be done but what is becoming clearer by the day is that some way will need to be found soon to ease the lockdown or the Indian economy, which was already in poor health, could become the biggest victim of this Chinese virus.

inside TRACK

COOMIKAPOOR



OUT OF SHADOWS

THE SOFT-spoken Harsh Vardhan has often been ignored in favour of more pushy Delhi BJP leaders such as Vijay Goel, Manoj Tewari, Kiran Bedi and Meenakshi Lekhi, even though Vardhan is probably the party's most popular local face. Before the lockdown, anyone could walk into his Tees January Marg residence from 7.30 am to 9.30 am without an appointment. A leading ENT doctor, Vardhan was appointed Health Minister when Narendra Modi took charge in 2014, but within months he was mysteriously pushed to the Science and Technology Ministry. In Modi 2.0, Vardhan was re-appointed Health Minister. With his medical background, articulation, and the ability to carry his team and states with him, Vardhan has emerged as the right man in the right place for the COVID-19 crisis.

NO INTELLIGENCE SLIP

The authorities turned a blind eye to the huge congregation at the Markaz in Nizamuddin, Delhi, last month not because of an intelligence failure but to avoid a confrontation with the powerful chief of the Tablighi Jamaat sect. The Maulana had excellent relations with the local police, the state government appreciated his popularity among minority voters and the Central government was conscious of how well networked he was with Middle-East and South-East Asian establishments. The first alarm bells of a potential health hazard were, in fact, sounded by the Markaz's immediate Muslim neighbours, who feared for their safety. Between March 18 and 22, the AAP government tried to cajole the Maulana to ask his followers to disperse. It was only after two separate deaths, in Srinagar and South India, that the link between the Markaz gathering and coronavirus was detected. Amit Shah immediately ordered police not to permit the Tablighi followers to disperse, as was the original plan. He wanted them all quarantined.

4 NIZAMUDDINS, NOT 2

The Tablighi congregation has earned the Nizamuddin locality in South Delhi undeserved notoriety, for the area is actually known for the tomb of the 13th-century Sufi saint Nizamuddin Auliya. It is the liberal Sufi culture, with *qawwalis*, *ghazals*, *mushairas* and *Mughlai* restaurants, which dominates the *basti*, with its maze of narrow winding lanes. The followers of the or-

thodox Tablighi sect confined themselves to a five-storey building. Actually, there are not two Nizamuddins, but four. Adjacent to the *basti* is West Nizamuddin, a middle-class refugee colony formed after Partition. The character of the colony altered with time with many houses bought by wealthy Muslims. Across Mathura Road is East Nizamuddin, also originally a refugee colony. It has a more eclectic mix. The late Sheila Dixit and H K L Bhagat owned apartments. Omar Abdullah, Subramanian Swamy, Dinesh Trivedi and Vijay Bahuguna live here, as do painters Arpita Singh, Paramjit Singh and Anjolie Ela Menon, writers Vikram Seth and Upamanyu Chatterjee and sportsman Mohammed Azharuddin.

RAPID SPREAD

A survey by the Delhi government and municipal corporation of around 2,800 families neighbouring the now-infamous Tablighi Markaz indicated that apart from one beggar and one family, no one had coronavirus-like symptoms. On the other hand, the disease spread among Tablighi followers all over India. Since this orthodox sect does not believe in vaccination, some feel it buttresses the theory that those not vaccinated with BCG are far more vulnerable. Others believe that the Tablighi's community-living and eating habits helped spread the infection.

NO SHARING GLORY

Despite the lockdown, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath went ahead with a ceremony on Ram Navami to mark the shifing of Ram Lalla idol from the disputed Babri Masjid site, as the construction of a temple begins. Yogi was accompanied by over two dozen people, including a temple trustee and the local MLA. Curiously, Vinay Katiyar, the Bajrang Dal president identified with the Ram Janmabhoomi movement and a four-time local MP, and Lallu Singh, the current MP, were not present. Both men were around on the day and, reportedly, expecting an invitation.

COMING INTO HIS OWN

Till the pandemic, Udhav Thackeray was described as an accidental chief minister and Sharad Pawar was portrayed as the real boss of Maharashtra. Now the tables have turned. Udhav, depicted as shy and apolitical, has blossomed into an able communicator on TV, whose calm, measured pronouncements inspire confidence. Thackeray's son Aaditya, with his band of young helpers, is handling social media effectively. In contrast, Deputy CM Ajit Pawar of the NCP is tongue-tied before the media. The Maharashtra government has also drawn praise for not permitting a Tablighi Jamaat meeting in Mumbai in March, and for roping in sports stadia in the battle against COVID-19. Congested Mumbai, however, remains a challenge.

She SAID

YAMINI NAIR

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Chores as *desi* lockdown workout

OVER TWO weeks ago, I received a message on the WhatsApp group of my aerobics class. It was before the nationwide lockdown was enforced to contain the spread of coronavirus. Gymnasiums and other fitness centres in Delhi-NCR were already closed by then.

The message was in response to our trainer's plan to launch online classes through the Zoom video app. It read: "Hi, I won't be in for the online classes. I started *desi* workout...*Jhadu pocha*. Trust me, I lost 3 kg in two weeks."

Several residential societies in Noida, where I stay, had prohibited the entry of domestic helps much before, forcing my aerobics classmate to take up all the household chores.

Desi workout! The term rang a bell. It took me back to my growing up days at my home town in Kerala, when day-to-day life involved a lot of workout, especially for women.

We used to draw water from well till the late 1990s for all our daily needs: toilets, washing clothes, the kitchen and even washing our cows, which meant buckets of water drawn from 20 to 30 feet below the ground. All of us divided the task among ourselves, multiple times every day, with children's share being much less. Everyone washed their own clothes at home; my brother and I were taught to do it since we were in Class 5.

So was Amma's task of grinding *idli* batter in the grinding stone. Mixer-grinder came to our kitchen only when I was in upper primary school.

Coconut, an unavoidable item on Kerala's dining tables, had to be ground, too, but in a different kind of stone. I used to try my hand on it only to grind henna leaves, much before *mehndi* cones reached our part of the town. All the girls in the area would gather to apply the not-so-fine paste, with the fibre of the leaves still in it, on our hands carefully with the fine tip of coconut palm veins.

The plucking of coconuts every one-and-a-half months was a day-long affair then. We had over a hundred coconut trees on over an acre of land. The person who used to pluck the coconuts for us — Janardhanan — had a peculiar body. It seemed just peculiar to my eyes then.

As a child I had seen my father and uncles with huge paunches of varying sizes — resting on their lap as they sat down or walking ahead of them when they moved around! Janardhanan '*maman*' (uncle) had none. His body looked cast in iron without a pinch of fat.



Coconut trees, requiring long hours of work, but rendering a lifetime of memories

He used to start work around 7 am and finish climbing all the trees by noon. All he would have in between was a pitcher of water around 9 am and rice gruel an hour later or after work. The eager eyes of my brother and I, meanwhile, used to be on the tender coconuts he would cut for us.

Later, our work would begin — of picking the coconuts from under each tree and gathering them while arranging the leaves and other dried parts pulled down from the trees for firewood. Amma would shoulder a major part of the work of picking over 1,000 coconuts in months of good yield.

After we started helping our mother with minor chores, I was designated the role of sweeping the inside of the house as well as the front and back yards. With several trees shedding leaves through the day, the task would last for 45 minutes to an hour. I used to do it three-four days a week.

My mother still doesn't have a domestic help and shares all household work with my sister-in-law. My brother chips in whenever he is around. The only difference is that the grinding stones have been replaced by machines. She also tends to around 100 plantain trees herself, often insisting that my brother wouldn't do a good job.

During summer, around 100 coconuts are used to make oil. The task involves dehusking the coconuts, cutting them open, drying them, removing the dried coconut from its shell, cutting the copra into pieces and drying it in the sun again for over a week before it is taken to the oil mill.

Other outdoor chores during summer also include plucking tamarind — mostly by shaking the branches to make the ripe

ones fall — shelling them, deseeding them and drying them to preserve them with rock salt. All such works are shared by all at home, with a majority of it being done by my mother.

Amma, now 69, was diagnosed with diabetes only a few months ago. Till then, she would have consulted a doctor about four-five times in over three decades — a hereditary trouble of arthritis haunts her, though. My grandmother, who never had any machines in her kitchen till she was over 70 years old, had additional work at the farm, too, during her early years. She helped with household chores till her 80s and was healthy — with a sharp memory, — till three months before her death at the age of 89.

Now all we have to clean are a couple of rooms and maybe the balcony. Our daily needs arrive in packets, and machines have taken over all difficult tasks. Still, families or bachelors (men and women) pay for a domestic help, a cook and, of course, the gym.

It may not be easy to do it all and manage work in office as well, but this may be the right time to test our stamina and perhaps improve it. With those *desi* workouts, along with a daily dose of yoga, walking or other fitness measures. By the time lockdown ends, men and women would still be able to fit into their pre-work-from-home trousers.

Most importantly, you may be able to sweep or mop away those long lockdown blues.

National Editor Shalini Langer curates the 'She Said' column

Out of MY MIND

MEGHNAD DESAI



THE COVID-19 pandemic is everywhere the only topic of conversation. Many countries are in lockdown. The virus is hard to beat, affects anyone and everyone, rich or poor. Scientists are trying hard running against the clock to understand what determines the speed of the spread, the groups who are more or less vulnerable, the choice of strategy — to mitigate or to suppress the choice of means — isolation or herd immunity testing or medicines.

So far the number of deaths in India has remained small. There seems to be a wave

Beware false coronavirus optimism

of self-congratulations. Friends call me up and say proudly that there is something unique about India and Indians — their food habits, their insistence on bathing and washing every day, several times if necessary, the warm weather etc.

Patriotism is always welcome, but not unrealistic. The manner in which the virus spreads initially, its later acceleration, the juxtaposition between people tested and the number of positive and the number of dead, have a shape which is well-known in statistics and hence a tool that is reliable. All countries fall into a general, almost universal, pattern. The start is slow after the first few positive cases. But then

the spread steps up gradually. India is at the initial stage where the curve is low and flat. When Britain was at that stage, the government and its scientific advisers thought they had the freedom to choose when the big upsurge will come. Indeed all Western European countries were aware that the rise would come, but optimistic about the period before its acceleration. The US was perhaps the most relaxed, or at least Donald Trump was.

