



Govt. is trying to evade parliamentary oversight: Tewari
page 8



J&K HC asks Centre, UT govt. to relook at 'Darbar Move' practice
page 8



Over 6.5 lakh migrants have returned to U.P., says Yogi Adityanath
page 10

Putin awards commemorative Second World War medal to North Korea's Kim
page 12

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NEARBY



COVID-19 cases in Delhi cross 5,000 mark

NEW DELHI
Delhi reported 206 new COVID-19 cases on Tuesday, taking the total number to 5,104, said the government. A total of 64 people have died till now, but no death was reported for the second consecutive day in the city.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

Delhi teen detained in Instagram chat case

NEW DELHI
A 15-year-old boy has been apprehended after he was allegedly found to be a member of an Instagram chat group where they used obscene language for minor girls, shared their pictures and talked about rape. Ten members of the group have been identified and those who are major are being examined, said the police.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 11

Now, Haryana to levy 'COVID cess' on liquor

CHANDIGARH
The Haryana Cabinet on Tuesday decided to levy 'COVID cess' on all types of liquor with effect from Wednesday. "The COVID cess will be ₹5 per quart in case of country liquor, ₹20 per quart on IMFL, ₹5 on strong beer, ₹2 on other beer and ₹50 per pack greater than 375 ml of IFL," said a statement.

NORTH & EAST ▶ PAGE 4

India records another spike with 3,875 new cases, 194 deaths

Fatalities peak in Gujarat; Maharashtra, T.N. and Delhi report high case count

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India registered its highest surge in COVID-19 cases and casualties on Tuesday with 3,875 cases and 194 deaths in the past 24 hours. The total number of cases nationwide stands at 46,711 with 1,583 deaths. India has 31,967 active cases currently.

"So far, a total of 13,160 people have been cured. This takes our total recovery rate to 27.41%," the Union Health Ministry said at the daily press briefing.

Reporting backlog: govt.
Explaining the rise in cases, Joint Secretary in the Ministry Lav Agarwal said, "We persuaded certain States,

COVID-19

which were not updating regularly to release their backlog, which has resulted in a spike in numbers."

He added that as this is the highest spike in the number of confirmed cases and deaths that has been reported so far, the States/UTs are advised to effectively implement contact tracing, active case search and clinical management of cases. Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Delhi continue to have the largest number of cases.

However, according to data from the State Health Departments, the total number of cases was 49,287, of which 33,877 are active. The death toll was 1,677.

Gujarat reported a single-day spurt of 368 cases and 49 deaths, with Ahmedabad recording the bulk of it (39). Maharashtra reported 841 new cases and 34 deaths, taking the overall case count

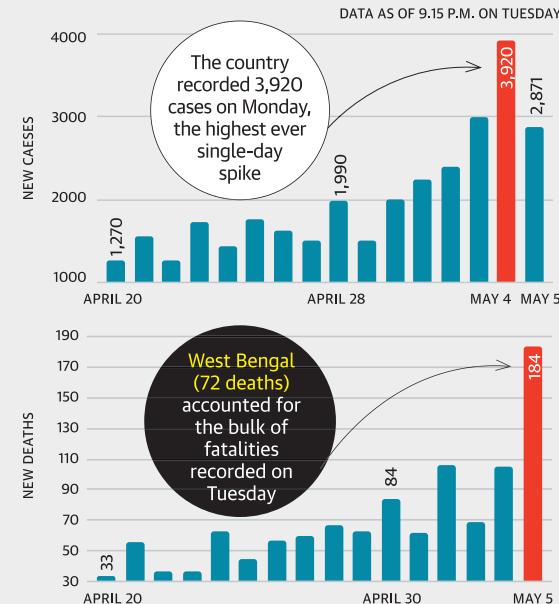
to 15,525 and the number of fatalities to 617. Mumbai reported 26 deaths.

Earlier in the day, the COVID Group of Ministers (GoM) met to review the availability of PPEs, masks, ventilators, drugs and other essential equipment.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8
MORE REPORTS ON ▶ PAGES 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11 & 12

Touching new peaks

India recorded 184 new COVID-19 deaths on Tuesday, the highest single-day spike yet. Since April 30, daily cases have crossed the 2,000 mark every day



Trade unions write to Modi

Ten Central trade unions wrote to PM Narendra Modi seeking immediate cash support for workers hit by the lockdown, free rations, and arrangements for those stranded to travel back to their home States. The letter said they had been drawing the attention of Mr. Modi and Labour Minister Santosh Gangwar to the plight of workers since the lockdown began. ▶ PAGE 10

NEET to be held on July 26

The National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) for admission to medical and dental courses will be held on July 26, while the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE)-Main for admission to engineering courses will begin on July 18 and continue from July 20 to 23. Human Resource Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank said on Tuesday. ▶ PAGE 11

Homecoming charges

A look at the fares for the repatriation flights

- Flights from Chicago, San Francisco, Newark and Washington will cost nearly ₹1,00,000
- Flights from London to Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Bengaluru and New Delhi will cost ₹50,000
- Flights from Dubai will

way. Air India is already receiving government subsidy; we can't subsidise this travel on the taxpayer's money. Equally, if you look at the financial situation of other airlines, they are living a hand-to-mouth situation and are in a precarious situation.

The entire operation will be managed by Air India. Passengers will also have to pay for quarantine facilities on their return, but a final decision will be taken by the State governments, he told journalists.

To a question why passengers were being charged airfares on par with commercial rates, Mr. Puri said, "It is equivalent to a commercial service. The exchequer doesn't have the space to bear the cost of repatriation. The service is being carried out by air carriers, which will have to go empty one

way. He added that the government would consider roping in private carriers in subsequent phases.

These flights will bring back 14,800 Indians. Fifteen flights will return 3,150 persons to Kerala, 11 flights will bring back 2,150 to Tamil Nadu, 1,750 will return to Telangana in seven flights, 650 will return to Karnataka in three flights, and 3,100 passengers are estimated to return to Delhi in 11 flights.

Some of the flights from India may also ferry foreign nationals, including those who hold visas in a foreign country at least for a year, U.S. green card and OCI card holders.

NAVY SHIPS ON WAY TO MALDIVES, UAE ▶ PAGE 10

+ TRF a Pak. ploy to avoid scrutiny, says J&K's DGP

'An attempt to give indigenous shade'

VIJAYA SINGH
NEW DELHI

Security forces say there is nothing alarming about The Resistance Front (TRF) as all attacks carried out by the Pakistan-backed Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) are being pinned on the newly formed "seasonal" group in the Kashmir Valley in order to escape international scrutiny.

J&K Director General of Police Dilbag Singh told *The Hindu* that TRF, a front of the LeT, was promoted by Pakistan and created in August following the withdrawal of Article 370.

The TRF had claimed responsibility for the April 5 incident along the Line of Control in the Kupwara sector, where five Army personnel were killed.

The Army had chased a group of militants for five

days after they infiltrated from across the border and killed five of them, of which two were Pakistanis. "The initial social media chatter and activity around TRF was being pushed by Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) in Karachi," said Mr. Singh.

"This is a bid to give the group an indigenous shade; they are all backed by Lashkar-e-Taiba... Pakistan has been smuggling weapons from across the border to arm them," he asserted.

A group of 7-8 trained foreign militants, who recently infiltrated from across the border, were said to be behind a spike in attacks in north Kashmir, an area that had largely remained incident-free in the past decade, an official said.

The Army had chased a group of militants for five

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Anxious wait



State of uncertainty: Migrant workers waiting in a convention centre in Hyderabad on Tuesday as the police process their applications to return to their home States. ▶ NAGARA GOPAL (REPORT ON PAGE 5)

70% markup fails to dampen Delhiites' spirits

Crowding forces many shops to down shutters; govt. seeks police help to enforce rules

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Despite a 'special corona fee' – 70% of the maximum retail price of liquor bottles – being imposed in the Capital, scores of buyers gathered outside liquor vends on Tuesday.

Serpentine queues could be seen outside the shops even before they opened shutters at 9 a.m. While some were forced to shut down within a few hours as people were not following social distancing, others remained open for business through the day with policemen keeping vigil.

The customers said they were ready to pay the hiked price as it would help the government earn revenue, but they were dismayed at the lack of organisation



Never-ending: People waiting in a queue outside a liquor shop in New Delhi on Tuesday. ▶ SANDEEP SAXENA

customer, said, "The government will have to increase taxes on non-essential commodities. Looking at the number of people willing to buy liquor, it may not be a bad idea."

However, Sanjay, another customer, said that those who are addicted to alcohol would buy it at whatever cost. "There are many daily

wage earners here who cannot afford to buy liquor but are still waiting. We will have to see what social challenges opening liquor shops throws up."

The Delhi government on Tuesday requested assistance from the Delhi police to enforce social distancing at liquor vends. Deputy Commissioner of Police (East) Jasmeet Singh said, "Wherever people stood in queues, followed social distancing norms and adhered to the directions given by police officers, vends were allowed to open. For instance, a wine shop was allowed to open in Kalyanpuri in the morning because people followed social distancing, but was shut in the afternoon when the crowd increased."

24 patients at Army hospital test positive

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Army on Tuesday said that 24 inpatients at the Research and Referral Hospital here had tested positive for COVID-19.

"All of them were in the Oncology department and have been shifted to the Base Hospital in Delhi Cantonment," the Army said, adding that no health staff had been reported to be positive. All 24 patients were undergoing treatment for cancer, and include serving and retired military personnel and their dependents.

A part of the building was vacated for sanitisation. Investigation is on to the source of the contagion.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Centre steps in after Gujarat records 49 virus deaths in a day

Bureaucrats reassigned to help State in containing COVID-19

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
AHMEDABAD

With 49 deaths caused by COVID-19, Gujarat recorded the highest single-day fatality in the country, with the entire State now engulfed in the surging pandemic. On Tuesday, 441 cases were reported from the State, bringing its numbers to 6,245 while the number of fatalities climbed to 368.

The State's fatality rate is now almost 5.9%. On Tuesday, 186 persons were discharged, taking the recovery numbers to 1,381 so far.

Ahmedabad is the worst hit with as many as 39 deaths and 349 cases on Tuesday. The city's overall numbers had jumped to 4,425 infections and 273 deaths as of Tuesday. Meanwhile,

alarmed by the spike in cases and fatalities in the State, the Central government has reportedly directed Chief Minister Vijay Rupani's administration for course correction to contain the pandemic and manage the situation.

Ahmedabad concerns
Accordingly, the government on Tuesday roped in senior IAS officer Dr. Rajiv Kumar Gupta, handing him overall charge of Ahmedabad city which has emerged as the largest cluster with a steep spike in infections and deaths. Dr. Gupta will now oversee the pandemic containment and management efforts of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation. Similarly, Ahmedabad

Municipal Commissioner Vijay Nehra has been sent on a two-week home quarantine after he came in contact with an infected person, and senior IAS officer from Gandhinagar Mukesh Kumar has been made Commissioner in-charge of the civic body.

Another senior IAS officer, Pankaj Kumar, has been made in-charge to guide the State Health Department in its COVID-19 management efforts. This move is aimed at curtailing the powers of Principal Secretary (Health and Family Welfare) Jayanti Ravi, whose performance was not as per the expectations of senior leaders in Delhi.

"New Delhi was not happy with the way the situation was getting out of hand in Gujarat," an official said.

Timings

DELHI

WEDNESDAY, MAY. 06
RISE 05:37 SET 19:00
RISE 17:52 SET 04:52
THURSDAY, MAY. 07
RISE 05:36 SET 19:01
RISE 19:01 SET 05:33

FRIDAY, MAY. 08
RISE 05:36 SET 19:01
RISE 20:09 SET 06:16

Delhi Weather	max min
Delhi City	38 23
Safdarjung	38 23
Palam	38 22

Delhi Pilm Today
37°C A spell of dust storm with light rain is possible over parts of the city.

Delhi Pilm Tomorrow
37°C Morning temperatures may drop marginally. Dry and very warm weather would prevail.

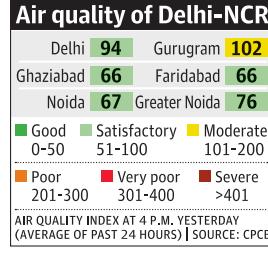
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IN BRIEF

Two people mowed down by truck in U.P.

NOIDA

Two truck cleaners standing along a highway in Greater Noida were killed after they were allegedly mowed down by another speeding truck in the small hours of Tuesday, the police said. The truck driver is hospitalised, they said.



Police dig up dirt tracks in Jhajjar to stop cross-border movement

Tar roads have been dug up by local villagers: Jhajjar police

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

Many roads and rough tracks through fields along the Haryana-Delhi border have been dug by the Jhajjar Police and the locals to prevent the unauthorised cross-border movement of people to the district from the national Capital.

Jhajjar along with three more Haryana districts has sealed its border with Delhi in view of the several COVID-19 cases traced back to the Capital.

Shri Bhagwan, husband of Issar Heri sarpanch, said the trails through the fields and the roads leading from their village to Delhi were dug by the police. "I got a call from the Station House Officer a few days back informing me that he had directions from the higher-

ups to dig up the roads. The police brought an excavator and dug up the roads," said Mr. Bhagwan.

Sidipur sarpanch Jai Kishan said the roads were dug up in the presence of the police to prevent the cross-border movement but they shared cordial relations with the people in Delhi villages.

Mr. Kishan said the residents in the several Jhajjar villages bordering Delhi worked in Delhi Police, municipal corporations of Delhi and other departments and returned to their homes every evening posing a danger to them.

"It is a contagious disease and spreads really fast. A single COVID-19 positive can put the entire village into high risk," said the Sarpanch. Some 30 rough

tracks in around a dozen Jhajjar villages along the border were frequented by the people coming from Delhi.

Superintendent of Police, Jhajjar, Ashok Kumar, said rough tracks through the fields were dug by the police, but not the tar roads.

"The tar roads have been dug by the local villagers. The locals themselves have been going from house-to-house requesting the Delhi employees in the villages to not return homes. The number of COVID-19 cases has gone up in Jhajjar and many of them are traced to Delhi," said Mr. Kumar.

COVID-19 cases in Jhajjar
As per the latest statistics, Jhajjar has 64 positive cases and results for 296 samples are awaited.

Allow domestic workers back in houses or ramp up relief provisions

Nearly two lakh affected, uncertainty prevails over re-employment of workers after May 4, says Gharelu Kamgar Union

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

Questioning the rationale behind the district administration's recent guidelines leaving the decision of domestic workers with the residents' welfare associations, Gharelu Kamgar Union (GKU) – a domestic workers' union – on Tuesday demanded the local authorities to either ramp up their lockdown relief provisions or ensure that they are allowed to return to work.

GKU convener Maya John, in a press statement, said shortly after the COVID-19 triggered lockdown was partially relaxed on May 4, the woes of the nearly two lakh domestic workers in Gurugram saw no end but a troubling escalation.

'Basic right to life'

"It has been the experience of GKU that the relief measures of the authorities have been piecemeal and truncated at most, leading to a situation wherein domestic workers have not only been robbed of their livelihood during the lockdown but also

so their basic right to life and liberty," read the statement, adding that there had been an undeniable failure of the authorities to provide an uninterrupted and adequate supply of rations as well as nutritious cooked food to Gurugram's labouring poor.

"Both the governmental authorities and their associated NGOs/social welfare workers have proved incapable of providing day-to-day succor during the lockdown, leading to the current distress of domestic workers," said Ms. John.

Consequently, the authorities have conveniently concealed their failures by allowing resumption of work, leaving of course, the final decision to the numerous RWAs, she added.

'A safe measure or not'

"A lot of ambiguity about the re-employment of domestic workers continues to prevail. While there are various individual employers and a large number of domestic workers who wish to have the work resumed, the larg-

er collective authority of the RWAs is skeptical about whether the measure is a safe one to take or not," read the statement.

In a situation of deadlock like this, GKU strongly pressed the Haryana Government and Gurugram administration to either ramp up their lockdown relief provisions so that domestic workers were not compelled to return to work immediately, or, to ensure that they were allowed to resume work, the statement read.

The union demanded that the Gurugram administration called for an immediate review of the situation unfolding on the ground, including a status report of the food distribution network in all wards of Gurugram and not allow the deadlock to prevail any further with respect to RWAs.

It also demanded that the Haryana Government and Gurugram district administration discussed a concrete wage and rent relief package for domestic workers for April and May.

Man held for selling fake travel forms to migrants

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

A constable was arrested for allegedly duping migrant labourers by selling them a fake form after claiming that it would facilitate their travel to their native states during the lock-

down, the police said on Tuesday.

The accused, identified as Rajeev, 38, is a resident of Punjabi Colony in Narela. He was selling the fake forms at ₹20 each and misleading the migrants, they said.

Constable found dead in car, husband on the run

Probe suggests marital discord: police

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 33-year-old constable was found murdered inside a car in south Delhi's Lodhi Colony, the police said on Tues-

day. The prime suspect in the case – victim's husband – a head constable, is absconding, they said.

DCP (South) Atul Thakur said a case under Section 302 (punishment for murder) of the IPC has been registered and teams are conducting raids in several places, including Uttar Pradesh's Meerut.

A senior officer said at 9.30 p.m., a call was received regarding the crime. "The body was spotted by a rag picker. The police found the woman dead on the passenger seat. She had sus-

tained a severe head injury," the officer said.

Next, the FSL found an empty cartridge on the crime spot. "Prime facie, it appeared that the woman was shot dead," the officer said. The police then found that the vehicle was owned by a police official posted in Special Cell unit. "The official told police that his friend, a head constable, asked him to give his car at 1.30 a.m., saying his wife was ill and needed to be taken to a hospital," the officer added.

The deceased was then identified as a constable, posted in Outer North district. "Investigation so far has revealed that the incident is a fallout of a marital discord," the officer said.

50 migrants flee west Delhi shelter home

Police apprehend 29, probe under way to trace the rest

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Homeless people served lunch inside a night shelter at Tilak Nagar in west Delhi. ■ FILE PHOTO: SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

persons who were shifted and one person who was kept separately in the shelter home started to flee by scaling the wall and main gate of the school. "While 17 persons were instantly apprehended from the spot by the police and shelter home staff, 12 persons were later

intercepted and were brought back to the shelter," Mr. Purohit said.

The police said that a case under relevant sections of IPC and Epidemic Act has been registered based on the complaint by the incharge of the shelter home and further probe is on.

JNU students begin online campaign against NEP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Jawaharlal Nehru University Students' Union (JNUSU) on Tuesday began a protest campaign on social media against provisions in the New Education Policy (NEP) of the government that they stated was "advocates financial autonomy and the commercialisation of education".

The JNUSU alleged that the policy omits all reference to the rights of students to unions and participate in decision-making. Giving an example of how one of the main stakeholders in planning the revised academic calendar were ignored, the JNUSU said: "In a written representation to the MHRD, the JNUSU had highlighted the importance of student representation in the reframing of the academic calendar, however, the MHRD and the UGC ignored these suggestions to unilaterally declare recommendations for educational institutions in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic."

The students claimed that the NEP seeks to obliterate principles of accessibility to higher education and the participation of students in the decision-making process. "With regards to student participation, the NEP is wholly silent, and instead offers clubs for students to participate in activities related to sports and to visual and performing arts," the JNUSU claimed.

