THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 2020, NEW DELHI, LATE CITY, 12 PAGES

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#### TESTING IN PRIVATE LABS TO BE FREE,

orders SC, tells govt to provide PPEs to doctors

SURVEILLANCE, AAROGYA APP DATA

will be merged to test the symptomatic

FINANCE MINISTRY TIGHTENS BELT, puts limits on expenditure for next 3 months

# Message in the chorus: Stay with lockdown

PM consults parties, final decision on April 11 after talk with CMs

**MANOJCG** NEW DELHI, APRIL 8

ON A day when the number of COVID-19 cases across the country crossed 5,000, Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave the first clear signal that some restrictions are likely to continue after the 21-day lockdown period ends on April 14.

In a video conference with floor leaders of various political parties on Wednesday, Modi said the government's priority is to save each and every life, and the feedback from districts, opinion of experts and experience of other countries all showed that a lockdown is perhaps the only way to check the spread of COVID-19.

Meanwhile, 485 fresh cases and 25 more deaths were reported in the last 24 hours; the number of cases has now gone up to 5,274 (411 recovered), and the death toll is 149.

According to a government statement, Modi emphasised that several state governments, district administrations and experts had pressed for extension of the lockdown. He. however. said he would hold another round of discussions with the chief ministers on April 11 before taking a final decision.

Last week, Modi had told the chief ministers to formulate a common but staggered exit strategy to lift the lockdown.

"The Prime Minister underlined that the situation in the country is akin to a 'social emergency'. The country has been forced to take tough decisions, and must continue to remain vigilant," the statement quoted him as saying.

This was Modi's first interaction with leaders of political CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

From Ground Zero:

Tested in hospitals,

they died hours later



Migrants quarantined at a school in Nanpara area of Bahraich district in Uttar Pradesh. Vishal Srivastav REPORT, PAGE 6

## Across party lines, one demand: Need more aid from Centre, more tests

**MANOJCG** & HARIKISHAN SHARMA NEW DELHI, APRIL 8

**CUTTING ACROSS party lines,** floor leaders of political parties on Wednesday asked the Centre to announce more financial relief measures, economic stimulus package, ramp up testing for COVID-19, release all dues including GST compensation to states and called for procurement of rabi crops from farmers.

In their video conference with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, some also raised the Tablighi Jamaat issue, and asked the government to ensure that there is no communalisation.

crossed 40 km and four hospitals

before succumbing to the virus.

And the 43-year-old mother

whose daughter is still struggling

to understand what happened.

health conditions, such as dia-

betes, asthma and high blood

pressure. "In most of the deaths,

the patients reached us in a crit-

ical stage," says Dr Hemant

Deshmukh, the Dean of KEM

hospital, one of the government

hospitals that is treating COVID-

deaths so far, Maharashtra's

death rate (6.3 per cent) is much

higher than the national count

(2.6 per cent) and the global av-

Mumbai, where over 10,000 tests

have been done so far, *The Indian* 

Express tracked the final days of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

At the state's Ground Zero in

erage (5.5 per cent).

With 1,135 cases and 72

19 patients.

Most of them had underlying



Representing the Congress, Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad drew Modi's attention to reports of shortage of personal protective equipment for medical staff and asked the government to focus on providing adequate PPEs and insurance cover to frontline

INSIDE

HARYANA. DELHI

**MEALS, KERALA** 

**PAGES 5, 6** 

**GOVTS GAVE MOST** 

**SHELTERED 3 LAKH** 

FOR POST-APRIL 14

PLAN, RLYS TO ASK

STATES ABOUT NEED

FOR SPECIAL TRAINS

THE IDEAS PAGE

**AVOID THE FOOD** 

**LOCKDOWN** 

**BY JEAN DREZE** 

PAGE 9

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

central government and several states are inclined to extend the current lockdown beyond April 14. Two weeks into the lock-411 RECOVERED down period, there is no indica-1,27,919 samples have been tion yet that the largest quarantested as on April 8, 2020 tine exercise in the world is having the desired effect of slowing down the spread of the

> COVID-19 disease. Scientists using computer models to measure the spread of an infectious

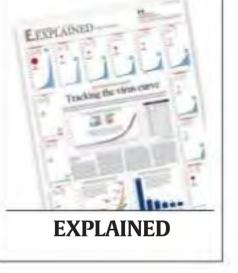
**AMITABH SINHA** 

& KARISHMA MEHROTRA

THERE IS good reason why the

PUNE, NEW DELHI, APRIL 8

disease say they are yet to notice a "flattening of the growth curve". This does not mean that the lockdown has been a



wasted exercise, however. It is too early to draw such a conclusion. Sitabhra Sinha of the

> Institute Mathematical Sciences in Chennai said he expected the impact of the lockdown to **CONTINUED ON PAGE 4**

## Pooled testing planned in zero-case districts to get the real picture

Virus curve up, lockdown

impact may take a while

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** NEW DELHI, APRIL 8

PUSHING FOR increased testing, health authorities are all set to do pooled testing in some of the 436 districts of the country from where no case of COVID-19 has been reported. This will be done to get a "realistic estimation" of the spread of the disease, highly placed government sources said, and the areas will be selected

based on information available. Into the third week of the 21day lockdown, there is realisation in the government that without adequate testing in the COVIDfree districts, there is an inherent risk in taking any decision on the lockdown. That is why information from two databases — from Aarogya Setu app and surveillance — will be merged to choose the areas where pooled testing



Pool testing to be via RT-PCR, not serological tests. PTI

will be done among symptomatic people. These tests will be done through RT-PCR, the nucleic acidbased test that India has been using from the start, and not the recently introduced faster option of serological tests, sources said.

"We already have a couple of crore downloads of the Aarogya Setu app. The tracking data from that will give us an idea about CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## UP and Delhi seal hotspots until April 15: No one gets in or out

CITY

22 POCKETS NOW IN **DELHI CONTAINMENT ZONES, NET TO WIDEN** 

People crowd shops in Noida after the sealing announcement Wednesday. Gajendra Yadav

**IN KEJRIWAL CHAT** WITH MPs, PPEs FLAGGED PAGES 3, 4

home delivery of essential items measures, movement of people would be allowed. will be completely curbed in these hotspots, and all shops will While entire districts will not face such stringent lockdown be shut.

In Delhi, too, 20 small pockets, including lanes and apartment complexes, were notified as 'containment zones', wherein tougher restrictions, including on essential services, will be implemented. By Thursday, more areas are likely to be sealed, which include Central Delhi's Sadar Bazar and pockets of West

The Indian Express. "Many cases were reported from the Sadar area, so it is being contained and sealed. There are **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2** 

Cash 'stress':

Finance tells

ministries to

limit spends

during Q1

NEW DELHI, APRIL 8

THE FINANCE Ministry is of the

view that the situation arising

out of COVID-19 and the subse-

quent lockdown may cause

"stress" to the government's

cash position in the first quarter

sued by the Budget Division in

the Department of Economic

Affairs on Wednesday, the min-

istry put the Demand for Grants,

or in simple words, the expendi-

ture estimates, of various depart

three categories A, B or C.

ments or ministries, in one of the

B. 31 Demands for Grants are

listed, including those of min-

istries such as fertilisers, posts,

external affairs and home affairs

For these demands, the Finance

Ministry has stipulated that the

monthly expenditure should be

kept at 8 per cent of the BE for

April, and 6 per cent each for the

next two months. In other words,

these ministries have been asked

not be spend beyond 20 per cent

of their full year Budget Estimate.

Demands for Grants of 52 de-

partments or ministries are

listed. These include ministries

and departments such as coal

chemicals and petrochemicals

tourism, steel, women and child

Similarly, under Category C

For instance, under Category

In an office memorandum is-

(April-June) of 2020-21.

**LIZ MATHEW** 

Delhi, district magistrates told

## Trump snaps at WHO — and India quietly sidestepped some of its advisories on virus

**ABANTIKA GHOSH & SHUBHAJIT ROY** NEW DELHI. APRIL 8

MAULSHREE SETH,

LUCKNOW, APRIL 8

AMIL BHATNAGAR &

**SOURAV ROY BARMAN** 

THE UTTAR Pradesh govern-

ment on Wednesday decided to

seal coronavirus hotspots in 15

districts until April 15 as part of a

cluster containment exercise,

where only medical services and

THE PUBLIC snub to the World Health Organisation (WHO) and a threat to cut its funding is characteristic of Donald Trump, and may not find an echo in New Delhi.

However, the fact is when it comes to key aspects of COVID management, the government has politely sidestepped the periodic "advice" from the WHO and, instead, leaned on the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the experience of several state governments — from Kerala and Uttar Pradesh to Rajasthan and Maharashtra.

This despite the fact that the WHO has been, like with immunisation, TB and other neglected tropical diseases, closely working with the Centre and states on the novel coronavirus outbreak, and its staff are helping state governments ramp up training and capacity-building.

Most recently, on April 3, the government's advisory on the use of masks while stepping out



of the house was at variance with that of the WHO, which said this should be only for those who are symptomatic, health workers, or caregivers to COVID patients.

where the government veered off the WHO track.

Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that WHO did not recommend travel restrictions to China — in fact, it

That's not the only point Consider:

On January 30, WHO CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

#### **THE WORLD**

**MASKED CROWDS SWARM WUHAN'S LOCKDOWN ENDS** 

**GLOBAL BODY SPLIT ON** 

development, youth affairs and sports, shipping, mines, higher

STREETS AS 76-DAY

EUCASES TOP 7 LAKH, **CORONABONDS** PAGE 10

#### education, among others. The Finance Ministry has asked these **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

## PAGE 1 ANCHOR

**TABASSUM** 

**BARNAGARWALA** 

& SAGAR RAJPUT

HE SPENT his final hours on a chair

in the ICU, pulling oxygen from a

tube. He watched attendants

wrap up the bodies of two pa-

tients. Finally, he was given a bed

of his own in the middle of the

night. Six hours later, he was dead.

stories of the coronavirus out-

break in Mumbai – 714 cases

and 45 deaths at last count -- are

the frantic final hours of those

who died barely hours after

reaching hospital and being

a dates trader who watched two

bodies being taken away in front

of him at KEM Hospital. Or, the

57-vear-old electrician who

Like the 67-year-old father of

Buried under the countless

MUMBAI. APRIL 8

## Cash over, women queue to draw Rs 500 from Jan Dhan accounts

#### **RAVIK BHATTACHARYA &** SANTANU CHOWDHURY BONGAON, KOLKATA, APRIL 8

AT 4 AM, Saswati Das, 22, left in her husband's toto (e-rickshaw) with her mother-in-law Parul, 40, and her 12-year-old son to join the queue outside the State Bank of India's Customer Service Point in Chandpara in West Bengal's

North 24-Parganas district.

At nearly noon, both women still had some distance to go to reach the cash counter. Saswati's husband and child were waiting for them in the toto. "The government has put Rs 500 in our

accounts. We need the money. My husband drives this toto and he has had no work," Saswati said, adding that he used to earn about Rs 400 a day before the lockdown.

To help families tide over difficulties brought by the 21-day lockdown, the government had announced that Rs 500 per month would be deposited in the accounts of women Jan Dhan Yoiana beneficiaries for three months. The first installment was

to be deposited starting April 3. For the last couple of days, long queues of women — accompanied by children or other family members — have been

**TEST REP** RTS **FROM THE FIELD** TRACKING THE VIRUS. LOCKDOWN

seen outside banks in districts across West Bengal. Many of them have been seen walking with their children or cycling to these centres.

Most banks have been dispensing cash through Customer Service Points, mostly singleroom set-ups in rural areas.



"I was here yesterday too, but before I could get to the counter, they shut. Yesterday, my motherin-law was home and she looked after my child and did the cooking. But today, both of us decided to come. If both of us get Rs 500 each, we can at least ensure food for some more days," said Saswati. "When the lockdown was announced, we rushed to buy food with whatever cash we had. Now people have been saying the lockdown will continue.

At Gaighata, North 24-Parganas in West Bengal, Wednesday. Partha Paul

we have no cash left." With the lockdown entering

Day 15 and earning members without work, families in rural Bengal have seen their cash depleting fast. About 10 km away from

where Saswati and Parul stood, near Bus Stand No 44 in Bongaon, also in North 24-Parganas district, Bithika Mondol, 35, stood in another snaking queue - she said she had been waiting since 3 am. Her husband Nitai, who drove a van, has been without work since March 22. "We decided against coming

on the first two days because we **CONTINUED ON PAGE 4** 

## **♦**TheIndian **EXPRESS**

WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM



#### **COVID-19 TRACKER: WHICH COUNTRIES HAVE REVERSED THE TREND IN DAILY CASES?** Even as the number of global COVID-19 infections crossed 1.4 million Wednesday, with the death toll at 82,119, as many as six out of 10 worst coronavirus-hit nations have reported a drop in the daily number of

**VIDEO OF THE DAY** 



**HOW AN INCUBATOR IS** FIGHTING VIRUS

A Pune incubator has manufactured a face shield

**TECH** 



WHATSAPP GROUP **CALLS** 

WhatsApp made group video, audio calls easier. But there's a catch

# **EXPRESS**

**Why is** Hydroxychloroquine being discussed?

**NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY** 

On today's episode, reporters and epidemiologists talk about what the drug is used for and whether it can work to stop the spread of COVID-19.

## **FROM PAGE ONE**

### Trump snaps

was opposed to such an idea. This despite the fact that the

same day, the WHO's International Health Regulations Emergency Committee raised a global alert on the need for containment, surveillance, detection, isolation, and even contact trac-

By this time, India's first advisory on avoiding non-essential travel to China dated January 25, was already in place.

■ Three days after the WHO statement, India advised citizens to refrain from travel to China, a step up from its earlier advisory.

■ On March 16, Ghebreyesus said that the WHO's key message is "test test test". On March 22, ICMR head Dr Balram Bhargava said: "There will be no indiscriminate testing. Isolation, Isolation, isolation."

Hours later, India went into lockdown, starting with 75 districts and then, from midnight of March 24, the whole country. The decision was based on a paper by ICMR that quarantine is a more effective way of containing the virus than even airport screening.

As the case count crossed 5,000, India has decided to ramp up testing although the protocol is likely to remain the same symptomatic people with travel or contact history, health workers with symptoms, all hospitalised patients with severe acute respiratory illness (fever, cough etc), and asymptomatic direct and high-risk contacts of a confirmed patient (once between days 5 and 14 of having come in

With the ICMR issuing an advisory for the use of rapid antibody tests in "areas reporting clusters (containment zone) and migration gatherings/evacuees centres", the serological tests are also set to be conducted on a wider scale.

contact).

■The day after the lockdown began, WHO executive director Mike Ryan said: "Without implementing the necessary measures, without putting in place those protections, it's going to be very difficult for the country to exit (the lockdown). And when they do, they have a resurgence and I

think that's the challenge now."

■ WHO's clinical care guidelines clearly lay down that there is "no current evidence to recommend any specific anti-COVID-19 treatment for patients". India, nevertheless, first included two of its undertrial antivirals lopinavir and ritonavir — in its clinical care guidelines for patients of the novel coronavirus disease, and then revised the management guidelines to replace the antivirals with a combination of hydroxychloroguine and the antibiotic azithromycin.

It has, however, recently announced its decision to be a part of a global drug trial anchored by the WHO. This despite the fact that a 20-subject French trial on the efficacy of the two drugs is widely considered to be too small to be acceptable.

On March 26, addressing the virtual G-20 summit to deal with Covid, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks were telling when he underscored the need to "strengthen and reform intergovernmental organisations like

WHO". WHO officials declined to comment on points of difference

with the government. Henk Bekedam, the WHO Representative to India, said: "India is at a crucial juncture in its fight against COVID-19. It is a moment that must be fully seized. WHO has been working closely with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and various state governments on preparedness and response measures for COVID-19, including surveillance and contact tracing; laboratory and research protocols; risk communications; hospital prepared-

ness; training on infection pre-

vention and control and cluster containment plan. WHO stands together in solidarity with the government in its firm resolve to overcome this unprecedented challenge."

#### Cash 'stress'

ministries to restrict their monthly spend to 5 per cent of the full year's Budget Estimate.

Category A comprises 17 Demand for Grants, which will follow the guidelines as they existed earlier for them. Emphasising that it was es-

sential to regulate government expenditure, the Finance Ministry said it was important to fix and stick to the plan specified. It said that large expenditure items would continue to be regulated as before, and said deviation from the current guidelines would require prior approval of the Finance Ministry.

The move comes in the backdrop of economic uncertainty given the drastic disruption of economic activity due to the outbreak of the pandemic. Pre-existing stress in the economy has left the government will little cushion to fall back upon now.

The outbreak has upset the assumptions and calculations made in the Budget presented by the Finance Minister two months back. It is expected to adversely impact revenue mobilisation. This was reflected in the GST collections for the March as well as the net direct tax collections figures of 2019-20.

The government's net direct tax collections for 2019-20 witnessed a contraction over last year, a situation witnessed after a gap of 20 years. In fact, the government's net direct tax collections fell short of the reduced revised target for 2019-20 by Rs 1.42 lakh crore at Rs 10.27 lakh crore, which meant a decline of over 8 per cent from previous year's receipts.

On the indirect tax front, too, the government revenues have come under tremendous strain. The GST revenues for March 2020 slipped below Rs one lakh crore after recording collections of over Rs one lakh crore in each of the previous four consecutive months till February

Hamstrung by economic slowdown, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had revised downward the estimate of expenditure to Rs 26.99 lakh for 2019-20 and projected a nominal growth of 10 per cent to budget the expenditure at Rs 30.42 lakh crore for the ongoing fiscal. However, this estimate is likley to come under pressure over disruption in economic activities that will strain the government's revenue mobilisation in the current fiscal.

#### **UP** hotspots

20 such places in Delhi where people are not allowed to come out of their lanes or apartments and people from outside are also not allowed to go in," Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said.

In Uttar Pradesh, the hotspots are in districts where more than six cases have been reported, including Agra, Lucknow, Ghaziabad, Gautam Budh Nagar (which includes Noida and Greater Noida), Kanpur Nagar, Varanasi, Sitapur, Shamli, Meerut, Bulandshahr, Saharanpur, Bareilly, Firozabad, Basti and Maharajganj.

Despite the administration urging people not to panic, long queues formed outside grocery stores in the evening in several areas, including Noida, Greater Noida, and Ghaziabad, as people attempted to stock up on essential supplies. As the footfall surged, many shopkeepers reported running out of essential items since supply lines have al-

ready been hit. Speaking to The Indian Express, Chief Secretary R K Tiwari said, "We have decided to Prime Minister consults parties

parties after announcing the

21-day lockdown on March 24.

According to sources, the PM underlined that he had not come across any opinion which suggests that lifting the lockdown at this juncture is "advisable". The view that is emerging so far, he said, is that lifting the lockdown is not going to be "simple" and the norms for ensuring social distancing will have to be en-

forced strictly. "Kareeb kareeb mood yeh ban raha hain ki ek dam se lockdown uthana to sambhav nahin hoga (The mood more or less is that it won't be possible to lift the lockdown in one go)," sources quoted him as saying.

The video conference, which lasted almost four hours, was attended by leaders

He asked the government to

conduct extensive testing and

make it free of cost. He de-

manded doubling and tripling

of BSL2 and BSL3 laboratory fa-

and sector-wise approach. "The

government should focus more

on areas where there are more

cases... divide such areas into

other leaders, demanded more

relief, like free ration, for work-

ers in distress. He suggested

that MGNREGA workers be in-

volved in harvesting of rabi

crops, which will help them as

Sharad Pawar raised the

Tablighi Jamaat issue and told

the PM that communalisation

would be unfortunate and the

incident should not be given too

pension of MPLADS funds also

came up during the discussion.

Regional parties like the

Trinamool Congress, DMK and

YSR Congress suggested that

the MPLADS fund should be di-

rectly transferred to the states

so that they can use it according

"It is only through the

to their requirements.

Sources said the issue of sus-

much attention now.

Sources said NCP chief

Azad, along with several

Azad suggested a targeted

health workers.

sectors," he said.

well as farmers.

cilities.

of 16 parties. The Secretaries of various departments, including Home, Health and Rural Development ministries, gave a detailed presentation on the steps taken by the government to deal with the situation.

Sources said the leaders, cutting across party lines, urged the government to announce more financial relief to help vulnerable sections, ramp up testing, provide adequate personal protective equipment to doctors and health workers, release various dues of the states and assist them financially in meeting the challenge.

In his reply, Modi admitted that the country is facing serious economic challenges and asserted that the government is committed to overcoming

MPLADS fund that MPs are able

to fulfil the demands of people

of their constituencies," DMK's

T R Baalu said. To cut govern-

ment expenditure, Baalu sug-

gested that the Central Vista

project should be suspended for

relief package announced by

the Centre was inadequate. "All

other countries are putting in at

least 10 per cent of their GDP.

America has committed \$ 2.3

trillion package. We are a \$ 2.7

trillion economy... the bare

minimum we should put in is

about Rs 17-18 lakh crore...

there is going to be massive

amount of refinancing re-

quired... massive amount of

moratoriums and loan write-

offs required. You have to put

money in the states' kitty," he

said. He asked the government

not to focus on the fiscal deficit

of drugs like hydroxychloro-

quine was also raised by some

parties. YSRCP leader V Vijayasai

Reddy is learnt to have said that

before allowing such export, the

government should assess

whether the country has ade-

Sanjay Raut also spoke about in-

terference of Governors in the

Pawar and Shiv Sena's

The issue of allowing export

barriers.

quate stock.

BJD's Pinaki Mishra said the

now, sources said.

Sources said Modi likened the situation with the Emergency. In such a situation, he said, the government would have to take "apratyashit" (unexpected) and "stern" decisions.

Some leaders like Shiv Sena's Sanjay Raut suggested a graded response, saying that restrictions can be eased in districts which have not recorded any positive cases so far.

Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad told reporters that his party would support any decision taken by the central government (on the lockdown) in consultation with the state governments.

Modi told the leaders that big changes in the work culture and working style of the country would be needed. Speaking

administrative work at the dis-

trict level. Both pointed out that

there is a protocol by which the

Governor's office can get infor-

mation from the district level.

Several leaders urged the

Parties ask Centre for more financial aid

about how the world's "viewpoint" changed after World War II, he said the world would change post-COVID 19 too.

According to the government statement, Modi noted that the country had witnessed "constructive and positive politics" through the coming together of all sections of polity to present a united front in the battle against the pandemic.

"The Prime Minister underlined the impact of the emerging situation, as witnessed in the resource constraints. Yet, India has been among the few nations to control the pace of spread of the virus till now. He also warned that the situation keeps changing continuously and one needs to maintain vigil at all times," the statement

the spread. The lockdown

should be continued if neces-

sary, till the situation is com-

pletely under control," said Lok

Janshakti Party president Chirag

held in a very positive environ-

ment... Everyone lauded the

firm steps taken by the Prime

Minister. The leaders across

political parties appreciated

the way the Prime Minister

took the lockdown decision.

They promised to support the

Prime Minister in future also. I,

on behalf of my party, want to

assure that whatever steps the

Prime Minister takes in future

to check the spread of this pan-

demic, the Lok Janshakti Party

will fully support him," he said.

Kareem asked the govern-

ment to immediately transfer

Rs 5,000 to all Jan Dhan ac-

counts, BPL and unorganised

workers, provide 35 kg food-

grain per family to all migrant

workers and the poor, declare

harvest of standing crops as an

essential service, ease restric-

tions for farmers and provide

harvesting equipment and

free seeds for the coming sea-

son. He also asked the govern-

ment to deploy rapid testing

kits on a large scale across the

country.

Elamaram

CPI(M)'s

"The entire meeting was

Paswan.

last week.

complained of uneasiness, his brother him to Burhani Hospital in the locality, where he was not admitted because there was no ventilator. "We went to the Kalwa civil hospital, 6 km away, where a doctor asked us to go to Sewri TB hospital in Mumbai," says the brother.

It took another four hours before an ambulance could be arranged in the middle of the night, he says. "We reached the TB hospital at 7.30 am on April 3. A doctor checked him, said he did not have TB and asked us reach KEM Hospital, which we did around two hours later. There were many patients and few doctors, I wish someone had told us what was happening," says the

At 8.45 pm, the patient was put on ventilator support. "The next morning, around 11, a doctor told me my brother had suffered acute respiratory distress and died," says the brother.

that the patient had COVID-19. Seven of his family members are under quarantine in the Thane civil hospital, awaiting their swab results.

#### **MALE, 64**

Employed as a security guard, he was staying with his wife in a slum in Mulund. "He hadn't travel anywhere recently, but had been suffering from asthma for the last ten years. He also had high blood pressure and diabetes," says a relative.

According to the relative, the patient developed a cough and high fever last week. "His wife took him to a private hospital, where they conducted an x-ray. The doctors did not admit him, and asked her to take him to another hospital. But his wife got him home," says the relative.

plained of breathlessness, and was rushed to Hira Mongi Navneet hospital, where doctors said the symptoms indicated COVID-9 infection. "They asked the family to take him to Kasturba Hospital, where he was admitted in the afternoon. On April 4, he tested positive, and suffered respiratory failure in the evening... His wife's test has come COVID-19 negative, but she is still in hospital as a precaution," the relative

#### FEMALE, 43 COMORBIDITY: DIABETES, LUNG AND

**HEART AILMENTS** 

says.

down from their home on the first floor to the road, and got two two-wheeler riders to take them to Nair Hospital. "There, a throat swab was taken at the emergency ward. The ward boys and

at least one private hospital had nurses had no time to talk, they admitted my husband earlier," seemed go be in a panic," he says. says the wife. "Her swab tested positive and the At Noor Hospital, Dr Aabid next afternoon, a ward boy told

Khan, the general physician, says me she had died." they are now referred all cases of cough and cold to government in the Jogeshwari Trauma hospitals. At Ruby Nursing Home, paediatrician Dr Ashish Pathrekar says they have stopped admitting patients with similar symptoms.

