



Bihar government to do random testing of migrants on arrival

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Pending CBSE exams for Class 10 and 12 will be held from July 1 to 15

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Moody's warns of rating downgrade if financial metrics weaken

page 15



PM should talk to CMs more, not as a boss but as a colleague: Rahul Gandhi

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## NEARBY



Delhi reports 2 deaths, 338 new COVID-19 cases

NEW DELHI

Two deaths and 338 new COVID-19 cases were reported in Delhi on Friday, taking the total number of deaths to 68 and cases to 6,318, according to the Delhi government. Of the cases, 2,020 people have recovered and there are 4,230 active cases.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

## Muslim workers return to Gurugram unit

GURUGRAM

Half-a-dozen Muslim workers returned to work at a garments unit based in Udyog Vihar Phase-III in Gurugram on Friday, a day after *The Hindu* reported that several of them were turned away citing their religion and told to wait till "there were orders from the higher-ups".

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

## Take back changes in labour laws: Priyanka

LUCKNOW

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra has demanded that the U.P. government take back its decision to exempt businesses and industries in the State from most of the labour laws for three years.

NORTH & EAST ▶ PAGE 4

# 103 deaths, 3,390 new cases in a day; recovery rate hits 29.36%

216 districts record no cases till date; ICMR initiates multi-centre clinical trial

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

With a recovery rate now standing at 29.36%, India on Friday registered 3,390 new COVID positive cases with 103 deaths taking the total number to 56,342 cases and 1,886 deaths.

The country currently has 37,916 active cases and so far a total of 16,540 people have been cured.

Data from State Health Departments put the nationwide death toll at 1,963 with a total number of 58,895 cases of which 38,354 are active cases. Maharashtra reported 1,089 new patients, taking

## Weekly count

In the past week, the share of new COVID-19 cases has increased sharply in T.N. and Punjab. Whereas, West Bengal recorded a spike in the share of new deaths. The tables list the % of cases/deaths from Apr. 17 to Apr. 23 (Period I), from Apr. 24 to Apr. 30 (II), and from May 1 to May 7 (III)



- Both Maharashtra and Gujarat have consistently recorded a high share of India's cases and deaths
- Only States with considerable number of cases/deaths were chosen

## CASES

State	PERIOD		
	I	II	III
Maharashtra	33	34	31
Tamil Nadu	4	5	15
Gujarat	17	15	13
Delhi	8	10	12
Punjab	1	2	6
U.P.	8	6	4
Rajasthan	9	5	4
West Bengal	3	2	4
M.P.	5	8	3
A.P.	4	4	2

## DEATHS

State	PERIOD		
	I	II	III
Gujarat	29	23	31
Maharashtra	33	40	28
West Bengal	2	4	16
M.P.	11	12	8
Rajasthan	5	7	6
U.P.	3	4	3

the total tally to 19,063. The State also reported 37 more deaths, taking the death toll to 731.

Gujarat reported 390 new cases, taking its tally to 7,403, while the death toll rose to 449 with 24 more deaths in the last 24 hours.

"The recovery rate is continuously increasing which currently means that almost 1 out of every 3 patients who were hospitalised has been recovered/cured. It is noted that on an average, 3.2% pa-

tients are on oxygen support, 4.7% of patients are in ICU, and 1.1% patients are on ventilator support," Joint secretary in the Health Ministry Lav Aggarwal said at the daily press briefing. He added that Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has initiated a multi-centre clinical trial called PLACID trial – "Phase-II Open-Label, Randomised Controlled Trial –

to assess the safety and efficacy of Convalescent Plasma to Limit COVID-19 associated complications in moderate disease."

"The study has received approval from the COVID-19 National Ethics Committee (CONEC) on April 29. ICMR has shortlisted 21 institutes for PLACID trial. These include five hospitals in Maharashtra; four in Gujarat; two

each in Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh; and one each in Punjab, Karnataka, Telangana and Chandigarh," he said.

The Health Ministry noted that currently there are 216 districts which have not reported any cases till date.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

MORE REPORTS ON ▶ PAGES 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12

# 16 M.P. migrants run over by train near Aurangabad

They had fallen asleep on railway track after a long walk

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE  
AJEET MAHALE  
PUNE

Sixteen migrant labourers, who were trying to return to their home State Madhya Pradesh on foot, were killed on Friday when a goods train ran over them between Jalna and Aurangabad districts, nearly 260 km from here. One was seriously injured, while three escaped.

All were aged between 20 and 30 and hailed from Umriya and Shahdol districts. They were working at a steel firm in the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) zone in Jalna district.

According to the authorities, the labourers left Jalna in Maharashtra at 7 p.m. on Thursday and walked on the road until Badnapur and then moved to the track. They decided to stop after walking around 36 km and fell asleep at the spot.

"Around 5:15 a.m. thereabouts, a freight train ran over some labourers in a rail track near Karmad, killing 16 of them. One of them is injured and we are checking with three others who fortunately escaped the tragedy to understand what exactly transpired," said Mokshada Patil, Superintendent of Police (Aurangabad Rural). According to the Aurangabad police authorities and railway officials at the Nanded division of the South Central Railway (SCR), 14 were killed on the spot, while two died en route to hospital.

The Madhya Pradesh government has announced ₹5 lakh as ex gratia for the deceased labourers' families. The Madhya Pradesh government has announced ₹5 lakh as ex gratia for the deceased labourers' families.

## PM anguished

Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted: "Extremely anguished by the loss of lives due to the rail accident in Aurangabad, Maharashtra. Have spoken to Railway Minister Shri Piyush Goyal and he is closely monitoring the situation. All possible assistance required is being provided."

Railway Minister Piyush Goyal said he had ordered an inquiry into the accident.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8  
MORE REPORTS ▶ PAGE 9

# Vardhan for a mix of curbs and relaxations

'Lockdown will impact economy'

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN  
NEW DELHI

In an exclusive interview to *The Hindu*, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan has said lockdown has repercussions for economy, society and psychology. "Given the diversity of a country like India, it becomes essential to use this extreme strategy very judiciously," he said.

"International trials have been started to assess their relative effectiveness against COVID-19. By enrolling patients in multiple countries, the World Health Organization's Solidarity Trial aims to rapidly discover whether any of the drugs slows disease progression or improves survival. Further,

7 candidate vaccines are at clinical evaluation stage, while 82 others are at pre-clinical evaluation stage," he noted.

INTERVIEW ▶ PAGE 10



Fear factor: Residents waiting on a road in Visakhapatnam in the early hours of Friday following rumours of another gas leak from LG Polymers. They finally left for their homes after officials convinced them. ■ K.R. DEEPAK

# Green tribunal directs LG Polymers to deposit ₹50 cr.

It forms a five-member committee to probe the gas leak in Visakhapatnam

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) on Friday directed LG Polymers India to deposit an initial amount of ₹50 crore for the damage caused by the gas leak at its plant in Vishakapatnam, which left at least 11 people dead and affected several others.

A Bench, headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel, issued notice to the Andhra Pradesh Pollution Control Board, the Central Pollution Control Board and the Union Ministry of Environment, seeking their response by May 18.

**Site inspection ordered**  
It also constituted a five-member fact-finding committee, to be headed by a former judge of the Andhra Pradesh High Court, to probe the incident, which happened early on Thursday, and submit a report.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

MORE REPORTS ▶ PAGE 8

# Supreme Court asks States to consider online sale of liquor

Plea against circular allowing direct contact sale dismissed

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday left it open for the States to consider online sales and home delivery of liquor during the COVID-19 lockdown to facilitate physical distancing.

Dismissing a petition filed against a government circular of May 1, allowing direct contact sales of liquor, a three-judge Bench left it to the discretion of the States to create a mechanism for online purchase and home delivery. "It shall be open for the State government concerned to consider non-direct sale, including online sale/home delivery of liquor, to facilitate social distancing," the court said.



In his petition, Guruswamy Nataraj said, through his counsel Sai Deepak and Anindita Mitra, that there were 70,000 liquor vends and shops nationwide, and over five crore people had purchased liquor from them. He said there had been a palpable rise in CO-

# U.S. special envoy urges India to talk to Taliban

'Delhi has a key role in peace process'

SUHASINI HAIDAR  
NEW DELHI

India should discuss its concerns on terrorism directly with the Taliban, said U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad, adding that he had discussed how India could play a "more active role" in the Afghan reconciliation process, during his talks in Delhi on Thursday.

"India is an important force in Afghanistan and it would be appropriate for that [India-Taliban] engagement to take place," Mr. Khalilzad told *The Hindu* in an exclusive interview. The envoy said India

had a "significant role" in Afghanistan's development, but paradoxically, doesn't play a role in the international peace efforts.

**Historic ties'**  
"India and Afghanistan have historic ties, and I believe that dialogue between India and the Taliban is important," he added. This is the first time the U.S. has publicly suggested an engagement between India and the Taliban. New Delhi, that still considers the Taliban a terror group allied to Pakistan, has thus far distanced itself from any talks.

INTERVIEW

▶ PAGE 11

# Deliver Babri case verdict by Aug. 31: SC

CBI court is trying senior BJP leaders accused of conspiracy

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday directed a CBI court trying senior BJP leaders for the Babri Masjid demolition to deliver the judgment by August 31, 2020.

Prominent BJP and Sangh Parivar leaders like L.K. Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi and Uma Bharti are accused of criminal conspiracy which led to the demolition of the 16th century Babri mosque by kar sevaks in Ayodhya on December 6, 1992. A Bench led by Justice Rohinton F. Nariman took cognisance of a letter from CBI judge S.K. Yadav through videoconferencing and said, "... given the original time frame and the extended time frame, the effort must now be to complete the proceedings and deliver judgment latest

by August 31, 2020."

The Bench said Mr. Yadav should take advantage of videoconferencing facility to complete the evidence in the trial and wind up the case.

**Extended deadline**

In July last year, the apex court had asked the Uttar Pradesh government to give an extension of tenure to Judge Yadav so that he could complete the trial in the over 25-year-old cases.

## Timings

DELHI

SATURDAY, MAY. 09
RISE 05:35 SET 19:02
RISE 21:17 SET 07:04
SUNDAY, MAY. 10
RISE 05:34 SET 19:02
RISE 22:20 SET 07:56
MONDAY, MAY. 11
RISE 05:33 SET 19:03
RISE 23:18 SET 08:51

Delhi Weather

max min

Delhi City 40 24

Safdarjung 40 24

Palam 41 23

Delhi Palam Today

40°C A hot and partly cloudy sky will persist with light winds.

Rise in night temperature is

possible.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow

39°C A Partly cloudy sky will

persist. Duststorm and

thundershowers likely.

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## THE HINDU

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## Air quality of Delhi-NCR

Delhi 134 Gurugram 159

Ghaziabad 162 Faridabad 169

Noida 108 Greater Noida 129

Good Satisfactory Moderate

0-50 51-100 101-200

Poor Very poor Severe

201-300 301-400 &gt;401

AIR QUALITY INDEX AT 4 P.M. YESTERDAY (AVERAGE OF PAST 24 HOURS) SOURCE: CPCB

## Workers return to Gurugram unit

They had been allegedly turned away by a garments factory on religious grounds

ASHOK KUMAR  
GURUGRAM

Half-a-dozen Muslim workers returned to work at Richa & Co. – a garments unit based in Udyog Vihar Phase-III in Gurugram – on Friday, a day after *The Hindu* reported that several of them were turned away citing their religion and told to wait till “there were orders from the higher-ups”.

Around two dozen more are likely to join duty on Saturday. Babul Haq, an operator, who was among those

turned away, said he got a call from his floor manager late on Thursday night regarding the management’s decision to allow the Muslim workers to join and his personal manager also rang him up on Friday morning asking him to return to work. Mr. Haq claimed that many other such workers also got a call from the two managers asking them to return to work. He said he along with six more of his Muslim colleagues worked on the first floor of the com-

pany and was handed over his movement pass as well, issued by the authority concerned on May 6. The company’s deputy manager (human resource and compliance) Amit Kumar had earlier said the workers were turned away since they did not have movement passes.

## Names in red

The Muslim workers had earlier alleged that their names were marked in red and told that there was no

work for “those offering Namaz and observing fast”.

All these workers stay on rent in Dundahera village bordering Delhi and belong to West Bengal. Most of them the sole bread-winners said that they could not sustain themselves without work and had rent and other expenses to take care of. The company’s general manager Amardeep Dagar reiterated that the company had a large Muslim workforce and had never imposed religion-based restrictions.

## 14-year-old boy dies after police ‘thrash’ him

Four such videos of policemen beating up people surface online

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 14-year-old boy was allegedly thrashed to death by policemen in Rohini on Wednesday.

A video that surfaced online on Friday shows that the boy – Rajneesh – was being revived while he lay unconscious in a vehicle. In the video, the family and others can be heard alleging that the policemen thrashed him. “The postmortem was conducted at Maulana Azad Medical College on

DCP (Rohini) P.K. Mishra said a bunch of boys had gathered in a park on Wednesday when a beat constable was announcing that people need to vacate area or action will be taken. “All the boys fled the spot when Rajneesh boy fell to the ground and fell unconscious. The officer then tried to revive the boy and also asked his colleague to bring a vehicle to take the boy to BSA Hospital from where he was further referred to Safdarjung Hospital,” Mr. Mishra said, adding that the boy died in a few hours. The family alleged that the police officer thrashed him. “The postmortem was conducted at Maulana Azad Medical College on

The post-mortem was conducted and the body was handed over to the family. Legal action will be taken depending on report

P.K. MISHRA  
DCP (Rohini)

Friday and the body was handed over to the family. Legal action will be taken after the report,” he said.

In another video, a man from south-west Delhi’s Sagarpur, could be seen getting thrashed by a constable allegedly for “hugging people”. The officer has been suspended, an official said.

In another video, medical

staffers can be seen threatening a COVID-19 patient with a stick. The patient is learnt to have fled from Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital on Thursday evening after which an ambulance intercepted him in Connaught Place. In the video, he can be seen being forced inside the vehicle with a stick after medical staff circled around him while he sat on the road.

In the fourth video, a man who was visiting Azadpur Mandi can be seen bleeding allegedly by security personnel.

The probe revealed that there was a scuffle between the man and Civil Defence of ficials.

## Sedition case: Khan moves court for anticipatory bail

DMC chief says his tweet highlighted plight of minorities

Viewed as a whole, the statement does not allude to any tendency, leave alone incitement, of violence against the government or any section of the population...

PETITION BY DMC CHIEF

Bench of the High Court asked authorities to consider the representation of a man seeking removal of Mr. Khan as DMC chief for his allegedly “inflammatory and threatening statements” against the majority community.

Mr. Khan contended that as a “public-spirited individual and a distinguished member of the Muslim community” he has consistently spoken out against attacks, persecution and discrimination against the Muslim community.

“The registration of an FIR on such a frivolous, unsubstantiated and ambiguous complaint for a tweet, reveals that the petitioner [Mr. Khan] is being targeted for his views and his work,” he added. While expressing his willingness to cooperate with the investigation, Mr. Khan said his tweet highlighted the plight of the minority population which had been targeted by certain elements in society, and further acknowledged the role of the international fraternity in raising concerns regarding the well-being of Indian Muslims.

“

Viewed as a whole, the statement does not allude to any tendency, leave alone incitement, of violence against the government or any section of the population... The social media post only refers to ‘Hindutva bigots’, which is not a religious group or community, but instead refers in this context to persons on social media posting hate speech and propagating communal disharmony,” read the plea.

In his petition, Mr. Khan said the FIR was “misconceived, being made on a misrepresentation of facts and

Earlier in the day, another

## APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



General public is hereby informed that one person namely Rahul Rawat, S/o Unknown, R/o Unknown, Age about 40 years, Height 5'5", Complexion Wheatish, Oval Face, Wearing White colour shirt and blue colour half pant was found dead from the jurisdiction of PS Lodhi Colony, New Delhi on 29.04.20. In this regard a vide DD No. 09-A dated 29.04.20 has been lodged at PS Lodhi Colony, New Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this male deceased may kindly inform the undersigned.

SHO  
PS : Lodhi Colony, New Delhi  
Ph.: 24611753, 24620283



JAMMU AND KASHMIR POLICE  
DISTRICT POLICE HEADQUARTERS JAMMU  
0191-2561578 (0) 0191-254780(F) E-mail: ssppjammu@jkpolice.gov.in

## LOOK OUT NOTICE

SHO P/S Bagh-e-Bahu vide communication No. 155/5-1 dated 02.05.2020, intimated that one un-identified dead body was recovered from Sheikh Nagar near Canal park on 28.04.2020. Accordingly, an Inquest proceeding U/S 174 Cr. PC vide DDR No. 15 dated 28.04.2020 was initiated at P/S Bagh-e-Bahu, Jammu.

For the identification of unidentified male dead body below description roll is required to be published on daily newspapers for identification / Public in general having any clue related to the unidentified dead body kindly communicate the same on the below mentioned contact/Telephone numbers.

## Description Roll:-

Age :	22 years
Height :	Approx. 5 ft 1 Inch
Eyes :	Black
Complexion :	Fair
Face :	Round
Wearing :	Red Colour Shirt

Contacts/Telephone Numbers:-  
1. DPO, Jammu : 0191-2547807, 0191-2561578  
2. SSP Jammu Mail I.D : ssppjammu@jkpolice.gov.in  
3. PCR Jammu : 0191-2542000  
4. SP City South : 0191-2430002  
5. SDPO City East : 01912474700  
6. P/S Bagh-e-Bahu : 0191-2459777  
Sd/-  
For Sr. Superintendent of Police, Jammu  
DIP No:DIP/J-511/20

POSTGRADUATE INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL EDUCATION & RESEARCH  
CHANDIGARH MEDICAL EDUCATION & RESEARCH CHANDIGARH

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER

Online percentage rate bids are re-invited on behalf of the Director, PGIMER, Chandigarh from the Original equipment manufacturer / Authorized dealer/ Special agencies dealing in similar type of work on two bid system (Eligibility cum Technical Bid and Financial Bid).