The European countries had a reason to be optimistic. Their hospital capacity could handle the cases if the rise could wait till spring. They thought they could flatten the curve. So the wish became father to the

thought. Italy realised 10 days too late the speed of acceleration and paid a price for it, in so far as a five figure total of the lives lost. Spain has mimicked the same pattern.

There is little doubt that the UK will follow the same shape a week or two later. The US's numbers may reach six digits.

The disease is not very discriminating between people. You hear that the elderly are more susceptible than the young. Even so, young people are among the dying in countries which are further on in the cycle. The key is the chance of coming into contact with someone who has got it. Since the origin in Wuhan, it has been carried everywhere else across the globe by travellers.

From Wuhan to Singapore and to the ski slopes in the Alps and then to the UK is how the first case arrived in the UK, and most probably via the ski slopes to Italy. By then dozens had it.

Thus it is the internationally mobile and the people they are likely to meet and the next lot whom the people who met the traveller will meet, string together the daisy chain. Indian experience confirms it. But beyond the first infection, the spread may be much more rapid in India because of lack of facilities and of hygienic habits of crowded market places, where one traveller may infect half of Khan Market. Beware optimism. Be alert. Stay alive.

10 THE OUTBREAK THE WORLD

PANDEMIC WATCH



In Lahore. AP

PAKISTAN

China sends more medical supplies

Islamabad: Pakistan is set to receive more medical supplies from its all-weather ally China to fight the coronavirus outbreak in the country where the COVID-19 cases have sharply increased to 4,892 and death toll reached 71, officials said on Saturday. The total number of cases on Saturday rose to 4,892 with more than 294 fresh infections. The death toll has reached 71. A special plane will arrive from China later Saturday with more medical supplies. It is the second plane to arrive in two days, said Naghmana Hashmi, Pakistan's Ambassador to China.

IRAN

Govt begins lifting lockdown restrictions

Tehran: Iran began re-opening government offices Saturday after a brief nationwide lockdown to help contain the worst coronavirus outbreak in the Middle East, which has killed more than 4,300 people in the country. Authorities had ordered most government agencies and all non-essential businesses to remain closed for a week after the Nowruz holiday ended on April 4. Government offices outside the capital, Tehran, reopened Saturday with two-thirds of employees coming in and the remainder working from home, media reported.

URUGUAY

Australian stranded on ship depart

Montevideo: More than 100 Australians and New Zealanders left Uruguay on a chartered flight after two weeks stranded aboard a virus-infected cruise ship, Montevideo's Carrasco airport said Saturday. Of 217 people aboard the ship, 128 had tested positive for coronavirus and had been blocked from docking. An agreement between the Uruguayan and Australian governments was made to create a "sanitary corridor" to take the mostly elderly tourists to the airport where they boarded a flight for Melbourne.

US first to top 2,000 deaths in a day

Going to have to make a decision, and I only hope to God it's the right decision: Trump; United States nears Italy's total death toll

AGENCIES

WASHINGTON, APRIL 11

THE US has become the world's first country to have registered more than 2,000 COVID-19 deaths in a single day with over 2,100 fatalities reported in the past 24 hours, according to Johns Hopkins University data.

The outbreak has now claimed the lives of at least 18,860, people in the US, which also leads the world in the number of confirmed infections with 503,594, by the Baltimore-based school's count. Italy has registered 18,849 deaths according to an AFP tally.

As he grapples simultaneously with the most devastating public health and economic crises of a lifetime, President Trump finds himself pulled in opposite directions on what to do next. Bankers, corporate executives and industrialists plead with him to reopen the country as soon as possible, while the medical experts beg for more time to curb the coronavirus.

The phone calls from his business friends compete against the television images of overwhelmed hospitals. The public health experts tell him what he is doing is working, so he should not let up yet. The economic advisers and others in his White House tell him what he has done has worked, so he should begin to figure out how to ease up. Tens of thousands more could die. Millions more

We're not doing anything until we know this country is going to be healthy... We don't want to go back and start doing it over again.

— DONALD TRUMP

could lose their jobs.

"I'm going to have to make a decision, and I only hope to God that it's the right decision," Trump said on Friday during his daily news briefing on the fight against the pandemic that has put more than 16 million Americans out of work. "But I would say without question it's the biggest decision I've ever had to make."

Seizing on new estimates of a lower-than-projected death toll, the president signaled that he wanted to start resuming business on some basis after his current stay-at-home guidelines expire on April 30. But he also promised to listen to public health officials cautioning against a premature move.

The death toll in New York State from COVID-19 is "stabilising" but at a horrific rate, Governor Andrew Cuomo said on Saturday as he announced that 783 more people died in the state.

Cuomo said the "good news" is that the infection curve is "continuing to flatten" and the number of hospitalisations appears to have hit a plateau-shaped apex.



At a COVID-19 alternative site, meant to relieve pressure on hospitals, in Chicago on Friday. AP

If China considered developing nation, make America one too, says Trump

LALIT K JHA

WASHINGTON, APRIL 11

IF CHINA is considered a developing country, make the United States too a developing one, US President Donald Trump said on Friday, alleging that Beijing has taken advantage of his country.

"China has been unbelievably taken advantage of us and other countries. You know, for

instance, they are considered a developing nation. I said well then make us a developing nation too," Trump told reporters.

Reiterating that United States was taken advantage of by the World Trade Organisation, Trump said the Chinese economy started booming after it joined WTO with the help of the US.

"If you look at the history of China, it was only since they

went into the WTO that they became a rocket ship with their economy. They were flattered for years and years," he said.

"Frankly, for many, many decades. And it was only when they came into the WTO that they became a rocket ship because they took advantage of all — I'm not even blaming them. I'm saying how stupid were the people that stood here and allowed it to happen," he said. **PTI**

With 2 hours' notice, Turkey puts millions under lockdown

NEW YORK TIMES

APRIL 11

TURKEY'S CITIES fell quiet on Saturday, a day after the authorities ordered a two-day curfew for 31 provinces, and as the country's death toll from the coronavirus pandemic climbed above 1,000.

The lockdown, which came with two hours' notice, affected Istanbul and Ankara, where international flights were halted and schools and bars closed three weeks ago.

"We urge all citizens who live in these 31 provinces to comply with this weekend's lockdown without panicking," Fahrettin Altun, the country's communications director, said on Twitter.

Altun asked people to maintain their social distance in the

time before the lockdown went into effect at midnight. But soon after the news was announced, hundreds of people rushed to late-night stores to shop for essentials in Istanbul, a city of 16 million. Video posted to Twitter and Facebook showed the chaos as scores of densely packed crowds — some people wore no masks — jostled to enter a store and fights broke out.

The Interior Ministry said in a statement that bakeries, pharmacies and health facilities could operate during the lockdown. Certain energy companies, distribution firms and some gas stations were also exempted. The number of cases of Covid-19 increased by 4,747 and 98 people died in the past 24 hours, raising the death toll to 1,006, Health Minister Fahrettin Koca said.



COVID PIÑATAS

Piñatas depicting the novel coronavirus at a workshop in Guatemala City, Guatemala, on Saturday. Reuters

UK warns public to follow rules, toll up by 917

ADITI KHANNA

LONDON, APRIL 11

BRITISH HOME Secretary Priti Patel on Saturday warned the UK public to continue to follow the strict social distancing as the death toll from coronavirus rose by 917 to hit a total of 9,875.

The senior Indian-origin Cabinet minister, who led the daily Downing Street briefing, said that a majority of the population have been following the government's stay-at-home guidance but there was a small minority who should be aware



Medical staff outside the NHS in London on Saturday. Reuters

that the police forces have the powers they require to impose

the lockdown measures. "We have given the police

powers to enforce the measures we have put in place, including through enforcement fines.

"If you don't play your part... our selfless police will be unafraid to act. You will be endangering the lives of your own family, friends and loved ones," she said.

She unveiled a new set of measures to combat domestic and child abuse, including a 2 million pounds fund to enhance online support services and helplines, as she highlighted a new set of challenges being faced by the country's security services during the lockdown imposed to curb the spread of the virus. **PTI**

Spain's daily death toll at 510, lowest in 19 days

REUTERS

MADRID, APRIL 11

THE NUMBER of coronavirus deaths in Spain fell for a third consecutive day on Saturday, with 510 fatalities reported in the past 24 hours — the smallest overnight increase since March 23.

Spain's total death toll from COVID-19 disease rose to 16,353, the Health Ministry said in a statement, while the number of confirmed cases climbed to 161,852 from 157,022 a day earlier.

The slowdown is an encouraging sign for the country, which has suffered the third-highest number of casualties from the virus after Italy and the United States. At the beginning of April, the overnight death toll rose as high as 950, overwhelming the national health service and forcing regional authorities to set up temporary mortuaries in an ice rink and disused public buildings.

But as the rate of new cases and deaths slows, the government is contemplating a gradual unwinding of lockdown measures.

Death toll hits 19,000 as Italy plans more testing, tracing

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ROME, APRIL 11

ITALY PLANS to increase testing for the coronavirus and use voluntary contact tracing whenever it exits from a lockdown that's currently in effect until at least May 3.

Italy has topped 19,000 deaths and 150,000 cases. Deaths rose by 619 to 19,468, while the cases reached 152,271

Italy's special commissioner for the virus emergency Domenico Arcuri told SKYT 24 there will be mandatory blood tests to set up a system of "immunity passports."

The voluntary contact tracing mobile apps will allow people to know if they have come in contact with someone who is positive for the virus. Then they can be tested in an effort to limit further spread.

The blood tests identifying anti-bodies are still being developed. Virologists have cautioned the tests will not prove immunity but will give a snapshot whether a person has been in contact with the virus.



Firefighters mark the death of a colleague. Reuters

Lankan Navy increases patrolling to prevent spread of virus from India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

COLOMBO, APRIL 11

THE SRI Lankan Navy has intensified its coastal patrolling to prevent the possible spread of the novel coronavirus through "infected" Indian fishermen that it fears might "poach" in their territorial waters.

Navy chief Piya de Silva on Friday said they have strengthened patrolling, especially in northern, western and north-western coastal areas. The Lankan Airforce would also be on hand to assist.

"There is a possibility that infected Indian fishermen could

poach in our waters. They could have contact with our people and pass on the virus," he said.