'Aarogya Setu app is must for Gautam Buddha Nagar'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GHAZIABAD

Thirteen new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Gautam Buddha Nagar on Tuesday, taking the tally to 192. Of these, 83 are active cases, said Sunil Dohare, District Surveillance officer, Gautam Buddha Nagar.

Responding to reports that not installing the Aarogya Setu app would be punishable under violation of lockdown rules in Gautam Buddha Nagar, Akhilash Kumar, Additional Commissioner of Police (Law and Order), told *The Hindu* that it was part of the May 3 order on execution of Section 144 in the district after the extension of lockdown till May 17.

"As Gautam Buddha Nagar is a red zone, it is compulsory for smartphone users to install the app, which has been created for the safety of the people."

When reminded that the Home Ministry's order was only for users in containment zones, and that for the rest it was only advisable to download the app, Mr. Kumar insisted that as Gautam Buddha Nagar was a red zone, the punitive action would apply to the whole district.

Nine cases in Ghaziabad

Meanwhile, nine new cases were recorded in Ghaziabad on Tuesday, taking the tally of positive cases to 104. Out of these, 50 are active cases, N.K. Gupta, Chief Medical Officer, Ghaziabad in an official release.

Hospital workers

Twelve more people working at Delhi government-run Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hospital tested positive on Tuesday, taking the total number of healthcare workers of the hospital infected by the virus to 73, according to hospital officials.

Also, two people working at Lady Hardinge Medical College in the city, a doctor and an intern doctor, have tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 24 hours, said hospital officials on

Tuesday.

A total of 20 healthcare workers connected to the hospital have tested positive so far.

Containment zones

In a related development, two more areas were removed from the "containment zones" by the government on Tuesday.

A containment zone has a stricter form of lockdown and entry and exit of people are not allowed in these zones and there were 88 such zones in the city as on Tuesday evening.

A total of 67,852 COVID-19 tests have been done in Delhi so far and 533 COVID-19 positive people are under home isolation, according to the statement. Also, 5,52,417 people are living in the containment zones in the city.

The Delhi government,

meanwhile, issued a Standard Operating Procedure (SoP) for the screening of stranded people, moving out or into the city from other States. "Persons found asymptomatic shall be allowed to move out of Delhi... Similarly, the persons coming into Delhi shall be allowed to go their respective home after ascertaining that they are asymptomatic," an official order said.

During the screening, people found to be "mild symptomatic" will be directed to undergo 14 days of home quarantine and people found to be symptomatic, will be tested and quarantined.

Meanwhile, Delhi Police said it received over 750 calls on its 24x7 helpline number on Tuesday, seeking assistance on issues faced during the lockdown

Tuesday.

The new charges came into effect from Tuesday. "Life isn't all about rainbows and sunshine. Tough times need tough solutions - my learning as Finance Minister [sic]," Delhi Finance Minister Manish Sisodia tweeted after the hike came into effect.

The increase was done with the approval of Lieutenant Governor Anil Baijal.

The revenue collection of the Delhi government was down by almost 90% in April due to the lockdown and the move is aimed to shore up the State economy, said officials.

Opposition parties hit out at Kejriwal govt. for move

ers, transporters as well as the lower and middle class. "Due to this, farmers, lower class, middle class and transporters will also have to bear the double whammy of economic crisis in times of COVID-19 crisis," he said.

"Increase in prices of petrol and diesel will hike the value of many essential commodities," said Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari.

East Delhi MP Gautam Gambhir tweeted, "Before the election - will give everything for free, there is no shortage of money 2 months later - We will need you to pay double tax, no money even to pay salary" Unmatched economics of 'AAP'!"

Shastri Bhawan partially sealed after virus case

Law Ministry official tests positive

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A portion of the Shastri Bhawan, housing the Law Ministry, has been sealed on Tuesday after an official tested positive for COVID-19.

An official, who didn't wish to be quoted, said Gate 1 to 3 of the A wing on the fourth floor has been sealed and sanitisation process carried out.

Elevators located on this wing have also been sealed for the moment.

A Deputy Secretary-level officer of the Law Ministry, housed on the second floor of Shastri Bhawan, is said to have tested positive and, as per protocol, contact tracing has been initiated.

This is the second in-

Traders' body seeks Central aid

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) on Tuesday appealed to the Union government for assistance. It also warned that with massive losses, thousands of traders stand to shut shops permanently as a consequence of the nationwide lockdown.

NGO seeks COVID-19 tests for homeless

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Centre of Holistic Development on Tuesday wrote to the Delhi government, highlighting the urgency to conduct COVID-19 tests among the homeless, after a night shelter caretaker tested positive.

Stating that it was a public health crisis, the letter read, "All these shelters are general category that includes elderly homeless persons. It is extremely urgent for the government to conduct free COVID tests of all the homeless who are living in these shelters."

COVID-19 cases in the city cross 5,000 mark

No death reported for second consecutive day in the Capital

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A total of 206 new COVID-19 cases were reported in the Capital on Tuesday, taking the tally to 5,104, according to the Delhi government.

Of the 5,104 cases, 1,468 people have recovered and there are 3,572 active cases. A total of 64 people have died till now, but no deaths were reported on Tuesday.

Of the total number of deaths, 51.5% are people above 60 years of age, though they account for only 16.05% of the total positive cases, according to an official statement.

On the other hand, of the total number of deaths, only 17.19% are people under 50 years of age, though they contribute to 68.21% of the total positive cases.

"Cases are increasing not just in Delhi, but across the country. Delhi's doubling time is more than that of the country," Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain said.

Hospital workers

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HELPLINE NUMBERS

COMMON HELPLINE — +91-11-23978046
DELHI — 011-22307145
GHAZIABAD — 0120 4186453
NOIDA — 8076623612/6396776904
GURUGRAM — 108/ 0124-2322412/
9911519296/ 7015523417/ 9654231756

Virus spread

Total number of COVID-19 cases	5,104
Total deaths	64
New cases in the past 24 hours	206
New deaths in the past 24 hours	0

SOURCE: DELHI GOVERNMENT HEALTH BULLETIN

Cases are increasing not just in Delhi, but across the country. Delhi's doubling time is more than that of the country

SATYENDRA JAIN
Delhi Health Minister

Tuesday.

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East Delhi MP Gautam

Gambhir tweeted, "Before the election - will give everything for free, there is no shortage of money 2 months later - We will need you to pay double tax, no money even to pay salary" Unmatched economics of 'AAP'!"

Doctor harassed by his Dwarka housing society

He was on COVID-19 duty from March 16 to March 31

HEMANI BHANDARI
NEW DELHI

A 36-year-old doctor who was on COVID-19 duty in March has alleged that he was harassed by his housing society in Dwarka for "being around COVID-19 patients". He further said that the members stopped his domestic help from entering the premises.

Mani Shankar Madhav and his wife, who is also a doctor, live in Dwarka North.

Dr. Madhav, who is also the Chief Medical Officer at Pandit Madan Malviya Hospital, said that he was on COVID-19 duty in Rajiv Gandhi Super Specialty Hospital from March 16 to March 31 and was quarantined thereafter. While working as the CMO in the private hospital, he said that three of his colleagues were tested positive, but he was tested negative.

For over a month, I am being ill-treated because I have stayed around COVID-19 patients. They do not enter the lift that I am in. Around 20 days ago, I was asked not to touch the main gate of the apartment. People changed their direction wherever I went," he added.

In his complaint to the police, he wrote: "They are treating me like I am a 'COVID-19 carrier' and anyone working or coming in contact with me can get infected. They blamed me for using the lift and advised me to keep my domestic help in my flat."

Dr. Madhav said that the housing society's secretary is not allowing his domestic help to enter the premises.

"We need our domestic help to cook meals as both my wife and I work, but the se-



Dr. Mani Shankar Madhav

cretary refused. I even showed him the government order that allows domestic help to resume work but he did not let me," the doctor added.

After his interaction with the secretary, the doctor approached the police "but they did not register an FIR or receive the complaint". I went to the office of the Deputy Commissioner of Police (Dwarka) where they directed me to meet another officer who said that had all this happened to me on duty, they would have registered the FIR but cannot do so in this situation because it is in my residence," the doctor said.

DCP (Dwarka) Anto Alphonse said: "A complaint by Dr. Madhav has been received and it has been forwarded to the concerned authority. When a complaint for action is generated from the concerned authority, we will take legal action."

Dr. Madhav said that he plans to leave the society after the lockdown ends due to the ill-treatment.

Petrol price up ₹1.7/litre, diesel ₹7.1/litre

Govt. has hiked VAT to 30% in an attempt to shore up State finances: officials

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Petrol price in the city increased by about ₹1.7 per litre and diesel by about ₹7.1 per litre on Tuesday as the Delhi government increased the Value Added Tax (VAT) charged on both the fuels.

The VAT on petrol has been increased from 27% to 30%, the charge on diesel has been hiked from 16.75% to 30%, said a Delhi government official.

Petrol will now cost ₹71.26 a litre as against ₹69.59 previously. Diesel will cost ₹69.39 per litre, up from ₹62.29.

The Finance Department of the Delhi government had on late Monday issued a notification amending the fourth schedule of the Delhi Value Added Tax, 2004, (Delhi Act 3 of 2005), increasing the VAT on petrol to 30 paise per rupee and also Diesel (High speed diesel, super light diesel oil, light diesel oil) to 30 paise per rupee.

Tough solutions

The new charges came into effect from Tuesday. "Life isn't all about rainbows and sunshine. Tough times need tough solutions - my learning as Finance Minister [sic]," Delhi Finance Minister Manish Sisodia tweeted after the hike came into effect.

Delhi Congress chief Ch. Anil Kumar said that due to the hike in price of diesel, "prices of essential commodities have shot up".

Meanwhile, Delhi Police said it received over 750 calls on its 24x7 helpline number on Tuesday, seeking assistance on issues faced during the lockdown

Tuesday.

The new charges came into effect from Tuesday. "Life isn't all about rainbows and sunshine. Tough times need tough solutions - my learning as Finance Minister [sic]," Delhi Finance Minister Manish Sisodia tweeted after the hike came into effect.

Opposition parties hit out at Kejriwal govt. for move



People at a petrol pump in Preet Vihar after fuel price was hiked in the Capital on Tuesday.

BJP leader quits party in Ladakh

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

Another BJP leader from Ladakh on Tuesday resigned from the party over the Centre's failure to address the issue of stranded Ladakhis in parts of the country and overseas.

BJP leader Tsering Gyalo, in the resignation letter, said, "The Union Territory administration of Ladakh has not taken the elected representatives of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council-Leh into confidence on any subject. The handling of the evacuation of stranded people is one such example."

Mr. Gyalo submitted his resignation to BJP national president J.P. Nadda. "The delay in evacuation has allegedly resulted into death of two Ladakhis in Jodhpur. I am pained to see the plight of Ladakhi people suffering in India and abroad," he said.

Haryana government decides to levy 'COVID cess' on liquor

Cabinet approves changes in excise policy for 2020-21 in the wake of pandemic

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

The Haryana Cabinet on Tuesday decided to levy "COVID cess" on all types of liquor in the State with effect from Wednesday.

"A COVID cess shall be levied on all types of liquor. The COVID Cess will be ₹5 per quart in case of country liquor, ₹20 per quart in case of Indian-made foreign liquor (IMFL), ₹5 in case of strong beer and ₹2 in case of other beer, and ₹50 per pack greater than 375 ML in case of imported foreign liquor (IFL)," said the statement.

The timings of operation of liquor retail vends will be from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., both in urban and rural areas, an official statement said.

The meeting, which was chaired by Chief Minister Manohar Lal, approved certain changes in the excise policy



The Cabinet meet was chaired by CM Manohar Lal. ■ FILE PHOTO

for 2020-21 in the wake of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It was decided that the excise policy of the State government for the year 2020-21 shall come into force with effect from May 6, 2020, and remain effective till May 19, 2021," the statement said.

Further, it said that the validity period of the L-2, L-14 A and other concomitant li-

ences shall be up to May 19, 2021, and all the licensees shall operate their licences at the same licence fee at which these were allotted before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The payment schedule for payment of security and licence fee has been reworked so as to provide flexibility to the licensees in order to overcome the difficulty of prevail-

ing cash crunch. The retail licensees shall operate strictly in accordance with the guidelines of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, it said.

It added that no liquor vend shall be allowed to operate in the containment zones.

VAT Act amendment

The Cabinet also approved amendment in the Haryana Value Added Tax Act, 2003, to enable the State government to extend the time limits specified in, or prescribed or notified under the Act, so that assessments for the year 2016-17 or other proceedings that could not be finalised or initiated on account of the lockdown could be completed.

The amendment shall be carried out by promulgation of an Ordinance, said the statement.

Former MLA moves HC over refusal to permit azan

Court clubs pleas relating to 2 U.P. districts, reserves judgment

ANUJ KUMAR
GHAZIABAD

Former Aligarh MLA Zamirullah Khan has approached the Allahabad High Court over Hathras District Magistrate Praveen Kumar Lakkar's refusal to allow azan, the Muslim call to ritual prayer, in local mosques.

When we didn't get any response from higher officials of the Aligarh zone, we approached the Allahabad High Court

ZAMEERULLAH KHAN
Former Aligarh MLA

oconferencing and reserved judgment.

Local social worker and former municipal councillor Raees Abbasi told *The Hindu* that he, along with locals, met the DM many times and told him that azan would not lead to any violation of lockdown but he refused to listen. "Azan is given by the muezzin and it doesn't take more than 90 seconds. We told him that nobody would rush to the mosque after azan," he said.

On Tuesday, the Bench of Justice Shashi Kant Gupta and Justice Ajit Kumar heard the arguments through video-

neighbouring districts of Aligarh, Mathura and Agra. "Azan helps the faithful during Ramzan as they get to know the *sehri* and *iftar* time [meals before daybreak and after sunset]," he added.

Mr. Lakhar declined to comment on the case saying it was sub judice, but pointed out that azan was not being allowed in Ghazipur and Farrukhabad as well. "I don't buy the argument that if neighbouring districts were allowing it, we should allow. On March 26, it was mutually agreed upon that no religious activity would take place in temples and mosques," he claimed.

When asked whether he was confused between azan and namaz and if he had an order from the State government, he refused to comment and insisted on waiting for the High Court order.

Relief for police personnel with medical conditions in Punjab

Exempted from front-line duties as protection from virus

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

Punjab has decided to prohibit all police personnel with medical issues, as well as policewomen with children under 5, from front-line duty, in an attempt to protect them from undue exposure to the risk of contracting COVID-19.

Director General of Police Dinkar Gupta on Tuesday said concerns had been expressed on this count during several calls received on the newly launched tele-counselling facility from anxious police corona warriors and their families.



Policemen enforcing curfew in Amritsar. ■ FILE PHOTO

presence.

"Separation from young children was causing hardship, worry and anxiety, especially in cases where the husband and wife were both members of the police force," said the DGP, adding that in response to these concerns, it was decided not to deploy such women on front-line duty.

Similar apprehensions were expressed with respect to personnel suffering from various medical issues, especially respiratory distress, which could aggravate their risk factors, he said.

Directions issued

Mr. Gupta said directions have been issued to ensure that police officers with pre-existing medical issues, and women police personnel with children below 5 years of age, are not posted on front-line duties in view of their peculiar and specific circumstances.

Large industries, MSMEs start work in Rajasthan

Cement factories start production

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR

After the relaxations announced in the COVID-19 lockdown, over 190 large industrial units and 7,300 micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Rajasthan have started functioning with a limited workforce. All the plants in the cement sector, except a unit in Chittorgarh district's Nimabahera, have also started production.

State Industries Minister Parsadi Lal Meena said here on Tuesday that the industries would provide employment to the local workforce as well as the migrant labourers who were willing to stay on the factory premises as per the government's rules.

"The production in cement units will facilitate restarting of construction projects and generate indirect employment as well," he said.

A large number of units are situated in the industrial

units will facilitate restarting of construction projects and generate indirect employment as well

PARSADI LAL MEENA
State Industries Minister

areas of Rajasthan State Industrial Development and Investment Corporation (RICO). Mr. Meena said the control rooms had been established in the industrial areas to provide information and guidance about the COVID-19 pandemic.

Projects restarted

The projects of Jaipur Development Authority (JDA) have also been restarted with the adherence to all safety and social distancing norms. JDA Commissioner T. Ravikant said the projects included the Jhotwara elevated road and the road over bridges in Dantli, Jahota and Sitapura villages.

Return of migrant workers increases fears of contagion

Three persons with links to Surat have tested positive

SIB KUMAR DAS
BERHAMPUR

The continuing inflow of migrant workers to Odisha's Ganjam district has increased fears that it may become a hotbed for COVID-19 in the coming days.

Ganjam was a green zone till the start of the return of workers. Since May 3, three persons have tested positive in the district and all of them have links to Surat. Till a few days ago, over 2 lakh persons from outside Odisha had registered to return to the district.

Ganjam Superintendent of Police Brijesh Kumar Ray said on Tuesday that around 17,000 persons were under quarantine in the Ganjam police district. Realising the gravity of the situation, the State government deputed five Deputy Secretary-rank Odisha Administrative Service officers to assist the local administration. The district administration and police

have warned of strict action against anyone breaking quarantine rules or in the case of unruly scenes. On Tuesday, three persons were injured in a clash between two groups in a quarantine centre in Ganjam district. The police has also registered cases against 12 persons in relation to workers leaving two quarantine centres on May 3. All those who left have been tracked down and brought back to the quarantine

centres.

More arriving

An assessment at quarantine centres in 18 panchayats in Ganjam district by the Youth for Social Development has hinted that they are mostly unprepared with respect to the number of migrants expected to return. The total number of beds in 120 quarantine centres was 6,950, which would not be enough for the 10,914 migrants from these areas who had registered till April 28.

Policeman held for post against CM Adityanath

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh police have arrested and booked under sedition charges a Bihar police constable for allegedly posting offensive material against Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Facebook.

The arrest was made in Ghazipur district in Purvanchal.

Identified as Tanveer Khan, the accused is posted as a constable in Nalanda in neighbouring Bihar, said Om Prakash Singh, Superintendent of Police, Ghazipur.

The police did not reveal the exact post for which Mr. Khan was apprehended but going by screenshots sent to the police by users on Twitter, he allegedly wished death upon Mr. Adityanath over the issue of 'azan' not being allegedly allowed in the district.

The police had received a complaint against the constable on April 24 following which a case was registered at Dildarnagar police station.

The FIR invoked Sections 124a (sedition), 504 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of the peace), 505 (statement conducing to public mischief) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code, said the Ghazipur police. Sections 66C and 66D of the Information Technology Act were also slapped against the accused.

20 migrants skip quarantine

Negating Bihar CM's claim, they complain of lack of facilities

AMARNATH TEWARY
PATNA

At a time when Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar announced that his government has made all facilities at quarantine centres, over 20 migrants skipped quarantine in Katihar district of northeast Bihar, complaining lack of proper amenities and food.

"I've instructed officials to make all arrangements at quarantine centres for people ... bathrooms, toilets, pure drinking water, medical care, food and all other facilities," announced Mr. Kumar on Monday in a video release. Later, a press re-

lease from his office too reiterated the same.

He also announced that the migrants returning to the State would not have to pay train fare and they would be reimbursed all their expenses along with an additional ₹500 after their 21-day quarantine period at their respective centres.

