

DAY 9: TESTING, TRACING, ISOLATION
must remain our focus, Modi tells States

MOBILISING FUNDS, MEDICAL RESOURCES
vital for corona fight: Chief Ministers to PM

PM WILL SHARE VIDEO MESSAGE
with nation at 9 a.m. today

PM to CMs: Plan phased un-lockdown

Calls for a common strategy, underlines grim global numbers, possible second wave

KRISHN KAUSHIK & VARINDER BHATIA
NEW DELHI, CHANDIGARH, APRIL 2

UNDERLINING THAT "in the next few weeks, testing, tracing, isolation and quarantine should remain the areas of focus" in the country's war against the coronavirus threat, Prime Minister Narendra Modi told Chief Ministers of all states Thursday to "formulate a common exit strategy to ensure staggered re-emergence of the population once the lockdown ends" on April 14.

He, however, warned that the global situation remains "far from satisfactory" and there was speculation of a "possible second wave of spread of the virus in some countries".

Interacting with the Chief Ministers via video-conference from New Delhi, the Prime Minister, according to an official statement, said "considering that this is the time to harvest crops, the government has given some relaxation from lockdown, but it is necessary to continuously monitor and maintain social distancing as much as possible".

He asked the states to "think of other platforms for procuring grains apart from APMC (agricultural produce market committee), and explore the possibility of creating pooling platforms for rural areas, like that in ride sharing apps, which can be used for this purpose".

In a tweet later in the day, Modi said: "At 9 AM tomorrow morning, I'll share a small video

BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY

This warrants a lock-up vastly distanced from every faith.



INSIDE



TRUMP DOUBTS CHINA NUMBERS, UK TO RAMP UP TESTS

PAK LOCKS DOWN TABLIGHI CENTRE, 40 CLERICS POSITIVE

PAGES 3, 4, 5, 9, 11

message with my fellow Indians." On the need to maintain social distancing even after the lockdown, Modi, one of the meeting participants said, warned that people should not come out in hundreds on the roads. He suggested that the lifting of the lockdown be staggered.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacts with CMs via video-conference Thursday. ANI

Option gaining ground: After 21 days, easing of curbs, in select areas

ABANTIKA GHOSH
NEW DELHI, APRIL 2

NINE DAYS into the national coronavirus lockdown, with looming economic distress across sectors, discussions have commenced in the government on the way forward at the end of the 21-day period, including an exit strategy.

Giving a glimpse of one possible option, Prime Minister Narendra Modi told Chief Ministers during a video-conference Thursday that it is "impor-

tant to formulate a common exit strategy to ensure staggered re-emergence of the population once the lockdown ends".

He asked the states to brainstorm and send suggestions for the strategy. Within his government, meanwhile, a "limited lockdown" in some areas is an option that seems to be gaining ground, at this point.

But what forms these "limits" would take depends on a host of factors, the key being the nature of the spread of the virus.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Rapid antibody tests in hotspots advised, decision left to states

ABANTIKA GHOSH
NEW DELHI, APRIL 2

HOURS AFTER it advised "rapid antibody tests" in "hotspot areas" in an interim advisory on Thursday, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) left the decision to the states, and put out a list of such tests that had been approved earlier.

In its interim advisory earlier in the day, the ICMR said: "Population in hotspot areas may be tested using rapid antibody test, and antibody positives to be confirmed by RT-PCR using throat/nasal swab. Antibody neg-

EXPLAINED

SIMPLY PUT

TO DO RAPID TESTS OR NOT

PAGE 10

atives to be quarantined at home." It said the recommendation would be finalised at the meeting of the national task force in the evening.

But this advisory was pulled down at night. Instead, the ICMR, put out a list of antibody-based (IgM, IgG) rapid tests that have

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Govt pushes speedy sourcing of protective gear, medical items

VARINDER BHATIA
CHANDIGARH, APRIL 2

THE GOVERNMENT is trying to rapidly source ventilators, personal protection equipment (PPE), N95 masks and medicines — hydroxychloroquine and azithromycin, to equip itself and all states in the fight against the spread of Covid-19.

The government shared information on the number of isolation beds and ventilators in Covid-19 dedicated hospitals during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's video conference with Chief Ministers Thursday morning. The Centre and states, together, have 47,483 isolation beds and 4,809 ICU beds in 258 Covid-19 hospitals. It was pointed out that only 17 states have notified dedicated hospitals so far.

Information shared with states (see chart) suggests that the Centre has already initiated a major sourcing push given that

STOCKING UP FOR FUTURE	
VENTILATORS	N95 MASKS
Available for Covid beds 16,435	Available with states 14.98 lakh
Orders placed 47,187	Orders placed 1.1 crore
Supplied so far 316	Already supplied 12.34 lakh
IN THE OFFING:	IN THE OFFING:
April 30: 10,500, May 30: 18,000, thereafter 10,000 per month	April 7: 26 lakh, thereafter 7 lakh per week
PERSONAL PROTECTION EQUIPMENT	
Available with states 3.98 lakh	
Orders placed 1.6 crore	
Supplied so far 93,000	
IN THE OFFING:	
April 4: 3 lakh, April 15: 15 lakh, thereafter 10 lakh per week	
MEDICINES	
Hydroxychloroquine (200 mg) 11.45 crore	
Azithromycin (500 mg) 25 lakh	
HCC tablets received and distributed 65 lakh	
IN THE OFFING:	
April 7: 2 crore, April 15: 1 crore, balance by May first week	

the existing stock of masks, medicines, PPEs and ventilators may not be sufficient for a worse case scenario.

The presentation made to states during the video confer-

ence noted that in six states/UTs, the number of confirmed cases was doubling at a rate faster than the all-India average of four days. These are Andhra Pradesh,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Need to add new test & quarantine plan to lockdown: ICMR research

KARISHMA MEHROTRA
NEW DELHI, APRIL 2

A soon-to-be-published mathematical model by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) suggests that while the 21-day lockdown to check the spread of COVID-19 is expected to bring down daily new cases, instead of extending it, the lock-

down needs to be combined with enhanced test-and-quarantine measures.

The study, led by Sandip Mandal of the ICMR's Department of Health Research, estimates that the current 21-day lockdown will reduce epidemic peak (or the highest number of new COVID-19 cases in a single day) by 43 per cent and total mortality (COVID-19-related

deaths) by 19 per cent. And that the lockdown, when combined with an aggressive test-and-quarantine strategy, can bring down epidemic peak by 71 per cent and mortality by 40 per cent.

Mandal was also the lead author of a February mathematical model of the ICMR, which has largely informed the government's COVID-19 strategy

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

As growth slows, demand for work under MNREGA shoots to 9-yr high

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, APRIL 2

AS THE economy slows down, the demand for work by households under the MGNREGA programme surged to a nine-year high in 2019-20.

According to figures up-

loaded on the MGNREGA official portal, 5.47 crore households sought MGNREGA works, the highest since 2010-11, when the number was 5.5 crore. It was 5.27 crore in 2018-19.

More individuals too worked under MGNREGA in 2019-20, with 7.86 crore employed at various sites across the country. This

is the highest since 2012-13, when 7.97 crore individuals worked under this programme. The national job guarantee scheme was launched in 2006 from 200 districts.

The new MGNREGA figures coincide with the sharp fall in GDP growth rate to 5 per cent in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

National death count from Tablighi meeting now 15 — and almost a fifth of total cases

ASTHA SAXENA, SOURAV ROY BARMAN & ABANTIKA GHOSH
NEW DELHI, APRIL 2

CORONA COUNT

2069 CASES
53 DEATHS
156 RECOVERED

THE TABLIGHI Jamaat congregation in Delhi last month has emerged as the biggest hotspot, accounting for about one-fifth of the COVID-19 positive cases across the country so far. Of the total 53 deaths, 15 have been linked to the gathering.

In Delhi, the number of positive cases almost doubled on Thursday, fuelled largely by those evacuated from Markaz Nizamuddin on Tuesday and Wednesday testing positive.

Of the 141 new cases in the Capital, 129 are people evacuated from Markaz Nizamuddin, the headquarters of the Tablighi Jamaat, where a congregation of over 4,000 was held last month.

The samples of two persons who died last month — a person who was at Markaz Nizamuddin and a resident of Nizamuddin West — tested positive, taking the death toll in the city to four. Officials said they are still verifying if the latter was in contact with the Markaz gathering.

With 182 of the 293 cases in the Capital so far being linked to

THE EDITORIAL PAGE

LIFE AND DEATH

The criminal negligence by Tablighi Jamaat organisers undermines fight against the virus, hurts people of all faiths

PAGE 6

the congregation, the Delhi government is bracing for rigorous testing in the coming days.

Across the country, the total number of positive cases is now 2,069 (155 recovered, 53 dead), with 235 new cases being reported in the last 24 hours. Of these, 400 positive cases have been linked to the Tablighi Jamaat congregation.

Of the 53 deaths, at least 15 have been linked to the Delhi meet — nine in Telangana, and one each in Delhi, Gujarat, Karnataka, Mumbai, Kashmir

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

After first two cases, Maharashtra cancelled go-ahead for Tablighi meet timed with Delhi



Outside the police quarters in Worli, Mumbai on Thursday after a positive case was detected. Prashant Nadkar

MOHAMED THAYER, SADAF MODAK, MANOJ MORE
MUMBAI, PUNE, APRIL 2

AROUND THE same time members of the Tablighi Jamaat gathered at the Nizamuddin dargah in Delhi, a congregation was scheduled in Vasai, 50 km from Mumbai. The Maharashtra government, however, cancelled permission for the event, preventing what could have become a Delhi-like Covid-19 hotspot.

A Tablighi Jamaat jitema or

congregation "expecting attendance of 50,000 people" was planned at Suncity in Vasai on March 12-13. The organisers had received permission for the same earlier in the year. However, on March 6, four days after Maharashtra registered its first two Covid-19 cases, the state government realised it would be wise to cancel the event. The organisers also agreed, officials said.

"On January 22, the Tablighi Jamaat had sought permission for holding the congregation in Vasai. The permission was given

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Doing good to do well: Holding on to migrant labour workforce

When lockdown lifts, will need trained, skilled labour pool, says Coimbatore-based KPR Mill which has 17,500 workers on premises

HARISH DAMODARAN
NEW DELHI, APRIL 2

IN MOST industrial centres across India, factories were compelled to let go their workers, mostly migrants, when the government imposed a 21-day nationwide lockdown from March 25 to combat the novel coronavirus. For most factory owners, it was a knee-jerk reaction, prompted both by the suddenness of the announcement and

the uncertain road ahead. But there are some stories of manufacturing companies choosing not to leave their workers in the lurch — a decision having elements of large-heartedness as well as taking a more long-term business view.

One illustrative example is the Coimbatore-based KPR Mill Ltd, which employs around 22,000 workers, 90 per cent of them women, at four spinning mills and three garmenting factories in Coimbatore, Tiruppur and Erode

districts of western Tamil Nadu. Since March 25, the company's mills, with a combined 3.54 lakh spindles capacity, haven't produced a single kilo of yarn. The same goes for its garmenting units, which can manufacture up to 9.5 crore of knitted inner and outerwear annually for supplying to the likes of H&M, Primark, Kmart and Marks & Spencer.

Yet, the company, which recorded sales of Rs 3,264.22 crore in 2019-20, hasn't shed any



At the KPR Mill, before the lockdown

of its 22,000 workers. That includes 17,500 migrant labourers who are all being housed in hostels within the premises of its factories.

"About 5,000 of them are from Odisha, while 2,500 belong to Bihar, Assam and Himachal Pradesh, 2,000 to Kerala, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, and 8,000 to other districts of TN. We are continuing to give food and accommodation to all the 17,500. The remaining 4,500 are locals coming from within 1-2 hours of travelling distance and who preferred to be with their families," said K P Ramasamy, chairman of KPR Mill.

For KPR, the average monthly cost-to-company per worker is roughly Rs 13,500. That works out to a wage bill of nearly Rs 30 crore, "which we paid to all the 22,000 workers on April 1". The free food and accommodation is over and above this. Are these costs worth incurring in the present scenario? "The lockdown cannot continue forever and my units will have to re-start at some point. Besides, they are all skilled and trained workers. I have to obviously take care of them," says Ramasamy.

He has sought permission from district authorities

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



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THE BEST CORONAVIRUS TRACKER WEBSITES AND APPS AVAILABLE ONLINE

Currently, there are several coronavirus tracker websites and apps available online but which are the reliable ones?

VIDEO OF THE DAY



AFTER TAGHLIBH GATHERING Drones used to sanitise Nizamuddin in wake of spike in cases

LIFESTYLE



LOCKDOWN BRINGS FAMILIES CLOSER Maybe we will learn valuable lessons from it

EXPRESS AUDIO Why the financial crisis after coronavirus will be unlike no other NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY Today on the 3 Things podcast, we talk about the financial crisis that will arise out of this pandemic and the measures that the government would need to take for it

New norms for quarantined foreigners, Indians issued

DEEPTIMANI TIWARY NEW DELHI, APRIL 2

AFTER SEVERAL countries approached the Centre for evacuation of their citizens who are quarantined in the country, the MHA on Thursday issued new Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) allowing them to leave the country — in chartered aircraft arranged by their respective nations — after they test negative for COVID-19 infection. The MHA also issued guidelines for the release of Indian citizens quarantined after foreign travel, saying they would be given transit passes, but would have to bear their own expenses. “...Some foreign countries have approached the Government of India for evacuation of their nationals. In view of the above, it has now been decided that requests received from foreign governments... would be examined by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on a case-to-case basis,” the MHA addendum, issued on Thursday, said. According to the new norms, local embassies/consulates of respective nations will have to arrange for a foreigner’s transit. An evacuee will be issued a transit pass, which would be honoured by all states en route, it said. For foreign-returned quarantined Indians who have now tested negative, the MHA said they would be released “as per standard health protocol”. “These persons are expected to return to their homes... by making their own transport arrangements,” the addendum said, adding that they too would be issued a transit pass. FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com

FROM PAGE ONE

Antibody tests

been approved and validated. “Approved kits can be used directly after due approval from DCGI and intimation to ICMR,” it said. Sources said the decision on whether to use the tests or not has now been left to the states. While Kerala, which was among the earliest to report COVID-19 cases and has at least two of these hotspots, has already started using these rapid tests, other states like Tamil Nadu and Chhattisgarh have been pushing for it. The rapid test, which uses blood samples instead of swabs, checks for the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV2) by ascertaining whether the person has developed antibodies against it. It takes less than 30 minutes. The swab test, on the other hand, comprises two steps — a screening test and a confirmatory test — and takes 8-9 hours. Though it is a faster test, the antibody test does not come positive until after a few days of infection. That is why the ICMR position has been that serological testing is good for the epidemiological purpose of testing population level exposure, but may not be the best option for detecting cases. While positive samples in the serological tests too will have to be sent for confirmatory tests, using the lengthier DNA testing process, those who test negative will be quarantined. Some states, however, have been pushing for this “mass-scale” testing. On Wednesday, Chhattisgarh Minister TS Singh Deo had written to Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan in this connection. “Requesting the Central Govt & @drharshvardhan to ensure that @ICMRDELHI formulates comprehensive guidelines for use and purchase of Rapid Tests for #COVID19 as these tests have been used effectively across the world and are needed for expanding testing capacities,” he had tweeted. “Mass-scale testing will expedite the state’s screening procedure. Within five minutes of collection of blood sample, the government will come to know whether the person has developed some antibodies or not,” Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope said in Mumbai on Thursday. The ICMR has also advised enhanced testing in 20 hotspots, up from 10 on Monday. These areas include Nizamuddin and Dilshad Garden in Delhi, Pathanamthitta district in Kerala, Mumbai and Pune in Maharashtra, Mysuru and Chikkaballapur in Karnataka, Meerut in Uttar Pradesh, Bhilwara in Rajasthan, and Ahmedabad in Gujarat.

Delhi deaths At the daily briefing, Lav Agarwal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, said about 9,000 people — those who attended the meet and their contacts — had been quarantined, including 1,306 foreigners. “Yesterday the Cabinet Secretary had a video conference with DGPs and Chief Secretaries of states to talk about intensive contact tracing and containment in war-footing on cases linked to Tablighi Jamaat. We got to know about this meeting through Telangana, and as people spread out, more cases came to light. About 400 positive cases have been found so far that are epidemiologically linked to the cluster. Additional testing is on,” he said. “As per information received so far, Tamil Nadu has 173 cases (linked to the congregation), Rajasthan 11, Andaman and Nicobar 9, Delhi 47, Puducherry 2, Jammu and Kashmir 22,

Telangana 33, Andhra Pradesh 67 and Assam 16,” he said. Confirming two COVID-19 deaths, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said: “Of those admitted to the hospitals, one patient remains on ventilator and five are receiving oxygen support. The rest are stable.” More than 2,300 were evacuated from Markaz Nizamuddin in an operation that began Tuesday and lasted until 4 am Wednesday. More than 500 who were symptomatic were taken to hospitals, and the rest to quarantine facilities. According to health officials, a 64-year-old man from Tamil Nadu who was at the Markaz died on March 29, and his test reports came back positive for COVID-19. He had been admitted to Lok Nayak hospital. The other deceased is a 73-year-old man from Nizamuddin West, who was brought to the hospital by relatives, health officials said, adding that he died on March 31. Kejriwal also said that apart from those evacuated from the Markaz, “51 patients have a travel history and 29 are cases of local transmission”. “We have quarantined 2,346 people from the Markaz out of which 536 have been hospitalised. We are trying to get all of them tested together so we can have a clear picture in a day or two. There is a possibility that a number of people from this group might test positive in the next few days, which can shoot up our Delhi data of COVID-19 cases,” Kejriwal said. On the possibility of community transmission, where the infection cannot be traced to a source, the CM said: “There are two things to worry about. First, is the virus spreading among the masses, and second, how many people have died so far. The figure of 29 — those who contracted it from those carrying the virus from abroad — has remained unchanged for some days now. This means coronavirus has not started spreading in Delhi, which is something to feel good about.” Meanwhile, 7,900 samples from across the country have been tested so far.

Maharashtra on February 6,” Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh told The Indian Express. With coronavirus spreading worldwide and in India too, the government cancelled the permission. Home Minister Deshmukh said the organisation initially said they would go ahead with the congregation. “We told them if they went ahead, we will have to take legal action,” he said. Niket Kaushik, Inspector General (Konkan range) said the state government felt it would not be wise to let so many people gather at a place when the virus was spreading. “Accordingly, we revoked the permission on March 6 and informed them about the same,” he said. A member of the Tablighi Jamaat said a two-day event was planned in Vasai. There were plans to take the event to several parts of the state including Raigad, Ratnagiri and Pune. “We approached Health Minister Rajesh Tope and told him that a large congregation was expected. He asked us to postpone it. Considering the circumstances, we also decided to cancel it. We informed everyone not to congregate here,” the member said. Over the last two days, some Tablighis have been booked by the police in Thane and Mumbai for violating lockdown orders. The Rabodi police station in Thane arrested 12 Tablighi Jamaatis for gathering at a mosque for prayers in violation of the lockdown orders. “They are from Vasai and had come here for prayers. Since they had violated section 144, we registered an FIR against them for not following the condition laid

PM asks CMs to form strategy

earmarking some days for vehicles, other days for cyclists, and that fewer people should be in offices. He told the Chief Ministers that the country may need to enforce social distancing at least until Diwali. There was speculation that a second phase of the virus may start and, therefore, social distancing must be followed as a safeguard. He cited the example of Japan where people wear masks, keep sanitising their hands through the year. Underscoring the importance of coordinated action and the need to avoid overlaps in efforts of stakeholders, Modi said there was need to form crisis management groups at the district level and appoint district surveillance officers. He said

data must be taken from accredited laboratories for testing — this will ensure congruence in data of district, state and centre. He said it is “necessary to ensure staggered release of funds” to beneficiaries under the PM Garib Kalyan Yojana to avoid crowding at banks. To increase the availability of doctors, he asked states to “tap into the resource pool of AYUSH doctors, organize online training and utilize paramedical staff, NCC and NSS volunteers”. He said “the common goal for the country is to ensure minimum loss of life” and “in the next few weeks, testing, tracing, isolation and quarantine should remain the areas of focus”. He highlighted the need to maintain supply of essential medical products, avail-

ability of raw material for manufacture of medicines and medical equipment. He said “it is imperative to work on war footing, identify hotspots of the virus, encircle them and ensure that the virus does not spread out”. It is pertinent, her said, to maintain peace and law and order across the country. He said “COVID-19 has attacked our faith and belief and is threatening our way of life”. He appealed to the leaders to reach out to community leaders and social welfare organisations at state, district, town and block levels to build up a united front based on community approach in the battle against the pandemic. The Chief Ministers, on their part, underlined the importance of mobilising re-

sources, financial as well as medical, to mitigate the crisis. According to the official statement, they “appreciated the Prime Minister for taking the bold and timely decision” on the lockdown to check the spread of the virus. “They mentioned their efforts of maintaining social distancing, tracking suspect cases, identifying and quarantining suspect cases arising from Nizamuddin Markaz, containing community transmission, boosting up of medical infrastructure, strengthening medical workforce, provision of tele-medicine, provision of mental health counselling, distribution of food and other essentials to those in need and taking care of migrant workers,” the statement said.

After 21 days, an option that is gaining ground

One opinion currently within the government seems to be that while it may not be possible to reach a zero-newcase situation by April 14, the best option would be to focus on specific “pockets” to contain the spread. “If we can identify pockets like these across the country — there may be several hundred of them — and if I am reasonably satisfied that the rest of the country can go about their business, then these pockets will remain the only ones left with restrictions,” a highly placed government source said. The added advantage of this approach would be that resources can be concentrated

on these areas, with rigorous and foolproof surveillance and follow-up action. What complicates this, sources said, is a sudden surge like the one over the last few days from the Tablighi Jamaat meeting in Delhi — about 400 cases so far from nine different states have been linked to that gathering. In an interview to The Indian Express Wednesday, AIIMS director Dr Randeep Guleria, who is a member of the high-level technical committee of Public Health Experts for COVID-19, explained the issues at stake. “There are two or three questions there. One, how long should the lockdown con-

tinue? Two, should it be throughout the country or, three, (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 which are safe, are protected because of the lockdown, and don’t have a significant number of cases,” he had said. Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba has denied reports that the lockdown would be extended. But sources said the option of a return to normalcy across the country after April 14 “is on the table but remote”. “There is little doubt that the virus will not suddenly go into

remission at the end of the period. If we are lucky, we would have contained it in some areas, if not, it’s another fight,” said a government functionary. In his meeting with chief ministers, the Prime Minister is learnt to have said that the fight is only just beginning. The option of extending the lockdown by two weeks has also come up in discussions. “It is an emerging situation, a call has to be taken depending on the situation then, this is not something one can base only on modelling. But medical experts across the board have been advocating a lockdown very strongly. The issue is to see how much the economy can take,” said sources.

Bihar struggles to quarantine migrant workers

SANTOSH SINGH PATNA, APRIL 2

THE BIHAR government is finding it difficult to convince migrants to remain at shelter camps in village schools for the 14-day quarantine period. The Disaster Management Department has claimed to have transported over one lakh migrants to their district headquarters from where they were taken to their villages. In Sitamarhi district, 17 migrants have gone missing since Tuesday night from Rampur Pachasi middle school in Pupri block’s Hardiya panchayat while many reportedly leave for their homes in the night to return in the morning. Pupri BDO Ragini Sahu said the administration was trying to trace the missing migrants. Over 25,000 migrants are in quarantine at 3,115 schools across Bihar while the rest have been allowed to live with their families after basic health check-ups. In Gopalganj, only 155 among over 11,000 migrants sent back to their villages are at the 99 quarantine centres. Gulf returnees, who are supposed to stay at the sample collection centres till their reports arrive, are not adhering to government directions. Several people have left for their homes after giving their blood samples at SS Balika High School in Gopalganj town and Jawahar Navodaya School Balara. Gopalganj District Magistrate Arshad Aziz said he has asked officials to look into the matter.

Govt gears up

Tamil Nadu, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Rajasthan.

Further, while cases have been reported from 26 states, in as many as 11 states, the case load was more than 50. These are likely to happen after a lockdown is lifted. The new model assumes “conservatively” that the lockdown reduces transmission by 25 per cent, accounting for incomplete compliance and continued overcrowding in urban settings. “We are also assuming a test-and-quarantine strategy that can identify symptomatic cases within two days of them developing symptoms and a 50 per cent compliance rate with quarantine,” said Mandal, who is also an independent consultant with the World Health Organisation. The scientist said that even though mathematical models would suggest an extended lockdown — of up to four months — to completely eradicate the COVID-19 spread, “that is not a practical solution”. The 21-day lockdown, he said, was needed to “ensure that the health system can cope with the epidemic and that the peak hospitalisation does not exceed the hospital bed capacity in each city”. In the previous ICMR model, completed in February and publicly released on March 23, the researchers had made a case for post-travel tracking rather than border containment. The paper’s mathematical model had showed that spending resources on quarantining symptomatic cases can achieve a meaningful impact on the disease burden rather than attempting to achieve infeasible levels of containment at the borders. The paper had also proposed “symptomatic surveillance” rather than indiscriminate testing — a position the government eventually adopted.

