

**DAY 8: BIGGEST SINGLE-DAY JUMP**  
sees 437 new positive cases across country

**INTENSIFY TRACING, SURVEILLANCE,**  
Health Ministry tells all state governments

**AS CASES SPIKE, SHIFT IN STRATEGY:**  
Home quarantine, monitoring for milder cases

# Hurting, States knock on Centre door



People line up outside a PDS outlet in the Behrampur area of Ahmedabad on Wednesday as the Gujarat government began distributing free rations. *Javed Raja*

## Chief Ministers will take up with PM today: Shortage of funds to next steps

**PVAIDYANATHAN IYER**  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 1

A WEEK INTO the lockdown, and faced with an extraordinary situation of large-scale migrant worker movement, several states, including Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, and West Bengal, are scrambling to find funds to undertake even basic relief measures for the most vulnerable sections of their people. While most states have written letters to Prime Minister Narendra Modi asking that the Centre clear their pending dues, they are likely to press these demands at a video conference he has scheduled on Thursday. "In the last meeting, while all CMs were present, only eight were invited to speak. This time around, several CMs would want to tell the Prime Minister about the acute economic distress in their respective states," said a senior state government official, who did not wish to be quoted.

**BUSINESS AS USUAL**

By UNNY

To stay healthy: Keep cleaning hands & no finger-pointing.



Some state chief ministers have already noted that the announcement of a 21-day lockdown was made without taking them into confidence. With the responsibility of providing relief for migrant workers lying squarely on the shoulders of states, inadequate financial support is only widening the trust deficit with the Centre, some of

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## Allow limited resumption or we lose markets to China: Exporters to Govt

**AVISHEK G DASTIDAR & HARIKISHAN SHARMA**  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 1

SEEKING SOPs to pay wages to workers, export industry representatives have told the government that if it does not find a way soon to re-open manufacturing units under lockdown, Indian products will lose their international markets to China, which has resumed production post the coronavirus outbreak.



**Industry representatives met Goyal with demands**

During an interaction on Monday with Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush

Goyal, exporters said if India does not begin shipments at this juncture, its export market will be taken over by Chinese products. They cited the example of certain pharmaceuticals exports which have been banned in the wake of the pandemic. They said if they were not allowed to export medicines soon, the global markets would be taken over by China.

"We conveyed that the problem is once you cede the ground to any country, particularly

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**WORLD**



**WORST CRISIS FOR HUMANITY SINCE WORLD WAR 2: UN**

**US HEADED FOR VERY TOUGH, PAINFUL TWO WEEKS: TRUMP**

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## TN traces 110 new cases to Tabligh congregation, other states zero in, too

**ARUN JANARDHANAN, SREENIVASA JANYALA, ABANTIKA GHOSH & AVISHEK G DASTIDAR**  
CHENNAI, HYDERABAD, NEW DELHI, APRIL 1

AS STATES and Union territories across the country continued their efforts to trace and quarantine people who attended a Tablighi Jamaat congregation in the capital last month, Tamil Nadu on Wednesday reported 110 new COVID-19 cases, all linked to the gathering. In Andhra Pradesh too, as the

**CORONA COUNT**

**1834** CASES | **41** DEATHS

**143** RECOVERED

number of positive cases jumped from 44 to 111 overnight, all the 67 new cases were linked to the Delhi meet attended by almost 4,000 people. According to Tamil Nadu Health Secretary Beela Rajesh, of the total 234 cases in the state,

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**'DECISION ON HOW LONG LOCKDOWN STAYS DEPENDS ON DATA FROM STATES'**  
**DR RANDEEP GULERIA**  
AIIMS DIRECTOR

## Lockdown strains economy, but key to containing virus: Guleria

**KAUNAIN SHERIFF M**  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 1

EVEN IF it's causing severe strain in the economy, the national lockdown is a very significant strategy to contain the spread of the coronavirus in India. And a call on how long it should continue — and in what form — can be taken only after a close look at data from different states, said AIIMS Director and member of

the high-level technical committee of Public Health Experts for COVID-19, Dr Randeep Guleria.

In a detailed interview to *The Indian Express* in which he explained a range of issues from testing to India's relatively low numbers, Dr Guleria was asked what his advice would be to the government on the next steps.

"My issue is to start quickly looking at data. There are two or three questions there. One: how long should the lockdown con-

tinued? Two, should it be throughout the country or (should) there be a graded lifting of the lockdown in certain areas? That is dependent on the data that emerges in terms of the number of cases, hotspots, and areas in our country that are safe, are protected because of lockdown, and don't have a significant number of cases. That data is important so that we can take a call on (these questions)," Dr Guleria said.

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## Govt considers shift in policy, milder cases may not require hospitalisation

**ABANTIKA GHOSH & KAUNAIN SHERIFF M**  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 1

THE GOVERNMENT is mulling a change in policy on care of patients of novel coronavirus, limiting hospitalisation to only those who really need it.

So far, all positive patients have been kept in hospital, but as numbers rise, discussions are being held about sending the milder cases to home quarantine

and monitoring them over phone.