However, on the same day, over 20 migrants who had recently returned from Punjab, Delhi and Haryana left a quarantine centre in Katihar town, complaining "lack of proper facilities and food".

About 100 migrant workers were put at the centre on

Assam swine fever death toll rises

The animal disease has never been reported in India before

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The outbreak of African swine fever (AFS) amid the COVID-19 pandemic has claimed more than 2,900 domestic pigs although veterinary officials said the rate of death has decreased over the last 48 hours.

Officials said they have not yet been able to crack the AFS "mystery". The disease first detected in Kenya in 1921 had never been reported in India before.

Data provided by the State's Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department said 2,904 pigs died till 5 pm of Tuesday. The deaths were reported from 310 villages across six eastern Assam

districts.

On Monday, Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal asked the Veterinary and Forest departments to work with the National Pig Research Centre of Indian Council of Agricultural Research for saving the State's pig population.

According to a 2019 census, the State has 21 lakh domestic pigs and more than 7 lakh farmers are involved in rearing them for the pork business worth at least ₹8,000 crore annually in the northeast.

"The Chief Minister asked doctors and other functionaries to ensure cleanliness and total sanitisation of the pig habitable areas and use disinfectants," a statement from the Chief Minister's Office said.

No vaccine

Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Minister Atul Bora said combating AFS was proving to be a challenge since no vaccine or medicine has been discovered so far.

"The AFS mortality rate is almost 100%. The focus is on preventing the disease from spreading and we have worked out some plans in consultation with officials, veterinary experts and pig farmers," he said. He added that the government was weighing options other than culling, as advised by the Centre.

SEARCH FOR SUSPECTED PERSON



General public is hereby informed that two male persons (depicted in the photo) cheated one gold necklace, one gold kada and one gold finger ring from New Rohtak Road, near Jeewan Mala Hospital, Karol Bagh, Delhi on 21.01.2020. The description of the suspected persons are as under:- (1)Name: Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: About 25 years, Face: Oval, Complexion: Wheatish, Wearing: Full white type jacket, (2)Name: Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: About 30 to 35 years, Sex: Male, Face: Oval, Complexion: Wheatish, Wearing: Full brown colour jacket, who are suspected to be involved in a crime as per captured in CCTV Camera. In this regard a case vide FIR No. 24/2020, u/s 420/34 IPC has been registered at P.S. DBG Road, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about these suspected persons but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about these suspected persons may kindly inform to P.S. DBG Road, Delhi.

SHO P.S. Desh Bandhu Gupta Road, Delhi

DP/75/CD/2020

Ph.: 011-23613252, 8750870429

e-Tender Notice

e-Tenders are invited by the Commandant of Water Wing Civil Defence, West Bengal for procurement of Spare Parts of INF Boat & OBW of Water Wing Civil Defence. Full details are available on website <https://wbtenders.gov.in>. Last date of submission of the tender is 28.05.2020 upto 15:00 hrs.

ICA-T1824(4)/2020

GUJARAT STATE NARMADA, WATER RESOURCES, WATER SUPPLY AND KALPSAR DEPARTMENT	
E-TENDER NOTICE No. 20 of 2019-20 (Corrigendum-III)	
The Tenders are invited on behalf of government of Gujarat by the office of the Executive Engineer, Ambica Division, Navsari for "Construction of Residential Quarters" at Navsari Irrigation Colony, Ta., Dist. Navsari" in B-2 form through online system.	
1. Estimated Cost	Rs. 3,80,64,650.49
2. Date of uploading	Up to DI 07/03/2020
3. Last Date & Time for receipt of online tender	Up



Eager wait: Police officials interacting with migrant workers in Hyderabad on Tuesday. ■ NAGARA GOPAL

Special trains leave Hyderabad, Vijayawada

Kerala resumes services to Bihar

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD

The South Central Railway ran two more migrant special trains, one from Telangana and another from Andhra Pradesh, carrying over 2,000 passengers towards Bihar and Maharashtra, respectively, early on Tuesday.

The State governments have picked up the ticket costs for the travel, identified the passengers, thermal screened them and brought them to the departing stations in buses under police escort.

Decks cleared

The operation of Shramik Special trains from Kerala held up over the refusal of the Bihar government to issue a No Objection Certificate (NOC) have been sorted out.

The Railways operated five special trains to Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar, and Odisha for the benefit of the stranded workers on Tuesday.

With Bihar issuing the NOC on Tuesday, Railways operated a special train from Alappuzha to Bettiah in Bihar. A special train was operated from Ernakulam South to Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh while another one was operated to Jasidh Junction in Jharkhand later in the day.

(With inputs from Vijayawada and Kerala Bureaus)

IN BRIEF



Special pass to send silk vashtram to Tirumala

CHENNAI
The Tamil Nadu government issued a special pass to transport "silk vashtram" exclusively made for adorning Lord Sri Venkateswara Swamy in Tirumala in Andhra Pradesh. According to sources in the TTD, the silk vashrams are prepared in Salem and transported to the hill temple by road. Since vehicle movements have been restricted, the stock has started depleting. The consignment that would last till June was handed over to TTD additional executive officer in Tirumala.

A.P. to give ₹10,000 to every fisherman family

VIJAYAWADA
The Andhra Pradesh government will provide financial assistance of ₹10,000 to each fisherman family under YSR Matsyakara Bharosa. It is aimed at helping the community during the marine ban period and in the wake of the lockdown. The amount will be credited into the accounts of fishermen on Wednesday. As many as 1,32,332 fishermen stand to gain from the scheme. However, fishermen who are availing other benefits such as Rythu Bharosa or disability schemes are not eligible.

Wild elephant electrocuted in Chittoor

CHITTOOR
An adult male elephant, which strayed into an agricultural field, was found electrocuted at Mandara Nayani village, 60 km from Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh on Tuesday. According to forest officials, the elephant came in contact with a live cable attached to the fence around the field. This is the eighth jumbo casualty in the western mandals of Chittoor since March 2019.

HC poser on guests at Nikhil's wedding

It asks why there were no restrictions

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT BENGALURU

The High Court of Karnataka has asked why the Ramanagaram Deputy Commissioner did not impose any restriction on the number of persons allowed at the wedding of Nikhil, son of former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy.

The court posed this question to the State government while expressing surprise at the blanket permission granted by the DC on April 16 without imposing any limit on the number of guests. The permission letter stated that those identified by a representative of Mr. Kumaraswamy could be allowed into the wedding venue.

A special Division Bench comprising Chief Justice Abhay Shreenivas Oka and Justice B.V. Nagarathna made these observations during a videoconference hearing of PIL petitions. The government had told the court that

between 80 and 95 people attended the ceremony on April 17.

The Bench also noted that even the latest guidelines issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs on May 1 relaxing the lockdown norms make it very clear that "marriage-related gatherings shall ensure social distancing, and the maximum number of guests allowed shall not be more than 50."

If it was the policy of the State government to grant permission for weddings without any restriction on the number of persons allowed, then other people also should get to benefit from it, the Bench observed.

It pointed out that several people had to cancel weddings because of the lockdown.

The Bench orally observed that at the very least, the State government should have admitted that not restricting the number of attendees was a mistake.

The Centre's decision not to conduct the obligatory medical checks on those bound for home at the very port of their departure had necessitated the radical change in the State's containment protocol.

'Quarantine must for those coming home'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Tuesday said non-resident Keralites (NoRKs) returning home from abroad would have to be in mandatory quarantine in government-controlled facilities for a minimum of seven days, irrespective of their COVID-19 status or age.

The government would not permit them to go home directly from the airport even if they were young, healthy and asymptomatic. Doctors would subject them to a PCR test after a week. Those who test positive would be hospitalised. Those who turn negative could quarantine themselves at home.

The Centre's decision not to conduct the obligatory medical checks on those bound for home at the very port of their departure had necessitated the radical change in the State's containment protocol.

Kerala HC refuses to stay salary ordinance

'Court can't question wisdom of govt.'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT KOCHI

The Kerala High Court on Tuesday declined to stay the ordinance empowering the State government to defer payment of salary of government employees and other government institutions for six days for five months in view of the COVID-19 crisis.

Justice Bechu Kurian Thomas, while refusing the plea for a stay made by counsel for various service organisations, observed that the court could not question the wisdom of the government in bringing the ordinance which did not appropriate the salary but only deferred payment of salary.

The court also found that the ordinance was enacted under the legislative competence of the government. It was promulgated as the State was reeling under a very difficult situation. In fact, the government did not deduct or reduce the salary and it only deferred payment of salary.

Advocate General C.P. Sudhakara Prasad argued that the government had the legislative competence to promulgate the ordinance. In fact, the government did not deduct or reduce the salary and it only deferred payment of salary.

According to the service organisations, including the Kerala NGO Association, the Kerala Disaster and Public Health Emergency (Special Provisions) Ordinance, which makes for deferment of pay of employees of the government and its institutions in part in the event of disaster and public health emergency in the State was illegal.

Advocate General C.P. Sudhakara Prasad argued that the government had the legislative competence to promulgate the ordinance. In fact, the government did not deduct or reduce the salary and it only deferred payment of salary.

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Dangerous drift

Encounters in Kashmir are on the rise, taking a disproportionate toll on security personnel

The deaths last Saturday of four soldiers and a police officer in an encounter with terrorists near Handwara town in Jammu and Kashmir's Kupwara district, call attention to, among other things, a difficult summer ahead. It is unusual and disproportionate for just a couple of terrorists to take down five highly skilled and motivated soldiers – a Commanding Officer of a battalion in the rank of a colonel, a major, two other ranks and a special operations group policeman in the rank of a sub inspector – in a firefight. The details on offer are sketchy, yet provide compelling evidence of an operation that went horribly wrong. On Saturday afternoon, receiving intelligence that terrorists were present in a house in Changimulla village, Colonel Ashutosh Sharma of 21 Rashtriya Rifles, Major Anuj Sood, Naik Rajesh Kumar, Lance Naik Dinesh Singh and J&K Police Sub Inspector Shakeel Qazi, and possibly others reached the site which had a building and a cowshed adjoining it, and an intense firefight commenced. All the enemy fire came from the cowshed, not the building. Then there was a lull for more than an hour during which the team apparently decided to approach the house and use the vantage of the upper floor to fire at the terrorists in the cowshed. They entered the house and there was a fresh firefight but no communication from the Colonel and his team. Then it was noticed that their communication instrument was being used by the terrorists. That is when realisation came all was not well, and firing ensued all over again. This time when it was over, there were seven bodies. The way this operation ended will have ramifications, on both morale and operating procedures, on future operations of this kind that go on all the time in this shadowy theatre of proxy war. It is certainly a coincidence that has not gone unnoticed that though the encounter ended tragically, news or details of it did not percolate, till well after Sunday's fly past and show of solidarity.

It should be evident by now to most that changing the nomenclature and status of J&K has not addressed any of the underlying causes of unrest and angst. Neither has it deterred Pakistan from its steadfast goals. Since the beginning of the year, in 127 days, as many as 55 terrorists have been killed in the region, roughly one encounter every two days. In the unhealthy vacuum that New Delhi has created since August 5 last year, such encounters have done nothing other than aid the impulse of the disaffected to embrace arms. As the dangerous drift in J&K continues, New Delhi must realise it has reached the point of diminishing returns and should look for ways to arrest this trend.

The mark of zero

Kerala's steps on the virus are easy to follow, but its success rate is difficult to repeat

With containment strategies in place even before the first case of novel coronavirus was detected on January 30, Kerala appears to have finally hammered the curve flat. On May 1, for the first time, the State reported zero new cases, and again on two consecutive days – May 3 and May 4. Zero fresh cases on three days in May appear to be more than a blip. If in April there were early signs of Kerala gaining an upper hand over the virus, its control became clear from the fourth week of April. Since April 22, except on four days, the number of new cases reported has remained either the same or fewer than the number of recoveries. The small number of cases reported so far – 499 – demonstrates how excellent its containment efforts have been. What is more remarkable is that 462 of those infected have fully recovered, including an elderly couple, aged 93 and 88 years, and there have been just three deaths – a case fatality rate of 0.6% against the national average of 3.3%. The containment success can be traced back to how Kerala did not wait for directions from the Centre but instead led from the front. When the number of cases increased to 12 on March 10, a day before WHO declared the coronavirus a pandemic, Kerala shut down all educational institutions and entertainment centres, banned large gatherings and appealed to people to avoid visiting religious places. If it realised the merits of containing virus transmission by quickly tracing all the contacts during the 2018 Nipah outbreak, it repeated that to perfection this time. Little wonder that on May 2, the ICMR lauded the State for the "unparalleled" containment and testing strategies and referred to it as the "Kerala model". But under no circumstances can the State lower its guard as the outbreak can resurge by exploiting the weakest link, as was seen in the sharp spike in Singapore, in dormitories.

Kerala has very good health-care infrastructure in place, down to the primary health-care centres. But what sets it apart from the other States is the manner in which it followed textbook epidemiology protocols to the tee, and beyond, and well before the ICMR advocated them, as well as the entire health-care infrastructure working in tandem despite being decentralised. Political leadership, and the close and complete involvement of the government at all levels with the bureaucracy and local community have been a huge advantage. The very different health-seeking behaviour and high literacy too have played a pivotal role in the war against the virus. While active involvement of all the stakeholders who complement each other especially during the crisis has worked in Kerala's favour, these are not measures put in place to fight coronavirus but what has been a legacy of the State. It is a success born out of decades-old social revolution and development. This is also the reason why other States, even if they emulate the measures adopted by Kerala to fight the virus, may not be able to achieve the same level of success.

Pathways to a more resilient economy

Following the pandemic, the redesign of economies, businesses, and lives must begin with questions about purpose



ARUN MAIRA

When complex systems come to catastrophes, i.e. critical points of instability, they re-emerge in distinctly new forms, according to the science of complex systems. The COVID-19 global pandemic is a catastrophe, both for human lives and for economies. Economists cannot predict in what form the economy will emerge from it.

Machines do not have the capacity for emergence. Once built, their capabilities inevitably reduce with increasing entropy. On the other hand, living systems evolve and acquire new capabilities over time. Fritjof Capra and Pier Luigi Luisi point out in *The Systems View of Life: A Unifying Vision* that among all living species, humans have a special ability. Only humans consciously develop new concepts, new scientific ideas, and new language in their search for new visions. Institutions of governance are human inventions for directing human endeavours and for providing stability. Thomas S. Kuhn explained in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* why new ideas are invariably resisted by prevalent power structures in societies. The scientific establishment determines which ideas are worthy of admission. The King's advisers do not want outsiders to dilute their influence in the court. The Establishment resists change. Therefore, fundamental reforms of ideas and institutions in human societies are always difficult, until a crisis.

Challenging principles

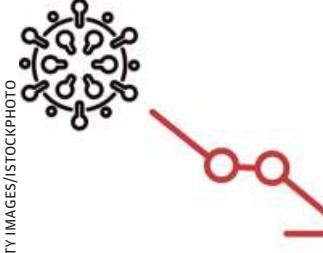
The COVID-19 catastrophe has challenged the tenets of econom-

ics that have dominated public policy for the past 50 years. Here are seven radical ideas emerging as pathways to build a more resilient economy and a more just society.

i) "De-Growth". The obsession with GDP as the supreme goal of progress has been challenged often, but its challengers were dismissed as a loony fringe. Now, Nobel laureates in economics (Joseph Stiglitz, Amartya Sen, Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo and others) are calling upon their profession to rethink the fundamentals of economics, especially the purpose of GDP. A five-point 'de-growth' manifesto by 170 Dutch academics has gone viral amidst the heightened Internet buzz during the lockdown. Goals for human progress must be reset. What should we aspire for? And how will we measure if we are getting there?

ii) Boundaries between countries are good. Boundary-lessness is a mantra for hyper-globalisers. Boundaries, they say, impede flows of trade, finance, and people. Therefore, removing boundaries is good for global growth. However, since countries are at different stages of economic development, and have different compositions of resources, they must follow different paths to progress. According to systems' theory, subsystems within complex systems must have boundaries around them, albeit appropriately permeable ones, so that the sub-systems can maintain their own integrity and evolve. This is the explanation from systems science for the breakdown of the World Trade Organization, in which all countries were expected to open their borders, which caused harm to countries at different stages of development. Now COVID-19 has given another reason to maintain sufficient boundaries.

iii) Government is good. Ronald Reagan's dictum, "Government is not the solution... Government is



the problem", has been up-ended by COVID-19. Even capitalist corporations who wanted governments out of the way to make it easy for them to do business are lining up for government bailouts.

iv) The "market" is not the best solution. Money is a convenient currency for managing markets and for conducting transactions. Whenever goods and services are left to markets, the dice is loaded against those who do not have money to obtain what they need. Moreover, by a process of "cumulative causation", those who have money and power can acquire even more in markets. The "marketization" of economies has contributed to the increasing inequalities in wealth over the last 50 years, which Thomas Piketty and others have documented.

Justice and dignity

v) "Citizen" welfare, not "consumer" welfare, must be the objective of progress. In economies, human beings are consumers and producers. In societies, they are citizens. Citizens have a broader set of needs than consumers. Citizens' needs cannot be fulfilled merely by enabling them to consume more goods and services. They value justice, dignity, and societal harmony too. Economists' evaluations of the benefits of free trade, and competition policy too, which are based on consumer welfare alone, fail to account for negative impacts on what citizens value.

vi) Competition must be re-

trained: Collaboration is essential for progress. Faith in "Darwinian competition", with the survival of only the fittest, underlies many pathologies of modern societies and economies. From school onwards, children are taught to compete. Companies must improve their competitive abilities. Nations too. Blind faith in competition misses the reality that human capabilities have advanced more than other species have, by evolving institutions for collective action. Further progress, to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals for example, will require collaboration among scientists in different disciplines, and among diverse stakeholders, and collaboration among sovereign countries. Improvement in abilities to share and govern common resources have become essential for human survival in the 21st century.

vii) Intellectual property belongs to the public. The earth's resources must be conserved. We are living in an era of knowledge. Just as those who owned more land used to have more power before, now those who own knowledge have more power and wealth than the rest. Intellectual property monopolies are producing enormous wealth for their owners, though many were developed on the back of huge public investments. Moreover, powerful technologies can be used for benign or malign purposes. It is imperative to evolve new institutions for public ownership of technologies and for the regulation of their use.

Purpose of enterprises

The paradigm shift necessary after the crisis will not be easy. There will be resistance to shifts in social, economic, and political power towards those who have less from those who have more within the present paradigm.

The financial crisis of 2008 was a crisis of liquidity in the system.

Recovery was achieved by putting more fuel into the system. The system then moved on; it basically the same shape it was before. COVID-19 has revealed structural weaknesses in the global economy. Putting fuel in the tank will not be sufficient. The vehicle must be redesigned too. While global attention understandably is focused on relief and recovery, this is the time to design for resilience.

The economic system cannot be redesigned by domain experts devising solutions within their silos. Such as, trade experts recommending new trade policies, intellectual property experts recommending reforms of intellectual property rights, and industry experts recommending industry policies. All the pieces must fit together. Most of all, they must fit into the new paradigm, which will be very different to the one in which the experts had developed their domain knowledge.

Innovations are required at many levels to create a more resilient and just world. Innovation is essential in the overall design of the economy. Innovations will be required in business models too, not just for business survival but also to move businesses out of the 20th century paradigm that "the business of business must be only business". Changes will also be necessary in our life patterns, our work and consumption habits, and in our personal priorities.