INIT No. -	[PGI]/Engg/RAC/2020/66
Name of Work :	PGI for package A/C Units installed at Dialysis Centre, Leveh, Nehru Hospital, PGIMER, Chandigarh.
Estimated Cost :	Rs. 9.80 Lac
Earnest Money :	Rs. 19600/-
Period of Completion :	Thirty six Months
Last date and time of submission of bid :	15.05.2020 Upto 15.00 hrs
Last date and time of opening of Eligibility Bid :	15.05.2020 Upto 15.30 hrs
Date and time of opening of technical bid:	

The tender forms and other details can be obtained from the website: www.tenderwizard.com/PGIMER and official website of the PGIMER www.pgimer.edu.in. Press notice is also available on www.eprocure.gov.in. Contractors are requested to get their firm registered on the website www.tenderwizard.com/PGIMER for participating in e-tendering process. (Helpdesk for registering 09257209344 & 08054628281).

HOSPITAL ENGINEER (RAC)

DIRECTORATE OF BASIC EDUCATION  
Vidya Bhawan, Nishatganj, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh – 226007  
Tel: + 91 – 522 2780384, Email:procurementcellup@gmail.com  
Website: www.pernaup.in, www.basiceducationup.com, www.etender.up.nic.in

Corrigendum for Tender number 2020 upbed 423599 2  
PRERNA Digital System Project for Elementary Schools of Uttar Pradesh

This is for information of all the bidders, bidding for supply, commissioning of Android based Tablet integrated with biometric identification device and related services that the bid submission date has been extended till 27th May, 2020 for the tender document (Ref. Tender Notice No. 2020\_UPBED\_423599\_2).

For convenience and clarity, the corrigendum document has been uploaded on the below websites.  
www.etender.up.nic.in, www.basiceducationup.com, www.pernaup.in  
Director Basic Education

JHARKHAND BIJLI VITRAN NIGAM LIMITED  
(CIN : U40108JH2013SGC01702)  
Engineering Building, HEC, Dhurwa, Ranchi – 834004,  
Email: cccr2018@gmail.com, Fax: 0651-2400799

2<sup>nd</sup> Time Extension Notice of NIT No. 306/PR/JBVNL/2019-20  
for “Supply, Installation, testing & commissioning of Three Phase Four Wire Trivector Energy 0.25 Accuracy class 33kV ABT Meter and system maintenance of ABT metering system for five years under ADP head for Electric Supply Area Jamshedpur.”

Timelines for participating in the all the above e-tender is detailed below :

SL. No.	Particulars	Estimated Date
1	Pre bid meeting	21.05.2020 at 12:30hrs
2	Last date & time of receipt of Bid documents online	Upto 04/06/2020 at 17:00 hrs.
3	Last date of physical submission of tender for E&MD:	Upto 05/06/2020 till 15:00 hrs.
4	Technical Bid opening due date	05/06/2020 at 17:30 hrs.

Bid uploading / opening will be through e-tendering norms only. The complete Tender documents can be downloaded through website www.jharkhandtenders.gov.in/Bidder may contact help desk of e-Procurement system at the following web address: www.jharkhandtenders.gov.in.

Contact of Official:- GM(Coml) – 9431708983 PR No. 228003  
General Manager (Commercial) JBVNL, Ranchi  
PR 228201 (Jharkhand Bijlee Vitran Nigam Ltd)20-21#D

TENDER NOTICE

SR. No.	NAME OF BOARD/CORP./AUTH	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE & CLOSING DATE (TIME)	AMOUNT / EXP. (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP./AUTH	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	IRRIGATION & WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT KURUKSHETRA.	REMOVAL OF OBSTRUCTIONS, SLUSH, GARBAGE AND VEGETATION ETC. FROM INTERNAL SECTION OF SARASWATI RIVER IN REACH RD 210000 TO 242000 AND RD 265000 TO 271500 + 2 OTHER WORKS	07.05.2020 14.05.2020	48.98 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01744-238590 xensarasvatidmkk@gmail.com
2	PWD B&R BR. REWARI	CONSTRUCTION OF PRIMARY HEALTH CENTRE BUILDING WITH RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION AT VILL. MASUNDI IN DISTT. REWARI (PDG. ELECTRIFICATION ONLY) (1ST TIME) + 9 OTHER WORKS	07.05.2020 21.05.2020	1.29 CRORE	http://etenders.hry.nic.in	01274-250515 eed-rwv.pwd@hry.gov.in
3	DIRECTOR GENERAL, SUPPLIES & DISPOSALS, HARYANA	SUPPLY, INSTALLATION AND COMMISSIONING OF GRID CONNECTED SOLAR WATER PUMPING SYSTEMS	07.05.2020 10.06.2020	16.50 CRORE	https://etenders.hry.nic.in, dsnsharyana.gov.in	0172-2570121-124,2584125,2585125 supplies@hry.nic.in
4	DIRECTOR GENERAL, SUPPLIES & DISPOSALS, HARYANA	FABRICATION OF FOAM TENDER CAPACITY 5500 LTRS. AS PER IS: 10460 (1983), REAFFIRMED 2010 OR LATEST , TENDER TYPE B, HEAVY-DUTY WATER BOUSER & SMALL WATER MIST	07.05.2020 10.06.2020	44.50 CRORE	https://etenders.hry.nic.in, dsnsharyana.gov.in	0172-2570121-124,2584125,2585125 supplies@hry.nic.in
5	DIRECTOR GENERAL, SUPPLIES & DISPOSALS, HARYANA	1.T.RUCK COV CHASSIS HAVING GROSS VEHICLE WEIGHT 18-19 TON , 2.T.RUCK CABIN CHASSIS HAVING GROSS VEHICLE WEIGHT 7.0 TO 7.5 TON	07.05.2020 10.06.2020	43.25 CRORE	https://etenders.hry.nic.in, dsnsharyana.gov.in	0172-2570121-124,2584125,2585125 supplies@hry.nic.in
6	DIRECTOR GENERAL, SUPPLIES & DISPOSALS, HARYANA	FABRICATION OF ADVANCE RESCUE TENDERS AS PER IS-949/2012 OR LATEST	07.05.2020 10.06.2020	10 CRORE	https://etenders.hry.nic.in, dsnsharyana.gov.in	

**IN BRIEF**

**11 institutes to be turned into quarantine facilities**

NEW DELHI  
Eleven educational institutes, including the NSIT in Dwarka and the DTU in north-west Delhi will be converted into quarantine facilities over the coming days, sources in the Delhi government said here on Friday. 'Take Over Orders' for these would be issued over the coming days. Maharaja Agarsen College, Ambedkar College, ITI Jai Road and ITI Arab ki Sarai are also among the institutes to be converted into such facilities.

**IIT profs. to develop virus management platform**

NEW DELHI  
The Delhi government has sought the help of three IIT Delhi professors – Pravesh Biyani, Tavpritesh Sethi and Ponnurangam Kumaraguru – to develop and maintain the IT infrastructure (website and app) necessary for disseminating vital information on COVID-19 and the efforts being taken to manage the outbreak in the city. The professors will be part of a multi-disciplinary Technology Innovation Group set up by the Delhi government.

**HC declines plea by animal rights activist**

NEW DELHI  
The Delhi High Court on Friday rejected to entertain a petition seeking directions to the government to involve veterinarians to help prevent spread of COVID-19 between humans and animals. It said the governments were taking all necessary steps while dismissing the plea by animal rights activist Sangeeta Dogra that claimed that a tiger in Pench Tiger Reserve in M.P. had died due to COVID-19.

**Another Hindu Rao doctor infected**

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI  
A total of 10 health care workers have tested COVID-19 positive at Hindu Rao Hospital so far, a senior official of the North Delhi Municipal Corporation, which runs the hospital, said on Friday. Among the fresh cases is a doctor from the gynaecology department of the hospital, an official confirmed.

Four other doctors and two nurses had tested positive for the virus earlier this week.

Contact tracing of all who have been found positive has been carried out and they have been placed under quarantine, the official said. Last month a nurse at the hospital tested positive, after which the hospital had been shut, sanitised and all her contacts traced and tested.

Also, 46 people from the hospital who had been quarantined earlier have been asked to return to work.

Apart from this, five health care workers have been found positive at Kasturba Hospital and one staff has tested positive at RBTB hospital so far.

**BJP accuses govt. of failing to deal with COVID-19**

Leaders worried about spike in cases

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

BJP MLAs on Friday accused the Delhi government of "completely failing" to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, at a meeting of the Delhi BJP Legislative Party chaired by Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly, Ramvir Singh Bidhuri.

Expressing concern over the "rapidly growing" cases of COVID-19 in the Capital, BJP MLAs said that the death of a policeman due to lack of treatment had "exposed" the claims of the Delhi government in this regard.

The MLAs demanded that one of Delhi's major hospi-

# 2 deaths, 338 new COVID-19 cases

Delhi govt. acquires 170 hotel rooms for infected officials, family members

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Two deaths and 338 new COVID-19 cases were reported in Delhi on Friday, taking the total number of deaths to 68 and cases to 6,318, according to the Delhi government. Of the 6,318 cases, 2,020 people have recovered and there are 4,230 active cases.

**COVID-19**

Commenting on AIIMS-Delhi Director Randeep Guleria's prediction that COVID-19 cases are likely to peak in June-July, Health Minister Satyendar Jain said:

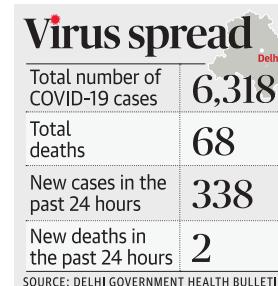
"Earlier also cases were predicted, but the cases are lesser than what we predicted. If they say that COVID-19 cases will reach their peak in June, it might happen, patterns of other countries are also similar."

He added that a COVID Care Centre with nearly 400 beds will start functioning in the next two-three days in Burari.

On allegations by opposition parties that the government was hiding information, Mr. Jain said: "We are not hiding anything. There is no question of hiding any data by



People show online tokens as they queue up to buy liquor in New Delhi on Friday. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA



Thursday), which was the highest till now?"

Reacting to rising cases of infected medical staff, the Minister said that "all over the world 15% health workers are getting infected".

Meanwhile, the government has acquired 170 rooms in three city hotels that will be made part of Rajiv Gandhi Super Specialty Hospital (RGSSH) for treatment of infected Delhi government officials and their family members.

"If the Delhi government officials or family members are asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic then they will be admitted to the hotels, else

they will be moved to the hospital. RGSSH will continue to treat other patients," a hospital official said.

The three hotels are: Hotel Ginger in Vivek Vihar; Park Plaza in Shahdara, and Leela Ambience in CBD Ground. The last two are five-star hotels, according to the government.

Meanwhile, the daily health bulletin issued by the Delhi government stated that an order has been issued for constituting an enquiry committee to look into the various aspects of "major discrepancies in the reports of Dr. Lal Path Lab".

## Wife, son of deceased constable infected

Amit Kumar died of COVID-19 on May 5

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Three days after Constable Amit Kumar died of COVID-19, his wife and three-year-old son have also tested positive, his family informed Delhi Police.

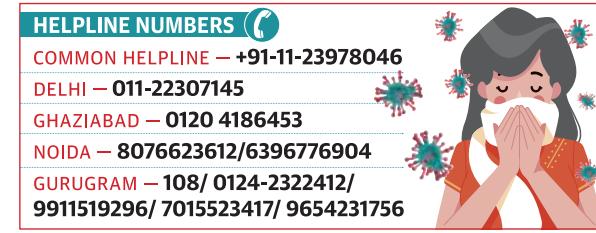
"They have been moved to a hospital in Sonipat where they are undergoing treatment," an officer said. Mr. Kumar had died on Tuesday night just hours after developing symptoms.

Earlier in the day, Delhi Police Commissioner S.N. Srivastava said he has offered a job to Mr. Kumar's wife. "Expressed deepest condolences to the wife and

family members of Late Constable Amit Kumar over video conference. Pooja, his wife is working as a contractual teacher. She was offered a suitable job in Delhi Police if she applies for it," Mr. Srivastava tweeted.

He also approved the creation of a 'Let's Fight Covid-DP' WhatsApp group to coordinate the grievances of infected officials. "This has been necessitated because of the increasing number of COVID-19 infected police personnel," an order read.

Joint CP (Central) added that a facility has been arranged to house asymptomatic personnel.



## Gautam Buddha Nagar sees first COVID-19 death

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GAZIABAD

Gautam Buddha Nagar recorded its first COVID-19 related death on Friday.

A 60-year-old man who was first admitted to a private hospital and later transferred to Government Institute of Medical Sciences (GIMS) in Greater Noida passed away in the early hours of Friday, an official release said.

"The cause of death was respiratory failure," said Sunil Dohre, District Surveillance Officer (Gautam Buddha Nagar). Sources in GIMS said the person tested positive on Thursday and was shifted to GIMS after that.

Meanwhile, the district recorded 12 new cases on Friday, taking the tally to 214. Out of these, 95 are active cases. The district is a red zone and has 332 people in institutional quarantine.

## Fake bus service for Bihar migrant workers in Delhi-NCR busted, 2 held

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Noida Police busted a fake bus service on Friday for duping people on the pretext of providing free transportation service of the Bihar government for migrant workers stranded in Delhi-NCR, officials said.

Two men were arrested and two privately-operated buses impounded during the police action around

1.30 a.m. on a Noida-Greater Noida road, they said.

The accused had stationed the two buses bearing banners that read "Free bus service for migrant labourers by Bihar government", a police spokesperson said.

"When officials from the local Phase 2 police station inquired from passengers about the service they were told that they got on the bus

thinking it was a free service but were being charged ₹3,000 per passenger," the policeman said.

When they questioned the drivers, they showed a purported permission letter from the "District Magistrate of Siwan, Bihar" on their mobile phones. When told to furnish the original copy, they tried to flee.

The men were arrested for violating lockdown rules.

## BJP accuses govt. of failing to deal with COVID-19

Leaders worried about spike in cases

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

BJP MLAs on Friday accused the Delhi government of "completely failing" to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, at a meeting of the Delhi BJP Legislative Party chaired by Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly, Ramvir Singh Bidhuri.

Expressing concern over the "rapidly growing" cases of COVID-19 in the Capital, BJP MLAs said that the death of a policeman due to lack of treatment had "exposed" the claims of the Delhi government in this regard.

The MLAs demanded that

one of Delhi's major hospi-

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GAZIABAD

A day after the Residents' Welfare Association of a society in Ghaziabad threatened to stop doctors and paramedical staff working Delhi from entering their residences in the society, the district administration has clarified that the association has no power to issue such an order.

Neel Padam Society's RWA had issued the notice while referring to guidelines issued by the Ghaziabad Municipal Commissioner Dinesh Chander. The RWA had advised the doctors to find a temporary residence in Delhi during lockdown.

After the Indian Medical Association (IMA) inter-

vened, the Ghaziabad Chief Medical Officer N.K. Gupta issued a clarification stating that the district adminis-

tration had stated that it was advisable if frontline health staff working in Delhi, a red zone, could find accommoda-

tion in Delhi as a safety measure for their family and neighbours.

**13 new cases**

Before Lockdown 3.0, Ghaziabad was an orange zone but has seen a spike in cases over the last week. On Friday, the district reported 13 new cases, taking the tally to 133.

District president of the

IMA V.B. Jindal, told *The Hindu* that the association took a strong objection to the order/advisory as it could generate a stigma against healthcare workers.

In a meeting on Friday, the district magistrate told the IMA that the advisory was not binding and was meant only for doctors and paramedical staff who are on COVID-19 duty. "He admitted that the advisory was poorly worded and created confusion," said Dr. Jindal.

Earlier, Col. (Retd.) Tejendra Pal Tyagi, chairman of the Federation of RWAs in Ghaziabad, agreed that the RWA had no right to issue such a notice to doctors.

## Second train ferrying migrant workers leaves for Muzaffarpur

Gopal Rai says Delhi govt. will bear entire cost of travel

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The second train for migrant workers left Delhi on Friday afternoon for Muzaffarpur in Bihar, officials said.

The train carrying 1,200 people left from New Delhi railway station around 3 p.m. and more such trains will transport migrant workers back to their States during the week, Delhi government officials said.

Also, the Delhi government has decided to bear the cost of train journey of migrant workers, if their home States do not respond on the matter of bearing the travel cost.

"The train carrying 1,200 migrant labourers left for Muzaffarpur, Bihar today. The Arvind Kejriwal government will bear their full travel cost," Labour Minister Gopal Rai said in a tweet.

"As per current guidelines, the Central government and the home State of the migrant workers should bear the cost of their travel. The Delhi government has already reached out to the respective States with the list

of migrant workers stranded in Delhi. Most of these States are yet to respond on the matter of bearing the travel costs of these stranded people, therefore, the Delhi government has taken the decision to bear the cost to avoid any further inconvenience to stranded workers," an official statement said.

**Screening**

On Friday, the Delhi government arranged buses to bring migrant workers from shelters across Delhi to the railway station. Teams of doctors were appointed to screen them and after a thorough check-up, a medical

**DU panel on exams must have elected representatives'**

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

In a step towards conducting examinations for the current academic session, Delhi University set up a "working group" to review preparedness and take appropriate steps, but the move invited criticism from teachers bodies on Friday.

University executive council members, Rajesh Jha and JL Gupta, decried the formation of the committee without sanction from its statutory bodies, calling it "arbitrary and undemocratic". In a letter to the Vice-Chancellor, the two attacked the grounds of the committee, inclusion of certain "nominated members" and other issues.

Similarly, the Delhi University Teachers Association (DUTA), in a letter to the VC wrote: "It is unfortunate that the statutory bodies of the university - the Executive and Academic Council - have been ignored in the formation of this working group." The group argued that the committee must be expanded to include elected representative of teachers. It also appealed that the committee must look into concerns raised by students as well.

Meanwhile, the Delhi government released ₹18.75 crore as part of the first instalment of grant-in-aid to 12 DU colleges run by the government. Earlier, DUTA had been petitioning the Chief Minister and Education Minister to release the funds, the stoppage of which meant staff at these colleges had reportedly not been paid salaries for a month. The present amount, however, has been inadequate, DUTA said.

The first train to originate from New Delhi, carrying 1,200 migrant workers to Chattarpur in Madhya Pradesh, left on Thursday while the train to Bihar left on Friday.

## DDA to inspect properties in non-containment zones

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) on Friday said it will resume inspection of properties in unauthorised colonies for the grant of ownership rights, in all areas except those in containment zones.

The surveyors will contact the applicants in advance and will visit the properties of the willing applicants only. The surveyors have been advised to strictly adhere to the social distancing norms and take other necessary precautions prescribed," the DDA said in a statement.