Doing good

concerned to resume work at his facilities. “I will engage only the 17,500 workers being put up in our spacious hostel rooms, each accommodating 7-8 persons. There should be no issues of social distancing even in the manufacturing units, more so when I don’t intend calling any outsiders, including locals who have left,” he adds. Hatsun Agro Product Ltd, India’s largest private sector dairy company, engages a total of 8,000 workers at its 18 plants across TN, Karnataka, AP and Telangana. The number includes 1,500 migrant labourers from Bihar and other eastern states. All of them are being provided food and housing. “There’s little work right now, but throwing them out to save one month’s cost isn’t worth it. When the lockdown is lifted, getting back labour won’t be easy. Even if you get it, it will be new labour that has to be trained all over again. Recruitment and training involve both additional cost and time, which would make it difficult to boost production when demand returns,” says

ICMR study

thus far. The February study, conducted by eight scientists, had recommended an approach of quarantine and random testing instead of a focus on border screenings. Talking to The Indian Express, Mandal said the results of the 21-day lockdown, which began on March 25, are expected to be visible in the next “six to seven days, with a decline in daily new cases”, even though he does believe that there are more positive cases than what is currently being reported. Calling an extended lockdown “not feasible at all”, Mandal said, “A lockdown is not the final solution to alleviate the epidemic. It reduces peak epidemic but we need additional interventions.” On the proposed “additional interventions”, he said, “We have to find the hotspots and then try community searching for symptomatic and asymptomatic cases. If incidents like Nizamuddin happen all over India, then we don’t have any control,” he said, adding that it is advisable to have a gradual lifting of the lockdown focused on certain hotspots. The research team is now modelling the required intensity of a test-and-quarantine strategy

down by a public servant. They were released on bail,” said Rabodi police senior inspector Rajendra Shirdode. Those arrested had, however, not visited the Nizamuddin headquarters of Tablighi Jamaat in Delhi. In Mumbai area of Thane, the police registered two FIRs against two separate groups of Tablighi Jamaatis for assembly on Wednesday. Police inspector R Valatakar said one FIR was against trustees of a mosque which had not followed proper procedures while allowing eight Malaysian nationals to stay at a local mosque. The Malaysians had visited Delhi in February, well before the March congregation at the Nizamuddin mosque. Another FIR was filed in connection with a group of 15 Bangladeshis residing in the Almas Colony area of Mumbai. This group of Bangladeshis had visited the Nizamuddin mosque in Delhi and had come to Mumbai on March 10. The 15 Bangladeshis and eight Malaysian nationals along with two local guides from Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal were put through Covid-19 tests on Wednesday. The lab test results on Thursday turned out to be negative for all of them. Housing Minister and MLA from Mumbai Jitendra Awhad said there was a lot of misinformation being spread about the number of jamaat members present in Mumbai who had visited the Delhi mosque. He said there were 25 persons, including the Bangladeshis and Malaysian nationals. “There is an attempt to give a communal colour to the outbreak, when we need people to show humanity.” The 25 continue to remain in home quarantine in Mumbai. Meanwhile, Shoeb Shaikh, a resident of Jogeshwari East, had attended the Tablighi Jamaat congregation in Delhi for a day and

returned on March 17. “When we came to know about so many positive cases, we reached out to the local police,” he said. He said several from Jogeshwari East were part of the event. They had traveled by train to and from Mumbai and Delhi. Shaikh and his three friends were asked to get admitted in Jogeshwari Trauma hospital on Thursday for a test. Four of his other friends had already tested negative on Wednesday. “None of us have developed any symptoms till now,” he said. (with inputs from Tabassum Barnagarwal)

RG Chandramogan, managing director of the Rs 4,760.30-crore sales company. Making the same point is the director of a large FMCG multinational. “Distribution problems are being gradually sorted out. The kirana stores and retail outlets are beginning to get fresh stocks from distributors, who are delivering through Tata 407 and other light commercial vehicles. But movement from the company’s C&F (carrying and forwarding) depots to distributors, which is inter-city and takes place in larger trucks, remains choked for want of drivers. My bigger worry, however, is factories. If they don’t start producing now, we are going to have major problems post lockdown,” he warns. India, according to the last Annual Survey of Industries for 2017-18, had 195,584 registered operating factories that engaged 1.56 crore people and distributed Rs 418,357.16 crore of emoluments. These factories are the ones using power and employing 10 or more workers or those without power and engaging a minimum of 20 people. Being registered and organised, they are amenable to monitoring, which can also extend to their observing social distancing rules. As of now, though, practically all of them are shut or operating at very low capacity. “Getting factory approvals to re-open may not be difficult. But even if the government allows (that), mobilising labourers, including arranging for their transport from home to plant and back, will be a challenge. At some stage, even invoking the Essential Services Maintenance Act for trucks might be required,” points out the FMCG company official. MNREGA 2019-20, the lowest in a decade. Other data shows that the number of gram panchayats not recording any MGNREGA expenditure has also declined. It stood at 9,144 in the last financial year, from lower than 10,978 in 2018-19. The number of such panchayats was 11,789 in 2017-18; 19,451 in 2016-17; 39,469 in 2015-16; and 39,531 in 2014-15. There are a total 2.63 lakh gram panchayats in India. The decline in the number of panchayats with zero expenditure shows that more and more panchayats are using MGNREGA to provide unskilled work to the unemployed. This is despite the fact that wages have been flattening. In 2019-20, average MGNREGA wage per day per person was Rs 182.09, barely Rs 3 higher than Rs 179.13 in 2018-19. The average cost per day per person under the MGNREGA (on materials etc), meanwhile, increased to Rs 263.3 in 2019-20 from Rs 247.19 in 2018-19. The data also showed that 263.73 crore person days were generated during 2019-20, slightly lower than 267.96 crore in 2018-19 but significantly higher than the total person days generated during each financial year from 2012-13 to 2017-18. These are provisional figures, and the final data will be settled by the end of April. Going by the daily person days’ work generation, the final numbers are likely to only increase. “In all likelihood, the person days generated will cross last year’s tally by a decent number,” said a source in the Ministry of Rural Development. The disruption caused by the coronavirus lockdown, however, may impact the final figure of the person days generated in March 2020. Sources further said that during 2019-20, the Centre released Rs 72,162.13 crore for the MGNREGA, the highest ever amount, and substantially higher than the Rs 62,125.07 crore released in 2018-19.



Two fire tenders and 16 firefighters were on standby at the spot of the mosque; (right) SDMC workers deployed a drone to sanitise out-of-reach areas in Nizamuddin, such as building tops and congested lanes. Tashi Tobgyal



SDMC, DELHI FIRE SERVICES JOIN FORCES

Firemen, drones in action as Nizamuddin is sanitised

SOMYA LAKHANI & ABHINAV RAJPUT
NEW DELHI, APRIL 2

FOR OVER five hours, 16 firefighters used four pipes attached to two fire-tenders to sanitise the six-storey Nizamuddin Markaz, and the area around it, with the help of an MCD official who guided them from lane to lane Thursday.

Apart from this, the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) deployed a drone to spray a disinfectant over the locality including the Markaz, and a team of four public health field workers with power sprayers also sanitised the Markaz.

Delhi Fire Services (DFS) director Atul Garg said, "We have winding hose reels and high water pressure in our fire-tenders to douse flames that billow from tall buildings. This has come in handy in sanitising the area." Garg said two fire-tenders and 16 firefighters were put on standby at the spot. "The solution — sodium

hypochlorite — was provided by the South MCD, and mixed with water and then sprayed. We used 20,000 litres of water mixed with solution," he said.

The 16 DFS personnel were equipped with orange-coloured imported fire-fighting helmets that come with a pair of goggles and a glass shield that covers the entire face, gloves, masks and gum-boots. "We have hose reels that can cover a distance of 30 metres, which ensures that in such cases, the men don't have to go too close to the building," said Garg.

Fire-fighter Mahinder (59), who is stationed at the Rakabganj fire station, told *The Indian Express*. "We sprayed the solution on the Markaz, the walls in the vicinity, the shutters of shops, flower pots, railings... literally everything. We started from the main road and went to the lanes, reached the Markaz, the mosque. The helmet we wear keeps us very safe, so I wasn't too worried."

A Delhi resident, he lives with his wife and two sons. "I am just

seven months away from retirement, and I got to be a part of this sanitising process... Makes me feel good that I can help at an unprecedented time like this," he said.

Portions of the Nizamuddin area in Southeast Delhi have been cordoned off after the area was identified as one of the 10 hotspots of the coronavirus outbreak in India.

At the Nizamuddin Markaz, at least 4,000 members of the Tablighi Jamaat, an apolitical religious outfit, had gathered mid-March — many to attend the quarterly *jod* — and on March 23, a day after the Janata Curfew, at least 1,500 were evacuated by Markaz officials. For three days, Delhi Police and the health department evacuated the rest of the visitors, and sent them to quarantine centres and hospitals. On April 1, an FIR was filed against Maulana Mohd. Saad and other members of the Tablighi Jamaat.

Meanwhile, a team of SDMC public health field workers too was busy sanitising the area, in-

cluding the Markaz, a day after it was vacated.

A senior SDMC official said, "We used the drone to spray 1% sodium hypochlorite solution as a disinfectant in Nizamuddin, Nizamuddin Basti and the surrounding areas. The drone helps cover areas which sanitation workers find difficult to reach such as the tops of buildings and congested lanes."

The official said that it also helps reduce human contact in the area, which is at the centre of the pandemic right now. "The drone took 18 rounds of 20 minutes each with a five-litre solution of the disinfectant," he said.

The civic body has also deployed 40 "disinfectant spraying" teams of public health workers, with knapsack pumps filled with one percent sodium hypochlorite solution, in a bid to cover narrow streets and localities where accessibility is an issue. Apart from this, sanitisation by spraying disinfectant with four tractor-driven tankers is also being carried out in the area.

Officers deployed to keep eye on Markaz but gathering took place under police nose

MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL
NEW DELHI, APRIL 2

A DAY before all international flight operations were suspended at IGI Airport, the SHO of Hazrat Nizamuddin police station had on March 21 approached the management committee of the Alami Markaz Banglawa Masjid, headquarters of the Tablighi Jamaat, and asked them to send all foreign pilgrims to their respective countries, and those from outside Delhi to their states. Senior police officers said this did not happen — indicating a lack of cooperation from Markaz members and a failure of the local police.

Police sources also told *The Indian Express* that personnel



Police personnel during the evacuation operation on Tuesday

from the Southeast district lines and staff from the local police station have been stationed outside the Markaz for the last five years, but none of them red flagged the huge gathering in March, even as both the Centre and Delhi government kept emphasising on the need for social distancing. The Markaz and the police station are less than 50

metres apart.

An FIR registered by the Delhi Police against the Markaz management committee mentions the March 13 order of the Delhi government, banning any seminar or conferences with more than 200 people. On March 16, this number was reduced to 50.

Though Delhi Police say they had been warning Markaz authorities to vacate the premises, no official directions were given until March 21. Facing criticism, Delhi Police also released a video dated March 24, wherein SHO Mukesh Walia can be seen speaking to six Markaz members about "clear-cut instructions that over five people cannot congregate and all religious institutions are shut".

A day later, the Maulana informed the SHO in a letter that

they were trying to shut down the centre as directed by him. The Maulana told him they had evacuated 1,500 people. "We still have over 1,000 people from different states in the Markaz. We contacted SDM (sub-divisional magistrate) for vehicle pass so we can send the remaining people to their respective places. The SDM office has given time for a meeting at 11 am on March 25. You are therefore requested to kindly approach the SDM for early action. We are ready to comply with your directions," the letter states.

Special Commissioner of Police (Intelligence unit) Praveer Ranjan, when contacted, said: "We were in touch with them and regularly, asking them to vacate the place in the wake of coronavirus outbreak."

3 from Tablighi gathering positive, 5 Palwal villages under scanner

SAKSHI DAYAL
GURGAON, APRIL 2

THREE PEOPLE, who were among those who attended the congregation of Tablighi Jamaat in Nizamuddin last month, tested positive for coronavirus in Palwal Thursday, a day after officials from the district administration tracked down 79 people who had been part of the congregation.

According to officials, the three were part of a group of 10 Bangladeshi citizens who had travelled to India on a visa. They were traced to villages in Palwal's Hathin tehsil and placed in isolation on Wednesday afternoon, along with their two translators.

An FIR was also lodged against the 10 Bangladeshis and their two translators Thursday for violating the lockdown and not alerting authorities to their travel history. "An FIR has been registered against them under relevant sections of the Foreigners Act and Sections 188 (disobedience in order duly promulgated by public servant) and 269 (negligent act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life) of the IPC," said a spokesperson of the district administration.

"All 12 were segregated and their samples were sent for testing. Samples of three people have returned positive, seven are negative, and tests of two people will have to be repeated because they were inconclusive," said Dr Brahmdeep Singh, Chief Medical Officer (CMO), Palwal.

"On tracing the travel history of these 12, it was found that they had visited 201 houses, which



Sanitisation underway at the Markaz mosque building, Wednesday. Praveen Khanna

have also been placed under quarantine. Apart from this, the five villages they were found in have been declared as a containment zone. The administration is barricading that area and movement will be restricted there," he said.

Apart from the five villages, namely Chhaysa, Mathepur, Duranchi, Maluka, and Hunchpuri, six villages that surround them have been declared part of a "buffer zone".

"The Deputy Commissioner has given directions to seal all villages that fall within the containment zone. 25 teams of anganwadi workers and aha workers have been formed, each will visit 50 houses and conduct thermal scanning of residents. Directions have also been given to properly sanitise all villages within the containment zone and the buffer zone," said a spokesperson of the district administration.

"Apart from this, suspension orders have been issued against the sarpaches of the five villages for failing to alert the administration about people who had come from outside, and directions have been given for them to hand over the entire record as well as movable and immovable property of the panchayat to the panch who holds the majority in the panchayat," he said.

In addition, the Deputy Commissioner Thursday issued showcause notices to the duty magistrate deployed for the Hathin area, and to the 'number-dars' of these villages for failing to alert the administration about outsiders coming in.

Apart from the 10 Bangladeshis, the administration also traced 67 others who had been part of the congregation at Nizamuddin, and came to Palwal on March 17.

The three cases that have emerged are currently the only active cases of coronavirus in Palwal. The first and only other person who had tested positive for the infection last month — a resident who had a travel history from Dubai — has recovered.

In Nuh, officials said, more than 250 people who had visited Nizamuddin have been traced, and samples of nine have been sent for testing.

Transit passes to be issued to those who complete quarantine

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 2

A TRANSIT pass would be issued for people who complete their 14-day quarantine at government-run facilities to help them navigate through the lockdown and return home.

This was mentioned in a standard operating procedure issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs Thursday for the release of those under quarantine after completing its duration. Only those who test negative for COVID-19 would be discharged from government-run quarantine facilities.

In case of a group, no one would be released if even one of them tests positive.

"These persons are expected to return to their homes, or to the homes of their families, relatives or friends, or to other places of shelter, like hotels, by making their own transport arrangements," said the order issued by the Ministry.

As a matter of caution, peo-

ple who are discharged would have to remain in home quarantine for a further 14-day period, according to the order. The transit pass for movement of vehicles would be issued by the state government and would be for a fixed route with a specified validity period.

However, for those about to be released from quarantine at the paid hotel facility in Delhi's Aerocity, there was no communication as of Thursday evening from authorities on their travel arrangements.

A 58-year-old, who came to Delhi from Australia on March 20, completes her 14-day quarantine at a Delhi government arranged facility in Red Fox Hotel on Friday. She has to travel home to Gurgaon.

"I am still awaiting the test results. A sample was taken Wednesday and I am expecting the result to come by Friday afternoon. If I am unable to travel to Gurgaon, since the state borders are sealed, I will stay at my brother's place in Delhi," she said.

Jamia PhD student held

New Delhi: Police Thursday arrested a 35-year-old PhD student of Jamia Millia Islamia for allegedly "hatching a conspiracy" to incite communal riots in several parts of Delhi. He was detained last evening and police arrested him on Thursday morning. On Wednesday at 10 am, the student, Meeran Haider, was called for questioning by the Special Cell at their Lodhi Colony office and was subsequently arrested. The Jamia Coordination Committee condemned the arrest and demanded his immediate release. Haider is the Delhi state president of the Chhatra Rashtriya Janata Dal. **ENS**

PUBLIC NOTICE
Form No. URC-2 Advertisement giving notice about registration under Part I of Chapter XXI (Pursuant to section 374(b) of the companies Act, 2013 and rule 4(1) of the companies (Authorised to Register) Rules, 2014)
1. Notice is hereby given that in pursuance of sub-section (2) of section 366 of the Companies Act, 2013, an application has been made to the Registrar at Kanpur (Uttar Pradesh) that WEALTH KNIGHTS VENTURES & INSURANCE MARKETING LLP may be registered under Part I of Chapter XXI of the Companies Act, 2013, as a company limited by shares.
2. The principal objects of the company are as follows:
Insurance and pension funding, except compulsory social security.
3. A copy of the draft memorandum and articles of association of the proposed company may be inspected at the office at UGF-2, A-BLOCK, OMAXE NRI CITY CENTRE MALL OMEGA-1, GREATER NOIDA, GAUTAM BUDDH NAGAR UP 201308 IN
4. Notice is hereby given that any person objecting to this application may communicate their objection in writing to the Registrar at Kanpur (Uttar Pradesh), within twenty one days from the date of publication of this notice, with a copy to the company at its registered office.
Dated this 3rd Day of April, 2020
Name(s) of Applicant
1. DEVENDER SINGH
2. NAVEEN KUMAR

SBI
Strategic Training Unit, Corporate Centre, State Bank Bhavan, 16th Floor, Madam Cama Road, Mumbai - 400 021.
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
State Bank of India has issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for Appointment of Consultant for conducting an online assessment centre and development journey for senior officials of the Bank. For Details, please see Procurement News at Bank's Website
<https://bank.sbi/>
Place: Mumbai
Date: 03.04.2020
Sd/-
Deputy General Manager
(Strategic Training Unit)

HIT BY LOCKDOWN

CM: Auto and taxi drivers to get Rs 5,000 assistance

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 2

THE DELHI government will extend one-time assistance of Rs 5,000 each to drivers of autos, taxis and e-rickshaws who are facing financial crisis due to the lockdown, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal announced Thursday. He also warned of a possible surge in the number of coronavirus cases in the next few days from among those evacuated from the Markaz Nizamuddin building, the headquarters of the Tablighi Jamaat.

Kejriwal said the decision to extend relief measures to drivers of public service vehicles was taken after many of them reached out to him, requesting the government's intervention as their sources of income have dried up ever since the lockdown was implemented.

"Many drivers of autos, taxis, rural transport vehicles have been messaging me saying how they are on the verge of starvation due to no earnings. I want to assure all of them that I won't let anyone go hungry. It's just that we don't have all their account numbers. So the transfer of the amount to their accounts will take around 7-10 days," Kejriwal said during the daily briefing.

The Delhi government has extended assistance of Rs 5,000 each to 32,358 construction labourers so far, who are regis-

tered with the Delhi Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board. The Union Labour Ministry has asked states across the country to release funds from their respective construction worker welfare boards.

The CM pointed to figures coming out from the US, where authorities have projected that there could be 1 lakh to 2.4 lakh deaths due to coronavirus. "Yesterday, US President Donald Trump said the country may record 1-1.5 lakh deaths due to the virus. So you can well imagine the gravity of the crisis. USA is the most developed country in the world. And that is why we need to abide by the PM's appeal to stay indoors," said Kejriwal.

Kejriwal said that by Thursday morning, the number of coronavirus cases had touched 219 in Delhi. Till Wednesday, there were 152 positive cases. Out of the 219, 108 are those who were at the Markaz gathering of the Tablighi Jamaat. One patient remains on ventilation, two are on oxygen support while the rest are stable and recovering, the CM said.

"Now the question is whether coronavirus is spreading among the masses?... It has not started spreading in Delhi... Within the next one-two days, Delhi might witness a surge as many of those evacuated from Markaz are undergoing tests and their reports are awaited," he said.



At the press briefing, Thursday



MIND THE GAP

At a shelter home near Nigambodh Ghat, Thursday. Several migrants who tried to leave the city over the last week and were stopped at the border have been directed to government shelters. Amit Mehra

DCW notice to police on condition of sex workers

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 2

IT HAS been over a month since a 35-year-old sex worker at G B Road has had any work. With income dwindling amid a shortage of ration, she is worried about the future of her two children.

"One of my daughters is in Class XII and the other is in her first year of graduation. I'm the sole breadwinner ever since my husband abandoned me. My savings are dwindling and I barely have enough to feed myself, let alone save for my children's future," she said.

"My peers who are HIV+ are facing difficulties getting their medicines. Nobody is allowed to step out," she said.

Her plight is shared by many other sex workers in Delhi's red light area, G B Road. The Delhi Commission for Women Thursday also took cognizance, and issued a notice to Delhi Police Thursday seeking information about the condition of the women there. Police have been asked to respond by April 6.

DCW chairperson Swati Maliwal said, "The women at GB Road live in small dingy cells lacking basic hygiene... The coronavirus epidemic has taken a terrible shape... We have issued a notice to police on what steps they are taking so the women and children don't face difficulties."

Kusum, president of the All India Network of Sex Workers, said she had given details of those in need of ration and medicines to government institutions and NGOs.

Amid spike in Noida cases, CMO of Gautam Budh Nagar is replaced

AMIL BHATNAGAR
NOIDA, APRIL 2

TWO DAYS after the Gautam Budh Nagar district magistrate was shunted out after a meeting with Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the Chief Medical Officer of the district has also been replaced. An order to this effect was passed Wednesday night.

CMO Dr Anurag Bhargava reported to CEO Greater Noida Authority Narendra Bhusan, who is also the government-appointed nodal officer for handling the coronavirus outbreak in the district. As per the order issued by Home Department, Dr AP Chaturvedi, Joint Director in Directorate of Health and Family Welfare, was appointed CMO and took charge Thursday.



Till Thursday evening, Noida had 48 cases

The shuffle comes in the wake of a visit by the CM to the district after Noida registered the highest number of coronavirus cases in the district. The CM was accompanied by a medical team from Lucknow and the district's handling of cases was discussed.

According to sources, the CM

was visibly angry at the administration and the health department regarding its functioning. The medical team raised issues on contact tracing carried out after the first case from fire safety firm was reported.

During the meeting, the CM accused the administration and

health department of playing a "blame game" in the context of the rising numbers. According to sources, the CM and the medical team were of the opinion that the rise in cases could have been prevented if members of the firm and their contacts were traced timely by the administration and health department.

Following a heated exchange between the DM and CM during the meeting, the former was transferred to the Board of Revenue in Lucknow and an enquiry initiated against him. Suhaas LY, a 2007-batch IAS officer, was appointed Gautam Budh Nagar DM six hours later.

Till Thursday evening, Noida had 48 cases, the highest in the state. Three societies in Noida and a village in Greater Noida were sealed after 9 cases were reported in the district Wednesday.

Staff at Ghaziabad hospital allege misbehaviour by patients, probe on

AMIL BHATNAGAR
NOIDA, APRIL 2

A PROBE has been set up against six patients in quarantine at the Ghaziabad district hospital's isolation ward for alleged misbehaviour with medical staff.

The six men had earlier attended a congregation at the Nizamuddin Markaz in Delhi last month. After they were traced back to Uttar Pradesh, following several cases of coronavirus that were linked to the gathering, they were sent to the government quarantine facility.

In a letter written by nurses and medical staff of the ward to the Chief Medical Superintendent of the district hospital, it was alleged that the men were not taking medicines and were misbehaving with the staff. The letter written by the staff members

Senior resident doctor at AIIMS, his pregnant wife test positive

ASTHA SAXENA
NEW DELHI, APRIL 2

A SENIOR resident doctor working in the department of physiology at AIIMS and his nine-month pregnant wife tested positive for COVID-19 on Thursday. The AIIMS administration said it is set to carry out the delivery if she continues to stay at the hospital.

She is the first pregnant woman in Delhi to test positive for coronavirus. The country's top medical institute has already prepared a protocol on how to deal with pregnant women diagnosed with the virus. A 38-page document prepared by the medical institute has one page dedicated to the care of pregnant patients.

"We have a separate suite dedicated to such patients. If she continues to test positive for the disease, then the team of doctors operating on her will follow a strict set of rules. Each healthcare worker present at the time of delivery will be wearing PPE gear, masks and gloves, specially procured for COVID-19 patients. It's preferable that the patient should opt for a caesarean. Once the delivery is done, the suite will be disinfected for the next patient," Dr DK Sharma, medical superintendent of AIIMS, told *The Indian Express*.

The former head of AIIMS gynaecology, Dr Alka Kriplani, said: "The next two-three weeks are crucial for the mother as well as the baby. As the immunity of the mother is low during pregnancy, chances of her being at risk are higher. The child inside the womb will not be at risk but after delivery, if the mother continues to have symptoms of the disease, the child is prone at catching the infection."

A resident of Hauz Rani, the 28-year-old AIIMS doctor has no history of foreign travel and had visited the hospital twice or thrice before testing positive for the disease. He is the eighth doctor in Delhi to test positive for COVID-19.

The hospital administration has sent around 10 healthcare workers for self-quarantine af-

CORONA COUNT
DELHI NCR
370 CASES 4 DEATHS
37 RECOVERED

ter tracing the doctor's contacts during his visit to the hospital.

"We are trying to figure out his complete history to find the source of transmission. He had visited a mosque on March 20. We are still trying to connect the dots to have final confirmation on the point of transmission. His wife has also tested positive and is admitted to the isolation ward. Their three-year-old daughter has tested negative for the disease. His wife does not work at AIIMS," said Dr Sharma.

A recent study was published in the *Lancet* on 'Management of pregnant women infected with COVID-19 in Wuhan, China. Seven pregnant women with COVID-19 pneumonia were assessed and the onset symptoms were similar to those reported in non-pregnant adults with the virus.

"In cases of pregnant women with COVID-19, more evidence is needed to establish when to deliver and when caesarean sections should be recommended. Previous treatment experience has been inconclusive about which delivery method is safer in this patient population. However, no reliable evidence recommends any specific COVID-19 treatment for pregnant women," researchers stated in the report.

Five new cases in Gurgaon

In Gurgaon, meanwhile, five people tested positive for coronavirus Thursday. "These include a resident of Gurgaon who was part of the Nizamuddin congregation. The others include a man who is working in Bombay and had recently returned to his parents' home in Gurgaon, and his father," said Chief Medical Officer Jaswant Singh Punia.

The district has so far recorded 15 cases. Nine people have recovered.

"We have received a letter from the medical authorities about inappropriate behaviour and non-cooperation by the patients in the isolation ward. An enquiry has been set up... and a report will be submitted in 24 hours"

AJAY SHANKAR PANDEY
GHAZIABAD DISTRICT MAGISTRATE

also alleged that the men would sit in groups despite being told to maintain social distancing.

Ghaziabad District Magistrate Ajay Shankar Pandey said: "We have received a letter from the medical authorities about inappropriate behaviour and non-cooperation by the patients in the isolation ward. An

enquiry has been set up under the SP City and ADM City and a report will be submitted within 24 hours. Appropriate action will be taken accordingly."

Across western Uttar Pradesh, several members of the Tablighi Jamaat who had attended the gathering at the Markaz are being identified and put under quarantine as cases linked to the congregation continue to rise in the state and across the country.

UP CM Yogi Adityanath had earlier ordered strict action against any Jamaat member found violating visa guidelines. Police chiefs of 18 districts were also ordered to find any Jamaat member who had returned to the district after attending the Nizamuddin Markaz event and to initiate proceedings against anyone found sheltering a foreign national.

AMID LOCKDOWN

Ghaziipur shut, Delhi zoo slaughters live feed for its big cats

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 2

TO ENSURE daily supply of meat for its large carnivores following the closure of the Ghazipur abattoir, the Delhi Zoo has secured permission to slaughter live feed at the zoo itself. The zoo requires 259 kg of buffalo meat daily to feed 8-12 kg each to 20 tigers, lions, leopards and jaguars, besides over a dozen wolves, jackals, and hyenas in its custody.

On March 25, soon after the East Delhi Municipal Corporation

(EDMC) shut down the Ghazipur abattoir as part of the 21-day lockdown to contain the coronavirus outbreak, Delhi Zoo director Suneesh Buxy flagged the logistical problems in securing food for the zoo animals.

"In order to provide feed to the carnivore species on a daily basis, it is requested to kindly permit the procurement of live feed (Buffalo-Calf) directly from the contractor. It is also requested to allow slaughtering of the live feed at the Zoo itself," wrote Buxy in a letter to EDMC.

"We had to ensure that the

animals housed in the National Zoological Park do not suffer during the 21-day lockdown. After an intervention by the Central Zoo Authority, zoos have been included under essential services. The municipality and police fully cooperated with the Delhi zoo to ensure the daily supply of meat," Buxy told *The Indian Express*.

Accordingly, the Delhi Zoo has been receiving four buffalo calves daily. "On March 25, we had to manage with chicken. Since March 26, the contractor transports and slaughters the animals daily. The zoo has its



The zoo requires 259 kg of buffalo meat daily to feed 8-12 kg each to 20 tigers, lions, leopards and other carnivores. Archive

own meat house, where two of our designated attendants apportion meat for feeding individual animals," said a zoo officer looking after the process.