The redesign of economies, of businesses, and our lives, must begin with questions about purpose. What is the purpose of economic growth? What is the purpose of businesses and other institutions? What is the purpose of our lives? What needs, and whose needs, do institutions, and each of us, fulfil by our existence?

Arun Maira is Former Member, Planning Commission and the author of *Redesigning the Aeroplane While Flying: Reforming Institutions*

Getting over pandemic stage fright

Admitting community transmission does not lower a country's prestige; instead, it aids the integrity of the health system



T. JACOB JOHN & M.S. SESADRI

This year, on World Health Day, April 7, a patient asymptomatic for COVID-19 was admitted with chest pain in a hospital in Maharashtra. Diagnosed with coronary artery disease, he was treated surgically. Five days later he developed COVID-19 pneumonia and eventually succumbed. Did he come infected or did he get infected in the hospital? Either way, evidence is clear for community transmission. The hospital was closed for containment of further transmission.

Similar events have occurred across several parts of the country. At the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, many doctors, nurses and other staff became infected with SARS-CoV-2 and had to be quarantined, depleting a range of health-care professionals. On April 8, a government hospital in Jahangirpuri, Delhi, was closed after 14 doctors and nurses were found positive for the novel coronavirus infection. Recent reports indicate that one in 15 SARS-CoV-2 infected individuals in the national capital is a health-care worker.

A 55-year-old neurosurgeon died in Chennai on April 19, with severe COVID-19. Once again the contact remains unknown – one of his patients is a good guess. Without proclamation of community transmission, respiratory precautions were perhaps deemed unnecessary by these

What about individual medical practitioners? On April 9, a 62-year-old physician in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, to whom many slum-dwellers came for care, died of COVID-19, despite treatment. The Chief Medical Officer (CMO) told the media that his contact history was unknown – most likely from a patient. Did the doctor lower his guard, as the official version was "no community transmission in India"?

The next day, an Ayurvedic physician, aged 65, died of COVID-19 in Indore. Again, the CMO confessed that contact history was unknown: perhaps from some patient.

On April 14, a popular 76-year-old "family doctor" died of COVID-19 in Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh. After retiring as Medical Superintendent of Kurnool Medical College, he ran a private hospital. On March 25, he closed the hospital, complying with the lockdown. He died; his wife and children tested positive for the novel coronavirus. The doctor's contact history could not be traced; most probably from a patient.

A 55-year-old neurosurgeon died in Chennai on April 19, with severe COVID-19. Once again the contact remains unknown – one of his patients is a good guess. Without proclamation of community transmission, respiratory precautions were perhaps deemed unnecessary by these



doctors.

In all these situations, a correct understanding of the nature of the epidemic and acknowledging community transmission would have alerted the medical profession and avoided a loss of lives.

Epidemiologically important

What is community transmission? One infected person in the community, unaware that he is infected, infects others in the community. If A was infected by a known contact B, in epidemiology we say B infected A. When contact is unknown we say "someone in the community" infected A; hence the term "community transmission". When did community transmission begin in India? On March 18, Tamil Nadu reported the second infection in the State, an example of community transmission. A 20-year-old man travelled by train from Delhi and had no contact with any known infected person. In Chennai, he developed symptoms and tested positive on March 18. So community transmission

had started in India by, or before, mid-March 2020.

Every pandemic emerges from a country of origin – the 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic originated in Mexico and COVID-19, in China. For every other country, the initial infection would be "imported" from another country. Importation means that the traveller got infected in a foreign country but developed symptoms and got diagnosed in the host country. If secondary transmission occurs from the imported infection, it is qualified as contact of imported case. If the importation-contact further infects someone in the host country, such infection by in-country transmission is called "local", "indigenous" or "autochthonous" infection.

This is epidemiologically important information. It indicates the start of in-country epidemic, in other words, when the imported infection becomes indigenous. As the epidemic advances, community transmission is natural and inevitable. If the intention is to intercept chains of transmission, then there should be acknowledgement of indigenous (community) transmission.

Necessary step

A country denies community transmission at its own peril. In times of epidemics, leaders may be tempted to deny the problem; but, prudence is the better part of valour. Once community transmis-

sion of COVID-19 came to light on March 18, warning all medical professionals, coupled with strong recommendations for strict implementation of appropriate protective gear by all health professionals in all levels of health care, was the correct public health procedure.

The lives of many health-care professionals need not and should not have been lost on account of semantic mis-interpretation of epidemiology. Admitting community transmission does not lower the honour of mother India in the eyes of foreigners; on the contrary it boosts the sagging morale of health-care professionals, prevents avoidable loss of manpower in the face of the epidemic, and preserves the integrity of the entire health-care system.

Protecting the lives of health-care professionals by acknowledging community transmission and strict implementation of appropriate personal protective equipment will ensure that there is no attrition of the pool of health-care professionals needed to deal with the epidemic. Such a courageous step, taken with openness, only enhances national prestige.

D. T. Jacob John is Retired Professor of Virology, Christian Medical College (CMC), Vellore. Dr. M. S. Seshadri is Retired Professor of Medicine, CMC, and now Medical Director, Thirumalai Mission Hospital, Ranipet, Tamil Nadu

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.



Fare and unfair

It is baffling that it is as yet unclear who – the Indian Railways, the States concerned, the migrants, or a combination of them – will bear the cost of the train fare of migrant workers (Page 1, "Confusion prevails over who will foot migrants' train fare", May 5). The larger picture is that this case reveals the apathy of the government/s concerned towards migrants, who in the middle of an extended lockdown are virtually penniless and without food and shelter. Our leaders make tall claims about 'sabka saath, sabka vilas' but are unable to decide whether they should bear the travel fare of a section of society without whose enormous contribution

nation building would be next to impossible. We are ready to spend crores of rupees on erecting tall statues, arranging mega events which are all considered as wasteful expenditure but draw our purse strings when it comes to helping the needy.

A. JAINULABEEN,
Chennai

Liquor queues
It should have been a difficult decision for governments to take as far as opening "wine shops" was concerned, and expectedly, one that proved wrong as tipplers raised the risk of spreading the virus. Upon watching visuals of people flocking to outlets for a bottle or two, one wonders how many of these buyers are 'rich'

enough to buy liquor. The issue here is of the utter disregard for social distancing. The lockdown requires government to declare Section 144 Cr.PC, but what was evident is that there can be thousands gathering to buy liquor. The economy needs to be revived at all costs. But is it necessary to open "wine shops" to gather revenue?

GOVARDHANA MYNEEDU,
Vijayawada

■ This is in reply to the letter writer ('Letters to the Editor', May 5) who "found visuals of queues in front of liquor shops nauseating". I find such self-righteousness appalling and their thinking primitive. I am 55 and consume liquor without fear or favour, without "neglecting the nutritional needs" of my family and myself, and with the permission of my wife. I have been frustrated by the non-availability of alcohol during the lockdown. All educated and advanced countries have found an equilibrium between the needs of people

needs of millions of distressed workers and other less privileged sections of society.

V.S. GANESHAN,
Bengaluru

■ This is in reply to the letter writer ('Letters to the Editor', May 5) who "found visuals of queues in front of liquor shops nauseating". I find such self-righteousness appalling and their thinking primitive. I am 55 and consume liquor without fear or favour, without "neglecting the nutritional needs" of my family and myself, and with the permission of my wife. I have been frustrated by the non-availability of alcohol during the lockdown. All educated and advanced countries have found an equilibrium between the needs of people

who drink moderately and dealing lawfully with people who abuse alcohol, with stringent punishment. It is only in this country that both society and the law have failed miserably in recognising such a possibility. Those queuing up might buy what they want and experience some happiness with what they felt was an end of "mental" imprisonment. And most would not be wife-beaters or insensitive parents. As long as social distancing norms were observed, where is the harm?

MELATUR S. SUNDARESAN,
Mumbai

Moving ahead
The government must consider seriously its choice between a staggered lifting of the national lockdown and

an indefinite extension. The lockdown is a game of snakes and ladders. In a country with

Boost wages to stimulate India's growth

The economic crisis can be overcome only by raising the consumption of and investment for the poor



JAYAN JOSE THOMAS

Impoverishment among English workers during the early years of the Industrial Revolution had prompted Leicester framework knitters to frame this resolution in 1817: "...if liberal Wages were given to the Mechanics in general throughout the Country, the Home Consumption of our Manufactures would be immediately more than doubled, and consequently every hand would soon find full employment" (cited in E. P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class*, 1963).

One of the moving images from today's India is of migrant workers suddenly feeling desolate in their places of work and desperate to return to their villages, in the aftermath of the COVID-19 outbreak. The helplessness felt by the workers as seen from those images calls for nothing short of a radical rethink. We need to plan for an economic growth driven by rising – and not stagnant – wages, and a development model that is dispersed far and wide across the country, and not centred in a few big cities.

Patchy data

Out of India's total workforce of 471.5 million, only 12.3% are regular workers receiving some form of social security, while the rest are mostly casual workers or petty producers surviving under various degrees of informality (figures for 2018). A vast majority of migrant workers belong to the category of informal casual workers. Available data on the size of the migrant workforce in India are rather patchy. According to the 2011 Census, there were 54.3 million persons (workers as well as non-workers) in the country who migrated from one State to the other. The 'heartland' States of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh accounted for 48.9% of these inter-State migrants, much higher than their combined share in India's population (of 36.8%).

Workers migrate from villages to urban centres as the growth of rural incomes has not kept pace with the



"Battered by an oppressive economic system and now by an unpredictable virus, India's working classes deserve long-lasting relief and comfort." Migrant workers arriving from M.P. are given bananas in Prayagraj, U.P. ■ AP

rising numbers and aspirations of the young in the countryside. Those engaged in agriculture and allied activities as a share of the combined workforce in U.P., Bihar, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh fell to 49.1% in 2018 from 64.1% in 2005. This meant that, between 2005 and 2018, 19.3 million persons left agricultural work in these four States alone and sought job opportunities elsewhere.

Workers' shift out of agricultural occupations as well as out of their rural bases is set to accelerate, unless new economic opportunities are created in the countryside.

A majority of the workers who leave villages find themselves in the bottom rung of the urban economy, earning a precarious living as drivers, factory workers, security guards and domestic helpers. Their livelihoods are directly or indirectly linked to economic activities that cater to the demand from the relatively affluent in India and abroad (such as from industries producing sophisticated IT products).

Widening the demand base

Even as they work long hours often under exploitative conditions, informal workers manage to earn and consume only very little. According to the official consumption-expenditure surveys (for 2011-12), the richest 5% accounted for as much as 64.4% of the value of overall consumption of durable goods (such as of furniture

or refrigerators) in urban India. The share of the poorest 50% was only 13.4%.

The COVID-19 pandemic is set to cause long-term disruptions to the existing structure of demand dominated by the consumption of a privileged few. Economic activities have now been halted for weeks on end, and no end seems to be in sight for the downward slide in export demand, which began with the U.S.-China trade tensions. Businesses in India and elsewhere are concerned that even after the lifting of the lockdown, they will have to operate at a fraction of their installed capacities due to the sagging demand conditions.

The crisis in the economy can be overcome only by widening the sources of demand, by raising the consumption of and investment for the poor. Consider, for instance, the setting up of industries linked to food processing or affordable housing in rural areas. The multiplier effects of such investment will be huge. Food processing can help boost farmer incomes, reduce food spoilage, create rural employment and, above all, improve the availability of nutritious food to the needy.

Broadening the demand base requires policies that differ fundamentally from conventional economic ideas. The mainstream argument has been that firms should try to reduce costs by squeezing wages. But cutting

wages will shrink markets further and deepen the crisis during a depression. Instead, firms should assist in raising workers' wages and incomes, and thereby, in enlarging the size of the markets. Even with higher wages, profit rates will not dip because the larger demand allows firms to utilise their capacities better.

Increase government spending

For rejuvenation of demand, it is critical that governments increase spending on the economy, in areas such as infrastructure and innovation. Government spending can boost the "animal spirits" of the private investors, as had been suggested by John Maynard Keynes amidst the great depression of the 1930s.

The ideas of Keynes and his followers had helped to fuel an unprecedented economic boom in the U.S. and European countries for almost three decades after the end of the Second World War in 1945. A striking feature of this 'golden age of capitalism' was that the real wages kept rising, providing the much-needed succour to the working classes, who had long suffered due to the war and the inequalities of the depression years.

Battered by an oppressive economic system and now by an unpredictable virus, India's working classes deserve long-lasting relief and comfort. What is needed is a massive expansion in government spending, which will uplift workers' skills as well as their incomes and purchasing power. This will include investments in healthcare, education, roads, rural infrastructure, agricultural research, public transport, and so on – perhaps similar in scale and ambition to the post-war reconstruction efforts in western nations following the Second World War.

A grave challenge to future growth are the ageing demographic structures in most parts of the globe. In such a context, the rising numbers of the young in India, especially in its northern and eastern States, offer a potentially new source of demand that could sustain the economy over the next few decades. Lifting the wages and the spirits of the wearied Indian worker could just be the dose required to bring cheer to the Indian and the global economies.

Jayan Jose Thomas teaches Economics at the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi. Views are personal

The case for a gradual exit

Using mitigation measures will save a great number of lives



JAYAPRAKASH MULIYIL & GEORGE THOMAS

COVID-19 has caused the world to slow down and, in many countries, completely shut down in a way not known in recent history.

The impetus for the shutdown was driven in large part by a document from the Imperial College, London, which modelled options to handle the pandemic in high-income countries, specifically the U.K. and the U.S., which it called mitigation and suppression. Mitigation refers to methods to reduce the numbers infected and protect the most vulnerable. Measures advised are home isolation of suspect cases, home quarantine of those living in the same household as suspect cases, and physical distancing of those at most risk of severe disease. The measures described under suppression are more or less what have come to be called lockdowns but do not include complete shutdown of work. The aim of suppression is to prevent the infection from spreading to others. The authors said, in order to be effective, lockdowns needed to be in place for 12 to 18 months which is the time estimated for an effective vaccine to be available.

Waiting for herd immunity

The International Labour Organization reports that nearly 50% of the world's labour force is in immediate danger of losing their livelihood. The Secretary-General of the UN, Antonio Guterres, says women are especially suffering the deadly impact of lockdowns. At a conservative estimate, for over 50% of the world's population, a two-year lockdown would mean the end of their world.

Due to conflicting statements from the scientific community and governments, there is widespread fear that lifting the lockdown would mean disaster. Proponents of the concept of herd immunity have been criticised for being irresponsible. Herd immunity to a particular infection is a situation when so many in the population have immune antibodies that, although the pathogen is still in circulation, it can rarely find a susceptible host, and so illness from that pathogen is uncommon and cannot spread. For SARS-CoV-2, estimates are that 60%-70% of the population needs to have antibodies for the herd effect to occur. Critics point out that with the current estimate of 1% of the infected dying, waiting for herd immunity will still result in a lot of deaths. This argument ignores four factors: first, the number of deaths can be brought below 1% if we protect

the most vulnerable, which is easier than locking down the entire population. Second, as statistics show, lockdowns also result in a very large number of deaths. Third, the pandemic will end much sooner than two years if herd immunity occurs. Fourth, we do not know the actual number infected up to now, as no country has reliable data. Therefore, a gradual exit, using mitigation measures, will save the greatest number of lives.

Critics also state that it is not certain if infection with this virus leads to immunity. This is based on the fact that a small number of people who tested positive were quarantined and allowed to leave quarantine after testing negative, only to test positive again later. There are other explanations for this phenomenon which are more robust than the 'no immunity' hypothesis. First, no test is absolutely fool-proof and false positives and false negatives, though infrequent, can occur with the RT-PCR test too. Second, it is possible, though unlikely, that for a small section of the population, the antibody response may be transient. Nearly all human infections produce a natural antibody response, which protects from reinfection. Some of these responses wane with time and require another challenge to establish a level high enough to be protective. In general, the antibody response to infection is more robust than the response to a vaccine. Vaccines are preferred because the much milder infections that they induce have a far lower mortality and morbidity than natural infection. There are very few infections, like the bacterial Haemophilus influenzae B, where the vaccine is engineered to produce a protective antibody response that the natural infection does not. The best evidence that SARS-CoV-2 is able to induce protective antibody production in humans comes from the observation that most people get rid of the virus without the help of any medicines.

The most effective response

We are faced with two alternatives, both of which will lead to loss of lives. An effective complete lockdown requires physical distancing at a level not possible in India without tremendous resources from the government. It has to be continued till a vaccine is available. If the lockdown is continued in the way it is now being done, it will decimate the poor. Using force to isolate the poor is not acceptable in a democracy. Mitigation measures, taking the people into confidence, and facing the pandemic by deploying available resources in the best possible way is the most ethical and effective response.

Dr Jayaprakash Muliyil is an epidemiologist and former principal of Christian Medical College, Vellore and Dr. George Thomas is an Orthopaedic Surgeon at St. Isabel's Hospital, Chennai. Views are personal

It's time for a virtual judiciary

It will not only reduce costs but also lead to speedy disposal of cases

R. ANAND & V. RANGANATHAN

During the nationwide lockdown imposed to contain the spread of COVID-19, it has become clear that many activities can simply be done online. Over the last decade, Indians have embraced technology in a greater way than ever before. We all have apps on our phones – Amazon, Flipkart, Swiggy, Uber, Ola, Zomato, etc. – that help us procure various goods and services. Today, in these exceptional circumstances, 'work from home' is a concept whose time has come like never before. Many offices are gearing up for the new normal of staying at home and working, as restrictions are expected to continue for an indefinite period. This brings us to the question, how can we use technology to ensure speedy disposal of cases?

Many hurdles

The pendency of cases in various courts in India is staggering. The Economic Survey of 2019-2020 dedicates a chapter to pendency of tax cases and revenue cases. The Survey mistakenly argues for more court infrastructure and judges to solve the problem. On the contrary, the existing infrastructure is grossly under-utilised. There are tribunals such as the Income Tax Tribunal that function only half-day most of the time. To make matters worse, most courts are closed for Christmas and summer vacations. Judges are not accountable for efficiency and performance. Thousands of Indians cannot afford to go to court as legal costs are high and legal procedures are complicated.

It is a fact that most tax matters do not necessitate personal hearings. Tax cases reach tribunals and higher courts after lower authorities record all the facts. The High Courts and the Supreme Court deal with issues or interpretation of the law. The bane of the court system is that lawyers on both sides need to be physically present in court. Cases are often adjourned due to various reasons. It is in this context that we make the case for a virtual judiciary.

In such a scenario, we can submit

all the papers via mail. The judge can decide the case based on all the available information. Wherever the judge requires clarifications, he or she can seek the same through email. Typically, the judge, after considering all the material available, can pass a draft order and send it to both sides for any comments which they may want to provide. Thereafter, the judge can, after considering the comments, pass the final order. This will enhance the quality of the judgment and also eliminate obvious errors.

An efficient judiciary

The use of the court hall to decide such matters is superfluous. Not only will a virtual judiciary result in substantial savings in costs but will also lead to speedy disposal of cases. The productivity of lawyers will increase substantially as visits to courts and long waiting hours will be more an exception than a rule. If this practice is extended to other civil cases, efficiency will double, even treble, in judicial functioning.