"Online Deficiency Memo will be issued, if any deficiency is noticed. Applicants who receive online Deficiency Memos are advised to file their replies online itself. They can correct or update their applications online," the statement read.

been completed, while 65,000 residents have received their GIS survey ID,

the urban body said while asking the latter to file their detailed application on the online portal.

The DDA further added that in a bid to continue services during the ongoing lockdown, back-end scrutiny of applications will be carried out as the scheme is completely online.

"Online Deficiency Memo will be issued, if any deficiency is noticed. Applicants who receive online Deficiency Memos are advised to file their replies online itself. They can correct or update their applications online," the statement read.

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52 new cases  
in Odisha

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BHUBANESWAR

Odisha recorded the highest ever single-day spike in COVID-19 positive cases with 52 new cases, including 43 from Ganjam district, taking the State's total to 271 on Friday.

Of the remaining nine new cases, five were reported from Kendrapara, two from Bhadrak and one from Bhubaneswar.

## NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY

## CORRIGENDUM

**Sub:** Dy. CME/Works for Chief Workshop Manager, N.E. Railway, Mechanical Workshop, Gorakhpur and on behalf of President of India has been revised Tender closing date pertaining to E-Open Tender No.-1, 19-MWS-GKP-2019-20-2, 2, 26-MWS-GKP-2019-20, 3, 25-MWS-GKP-2019-20, 4, 27-MWS-GKP-2019-20. In reference to the above subject, Tender closing Date have been revised, which may please be read as under:-

**S.No. 1, E-Tender Notice No. & Name of the work:** 19-MWS-GKP-2019-20-2, "Testing of Gas Pipe line & Manifold for Oxygen, BCG-LPG & CO<sub>2</sub>"., **Tender Closing date (Existing Date)**: 11.05.2020 11.00 am, **Tender closing date submission (Revised Date)**: 01.06.2020 11.00 am. **S.No. 2, E-Tender Notice No. & Name of the work:** 26-MWS-GKP-2019-20, "D-Check Schedule Maintenance of GREAVES make 02 Nos. D.G.Set of Garib Rath Power Car No. 07868"., **Tender Closing date (Existing Date)**: 12.05.2020 11.00 am, **Tender closing date submission (Revised Date)**: 02.06.2020 11.00 am. **S.No. 3, E-Tender Notice No. & Name of the work:** 25-MWS-GKP-2019-20-2, "Stripping and Fitting of Screw Coupling and Draw Gear Assembly of 3000 Coaches for 24 Months at Mechanical Workshop, Gorakhpur"., **Tender Closing date (Existing Date)**: 13.05.2020 11.00 am, **Tender closing date submission (Revised Date)**: 04.06.2020 11.00 am. **S.No. 4, E-Tender Notice No. & Name of the work:** 27-MWS-GKP-2019-20, "D-Check Schedule Maintenance of CUMMINS Make 04 Nos. D.G.Set of 02 Nos. Garib Rath Power Car No. 07866 and 07867", **Tender Closing date (Existing Date)**: 13.05.2020 11.00 am, **Tender closing date submission (Revised Date)**: 04.06.2020 11.00 am. All other terms and conditions of above tenders will remain unchanged except above and details of tenders are also available on Indian Railway website: [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in).

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# Bihar government to do random testing of migrants on arrival

TrueNat machines will be used for the first time in the State for virus screening

AMARNATH TEWARY  
PATNA



Migrants who returned from Karnataka show home quarantine stamps in Danapur. ■ FILE PHOTO: RANJEET KUMAR

With thousands and thousands of migrants, carrying stories of pain, agony and trauma, returning every day to their home districts in Bihar from all over the country, the State government has decided to start random testing.

Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has asked the Health Department officials to start random testing by procuring TrueNat machines. These machines, endorsed by the Indian Council of Medical Research on April 10, will be used for the first time in Bihar for screening COVID-19 cases.

"We're going to do random testing because many positive cases are asymptomatic... District Magistrates have been asked to go for it," said Principal Health Secretary Sanjay Kumar.

The migrants coming to the State are being classified according to the three zones – red, orange and green – they come from. "Those coming from the red zone and above 60 years will be tested on priority basis," said Mr. Kumar.

"If a sample tests negative on the TrueNat machine, it means no novel coronavirus, but if it is positive, then it will be subjected to the RT-PCR test," said Mr. Kumar. As many as 40-42 samples could be tested on this machine in a day, he added.

Bihar has currently been conducting sample tests on an average of 1,200-1,300 people in its seven labs located in district government hospitals. So far, 31,693 tests have been done. Seven more COVID-19 positive cases have now taken the total number to 563 – six males and one

female from Darbhanga, Saharsha, Supaul and Katihar districts.

In a meeting with officials on Wednesday, the Chief Minister asked officials to do skill mapping of returning migrant workers "to help the government in using their services as per their skill".

The government will do skill mapping of migrants through an app... it will help us in providing them jobs as per their skill other than the MGNREGA," Minister Neeraj Kumar said.

## Arrivals by trains

Migrants continue to reach the State from different parts of the country. According to government sources, over 20,000 were scheduled to reach by 17 trains at different stations on Friday. On Thursday, 24 trains carrying 28,000 migrants reached the State.

According to an official release, the V-C emphasised the need to safeguard the academic career of students in view of the extraordinary and unprecedented circumstances.

Students following social distancing at the Aligarh railway station. ■ MANOJ ALIGADI

es caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In order to strengthen the online teaching, it was decided that e-content/e-lab experiments will be prepared by the teachers concerned and uploaded on the website. The use of ICT and online teaching tools will be encouraged and the teachers should strive to complete about 25%

Zuberi (Controller of Examinations), online teaching for the session 2019-20 will continue up to May 31, and the period from June 1 to June 15 would be utilised for finalisation of dissertation/project work/e-labs/completion of syllabus/internal assessment /assignment/reports, etc.

The period of lockdown may be treated as 'deemed to be attended' by all the students and their attendance computed accordingly.

Earlier, around 1300 students from different parts of Bihar left for their homes by a special train arranged by the university administration.

# Take back changes in labour laws: Priyanka

'U.P. government crushing their rights'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
LUCKNOW

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra has demanded that the Uttar Pradesh government take back its decision to exempt businesses and industries in the State from most of the labour laws for the next three years.

any security shield. And now you are making a law to crush their rights," Ms. Vadra said in a tweet in Hindi.

The labourers are builders of the nation, not your hostage, she told Mr. Adityanath.

The Uttar Pradesh government has cleared an ordinance exempting businesses and industries from labour laws, except for a handful, for the next three years as a measure to get the State's industrial activities back on track in wake of the COVID-19 crisis.

# 'Take us home, we don't want anything else from you'

Stranded migrant workers from Chhattisgarh in U.P. have started their journey on foot in desperation

OMAR RASHID  
LUCKNOW

Mungeli is more than 700 km away. Yet the distance is not too far for Lalaram and his family, as they set out on foot towards home in Chhattisgarh from Lucknow on Thursday evening.

Lalaram took along his wife, their four-year-old daughter, his father and other relatives. Back home, the labourer has three more kids, aged 6, 10 and 12, to take care of. The stranded migrants from Chhattisgarh have run out of patience and just want to go home even at the risk of their safety.

A construction worker living in a slum colony in Lucknow's Gomti Nagar area, Lalaram has been out of work since the lockdown began. Though he, like other labourers living in the colony, has been occasionally receiving ration kits and food packets from NGOs, local authorities and a political workers, Lalaram argues this is not enough for sustenance.

"We get puris. How long will we survive on puris? We also need money for our expenses," he said.

Since there is no bus or train service yet to transport them back home from U.P. to

Chhattisgarh, the family wants to attempt this on foot, like several thousand people across the country already have.

## Govt. blamed

Lalaram's wife Santoshi is agitated. She blames the government for not taking note of their situation even after two months. "Kya kare, sar-kar toh andha go gaya hai (The government is blind, what can we do)," she says in anger.

"Hume kuch matt de, khali humko ghar chorde, Chattisgarh (We don't want anything from the government. We just want to be dropped home.)"

The journey is precarious. On Wednesday night, a migrant couple from Chhattisgarh's Behrmata district living in a slum in Jankipuram area of Lucknow, Krishna and Pramila, who had set out on foot towards home were crushed to death by a vehicle on a road on the outskirts.

Their two little children survived but were seriously injured.

Meanwhile, the total number of cases in U.P. climbed to 3,215 and the death toll to 66.

Lucknow has reported 247 cases so far.

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NIT No. EE(EMS)/SZ/T/TC/01 Dated- 08/05/2020

South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) invites sealed Technical and Financial Proposals (manually) from the interested bidders who necessarily be a Ltd/Pvt. Ltd Company, registered under the companies Act, 1956 (Bidding in the form of proprietorship/JV Consortium is not permitted) for "Lifting and Transportation of Construction and Demolition (C&D) waste on demand from various locations of South Zone and disposal to designated SLF site at Okhla" for a period of 3 years as per following details:-

**Estimated Cost (Per Annum)-Rs.2.815 Crores, Tender/RFP Document can be had from the office of the undersigned after a payment of Rs. 1000/- in the form of DD/Pay order in favour of Commissioner SDMC payable at New Delhi.**

**Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) - Total Rs. 5.63 Lakhs (Rs.2.82 Lakhs in the form of DD/Pay order in favour of Commissioner, SDMC payable at New Delhi, and Rs. 2.81 Lakhs in the form of Bank Guarantee drawn on any nationalized Bank and valid for 120 days, to be submitted along with Technical Bid (Envelope "A"), in the office of SE(DEMS)/SZ, 8th Floor, Dr. S. P. Mukherjee Civic Centre, Minto Road, New Delhi - 110002.**

Last date for issue of RFP Document:- 28/05/2020 till 5:00 PM

Last date for Submission of Proposal:- 29/05/2020 till 3:30 PM.

Date of Opening of Technical Bids:- 29/05/2020 at 3:30 PM

A pre bid meeting shall be held with prospective bidders on 18/05/2020 at 3:00 PM in the office of Director(DEMS), 19th Floor, Dr. S. P. Mukherjee Civic Centre, Minto Road, N.Delhi-110002.

For more details and further updates from time to time, please refer to website [www.mcdonline.gov.in](http://www.mcdonline.gov.in).

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**Safe sail:** INS Jalashwa departing with 698 Indians from the Port of Male in Maldives on Friday. ■ PTI

## Navy ship with 698 evacuees leaves Male

Indian envoy lauds Maldives govt. for support in evacuation

DINAKAR PERI  
SUHASINI HAIDAR  
NEW DELHI

Navy ship INS Jalashwa departed from the Port of Male in Maldives on Friday with 698 Indians on board, and is scheduled to reach Kochi on May 10. The 698 include 595 men, 103 women, including 19 pregnant women.

The Navy launched this evacuation effort under 'Operation Samudra Setu'.

"After the voyage of INS Jalashwa today, we expect a voyage by INS Magar to Kochi on May 10. We expect voyages by the same ships to Thoothukudi on May 12 and 14," Sanjay Sudhir, High Commissioner to the Maldives, told *The Hindu*. INS Jalashwa, the Navy's landing platform dock, reached Male on Thursday.

**Complex operation**  
Mr. Sudhir termed the entire effort a "very complex operation" since Indians are spread over 200 islands



**Safety first:** Officials wearing protective gear checking people before they boarded the ship on Friday. ■ AFP

across the 800 km length of the Maldives and there are restrictions in place on island to island movement.

"There are a lot of medical cases, including pregnant women, where ferrying them to Malé is a challenge. There are a lot of senior citizens with specific medical requirements. What made it challenging was the fact that Malé is under lockdown and all offices and Ministries are closed," he said.

The envoy was all praise for the Government of Maldives for the "wonderful support and helping hand" they had received despite the fact that the city was un-

der lockdown.

"They made available immigration and baggage facilities at the Velana International Airport though it is a sea voyage. Alongside berthing for the ship was provided at Malé Port which made embarkation very easy for the passengers," he added.

### Compelling cases

Official sources said that in all about 1800-2000 Indians would be evacuated from Maldives and priority was being given to compelling cases such as medical, senior citizens, family emergencies and jobless. About 4500 Indian community

members out of approximately 27,000 have conveyed their wish to travel back, the sources added.

The Indian High Commission in Maldives said an "evacuation service charge" of \$40 per head would be collected from Indians embarking on naval ships from Maldives to return to India as stated by the government to charge for all repatriations. This marks the first time passengers being evacuated by the Navy are being charged.

All those being repatriated under 'Operation Vande Bharat' will be quarantined at facilities set up across the country. Under this, the three Services have set up six quarantine facilities that can accommodate up to 2,100 Indians arriving from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Malaysia.

The facilities have been established in Jodhpur, Jaipur, Bhopal, Kochi, Visakhapatnam and Chennai.

Two amphibious ships, INS Airawat and INS Shardul, are proceeding to the United Arab Emirates but the modalities for evacuation are still being worked out.

**152 return from Riyadh**

Majority of cases are Asian expatriates

STAFF REPORTER  
MALAPPURAM

Air India special flight AI-922 from Riyadh in Saudi Arabia reached the Calicut International Airport at Karipur on Friday, bringing home 152 expatriates. They included 103 women and two were from Tamil Nadu.

Health officials said 84 of the passengers who returned from Riyadh were pregnant women. They said the health team at the airport had been

augmented by adding gynaecologists and specially trained nurses.

### Two from T.N.

District officials said eight persons among the passengers were from Karnataka and two were from Tamil Nadu.

Pregnant women, children below 10 years, senior citizens above 75 years and those requiring medical treatment were allowed to return home.

due to the overlap between comorbidity and COVID-19 mortality.

tions for domestic quarantine have been transferred to makeshift institutional facilities," he said.

Already, expatriates are bearing the brunt of job losses and salary cuts. "The worst-affected are blue-collar workers," he said, adding that oil prices had hit a historic low.

## Restarting trains a relief, but some migrants continue trek

About 300 of those in Karnataka who had been detained leave by train to Uttar Pradesh

K.V. ADITYA BHARADWAJ  
BENGALURU



**Long queue:** Migrant workers of Bihar waiting to board buses to reach railway station in Bengaluru. ■ V. SREENIVASA MURTHY

Uttar Pradesh, speaking to *The Hindu* from the train.

**Still on foot**  
Not all labourers, however, have stopped their trek back home. Several new groups of

labourers began their walk home on Friday, despite knowing that the trains have restarted.

"We spent nearly a week to register online. We don't trust that we will get a train

## Three die in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka sees record spike

Telangana wants Centre to declare 14 districts green, Kerala adds another case

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD

Three people died of COVID-19 in Andhra Pradesh, taking the State total to 41. Of 7,320 daily samples tested, 54 were positive on Friday, taking the tally to 1,887.

Karnataka saw a record spike with 48 cases, 11 of them children and 24 women. With this, the State's tally touched 753. Three cases in Bengaluru were detected through random testing.

Telangana reported 10 more cases on Friday taking its total to 1,132. The number of people discharged after treatment touched 728 including 34 on Friday, with Health Minister Eatala Rajender asserting that those under treatment were recovering well. No additional deaths were reported and the toll remained at 29, while

### COVID-19

active cases stood at 376. Nine districts including Yadadri-Bhongir, Warangal (Rural) and Wanaparthy met green zones norms.

The State government requested the Centre during a video conference to certify 14 more districts which did not report any case in the last 14 days as green. The Centre was expected to take a decision on Monday.

Mr. Rajender dismissed criticism that testing was low, stating that the government adhered to guidelines of the Indian Council of Medical Research.

On red zone districts like Hyderabad, Rangareddy and Medchal, he said only urban areas in the two districts abutting the State capital were affected.

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao had instructed officials to focus on GHMC areas, the old city in particular, to strictly enforce containment measures.

**Random test cases**

Of Karnataka's new cases 14 were from Davangere. Besides, 12 cases were reported from Bhaktapur in Uttara Kannada, 11 from Hirebagewadi and Kuduchi in Belagavi, seven from Bengaluru Urban, three from Chitradurga and one from Ballari.

In Bengaluru Urban, four of the seven cases were from containment zones and three from Padarayanaapura, the latter found through random testing. Suresh Kumar, Primary and Secondary Education Minister insisted that there was no link between lockdown relaxation and the spike. "All are contacts of persons in containment zones," he told the media.

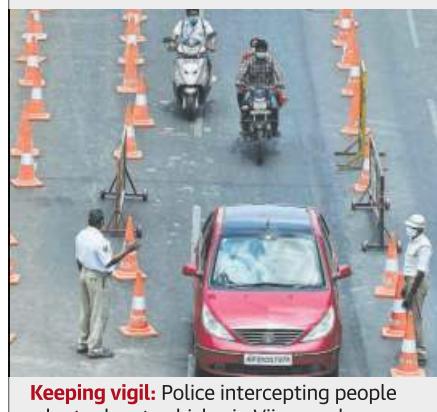
Those who tested positive in Andhra Pradesh were being quarantined and 842 were sent home after recovery.

### T.N. tally crosses 6,000

Tamil Nadu's tally of COVID-19 cases passed the

### Stay home, stay safe

The Andhra Pradesh government is taking all steps to make people stay safe during the nationwide lockdown



**Keeping vigil:** Police intercepting people who took out vehicles in Vijayawada on Friday. ■ K.V.S. GIRI



TOTAL NUMBER OF CASES  
**1,887**  
41  
ACTIVE CASES  
DISCHARGED CASES  
DEATHS

TOTAL NUMBER OF CASES  
**753**  
31  
ACTIVE CASES  
DISCHARGED CASES  
DEATHS

TOTAL NUMBER OF CASES  
**503**  
3  
ACTIVE CASES  
DISCHARGED CASES  
DEATHS

TOTAL NUMBER OF CASES  
**6,006**  
40  
ACTIVE CASES  
DISCHARGED CASES  
DEATHS

TOTAL NUMBER OF CASES  
**1,132**  
29  
ACTIVE CASES  
DISCHARGED CASES  
DEATHS

ery, while 1,004 positive cases were under treatment.

The virus claimed three lives, two in Kurnool, a hotspot, and one in Visakhapatnam.