The Delhi Zoo continues to procure chicken and fish from the market for its smaller carnivore species. While some zoos, such as the ones in Himachal Pradesh, shifted from buffalo to chicken meat for their big cats due to "quality issues" years ago, others, like the Jaipur zoo, had to make the switch in the wake of the recent lockdown.

Across the globe, prolonged

lockdowns have adversely affected captive animals. According to media reports, hundreds of animals have been left to feed on each other and die as a zoo in China's Hunan province remained shut for two months.

In Thailand, more than 1,000 elephants face starvation as the coronavirus pandemic has stalled tourism and left caretakers with meagre resources. In the UK, a zoo official in Somerset warned that many zoos would have to close and consider euthanising some animals if staff had to scour the shops for food.

CENTRE'S ONLINE SURVEY AMONG DIST COLLECTORS, MAGISTRATES ON COVID-19 PREPAREDNESS

Extend lockdown, need more PPEs: officers on ground

AVISHEK G DASTIDAR
NEW DELHI, APRIL 2

THERE IS a massive shortage of key personal protective equipment (PPEs) at the district and village levels, and the 21-day lockdown period should be extended to prevent further spread of the COVID-19 outbreak.

These are the two key take-aways from a government survey of 410 district collectors and district magistrates leading the country's efforts in dealing with what the government in the survey described as the "greatest health crisis India faced since Independence".

While 410 officers registered online for the survey, not all of

them answered all 23 questions. So the survey has taken into account the 266 different forms.

The "National Preparedness Survey on COVID-19" says in its prelude to one of the questions that the government's aim was to "evade further community transmission" and chalk out a strategy in case community transmission takes place.

The numbers threw up a grim picture for the Centre.

As many as 47 per cent of the officers "felt that inadequate availability of Personal Protection Equipment (masks, gloves etc.) in District/ Sub-District Hospitals is an area of concern," the survey said.

Around 28 per cent said there were not enough isolation beds,

and 60 per cent said district hospitals did not have adequate ICU beds. Around 71 per cent said there were not enough ventilators in the battle against COVID-19. As many as 34 per cent of respondents felt the local hospitals were "not equipped" to face the outbreak.

The survey, conducted by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, under the Ministry of Personnel, included IAS officers from batches 2014-18 who did stints in Union ministries as Assistant Secretaries before being posted in their respective cadres.

In an endorsement of the Centre's strategy, an overwhelming 96 per cent respondents noted that the lockdown is "an effective

way" to contain the outbreak, even as 31 per cent felt that people in the districts and villagers are "alarmed and panicking".

Asked what is the one thing the government should do, the replies were compiled into 21 responses. Chief among them was that the lockdown period should be extended "till Covid-19 is not controlled".

"Furthermore", the survey stated, "any instances of non-adherence to curfew/ lockdown should be dealt with harshly particularly where gathering of more than 50 people." In a similar vein, another response said the 21-day lockdown should be cautiously reviewed, "as it may as it may lead to wider spread of the virus."

Among key actions recom-

mended by the respondents was the need to test more people to find more positive cases. "The survey highlighted the need for quick redressal of under-reported cases...on account of under-testing people due to various challenges like paucity of testing kits, no data on travel history, sudden migration of wage workers across states; as this may actually end up in further transmission," said one key action point.

Information collection regarding foreign travel history of people in the district and states was emphasised, as most people hid their travel history, thereby resulting in delay of contact-tracing and prevention of human-to-human transmission, said one of the findings.

RISK POINTS IN SOME STATES

MAHARASHTRA: Availability of medical supplies such as PPEs, masks, sanitisers, ventilators, etc; lack of trained staff

MADHYA PRADESH: Poor infrastructure, low availability of PPEs, ventilators

GUJARAT: High migrant inflow, risky slum areas and lack of PPEs for hospital staff; internal migration

BIHAR: Lack of PPEs and medical facilities.

Some districts report lack of basic medical accessories such as masks, sanitisers

DELHI: Inadequate testing of suspected cases; need for better hospital equipment

CHHATTISGARH: Lack of medical facilities, staff; shortage of PPEs

JHARKHAND: Lack of an anesthetic in Dumka means ventilators can't be operated.

FULL TABLE ON www.indianexpress.com

CORONA WATCH



Nurses in Assam arrive for a training to deal with coronavirus.
Dasarath Deka

UP: Separate fund for medical colleges, labs

Lucknow: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath ordered formation of a separate fund just to fight coronavirus, which would be used to enhance the capacity of medical colleges, testing laboratories, Personal Protection kits, triple layer masks and also establishment of isolation and quarantine wards across the state. He also instructed officials to enhance the tele-medicine facilities in the state. Adityanath has also called on all DMs and divisional commissioners to monitor the situation at old-age homes in the state. **ENS**

2 held for hiding travel history in J&K

Jammu: A man from UP, who did not share his travel history with the authorities and a preacher who gave him shelter in a mosque have been apprehended in Jammu and Kashmir's Samba district, officials said on Thursday. Acting on a tip-off, police raided the Chak Doulat mosque and held the two men on Wednesday night, they said. A case has been registered against the man from Uttar Pradesh and the preacher. **PTI**

Fatwa calls for Muslims to get tested

Lucknow: A leading Islamic cleric on Thursday issued a fatwa (religious edict), asking Muslims to get tested for coronavirus if they show symptoms of COVID-19 and undergo treatment. "It is not permissible to hide it (disease). If people do not get their treatment and tests done... it is absolutely against Sharia law," according to the fatwa issued by Maulana Khalid Rashid Farangi Mahali of the Darul Uloom Farangi Mahal. **PTI**

Govt nod to 5 research projects to tackle COVID-19

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 2

THE DEPARTMENT of Science and Technology has sanctioned five technological research projects to address several issues such as the manufacture of emergency ventilators and improved personal protection equipment to tackle COVID-19.

The projects have been sanctioned under the Science and Engineering Board division with an annual grant of Rs 25 lakh, which may increase depending on the success of the projects.

Meanwhile, the Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute of Medical Sciences and Technology, under the DST, Thursday tied up with Wipro 3D, Bengaluru to manufacture automated ventilators. **FULL REPORT ON** www.indianexpress.com

INTERACTION WITH PM



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other ministers during the interaction with Chief Ministers via video conference. **ANI**

Medical supply, PPE, safety of Indians abroad: What CMs want

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, HYDERABAD, CHENNAI, APRIL 2

DURING A video conference interaction held by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and all Chief Ministers, the CMs have called for various measures to check the spread of the coronavirus, including more medical supplies and equipment, more funds, and establishment of quarantine centres in countries where Indians have been stranded.

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Thursday said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi said: "We have to compulsorily continue social distancing even after ending the lockdown step by step." Referring to the Prime Minister's interaction with Chief Ministers via video conferencing on measures to combat Covid-19, Vijayan

told reporters that "one thing is clear that he has mentioned about how we should end lockdown step by step, not abruptly."

Vijayan said the Prime Minister has sought states' opinions on removing the lockdown. States were asked to form an expert task force in this regard and submit suggestions within three or four days. Kerala would form an expert committee in this regard, he said. Vijayan said he sought the Centre's intervention to ensure the safety of Keralites in various countries.

Quarantine centres should be established in countries with the help of Indian embassies for lodging Indians with symptoms. He said Kerala is going to begin rapid test for Covid-19. "We have also sought the help of the Union Government to bring kits for rapid test from Hong Kong every day."

He also demanded that state's borrowing limit be in-

creased from 3 per cent to 5 per cent.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi to send necessary medical supplies and equipment to curb coronavirus spread.

"The CM told the PM that the state is implementing the cluster containment strategy to have control over the situation and requested the PM to send the required equipment to the state as soon as possible," an official said.

Jagan also informed the Prime Minister that his government will pay only 50 per cent salary to employees as the fight against coronavirus has put a huge financial burden on the state government. "The CM also requested the PM to take into consideration the state's financial situation as the expenditure has skyrocketed due to COVID-19," the official said.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister

Edappadi K Palaniswami sought allocation of Rs 3,000 crore for procuring personal protective equipment (PPE), N-95 masks and ventilators to manage the COVID-19 pandemic. He also demanded the Centre to increase the supply of test kits to the state.

Chief minister E Palaniswami, in a letter to PM, sought an allocation of Rs 9,000 crore, and as a one-time measure, easing the fiscal deficit limit of 3 per cent of GSDP for financial years 2019-20 and 2020-21. According to an official release, the CM requested the PM to release in advance "grants due to States in 2020-21".

He requested for release of 50 per cent of the Finance Commission grants to the Urban and Rural Local bodies and 50 per cent of the revenue deficit grant, the GST compensation amount due for the December-January 2019-20 and grants under the National Health Mission.

Gehlot asks PM to give states more financial room

MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI, APRIL 2

ARGUING THAT state governments are facing a severe financial crunch because of the lockdown, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Thursday asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to give states more financial room by relaxing their borrowing limit and announcing a moratorium on payment of their dues to financial institutions under the RBI and other Central agencies.

He also asked the Centre to put in place an inter-state supply chain protocol to ensure unhindered operation of essential services and smooth supply of medicines, equipment and other essential commodities for the people during the lockdown. Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Gehlot said the Central government should also set up an additional fund of one lakh crore to help states.

"I have suggested to the Prime Minister that the Centre relax the borrowing limit of states from 3 per cent of Gross State Domestic Product to 5 per cent. Also, the Centre should step in and announce a moratorium on the payment of states' dues to financial institutions under the RBI. These payments should be deferred," he said.

Gehlot said his government is doing all it can to contain the pandemic. "But the main problem is the financial stress that we are facing."

"I told the Prime Minister that the Central government should grant an additional Rs 1 lakh crore to states to tackle the pandemic. This will help states cope up with the financial stress...I told him that the fund can be distributed on the basis of either the number of corona patients in each state, on the basis of population or the guidelines devised by the GST council," he said.

FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com

CWC picks holes in govt's corona response

MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI, APRIL 2

WHILE PLEDGING to continue its "unstinted support" to the government, the Congress on Thursday strongly criticised the Narendra Modi administration's response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The Congress Working Committee (CWC) said the government's strategy of limited testing was "flawed", its financial action plan "hopelessly inadequate" and claimed that it went in for the 21-day lockdown "unplanned".

The CWC, which met for the first time through video conferencing, said supply chains to crores of people have been severely disrupted due to "poor preparation" and "thoughtless orders". It argued that the "tragic spectacle" of thousands of migrant workers "desperately trying to go back to their villages" will "forever remain" a "blot" on this government.

The Congress asked the government to go for extensive testing, announce a second financial action plan for the poor, restore supply chains, take preparatory steps to deal with the economy to ensure that current levels of employment and wages are maintained and business failures of MSMEs are averted, announce a cut in GST rates on goods of mass consumption and make preparations for immediate harvesting and procurement of crops at minimum support price.

The Congress asked the government to earmark Rs 5-6 lakh crore and appoint an Economic Task Force comprising renowned economists to suggest an emergency plan within one week, a short to medium-term plan within one month and a medium to long-term plan within three months to protect and revive the economy.

In her speech, Congress president Sonia Gandhi asked the government to prepare and publish a Common Minimum Relief Programme, arguing that it will help alleviate several concerns currently afflicting people.

Sources said the CWC meeting saw some members arguing



Sonia Gandhi

that the party should desist from criticising the government at this juncture and some like P Chidambaram favoured a nuanced approach of supporting it while pointing out the shortcomings. It is learnt that former party chief Rahul Gandhi told the meeting that he saw no reason why the Congress should not criticise the government. The CWC resolution, released after the four-hour meeting, was fairly critical of the government.

Rahul is also learnt to have said that the 21-day lockdown is not sufficient to serve the intended objective. According to sources, he said that international experts have told him that the shutdown, if it has to be effective, should be more than twice the incubation period.

Sources said Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh did not rule out the possibility of COVID-19 cases in his state touching 30,000 in the coming months. All the chief ministers from the party said their governments are facing a severe resource crunch because of the shutdown.

"The fight against coronavirus must be unitedly fought by central and state governments. Majority of the state governments have complained of inadequate financial resources in absence of central government not releasing state's share in the GST," the CWC resolution said.

The Congress said the government has erred in adopting a strategy of limited testing and demanded its reversal. It asked the government to expand medical infrastructure - like isolation wards, hospital beds, testing labs, and quarantine facilities - on a war footing.

Padma-winning Gurbani maestro dies of COVID-19

KAMALDEEP SINGH BRAR & HINA ROHTAKI
AMRITSAR, CHANDIGARH, APRIL 2

HE ROSE from humble beginnings to the pinnacle of Gurmat Sangeet. Born in a Dalit family of Lohian village near Amritsar, Giani Nirmal Singh Khalsa, 67, came to define the genre with 80 albums and two books that are part of university syllabus. In 2009, he was awarded the Padma Shri for his contribution to Gurmat Sangeet.

The man, who considered Pakistani maestro Ghulam Ali a close friend, and supported the movement for women raagis in the Golden Temple, was penning his autobiography when he died of COVID-19 on Thursday.

The Gurbani maestro, who was being treated at Amritsar's Government Medical College Hospital, died at 4.30 am Thursday while being on ventilator support. His death sent authorities across Punjab and the Union Territory of Chandigarh on a frantic search for the source of his infection and also those who



Giani Nirmal Singh Khalsa

could have been infected by him during his public interactions.

According to sources, he had attended a wedding at Dhudike village in Moga on March 15. He had also performed a 'kirtan' at a house in Chandigarh on March 19 that was attended by many prominent people.

Additional Commissioner Anil Garg, who is the officer in-charge for home quarantine, said that 86 VIPs who attended that event have been quarantined.

Intriguingly, while the Chandigarh administration was informed by Amritsar authorities about the case on March 30, the quarantine process only began on Thursday.

"We have found that 16 VIP families attended the event on March 19. A total of 86 people have been quarantined by us," Garg said.

The final rites of the Golden Temple's former Hazoori Raagi were performed late in the evening. A medical team in protective suits carried out the last rites, while Akal Takht head priest Giani Malkeet Singh performed 'ardas' at the cremation. His son, Amiteshwar Singh, was in attendance.

But the cremation was mired in controversy after the Amritsar administration decided to cremate Khalsa outside the city at Verka village. Harpal Singh, a local Congress leader from Verka and husband of a party councillor, objected saying, "Smoke raised during the cremation can infect villagers."

After administration's attempt to persuade him and others accompanying him failed, several individuals - even the SGPC - came forward to offer land for cremation. The body was finally cremated on shamlat land of Shukar Chak village in Amritsar at around 9 pm.

Cong playing petty politics, should think of national interest: BJP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 2

THE RULING BJP hit back at the Congress after it criticised the government for the "unplanned" announcement of the lockdown, saying the Opposition party was playing "petty politics".

Union Home Minister Amit Shah said that the Congress should think of "national interest". "Under PM @narendramodi's leadership, India's efforts to fight Coronavirus are being lauded domestically and globally. 130 crore Indians are united to defeat COVID 19. Yet, Congress is playing petty politics. High time they think of national interest and stop misleading the people," Shah tweeted hours after Congress president Sonia Gandhi addressed the Congress

Working Committee meeting. Addressing the CWC in a video conference, Congress president Sonia Gandhi said: "The 21-day National Lockdown may have been necessary but the unplanned manner in which it has been implemented has caused chaos and pain in the lives of millions of migrant workers all over India."

BJP president J P Nadda, too, slammed the Congress president. In a tweet, he said when the entire country is united under PM Modi, the statement by Sonia is "insensitive and indecent".

"This is the time to serve the country, not to do politics. We have to fight in unison...The Prime Minister is fighting this battle with all the state governments as Team India. The Congress should function as a responsible political party in difficult times," he said.



The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY
RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

LIFE AND DEATH

The criminal negligence by Tablighi Jamaat organisers undermines fight against the virus, hurts people — of all faiths

OVER 400 COVID-19 positive cases, almost a fifth of the national count, at least 15 dead, and counting — this has been wrought by the coronavirus and the criminal negligence of those who helped organise a gathering of the Tablighi Jamaat in mid-March in New Delhi. The Jamaat is no local neighbourhood residents' group, it has a well-established organisational infrastructure, a sprawling international membership and a reach across over 100 countries. Many of the estimated 3,000 participants came from countries that had, weeks earlier, already become COVID-19 hotspots — most notably, Indonesia and Malaysia, where an earlier Tablighi meet was linked to more than 600 cases. The WHO, on March 11, had declared the outbreak as a pandemic. Yet, the Tablighi Jamaat's organisers went ahead with their three-day meet, on March 13, disregarding a Delhi government order issued the same day prohibiting the assembly of more than 200 people. They also flouted a Delhi government notification on March 12 asking people with a travel history from COVID-19-affected countries to self-isolate. The local police station, within shouting distance of the venue, merrily looked on as hundreds poured in. The Jamaat's representatives say that their meeting was held days before the janata curfew and that the Delhi Government itself didn't seem serious about social distancing norms. That's little more than an excuse.

What the Nizamuddin spread underlines, tragically, is how easy it is to unravel and undermine any multi-pronged, public health campaign against a virus that has no antidote. While the government's role cannot be overstressed, it is incumbent upon civil society to follow the norms of responsible behaviour. The flouting of protocols by communities, even individuals, hobbles the entire country's battle. The Jamaat's organisers aren't the only violators — even as, so far, their violation certainly is the most egregious. But their actions, in particular, threaten to fuel another spectre — as attempts are made by some, amid this shared crisis, to use their example to deepen mistrust, taint and tarnish an entire community.

It must be recognised that the collective battle against COVID-19 — as AIIMS Delhi's director, Randeep Guleria, underlined in an interview to this newspaper on Thursday — "has to be won at the community level, rather than the hospital level". Religious leaders should use their social clout, an invaluable resource in times of fear and anxiety, to empower their community and, thus, the nation. In Indore on Thursday, for instance, Muslim clerics appealed to residents of a neighbourhood to cooperate with health officials after a mob allegedly pelted stones and chased them away. The Tablighi Jamaat's organisers, in contrast, endangered the lives of hundreds — of all faiths. The least they can do is to use their formidable network to cooperate with those who are now working to heal the damage they helped inflict.

ANOTHER MISSTEP IN J&K

New domicile rules introduced by Centre for Jammu and Kashmir are a let-down — both in substance and timing

THE RULES SETTING out new domicile criteria in Jammu & Kashmir have done nothing to reassure the people of the erstwhile state on the issue of demographic change. Only last month, both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah had assured a delegation of the newly-created Altaf Bokhari-led J&K Apni Party that the Union Territory would have "a better domicile policy than other states". It says something about how the policy, notified earlier this week, is being seen in J&K that even Bokhari feels let down. The Centre may have expected him to help it sell the new policy to the people. Instead, Bokhari has called it an attempt to "hoodwink" the people of J&K, and said it was "totally unacceptable" to JKAP. The National Conference called it "an insult upon injury". Others, too, have criticised it in similar vein.

Under the new rules — which replace the pre-August 5 rules for defining "permanent residents" who can own property and are eligible for government jobs — the categories are made more expansive: Those who have lived in the state for 15 years; those who have studied seven years in the state and written their Class 10 or Class 12 examinations; the children of such people; the children of a whole range of central government officials who have served 10 years in J&K; and such official themselves. As if this was not alarming enough for even a Bokhari to raise a rebellious voice, there is outrage that the only government employment reserved for those with domicile are "level 4" jobs. These account for a majority of government jobs and, very soon, non-J&K aspirants who meet the domicile requirements under the new policy would also be in the running.

The timing of the order is equally disquieting. At a moment when the entire nation, including J&K, is focussed on the fight against COVID, it was inappropriate and insensitive to push in new rules that will directly impact the lives of the people of the former state. Upon his release from detention under the J&K Public Safety Act, former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah had said that despite his views on what the Centre had done in J&K on August 5, he would desist from commenting on it for the moment, in order to support the government fully in the anti-coronavirus effort. The government should have acted in the same spirit. Instead, it has done the opposite by bringing in a politically contentious measure.

SERENA AND ROGER

Will they come back to play at Wimbledon — that's a question

ONLY THE MOST extraordinary of events has seen the traditionalists at the All England Club cancel Wimbledon. Since the first edition in 1877, only 10 editions haven't taken place, and each time it was a World War to blame. When the tournament that has obsessively resisted change decides to pull the plug, you know the COVID-19 outbreak has triggered war-like panic in the UK.

Shedding tears over the scrapping of a tennis tournament, however popular, in this time of pandemic, would be insensitive. Yet, the fans are entitled to feel disappointed, as they wonder if they will ever see two ageing legends of the game on the celebrated centre court again. Both Roger Federer and Serena Williams will be a year short of 40 next year. Their reactions on 2020 becoming a "grassless" year suggested that they are not sure about their plans for 2021. Federer tweeted he was "devastated" and Serena Williams was "shocked". With advancing years, athletes don't have the luxury of long-term plans.

Federer, father of two sets of twins, and Serena, mother of a two-year-old daughter, while locked at home, would have got an idea of their post-retirement days. For years, their bodies would have ached for a break and now they are getting one. Looking ahead, will Federer and Serena retain the hunger, and the drive, to pick themselves up, hit the road again? They might be old by tennis standards, but aren't have-beens yet. Both were finalists last year and Federer lost a final that went on for nearly five hours — the longest Wimbledon has seen. All through their careers, Federer and Serena have defied odds, stayed in contention and packed away younger challengers. Their bodies might not be willing but the whiff of freshly cut Wimbledon grass might be too strong to resist for these evergreen stars.



ABHINAV KUMAR

Policing a lockdown

We are learning new tactics, protocols on the fly. Every day brings challenges, heartbreaks, acts of inspiration

MAY YOU LIVE in interesting times. Though this oft-repeated English expression is perhaps wrongly attributed to the Chinese, these are certainly interesting times — with a controversial Chinese connection. At the time of writing, the COVID-19 virus, widely believed to have originated in China, has infected more than 7,75,000 people across the world and killed more than 37,000. In India, it has mercifully had a slow start, with more than 1,600 infections and less than 50 casualties till April 2, despite the first case being detected two months ago on January 30.

Quite rightly, the government of India has paid heed to the devastation abroad, and imposed a 21-day lockdown across the country beginning March 23. Nothing of this scale has ever been attempted in human history. In the second week of the lockdown, it is hard to predict its effect on arresting the impact of the COVID-19 by April 14. For all those entrusted with enforcing the lockdown, and catering to the infected patients, the next two weeks are sure to stretch and challenge us in unimaginable ways. There was never a scarier time to be in uniform. There was never a more inspiring time to be in uniform.

Today, the health and well being of our 1.3 billion citizens literally depend on how well we in the police forces work with our colleagues in healthcare, civil administration and other essential services to ensure that this lockdown achieves its intended goal. Namely, to arrest the rate of transmission, and the number of infections and keep the number of casualties to the minimum possible till April 14. These are truly morbid parameters to judge the performance of any state agency. Interesting times, indeed.

The experience of the last one week has been a steep learning curve for all of us, apart from also being a deeply stressful and humbling experience. To take credit for anything at this stage would be sheer hubris. It is largely the support and cooperation that we have received from our citizens in enforcing this lockdown that has got us this far. True, there have been stray instances of reckless non-compliance with lockdown guidelines.

Our police forces have seldom enjoyed high levels of trust and support from civil society — largely due to our own failings. However, now is not the time to remind us of all these things. It is the time to appreciate that even though the COVID-19 can't tell a uniformed Indian from a civilian, we are not turning our backs on what is expected of us. We want you to trust us to do the right thing. We will not hesitate to repeatedly expose ourselves to this sinister menace, if it can ensure your safety. We will ensure that the elderly and the sick receive due assistance. We will ensure that there are no shortages of critical items of food and medicines.

Equally, there have been more than a few instances of high-handedness by the police. But, by and large, the lockdown has become a reality for 1.3 billion Indians. Not by force, but primarily by consent.

Frankly, nothing in our training and our practical experience as police officers has prepared us for a task of this magnitude. How do you begin to protect others, when the air you breathe, the hands you shake, the loved ones you hug, all become a potentially lethal source of infection for yourself? And vice versa, how do we know that we aren't already infected, and instead of helping, we are in fact harming all those who come into proximity seeking our help? The psychological impact of the virus is as insidious as its biological impact. We are having to learn completely alien tactics and protocols on the fly. Every day brings new challenges, new heartbreaks and new acts of inspiration.

The lockdown has, of course, eased some of the daily challenges of policing India. Crime is down, of course. As are daily challenges of law and order. But these have been replaced by larger challenges. Ensuring that our citizens stay indoors as required is the biggest task. No less difficult is ensuring the uninterrupted supplies of a host of essential services. Add to that the task of tracing the contacts of all positive cases and ensuring that they observe strict quarantine guidelines. However, all these have been dwarfed by the migration of over 10 million citizens, largely from the cow belt, most of whom worked as daily wage labour across most of our major cities and states. The recent acts of the Tablighi Jamaat that have fed a new wave of infections across the country are a grim reminder of the challenges we face.

Our police forces have seldom enjoyed high levels of trust and support from civil society — largely due to our own failings. However, now is not the time to remind us of all these things. It is the time to appreciate that even though the COVID-19 can't tell a uniformed Indian from a civilian, we are not turning our backs on what is expected of us. We want you to trust us to do the right

thing. We will not hesitate to repeatedly expose ourselves to this sinister menace, if it can ensure your safety. We will ensure that the elderly and the sick receive due assistance. We will ensure that there are no shortages of critical items of food and medicines.

However, we can't do it alone. We require unprecedented levels of forbearance, trust and support from our citizens. We require them to listen and follow instructions. We require them to stop hoarding essential items. We require them to stop spreading rumours, because the fear and panic they create will be as deadly as the virus. We require them to stop seeking frivolous exemptions from the lockdown. We require them to put on hold the many murderous faultlines of religion, region and caste. We require elite segments of our society in business and industry to work in close partnership with us to ensure that wherever there are gaps in our capabilities, they step up to shoulder some of our responsibilities.

This virus is deadly and infectious enough. We don't need to add to its lethal prowess by holding onto our past legacy of mutual distrust. For all the threat it represents, this epidemic is also an opportunity for police forces in India to redeem themselves in the eyes of their fellow citizens by exemplary standards of courage, professionalism and service. You have cheered enough for men wearing khaki on celluloid. We want to earn your applause this time. This lockdown is only the beginning of a long struggle. There will be many unknown challenges that will surely follow.

Despite our best efforts to protect our men and women in uniform from getting infected by the virus, it would be foolish to expect that none of us will fall ill doing our duty, or even worse. We will do all we can for those unfortunate colleagues, even as we will soldier on. This epidemic is an hour of collective reckoning and we can only survive it by coming together. Even if some of us fall by the wayside, we will not let you down.

The writer is a serving IPS officer. Views are personal



BINA AGARWAL

PLOTTING THE WAY BACK

There is need for a calibrated approach to end the lockdown, testing will be key

WE KNOW THAT in the coming months, this pandemic will hit an already ailing economy even harder and devastate the poor, the unemployed and the hungry. It will take a heavy toll on lives and livelihoods. But in the immediate short term, we need ways of maintaining essential production and other services, such as food supply chains (from harvesting standing rabi crops to transporting these to markets, to households and to the hungry and homeless); production supply chains for protective gear, ventilators, masks, medicines; delivery services; government employees maintaining public utilities, and so on.

We are trying to break the COVID-19 transmission chains with a total lockdown but in the process, we are also breaking essential service supply chains. We are creating an ocean of joblessness. Is there a way out? I believe so, through strategic easing of the lockdown. How?