#### **MALE, 57**

**COMORBIDITY: DIABETES** Between April 2 and April 3,

the patient, an electrician with a wife and two daughters based in Thane's Mumbra, visited three hospitals before succumbing to the infection at the KEM Hospital on the morning of April 4. According to relatives, the

family was suffering from jaundice, and the patient complained of difficulty in breathing earlier On April 2, when the patient

The next day, tests confirmed

#### COMORBIDITY: DIABETES, HIGH BLOOD

PRESSURE, ASTHMA

On April 3, the patient com-

A resident of Nagpada, the patient's husband says she com-

plained of breathlessness in the last week of March. "She had lung disease for the last 12 years," he On April 2, he carried her

samples have not been tested yet. "We don't understand what is happening. No doctor or nurse has the time to explain what this

Hospital since April 3, but their coronavirus is, or why we have been kept here," says the patient's daughter.

Six other family members are

#### Testing planned the spread of the disease and then there is our own surveil-

lance data. Merging these two databases, we will do pooled testing in select areas of some of the COVID-free districts to see if they really are free of the disease. The NCDC (National Centre for Disease Control) will choose the areas and once all tests are negative in symptomatic people, we can say with reasonable certainty that that a particular geography is free of COVID," a highly placed source said.

In this context, sources said Prime Minister Narendra Mod held a high-level meeting Tuesday on the Aarogya Setu app. It was attended, among others, by Cabinet ministers Rajnath Singh Amit Shah, Ram Vilas Paswan Ravi Shankar Prasad, Piyush Goyal and Prakash Javadekar.

During the meeting, a team of experts was learnt to have made a presentation on the app and its role in tracking the corona-positive cases and also alerting people to observe social distancing from places visited or populated by those who had tested positive.

The presentation indicated the push for the app from the highest levels of the government "We will have to use technology not only for better tracking of positive cases but also helping unaffected population from getting close to positive cases. The data generated will also be used to better plan isolation and quarantine facilities in the event of the pandemic intensifying any further," sources said.

Till date, 131,271 tests have been done on symptomatic people with travel or contact history medical professionals or asymptomatic contacts of confirmed cases. Of these, 13345 tests were done in the last 24 hours in 139 ICMR labs and 2266 cases in 69 private laboratories. India is making a concerted push to double testing every few days to reach 40,000 daily tests.

Meanwhile, as the number of positive cases in the country reached 5274 (411 recovered, 149 deaths), ICMR has maintained that the number of deaths is too few to come to the conclusion that the number of deaths is significantly more in Maharashtra The state, which has reported 1018 cases, has seen 64 deaths so far — the highest in the country. Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh with 13 deaths each are a distant second in terms of the number of deaths.

Responding to a query on the high death figures in Dr R R Maharashtra, Gangakhedkar, head of the department of epidemiology and infectious diseases at ICMR, said: "You cannot decide less or more deaths on the basis of absolute numbers. Currently, if you see, the number of deaths is so smal that to say there have been significantly more deaths in Maharashtra is not correct. May be a chance event, you should see from that perspective. You cannot say it is significantly high." Lav Agarwal, Joint Secretary

in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, said: "Even a single death is an area of concern but you have to understand the risk factors such as comorbidity and age. Also, early identification is a major factor in the management of the disease. That is why community support is so crucial."

seal hotspots in 15 districts of the state. Rest of the places would continue with the usual lockdown exercise. Hotspots are places from where a cluster of coronavirus cases have been reported. These places would be sealed and only medical services and home delivery would be allowed." Additional Chief Secretary

Awanish Awasthi said these hotspots would be sealed until the morning of April 15. The largest number of hotspots are in Agra (22), followed by Ghaziabad (13), Gautam Budh Nagar (12), and Lucknow (12). The hotspots range from entire sectors to specific apartment complexes.

"In these hotspots, there would be no relaxation but there is no need to panic as medical services and civil supplies would be delivered to the doorstep. Other areas would remain as they were during the lockdown," Awasthi said. He said that in the sealed areas, everything from grocery stores to banks would be closed until April 15.

Director General of Police Hitesh Chandra Awasthi said. "These are clusters where there is a history of positive cases and a potential of spread. After the sealing exercise, an extensive sanitisation drive would be conducted through fire services in these areas.

"While all the civilian passes would be cancelled for these sealed regions, civil supplies would be given at the doorstep. All commuting in these areas would be stopped like it is done during any curfew. There would be barricading and these areas would turn into zero-traffic zones." DGP Awasthi said.

Officials said those involved in essential services would be allowed to head to work. "There will be 24-hour patrolling and surveillance will be maintained through drones to ensure people do not move out. All those not involved in essential services their passes will not be effective anymore. Anyone requiring emergency medical services will be rushed through an 'advanced life support ambulance' since use of private vehicles is not allowed. Constant announcements will be made via loudspeaker," the DGP said.

Anyone from outside the sealed zone will not be allowed in, except those with government, police, fire or sanitisation departments. Additional Chief Secretary

Awasthi said the government has also made the wearing of masks compulsory for everyone, and action will be taken against those who step out without their face covered.

So far, 343 cases have been re-

government to announce steps to help farmers harvest their crops. Azad demanded a hike in the Minimum Support Price and an increase in procurement of crops. He said farm loan repayment should be deferred for

six months, and asked the government to do away with GST on fertilisers, pesticides and agricultural equipment like tractors. He also asked the government to include some chief ministers in the task force set up by the Centre to ensure coordination by central government and states.

Several leaders asked the government to release dues of states under various heads, including for MGNREGA. Azad also asked the government to restart factories which produce essential goods and commodities, including medicines and agricultural equipment. "If there is no production, how can the supply chain be main-

tained," he said. "The issue of lockdown was discussed. We gave suggestions... Right now, social distancing is the only way to avoid

ported in Uttar Pradesh, which includes 187 related to last month's Tablighi Jamaat gathering in Delhi's Nizamuddin West. In Delhi, 669 cases have been reported so far, including 426 re-

#### lated to the Markaz gathering. They got tested

four patients from Andheri to Mumbra, who shuttled from one hospital to another, desperately seeking answers:

#### **MALE, 67 COMORBIDITY: DIABETES** The Andheri West resident

developed fever and cold on March 19. His son took him to the BSES MG Hospital where a doctor gave him paracetamol, which led to the fever subsiding for a few hours. Later, the patient visited Noor Hospital, about 1 km from home, where he was admitted and put on saline drip. On

March 29, he was referred to a lab for an x-ray. "The chest scan was clear. There was inflammation in his liver, and urinary infection," says the patient's son. On April 1, another x-ray

showed "blurry white patches" in the lungs and signs of pneumonia. On April 2, the hospital asked for the patient to be shifted to a tertiary care hospital. The 67year-old's son says they took him to Ruby Nursing Home, where he was "not admitted".

From there, the family went to Hindu Hruday Samrat Balasaheb Thackeray Trauma Hospital. "The doctors said they were only admitting patients with acute respiratory distress or those with travel or contact history with COVID-19 cases," says the son.

According to the family, the patient was taken to Dr RN Cooper hospital, where doctors said there was no space in the ICU. "People were waitlisted for beds, and sleeping in the corridors," says the son. On April 1 evening, the pa-

tient's condition deteriorated, and he was rushed to KEM Hospital, where doctors admitted him, conducted an ECG test and took his throat swab for the COVID-19 test. "We requested a bed, but there were two bodies on two cots, which had to be disinfected first. I could see my father waiting on the chair, I felt so helpless," says the son. By 1 am on April 2, a bed was

provided, and the patient asked his family to rest for a while. But at 7 am, doctors declared him dead following acute respiratory distress. Hours later, the COVID result came -- positive. The swabs of eight family members were immediately

taken. So far, the patient's wife has tested positive, and is admitted in Kasturba Hospital. "I wish

# 3 THE OUTBREAK THE CITY



At Noida's Sector 8 on Wednesday. As people gathered to stock up on supplies, most grocery stores quickly ran out of essential items. Gajendra Yadav

#### **NO MOVEMENT IN OR OUT**

# 22 pockets now containment zones in capital, sealing net likely to widen

#### **SOURAV ROY BARMAN** NEW DELHI, APRIL 8

AS MANY as 22 small pockets of settlements — lanes, apartment complexes — in many parts of Delhi, including parts of Sangam Vihar, Hauz Rani and Bengali Market, have been notified as containment zones, wherein tougher restrictions, including on essential services, are being implemented.

By Thursday, more areas are likely to be sealed, which include Central Delhi's Sadar area and pockets of West Delhi, among others, district magistrates told The Indian Express.

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia told reporters: "Many cases were reported from Sadar area, so it is being contained and sealed. There are 20 such places in Delhi where people are not allowed to come out of their lanes or apartments and people from outside allowed to go in."

While a few zones were notified Wednesday, in many cases, containment orders were made as early as March 31, and some in the intervening period.

The South district administration has issued two orders notifying a street in Malviya Nagar's Hauz Rani neighbourhood and a lane in Sangam Vihar as contain-

**CORONA** 

WATCH

Gurgaon: Migrants em-

ployed at various automobile factories in Manesar, who reside in a rented accommodation in Aliyar vil-

lage, were allegedly beaten up by local residents

Wednesday. They told police that the villagers accused them of "going out during lockdown" though

they claimed they were

only out to purchase es-

sential goods. Police have

filed an FIR in the matter.

Separate ward

New Delhi: Tihar authori-

ties have carved out sepa-

rate wards in Delhi jails to

make sure that the "fresh

inmates do not intermin-

gle with those already in-

in Delhi jails

**Migrants** 

beaten up

#### **CONTAINMENT ZONES** Street near Gandhi Park ■ Gali no. 9, Pandav Nagar Malviya Nagar ■ Vardhaman Apartment, Mayur Vihar Phase-I Extension ■ Gali no. 6, L 1 Sangam Vihar ■ Shahjahanabad society, Plot ■ Mayurdhwaj Apartments, IP no. 1, Sector 11, Dwarka. Extension, Patpargani ■ Dinpur Village ■ Gali no. 4, Krishan Kuni Extension Markaz Masjid and Nizamuddin Basti ■ Gali no. 5, A Block, West ■ Nizamuddin West (G and D Vinod Nagar block) areas J, K, L and H pockets, Dilshad B Block Jahangirpuri. Gali no. 14, Kalyanpuri ■ G. Hand J blocks, Old Seemapuri Mansara Apartments, F-70 to 90, Dilshad Colony Vasundhara Enclave

ment zones. In both areas, confirmed COVID-19 patients were found, necessitating the orders under the Delhi Epidemic Diseases Regulations and the Disaster Management Act.

■ 3 galis of Khichripur

"In case of the Hauz Rani patient, we are still trying to ascertain where he contracted the virus from. His family said he was not at the Markaz Nizamuddin gathering and rarely stepped out. However, we have managed to trace all those he came in touch. There are around 10-12 families in that lane," said DM (South) BM Mishra. Later in the evening, a

lane in Sangam Vihar was also declared a containment zone.

■ Pratap Khand, Jhilmil Colony

In East Delhi, there are nine containment zones scattered across Mayur Vihar and Preet Vihar sub-divisions. The zones include a lane in Kalyanpuri, a housing society in Vasundhara Enclave, three lanes in Khichripur, one lane in Pandav Nagar, one lane in Preet Vihar and an apartment in Mayur Vihar, among others.

"At all such containment zones, we have put up canopies at the outer boundaries where teams of the administration are

always present. WhatsApp groups have been created for coordination and nodal officers appointed. For instance, an officer of the Department of Weights and Measures is in charge of the grocery requirements of residents, while someone from the **Drugs Control Department is** providing medicines as and when required. The items will be delivered to the doorstep of the residents. A population between 6,000-7,000 is under such restrictions in East Delhi," said DM (East Delhi) Arun Mishra.

DM (Central) Nidhi Shrivastava said the local administration will declare the Sadar area a containment zone. "The plan is under process. It will be done most by tomorrow morning," she said. A resident of Sadar had died of the disease on Tuesday.

DM (New Delhi) Tanvi Garg said the administration carried out extensive surveys in areas, including a slum colony in Moti Bagh, and Babar Road near Bengali Market, and concluded there was no need to notify any containment zone as of now.

"There are no containment zones falling under New Delhi district as of now. We have carried out multiple surveys in areas where confirmed cases were found. So far, we have not found

nesses. I have personally visited such areas. For instance, after a sanitation worker, who is a resident of a colony in Moti Bagh, was found positive, we had enhanced surveillance in that area. To enable the survey, checkpoints were created. We surveyed around 865 people. There was extended vigil. But there has been no cluster containment. At Babar Road, after three members of a family tested positive, we carried out a survey encompassing around 300 families across the area. The family members of that person have been strictly advised to stay indoors and a system has been worked out to supply groceries and essentials to their doorstep,' said Garg.

people with influenza-like ill-

However, in the evening, the Bengali Market and Babar Road areas were declared a containment zone after Garg's team found two workers with illnesses. Moreover, 35 persons were found residing at the Bengali Pastry Shop within a small confined space in "highly unhygeinic conditions", authorities said.

Delhi Police have also been directed by the administration to lodge a case against the owner of the shop. Moti Bagh slum was also declared a containment zone later in the evening.

### RESIDENTS RESORTED to panic

buying in Noida on Wednesday following a surprise announcement by the UP government that Gautam Budh Nagar and Ghaziabad, among other districts. would be 'sealed' in the wake of rising COVID-19 cases. While a clarification was issued within few hours that only 'hotspots' — 13 in Ghaziabad and 12 in Gautam Budh Nagar — will be sealed and not the entire district, it had little effect on the hundreds stocking up on essential supplies.

**AMIL BHATNAGAR** 

NOIDA, APRIL 8

According to UP government officials, at the hotspots, all movement will be restricted from Wednesday midnight and even grocery shops and banks will be shut. No one will be allowed to enter from outside.

Amid the panic, appeals were issued by the administration asking people to refrain from stepping out. "No need for panic buying. Identified hotspots shall be sealed and home delivery of essential commodities and services shall be available at all places. We shall take strict action against ru-

mour mongering," tweeted Gautam Budh Nagar District Magistrate Suhas LY.

Amid panic buying, social

distancing goes for a toss

Gaur City 2

Sector 2,

**Greater Noida** 

**ATS Dolce** 

**Greater Noida** 

Ace Golfshire

Society, Sector 150

Zeta 1, Greater

Sector 62

Sector 41

Sector 27

Jaypee Wish Town,

Sector 128

**NOIDA, GREATER NOIDA: THE HOTSPOTS** 

The size of a 'hotspot' varies across the

district — in some places, entire sectors

have been sealed, while only certain

societies have been sealed elsewhere

Sector 28

Chauda village, Sector 22

Hyde Park,

Lotus Boulevard. Sector 100

Grand Omaxe,

Ajay Shankar Pandey, DM Ghaziabad, made a similar appeal: "There are rumours circulating that there will be a curfew. This is fake news and I appeal to the public to not give in to them. The lockdown is in place and like before, there will be no issues with supply of essential items in the coming days."

According to locals, on Wednesday afternoon, messages began circulating on social media, RWA groups and other platforms warning people of a curfew until April 13. Soon after, large crowds and long queues were seen in Sectors 30, 50, 62, 137 and Greater Noida Extension, as people elbowed their way to vegetable vendors and general stores to stock up on essential items.

Traffic congestion was also witnessed in areas in Greater Noida Extension, as most people drove to stores in other areas after local shops began running out of essential supplies.

"Some people were buying more than 10 kg of onions and tomatoes. There has been a disruption in supply anyway since

the lockdown; this made it worse Most shops in the area are running out of supplies and we don't know how things will fare in the coming days," said a resident of Sector 137, where a person had contracted the virus.

Vishnoi Village

Omicron 3

Sector 3.

Gr Noida

Stellar M

Village Ghodi

Bachheda,

**GB** Nagar

Similar scenes were seen at Ghaziabad's Sabzi Mandi in Janakpuri and areas in Pratap Vihar, with crowds blocking the roads.

Nilesh, a resident of a high rise in Sector 78, said: "In the last few days, not many people were venturing out as a mechanism for deliveries was being figured out. Since Wednesday morning, rumours and messages began doing the rounds that no one will be allowed to step out. Most of my neighbours rushed to nearby stores to purchase milk, rice, dal and other essential items in bulk We are still awaiting clear instructions as to what exactly will hap-

An official said the administration is formulating supply mechanisms in the hotspots. In Noida, a senior police officer said they will begin making announcements against panic buying in crowded areas and advise people to stay home.

pen."

## Gurgaon's 'new vegetable market' switches to 'odd-even' for shops to avoid congestion

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** GURGAON, APRIL 8

TO REDUCE congestion in light of the coronavirus outbreak, shops in the 'new vegetable market' in Gurgaon's Khandsa road will function on an 'odd-even' basis starting Thursday.

"From April 9, on odd dates, shops with odd registration

numbers will be allowed to operate while shops with even registration numbers will operate on even dates. To curb the spread of coronavirus, social distancing is the only solution, and it is to bring this into better effect that this rule will now be imposed at the market," said Sub Divisional Magistrate Jitendra Kumar.

The market, which houses

both wholesalers and retailers, is a hub for purchase of fruits and vegetables by individual buyers, local vegetable sellers, as well as owners of small hotels or eateries. On Tuesday, however, the district administration had announced that retail sale will be banned in the market, with only those who sell fruits and vegetables on carts, and those who run retail shops, being allowed purchase from the market.

"Strict action will be taken against anyone found to be violating these directions," he said.

"Individual domestic buyers are no longer allowed to come to the market for their purchases. The time for wholesalers to sell their vegetables has also been fixed till 9 am, after which the gates of the market will be closed," said the SDM.

#### **BAWANA JJ CLUSTER**

## Tales from Delhi colony that accounts for bulk of hunger calls

### **ANAND MOHAN J**

NEW DELHI. APRIL 8

THE ENTRANCE to the alleys inside Bawana's II colony are barricaded with blankets and sarees, held together with ropes and bright red strings. While residents hope this will keep coronavirus at bay, they believe hunger is a far bigger crisis. Delhi Police helplines have been buzzing, with a substantial number of 'hunger calls' coming from the Bawana colony.

(Licensing)

Asif

Mohammad Ali said while they were analysing the calls for food, "around 25% of the hunger calls are from Bawana" — making it one of the areas with the maximum calls in Delhi.

Several factory workers, out of jobs since work halted at the Bawana Industrial Area, live at the colony. The main road is filled with sewage dug up from manholes, and a small canal, filled with water that has turned black,

passes through the colony. There is no social distancing here as groups of women wash their clothes at the canal, while men relieve themselves nearby. Children fish for coconuts floating in the water, hoping to sell them at Rs 15 a piece.

One of the residents, Mohammad Iqbal, is among the few keeping the supply lines to Bawana running. He heads to Narela every day to bring back goods. On Monday, he said it took him over two hours to haul his wooden cart filled with potatoes till Bawana. On spotting a police patrol vehicle, Iqbal quickly steered his cart into the colony



The colony entrance has been blocked with bright **strings.** Renuka Puri

hoping personnel wouldn't impound it. "Police colony ke bahar jaane nahi deti," he said.

Nearby, a group of women carrying vegetables and fodder for goats trudge through the lanes. They used to work at the Bawana Industrial Area, earning Rs 6,000 at a fan-making unit. After the lockdown, the owner handed them their previous month's salary and some ration to tide through the week.

Rani Bai (32) got around Rs 4,500 from her employer. She will finally be able to feed her family of eight, who were dependent on volunteers at a local school to feed them. "Sirfdal-chawal aur khichdi

se kaam kaise hoga?" Bai asked. Another resident, Raj Kumar (25), who used to work at an auto parts manufacturing unit, said he had to dip into his savings for ration to pay his landlord Rs 2,500. "Ek hafte se bhik maang raha hun. Aur nahi mangunga," he said.

Israti Khatun (35), who has nine family members, borrowed money from her sister. "Log bole muft mein ration milega. Ek chutki bhi nahi mila mujhe," she said.

Single mothers face an even tougher challenge. Ritu (35) used to earn Rs 6,000 a month at a plastic-making unit. Her husband was electrocuted at their house. She has now been begging her neighbours for ration for the past week. "Log bol rahe hai ki mujhe corona hogaya hai. Nahi milta koi ab mujhse," she said.

For Raju Devi, a mother of seven, having to wait in line for ration is an exercise fraught with anxiety. "Dar lagta hai line mein khade hone se. Bimaar pad jaungi," she said.

side". ENS

# THE ()UTBREAK

**SOMYA LAKHANI** 

NEW DELHI, APRIL 8

quarantine facility.

equipment (PPE).

State Cancer Institute (DSCI) in

Dilshad Garden tested positive

for COVID-19 Wednesday, taking

the number of positive cases

from the hospital to 22. DSCI does

not have a COVID-19 ward, nor is

it being utilised as a testing or

pital has reported the highest

number of healthcare workers

with positive test results in the

capital so far, with many nursing

officers alleging that they were

not given personal protective

tested positive Wednesday, one

Of the three people who

The Delhi government hos-



At the Rajiv Gandhi Hospital on Wednesday. Amit Mehra

#### **COP POSTED AT IGI ALSO TESTS POSITIVE**

# 93 new cases, Delhi corona count at 669

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** NEW DELHI, APRIL 8

ON THE day it announced complete sealing of 20 containment zones across the city, Delhi government said 93 people, who had attended the gathering at Nizamuddin Markaz, tested positive. The total number of cases in Delhi has now reached 669. On Wednesday, a 44-year-

old head constable of the Delhi Police, posted with the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO), also tested positive. A resident of Rohini Sector 16, he has been shifted to Lok Navak Hospital. His wife and two children have been advised home quarantine as they were asymptomatic.

According to police, the man was working at Terminal-3 of the IGI Airport and was sent on leave on March 31 after he said he was feeling unwell. "He was advised home quarantine. On Wednesday, at 3.41 pm, a PCR call was received that the test reports, that he got today, were positive," said an officer said.

Authorities are trying to ascertain how he contracted the infection and also advised his two colleagues to quarantine themselves at home. The entire colony has been cordoned off.

Gurgaon, meanwhile, saw 10 new cases on Wednesday. All of them had attended the Tablighi Jamaat gathering, officials said. The district reported the highest number of cases in a single day



so far, taking the total number of

cases to 30. Nine people have recovered so far. Faridabad, meanwhile, saw seven cases. While Faridabad and Nuh have identified containment and buffer zones that have been sealed, Gurgaon has constituted teams to conduct door-to-door surveys to find potential new cases. In Gurgaon, officials said

203 teams have been formed at the gram panchayat level to carry out these surveys. Each team includes the sarpanch, panch, gram sachiv, as well as an anganwadi and ASHA worker. In Nuh, the district administration Wednesday issued an order identifying 36 villages that fall within a 'containment zone'

and adjoining 104 others that form a 'buffer zone'. It laid out an "action plan", which includes forming 289 teams to conduct door-to-door screening of 65 households each, and thermal scanning of "each person of the entire households falling in the containment zone".

In addition, the containment and buffer zones will be sanitised and movement of inhabitants "absolutely restricted", with the SDM and nodal officers concerned ensuring essential

items are received and distributed to all households.

Meanwhile, after an infected person died in Sadar Bazar, the administration has decided to seal the area as well and declare it a containment zone. Officials said that the formal process will start on Thursday. Senior officials in the depart-

ment said a plan has been chalked out to seal around 1.5km of the area for containment. "As per the initial contact tracing, the people have been in contact with a person who has a travel history. We are tracing many more people in the area. Since, the locality is quite congested, we have decided to seal it," said a senior health official.

On Wednesday, Sadar Bazar and Delhi Gate, both places where people have died of COVID-19, had security personnel keeping a tight vigil. All roads leading to Sadar Bazar were barricaded and police prohibited trucks, cars and people from entering. Major routes to Delhi Gate also remained blocked.

#### Wearing masks in public mandatory

The Delhi government also made wearing masks in public mandatory on Wednesday. "Wearing facial masks can reduce the spread of coronavirus substantially. Therefore, it has been decided that facial masks will be compulsory for anyone stepping out of their house. Cloth mask shall be eligible too," CM Arvind Kejriwal tweeted.

#### 22, doctor among 3 more to test positive is a doctor in the oncology department, one a nursing officer, and the third a safai karamchari, confirmed DSCI medical THREE MORE staffers at the Delhi supreintendent Dr B L Sherwal.

All three had been tested on Monday. After their result came out on Wednesday evening, they were sent to Rajiv Gandhi Super Specialty Hospital for treatment, said a source at the hospital. This comes days after a resi-

dent doctor from the department of preventive oncology had tested positive, following which more cases came to light. The 37-year-old nursing offi-

cer, who tested positive Wednesday, lives with her husband and their six-year-old son. "She developed high fever over two days ago and completely self-isolated herself at home. On

Monday, she got tested, and today her result is positive. She was on duty till April 2 but was not given any PPE till March 31. After much persuasion, the nursing staff was given HIV drape kits but no eve-shields," said a source close to the nursing officer.

Cases at Delhi cancer institute jump to

The source claimed that the nursing officer has not even been provided an ambulance to take her to the hospital and that her husband dropped her off.

The 31-year-old doctor who tested positive Wednesday spoke to *The Indian Express* over the phone from the hospital: "I am asymptomatic, and reported to duty till March 31. Since then, I have been home and self-isolated myself from my family of 10 people. The result came around 5.30 pm. I was provided

PPE by the hospital... I do not know how this happened. I hope my family members too get tested. I am feeling just fine right now."

Meanwhile, there are at least 10 patients still at DSCI, while many have been moved to private hospitals. Sherwal. said: "We are await-

ing their COVID-19 results and will accordingly shift them to hospitals. We cannot abandon them right now. If any patients test positive, they will be sent to Rajiv Gandhi Super Specialty Hospital. If they test negative, then they will be sent to other hospitals so their treatment continues."

The OPD has been shut down and no new admissions are taking place at DSCI as of now.

On Monday, The Indian Express had reported that many nursing officers and orderlies had alleged lack of PPEs at the

cancer institute. At the time, Sherwal had said: "Ours is a cancer institute and healthcare workers are dealing with cancer patients. We are not a dedicated hospital for COVID-19, which is why there

was no need to have PPE kits." Meanwhile, around 30 healthcare workers, including doctors, nurses and technicians, at the Cardio-Neuro Centre in AIIMS have been advised to undergo quarantine after a 72-year-old man who visited the facility with neurological problems tested positive for COVID-19, sources

said on Wednesday. In CM chat with MPs,

some flag PPE kits

## **EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**

NEW DELHI, APRIL 8

**DELHI CHIEF Minister Arvind** Kejriwal Wednesday held a video-conference with five Lok Sabha MPs and three Rajya Sabha MPs to discuss the COVID-19 crisis. "I discussed the situation because of coronavirus with Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha MPs of Delhi. Many of them gave good suggestions. The government will implement them soon. We have to fight this fight together," he tweeted.