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said that one person had tested positive for COVID-19 in the State and 10 other test results were negative. The positive case was from Ernakulam, a patient from Chennai with a kidney ailment. Of the 503 cases reported so far by Kerala, 484 had recovered and 16 patients were undergoing treatment.

The State government requested the Centre during a video conference to certify 14 more districts which did not report any case in the last 14 days as green. The Centre was expected to take a decision on Monday.

In Bengaluru Urban, four of the seven cases were from containment zones and three from Padarayanaapura, the latter found through random testing. Suresh Kumar, Primary and Secondary Education Minister insisted that there was no link between lockdown relaxation and the spike. "All are contacts of persons in containment zones," he told the media.

Those who tested positive in Andhra Pradesh were being quarantined and 842 were sent home after recovery.

6,000-mark as another 600 persons tested positive on Friday. Chennai alone accounted for over half the new cases with 399. Three more patients died of the virus in the State – two in Chennai and one in Tirunelveli.

The State had a total of 6,009 COVID-19 cases. In fact, this comes just a day after the State crossed the 5,000-mark from 4,829 cases on May 6, the total tally increased to 5,409 on May 7.

The cases continued to surge in Chennai, taking its total count to 3,043.

Health Minister C. Vijayabaskar said the increase in the number of positive cases need not cause fear among people as it was a result of "aggressive testing".

The Minister said the State's mortality rate was 0.68%, the lowest in the country.

(With inputs from Vijayawada, Bengaluru, Chennai and Thiruvananthapuram Bureaus)

## Aarogya Setu app: HC seeks Centre's response

Mandatory provision challenged

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOCHE

A Division Bench of the Kerala High Court, comprising Justice Shaji P. Chali and Justice M.R. Anitha, on Friday asked the Centre to respond to a writ petition challenging its directive to make the Aarogya Setu app mandatory for all employees, including those in the private sector.

In his petition, Thrissur Congress committee general secretary John Daniel said the app was a tracking mobile application, which used the GPS and Bluetooth features in smartphones to track COVID-19 patients. It collected the personal information during registration and stored it in the cloud.

He sought to strike down as unconstitutional the directive. The directive, issued as part of COVID-19 management, said it should be the responsibility of the head of state to ensure 100% use of the app among employees.

Mr. Daniel pointed out that the directive violated the fundamental rights of the citizen and there was a possibility of misuse of the personal information. It raised concerns of surveillance by the Centre. The directive took away the right of a person to decide on the use and control of information about him/her.

It had been made clear prosecution would be launched against those who did not comply with the directive, under Section 58 of the Disaster Management Act 2005. In fact, an employer who had only a work relationship with an employee could not compel him/her to install a mobile app and use it diligently.

Besides, the directive did not specify which department or ministry or official would be accessing the data.

the respective organisation

to ensure 100% use of the app among employees.

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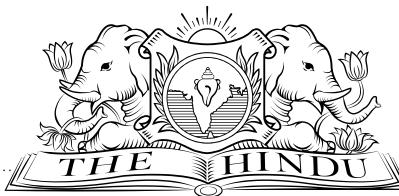
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## Contempt for labour

Centre should not allow exemptions from welfare laws for workers mooted by States

**A**t a time when everyone is awaiting an early end to the health and economic crisis caused by the global pandemic, the interests of labourers and workers are once again set to be sacrificed. The revival of business and economic activity after weeks of forced closure is indeed a key objective to be achieved. However, it is amoral and perverse on the part of some States to address this need by granting sweeping exemptions from legal provisions aimed at protecting labourers and employees in factories, industries and other establishments. Madhya Pradesh has embarked on a plan to give a boost to business and industry by allowing units to be operated without many of the requirements of the Factories Act – working hours may extend to 12 hours, instead of eight, and weekly duty up to 72 hours. Going by Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan's remarks, it appears the State has used Section 5 of the Act, which permits exemption from its provisions for three months, in the hope that the Centre would approve such suspension for at least a thousand days. However, this exemption can be given only during a 'public emergency', defined in a limited way as a threat to security due to war or external aggression. Uttar Pradesh has approved an ordinance suspending for three years all labour laws, save a few ones relating to the abolition of child and bonded labour, women employees, construction workers and payment of wages, besides compensation to workmen for accidents while on duty. Reports suggest that several States are following their example in the name of boosting economic activity.

Changes in the manner in which labour laws operate in a State may require the Centre's assent. One hopes the Centre, which is pursuing a labour reform agenda through consolidated codes for wages, industrial relations and occupational safety, health and working conditions, would not readily agree to wholesale exemptions from legal safeguards and protections the law now affords to workers. The most egregious aspect of the country's response to the pandemic was its inability to protect the most vulnerable sections and its vast underclass of labourers from its impact. The emphasis in the initial phase was on dealing with the health crisis, even when the consequence was the creation of an economic crisis. While the country watches with horror the continuance of the collective misery of migrant workers well into the third spell of the national lockdown, the attitude of the ruling class towards labour remains one of utter apathy, bordering on contempt. Why else would a government relieve factories of even elementary duties such as providing drinking water, first aid boxes and protective equipment? Or suspend requirements such as cleanliness, ventilation, lighting, canteens, restrooms and crèches?

## Eradicate it

Sudan's decision to end female genital mutilation builds on its political transition

**S**udan's decision to outlaw the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) is a landmark victory for women's rights in a country that is still in a transition from dictatorship to democracy. The development follows the transitional government's decision to scrap the repressive social codes and humiliating penalties that targeted women during the nearly 30-year dictatorship of Omar al-Bashir, which fell last year amid protests. Hundreds of Sudanese professionals who spearheaded the protests, had clamoured for a broad-based and inclusive constitutional order. The new measure, which entails punishment with a fine and a prison sentence, must still be approved by the Supreme Council, made up of civilians and military officials, that oversees the democratic transition. The government's decision builds on the curbs already in place in a number of provinces, although enforcement has been a concern. The UN estimates that some 87% of Sudanese women have had their external genitalia removed on non-medical grounds during childhood, leaving them with life-long emotional and physical injuries. While the latest measure has been widely welcomed, campaigners remain cautious about a shift in attitude against this custom, regarded as crucial prior to matrimony.

According to the UN, over 200 million women in several African countries, including Sudan, Egypt, Nigeria, Djibouti and Senegal, and some in Asia, have been subject to this brutal social custom. While there is ongoing research to rectify the damage, WHO is somewhat sceptical about the effectiveness of recent reconstruction surgeries. The prevailing scenario thus underscores the need for stronger campaigns and bold actions to stop this social scourge. Even in countries where FGM is outlawed, enforcement remains an issue. In Egypt's first FGM trial in 2014, six years after Cairo clamped a ban, the doctor who had carried out the procedure, as well as the father of the deceased girl, were acquitted, despite incriminating forensic evidence. In Somalia, the country with the highest prevalence rate but no legal ban, the death of a girl in 2018 after a similar procedure led to the first prosecution in such incidents. In Uganda, reports last year of some 300 cases of mutilation within a month shed light on the government's uphill task to back existing legislation with vigorous awareness campaigns. In Kenya, where the practice was criminalised in 2011, the government strategy last year requiring girls to be tested for circumcision raised concerns of victimisation and privacy violation. These practices suggest that legislation alone may not stop this practice that has deep cultural roots. The government has to eradicate it. Sustaining the country's progressive currents and democratic transition would be crucial to consolidate the gender reforms it has introduced in recent months.

# Slower growth and a tighter fiscal

India slid into the pandemic crisis in the backdrop of economic downslide; fiscal stimulus has to be structured



C. RANGARAJAN &  
D.K. SRIVASTAVA

**T**he impact of COVID-19 will be debilitating for the global as well as the Indian economies. Various institutions have assessed India's growth prospects for 2020-21 ranging from 0.8% (Fitch) to 4.0% (Asian Development Bank). This wide range indicates the extent of uncertainty and tentative nature of these forecasts. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has projected India's growth at 1.9%, China's at 1.2%, and the global growth at (-) 3.0%. The actual growth outcome for India would depend on: the speed at which the economy is opened up; the time it takes to contain the spread of virus, and, the government's policy support.

### Growth prospects

India slid into the novel coronavirus crisis on the back of a persistent economic downslide. There was a sustained fall in the saving and investment rates with utilised capacity in the industrial sector. In 2019-20, there was a contraction in the Centre's gross tax revenues in the first 11 months during April 2019 to February 2020, at (-) 0.8%. These trends continue to beset the Indian economy in this crisis.

We examine the growth prospects for 2020-21 from the output side, making reference to real gross value added (GVA). In 2019-20, which would serve as the base year, India may show GVA growth of about 4.4%, well below the Central Statistics Office's second advance estimate of 4.9%, as the fourth quarter number is likely to be revised downwards on account of the adverse impact of the virus on economic activities. The IMF's GDP growth estimate for 2019-20 is at 4.2%.

GVA is divided into eight broad

### Sectoral growth prospects in 2020-21

Differential impact of the novel coronavirus on Gross Value Added in 2020-21

Group	Sector	Share 2019-20 (MAE)	Average growth (2017-18, 18-19, 19-20 MAE)	2019-20 MAE	Targeted growth (2020-21)	Contribution to growth (% points)
A	Agriculture, forestry & fishing	14.4	4.0	3.1	2.8	0.40
B	Mining & quarrying	2.6	0.6	2.2	1.1	0.03
C	Manufacturing	17.4	4.4	0.3	1.8	0.31
B	Electricity, gas, water supply & other utility services	2.3	8.0	4.1	2.1	0.05
B	Construction	7.8	4.7	2.4	1.2	0.09
D	Trade, hotels, transport, communication, etc.	19.6	7.0	5.1	1.5	0.30
B	Financial, real estate & professional services	22.3	6.3	6.8	3.4	0.76
A	Public Administration, defence and other services	13.6	9.3	8.2	7.4	1.00
	GVA at Basic Price	100.0	5.9	4.4	2.94	2.94

MAE refers to modified advance estimates that are derived by adjusting downwards, CSO advance estimates dated February 28, 2020

sectors. Although all sectors have been disrupted, some may be affected less than the others. We divide the output sectors in four groups.

In group A, we consider two sectors that have suffered only limited disruption – namely agriculture and allied sectors, and public administration, defence and other services. In the case of agriculture, rabi crop is currently being harvested and a good monsoon is predicted later in the year. Despite some labour shortage issues, this sector may show near-normal performance. The public and defence services have been nearly fully active, with the health services at the forefront of the COVID-19 fight. For the group A sectors, it may be possible to achieve 90% of the 2019-20 growth performance.

Next, we consider the group that is likely to suffer maximum disruption (Group D). This includes, trade, hotels, restaurants, travel and tourism under the broad group of "Trade, Hotels, Transport, Storage and Communications". This sector may be able to show 30% of 2019-20 growth performance. Group B comprises four sectors which may suffer average disruption showing 50% of 2019-20 growth performance. These sectors are mining and

quarrying, electricity, gas, water supply and other utility services, construction, and financial, real estate and professional services. In the last group (Group C), we place manufacturing which has suffered significant growth erosion in 2019-20. It is feasible to stimulate this sector by supporting demand.

In this case, we apply a 40% performance factor, not on the 2019-20 growth which is an outlier, but on the average growth of the preceding three years. Considering these four groups together, a GVA growth of 2.9% is estimated for 2020-21. Realising this requires strong policy support, particularly for the manufacturing sector which has a weight of 17.4%. It is also based on the assumption that the Indian economy may move on to positive growth after the first quarter. In the first quarter, GVA growth will be negative.

**Calibrating policy support**  
Monetary policy initiatives undertaken so far include a reduction in the repo rate to 4.4%, the reverse repo rate to 3.75%, and cash reserve ratio to 3%. The Reserve Bank of India has also opened several special financing facilities. These actions will have a positive impact on output only after the lockdown is lifted. These mea-

sures need to be supplemented by an appropriate fiscal stimulus. Although industry has been clamouring for a large fiscal stimulus, cash-constrained central and State governments have taken expenditure reducing measures by announcing a freezing of enhancements of dearness allowance and dearness relief. This may result in savings of ₹37,000 crore for the Centre and about ₹82,000 crore for the States, together amounting to 13.5% of GDP.

There is also a talk of substantially reducing non-salary defence expenditure. With lower petroleum prices, fertilizer and petroleum subsidies may be reduced. These expenditure cuts are contemplated to keep the fiscal deficit under some control.

### On fiscal deficit

Fiscal stimulus can be of three types: relief expenditure for protecting the poor and the marginalised; (b) demand-supporting expenditure for increasing personal disposable incomes or government's purchases of goods and services, including expanded health-care expenditure imposed by the novel coronavirus, and, bailouts for industry and financial institutions. The Centre had earlier announced a relief package of ₹1.7-lakh crore of which the additional

ity was only ₹65,000 crore, since it included a frontloading of the budgeted expenditures. The Centre's budgeted fiscal deficit of 3.5% of GDP may have to be enhanced substantially to make up for the shortfall in budgeted revenues; account for a lower than projected nominal GDP for 2020-21, and provide for a stimulus. Thus, the Centre's fiscal deficit may increase to 6.0% of GDP. Expenditure on construction of hospitals, roads and other infrastructure and purchase of health-related equipment and medicines require prioritisation. These expenditures will have high multiplier effects. Similar initiatives may be undertaken by the State governments which may also enhance their combined fiscal deficit to about 4.0% of GDP to account for 3.0% of GDP under their respective Fiscal Responsibility Legislation/Law and to provide for the shortfall in their revenues and some stimulus.

Financing of the fiscal deficit poses a major challenge this year. On the demand side, the Central (6.0%) and State governments (4.0%) and Central and State public sector undertakings (3.5%) together present a total public sector borrowing requirement (PSBR) of 13.5% of GDP.

Against this, the total available resources may at best be 9.5% of GDP consisting of excess saving of the private sector at 7.0%, public sector saving of 1.5%, and net capital inflow of 1.0% of GDP. The gap of 4.0% points of GDP may result in increased cost of borrowing for the Central and State governments. This gap may be bridged by enhancing net capital inflows including borrowing from abroad and by monetising some part of the Centre's deficit. Monetisation of debt can at best be a one-time effort. This cannot become a general practice.

C. Rangarajan is former Chairman, Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council and Former Governor, Reserve Bank of India. D.K. Srivastava is Chief Policy Advisor, EY India and former Director, Madras School of Economics. The views expressed are personal

## Shaping India's response in a global hinge moment

The most important improvements concern its national security structures and their work, and flexibility in thinking



SHIVSHANKAR MENON

**I**ndia finds itself in an increasingly dangerous world, one that is fragmenting and slowing down economically. We are today in a new geopolitical situation, caused primarily by the rise of China, India and other powers – Indonesia, South Korea, Iran, Vietnam – in a crowded Asia-Pacific, which is the new economic and political centre of gravity of the world.

Rapid shifts in the balance of power in the region have led to arms races and to rising uncertainty, also fuelled by the unpredictability, disengagement and the transactional "America First" attitude of United States President Donald Trump. China-U.S. strategic contention is growing, uninhibited so far by their economic co-dependence. As China seeks primacy in a world so far dominated by the U.S., the world faces a destabilising power transition which may or may not be completed. It is a hinge moment in the international system.

### Strategic autonomy

What should India's response be to the new situation? Fear leads some to suggest alliances. Some Indians are so worried by what they see as an unstoppable China that they advocate that India enter

into an alliance with the U.S. India is much greater and more resilient than these people think.

There is a common thread running through the foreign and security policies of successive governments of India until this one, irrespective of their various political persuasions: it has been the pursuit of strategic autonomy for India. If there is any situation in which India should retain the initiative and not get entangled in others' quarrels, keeping India's powder dry and free to pursue its own national interest, it is this disorganized and uncertain world. This is a world that calls for creative diplomacy and flexibility, adjusting to the fast-changing balance of power and correlation of forces around us. An alliance seems to be exactly the wrong answer.

The Doklam crisis of 2017 is only the most recent example that shows that no one else is ready to deal with India's greatest strategic challenge – China. It saw a tepid reaction from the rest of the world. To expect anything else is unreasonable.

### The China question

China's rise is the foremost challenge which could derail India's quest. But it is also an opportunity. The big question, of course, is how to handle China. One possibility is to engage China bilaterally to see whether the two countries can evolve a new *modus vivendi*, to replace the one that was formalised in the 1988 Rajiv Gandhi visit. That framework is no longer working

and, seems to have tired of that role. India must work with other powers to ensure that its region stays multi-polar and that China behaves responsibly.

### Double opportunity awaits

We are living in a time when there is a deep sense of strategic confusion. In India's case, that confusion extends to it being not just about the ultimate goal India's foreign policy should pursue but also over the best means to achieve them. Indians seem to mistake controlling the narrative, which is the real task of foreign policy. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has declared a goal of India to be a 'Vishwa guru', or world teacher, which is still a long way away when it is an importer of knowledge and technology. Nor is it clear that this status will actually contribute to transforming the lives of India's citizens, though it might satisfy the ego.

The important thing is the need to rapidly accumulate usable and effective power, even while the macro balance will take time to right itself. A calculus of interests suggests that India-China relations are more complex than simple narratives suggest, and indeed that there is room here for both sides to seek a new *modus vivendi*. This would require a high-level strategic dialogue between the two sides about their core interests, red lines, differences and areas of convergence.

The U.S. is an essential partner for India's transformation. But it is withdrawing from the world, less certain as to how it will choose to deal with China. Certainly, it will no longer be the upholder of international order, economic or politi-

cal, and seems to have tired of that role. India must work with other powers to ensure that its region stays multi-polar and that China behaves responsibly.

Today, India is more dependent on the outside world than ever before. It relies on the world for energy, technology, essential goods like fertilizer and coal, commodities, access to markets, and capital. When you add the new security agenda and the contested global commons in outer and cyberspace and the high seas to India's traditional state-centred security concerns, you can see why there is greater worry or a sense of insecurity.

India risks missing the bus to becoming a developed country if it continues business as usual, or tries to imitate China's experience in the last 40 years, does not adapt, and does not manage its internal social and political churn better. The most important improvement that India needs to make concerns its national security structures and their work – introducing flexibility into India's thinking and India's structures. For change is the only certainty in life.