Scientists say that 80 per cent of the infected population will recover without hospitalisation. This includes both those who have symptoms and the asymptomatic. All of them will develop immunity — we don't know for how long, but at least in the immediate future. And there is an antibody test (serological test) which is easy to administer and can tell us within minutes whether someone has already recovered from COVID-19. It only needs a blood sample, where the blood goes into a cartridge alongside chemicals called buffers, and produces a reading. India has hundreds of technicians who are

already trained to take blood samples in labs, hospitals and from homes (unlike nasal swab tests which require training). But we do lack enough testing kits for largescale serological testing.

So here is what I suggest we do. We should identify workers in each essential service and production supply chains and test them for antibodies, each state conducting its own. (Even among essential services we need a priority list, given the scarcity of kits.) The workers who have antibodies, and hence immunity, can go back to work. This will be easiest in factory-based production units, such as those manufacturing and delivering hospital equipment, gear, medicines, etc. since they have identifiable workers who can be reached.

Food supply chains are more of a challenge, especially for harvesting the current rabi crop. But large numbers of migrants that are at present under quarantine on the borders of states, and are being tested anyway. Instead of keeping everyone on a 14-day quarantine, those who pass the antibodies test can be identified straightaway and offered work for harvesting, loading, or other jobs in their own state, or elsewhere if they wish. Those harvesting foodgrains, vegetables or fruit can be paid in kind, if they wish, so that they have food. Transporting the produce to markets will still be difficult. Here the government needs to mobilise the trucks currently lying idle for farm-gate pickup.

In addition, strategic testing can better protect our health carers, doctors and

nurses, if those with immunity undertake the more risky end of care. As our antibody test kits increase we can broaden the parameters of testing. Basically by such strategic testing we can gradually begin to open up production units and facilitate re-employment in both the formal and the informal sector workers.

Apart from this, I suggest we convert large spaces like stadiums and conventional halls into temporary hospitals and quarantine spaces. Stadiums have multiple showers, bathrooms, and enough space for large numbers, setting up testing units, and for medical staff, food preparation, etc. At present, in Delhi, we are scattering people across guest houses, schools, etc. That is fine, but it would be more efficient and save on personnel and resources if we concentrated efforts in larger spaces. Also while creating railway make-shift hospitals is an excellent idea, we should also use these mobile hospital units to take patients from remote areas with few medical facilities to areas with facilities.

The complete lockdown, while needed as a first step, is also causing huge hardships to people, especially those without jobs and food, due to lack of warning and very little planning. But lifting the lockdown fully and suddenly will lead to new outbreaks. I would suggest we go for strategic easing of the lockdown in a calibrated way.

The writer is Professor of Development Economics and Environment, University of Manchester, UK



APRIL 3, 1980, FORTY YEARS AGO

NARAIN SPEAKS

RAJ NARAIN SAID in Delhi that he was confident that socialists left behind in the Lok Dal would join him, sooner or later. Addressing newsmen on the eve of his requisitioned Janata-S executive meeting, the expelled vice-president of the Lok Dal seemed to suggest that it was the "destiny" of the socialists to follow him, primarily because they could not be happy with Charan Singh. Narain did not name anybody but it was clear that he had in mind Madhu Limaye, George Fernandes and Karpoori Thakur.

ASSAM 1967 CUT-OFF
THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE of the All-

Assam Students Union (AASU) is expected to meet in Gauhati to review the outcome of the talks between the governor, L P Singh, and a four-member AASU delegation at Shillong yesterday. A Raj Bhawan release issued in Gauhati said the governor had indicated to the representatives of the AASU that he would be willing to recommend to the Centre "on his own" that 1967 should be treated as the base year for detection and for deletion of names from electoral rolls, 1971 being the acknowledged year for deportation purposes. But the AASU representatives had indicated that though they would place the proposal before their executive, it would be difficult to get them to accept 1957 now

that they had "persuaded their colleagues with great difficulty to accept 1961".

LEFT PROTESTS ARRESTS
THE LEADERS OF the CPM and the CPI have voiced vehement protest against the arrest of communists in Jammu and Kashmir. The CPM politburo alleged that the arrests had been made on the basis of reports concocted by the Jamaat-e-Islami which had "infiltrated" into the J&K administration and established "strong links" with the National Conference. The politburo thought that the charge that the arrested persons had been planning violence on the first anniversary of the hanging of Z A Bhutto will not deceive anyone.

7 THE IDEAS PAGE

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Excessive cultural confidence has hindered the US and European countries from giving due attention to the experience of their Asian counterparts."
— GLOBAL TIMES, CHINA

Opportunity in the crisis

Coronavirus pandemic offers a trigger to fundamentally strengthen the Indian economy, and protect the vulnerable. This requires cooperation between the Centre and states



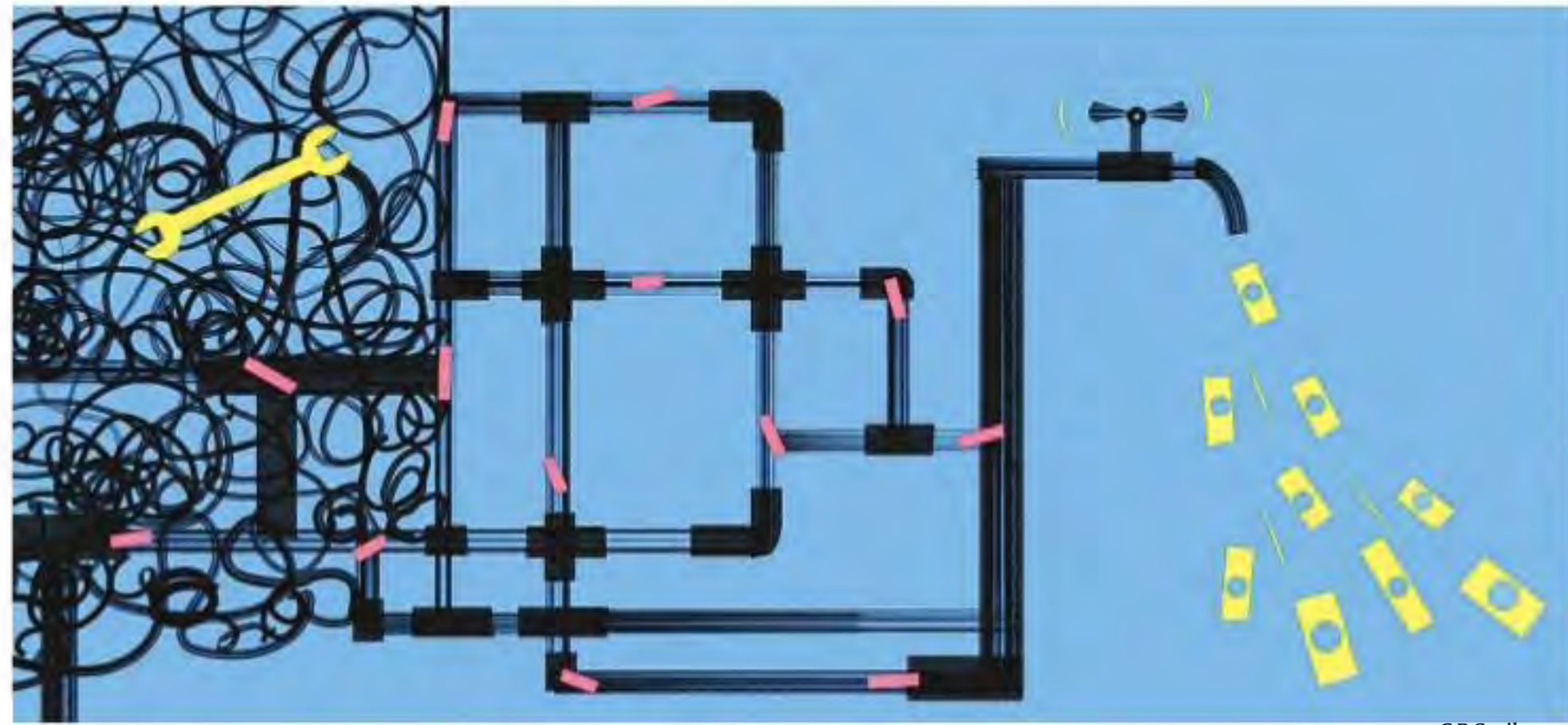
DEVESH KAPUR AND ARVIND SUBRAMANIAN

THE CURRENT CRISIS is so terrible in its toll of life and livelihoods that the need of the hour must be minimising the health, humanitarian and economic costs, especially for the most vulnerable. Rising public expenditures to help tens of millions of workers and their families alongside plummeting resources will inevitably force hard choices. Appropriately, much of the policy discussion and the government's first response have focussed on addressing the immediate imperatives. But this crisis is also an opportunity to do things that are not only good for now but for the medium term as well. We discuss a few.

Revamp macro-fiscal framework: If the pandemic follows the exponential trajectory seen in other countries, the crisis is going to entail massive fiscal expenditures, perhaps up to 4-5 per cent of GDP, much more than what the government has announced. Consequently, the basic macro-fiscal framework — for example, the Centre's FRBM target of 3.5 per cent of GDP, and the revenue and deficit estimates for 2020-21 — has been fundamentally overtaken by events. The Centre should immediately announce that even the states will be allowed to exceed their fiscal responsibility legislation targets because they will be in the front line of taking action against the pandemic. The crisis is an opportunity to revisit the entire framework. The focus on unattainable targets, the fact that the FRBM has been honoured only in the breach, and the consequences in terms of loss in budgetary integrity and transparency need serious review, even overhaul. Once the crisis ebbs, India might be looking at overall deficits well in excess of 10 per cent and debt levels much greater than those today. If the starting point is going to be so different, do the old goals and targets retain meaning?

Remake finance: Going into the crisis, India's corporate and financial sector were under severe stress — the so-called Four Balance Sheet problem. This crisis will unfortunately add consumers and small and medium enterprises to that list. This will be an extremely hard — but critical — problem to address. To allow banks to revert to normalcy, a largescale takeover of their bad loans will be unavoidable not least because the current bankruptcy process will be severely inadequate. In addition, this crisis opens the door for the new lending model proposed by Nandan Nilekani — technology-driven lending that uses data rather than collateral, allowing the 10 million-odd businesses with deep digital footprints (for example, based on GST invoices), to get loans from the thriving ecosystem of new financial players.

Complete JAM: One of the major achievements of this government was to create the plumbing — Jan Dhan, Aadhaar, and Mobile (JAM) — to augment weak state capacity. The state could now make cash transfers swiftly, with reduced leakages, whether as income support, scholarships or pensions, and potentially eventually implementing a Universal Basic Income. In the current crisis, it is proving to be an important part of the social safety net that is helping to cushion the most adversely affected groups. But the JAM plumbing is still incomplete because there is a "last mile problem". Not all those with bank accounts



CR Sasikumar

can access money either because of difficult geography or because bank functionaries give incomplete or misleading information. This crisis is an opportunity not just to leverage JAM to enhance cash transfers, but to empower citizens. This will require the government to identify remaining weaknesses on a war footing and fix them.

Re-shape Indian agriculture: The need to preserve supply chains in agriculture in times of crisis reinforces the need to create one market for agriculture across India. This requires eliminating legislation like the Essential Commodities Act and the panoply of resulting restrictions. Second, the crisis has shown the possibilities created by JAM and direct transfers. Building on PM-Kisan and various state level schemes, pernicious subsidies, especially for fertilisers and power, could be phased out over 5-6 crop cycles. This could be done through small but frequent increases in fertiliser prices (the technique used to eliminate fuel subsidies). Advance communication to farmers along with compensating cash transfers can help build trust and confidence.

Make in India: A macabre joke referring to the origins of the coronavirus was that everything, even death, was Made in China. But the critical source for almost all the essential Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (API) used to manufacture drugs, the ability also to fight death, is largely made in China. India was once a major producer of such APIs but lost ground to China. The crisis should be the opportunity to go on war footing to do intelligent industrial policy — incentives, regulatory help, trade policy — that would resurrect India's manufacturing capability. Previous Make in India attempts have shown lackadaisical results. The crisis creates the momentum to focus the effort on one sector, pharmaceuticals. As a result, the ability to save lives could be Made in India, again.

Establish migrants as full citizens: The crisis has highlighted the travails of migrant labour and their second-class status. It reflects a broader chasm between the few securely employed in the organised sector and the vast majority subject to the vicissitudes of the unorganised sector. Differences not just in the levels of income but in their volatility as well as differential access to social insurance (healthcare, pensions) distinguish these two classes.

The plight of migrant workers reinforces the need to move from immobile place-based benefits to mobile person-based benefits, which is possible as the JAM infrastructure is strengthened. This will require portability of benefits, including access to the PDS, Ujjwala and Ayushman Bharat.

Upgrade Health: State capacity over 70

The severe downturn in economic activity ahead will savagely hit the informal poor. But it will also reveal how much they are central to the comfortable lives of the salaried classes and wealthy. If there was ever a time for the latter to demonstrate their solidarity with those providing the essential services that they so depend on, from maids to drivers, from farmers to construction workers, it is now.

years in India has been weakest in the areas of education and health. The COVID-19 pandemic must lead to a serious strengthening of the health infrastructure for dealing with pandemics. To start with, India needs an apex institution like the US' Centers for Disease Control with a network across all the states. They should invest in disease surveillance systems, set up diagnostics labs, be able to gather real-time data and analyse them etc. The Taiwan model, which has been so successful in this pandemic, could be studied. More fundamentally, the crisis is a wake-up call to address India's severe limitations in the provision of basic health. Creating tertiary health facilities must be subservient to strengthening basic public health and early childhood care.

Build National Solidarity Fund: The severe downturn in economic activity ahead will savagely hit the informal poor. But it will also reveal how much they are central to the comfortable lives of the salaried classes and wealthy. If there was ever a time for the latter to demonstrate their solidarity with those providing the essential services they so depend on — from maids to drivers and farmers to construction workers — it is now.

The government should consider a Solidarity Fund with a one-time annual contribution coming from the wealthy and the employees in the organised sector. This contribution can take the form of taxes or elimination of middle-class subsidies identified in the *Economic Survey* of 2016. The wealthy could contribute via a wealth tax with thresholds set by property values say above Rs 5 crore. Salaried employees in the public and private sectors could contribute via a small, progressive tax on salaries and pensions. Middle class subsidies that could be eliminated include interest and tax deductions for small savers, favourable taxation of gold and other luxuries. Wealth taxes and elimination of subsidies for the rich should in any event be part of the long run reform agenda to reduce growing inequality.

These examples illustrate how crisis can be converted to opportunity to fundamentally strengthen the Indian economy, and protect the vulnerable. A common thread to many of these actions — indeed prerequisites for their success — is cooperation between the Centre and states. Central direction combined with flexibility and nimbleness in the states and local bodies is India's way through the crisis and beyond.

Kapur is professor, Johns Hopkins University and Subramanian is former chief economic adviser to government of India

Carte blanche and a blind eye

SC order on migrant labour is premised on unchallenged claims of the government, it curtails press freedom



DUSHYANT DAVE

ON MARCH 31, the Supreme Court of India (SC), entertaining a writ petition under Article 32, passed an order which raises more questions than it seeks to answer. The writ petition was purportedly filed in the public interest, "for redressal of grievances of migrant workers in different parts of the country". However, the Court has proceeded to issue several directions which are clearly in favour of the respondent, the Union of India. Amongst others, the following three directions were uncalled for:

One, that under section 54 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005, persons can be punished with imprisonment, which may extend to one year, or with a fine for making or circulating a false alarm or warning. Disobedience of the order including an advisory by a public servant would result in punishment under section 188 of the IPC. Two, all concerned, that is the state government, public authorities and citizens, will faithfully comply with directives, advisory and orders issued by the Union of India in letter and spirit in the interest of public safety. Three, the media should only refer to and publish the official version of the Government of India, publishing a daily bulletin.

After giving substantial reliefs to the Union of India, the SC proceeded to make mere observations about migrant labourers by directing that they should be dealt with "in a humane manner" and that "trained counsellors, community leaders and volunteers must be engaged along with the police to supervise the welfare activities of migrants". The SC has virtually absolved the government of its handling of the situation.

The basis of the directions is a statement made by the Solicitor General of India and some status reports to the effect that "the exodus of migrant labourers was triggered due to panic created by some fake/misleading news and social media". The SC has proceeded on assumptions and surmises which were untested and unchallenged. In a matter of such seriousness, the least it should have done was to have appointed an amicus curiae (a friend of the court) to assist it rather than simply accept the self-serving status reports and statements made before it.

The Court overlooked the fact that in India, hundreds of millions of people work during the day and are paid at the end of the day and then go and buy their foodstuffs. They have no savings, nor do they have foodgrains stored. It is surprising that the Court, the custodian of fundamental rights, should be oblivious to this reality. Even workers in the manufacturing or service sectors do not have sufficient means to survive beyond a short period.

The Court should have been mindful that the government should have taken effective measures to prevent this human tragedy since January when China had reported the epidemic. Those in power

should have known the peculiar nature of Indian society and the precarious life of its citizens. Even by March 11, when the WHO had declared a pandemic, the Indian government did not stir into action.

When the prime minister called for a janata curfew on March 20, government officials did not take precautionary measures. If the government had directed by then that all the employers should pay advance salaries for March and April and all landlords were prohibited to collect rent for two months and all ration shops were kept open for those below the poverty line, the crisis could have been mitigated. Even as a layman, I could have foreseen the suffering of the people and thought of a few steps to ameliorate it. So, why could the experts in the government not do so? They have a constitutional responsibility to look after the people. The Court should have challenged the Union of India on all these grounds. Instead, it has allowed the Union of India to get away under the premise of "fake news and social media".

Citizens have the right to freedom of speech and expression. Press freedom is a part of this. Citizens have the right to receive information as well. Article 13 (2) of the Constitution says that the state cannot make any law which takes away or abridges the fundamental rights. If Parliament cannot do so, the Supreme Court — the upholder of the constitutional rights — surely cannot do so.

The SC has itself held in *M Nagraj* (2006): "A right becomes a fundamental right because it has foundational value. Fundamental right is a limitation on the power of the State. A Constitution, and in particular that part of it which protects and which entrenches fundamental rights and freedoms to which all persons in the State are to be entitled, is to be given a generous and purposive construction."

One wonders why despite disowning the majority judgment in the infamous *ADM Jabalpur*, the Court has not been mindful of Justice H R Khanna's powerful dissent. He said: "The greatest danger to liberty lies in insidious encroachment by men of zeal, well-meaning but lacking in due deference for the rule of law... Extraordinary powers are always assumed by the government in all countries in times of emergency because of the extraordinary nature of emergency. More is at stake in these cases than the liberty of a few individuals or the correct construction of wording of an order. What is at stake is the Rule of Law."

The SC has given a carte blanche to the authorities, and citizens appear to have no avenues of redress. Most of all, by condemning the media and social media, holding them responsible for fake news, the SC has done a great disservice to the institution which provides information to citizens and upholds democracy.

The SC should not have made all media subservient to the government by directing that the former "refer to and publish the official version about the developments". Such an order could be justified only during an emergency and that too by the executive, subject to challenge before the courts.

The writer, a senior advocate, is currently president of the Supreme Court bar association. Views are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LEAN ON FACTS

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Facts fight fear' (IE, April 2). Fake news and rumours are spreading during the corona crisis. The media, at such times, has a broader role to play than merely to disseminate information. Responsible and unbiased media coverage can go a long way in calming frayed nerves.

Vipul Pandey, Nainital.

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Facts fight fear' (IE, April 2). In the war against COVID-19, truth and information are the greatest weapons. The Supreme Court directed the government to verify facts through its own machinery. We must make sure that the pandemic does not become an "infodemic".

Tapomoy Ghosh, Katwa

MANAGE CRISIS

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Spend wisely' (IE, April 2). Like the rest of the world, the Indian economy is suffering due to the coronavirus. Those suffering the damage today could also face a precarious existence for years to come, because of the long-term consequences of the pandemic. Moreover, the crisis has exposed the global health system. India, now, must focus on the well-being of its citizens and reviving its economy rather than waiting for globalisation to revive and rescue it. The government must curb non-essential

LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

To encourage quality reader intervention, The Indian Express offers the Letter of the Week award. The letter adjudged the best for the week is published every Saturday. Letters may be e-mailed to editpage@expressindia.com or sent to The Indian Express, B-1/B, Sector 10, Noida-UP 201301.

spending and wasteful expenditure. It needs to focus on supply chains.

Ravi Jain, Zirakpur

TECH AND VIRUS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'How to make lockdown succeed' (IE, April 1). It's wise to track and enforce quarantines using GPS tracking. South Korea has contained the spread through the timely leveraging of the technology. On the same lines, Karnataka has developed the Corona Watch app. R&D teams from other states should also find technological solutions on an urgent basis.

Dimpy Bhatia, New Delhi

Pandemic and the community

Organisers of Tablighi Jamaat have hurt the fight against the coronavirus



FIROZ BAKHT AHMED

LAST WEEK, I was asked by Prasar Bharati to send a one-minute clip asking my co-religionists to desist from congregational prayers, since these were still being held in many villages and smaller towns. I duly obliged. This is in the context of the Nizamuddin Tablighi Jamaat gathering at Banglaveli masjid — which can accommodate up to 12,000 devotees — that is feared to have infected many across several states. This is deeply disappointing.

The organisation, established by Maulana Ilyas of Mewat in 1926 for "puritanical" Islam, is under the scanner for something that is un-Islamic. Islam is a religion of caring and for sharing the blessings of Allah, not spreading disease. It is an irresponsible act on the part of the Tablighi Jamaat's authorities. A social media clip, allegedly of Maulana Saad, who hosted the Jamaat, claimed that the government has tried to lock mosques and was trying to divide the community by not letting Muslims sit together to pray. Now, a community that is constantly under the scanner could be further sidelined and socially distanced by their non-Muslim brethren. The Maulana, meanwhile, is reportedly absconding.

What is more shocking is that this has come after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address to the nation. He, like a concerned member of a family, requested everyone with folded hands to stay at home and maintain social distance to break this deadly COVID-19 chain of transmission.

The spate of infections of coronavirus also highlights how the Muslim community has been woefully misled by their so-called representatives.

More often than not, community leaders are interested in feathering their own nests while the poor are pushed towards ignorance because of the obscurantist attitude of their "netas" who think they are accountable to no one. In this case, the residents of Zakir Nagar West area were sensible enough to complain to the police about the residents in this mosque from Nizamuddin Markaz.

Despite three major imams of India — Imam Syed Ahmed Bukhari, Imam Mufti Mukarram Ahmed and Imam Umer Ahmed Ilyasi — and a decree from the Darul Uloom Deoband, and many other mosques announcing that congregations may cause the spread of COVID-19, several gatherings continued. The argument was, our sahabas had

prayed in the mosques even under the threat of the enemy's swords. Why are they getting scared of this petty enemy, coronavirus?

These people don't remember that Allah has also said that "He helps those who help themselves".

The Muslim community, not only in India but across the world, must know that the Prophet (peace be upon him) instructed the community to stay at home in case of emergencies such as this. In the case of epidemics and pandemics, the Prophet (PBUH) clearly stated that nobody should either go to somebody else's house or invite anyone.

One day, when it was raining heavily, and it was the time of azaan, the Prophet (PBUH) had said, as-salatu-fi-buyutikum (pray in your homes). Not only this, once when a deadly and contagious disease broke out among the camels, he instructed that the healthy camels should not be allowed to mix with the affected ones.

But there is always a backlash against such an opinion. Through social media, when I urged people to maintain social distancing and pray at home, I was targeted with abuse. PM Modi has rightly said: Jaan hai, to jahan

hai!" Only when we survive, will we be able to do anything else in the world.

I faced brickbats for pointing this out in a time of crisis, by those who have perhaps missed the point that PM Modi was not delivering this lifesaving dose only for the BJP, RSS or non-Muslims, but for all. He was hoping that the lockdown may break the COVID-19 chain of transmission and, in the process, save millions of lives.

The tragedy of the already beleaguered Indian Muslim community has been the way they have been taken for a ride — treated as a vote-bank by their leaders, the Congress and the so-called secular parties. This has resulted in the state of affairs they find themselves in today. They are far from the mainstream, with the begging bowl of the Sachar Committee and some other commissions that have proved futile in addressing their social, economic and educational needs.

It is time for us, Muslims, to cooperate with the government to fight the deadly coronavirus and follow Islam in letter and spirit.

The writer is chancellor, Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad

DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



GAMES SUPPORTERS PLAY?

THE FINAL minutes of Thursday's Congress Working Committee meeting saw an interesting turn. Out of nowhere, members such as K C Venugopal, Rajiv Satav and Randeep Surjewala urged Rahul Gandhi to hold a meeting with state Congress presidents and Congress legislature party leaders to discuss the situation in states on account of the coronavirus pandemic. Rahul, who holds no party post, said he has no jurisdiction to hold such a meeting, but Congress chief Sonia Gandhi then asked him to heed their request. Many CWC members surmised that the call by the three known Rahul camp followers was an orchestrated attempt as part of the larger efforts to make Rahul return to the helm.

RAMAYAN RULES TV

PRASAR BHARATI'S experiment of bringing back old shows to keep people entertained during the lockdown has turned out to be a hit, data suggests. Provisional data of BARC, which gauges TV viewership in India, shows that a week since Ramayan's re-telecast began on Doordarshan it has become the top-ranked show in its slot. In fact, it has got the highest TRP for a general entertainment show since 2015. But on Friday even this hugely popular mythological show will get a late start, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi is slated to release a short video message at 9 am. Ramayan will be telecast after that.

MASK SHORTAGE

STARING AT a massive shortage of face masks, the office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) to the Government on Thursday issued an advisory for "homemade face masks". The PSA's office issued a manual on handmade masks — "Masks for curbing the spread of SARS-CoV-2 Coronavirus" — with tips on how to make one by hand or using a sewing machine, what kind of cloth to use, and how to keep masks sanitised at home. The advisory also quotes a report by Pub Med, which has said that wearing masks can substantially reduce the risk of contracting the virus.

Fearing coronavirus, UP clerk kills self, say police

AMIT SHARMA MEERUT, APRIL 2
A 45-YEAR-OLD clerk at the local panchayat office at Nakud in Uttar Pradesh's Saharanpur committed suicide, allegedly over fears of the coronavirus. Adesh Saini hanged himself at the Cane Development Council office at Sherkot late Wednesday night. "We have recovered a suicide note in which he has stated in his handwriting that he is fright-

ened by the coronavirus and hence has decided to take the extreme step. He has also written in the suicide note that all his life's savings should be given to his wife," said Sushil Saini, the in-charge of Nakud police station. The officer said though the report at the police station has been lodged as that of suicide, the possibility that he was murdered cannot be ruled out. "We are probing the case while the body has been handed over to his family members," said the officer.

MHA tells state govts to penalise violators of lockdown measures

Home Secy letter follows reports of health workers being assaulted, chased away

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
NEW DELHI, APRIL 2

WITH REPORTS emerging about health workers being beaten up or chased away in various parts of the country while checking on coronavirus-infected patients, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Thursday wrote to all states to penalise people who violate COVID-19 containment measures under the Indian Penal Code and the Disaster Management Act.

In a letter to chief secretaries of all states, Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla stated that these penal provisions must be widely publicised. Bhalla had last reminded the states of these provisions on March 31 while asking them to strictly enforce lockdown measures in "letter and spirit".

