



DAY 11: Cases doubling every 4.1 days, would have been 7.4 but for Tabligh congregation, says Ministry

As cases cross 3500, a pattern emerges: 80% in 62 districts

Aggressive containment action likely in hotspots after Apr 14

ABANTIKA GHOSH
NEW DELHI, APRIL 5

WHILE THERE has been a sharp spike in the number of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) cases and deaths over the past week, over 80% of the total positive cases have been traced to 62 districts across the country.

Top government sources said restrictions are likely to continue in these districts even after the nationwide 21-day lockdown ends on April 14.

Across the country, 274 districts have reported COVID-19 cases so far.

With 505 fresh cases being confirmed in the last 24 hours, the total number of cases is now 3,577, while the death toll has gone up to 83; on March 30, the tally was 1,251 cases and 32 deaths.

According to Health Ministry estimates, the current rate of doubling of COVID-19 cases is 4.1 days, but it would have been 7.4 days if the Tablighi Jamaat congregation had not happened in Delhi last month.

"There is a clear geographical skew in the spread; 62 districts are currently reporting over 80% cases and these will be the focus of an aggressive containment strategy in the Bhillwara model. We are also stepping up testing. In the last two days, the number of tests was doubled; we will again double in the next few days," said a source.

According to what is unofficially being referred to in the government as the "Bhillwara model", the containment zones, or areas reporting large number of cases, in these 62 districts will be sealed off. The strategy was found to be effective in Bhillwara (Rajasthan), which had emerged as a hotspot last month.

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9 PM, UNITED

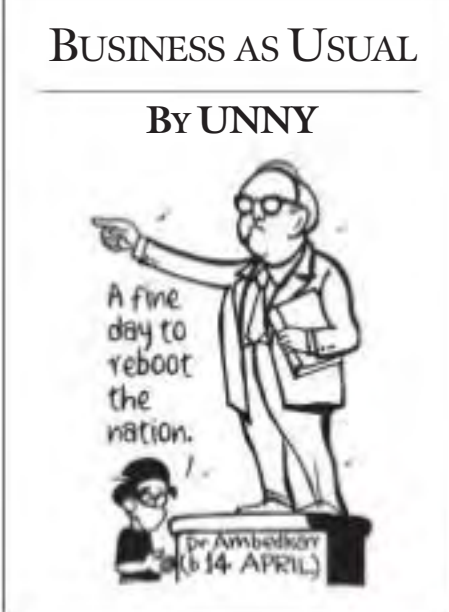
At an apartment complex in Ghaziabad's Raj Nagar Extension on Sunday. People across India responded to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call to light candles and diyas to "challenge the darkness of the coronavirus" outbreak. *Praveen Khanna*

Govt estimates: In next 2 months, need 27 mn N95s, 50000 ventilators

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, APRIL 5

ESTIMATING A spike in demand for personal protective equipment and diagnostic kits in the fight against COVID-19, the central government has calculated that the country will require about 27 million N95 masks, 15 million PPEs, 1.6 million diagnostic kits, and 50,000 ventilators in next two months, *The Indian Express* has learnt.

According to sources, this was conveyed to industry representatives during a meeting on April 3 of the empowered group of officials on "coordinating with private sector, NGOs and inter-



national organisations", which is headed by the NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant.

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After Trump-Modi call, India 'considers' release of 'game changer' drug

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, APRIL 5

HOURS AFTER US President Donald Trump said he has requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi to release the amount of hydroxychloroquine ordered by the United States, New Delhi is "considering the request", *The Indian Express* has learnt.

On Saturday, before the phone call between Modi and Trump, India had banned all exports of hydroxychloroquine, the malaria drug that the US President has repeatedly touted as a "game changer" in the fight against COVID-19.



Sources said the issue is likely to figure during the next Group of Ministers (GoM) meeting to tackle the coronavirus outbreak. The GoM, headed by Rajnath Singh, is likely to meet next week, possibly as early as Tuesday.

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8 Malaysians who were at Tabligh meet detained at Delhi airport

MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL
NEW DELHI, APRIL 5

EIGHT MALAYSIAN nationals, who were part of the Tablighi Jamaat gathering in Nizamuddin in New Delhi last month, were intercepted and detained by immigration authorities at Delhi's IGI airport while trying to board a special flight to Kuala Lumpur on Sunday.

COVID-19 cases in India have spiked ever since members of the Tablighi Jamaat who attended the gathering tested positive. Over 33 per cent of positive cases across the country have been traced to the Delhi congregation.

The eight Malaysians were intercepted by immigration authorities following a Delhi Police request to open a Look Out Circular against an estimated 200 people. The eight have since been detained by the Delhi Police Crime Branch.

Sources in the Crime Branch told *The Indian Express* that the detained persons are in the age group 25-28.

"One of them came to India in January, and another in February. The remaining six came in the first week of March."

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WORLD



IN PAK, OVER 300 TABLIGHIS POSITIVE; TRUMP WARNS OF A LOT OF DEATHS

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Day after testing positive, MP health official is back at work — from her room

MILIND GHATWAI
BHOPAL, APRIL 5

JUST A day after she tested positive for the coronavirus, Madhya Pradesh's Principal Secretary (Health) Pallavi Jain Govil, who is playing a key role in the state's fight against COVID-19, was back at work — from the room where she has been quarantined.