Shivshankar Menon is a former National Security Adviser. A longer version of this argument appeared in "India's Foreign Affairs Strategy", Brookings India Impact Series, May 2020

## 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.

### Living in danger

The industrial disaster is a redux of the Bhopal gas tragedy of 1984 (Page 1, "Vizag gas leak claims 11 lives; over 350 hospitalised" and Editorial, "Toxic disaster", both May 8). The country is dotted with chemical factories, oil depots, LPG plants and even ordnance factories cheek by jowl in towns and cities. Clusters of people live within a stone's throw from grave danger; the competent authorities look the other way. Such

industries need urgent re-sitement.

DEEPAK SINGHAL,  
Chennai

**Nowhere people**  
The plight of thousands of migrant workers caught unaware by the magnitude of the novel coronavirus outbreak is disturbing. Their by now sordid condition, scattered as they are all over the country, and earning their bread – in many instances for a pittance – needs to be addressed. Why should

there be much debate over how they should return to their home States. If they want to go back, which is a basic right, they should be allowed to do so. And, they should be allowed to go back safely. It is high time the Prime Minister settles the matter instantaneously.

MANI NATARAJAN,  
Chennai

**Reforms in judiciary**  
A letter writer ('Letters to the Editor', May 7) has justified annual vacations for courts using the

argument that "the life of lawyers and judges is highly demanding." The unwillingness of the law's practitioners and adjudicators to give up a colonial-age privilege for the larger public interest speaks poorly of their commitment to delivering fair and expeditious justice. Court vacations appear as a cruel anachronism when thousands languish in jails for years as 'undertrials' merely because their cases

# When a virus finds space in India's largest slum

Packed settlements and common toilets make physical distancing an impossibility in Dharavi. **Jyoti Shellar** and **Ajeet Mahale** report on the efforts to stop COVID-19 from spreading in a 2.5-sq km area that has recorded more than 800 cases and 25 deaths

**W**hile the roads in India have remained largely empty since Prime Minister Narendra Modi imposed a nationwide lockdown on March 24 to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus, Dharavi in Mumbai stands in stark contrast. Dharavi is many things: Asia's largest slum, one of the most densely populated areas in the world (with 3.6 lakh people per sq. km) and, now, also a containment zone. Driving through its narrow lanes, chock-a-block with settlements and thronging with people, it is evident that the one necessary norm to prevent the spread of COVID-19, physical distancing, is practically impossible here.

On March 18, a 68-year-old domestic help living in a congested slum pocket in Mumbai's central suburb of Ghatkopar tested positive for COVID-19. The previous day, her U.S.-returned employer was found to be infected. At the time, there didn't seem much to worry about. Mumbai had merely eight cases, all of them with a travel history abroad, barring this senior citizen.

But things changed on April 1. It was on that day that Dharavi recorded its first positive case of COVID-19. The index patient was a 56-year-old garment unit owner. He had mild cough and fever. After consulting a local doctor, and when his symptoms worsened, he was admitted to the civic-run Sion Hospital. His throat swab was sent for testing and it returned COVID-19-positive. By the time the civic officials were informed and they could reach him to investigate his contact history, the garment unit owner succumbed to the disease on the evening of April 1. The resident of Dr Baliga Nagar Housing Society, one of the oldest clusters of buildings in Dharavi's Jasmine Mill Road, had a simple routine. "Going by what his wife and two sons told us, he would go to his garment shop and to a nearby mosque to offer prayers everyday. So, we began our contact-tracing exercise as per that information," said Kiran Dighavkar, assistant commissioner of G-North Ward, which includes Dharavi. Dighavkar said the entire housing society was sealed the same day the patient died.

It was during contact tracing that one of the locals passed on an important tip to the civic officials. He told them that the garment unit owner had another house nearby, where he had hosted some people a couple of weeks ago. "When we questioned the family about the other house, they got angry. We eventually had to take the help of the police. They investigated this further," said Dighavkar. The police found that the garment unit owner had hosted five couples in his vacant house. All his visitors had attended the Tablighi Jamaat congregation in Delhi in March, India's first big cluster of COVID-19 cases. "He took care of their food and other requirements. While the women slept in the house, the men would step out at night and sleep in the nearby mosque," Dighavkar said.

The visitors had arrived on March 18 and stayed for five days before taking a flight back home to Kerala. But during their time at Dharavi, they had come in contact with 75 people, including the garment unit owner. Each one of them was isolated, in an attempt to break the chain of infection. But there was little reason to heave a sigh of relief. By this time, the number of cases in Mumbai had gone up to 181. The virus had quickly entered many other densely populated slums sprawled across the financial capital, making contact-tracing a nightmarish exercise.

## Alarm bells

A surgeon working in Wockhardt Hospital, which had reported many infections among its healthcare workers, was Dharavi's second case. The doctor, who lived in Dharavi's Vaibhav Apartment, got tested and admitted himself to the nearby SL Raheja Hospital after he suspected that he had contracted the virus. He then informed the civic officials that he had tested positive. The officials traced his contacts, isolated them and sealed his residential building. The doctor's wife also tested positive later.

Meanwhile, a 30-year-old woman from Dr Baliga Nagar Housing Society also tested positive. "This case was again linked to the Tablighi Jamaat congregation. The visitors hosted by the Dharavi's index patient had attended a birthday celebration in this woman's house," said Dighavkar.

But the real alarm was set off on April 4 when a positive case was reported from Dharavi's slum, Mukund Nagar. In the official books, this was the fourth case from Dharavi. The 48-year-old man lived with 11 members of his family in a two-room house, each room barely 100 sq ft. "He complained of chest pain and breathlessness. So, we immediately rushed him to Sion Hospital where they found that he was positive for COVID-19. The next day, they shifted him to Kasturba Hospital," said the patient's son adding that they were all quarantined in a facility in Dharavi. "We don't know what they treated him for. On April 13,



Private doctors in association with the BMC health department conduct door-to-door thermal screening in Mukund Nagar, Dharavi. (Below): Members of the Dharavi Medical Practitioners Association screen residents of Dharavi-Koliwada in Mumbai. ■ PRASHANT NAKWE / VIJAY BATE



we received a call saying he had passed away. We continued to be confined in the quarantine facility," he said. His father's burial was carried out by the civic staff in the presence of a family friend. When they returned home after completing the 14-day-long quarantine period, the family members were told to strictly remain at home and maintain distance from one another. "Can you imagine maintaining distance in such a small space," the son asked. "Dharavi is a maze of tiny lanes and by-lanes. You cannot escape rubbing shoulders multiple times even when you step out to attend nature's call."

## The problem of common toilets

India's most famous slum was a mangrove swamp originally inhabited by fishermen. As small factories and units found a footing in the area, it gradually grew into a dense slum that today offers livelihood to lakhs of people. According to the 2011 Census, Dharavi, which is spread over 2.5 sq km, is home to a population of 6.53 lakh people. "But there are over 2.5 lakh migrant workers who are unaccounted for," said Dighavkar.

The biggest issue in the area is common toilets, he said. "Most houses are merely 10x10 feet and you will find eight to 10 people living in such small rooms. How does one contain the virus in such a cramped space?" It is challenging to keep people confined to their homes, he said. "We are now providing 19,000 lunch packets and 19,000 dinner packets so that people don't venture out for food. But even during food distribution, we have crowds."

As a result, Dighavkar has put all his energy into removing the possible con-

tacts of patients, or those with symptoms, from the area and placing them in quarantine facilities. "This is the only way to deal with the problem in Dharavi," he said. In Dharavi nearly 3,000 quarantine beds have been made available – across a large sports complex, schools, a nature park, marriage halls, hotels and guest houses. Dighavkar claimed that 66% of the cases that have been found positive in Dharavi were people who were already in quarantine facilities.

Activists in the area are not convinced that this will stop the virus from spreading. Only if all the common toilets are sanitised aggressively at hourly intervals and people are made conscious about hygiene will infection stop spreading, they said. Dharavi has 275 municipal toilet blocks and 125 Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority (MHADA) toilet blocks. Each block consists of an average of 10 toilet seats. While a few buildings in the area and some pockets like Dharavi-Koliwada have their own toilets, the majority of the population depends on these common toilets. "We have been urging the civic officials to make sanitisers available for people at the entrance of the toilets. But even this basic step has not been initiated so far," said Raju Korde, president of the Dharavi Development Committee.

## Closing a crucial link

The residents of Dharavi-Koliwada decided to take it upon themselves to safeguard their population. They have barricaded the area to keep out outsiders. Koliwada, neighbour to Mukund Nagar, Shastri Nagar, and 60 Feet Road, which are hotbeds of COVID-19 cases, has recorded about five cases so far. "We don't want an explosion of cases in our area. Therefore, we have barricaded all the entry points," said Digambar Koli, secretary of the Dharavi Koli Samaj Trust. Koliwada has plenty of shops and markets, including a fish market. "Barricading

our entry points was the only way to stop the public from walking into the area," he said. The lockdown is practically non-existent in most of the area, he said. "Within Koliwada, we are trying to maintain discipline as much as possible," he said.

"Walk into Dharavi any time in the morning or evening, it is like a mela," said Anjum Shaikh, 60, a resident of Diamond Apartment on Jasmine Mill Road. "People living in buildings follow some discipline. But for others, it is impossible to stay inside their homes. With the ongoing holy month of Ramadan, many people step out in the evening to buy fruits and other things. Given the population of the area, even a few people form a large crowd."

A railway track separates the Transit Camp area at the eastern edge of Dharavi from the high-rise buildings in the suburb of Sion. Since the lockdown, a key bridge connecting the slum and the city has been shut. Locally known as Dhobi Ghat Bridge, it has long been a vital link for the residents of the area to access key medical facilities including the civic-run Sion Hospital. Dharavi residents now have to wait for an ambulance or a vehicle to take them to the other side, which was merely a five-minute walk from the bridge. "Many people have had a tough time reaching the hospital. We don't even know how many have died because of the delay," said Rahul Medhe, a resident of the area who has been organising food camps since the lockdown started.

Residents say that the bridge was closed as Dharavi started recording more cases and the people on the other side became apprehensive of its residents crossing over. The local doctors have shut their clinics too, which has added to their hardships. "The Transit Camp area has only three doctors operating their clinics," said Medhe. Chemists in the area are also regularly running out of their stock of drugs, he said. The queues and the struggles remind him of

the demolition days, Medhe said.

The status of Dharavi being Mumbai's COVID-19 hotspot is doing the area more harm than good, said residents. "Hospitals are turning away patients coming from Dharavi. Even as grocery stores and other essential services remain open, many employees living in Dharavi have been asked to stay at home, which has affected livelihoods," said a resident.

## 'Pushed to the margins'

"Aaj Dharavi lawaris ho gayi hai (Today Dharavi is orphaned)," said Babu Khan, president of the Dharavi Garment Association. Khan feels that it is unfair that the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has to deal with Dharavi alone. The State and Centre should have pitched in, he said, especially given that there are so many migrant workers in the area.

"It is the migrant workers who have made Dharavi a manufacturing hub for garments and leather. Today, they have been pushed to the margins," he said. Khan claimed that there are as many as 10 lakh migrant workers (higher than the BMC estimate) in the region, many of whom have had no choice but to subsist on handouts. "For how long can you survive on *daal khichadi*," he asked. According to Khan, the only solution to the spread of infection in Dharavi is to allow the migrant workers to leave. This would decongest the area. "This should have been done much earlier, but it is not too late even now."

"We want to go back home. Nobody wants to die here. If I have to die, I might as well die while I'm with my family back home," said Triveni Yadav from Jharkhand, who was employed to carry out interior work in homes.

Desperate to submit his application to get back home, Yadav stood in line for three hours from 6 a.m. only to be driven away by the police. In another corner of the Transit Camp, Haseena Shaikh, a widow raising four children, said she has been unable to buy milk for them for the last three weeks. "We got ration at the beginning of the lockdown, but after that there was nothing. We are dependent on the food distributed every night," she said. Shaikh said going back home to Gulbarga in Karnataka was not an option for her. "My two brothers are rickshaw drivers and they don't have any income now. How will they support me?"

Akkubai, who has lived in Dharavi for the last 40 years, said she has never seen a situation as bad as this. "Every day we see long queues outside doctors' clinics and outside police stations; hundreds standing in the hot sun. People may just die in this heat," she said.

Many residents of Dharavi question the BMC's statistics while some remain completely oblivious of the spurt in cases in their neighbouring lanes, which is

We have been urging the civic officials to make sanitisers available for people at the entrance of the toilets. But even this basic step has not been initiated so far.

RAJU KORDE  
President, Dharavi Development Committee

only a stone's throw away. "I don't think the number of cases is so high," said Jagan Nadar, a resident of Kannada Chawl, which is close to Mukund Nagar, where many cases have been reported. "I have not come across any person who knows of a positive case. If the threat is so big, why has there been no medical check-up in our area," he asked.

## The way forward

Bu Dighavkar has a different take. He said Dharavi's popularity has played a crucial role in bringing focus to the area during the pandemic. "Every small development, every single positive case is reported by the media. The residents of Dharavi are constantly watching this, and it is helping spread awareness as well as caution," he said, as he received a music video of a new Dharavi pandemic rap song on WhatsApp. Featuring Bollywood stars, the trilingual music video by rappers from the area has a simple message: stay home, stay safe. Dighavkar hopes that the music video will create further awareness.

In an attempt to detect people with symptoms early, a door-to-door screening exercise in Dharavi has covered a population of 90,000 people till Friday. Health workers have also been tasked with checking the blood oxygen levels of senior citizens. Nearly 7,000 senior citizens have undergone this check-up and 250 were referred to hospitals for treatment after their oxygen levels were found low.

On Thursday, a Central government team, including the Joint Secretary of the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Lav Agarwal, visited Dharavi and suggested that all focus should be on institutional quarantine to break the chain of infection. Till date, Dharavi has quarantined 2,480 people in various institutions. Only 2,400 people from the slum have been tested for COVID-19 so far.

By Friday, Mumbai had recorded 12,142 cases of which 808 were from Dharavi. Of the 462 deaths in the city, 26 patients were from Dharavi.

All eyes are on Dighavkar. Will he be able to stop an exponential jump in cases and deaths? Where will Dharavi stand by the end of this month? "As we screen more people and isolate them, we are likely to see a substantial decrease in the number of cases in the coming days. But I can't give you a specific number," he said.



FROM PAGE ONE

## 103 deaths, 3,390 new cases in a day

"As many as 42 districts have seen no fresh cases in the last 28 days, while 29 districts have seen no fresh cases in the last 21 days. A total of 36 districts have seen no fresh cases in the last 14 days, and 46 districts have seen no fresh cases in the last 7 days," a release said.

Stating that some States like Gujarat, Maharashtra, Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh have reported more cases, Mr. Agarwal said, "it is important to strengthen containment efforts. Today, when we are talking of relaxations and return of migrant workers, we have to understand that we also have to learn to live with the virus. The preventive guidelines against the virus need to be implemented as behavioural changes."

The Ministry of Health noted that it has issued additional guidelines for States facility quarantine/ facility isolation in hotels, service apt, lodges etc., for returnees from abroad/contacts/ isolation of suspects or confirmed cases. "There are large number of facilities such as hotels, service apartments, lodges which remain unoccupied due to impact of COVID-19 on tra-

vel and tourism. There are also instances where people who don't have requisite space at home and may opt for such facilities. This is likely to reduce the pressure on the family, give comfort to the person, and protect the family members and immediate neighbourhood," state the guidelines.

It adds that the facility owner of the quarantine/ isolation facility shall make additional arrangements, including ensuring in-house availability of a trained doctor and a nurse on a 24X7 basis. The doctor will monitor the contacts/cases in quarantine/isolation facilities once a day on basic parameters of temperature, pulse, blood pressure, respiratory rate and pulse oxymetry and keep record of the same. "The doctor engaged by the facility will inform the District Surveillance Officer regarding the list of cases/contacts admitted to such facility and their health status," the guideline said.

The quarantined/isolated persons should not be allowed to meet visitors but the facility will provide Wi-Fi facility and ensure that the client downloads the Aarogya Setu App on mobile.

## 16 M.P. migrants run over by train near Aurangabad

Disturbing scenes were witnessed in Karmad as police and rescue teams shifted the mutilated bodies.

"From initial reports, it appears that they started walking on Thursday evening from Jalna and after walking 40 km and exhausted by their journey, decided to rest on the track, where they fell asleep. They were planning to walk to Bhusaval but tragedy struck," said a policeman from the Karmad police station.

SCR officials said the incident occurred at 5.22 a.m. between Badnapur and Karmad stations on the Parbhani and Manmad section under the Nanded division.

The train comprised empty containers of petroleum products and was on its way from Cherlapalli in Telangana to Manmad in Maharashtra.

Immediately on receipt of information, personnel from the Railway Protection Force, including senior officials, and other depart-

ments reached the place. A medical relief van with doctors and nurses was also rushed to the spot.

The railways have appointed Ram Kripal, Commissioner of Railway Safety, South Central Circle, to hold an independent inquiry into the incident.

BJP leader and Jalna MP Raosaheb Danve said he was trying to ascertain as to what compelled the labourers to begin walking to their hometowns despite the Maharashtra government having started transport of labourers via the Shramik Special trains.

"I cannot comment on the incident except to say it is deeply disturbing. I am on my way to Jalna to find out whether or not the labourers were being given adequate food during the lockdown period. I know of companies that have housed and fed their migrant workers," Mr. Danve told a vernacular news channel.

## NGT directs LG Polymers to deposit ₹50 crore

"The statutory authorities responsible for authorising and regulating such activities may also be accountable for their lapses, if any, in dealing with the matter," the Bench said.

"Leakage of hazardous gas on such a scale, adversely affecting public health and environment, clearly attracts the principle, 'strict liability', against the enter-

prise engaged in hazardous or inherently dangerous industry. Such an entity is liable to restore the damage caused under the Environment Law, apart from other statutory liability," the Bench said, adding it was necessary to take steps to prevent such incidents. The order came after the NGT took cognisance *suo motu* of the gas leak at the plant.

## Wadhawans' custody extended till May 10

They were held in Satara on April 26

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
MUMBAI

A special Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) court on Friday extended the custody of Kapil Wadhawan and Dheeraj Wadhawan, promoters of Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Limited (DHFL), till May 10.

The Wadhawans were arrested from their bungalow at Mahabaleshwar in Satara on April 26 for their alleged involvement in the Yes Bank scam and were remanded to the CBI's custody till Friday.

phones which belonged to their employees and relatives, and that the agency wanted to check if the phones were used to send any incriminating messages or e-mails. Though the Wadhawans objected to the CBI's claims, the court extended their custody.