The fact that the jurisdiction of a court is defined by geography makes no sense in matters such as taxation and company law. The change to remote, non-personal electronic court hearings will change this. All judges should be empowered to handle any case, wherever it originates. This will result in multiple advantages – the principal one being better utilisation of manpower and infrastructure by equitably distributing the work. Also, malpractices will be limited as there will no longer be familiarity between lawyers and judges in a city.

While India grapples with a crisis on the health and economic front, we need to think out of the box. We need a change in mindset regarding the way we work. Imagine the overall savings and extent of improvement of the judicial ecosystem if 70% of the cases get decided without going to court? If vested interests are kept aside and collective will to initiate what is for the common good takes precedence, a virtual judiciary can become a part of our lives.

R. Anand and V. Ranganathan are Chartered Accountants

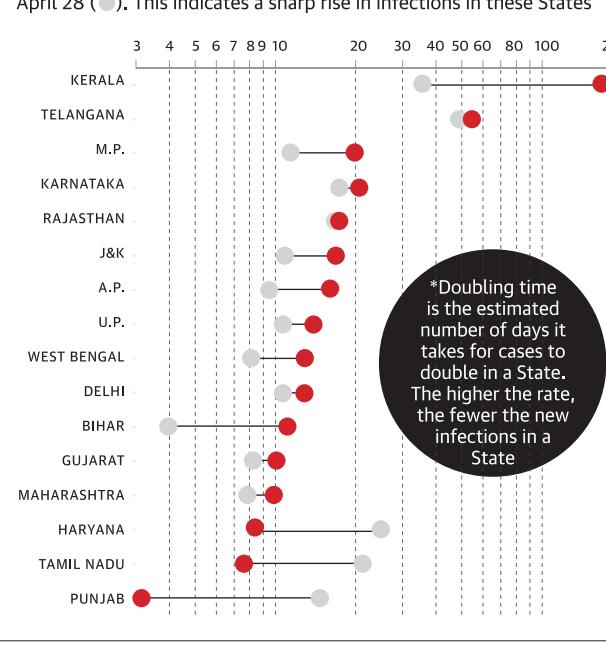


DATA POINT

Troubling doubling

Punjab, Haryana and Tamil Nadu witnessed a spurt in the rate of growth of cases in the last week, with cases in Punjab doubling every three days as of Monday. The rate of growth of cases in Kerala slowed down even further, indicating a successful containment of the spread. Both cases and fatalities are increasing rapidly in Maharashtra and Gujarat. *By The Hindu Data Team*

■ DOUBLING TIME CHANGES Only in T.N., Haryana & Punjab did the doubling time, as on May 4 (●), decrease compared to the value on April 28 (○). This indicates a sharp rise in infections in these States



FROM PAGE ONE

India records another spike with 3,875 cases

Prime Minister Narendra Modi also conducted a detailed review of the current status of India's efforts in vaccine development, drug discovery, diagnosis and testing according to a release issued by the Government.

Vaccine trials

"Over 30 Indian vaccines are in different stages of development, with a few going on to the trial stages," said the release. It added that at least four drugs are undergoing synthesis and examination and development of new candidate drugs and molecules are being driven by linking high performance computational approaches with laboratory verification.

"Plant extracts and pro-

ducts are being examined for general anti-viral properties," notes the release.

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said the Ministry has now released guidelines for rationed use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) for health care workers and others in non-COVID treatment areas, in non-COVID hospitals and hospitals with COVID blocks.

Different PPEs have been prescribed for different areas of the hospital like OPD, operation theatre.

He added that the use of technology is now integral for the containment strategy and is helping the States to manage the COVID-19 in a more effective manner.

"Plant extracts and pro-

TRF a Pak. ploy to avoid scrutiny, says J&K's DGP

The group is suspected to have attacked a police picket at Wangam in Kupwara on Monday, an attack in which three CRPF men were killed.

Security agencies assert that the TRF was formed to help Pakistan evade scrutiny by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and avoid further sanctions. The global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog is to review Pakistan's performance in acting against terror funding at its next meeting in Beijing in June.

A senior government official said that TRF also includes members of the Hizbul Mujahideen, another banned terrorist group.

One of the three militants killed in Kulgam's Qazigund on April 27 – an attack that was claimed by the TRF – was associated with the Hizbul for many years, said the official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity. Two other fresh recruited men were also killed in the encounter with forces.

The official said the group was mainly concentrated in south Kashmir but the number of locals who had joined the group was not known yet. "We have information that 2-3 boys who went to Pakistan on visas for educational purposes have also joined the group. There is a

concerted effort by Pakistan to lure them to join the TRF, projecting it as a local movement," said the official.

"TRF is more of a social media sensation. If TRF is suddenly active, can we say that LeT, Hizbul, Jaish and other terror groups backed by Pakistan have become redundant," the official asked rhetorically.

A third official described the group as an "online project". "Pakistan wants to project Kashmiri terrorism as a resistance movement by Kashmiris. So far Hizbul and LeT have come under TRF's umbrella," the official said.

On March 23, J&K police arrested six members of the group from three districts – Sopore, Kupwara and Handwara in North Kashmir. The group included an engineer, a shopkeeper, a baker and a government hospital employee. Police said the group received instructions from their handler – "Andrew Jones" on Telegram. The handler's WhatsApp ID was "Khan Bilal". Huge amount of arms and ammunition smuggled from Pakistan were also recovered. Four of the group are yet to be arrested.

Police had then said that the group was not armed with firearms yet, but were involved in grenade attacks and overground activities.

India needs a big stimulus: Banerjee

To another query from Mr. Gandhi on whether a scheme like NYAY or minimum income guarantee for the poorest families would help, he said, "Whether it is to the poorest people, that is more debatable...I would say bottom 60% of the population, we give them some money, nothing bad will happen in my view. If we give them money, well some of them might not need it. Fine they'll spend it. If they spend it, it would have a stimulus effect."

Talking about the two key challenges in the post-COVID world, he noted: "There are two concerns – how to avoid a chain of bankruptcies. Maybe writing off a lot of debt is the way to go...The other is demand shortfall, and getting some cash into the hands of the population

is the best way to kickstart the economy."

The Nobel laureate, however, was quick to discount the notion that "only strong leaders can take on the virus" and cited the U.S. and Brazil as two disastrous examples where the leaders are "messing up right and left".

He also mentioned about their (along with Amartya Sen and Raghuram Rajan) suggestion to give temporary ration cards and make the public distribution system universal and also find a way to put cash in the hands of people who don't have Jan Dhan accounts.

On how quickly the economy could be opened up, Prof. Banerjee said, "You don't want to take down the lockdown when a lot of people are getting sick."

24 patients at Army hospital test positive

An officer said that as per standard protocol in COVID-19 cases, after a patient has tested positive, detailed contact tracing is carried out, including that of family members who are categorised as part of a high-risk group.

Till date, a total of 74 people from the Armed Forces, including 60 serving per-

sonnel from the three Services and also veterans and dependents, have been hospitalised for COVID-19. This does not include the 24 positive cases reported on Tuesday. Of the 74 persons admitted, 42 have been discharged after successful treatment, which includes 28 serving personnel from the three Services.

Convene House panels: Cong.

If govt. can run on video conferencing, then why not parliamentary committees'

SOBHANA K. NAIR
NEW DELHI

The government is trying to hide behind rules to escape parliamentary oversight, national spokesperson for the Congress and Lok Sabha member Manish Tewari said on Tuesday.

"In this pandemic, why can't parliamentary committees meet virtually," asked Mr. Tewari, speaking to *The Hindu*. "There seems to be an attempt to hide behind the rules to escape parliamentary oversight," he contended.

The Congress MP, who is a member of the parliamentary panel on Finance, wrote a letter to the panel chairperson, Jayant Sinha, on April 18 urging him to arrange for a meeting.

"Isn't the central government running on videoconferencing? Isn't the world running on videoconferencing, isn't G20 happening on videoconferencing? Then how are the parliamentary

committees an exception," Mr. Tewari wondered.

Confidentiality issues

The functioning of the Parliamentary Standing Committees has been suspended due to the lockdown and both the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha secretariats have refused to permit meetings of the panels via videoconferencing. The secretariats have contended that holding such meetings, where the government shares critical information, virtually could violate the confidentiality clause. Chairman of the IT committee Shashi Tharoor and Chairman of the com-

mittee on Home Affairs Anand Sharma had both written to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and Rajya Sabha Chairman Venkaiah Naidu seeking permission to hold the meetings.

Mr. Tharoor announced on Twitter on April 20 that Mr. Birla had permitted holding the meeting by videoconference. Four days later, he tweeted that the Lok Sabha secretariat was yet to approve the "amended rules".

Pandemic the priority

Addressing a meeting on Monday, Mr. Naidu had observed that there was a need for undivided focus from the

Executive on containing the pandemic, adding that a view on holding meetings of the department-related standing committees would be taken later.

Mr. Tewari contended that to say that somebody was too busy to attend Parliament was not acceptable and was misleading as regards the role of the legislative institution.

"When Britain was fighting the Second World War, Parliament sat regularly for five years. That was a country at war, the Executive was busy discharging its responsibilities and yet it found time for Parliament. Even during the First World War, the House of Commons kept meeting," he added.

Observing that the committee meetings were not only a one-way affair with MPs asking questions, Mr. Tewari said the government was also "enriched" by the inputs that came directly from the ground.

Ramesh withdraws plea in SC, writes to Paswan

MP alleges chinks in food security

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha member Jairam Ramesh on Tuesday sent a detailed representation to Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Ram Vilas Paswan, voicing his deep concern about chinks in the public distribution system and food security for the poor amid the COVID-19 lockdown.

Mr. Ramesh addressed his representation to the Minister within hours of the government's assurance in the Supreme Court that his concerns would be "duly attended to."

"Over the last several weeks of the nation-wide lockdown and subsequent extensions of the same, numerous reports are coming in from across the country regarding inadequate food stocks and wide variances in distribution of the same amongst beneficiaries," Mr. Ramesh wrote.

Earlier in the day, Mr. Ramesh, represented by se-

nior advocate Salman Khurshid, sought a non-discriminatory implementation of the National Food Security Act.

However, during the court hearing, Mr. Ramesh's side went on to acknowledge that they had come directly to the court without approaching the government first. The court finally allowed him to withdraw the petition in order to "enable the petitioner [Mr. Ramesh] to submit a detailed representation to Respondent No.1 [Union of India]. Solicitor General has submitted that it shall be duly attended to."

In his representation to Mr. Paswan, Mr. Ramesh argued the urgent need to identify gaps in the supply chain by comparing data of January this year with April on active PDS outlets. He also asked the government to ensure that food grains were not denied to those who did not produce ration cards during the lockdown period.

SC dismisses petition to stop eviction

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday dismissed a petition seeking an urgent intervention against the eviction of students by their landlords during the COVID-19 lockdown despite a government order to the contrary.

"We are not inclined to entertain this petition under Article 32 of the Constitution. The writ petition is accordingly dismissed," a three-judge Bench led by Justice Ashok Bhushan recited orally while rejecting the plea.

The plea filed by advocate Pawan Prakash Pathak complained that the evictions were violative of a Ministry of Home Affairs order on March 29 that landlords should not collect rent or evict students and labourers for a month. "With the extension of lockdown, they are facing problems in paying rent as income during this period is nil and savings with their families are minimal," the petition had said.

The petition cited the Uttar Pradesh government website to say that 15,378

Lockdown violation cases won't be quashed'

SC rejects petition filed by former DGP

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday dismissed a petition filed by a former Director-General of Police of Uttar Pradesh to quash FIRs registered against ordinary citizens for violating the COVID-19 lockdown.

"There cannot be a super government. Everyone is going through difficult times," a Bench led by Justice Ashok Bhushan remarked orally while rejecting the plea.

Vikram Singh, the former DGP of Uttar Pradesh, had cited data collected by a think-tank Centre for Accountability and Systemic Change (CASC) – of which he is the chairman – to show that 848 FIRs were filed between March 23 and April 13 under Section 188 of the IPC (disobedience of an order promulgated by a public servant) in 50 police stations in Delhi alone.

The petition cited the Uttar Pradesh government website to say that 15,378

'Darbar Move' burdens exchequer, says J&K HC

Centre, UT urged to take a final call

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

The Jammu and Kashmir High Court on Tuesday asked the Centre and the Union Territory (UT) administration to take a final call on the continuation of the 148-year-old practice of shifting capitals annually between Srinagar and Jammu, "which burdens the exchequer".

A Bench comprising Chief Justice Gita Mittal and Justice Rajnesh Oswal, hearing a petition against the 'Darbar Move', observed, "There are limitations on the extent of our jurisdiction on making a declaration on the permissibility or the continuation of the 'Darbar Move'. We defer this task to the best wisdom of those on whom the Constitution of India bestows this duty."

Regional parties advocated the continuation of the practice "to help in the emotional integration between two diverse regions" of J&K.

mine it and take a considered decision."

Evaluating the cost incurred by the 'Darbar Move' on the exchequer, the court noted: "If this practice was rationalised, the amount of money, resources and time which could be saved, could be utilised towards the development of the Union Territory, which has otherwise witnessed much turmoil."

The 'Darbar Move' results in wastage of tremendous amount of time, efforts and energy on inefficient and unnecessary activity [say, packing of records]. It is taxing for security forces too," the court observed.

The practice was introduced in 1872 by a Dogra monarch to escape the harsh winters of the Kashmir Valley.

Regional parties advocated the continuation of the practice "to help in the emotional integration between two diverse regions" of J&K.

Mehbooba's detention may be extended

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

The J&K administration is likely to extend the detention of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti, her close confidant Sartaj Madani and National Conference's Ali Muhammad Sagar by three months under the Public Safety Act (PSA), official sources said.

Ms. Mufti, former Chief Minister, completed nine months of detention on May 5. Ms. Mufti and NC vice-president Omar Abdullah were booked under the PSA on February 6. Mr. Abdullah's PSA order was revoked on March 24 and Ms. Mufti was shifted to her official residence but placed under detention.

"We have not been informed about the extension so far," Ms. Mufti's daughter Iltija Mufti told *The Hindu*.

Mr. Madani is Ms. Mufti's uncle and a former legislator. Mr. Sagar is considered a close associate of NC president Farooq Abdullah.

M.P. caught between pandemic and penury

With revenues and economic activity drying up post lockdown, State has turned to massive borrowing to shore up finances

SIDHARTH YADAV
Bhopal

The stringent lockdown imposed to curb the COVID-19 outbreak has had a crippling impact on the economy of Madhya Pradesh, where tax collection – SGST and IGST put together – dropped by close to 85% in April.

"We collected around ₹250 crore, which is about 15% of the amount collected for the month last year. It is much lower than the target," said Additional Chief Secretary, State Finance Department Anurag Jain.

Mining activity remains suspended across the State. Liquor shops will remain shuttered in the three red zone districts of Bhopal, Indore and Ujjain, but be partially open in the remaining six, during the continuing lockdown. There will be no curbs on liquor sales in the other 43 districts.

Falling fuel VAT

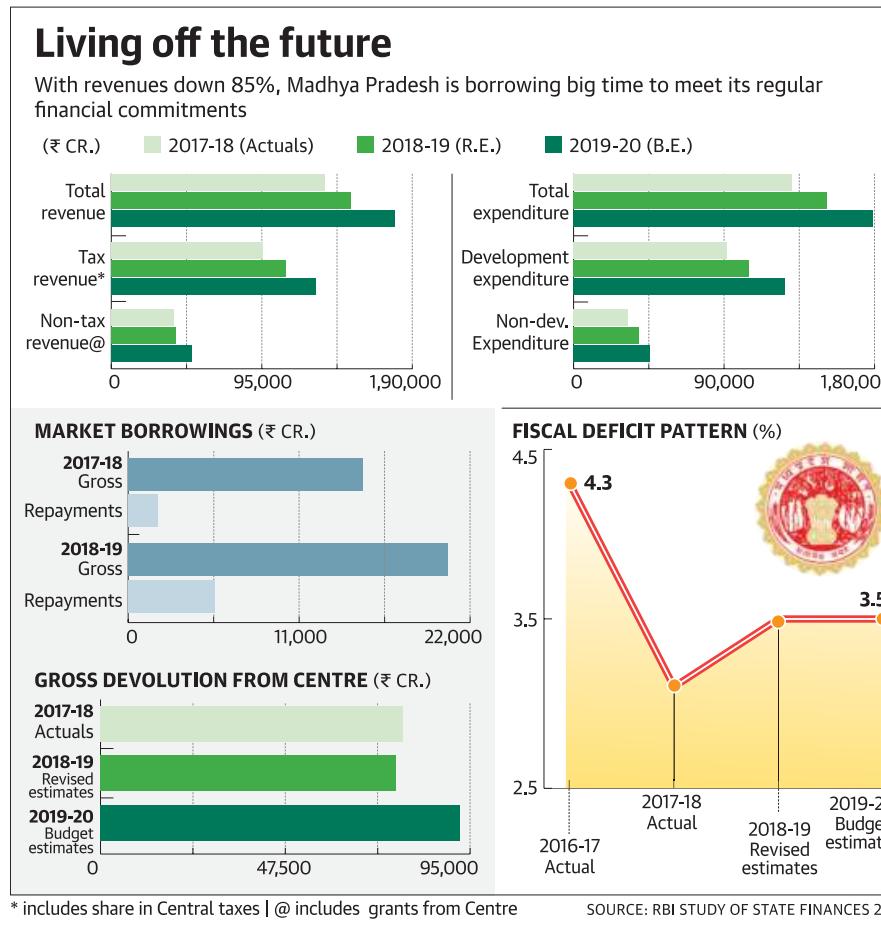
"In mining and excise, there is [now] hardly any revenue. The VAT on petrol and diesel has also come down to 60-65%," said Mr. Jain.

As regards GST arrears, the Centre has settled only part of the pendency for December and January. The compensation loss for February and March of about ₹2,100 crore, and the remaining dues are still outstanding.

Staring at an imminent financial crunch, the State advanced its borrowings for April and May. The govern-

Living off the future

With revenues down 85%, Madhya Pradesh is borrowing big time to meet its regular financial commitments



Seven more deaths, 85 new infections in Bengal

Door-to-door surveillance for Severe Acute Respiratory Infection and Influenza-like Illness cases going on in State: Mamata

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA

Seven more deaths and 85 new cases of COVID-19 infection were reported in West Bengal on Tuesday, taking the count to 1,344. While 980 are active cases, the number of deaths has increased to 140.

The State government maintains that "68 deaths are due to COVID-19 infection and 72 due to co-morbidities where the infection was the incidental finding". Though the audit committee set up by the State government is no longer looking into every death due the virus infection, it has not included 72 deaths in its official tally.

In the past 24 hours, 2,455 samples were tested taking the number of samples tested to 27,571. So far, 264 per-



Finish line: Migrant labourers arriving in Kolkata from Rajasthan on Tuesday. • AFP

sons have been discharged from health facilities.

Responding to questions on the high mortality rate, Home Secretary Alapan Ban-

dopadhyay said, "The more positive cases you test, the lesser will be the mortality rate".

Till a month ago the State

had only one testing centre and it now has 15, he said. In the first few days of the outbreak, the State was testing only "acute cases" and

hence the mortality was high, Mr. Bandyopadhyay.

On Monday, the Inter-Ministerial Central Team (IMCT) had highlighted that the mortality rate in West Bengal, at 12.8%, was the highest in the country.