Poaching in each other's waters by fishermen of both the countries has been a recurring problem since the recent past.

The frequent incidents of poaching have drawn top-level talks between the two nations across the Palk Strait, which is between Tamil Nadu and Jaffna district of the Northern Province of Sri Lanka.

The fishermen issue also figured in the talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Sri Lankan counterpart Mahinda Rajapaksa during the latter's visit to India in February.

'I CANNOT BUY FOOD ANYWHERE, NO SHOPS OR RESTAURANTS WILL SERVE ME'

Africans targeted in China: 'If you're black, you can't go out'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

BEIJING, APRIL 11

AFRICANS IN southern China's largest city say they have become targets of suspicion and subjected to forced evictions, arbitrary quarantines and mass coronavirus testing as the country steps up its fight against imported infections.

China says it has largely curbed its COVID-19 outbreak but a recent cluster of cases linked to the Nigerian community in Guangzhou sparked the alleged discrimination by locals and virus prevention officials.

Local authorities in the industrial centre of 15 million said at least eight people diagnosed with the illness had spent time in the city's Yuexiu district, known as "Little Africa".

Five were Nigerian nationals who faced widespread anger after reports surfaced that they had broken a mandatory quarantine and been to eight restaurants and other public places instead of staying home. As a result, nearly 2,000 people they came into contact with had to be tested for COVID-19 or undergo quarantine, state media said.

Guangzhou had confirmed 114 imported coronavirus cases



Africans have become targets of suspicion. Reuters/Representative

as of Thursday — 16 of which were Africans. The rest were re-

turning Chinese nationals. It has led to Africans becom-

ing targets of suspicion, distrust and racism in China. Several Africans told AFP they had been forcibly evicted from their homes and turned away by hotels.

"I've been sleeping under the bridge for four days with no food to eat... I cannot buy food anywhere, no shops or restaurants will serve me," said Tony Mathias, an exchange student from Uganda who was forced from his apartment on Monday. "We're like beggars on the street," the 24-year-old said.

Police in Guangzhou declined to comment when contacted by AFP.

A Nigerian businessman said

he was evicted from his apartment earlier this week.

"Everywhere the police see us, they will come and pursue us and tell us to go home. But where can we go?" he said.

Thiam, an exchange student from Guinea, said police ordered him to stay home on Tuesday even after he tested negative for COVID-19 and told officers he had not left China in almost four years. He believes the measures are unfairly targeting Africans.

"All the people I've seen tested are Africans. Chinese are walking around freely but if you're black you can't go out," he said.

eye



SPOTLIGHT, PAGE 12

The Number is You

In a pandemic, data has a face and a name, and humanising numbers helps us take action

BOOKS, PAGE 13

- Review of *The Deoliwallahs*
- Review of *Animosity at Bay*



A Sublime Note

He would have turned 100 on April 7. Remembering Pandit Ravi Shankar, one of sitar's greatest exponents, and the man who took Indian classical music to the world

Suanshu Khurana

ON THE EVENING of November 4, 2012, a frail Pandit Ravi Shankar took to the stage at Terrace Theatre in Long Beach, California, a place he had fallen in love with for its moderate temperature and lush spaces. Wearing a nasal cannula and a sandalwood *tilak* on his forehead, he arrived in a wheelchair. As the concert started, he picked up a smaller sitar that had been especially created for him because his older one had become "too heavy". That evening, he chose to play *Pancham se Gara*, a *raga* he had created. With daughter Anoushka by his side, he touched each note with tenderness and ended with a *tihai*. As the audience broke out in thunderous applause, Shankar stood there, flanked by his students, sobbing like a child. It was as if he knew that this was the final goodbye. A little over a month later, on December 11, Shankar passed away. He was 92.

Grammy-winning cellist Barry Phillips was one of the students who had accompanied Shankar that evening on the bass *tanpura*. "He loved music, loved people, loved giving concerts, loved life through and through. I believe those tears were about all that having to end," says Phillips.

Pandit Ravi Shankar would have turned 100 on April 7. "It's been seven years, two months and 16 days exactly. I've been counting," says his wife Sukanya Shankar, 66. "I have had the choice of being completely broken, but I have decided to think that he is still around, and that's where I get my strength," she says about an artist, who, for more than half a century remained India's greatest cultural ambassador, drafting a blueprint for those who came after him.

"A maze of noises," wrote EM Forster in *A Passage to India* (1924), while describing Indian classical music. Pt Ravi Shankar, whose virtuosity would change the way the world understood the richness of Indian music, was yet to burst on to the international music scene. Before Shankar, Indian music for the West was exotic but monotonous and never considered on a par with Western classical greats. But Shankar and his corpus of work provided "a sense of serene exaltation", according to legendary violinist Yehudi Menuhin. "In him, they (the audience) see the mastery and dedication of a discipline born of infinite experience and concentrated effort that are manifestations of not only the artist's own being but the generations preceding him," wrote Menuhin in the foreword to one of Shankar's autobiographies, *My Music, My Life* (2009, Mandala Publishing).

Born in 1920 in Banaras as Robindro Shankar Chowdhury, Shankar was the youngest of five brothers in a Bengali Brahmin family. His father, a Sanskrit scholar and lawyer, was a *diwan* (minister) in the service of the Maharaja of Jhalawar. He soon left for London to practise law, leaving his family behind. A meagre pension was arranged by the Maharaja for their livelihood. Shankar, a curious child, always had an ear for music. Banaras was full of sights and sounds and a young Robu was in love with it all. A towering figure in his life was his much older brother Uday, who, by then, after studying at the JJ School of Art in Mumbai, had moved to London to study painting at the Royal College of Art. There, in 1923, he met the feted ballerina Anna Pavlova. The meeting led to a collaboration that gave Londoners a glimpse into Indian dance and led to a year-long association between Pavlova and Uday, who was so taken by the experience that he quit painting and became a full-time dancer. He toured with Pavlova's company, and, later, went on to become a pioneer in modern Indian dance.

Shankar, meanwhile, was learning to sing Rabindranath Tagore's songs and imbibing the cadences of the river Ganga and the musical incantations of the *aarti* along its *ghats* every evening. In 1929, Uday returned, with a dream to tour Europe with an Indian troupe, comprising musicians and dancers. By the fall of 1930, the family was *en route* Paris by sea. It was in Paris that a young Shankar began tinkering with the *esraj*, *sitar* and the *tabla*. "To me, he (Uday) was a superhero, and those days with him did a great deal to not only shape my

artistic and creative personality but also to form me as a total human being..." says Shankar in *My Music, My Life*.

For one of these international tours, Uday invited Ustad Alauddin Khan, the sarod player, who was the founder of the *Maihar gharana* and who he had met in Calcutta at a performance in 1934. The musician agreed to join his troupe in Europe as its music director. It was here that he came across a handsome 14-year-old Shankar, "always chasing girls". As the legend goes, he told Uday that he would teach the gifted youngster to play "at least one instrument" and to send him to his house. Uday agreed. A few years later, Shankar was sent to Khan in Maihar.

From the dazzling Paris to the austere Maihar was a long journey. The seven-year-long training he received there was to decide the course of Shankar's life. Every day, at 6 am, he would sit at Khan's feet, along with his son Ali Akbar, and, sometimes, daughter Annapurna, and learn to coax the sitar into life. It was a tough life for the young man. Khan, fondly called Baba, was a taskmaster. But Shankar understood early on that what he was learning was privileged knowledge; it needed to be imbibed emotionally and intellectually. "You can learn the technique, the speed, but to make each note alive and pulsate with life and feelings so that it can move you, just one *sa* or one *gandhar* can bring that particular feeling. This is not something that can be learnt in a year or two. I am strict, orthodox and traditional as far as music goes. The total surrendering to the *guru*, for whatever *vidya*, art, technique or craft, this feeling of reverence and respect helps one to learn the *sadhana*..." he had said in an All India Radio (AIR) documentary.

Khan had a penchant for crafting individual styles for each of the musicians that he taught. So, he taught Shankar in a certain way. Then there was Shankar's own personality — charismatic, flamboyant — that added to his style. In 1939, he was ready for his first performance at a conference in Allahabad.

Shankar's *sadhana*, meanwhile, had impressed Khan. When Uday suggested an alliance between Shankar and Khan's daughter, Annapurna, he agreed readily to a Hindu-Muslim marriage — a rarity in those days. The couple had a son, Shubho. The family moved to Mumbai in 1944, with Shankar intending to try his luck in the nascent film industry. They set up home in Malad and began performing at smaller concerts and in music circles in Kolhapur, Pune, Belgaum, Gugali, Aurangabad, Nasik, and Baroda, among others. India was at the cusp of independence and Shankar joined the Indian People's Theatre Association, where he composed the tune for Iqbal's famous poem *Saare jahan se achha* and worked on a ballet project for Indian National Theatre, titled *Discovery of India*, based on Jawaharlal Nehru's book of the same name. Nehru was present at its premiere in 1947.

Around the same time Shankar worked as a music composer for two films — Khwaja Ahmad Abbas's *Dharti ke Lal* (1946) and Chetan Anand's *Neecha Nagar* (1946). A few years later, a family friend, the auteur Satyajit



performing a duet with Ali Akbar, but agreed reluctantly. Khan wasn't happy. According to Vinay, he "hurled the choicest of abuses" from the audience, that comprised many connoisseurs, including legendary sarod player Ustad Hafiz Ali Khan. Namita Devidayal writes in *The Sixth String of Vilayat Khan* (2018) that things kept heating up at the concert, each musician going out of his way to better the other. "*Maar dala!*" exclaimed Haafiz Ali after a particularly enthralling round. Though it was never meant to be a competition, Vilayat had won it.

"Pandit ji (Shankar) would often say that Vilayat Khan's music is the epitome of *shringaar*. He himself would play from the *dhruwad ang*. It was meditation of a different kind," says Vinay, refusing to be drawn into the debate of who was a better artiste. "Everything in my father was the opposite of Pt Ravi Shankar — his music, his dealings with the world. It is exciting to see these two musicians, who were such excellent artistes, doing the same thing but with no resemblance to each other. A rivalry is a good thing. It keeps people on their toes," says sitar player Shujaat Khan, Vilayat Khan's son.