The Wadhawans were arrested from their bungalow at Mahabaleshwar in Satara on April 26 for their alleged involvement in the Yes Bank scam and were remanded to the CBI's custody till Friday.

# 'PM should talk to CMs as a colleague'

Central government needs to give a sense of transparency about its plans, says Rahul Gandhi

SANDEEP PHUKAN  
NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to work with the Chief Ministers as a colleague.

"If we speak fairly, the situation we are in today is not a normal situation. So, we can't have a normal solution. We need to decentralise and take it to the district level. Then we will win. If we keep it in the PMO, we will lose the fight. The PM should talk to the CMs more, not as a boss but as a colleague," he said.

Addressing the media, he said: "In the Congress party, we have been having discus-

sions internally. We are now into a lockdown for 45 days and we are beginning into a bit of problem. There is this feeling that we need to immediately get this package for small and medium businesses, help migrants and exit the lockdown."

### 'Not the time to criticise'

"These suggestions are in the spirit of helping the government. The Central government needs to give a sense of transparency about their plan or action. The government needs to tell the people these are the criteria that needs to be ticked off and then this is what we will



Rahul Gandhi

do," said Mr. Gandhi.

"This is not the time to criticise and I won't do it. We need to get out the situation we are in right now. If you ask any businesses, they say our supply lines that run

through red, orange and green. But there is a problem there. We need to restore these chains," he added.

"I would urge the Prime Minister to treat the States and district magistrates [DMs] to treat as partners. We have been talking about cash transfers. Migrants need the money now. There are pushes and pulls with regard to the migrant workers. Start implementing NYAY and put it in 50% of the households. It won't cost much."

"PM Modi has a style and that's all right. But in such a situation, I would want many strong CMs, strong DMs and a strong PM working together

er. For example, these zones of red, green and orange. Our CMs say what they think is green has been marked red by the Centre. So, there is a mismatch between what the States think and the Centre marks," he added.

The Congress Chief Ministers have said they are not getting funds from the Centre, said Mr. Gandhi.

As the visibility of Mr. Gandhi grows, he indicated that his return as Congress chief continued to be a "closed chapter". "Please see my letter from a year ago," he told a reporter when he was asked if he would return as party president.

## India, Japan to work together post COVID-19

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and his Japanese counterpart, Taro Kono, on Friday agreed to work together with other countries to deal with challenges post COVID-19, with the India-Japan special strategic and global partnership as the basis.

"Mr. Singh informed Mr. Kono Taro on India's contribution to international efforts against COVID-19 and discussed areas of mutual cooperation in the global fight against the pandemic," said the Defence Ministry in a statement.

## NGT cites archaic law in gas leak case

Principle of 'strict liability' was made redundant in 1986

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal's order on Friday in the Visakhapatnam gas tragedy found LG Polymers *prima facie* liable under the 19th century English law principle of "strict liability", which was made redundant in India by the Supreme Court in 1986. Lawyers say the term "absolute liability" should have been used instead.

Even though the NGT directed the company to deposit an initial amount of ₹50 crore and formed a fact-finding committee, its use of the term "strict liability" has been questioned. For, under the "strict liability principle", a party is not liable and need not pay compensation if a hazardous substance escapes his premises by accident or by an "act of God" among other circumstances.

**'Woefully inadequate'** The Supreme Court, while deciding the Oleum gas leak case of Delhi, found strict liability woefully inadequate to protect citizens' rights in an industrialised economy like India and replaced it with the "absolute liability principle".

The country was then

reeling under the shock of the 1984 Bhopal gas tragedy. The court then Chief Justice P.N. Bhagwati wanted corporations to be made fully liable for future "undeserved suffering of thousands of innocent citizens".

The country was then reeling under the shock of the 1984 Bhopal gas tragedy. The court, under the then Chief Justice P.N. Bhagwati wanted corporations to be made fully liable for future "undeserved suffering of thousands of innocent citizens."

So, under the absolute liability principle, the apex court held that a company in a hazardous industry cannot claim any exemption. It has to mandatorily pay compensation, whether or not the disaster was caused by its negligence. The court said a hazardous enterprise has an "absolute non-delegable duty to the community".

"If any harm results on account of such activity, the enterprise must be absolutely liable to compensate for such harm irrespective of the fact that the enterprise had taken all reasonable care and that the harm occurred without any negligence on its part," Justice Bhagwati wrote.

"The court found that strict liability, evolved in an 1868 English case called Rylands versus Fletcher, provided companies with several exemptions from assuming liability. Absolute liability, on the other hand, provided them with no defence or exemptions. The principle of absolute liability is part of Article 21 (right to life) ... The courts, to make the legal position clear, should use the term 'absolute liability' in orders and judgments," said senior advocate Sanjay Parikh.

The joint letter, signed by CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury, CPI general secretary D. Raja, CPI(ML) general secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya, All-India Forward Bloc general secretary Debabrata Biswas, Revolutionary Socialist Party general secretary Manoj Bhattacharya, RJD MP Manoj Jha, Sharad Yadav's Lok Janta Party, and president of Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi Thol. Thirumavalavan, said the workers are being treated as slaves.

## Eight political parties pan dilution of labour laws

Write a joint letter to President

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Eight political parties have written to President Ram Nath Kovind protesting the dilution of labour laws, including extending the daily working hours from eight to twelve in six States, on the pretext of battling the COVID-19 pandemic.

The joint letter, signed by CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury, CPI general secretary D. Raja, CPI(ML) general secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya, All-India Forward Bloc general secretary Debabrata Biswas, Revolutionary Socialist Party general secretary Manoj Bhattacharya, RJD MP Manoj Jha, Sharad Yadav's Lok Janta Party, and president of Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi Thol. Thirumavalavan, said the workers are being treated as slaves.

"Reducing them to this status is not merely a violation of the Constitution, but its nullification," they said.

Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and Punjab have extended the working hours from eight to 12 without amending the Factories Act. The parties said others States are likely to join this list.

Uttar Pradesh has sus-

pended all labour laws, except three, for a period of three years.

The Madhya Pradesh government, similarly, announced a Cabinet decision to exempt all establishments from obligations under all labour laws for a thousand days.

**'Centre has done little'** "Diluting labour rights seems to be the logic employed by your government at the Centre and by some State governments, rather than concentrating on fighting the pandemic by augmenting our health facilities and protecting our doctors and health workers and taking care of the people's requirements," the letter said.

The parties said the Indian economy was already in a tailspin, hurtling towards a recession even before the pandemic. The government has done precious little to help those whose livelihoods were affected, as 14 crore workers have lost their jobs since the lockdown began, they said.

"Surely, you will agree that India cannot have more deaths due to hunger, starvation, poverty and deprivation than those infected by this deadly virus," stated the memorandum.

The industrial hub faces a massive shortfall in revenues amid growing cost of combating the pandemic

ALOK DESHPANDE  
MUMBAI

Announcing that Maharashtra's financial condition has deteriorated to the extent that it could not even afford to go ahead with annual transfers of government employees in the ongoing fiscal, the State's Finance Department on Monday said there will be no new projects nor will new construction work be undertaken in the financial year 2020-21, in an effort to reduce expenses.

The State government also announced that all ongoing works except pre-monsoon necessities, will not be allocated any funds.

The government also said the salary for March for A, B and C class government employees will be paid in two installments. Directions have also been issued to stop new recruitment as well as cancelling purchase orders or new tenders.

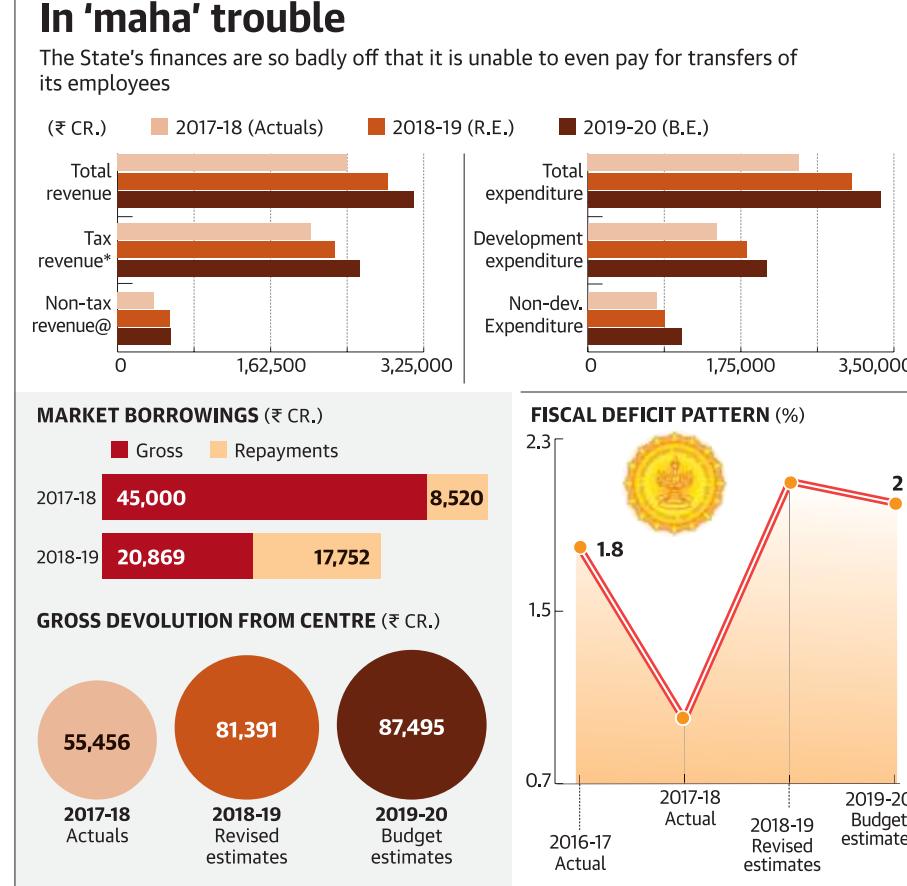
### Revenues slump

According to data available with *The Hindu*, the revenue received by the State through non-GST sources in April in financial year 2018-19 and 2019-20 was ₹7,829.44 crore and ₹8,251.2 crore, respectively. However, this year, the receipts for April are barely ₹3,314.42 crore. Of this, the major contribution comes from Sales Tax on fuel which is around ₹2,299.82 crore. Stamp duty from registrations brought in ₹269.35 crore and excise duties another ₹237.5 crore.

According to officials, the State was expecting the revenue around ₹3,500 crore,

in 'maha' trouble

The State's finances are so badly off that it is unable to even pay for transfers of its employees



\* includes share in Central taxes | @ includes grants from Centre

SOURCE: RBI STUDY OF STATE FINANCES 2019

tion to its citizens. The Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Jan Arogya Yojana (MJPYAY) will now cover government, semi-government employees and as well as white ration card holders. The government has made COVID-19 tests and treatment free and capped the disease's treatment at private hospitals.

The State has also set up a special website for industries to seek clearances to resume work. Till May 5, the government had received 38,363 applications out of which 12,336 have already gone in operation.

In view of the crisis, the State's Power Department has decided to reduce power tariff on an average by 7% for consumers. For the industrial and commercial consumers, the reduction in tariff would be 10-15%, while for residential consumers, it would be 5%.

Further, for the next three months, industrial and commercial consumers will not have to pay fixed charges. There will be no increase in tariff for agricultural consumers, and those using power derived from solar roof sources will not have to pay any additional charges.

Maharashtra government has formed two committees – one of experts and another of ministers to tackle the financial recovery of the State in post-corona times.

At its first meeting, the bureaucrats' panel recommended that the State government rethink the budget.

Former Union minister Sharad Pawar has estimated that Maharashtra is going to face a shortfall of ₹1,00,000 crore to sustain its projected expenditure in FY 2020-21 and sought help from the Centre in the form of additional grants of an untold nature.

As per the budget presented on March 6, 2020, the State was already staring at a revenue deficit of ₹9,510.71 crore. With financial activity closed down for over 40 days now and all source of revenue dried up the deficit is likely to soar.

AN-NDNE

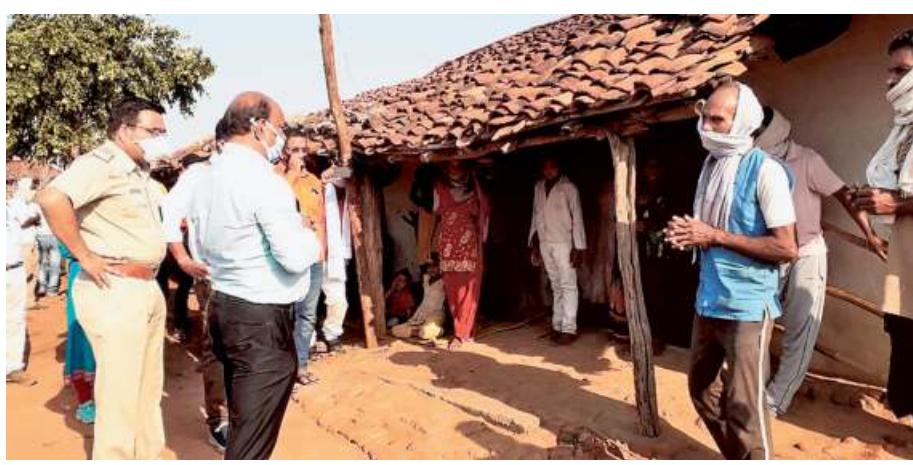
# Accident victims were battling hunger

The previous night, they had called up relatives in Madhya Pradesh to say they were in a helpless state

SIDHARTH YADAV  
BHOPAL

"Please send us some money. We don't have anything left. Even the contractor is refusing to pay us. What should we do? We will die of hunger and thirst," were the last words Krishnawati Singh recalled from her husband's phone conversation at 9 p.m. on Thursday, as he despiritedly trudged along railway tracks in Maharashtra hoping to reach his village home, some 800 km away.

Back home in Maman village of Madhya Pradesh's Umaria district, landless and without even a head of cattle to sell or borrow money on, Ms. Singh was helpless. "He stepped out in the first place as we barely had anything to eat here; how could we send him anything," asked a disconsolate Ms. Singh, her voice barely audible over the phone line as she fought to stifle sobs of despair.



**Help at hand:** Shahdol district officials interacting with the families of those run over by a train in Maharashtra. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

## 'Train tragedy could have been averted'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on Friday said the incident of a goods train mowing down 16 migrant workers in Aurangabad could have been averted had arrangements been made for their shelter.

Taking *suo motu* cognizance of media reports, it issued notice to the Maharashtra Chief Secretary and the Aurangabad District Magistrate and asked them for reports in four weeks on the steps taken to give the migrants food, shelter and other amenities.

## Consider priority evacuation plea: SC

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday asked the government to consider a plea made by some doctors and nurses, based in Saudi Arabia and all in advanced stages of pregnancy, to be granted "further priority" among pregnant women to be repatriated amid the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown.

"The government shall explore the question of further priority as per the specific cases of the petitioners and shall take appropriate steps," a three-judge Bench led by Justice Ashok Bhushan ordered.

The government, represented by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, argued that a standard operating protocol was already in place and pregnant women were being given priority. But senior advocate Indira Jaising and advocate Jose Abraham, for the petitioners, pressed that their clients were vulnerable and should be considered for immediate evacuation.

## Opposition slams Centre for deaths on tracks

'Govt's apathy towards migrant labour to blame for 16 being run over by train'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI



Priyanka Gandhi Vadra

Opposition parties on Friday held the Centre responsible for the death of 16 migrant workers, who were run over by a goods train in Aurangabad, contending that the sudden announcement of the lockdown in March coupled with the government's apathy towards the stranded labourers had led to the tragic incident.

Former Congress President Rahul Gandhi, in a post on Twitter, slammed the government for the treatment meted out to the migrant workers. "I am shocked by the news of the killing of our labourer brothers and sisters

as a result of being crushed by a goods train. We should be ashamed of the treatment being meted out to our nation builders. My condolences to the families of those killed and prayers for the early recovery of the injured," he tweeted in Hindi.

Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra

said that the lockdown had robbed the migrant workers of any means to make a living and demanded that the government should pay compensation and extend all possible help to those affected by the incident.

The "heartbreaking incident" had occurred due to "criminal" neglect by the government, CPI (M) General Secretary Sitaram Yechury asserted.

"The death of these poor labourers is solely due to the sudden announcement of a lockdown and denial of transport to them for weeks, while not providing a substantive relief package. It is criminal what has been done

to facilitate his return. "I had told him to come back when the trains resumed. But he didn't listen," she said, her voice trailing off.

Not paid for two months at a steel factory in Jalna district, the men had approached their contractor for a bus to help them return

home, she said. "But the contractor disappeared after that," recounted Ms. Devwani.

Now, only Arjun Singh,

her brother-in-law, can support the family of two. "At present, we are surviving on 15 kg rice procured through ration shops," said Mr. Arjun.

Pointing out that poverty and lack of local jobs drove the villagers away to hunt for work, Bhagwati Singh, the sarpanch, said, "They also don't get much work under MNREGA here".

At Antoli in Shahdol district, Rajkumar Singh said he had lost six cousins in the incident – three of them married, with the youngest only 23. "There are no employment opportunities here. And my family can live off our five acres of farms for only three-four months," he said. He had last heard from his cousins on Thursday.

As of now, 67,833 requests for repatriation have been registered. The Ministry of External Affairs has developed a dynamic online platform on which requests received by Indian Missions

from Indian nationals wishing to return are regularly being uploaded," said a source with knowledge of the operation scheduled from May 7 to 15. The operation is officially named 'Vande Bharat Mission'.

Following arrival, all Indian citizens will have to spend the mandatory quarantine period in a government facility to avoid spread of COVID-19.

Russia and Ukraine have flown out a substantial number of their citizens from India in the last few weeks, even as several thousand Indians remain stranded in the two countries and east European countries such as Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. A Ukrainian diplomatic source said at least 15,000 Indians are in Ukraine. "Our assessment is that at least 4,000 Indians would be willing to be airlifted from Ukraine." A number of flights to Thailand are expected to be part of Phase-II.

In Phase-I, the Indian

Ministry of Civil Aviation shared eligibility criteria for passengers taking these special flights. It said several countries were allowing only nationals from the destination country to enter, including Oman, Ku-

wait, Malaysia, the Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

All foreign nationals in India from one of the 12 destination countries to which Air India has flights can also avail themselves of the service.