Bhalla wrote that in the lockdown measures issued through the MHA order on March 24, "it is clearly mentioned that 'any person violating these containment measures will be liable to be proceeded against as per the provisions of Section 51 to 60 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005, besides legal action under Sec. 188 of the IPC.... It is requested that for attention of the public authorities and citizens, penal provisions under the DM Act and IPC should be widely circulated and for violation of lockdown measures, action under relevant provisions of DM Act and IPC shall be taken by the law enforcement authorities."

Bhalla also cited the Supreme Court's observations on the issue: "While referring to the provisions of Disaster Management Act, 2005, and Indian Penal Code,

the Hon'ble Supreme Court observed, 'we trust and expect that all concerned viz. State Governments, Public Authorities and citizens of this country will faithfully comply with the directives, advisories and orders issued by Union of India in letter and spirit in the interest of public safety.'"

The letter had with it relevant provisions of the laws concerned attached.

In another letter, Bhalla asked the states to strictly enforce social distancing while disbursing money to beneficiaries under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana.

He wrote: "As you are aware, under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PM-GKY) package, disbursement of money to large number of beneficiaries will take place from tomorrow.

In this regard, the Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance, has given detailed guidelines such as staggering of account holders to avoid crowding and maintaining social distancing; publicising the modalities of staggering and cash distribution; and provision of adequate security personnel at bank branches and business correspondents to maintain law and order and social distancing."

The letter stated that the departments concerned of the state governments or UT administrations, district authorities and field agencies should be informed on these.

"They shall take all necessary measures to ensure smooth disbursement of money to the beneficiaries of PM-GKY. An action taken report may please be sent to the Ministry," the letter stated.

Bengal: Nine cops injured in attacks during lockdown enforcement

ENS & PTI
KOLKATA, APRIL 2

AT LEAST nine policemen were injured in two separate attacks while they were trying to enforce the nationwide lockdown in two West Bengal districts, state police said on Thursday.

Quick response teams in South 24 Parganas and West Midnapore were allegedly pelted with stones when they stopped people from gathering, they added. At Bhargore area of South 24 Parganas Wednesday night, a patrolling team came under attack when it stopped youths from gathering, a police officer said.

"The youngsters pushed the police personnel and hurled stones at them when they were asked to go home. A sub-inspector and four constables were injured in the clash. A police vehicle was also damaged. We have arrested five people," he added.

In another incident, a police team was attacked, resulting in injuries to two assistant sub-inspectors and two constables, in Goaltore, West Midnapore district, when they asked a group of people not to gather at a tea stall.

"We are trying to trace those behind the attack. The injured police personnel are being treated at a hospital," a district police official said.

Ex-village head, sons held after assaulting personnel on lockdown duty: UP Police

AMIL BHATNAGAR
NOIDA, APRIL 2

AFTER A police sub-inspector and two constables were injured when they were allegedly cornered and beaten by a former pradhan and his family members in Morna village of Muzaffarnagar in UP, five people, including former village head Nahar Singh, have been arrested.

While Singh and his sons have been arrested, four others are absconding, the police said.

INDORE UNDER LENS WITH 75 CASES

Fake videos behind attack on health team, 4 booked under NSA

MILIND GHATWAI
BHOPAL, APRIL 2

WITH MORE than 75 COVID-19 cases reported in the city between March 24 and April 2, Indore in Madhya Pradesh has become the latest cause of worry for authorities.

Most people who have tested positive so far live in small houses in congested localities and authorities are figuring out the source of infection because nobody in the areas had travelled abroad.

The only international flight taking off from Madhya Pradesh flies between Indore and Dubai.

The alleged assault took place Wednesday evening when Morna chowki in-charge Lekhraj Singh and two constables were in the village to make announcements, asking people to stay home during the lockdown. Police found Singh and his family roaming around, and they allegedly refused to cooperate when the team asked them to return.

Ram Mohan Sharma, Circle Officer, Bhopal, said: "Prima facie it appears members of Nahar Singh's family would often gather outside and violate lockdown orders. The police officials tried to reason with them that it is in their best interest but they did not pay heed. The argument escalated and soon 10-12 people gathered and began assaulting the policemen..."

The accused escaped after reinforcements arrived, and nine people have been named in the FIR, CO Sharma said. The S-I sustained a head injury and was referred to Meerut Medical College; the constables had bruises. The S-I's condition is stable, a senior officer said.

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PM, Merkel discuss collaboration, raise issue of medical gap

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, APRIL 2

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi and German Chancellor Angela Merkel Thursday discussed the importance of international collaboration in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, especially on medical equipment.

"They shared views on the inadequate availability of medicines and medical equipment, and agreed to explore avenues of cooperation," an official statement from the Ministry of External Affairs said.

The Chancellor "agreed with the Prime Minister that the COVID-19 pandemic is an important turning point in modern history, and offers an opportunity to forge a new vision of globalisation focused on the shared interests of humanity as a whole", the statement said.

Modi informed Merkel about the recent Indian initiatives to disseminate simple yoga exercises and immunity-enhancing Ayurvedic remedies. Merkel "agreed that such practices could be very beneficial for enhancing psychological and physical health, especially under lockdown conditions", the statement said.

The Prime Minister also spoke to Prince Charles, and "expressed satisfaction that the Prince had recovered from his own recent indisposition", while expressing regret over the loss of lives in the UK to coronavirus. The Prince has just recovered from COVID-19.

Charles, the Prince of Wales, expressed his appreciation for the members of the Indian dias-

Ayush minister: Prince Charles cured by Ayurveda

Panaji: Union AYUSH Minister Shripad Yesso Naik on Thursday told a press briefing that the UK's Prince Charles had been "cured" of coronavirus with the help of Ayurveda. Naik said, "I received a phone call from Dr Isaac Mathai, who runs the Soukya ayurveda resort in Bengaluru. He tells me that his treatment of Prince Charles through Ayurveda and Homeopathy has been successful. This is just one example of how the system can work," Naik said. The minister added that he has now asked the central government to give the ministry an opportunity to treat coronavirus patients with alternate medicines. **ENS**

pora in the UK as well as organisations of the Indian community who are helping combat the pandemic. The PM also raised India's yoga and Ayurveda initiatives with the Prince.

Modi's conversations with Merkel and Charles follow his phone conversations with French President Emmanuel Macron, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, among others. Modi was part of the video-conference held by G-20 leaders on the matter, and initiated a SAARC leaders' virtual summit.

Need for green clearance way to achieve sustainable development, says SC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 2

THE NEED for environment clearance for a project must be seen as a measure to achieve sustainable development, the Supreme Court has said. The court ruled that the "concept of an ex-post facto EC (environmental clearance) is in derogation of the fundamental principles of environmental jurisprudence," "detrimental to the environment, and could lead to irreparable degradation".

The reason why a retrospective EC or an ex-post facto clearance is alien to environmental jurisprudence is that before the issuance of an EC, the statutory notification warrants a careful application of mind, besides a study into the likely consequences of a proposed activity on the environment, the bench held.

An EC can be issued only after various stages of the decision-making process have been

completed. The court was hearing an appeal against the January 8, 2016, decision of the National Green Tribunal bench for the western zone, which held a May 14, 2002 circular issued by the Union Environment and Forests Ministry as contrary to law. The circular envisaged the grant of ex post facto environmental clearance.

The bench of Justices D Y Chandrachud and Ajay Rastogi ordered: "Requirements such as conducting a public hearing, screening, scoping and appraisal are components of the decision-making process which ensure that the likely impacts of industrial activity or the expansion of an existing industrial activity are considered in the decision-making calculus. Allowing for an ex post facto clearance would essentially condone the operation of industrial activities without the grant of an EC. In the absence of an EC, there would be no conditions that would safeguard the environment..."

WESTERN RAILWAY - AHMEDABAD DIVISION
VARIOUS ENGINEERING WORKS
e-Tender Notice No. 31 of 2019-20 dated : 31.03.2020

Sr. No.	e-Tender No.	Name of work	Approximate NIT Cost (₹)	EMD Cost (₹)
01	DRM-ADI-155-2019-20	Gandhidham (GE Diesel Shed) - Provision of rail connectivity with low wall and pitching and storm water drainage work at	1,34,15,223.13	2,17,100.00
02	DRM-ADI-156-2019-20	Gandhidham - New Bhuj & Gandhidham - Kandlaport - Through Ballast Recoupmnt (TBR)- 31.709 Km (Main Lines) & 11.919 Km. (Loop lines) and other associate works.	3,12,60,628.61	3,06,300.00
03	DRM-ADI-157-2019-20	Samakhiali-Gandhidham & Gandhidham - Kandlaport Section- Complete track renewal (P & S)-1 km and Through Rail Renewal(S) in various loop lines in yards.	87,97,217.38	1,76,000.00
04	DRM-ADI-158-2019-20	Rag picking and clearing of tracks on approaches to stations under SSE (P Way) BG- sabarmali jurisdiction	1,09,84,510.5	2,04,900.00
05	DRM-ADI-159-2019-20	Deep screening of loop lines and Point and Crossing in Yards and associated work in jurisdiction of Sr.DEN/SOUTH/ADI.	68,11,227.48	1,38,200.00
06	DRM-ADI-160-2019-20	Ahmedabad Division-Conversion of SWRF/ree rails into LWR by using flash butt welds with Mobile Flash Butt plant.	7,00,35,281.87	5,00,200.00

Closing and opening date and time of e-tender: 05-05-2020 at 15:00 Hrs. and 05-05-2020 at 15:30 Hrs. Address of the Office: Sr. Divisional Engineering (Co-ordination)- Ahmedabad, DRM Office, Opp. New Swadeshi Mill, Naroda Road, Amdipur, Ahmedabad-382345. Website for participating e-tender: www.irps.gov.in

VISVESVARAYA JALA NIGAMA LIMITED
(A Government of Karnataka Enterprise)
Office of the Executive Engineer, Visvesvaraya Jala Nigam Limited, Upper Bhadra Project Division No.9, Sira - 572137 Ph: 08135-276101 Email: Id-ubpee09@gmail.com No. EE/VJNL/UBP/Div-9/Sira/Tank filling/Corri/2019-20/707 Date: 01.04.2020

CORRIGENDUM -3 (Through e-Procurement only)
Reference: This Office Tender notification No. EE/VJNL/UBP/Div-9/Sira/Tank/tender-noti/ 11 /2019-20 Dt : 19-02-2020. Addendum-1,2,3 & 4 and Following corrections are made in the Calendar of Events of tender notification are published in e-portal.
(1) As appeared in the tender notification Dated: 19-02-2020 Calendar of Events Sl. No. (D) The last date for submission of completed tender documents (Cover-1 & cover-2) through e-portal. Date: 30.03.2020 To be read as Date: 20-04-2020 (E) Date & time of opening of Technical Bid (Cover -1) by Executive Engineer, V.J.N.L., UBP, Division No.9, Sira, Date: 01.04.2020 after 4.30 pm To be read as Date: 22.04.2020 after 4.30 pm
Sd/- Executive Engineer,VJNL,UBP, Division No.9 Sira

DEENDAYAL PORT TRUST
Request for Qualification
Tender No. 03/CE
Global Invitation for Qualification for "DEVELOPMENT, MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION OF OIL JETTIES 09 & 10 AT DPT, ON BOT BASIS UNDER PPP MODE", for a concession period of thirty (30) years. Deendayal Port Trust invites Applications from Interested parties (the "Applicants") in accordance with the Request for Qualification (RFQ) Document in order to pre-qualify Applicants who can subsequently bid for the Project as per Request for Proposal. Estimated cost of the Project is INR.123.40 Crores for Oil Jetty 09 and INR.123.12 Crores for Oil Jetty 10. The RFQ Documents of both the OJ 09 & OJ 10 may be obtained from the office of the A.O. (Cash), Deendayal Port Trust at Gandhidham on submission of a demand draft (non-refundable) of INR.20,000/- (Rupees Twenty Thousand only) (Plus INR.200/- for dispatch by courier/speed post) for each RFQ document, for domestic as well as foreign applicants, to be issued by any scheduled bank drawn in favour of Financial Adviser & Chief Accounts Officer (FA&CAO), Deendayal Port Trust, payable at Gandhidham. The RFQ Documents for Oil Jetties 9 & 10 can be downloaded from website http://www.deendayalport.gov.in The schedule of different activities till Submission of the applications is as under:
1 Sale of RFQ Document 27/03/2020 to 13/05/2020
2 Last date of receiving queries regarding RFQ 20/04/2020
3 Pre-Application Conference 27/04/2020
4 Last date of submission of Applications i.e. Application Due Date 13/05/2020 upto 11:00 Hrs.
FAX: +91-2836-220050
Tele: +91-2836-233192
Chief Engineer
Deendayal Port Trust

SALUTE THE SOLDIER
Martyrs of CISF on 03rd April

 CT/GD A P YADAV ONGC TRIPURA 03-04-1996	 LNK D C DEVI ONGC TRIPURA 03-04-1996	 CT/GD EUGIN MINZ BCLL DHANBAD 03-04-1996
 CT/GD H MONDAL BCLL DHANBAD 03-04-1996	 CT/GD ALAM ALI BCLL DHANBAD 03-04-1996	

CISF proudly remembers the supreme sacrifice of these brave hearts. On this day, they laid down their lives at the altar of duty while fighting with militants. Their courage and bravery would remain an abiding source of inspiration for the force. The force will remain eternally indebted to them for their noblest deeds.

ANDHRA PRADESH STATE SEEDS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LTD.
Regd. Office : Door No.4-150, Prasadampadu, Ramavarampadu post, Vijayawada-521108.
TENDER NOTICE
Tenders are invited from reputed Manufacturers / Authorized Suppliers / Dealers for certain works through E-procurement market platform and date of opening of tenders from 3-4-2020 @ 11.00 AM and Last date for Submission of Bids on 16-4-2020 upto 4.00 PM. For further details please visit www.tenders.apseeds.gov.in and for information please contact mail: apseedsengg@gmail.com & Phone No. 6309265455 and website www.apseeds.in. T.N.No.APSSDC/ENGG/SMSRP/KVY/2020-2, Date:27-03-2020
Sd/- VC & MANAGING DIRECTOR

UJVN LIMITED
H.O.: "UJJWAL", Mahanadi Bagh, GMS Road, Dhanradun-248006
Telephones: 0135-2763808, & Fax: 0135-2763508
CIN No. U40191UR2001SGC023066, Website: www.ujvn.com
"e" Procurement Corrigendum/Addendum Notice-1
The "e" Tender invited by Office of the Executive Engineer (Civil), MB-II, Chinyalisaur, Uttarkashi bearing NIT no 17/EE(Civil)/MB-II/Chinyalisaur/2019-20 , 18/EE (Civil)/ MB-II/ Chinyalisaur/2019-20 & 19/EE (Civil)/ MB-II/ Chinyalisaur/2019-20, the date and time of these NIT shall be extended as below -
1. The last date and time of submission of Bid on e-tender portal shall be : 21-04-2020 upto 17:00 hrs.
2. Last date, time and venue for submission of original documents in hard copy: 22-04-2020 upto 11:00 hrs. in the Office of EE(Civil), MB-II, Chinyalisaur, Uttarkashi.
3. Date of opening of bid on website: 22-04-2020 at 15:00 hrs. Other terms & conditions shall remain same. For further details, kindly visit e-procurement Portal "http://uktenders.gov.in"
पत्रांक 192 दिनांक 01.04.2020 E.E (Civil), MB-II, Chinyalisaur
" Avoid wasteful use of Electricity "

PT. B.D. SHARMA PGIMS ROHTAK
DI. 02.04.2020
PUBLIC NOTICE/TENDER NOTICE

Sr.	Name of Dept./Board/Corp.	Name of work/ Notice/Tender	Opening Date/ Closing Date (Time)	Amount/ EMD (approx. in Rs.)	Website of the Dept.	Nodal Officer/Contract Details / email	Tender Ref. No./ Tender No.
1.	PT. B.D. SHARMA PGIMS ROHTAK	SHORT TERM e-TENDER NOTICE NO. UHSR/PURCHASE/ COVID-19/ 2020/0 dt. 02.04.2020 RECALLING / PURCHASE OF MMS/ M/E ETC.FOR USE IN COVID-19 PGIMS/UHS ROHTAK.	OPENING 09.04.2020 at 02.00 PM CLOSING 09.04.2020 UPTO 3.00 PM		a) www.uhsr-ac.in b) www.etenders.hry.nic.in	Professor Ic Purchase Contact No. 9255169924 Email: purchase.secton@gmail.com	PS/2020/7702

NOTE:
1. The e-tender form can be downloaded from link available on the website: www.etenders.hry.nic.in
2. Tender Fees Rs. 2,000/- in the bank account no. 39004947732 Registrar, UHS Rohtak and e-Service Fees Rs. 1,000/- + 18% GST (Non- Refundable) are required. Earnest money (Refundable) for each group @ 2% of the estimated value of the tender subject to a ceiling of maximum 2 lac of tender cost submitted in the bank account no. 39004947732 is also mandatory.
3. Possession of Digital signature certificate (DSC) and Registration of the contractors on portal i.e. http://www.etenders.hry.nic.in is a pre-requisite for e-tendering.
4. It is clarified that no hard copy of the bid documents/registration documents shall be accepted. Only the documents which have been uploaded on e-tender portal shall be considered, if any document is found missing from the uploaded document from the website, it will be the responsibility of bidder.
5. Terms & conditions on each aspect as specified in the Tender Document should only be followed.
6. After the pre-bid meeting, suggestions/representations, if any, received from the participating firms/vendors, be uploaded on Haryana Govt/Website Portal: etenders.hry.nic.in and university website: uhsr.ac.in but only after final comments of the Tendering Department of the Institute.
7. Corrigendum, if any, will not be advertised/published in the newspapers. 805594HRY Professor Ic Purchase

Classifieds
PERSONAL
I Kavneet Singh S/o Sarbjee Singh Hanspal R/o C-156, Lal Quarters, Minto Road Complex, New Delhi-110002 have changed my name to Kavneet Singh Hanspal for all purposes.
0040536662-1



CORONA WATCH



Railway police officers donate blood at a camp in Kolkata. Reuters

CRPF doctor tests positive, 10 quarantined

New Delhi: A doctor posted with the CRPF has tested positive for the coronavirus in Delhi. Senior CRPF officials confirmed that the doctor was staying at the officers' mess, and was attached to ADG (Medical)'s office. A senior CRPF official said, "He is now isolated in AIIMS Jhajjar... He was in Delhi when he tested positive." The official also said that ten others including staff and guests living there, who had also been residing at the officers mess have been quarantined, and contacts are being traced. **ENS**

Odisha gets 500-bed hospital

New Delhi: Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Thursday inaugurated a 500-bed COVID-19 hospital, including a 50-bed critical care unit, managed and run by Kalinga Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS), Bhubaneswar. The state government is financing equipment and operational costs of the hospital through CSR policy of Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC), according to a media release. **ENS**

Reaching students at home, online

New Delhi: In an effort to ensure that students of Narayana Group of Educational Institutions continue to learn at home in safety during the lockdown, Narayana has launched online classes, tests and deep learning apps, nLearn and Narayana Online Test Series through the Internet. With the help of these online learning apps, Narayana is now streaming a daily average of 10,000-plus live online classes across the country in more than 600 branches of Narayana for more than 75,000 students, according to a media release. **ENS**

3 cemeteries denied nod for burial: Kin of Muslim man who was cremated

SANJANA BHALERAO
MUMBAI, APRIL 2

A 65-YEAR-OLD Muslim man, who died a few hours after testing positive for COVID-19 early on Wednesday, was cremated after a 10-hour wait as three cemeteries in Malad, Kandivali and Borivali denied permission for burial. The senior citizen's family members have alleged that they were unable to convince the authorities at any of the cemeteries to give the man a proper Muslim burial as their pleas were rejected due to fear of infection. An hour after the man's cremation, eight of his family members — his wife, son, daughter-in-law, their two kids, his



DISTANCING: Outside a ration shop in Juhapura area of Ahmedabad on Thursday. Javed Raja

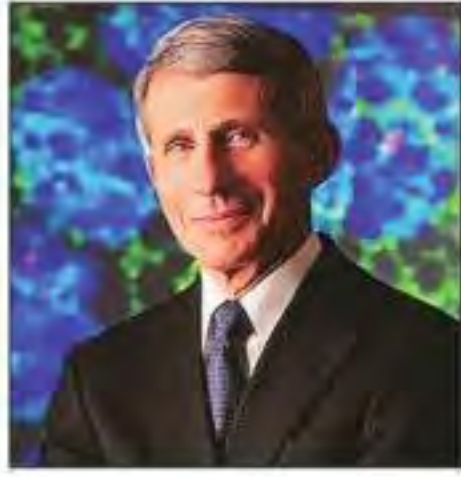
'Disruption in economy by lockdown can be catastrophic'

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, APRIL 2

THE MAN leading the US administration's fight against COVID-19 on Thursday cautioned that there had been "cogent concerns" among public health experts that lockdowns can cause disruption in the economy and society which can be "catastrophic".

India is on a national lockdown for three weeks till April 14, while in the US, 37 states have given orders or directives to stay at home.

Fauci, the director of the US's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases since 1984, has worked with six presidents, and has declined multiple requests to lead his agency's parent organisation, the National Institutes of Health. He has led federal efforts to combat diseases caused by emerging



Anthony Fauci, director of the US's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
Courtesy: NIAID

viruses, including HIV, SARS, the 2009 swine flu pandemic, MERS and Ebola.

He has emerged as the face of the Donald Trump administration's fight against the novel coronavirus pandemic, which has claimed more than 3,900 lives in the US and has infected

more than 1.8 lakh people.

In a conversation with *The New York Times* podcast, Daily, Fauci said, "I had a very interesting conversation just this morning, with colleagues from literally all over the world on weekly telephone conference call that WHO sponsors.

"And it was interesting to me, that some of the most cogent concerns of people from different countries, was that, we need to make sure (that) we keep our eye on the balance of, if you're too stringent in things like lockdowns and keeping people under wraps for a long period of time, you may have the unintended consequences of triggering - from an economic and societal standpoint - such a disruption that to get things like poverty and health issues, unrelated to the coronavirus, and it was really a serious concern," Fauci said.

When asked what are the

worst case scenarios for unintended costs, Fauci said, "Well, so many people need medications, many people are dependent on supply chains for nutrition, for food, that they might starve, that people who have illnesses... if you dramatically interrupt that to the point where it no longer exists, the disruption of society can be really quite catastrophic.

"I mean that's the one of the things you want to avoid and that's one of the pushbacks you have, when you have people who say we really need to lockdown everything and lock it down indefinitely," he said.

Fauci further said, "You might get an extra mile or two out of suppressing the virus, then but you got to make sure that you look at what the ultimate issue, is I've always been one that leans much more heavily, that it's the public health. That's the most important thing."

Started thermal screening for China, Hong Kong passengers on Jan 18: Govt

New Delhi: The government has stated in a status report submitted before the Supreme Court that China announced the presence of COVID-19 on January 7 and India started thermal screening all passengers from China and Hong Kong at three international airports on January 18.

The report was filed on March 31 by Union Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla through a video-conference before the bench of Chief Justice of India S A Bobde and Justice L Nageswara Rao.

"... on January 7, 2020 itself, Union Health Secretary addressed all states Health Secretaries to examine and take necessary actions for adequate hospitals preparedness to meet with any potential emergency... without wasting even a single date after announcement made by China," it said. **ENS**

'MISSIONARY WORK ON TOURIST VISA'

MHA blacklists 960 Tablighi foreigners

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
NEW DELHI, APRIL 2

THE MINISTRY of Home Affairs (MHA) on Thursday blacklisted 960 foreigners associated with the Tablighi Jamaat for violating visa rules even as it has cancelled the tourist visas of all such visitors to India.

"MHA has also directed DGPs of all concerned States/UTs and CP, Delhi Police to take necessary legal action against all such violators, on priority, under relevant sections of the Foreigners Act, 1946 and Disaster Management Act, 2005," a statement from MHA said.

Sources said that the foreigners associated with Tablighi Jamaat came on tourist visas but had been engaging in "missionary and proselytising" activities across the country. "This is a clear violation of visa rules and so their visas have been cancelled. They have also been blacklisted which means they will not get Indian visa henceforth. A visitor to India on a tourist visa can at best attend a religious congregation but the person cannot engage in proselytising activities. For that one would need a missionary visa," a Home Ministry

official said.

Beginning the first week of March, thousands of Tablighi Jamaat activists had gathered at Alami Markaz at Nizamuddin for a religious event that continued for days. More than 2,000 of them were foreigners and after the event, over 800 of them went to various parts of the country and engaged in proselytising activities, the MHA has claimed.

Many of them came from COVID-19-affected countries such as Thailand, China, Malaysia and Indonesia and the infection spread among those staying at the Markaz. As they went across the country and met hundreds of people, the infection spread further, the MHA said. Nizamuddin Markaz has now been notified as a COVID-19 hotspot.

According to the MHA, more than 1,000 Tablighi workers of foreign nationalities were in various parts of India on March 21. Of these, 216 were staying in Nizamuddin Markaz. "Additionally, about 824 foreigners had been, as on March 21, doing Chilla activities in various parts of the country... Details of these 824 foreigners had been shared on March 21 with the State Police for identifying them,

getting them medically screened and quarantining them," an MHA statement had said earlier.

It added that as on March 21, there were about 1,746 people staying in Hazrat Nizamuddin Markaz. According to MHA figures as on March 21, among the Tablighi foreigners who fanned out across the country, most (125) went to Tamil Nadu, followed by Uttar Pradesh (132), Haryana (115), Maharashtra (115) and Telangana (82).

According to a March 28 letter of MHA to all states, about 2,000 foreigners of Tablighi association from 70 countries were in different parts of India on tourist visas. Their visas are valid for six months. Most of these foreigners are from Bangladesh (493), Indonesia (472), Malaysia (150) and Thailand (142).

"Usually, all the foreign nationals visiting India as a part of Tablighi team come on the strength of tourist visa. MHA had already issued guidelines that they should not indulge in missionary work on tourist visa. State Police would be examining categories of visas of all these foreigner TJ workers and take further action in case of violation of visa conditions," an MHA statement said.

170 fresh COVID-19 cases linked to Tabligh event

WITH 170 new COVID-19 cases linked to those who attended the Tablighi Jamaat gathering in Delhi, states are now racing to track contacts and test them.

TAMIL NADU

On Thursday, 74 more people who attended the congregation tested positive, taking the total number of cases to 309. State Health Secretary Beela Rajesh said 264 of these were those who attended the congregation. Around 1,103 people who attended the meet have been tested and some results are yet to come.

ANDHRA PRADESH

The number of positive cases rose from 111 to 143, with 32 new cases linked to the congregation. Swab samples of 1,800 people have been taken — 143 tested positive, 1,321 negative and results of 409 are awaited. "A majority of them attended the Jamaat meeting and a few are their family members or those who came in close contact with them," Health Minister A Krishna Srinivas said. The state government has quarantined 1,085 people who attended the meet.

TELANGANA

The number of positive cases in Telangana went up to 154 with 27 new cases — all linked to people who attended the Tablighi Jamaat meeting in Delhi.