Sources said some MPs raised the issue of shortage of PPE kits and said they would try and contribute in any way they could.

All MPs, except Union Health Minister and Chandni Chowk Harsh Vardhan

Northwest Delhi MP Hans Raj Hans, were part of the meeting. including Rajya Sabha MPs Sanjay Singh, N D Gupta and Sushil Gupta.

The CM held discussions with each MP on their constituencies and the problems and efforts being made there.

East Delhi MP Gautam Gambhir said he asked the CM to ensure more quarantine centres are readied: "Till now, the CM was late in reacting; as a result Delhi faced shortage of PPEs. I told him to think ahead and communicate with us timely so that we can fight this together..."

New Delhi MP Meenakshi Lekhi tweeted: "Would like to thank Arvind Keiriwal ii who was gracious enough to take my suggestions into account..."

## FIR against guard after three cases in Def Col home

**SOMYA LAKHANI** NEW DELHI, APRIL 8

DELHI POLICE has filed an FIR against a man, employed as a guard of a house in South Delhi's Defence Colony, where three people tested positive for COVID-19 on April 3, under sections of "negligent, and malignant act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life" and disobedience. DCP (South) Atul Kumar

KEEP DISTANCE

Thakur said, "Ever since the

three members of the family were hospitalised after they tested positive, the guard of the house has been missing. We inguired and found out through local sources that he had visited the Nizamuddin Markaz. An FIR under sections 188, 269 and 270 of the IPC has been registered against him."

Women line up outside a bank at Dilshad Garden on Wednesday. Praveen Khanna

Police tracked down the guard to his house in Southeast Delhi's Okhla, and he has been sent to a quarantine centre. An officer said, "The protocol is to send the person to quarantine

for 14 days and then question him. So far, he has not said anything about visiting the Markaz but colony guards told us that he did. An FIR has been registered."

Of the three Defence Colony patients, two are senior citizens, and the third one is their grandson. A resident, known to the family, said "the family lives in a three-storey house... The grandparents and grandson were taken to the hospital on April 3, the rest are home-quarantined".

Another resident said "the

lockdown... that is what's happening across many homes in the colony." The DCP said he is "not aware of the travel history of the family". A resident of Defence Colony

guard was still working after the

told The Indian Express that SHO Defence Colony also sent messages to the RWA about the case.

The message said, "Our preliminary inquiry indicates doubt towards the guard who was quite close to the family and used to move in and out of the house frequently... He allegedly attended the Jamaat at Markaz Nizamuddin." The message further advised

residents to "be a bit more alert and keep watch on their domestic helps, drivers and guards" and requested residents to "not assemble in parks... My men will patrol the area and violators will be prosecuted."

Defence Colony RWA president Major (retd.) Ranjit Singh said they have an RWA helpline and a WhatsApp group to keep residents informed about any

## श्चन्धान आवासन सण्डल

क्रमांक : अति.मू.अ.प./रा.आ.मं./2020-21/01

### संशोधित निविदा सूचना संख्या : 22/2019-20

मानसरोवर योजना जयपुर वी.टी. रोड़ स्थित वाणिज्यिक भूपट्टी ''बी'' में फाउन्टेन रकवायर के निर्माण एवं विकास का कार्य

प्रतापनगर योजना जयपुर के सैक्टर-22 से 29 तक में बीसलपुर पेयजल सप्लाई हेतु महल पम्प हाऊस जगतपुरा जयपुर पर पम्पस लगाने से सबंधित विभिन्न कार्य।

रेनवाल (फागी) आवासीय योजना फेज-प्रथम जयपुर में ढब्ल्यू.बी.एम. रोड निर्माण का कार्य। आर.के. पुरम आवासीय योजना कोटपुतली, जयपुर में सड़क के रिमेटलिंग एवं कारपेटिंग का कार्य।

प्रताप नगर योजना जयपुर के सैक्टर-28 स्थित आयुष मार्केट में विकास का कार्य। प्रताप नगर योजना जयपुर के सैक्टर-3 (जोन-34) में सामुदायिक भवन का निर्माण कार्य।

प्रताप नगर योजना जयपुर के हल्दीघाटी मार्ग की सर्विस रोड़ (टॉक रोड़ से महल रोड़ तक) पर स्ट्रीट लाईट लगाने का कार्य।

मानसरोवर योजना जयपुर स्थित द्वारका रेजीडेन्सी, ब्लॉक-बी के मध्यम आय वर्ग ''ब'' (बी+एस+12)=93 फ्लैट्स हेतु बाहय विद्युतीकरण का कार्य। दौराई आवासीय योजना अजमेर में सडक व सीवर लाईन के मरम्मत का कार्य।

इन्दिरा गांधी नगर योजना जयपुर के सैक्टर-1 से 7, 10,12 एवं 14 के उद्यानों में विद्युतीकरण का कार्य।

प्रतापनगर योजना जयपुर के सैक्टर-23 जोन-234 स्थित शॉपिंग सेन्टर में बाह्य विद्युतीकरण का कार्य।

महात्मा गांधी दस्तकार नगर नायला, जयपुर के एम्फीथियेटर, फुडकोर्ट व प्रदर्शनी स्थल में बाह्य विद्युतीकरण का कार्य।

प्रतापनगर योजना जयपुर के सैक्टर-28, राणा सांगा मार्ग स्थित आयुष मार्केट में बाह्य विद्युतीकरण का कार्य। 14. मानसरोवर योजना जयपुर स्थित झुलेलाल मार्केट में हैरिटेज लाईट्स लगाने का कार्य।

राजस्थान आवासन मण्डल की विभिन्न आवासीय योजनाओं में विभिन्न कार्यों की बिंड के लिये उपयुक्त श्रेणी के राजस्थान आवासन

मण्डल में एवं अन्य विभागों में ''एए'' व ''ए'' श्रेणी तथा विद्युत कार्यों हेतु राजस्थान आवासन मण्डल में समुचित वर्ग एवं अन्य विभागों के E-XY-l श्रेणी के पंजीकृत संवेदकों से निर्धारित प्रपत्र में ऑनलाईन ई-प्रोक्योरमेन्ट प्रक्रिया से बिड आमंत्रित की जाती है।

निविदा की कुल लागत		रू. 2735.12 लाख (14 कार्य)	
ऑनलाईन बिंड मिलने की दिनांक	: क्र. सं. 1 से 4 : क्र.सं. 5 से 14	दिनांक 16.04.2020 से 05.05.2020 सायं 6.00 बजे तक दिनांक 16.04.2020 से 27.04.2020 सायं 6.00 बजे तक	
ऑनलाईन बिंड एवं निर्धारित प्रपत्र जमा करने की दिनांक : क्र. सं. 1 से 4 : क्र.सं. 5 से 14		दिनांक 16.04.2020 से 05.05.2020 सायं 6.00 बजे तक दिनांक 16.04.2020 से 27.04.2020 सायं 6.00 बजे तक	
निविदा अनुसार डिमाण्ड ड्राफ्ट व अन्य मूल प्रपत्र कार्यालय में जमा कराने की दिनांक	भौतिक रूप से : क्र. सं. 1 से 4 : क्र.सं. 5 से 14	दिनांक 06.05.2020 सायं 6.00 बजे तक दिनांक 28.04.2020 सायं 6.00 बजे तक	
ऑनलाईन तकनीकी बिंड खोलने की दिनांक	: क्र. सं. 1 से 4 : क्र.सं. 5 से 7	दिनांक 08.05.2020 प्रातः 11.00 बजे दिनांक 30.04.2020 प्रातः 11.00 बजे	
आनलाईन वित्तीय बिंड खोलने की दिनांक	क. सं. 1 से 4 : क्र.सं. 5 से 7 : क्र.सं. 8 से 14	दिनांक 15.05.2020 प्रातः 11.00 बजे दिनांक 07.05.2020 प्रातः 11.00 बजे दिनांक 30.04.2020 प्रातः 11.00 बजे	
SPPP UBN NUMBER		RHB2020WL0B00011, RHB1920WS0B00264, RHB2021WS0B00003, RHB1920WS0B00263, RHB1920WS0B00261, RHB1920WS0B00262, RHB2021WS0B00004, RHB2021WS0B00005, RHB2021WS0B00002, RHB2021WS0B00006, RHB2021WS0B00007, RHB2021WS0B00008,	

क्र.सं. 1 से 7 तक के कार्यों की बिड टू बिड पद्वति एवं क्र.सं. 8 से 14 तक के कार्यों की बिड एकल बिड पद्धति से आमंत्रित की जाकर आवासीय अभियन्ता ई-प्रोक जयपुर के कार्यालय में उपरोक्तानुसार खोली जायेगी। अन्य विभागों में ''एए'' श्रेणी के पंजीकृत संवेदक 1.50 करोड़ से अधिक के समस्त कार्यों की बिंड में ही भाग ले सकेंगे। ई-टेण्डरिंग प्रक्रिया में विद्युत कार्यों हेतु राजस्थान आवासन मण्डल में समुचित वर्ग व अन्य विभागों में E-XY-I श्रेणी के पंजीकृत संवेदक 1.50 करोड से अधिक के समस्त कार्यों की बिड में ही भाग ले सकेंगे। निविदा से सबंधित समस्त विवरण एवं शर्ते वेबसाईट www.urban.rajasthan.gov.in/rhb, https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in एवं sppp.rajasthan.gov.in पर देखी जा सकती है। अतिरिक्त मुख्य अभियन्ता-प्रथम फोन नं. 0141-2741950

RHB2021WS0B00009, RHB2021WS0B00010

Samwad/C/07/2020-21

#### **Trajectory**

become visible in the next couple of days. That is because at least some of the crucial states, including Maharashtra that has the highest number of cases, seem to have begun to show a slight bending of

the growth curve. "We were hoping to notice a flattening of the growth curve after two weeks of the lockdown coming into effect. As of now, that does not seem to be happening. But something interesting seems to be going on at the state level. For the last two days (April 6 onwards), the curve for Maharashtra is showing signs of bending. It is still early days, but noticeable," Sinha said.

"Delhi and Uttar Pradesh (both having more than 300 caseloads) too have started to show a bending of the curve from April 3, and those trends seem more concrete," Sinha added.

"Kerala and Tamil Nadu seem to be having the most interesting trajectories. In both these states, the disease seems to be spreading linearly and not exponentially as at the national level or for other states," Sinha said. For modellers, flattening or

bending of the growth line represents a slowing down in the spread of an infectious disease. It does not mean that the spread is being contained, just that the rate of growth in the number of people being infected is slowing down.

The lockdown was meant to achieve exactly that. By confining a majority of the population to their homes for a three-week period, and limiting their contact with other people, it was hoped that the spread of the disease would be slowed down considerably, because infected people would not be able to pass it on to

others. The slowdown, it was hoped, would provide government authorities some breathing space to ramp up health and hospital infrastructure to deal with a possible explosion of infections at

a later point.

While that effect is not yet visible, Sinha says neither the migrant movement for the first three days of the lockdown, nor the large number of infections flowing out of the Tabligh Jamaat event in Nizamuddin are the possible explanations. "The gathering (at Nizamuddin) took place about 10 days before lockdown came into force, and most of the movement of the people involved had already happened by that time. So, while it has increased India's caseload, this could not be the reason why we are yet to see a slowdown in growth rate. As for the migrant issue, that only meant that the lockdown was effectively delayed by three days because of continued movement — so, theoretically speaking, its effect can be nullified by extending the lockdown by another three days," he said.

The possible explanations, Sinha pointed out, can be seen in the way the disease is spreading in individual states and regions. In a different exercise, a group of scientists at the Indian Institute of Information Technology in Delhi have shown that the rates of growth of the disease are very different in different states. Twelve states and Union Territories have an infection transmission rate higher than the national average. Out of these, just five states account for more than half of the country's caseload as on April 6.

In the study of infectious disease, the "basic reproduction number", or R-naught is used to assess the severity of an outbreak.

**FROM PAGE ONE** This number is an average, reflecting the number of people infected

> by one infected person. The researchers at IIIT Delhi have a current nationwide Rnaught of 1.4, meaning that an infected person is passing COVID-19 onto an average of 1.4 other people. If an R-naught (R0) is above one, the outbreak will lead to an epidemic. If it is below one, the

outbreak will eventually die out. The five states with high case numbers, high spread within the state, and high transmission numbers are Maharashtra (with a RO of 1.58), Tamil Nadu (1.53), Delhi (1.42), Andhra Pradesh (1.55), and Karnataka (1.44). While Madhya Pradesh has a relatively high case number (165) and transmission rate (1.58), its spread throughout its districts is less (16 per cent). Although they have lower case numbers, some of the states with still high transmission rates are West Bengal (1.7), Gujarat (1.61) Bihar (1.6), and Jharkhand (1.58).

The calculations — called SIR (Susceptible, Infected and Recovered) models – used to produce the reproduction numbers do have several weaknesses.

"If someone gives an estimate of an R0 to a policy maker, they should be aware that these models are prone to wild fluctuations. They assume an equilibrium and work best when numbers have stabilised over time. It looks as though right now, the epidemic in India is evolving and is very dynamic. These models are also agnostic to the ground truth about testing," said IIIT Delhi computational biologist Tavpritesh Sethi, who built the models along with computer science professor Ponnurangam Kumaraguru, computer biologist Sriram K, and oth-

ers at a computational medicine

group called TavLab and PreCog

Research Group at the Institute. Some main assumptions made in the model that may be accounted for in varying ways, include population density, mobility factors, interactions before the lockdown. The researchers have

also noticed that the numbers are

just beginning to stabilise, proba-

bly due to the lockdown. Sinha of the Institute of Mathematical Sciences is himself involved in a modelling exercise with his colleagues, and his calculation has yielded a national Rnaught of 1.83.

On March 19, Sinha's model had found a national number of 1.7. With this rate prediction, he had predicted at the time that India would have 200 to 500 positive cases in five days. That number was around 530 on March 24.

Since then, the R-naught in Sinha's model has not changed significantly — maintained at 1.83 as of April 6. "I am hoping to see a slight flattening of the curve any time now, as I expect the effect of the lockdown to kick in after about two weeks," he said to The Indian

#### Express. Jan Dhan

knew there would be crowds. But I am still not sure if I will be able to get the money today," Bithika, a resident of Puraton (Old) Bongaon,

Also in the queue was Lakshmirani Biswas, who said the situation was especially bad because local grocers have stopped giving them food and other items on credit.

"Now that we are without jobs and we don't even know how long this will continue, grocers don't want to give us things on credit," said Biswas.

# THE ()UTBREAK NATION



**CORONA** WATCH



A doctor examines a policeman in Mumbai. PTI

#### Govt sets up help desks for Kerala expats

Thiruvananthapuram: The Kerala government has launched help desks for expatriates from the state at five locations in the Middle-East. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said the help desks would be run by the Department of Non-Resident Keralites Affairs with the support of expat organisations. The facilities would be launched in Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Ras Al-Khaimah and Fujairah. Indian Ambassadors have been told to cooperate with the help desks, he said. **ENS** 

#### To decongest prisons, 100 released

J&K

Jammu: The Jammu and Kashmir administration has released more than 100 prisoners from different jails across the Union Territory as part of a drive to decongest jails in view of the coronavirus outbreak. Of the 108 prisoners who have been released, 107 were undertrials and were released on interim bail, sources said. Apart from the 107 undertrials, a convict has been released on parole in Pulwama disrict. The undertrials released include 22 people detained under the Public Safety Act. **ENS** 

#### **MADHYA PRADESH** Cong MLA leads protest, booked

Satna: An FIR has been registered against Congress MLA Siddharth Kushwaha and seven others for allegedly defying CrPC Section 144, which bans assembly of four or more people, during the lockdown, police said on Wednesday. The MLA led a protest near Nai Basti area of Satna on Tuesday, Inspector Mohit Saxena said. Details of the protest led by Kushwaha were not known. "We have booked eight, including Kushwaha," Saxena said.PTI

# For post-April 14 plan, Rlys to ask states about need for special trains

**AVISHEK G DASTIDAR** & LIZ MATHEW NEW DELHI, APRIL 8

AS THE government considers various options for a post-lockdown exit strategy, the Railways will be speaking to states to understand if there is any need for targeted special trains for limited, essential movement of people, like labourers, those stranded, etc.

This is to enable the national transporter and government to gauge if states would be on board such a plan, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi telling political parties Wednesday that no one had suggested that the government lift the national lockdown set to end on April 14 — in one go.

The Railway Board has authorised general managers of zonal railways to speak to state chief secretaries to ascertain the demand, sources said.

Earlier, in several deliberations during the lockdown period,

**DURING LOCKDOWN** 

**KRISHN KAUSHIK** 

NEW DELHI, APRIL 8

WHILE HARYANA and Delhi gov-

ernments have provided two out

of every three meals given to mi-

grant workers and the needy by

state government through food

camps during the nationwide

lockdown, and Kerala is among

states have not given out any meals through food camps, the

coastal state has provided shel-

ter to nearly half the people

given shelter across the country.

the Union government in a sta-

tus report filed in Supreme

shows that out of 54.15 lakh

meals given to people by differ-

ent state governments at food

camps since the lockdown be-

gan, 34.7 lakh have been pro-

vided by two governments:

22.38 lakh meals by Haryana,

more than 1 lakh meals each in-

clude Uttar Pradesh (6.84 lakh

meals), Uttarakhand (2.65 lakh),

Punjab (1.94 lakh), Jharkhand

(1.22 lakh), and Karnataka (1.12

data on shelter and food camp

being run by state governments

and NGOs, submitted to the apex

court on Tuesday, the govern-

ments of Kerala, Telangana and

Sikkim, and the UT administra-

tion of Ladakh have not provided

vided shelter to more than 3 lakh

people, nearly half of 6.31 lakh

people provided shelter by state

governments across the country.

The UP government has given

shelter to over 1 lakh people in

vided food and shelter to 14,354

people, while Delhi's 102 shel-

ters have helped give shelter to

Bihar government has pro-

need, according to statistics.

Kerala, however, has pro-

any meal through food camps.

As per the Centre's state-wise

Other states that have given

and 12.32 lakh by Delhi.

lakh).

The details were shared by

The government's data

Haryana, Delhi gave

sheltered 3 lakh: Govt

most meals, Kerala

states had sought transportation for people stranded in far-flung areas. Besides, factories in various parts of India processing COVID-19-related orders are facing shortage of labour, as migrants have gone back to their villages and can't come back. Labour would also be required in the fields for the harvest season.

Also on the table are one-off special services on some routes. "Like trains without stops, with limited occupancy, while maintaining social distancing," an official said.

A group of MPs tasked with submitting a report on the nature of fiscal stimulus required at the grass-roots level has, on the other hand, suggested to the government that mass transport facilities like the Railways should stay closed for now to prevent labourers from rushing back home.

The MPs, led by BJP president JP Nadda, felt that once gone, the labourers might not return to cities till at least Diwali, severely

4,788 people. Maharashtra has

provided shelter to 73,492 dis-

advantaged people, while

Punjab government has given

shelter to only 1,400 people, ac-

been given shelter and food by

employers and industry associa-

tions, which overlaps with shel-

ter and food provided by some

NGOs in a few states. In

Maharashtra, NGOs, including

industry associations and em-

ployers, have given shelter and

NGOs across the country have

given out 30.11 lakh meals dur-

ing the lockdown period.

Haryana again leads the chart,

with NGOs distributing 7.23 lakh

meals, followed by more than 3

lakh meals by NGOs in Punjab,

state governments are operating

7,848 food camps across the

country, while NGOs have or-

ganised 9,473 food camps.

Approval granted to

NGOs to provide help

Meanwhile, to facilitate

NGOs trying to help migrant

workers and others in need dur-

ing the lockdown period, the

Union government has given its

approval for these organisations

to buy rice and wheat from the

More than 10 lakh people are

Food Corporation of India (FCI).

staying in shelters being run by

state governments and NGOs,

and close to 85 lakh meals have

been delivered since the nation-

wide lockdown was announced

on March 24, according to data

**Union Minister of Consumer** 

Affairs, Food & Public

Distribution Ram Vilas Paswan

on Wednesday said that district

magistrates will ensure that food

bought by NGOs is being utilised

collated by the Centre.

properly.

According to the statistics,

UP and Gujarat.

The data also mentions that

food to 3.73 lakh workers.

Over 15 lakh workers have

cording to the Centre's data.

impacting economic revival. "This will lead to a situation where the functioning of manufacturing units and economic operations would come to a standstill. There aren't any jobs in villages either, which could develop into a dangerous situation," said a source.

Till Wednesday though, there was no indication from the top echelons of the government regarding the strategy to be adopted for the Railways if the lockdown ends April 14. Sources said inputs from the government's outbreak-containment apparatus to the Railways are clear on the fact that the trend of coronavirus cases does not allow full resumption of services as yet.

A senior Railway Ministry officer said, "In internal deliberations the full resumption of passenger services was not discussed since that is not on the table at the moment. We will be speaking to states to gather further inputs." The officer added that there would be little point resuming

**KRISHN KAUSHIK** 

NEW DELHI, APRIL 8

COMPARING CONGRESS presi-

dent Sonia Gandhi's suggestion

to Prime Minister Narendra

Modi to stop all government ad-

vertisements to the media for

the next two years with "finan-

cial censorship", the Indian

Newspaper Society (INS) on

Wednesday stated that the

amount that goes in media ads

is small for the government but

significant for an industry al-

ready facing challenges, espe-

cially given the COVID-19 pan-

demic and the resultant

Wednesday, the INS stated that

its president Shailesh Gupta, on

behalf of the association repre-

senting the print news industry

in India, has appealed to the

Congress chief to reconsider and

MORETHAN 1,000 police person-

nel from several police stations in

Bhopal have been relocated to ho-

tels and guesthouses over the last

two days after 11 police person-

nel, including a young IPS officer,

and five of their relatives tested

from Jahangirabad Police Station

in old Bhopal contracted the virus

while tracing members of differ-

ent Jamaats who participated in

last month's Tablighi Jamaat con-

ferent Jamaats, who came to

Bhopal in early March, have re-

ported positive for coronavirus

Indian Express that police person-

nel have been sent to hotels and

guesthouses to break the chain by

ADG Upendra Jain told *The* 

Twenty members of four dif-

The police believe personnel

positive for COVID-19.

gregation in Delhi.

In a statement issued on

nationwide lockdown.

**MILINDGHATWAI** 

BHOPAL, APRIL 8

services in states which do not want trains to run or inter-state travel to happen. Sources said that much before

the 21-day lockdown was announced, states like West Bengal and Jharkhand had officially asked the Railways not to allow any inter-state trains. When Maharashtra was locking itself down in phases middle of March onwards, talks were held between zonal railways and the state government about plans for Mumbai's local trains.

Sources also noted that several states which would be expected to receive a large population of migrant workers if trains were to run, did not show any keenness for the same at the time migrant labourers were forced to walk hundreds of miles back home from cities.

Amidst indications of the lockdown continuing, at least in some form, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had tasked the Nadda-led group of MPs on

withdraw her suggestion in the

interest of a "vibrant and free

ready a decline in advertisement

and circulation revenue due to

recession and the digital on-

slaught. To add to the problem,

we now face severe financial cri-

sis due to the complete lock-

down of industries and busi-

dia personnel are risking their

lives and bringing news on the

pandemic, Sonia's suggestion for

a two-year ban on media adver-

tisements is "deeply disturbing

and demotivating for the entire

media industry", the INS stated.

Tuesday with suggestion for

"austerity measures", which can

be used to divert "much-needed

funds to the fight against COVID-

1,000 Bhopal cops moved to

hotels days after positive cases

ensuring that they do not return

home, or the police quarters. He

said more than 300 samples of

police personnel and their family

members and neighbours have

been sent for testing so far and re-

Shivraj Singh Chouhan also said

that police officials got the infec-

tion from Jamaat members. He

also said the returning members

affected people in Sironi and

Khargone districts — while only

one member has so far tested pos-

itive in Sironj, one member and

multiple members of his family

have been confirmed positive in

among those who had come to

Bhopal from the Nizamuddin

Markaz following last month's

Tablighi congregation, according

sonnel from Jahangirabad Police

The infection is suspected to have spread among police per-

About 60 foreigners were

On Wednesday, Chief Minister

sults are awaited.

the latter.

www.indianexpress.com

**FULL STORY ON** 

Sonia had written to Modi on

At a time like this, when me-

The INS stated: "There is al-

Sonia proposal to ban ads

press".

ness."

akin to censorship: INS

March 17 to come up with suggestions that could be implemented in rural areas. They submitted a power presentation to the minister Wednesday.

Apart from holding off opening up of mass transport facilities, the group proposed that interests of MSME loans be waived off for three months, panchayats be provided more money, agriculture sector be opened up to provide more job opportunities and working days annually under the MGNREGS be increased from 100 to 150, sources said.

Many of the suggestions made by the group in a report earlier had been incorporated by the government in its financial package to deal with the COVID-19 crisis.

Apart from Nadda, the group comprises Jayant Sinha, Shivkumar Udasi, Sanjay Jaiswal, Manoj Kotak and Rajya Sabha MPs Vinay Sahasrabuddhe, Rajeev Chandrasekhar and Swapan Dasgupta.

### **Invoke Essential** Commodities Act, Centre asks states

*New Delhi:* Amid disruptions in the supply of essentials and fears of hoarding by traders, the Centre has asked the states to invoke the Essential Commodities Act to ensure smooth supply chains.

Bhalla has written to all state chief secretaries to take urgent steps to ensure availability of essential goods, by invoking provisions of the Essential Commodities (EC) Act 1955. These measures include fixing of stock limits, capping of prices, enhancing production, inspection of accounts of dealers and other such actions," a statement from the Ministry of Home Affairs said Wednesday. According to the Ministry, there have been reports of loss of production due to various factors, especially lower labour supply.