Third country nationals must ensure they have visas to enter Bahrain, Bangladesh, the U.S., the U.K. or Singapore or fly through these countries to another country.

Seafarers can also buy tickets on outbound flights.

## 'Vande Bharat Mission' to cover more European nations

Indians in Russia, Ukraine to be evacuated in the next phase

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE  
NEW DELHI

The 'Vande Bharat Mission' to evacuate Indian citizens is expected to cover Russia, Ukraine, Germany, Spain and east Europe in the third week of May, informed sources said here on Friday.

The process of repatriation, which is focused on the Gulf and the South Asian regions, began on Thursday and is expected to involve 64 flights, bringing back 15,000

nationals from different parts of the world through 14 Indian airports.

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Seafarers can also buy tickets on outbound flights.



Passengers being checked at the Delhi airport after they arrived from Singapore. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

## Over 1,000 return to India on six flights

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Air India's special flights brought back 1,081 passengers and 10 infants on the second day of the 'Vande Bharat Mission' on Friday.

Six flights flew in from five countries. Passengers returned from Singapore, Dhaka, Bahrain, Riyadh and Dubai to Delhi, Srinagar, Kochi, Kozhikode and Chennai.

Air India is also allowed to ferry passengers on out-bound flights to the U.K., the U.S. and Singapore. As many as 169 passengers flew from Delhi to Washington, DC and 80 from Delhi to San Francisco. There were only 15 passengers on the Delhi-Singapore flight.

Air India has flights from London to New York, Washington, DC, Chicago and San Francisco. Seven other flights will airlift Indians from London.

Official sources also announced a plan for repatriation of Indians aboard INS Jalashwa and INS Magar from the Maldives. The ships will make two voyages to Kochi and Tuticorin. INS Jalashwa, with 698 passengers, is expected to reach Kochi on May 10 in the first round and proceed to Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu.

source said 27 flights are scheduled to take off from the Gulf countries and 7 flights from Bangladesh. On Friday, a special Air India charter flight brought 167 students from Dhaka to Srinagar. Most of the students were enrolled in medical schools in the capital of Bangladesh. During the same time, 14 non-scheduled commercial flights are reserved for stranded Indians from Singapore, Malaysia and the Philippines. At the same time, seven flights shall take

off for New York, Washington, DC, Chicago and San Francisco. Seven other flights will airlift Indians from London.

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**विकास प्रबंधन संस्थान**  
**Development Management Institute**  
Transit Campus, Udyog Bhawan, East Gandhi Maidan, Patna - 800004, Bihar, Phone : (0612) 2675180, 2675181

**Appointment of Director, Development Management Institute (DMI)**

Development Management Institute (DMI), Patna, invites applications for the position of Director. Set up on the initiative of the Government of Bihar in 2014 as a Board managed autonomous high performing knowledge institution, DMI has successfully emerged from its inception phase and aspires to be among the top academic Institutes in India and Asia. With an excellent inter-disciplinary faculty team and a self-regulating institutional culture, DMI seeks to Empower Grassroots' and make a meaningful impact on the development sector through its distinctive academic curriculum, teaching, training and research activities.

DMI offers a two-year full-time Post-Graduate Programme approved by AICTE in Development Management (PDM) for building a professional cadre of Development Managers. It also offers short duration Competency Enhancement Programmes for practising development professionals, policy makers and Government functionaries besides consulting and advisory services to government and non-government clientele.

The ideal candidate to lead DMI would have a Ph. D or its equivalent from a premier institution in India or abroad in a relevant discipline such as Rural Management, Health Management, Agribusiness Management, Public Administration, Development Studies and related areas with a minimum of 10 years of experience as a full professor. She or he should have taught in reputed institutions in post graduate and doctoral programmes besides delivering executive development programmes designed for Development Practitioners. An impressive record of published research in top quality journals of Development Management with strong credentials in case based teaching and research as well as a demonstrated track record of academic and administrative leadership are essential. The Search Committee reserves the right to relax any of these requirements in exceptional cases of proven merit.

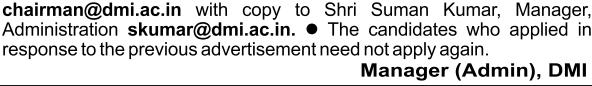
The Basic Pay for the Director would be at pay level 17 (Rs.2,25,000/-fixed) as recommended by the 7th CPC with other generous perks normally available to heads of premier institutions. Applications with exhaustive bio data giving details of educational qualifications, teaching, research and praxis, may be sent latest by 1700 hrs. on the 24th May 2020 in the format downloadable from DMI's website at <https://www.dmi.ac.in/careers/director>.

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• The candidates who applied in response to the previous advertisement need not apply again.

**Manager (Admin), DMI**



**MANGALORE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY COMPANY LIMITED**  
(A Government of Karnataka undertaking)  
Corporate Office, 2nd Floor, MESCOM Bhavan, Kavoor Cross Road, Bejai, Mangaluru - 575004. E-mail : [seprojmescom@gmail.com](mailto:seprojmescom@gmail.com)  
CIN : U40101KA 2002 SIC 03425

No. SEE(Projects)/EE/APR/2020-21/519 Date: 05.05.2020

**TENDER NOTIFICATION (e-Procurement Mode Only)**

MESCOM invites tender for appointment of 'Project Management Agency' for Providing Consultancy and Monitoring of Gas Insulated Substation works in Mangaluru & Udupi Circles of MESCOM under Integrated Power Development Scheme (IPDS).

**Bid Enquiry No:** MESCOM/SE-PROJECT/IPDS/GIS/PMA/20-21/01R

The interested eligible bidders may log on to : [www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in](http://www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in) or after 11.05.2020.

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**MATERIALS MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT CHENNAI - 600 008**

**E-TENDER NOTICE FOR THE SUPPLY OF STORES - No.22/2020 dated 07.05.2020**

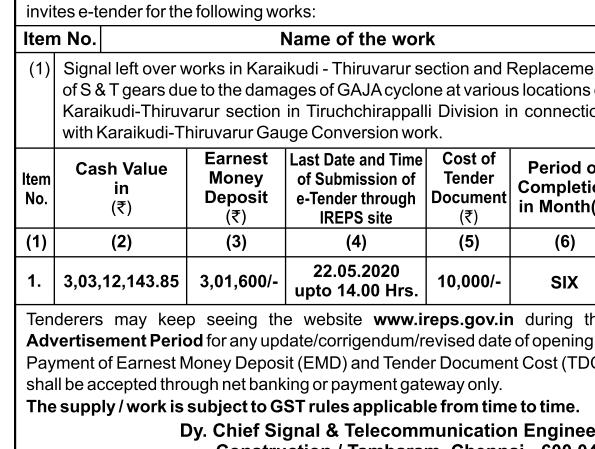
Southern Railway has implemented an e-system. All advertised tenders will be dealt through e-procurement system only. No manual offer/postal offer will be entertained. These tenders can be accessed under the link [www.irops.gov.in->SR->COS](http://www.irops.gov.in->SR->COS)

**Sl. No. E-Tender No. Description Tender Closing date & time**

1. 82/20/5058/EOT 24 OFC Cable 27.05.2020 @ 14.30 Hrs.

Railway reserves the right to issue any corrigendum to the tenders. Important Notice to Vendors: e-procurement is in the link [www.irops.gov.in](http://www.irops.gov.in).

**Deputy Chief Materials Manager, Construction, Egmore, Chennai - 600 008.**



**SOUTHERN RAILWAY**  
(CONSTRUCTION ORGANISATION)  
TENDER 3rd EXTENSION NOTICE  
NIT No. 41\_42 & 43/2019-2020/BCMC/MW/CHENNAI Date : 08.05.2020  
NIT No. 41\_42 & 43/2019-2020/BCMC/MW/CHENNAI Dated: 10.03.2020 for three works are extended upto 22.05.2020, 3.00 P.M. Further details are available in the Web site <http://www.tenders.tn.gov.in>. Other conditions remain unaltered.  
Superintendent Engineer, PWD, Buildings (C&M) Circle, M.W., Chepauk, Chennai-5.  
DIPR /1758 / TENDER / 2020

**E-TENDER NOTICE NO. 01-CECNMS-20-21-PBW41-II DATED : 05.05.2020**  
E-TENDER NOTICE NO. 02-CECNMS-20-21-PBW418 DATED : 05.05.2020  
For on behalf of The President of India, The Chief Engineer, Construction, Southern Railway, Egmore, Chennai-600 008, invites E-Tender for the following work(s) as per Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) in our portal <a href="http://www.irops.gov.in

INTERVIEW | HARSH VARDHAN

# 'Lockdown can't continue forever, it's an extreme social distancing step'

Given the diversity of a country like India, it becomes essential to use the lockdown strategy very judiciously, says the Union Health Minister

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN

**Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan** says the lockdown cannot continue forever and that it is an extreme intervention to break the chain of transmission. "Lockdown has great repercussions for the economy, society and psychology," he says. Worldwide, seven candidate vaccines are at a clinical evaluation stage, while 82 are at a preclinical evaluation stage, which include those developed by six Indian firms.

How long can we continue with the lockdown, physical distancing and delayed transmission in the absence of any treatment? Also, are there any frontrunners for the WHO solidarity trials?

■ It is true that in the absence of treatment, social distancing measures cannot continue forever to restrict the transmission. Lockdown is an extreme social distancing intervention available to break the chain of transmission. This does not destroy or kill the virus but is an important measure that flattens the peak of the epidemic, slows the growth of the epidemic curve and provides time to the health and social systems

to mount a response. Lockdown and social distancing, when supported with public health measures such as case detection, contact-tracing, isolation and management of cases, help in containing the disease effectively. At the same time, a countrywide lockdown has socioeconomic implications, in addition to the health-related issues. Given the diversity of a country like India, it becomes essential to use this extreme strategy very judiciously.

As regards the frontrunner for solidarity trials, based on evidence from laboratory, animal and clinical studies, four treatment options were identified – Remdesivir; Lopinavir/Ritonavir;

■ Any decision on its relaxa-



... as on date, there has been no documented case of asymptomatic transmission

tion after continuous imposition has to take into consideration the wide diversity in the country and such relaxation should be done in a way that it does not damage the gains in disease containment during the lockdown. At this stage, it would suffice to say that we need an optimal mix of relaxations and restrictions so that disease control continues along with nil or minimal impacts on the economy.

Keeping this in mind,

while devising the strategy of dividing the country into three zones, green, red and orange, identifying the containment regions in red zones, as well as identifying possible relaxations in various zones, we are making sure that the disease situation is monitored regularly at various levels and the situation does not deteriorate.

India seems to have a peculiarly large number of asymptomatic patients. How will we manage this group now in the absence of aggressive testing that is being proposed for this period?

■ An asymptomatic case is a person infected with COVID-19 virus, as confirmed by laboratory test, but does not develop symptoms. Asymptomatic transmission refers to the transmission of the virus from a person having disease without any symptoms. There are few reports of laboratory confirmed cases that

are truly asymptomatic, and as on date, there has been no documented case of asymptomatic transmission. However, this does not exclude the possibility that it may occur. Asymptomatic cases have been reported as part of contact tracing efforts in some countries.

A patient develops symptoms when the viral load is high in the throat and nose and the diagnosis of infection can best be made using RT-PCR test when a patient reports symptoms. Almost 80% patients tend to report no or very mild symptoms and such patients may not even report such mild symptoms when they occur in isolation.

Any carrier of infection can pose challenges in containing the transmission of COVID-19 to others. However, all those who are contacts of any lab-confirmed case are advised home isolation and to maintain safe physical distance. Identification of all the asymptomatic cases will

require repeated testing of our 130 crore population, which is a resource-expensive and time-consuming exercise for any country and is neither possible nor recommended because of its feasibility.

Where does India stand in terms of infrastructure to manage a surge in cases?

■ India stands at a reasonably good position in terms of infrastructure to manage a surge in cases. I would like to inform that 80% of the infections are mild or asymptomatic, 15% are severe infections requiring oxygen and 5% are critical infections that may require artificial ventilation. The more important thing is oxygen supply, which is needed in 20% of the cases, 15% through masks or cannula and 5% through a ventilator. As of now [May 6], the status in dedicated facilities identified by Central Ministries, States and UTs is: Total number of 2,41,505 iso-

lation beds (excluding ICU beds), total ICU beds are 27,663, total oxygen-supported beds are 88,753 and ventilator-supported beds are 19,257. In addition, several domestic manufacturers for ventilators have been identified and orders for 60,848 ventilators have been placed, which will be received in a phased manner in May and June.

How will we manage when the lockdown ends and people come out and transmission hits again?

■ It is a fact that the COVID-19 outbreak has placed unprecedented demands on our already overburdened health system. However, given the current scenario and crisis posed by COVID-19, our health facilities and workforce are currently busy with lots of activities related to it. Resources available with other government departments have also been pressed into action.

## IN BRIEF



## 251 Shramik trains run so far: Railways

NEW DELHI  
The Indian Railways on Friday said it had so far run 251 Shramik special trains, ferrying about 2.61 lakh migrants stranded in different parts of the country due to the nationwide lockdown. "About 53 trains were planned for today [Friday], of which over 40 have been run," a Railways spokesperson said. Till Thursday, Railways had run about 210 such trains.

## 30 more BSF personnel test positive for COVID

NEW DELHI  
Thirty more BSF personnel tested positive for COVID-19 on Friday. Six of them are in Delhi and 24 others in Tripura. The total number of infected persons now stands at 235 in the 2.5 lakh-strong force. Two others have recovered and two have died so far. The cases have been reported from the units deployed in Delhi, Jodhpur, Kolkata and Ambassa in Tripura.

## 390 new cases, 24 deaths in Gujarat

AHMEDABAD  
With 390 new cases and 24 deaths, Gujarat continues to see a sharp rise in COVID-19 infections despite the stringent lockdown measures imposed in the two main affected cities of Ahmedabad and Surat. The State now has 7,403 cases, 449 deaths and 1,872 recoveries. Two medical experts – AIIMS director Dr. Randeep Guleria and Dr. Manish Suneja – flew into Ahmedabad on Friday following instructions from Home Minister Amit Shah to guide local doctors. The situation in Ahmedabad remains grim with almost 71% of the total cases, 5,260, and almost 75% of fatalities reported from the State. Containment efforts are on the most congested pockets of the city.

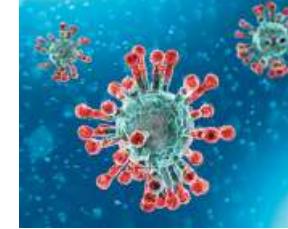
## Phase-2 trial with three drugs offers hope

Testing in Hong Kong hospitals shows the regimen clears coronavirus in 7 days in the mildly ill

R. PRASAD  
CHENNAI

A phase-2 trial involving participants with mild to moderate COVID-19 illness found no detectable virus within an average seven days of starting treatment with a three-drug regimen compared with 12 days in people in the control group. Samples tested for the virus comprised nasopharyngeal swab, posterior oropharyngeal saliva, throat swab, and stool samples.

Clinical improvement was also significantly better in



those who received the three-drug regimen. Complete alleviation of symptoms was achieved in four days in the intervention group and eight days in the control group. The average hospital stay was also significantly shorter (nine days) in participants who received the three-drug therapy than in the control group (14.5 days). The three-drug regimen was found to be safe.

Analysis of secondary outcomes revealed that 52 participants in the intervention

group who started treatment less than seven days after onset of symptoms showed better clinical and virological outcomes than in the control group consisting of 24 participants.

The trial was carried out

in six public hospitals in Hong Kong between February 10 and March 20. The team of researchers was led by Prof. Kwok-Yung Yuen from the University of Hong Kong, and the results were published in *The Lancet*. The safety and efficacy of the three-drug regimen have to be tested in a phase-3 trial involving more people.

## Randomly assigned

The 127 participants were randomly assigned to either the intervention group or a control group. The interven-

tion group had 86 participants and the control group had 41. Participants in the intervention group received oral lopinavir-ritonavir, ribavirin and injectable interferon beta-1b, while the control group received only lopinavir-ritonavir. Treatment in both groups started within seven days of symptoms showing up.

Lopinavir-ritonavir is used for treating HIV, ribavirin for treating chronic hepatitis C virus, and injectable interferon beta-1b is used by multiple sclerosis patients.

## Plea to govt. to suspend labour laws for 2-3 years

Employers' associations join hands

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Among the suggestions given by the employers' associations were relaxation of the Industrial Disputes Act in order to treat the lockdown period as lay-off, treating wages paid during this period as corporate social responsibility (CSR) funding, increasing the maximum workforce to 50% from 33% upon reopening and suspending labour laws, except those governing minimum wages, bonus and statutory dues.

## In Indore, relatives of 4 dead allege foul play by hospital

They were declared dead ahead of a sanitisation drive

SIDHARTH YADAV  
Bhopal

The Indore district administration has launched an inquiry into a charge of relatives of four patients who died on Thursday that the private hospital they were admitted to suddenly declared them dead ahead of a sanitisation drive to prepare for the hospital's reversion to a non-COVID one.

"We have seized their medical records and launched an investigation. Only after its completion, can it be established if the management is at fault," said Pravin Jadia, Indore Chief Medical and Health Officer. "If any negligence is found on their part, we will act under the Nursing Home Act and the Epidemic Diseases Act."

Three patients had tested negative for COVID-19, while the report of one of them was awaited, said Dr. Jadia. The first death at the Gokuldas Hospital, a yellow category facility to cater to possi-



There are strict sanitisation protocols to be followed in hospitals during a pandemic.

ble cases, occurred at 11.25 a.m. and the rest in the evening. Three of them had bilateral pneumonia and were admitted to the ICU.

"A team of senior doctors is looking into the deaths. Other patients being treated there are yet to be shifted," said Akash Tripathi, Indore Divisional Commissioner.

In a video clip, the relatives claimed that three patients, with whom they had interacted, died within half an hour of the interaction. One of them cried, "Look at the condition of the Gokul-

das Hospital. One by one, everyone is dying." Two days ago, they were told that the hospital would be sanitised and emptied before being converted to a green facility for general patients, another said. "And they declared them dead," he said.