In a short video message on Sunday, Govil started with the day's health bulletin — 193 cases, with 13 deaths. Then, she said: "You must have read in newspapers that I have tested positive. Because we were continually



Principal Secretary (Health) Pallavi Jain Govil in the video

working with many officers, it's possible that I may have got the infection from someone. But I don't have any symptoms. I am

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In midst of lockdown, 200 gather to celebrate BJP MLA's birthday

VIVEK DESHPANDE
NAGPUR, APRIL 5

THROWING SOCIAL distancing caution to the winds, about 200 people gathered at the residence of Arvi BJP MLA Dadarao Keche in Wardha on Sunday.

Though Keche denied that he had invited people to celebrate his birthday, Sub-Divisional Officer Harish Dharmik has issued a notice to the local police, asking for action to be taken against Keche under provisions of the Disaster Management Act, the Epidemic Act, and other CrPC and IPC sections.

Keche told *The Indian Express*,



SDO has asked police to take action against MLA. *Express*

"I had only invited 21 labourers who lost their livelihoods due to coronavirus, and distributed

food grains to them. After that, around 11 am, I left to visit my

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Tracking phone locations, Delhi Police lodge 176 FIRs for breaking quarantine

MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL
NEW DELHI, APRIL 5

AFTER THE Delhi government shared more than 25,000 phone numbers of people under home quarantine with the Delhi Police, 176 FIRs have been registered against people whose phone location suggested they had stepped out of their residence.

According to senior police officers, SHOs across the capital's 15 police districts have been handed the phone numbers that fall in their jurisdiction, and are scanning movement of people using

mobile towers. Fourteen districts have compiled the data so far.

"Some officers, after tracking the phone, are also conducting surprise visits. In one such case in North West Delhi's Mukherjee Nagar, they found a man who was supposed to be in home quarantine taking an evening walk. An FIR was registered against him. In South Campus, police found a man on a morning walk, and booked him under IPC sections 269 (negligent act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life), 270 (malignant act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life) and

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5 militants, 3 soldiers die in Kashmir gunbattle

ADIL AKHZER
SRINAGAR, APRIL 5

IN THE first major operation against infiltrators near the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir this year, five militants and at least three soldiers were killed in a gunfight in Kupwara district.

Two other soldiers were injured in the operation that was launched after the Army intercepted a group of infiltrators in Keran sector last week. J&K Police claimed that the five militants were from the Lashkar-e-Taiba.

Defence sources told *The Indian Express* that Army personnel deployed on the LoC intercepted a group of militants in the Jamgund forest on April 1 following which a brief exchange of fire took place. Later, a massive search was launched in the area, with all exit points sealed and additional forces deployed.

"Fresh contact with the militants was established on Saturday and in the ensuing operation, which is still underway, five infiltrators have been killed so far," said a senior Army officer.

Defence spokesperson Col Rajesh Kalia said: "Alert troops braving inclement weather and hostile terrain have so far eliminated five terrorists attempting to infiltrate across the LoC, taking advantage of bad weather."

Kalia said two soldiers later

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AVINASH NAIR
ALANG (BHAVNAGAR), APRIL 5

"IF ALANG was Delhi, I would have fled home," says Rajendra Chauhan, hammering nails into planks of wood stained with oil and grease.

The 49-year-old, a worker at the ship breaking yard at Alang in Gujarat, is using wood salvaged from old ships to make a cot that he can lie on, when his shanty, with its stone walls and tin roof, gets unbearably hot during the day. Anyway, there's little work these days and most afternoons are spent thinking of



home in Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh.

At Alang, one of the biggest ship-breaking yards in the world, migrant workers from across the country work to turn hundreds of ships, big and small, into scrap every year. Chauhan says he uses gas cutters to slice

through the bodies of large ships, a work he has been doing for the last 15 years.

But the panic over coronavirus and the ensuing 21-day lockdown to check the spread of COVID-19 has brought all ship-breaking activities in Alang to a halt and left around 25,000 migrant workers, who stay along the 10-km coast in Bhavnagar district, stranded.

Giant skeletons of ships now line the greasy shore, the jaws of cranes suspended over them. Each of the half-broken ships lie within plots leased out to ship-breaking firms, separated from the road outside by large



At the shipbreaking yard in Alang in Gujarat, workers, mainly from UP and Bihar, complain that they have not been paid for March, and their money is running out. *Javed Raja*

iron gates.

These days, the workers at Alang mostly sit outside their shanties that face the sea, talking of how the "sudden" lockdown brought their lives to a standstill.

"Suddenly, the trains and buses stopped and we couldn't leave. Walking from Alang is not an option. We can easily die on the way due to exhaustion," says Suresh Singh, also from Gorakhpur. Alang is 50 km from the nearest city, Bhavnagar.

While some workers say they are yet to get their March salaries, others who have say they the ship breakers haven't guaranteed work or their salaries

for April.

Hari Ram, who is from Bihar and has been working at Alang for 15 years, pulls out a small wad of Rs 50 and Rs 10 notes from his pocket. "I had a debt of over Rs 4,000 which I repaid and now this is all that's left of my March salary. I have only half a kg of rice left, some of which I ate this morning. I live alone near a Shiva temple and I now am completely dependent on Him to see me through this phase," he says.

"What if this lockdown is extended? At least allow us to leave this place and return to our homes," he adds.

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