The '60s was the summer of love in America, with its flower children and their interest in art, spirituality, drugs and the concept of free love. George Harrison, one of the members of the music band The Beatles, decided to learn the sitar from Shankar. Suddenly, Indian music was "the thing". "I never thought our meeting would cause such an explosion, that Indian music would suddenly appear on the pop scene," says Shankar in *Raga* (1971), a documentary on him by Howard Worth.

The association got Shankar two major concerts — Monterey Pop Festival (1967) and Woodstock (1969). Other acts in these festivals included artistes such as The Who, American guitar great Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin and rock giants The Grateful Dead. In the coming years, Shankar collaborated with iconic American composer Phillip Glass, Menuhin and famed jazz saxophone player John Coltrane, among others. He was happy with his fame but often wondered if the audience really understood his music. He also started to become uncomfortable with the association of drugs with classical music.

The journey to Woodstock and Monterey required Shankar to make certain tweaks to his music. He shortened his performances, concentrating more on pace. It drew criticism from the purists but enhanced his popularity among his audience. "It's all about the context. He read his audience and tried to give them what they wanted. His connection to the commercial pop culture scene was unique. That is what shaped the road that he went down," says sarod player Alam Khan, Ali Akbar Khan's son. But what Shankar's popularity in the West really did in the long run was to establish Indian music as a rich tradition to reckon with. It was now on the same pedestal that was reserved for Mozart, Bach and Beethoven.

By this time, Shankar's marriage with Annapurna Devi was on the rocks. The two parted ways in the late '50s. Shankar would go on to have a slew of relationships, among them with concert promoter, Sue Jones, with whom he had a daughter, musician Norah Jones, in 1979. Shankar would marry Sukanya Rajan, a London-based banker, in 1989. They had a daughter together — Anoushka — in 1981. "People spoke about the many women in his life. I really didn't care. When he was with me, I was the goddess and nothing else mattered," says Sukanya.

Shankar's last work, an opera titled *Sukanya*, was dedicated to his wife of 22 years and partner for 30. He had called upon his longtime friend and collaborator David Murphy, a Welsh conductor, and told him his vision for it, when he was admitted in hospital. The opera premiered at Curve Theatre in Leicester, UK, in 2017, and, later, went on to be staged at London's prestigious Royal Festival Hall. "It's very difficult for a person like myself, who is demanding so much from life and wanting to give so much back... I will ask you to bless me, so that till the last day of my life, I can be active and... create and try to achieve at least half of what I would like to and make all of you very proud of me," Shankar had said in a 1978 AIR documentary. He got what he had asked for — the sitar will forever be remembered as the instrument he made his own.



THE VILAYAT KHAN FAMILY; COURTESY THE SIXTH STRING OF VILAYAT KHAN BY NAMITA DEVIDAYAL (CONTEXT)

What Alauddin Khan did not know was that a rivalry would soon ensue between one of his favourite students, Shankar, and this young man, Vilayat Khan (in picture above, right)

young musicians such as Shiv Kumar Sharma and Chaurasia besides Ustad Alla Rakha on the percussion. It's during this time that Robindro Shankar Chowdhury became Ravi Shankar. "Ravi Shankar sounded just right, and that was how I told the announcers to introduce me on the radio. All India Radio was heard throughout India, so people came to know me by my new name... I am proud to be a Bengali, but it made me more international, in the Indian sense," writes Shankar in his autobiography.

In Delhi, Shankar came in close contact with businessman and arts impresario Lala Shriram of the Delhi Cloth Mills. The Shriram-Shankar family was a patron of the arts and their house on Curzon Road was always brimming with writers, musicians, politicians and philosophers. They often hosted Uday, French dancer Madame Simkie, who performed with Uday, Ustad Alauddin Khan, and, later, Shankar. "In those days, musicians wouldn't come for a day or two, they would come and spend months," says Vinay Bharatram, 84, Shriram's grandson, who learned vocal classical music from Shankar, Annapurna Devi and Ustad Ali Akbar Khan. On one such visit, Alauddin Khan had just tuned in to AIR, when strains of the romantic *raga Pilu*, being played on the sitar, moved the sarod maestro's heart. He asked Bharat Ram, Lala Shriram's son, the name of the musician. Bharat Ram didn't know, so he sent someone to the radio station to bring the artiste home. A handsome young man walked in. It was Vilayat Khan.

What Khan didn't know was that a rivalry would soon ensue between one of his dearest students and this young man, which would be talked about for years to come. It was in 1952, at a concert organised by the family, that this rivalry came to the fore. Vilayat Khan walked into Shankar's green room and asked him if he could accompany him. Shankar was

ILLUSTRATION: SUVAJIT DEY

SPEAKEASY



Pratik Kanjilal
Pratik Kanjilal lectures a surprisingly tolerant public on far too many issues

The Final Blow Hits You

The political and psychological fallouts of COVID-19 hark back to a difficult past

FOR THE FIRST time in a century, the human race faces an existential question: who will live to see 2021, and who will die? In the abstract, it is an academic question since the death rate will be low. But it is engrossing because the absolute numbers will be very large, and everyone secretly wonders if they or their family and friends will become pandemic statistics.

In that century since the influenza pandemic, speculative fiction and futurology emerged as independent genre and respectable discipline, serving up the fruits of human folly with relish. In the free world, World War II anxiety was followed by unprecedented prosperity and public safety. Stories of vicarious suffering, dystopias and disaster porn rushed in to fill the void. Broadly speaking, this literature depicted the failure of humanity to protect itself from superior intelligences and from the products of its own reckless intelligence (AI in *The Terminator* and ecological and social/environmental disaster in *Mad Max: Fury Road*). Very few anticipated a superbug capable of popping the existential question. Now that the real thing is here, perhaps vicarious suffering will languish for a while. NK Jemesin's *The City We Became*, which is just out and depicts a crisis heightened by human prejudices, could be the last of the current crop. One looks forward to a boom in humour and satire.

Apart from content, form, packaging and delivery are also liable to change. Our lives have already been altered by disruptive startups, which offer new ways to consume a range of cultural products, from food to media and education. Some, which depend on physical delivery, will falter during lockdowns, bringing back long-forgotten memories of socialist scarcity. Others are making the lockdown tolerable. Imagine house arrest for the same class without streaming music and video, without cookery sites, wellness apps and social media. Old habits die hard, but alternative modes of delivery could accelerate their demise. In music, the world had already migrated from personal collections to streaming services. The weekend outing to the multiplex is still a habit, but the



REUTERS

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In the plague years, Jews were massacred in Europe because they were relatively immune

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ease with which streaming video can be accessed in the cities is seductive. On the other hand, the world has resolutely stayed with the printed book, and, in our region, the morning newspaper remains a habit.

But habits are eventually fragile, and curling up with a cup of tea and the mobile phone is an equally compelling habit — especially so if the consumer is not very literate and more comfortable with audio or video news. The world is already divided according to the mode of delivery it accesses — in the US, there is the *Breitbart* reader and the *New York Times* reader, consuming conspiracy theory and reported fact respectively. Now, if serious media houses commit more forcefully to digital delivery, as the NYT has done, that divide could shrink.

This business opportunity could also be politically profitable. The recent social and political polarisation in the biggest democracies is comparable with the devastating schisms of the age when religion defined politics. Stress brings out the worst in people, and the novel coronavirus will be with us long enough to do serious psychological damage. Under stress, people seek scapegoats. In Europe, from the 15th century, the scapegoat was the Jew. In the plague years, the community was massacred in Barcelona, Toulon, Frankfurt, Mainz, Cologne, Basel on the perception that they were relatively immune — possibly because they lived in cleaner conditions. That forced a migration of Jews to eastern Europe, where the pogrom was completed six centuries later by the Holocaust. The geopolitical result was the founding of Israel.

Now, in parts of Asia, Muslims are being marginalised, vilified, re-educated or dealt with differentially. The case of the Tablighi Jamaat meet in Delhi, which became an epicentre of the spread of COVID-19, displays the differential. The organisation was in error on several counts, the most grievous being its persistence in the face of restrictions on public gatherings imposed by the state government. It is generally agreed, and rightly so, that its leadership should be prosecuted for accelerating a threat to public health. But the fact that it was an administrative failure didn't attract half as much attention — the meet was in the vicinity of an important police station, which should have enforced the law banning gatherings. Such differentials are early warning signs. The historians and political analysts of the distant future may look back on our foreseeable future like we look back on the Holocaust, and prescribe the very same nostrum: "Never again."



GETTY IMAGES

The Number is You

In a pandemic, data has a face and a name, and it shifts momentum from virus to us

Anirban Mahapatra

IT IS HARD to think that there was a time before the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted all of our lives. Although it seems like an eternity ago, it was only on December 31, 2019, that China reported serious cases of pneumonia to the World Health Organization (WHO). Within days, the cause was identified as a virus, named severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2, or SARS-CoV-2. It is widely believed that SARS-CoV-2 jumped over to humans from bats either directly or through an intermediate host in late 2019. Since then, lakhs of people have been infected all across the globe; tens of thousands have perished. Our complex, interconnected world has been upended by an invisible virus — a tiny, self-assembling nanoparticle with less than 30,000 nucleotides of genetic information with the simple evolutionary prerogative of making more copies of itself.

People from all walks of life have had their hopes and dreams dashed by SARS-CoV-2. These are doctors, nurses, political leaders, sportspersons and actors, among others. Like many others, since the start of the pandemic, I have consumed with great interest the human stories of those who suffered because of COVID-19. I have seen the photos of doctors with battle-scars from

wearing personal protective equipment during exhausting long hours of duty. I've heard anguished debates over triage: which critically-ill patients will get access to limited resources like intensive-care-unit beds and ventilators? I've seen photos of army trucks lined up to take away the bodies of the deceased. I've read the Twitter threads of those who have been hospitalised and the Instagram posts of quarantined celebrities. These stories have filled me with sorrow.

People are not numbers. But in a pandemic, we must also flip the paradigm and think of numbers as people. I believe each of us must not only look at personal individual stories, but at data concerning COVID-19 — how fast it spreads, how many people are infected, who is at risk of suffering the most and of dying — and humanise it. Joseph Stalin is thought to have said, "One death is a tragedy. A million deaths is just a statistic." During the COVID-19 pandemic, we must negate this assumption. We must give statistics names and faces.