HARYANA

Three of 12 Tablighis found in Huchpuri Masjid on March 31 have tested positive. All 12 are in isolation. The government has put 66 others in isolation. Swab samples of 31 have been sent for

testing. The govt has tracked down at least 510 tablighis who attended the congregation.

UTTAR PRADESH

Seven people, including one Indonesian national, who participated in the meet have tested positive. The state government has put in quarantine 883 people who attended the meet and sent over 400 samples for testing.

NORTH-EAST

A total of 16 people who attended the meet have tested positive in Assam. Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh have reported one positive case each linked to the meet.

RAJASTHAN

The state reported 13 new COVID-19 cases, including 3 people who attended the congregation. The number of positive cases in the state reached 133, 14 of them from Tablighi Jamaat. On Wednesday, police traced 183 people who visited Markaz Nizamuddin. Among them, 11 tested positive for coronavirus.

GUJARAT

Twelve more Tablighi Jamaat members who attended the Markaz gathering in Delhi were tracked down in Gujarat, taking the total to 84. Of them, 83 have been home-quarantined and a 70-year-old COVID-19 positive man from Bhavnagar, who visited Nizamuddin from March 9-March 11, died on March 26.

MAHARASHTRA

The state has started setting up a mass quarantine facility in

Goregaon for contacts of 442 Tablighis traced so far in Mumbai and surrounding areas. The state has so far identified around 1,300 people who attended the meet, said Maharashtra Public Health Minister Rajesh Tope. On Thursday, 10 people linked to the meet tested positive in the state. Six of them attended the meet and four came in contact with them.

KERALA

Two participants of the Tablighi Jamaat event were among the 21 fresh COVID-19 cases reported in Kerala on Thursday. With positive cases in the state soaring to 286, seven out of 14 districts in Kerala have emerged as hotspots. Chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan said 157 people from Kerala had attended Tablighi Jamaat conference and those who have suspected symptoms of COVID-19 have been moved to isolation.

KARNATAKA

With 11 people linked to the congregation at Delhi testing positive for COVID-19 along with three others, Karnataka recorded 14 fresh cases on Thursday, taking the total number of cases reported in the state to 124.

The Markaz-linked infections in the state grew to 13 on Thursday, including one death that occurred on March 27.

The state health and family welfare department has asked all persons "with history of attending the Tablighi Jamaat Congregation" who are asymptomatic to be quarantined at government centres within 14 days of their return. Those beyond 14 days should be home quarantined, it has said.

Dharavi housing society sealed, BMC suspects Tabligh link

LAXMAN SINGH
MUMBAI, APRIL 2

DHARAVI, THE 630-acre urban sprawl in the heart of Mumbai, stood paralysed with fear after the first COVID-19 death was reported from the area Wednesday. Authorities Thursday sealed off and restricted the entry and exit of the 2,500 residents the housing complex where the 56-year-old deceased lived to ensure complete containment, even as BMC launched a probe to find if the virus transmission had any link to the Tablighi Jamaat gathering in New Delhi.

The civic body said they have traced at least four persons from Dharavi who had attended the Tablighi meet in Delhi. The 56-year-old man who died, civic officials suspect, may have had

contact with one of them.

"We are checking if the man had met any of them. All the four persons have been sent to a quarantine facility in Sion," Assistant Municipal Commissioner, G-north (Dadar, Sion), Kiran Dighavkar said.

"We were shocked after news came that the Dharavi resident had tested coronavirus positive. Our biggest concern is that the virus should not spread to other members of the society, and more importantly in other parts of Dharavi. Just imagine how much damage it will cause as this is a very densely populated area," Charles Anthony, secretary of the housing complex where the deceased resided, said.

There are eight buildings with 338 flats and 93 shops inside the housing complex which was constructed in 1976. On Thursday, a team of BMC officials



Dharavi reported its first COVID-19 death on Wednesday. File

reached complex and sanitised its garden and the building where the victim stayed. Civic officials have also identified 15 close contacts of the deceased

and collected their nasal swab samples for test.

The Matunga Labour Camp lane, which leads to the housing complex, wore a deserted look

through Thursday as local residents preferred to stay away from the building precincts that teemed with healthcare workers, screening residents with coronavirus-like symptoms.

Meanwhile, Anthony said residents of the housing society were gearing up for life under complete lockdown. "The daily supply of essentials like milk, vegetables, medicines and grains will be affected with the lockdown. Everybody is scared. We have requested members of the society to make a list of goods they want and then any one person from the complex will give it to the civic officials and accordingly arrangement will be made. We don't want to spread this virus further so we are ready to cooperate with the BMC," he said.

Two neighbouring housing complexes have also imposed restrictions on the entry and exit

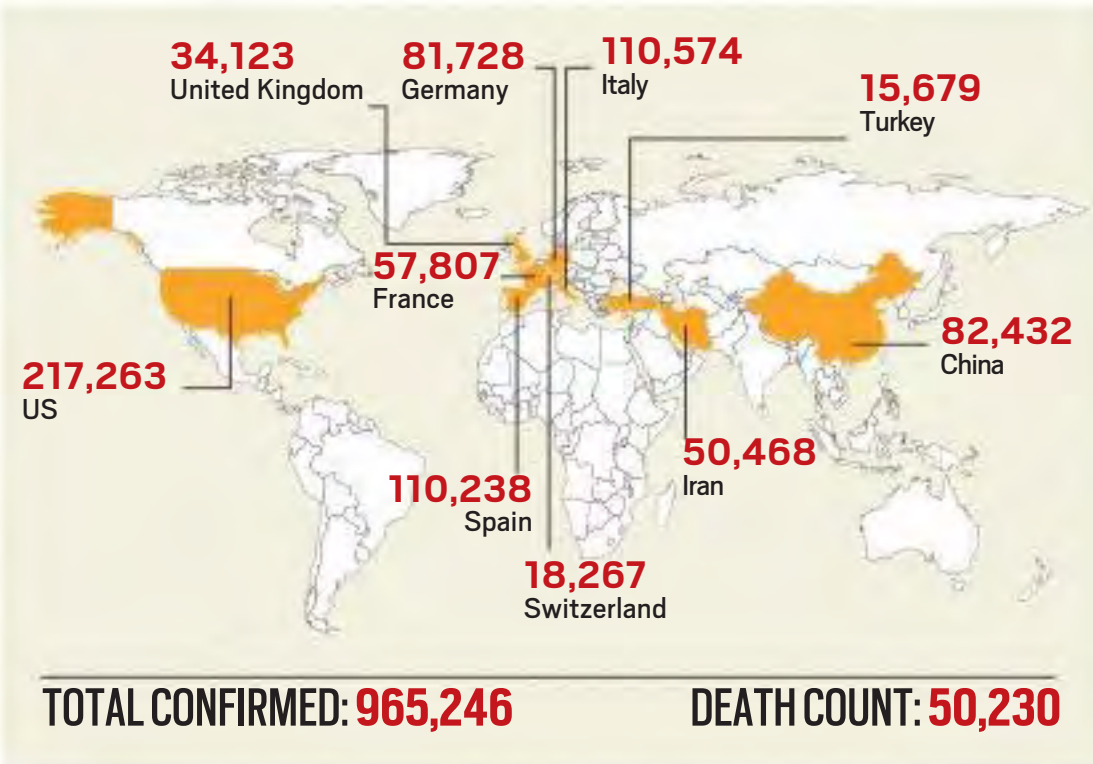
of people. "No one from these building is stepping out unless extremely necessary. We need to take the lockdown seriously," Mubin Matwale, a resident of a nearby building, said.

An acquaintance of the deceased man said he used to run a factory in Dharavi and had taken a flat on rent in the society just two years ago. "We did not have much interaction with him. We only know that he was unwell since March 23 and did not have any travel history. He was being treated by a local doctor initially, but after his condition worsened, he was admitted to Sion hospital," R Gopal Yadav, president of the society, said.

There are more than 20,000 small-scale units in Dharavi that operate cheek by jowl. BMC is now tracing the people who may have interacted with the deceased in the last few days.



CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK
 YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED DAILY



Source: Johns Hopkins University, updated at 11pm on April 2

Can you fight or prevent infection by drinking alcohol?

ALCOHOL-BASED sanitisers to wash your hands are one thing, but drinking alcohol is quite another. Ever since the outbreak of COVID-19, "advice" and theories have been circulating around social media that drinking alcohol offers protection against the novel coronavirus; in Iran, media has reported how this led to a binge drinking session that eventually left dozens dead.

"No, drinking alcohol does not protect you from coronavirus infection," the World Health Organization make sit clear. "Alcohol should always be consumed in moderation and people who do not drink alcohol should not start drinking in an attempt to prevent the infection."

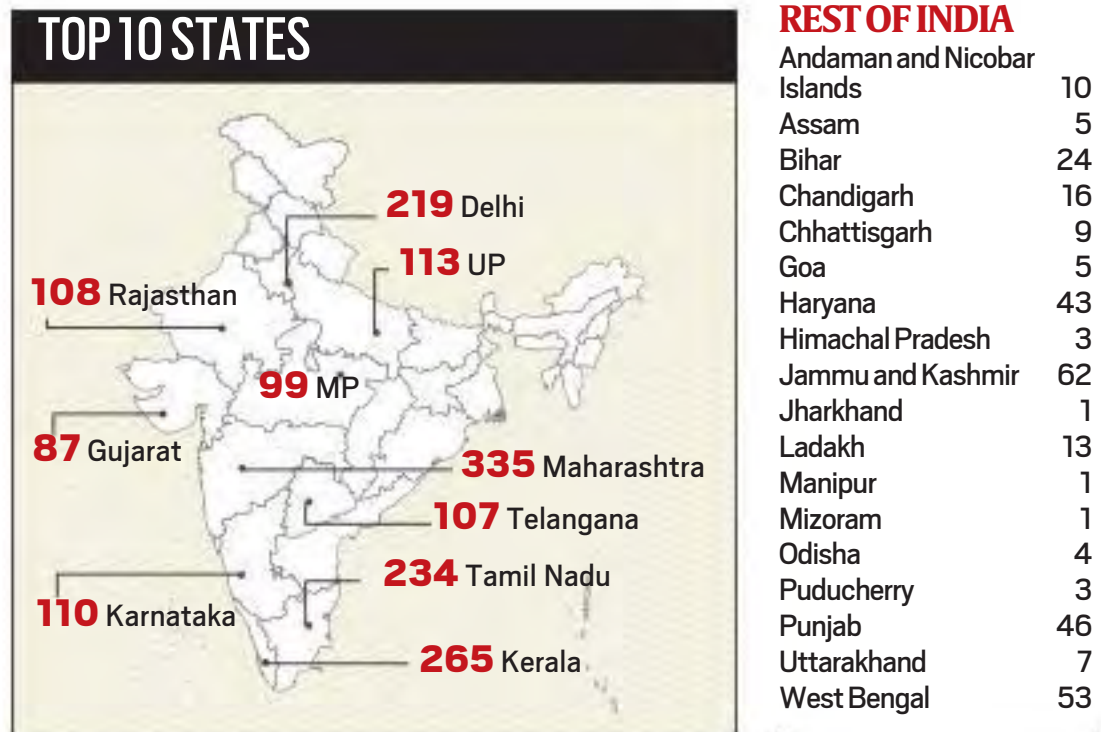
Alcohol releases chemicals that reduce anxiety, so it may not be harmful to drink in moderation - one or two a day - to relieve stress and boredom, especially for those confined to their homes. Drinking in excess, however, can end up weakening the body against a coronavirus, or even killing the drinker, as it did in the Iran binge.

While the novel coronavirus is still being studied, research on other virus outbreaks has shown that excessive alcohol affects immune function. Excessive drinkers have been seen to be vulnerable to, in particular, respiratory illness and pneumonia. They also take longer to recover from infection. In fact, excessive alcohol can also damage the lungs, which are one of the areas the novel coronavirus affects. Not just COVID-19, even those who have caught the common flu or a cold should avoid excessive alcohol consumption.

There is an argument against drinking too much to fight depression too. While alcohol's effect on the central nervous system has been observed as leading to a reduction of anxiety, this lasts only as long as the alcohol lasts in the blood. Later, when the level of alcohol in the blood returns to zero, the nervous system becomes overactive trying to restore the chemicals in the blood to the earlier concentrations. That can leave the drinker anxious as ever.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

INDIA COUNT: 2,069 (53 DEATHS)



Union Health Ministry update at 11 pm, April 2. Some states may have reported higher numbers. Only states with most cases are listed above. **156 PATIENTS DISCHARGED IN 19 STATES ACROSS THE COUNTRY**

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

SIMPLY PUT **QUESTION & ANSWER**

To do rapid tests, or not to

States have been pushing for rapid tests on plasma; ICMR has resisted, yielded and qualified its stance. How are such tests different from PCR tests on swab, and what are the arguments for and against each?

ABANTIKA GHOSH
 NEW DELHI, APRIL 2

AMID THE growth of cases of novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19), states have started to look at "rapid tests" — serological or blood tests — as an alternative to the longer, swab-based tests routinely being used. Kerala has already rolled out such tests, Maharashtra appears set to do so, while Chhattisgarh has sought permission.

On Thursday, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) issued an interim advisory on the use of serological tests in "hotspots", before pulling it down hours later. There are currently about 20-odd hotspots in the country, up from an earlier 10.

What is a serological test?

According to the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, "Serology tests are blood-based tests that can be used to identify whether people have been exposed to a particular pathogen. Serology-based tests analyse the serum component of whole blood. The serum includes antibodies to specific components of pathogens, called antigens. These antigens are recognized by the immune system as foreign and are targeted by the immune response."

Blood has two components, a matrix called plasma and the blood cells. The plasma minus the components of whole blood that cause it to clot is known as serum.

How is it different from the tests being done more widely?

The standard test for COVID-19 so far has been the Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR). It is done after taking nasal or throat swabs of the patient, from which RNA is extracted and converted to DNA, which is then amplified before being checked for confirmation of the virus. The PCR test takes up to nine hours. The long time is also because the swab is first screened to decide the family of the virus; if that confirms it is a coronavirus, a second test is done to ascertain if it is indeed the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV2.

The serological test screens the plasma for antibodies that the body develops against the virus. It takes less than 30 minutes. It is important to note, however, that the PCR test is ca-



A blood sample collected for COVID-19 test in Lviv, Ukraine, earlier this week. Reuters

pable of identifying infection at an earlier stage. Only after the antibodies have developed, which takes several days, can the serological test come in. And even for serological tests, the positives will have to go through the PCR filter.

Which states have been pushing for it?

Kerala has started using the test, with approval from the ICMR. During videoconferencing on Thursday, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan urged the Prime Minister for central assistance for bringing test kits from Hong Kong. Haryana CM M L Khattar too called for rapid tests, while Maharashtra has got permission to conduct these, reports from Mumbai said quoting state Health Minister Rajesh Tope.

On Wednesday, Chhattisgarh Health Minister T S Singh Deo tweeted: "Requesting the Central Govt & @drharshvardhan to ensure that @ICMRDELHI formulates comprehensive guidelines for use and purchase of Rapid Tests for #COVID19 as these tests have been used effectively across the world and are needed for expanding testing capacities."

Earlier, the Tamil Nadu government had approached ICMR for permission to follow the 'South Korea-China model' of rapid tests, but the ICMR had said the real-time PCR (RT-PCR) test is more foolproof.

What did the ICMR say now?

After weeks of resisting the states on the ground that serological tests are for estimat-

ing population exposure in epidemiological studies, and not the best option for detection, the ICMR issued an interim advisory on Thursday, before pulling it down.

It said: "Population in hotspot areas may be tested using rapid antibody test, and

- Antibody positives to be confirmed by RT-PCR using throat/nasal swab
- Antibody negatives to be quarantined at home"

It added that an emergency meeting of the National Task Force will finalise the recommendation. Later in the night, the advisory was pulled down but there was no official word why. Sources said the task force could not agree on the recommendation.

On Thursday night, the ICMR put up a list of approved and validated antibody testing kits. It says: "... Approved kits can be used directly after due approval from DCGI (Drug Controller General of India) and intimation to ICMR".

Did the ICMR specify who would be subjected to such tests?

Sources said there are now at least 20 places where several clusters of cases have been detected, needing them to be locked off even in the middle of a lockdown — a "hotspot". In these areas, serological tests (if approved) would be conducted on people showing COVID-19-like symptoms, even if they had no established history of travel or contact with confirmed COVID-19 cases. The offi-

cial testing strategy remains that only symptomatic contacts of confirmed cases or symptomatic people with travel history may be tested. Asymptomatic people with contact are tested once between 5-14 days of exposure.

What has the ICMR stance been so far?

As recently as on March 28, the ICMR's guidance document on these tests said that they "can be done on blood/serum/plasma samples; Test result is available within 30 minutes; Test comes positive after 7-10 days of infection; The test remains positive for several weeks after infection; Positive test indicates exposure to SARS-CoV-2; Negative test does not rule out COVID-19 infection" but are not to be recommended for diagnosis of COVID-19 infection. "These tests are not recommended for diagnosis of COVID-19 infection," read a line in bold, before going on to list the 12 approved serological testing kits.

The ICMR's contention that it is not a diagnostic test is partly because the test detects the antibodies and not the virus, which means the virus needs to have spent some time in the body. For that duration, the person would continue to spread the disease to others. That is not an ideal situation.

The dynamics change in hotspots where every person is potentially a carrier; the faster the person is quarantined, the less the spread.

What is the South Korea model that Tamil Nadu referred to?

South Korea, which had shot up to the top of the COVID-19 chart in February, has emerged as a success story in its containment aggressively using mass testing, including with serological kits, to reduce the number of cases. The country has had 9,976 cases and 169 deaths but managed to contain the virus without the kind of lockdown that several countries including India have now gone into. While it is testing that has got it global praise, it is also a fact that South Korea's success was as much because of its hospital infrastructure that was ramped up during the earlier outbreaks of SARS and MERS. Even in Daegu, where the country's 31st patient became an index for some 1,100 contacts, hospitals were clogged but hospitalisation rates remained high.

Though South Korea has become the benchmark, it was Singapore that first started using such tests.

Kerala's vulnerability test: age, morbidity

SHAJU PHILIP
 THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, APRIL 2

A HIGH prevalence of disease and a large share of elderly people in the population have been concerns for Kerala during the COVID-19 outbreak. The number of confirmed cases in Kerala is now between 250-300 (state and central numbers differ).

While a couple aged 93 and 88, suffering from age-related illnesses and underlying diseases, tested negative recently after having contracted the infection, and raised hopes that the virus can be fought back by the elderly too, the two deaths in Kerala were of patients above age 60 and both had underlying medical conditions. The evidence worldwide so far has indicated that people over that age, and with conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, cancer, are likely to be more vulnerable. And while Kerala's excellent

healthcare system earned it the rating of a top-performing state in NITI Aayog's recent annual health index (based on indicators such as mortality rate, fertility rate and sex ratio), experts believe the state's age profile and morbidity will challenge the system.

"Kerala is exposed to a community outbreak because of high prevalence of lifestyle diseases, a larger share of 60-plus and a high population density," said Dr N Sulphi, vice-president of the Kerala chapter of the Indian Medical Association. "In Italy, we have seen that COVID-19 turned fatal for the elderly. The higher share of the elderly population in the state, coupled with high population density, is a matter of concern in the emerging stages of the fight against COVID-19," he said.

While the share of the elderly in India's population is 8.6% as per Census 2011, their share in Kerala is 12.7%. In Kerala's Pathanamthitta district, which is on high alert with 13 cases, the share of the elderly is 17.9% of the population, the highest in the

state. Three primary contacts who tested positive in the district are above 60.

The 71st National Sample Survey on Morbidity in 2016 showed that while 89 out of every 1,000 persons surveyed reported illness during the 15-day period of survey across India, this proportion was 310 out of 1,000. Among the 60-plus population, it was 276 per 1,000 for India and 646 per 1,000 for Kerala. Broken up by residence, 19% of Kerala's rural population and 22% of its urban population reported ailments during the 15-day reference period, as compared to 9% of India's urban population and 12% of the rural population.

Kerala has the largest incidence of non-communicable diseases in India. The state is often described as the diabetes capital of the country. The Registrar General of India's Report on Medical Certification of Cause of Death 2015 revealed that while in India 3.4% people died due to diabetes in 2015, it was 9.6% for Kerala, the highest among the states. Hypertension,

diabetes mellitus, cardiovascular diseases, stroke and cancer are prevalent in Kerala.

In Kerala, 27% of adult males have diabetes mellitus compared to 15% nationally, while 19% of the adult female population are diabetic compared to 11% in India. Genetic predisposition, dietary habits and sedentary lifestyle are considered to be among the reasons for this trend. Again, 40.6% of adult males and 38.5% of adult females are hypertensive in Kerala, compared to 30.7% and 31.9% nationally. Cancer mortality is extremely high in males in Kerala compared to the national average.

A survey by Achutha Menon Centre for Health Science Studies, Thiruvananthapuram, in 2017 found that prevalence in Kerala had increased to one out of three for hypertension, and one out of five for diabetes. The State Economic Review, 2019 found Kerala has an estimated 5,30,000 cases of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and 4,80,000 asthma patients among adults.

AN EXPERT EXPLAINS

'Perhaps the exodus will spotlight migrants' key role in cities' functioning'



TARIQ THACHIL

What is unique about the migrant labour in India's cities, compared to other countries and societies?

Migrant labour in Indian cities are marked by three traits: internal migration, informality, and circularity.

First, they come from within India, unlike international migrants who often dominate the study of migration. Second, they are low-income workers who lack formal contracts. Many perform daily wage labour or are self-employed. Such employment is precarious and day-to-day in nature, with no protections in the event of an abrupt cancellation, as has happened with the lockdown. Third, most of these migrants do not permanently relocate to the city. Expensive and inhospitable urban environments com-

pel them to move without their families. Instead, they circulate between city and village several times a year, and remain deeply rooted within the sending villages.

Each of these factors is important in understanding why migrant workers have been so eager to return home since the lockdown was announced.

Has the migrants' contribution to the Indian economy been recorded accurately?

The informal nature of employment makes it hard to collect reliable data even on the size of this population, let alone its economic contributions. But fine-grained studies have revealed circular migrants are influential, and in some cases, the predominant forms of labour in industries ranging from construction, brick manufacturing, mining and quarrying, hotels and restaurants, and street vending. Many of these sectors are integral to the Indian economy and comprise a significant share of our GDP.

There is a broad societal reluctance to acknowledge the contributions of circular migrants. They perform essential labour and provide services that many people want but are unwilling to provide them-

selfes; yet, too often this work is not received with gratitude by municipal authorities or more privileged urbanites. The migrants I have spoken to repeatedly offer examples of their harassment and mistreatment by urban employers, middle-class shopkeepers and residents, and local police. Perhaps one silver lining of the lockdown will be that the exodus of migrants renders visible the essential role they play in the functioning of Indian cities.

What are your estimates about their numbers and socio-economic and educational status?

We lack a consensus estimate of the size of our circular migrant population. Many official data sources use definitions of migration that fail to capture the transient and itinerant patterns observed by circular migrants. For example, the National Sample Survey collected specific data on migration in its 64th round and found the all-India rate of 'short-term migration' to be between 1% and 2%. This rate would roughly suggest a population of between 13 million and 26 million short-term migrants.

Yet, the figure is likely to be a dramatic underestimate. The NSS defines a 'short-

term' migrant as one who stays away for up to six months during the last year, but many circular migrants spend most of the year labouring in cities, returning home for festivals, harvests, or to see family. Further, the fact that these migrants live and work in informal conditions in cities, and circulate between village and city, makes them especially difficult to access through standard residence-based surveys.

Alternative data sources suggest India's circular migrant population is substantial. According to the 2011 Census, more than half of all rural residents live off the earnings they make through unskilled labour, many of whom are likely to do so in cities.

Some scholars have drawn on employment figures from migrant-dominated sectors like construction to estimate the number of circular migrants at nearly 120 million. The truth may lie in the middle, but either way we are talking about tens of millions of people.

Most studies agree the vast majority of circular migrants are economically disadvantaged. My own survey of 3,018 circular migrants working as daily wage labourers and 1,200 migrants working as street vendors across Delhi and Lucknow showed they

were uniformly poor, but diverse in caste and faith. 27% were SCs, 44% were OBCs, 18% were upper castes, and 12% were Muslims. Yet the average income within each of these groups was practically identical - and 75% earned less than \$2 per day. Also, 77% had no secondary education, and over half of them had ongoing debts they had to pay off.

Could the exodus after the lockdown announcement have been prevented?

I disagree with the Supreme Court's observation that the exodus was caused by irrational panic triggered by misinformation. Observers are unaware of how rooted circular migrants are in their sending villages, as well as how inhospitable the conditions are under which they must live and work in their destination cities. My own surveys found most migrant workers live in cramped rented rooms or must sleep on the footpath, lack documents with which to access benefits such as rations in the city, do not have family members in the city, and have few savings to draw upon. They also face considerable harassment from police and middle-class elites, who view them variously as unclean, nuisances, or criminal. The lockdown takes away their only reason for enduring

such hardships: work in the city.

Moreover, given the nature of the novel coronavirus, it would be completely plausible for migrants to be unsure about when work opportunities might actually resume in cities. Why then would they stay in harsh conditions away from their families?

A more effective and humane response would have first considered how an abrupt lockdown might affect transient populations. It would also have decided whether to prioritise keeping migrants in place in destination cities or helping them safely reach home. If the goal was to get migrants safely home, resources should have been targeted to ensuring safe and clean passage, and a feasible local quarantine strategy for migrants in their home regions. If the goal was to keep them in the city, resources should have targeted keeping them healthy, housed, and fed, including by enabling them to pay or pause rent, and access PDS benefits in cities.

Dr Tariq Thachil is Associate Professor in Political Science at Vanderbilt University, and a researcher on urbanisation and internal migration in India. He spoke to Sushant Singh. (EDITED EXCERPTS. FULL INTERVIEW ON WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM)

11 THE OUTBREAK THE WORLD

PANDEMIC WATCH



People wear masks in Pyongyang. AP

NORTH KOREA
Free of virus, insists official in Pyongyang

Seoul: North Korea remains totally free of the coronavirus, a senior health official in Pyongyang has insisted, despite mounting scepticism. The North quickly shut down its borders after the virus was first detected in China in January, and imposed strict containment measures. Pak Myong Su, director of the anti-epidemic department of the North's Central Emergency Anti-epidemic Headquarters, insisted the efforts had been successful. "Not one single person has been infected with the novel coronavirus in our country so far," Pak told AFP.

6.6 mn file for US jobless benefits; Trump doubts China's virus figures

AGENCIES
APRIL 2

THE TENDRILS of the coronavirus pandemic reached deeper into the American economy last week, leaving millions more people out of work as the damage spread to jobs and industries that were spared at the outset of the crisis.

More than 6.6 million people filed new claims for unemployment benefits last week, the Labor Department said Thursday, setting a grim record for the second straight week.

The latest claims brought the two-week total to nearly 10 million. The speed and scale of the job losses is without precedent. Until last month, the worst week for unemployment filings was 695,000 in 1982.

Meanwhile, America continues to wage an all-out war to defeat the "horrible" coronavirus, President Donald Trump has said, as the US reported over 5,000 deaths and more than 200,000 infections, the highest in the world.

According to Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center, the number of Americans to have been infected by coron-



US President Donald Trump addresses the daily coronavirus response briefing in Washington. Reuters

avirus stood at 214,000, and 5,093 had lost their lives by Wednesday night.