'Massive survey'

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee took to social media to say a massive door-to-door surveillance had been going on for the past one month to identify Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI) and Influenza-like Illness (ILI) cases across West Bengal.

"This herculean effort has been undertaken by 60,000 specially-trained ASHA and health workers non-stop for the past four weeks. It gives us early warning signals and

is an important proactive step in fighting COVID-19," Ms. Banerjee said.

In the 5.57 crore household visits conducted from April to May 3, she said, "872 cases with SARI and 91,515 cases of ILI have been identified and given health advice". As many as 375 people have also been admitted to health facilities, of whom 62 have tested positive for COVID-19, the Chief Minister added.

Train from Ajmer

Meanwhile, the first train carrying over 1,000 persons reached the Dankuni railway station from Ajmer.

After being screened, the passengers were given guidelines to isolate themselves. Another train from Kerala has also left for West Bengal.

Rajasthan sees 38 new cases, 5 deaths

Cumulative tally reaches 3,099 in State

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

JAIPUR

Five COVID-19 patients died in Jaipur on Tuesday, taking the death toll in Rajasthan to 82. Declared a red zone, the capital has recorded the highest number of deaths (49) so far. Stringent curfew has been imposed in the Walled City portion to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus.



People outside a liquor store in Jaipur. • ROHIT JAIN PARAS

one in Bharatpur.

According to the figures released by the Medical & Health Department, 1,440 patients have recovered in the State and 983 of them have been discharged from hospitals. As of now, the State has 1,577 active COVID-19 cases.

IN BRIEF



Punjab reports two more virus deaths

CHANDIGARH

Punjab on Tuesday reported two more COVID-19-related deaths, taking the toll to 25. Additionally, 219 fresh cases of COVID-19 surfaced in the State, according to an official statement. The total number of COVID-19 positive cases stood at 1,451 in the State.

Most of the new cases include pilgrims who had recently returned from Nanded in Maharashtra. The patients who died were from Hoshiarpur and Amritsar districts.

Odisha disallows bus travel by workers

BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha government on Tuesday disallowed bus journey by Odia migrant workers from Surat in Gujarat to the State following travel hardships and violation of social distancing norms. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik ordered that the migrants will be allowed to return by trains only. As many as four road accidents involving buses coming from Surat to Ganjam and other districts were reported in the State during the past one week.

Driver on bus carrying migrants dies in accident

BHUBANESWAR

One person was killed when a bus carrying Odia workers from Hyderabad met with an accident in Odisha's Khordha district on Tuesday. The incident occurred when the bus driver tried to evade a collision with a truck near Tangi. K. Srikant, assistant driver of the bus, died and three others sustained minor injuries, an official said. Migrants belonging to Cuttack, Puri and Kendrapara districts, who were working in different hotels, left Hyderabad by the bus around 9.30 p.m. on May 3. This is the fourth accident involving buses carrying Odia migrants' in the last five days.

11 more deaths reported in M.P.

Travel fare should not be collected from returning migrants, says CM

STAFF REPORTER

BHOPAL

Eleven persons died of COVID-19 in Madhya Pradesh on Tuesday while undergoing treatment at hospitals, taking the State-wide death toll to 176, the Directorate of Health Services said.

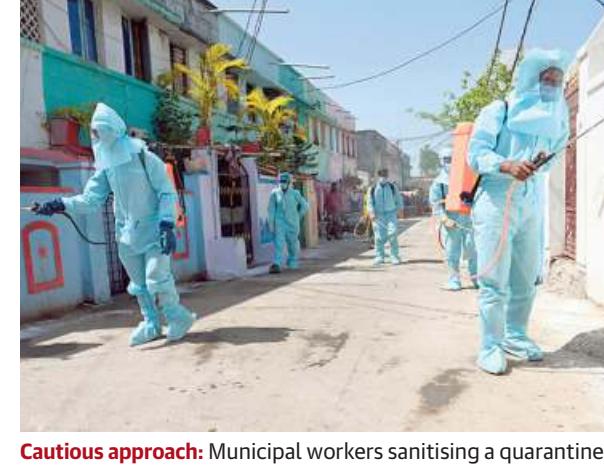
Five persons died in Ujjain, two each died in Indore and Jabalpur and one each died in Bhopal and Satna, according to the bulletin issued by the Directorate.

The case fatality rate in Ujjain, which has reported 184 cases and 40 deaths so far, touched 21.7%.

The recovery rate in the city stands at 14%.

Meanwhile, 107 new cases were registered in the State on the day. The overall count surged to 3,049.

Indore, the worst hit city, has registered 1,654 cases and 79 deaths so far. As many as 468 persons have recov-



Cautious approach: Municipal workers sanitising a quarantine centre in Jabalpur on Tuesday. • PTI

ered from the illness in the city.

Higher recovery rate

Across the State, 144 patients recovered from the illness on the day.

The State's recovery rate stands at 32.8%, higher than

the national average.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan ordered the treatment of COVID-19 patients at the trauma centre in Ujjain.

Further, he directed a medical specialist from the All India Institute of Medical

Sciences, Bhopal, to reach Ujjain to monitor treatment of patients there. He pointed out that at present around 3,000 samples were being tested for the illness in the State every day. In the coming week, the capacity would be ramped up to 3,500 samples a day.

'₹1 crore to Railways'

Additional Chief Secretary, Commercial Tax, I.C.P. Keshari said to facilitate the return of workers stuck in other States, the government had paid ₹1 crore to the Railways.

Mr. Chouhan reiterated that in no condition should travel fare be collected from workers.

In the first phase, around 75,000 workers had returned to the State. In the second phase, around 70,000 more workers will be brought back this week.

Death toll jumps to 56 in U.P.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

LUCKNOW

The COVID-19 death toll jumped to 56 in Uttar Pradesh with six more casualties, according to the State Health Department.

Deaths were reported in Jhansi, Bijnor, Agra, Mainpuri and Firozabad.

Toll in Agra

This takes the total casualties in Agra, which reported two new deaths, to 16.

The positive cases also rose to 2,880, with 118 new cases in the State.



Finally home: Migrants who arrived from Maharashtra at the Charbagh railway station in Lucknow. • PTI

Now, the active cases stand at 1,836, while 987 people have been discharged so far. The State has reported

66 COVID-19 cases in 66 out of its 75 districts with a case each in Amethi and Kushinagar.

Officials turn couriers amid lockdown

Tamil Nadu and Karnataka coordinate to procure medicines for Theni girl

L SRIKRISHNA

THENI

A distress call to the Theni district control room proved that States can work together in times of emergency, despite the stringent COVID-19 lockdown.

Coordination between officials in Tamil Nadu and the Karnataka police helped a young girl in Theni, suffering from Maple Syrup Urine Disorder (MSUP), get medicines from Bengaluru in record time.

The 11-year-old girl's father works as a supplier in a small restaurant in Periyakulam, and her mother is a daily wage worker.

With both unemployed due to the lockdown, getting meta nutrition, the required dietary supplement for their only daughter, from Bengaluru seemed near impossible.



ILLUSTRATION:DEEPAK HARICHANDAN

For the past three years, the family has been procuring it through courier service.

"With prohibitory orders in vogue, we did not know what to do as there is no movement of goods..." the mother told *The Hindu*.

A campaign vehicle appealing to people to remain indoors while distributing pamphlets with a control room number proved a godsend for the desperate parents.

After the girl's mother called the control room, her

request was passed to nodal officer Kavita, who in turn, spoke to Collector M. Pallavi Baldev.

A team of officials visited the family at Aranmanai-puram panchayat near Periyakulam and obtained details of the shop in Bengaluru.

When Ms. Kavita contacted the dealer, he was initially reluctant to open the shop but later agreed to keep the medicine ready. She then sought the help of the Bengaluru City Police Commissioner, who made arrangements to get the packet delivered to the Hosur checkpoint.

A two-member team from Theni then made a 14-hour journey to the checkpoint and back to Periyakulam to deliver the medicine to the family, leaving them overwhelmed by refusing to accept money for the supplements.

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Over six lakh migrants back:
Adityanath

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LUCKNOW

Over 6.5 lakh workers and labourers have returned to Uttar Pradesh since the lockdown in March, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said on Tuesday.

This included over 50,000 migrants who entered the State in the past three days, he said.

The bulk of the migrants, over six lakh, returned during the first phase of the lockdown from March 27 to 29, the Chief Minister said. More than 10,000 State buses have been deployed in transporting them home.

Without taking names, Mr. Adityanath criticised Opposition parties and accused them of "unnecessarily" indulging in politics instead of serving the people.

70,000 migrants return on 67 trains

Railways say 21 more trains will take home people stranded in various places across the country

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Railways on Tuesday said it had run 67 'Shramik Special' trains since May 1, transporting about 70,000 stranded migrants.

"Till now 67 'Shramik Specials' have been run by various zonal railways. Till May 4 [Monday], we had run 55 trains," a Railways spokesperson said. He said 21 more such trains were expected to be run from places such as Bengaluru, Surat, Sabarmati, Jalandhar, Kota and Ernakulam.

Union Home Ministry spokesperson Punya Salila Srivastava said these special trains had so far ferried about 70,000 migrants.

"On an average, these trains are carrying 1,000 passengers each," the Railways said. Each coach is carrying only 50 due to social distancing norms.



Last leg: Migrants waiting to board a bus after arriving from Karnataka by train at Danapur in Bihar on Tuesday. ■ RANJEET KUMAR

'States, Railways final judge on ticket fare'

Court finds no reason to step in

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to intervene in a plea alleging that stranded migrant workers journeying home amid COVID-19 lockdown are charged 15% of their rail ticket fare.

A three-judge Bench led by Justice Ashok Bhushan on Tuesday said it was not for the court but the State governments and the Railways to take steps.

The Centre was responding to arguments made by advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for a former IIM (A) faculty member Jagdeep S. Chhokar, and lawyer Gaurav Jain that even the 15%

Centre sets rules for bringing back Indians

Those returning must submit RT-PCR test result, agree to pay for and be in 14-day quarantine

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Tuesday issued guidelines to enable persons, including foreigners who have been stranded in India due to the ongoing lockdown, to return from abroad or fly overseas from the country.

Those coming from abroad would have to submit the result of the RT-PCR test to the Indian missions where they have registered and also give an undertaking that they would be willing to undergo institutional quarantine for a minimum period of 14 days, at their own cost, on arrival.

Setting out the Standard Operating Protocol, the MHA said those who want to re-

turn would have to register with the Indian missions and give an undertaking that they were making the journey at their own risk.

"Based on the registrations received, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) will prepare flight/ship wise database of all such travelers, including name, age, gender, mobile phone number, place of residence, final destination and information on RT-PCR test taken and its result," the MHA said. "This database will be shared by the MEA with the respective State in advance," it added.

Thermal screening of passengers would be done on arrival and "all passengers shall be asked to download Aarogya Setu app on their mobile devices". The same



Symptomatic travellers will be immediately taken to a medical facility.

protocol would be followed for passengers crossing over from land borders.

Symptomatic passengers would be immediately taken to a medical facility and the remaining persons to institutional quarantine to be ar-

ranged by the State government. "If they test negative after 14 days, they will be allowed to go home and undertake self monitoring of their health for 14 more days as per protocol," said the MHA.

Only those crew and staff who had tested negative for COVID-19 would be allowed to operate the non-scheduled commercial flights and naval ships to bring back those stranded.

Passengers to pay fare
The cost of travel would have to be borne by the travellers and the MEA would post the details of the flight schedule on the concerned platform at least two days in advance, the MHA said.

The Ministry also issued

the SOP for "movement of persons stranded in India who are desirous to travel abroad."

These passengers would be accommodated on the flights being arranged by the Ministry of Civil Aviation to bring back Indians stranded abroad, from May 7 onward.

Air India would operate 64 flights between May 7-13, mainly to the Gulf and Southeast Asian countries.

The MHA said that only those persons would be allowed to travel to the destination countries who were "citizens of that country, green card or OCI card holder" or in the case of a medical emergency or a death in the family, Indians holding six-month visas could also be allowed.

NCERT contract staff terminated

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A group of contract workers with the NCERT in Bhopal, whose jobs were terminated on March 31, have complained that the action violates the Home and the Labour Ministry advisories not to cut jobs.

The workers were employed by its constituent unit, the PSS Central Unit of Vocational Education.

On March 31, about 40 employees were informed that their tenure was expiring that day. NCERT Director Hrushikesh Senapati said that project appointments were valid till the end of a financial year. "We are not terminating them, it is simply that their term is over," he said.

Ships on way to the Maldives, UAE

Basic amenities, medical facilities will be arranged during sea passage, says Navy

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Navy dispatched two ships, INS Jalashwa and INS Magar, to Male under Operation "Samudra Setu" to repatriate stranded Indian citizens.

The evacuation operations will start on May 8 as part of Phase 1 efforts, the Navy said on Tuesday.

Defence sources confirmed that INS Shardul and INS Airavat had set sail to the UAE. Modalities at the port of entry were being finalised and should be in place before the ships reach, a defence source said.

"A total of 1,000 persons



Rescue operation: INS Jalashwa is accompanying INS Magar to the Maldives. ■ PTI

are planned to be evacuated during the first trip, catering for COVID-related social distancing norms vis-a-vis the carrying capacity and medi-

cal facilities available on board," the Navy said.

The evacuated personnel will disembark in Kochi and entrusted to the care of the

State authorities, the Navy said. INS Jalashwa is set to reach Male on May 8 and INS Magar on May 10.

INS Jalashwa can normally accommodate 1,000 people but will take 800.

The other three amphibious ships are landing ship tanks (LST) and can normally accommodate 500 people each but the capacity will be reduced to 300-350, officials said.

The Navy said the ships had been suitably provisioned for the evacuation and those evacuated would be provided basic amenities and medical facilities during the sea passage.

Fare will put evacuees in a tough spot'

Former diplomat recalls how the govt. bore expenses during the Gulf war

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
NEW DELHI

The Indian flights to operate from this week to evacuate nationals from all over the world will be commercial in nature. Informed sources on Tuesday clarified that the largest-ever evacuation of expat Indians from abroad will be carried out by "non-scheduled commercial flights" that will allow only those passengers who can buy tickets. The commercial condition has drawn criticism from a veteran diplomat who played a crucial role in evacuation of Indians during the 1990 Gulf crisis.

The sources indicated that they are aware of the hardships that expats are facing because of global economic downturn and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic saying the States and Central Ministries will receive database for future employment of the returning expats who have lost jobs in the Gulf.

1990 operation

The planned evacuation of Indians from the Gulf is set to commence from May 7 but unlike the operation of 1990 Gulf War the Indian nationals will have to pay for boarding the aircraft that will fly them home. According to available information,

passengers boarding the Kuwait-Ahmedabad flight will have to pay around ₹20,000 and passengers for the Abu Dhabi-Kochi and Dubai-Kochi flights will have to pay around ₹15,000.

Former Indian Ambassador K.P. Fabian, who was the Joint Secretary of the Gulf Division in the External Affairs Ministry during the 1990 Gulf War, said this was going to place the expats in a difficult position as many of them were facing financial hardships.

"In 1990, we had taken a decision that the Government of India will bear the expenditure for the entire

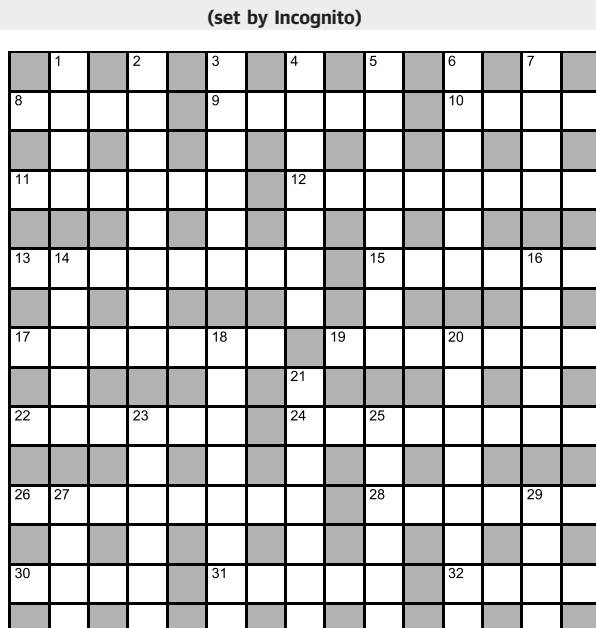
operation. We did not have a contractual arrangement with Air India but it was a smooth tie-up as the Ministries of Civil Aviation, Finance and External Affairs coordinated. After the operation, MEA paid Air India for the airlift," said Mr. Fabian who travelled to Baghdad where he and External Affairs Minister, the late Inder Kumar Gujral, met Iraqi ruler Saddam Hussein.

Mr. Fabian also visited Jordan subsequently to work on the logistics of the plan which led to the airlift of around 1,76,000 people by civilian airliners. The operation remains a record.

TH CROSSWORD + 12928

(set by Incognito)

Improve your language & problem solving skills. Try our Crosswords site! @ <https://crossword.thehindu.com>



ACROSS

- 8 Bird consumed when proven wrong? (4)
- 9 We returned after brief function to get strength (5)
- 10 Sailor, engineer and French cleric (4)
- 11 Psycho author consuming tea makes a mess (6)
- 12 Utter: "Boas writhe in front of musical instrument" (8)
- 13 Hippo – campus's main mount (8)
- 15 Nicest sort of crime? (6)

- 17 Cheat, subscribe and send (7)
 19 I chased grammarian Wren's partner for a drink (7)
 22 Instruction booklet involving human labour (6)
 24 Jet bomber is able to bomb exhibited rocket right away, for starters (8)
 26 Excited Libyan gets a piece each of lamb and chicken for cooking pot (8)
 28 Some shrug and accept Amin ruled this country (6)
 30 Unit of cultural transmission created by setter repeating again (4)
 31 Arrive at car he crashed (5)
 32 Sultanate where woman, not wife, can be seen (4)
- DOWN
- 1 Ointment is taken away from Scottish castle, it is said (4)
 - 2 Macbeth's hags are after small rail-yard controls (8)
 - 3 Xerxes' wife's anaesthetic contains sulphur (6)
 - 4 English got older and was busy (7)
 - 5 Perhaps, *The Hindu* Cross-word created by Sakti was extraordinary (8)
 - 6 Bulb mentioned in hangar licence (6)
 - 7 Zero binary digit, in brief, represents short send-off message (4)
 - 14 Virus noticed during regression of a lobe (5)
 - 16 Spanish gentleman seen after I left senior (5)
 - 18 Badly flog model having vehicle, one used by some sportsmen (4,4)
 - 20 Creasey's Jewel Thief actress gets graduate degree (3,5)
 - 21 Supreme Court's with a criminal? That is malicious gossip (7)
 - 23 Fruit with queen is more unseemly (6)
 - 25 Name should mean nothing (6)
 - 27 Thing crushing mite (4)
 - 29 OCR error, when reading 'clean', led to replacement with a college officer (4)

SUDOKU

			6	3		2		
			5		4	9	1	
4				1		6	5	
	1					5	4	
5	6					7		
7	3		1				9	
6	8	5		9				
2			7	6				

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to puzzle 12927

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

S	N	P	P	N	I	A	K
T	R	E	M	O	L	O	E
R	P	P	G	G	T	S	E
A	M	A	T	E	R	H	O
A	A	T	E	O	D	E	W
F	I	L	E	T	R	L	N
E	P	I	S	T	M	I	C
P	R	O	N	I	L	O	U

No.SS176 Date: www.ngtfitness.com

FAITH

His many names

Rama was born a prince, but suffered in exile. Krishna was born in a prison, but was pampered like a prince in Goloka. But in His Vamana avatara, the Lord was not born a prince, and did not enjoy any comforts. He was the son of a sage, and had no riches. To retrieve Indra's kingdom, He begged from Mahabali. Did He have to do all this? But, if He had not taken the Trivikrama avatara, how would the Vedas have been able to praise Trivikrama, asks Koortazhvan. In the Vishnu Sahasranama, there are many names which refer to the Trivikrama avatara, elaborated M.A. Venkatakrishnan, in a discourse. He is Upendra (153rd name in Parasara Bhatta's classification). Indra was Atiti's son, and since Vamana appeared later as Atiti's son, the Sahasranama refers to Him as Upendra, the one younger to Indra. Vamana is the 154th name. It was as Vamana that He approached Bali.