Station to their compatriots in TT

were living in different

mosques, were relocated to a

couple of places acquired by the

administration. After receiving

complaints that the members

were moving out, the adminis-

tration shifted many of them to

a bigger shrine on the outskirts

presence of district administra-

tion officials before they were

shifted. Those who show symp-

toms of the virus will be quaran-

infected police personnel came

in contact with their colleagues

in other police stations, arrange-

ments have been made for so

many personnel to live away

from their families. Each police

official has been given a separate

room in the acquired premises,

ADG Jain said that since the

The place was sanitised in the

The Jamaat members, who

Nagar quarters.

of Bhopal.

he added.

tined, officials said.

"Home Secretary Ajay Kumar

## **Private labs** must test for free, says SC **ANANTHAKRISHNANG** The top court said NEW DELHI, APRIL 8

IN AN interim order, the Supreme Court ruled Wednesday that private labs should conduct COVID-19 tests free of cost, saying it was needed "in the hour of national crisis".

Asking the Centre to issue the necessary directions immediately, a Bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan and S Ravindra Bhat said, "The tests relating to COVID-19 whether in approved government laboratories or approved private laboratories shall be free of cost... Private hospitals including laboratories have an important role to play in containing the scale of pandemic by extending philanthropic services in the hour of national crisis."

The court said that whether the private laboratories should be reimbursed for the expenses incurred would be decided later on. Issuing a notice to the Centre, the Bench gave it two weeks time to file an affidavit on the

On March 17, the ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research) had issued an advisory allowing private labs to conduct the test, and fixed Rs 4,500 for it.

Around 69 private laboratories, including Dr Lal PathLabs, Dr Dangs Lab and Indraprastha Apollo, have been approved to carry out coronavirus tests. After the ICMR appealed to them to conduct the tests "at no cost", they had sought clarification on

whether private laboratories should be reimbursed for the expenses incurred would be decided later on. Issuing a notice to the Centre, the Bench gave it two weeks time to file an affidavit.

whether the government could provide them the ingredients required for these tests for free or at a subsidised rate.

The bench was hearing a PIL by advocate Shashank Deo Sudhi seeking that the Centre ensure free coronavirus testing by all labs, including government. Sudhi had also challenged the fixing of Rs 4,500 price by the ICMR.

Hearing the petitioner through video conferencing, the Bench said, "We find prima facie substance in the submission of (the) petitioner that at this time of national calamity, permitting private labs to charge Rs 4,500 for screening and confirmation test of COVID-19 may not be within the means of a large part of the population of this coun-

The court also directed that the COVID-19 tests be carried out in NABL-accredited labs or by agencies approved by the WHO or ICMR.

## Provide PPE, security to doctors, health staff, SC directs govt

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** NEW DELHI, APRIL 8

THE **SUPREME** Court Wednesday asked the government to ensure availability of personal protective equipment to doctors and other medical staff fighting the COVID-19 pandemic and to provide them with necessary police security.

A bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan and S Ravindra Bhat also said action should be taken against those hindering healthcare staff and other government officials deputed to contain the outbreak from performing their duties.

The court's direction to provide security to healthcare workers comes after the stone pelting incident in Indore and alleged instances of misbehaviour with medical staff in Ghaziabad episodes which it took note of while passing its order.

"...provide the necessary police security to the dDoctors and medical staff in hospitals and places where patients who have been diagnosed COVID-19 or patients suspected of COVID-19 or those quarantined are housed, the top court said said.

"Doctors and the medical staff who are the first line of de-

fence of the country to combat with this pandemic have to be protected by providing PPEs as recommended by WHO on 27.02.2020," it said.

The Supreme Court also wanted the Government to explore all alternatives, "including enabling and augmenting domestic production of protective clothing and gear to medical professional".

This, it said, "includes the exploring of alternative modes of production of such clothing...and permitting movement of raw materials".

The bench was hearing a PII by Jerryl Banait, a medical practitioner who highlighted issues related to safety of health workers attending to COVID-19 pa-

Appearing for the Centre, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said the government's stand in the matter is not adversary to any of the reliefs claimed, adding that it is taking all necessary steps for providing PPEs and other necessities for doctors and

On the question of security to medical staff and hospitals Mehta said: "The government will go an extra mile to augment the security as existing today".

health staff.

## Study: Long-term exposure to PM 2.5 may raise COVID-19 death risk by 20 times

**SUSHANT SINGH** 

A NEW study by Harvard University researchers concludes that long-term average exposure to fine particulate matter (PM 2.5) increases the risk of COVID-19 death by 20 times — a potential cause for alarm for several Indian cities which, for long, have been exposed to high pollution levels.

The study, by Xiao Wu and Rachel C Nethery of Department of Biostatistics at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, has found that an increase of just 1 microgram per cubic metre of air (ug/m3) in PM 2.5 is associated with a 15% increase in the COVID-19 death rate, with 95% confidence interval. The study has been not look into individual cases.

million Americans older than 65, the researchers had found that an increase of 1 mg/m3 in long-term PM2.5 exposure is associated with a 0.73% increase in the rate of allcause mortality. Therefore, a small increase in long-term exposure to PM 2.5 leads to COVID-19 death rate increasing by a magnitude that is 20 times the one estimated for all-cause mortality.

The study includes over 3,000

enth spots, respectively.

Delhi had an average PM 2.5 level of 98.6 ug/m3 in 2019, which is classified as 'unhealthy'. The average PM 2.5 levels for 2018 and 2017 for the capital were even higher at 113.5 and 108.2 ug/m3.

Even though pollution levels have come down in India following the announcement of a 21-day lockdown, it is of little consequence, as the study investigates the effect of long-term exposure to high PM 2.5 levels.

The results, the study says, suggest that long-term exposure to air pollution increases vulnerability to experiencing the most severe COVID-19 outcomes. These findings align with the known relationship between PM 2.5 exposure and many of the cardiovascular and respiratory co-morbidities that dramatically increase the risk

of death in COVID-19 patients. They are also consistent with findings that air pollution exposure dramatically increased the risk of death during the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome outbreak in 2003, which is caused by another type of coronavirus.

As per the study, the results also underscore importance of continuing to enforce existing air pollution regulations during the COV-ID-19 crisis. The study warns that a failure to do so can potentially increase the death toll and hospitalisations, further burdening the healthcare system and drawing resources away from patients. The study has been adjusted by population size, hospital beds, number of individuals tested, weather, and socioeconomic and behavioural variables. It has been updated with data up to April 4.

#### Army extends quarantine span of Iran evacuees

*Jaipur*: The Army has extended the quarantine period of some evacuees brought from Iran to its facilities at Jaisalmer and Jodhpur.

According to the state Health Department, 36 of the 1,036 evacuees tested positive for the infection as of Wednesday. Three batches were sent to Jaisalmer, and two to Jodhpur. Upon their arrival in India, they were quarantined at the Army Wellness Facilities at Jaisalmer and Jodhpur. At the Jaisalmer facility, the

evacuees were tested at AIIMS Jodhpur after they completed their quarantine period, and of the 236 people evacuated in the first batch, 15 asymptomatic persons tested positive. The entire second batch of 53 tested negative for the virus. In the third batch of 195 evacuees, only two persons have tested positive till date. **ENS** 

### Jaishankar dials Aus minister to share strategies

New Delhi: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday held a telephonic conversation with his Australian counterpart Marise Payne and shared the respective domestic response strategies by the two countries to deal with the coronavirus crisis.

The conversation between the two foreign ministers came two days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Australian PM Scott Morrison agreed on the importance of bilateral experience-sharing in flattening the growth curve of the coronavirus.

In a tweet, Jaishankar said India is also responding "positively" to Australia's requirements for drugs, without elaborating whether it has sought supply of anti-malarial drug hydroxychloroquine like many other countries. **ENS** 

## Foreign Secy calls up US, talks pandemic control

**SHUBHAJIT ROY** NEW DELHI, APRIL 8

FOREIGN SECRETARY Harsh Vardhan Shringla spoke to US Deputy Secretary of State Stephen E Biegun on Wednesday and discussed how to control the pandemic, including through development of "novel therapies" and prophylactics against COVID-19 and "ensure availability of essential medicines, diagnostic and medical equipment, and sharing

The phone conversation between Shringla, who was earlier India's envoy to the US, and Biegun took place a day after India said it will supply essential drugs to "some nations who have been particularly badly affected" by COVID-19, and to "neighbouring countries who

of best practices and information".

are dependent on India's capabilities"

New Delhi announced the decision shortly after US President Donald Trump said that "there may be retaliation" if India does not agree to export Hydroxychloroquine (HCQ), a key anti-malaria drug.

Sources said Shringla and Biegun "discussed ways to further enhance their cooperation to counter and control the COVID-19 pandemic". They exchanged views on the COVID-19 situation and associated challenges, a source said.

Earlier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump had a telephonic conversation over the issue. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and US Secretary of State Pompeo had also spoken over phone to discuss the issue.

NEW DELHI, APRIL 8

submitted for peer review and did

In their previous study of 60

counties in the US and covers 98% of the the country's population. But it assumes significance for India as the country ranks high on the IQAir chart of worst polluted countries, with 14 of its cities in list of 20 cities with the most hazardous air. Ghaziabad topped the chart followed by Delhi, Noida, Gurugram at fifth, sixth and sev-



### EPIC SUPPORT

BRAZIL'S PRESIDENT Jair Messias Bolsonaro, in a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, compared India's move to allow export of anti-malaria drug Hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) to Lord Hanuman bringing "sanjeevani booti (herb)" in the epic Ramayan. "Just as Lord Hanuman brought the holy medicine from the Himalayas to save the life of Lord Rama's brother Laksmana, and Jesus healed those who were sick and restored the sight of Bartimeu, India and Brazil will overcome this global crisis,' Bolsonaro wrote. The letter arrived on the eve of Hanuman Jayanti.

### READING ON

AMID MANY video conferences for coordinating party activities in states, BJP general secretary Ram Madhav does not want to reduce his reading time. Although he has to attend the daily conference of India Foundation, a think tank he is involved with, and coordinate the party's initiative to mobilise the youth to support the government in its fight against coronavirus, Madhav completed Francis Fukuyama's Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment last week. He is also doing two online courses.

### QUICK LEARNER

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar may be a new entrant into BJP, but he did not forget to wish all BJP supporters on the party's 40th foundation day on Monday. Earlier, he had lit lamps on Sunday, responding to the PM's call.

### **SALUTE THE SOLDIER**

**MARTYRS OF 206 CoBRA** 







Martyrs of 206 CoBRA, CRPF made supreme sacrifice during a search and destroy operation in the jungle area of village Chintagupha, under PS - Chintagupha, Distt - Sukma (C.G) on 09th Apr 2014 in a true act of valour. The brave soldiers will always be remembered for their patriotism and courage. To these brave martyrs we pledge that we shall always be guided by their immortal spirit and do their names proud.

**IG & All Ranks of CoBRA** 

## Supreme Court gives Navlakha, Teltumbde another week to surrender

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** NEW DELHI, APRIL 8

**ASAD REHMAN** 

GONDA, APRIL 8

will we go home?"

for the 186 people on the prem-

ises — migrant labourers and

their families (among them 55

women, 29 children and one in-

lockdown may be extended.

away, pulls at the shutter grille

as he asks, "Why is the govern-

ment treating us like criminals?"

wife is running out of money as

she looks after their three chil-

dren back home in Ayodhya, 150

km away. Once the lockdown

ends, he fears, he will have to

walk there. "How else will I go

at the shelter were returning

from Nepal. With the border

near, a lot of men from the region

An official says many of those

when I have no money?"

cross over for work.

The 29-year-old says that his

BAHRAICH, BARABANKI,

THE SUPREME Court on Wednesday gave activists Gautam Navlakha and Anand Teltumbde, facing charges under Unlawful Activities(Prevention)Act(UAPA) for alleged Maoist links, one more week to surrender.

A bench of Justices Arun Mishra and Indira Banerjee, however, expressed its displeasure over the activists not surrendering earlier, as directed by the

"Though we expected that the accused would surrender, honouring the order of this Court, they have not done so. We are told that in Bombay, the courts are functioning. It would have been appropriate for the accused to surrender as the courts are open and not totally closed," the SC said.

It added, "However, since the petitioners have enjoyed the protection for long, by way of last opportunity, we extend the time granted to surrender for one

The bench made it "clear that there shall not be any further extension of time" and that "this order shall not be treated as a precedent".

On March 16, the Supreme Court had rejected the duo's anticipatory bail plea and had given them three weeks to surrender. The two had moved the apex court after a single-judge bench of Bombay High Court rejected their pleas for anticipatory bail.

However they did not surrender and once again approached the SC seeking more time to surrender in view of the COVID-19 situation.

Several activists, including Raj Kumar (52), who belongs Navlakha and Teltumbde, were to a village in Kaushambi, and booked by Pune Police for their worked at a brass factory in alleged Maoist links and other Banka district of Nepal, says he charges following the violence gets calls every day from his chilat Bhima Koregao village near dren asking when he would be Pune on January 1, 2018. The back. As he slides down next to accused deny the allegations. the shutter, he says, agitated,

उत्तर प्रदेश पावर ट्रान्समीशन कारपोरेशन

लिमिटेड ई-निविदा आमंत्रण एतद्द्वारा



Desperate to get home, migrants at UP shelters ask: 'Are we criminals?'

**MEANWHILE, IN JAIPUR:** Nurses and paramedical personnel wait for a briefing on survey routes to detect coronavius cases at a camp at Ramganj Chaupar, Jaipur. Rohit Jain Paras

fant), belonging to different states, rounded up as they tried to return "Corona se humara kya lena home from big cities last week, dena? Woh toh ameer logon ki and kept in shelters like this one beemari hai aur videsh se aayi hai. across Uttar Pradesh. The unoffi-Phir hume kyun iss jail mein band kiya gaya hai (What do we have cial date of "release" is April 14; word hasn't got around that the to do with coronavirus? It is a disease of the rich, which has Neeraj Kumar, who was come from abroad. Then why are brought here by police from the we being kept in this jail)?" Nepal border, around 20 km

Balram Yadav, the village lekhpal and one of the caretakers at the shelter, says it has been very difficult for them too. "The migrants make noise all night. They don't maintain distance from each other and keep banging their utensils," says Yadav, sitting at a table with an attendance register. "Recently, one of them claimed a ghost had possessed her."

The meals, including breakfast and evening snacks, are cooked on the school premises. The village head organises the rations from money provided by the administration. Nafees Ahmad Khan, whose wife Rubeena is the village head, says, "We are doing the best we can."

Yadav says a doctor regularly comes around to check for ailments. "None of them has shown any symptoms so far."

SDM, Nanpara, Ram Asrey Verma says they have made arrangements to keep the migrants until April 14. "We are awaiting directions from the state government regarding sending them back after that," he

Unlike the Gurgutta shelter, the one at a primary school in Barabanki district's Harakh town, 140-odd km away, has just one resident. The loneliness is becoming unbearable for Manoj Kumar, picked up on April 4 as he made his way from Meerut, around 600 km away – particularly as home is now just a kilometre away. He covered half the distance on foot, and then hitch-

He has joined several school benches and spread out a thin blanket on them to fashion a makeshift bed. For company, he only has the priest of the Hanuman temple next door, apart from half-an-hour visits by his family every day.

Once his food has been sent over by the village head, the priest shouts out and Manoj collects it. "It is tough to stay alone. I don't even have a smartphone,"

says the 25-year-old, who worked as a driver at a sugar mill in Meerut.

ADM (Barabanki) Sandeep

Kumar Gupta assures that Manoj can go home after 14 days of quarantine. "That is what the protocol is." But Manoj fears his ordeal

won't be over. "I am a Dalit. As it is, we face untouchability. *Ab iss* beemari ka kalank bhi lag gaya hai (Now, there is also the mark of this disease on me)," he says. Meanwhile, he hopes the ad-

checked for coronavirus. "So I can feel reassured." At the neighbouring Gonda district headquarters, Shaheede-Azam Sardar Bhagat Singh

ministration would get him

College holds 37 migrants. Two of them belong to Nepal's Nawalparasi district, 18-year-old Sunny and Kripa Shankar, 20. Intently watching something on his phone, Sunny says that while the administration is giving them everything, "including

electricity to charge mobiles". they would rather be home in this time of crisis. The 18-yearold, who worked at an iron come back. He has a fever." warehouse in Jaipur, says he is

the eldest of three siblings and his family's main breadwinner. Sitting on his cot, spread out some 2 metres away from Sunny's, Shyam Bihari (58) fears that his own teenage sons would find it impossible looking after the family's wheat crop. His home is in Deoria district, around 220 km away. "I have a bigha of land. My children go to school and don't have much experience in farming,'

Swami Vivekanand School in Colonelganj town, around 40 km from the Gonda district headquarters, holds 25 people. Naib Tehsildar Vijay Kumar Gupta, the shelter in-charge, says all 25 belong to Aurangabad, Bihar, and were brought by officials from a construction site in Gonda district. "We have arrangements for everything, but they want to go home," says Gupta.

Bihari says.

Gonda District Magistrate Nitin Bansal says they are counselling those at the shelter. "When the lockdown is over, they will be sent back depending on government orders," he says, adding that the Uttar **Pradesh State Road Transport** Corporation is collecting data regarding how many are stuck where.

From the school balcony where he stands, looking at a truck go past on the nearby highway, Braj Nath (35) says it seems like the lockdown is only for the

At the shelter with his wife, Nath says, "I see cars moving around, I have heard people with emergencies are travelling. My children are alone in the village and don't have anything to eat. Is that not an emergency?"

Khushbu (31) has the same question. At the shelter with husband Chaubey Prasad (35) and a seven-year-old son, she says her elder son (12), who goes to school, is in the village with his grandparents. Her eyes welling up, Khushbu says, "He called us yesterday crying and asked us to

#### (Telecom Technology Centre of Govt. of India) Electronic City - Phase - I, Hosur Road, BENGALURU - 560 100

Date: 09-04-2020 TENDER REF NO. CDOTB/TENDER/2020-21/001

#### e-TENDER NOTICE C-DOT a Telecom Technology Centre of Govt. of India invites On-line bids from

prospective, reputed and experienced agencies for providing IT infrastructure for O&M services for AAI, KOLKATA for maintaining their Network using C-DOTs IP-NMS SOLUTION Description

Agencies for providing IT infrastructure O&M services for AAI KOLKATA for maintaining their Network using C-DOTs IP-NMS SOLUTION as per the scope of work and Terms & Conditions Interested bidders may please refer Notice Inviting Tender(NIT) fo

all details. Tender document may be downloaded from CPP Portal https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app or C-DOT web site www.cdot.in. All amendments / corrigendum to this tender will be uploaded only on the websites and will not be published in the Newspapers. Bidders are advised to check the website / portal before submitting the Tender. Manual or offline submission of bids will not be accepted.

#### OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER GENERATION DIVISION BHEP-II CHANDERKOTE

Email- xenegenbhep2@gmail.com, Tel - 01998-288052 Dated: 24.03.2020 NO. GEN/BHEP-II/1232 **EXTENSION NOTICE-1** 

1. e-NIT NO: BHEP-II/08 of 2019-20 Dated: - 03-03-2020 for Supply, Testing, installa tion and commissioning of Testing equipment for 450MW BHEP-II as per desired

2. e-NIT NO: BHEP-II/10 of 2019-20 Dated: - 03-03-2020 for Proper stacking of old & new material including transportation, shifting, handling, loading and unloading from Generation complex to power house BHEP-II & vice versa at Chanderkote. e-NIT NO: BHEP-II/11 of 2019-20 Dated: - 03-03-2020 for Supply of 01 No Dehydration & Filtration Machine and 01 No. NAS/Oil Contamination Checking Machine for hydraulic & Lubrication fluids for power house BHEP-II Chanderkote Due to poor response, it has been decided to extend bid download, submission end

and bid opening dates for the e-NIT as under, **Existing date** Modified/ amended date

Bid purchase/ download end date	at 16:00 hrs	Bid purchase/ download end date	14-04-2020 at 16:00 hrs	
Bid submission end date	25-03-2020 at 16:00 hrs	Bid submission end date	14-04-2020 at 16:00 hrs	
Bid opening date	27-03-2020 at 13:00 hrs	Bid opening date	16-04-2020 at 13:00 hrs	
All other terms & conditions shall remain same as mentioned in SBD of tender.				
			Sd/-	

Executive Enginee Generation Division BHEP-II Chanderkot

#### **GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA Meghalaya Infrastructure Development Finance**

**Corporation (MIDFC)** Shillong, Meghalaya

No: MIDFC-IPL-2019-16-430 Dated: Shillong, the 06th April, 2020

#### NOTICE INVITING QUOTATION Meghalaya Infrastructure Development & Finance

Corporation Ltd. (MIDFC) (on behalf of Government of Meghalaya) invites quotation from qualified and interested firm/contractor for "Speedy Construction of COVID-19 Hospitals at Shillong, Tura, Jowai and other locations in Meghalaya using Pre-Fabricated Modular Construction Technology on Turnkey Basis".

Interested Parties are requested to download the Request for Quotation (RFQ) document from http://mbda.gov.in/tenders. Further details shall be provided in the RFQ document.

#### For any queries, please contact:

COO, MIDFC; Email ID: midfcmegh@gmail.com,

Phone No.: +919436102314/+917085401314

Sd- B.M.Syiem, COO, MIDFC MIPR No. 0019 dt. 8/4/2020

#### DIESEL LOCOMOTIVE WORKS, VARANASI - 221004 Corrigendum Notice

S.N.-1, Tender No. 06191059, Bid No.: E-78, Rev. 01, Existing due Date 07.04.2020, Revised due Date: 04.05.2020, S.N.-2, Tender No. 06191054A, Bid No.: E-78, Rev.: 01, Existing due Date: 10.04.2020, Revised due Date: 06.05.2020, S.N.-3, Tender No. 06191058, Bid No.: E-78, Rev.: 01, Existing due Date 13.04,2020, Revised due Date: 11.05,2020, S.N.-4, Tender No. 06191079 Bid No : E-78, Rev. 01, Existing due Date: 17 04 2020, Revised due Date 14 05 2020, S.N.-5, Tender No. 06191066, Bid No.: E-78, Rev. 01, Existing due Date: 15.04.2020, Revised due Date: 08.05.2020. Note: All other terms & condition shall remain unchanged. Details terms and conditions can be seen and Hindi version also on website www.dlw.indianrailways.gov.in http://www.ireps.gov.in and tender can fill up on the same website

PRO/DLW/S-01 🚺 💟 /diesellocoworks "Website; www.dlw.indianrailways.gov.in'

उ.प्र. पावर ट्रान्समिशन कारपोरेशन लि. ई-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना अनुभवी फर्मों/ ठेकेदार/ कार्यदायी संस्थाओं से विद्युत पारेषण मंडल मेरठ के अंतर्गत निम्न कार्यों हेतृ मोहर ई-निविदाएं ई-पोर्टल

(www.etender.up.nic.in) पर दो भागों में आमंत्रित की जाती है। भाग-1 में ई-निविदाओं के प्रपत्र निर्धारित शुल्क आर.टी.जी.एस./ एन.ई.एफ.टी. एवं निर्धारित धरोहर राशि आर.टी.जी.एस./एन.ई. एफ.टी./बैंक गारन्टी (अलग-अलग) के माध्यम से अधीक्षण अभियंता, विद्युत पारेषण मण्डल, मेरठ के पक्ष में State Bank of India, Cantt Branch, Meerut Account No. 11047201099, IFSC Code SBIN0000680 में जमा करायी जायेंगी। बैंक जमा की साक्ष्य यथा योज्य यू.टी.आर. संख्या, पे-इन स्लिप मूल की प्रति, निविदा के प्रथम भाग के साथ संलग्न किये जाये। ई-निविदा के प्रथम भाग (यू.टी.आर. संख्या, पे-इन स्लिप प्रति, निविदा प्रपत्र, पैन के अनुरक्षण से सम्बन्धित कार्य। धरोहर राशि कार्ड, इन्कम टैक्स रिर्टन, जी.एस.टी. प्रपत्र की स्वयं प्रमाणित छायाप्रति एवं तकनीकी अनुभव आदि) ई-पोर्टल पर स्कैन्ड प्रतियाँ (PDF format) तथा ई-निविदा के द्वितीय भाग (प्राइजबिड) में दरे एवं वाणिज्यक नियम व शर्ते ई-पोर्टल (www.etender. up.nic.in) पर निम्नलिखित तालिका के अनुसार अपलोड की जायेगी। निविदा शुल्क, धरोहर राशि एवं अन्य व्यवसायिक प्रपत्र हार्ड कॉपी में अथवा व्यक्तिगत संवाहक के माध्यम से इस कार्यालय में प्राप्त नहीं किये जायेंगे। ई-निविदा भाग द्वितीय (प्राइजबिड) खुलने की तिथि हेत् तदोनुसार वेबसाइट पर सुचित की जाएगी। ई-निविदा का प्रथम भाग, तालिका में अंकित दिनांक एवं समय अनुसार सार्वजनिक रूप से खोला जायेगा। ई-निविदा खुलने की तिथि पर अवकाश होने की स्थिति में ई-निविदा अगले कार्य दिवस पर निर्धारित समय तक स्वीकार की जाएगी एवं निर्धारित समय पर खोली जाएगी। ई-निविदाओं को बिना कोई कारण बताए ई-निविदा/ ई-निविदाओं को अस्वीकार/ विभाजित करने का

अधिकार अधोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता के पास सरक्षित

रहेगा। धरोहर/ ई-निविदा राशि रहित व सशर्त

ई-निविदाएं स्वीकार नहीं की जाएंगी। कृपया

विस्तृत जानकारी, डाउन लोड, अन्य संशोधनों

एवं ई-निविदा प्रस्तुत करने के दिनांक तक

क्रम सं. 1 निविदा संख्या एवं कार्य का विवरण टी- 24/20-21:- विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड-द्वितीय मेरठ के अन्तर्गत 220 के.वी. उपकेन्द्र चरला पर स्थापित एयर कंडिशनर के अनुरक्षण से सम्बन्धित कार्य। धरोहर राशि 4000.00 निविदा प्रपत्र का मूल्य 590.00 जी.एस.टी. सहित, ई-पोर्टल पर निविदा अपलोड करने की अन्तिम तिथि एवं समय 09.05.2020 सायं 05 बजे तक, ई-पोर्टल पर निविदा का प्रथम भाग खोलने की तिथि एवं समय 11.05.2020 प्रातः 12 बजे तक, ई-पोर्टल पर निविदा का द्वितीय भाग खोलने की तिथि एवं समय तदनुसार बेवसाइट पर सुचित की जायेगीं। क्रम सं. 2 निविदा संख्या एवं कार्य का विवरण टी-25/20-21:- विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड-द्वितीय मेरठ के अन्तर्गत 132 के.वी. उपकेन्द्र कंकरखेडा–द्वितीय पर स्थापित एयर कंडिशनर 2000.00 निविदा प्रपत्र का मुल्य 590.00 जी.एस.टी. सहित, ई-पोर्टल पर निविदा अपलोड करने की अन्तिम तिथि एवं समय 09.05.2020 सायं 05 बजे तक, ई-पोर्टल पर निविदा का प्रथम भाग खोलने की तिथि एवं समय 11.05.2020 प्रातः 12 बजे तक, ई-पोर्टल पर निविदा का द्वितीय भाग खोलने की तिथि एवं समय तदनुसार बेवसाइट पर सुचित की जायेगीं। क्रम सं. 3 निविदा संख्या एवं कार्य का विवरण टी- 26/20-21:- विद्यत पारेषण खण्ड मेरठ-द्वितीय के अन्तर्गत 132 के.वी. उपकेन्द्र कपसाड पर स्थापित विभिन्न उपकरणों पर पेन्टिंग से सम्बन्धित कार्य धरोहर राशि 5000.00 निविदा प्रपत्र का मुल्य 590.00 जी.एस.टी. सहित, ई-पोर्टल पर निविदा अपलोड करने की अन्तिम तिथि एवं समय 13.05.2020 सायं 05 बजे तक, ई-पोर्टल पर निविदा का प्रथम भाग खोलने की तिथि एवं समय 14.05.2020 प्रातः 12 बजे तक, ई-पोर्टल पर निविदा का द्वितीय भाग खोलने की तिथि एवं समय तदनुसार बेवसाइट

पर सुचित की जायेगीं। अधीक्षण अभियंता,

विद्यत पारेषण मण्डल. 130-डी. ''पारेषण

भवन'', विक्टोरिया पार्क, मेरठ। ''राष्ट्रहित

में ऊर्जा बचाएं'' पत्रांक नं.: 964

वि.पा.मं./ ETC/ मेरठ /MT/TEN-

**DER** दिनांक: 08/04/2020

www.etender.up.nic.in पर लॉग आन

करें। निविदाओं का विवरण निम्न प्रकार है:-

## JeM commander killed in Sopore encounter: police

Classifieds

**PUBLIC NOTICE** 

Our Clients, Dr Ajay Gupta and

Mrs Tanya Gupta, intend to

purchase property allotted to

them in a public auction from

Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd and

described as Entire Second

Floor, consisting of Two

Bedrooms, Three Bathrooms,

One Drawing cum Dining

Room, One Kitchen, Front and

Rear Balconies and

Space/Area for the servant

quarter with the W.C. on the

Top Terrace, One Car Parking

Space in the Driveway inside

the Building and Entire Terrace

Rights over and above the

Entire Second Floor (Except

the area of common Servant

Quarter with Common W.C.), of

Freehold Property Bearing No.