A pandemic is not a single destructive event like a cyclone; it is not a prolonged, but comparatively subdued event like a recession. A pandemic combines the destructive nature of a cyclone with the length of a recession. Actions we take individually have meaningful life-or-death consequences for others. Given the ferocity and speed by which the virus has spread, those of us who are not yet infected also have to consider the implications of SARS-CoV-2 now and in the immediate future. Humanising data helps each of us define parameters of the pandemic and understand the significance of our actions.

If no actions are taken, one infected person will infect everyone in a city the size of Varanasi in two months. If you think of data this way, you are likely to stay home

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If all goes well, the earliest a vaccine might be available for SARS-CoV-2 would be 2021 (and that would be a record of sorts, given that vaccines often take a decade or longer to develop). Developing a drug to cure COVID-19 will also take time, and our best hope right now is that an approved drug for another disease works to contain it. Given these circumstances, and given that there is mounting data that non-pharmaceutical interventions like social distancing and hand-washing slow the spread of SARS-CoV-2, doing so becomes everyone's responsibility. Relying on data to understand that these approaches are effective

tive is empowering, because it shifts momentum from the virus to us: as humans we have the ability to change our habits.

One of the most effective approaches is to visualise the number of people who are infected over time and see how the curve changes due to interventions, also called "flattening the curve." The idea here is that if no actions are taken, SARS-CoV-2 spreads unhindered: each infected person infects at least two more and the total number of infected people doubles every two or three days. This doesn't sound like much until the data is humanised. Now, if I think of it like this: if no actions are taken, one infected person will infect everyone in a city the size of Varanasi in around two months. I have context. I can imagine the toll it will take on the people and the hospitals there and I am more likely to wash my hands and stay at home. My actions help to flatten the curve; SARS-CoV-2 spreads slowly and fewer people are infected at any given time.

Demographic data should also be seen through a human perspective. One of the few silver linings gleaned from the early data from China and the United States is that not as many children suffer from severe COVID-19 as adults do: indeed, there is a correlation between the severity of symptoms and age. Those with heart disease, diabetes, respiratory disease, and high blood pressure also tend to have worse outcomes, including death. The problem is that this has led to a lackadaisical attitude among young adults in many parts of the world. Unfortunately, while symptoms in young adults may be mild or nonexistent, they can spread it to someone older through their actions and cause severe COVID-19. Here, a 15 per cent death rate among those who are above 80, and an 8 per cent death rate among those who are between 70 and 79 should be seen through a human perspective. Once someone sees the numbers as parents, grandparents, elderly neighbours, and relatives, he or she is more likely to take preventative measures.

Broadly speaking, it is true most of those who are infected will get better. But that is not the entire picture. Even among middle-aged adults, the burden on hospitals can be substantial. Up to 20 per cent of those with COVID-19 might need urgent care. It helps to think in personal terms — thinking of five friends and imagining that one of them becomes so acutely sick in days that he or she needs to be hospitalised, it becomes easier to grasp the seriousness of COVID-19.

Data gives us a picture, but over-reliance on data also has flaws, because it is fluid. With a broader testing of the population for SARS-CoV-2, we will find that more people had mild or no symptoms, and that we probably overestimated the severity of COVID-19. But data with a human face allows us to consider all angles and take action now.

Individual stories are compelling, but we can never really be sure that they are representative. There could be a news story about a 30-year-old who died from COVID-19 right next to one about a person who didn't feel a thing. Depending on which one we read, we might come to a conclusion about the severity of COVID-19. Data, on the other hand, seems cold and distant. But data that is put into the context of real people is invaluable, and along with individual stories, gives us a clearer perspective on the ongoing pandemic.

Anirban Mahapatra trained as a scientist and is now tracking the pandemic while maintaining appropriate social distance

A Borrowed Life

In our interconnected world, why the threat of a virus appears distant and delusional — till it isn't

Karishma Mehrotra

MY BRAIN HAS difficulty conceptualising a literal virus. I can imagine a viral puppy video dismantling geographical boundaries. I can imagine a computer virus, infecting those who practise little digital hygiene. And while both of those are also a result of an ever-increasing interconnected world, I can't seem to wrap my head around exponential growth of daily case numbers, entire nations falling into a dystopian quarantine, or an actual, literal virus.

It's not the first time humanity was caught off guard. From the Black Death in 1347, (ravaging tens of millions) to the Spanish Flu in 1918 (infecting a third of the world), sudden mixing of populations have changed the course of history with little notice.

"Everybody knows that pestilences have a way of recurring in the world," Albert Camus writes in *The Plague* (1947), "yet somehow we find it hard to believe in ones that crash down on our heads from a blue sky. There have been as many plagues as wars in history; yet always plagues and wars take people equally by surprise." The indescribable nature of the virus might be best encapsulated by the scientific community's own confusion. At first, it was considered a poison, based off of its roots in the Latin word. Over the past century, it was then understood to be a life form, a biological chemical, and now, some hybrid between an inanimate and animate entity, according to virus researcher Luis P. Villarreal,

professor emeritus at University of California, Irvine, USA.

Why is it so difficult to pigeonhole the concept between biology and chemistry? A virus enters a host cell, sheds its own protein coat, lays out its genes, and makes the cell replicate its DNA or RNA. Researchers have characterised this as a "borrowed life". Is a borrowed life itself alive?

Many scientists are adamant that a virus cannot be considered alive, considering its reliance on a host cell. But Villarreal disagrees. "This is a lot like asking about Schrodinger's cat. It is both alive and dead, depending on perspective. Outside of the cell, a virus is a complex chemical that shows no living feature. But it clearly has living potential, just like a seed or spore and can be killed. Inside a cell, a virus becomes a complex entity that is clearly part of life," he wrote to *The Indian Express*.

Despite, or perhaps because of, its incomprehensibility, the fictional virus captures public imagination, overshadowing more threatening diseases. Slow-killers like diabetes and cardiovascular disease kill far more people across India and in parts of the world. But those fail any competition for attention or panic. The notion of a plague has consumed popular culture, enshrined by a genre of films conjuring various outcomes of a global pandemic.

And while fiction relegates a virus from reality, technological metaphors cement their innate nature, obscuring any literal threat. Computer pioneer John Neumann's thought experiment in 1948 imagined robots, or automata, to be constructed so that they could self-replicate, as long as they have a source of free energy. With the seeds of the



GETTY IMAGES

'A virus is both alive and dead. Outside the cell, it shows no living feature. But it has living potential and can be killed,' says Luis Villarreal

"computer virus" sown, a California graduate student put forth a mathematical definition for the "major computer security problem": "a program that can 'infect' other programs by modifying them to include a possibly evolved copy of itself," he wrote in his 1986 PhD thesis.

By the end of that decade, the public was infatuated with the idea that a small software code could overtake the systems of some of the largest computers spread across the world. The new mimicry also carried a new humility — everything, even our most "advanced" innovations, was much more

vulnerable than previously thought. But this humility didn't transfer to self-reflection. Computers and software code, after all, are not living objects. They remain in a dimension one-removed — a dimension that ironically has also become our only real source of social communication.

In a dissonant fog, the metaphors and the science fiction images are easier to digest, humouring us in delusion. A virus cannot be alive, and, therefore, cannot be an actual threat. Until a virus did, in fact, become alive, crashing down once again on our heads from a slightly blue sky.

Death Comes as the End

In this pandemic season, a look at how diseases and deaths have been central to several narratives in Hindi literature

Seema Chishti



■ Suryakant Tripathi Nirala's memoir *Kullī Bhat* (1938; *A Life Misspent*, 2016, English translation) captures the misery of the Spanish Flu, that swept through India in 1918. Indian soldiers in the British army, who has participated in World War I, returned home, becoming unwitting carriers of the disease.

In India, the Spanish Flu killed between 10-20 million people. Nirala was 22 at the time, on his way to meet his teenaged wife at his in-law's place in UP's Dalmou. But she dies before he makes it. That's not the only death he encounters. There are others who die, too — caretakers, and, most poignantly, an infant in his lap. Nirala's description of the river Ganga, laden with swollen, abandoned dead bodies, bear witness to the scale of the devastation that befell India. "My family disappeared in the blink of an eye. All our sharecroppers and labourers died..." he writes.



■ Phaneshwar Nath Renu's landmark novel *Mailla Anchal* (1954) has, as its protagonist, a doctor who leaves his city life behind to work in the hinterlands of what is now Bihar, where malaria, kalazar, and numerous other epidemics ran havoc. Based on the true story of a doctor named Alakh Niranjani, who battled not just diseases and infection but also ignorance and superstitions in one of the most under-developed areas in Bihar, *Mailla Anchal* shows how poverty is the biggest social malaise.

■ Shrikant Verma's *Bukhar mein Kavita* is a meditation on a lived life, with strong allusions to mortality and the fleeting nature of existence. He writes,

चेचक और हैजे से
मरती हैं
बस्तियाँ
कैन्सर से
हस्तियाँ
वकील
रक्तचाप से
कोई नहीं
मरता
अपने पाप से

(Small pox and cholera empty colonies, cancer kills the well-known, lawyers die of blood pressure, but no one dies of their ill-deeds.)

■ The last poem of the renowned Hindi poet from Varanasi, Sudama Pandey "Dhoomil", presents a personal meditation on a near-death experience. The poet who died early — at the age of 39 — writes,

शब्द किस तरह
कविता बनते हैं
इसे देखो
अक्षरों के बीच गिरे हुए
आदमी को पढ़ो
क्या तुमने सुना कि यह
लोहे की आवाज है या
मिट्टी में गिरे हुए खून
का रंग।

लोहे का स्वाद
लोहार से मत पूछो
घोड़े से पूछो
जिसके मुँह में लगाम है।

(Ask the horse about the test of metal, not the person who makes the leash, as the horse can taste it in his mouth.)



■ Kamlakant Tripathi's novel, *Paahighar* (2016) is centred around the 1857 Uprising and how it changed the course of lives in rural Poorvanchal, ravaged as it is by floods, plagues and cholera. Writer and journalist Mrinal Pande speaks of the use of the word "fever" in the "language from the kitchens". Tripathi writes,

पिंडा तप रहा था, बदन भट्टी बना हुआ था।

("The body was on fire, quite like the oven.")