Another name in the Sahasranama is Praamshu. This refers to His assuming the huge form of Trivikrama, when He covered all worlds. He is Amoghah, because He was merciful to both Indra and Mahabali. Indra got back his kingdom, but Bali was not left out. He was given patala loka to rule over. The Lord is Suchihi, because although He was kind to both Indra and Bali, He expected nothing in return. He is

Delhi teen detained in Instagram chat case

About 10 members of group have been identified: police

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 15-year-old boy has been apprehended after he was allegedly found to be a member of an Instagram chat group called 'Bois Locker Room' where the members used obscene language for minor girls, shared their pictures and talked about rape.

A Delhi police spokesperson said, "As of now, about 10 members of the group have been identified. The identified members who are major are being examined. The minor members are being dealt with as per the provisions of Juvenile Justice Act." The police said the devices used to engage in the offensive, vulgar communication had been seized. They have asked Instagram to provide the details of the accounts involved in the group.

Several girls were spoken



Abusive texts and pictures can be reported as cyber crime. ■ GETTYIMAGES/ISTOCK

about in the screenshots that went viral, and one of them who was among the first women who revealed the chats, said her security was threatened. On her Instagram profile, she wrote, "My security is being threatened so I'm going off." Later, she wrote, "I hope that people learn from this incident (both boys and girls) and try to make a difference in this society."

She also wrote, "Since the very beginning, I've been saying no matter who it is, a girl or a boy, they're both

equally wrong. That group chat called 'Boys Locker Room' had girls in it too. They even supported and defended those guys despite everything they said and did... Don't make this a gender thing."

The police on Monday registered a case under Sections 465 (forgery), 471 (using as genuine a forged document or electronic record), 469 (forgery for purpose of harming reputation), and 509 (word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman) of the IPC and Sections 67 (publishing or transmitting obscene material in electronic form) and 67A (publishing or transmitting of material containing sexually explicit act in electronic form) of the IT Act.

They said that the group members belonged to four or five south Delhi schools.

Arnab appeals to SC to quash fresh FIR

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Republic TV editor-in-chief Arnab Goswami has moved the Supreme Court seeking quashing of a fresh FIR lodged against him by the Mumbai police for allegedly making communal comments on air.

Mr. Goswami has sought a direction to restrain the authorities from continuing any probe initiated pursuant to filing of the FIR on May 2. He said the FIR was "politically motivated" and the police harboured ill-will towards him.

NEET to be held on July 26

JEE-Main examination to begin on July 18, says Minister

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) for admission to medical and dental courses will be held on July 26, while the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE)-Main for admission to engineering courses will begin on July 18 and continue from July 20 to 23, Human Resource Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank said on Tuesday.

The JEE-Advanced examination for admission to the prestigious Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) will be held in August, and the exact dates will be announced soon, Mr. Pokhriyal said, in an interaction with students via Twitter.

The dates for the University Grants Commission-National Eligibility Test to gain admission to Ph.D programmes and employment as an assistant professor, will also be announced soon.

Before these admission examinations can be held, the Class XII Board examinations must be completed. Mr. Pokhriyal said the dates for the Central Board of Secondary Education's (CBSE) pending Class X and XII Board exams would be announced soon, with the decision likely in the next couple of days.

For students worried about the loss of classroom teaching during the lockdown, Mr. Pokhriyal assured them that the CBSE will assess the loss of instructional time for proportionate reduction in curriculum load for the 2021 Board exams. The Board's Course Committees have already started work on drafting reduced syllabus.

Till recently, a 50-kg bag of salt cost ₹170. Around 8 kg to 10 kg of salt is needed to produce one quintal (100 kg) of dried fish.

However, post the lockdown, the price of salt all

As salt too turns dear, fisher families worry

Production of dried fish affected in Odisha

SIB KUMAR DAS
BERHAMPUR



Lost income: Families are now drying fish only for their own needs due to the high price of salt. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

most doubled and made the production of dried fish practically unviable.

case some one places order," said M. Kumudu, a fisherwoman.

Some families started using commercial salt from grocery stores to produce dried fish. "But it increases production cost, so we only make it for own use or in

But production by the Humma Binchanapalli Salt Production and Sales Cooperative has dwindled considerably over the past few years. K. Durayodhan Reddy, a former secretary of the cooperative, said there was presently no stock.

Samudram, a community-based federation of women self-help groups has stopped production of dried fish and other value-added seafood products, said B. Chittamma, its managing director.

Others have started making dried fish without salt. But the market for this is low – dried fish without salt is mostly bought only by poultry feed manufacturers.



THE HINDU GROUP

All it took was a microscopic organism to make us more human.

A virus has locked us down in a new world. One where we no longer haggle with the vegetable vendor, because we know he needs the money more than we do.

Today, we respect healthcare professionals, people in uniforms, and delivery agents, leaving no occasion to thank them.

We insist that our house helps stay home and take care of themselves, we make sure they are cared for.

Aged parents do not have to wait for our weekly phone calls, because it happens almost twice every day.

We have, by all means, become more human. This pandemic has changed us, for, we have developed new habits. If these are not the habits worth keeping, then what are?

THE HINDU

Mail us about the one new habit that made you happy this lockdown at keepthehabit@thehindu.co.in and we will feature it.

#KeepTheHabit

3 women in Bihar branded as witches

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PATNA

Three women in Muzaffarpur district in Bihar were allegedly branded as witches, and thrashed and tonsured by a group of people on May 4. A video of the incident went viral on social media, following which the police lodged a case and arrested nine people.

"Nine persons, including the main accused Shyam Sahani, have been arrested," said a senior police official. The incident took place at Dakrama village under the Hathauda police limit.

"Raids are being conducted to nab the absconding accused, who had apparently tonsured the heads of the women," said Amitesh Kumar, Additional Superintendent of Police.

He said "neither the victims nor the villagers informed the police." "We got to know after the video went viral on social media," Mr. Kumar added.

Cyber experts say the aim is to capitalise on the dubious fame and gain followers

GAUTAM S. MENGLE
MUMBAI

Even as the Delhi police cracked down on the 'Bois Locker Room', an Instagram page where teenage boys were allegedly discussing gangrape of minor girls, cyber experts have observed scores of 'copycat' groups with similar names or themes that were formed within hours of the matter becoming public knowledge.

Cyber experts said the copycat groups were trying to capitalise on the dubious fame and gain followers.

Mumbai-based expert Shubham Singh told *The Hindu* that from Monday night to Tuesday morning, he had confirmed the details of eight members of the Instagram group and shared them with the Delhi police.

"Even as I was working on this, I saw several such pages, some of them newly formed, on Instagram. The pages were created with the obvious intent to cash in on the attention and gain fol-

lowers. As news of the incident spread, those who did not know about it started searching online and in the process came across these pages and started following them," Mr. Singh said.

Rumour-mongering

He added that another fallout of the matter was the rumour-mongering that started either to take focus away from the core issue or to malign others in a similar way with fabricated evidence. Supposed screenshots of chats from a Delhi-based group where members os-

tensibly admitted to having taken advantage of a girl started doing the rounds on Twitter on Monday evening, but could not be verified.

"There were also reports of one of the members of the Bois Locker Room committing suicide on Monday night, which I later confirmed to be false," Mr. Singh said, who has received calls from several people to discuss cyber crime.

Ritesh Bhatia, another expert, has also been besieged with calls from people seeking to report similar pages.

The major problem is that there are no clear laws for many of the instances that are coming to light. For example, there are so many instances of body shaming but no laws that deal with cyber bullying. If people have no fear of the law, such incidents will continue," Mr. Bhatia said. He referred to a similar case that had come to light in a Mumbai-based school last year, where there was ultimately no police case, nor were there any steps taken by other schools to spread awareness. He added that responsibility also lay with parents, who need to make children aware that such behaviour can attract serious consequences.

"Today, instances of people breaking traffic laws are decreasing not because they have suddenly developed respect for the law but because there are speed cameras, e-challans and increased fines. It works the same way with cyber crime," Mr. Bhatia said.



Ride like a Pro, triumphantly

The new Tiger 900 bears no resemblance to the Tiger 800 it replaces, save for the switchgear and is classified into the GT Pro and Rally Pro

RISHABH BHASKAR

The Triumph Tiger is one of the most recognised and revered motorcycles in the category, so much so that it has a mega fan following around the globe. With such a successful motorcycle in its portfolio, you would think that Triumph would not tinker too much with an established formula.

So, when we found out that Triumph has developed an all-new Tiger, doubts emerged. Can the new Tiger 900 fill the incredibly large, adventure-motorcycle-sized shoes of its predecessor? We have

come all the way to beautiful Morocco to find answers.

What does it look like?

Well, straight off the bat, let us tell you that the new Tiger 900 bears no resemblance to the Tiger 800 it replaces, save for the switchgear. It is classified into two – the GT or the Rally – with the Pro suffix on both indicating that both are the fully-loaded, top-of-the-line versions. The GT Pro is the road-biased Tiger, which is evident from the cast alloy wheels, lower ride height and its new Marzocchi suspension with an electronically adjustable, gas-charged monoshock. The Rally Pro, on the other hand, is the highest-spec off-road-biased Tiger, as seen from the fully adjustable and long travel Showa suspension, higher ground clearance, and bigger front wheel. Speaking of wheels, the Rally gets tubeless wire spoke rims and that'll make it a lot easier to fix punctures.

While this is what essentially separates the GT and the Rally, they share the same frame, body panels, 7.0-inch TFT display (with Bluetooth connectivity and turn-by-turn navigation) and the newly developed in-line triple engine.

Building on its strengths What Triumph has managed to achieve with the Tiger 900 GT Pro and Rally Pro bikes is incredible ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



the star of the show. A major highlight is the way it sounds. Part of the reason for this is the new engine's 1-3-2 firing order and T-plane crank (crank pins in cylinders 1 and 3 are set at 180 degrees while the number 2 cylinder's crank is at 90 degrees, forming a T) that not only claims to give it stronger low- and mid-range grunt, but also makes it sound deeper, angry and menacing, across the rev range.

The motor's tractable nature and strong bottom-end saw me hovering around 30-40kph in fourth

TIGER 900 RALLY PRO / GT PRO SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE 888cc, in-line-triple, water-cooled

POWER 93.9hp at 8,750rpm

TORQUE 87Nm at 7,250rpm

GEARBOX 6-speed

WHEELBASE 1551mm/1556mm

SEAT HEIGHT 850-870mm/810-830mm

FUEL TANK 20 litres

FRONT SUSPENSION: 45mm USD fork, 240mm travel/180mm travel

REAR SUSPENSION Monoshock, 230mm wheel travel/170mm travel

BRAKES (F/R) 320mm twin discs/255mm disc

What is it like to ride?

On the road, the Tiger 900 GT Pro's Marzocchis did a brilliant job of soaking up bumps – whether in a straight line or mid-corner – and that goes a long way in boosting confidence, especially on unknown roads. The bike stays glued to an intended line, as its communicative front-end lets the rider push the bike hard, even to the point where the pegs end up grinding into the tarmac. And this is despite the bike having more cornering clearance than before.

The Rally Pro, however, was surprisingly fun to chuck around some of the winding sections we encountered, highlighting its ability to tackle both tarmac and off-road sections with aplomb. Naturally, it is in the latter area where the Rally Pro manages to impress the most. The combination of the perfectly set up suspension, chassis balance, and peppy engine, made it incredibly intuitive to ride this big adventure tourer off-road.

Should I buy one?

It certainly was not an easy job to build upon the strong attributes of the Tiger 800, but what Triumph has managed to achieve with the Tiger 900 GT Pro and Rally Pro bikes is incredible. The new Tiger 900 is expected to go on sale in India by this month or the next. Compared to its predecessor, prices are expected to increase by ₹60,000 to ₹1 lakh, considering the additional equipment.



5 most fuel-efficient BS-VI-compliant petrol cars

Figures will vary from individual to individual, due to differences in driving styles, driving conditions and traffic

RIVAN RS

We take a look at the most fuel-efficient BS-VI-compliant petrol cars currently on sale in the Indian market. The listing is based on the ARAI-certified fuel-efficiency figures provided by the manufacturer. Keep in mind that real-world figures will vary from individual to individual, owing to factors such as differences in driving styles, driving conditions, traffic and more.



1. Maruti Suzuki Dzire AMT

Fuel economy: 24.12kpl

Besides the design changes and longer equipment list that came with the recent Dzire facelift, one of the most important changes was the 1.2-litre K12B petrol engine, which was replaced with the 1.2-litre K12C unit that comes with a start-stop function, but without the dual-battery setup. The new Dzire is 7hp more powerful and more efficient in both, 5-speed manual (23.26kpl) and 5-speed AMT (24.12kpl) form, making it the most fuel-efficient petrol car currently on sale in India. Now priced between ₹5.89-8.81 lakh (ex-showroom, Delhi), the Maruti Dzire is

consistently on the bestseller list every month, outselling the likes of the Honda Amaze, Ford Aspire, Hyundai Aura and Tata Tiago.



3. Renault Kwid 1.0 AMT

Fuel economy: 22.5kpl

While the Kwid comes with 54hp 0.8-litre and 68hp 1.0-litre engines, it is the latter that can go an impressive 22.5km on a single litre of petrol, when mated to the AMT gearbox. The Kwid 0.8 is nearly as efficient with an ARAI mileage of 22.3kpl, while the 1.0-litre unit with the 5-speed manual is rated at 21.7kpl. The third most fuel-efficient petrol car in India is priced between ₹2.92-5.01 lakh (ex-showroom, Delhi).



2. Toyota Glanza/Maruti Suzuki Baleno

Fuel economy: 23.87kpl

The badge-engineered siblings, Maruti Suzuki's Baleno and Toyota's Glanza share the second spot in their mild-hybrid avatars, with an ARAI-rated economy of 23.87kpl. Their powertrains comprise

90hp, 1.2-litre engines and include an integrated starter generator and a 12V lithium-ion battery that adds start/stop and energy recuperation functionalities, along with a (very) mild power assist. Considering the Glanza mild-hybrid is priced at ₹7.22 lakh – thereby undercutting its Maruti counterpart (Baleno mild-hybrid prices range between ₹7.33-7.90 lakh, ex-showroom, Delhi) – the

Toyota is the most affordable mild-hybrid car you can buy in India today. Do note that both premium hatchbacks are also available with an 83hp, 1.2-litre petrol engine that has an ARAI rating of 21.01kpl for the manual and 19.56kpl for the CVT version.

4. Maruti Suzuki Alto

Fuel economy: 22.05kpl

Maruti Suzuki's smallest model is powered by a frugal 48hp, 0.8-litre engine that has been certified by ARAI to deliver 22.05kpl. While the Alto feels basic and has a cramped cabin, its low price (just ₹2.95-3.90 lakh, ex-showroom, Delhi), high efficiency and minimal maintenance costs make it a popular buy. There is a CNG variant on offer (₹4.33-4.36 lakh) that has an equally impressive mileage of 31.59km/kg of gas.



5. Maruti Suzuki Wagon R 1.0 AMT

Fuel economy: 21.79kpl

Like most Marutis, one of the reasons buyers opt for the Wagon R is the economy of its engines. The tall-boy hatchback gets two units – a 68hp, 1.0-litre engine and an 83hp, 1.2-litre motor. The smaller engine is the slightly more frugal mill, delivering 21.79kpl to the 1.2-litre's 20.52kpl. Both units get a 5-speed AMT too, which has the same ARAI mileage as the manuals. The 1.0-litre engine also comes with a factory-fit CNG option that is rated at an excellent 32.52km/kg. Another reason for the Maruti Wagon R's relatively higher sales is its price, which starts at ₹4.45 lakh and goes up to ₹5.95 lakh (ex-showroom, Delhi).

Q AND A WITH HORMAZD



Deal with this

Akshath Indusekha, Bengaluru: I am looking to buy a mid-sized SUV in the ₹15 lakh category and the Seltos' reviews suggest that it outclasses nearly everything in the segment. However, a major concern are Kia's aftersales, service and ownership experience, considering the fact that it's rather new in India.

■ The success of the Seltos has in fact made Kia dealerships quite profitable, which in turn allows them to invest in good manpower, especially on the workshop side. Besides, with only two models in Kia's portfolio, the company is able to focus on customer service. Hence, we don't think Kia owners should have any concerns about the ownership experience.

A good upgrade

Prakash Maladkar, Kolhapur: I have been driving a 2006 Toyota Innova for my personal business trips since 2006. And till date, I have travelled more than 3,00,000km without any major maintenance expenses. Kindly advise me, which car is suitable for my family of five for day-to-day use and for my business trips as well? Should I buy a BS-VI model?

■ Quite frankly, the best upgrade for you is the new BS-VI Toyota Innova Crysta, as you are already used to the bulletproof reliability your current Innova gives you. We don't think there is any other vehicle that is as reliable, and hence it's best to stick to a tried-and-tested brand. You could consider waiting till September, when the face-lifted Innova, which will have more features and a few changes, will be launched.

Switching gears

Satya Polukonda, via email: I saw an Instagram post of the BS-VI Volkswagen Polo. Can you give me details about its gearboxes and specifications?

■ Yes, we had reported that the Volkswagen Polo would get new gearboxes for variants that are powered by the new 1.0 TSI engine. The DSG unit, which was available in the now-discontinued 1.2TSI, will be dropped and instead the new 1.0 TSI will get a 6-speed manual and a 6-speed torque converter automatic. The base 1.0 MPI will continue to use the 5-speed manual. There is no automatic option for the base variant.

Hormazd Sorabjee is the editor of Autocar India. Mail your feedback and queries to roadshow@thehindu.co.in

Trump's lab claim remains speculative: WHO

'We have not received any data or specific evidence from the U.S. government relating to the purported origin of the virus'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
GENEVA

The World Health Organization (WHO) has said that Washington had provided no evidence to support "speculative" claims by the U.S. President, Donald Trump, that the new coronavirus originated in a Chinese lab.

"We have not received any data or specific evidence from the U.S. government relating to the purported origin of the virus – so from our perspective, this remains speculative," WHO emergencies director Michael Ryan told a virtual briefing.

COVID-19

Scientists believe the killer virus jumped from animals to humans, emerging in China late last year, possibly from a market in Wuhan selling exotic animals for meat.