D-205, measuring 336 sq. Yds

situated at Defence Colony,

New Delhi-24 along with 30%

the said Plot of Land. Any

person or persons having any

right, title or interest by way of

inherence or claim against the

said property should send their

claims in writing, to the

undersigned along with the

documentary evidence in

support of the said claim, within

10 days of publication of this

notice, failing which claims, if

any, shall be deemed to have

**Suhail Sehgal Advocate** 

D-1/30, DLF City, Phase-1,

Gurugram, Haryana - 122002

been waived.

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** SRINAGAR, APRIL 8

A JAISH-E-MOHAMMED (JeM) commander was killed in a encounter with security forces in Kashmir's Sopore on

Wednesday, officials said.

A cordon-and search-operation was launched by joint forces in Arampora area on Tuesday night following the presence of militants there. On Wednesday morning, police said they "established contact" with the "2-4 militants" reported present inside a house.

By Wednesday evening police confirmed that they recovered the dead body of one mil-

itant. "In the ongoing encounter at Sopore body of one terrorist of JeM, namely Sajad Ahmed Dar of Sopore, recovered so far. Clearance of the target house in progress, said a J&K Police spokesperson.

Sopore SSP Javid Iqbal told the The Indian Express that Darjoined militancy two years ago. "The operation is still going on in the area, he said, adding that one security personnel had suffered minor injuries in the operation.

In another tweet, police said, "The killed terrorist threatened & intimidated peace loving citizens of Sopore & its peripheral areas..."

## उत्तर पश्चिम

undivided, indivisible and इस कार्यालय द्वारा झापित खुली निविदा impartible ownership Rights in | सुचना संख्या डब्ल्/118/1/निवेदा/वगई (सम0)जयपुर / इन्जी. दिनांक 17.03.2020 में नेविदा सं इजी / जय / 2020-21 / 1 से इंजी./जय/2020-21/7 जो दिनांक 09.04.2020 को खोली जानी है और निविदा सूचना संख्याः डब्ल्/118/1/निविदा/ यमई (सम0)जयपुर / इन्जी. दिनांक 20.03.2020 में निविदा सं. इंजी./जय/2020-21/8 से इंजी./जय/2020-21/9 जो दिनांक 13.04.2020 को खोली जानी है उपरोक्त सभी नेविदायें अब दिनांक 20.04.2020 की खोली नावेगी। अन्य शर्ते यथावत रहेगी।

मण्डल रेल प्रबंधक (निर्माण लेखा).

OFFICE OF ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER PHED, JAIPUR REGION-I, JAIPUR Jyoti Nagar, Sahakar Marg, Jaipur-302005

Phone: 0141-2740170(o) e-mail: ace1.jpr.phed@rajasthan.gov.in No F. ()/ACE/PHED/Ar. City Div./NIT-01/2020-21/ 18 Date: -07.04.2020

(e-NIT NO. 01/2020-21) Online tender are hereby invited on behalf of the Hon'ble Governor of Rajasthan for the following works from eligible bidders as per criteria mentioned in detailed tende document which can be seen and downloaded from websites https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in www.rajwater.gov.in, Tenders are to be submitted online in electronic format or

website https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in as per prescribed schedule. Last date for Due date for submission of (Rs. In lacs 01/2020-21 Conversion of Existing 6,40,240.00 29.04.2020 30.04.2020 WSS to Piped Schem Udaipurwati District Jhunjhunu.

NIB No. UBN No. PHE 2021A0042 PHE 2021WSOB00073 SAVE WATER-SAVE LIFE

DIPR/ NO. 2911

(R.C. Mishra) Addl. Chief Engineer PHED, Jaipur Region-I, Jaipur

#### वस्तु एवं सेवा कर अधिनियम के अन्तर्गत पंजीकृत फर्मीं/ आपूर्तिकर्ता, जो कि निविदित उपकरणों के निर्माता/ अधिकृत विक्रेता हों एवं विद्युत विभाग में आपूर्ति का अनुभव हो से, इस कार्यालय के द्वारा पारेषण दक्षिण क्षेत्र के अन्तर्गत विभिन्न उपकेन्द्रों हेतु सामग्री हेत् आवश्यक उपकरण/ निम्नलिखित ई-निविदा आमंत्रित की गयी है जिनका विस्तृत विवरण ई-टेण्डर की वेबसाइट www.etender.up.nic.in पर उपलब्ध है। 1. **अल्पकालीन ई**-निविदा सं.- टी-01/ मु.अ. (पा.द.प.)/ 20-21: पारेषण दक्षिण क्षेत्र आगरा के अन्तर्गत विभिन्न पारेषण मण्डलों हेतु 33 केवी की विभिन्न रेशियो की सी.टी. को क्रय किये जाने के सम्बन्ध में। 2. अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सं.- टी-02/ ( **पा.द.प**. )/ 20-21: पारेषण दक्षिण क्षेत्र आगरा के अन्तर्गत विभिन्न पारेषण मण्डलों हेतु 33 केवी की विभिन्न विभव के बस/ लाइन आइसोलेटर को क्रय किये जाने के सम्बन्ध में। 3. अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सं.- टी-03/ मु.अ. ( पा.द.प. )/ 20-21: पारेषण दक्षिण क्षेत्र आगरा के अन्तर्गत विभिन्न पारेषण मण्डलों हेतु 30 केवी के लाइटनिंग अरेस्टर को क्रय किये जाने के सम्बन्ध में। 4. अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सं.- टी-04/ मु.अ. (पा.द.प.)/ 20-21: पारेषण दक्षिण क्षेत्र आगरा के अन्तर्गत विभिन्न पारेषण मण्डलों हेतु विभिन्न प्रकार के बैटरी चार्जर एवं डी.सी.डी.बी. को क्रय किये जाने के सम्बन्ध में। 5. अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सं.- टी-05/ मु.अ. ( **पा.द.प**. )/ 20–21: पारेषण दक्षिण क्षेत्र आगरा के अन्तर्गत विभिन्न पारेषण मण्डलों

हेतु विभिन्न प्रकार के बैटरी सैट को क्रय

किये जाने के सम्बन्ध में। 6. सामान्य ई-

निविदा सं.- टी-06/ मु.अ. (पा.द.प.)/

20-21: पारेषण दक्षिण क्षेत्र आगरा के

अन्तर्गत विद्युत पारेषण द्वितीय, अलीगढ़ के

अधीन विभिन्न पारेषण लाइनों के अनुरक्षण

हेतु सामिग्री को क्रय किये जाने के सम्बन्ध

में। ७. सामान्य ई-निविदा सं.- टी-०६/

**मु.अ. ( पा.द.प.** )/ 20-21: पारेषण दक्षिण

क्षेत्र आगरा के अन्तर्गत विद्युत पारेषण

खण्ड, तृतीय आगरा के अन्तर्गत 220 केवी

उपकेन्द्र बाह हेतु 5 केएल. ऑयल स्टोरेज

टैंक क्रय किये जाने हेतु। मुख्य अभियन्ता,

(पा.द.प.) निकट अमर उजाला प्रैस.

ककरैठा रोड, आगरा ''राष्ट्र हित में

बिजली बचायें'' उपभोक्ता सेवा हेतु

सम्पर्क करें- www.uppcl.org पत्रांक

704/ मु.अभि (पा.द.प.) आ./ ई-

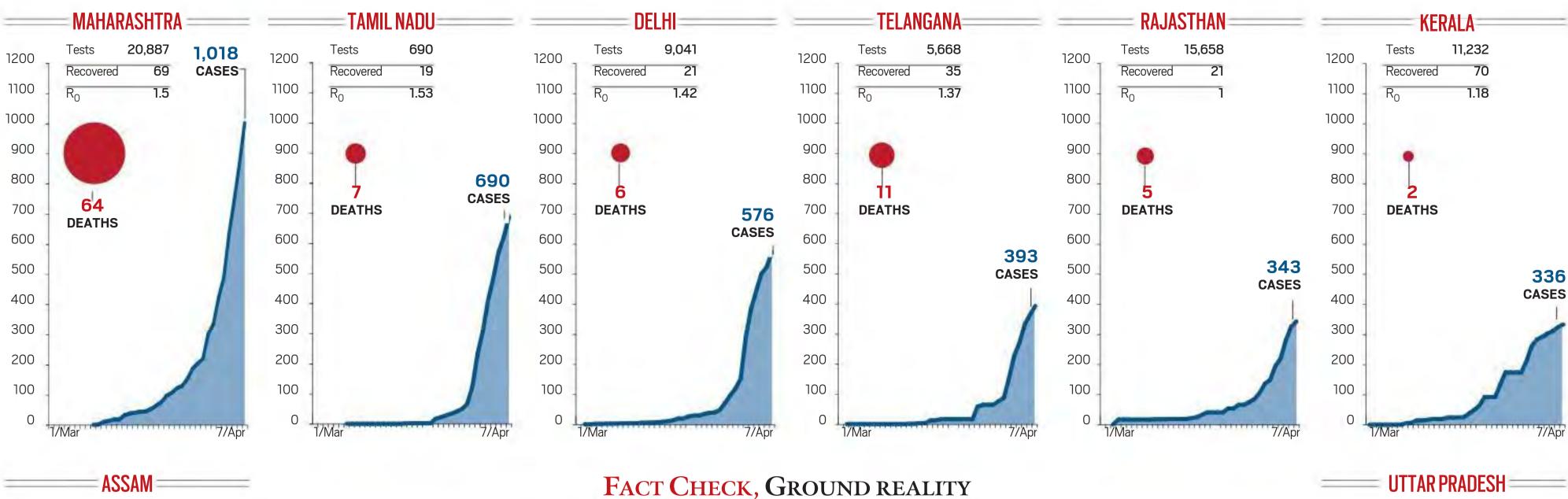
निविदा संख्या टी. 01 से 07/ 20-21

दिनांक 08/04/2020

# THE INDIAN EXPRESS, THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 2020 THE OUTBREAK

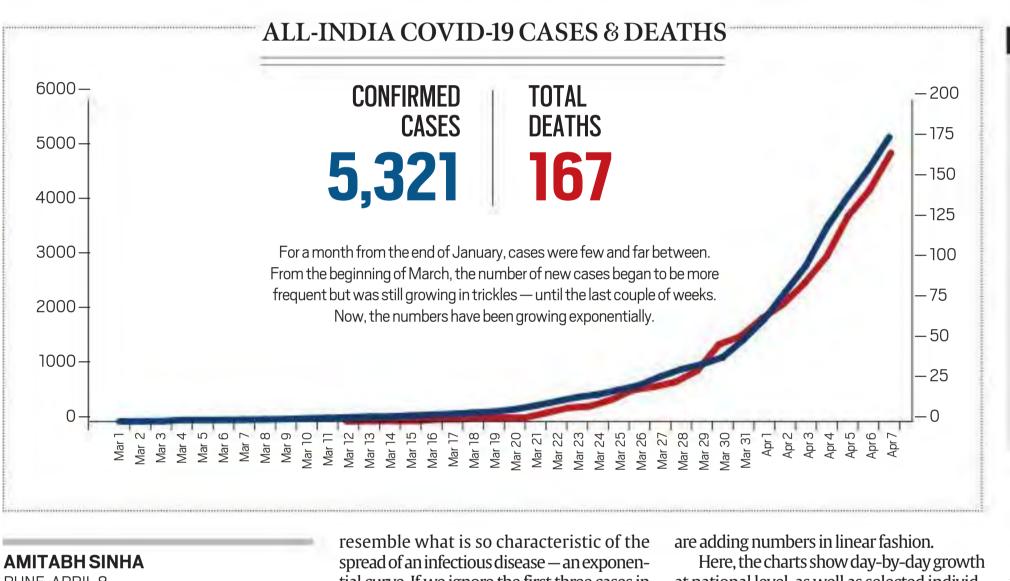
00 @ieExplained #ExpressExplained

> If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to explained@indianexpress.com



# Tracking the virus curve

India is talking about the recent spurt in cases, but how sharp has it been? Data from day to day, plotted in these graphs, show how and when the growth changed from occasional to a trickle to exponential



PUNE, APRIL 8

THE FIRST three cases of novel coronavirus infection in India happened on January 29, and none thereafter for the next more than one month. Fresh cases began to emerge in the first week of March but for more than two weeks, it came in trickles, even as many other parts of the world were battling with the emergence of thousands of cases every day.

In the last few days, however, the growth of numbers in India has begun to prominently

tial curve. If we ignore the first three cases in Kerala and January, it took India 13 days after the emergence of a fresh case on March 2 to cross the 100 mark. Over the next 14 days, India had more than 1,000 cases. By April 7, or in another nine days, the numbers had crossed the 5,000 mark, and at this rate, India is on

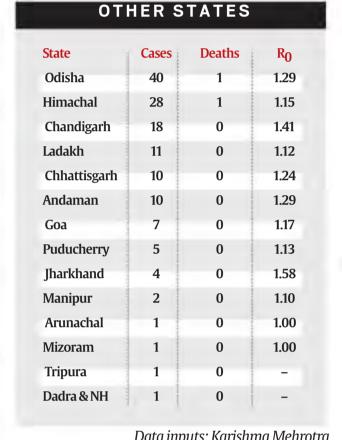
route to touch 10,000 cases in about a week. The growth has been different in different states. While Maharashtra, Telangana, Delhi, Tamil Nadu and UP have been seeing an ex-

ponential rate of growth, many other states

at national level, as well as selected individual states with large caseloads. We also present the daily increase in deaths because of the disease. These numbers have been sourced in-house from daily reports from the states. As such, they are likely to be a little different from the official numbers put out by the Health Ministry, or several other publicly available databases. However, the overall trend is not very different. Some deaths are being attributed to COVID-19 a few days af-

ter the actual demise because the test results

HARYANA

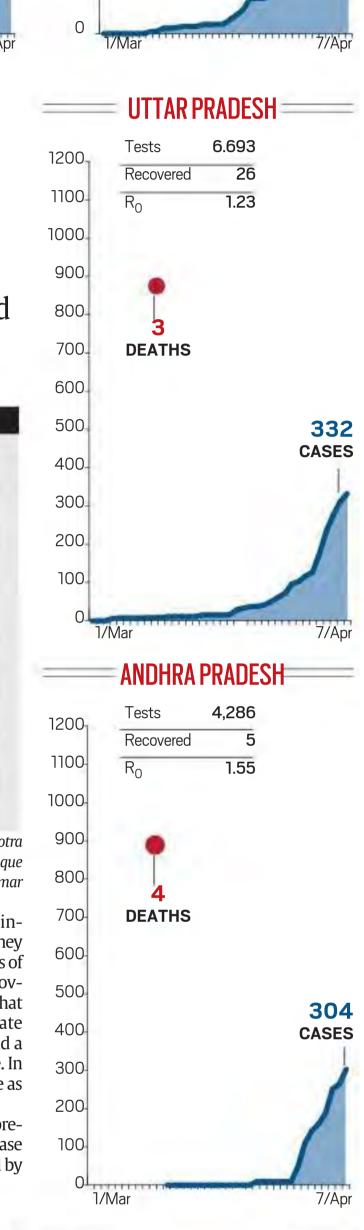


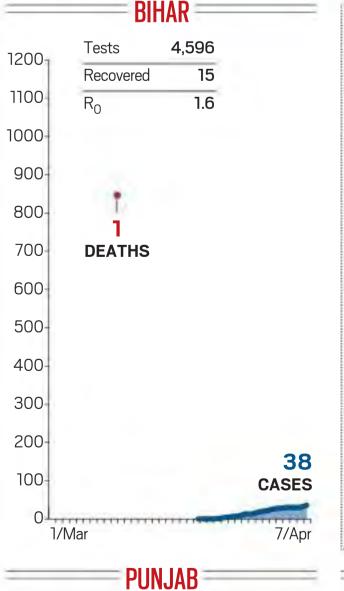
Data inputs: Karishma Mehrotra Editing: Kabir Firaque Graphics: Mithun Chakraborty & Ritesh Kumar

arrive late. For convenience, we have included the deaths on the dates on which they were announced. There are other sources of discrepancy as well. The West Bengal government, for example, has maintained that some of the deaths reported in the state could not be attributed to COVID-19, and a committee is looking into some of these. In this database, we have included all those as deaths of people positive for COVID-19.

The RO, or reproduction numbers representing how many people one positive case can infect, in the graphs are as calculated by IIIT Delhi researchers.

**GUJARAT** 





2,253

None

3.85

1,289

5

1.31

27

**CASES** 

**CASES** 

7/Apr

Tests

Recovered

NO

**DEATHS** 

Recovered

NO

**DEATHS** 

1200

1100

1000

900

800

700

400

300

200

100

1200

1100-

1000

900

800-

700

600

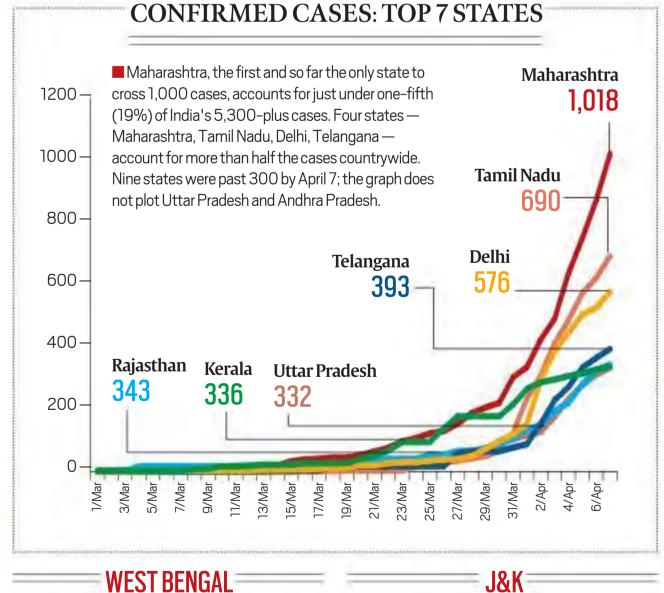
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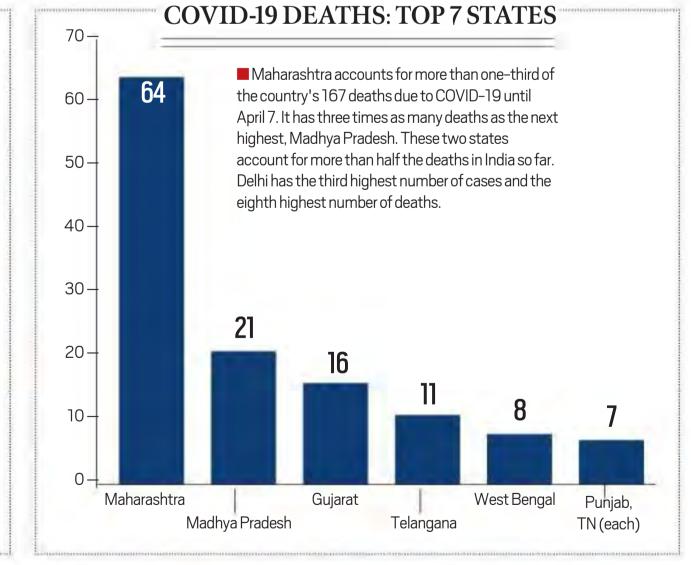
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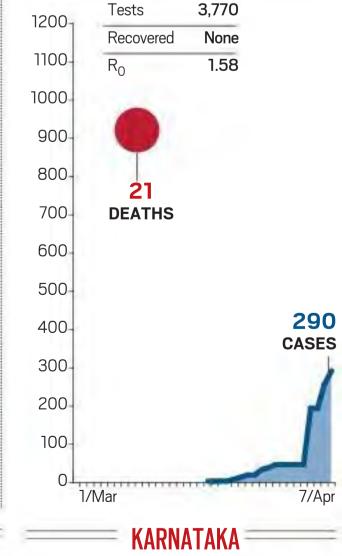
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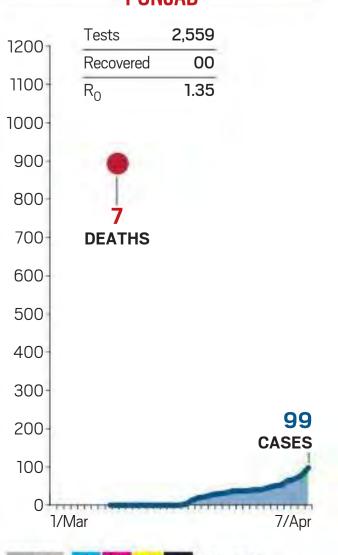
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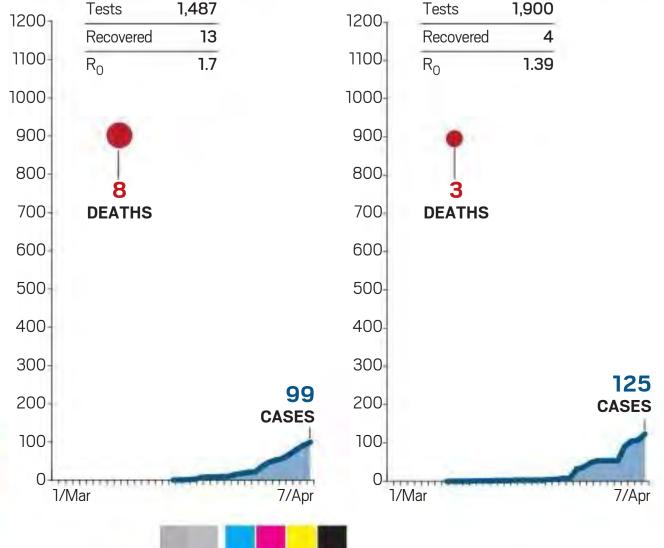


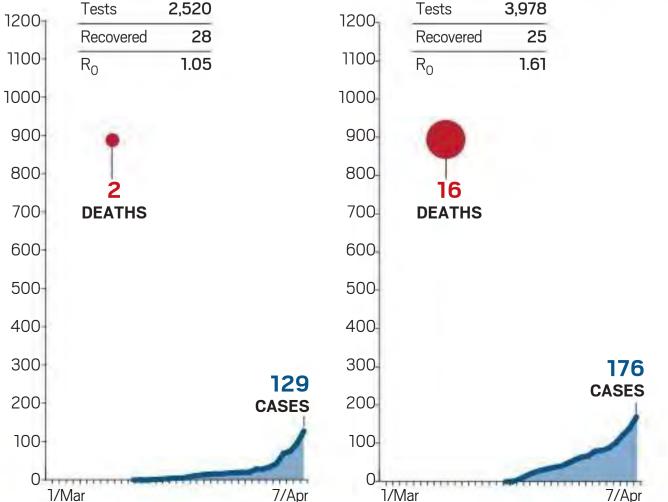


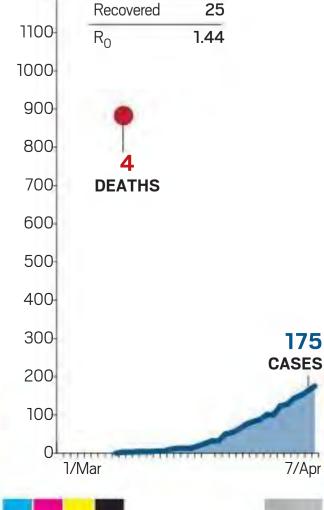


MADHYA PRADESH









6,580

Tests

12001

THERE IS ONLY ONE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A LONG LIFE AND A GOOD DINNER: THAT, IN THE DINNER,

THE SWEETS COME LAST. — RL STEVENSON

## **The Indian EXPRESS**

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RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

## OUT OF THE OLD BOX

Sonia Gandhi's proposal for a two-year ban on government ads in media needs to be rejected — by all, including her party

HEN PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi called on chairperson of the Congress Parliamentary Party Sonia Gandhi to give her suggestions for addressing the coronavirus crisis, it was a rare event. There has been little conviviality so far between the Modi government and its main opposition. But what could have been an uplifting, constructive moment, became just the opposite. Austerity measure No 1 in her letter to the PM asks for the imposition of a "complete ban" on media advertising by the government and public sector undertakings "for a period of two years", making an exception only for specific "advisories" for COVID-19 or unspecified "issues relating to public health". Forget, for a moment, the fact of its spectacularly bad timing — as reporters, across media all over the country, risk their own health, and lives, to cover a public health emergency and as the lockdown severely disrupts production and distribution of publications. Her call for a ban on advertising in the media shows a complete, and completely shocking, misunderstanding of news as a public good, the economics of its access, the fact that governments use public money to advertise and curbs on it have to follow due process. And, of course, the role of the media as a countervailing institution in a democracy.