■ On epidemic or *vaba*, Urdu poet Hasan Naim (1927-1991) writes:
*Sab pareshan hain ki akhīr kis vaba men vo mire
Jin ko ghubat ke alawa koi bimari na thee*
(Everyone is worried about the epidemic that will get them/ Them who have no illness save poverty)

Lives Interrupted

Notes on putting humans in camps — three lessons from 1962

Raghu Karnad

WHAT SHOPPING malls were to India in the 1990s, detention camps may be in the 2020s. Few and far-flung at the start of the decade, but everywhere by the end — the essential feature of a decade's political economy, given form in brick and tile.

In both cases, pioneering designs already existed: In Assam, detention centres for undocumented people have existed since at least 2010. Outside Bengaluru, the first camp in the state of Karnataka had its wall white-washed by the final week of 2019. And earlier, too, Indians have been forcibly held in camps, especially during war.

In the 1960s, after the short-lived Sino-Indian border war, three thousand people were taken from their homes and into captivity in a camp in Deoli, on the edge of the desert in Rajasthan. In *The Deoliwallahs: The True Story of the 1962 Chinese-Indian Internment*, Joy Ma and Dilip D'Souza collect their stories and reveal the practical and ethical facets of that exercise, all of which could not be more relevant to us today.

Bureaucracy is its own law

In his preface, D'Souza recalls a retired army officer telling him that India should now apologise, but that "the Deoli episode ... was 'SOP' (standard operating procedure) for any country at war". Compared to the shifty, unstable claims made about the National Register of Citizens (NRC) today, a hard-headed argument did exist in 1962 for detaining Chinese-Indians: in wartime, they might act as a fifth column.

National interest was the argument, but bureaucracy was still the instrument. Open hostilities began and ended in a month (October 20-November 21, 1962) but detention orders were implemented on a different clock: the majority of Chinese-Indians were taken into captivity while the war was ending, or over.

Chinese forces were already withdrawing to their pre-war positions by New Year's Day, 1963, when Effa Ma — born in Kalimpong in 1934 — was detained from her home in Darjeeling. With her husband, Jack, she was transported by train to truck, from jail cell to jail cell, to Deoli.

By February 1963, there were about 2,100 detainees there, and the number was growing. Effa gave birth to a daughter, Joy, who is one of the authors of *The Deoliwallahs*, inside the camp. And they were all kept there, in the bewildering silence and stillness, until June of 1967.

By the time the family was released, a whole other war had started and ended. Nehru had died. Lal Bahadur Shastri — who had visited the Deoli detainees as Home Minister — had succeeded Nehru, and also died. Effa Ma's family was never accused of any crime, nor proven to be any kind of threat. But bureaucratic machinery has its own logic, unconnected to those of law or national security.

Every modern case of detention, right up to Guantanamo, shows how much easier it is to lock people up than to let them out.

Lashed by freedom

Considering how long they spent there, the book does not dwell, for very long, inside the camp. It's hard to write about years of nothing happening. It might be even harder to remember it. There was a single football. There were no teachers. Rice was rarely washed, often burnt. Later they had vegetable plots. Conditions swung from egregious to benign neglect.



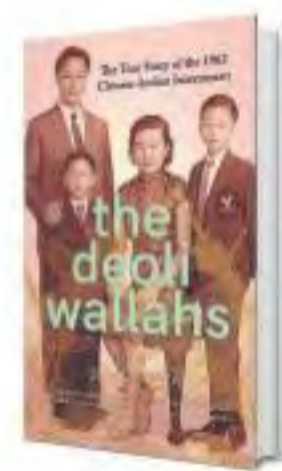
FAMILY PORTRAIT

Joy Ma (centre, above) with her siblings Lyndem and William; the detention centre in Deoli

The real tragedy begins once the detention ends. Then you are released from the uncertainty of your limbo to the certainty of your ruined life. The *Deoliwallahs* were not restored to their homes, but abandoned to them — to ransacked businesses, vanished jobs, derelict houses, absent community, missing years of schooling, and hunger.

The hunger comes first. When Effa Ma was released at a police station near Howrah, after three days in transit from Deoli, she had three children with her, no money, no food or bedding, and nobody to call. The police told her to leave. She refused, bewildered. By night-time, they found a local Chinese family to lodge them. Effa tried to make the children eat, but Joy was so tired she kept throwing up.

Many of the detainees had been named by informants (just as the upcoming NRC had proposed), salting the ground where they were meant to restart their lives. There was no acknowledgement — let alone an apology



THE DEOLIWALLAHS: THE TRUE STORY OF THE 1962 CHINESE-INDIAN INTERNMENT
JOY MA AND DILIP D'SOUZA
Pan MacMillan
248 pages
₹ 650

— and no promise that it would not happen again if another border war boiled up.

A story of detention is a catalogue of things destroyed: Not just years lost to captivity, but all of life's labour from before. We do some version of this anyway. But societies are beginning to confront the awesome waste of incarceration, and the collective self-harm that is the industrial prison system. Detention lacks even the logic of criminal guilt.

Like the people in India facing detention in the 2020s, the families in *The Deoliwallahs* were productive, striving members of society. Detention turns them into subjects totally dependent on the state; release turns them into outcasts, free to rebuild from nothing.

Nations make war, war makes nations

Chinese immigrants had arrived in the

Hear Them Out

This study of Indo-Pak bilateral relations after Partition is a reminder of the possibility of cooperation

Rana Banerji

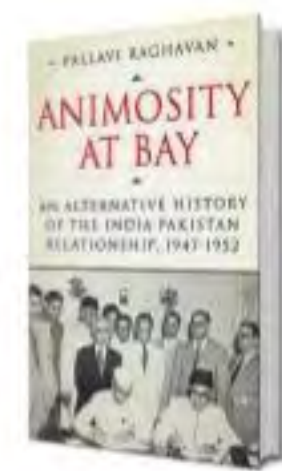
IN AN interesting academic work which has recently hit the stands, Pallavi Raghavan, assistant professor of international relations at Ashoka University, forcefully argues that bilateral dialogue between India and Pakistan, especially interactions between their bureaucrats in the period studied (1947-1952) "opened up spaces for resolving problems in the aftermath of Partition" and "seemed to arrest the pace of the slide towards hostility", which is so evident, unfortunately, in the "bleak" state of ties today.

Based on historical analysis and drawing on a rich wealth of archival material from the National Archives of India, the Ministry of External Affairs' files and Dominion Office records of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London, the author delves into the frayed post-Partition environs, focusing on the effort to find an even keel in bilateral relations. The narrative describes the dangerously escalating backdrop of an almost unmanageable flow of Hindu refugees from East Bengal, which did not prevent the signing of the Nehru-Liaquat Pact in April, 1950. The book examines several other vexatious issues governing bilateral ties in those early

years of independent statehood.

The premise is that the actions of politicians and bureaucrats were determined by a variety of considerations: one of the critical priorities for both governments in the midst of the chaos and violence of riots, majorly in Punjab and Bengal, was not only to tackle questions of law and order but "preparing more, an architecture" to deal with and promote their own interests as "two separate States". "What mattered was not the inadequacy of the state apparatus in either country to contain the fallout, but rather that this should be seen to exist within a bilateral framework of action."

Committees were set up at the highest levels to deal with the division of assets, the infrastructure of the respective foreign policy establishments, the efficacy or otherwise of the soon-to-be-disbanded Punjab Boundary Force and work done on the abducted women's cell, on both sides. The author contends that though these processes were far from smooth, "at heart, regardless of incessant disagreement about intentions and methods", it remained a "collaborative" exercise. The Nehru-Liaquat Pact, a joint agreement to extend the jurisdiction of respective high commissions to the welfare of minority citizens across borders, "repre-



ANIMOSITY AT BAY: AN ALTERNATIVE HISTORY OF THE INDIA-PAKISTAN RELATIONSHIP, 1947-1952
PALLAVI RAGHAVAN
HarperCollins
288 pages
₹ 699

sented something quite unusual. To states notoriously prickly about their sovereignty, it seemed like "a way of bolstering their claims to separate and viable statehood."

Both Nehru and Liaquat had to contend with domestic pressures "and formidable opposition" from powerful political figures like Bidhan Roy, then chief minister of West Bengal, and, among others, from Ghulam Muhammad, Pakistan's minister for minorities. In particular, Nehru had to face a lot of criticism from his own cabinet members, KC Neogy and Shyama Prasad Mookerjee. Sardar Patel, India's deputy PM and home minister, supported Nehru at this juncture. JN Mandal, Pakistan's only minority representative in the Liaquat cabinet, resigned in October 1950, sending "a brutally worded letter" castigating the Pakistan government's unsympathetic position on Hindus there. Nevertheless, the author argues that the process was "based on a realisation that the way towards a more amicable relationship... lay in their ability to acknowledge, and then further cement the basis of Partition, and correspondingly, the basis of existence for both states."

Dealing with Evacuee Property in Chapter 3, the author holds that "South Asia's partition story is about property — about the sin of breaking the sacrosanct bond with ones' land." The Indian Ministry of External Affairs played a crucial role "in shaping the debate" about how rules ought to be fashioned, on the basis of reciprocity. Though this principle remained "the cornerstone that held up the structure of legislation" in both countries, in between, many discordant considerations cropped up in individual instances (as in the fascinating House of Camba case), where



The mass detention of an ethnic group is typically the work of a state fighting a war. Below the surface, it's the work of a nation, using a war to forcibly remove whoever may be in a land but does not belong to it

Northeast over generations, even as Indians migrated elsewhere, percolating through the very multicultural, mobile world of colonial Asia. That world was divided by softer ethnic lines than what replaced it — independent nation-states with identity crises and insecure borders.

Above the surface, the mass detention of an ethnic group is typically the work of a state fighting a war. Below the surface, it's the work of a nation, using a war to forcibly remove whoever may be in a land but does not belong to it. Perversely, it even accepts the enemy's definition of who belongs to them.

During World War II, when Britain interned Japanese civilians inside the Purana Qila, many of the internees were picked up from as far as Iran, or Chhapra in Bihar. Many had never been to Japan. It must have been a shock to be designated, and relocated, as a subject of the Emperor.

In Deoli, it wasn't just Chinese-Indians who were detained — they were joined by many Tibetans. Some were picked up as they crossed the border to seek refuge, and ended up dumped in Deoli. Tibetans were asserting their right to be free, and India was at war with the People's Republic. But detention draws lines almost on the enemy's behalf.