Top U.S. epidemiologist Anthony Fauci echoed the WHO's statement in an interview published on Monday by *National Geographic*. "If you look at the evolution of the virus in bats and what's out there now, (the scientific evidence) is very, very strongly leaning toward this could not have been artificially or deliberately manipulated," Mr. Fauci told the magazine. "Everything about the stepwise evolution over time strongly indicates that (this virus) evolved in nature and then jumped species," he said. U.S. President Trump, increasingly critical of China's management of the outbreak, claims to have proof it started in a Wuhan laboratory.

"Enormous evidence"
And U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Sunday said "enormous evidence" backed up that claim, alth-



Throwing caution to the winds: A rally in Boston, Massachusetts, on Monday calling for an end to the State government's 'stay-at-home' advisory. The U.S. government has predicted a further surge in fatalities, currently close to 68,700 ■ AFP

ough the U.S. intelligence community last week said it would continue to study whether the outbreak stemmed from infected animal contact, or a lab accident. China has vehemently denied suggestions the lab was the source. "Like any evidence-based organisation, we would be very willing to receive any information that purports to the origin of the virus," WHO's Mr. Ryan said.

"If that data and evidence is available, then it will be for the U.S. government to decide whether and when it can be shared, but it is difficult for the WHO to operate in an information vacuum in that regard," he added.

WHO expert Maria Van Kerkhove stressed during Monday's briefing that there were some 15,000 full genome sequences of the novel coronavirus available, and "from all of the evidence that

we have seen... this virus is of natural origin."

The global toll topped a quarter of a million on Tuesday, with the U.S. government predicting a further surge in fatalities as an international vaccine drive garnered \$8 billion in pledges. Since the disease first surfaced in China late last year the number of confirmed cases has reached almost 3.6 million while fatalities have topped 2,51,000.

Europe remains the hardest-hit continent with around 1,45,000 deaths while the U.S. has recorded close to 68,700, the biggest single-country toll. The bleak figures were compounded on Monday by an internal government estimate that forecast the COVID-19 infection rate in the U.S. could surge eight-fold to 2,00,000 a day by June 1, and the daily death toll could rise to 3,000.

REUTERS
LONDON

The United Kingdom has overtaken Italy to report the highest official death toll from COVID-19 in Europe, figures released on Tuesday showed, increasing pressure on Prime Minister Boris Johnson over his response to the crisis.

Weekly figures from Britain's Office for National Statistics (ONS) added more than 7,000 deaths in England and Wales, raising the total for the United Kingdom to 32,313 as of late April. Only the United States has suffered more deaths than Britain, according to the data so far. Tuesday's figures are based on death certificate mentions of COVID-19, including suspected cases.

Opposition politicians

said the figures proved the government was too slow to provide enough protective equipment to hospitals and introduce mass testing.

"I'd be amazed, if when we look back, we don't think: yep we could have done something differently there," the government's chief scientific adviser, Patrick Vallance, said in response to lawmakers' questions on testing.

Government's comment
Britain's Health Ministry said the ONS data should be handled with care. "We caution against extrapolating or estimating figures based on historic data as it risks being extremely misleading," it said on Twitter.

Ministers dislike comparisons of the headline

Hong Kong to lift restrictions

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
HONG KONG

Hong Kong on Tuesday announced plans to ease major social distancing measures, including reopening schools, cinemas, bars and beauty parlours after the Chinese territory largely halted local transmission of the deadly coronavirus. The relaxation, which comes into effect on Friday, will be a boost for a city mired in a deep recession. There have been no new confirmed infections in 10 of the last 16 days and the cases that have been recorded came from people arriving from overseas who are quickly quarantined.

Pfizer, BioNTech begin virus vaccine trial

It could be ready the end of the year

REUTERS

Pfizer Inc and BioNTech SE said on Tuesday they have begun delivering doses of their experimental coronavirus vaccines for initial human testing in the U.S.

The U.S. drugmaker and German partner said if the vaccine proves to be safe and effective in trials, it could potentially be ready for wide U.S. distribution by the end of the year, shaving several years off the typical vaccine development timeline. The vaccine, which uses messenger RNA (mRNA) technology, has the potential to be among the first vaccines against the virus.

There are currently no approved treatments or vaccines for the new coronavirus, though some drugs are being used on patients under an emergency use authorisation.

The U.S. study is part of a broader, global programme already under way in Germany, where BioNTech is based. Dosing there began last month.

Moderna Inc is using similar technology for its vaccine being developed along with the U.S. government. Phase I testing of that vaccine candidate has also begun, with mid-stage trials planned in the current quarter.

Getting approval
Pfizer said last week it hopes to receive emergency authorisation from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration as early as October, and could distribute up to 20 million doses by the end of 2020, with an eye toward producing hundreds of millions of doses next year. "Even going from a few million to 20 million will allow you to protect



At a testing centre in Mexico. ■ REUTERS

the epicentres of the virus, and then drive out the virus from our society as we ramp up to hundreds of millions," said Pfizer research chief Mikael Dolsten.

Using synthetic mRNA technology can enable the vaccine to be developed and manufactured more quickly than traditional vaccines, the companies said. Pfizer said last week it expects to make safety data on the vaccine available by late May.

The trial will initially aim to test different dosing regimens of four potential vaccine candidates on around 360 healthy volunteers divided into a younger cohort and a group of seniors.

The trial will expand to more subjects after researchers determine which compounds and dosing regimens are most effective, said Kirsten Lyke, a director at the University of Maryland's Center for Vaccine Development and Global Health, which is participating in the trial.

Doses have already been administered to some volunteers at NYU Grossman School of Medicine and the University of Maryland School of Medicine.

Pfizer plans to expand the trial to sites across the U.S. in early July, and may ultimately enroll more than 8,000 participants, a company spokeswoman said.

U.K. now has Europe's highest toll

death toll, saying that excess mortality – the number of deaths from all causes that exceed the average for the time of year – is more meaningful.

But early evidence for excess mortality suggests Britain will be one of the hardest-hit on this measure, too. ONS statistician Nick Stripe said excess deaths for the United Kingdom were running about 42,000 higher than average at this point in the year. Only about 80% of these excess deaths have been linked specifically with COVID-19, however. The weekly ONS data also showed the peak in COVID-19 deaths has likely passed, although the week to April 24 was still the second-deadliest since comparable records began in 1993.

Government's comment
Britain's Health Ministry said the ONS data should be handled with care. "We caution against extrapolating or estimating figures based on historic data as it risks being extremely misleading," it said on Twitter.

Ministers dislike comparisons of the headline

Venezuela detains 2 Americans

Arrests come after government foiled 'invasion' from sea

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
CARACAS

Two Americans were detained in Venezuela on Monday on suspicion of plotting to topple President Nicolas Maduro's government, which has accused U.S.-backed Opposition leader Juan Guaido of bankrolling the scheme. The arrests came a day after the government said it foiled an "invasion" from the sea, killing eight assailants and capturing two others.

Mr. Maduro appeared on state television to show the passports of Luke Denman, 34, and Arian Berry, 41, and told the Venezuelan military high command that the pair were members of the U.S. security forces.

Attorney General Tarek William Saab earlier told reporters that "hired mercen-

aries" had signed a \$212 million dollar contract with Mr. Guaido using funds "stolen" from state company PDVSA.

The U.S. – one of more than 50 countries backing Mr. Guaido as Venezuela's acting President as he challenges Mr. Maduro for power – has slapped sanctions on PDVSA and allowed Mr. Guaido to use funds from frozen accounts belonging to the firm Houston-based subsidiary Citgo.

Guaido to blame'

Mr. Saab said Mr. Guaido had signed a contract with former U.S. special forces soldier Jordan Goudreau, linked in several press reports last week to an allegedly bungled attempt to topple Maduro. Mr. Goudreau, an Iraq and Afghanistan veteran, is accused of training a

Putin honours Kim with war medal

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MOSCOW

Russian President Vladimir Putin has awarded Kim Jong-un a commemorative war medal marking the 75th anniversary of the victory over Nazi Germany, the Russian Embassy in Pyongyang said on Tuesday. The medal was awarded to Mr. Kim for his role in preserving the memory of Soviet soldiers who died on North Korean territory, the statement said.

Russia's Ambassador in North Korea, Alexander Matsegora, presented the award to the country's Foreign Minister Ri Son-gwon on Tuesday. Last year, Russia invited Mr. Kim to visit Moscow on May 9 and attend the parade marking the 75th anniversary of the victory.

China launches new rocket, spacecraft

It will be used to transport astronauts to country's own space station

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BEIJING

China on Tuesday successfully launched a new rocket and prototype spacecraft, state media said, in a major test of the country's ambitions to operate a permanent space station and send astronauts to the Moon.

The Long March 5B rocket took off from the Wenchang launch site in the southern island of Hainan and eight minutes later an unmanned prototype spaceship successfully separated and entered its planned orbit, according to the Xinhua news agency. A test version of a cargo return capsule also separated from the rocket, Xinhua added.

The spaceship will one day transport astronauts to a space station that China plans to complete by 2022 –



New horizons: The 'Long March-5B' rocket blasting off from the Wenchang Space Centre in Hainan on Tuesday. ■ AP

and eventually to the Moon. It will have capacity for a crew of six.

Return on Friday

The spaceship and capsule are slated to return to a landing site by Friday after completing their test flights, Ji Qiming of the China Manned Space Agency told a press

Moon. But Beijing has made huge strides in its effort to catch up, sending astronauts into space, satellites into orbit and a rover to the far side of the Moon.

The successful maiden flight of the 54-metre Long March 5B – which has a take-off mass of about 849 tonnes – should reassure China, following failures of the 7A model in March and 3B model in April. "The new spaceship will give China an advantage in the area of human spaceflight over Japan and Europe," said Chen Lan, an independent analyst at GoTaikonauts.com. Assembly of the Tiangong space station is expected to begin this year and finish in 2022.

China plans to send an astronaut to the Moon in about a decade and then build a base there.

3 Indian photographers win Pulitzer Prize

AP series on Kashmir unrest awarded

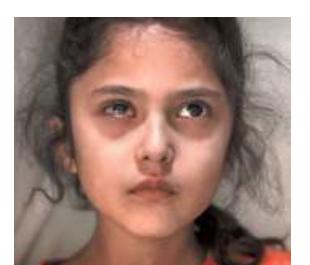
AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW YORK

The New York Times picked up the most awards as the 2020 Pulitzer Prize winners were announced virtually on Monday owing to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Prize board administrator Dana Canedy chose the winners from her living room via livestream on YouTube rather than at a ceremony at New York's Columbia University.

The Times collected three awards, including for Brian M. Rosenthal's investigative report into New York City's taxi industry which revealed predatory loans that took advantage of vulnerable drivers. It also won the international reporting prize for a series of stories on Russian President Vladimir Putin's regime.

Reuters won the breaking news photography award



An injured Kashmiri girl in an image that was part of the AP series that won Pulitzer. ■ AP

for pictures of the Hong Kong protests.

The Associated Press was awarded the feature photography prize for images showing life in Kashmir as India revoked its semi-autonomous status. Three photographers – Mukhtar Khan, Yasin Dar and Channi Anand – were named for the award. "A proud moment for all in our tribe across Jammu and Kashmir and beyond," veteran journalist Yusuf Jameel said.

ELSEWHERE



Resumption of travel will take time: Australia

SYDNEY

Australia and New Zealand said on Tuesday that efforts to resume travel between the countries would take some time. Prime Minister Scott Morrison said travel across the Tasman Sea between the neighbours would be the first international route re-started and would likely begin around the time domestic air travel restarts. ■ REUTERS

14 Iran-backed fighters killed in Syria strikes

BEIRUT

Oversight strikes on positions held by Iranian-backed militias and their allies in eastern Syria killed 14 fighters, a war monitor said on Tuesday. It was not immediately clear who carried out the strikes in the desert near the town of Mayadin. ■ AFP

Amid high inflation, Iran to get a new currency

Each toman, which has been cleared by Parliament, will be worth 10,000 rials under the new system

FARNAZ FASSIHI

For many years, Iran's government debated changing the national currency, the rial, by basically slashing four zeros off its face value – an acknowledgement of how American sanctions and economic mismanagement have contributed to inflation in the country.

On Monday, the Iranian Parliament essentially took that step, authorising the replacement of the rial with another basic unit of currency called the toman. Each toman will be worth 10,000 rials under the new system.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which turned Iran into a regional epicentre of the disease, appears to have played a decisive role, contributing to a further devaluation of the rial since February.

Since 2018, when the Trump administration repudiated the nuclear agreement and reimposed sanctions on Iran, the value of Iran's currency has fallen by roughly 60%. "Eliminating the four zeros is a necessary action to simplify financial transactions," an Iran government spokesman, Ali Rabiei, said in a Twitter posting.

The Guardian Council, a body of conservative clerics that supervises Parliament, is expected to ratify the law, and then the Central Bank

will have two years to implement the change – removing rials from circulation and issuing tomans instead.

The change is the outcome of a draft Bill presented in early 2019 by the Governor of Iran's central bank, Abdolnasser Hemati. He noted that the currency has been devalued 3,500 times since 1971 and that Iran

had no choice but to "save the face" of its national currency, according to Iranian official media reports.

Earlier attempts by President Hassan Rouhani's government to change the currency as far back as 2016 had remained in limbo.

Two views
Supporters of the change said slashing the extra zeros would vastly simplify financial calculations in Iran by eliminating the need for Iranian shoppers to carry loads of rials to make purchases, which they must do now because of inflation. On Monday, the rial's exchange rate was 1,56,000 to the dollar.

But opponents argued that the plan was an added expense at a time when the government was already facing a budget deficit of between 30-50% for this coming fiscal year.

The effect of the currency change, the critics said,

amounted to just cosmetic window dressing.

Fereydoun Khavand, an Iranian economist in Paris, said governments typically arrived at changing the national currency as the last stage of an economic overhaul like European countries had done after the Second World War or Turkey in recent years. Iran has done the opposite, Mr. Khavand said, partly because of the crippling effect of U.S. sanctions, which have severely limited the country's ability to sell oil or to conduct international financial transactions.

MARKET WATCH

	05-05-2020	% CHANGE
Sensex	31,454	-0.83
US Dollar	75.63	0.13
Brent oil	29.91	11.06

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	263.10	-3.25
Asian Paints	1619.15	-57.65
Axis Bank	389.00	-13.80
Bajaj Auto	2422.80	-19.35
Bajaj Finserv	4629.20	-133.15
Bajaj Finance	2002.35	-77.30
Bharti Airtel	528.05	-4.45
BPCL	347.05	-0.85
Britannia Ind	2978.75	-114.20
Cipla	596.90	-14.95
Coal India	138.00	-4.30
Dr Reddys Lab	3833.90	-10.10
Eicher Motors	13810.95	-62.15
GAIL (India)	91.10	-2.40
Grasim Ind	471.45	-7.60
HCL Tech	520.40	6.15
HDFC	1689.90	-34.45
HDFC Bank	911.45	-11.55
Hero MotoCorp	1965.35	-35.35
Hindalco	115.90	0.00
Hind Unilever	2041.50	-41.15
ICICI Bank	330.85	-7.20
IndusInd Bank	418.70	-4.35
Bharti Infratel	170.60	2.10
Infosys	673.70	0.00
Indian Oil Corp	78.70	-1.05
ITC	173.90	-0.15
JSW Steel	163.90	0.35
Kotak Bank	1238.35	-39.45
L&T	836.90	-13.75
M&M	368.15	11.10
Maruti Suzuki	4829.85	-56.45
Nestle India Ltd.	17421.50	-34.95
NTPC	92.60	1.15
ONGC	78.45	1.90
PowerGrid Corp	163.65	4.60
Reliance Ind	1460.65	25.45
State Bank	170.40	-8.45
Shree Cement	18512.00	-113.00
Sun Pharma	456.30	-9.15
Tata Motors	80.90	-3.00
Tata Steel	272.65	-0.95
TCS	1932.75	2.30
Tech Mahindra	499.95	-2.50
Titan	886.95	-4.90
UltraTech Cement	3284.35	-63.25
UPL	387.05	1.65
Vedanta	78.90	-1.05
Wipro	184.20	-5.85
Zee Entertainment	148.40	2.00

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	75.43	75.75
Euro	81.76	82.11
British Pound	93.84	94.24
Japanese Yen (100)	70.61	70.91
Chinese Yuan	10.68	10.73
Swiss Franc	77.66	78.03
Singapore Dollar	53.24	53.47
Canadian Dollar	53.54	53.77
Malaysian Ringgit	17.50	17.59
Australian Dollar	48.47	48.72

Source: Indian Bank

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on May 05

Banking stocks wilt under selling spree

S&P report flags fresh concerns related to stress in the sector; FPIs net sell ₹1,060 crore shares

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Equity benchmarks fell for the second straight session on Tuesday as banking stocks came under heavy selling pressure after S&P Global Ratings flagged off fresh concerns related to stress and uncertainties in the Indian banking sector.

The 30-share Sensex, that traded in the green for most part of the trading session, dipped in the red in the last hour of the session, ending the day at 31,453.51, down 261.84 points, or 0.83%.

State Bank of India was the worst performer among the Sensex pack, shedding 4.64%. Financial sector heavyweights such as Axis Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, ICICI Bank, Bajaj Finance and HDFC were among the top

SBI
PRICE

PRICE CHANGE

05-05-2020 % CHANGE

Adani Ports 263.10 -3.25

Asian Paints 1619.15 -57.65

Axis Bank 389.00 -13.80

Bajaj Auto 2422.80 -19.35

Bajaj Finserv 4629.20 -133.15

Bajaj Finance 2002.35 -77.30

Bharti Airtel 528.05 -4.45

BPCL 347.05 -0.85

Britannia Ind 2978.75 -114.20

Cipla 596.90 -14.95

Coal India 138.00 -4.30

Dr Reddys Lab 3833.90 -10.10

Eicher Motors 13810.95 -62.15

GAIL (India) 91.10 -2.40

Grasim Ind 471.45 -7.60

HCL Tech 520.40 6.15

HDFC 1689.90 -34.45

HDFC Bank 911.45 -11.55

Hero MotoCorp 1965.35 -35.35

Hindalco 115.90 0.00

Hind Unilever 2041.50 -41.15

ICICI Bank 330.85 -7.20

IndusInd Bank 418.70 -4.35

Bharti Infratel 170.60 2.10

Infosys 673.70 0.00

Indian Oil Corp 78.70 -1.05

ITC 173.90 -0.15

JSW Steel 163.90 0.35

Kotak Bank 1238.35 -39.45

L&T 836.90 -13.75

M&M 368.15 11.10

Maruti Suzuki 4829.85 -56.45

Nestle India Ltd. 17421.50 -34.95

NTPC 92.60 1.15

ONGC 78.45 1.90

PowerGrid Corp 163.65 4.60

Reliance Ind 1460.65 25.45

State Bank 170.40 -8.45

Shree Cement 18512.00 -113.00

Sun Pharma 456.30 -9.15

Tata Motors 80.90 -3.00

Tata Steel 272.65 -0.95

TCS 1932.75 2.30

Tech Mahindra 499.95 -2.50

Titan 886.95 -4.90

UltraTech Cement 3284.35 -63.25

UPL 387.05 1.65

Vedanta 78.90 -1.05

Wipro 184.20 -5.85

Zee Entertainment 148.40 2.00

Axis Bank
PRICE

PRICE CHANGE

05-05-2020 % CHANGE

Adani Ports 263.10 -3.25

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Axis Bank 389.00 -13.80

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