Perhaps, the misunderstanding, and the insensitivity, need not surprise. The Congress is the party that suspended fundamental liberties during the Emergency, censored the press and put the Opposition behind bars. Yet, the nation, and to be fair, even the Congress, has moved on from that two-year period of standstill, having taken on board valuable lessons about the centrality of the press in the institutional architecture of a democracy. As the leading party of the Opposition today, and, more importantly, as a party that also runs several state governments, surely the Congress knows the indispensability of a free media to so many critical public endeavours. To keep information flows going, to speak truth to power, to check and balance and hold government to account, to create and widen the space for debate and deliberation. In the ongoing COVID crisis, it is the media that helps make visible issues like the migrants' predicament, that otherwise may be invisibilised, even as it becomes the platform for governments to speak to the people, address their anxieties.

The revenue model for good journalism has always been unsteady and turning the advertisement tap on or off is a time-tested way to harass a free press. With the nationwide lockdown of business and industry, the economic crisis will only grow. The need for a vibrant and independent media has never been more keenly felt — as governments scramble with tools that are conventional and unconventional, restrictions that clamp rather than curb, while the people are subdued by fear and anxiety. At a time like this, the media needs public support to render its essential service, not disincentives and curbs. As for the Congress, it should think harder, focus on suggestions that may actually make a difference — like the new "Bhilwara model" of COVID containment in Rajasthan — instead of pulling out a dangerous idea from its old box.

## CAPITAL STEPS UP

Delhi's decision to intensify testing will help obtain better picture of COVID-19. It can learn from Kerala

T'S NOW WELL-KNOWN that testing is the best weapon in the fight against the novel coronavirus. Beyond diagnosing individual cases, testing informs public health authorities about how much the infection has spread, helps identify hotspots and aids the framing of containment strategies. That's why the Delhi government's decision to scale up testing in the capital is long-overdue. The Arvind Kejriwal government plans to test at least 1,000 people every day — more than double the number it tests currently. These tests could address fears of community transmission that have arisen after the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare identified two areas in the city — Nizamuddin and Dilshad Garden — as hotspots.

The Delhi government also plans to conduct 1,00,000 random antibody tests in the city's hotspots. Given belated approval by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) more than 10 days after the lockdown — these tests are now globally recognised as necessary complements to the conventional swab tests. They help identify people who may have had the disease but were never tested. Tracking down antibodies created by the immune system to fight the coronavirus is a relatively inexpensive procedure and does not require sophisticated laboratories. The tests will help answer important questions: Have a large number of COVID-19 cases gone undetected? Are those who had mild COVID-19 cases immune to new infections? Figuring out how much of the population has fought off the virus and whether they have developed immunity will be critical in establishing an accurate picture of the pandemic. When conducted in hotspots such as Nizamuddin and Dilshad Garden, the antibody tests could yield information that will be crucial to decisions about lifting the lockdown.

Kerala was amongst the first states in the country to conduct antibody tests - it did not wait for the ICMR's nod. As it steps up its fight against the coronavirus, the Delhi government would do well to learn from Kerala's experience. The state did rely on surveillance measures — much like the Delhi government plans to. At the same time, however, Kerala also roped in civil society, religious leaders and media. The state's experience shows that drawing on social capital is crucial to fighting a pandemic. That's a lesson for Delhi, and other Indian states.

## COME, MY SWEET

Let us eat thee! Bengal consumes the coronavirus the best way it knows

HE CITY THAT cooked up rosogollas and revolution, and which ritually slays the demon in every neighbourhood Durga Puja, has taken on the big one. It has chosen its weapon well — the sandesh, a marker of its culture. Remember the little squabble that Kolkata got into with Bhubaneswar over the ownership of the rosogolla? Such trifles are now forgotten, as the city girds its taste buds to engage with the corona sandesh invented by Hindustan Sweets, and to annihilate the disease with gastric juices.

This is the ancient symbolism of magic, precisely like that of Durga Puja, which signifies the destruction of evil worldwide. But also consider the amoeba, which surrounds its prey with its pseudopodia and assimilates it. What could be more natural than to engulf the enemy? The corona sandesh is an angry red blob with knobs on, like a Vogon seen through the

haze of rage. It is presented as a target to be immediately engulfed. Bet it's tasty, too. Kolkata's sweet-makers stay with the news. The famous ledikeni was a nod to Lady Canning, whose husband was governor-general during the rising of 1857. It was a diplomatic gesture to assuage feelings ruffled by that chapati business, upcountry. The tradition stretches to the present — the inventors of the corona sandesh had earlier invented the pink ball sandesh to coincide with India's first pink ball Test. Now, with the advent of the edible coronavirus, this tradition of marking the great events of our times continues. And you thought that we would be trotting out those old tropes about a dying city which nevertheless leads the country in Gelusil sales. But like Kolkata has left the quarrel over rosogolla behind to engage with the biggest global challenge, we too have risen above pettiness.

# Command to confidence



A lockdown requires a command, an opening will require confidence

PRATAP BHANU MEHTA

THE DECISION ON extending the nationwide lockdown or relaxing it in a phased manner is not an easy one. Many states are arguing for extending the lockdown. Even Kerala's thoughtful proposal for a three-phase relaxation of the lockdown is, rightly, cautious. The case for extending the lockdown is based on two claims. Based on the data we have, we simply cannot confidently predict that any easing of the lockdown will not lead to an unmanageable surge in the disease. It is better to act on the precautionary principle in this case. This argument is not simply pitting lives against livelihoods. It is about the inter-temporal dimensions of how the trade-off might play out. The premise seems to be that longer lockdowns now might actually prevent the need for even longer lockdowns later.

The second premise seems to be that states need more time to be prepared to partially emerge from a lockdown. Adequate medical supplies, personal protective equipment, testing and tracing capabilities, quarantining facilities and protocols, administrative capabilities, will need to be in place to make the opening work. The important thing here is to make sure the lockdown does not provide an indefinite alibi for going slow on this preparation.

There are government task forces in place, and in many states the state machinery is moving. But the visible evidence suggests that we are still underprepared. For example, the risks the frontline health care workers are facing are enormous in the absence of enough personal protective equipment. India is not alone in this deficiency. But it would inspire more confidence in the system if there was a clearer, publicly articulated and independently verified picture of our preparedness.

There is a lot of good faith logic left to the argument that we need to extend the lockdown a little more to fully realise its gains, and not risk severe reversals. But the concern that the shutdown is also coming at an immeasurable human cost has considerable truth to

There was suffering and hardship unleashed, especially for the poor and migrant labour, in the first few days' chaos of the lockdown. Governments have responded. But the legitimate criticism is that not enough has

First, it will require confidence in what our data is telling us. One of the arguments for a partial opening is a differential spread of the virus. According to some analysts, about 17 districts have high concentration of cases, about 200 districts have less than 10 cases, but 400 districts are corona-free. But how much confidence do we have that the virus-free districts are indeed virus-free? This is for epidemiologists and statisticians to tell us. The overall impression is that we simply don't know enough yet to make this determination. This problem

could be fixed in the coming weeks. But it will require a sea change in the kind of data that is collected and the way it is shared.

been done to mitigate the immediate human costs of the lockdown. In particular, the level of financial support and security offered does not measure up to what is required. The government needs to address this concern with a more robust and confidence-inspiring economic package. But when we think of the option of a par-

tial opening of the lockdown, we will immediately run into this paradox. A lockdown is relatively easy to administer. It was done as a command and control operation. An opening up, or a partial opening up, will require immense confidence. First, it will require confidence in what our data is telling us. One of the arguments for a partial opening is a differential spread of the virus. According to some analysts, about 17 districts have high concentration of cases, about 200 districts have less than 10 cases, but 400 districts are corona-free. But how much confidence do we have that the virus-free districts are indeed virus-free? This is for epidemiologists and statisticians to tell us. The overall impression is that we simply don't know enough yet to make this determination. This problem could be fixed in the coming weeks. But it will require a sea change in the kind of data that is collected and the way it is shared.

The second is a behavioural point. Even if social distancing norms are in place, how much confidence would you have that it is indeed safe to return to work? There is an irony here. The argument for opening up is that the poor need to get to work. But they need to only because they have been given little income support. Suppose you could tide over the lockdown, even with very modest savings. Or you had income support. Would you choose to return to work, if you were not compelled to, unless you were convinced it is as safe to return to work as these things might be? Even for wage labour, particularly those who can sustain themselves for a couple of months or get by with food support, this might be a dilemma.

Should you take a risk or wait it out a little more? You can command a lockdown. But whether people actually come out depends on your ability to convince people that it is safe, and the consequences of getting the disease will not be catastrophic. A lockdown requires a command, an opening will require confidence. These are two different governance modalities.

The third is a logistical point that applies to lockdown as well. India is deeply integrated as a market and production circuit. A harvest in a district in Punjab might require labour from UP and jute bags from Bengal. For partial openings to work, you need very granular knowledge of how to make these economies work. As even the modest example of Punjab not getting enough gunny bags from Bengal suggests, there will have to be robust mechanisms to coordinate all the problems that may arise. While the Centre seems to be consulting state chief ministers more on the macro decisions, you will need nimble and wide-ranging coordination mechanisms, across several sectors of society and economy.

It is the quality of governance that will mediate the path to opening up, not just the economics versus life debate. The government will have to inspire total confidence in the robustness of the information it is putting out, whether on testing or supplies. In recommending a lockdown, the states seem to be honest enough to admit both that we don't know enough and that we are not fully prepared. The Centre sometimes gives the impression, more, of controlling the narrative than eliciting the maximum transparency and making society a partner in the information architecture we are using to make decisions. We will require broad-based administrative and consultative mechanisms to move us from command to confidence.

The empowered committees at the Centre, for example, seem to have the standard formula of being staffed with mostly government people for the purposes of governmental coordination. In contrast, Kerala's task force that came up with recommendations seems be very broad-based. Whether we stay with a lockdown or partially open up, the success of the decision will depend on full knowledge of our preparation to make our decisions a success, and a full account of the reasoning behind our choices.

> The writer is contributing editor at The Indian Express

## PRAYER AND CONTAGION

Religious congregations and beliefs need a relook in times of coronavirus

KHALED AHMED

IN THE LAST week of February 2020, the border post of the Balochistan province, Taftan, allowed 6,500 pilgrims to leave their confinement as suspected victims of COVID-19 and return home to their provinces in Pakistan as long as they were free of the virus. These were Shia pilgrims who had visited sacred shrines like Qom and Mashhad in Iran.

In early February, China had warned the world about the contagion, but Iran paid no heed and kept allowing travel to China, and took no quarantine action at Qom where thousands had gathered from around the world. Iranian authorities allowed the city to become a major epicentre of COVID-19. The following month, around 90 per cent of the approximately 17,000 cases throughout the Middle East were linked to Iran.

Iranian leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, on March 3, said something that most religious leaders in Pakistan were to soon repeat: "COVID-19 is not such a big tragedy and this country has overcome graver ones. The prayers of the pure youth and pious are very effective in repelling major tragedies." After the death of 13 senior Iranian officials, among at least 30 who contracted the virus, he shifted to blaming America for starting the pandemic.

The thousands of pilgrims quarantined by Pakistan in Taftan hardly experienced adequate safety measures. People were herded into tents where the unaffected men and

When Pakistan decided to 'lock down' the country in the third week of March, mosque congregations had to be ignored because most clerical leaders were not in favour of the closure. Their response was close to what the Iranian supreme leader had said earlier — and regretted — that Allah will look after His believers.

investigation of offences.

women also became infected. They were all Shias, and the largest numbers were from Sindh province in Pakistan, where its largest city, Karachi, with 22 million inhabitants, is located. Since none of these pilgrims were tested for infection, they became carriers, and today Pakistan has nearly a thousand coronavirus-stricken citizens, with reportedly eight dead by the end of March.

The Tablighi Jamaat of Pakistan is the largest such "invitation to Islam" organisation in Pakistan and, probably, in the world, judging from a million-strong congregation in Lahore every year. This March, the Lahore congregation became an international infector. An article in The New York Times reported how, "the gathering proved a perfect transmission point, infecting indeterminate numbers of Pakistanis, at least two Kyrgyz citizens and two Palestinians who flew home and introduced the virus to the Gaza Strip. A similar gathering of Tablighi Jamaat in Malaysia infected more than 620 participants who then returned to half a dozen countries across Southeast Asia".

Pakistan's most vulnerable locus is the mosque where the devotees have to stand shoulder-to-shoulder to pray five times a day. There are half a million mosques in Pakistan - the count can't even be called accurate because of the changing nature of the mosque. In Pakistan, in the early days following 1947, most Muslims prayed at home except on Fridays when some went to the mosque to join the congregation. Today, most people pray five times a day in neighbourhood mosques, which have consequently prolif-

When Pakistan decided to "lock down' the country in the third week of March, mosque congregations had to be ignored because most clerical leaders were not in favour of the closure. Their response was close to what the Iranian supreme leader had said earlier — and regretted — that Allah will look after His believers. Then, Pakistan President Arif Alvi referred the matter to the highest Islamic authority — the Jami'at al-Azhar or the Al-Azhar University, in Egypt. Only then did he get an edict in favour of the closure of all mosques: The clerical leaders would have still stood their ground but for the decision taken by Saudi Arabia to close all rituals in Mecca and Madina.

Pakistan took the middle ground, a decision which remains incomprehensible: That mosques will not be closed, but the prayers will only be conducted by no more than five people connected with the mosque administration. Evidence as per TV coverage, though, suggests that the police have had to actively stop citizens from heading to mosques to keep them safe.

> The writer is consulting editor, Newsweek Pakistan

## APRIL 9, 1980, FORTY YEARS AGO



COUNTER TO VIOLENCE DELHI COPS PROTECTED GOVERNORS OF CENTRALLY ruled states and ALL NON-GAZETTED OFFICIALS of the Delhi chief ministers reached consensus on steps Police have been granted protection against to be taken to effectively enforce law and orlegal action by members of the public through der and curb communal and caste tensions. a notification issued by the Lt Governor, Mr But there was disagreement on the sugges-Jagmohan. The gazetted police officials already enjoy this protection. The notification, tion that certain powers under the CrPC reissued under section 197 of the CrPC stipugarding preventive measures to maintain peace should be vested in executive magislates that no court would take cognisance, extrates. At present, these powers are enjoyed cept with the previous sanction of the Lt Governor, of any offence alleged to have been by judicial magistrates only. The steps on which there was broad agreement included committed by any subordinate non-gazetted official of the police while acting or purportimposition of collective fines, holding of ading to act in the discharge of his duties. A press ministrative inquiries to pinpoint police or civil administration failures and expeditious note issued from Raj Niwas said the object of this notification was to guard against "vexa-

tious proceedings and enable the officials to perform their duties fearlessly."

IRAN EMERGENCY

THE RULING REVOLUTIONARY council in Iran yesterday considered declaring an economic state of emergency, a belt-tightening programme that could include rationing consumer goods as a result of new US actions in the light of the hostage crisis. President Bani-Sadr warned Iranians, "If you want to be alive, produce and work." According to Teheran radio, Ayatollah Khomeini scoffed at President Carter's new sanctions, saying they would have no effect on the plight of the 50 Americans held hostages.

— THE GUARDIAN

# THE IDEAS PAGE

# Break the food lockdown

Excess stocks of the Food Corporation of India must be released to states for emergency relief for the poor



HOW WOULD YOU feel if a family were to let its weakest members starve, even as the house's granary is full to the brim? That is what is happening in India today.

Everyone knows that the country has large food stocks, and that some of this could be used to protect people from hunger during the coronavirus crisis. The enormity of the situation, however, has escaped many ob-

Twenty-odd years ago, the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) filed a writ petition in the Supreme Court asking for the country's gigantic food stocks to be used for public works and other social security schemes. This public interest litigation paved the way for important food security initiatives such as mid-day meals, public distribution system (PDS) reforms, and later on, the National Food Security Act (NFSA). Taken together, these food-based schemes involve the distribution of some 50-60 million tonnes of rice and wheat every year. Yet, food stocks have continued to grow because procurement levels have also increased.

When the PUCL petition was filed, in 2001, the foodgrain stocks of the Food Corporation of India (FCI) were approaching 50 million tonnes — a record at that time. During the last five years, they have not only exceeded that level every year, but have also grown further by leaps and bounds. Last year, in June (when the stocks normally peak), foodgrain stocks crossed 80 million tonnes

 more than three times the buffer-stock norms. This year, they have reached a staggering 77 million tonnes in March, before the rabi harvest, when food stocks typically rise by another 20 million tonnes or so. Public food storage on this scale has never happened in India before. Meanwhile, the shadow of hunger looms large as the lockdown devastates people's livelihoods.

The finance minister did not do them a big favour by doubling PDS rations for the next three months — something like that was needed, in any case, to make space in FCI's overflowing godowns for rabi procurement. A serious relief package would include releasing excess stocks to the states in large quantities.

Why is it proving so difficult? One reason has to do with food-subsidy accounting. The food subsidy essentially pays for the losses FCI makes when it buys at minimum support prices and sells at much lower PDS prices, and also the money spent on transportation and storage. As it happens, however, the food subsidy does not enter the central government's accounts until stocks are released. That is why the finance minister had to budget Rs 40,000 crore in her relief package simply to release some excess food stocks into the PDS. In economic terms, releasing excess stocks is costless, and even saves money. But in accounting terms, it is expensive. This anomaly makes it harder to release food stocks: Credit-rating agencies watch the fiscal deficit, not the food economy.

Now, let us consider this from the angle of state governments. Take Jharkhand. The state has a major problem of exclusion from the PDS — there are pending ration-card applications from seven lakh households, including many poor ones. The central govern-



ment does not provide any food assistance to them under its relief package. If the Jharkhand government wants to distribute some food to these excluded households, it will have to pay the FCI for it at the so-called economic cost — well above the market price.

Providing seven lakh Jharkhandi households with emergency ration cards for, say, six months at the standard NFSA rate of 5 kg per person per month would require just one lakh tonne of foodgrain, or barely one-tenth of one per cent of the FCI's food stocks. This would make a tiny dent in the stocks, yet go a long way in averting hunger in one of India's poorest states.

Thus, there is a strong case for the central government to release more food stocks to the states for free (or at a nominal price), over and above existing allocations. These special food quotas could be used not only to enhance monthly rations and reduce exclusion errors in the PDS, but also for emergency relief measures such as community kitchens. With private trade hampered by lockdowns, this would also help to contain local food in-

Releasing food is all the more crucial as the emergency cash transfers proposed by the finance minister are likely to have severe limitations. First, the amounts are small for example, Rs 500 per month for three months to Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana accounts held by women, the flagship provision. Second, exclusion errors are likely to be substantial — many poor households have no operational PMJDY account (there is, alas, little data on this). Third, there is the chalReleasing food is all the more crucial as the emergency cash transfers proposed by the finance minister are likely to have severe limitations. First, the amounts are small — for example, Rs 500 per month for three months to Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana accounts held by women, the flagship provision. Second, exclusion errors are likely to be substantial — many poor households have no operational PMJDY account (there is, alas, little data on this). Third, there is a challenging issue of mass disbursement of cash in this crisis. In the poorer states,

the density of rural banks is

very low.

lenging issue of mass disbursement of cash in this crisis. In the poorer states, the density of rural banks is very low. Business correspondents (extension counters of the banks) are not safe at this time because they use fingerprint authentication. If their work is suspended, rural banks are likely to be massively overcrowded. Resolving this issue may take time.

Meanwhile, even finding out whether and where relief money has been sent is going to be an ordeal for many poor people. Some of them will have to make expensive trips to distant banks and queue there for hours just to make enquiries. Some will be told that the computer is down, others that their account has been frozen for lack of biometric verification, others still may not reach the head of the queue. I am not inventing a problem: All this has been observed recently in Nagri Block (near Ranchi), where the Jharkhand government tried and failed to replace the PDS with so-called direct benefit transfers.

In short, food transfers are bound to play a big role in keeping poor people alive in the next few months. Food schemes such as the PDS and mid-day meals are in place in most villages, it is mainly a matter of reinforcing them. For this to happen, the central government must unlock the godowns and give plenty of food to the states. Never mind if the step takes the fiscal deficit a notch higher due to muddled accounting.

The writer is visiting professor at the Department of Economics, Ranchi University

# Fill in the gap: Test

"For most of us, the announcement of the lockdown last month was a sober, even daunting moment. It is hard to imagine how terrifying it must have been

for those who knew they would now be confined with their abusers."

#### Tests are essential to contain the pandemic. Here's a roadmap for India to ramp up testing



WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

THE NATION-WIDE lockdown that began on March 25 has helped to contain the spread of COVID-19. In its absence, the incidence of infections could have doubled each day, instead of every four days. The responses from public health networks, clinical experts, state governments and district administrations have surpassed expectations. However, it needs to be asked if India's response to the coronavirus out-

break has any unseen gaps.

Missing in these deliberations on testing are infectious disease specialists. These specialists are available in India, many of them have trained abroad or at AIIMS, CMC Vellore and PGI Chandigarh, but they mostly work in big private hospitals. The Clinical Infectious Diseases Society (CIDS) and the Indian Association of Medical Microbiologists (IAMM), the National Academy of Medical Sciences and the National Academy of Sciences are not known to have proffered any advice to the government. If they are waiting to be invited to the high table, no time should be lost in extending the invitation!

The National Institute of Biologicals (NIB) was established in 1992 by the Ministry of Health to function as the apex body and was mandated to ensure validation of invitro diagnostics, vaccines and biotherapeutics, including therapeutic monoclonal antibodies, in the event of a pandemic. The NIB is similar to the North American Background Screening Consortium (NABSC) and the FDA's Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research (CBER), which validates assays and tests. The NIB ought to deliver on its mandate and the best infectious diseases professional in the country should be steering it. A search committee of retired virologists, infectious diseases specialists and medical microbiologists should be constituted urgently to find a director for the NIB.

That apart, it is important to understand what different tests can and cannot do. Traditionally, there are two types of diagnostic tests for infectious organisms tests for the presence of the virus itself (current infection), and tests for antibodies to the virus (current or prior infection). The PCR test used for detecting specific genetic material of a virus is key to determine if someone ill is infected with COVID-19. The test uses swabs from the nose and throat and has a high accuracy rate. The WHO and US FDA recommendations have also added antibody and antigen tests alongside the PCR. This will enable mass screenings — these have to be confirmed by PCR tests.

Some countries test as many people as possible; others test those who develop serious symptoms of the infection. The decision is dependent on infrastructure and lo-

gistics available. It is difficult to have PCR testing for large proportions of the population. Some countries like Germany are investigating the use of serology results as an "immunity passport". So far all countries including South Korea and Italy, have relied on PCR testing.

The PCR test identifies a virus from the swabs taken a few days after infection, to about 8-10 days after the first symptoms appear. Early testing can help to identify and isolate infected people and thereby, limit the spread. It can also provide clues to community transmission, including anticipating the percentage of population that might develop serious complications. It can also tell us which strategies have worked in controlling the spread of the disease – for instance, whether market and school closures made a difference.

A PCR test takes six to eight hours, not counting the time taken to collect and send the sample to the nearest lab. It is expensive — each test costs around Rs 4,500. A commercial test named X-pert has recently been approved by the US FDA for detecting the virus' nucleic acid (genetic information) within a couple of hours. A similar test is available in India for diagnosing TB. When reagents are available, this test can be used on multiple TB-testing machines, at least in the interregnum.

The antibody test is the best to calculate the number of people who may have experienced COVID-19, either symptomatically or asymptomatically. It is dependable for hotspot surveillance; it is quick and helps to see who has been infected more than 10 days earlier. The only negative aspect of it is that if conducted very early, it may miss virus shedders while hunting for the antibodies. The third test — the antigen test — identifies the protein component of the virus and could be used even sooner than the antibody test.

Some say that the best test for an early infection is combining the antibody test and the PCR test on swab because by itself the PCR test is reported to have only a 66 per cent detection rate in the first week, and the antibody test has only a 38 per cent detection rate, even if the person has been sick for a few days.

It is not possible to conclude which is the best test because COVID-19 is a new challenge for mankind. One does not know yet if antibodies which may be present will protect people against re-infection. Clearly, a dedicated institution with experts who can give undivided attention to testing in conjunction with the National Centres for Disease Control (NCDC), needs to be set up. The NCDC also has to be strengthened. The NIB should be revitalised, and given the autonomy to guide testing under the best possible infectious disease specialists available in the country. We need testing protocols, networks and interpretation of data so that India is ready in the event of any outbreak in the future.

Chandra is former chief secretary, Delhi and secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and Ganguly is former director general, Indian Council of Medical Research. With inputs from Arunaloke Chakrabarty, head of microbiology at PGI, Chandigarh, and Gagandeep Kang executive director of THSTI

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### A DILEMMA

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Opening up'(IE, April 8). The lockdown and other initiatives put in place due to the pandemic panic may not be as easy to end as people think. The war against the virus and hunger is going simultaneously. The dangers are twofold: The poor are suffering from a lack of jobs, income and food and the number of infections is still growing. In this situation, it is difficult for policymakers to decide on the next steps. Ensuring peoples's livelihoods, at least to some degree, is needed.