Quoting the political scientist Srirupa Roy, the authors write that "the 1962 war began the 'ethnicisation of the nation', meaning that it became possible to use 'blood and race' to define who did and did not belong." The 3,000 Chinese-Indians, deemed to not belong in the 1960s, were the early drip-drip of exclusionary nationalism, which now threatens to collapse the ceiling.

Today, without a war, we have found a way to designate a much larger class of residents as not-Indian, again validating the terms of the supposed enemy. These are the cruelties we perpetrate on ourselves when we use identity to decide who belongs in the country and who in the camps.

Raghu Karnad is a journalist and writer, and a recipient of the Windham-Campbell Literature Prize for non-fiction

impromptu and preemptive state action on either side seemed to go at variance. Several conferences were held between the two sides, revealing "two parallel processes: partly simply an ugly exercise about land-grabbing and ownership", but also "an attempt to emulate systems of governance established elsewhere in the world." The author finds that ultimately, "the rehabilitation of refugees was critical in fashioning the narrative of legitimacy to both nation-states."

The correspondence between Nehru and Liaquat on the "failed" No War Pact is examined in Chapter 4. It offered an opportunity for India and Pakistan to clarify their positions internationally as mutually exclusive entities — demonstrating that "the business of disentangling" "did not necessarily mandate stances that had to be hostile to one another". The process also illustrated "the importance of atmospherics" in the conduct of relations. Though some of the relevant issues figured at the United Nations, diplomats of big powers like the USA and UK in India advised their governments not to be unduly alarmed over prospects of imminent war.

Though the book ends in 1952, in Chapter 5, the author dwells on prehistory — on clauses connected to the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty, which evolved during this period. Raghavan's seminal effort is a timely reminder that "despite traumas of the very worst kind", "cooperation and dialogue" can be worked out between two states seeking assertion, if "contentious issues are addressed with a degree of circumspection and prudence".

Rana Banerji retired as Special Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat, in 2009

In England, footballers to be tested before season resumes

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE
LONDON, APRIL 11

LEAGUE MANAGERS Association chief executive Richard Bevan has said that the English season can only be restarted if all footballers are tested for coronavirus. "Tests must be made available first to National Health Service (NHS) workers and patients," Bevan told the BBC. "Once that's happened, by all means let's access it in sport."

Football has already been shelved for a month due to the virus which has killed nearly 9,000 people in Britain.

Football League chiefs believe they can finish the season in 56 days once it is safe to resume. "We're not really going to see more accurate forecasting about when we can get on the pitch until the end of April," said Bevan. He added: "In Germany, if you look at discussions about coming back in May, that's probably a direct result of some very clear thinking from their government because they're doing 50,000 tests a day. In this country we're doing 10,000 per day, although the government are targeting 100,000 each day by the end of the month. Our managers do not want to be back on the pitch unless the players have been tested."

Clubs in the Championship, League One and League Two were sent a letter by the Football League this week revealing that the governing body hope to complete the season this summer despite the on-going pandemic. But Bevan insists bosses should have been consulted.

"You're going to have to get the support of the coaches and managers. You do not do that by not talking to them," Bevan said. "You're going to have to get the goodwill of the players because you're going to have at least three weeks of training to get back on the pitch at least. The most important thing guiding every principle is health, and getting back on the pitch without ensuring fully-fit players is a very big call to make."

Tests must be made available first to National Health Service (NHS) workers and patients. Once that's happened, by all means let's access it in sport."

RICHARD BEVAN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE,
LEAGUE MANAGERS ASSOCIATION

Roadmap to restart sports: Test all

Sports executives say testing the only solution until vaccine is found but medical experts warn mass testing not easy

MIHIR VASAVDA
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

FROM IPL and football to hockey and even the Olympics, global sports executives and Sports Ministry officials say organisers should ensure that all players, support staff and the officials involved are tested for COVID-19 before mass events are restarted — and not focus only on holding matches behind closed doors.

However, medical experts say it's not easy. They foresee practical problems with mass testing, thus diminishing the chances of an early start to sporting action around the world.

With no clear timeframe available, various tournament organisers — including the BCCI that conducts IPL, cricket's biggest event — have been exploring the possibility of conducting matches in empty venues. But hockey's gameplan will depend on testing, International Hockey Federation chief executive Thierry Weil told The Indian Express.

"I am convinced that sooner than later, a vaccine will be found. And then, you can go back to normal. Until then, I am sure what will happen is, before going on a field of play, or playing again, everybody — not only the sports side but everybody — will have to be tested," he said.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC), which has put off the Tokyo Games in June by a year, said they will follow "risk management and mitigation measures set out by the WHO for mass gatherings". Screening and testing are among the key recommendations in the WHO's guidelines.

The Sports Ministry, too, is planning to test its athletes before allowing them to enter Sports Authority of India (SAI) centres after the lockdown is lifted.

But medical experts feel that, even without fans, the idea of mass testing may not be practical during tournaments, where at least 200 people will be present, including players, coaching staff, match officials, medical personnel and the media. "The testing process at the moment takes around five to seven days. Two tests are conducted during this period and only when both are negative, we can conclude that the person is not infected," says Dr Damanjit Chadha, an internal medicine specialist. "During this duration, they should be totally isolated. So the idea to test everyone is very theoretical."

Dr Yash Gulati, a consultant orthopedic surgeon at Apollo Hospital added: "Mass testing is a secondary option... It is a stupid



The BCCI is considering to host IPL behind closed doors. However, sports executives feel that alone might not be enough and, till a vaccine is found, organisers will have to test players and other staff for coronavirus when sport resumes. File

The Sports Ministry is planning to test its athletes before allowing them to enter Sports Authority of India (SAI) centres after the lockdown is lifted

idea to even start any sporting event the way things are right now. Once things settle down, once other activities are started, then maybe we can do that."

According to Sports Ministry officials, one of the options is to set up isolation wards at major SAI centres, where training camps have been suspended. "At major centres, for example, when athletes come to train, they will first have to be tested for the virus, irrespective of where they are coming from. If two consecutive tests come negative (as per Health Ministry protocols), they can enter the centre. If there is a positive test, the athlete will be placed under quarantine in the isolation ward. This is one of the ideas," the official said.

"We might have to start with a few centres where we have isolation facilities. At places where we have limited accommodation, we might hire adjacent premises," the official said.

Mitigation measure

Most national federations say they will follow the guidelines laid out by world governing bodies. The IOC, in an emailed statement, said: "We will follow the risk management and mitigation measures set out by the World Health Organisation (WHO) for mass gatherings in the context of the current COVID-19 outbreak."

The five-page guideline, issued on March 19, details the steps that need to be taken, with focus on surveillance and testing. "We are committed to following this principle in the future," the IOC said.

As the coronavirus began spreading across the world over the last two months, organisers had floated the idea of resuming games without fans. Recently, Aleksander Ceferin, the president of UEFA — European football's governing body —

said: "It is still better to play the game behind closed doors and have it on TV, which is what the people need and want because it brings positive energy to their homes than not playing at all."

The IPL is looking at a September-October window before the T20 World Cup. And team owners were involved in discussions with the cricket board last month to explore the idea of conducting the games minus spectators.

Rajasthan Royals co-owner Manoj Badale had told BBC: "These are unprecedented times and sport needs to be put in the right perspective overall. If the way of ensuring the cricket economy survives is by playing behind closed doors, so be it."

But world hockey CEO Weil said caution is now the need of the hour. "In my personal view, it is obvious that you need to test literally everybody to find out who was contaminated to make sure the virus doesn't spread. So before potentially playing a game, players will need to be tested just to see there is no contamination between the two teams on the field of play," he said.

'Should not even think to start... relapse reported'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

Can sporting events begin even after three or four months?

Dr Damanjit Chadha, an internal medicine specialist at Fortis, believes 'right now, it should not even be thought of.'

"We are getting daily reports of re-infections in Wuhan, and even in Korea. There were reports that the situation was totally clear there but two days ago, patients started showing symptoms again and tested positive again. They say that it may be a relapse. Maybe in the next six weeks, we will be much wiser about how things are going to unfold."

Till then, according to Dr Yash Gulati, a consultant orthopaedic surgeon at Apollo Hospital, it is 'impossible' to hold an event.

"It is a stupid idea to even start any sporting event the way things are right now, with or without spectators. Maybe, once things settle down, once other activities are started."

SIMPLY PUT

Is testing all players, support staff and organisers — making it roughly 200 people — at a venue practical?

Dr Gulati says sparing 200-odd testing kits 'should not be an issue' if events start three-four months from now. However, there could be logistical challenges. "Two tests are conducted in a span of five-to-seven days and only when both are negative, can we conclude that the person is not infected," Dr Chadha says. "During this duration, they should be totally isolated. So, the idea to test everyone is very theoretical." He, however, says antibody tests, which give results in a shorter time, can be an alternative.

What if someone tests positive?

A sports ministry official said they are considering having isolation wards at major Sports Authority of India centres in case such a scenario takes place at one of their facilities. There is no clarity yet on what happens if someone will test positive before a tournament or a match.

BRIDGE

Dealer East, nil vulnerable.

NORTH	SOUTH		
♠ K 8 5 2 ♥ 5 3 ♦ A 8 6 4 3 2 ♣ 8	♠ A Q ♥ A J 6 ♦ K Q ♣ K Q 9 6 4 3		
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	1 ♣	INT	
Pass	1 ♦	Pass	3 NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West leads the H7 to the H3 and East's HQ. How do you plan the play?

THE WEST HAND: ♠ 107 ♥ K10872 ♦ J7 ♣ J1052

THE EAST HAND: ♠ J9643 ♥ Q94 ♦ 1095 ♣ A7

Looking at top tricks, we have three in spades, three in diamonds and the HA and we can set up one more in clubs by knocking out the ace; but that is only eight tricks. Playing on clubs is unlikely to be successful; two tricks in the suit will have to be lost and, by that time, the defenders may well have set up three heart tricks to complete five. It looks as though the whole diamond suit will be needed. That implies a 3-2 split but even then, we still have to reach the board to cash the long cards. The only entry outside diamonds is the AK, which means that we shall have to sacrifice one of our top spade tricks by over taking our own SQ. Re-counting our tricks in that light, we have six diamond tricks (given a friendly 3-2 break), two spades and the HA to total nine and we may have time to knock out the CA for an overtrick.

Our plan is to cash the two diamond honours in hand, then over take SQ with the SK and cash the DA and the remainder of the suit, finishing with the SA.