Globally, more than 930,000 people have been infected and 46,809 people have died.

Trump cast doubt Wednesday on the accuracy of official Chinese figures on its coronavirus outbreak after US lawmakers, citing an intelligence report, accused Beijing of a cover up. "How do we know" if they are accurate, Trump asked at a press conference. "Their numbers seem to be a little bit on the light side," Trump insisted that "the relationship with China's a good one" and that he remained

close to President Xi Jinping. However, controversy around Beijing's transparency has strained ties, adding to bad feelings triggered by a conspiracy theory in China that the US military was to blame for the virus.

Republicans, pointing to a report by Bloomberg citing US intelligence, expressed outrage that Beijing apparently misled the international community on China's infections and deaths.

China's reporting has been intentionally incomplete, with some intelligence officials describing Beijing's numbers as fake, reported Bloomberg.

CORONAVIRUS DEVELOPMENTS

RUSSIAN PLANE LANDS IN U.S. WITH SUPPLIES

Washington: A Russian cargo plane carrying 60 tonnes of medical supplies, including ventilators, masks and other protection gear, needed to treat the patients with COVID-19 landed in the US as the country wrestles with the coronavirus pandemic that the White House has warned could kill up to two lakh people during the next fortnight. The Permanent Mission of

Russia to NATO on Thursday tweeted a video of the cargo aircraft Ruslan AN-124-100 arriving at the John F Kennedy airport in New York.

The move comes after a telephonic conversation between US President Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin on March 30. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said that it was a time to work together to overcome a common enemy.

SIX-WEEK-OLD BABY DIES OF COVID-19

New York: A six-week-old baby girl has died of coronavirus in the US state of Connecticut, Governor Ned Lamont said on Thursday, stressing that the death is a reminder that "nobody is safe with this virus," Lamont said.

"Testing confirmed last night that the newborn was COVID-19 positive. This is absolutely heartbreaking. We believe this is one of the youngest lives lost anywhere due to COVID-19," he said.

youngest person ever to die of COVID here in Connecticut. That baby was a less than seven weeks old. And it just is a reminder that nobody is safe with this virus," Lamont said.

"Testing confirmed last night that the newborn was COVID-19 positive. This is absolutely heartbreaking. We believe this is one of the youngest lives lost anywhere due to COVID-19," he said.



An elderly woman in Barcelona, Spain. Reuters

Spain's deaths top 10,000; officials see 'glimpse of hope'

EMMA PINEDO & INTILANDAURIO
MADRID, APRIL 2

95%

SPAIN'S DEATH toll from the coronavirus rose above 10,000 on Thursday after a record 950 people died overnight, but health officials saw a glimmer of hope with the epidemic slowing in terms of proportional daily increases in infections and deaths.

Spain has the world's second-highest death toll after Italy at 10,003. The number of registered coronavirus cases rose about 8% from Wednesday to 110,238, the ministry said. The total deaths rose by just over 10%, about the same rate as the previous day.

"There's light at the end of the tunnel," Health Minister Salvador Illa told parliament. "A glimpse of hope: the curve has stabilised. We have reached ... the peak of the curve and we have started the slowdown phase."

Spain has been in a lockdown since March 14, allowing residents to leave their homes only for essential trips. This week it tightened the measures, with only employees in key sectors permitted to travel to and from work.

The daily increase in infections in percentage terms has

■ More than 95% of those who have died of coronavirus in Europe have been over 60 but young people should not be complacent, the head of the WHO's office in Europe said Thursday. Dr Hans Kluge said age is not the only risk factor for getting a severe case of the virus. "The very notion that COVID-19 only affects older people is factually wrong," he said in Copenhagen. "Young people are not invincible."

been slowing gradually since March 25, when reported cases rose by just over 20%.

Laying bare the scale of the outbreak's economic impact, data showed that Spain has shed an unprecedented 900,000 jobs since it went into lockdown, with temporary layoffs affecting at least a further 620,000.

Social security data also showed that around 80,000 workers are off sick with coronavirus, while another 170,000 are on sick leave because they are isolated after coming into contact with someone with the virus. REUTERS

GREECE
Govt seals off migrant camp with cases

Athens: Greece on Thursday sealed off a migrant camp near Athens after 21 of its residents tested positive for the coronavirus — beginning with a new mother at an Athens hospital. "From today the facility is placed under sanitary isolation for two weeks," the migration ministry said in a statement. Hours before the cases were announced, Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis had praised safeguards at Greek camps. "I think we're pretty good at contact tracing, and you can actually do contact tracing at the very beginning of an outbreak," Mitsotakis told CNN.

BELGIUM
COVID-19 cases top 1,000

Brussels: The number of deaths attributed to the epidemic in Belgium passed the 1,000 mark on Thursday, health officials said. The official toll in the country of 11.4 million has doubled in three days, in part because figures have been updated with a backlog of fatalities from retirement homes. There have now been 1,011 deaths and 15,348 recorded cases since the start of the outbreak, officials said. "Ninety-three percent of deaths involve an elderly person of more than 65," said Dr Emmanuel Andre, the government health spokesman.



Workers in protective suits pray before a disinfection operation in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Reuters

ON THE JOB, WITH A PRAYER

Workers in protective suits pray before a disinfection operation in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Reuters

EU chief apologises to Italy, balks at joint debt

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
ROME, APRIL 2

EUROPEAN COMMISSION chief Ursula von der Leyen told Italy on Thursday that European nations were ready to help it deal with the coronavirus after initially focusing on "their own home problems".

But the EU leader stopped short of agreeing to Rome's request for the bloc to start issuing joint debt — dubbed "coronabonds" — that could let countries address the crisis more cheaply.

"Today Europe is mobilising alongside Italy. Unfortunately, this has not always been the

EXPLAINED
Concerns over time delay in taking decision

AT THE last EU meeting, leaders failed to agree on a course of action regarding the sharing of debt in the fight against the virus. They pushed the discussion to two weeks later, though even then, there is no guarantee of an agreement being reached. This is seen as cause for concern by some member nations and analysts, as two weeks is considered a long time given that some countries are seen exponential jumps in their virus figures.

case," von der Leyen wrote in Italy's La Repubblica newspaper. "It must be recognised that in the early days of the crisis, in the face of the need for a common

European response, too many have thought only of their own home problems." Von der Leyen's letter read.

Von der Leyen said the EU

"will allocate up to 100 billion euros (\$1.1 billion) to the hardest hit countries, starting from Italy, to compensate for the reduction in the wages of those working on shorter hours." She said the newly agreed initiative provides "loans guaranteed by all member states — thus demonstrating European solidarity".

Von der Leyen concluded by proposing that "every euro still available in the EU's annual budget be spent on tackling the crisis". "In the past month, the European Commission has left no stone unturned to help Italy," she wrote. Spain and France have backed Italy's plea for the new common debt instrument.

UK set to massively ramp up testing: Boris

ADITI KHANNA
LONDON, APRIL 2

BORIS JOHNSON, who remains in self-isolation after his COVID-19 diagnosis last week, posted a new video message on social media as a health update and also to stress that he was determined to "massively ramp up" the government's testing for coronavirus.

In his message posted on Twitter in the wake of the UK logging a 563 day-on-day leap in death toll to hit 2,352 on Wednesday, the British Prime Minister described it as a "sad, sad day" with a record number of deaths in a single day.

"I want to say a special word about testing because... this is how we will unlock the coronavirus puzzle," said Johnson, seen dressed slightly less formally without a tie and looking visibly unwell.

"This is how we will defeat it in the end. What we need to do is massively ramp up not just tests so that you can know whether you have had the disease in the past, the so-called antibody test... [also] to know whether they haven't got it, rather than isolating themselves at home for no reason, and that's very, very important above all for our NHS staff," he said.

The focus on testing came as the government has come under increasing pressure over the low levels of tests being conducted, especially to National Health Service (NHS) workers required on the frontline of the pandemic in hospitals and clinics. PTI

Pak locks down Raiwind after Tablighi Jamaat members test positive

M ZULQERNAIN
LAHORE, APRIL 2

PAKISTAN AUTHORITIES have placed the entire city of Raiwind under quarantine, shutting down all general and medical stores, and completely restricted the mobility of people within or outside the city after at least 40 Tablighi Jamaat preachers tested positive, officials said Thursday.

Similarly, some 50 members of the Jamaat, including five Nigerian women, suspected to be carriers of coronavirus, are admitted to a quarantine centre in Kasur, some 50 km from Lahore. In Hyderabad city of Sindh province, 38 coronavirus cases of local transmission among members of the Tablighi Jamaat were reported on Thursday.

There are reports that the Sindh and Punjab police have picked some members of the Jamaat from the mosques and its Raiwind Markaz (headquarters of the Pakistani faction of

Jamaat) and locked up in the police stations in connection with violation of the lockdown.

According to the government, in March the Tablighi Jamaat went ahead with its annual congregation in Raiwind, Lahore against its 'advice' that the gathering might spread the virus. Pakistani authorities had urged the cancellation of the five-day Tablighi congregation, which was attended by thousands of people from several countries.

"The government's apprehensions stood true as several Tablighi Jamaat activists have tested positive for coronavirus and they caused spread of it," Lahore Deputy Commissioner Danish Afzaal said in a statement.

He said the Raiwind Tablighi Jamaat Markez is presently housing approximately 600 preachers. "The health teams have so far sent samples of around 110 of them for lab analysis and of them 41 preachers have been tested positive for COVID-19," he said. PTI

2002 killing of Daniel Pearl: Pak court overturns conviction of top Al-Qaeda leader, three others

SALMAN MASOOD
ISLAMABAD, APRIL 2

A PAKISTANI court on Thursday overturned the murder conviction and death sentence of Ahmed Omar Sheikh, a British-born militant who had been convicted of masterminding the 2002 abduction and killing of the American journalist Daniel Pearl, lawyers said.

The court also overturned the convictions of three other men who had been serving life sentences in the case. All four men were expected to be freed soon, lawyers said.

Pearl, a reporter for *The Wall Street Journal*, was abducted in January 2002 in the city of



Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh was found guilty on a lesser charge of kidnapping. AP

Karachi, while working on an article about Pakistani militant groups with links to Al Qaeda. He was later beheaded.

A two-member bench of the Sindh High Court in Karachi,

headed by Justice Mohammad Karim Khan Agha, found that there had been sufficient evidence to convict Sheikh of kidnapping, but not of murder, said Sheikh's lawyer, Khawaja Naveed Ahmed. "The court ruled that the charge of abduction was proven," he said.

The court reduced Sheikh's sentence to seven years. Because he has been imprisoned for 18 years, he was expected to go free along with Fahad Saleem, Syed Salman Saqib and Sheikh Muhammad Adil, the three other men whose convictions were overturned, Ahmed said.

Lawyers said the court had not yet issued a detailed ruling, only a brief order. Soon after Pearl's killing,

Pakistan's government, then led by President Pervez Musharraf, moved quickly to arrest Sheikh and the other men, amid a global outcry and pressure from the United States.

But a 2011 report, based on investigative work by students and faculty at the journalism program of Georgetown University and the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, cast doubt on the four men's convictions. It found that Sheikh and the three other men had been involved in the plot to abduct Pearl but were not responsible for his murder.

American officials have said that they believed Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, the accused mastermind of the attacks of

September 11, 2001, had personally carried out Pearl's murder.

Sheikh, a British national who was trained in camps in Pakistan and Afghanistan, belonged to the militant group Jaish-e-Muhammad at the time of his 2002 arrest. Pakistani investigators said Sheikh lured Pearl by offering him an interview with an Islamic cleric who had ties to Richard C Reid, the so-called shoe bomber.

Sheikh has made headlines from his cell over the years. In 2008, soon after Pakistani militants carried out terror attacks in Mumbai, Sheikh managed to place a call to then-President Asif Ali Zardari, pretending to be the Indian foreign minister and warning of an attack by India. NYT

Trump warns Iran against attacking US troops in Iraq

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, APRIL 2

PRESIDENT DONALD Trump has said that Tehran should expect a bold US response if Iran or Iranian-backed groups attack American forces or assets in Iraq.

US-Iran tensions soared following the January 3 Washington-directed strike that killed Iranian General Qasim Soleimani outside Baghdad airport. Trump said at a briefing that his administration has received intelligence that Iran is planning a strike, but did not provide additional details.

Iran has been blamed for an uptick in rocket attacks targeting Iraqi military bases hosting US

IRAN ONLY ACTS IN SELF-DEFENCE, SAYS ZARIF

Tehran: Iran said on Thursday it "only acts in self-defence" after President Donald Trump warned it and its allies against attacking US troops in Iraq. "Unlike the US — which surreptitiously lies, cheats & assassinates — Iran only acts in self-defence," Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif

tweeted. "Don't be misled by usual warmongers, AGAIN," he wrote, also cautioning "Iran starts no wars, but teaches lessons to those who do". Iran and the US are in a tense battle for influence in Iraq, where Tehran has powerful allies and Washington has close ties to the government. AFP

troops. Three separate attacks in a week struck Camp Taji and Basmaya bases, killed three coalition servicemen, including two Americans. Earlier in the day, Trump

TRACKING COVID-19 APP TO ASSESS RISK

Legal experts raise concerns, seek more clarity from Aarogya Setu's privacy policy

PRANAV MUKUL & AASHISH AARYAN
NEW DELHI, APRIL 2

FLAGGING CONCERNS over the privacy policy of Aarogya Setu app, launched by the government Thursday to allow people to assess if they are at a risk of contracting COVID-19, legal experts are of the view that there was a need for further clarity on how the data collected by the app be stored and used by the government.

According to a statement by the Ministry of Electronics & IT, the app will track users' "interaction with others", and will alert the authorities if there was any suspicion of the user having been in contact with any infected person. "Once installed in a smart phone through an easy and user-friendly process, the app detects other devices with Aarogya Setu installed that have come in the Bluetooth or GPS proximity of one's phone and captures this information. It recommends users to keep the Bluetooth and location sharing settings of the device switched on at all times. The statement added that the app's design ensured "privacy-first". It said that the personal data collected by the app was encrypted using "state-of-the-art technology and stays secure on the phone till it is needed for facilitating medical intervention".

However, the app's privacy policy reads: "Any personal information uploaded to the cloud will only be used for the purpose of informing you, or

those you have come in contact with, of possible infection. Such personal information may also be shared with such other necessary and relevant persons as may be required in order to carry out necessary medical and administrative reasons."

"There isn't enough information available on what data will be collected, how long will it be stored and what uses it will be put to. If the data gets shared with the government of India, what the government can use it for needs to be specified. Otherwise, it will be a violation of the notice and consent principles," said Prasanna S, a Delhi-based lawyer.

On the data retention part, the app's privacy policy mentions that all information provided at the time of registration will be retained for as long as the user's account remains in existence "and for such period thereafter as required for the purposes for which the information may lawfully be used..."

"This is only the app-side data. What about the server side data? How long the Government of India retains it also needs to be specified," Prasanna argued.

Additionally, there was also a question of proportionality with the app and whether it will be as effective as envisaged in containing the COVID-19 outbreak. "We understand that these are extraordinary times and some level of data collection is required but the question is how effective is this. Our situation is different than Singapore, where a good number of people would have smartphones. This raises a concern of proportionality. There are other means for trying to achieve this for a country like ours," said Prasanth Sugathan, volunteer legal director, SFLC.in.

LOCKDOWN DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAS DISRUPTED BUSINESS OPS, SUPPLY CHAINS

Despite RBI liquidity push, banks stare at fresh NPAs

SUNNY VERMA & SANDEEP SINGH
NEW DELHI, APRIL 2

BANKS ARE bracing up for a fresh bout of non-performing assets (NPAs) as the disruption caused to business operations and supply chains during the 21-day lockdown period will take time to repair. Even as the Reserve Bank of India has injected fresh liquidity into the banking system and given banks leeway to deal with potential stress in loan accounts, bankers have discussed with the government their concerns about MSME loans and those extended to manufacturing sectors, such as auto, steel, renewable energy, as those where fresh NPAs are looming.

It is learnt there was a concern among bankers that even if the lockdown is lifted on April 14, operations of a number of companies in specific sectors will not see business getting back to normal as the labour has moved out and the production may not be able to restart.

Apart from these, capital intensive sectors such as aviation, real estate, consumer durables, and jewellery may take a long time be-

EXPLAINED

Buildup of bad loans looks inevitable

BANKS ARE concerned about a fresh wave of non-performing assets that may hit them as a result of the lockdown. While a prolonged shutdown of the economy is expected to hit them hard, the 21-day period is enough to cause pain to lenders, especially in loan accounts from sectors including MSMEs, airlines, real estate, auto dealers, gems and jewellery, metals among others. A raft of measures by the RBI will provide them some relief during the next three months, but a buildup of bad loans looks inevitable.

fore there is a demand revival. While moratorium provides temporary relief to borrowers and helps check the NPAs during that period, an extended lockdown is expected to have a significant adverse effect on the economy.

Leading analysts and rating agencies have flagged these concerns in their reports, and the stock market has punished financial sector and bank stocks much more than say FMCG stocks.

Moody's Investors Service has

changed the outlook for Indian banking system to negative from stable, as it expects deterioration in banks' asset quality due to disruption in economic activity.

In a report released Thursday, CRISIL said post-lockdown, "asset classes such as microfinance, unsecured loans, and SME borrowers (including the LAP segment) will see continuing pressures on asset quality due to weaker profiles of borrowers and expectation of only a gradual economic recov-

ery." It said while RBI's permission to banks to offer moratorium on servicing of bank loans until May 2020 comes as a big breather in the immediate term, it pointed that over the near to medium term, credit quality trends would be driven by the ability of companies to rebound from the near-standstill demand situation.

Even bankers say in most of the businesses where shop/floor function is involved, such as steel, heavy engineering, auto, and their ancillary units, there is a perceptible impact. Renewable power is struggling because of complete disruption of supply chains from China, as a result of which they are way behind on project schedules and could face payment issues from their customers, the power discoms. MSMEs are the most impacted, especially from the labour exodus. In these cases, what's been flagged is that even months after the lockdown is lifted, operations may not return to normal because of the labour migration issue.

Government officials, however, continue to be optimistic. "We don't think the lockdown will persist beyond 21 days. While bankers may have their concerns,

one also needs to bear in mind that the Indian economy has lot of resilience. The three-month moratorium, along with a series of government and RBI measures, would ensure that we traverse this phase with least possible disruption," a finance ministry official said, asking not to be named. Queries sent to the finance ministry and the Reserve Bank of India seeking comments on the story did not elicit any response.

Gurpreet Chhatwal, president, CRISIL Ratings, "We foresee India Inc's credit quality deteriorating in the near-term. Our study of 35 sectors, both from manufacturing and services, however, shows sharp variation in resilience in a post-COVID-19 landscape. Strong balance sheets or continuing demand will support some sectors during the current lockdown." Excluding financial sector, these 35 sectors comprise 71 per cent of the debt in the agency's rated portfolio.

Pharmaceuticals, telecom, FMCG, fertiliser, oil refineries, power & gas distribution and transmission are among the sectors — comprising nearly 44 per cent of the debt — which are in high resilience category, while an-

Pandemic may shave almost 1% off global economy: UN

The global economy may shrink by up to 1 per cent in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic, a reversal from the forecast of 2.5 per cent growth, the UN has said



Supply chain disruption
The analysis by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs said the pandemic is disrupting supply chains and international trade

Millions of workers are facing the bleak prospect of losing their jobs

Worst-case scenario
The world economy could contract by 0.9 per cent in 2020

1.7%
The world economy had contracted by 1.7 per cent during the global financial crisis in 2009

Best-case scenario
With moderate declines in private consumption, investment and exports and offsetting increases in government spending in the G7 countries and China, global growth would fall to 1.2 per cent in 2020

Situation prior to the outbreak: The analysis noted that before the outbreak of the COVID-19, world output was expected to expand at a modest pace of 2.5 per cent in 2020, as reported in the World Economic Situation and Prospects 2020

Source: UN/PTI

INTERVIEW WITH BANK OF BARODA MD & CEO

Pressure on individual borrowers should be less after 3 months: Chadha

SANJIV CHADHA, MD & CEO, Bank of Baroda, spoke to GEORGE MATHEW on the situation in the banking sector in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak and the lockdown in the country. Edited excerpts:



How is the banking sector proceeding on the issue of the three-month moratorium on term loans?

We're now living in difficult times. There are physical challenges in terms of people transacting in their accounts, coming to the branches and the lockdown. We have implemented moratorium across the board, as has been allowed by the RBI. We have told customers that if there are some debits, we will reverse the transactions. We have not raised demands but very often customers have given instructions that please debit from the account. In these cases also, we have given the option of reversing the transactions and crediting back money to the customers.

Do you expect more measures from the RBI or the government for the banking sector?

Given the current situation, the RBI has done everything that was possible. The challenge for the industry may be beyond what a bank can do. For that, a sector-specific solution may be required.

Have you curtailed the services in the wake of coronavirus and lockdown?

We have something like 3 crore accounts. The government is now sending money to these accounts and all these people would want to access their accounts. We are making sure that all our branches are open, all our ATMs are open and business correspondents (BC) are working. As of today, despite restrictions, 99 per cent of our branches are open and more than 90 per cent of the ATMs are functional. We have also got money to BCs so that they can buy sanitisers, masks and other safeguards so that they can conduct the transactions safely. We

Has banking business come down because of the lockdown and virus?

All the customers will get the minimum services which are required. This means they will be able to operate their accounts, deposit cash, receive cash, make transfers... there are limited services which are offered at the branches. When it comes to digital channels like ATM, they are working exactly as normal. We're not focusing on opening of new accounts.

Have you come across cash shortage in part of the country?

Not really. As I said our ATMs are working above normal. There's no shortage of cash.

Do you see a spike in NPAs

because of the recent developments?

The RBI has proactively taken steps anticipating likely pressures which are likely to come in to the system. For three months, we are not raising any demands in terms of installments. We believe that as long as we return to normalcy within the three-month period which we anticipate as of now, these pressures should be less, particularly on individuals. When it comes to corporates, there are different sectors which are likely to be impacted. I think an assessment of what the impact is likely to be and any sector specific solution is required can be done once the lockdown is lifted on April 14. Airlines, hotels, cinema halls etc are sectors that could be impacted as of today.

BRIEFLY

HDFC Group pledges ₹150 cr to PM-CARES

New Delhi: HDFC Group on Thursday said it has committed Rs 150 crore to the PM-CARES Fund to support the government in its relief and rehabilitation measures.

Petronet LNG contributes ₹100 crore

New Delhi: Petronet LNG has contributed Rs 100 crore to the PM-CARES Fund. PLL being a responsible corporate, said MD & CEO Prabhat Singh, will ensure seamless supply of LNG.

NHIDCL donates to PM-CARES

New Delhi: The National Highways & Infrastructure Development Corporation has contributed Rs 67,25,000, which includes one-day salary of its staff, to the PM-CARES Fund, as per a release.

All-time high output of bauxite, alumina: NALCO

New Delhi: National Aluminium Company Ltd (NALCO) has recorded over 100 per cent capacity utilisation, as per a release. NALCO's Panchpatmali Mines has achieved bauxite output of 73.02 lakh MT, which is highest ever. Bauxite transportation has gone up to 73.02 lakh MT, also highest ever. **ENS**

International flights will be permitted after April 15 on case-by-case basis: Puri

PRES TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, APRIL 2

THE GOVERNMENT on Thursday said resumption of international flights will be considered on a case-by-case basis, depending on which countries they are coming from, after April 15 when the 21-day lockdown to fight the coronavirus ends in India.

Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said Indians who are stranded in several foreign countries will have to wait till April 15 to return to India, suggesting flights taking foreign nationals to their nations from India will not bring back any passengers.

India has allowed countries like the US, UK and Germany to conduct special flights during the

India has allowed countries like the US, UK and Germany to conduct special flights during the lockdown to take their citizens back home

lockdown to take their citizens back home.

Air India has also extended its services to countries such as Germany, UK and France to facilitate return of their citizens.

Air India has also got approval from Indian and Chinese authorities for operating cargo flights to Shanghai and Hong Kong to get medical supplies, Chairman and Managing Director Rajiv Bansal said on Thursday.

'Manufacturing activity weakens in March, biz sentiment at record low'

PRES TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, APRIL 2

THE COUNTRY'S manufacturing sector activity grew at the slowest rate in four months during March, hampered by softer rises in new business as international demand faltered owing to the coronavirus pandemic, a monthly survey said on Thursday.

The headline seasonally adjusted IHS Markit India Manufacturing PMI fell to 51.8 in March, from 54.5 in February, signalling the slowest improvement in business conditions since November 2019.

This is the 32nd consecutive month that the manufacturing

PMI has remained above the 50-point mark.

In PMI parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below that denotes contraction.

Moreover, the confidence towards the business outlook plummeted to a record low, with positivity tapered by COVID-19 concerns, the survey said.

"Should the trajectory of injections continue in the same vein, the Indian manufacturing sector can expect a much sharper negative impact in the coming months, similar to the scale seen in other countries," Kerr said.

According to the survey, the sentiment towards the 12-month business outlook weakened in March.

Banks to deposit ₹500 in women Jan Dhan accounts from today

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, APRIL 2

STARTING FRIDAY, banks will start depositing Rs 500 per month into Jan Dhan account of each of the women beneficiaries. A total of three monthly instalments will be credited in these accounts under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana, as part of relief measures announced by the government last month to help the poor during the lockdown that is in place to combat spread of COVID-19.

"Under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package, a sum of 500 per month is being deposited into the accounts of Women Jan Dhan Yojana beneficiaries by all Banks. This is first of the monthly instal-

JAN DHAN ACCOUNTS

Women PMJD* a/c ending with	Date*
0 or 1	Apr 3
2 or 3	Apr 4
4 or 5	Apr 7
6 or 7	Apr 8
8 or 9	Apr 9

*Women PMJD account holders having account number with last digit as...

*Date on which amount could be withdrawn by the beneficiaries

Source: IBA

IBA said funds will be deposited in a staggered manner during April 3 and April 9 in order to maintain social distancing and to ensure orderly withdrawal of money by the beneficiaries. IBA said account holders can withdraw money as per their convenience and need not rush for withdrawals.

The accounts are being scheduled for disbursement based on the last digit of the account numbers of the beneficiaries. A total of 20.40 crore women account-holders are expected to benefit from government's move. The government would spend Rs 31,000 crore for this purpose. The government had also said it will transfer Rs 2,000 into the accounts of farmers under the PM KISAN scheme in the first week of April, covering 8.7 crore farmers.

WALL STREET FALLS AT OPEN AS JOBLESS CLAIMS TOP 6 MILLION

Oil jumps 23% on likely Saudi Arabia-Russia deal

REUTERS
NEW YORK, APRIL 2

OIL PRICES jumped over 20 per cent on Thursday after US President Donald Trump said he expected Saudi Arabia and Russia to reach a deal soon. Brent futures were up \$5.80, or 23.4 per cent, to \$30.54 a barrel by 12:23 p.m. EDT (16:23 GMT), while US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude rose \$4.91, or 24.2 per cent, to \$25.22.



A passenger at Guarulhos International Airport in Brazil. Reuters

US stock indices fell at the open on Thursday after US jobless claims blew past a record 6 million. The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 124.05 points, or 0.59 per cent, at the open to 20,819.46. In Japan, the Nikkei ended down 1.37 per cent. European stocks made tentative gains, with the pan-European STOXX 600 gaining 0.5 per cent.