**Tapomoy Ghosh**, Katwa

### DIGITAL LIMITS

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'The disconnect' (IE, April 8). All digital platforms have their own limitations, more so in countries like India, where the markers of socio-economic divides are compressed in terms like "Bharat" and "India". Still, had it not been for digital tools, the locked-down life at present would have been much more miserable. Moreover, digitisation was never supposed to be the answer to all our problems. It facilitates life, it doesn't replace it.

**Vijai Pant,** Hempur

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'The disconnect' (IE, April 8). A curfew-like lockdown was clamped to rein in those who refused to maintain "social distancing" to check the spread of COVID-19. But how long could we lockdown farms and factories? How long can the police deliver milk, vegetables and medicines to

#### 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.

our doorsteps?

**Varin Dhir.** Ahmedabad

### No hurry

THIS REFERS TO the report 'Centre's cue: States want longer lockdown' (IE, April 8). In view of the prevailing situation, many chief ministers and health experts want an extension of the lockdown beyond April 14. About 500 new cases of COVID-19 are being detected across the country daily. Any haste in withdrawal of nationwide lockdown at this stage may prove too costly. A graded opening up in areas where there have been no new cases for sometime may be tried out. However, schools, religious gatherings — any meeting of large groups of people - must not be allowed.

M C Joshi, Lucknow.

# Notes from a recovery

Story of COVID-19 has been about extremities — let us be careful, but let's not panic

AJIT MISHRA

AS WE drove through the empty streets of Delhi, from Safdarjung Hospital to my home in the Institute of Economic Growth, the contrast between this journey on April 4 and the one I made on March 16 to get tested could not get any starker, both for myself and the wider society. For me, it was a huge sense of relief, gratitude to the well-wishers and all the caring staff, but for the economy at large, it is a time of doom and gloom. The Pandemic Uncertainty Index for coronavirus 2020, which captures the uncertainty related to the pandemic, is three times the size of uncertainty during the SARS outbreak.

For me, the story of COVID-19, so far, has been about extremities. First, in terms of our response to the spread of the virus, people and nations have either been casual or have taken extreme measures. For example, in countries like Italy and the UK, it was business-as-usual at first even when the pandemic was knocking on their doors. But now, several countries including India are completely locked down. The extreme response to the virus is reflected in the panicked reactions of individuals, evident in several actions which cannot be explained by rational thinking. I feel that our fear and panic has been disproportionate.

Maybe the news about fatalities in various countries and uncertainty about our medical preparedness have contributed to this panic. Let us fear, let us be careful, but let us not panic. As doctors and scientists have been saying, a majority of the cases will be no worse than the common flu. I am fortunate enough to be one of these. But somehow, in our desire to know about the disease, we have collected all the facts about how terrible it can be. While in the hospital, I was so scared that I would go to bed bracing myself for the worst-case scenario. After a week or so, I even asked the doctor to check why my nights have been relatively smooth. Yes, there will be complications, as all illnesses lead to, but most will overcome these. It is certainly not the case that once you are infected you will drop dead. It was nice to see the section on recoveries in *The Sunday* Express, which will go some way in restoring the balance between fear and hope.

Second, the way the virus seems to be affecting people is very different in terms of intensity and fatality. For many, it is no more than the common flu or even milder, but for many, it has proved fatal (even without existing medical conditions). This has created a difficult situation. Those with minor symptoms or with no symptoms can spread it very easily to the wider public, resulting in a very high overall mortality. Hence, it is important to exercise social responsibility and to selfthis cannot be a long term solution as isolation will affect the frontline workforce, and in some societies, isolation may not be feasible for the poorer sections. In this context, we need to test in large numbers. Tests have to be accessible and quick.

My experience with testing has not been great. When I first went to Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital to get tested, nearly 80-90 people were waiting in a small corridor, and it was a scary prospect. People were borrowing a pen and paper from each other. I am glad I got tested because my symptoms were not severe and I could have easily spread the disease. The lack of sufficient testing and targeted isolation has been mitigated to some extent by the total lockdown, but we will need to test more once we come out of the lockdown. We also need to have quicker reports, in my case the average has been 4-5 days. Hopefully, things have improved, as more and more labs are participating (including the safe drive through testing) and I sincerely hope we stay on this trajectory.

As various economists have been commenting, we have to look at the fatality and distress which the suspension of economic activities will induce. The current lockdown has slowed the spread, given the authorities time to bolster medical capabilities, contain the spread by contact-tracing and testing intensively. But sooner or later, we will come out of this lockdown, though we may remain in a partial lockdown for quite some time. We may have targeted lockdowns of certain geographical areas, once the distribution of Covid incidence is clearer. The sooner we move to this phase, the better. The economy has to keep running, even if at a low gear. Economies are like central heating systems, restarting them becomes difficult if you switch off the heating and let the house get very cold. Once we let economic activities resume (not just essential services), it will be important not to let panic dictate our lives.

My experience with the facilities at Safdarjung Hospital has been very good. The doctors, the nursing staff and other workers are superb. They have been working very hard in a difficult environment, but as cases grow and pressure on the system increases, they will be stretched beyond the limit. We must make sure they are not over-worked and they have the right equipment and environment to carry out their jobs.

I hope we take some lessons from this pandemic to ensure that our per capita health spending improves soon. Otherwise, we haven't learnt anything.

The writer is professor of economics and director, Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi

isolate at the slightest hint of symptoms. But

## THE INDIAN EXPRESS, THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 2020

# 10 THE OUTBREAK THE WORLD



#### **UNITED KINGDOM** Boris' condition improving, says Sunak

London: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's condition is improving and he is able to sit up in bed and engage with clinical staff, finance minister Rishi Sunak said Wednesday as Johnson remained in intensive care. Johnson, who tested positive nearly two weeks ago, was admitted to St Thomas' hospital on Sunday evening with a high temperature and cough but his condition deteriorated and he was taken into intensive care Monday. The leader has received oxygen support but was not put on a ventilator and his designated Foreign deputy, Secretary Dominic Raab, said he would soon be

#### **BANGLADESH** Govt seeks Chinese help

as toll hits 20

back at the helm.

Dhaka: Bangladesh on Wednesday sought China's medical assistance to handle its worsening coronavirus crisis as the healthcare officials said the infection has killed three more people in the last 24 hours, taking the toll to 20. The Foreign Ministry said that Bangladesh has urged China to send an expert team comprising doctors, nurses and technicians to help the country handle the situation and train its own health professionals. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi called up his counterpart AK Abdul Momen and the two lead-

### Singer John Prine dies at 73

ers discussed the situation.

Los Angeles: Grammywinning singer John Prine, who wrote his early songs in his head while delivering mail and later emerged from Chicago's folk revival scene in the 1970s to become one of the most influential songwriters of his generation, died on Tuesday. He was 73. Prine was hospitalised in Nashville on March 26 suffering from symptoms of COVID-19, according to his wife, Fiona Whelan Prine. "We join the world in mourning the passing of revered country and folk singer/songwriter John Prine," the Recording Academy said in a written statement.

# Trump threatens to freeze WHO funding

WHO denies being 'China-centric'; says Washington, Beijing need to join forces to fight COVID-19

**AGENCIES** 

WASHINGTON, GENEVA, APRIL 8

PRESIDENT DONALD Trump has threatened to put a "very powerful" hold on US' funding to the World Health Organisation, accusing the UN agency of being "very China centric" and criticising it for having "missed the call" in its response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Trump slammed the global health agency for its early guidance aimed at countering the international spread of the coronavirus. "We're going to put a hold on money spent to the WHO. We're going to put a very powerful hold on it and we're going to see. It's a great thing if it works. But when they call every shot wrong, that's no good," Trump told reporters at his daily White House news conference on Tuesday.

Responding, the WHO on Wednesday urged the United States and China to join forces to fight the pandemic, saying there would be "many more body bags" without international unity.

"The United States and China should come together and fight this dangerous enemy," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said.

WHO officials also denied that it was "China-centric" and said the acute phase of a pandemic



Messages of thanks written outside a hospital in New York City, New York. Reuters

was not the time to cut funding. "We are still in the acute

phase of a pandemic so now is not the time to cut back on funding," Dr Hans Kluge, WHO Regional Director for Europe, told a virtual briefing in response to a question about Trump's remarks.

Dr Bruce Aylward, senior advisor to the WHO Director-General, also defended the UN agency's relationship with China, saying its work with Beijing authorities was important to understand the outbreak

which began in Wuhan.

US contributions to WHO in 2019 exceeded \$400 million, almost double the 2nd largest member state contribution. China contributed \$44 million.

"We pay for a majority or the biggest portion of their money. They actually criticised and disagreed with my travel ban at the time I did it. They were wrong. They've been wrong about a lot of things. They had a lot of information early and they didn't want to - they're very - they seem to be

very China centric," Trump said. The president said his administration was going to look into the US funding to the WHO.

"But we want to look into it, WHO, because they called it wrong. They called it wrong. They missed the call. They could've called it months earlier. They would have known and they should have known and they probably did know. So, we'll be looking into that... and we're going to put a hold on money spent to the WHO," Trump said.

#### **AFRICAN AMERICANS** 'MORE SUSCEPTIBLE'

■ The African American community are more susceptible to COVID-19, the latest testing data from the ground reflects, **US President Donald** Trump said on Tuesday.

"It is a tremendous challenge, is terrible and provide support to African-American citizens... but it has been disproportional," Trump said

**Experts say the** community is impacted by underlying conditions, face discrimination in medical care, and are more likely to work jobs that require them to leave their home

■ Dr Anthony Fauci, **Director National** Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease, said the community has been afflicted by diseases like diabetes, hypertension, obesity, and asthma

## Looking to have fewer deaths than originally thought, says Trump

PTI& REUTERS WASHINGTON, NEW YORK, APR 8

THE NUMBER of deaths in the US due to coronavirus on Tuesday crossed 12,700, with a record 1,900 fatalities in a single day, as President Donald Trump sought to assure a grieving nation that new data projections reveal fewer deaths than originally thought.

"We're looking to have far fewer deaths than originally thought. I think we're heading in that direction, but it's too early to talk about it," Trump told reporters at his daily White House news briefing.

New York, the epicentre of COVID-19 in the United States. alone accounts for 5,400 deaths and 1,38,000 cases, followed by adjoining New Jersey with 1,200 deaths and 44,416 cases.

The national number of both fatalities and cases of infections are expected to jump during the next week, officials believe, but they exuded confidence that strict enforcement of social mitigation measures

Some caveats to estimations

WHILE PREDICTIVE models play a vital role in virus responses, they face issues ranging from difficulty in predicting the peak to questions about accuracy. A big caveat is that the model may change at any time depending on the data, just as it did now, say experts. A key fear is that laxity about social distancing may lead to second and third waves of infection, upending any predictions.

would help bring things under control in the next few weeks.

"We are seeing light at the end of the tunnel," Trump said during a White House meeting on Small Businesses.

#### **CASES TOP 750,000**

## Top EU scientist quits; finance ministers split on coronabonds

**NEW YORK TIMES** NEW YORK, APRIL 8

THE EUROPEAN Union's top scientist has quit after failing to persuade his superiors to set up and finance a major collective scientific program to confront the new coronavirus.

Dr Mauro Ferrari, an Italian-American who began a four-year appointment as president of the European Research Council in January, resigned on Tuesday in a letter to Ursula von der Leyen, the European Commission president.

"I have been extremely disappointed by the European response to Covid-19," he said in a statement to The Financial Times. "I arrived at the ERC a fervent supporter of the EU," he wrote, but "the Covid-19 crisis completely changed my views."

Ferrari said that he began to press for a special virus program in early March when the extent of the pandemic became clear. But his proposal was rejected because by rule the bloc is supposed to fund only research proposed by scientists, not programs initiated in Brussels.

The news came after another upset as European finance ministers broke off a marathon overnight teleconference without reaching an agreement on measures to counter the pandemic's economic effects.

The 16-hour meeting was meant to produce a clear list of recommendations to be presented to European leaders. These measures would be in addition to the policies enacted by



**In Pamplona, Spain.** AP

#### **SPAIN DAILY VIRUS** DEATHS 757, 2ND **SUCCESSIVE RISE**

Wednesday a second suc-

individual countries to shore up their own economies.

Analysts foresee a recession and a contraction of roughly 13 percent this year in the eurozone, the group of 19 EU nations that share the same currency.



## Madrid: Spain recorded

cessive daily rise in coronavirus-related deaths with 757 fatalities, lifting the total toll by 5.5 percent to 14,555. The number of new infections rose by 4.4 percent to 146,690, the health ministry said, as Spain has ramped up its testing for the disease. The number of daily deaths, which peaked on Thursday at 950, rose for the first time on Tuesday after falling for four straight days. AFP



months cooped up at home. "I'm so happy Wuhan has defeated the virus," Wang said after recording a K-Pop-inspired duet with a male partner for posting on the internet. Neither wore face

dance outdoors after 2 1/2

masks, at least for a few minutes. After she put on the mask again, Wang confronted the question many of the city's 11 million residents are asking



Medical workers hug at the Wuhan airport after travel restrictions to leave the city were lifted, on Wednesday. Reuters

Masked crowds swarm Wuhan's streets,

Vehicles leave Wuhan via a toll station. Reuters

themselves: When will they be going back to work?

"That's a very good question," Wang responded with a giggle. Wuhan ended its 76-day lockdown Wednesday morning,

allowing residents to again travel in and out of the city without special authorisation through the use of a mandatory smartphone app powered by a mix of data-tracking and government surveillance showing they are healthy and have not been in recent contact with anyone confirmed to have the virus.

Long lines formed at the airport and train and bus stations as thousands streamed out of the city to return to their homes and jobs elsewhere. Yellow barriers that had blocked off some streets were gone, although the gates to residential compounds remained guarded.

After more than two months indoors, Wuhan resident Tong Zhengkun was one of millions of enjoying a sense of freedom. "Being indoors for so long

drove me crazy," an emotional Tong said as he watched a celebratory midnight light display from a bridge across the broad Yangtze River. Tong said his apartment

complex was shut down after residents were found to have contracted the coronavirus. Neighbourhood workers delivered groceries to his door.

Such measures won't be entirely abandoned following the end of Wuhan's closure. Schools are still closed, people are still checked for fevers when they enter buildings, and masks are strongly encouraged.

## Hospitals may not be able to cope,

**SAJJAD HUSSAIN** 

ISLAMABAD, APRIL 8

PAKISTAN'S CORONAVIRUS cases rose to 4,183 on Wednesday, as Prime Minister Imran Khan expressed concern that the situation "can further deteriorate" and "our hospitals may not be able to cope" with the increasing num-

warns Imran

ber of patients. The Ministry of National Health Services in its evening update said 42,159 tests, including 3,076 in the last 24 hours, have been conducted so far. The total number of COVID-19 pa tients now stands at 4,183, it said.

So far 58 patients have died, including four in the last 24 hours, while 467 have recovered Another 25 were reported to be in critical condition. Private media and official sources reported that patients in Punjab has risen to 2,108, followed by Sindh at 1,036, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa 527, Gilgit Baltistan 212, Balochistan 206, Islamabad 83 and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir 28.

Pakistan is making frantic efforts to tackle the pandemic. Prime Minister Khan once again warned the people to follow official guidelines on self-isolation or the virus would spread further. Addressing a media briefing. Khan warned that the situation "can further deteriorate" and "our hospitals may not be able to cope with the patients".

He, however, defended his decision to not impose total lockdown, saying over 50 million were below the poverty line in the country and they could die of hunger if such step is taken. PTI

### **OTHER TOP GLOBAL STORIES**

Bernie Sanders drops out of Democratic

race for president, paving road for Biden

## Syrian air force behind chemical attacks, finds investigation team

ANTHONY DEUTSCH APRIL 8

SYRIAN ARAB Air Force pilots flying Sukhoi Su-22 military planes and a helicopter dropped bombs containing poisonous chlorine and sarin nerve gas on a village in the country's western Hama region in March 2017, a new team at the global chemical weapons watchdog has concluded in its first report.

The special investigative unit was established by members of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in 2018 to

attacks. Until now the OPCW had only been authorised to say whether chemical attacks occurred, and not who perpetrated them.

Officials in the government of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and its military backer Russia have repeatedly denied using chemical weapons and accuse insurgents of staging attacks to implicate Syrian forces.

Syria's mission to the United Nations in New York did not immediately respond to a request for comment, while there was no immediate reaction from Damascus to the report. **REUTERS** 

identify perpetrators of illegal

NEW YORK, APRIL 8

PRIMARIES:

THE

**DEMOCRATS** 





five years ago in relative obscurity but ultimately elevated him as a champion of the working class, a standard-bearer of American liberalism and the leader of a self-

Sanders's exit from the race es-

tablishes former Vice President Joseph R Biden Jr, as the presumptive nominee to challenge President Trump, and leaves the progressive movement without a prominent voice in the 2020 race. In a race reshaped, and

eclipsed, by the escalating coronavirus crisis, Sanders faced no realistic path to the nomination after a series of lopsided losses to Biden, beginning in South Carolina in late February. Though Biden had been care-

ful not to pressure Sanders, he had begun to move ahead as if the race were over, taking steps, for example, to begin his search for a running mate.

Sanders championed and

popularised liberal policies like "Medicare for all" and free fouryear public colleges aimed at lifting up America's working class, but he faced opposition from many party leaders, elected officials and major donors. Sanders had vowed to do

everything he could to beat Trump in November, and his departure, though not what he had envisioned, amounted to an acknowledgment that continuing to battle against Biden would preclude the kind of party unity necessary for the general election fight ahead. Sanders has repeatedly said he would support the former vice president if he were the nominee. **NYT** 

## former military captain **ANISUR RAHMAN**

DHAKA, APRIL 8

A BANGLADESHI court on Wednesday issued a death warrant against a former military captain for his involvement in the 1975 coup in which the country's founder Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was assassinated.

Abdul Majed, who was arrested in Dhaka on Tuesday after hiding in India for nearly twoand-a-half decades, was brought before the court from the jail in heavy security.

Dhaka's District and Sessions Judge Helaluddin Choudhury is-

Bangabandhu assassination:

Death warrant issued against

Supreme Court's special permission during the ongoing COVID-19 holiday, public prosecutor Abdulah Abu told reporters. "The judge read out the

sued the death warrant with

charges and original judgment issued in 1998 in line with the legal procedures ahead of issuing the death warrant, meaning clearance for jail authorities to hang him," he said. The court officials and police

said Majed was immediately brought back to the Kashimpur Central Jail on the outskirts of Dhaka where he would await the hangman's noose, exhausting subsequent legal procedures under jail code. **PTI** 

# ECONOMY









₹38,100

SENSEX: 29,893.96 ▼ 173.25 NIFTY: 8,748.75 ▼ 43.45 NIKKEI: 19,353.24 ▲ 403.06 HANG SENG: 23,970.37 ▼ 282.92 FTSE: 5,637.06 ▼ 67.39 DAX: 10,269.71 ▼ 86.99

### **COVID-19** EFFECT **DATA COLLECTION**

## For March, retail inflation to be based on data for 18-20 days

**ENSECONOMIC BUREAU** NEW DELHI, APRIL 8

WITH THE countrywide 21day lockdown to counter the impact of COVID-19 outbreak resulting in minimal transactions and data collection issues, India's retail inflation print for March would be based on data available for 18-20 days instead of 30-31 days.

The government's statistical officers have used simulation and imputation to compute the March inflation rate based on Consumer Price Index (Combined), details of which would be made available on the day of the data release on Monday.

Index of Industrial Production (IIP) won't be affected given that the data is for February, the pre-lockdown phase, officials said. The IIP data for February is scheduled to be released on Thursday.

Officials said there's no data for transactions during the lockdown phase, especially for non-essential items, due to which they have resorted to the use of imputation. Imputation is a statistical process of replacing missing data with substituted values, which in this case are likely to be prices from the previous month. "There's no data since data collection stopped after March 18. For some other items, we have details till 20th. We are using simulation to see how we can work upon it," a senior government official told

The Indian Express. It is learnt that field investigators were asked to collect some data for food and other essential items from whichever shop they could access instead of the designated shops usually surveyed by

**GEORGE MATHEW** 

AFTER THE RBI's decision to allow

banks to offer three-month mora-

torium on repayment of term

loans, Insurance Regulatory and

Development Authority of India

(Irdai) Wednesday allowed insur-

ance companies to offer a similar

MUMBAI, APRIL 8

Statistical officers

have used simulation and imputation to compute the March inflation rate based on Consumer Price **Index (Combined)** 

them. Experts are of the view that the accuracy in this case may be questionable.

"They don't have a choice

since field investigators should not be put under threat (of COVID-19). Data collection from shops other than the designated ones, however, could result in slightly different results. If the shop is in a different village or district than the designated one, then it may get the effect of difference in trade and transport margin, which varies with every region," former Chief Statistician of India Pronab Sen said.

For non-essential items, however, they are likely to rely on imputation and use data from the previous month, resulting in a flat index value.

In the CPI basket, essential items such as food and beverages, health and fuel and light and education comprise about 63 per cent of the total weightage. The rest would be the non-essential items, for which the imputation method is going to be adopted primarily.

Officials said their statistics contemporaries are facing a similar situation globally and are adopting imputation. "Some imputation is being done. Globally they are doing it similarly. India is not the only country facing this situation,' one of the officials said.

moratorium to their term loan

fit several corporates, especially fi-

nance companies which had

taken term loans from insurers.

Irdai has allowed moratorium for

three months from March 1 to

May 31. "In respect of term loans,

insurers are permitted to grant a

moratorium of three months to-

The decision is likely to bene-

customers hit by COVID-19.

#### SPILLOVER EFFECTS OF COVID-19 DAMPENS SENTIMENT

# India, US in talks for dollar swap line to strengthen macro outlook

**SUNNY VERMA& GEORGE MATHEW** NEW DELHI/MUMBAI, APRIL 8

INDIA IS working with the United States to secure a dollar swap line that would help in providing an additional comfort in an event of any abrupt outflow of funds, according to a senior government official and banking industry executives familiar with the matter. Foreign institutional investors have been large sellers in the Indian equity and debt markets in March and April so far, as concerns on the economic effects of COVID-19 hit investor sentiment. "We have been discussing with the US for a dollar swap line, on the lines of a similar facility that India has with other central banks. We expect positive progress on that front," the official said.

"(A swap facility) could be on the way as there's a possibility that India will liquidate its foreign currency assets like investment in US treasury etc. to stabilise the rupee which has been under pressure of late." said a forex market source.

India liquidated its forex assets to stabilise the rupee which recently fell below the 76 level against the dollar. India's foreign currency assets had declined by

40% in April'

EXPLAINED **Tool for RBI to** deal with volatile currency markets

AMID THE COVID-19 impact on financial markets, presence of a currency swap facility with the United States will add to the RBI's arsenal in managing external account and excessive volatility in currency markets. Though some economists believe foreign exchange reserves are sufficient at this juncture for macroeconomic management, forex market analysts argue that this will provide comfort in case of further outflows from the Indian markets.

around \$7.50 billion in two weeks to \$439.66 billion as on March 27.

According to Reserve Bank of

India (RBI) data, 63.7 per cent of India's foreign currency assets or \$256.17 billion — is invested in overseas securities, mainly in the US treasury. If countries like India and China resort to large scale liquidation of their investments, it could push up the yields and interest rates in the US, sources said, adding, "there's a case for India to get the swap facility from Fed as the economy is facing rough weather due to the coronavirus

seeking comments for the story.

While India is expected to comfortably tide over any challenge posed by continued outflows of funds from the markets, given the adequacy of foreign exchange reserves, a swap line with the US Fed provides an additional comfort to the forex markets. "India has enough foreign exchange reserves now and external sector is not facing any problem. Current account is getting stronger and the oil prices have come down. India doesn't require a swap facility," said CARE Ratings chief economist Madan Sabnavis. In a swap arrangement, the US

Federal Reserve provides dollars to a foreign central bank. At the same time, the foreign central bank provides the equivalent amount of funds in its currency to the Fed, based on the market exchange rate at the time of the transaction. The parties agree to swap back

these quantities of their two currencies at a specified date in the future, which is the next day or as far ahead as three months, using the same exchange rate as in the first transaction. These swap operations carry no exchange rate or other market risks as transaction terms are set in advance.

On March 19, the US Fed added temporary swap arrangements with the Reserve Bank of Australia, the Banco Central do Brasil, Danmarks Nationalbank (Denmark), the Bank of Korea, the Banco de Mexico, the Reserve Bank of New Zealand, the Norges Bank (Norway), the Monetary Authority of Singapore and the Sveriges Riksbank (Sweden) to be in place for at least six months for a combined total of \$450 billion.

The US Fed already has permanent swap arrangements with the Bank of Canada, the Bank of England, the European Central Bank, the Bank of Japan, and the Swiss National Bank.

RISE IN OPERATING EXPENSES:

Lower refinery utilisation rates can

increase the operating expenses on a

per barrel basis from the present \$2-

2.5 incurred at full utilisation, lending

Benchmark Singapore gross refining

margins in March, falling from \$1.7 in

Benchmark Singapore gross refining

margins in FY19, from \$7.2 in FY18

Source: India Ratings/PTI

operations unviable

previous month

\$1.3 A BARREL:

**\$4.9 A BARREL**:

#### **LOCKDOWN SWITCH-OFF**

## After uptick in Jan-Feb, industry power demand comes down by a third

\$26.15

Household load (about 30 per cent of total demand) is holding up

**ANIL SASI** 

NEW DELHI. APRIL 8

THE NATIONAL lockdown to check the spread of COVID-19 has cut India's power demand by up to a third since the third week of March. A bulk of the industrial, commercial and agricultural loads have switched off, and it is the domestic load that is predominantly holding up demand. Records show that this crash

comes after national power demand had seen a pick-up in January and February after four continuous months of decline at the end of calendar year 2019.

The impact of the ongoing collapse in industrial activity is mirrored in electricity demand charts which have sharply tapered off since March 22, and appear to show a more pronounced impact in the northern and western regions, with the south showing some impact as well.

Routinely, industrial and commercial load account for about 45-50 per cent of the country's total demand with agricultural consumption accounting for another 20 per cent. The rest is essentially domestic household load.