From the point of view of the contract, it does not matter whether we win the first heart or hold it up. But you should have realised that if we decided to hold it up, and East cunningly shifts to a spade (attempting to attack our entry) we must win this with the SA, keeping our AQ intact for when it is needed. Satisfy yourself that, if we put on the SQ, we cannot make the contract.

Dealer North, EW vulnerable

NORTH	SOUTH		
♠ A 6 2 ♥ Q 4 ♦ J 7 4 2 ♣ A K 7 2	♠ K Q J 10 9 4 ♥ K 7 3 ♦ K 6 5 ♣ 5		
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	1 ♣	2 ♦	dbl
Pass	Pass	Pass	

You are in 4S, having missed the easy 3NT contract. West leads the DA, and (believe it or not) your play to trick one will decide the fate of the contract. What is your plan for the first trick?

SUNDAY CROSSWORD 2264

QUICK CLUES

ACROSS

- Easy to deal with (13)
- Send or forward (5)
- Migratory movement (9)
- An inability to feel pain (9)
- Slack (5)
- Baltic land (7)
- Understand (7)
- Food item - "Alter TT" anagram? (7)
- Epicure (7)
- Complete (5)
- Lowest female singing voice (9)
- Over the side of a ship (9)
- Majnu's counterpart (5)
- Dull; stupid (13)

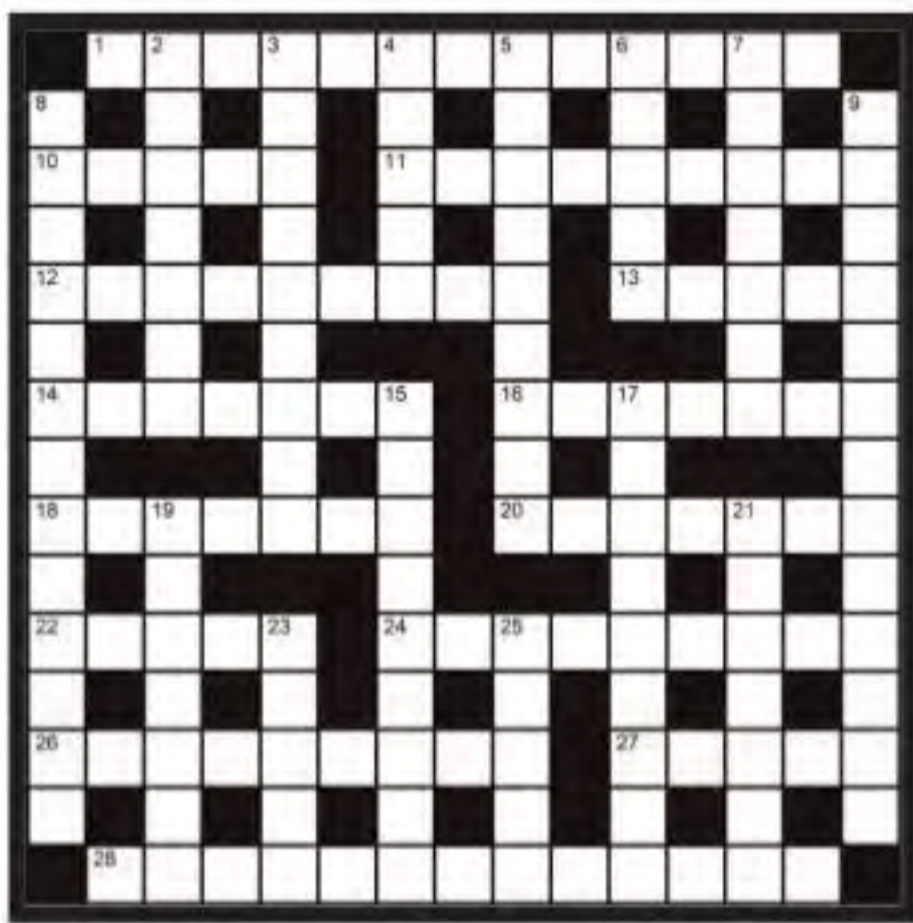
DOWN

- A mutual agreement (7)
- Eight-sided (9)
- Office notes (5)
- Ruthless competition (3-3-3)
- Lag behind (5)
- Noxious (7)
- Embellishment (13)
- Global (13)
- Sterilizing vessel (9)
- Position on the cricket field close to the umpire (6,3)
- Heavy napped woolen fabric (7)
- 1000 times 1000 (7)
- Biblical father of Rachel and Leah (5)
- Tennis star Rafael ____ (5)

CRYPTIC CLUES

ACROSS

- Transforming of our huge fees into sheltered accommodation (5,2,6)
- Rubber solution? (5)
- Not working but attending a cad who appears poor (3,2,4)
- Old army fare made Hector complain (5,4)
- A cracker of a short satire (5)
- Was it used in operating a big fiddle? (4,3)
- The girl, confused, hit the switch again? (7)
- I'm turning up in a family football club (2,5)
- School where learning is acquired by a tot, maybe? (7)
- Midget musician of some note (5)
- Badly upset, I'd go to show the way (5-4)
- Refusal to debase apprenticeship



- (9)
- Chieftain always going round Middle East (5)
- Brummie is shut out of London tourist attraction (7,6)

- Author turning on the earth-first movement? (7)
- Paid to get books in for composition (5)
- I operate on mule for an intestinal section (5)

Solutions to 2263

QUICK CLUES Across: 1 Dreamscape, 6 Tale, 9 Invigorate, 10 Pawn, 12 Fit as a fiddle, 15 Caellan, 16 Learned, 17 Umpteen, 19 Partner, 20 Unaccustomed, 23 Apia, 24 Abducentes, 25 Envy, 26 A great many. **Down:** 1 Drip, 2 Envy, 3 Magnificence, 4 Curtain, 5 Pitfall, 7 Abandoning, 8 Contenders, 11 Disagreement, 13 Accumulate, 14 Temptation, 18 Nosebag, 19 Profuse, 21 Hippodrome, 6 Snub, 9 Munificent, 10 Tara, 12 That's your lot, 15 Unaired, 16 Outious, 17 Medium, 19 War hero, 20 Steering gear, 23 Ida's, 24 Remarkable, 25 Nose, 26 Sub-letters. **Down:** 1 Harms, 2 Pant, 3 Off-the-record, 4 Rejected, 5 Moneyed, 7 Nearly over, 8 Beauty spot, 11 Lumber-jacket, 13 Submission, 14 Handle bars, 18 Manteau, 19 Wagtail, 21 Able, 22 Hens.

If it's your Birthday

Sunday April 12

The Sun's intriguing alignments offer you the chance of a breakthrough at work, or the opportunity to pursue a major public ambition, with all the praise that success will bring. It's all a question of getting your intuitions in top gear.

Monday April 13

You may avoid certain shocks, but then you may also miss out on a number of pleasant surprises. Set your heart on a treasured ambition. You might not succeed, but you'll make good progress.

Tuesday April 14

You'll be ready to enjoy social and romantic encounters, free from commitment or concern about the future. You need to live in the present and put the past behind you.

Wednesday April 15

Don't be too worried if someone has failed to get in touch or reply to your blandishments. It's not what other people do that matters, but how you respond.

Thursday April 16

This is no time to worry about letting someone down — it is time they took responsibility for their own affairs. They could do with your understanding.

Friday April 17

In love you'll be flexible and, when you face opposition, you'll give way gracefully. At work, however, stand up for your rights.

Saturday April 18

It stands to reason that new people could come into your life and challenge you to broaden your interests. You can follow your intuitions and find yourself in some wonderfully colourful situations.

YOUR WEEK AHEAD

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

The right strategic moves and tactics will enable you to preserve and protect all you hold dear. You will find it easier to make financial decisions in the future, now that more information is to be released.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

You know very well what must be done. Now that Mercury, planet of communication, has turned from an opponent into an ally, you will be far better able to make yourself understood and persuade other people that you are right.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

You will be happier than before to let partners know about certain of your personal plans. Drop your guard and allow people to charm you. Now is the time to trust that friends have your best interests at heart.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

If someone has got the better of you in a business matter, there is no need to worry. Not only are your financial prospects looking up but you are now entering the initial phases of a new cycle of hope and optimism. Jupiter, the most beneficial of planets, is about to work its magic again.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

The current relationship between Jupiter and Mars impacts on that part of your chart associated with health and work. Could it be that you have been pushing yourself too hard lately? Or that you are beginning to feel worn out? Is it time to shed a number of commitments? I think it is.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

One important factor stopping you from making the most of yourself has been a deep fear of taking risks, perhaps a feeling rooted back in the distant past. However, you should by now have overcome such inhibitions and be ready to face the future with renewed optimism.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

Venus continues its challenge to your sign, urging you to take greater notice of partners' needs and wants plus, of course, family members' real desires. There is a great deal of affection coming your way. All you must do is open yourself up to the love and good feeling which other people have for you.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)

It's a strange old week, to be sure. It will take a good deal of courage to swallow your pride and admit that you should change your plans. On the other hand, if you really must continue with your current proposals be certain that close partners are reassured and reconciled.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 23)

Your fine words and elegant phrases are pouring oil on troubled waters. You have exactly the right touch, especially for getting people at work to buck their ideas up. You may have to knock heads together if that is what it takes. Venus brings excellent romantic developments.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

A series of extraordinary events will make the next week somewhat more lively than anticipated. If you are in tune with the mood of the moment you will get both the best out of opportunities and find the most appropriate solution to every problem. It's not a question of right and wrong, but of what works best.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

It's time to show your serious face, in the knowledge that if you are careful now you'll be in a much better position to take advantage of various bizarre events that are due to happen very soon.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

Most Pisceans pride themselves on being sensitive, compassionate and easy to get on with. Mars is making you feel rather tough and unwilling to compromise but, instead of rubbing people up the wrong way, why don't you take the lead in some new charitable enterprise: selfless behaviour will make you feel good.

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 clue.

___ like ___ are divided into incisors and grinders. - Walter Bagehot (7, ..5)

PWEEE	AERTTT
AFIRR	ILTHSW

Answer: Writers like teeth are divided into incisors and grinders. - Walter Bagehot
SOLUTION: PWEEE, FRAR, TATTR, WHILST

Difficulty Level 5s

Instructions

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Difficulty Level

1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard; 5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius



SOLUTION SUDOKU 4176