BA temporarily lays off 28K; Boeing may follow

Seattle/London: IAG-owned British Airways has temporarily laid off 28,000 of its employees, AFP reported on Wednesday.

The airline reached a broad deal with Unionite that will include suspension of jobs of 80 per cent of BA's cabin crew, ground staff, engineers and those working

at head office.

Meanwhile, Boeing Chief Executive Officer Dave Calhoun outlined a plan of voluntary layoffs for employees on Thursday, while warning that the coronavirus pandemic would have a lasting impact on the global aerospace industry. **AGENCIES**

EU announces work scheme, aid for farmers

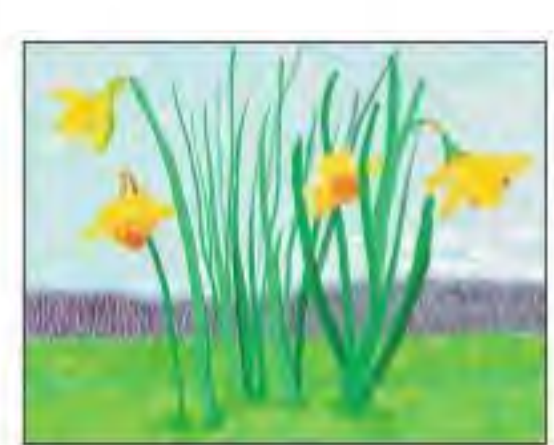
REUTERS
BRUSSELS, APRIL 2

THE EUROPEAN Commission proposed on Thursday a package of measures to soften the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the EU economy, including a short-time work scheme and easier access to funds for farmers and fishermen.

To prevent firms from laying off workers when there is not enough work, the Commission proposed that all EU countries adopt a German scheme under which employers cut working hours, not jobs.

13 TALK ART, MUSIC, STYLE, FOOD

SNAP SHOTS



Colours of Hope

BRITISH ARTIST David Hockney, 82, has unveiled a collection of works that he has created during isolation at his Normandy home. The ten new images created on his iPad capture the arrival of spring, in a bid to offer people "a respite from the news". One of the paintings, titled *Do Remember They Can't Cancel the Spring*, features bright yellow daffodils in front of a gloomy, grey mass, depicting a splash of colour being added to the dark times due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He had captured the spring in a similar fashion in East Yorkshire around a decade ago.



Rest in Peace

AWARD-WINNING singer-songwriter Adam Schlesinger (pictured) died in New York after being diagnosed with COVID-19. He was best known as the bass player and co-songwriter of *Fountains of Wayne*, the power pop band whose hits include *Stacy's mom* and *Hey julie*. In 2019, he won the Emmy for outstanding original music and lyrics for *Antidepressants* are so not a big deal, and won a Grammy in 2009 for *A Colbert Christmas: The Greatest Gift Of All*. Meanwhile, in New Jersey, Grammy-winning jazz trumpeter, Wallace Roney, who is celebrated for his interpretations of Miles Davis's compositions, also died after contracting COVID-19. He had won a Grammy in 1994 for the album *A Tribute to Miles*.



Restaurants across India are shut
Amit Mehra; (above) food being prepared at one of Zorawar Kalra's outlets for the underprivileged

Not Much on Their Plate

Finding it difficult to survive the lockdown, restaurants petition for bailout packages and reach out to their patrons with food delivery options

DIVYAA

IN 1996, when American fast food chain McDonald's made its foray into India with an outlet in Delhi, it was eagerly welcomed by Indians, most of whom had limited exposure to international cuisines till then. Over the years, several global chains started operations in India, building not just awareness about international flavours but also prompting Indians to discover fine dining.

With the growth of the restaurant industry coinciding with the growth of the great Indian middle class, the Indian restaurant industry was pegged at Rs 45,000 crore at the turn of the century, growing at 15-20 per cent annually.

The COVID-19 outbreak, however, has brought that momentum to a screeching halt. While several restaurants closed even before the nationwide lockdown was announced from March 25, the ones that are open do not allow sit-down diners. The sector is now calculating how to survive.

Dining out platform Dineout has filed a petition #ReliefForRestaurants on *change.org* to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. It reads: "The F&B industry employs more than 7.3 million people. If this shutdown continues, 20 to 25 per cent of the employee base could lose their jobs." They have sought an introduction of employee unemployment pay cover, deferment of rent and utility payments, and a moratorium for the upcoming statutory dues.

The National Restaurant Association of

We have sought concessions from tax authorities, statutory bodies and financial institutions so that our limited cash flows are deployed towards the well-being of our employees

ANURAG KATRIAR
PRESIDENT, NRAI

India (NRAI), which according to its website "represents 5,00,000+ restaurants, an industry valued Rs 4 lakh crore", has approached the government for a bailout package. Anurag Katriar, NRAI President, says, "The biggest worry right now is more human than commercial. We have sought concessions from tax authorities, statutory bodies and financial institutions so that our limited cash flows are deployed towards the well-being of our employees." NRAI is encouraging restaurant staff to seek work with online grocery stores, such as Big Basket and Grofers, who are struggling to keep up with the increase in orders.

Zorawar Kalra, Managing Director, Massive Restaurants, that runs 25 restaurants in nine cities, including Farzi Cafe, Masala Library and Pa Pa Ya, says, "The restaurant industry, which is a non-essential service, is going to suffer a major setback due to the COVID-19 outbreak." He warns that even after things start opening, it will take long for premium restaurants to get back clientele as foreign travellers form a major chunk of their

diners. In the meantime, he is channelising his resources for charity. "Currently, we are cooking in Gurgaon and Mumbai for the underprivileged," he adds.

Anahita Dhondy, Chef-Partner at SodaBottleOpenerWala, has started sharing live cooking videos on her social media accounts. She is also using this time to restructure operations and plan menu items that can be easily delivered. "Our restaurants are not even located at isolated places so that we can open up and use the kitchens for deliveries. We can only wait," says Dhondy.

Amit Bagga, Co-founder and CEO of Daryaganj, a year-old brand with four outlets in Delhi, says, "Our newest restaurant in Gurgaon opened just a week before the lockdown. For any fine diner, new or old, overhead costs are massive. While our operations teams are working from home, trying to streamline operations and replan the menu, we are paying full salaries to our restaurant staff who can't be engaged at the moment."

Several restaurants, meanwhile, are also considering switching to deliveries. While Kalra is still toying with the idea, Padmanabhan, a South Indian restaurant in Delhi, has created a limited delivery menu, and delivers free of cost in a five-km radius. "We call our chefs on rotation to cater to 30-35 orders a day, and send our own boys for contactless delivery," says Vidur Kanodia, Partner at Padmanabhan. He plans to continue with home delivery after the lockdown ends. "The industry will take a long time to bounce back. In the interim, we will continue with whatever keeps us going," he adds.

Nowhere to Ride

With most restaurants closed, delivery riders are finding it hard to make ends meet



Riders waiting for food delivery orders in Delhi Surbhi Gupta

SURBHI GUPTA

ZOMATO DELIVERY rider Tanay Roy, 28, has been waiting to collect an order for the last 40 minutes, in south Delhi's Vasant Kunj, but hard luck. "A siren will ring when a new order is assigned, so you'll know," he says. As several other riders drive past him, he comments how everyone is having a hard time. "If they had orders to deliver, you would not find them driving so slowly," says he. Working with Zomato for a year now, he adds, "Usually, if I work for 12 hours, I earn about Rs 1,000. I would make 20 to 30 deliveries a day; now there are not more than two to three."

He is not alone. Several riders from food delivery companies Zomato and Swiggy can be seen parked along the roads in cities across India. With eateries in the malls shut, there are only a handful standalone restaurants that are sending out takeaways. Most riders are reportedly earning Rs 200 a day, a steep decline from the usual income of Rs 900 to 1,000.

Jaiprakash, father of three, shares that he has made 40 deliveries in the last one week, earning around Rs 2,000, with zero income on March 24, and Rs 20 on March 25, when the nationwide lockdown was followed by reports of delivery personnel being assaulted by the police. "When the police stopped me, I called my team leader, who was busy in a meeting and told me to call later. Since he did not respond, I

thought it was better to return home than to be beaten up," says Jaiprakash. "The next day, when I was on my way to pick an order, a police officer abused me and said that while the world is dying, I only cared about food deliveries. I felt bad, so I returned home again," he adds. While the police is no longer stopping the riders, customers can also be rude and several colonies do not allow them to enter. "We can sit at home and not work, but we have children to feed," says another rider on condition of anonymity.

Most companies have instructed their employees to wear gloves and use masks and sanitisers. "We prefer to buy them on our own than go to the company's office. The Zomato outlet is in Madangir (in Delhi) and it takes a lot of time and petrol to go there, which we cannot afford, as we are daily wagers," says Brajesh Kumar, 30.

Contactless deliveries are also being encouraged. "We suggest people who have ordered cash on delivery to make payments through e-wallets," says Roy.

While Zomato co-founder Deepinder Singh tweeted on March 25 that he would start a "fund to cover up the lost earnings for thousands of their delivery partners", over 12 riders, who *The Indian Express* spoke to, said they were yet to hear of any compensation. On Tuesday, Swiggy also announced a relief fund called Swiggy Hunger Saviour Covid Relief Fund for "the safety and welfare of delivery partners and their families".

CROSSWORD 4082



- ACROSS**
- Two male animals bound for cover (7)
 - One with no faith in father backing a horse (5)
 - Inflowing currency (5,4)
 - It has a strong pull in the port trade (3)
 - Such a fuss getting to the party (2-2)
 - No occasion for generosity in the interim? (8)
 - These teeth are our last (6)
 - Think back about the capital of Germany, sir (6)
 - Dead estate agent (8)
 - Photograph without warning (4)
 - Energy with which an opening may be closed (3)
 - Careless way to get into debt (9)
 - Fascinating lady may stop people working (5)
 - Unkempt politician is ruled out (7)
- DOWN**
- To live well is right (5)
 - One hundred and two rings to make one call (3)
 - Went on the right lines (4)
 - A girl to help people out (6)
 - Cleaning down (8)
 - Well past one's prime, yet still making progress (7,2)
 - Slight oversight (7)
 - A dog's upset the paint (9)
 - The answer to a mix-up (8)
 - Breathes with difficulty and gags (7)
 - Cooperate with Italian scoundrel (6)
 - Sat when asked (5)
 - It's usually beaten in time (4)
 - Low form of night-life (3)

Solutions Crossword 4081: Across: 1 Category, 5 Cafe, 9 Lorna, 10 Craving, 11 Persona grata, 13 Put off, 14 Writhe, 17 Preparations, 20 Entreat, 21 Niece, 22 Yard, 23 Idolatry. Down: 1 Calif, 2 Torment, 3 Glass of water, 4 Racing, 6 Anita, 7 Engraved, 8 Danger signal, 12 Apoplexy, 15 Tangent, 16 Parted, 18 Enter, 19 Verity.

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.

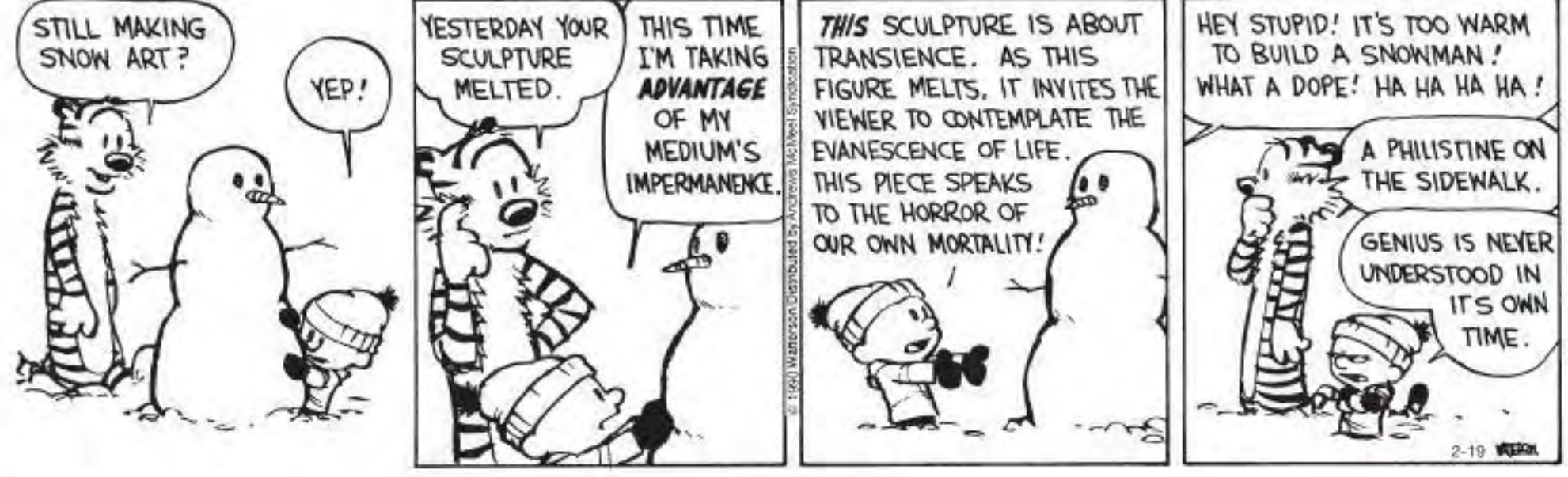
ATEOR IISTLN
FSIOT AELUUV

Answer: Revolution is not a onetime event - Audre Lorde

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



SUDOKU 4168

Difficulty Level 3s
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



DAY TODAY BY PETER VIDAL

- ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)**
In spite of the fact that everyone appears determined to pick up the wrong end of the stick, this does seem to be a good time to at least attempt to communicate. There is bound to be some considerable exaggeration, but if you take big promises with a pinch of salt, then you should protect yourself against major blunders.
- LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)**
What comes to light over the next few days should strengthen your bargaining power. You should check out any legal, ethical or longterm issues today, so that when an opportunity does come along, you are well primed - and can do your best by other people.
- TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)**
The next forty-eight hours should raise the financial temperature. Do concentrate on your own interests, in spite of the fact the others may have their own rather complex demands. Partners could still be rather fractious, and a loved one may need placating.
- SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)**
You do have a sense of humour, even if some people don't believe it. The moment has come for you to lead others a merry dance - which is just what they deserve. Do keep a very careful eye on the financial situation, partly because a partner is liable to take up a rather extreme position.
- GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)**
The Moon is now offering you a great deal of encouragement and you may right wrongs, make up for injustices and generally correct a serious personal imbalance. Don't imagine that you can get away with half-measures, though. It's time to go the whole way.
- SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)**
Now that one series of intensely personal planetary aspects is on the wane, you should begin to feel slightly less hassled. Yet don't expect genuine relaxation until after another few days have passed. Actually, you're most relaxed when you're busy.
- CANCER (June 22 - July 23)**
Make the fullest possible advantage of a series of splendid planetary aspects. Probably the prime consideration is to see that you take a little time off by yourself. Also, please don't believe unfounded rumours or imagine that others are undermining you.
- CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)**
You should spend a little time tuning your body up, with special attention to exercise and diet. You are slightly sensitive at the moment, and any emotional stress could leave you feeling under the weather. That's why partners should be nice to you. I know it, and you know it, but I hope they know it.
- LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)**
You've got more personal choices coming up. The question is whether you would rather spend time with friends who may be pleasant but dull, or with intimate partners who may be highly stimulating but also rather complicated and unpredictable.
- AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)**
You may leave yourself enough time for a spot of self-indulgence, but should realise that certain planets are tipping you into excess. That would never do. Remember the dangers of swinging to emotional extremes or of putting too many demands on partners.
- VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)**
If you have not already had some sort of completely random and ill-considered argument, whether with a close partner or a complete stranger, it may yet happen. Mind you, sometimes it does you good to blow your top. It's just that you have to clear up the mess afterwards.
- PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)**
There is still a considerable amount of tension, but life could be extremely exciting if you have a private goal that you are determined to achieve. Only Pisceans who are totally dedicated to a passive lifestyle will resent all those mounting personal pressures.



Here's a thought .. The IPL is played for the 5 weeks leading up to the T20 World Cup in Oz .. all players use it as the great warm up for the WC .. then the WC happens .. So important for the game that the IPL takes place but also the WC."

MICHAEL VAUGHAN, FORMER ENGLAND CAPTAIN

India was supposed to start its four-month countdown to the Olympics this moment. But forced into an unprecedented, grim lockdown as the world battles the Covid-19 outbreak, sport is staring at unfathomable despair. Indian athletes though have given the country reasons to rejoice in the past. *The Indian Express* looks back at a bunch of these memories.

'Vajpayee called me *Bharat ki beti*'

Malleswari regrets missing the gold but still relishes talking about the PM's call and his *shaayari* that she couldn't understand

SHASHANK NAIR

TO THIS day, former weightlifter Karnam Malleswari remains an underappreciated Olympic medallist in Indian history. It's six months shy of the 20th anniversary of her bronze-winning effort at the Sydney Games. She was the first Indian woman to win an Olympic medal. Add to that two World Championship golds and two bronze medals apart from two silver at the Asian Games – the 1990s saw the five-foot-four weightlifter from Voosavanipeta, Andhra Pradesh dominate the international scene – culminating in her greatest moment at the beginning of this century in Sydney.

Her greatest moment for everyone, except her. When one is really good at something – possibly the best in the world – coming third is a disappointment that refuses to fade away.

"My immediate reaction was that I had never gone there for bronze and I always felt I deserved a gold. I had worked that hard. If I thought my capacity was to just win bronze, I would have been fine with it. But because of someone else's fault (more on that later), I came down to bronze," Malleswari recalls.

"But the next day, I realised that the whole of India was celebrating my win. This medal didn't feel my own, but the whole country's. That made me feel a little better. Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee called me later that day. He congratulated me and called me '*Bharat ki beti*'. He was also reciting some *shaayari* – *main sun rahi thi but samajh kuch nahi aa raha tha*," she laughs.

The conversation with former Prime Minister is one of her happier memories of the Sydney experience. On the night of September 18, the eve of her event, Malleswari was anxious, and like most nights before any competition, couldn't eat anything.

"I had won medals everywhere by then and when you become an athlete of that calibre, the expectations of people take on another level. The Olympics is a big dream for every player. If we miss one Olympics, there is no guarantee that four years later you'll get that same opportunity – especially in weightlifting."

The next morning, Malleswari plucked some flowers from nearby and after a pooja with an idol of Ganesha that she carried around with her for all competitions, left for the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Weightlifting contests at the Olympics include two events – snatch and clean and jerk. That day, in the 69 kg snatch category, Malleswari's first lift was 105 kg, followed by 107.5 kg and then 110 kg. She was successful on all three attempts and, according to her, did it with ease.

"My coaches could have asked me to lift a bit more than what I did. I had picked all



three of my lifts very cleanly and easily. I had the capacity to lift 2.5-5 kilos more in that category," she claims.

In the clean and jerk, things didn't pan out as she had hoped.

"For the last lift, normally the procedure is to increase the weight by a maximum of 2.5 kgs. This is done because this is your last chance and if you miss it, the competition is over right there and then. If you have to take a risk, it has to be in the first lift or second lift – because if you can't lift your weight in the first try, there is a chance to find your balance and try again. My coaches asked me to lift 137.5 kg in the final lift, a jump of 7.5 kg from my previous lift. I still don't understand why they did it when it wasn't required."

Whether it was her own call or one that

...
"In 1994, there were three world champions. Me, Sushmita Sen and Aishwarya Rai. The world came to receive them at the airport ... *hum log auto rickshaw dhoond dhoond ke Nehru Stadium gaye.*"

her coaches made, is an unending blame game. Malleswari would lift 137.5kgs from the ground, but couldn't complete the jerk, possibly letting go of the gold medal. Her final total weight lifted after both events would be 240 kgs, 2.5 kgs short of the gold and silver medal positions. She believes a successful clean-and-jerk lift of 132.5kg would have put her right in the mix for the top spot on the podium, not to mention a bigger lift in snatch.

Malleswari has, on multiple occasions, talked about how lifting 137.5 kg was possible for her but on that day, she couldn't pull off the play that would have likely changed the colour of her medal. But even after almost 20 years, no one in India has come close to her record and performances.



THOSE MONTHS
THOSE MINUTES

SEPTEMBER, 2000

'Afternoon sessions meant changing T-shirt at least 6 or 7 times.'

19/09

'My coaches could have asked me to lift more... 2.5-5 kg more'

In her 20s, Malleswari had to go through more hoops and roadblocks than any average Indian Olympic athlete has to go through today. And after all these years, she describes the struggle that ended up shaping her.

"The support that was truly required, like going to a foreign country to train before the Olympics, was never there for me. In Patiala, the temperature can soar up to 45 degrees. Today, the training centre over there is fully air-conditioned. When we trained, we had to open a window – no fans, no coolers. Afternoon sessions meant changing t-shirts at least 6-7 times. And despite all the facilities in the world, the sad part is that my records, my performances, have still not been overtaken or beaten in the country," says the 44-year old, who now runs her own weightlifting centre along with her husband.

Even before the 2000 Olympics, Malleswari was one of the best in the world. Her last major medal was the Olympic bronze. She had already won two golds, two bronze and two silvers at the Worlds and the Asian Games from 1993-1999 before Sydney happened. But the talent she possessed and the grit she showcased was never appreciated in her prime and that's a grudge she still holds.

"In 1994, there were three world champions from India. Me, Sushmita Sen and Aishwarya Rai. I did it in sports, they became Miss Universe and Miss World. The whole world came to receive them at the airport when they returned to India. They got huge sponsors, became film stars... *hum log auto rickshaw dhoond dhoond ke Nehru Stadium gaye.*" She adds, "In 1995, I became World Champion, broke records. In 1999, I was conferred the Padma Shri. I was the first Indian woman to win an Olympic medal, breaking 100 years of history. But the central government never gave me another award. No Padma Bhushan or Padma Vibhushan."

'Global football could emerge better after crisis'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS, APRIL 2

FOOTBALL HAS ground to a halt due to the coronavirus pandemic, and the immediate concern is the simple survival of many clubs because of the financial impact, but there is hope that the global game could ultimately emerge better from this crisis.

"We are living through something none of us were used to and which will change us profoundly," Everton manager Carlo Ancelotti told *Corriere dello Sport*.

Not since World War II has the sport been forced to stop across Europe. The sudden interruption has exposed the deficiencies of a system intoxicated by huge sums of money.

Cutbacks are inevitable in the short term. "TV money will go down, players and coaches will earn less. Tickets will cost less because people will have less money. The economy will be different and so will football. Maybe it will be better," said Ancelotti.

"As with most things, crisis is an opportunity," football historian and academic David Goldblatt, author of recent book *The Age of Football*, told AFP, before sounding a warning.

Fairer distribution of money?

"It could actually get worse. For there to be real change there has to be a change in the way power and ownership is distributed in the

Boateng fined for visiting son without permission

Paris: Bayern Munich have fined defender Jerome Boateng for leaving the city "without permission", an act in breach of the strict rules of confinement imposed due to the coronavirus outbreak.

According to TVO television, the 31-year-old had left the city in order to visit his son who suffered minor injuries in a road traffic accident on Tuesday.

"Bayern defender Jerome Boateng left Munich yesterday without permission from the club," said the German champions in a statement.

"Boateng has transgressed the guidelines issued by the club by being too far away from his home.

game." At the moment the financial power belongs to the lucky few at the top, but even they are being hurt. That is likely to affect the transfer market, and huge spending sprees on players could become a thing of the past.

"In two or three years, it will not be possible to spend the sums we have been seeing because every country will be affected. In all likelihood a new footballing world will emerge from this," insisted former Bayern Munich president Uli Hoenes.

Already players at Barcelona – the richest

"These guidelines govern the behaviour of the FC Bayern players in the current situation in line with government directives on restrictions on movement and the recommendations of the health authorities."

Bayern did not specify the amount of the fine which was being donated to local hospitals.

"I know it was certainly a mistake not to inform the club of my journey, but at the time, I was only thinking about my son," Boateng told Bild newspaper.

"He was not in good health. If a son calls his father, then of course I will go, whatever the time of day." AFP

club in the world – have agreed a 70 percent pay cut. Clubs across Europe are taking similar measures. It is evidence that clubs, even in the elite, have been living on the edge, and it raises the question of whether salary caps could finally be seen as a way forward, despite the difficulties presented by EU rules.

In Germany, the Bundesliga's four Champions League representatives this season have pledged 20 million euros (\$22 million) to help crisis-hit clubs in an encouraging sign of solidarity.

Meanwhile, lessons may also be learned about how TV revenue is distributed in future.

Fewer games

It may also be time to rework the fixture calendar. The fashion for expanding existing tournaments – like staging a 48-team World Cup and 24-team Club World Cup – is surely not sustainable. "It is now high time that we find some rules to say ok, let's get out of this crisis as well as we can, but let's also put safeguards in that manage player loads successfully moving forward," warned Jonas Baer-Hoffmann, general secretary of global players' union FIFPro, as he called for "a much healthier set-up than we what have had lately."

FIFA president Gianni Infantino has acknowledged the calls for change, telling La Gazzetta dello Sport that "we can perhaps reform world football by taking a step back. With different formats. Fewer tournaments, maybe fewer teams, but more balanced."

Goldblatt, meanwhile, believes FIFA need to look again at plans to stage a 48-team World Cup in 2026 all across North America.

That, and the European Championship that UEFA intend to stage in 12 cities across the continent, are being planned in ways which appear at odds with the need to face up to another imminent threat: climate change.

"If we have learned anything from the last couple of months it is that we should listen to the scientists," Goldblatt says.

National committees have final say on qualified athletes

Athens: Athletes already qualified for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics will need to be picked again by their respective National Olympic Committees to compete at the postponed Games in 2021, the International Olympic Committee said on Thursday. "All of the qualifications that have been achieved by National Olympic Committees and individual athletes remain in place," IOC Sports director Kit McConnell said in a conference call. "Any athlete needs to be individually selected because they represent their NOC. In all sports the NOC retains the right to select the athletes." Some 57% of the 11,000 athletes had already qualified for the Tokyo Games before qualification tournaments were scrapped as the virus spread.

Club Brugge declared Belgian league champs

Paris: The Belgian football league has recommended that the current season be declared finished early due with the present league table accepted as final, it said in a

statement on Thursday. The decision is set to be validated at a General Assembly on April 15, meaning that Club Brugge would be declared champions as they currently sit 15 points clear of Gent at the top of the table. In a statement, the league said it was "very unlikely" to be able to hold matches before June 30 and that it had "unanimously decided that it was not desirable...to continue the competition" after that date. Belgium would become the first European league to take such a measure.

D/L method co-inventor Lewis dies aged 78

London: Tony Lewis, co-inventor of the Duckworth-Lewis method for settling weather-affected cricket matches, has died aged 78. Former university lecturer Lewis, together with mathematician Frank Duckworth, devised the formula that was first used in match between Zimbabwe and England in 1997 and adopted by the International Cricket Council (ICC) in 1999. "It is with much sadness that the ECB has learned of the passing of Tony Lewis MBE. Our thoughts are with Tony's family," the England and Wales Cricket Board said on Twitter. "Cricket is deeply indebted to both Tony and Frank's contributions to the sport." AGENCIES