While demand patterns have become unpredictable ever since states started announcing restrictions and partial lockdowns since mid-March and the subsequent nationwide lockdown on March 24, power demand went down by 40,000-45,000 MW in the last fortnight, over a base load of 150,000 MW.

An analysis of consumption figures shows:

March 22, when the Janata curfew was implemented, marks an inflection point in the all-India demand curve — it is from here that there's a steady decline in demand with little sign of any recovery.

Despite rising temperatures in the north, the April electricity load trend in the country's north-

**ENERGY MET** (IN MILLION UNITS) Date 3,565 20-Mar 22-Mar\* 3,030 25-Mar\*\* 2,777 2,757 6-April \*voluntary curfew \*\*National lockdown Source: CEA

**CRASH IN LOAD:** 

ern heartland is largely constant and continues to be lower than that for the western region. Typically, around the first week of April, the northern demand is equal to that for the western region and higher than the southern region. ● Load in the North-Eastern

region has been unaffected by the

crash, primarily because there is very little industrial load there to begin with. Power Ministry estimates showed that in February, base and peak power demand went up

over 11 per cent and 9 per cent respectively on a year-on-year basis, largely due to a mild uptick in industrial activity. The slide in March demand is

reflected in the spot power market, with average market clearing price in the day-ahead market on the IEX — India's largest power exchange — being recorded at Rs 2.46 per unit in March 2020, a decline of 21 per cent over the price of Rs 3.12 per unit in March 2019, offering distribution utilities/discoms an avenue to reduce their financial burden.

But with the bulk of commercial and industrial units halting operations to control the spread of the pandemic, for power discoms, the crash is bad news as it's these segments that cross-subsidise domestic and agricultural tariffs.

## outbreak." The Finance Ministry and RBI did not reply to queries

'Fuel demand seen falling

Amid the lockdown, fuel demand is likely to decline to 40 per cent in April, impacting pricing and increasing borrowing cost for oil marketing companies, India Ratings said

#### 20%:

**FALL IN OVERALL FUEL DEMAND IN MAR** 

#### 50%:

Now, Irdai allows 3-month moratorium on term loans

**FALL IN CAPACITY UTILISATION LEVELS IN MAR** 

wards payment of installments

falling due between March 1,2020

and May 31, 2020. The repayment

schedule for such loans and also

the residual tenure, will be shifted

across the board by three months

subsequent to the moratorium

period," Irdai said in a circular to

the CEOs of insurance companies.

accrue on the outstanding portion

It said interest will continue to

#### **REASONS FOR FALL IN FUEL DEMAND:**

■ Reluctance of people to move outside

of the term loans during such

moratorium period. "The asset

classification of term loans which

are granted relief should be deter-

mined on the basis of revised due

dates and revised repayment

schedule," it said. It also said the

rescheduling of payments, includ-

ing interest, will not qualify as a

default for the purpose of report-

ing of NPAs.

Restricted air travel

■ Slow pickup in industrial and



## 'About 400 mn workers in India may sink

**PRESSTRUST OF INDIA** UNITED NATIONS, APRIL 8

into poverty'

ABOUT 400 million people working in the informal economy in India are at risk of falling deeper into poverty due to the coronavirus crisis which is having "catastrophic consequences", and is expected to wipe out 195 million full-time jobs or 6.7 per cent of working hours globally in the second quarter of this year, the UN's

labour body has warned. The International Labour Organization (ILO) in its report titled 'ILO Monitor 2nd edition: COVID-19 and the world of work', describes coronavirus pandemic as "the worst global crisis since World War II". "Workers and businesses are facing catastrophe, in both developed and developing economies. We have to move fast, decisively, and together. The right, urgent, measures, could make the difference between survival and collapse," ILO Director-General Guv Rvder said on Tuesday.

## 'India's GDP growth to plunge to 1.6% in FY21; world faces recession'

**ENSECONOMIC BUREAU** MUMBAI, APRIL 8

GLOBAL BANKING group Goldman Sachs on Wednesday said India's real GDP growth is expected to plunge to 1.6 per cent in FY21, as against 3.3 per cent forecast previously and the world is set to face a recession in 2020. It said over the last two weeks,

with the escalation of the COVID-19 crisis, the Goldman Sachs global team is now forecasting the world to be in a recession in 2020, with risks remaining on the downside. "We have downgraded our global GDP forecast to -1.8 per cent in 2020, more than a 5 percentage point (PP) downward revision since early this year. For the US, we have downgraded our growth forecast to -6.2 per cent in 2020 (from -3.7 per cent earlier)," it said.

In India, the spread of the virus, announcements of a nationwide shutdown from March 25. social distancing measures,

and fears among consumers and businesses have all escalated sharply over the past two weeks. "High frequency data, as well as anecdotal evidence, although still limited, suggest a significant contraction in economic activity," Goldman Sachs said.

The Reserve Bank of India had earlier forecast a 5 per cent GDP growth for FY20. However, Goldman Sachs said it expects a strong sequential recovery in the second half of the fiscal year, based on three assumptions.

According to the banking group, the three-week nationwide lockdown – expected to be removed only in a staggered fashion — and social distancing measures will reduce new infections over the next 4-6 weeks.

"Second, while the fiscal easing so far has been limited, our expectation is for further fiscal stimulus by the center and the states. Third, we expect the RBI to continue with its monetary easing policy, along with liquidity infusion measures," it said.

### **BRIEFLY**

### Rupee falls 70p against dollar

New Delhi: The rupee plunged by 70 paise to its life-time low of 76.34 against the US dollar on Wednesday.

#### Essar arm joins **COVID** fight

New Delhi: Essar Foundation, an arm of Essar Group, said it will provide 1.25 million meals to communities hit by COVID-19 and over 1 lakh medical supplies. **PTI** 

### IPE Hyderabad included in panel

New Delhi: Institute of Public Enterprise (IPE), Hyderabad has been nominated as member of the Committee on Public and Government Financial Management as a Special Invitee for the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India Council (ICAIC) year 2020-21. **ENS** 

## India Inc seeks economic package from Centre

**PRESSTRUSTOFINDIA** NEW DELHI. APRIL 8

INDIA INC has sought an economic package from the Centre to tide over the impact of the coronavirus outbreak and support small and medium businesses to keep their enterprises afloat while catering to the needs of the poor and informal sector workers.

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has submitted recommendations to the government seeking an "economic package" entailing additional support to the lowest strata and the inforsought a "stimulus package" of at least **\$200-\$300 billion** 

Another industry chamber Assocham has also sought a "stimulus package" of at least \$200deepest global recession expected tary general Deepak Sood said.

Assocham has also

\$300 billion "to thwart one of the in the world's history", its secre-

mal sector through cash transfers, amounting to Rs 2 lakh crore to Jan Dhan account holders.

## Cos can now hold EGMs via video conference

**ENSECONOMIC BUREAU** NEW DELHI, APRIL 8

COMPANIES WILL be able to conduct extraordinary general meetings (EGMs) online and take key business decisions requiring approval of shareholders through evoting and till June 30 to take key decisions while complying with the lockdown and other restrictions amid COVID-19 outbreak.

The Corporate Affairs Ministry notified on Wednesday that listed companies and companies with over 1,000 shareholders which are already required to provide e-voting facility will be able to conduct EGMs through video conferencing or other audio visual means. Other companies will be able to allow members to vote via email.

The ministry said, in a press release, the move was "in furtherance of the Government's objective of facilitating corporate compliances during the current lockdown period and other restrictions ..." It had earlier said companies would be allowed to hold all board meetings, including those in which physical presence of board members is required, to be conducted via video conferencing till June 30.

#### **ONLINE PLAYERS FACE SHORTAGE**

■ For retailers, the lockdown has resulted in unavailability of sufficient items to restock their supplies,

■ For online players too, a shortage in supply from bigger brands has meant higher reliance on private labels

### at nearly 60 per cent of their preshutdown capacity, they also

maintain that it would be too early to tell if the supply chain would be

gle FMCG product typically consists of 20-30 components and their seamless movement is absolutely necessary to ensure continued production and uninterrupted supply of the final product

by the Centre are properly communicated to authorities across states and to local police as well," Shahrukh Khan, executive director—operations, Dabur India, said.

Dabur, which has ramped up production of essential hygiene products and medicines to meet the growing need, had earlier too said it was facing problems even with availability of raw material and packing material.

dent, All India Motor Transport Congress, told *The Indian Express* that as of Wednesday, only less than 10 per cent of 90 lakh trucks in India were plying on the roads.

been operating with restricted number of hours and reduced workforce in line with the approvals received. "The company has received approvals from a number of state authorities for manufacturing of essential commodities. Efforts are being made to ensure that supply chain functions smoothly across the country despite challenges of manpower shortages and availability of trucks," a spokesperson said. The slowing down of gears at

the manufacturing stage of FMCG goods has also impacted other downstream segments. A spokesperson for Walmart India, one of India's largest B2B wholesalers, said: "There are some chal-

plies due to production shortages from manufacturers or transportation of the products to our locations, but we are working closely with our suppliers and with local authorities to minimise and address these challenges." For online players too, a shortage in supply from bigger brands

has meant higher reliance on private labels. "We have our private label, too, where we have ramped up manufacturing significantly. With this, we are able to ensure that any shortage of supplies from large national brands is supplemented with our private labels,' Bikram Singh Bedi, presidentstrategy and new initiatives at Grofers, said, during a CII webinar.

**LOCKDOWN EFFECT** 

#### As labour participation hits all-time low, production of essential goods slows; retailer stocks dwindle portant that the guidelines issued products in India, factories have lenges in securing sufficient sup-Taking a note of the situation, to bring to your notice that several lever (HUL) said the company's companies have reported difficulthe Ministry of Home Affairs has production units were operating

AASHISHAARYAN& **PRANAV MUKUL** NEW DELHI, APRIL 8

A FALL in the country's labour participation to an all-time low and a massive disruption in transportation system that has taken over 90 per cent of trucks off the roads has culminated into manufacturers of essential goods slowing down production with no sight of recovery — particularly with expectations of the lockdown being extended beyond April 14. For retailers, this has resulted in unavailability of sufficient items to restock their supplies, which have slowed down for some brands

and completely halted for others.

epaper indianex

written to all states pointing out that in light of loss of production due to various factors, "the possibility of inventory building/hoarding and black marketing, profiteering, and speculative trading, and the resulting price rise of essential goods cannot be ruled out". Further, the Centre has even approached the states to seek facilitation of enough labour availability in factories, warehouses, and transportation operations of essential food and grocery items.

In a letter to chief secretaries of all states and union territories, Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs Pawan Kumar Agarwal wrote: "I would also like

ties in getting labour for their operations. Local administration may be advised to facilitate in ensuring availability of labour in factories, warehouses and transportation and distribution operations of essential food and groceries by appealing to house owners, societies and villagers to allow workers to go for work". In a report released Tuesday, the Centre for Monitoring Indian

Economy (CMIE) had noted that

in March 2020, "the labour partic-

ipation rate fell to an all-time low,

the unemployment rate shot up

sharply and the employment rate

fell to its all-time low. The employ-

ment rate fell to an all-time low of

38.2 per cent in March 2020."

Among major FMCG compa-

nies, sources at Hindustan Uni-

back to normal if and when the lockdown measures are eased. Other large domestic FMCG companies maintained that the problems of procuring raw material and shipping finished products remained at most of their units.

"The supply chain for any sin-

to consumers. It's extremely im-

Kultaran Singh Atwal, presi-

At ITC, among the largest manufacturers of food and hygiene



#### STOKES CRICKETER OF THE YEAR

England all-rounder Ben Stokes has ended India skipper Virat Kohli's three-year run as Wisden's 'Leading Cricketer after being named for the honour on the back of his stellar show in 2019.

# The last and perfect shot at glory

Desperate for an Olympic quota and fighting mental demons, Shirur came up with a flawless performance when it mattered most

#### **SHAHIDJUDGE**

AN ETERNITY passed by, or so it seemed for Suma Shirur, as she shot at a target no greater than a centimetre in diameter, 10 metres away. The exercise — raise the rifle, control breathing, take aim with as much focus as you can muster, fire, and then do it all again till you have 40 shots on the board – took a lot out of her, both physically and mentally. When it was all over in the 50-minute qualifier, she was confident about all except four shots that she felt were not quite hitting 10.

In the qualification round of the women's 10m air rifle event before 2013, each shot was measured in round numbers – which means what would be a 9.9 or 10.9 now would be a 9 or 10 respectively. Based on this scoring format, Shirur expected at least 396. She chanced a glance at the stands in the shooting range in Kuala Lumpur after taking her 40th shot and spotted her husband Siddharth. He followed her gaze and duly held up four fingers. For Shirur, her suspicion had been confirmed. She had doubted four shots, and her husband's signal made it clear that those four shots were 9s. But they were not.

"When I went up to him, he had a big smile on his face. I was confused. Then he told me I had shot a 400. The maximum," Shirur remembers. "I didn't believe it."

At the Asian Championships in 2004, Shirur became the first Indian, and the sixth shooter in the world, to have shot a perfect 400 in the qualifying round of the women's 10m air rifle event. A few years later, the rules were changed and as of today, women shooters take 60 shots in the qualifiers, with a maximum of 10.9 points available per shot. As of today, 16 years after that marvel in Malaysia, Shirur remains the only Indian woman to have achieved the perfect score.

But her job was not done. Shirur knew this was still just halfway in the event. The finals were yet to be played, and it was there that her hopes of winning a medal and a quota for the Athens 2004 Summer Olympics lay.

By the 2004 season, Shirur had been competing on the international stage for around 10



Suma Shirur is the only Indian woman to have achieved the perfect score in 10m air rifle.

years. Never once though had she qualified for the Olympics. As Athens beckoned, she grew restless and anxious. It didn't help her nerves that results were not going her way, and no matter how close she got to the quota, she was still far away from making the cut. The closest she got was within 0.2 points, at the Shanghai World Cup of 2002. "That was heart-wrenching," she recalls.

Tournaments came and went, but the quota place remained as distant as ever. As the 2004 season approached, Shirur had one last chance. "I was getting desperate and, for me, the Asian Championships was the last chance. This was it. There were no quota places available after this tournament," she recalls. "I had put in 10 years of my life into this, and to not have been to the Olympics at all, it was a waste of everything I had done. Those were the thoughts coming into my head."

Shirur started preparing on her own two months prior to the event. She followed a sound fitness regimen to make sure that she would at least be physically fit to compete in the Malaysian capital. Mentally, she was fighting herself, looking for every ounce of motivation she could find. More often than not though, something negative would creep in. Like when she asked her husband – who would rarely accompany her on her tours – to join her for a post-event holiday since that "might have been the last chance" for her. His

"He told me, 'I don't want to have a holiday. I'm coming for your match'," she remembers. "I was not used to him being there for my matches, maybe just once after our marriage he had come to watch me. So when he said that, I was thinking, 'this guy believes I can do it'. Somewhere it gave me a lot of strength and that's when, in a way, I started looking forward to it."

reply, however, gave her the boost she needed.

Shortly afterwards, she got a call from her old mentor, the late Bhishmaraj Bam, former president of the Maharashtra Rifle Association. "He came over to meet me and asked how preparations were going. I said 'we'll see'. He said, 'there's no we'll

#### THOSE MONTHS. **THOSE MINUTES**

As the world battles the Covid-19 outbreak. sport is staring at an unfathomable future. The Indian Express looks back at the sporting moments which have given the country reasons to rejoice in the past

DECEMBER, 2003 Worked specifically on physical and mental aspects of her game

FEBRUARY 13, 2004 Becomes first Indian to score a perfect 400 in 10m air rifle

see, you are going to shoot a 400'," Shirur recalls the meeting. "He said that I have to do my best, and the best had to be 400 because the Chinese were coming in, and they used to shoot 398, 399. So, I had a target now. The decision was made that I had to go for 400. It was the goal, it wasn't a score that just happened."

To get a perfect score, Shirur started focusing on breathing exercises. It helped calm her mind and enabled her to concentrate on each shot. She had to stay in the moment, not think about the result, but work on executing each attempt at that centimetre target perfectly. After spending tense weeks fretting over an elusive Olympic quota, she was now set for that final fling in Kuala Lumpur, armed with some new equipment and a renewed sense of confidence.

Siddharth's task in Kuala Lumpur was to make sure his wife stayed in a positive frame of mind. He'd observe her body language, study each and every word she'd utter and intervene when things were going off track.

"I had to fight the demons of self-belief. When the event was close, thoughts of 'maybe you can't do it' were coming out in some form or the other. Siddharth would then catch me and keep me positive, make me believe that I can do it," the current junior national rifle coach says. "He kept the mood very light, few jokes

here and there, making light conversation. He wouldn't let me stay indoors, so we'd go around, basically not allow me much time to sit and think. This was very important and it's something that I try to do with the junior team now."

#### **Asian Championships FEBRUARY 13, 2004**

Shirur remembers waking up to a chilling nervousness. She could barely eat breakfast, and instead indulged in a session of pranayama – a breathing exercise – to calm her nerves. It worked. She did not speak at all the entire morning, nor did she interact with anyone when she went to the range. So absolute was her focus that she hardly remembers the atmosphere inside the range. In those days, a shooter could not see the qualification scores until the end of the round,

see her husband holding up four fingers. For the next hour, Shirur remembers sitting under a tree outside the range, with a book in hand. "Siddharth took me outside, away from my teammates who were excited and jumping. He sat me under the tree to make sure I was still in that same focus. Then I went back into the range thinking about playing the perfect shot every time. That's when I won gold, and the quota."

so she wasn't certain what the final score

would be. And then she turned around to

At the Athens Games, she was the only Indian apart from Abhinav Bindra and Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore to have made it to the final of their discipline. And as for the sojourn in Malaysia, the Shirurs went for a short holiday to the nearby islands. What Suma remembers though was sitting on a chair in the range after the final. "The floodgates opened. I was so exhausted, physically and mentally. It took me two days to recover," she says.

The Asian Championships took place a few months short of her 30th birthday, but it was potentially the last competition for her as a shooter – the "do-or-die event" as she describes it. She went on to compete internationally for India for another 12 years before joining the junior national team as a coach.

Asked if that win had anything to do with her staying on in the sport, she offers: "Maybe. Yes."

## Very few guys to look up to in this team: Yuvraj tells Rohit in live Q&A

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA** NEW DELHI, APRIL 8

INDIA'S TEAM culture drew severe criticism from World Cup-winning former allrounder Yuvraj Singh, who told ODI vicecaptain Rohit Sharma that there aren't enough role models in the side, which lacks a sense of respect for the seniors and is prone to being distracted by social media.

The two were in conversation during an Instagram live chat on Tuesday night. The context of Yuvraj's observation was Rohit's question on the difference between the current team and the ones in which the swashbuckling left-hander turned up. "When I came into the team or when

you (Rohit) came into the team, our seniors were very disciplined. Obviously there was no social media so there were no distractions," Yuvraj said. "There was a certain behaviour that we boys had to carry, how they talk to people, how they talk to media. Because they were the ambassadors of the game and India."

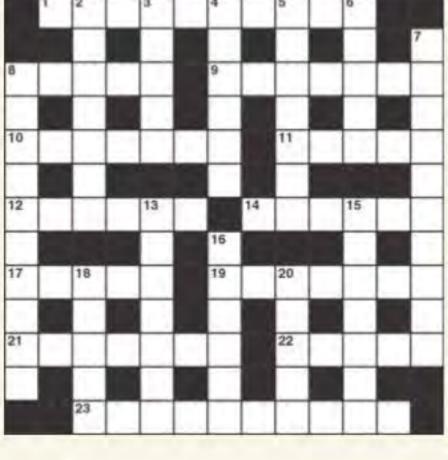
"So that is what I had told you guys. After playing for India, you have to be more careful about your image. But I feel the third generation. There are only you two seniors, Virat and you, who are playing all the formats, rest of the guys are coming and going," he said.

"I just feel there are very few guys to look up to and I feel that a sense of respect towards seniors, that has become a thin line now. Koi bhi kisiko kuch bhi keh deta hai (anyone can say anything to anyone)," he said. Yuvraj said players during his time were

more conscious about how they were perceived by the seniors in the side. "I think juniors, because of social media, party scenes, these things, we could not even think about that in our time. Because we had that fear that if we do some mistake our senior will tell us that do not do this, this is not right," he said. Commenting on the infamous incident

involving Hardik Pandya and K L Rahul, who were suspended for loose talk on women on a chat show, Yuvraj added: "That incident could not have happened in our time."

### CROSSWORD 4087



#### **ACROSS**

- 1 Quiet address is smaller (10)
- 8 Type of brush undergrowth (5) 9 Runner allowed to take part in

a different heat (7)

- 10 Took the curve or gave it (7) 11 One doesn't have to have them
- 12 Chemical result of smoking
- cannabis?(6) 14 Don't get angry, just leave
- without a blow (6) 17 Badly riled, he's not keen to
- 19 They should be enough to
- 21 Port of granite construction
- (7)

- about stars? (10)

22 Tests said to be passed (5)

- work(5)
- cover the rents (7)

## 23 Details of special importance

**DOWN** 

- 2 The chase for a job? (7)
- 3 Be sent up to bed, having gone into a decline (5)
- 4 Sets great store by (6)
- 5 Hence an alteration is made to
- increase the value (7)6 What could be finer than a
- riddle?(5) 7 They are hopeless people (10)
- 8 Spots of trouble? (4,6) 13 Sport for boarders at the
- seaside(7)
- coming across (7)
- 16 The continual round of wage increases?(6)
- 18 Such law presumably implies a
- suspended sentence (5)
- 20 Narrow strip in the North on general offer (5)

**JUMBLED WORDS** 

Solutions Crossword 4086: Across: 1 Sorbet, 4 Scored, 9 Plateau, 10 Alarm, 11 Ensue, 12 Tending, 13 Cartoonists, 18 Reminds, 20 Clear, 22 Trust, 23 Landing, 24

8 Auction sale, 14 Armoury, 15 Incense, 16 Orated, 17 Oregon, 19 Notes, 21 Exits.

Dryish, 25 Person. Down: 1 Supper, 2 Reaps, 3 Everest, 5 Chain, 6 Realist, 7 Damage,

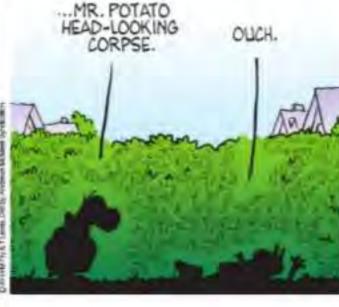
#### Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given quip. What is to give \_\_\_must endure \_\_\_\_. - Anton Wildgans (5,...,7) DGIIR **ORSHNU IIWBGG BULNT**

Answer: What is to give light must endure burning. - Anton Wildgans **SOLUTION:** RICID, BLUNT, ONRUSH, BIGWIG

#### **OVER THE HEDGE** by Michael Fry & T Lewis AND LOOK







#### **CALVIN & HOBBES** by Bill Watterson



**MARVIN** by Tom Armstrong

Difficulty Level 2s

To solve a Sudoku puzzle,

must appear in each of the

each of the nine horizontal

nine vertical columns, in

rows and in each of the

1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy;

3s = Medium; 4s = Hard;

5s = Very Hard; 6s =

every digit from 1 to 9

Instructions

nine boxes.

Genius

Difficulty Level

SUDOKU

TOY STRIKE DEMAND

NUMBER 5: YOU HAVE TO

START BEING AN EQUAL

OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER



8





# YOU CAN'T PLAY WITH

# THAT MEAN?

WHAT'S



## **SOLUTION SUDOKU 4173** 5 9 9 6 5

2 5 7 6

8

4

#### **DAY TODAY**

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20) Do you feel downtrodden? Hard done-by? This is not how other people see you, but it is often the way you feel. Anyway, with the Moon occupying an intriguing position, you may find that the scales are tipped in your favour.

Give them an extra push, just

**TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)** You do tend to take on emotional

for good measure.

burdens, don't you? If you are falling into the old Taurean trap of accepting life as it is, don't. With a single leap and a mighty bound you could be free of personal pressures which have bothered you for longer than you can remember.

#### **GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)**

You should now find it really easy to forget about intimate affairs and concentrate on making the grade - and making your mark at work. Your best course of action is to get hold of anyone who will listen and bend their ears for as long as you can.

#### CANCER (June 22 - July 23) It is pretty certain

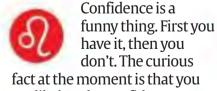
that you still need to use tact and diplomacy when handling one very special relationship. A romantic involvement is now coming up for its periodic review, and you

will have fresh demands to

make. See to it that they are

#### LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

realistic ones.



are likely to be confident with your feelings, but not with your ideas. Or is it the other way round? All things considered, the stars aren't sure whether you're coming or going.

#### **VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)** Difficult planetary



sure you will rise to it. The problem is how to make a go of joint financial relationships and commitments. Fortunately, helpful planetary aspects are equally spread throughout the day.

#### BY PETER VIDAL

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23) You could not wish

influences, and you'll be putting plenty of extra effort into making relationships work. This doesn't mean that they're easy, though. I think 'interesting' might be a better term, as friends and

for better social

#### arrangements. SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)

partners chop and change, in

turn making then cancelling

A personal ambition appears to hang in the balance, but eventually you will come out on top. Indeed, you might have already done so, though there seems to be something deep within the Scorpio psyche that stops you

#### recognising when you're well off. SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)

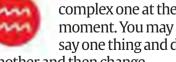
You must continue to exercise due caution and discretion over a joint financial arrangement. If I could just repeat something I've been saying for a few months, it is ethical issues rather than cash balances which seem to be the

#### CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20) I've not spoken

heart of the matter.

about professional affairs yet this week, so just let me take you ahead a little and point out that as the days pass your work will suddenly spring into life. Even if you're not in gainful employment, there are other ambitions waiting to achieve lift-off.

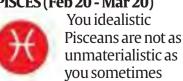
#### AQUARIUS (Jan 21- Feb 19) Your solar chart is a complex one at the



say one thing and do another and then change positions on both counts. Await further developments! But not with baited breath. A cash question makes you think about fundamental issues, such as whether money or friendship is

#### PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20) You idealistic

more important to you.



agree that this is a day to get out and earn some extra cash, if only to finance ambitious spending plans. You could, if you wish, make a complete break with the past.

pretend. You must therefore

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6

9

2

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