Highly placed government sources said this was being discussed as much to rationalise the use of hospital beds as to minimise exposure of healthcare workers, who are most at risk of contracting the disease. India has recommended hydroxychloroquine as post-exposure prophylactic medication (preventive medicine after exposure) for healthcare workers, but has so far not given out a consolidated

list of the number of infections among doctors, nurses etc.

While there are no definite protocols for hospitalisation of a symptomatic patient (fever, cough, and shortness of breath), the guidelines are clear on two aspects: the final decision to admit a patient is the discretion of the treating physician; and till the time laboratory results are received, the suspected patient has to be kept in isolation at a health facility and given

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**EXPLAINED**  
**Optimising use of beds, cutting risk**

AS THE all but inevitable spike in the infection comes, it will be critical to rationalise the use of hospital beds, so that the limited capacity can be utilised for patients who need it most. Keeping the milder patients at home will also go some distance in lowering the risk for frontline healthcare workers.

## Hajela of Assam NRC fame is removed as health chief after power shift in Bhopal

**MILIND GHATWAI**  
BHOPAL, APRIL 1

DAYS AFTER returning to power in Bhopal, the Shivraj Singh Chouhan government on Wednesday removed Health Commissioner Prateek Hajela from his post for "showing grave negligence towards his duties" at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic.



**Removed by Chouhan for 'negligence of duties'**

As NRC coordinator for Assam, Hajela had also earned the ire of the BJP and the party-led government there. An IAS

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## Nizamuddin powers Delhi spread, all but 3 of 32 new cases attended gathering

**ASTHA SAXENA**  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 1

OF THE 32 new COVID-19 cases that were recorded in Delhi on Wednesday, 29 are members of the Tablighi Jamaat. So far, 53 members of the outfit, who were part of a congregation at the Markaz Nizamuddin last month, have tested positive in Delhi. The total number of confirmed cases of the infection in the national

capital rose to 152 on Wednesday.

Nizamuddin West is among the 10 COVID-19 hotspots identified by the Centre across the country.

All through Tuesday and until 4 am on Wednesday, occupants of the Markaz were evacuated in batches. "After a long operation lasting 36 hours, the whole Markaz building was emptied. 2,361 people were

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## Brooding Taj to fearful kirana, distress and despair loom large

**DIPANKAR GHOSE**  
DAUKI (AGRA), APRIL 1

IT IS noon in Dauki village on the Agra-Fatehabad road, and the shelves inside Ramesh Kumar's kirana store are in different stages of empty. Locally sourced biscuits and namkeen: half-full. Atta and rice: empty. Soap: two bars left, both "Lux Soft Touch". Outside, a voice from a loud-speaker mounted on a police jeep exhorts people to stay inside, and to wash their hands to stop the spread of COVID-19.

"Sabun hoga nahin, toh dhoyenge kaise (Without soap,

**TEST REPORTS FROM THE FIELD**  
**TRACKING THE VIRUS, LOCKDOWN**

how will they wash their hands?)" asks Kumar.

With the nation entering the second week of the lockdown, the local economy in small towns, far from cities, is on its knees: supply chains have been disrupted, lone-man shops have no home delivery, and the police

barricades are unforgiving. So much so, even goods that are part of the solution, like soap, aren't reaching shops, and homes.

In cities, major e-commerce players have coordinated with local officials to coordinate supplies but even that's rapidly fraying — shortage of labour and trucks stuck on the highway are thinning shelves. Pre-lockdown stocks are running out and replenishment is a challenge.

For Kumar, that means life and livelihood in question.

"The goods used to come from Agra, about 22 km away. But now they have stopped, and when I call them, they say they



At the Radhaswami dhaba in Jaghina on the Bharatpur-Mathura border. *Gajendra Yadav*

don't know when they will come again. So I am selling all the stock that I have left. After that, I will have to down my shutters," says Kumar.

About 100 m to the left, Agarwal Grocery Store is bigger, its shelves less desolate. Outside are small circles in white chalk, for customers to stand roughly a metre apart. "We went to the Dauki police station three days ago, and there was a meeting. They said if there is a problem with goods coming in, we will get passes and we can go to the warehouses in Agra in our own vehicles. So we send our pick-up truck. But not everything is avail-

able, and the stocks in Agra are going down," says the staffer at the counter.

Back at the kirana store, with no pick-up truck, it's a solution that's out of Kumar's reach. "I understand how bad the virus is, and that everyone should stay home. But the police are being very aggressive. What if I go to Agra, and I get past the Dauki barricade safely, but get beaten at the others? What if they damage my motorcycle?" he asks.

Agra city, meanwhile, is brooding in silence, its streets eerily empty. Right up to the iconic East Gate of the Taj Mahal, on a cobbled street of red sand-

stone, are hotels on either side. Every single one was boarded up after the Taj itself was shut to the world on March 15. Since then, there has been an exodus.

The freeze on international arrivals, the domestic rail-road-air lockdown and the raging outbreak in the West — all this strike at the very heart of this city's tourism economy.

Right at the end of the East Gate road, is UP Tourism's Taj Khema Hotel. Its gates are open, but only for three of its staff that remained behind. "We have six rooms. Normally, at this time, they are full. Now the hotel is

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