A relative of another deceased person said, "Just 10 minutes ago, my mother said she was all right. Now, she is dead." Another said: "If they wanted to sanitise the hospital, they should have first shifted the patients to another hospital, probably a government one. We would have been satisfied then."

Five government-run hospitals and 16 government-backed private hospitals are helping combat COVID-19 in Indore, the hardest-hit city of Madhya Pradesh, where 1,727 persons have tested positive, while 86 have died so far. District officials had told *The Hindu* that private hospitals were delaying sample collection.

With 1,089 new COVID-19 cases on Friday, Maharashtra's overall tally stood at 19,063, while 37 fatalities saw the State's death toll touch 731.

This is the fifth time in little more than a week that the State has reported a surge of more than 1,000 cases in a single day.

One death each was reported from Jalgaon and Amravati districts, taking their total death tolls to 15

cases in Mumbai have not been added to the count owing to "non-reconciliation". Officials said 25 of the fatalities were from Mumbai, taking the city's death toll to 462, while Pune district reported 10 more deaths, taking the city's toll to 139. However, Pune district administration said the death toll had risen to 141. Of the 1,089 new cases, Mumbai accounted for 748, with a cumulative tally of 12,142. With 75 new cases, Pune district's tally has risen to 2,537.

## Maharashtra adds 1,089 new cases to tally of 19,063

Mumbai death toll at 462; fatalities in Pune touch 139

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE  
PUNE

With 1,089 new COVID-19 cases on Friday, Maharashtra's overall tally stood at 19,063, while 37 fatalities saw the State's death toll touch 731.

This is the fifth time in little more than a week that the State has reported a surge of more than 1,000 cases in a single day. However, as per the State Health Department's medical bulletin, a further 146

## M.P. records 89 new cases

STAFF REPORTER  
BHOPAL

Madhya Pradesh on Friday recorded 89 new COVID-19 cases, taking the State-wide tally to 3,341, the Directorate of Health Services said. The death toll in the State from the pandemic rose to 200, as seven more fatalities were reported, including three from the worst-affected city of Indore.

With 1,727 cases and 86 deaths, Indore continues to remain in focus. Alarmingly, the count of critical patients in the city surged threefold overnight earlier this week.

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## INTERVIEW | ZALMAY KHALILZAD

# 'India should talk to Taliban, discuss terror concerns directly'

U.S. Special Representative says the peace process in Afghanistan could become a platform for regional cooperation and connectivity

**SUHASINI HAIDAR**  
NEW DELHI

*India should begin a dialogue with the Taliban, says U.S. Special Representative Zalmay Khalilzad, adding that he had discussed India's possible future role in Afghanistan's reconciliation process with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval during a short stop in New Delhi on Thursday. In an interview, Mr. Khalilzad said his mission was building support for the full implementation of the U.S.-Taliban agreement. Edited excerpts:*

It is rare for anyone to be travelling during the coronavirus lockdown, let alone high officials. Tell us what brought you to the region, and how your meetings went?

■ The mission is to encourage movement towards the implementation of the U.S.-Taliban agreement signed at Doha in February. Part of the confidence building measures leading to intra-Afghan negotiations, is that both the Taliban and the Afghan government have to release prisoners on both sides. Secondly that there must be a reduction in violence com-

pared to the period before the agreement was signed, and thirdly, that in order to get lasting peace and bring the long war in Afghanistan to an end, we should open the door to negotiations for a political roadmap and a permanent comprehensive ceasefire.

The territory of Afghanistan must not be used against the United States, our allies and in fact the world. So peace for Afghanistan, and security for the world from Afghanistan, are our two goals, and I was encouraged by my meetings on this trip. International support for peace in Afghanistan is im-

portant and Indian support in particular was the focus of my mission [to Delhi].

Is the focus on India's role just lip service? India is not at present involved in any of the regional formats that are currently discussing Afghanistan's future...

■ That's an excellent question, because this is a paradox, that on the one hand India has such a significant role when you look at the development of Afghanistan and India has such a long history with the people of Afghanistan. But when it comes to international efforts, India does not yet have the role that it could.

Part of that may have been a choice to pursue its role bilaterally, but I think as the peace process gets more serious, and the U.S.-Taliban agreement goes into the next stages, we want India to take a more active role in the peace process, and that was



**Our strong position is that there shouldn't be [terror] sanctuaries on either side of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border**

a key focus of our discussion in Delhi.

Did you also discuss the possibility of India opening direct, public talks with the Taliban during your meetings, something India has rejected thus far?

■ It is for India to decide its role, but I do think engagement between India and all the key players in Afghani-

stan, not only in terms of the government but also in terms of political forces, society and the Afghan body politic, is appropriate given India's regional and global position. India is an important force in Afghanistan and it would be appropriate for that [India-Taliban] engagement to take place.

Has India expressed a desire for a role beyond humanitarian assistance, economic and reconstruction, in terms of mediation, or more security assistance?

■ We did discuss what kind of future role India might want to play. When it comes to the peace process, I can tell you India is considering a more active role, and we in the U.S. are supportive of India's engagement in the international process.

Specifically, could India help in the current impasse

within the Afghan polity, in particular between President Ghani, and former CEO Dr. Abdullah?

■ India has good relations with several leaders in Afghanistan and like the U.S., India supports the end of the political crisis in Kabul to bring about a more inclusive government. I am encouraged by the decision of the political leaders: President Ghani, Dr. Abdullah, (former) President Karzai, and other leaders to form an inclusive government. I found that India and the U.S. are on the same wavelength with regard to the resolution of the internal political crisis and the establishment of an inclusive government.

The U.S.-Taliban deal is being seen in India as a deal for withdrawal, not a peace deal. There are concerns that this is not an Afghan owned and led agreement, there is no ceasefire, no

Taliban commitment to the constitution. In fact the U.S. seems to be putting the Taliban at par with the democratically elected government in Kabul. Your response?

■ The U.S.-Taliban agreement is a necessary step to transition to the Afghan owned process. We have a specific commitment from the Taliban not to allow terrorism from territory they control, and should they join a future government that they will not allow Al Qaeda and other terror groups to launch attacks against the U.S. and its allies, and indeed the rest of the world. That's an important achievement. So while we are not as far along as we or India would have liked, we don't see a better alternative to this process.

For India, it is the groups in Afghanistan that target India, which are backed by

Pakistan that are a worry, and the U.S.-Taliban agreement doesn't mention those.

■ Look, our strong position is that there shouldn't be [terror] sanctuaries on either side of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, and I believe that for peace to come to Afghanistan, there is a need for good relations amongst the neighbours and support for peace. I believe that the Pakistani leadership has supported the peace process, and thinks that the time has come for economic strategy, for trade and development and for Afghanistan to become a platform for regional cooperation and connectivity. We encourage and support those objectives. India and Afghanistan have historic ties, and I believe that dialogue between India and the Taliban is important, and it would be important that issues of concern like this [terrorism] are raised directly.

## Pending CBSE exams to be held from July 1 to 15

12 papers in core subjects for Class 12

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

The pending examinations of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) will be held from July 1 to 15, Human Resource Development Minister Ramesh Pokhrayan Nishank said on Friday.

They include 12 papers in core subjects for Class 12 students across the country. There are no pending papers for Class 10 students in most parts of the country.

There are 17 additional pending papers for students in north-east Delhi whose examinations were postponed due to violence in Fe-



Exams were put on hold due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

brary. They include six pending papers for Class 10 students and 11 pending papers for Class 12 students.

A detailed schedule for the examinations is yet to be released.

Classes and examinations were put on hold from March 16, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Manipur Speaker reserves decision on disqualification of 7 legislators

Cong. had approached SC over MLAs supporting BJP govt.

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
GUWAHATI/IMPHAL

Manipur Assembly Speaker Yumnam Khemchand on Friday reserved his decision on the disqualification of seven Congress MLAs who have been supporting the Bharatiya Janata Party-led coalition government in the State.

The Congress had approached the Supreme Court for disqualification of the seven MLAs who helped the BJP, 10 short of majority in the 60-member Assembly, form the government while continuing to be with the Congress.

The seven MLAs are Oiam Lukhui Singh, Kshetriamayum Biren Singh, Paonam Brojen Singh, Sanasam Bira Singh, Ngamthang Haokip, Ginsuanhan and Yengkham Surchandra Singh.

Mr. Khemchand had, according to schedule, heard the cases of seven MLAs at the Speaker's Tribunal formed under the 10th Schedule of the Constitution. But he kept his decision "reserved" soon after the Tribunal began at 11 a.m.

"The Speaker is delaying his decision despite a Supreme Court order to do so. The petitioners have no op-

tion left but to approach the court in a day or two for justice," Congress spokesperson Ningombam Bupenda Meitei said from State capital Imphal.

The apex court had in a judgment on January 21 asked the Speaker to take necessary action within the stipulated time. On March 28, the Speaker had in defiance to the court's order disqualified former Forest Minister Thounaojam Shyamkumar who had "defected" to the BJP.

The Congress had won 28 seats while the BJP bagged 21 in 2017 Assembly elections.

## Punjab police arrest gangster with Pak. links

Five associates of Billa also arrested

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
CHANDIGARH

Punjab Police on Friday said it has arrested wanted gangster Baljinder Singh alias Billa, having alleged links with the now reportedly deceased Pakistan-based Khalistan Liberation Force (KLF) chief Harmet Singh Happy, as well as Germany-based Gurmeet Singh Bagga of Khalistan Zindabad Force.

Director General of Police Dinkar Gupta said that another notorious gangster Sukhjinder and five other members of the Billa gang have also been arrested.

He added that the police have seized a large consignment of highly sophisticated weapons smuggled in from Pakistan, drug money, reportedly smuggled from across border at different times through several modes, and drones.

Mr. Gupta said the arrests were made in a joint operation by the Organised Crime Control Unit team from Chandigarh, Counter Intelligence Jalandhar Unit and Kapurthala Police on May 7. All the arrested accused have been kept separately as they are being tested for COVID-19 by a special team of doctors.

## Upgrade of 37 defence airfields soon

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) on Friday signed a contract worth about ₹1,200 crore for the second phase of the modernisation of air field infrastructure project involving 37 airfields of the Indian Air Force (IAF), the Navy and the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) with Tata Power SED.

"It is a turnkey project that includes installation and commissioning of modern airfield equipment like Cat-II Instrument Landing System (ILS) and Cat II Air Field Lightning System (AFLS) and so on," the MoD said.

## MiG-29 crashes near Jalandhar

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

A MiG-29UPG of the Indian Air Force (IAF) from an airbase near Jalandhar crashed on Friday. The pilot, however, ejected safely.

"On May 08 at 1045h, one MiG-29 aircraft airborne on a training mission from an Air Force base near Jalandhar met with an accident. The aircraft had developed a technical snag and the pilot ejected safely as he was unable to control the aircraft," the IAF said.

The pilot has been rescued by a helicopter.

## Ration card portability usage low: Paswan

Poor awareness, suspension of biometric authentication due to fear of infection stall implementation

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

Although 60 crore people are now potentially covered under the Centre's ration card portability scheme, inter-State usage has been very low so far, says Food Minister Ram Vilas Paswan. If utilised properly, the One Nation, One Ration Card scheme could allow migrant workers to access free foodgrains wherever they are, providing a lifeline for desperate migrants during the COVID-19 lockdown.

"So far, 17 States and Union Territories have joined the portability scheme, and



another three States are likely to join by June," Mr. Paswan told reporters on Friday. However, he admitted that the usage of the scheme had been very low, because of lack of awareness as well as the fact that most States have suspended biometric authentication at ration shops due to fear of coronavirus infection.

The portability scheme could not work without biometric authentication using electronic point of sale machines, Mr. Paswan said. In fact, during a recent conference with the Centre, several States had suggested al-

lowing distribution using just ration cards. "That would open a Pandora's Box which we do not want," said Mr. Paswan. "We have told them to ensure that hand sanitiser is placed next to the point of sale machines to

prevent infection," he added.

On procurement of wheat from farmers during the ongoing rabi marketing season, the Minister said it was lagging behind by 18.35% following shortage of jute gunny bags due to the lockdown.

As on May 8, cumulative procurement of wheat for the season was 226.85 lakh tonnes, in comparison to 277.83 lakh tonnes for the corresponding period last year.

"We have given permission for the re-use of jute bags and also for a 30% use of plastic bags," said Food

Secretary Sudhanshu Pandey. Wheat procurement has been extended until mid-June, as the lockdown caused labour and transport shortages.

Mr. Paswan urged the State governments to ensure speedier distribution of pulses, noting that while the entire allocation of 1.95 lakh tonnes for April had been despatched by the Centre and 93% of that had been received by States, only 27% had actually reached beneficiaries.

"The States must put in extra effort to ensure distribution," said Mr. Paswan.

(China Border) known as Kailash-Mansarovar yatra route. Also flagged off a convoy of vehicles from Pithoragarh to Gunji through video-conferencing," Mr. Singh wrote on Twitter.

With the completion of this road link, the yatra could be completed in one week, compared to 2-3 weeks it took earlier, a Defence Ministry statement said, quoting Mr. Singh.

Except for a 5-km trek on the Chinese side across the Lipulekh Pass, the travel will now be on vehicles, a Defence source said.

**CROSSWORD** + 12931  
(set by Incognito)

1 West American bias about pungent condiment (6)  
16 Model leaves martial art for fine entertainment (7)  
18 Chief accepts money and order for flower (7)  
21 Was raw when rejected in city (6)  
23 Separates dancing twins before end of August in America (8)  
25 Scornfully reject as foolish and return a couple of rings (4-4)  
27 Sport returns carrying nothing for men (6)  
29 Finally, water animal is next to bunt in city (9)  
30 English surgeon finishes (4)

**DOWN**

1 After expelling Munro, Kawasaki imports sour cocktail for movie director (8)  
2 Mount, in the beginning, for unique Japanese image (4)  
3 Wail about that lady's fruit (6)  
4 Tunas swim over Malta island in a very destructive wave! (7)  
5 Grant's tea-bowls are broken (8)  
6 In court, see an idiot (4)  
9 Bohr returned, clutching money for equilateral parallelogram (5)  
13 Approves soya preparation around the end of the week (5)  
15 Colossus hiked, carrying fish dish (5)  
17 OK, two wed by mistake and behaved subserviently (8)  
19 Cop stood awkwardly producing possible ingredients of 15 (8)  
20 President gets bride's confirmation for martial law (7)  
22 Lover's mail? Second letter is missing! (5)  
24 A mat rolled up in the outskirts of Toyotomi? (6)  
26 Detest headgear worn by European (4)  
28 Order's accompanied by money? Follow order (4)

**ACROSS**

7 Fish used in Tofu Gumbo (4)  
8 Head Office's cashier is an innkeeper (9)  
10 Confused senior is more inquisitive (6)  
11 Swimming volunteers in country (8)  
12 Rosa wanders, carrying a couple of axes, in afternoon, resulting in seizure (8)

SCAN TO PLAY



## SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to puzzle 12930

N	H	S	M	I	N	R</td
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## Instapick

**Mother's Day:** How do you celebrate this day without brunches and flowers? Italian heritage brand Ferragamo is hosting a series titled #MomToMom, with model Carolyn Murphy. Follow @ferragamo. PopSugar Fitness has live workout sessions to try with mum all day. Or sit back together and enjoy smooth R&B by 11-time Grammy-winning artiste Kenneth 'Babyface' Edmonds, on his Insta Live: @babyface.



## Talking point

**Rise Up New York!**: Anti-poverty organisation, Robin Hood, is all set to raise funds for New Yorkers who are worst hit by the coronavirus pandemic. Hosted by Tina Fey (*30 Rock, SNL*), it will include musical performances by Bon Jovi, Billy Joel, Mariah Carey, Sting and others. All donations will go to food, health and mental health, legal services, etc. On May 12, 4.30 am IST; tune in at iheartmedia.com.

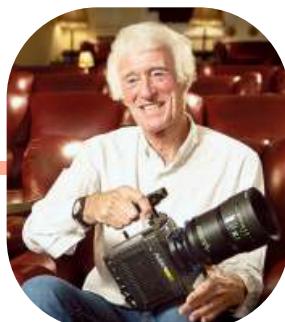
## Pick of the week

**Concerts, stand-up and other online events you just can't miss. The event preview and calendar will resume in a few weeks.**



### Sleep assistants

To deal with the insomnia that has accompanied lockdown, audiobook platform, Audible, has launched a section to cope with sleep anxiety. This includes *Honor Yourself* (narrated by Diddy) and *The Perfect Swing*, an inspiring bedtime story narrated by Nick Jonas. *6 Sleep Myths Debunked*, narrated by Arianna Huffington, gives the lowdown on how to improve your sleep cycle. Access this content through the Audible app – listeners can download the titles, set a sleep timer and cast to their connected devices.



### Potter and film podcasts

Harry Potter reading the first chapter from the first book in the series: that's the latest from the wizarding world. Daniel Radcliffe, the actor who played the titular role in the film adaptations, reads *The Boy Who Lived*. Other stars in the lineup include Stephen Fry and Eddie Redmayne. Available on Spotify. For movie magic buffs, two-time Oscar winner Roger Deakins now has his own podcast about filmmaking. The first six episodes of *Team Deakins* are now available on Apple Podcasts.



### Pictures perfect

**Chennai Photo Biennale** continues its virtual events with a panel discussion on crisis reportage, today, from 9.30 pm. MaryAnne Golon from *The Washington Post*; Paroma Mukherjee of *Hindustan Times*; and Tanvi Mishra from *The Caravan* will weigh in. chennaiphotobiennale.com. Over on Instagram, fashion house **Alexander McQueen** is sharing images shot by photographers who were asked to capture their perceptions of nature during quarantine. @alexandermcqueen.



### Art in an AR world

Use **Snapchat's** latest augmented reality (AR) filter to create your own version of the iconic Spin paintings by artist **Damien Hirst**. Together, they are supporting the charity Partners in Health, who support vulnerable communities during the pandemic. Or add an immersive and experiential angle to your original artwork using **Artivive**. The AR tool allows artists to link classical with digital art – so you can add movement and music to make it a multi-sensory piece. Details: artivive.com



### Kids teach kids

Two students of Class X from Sishya, Adam and Arun, are channelling their love of the ocean into an online camp on **Understanding Oceans**. Conducted over six Zoom sessions starting May 11, it is meant for eight to 11-year-olds. Marine biologists as well as experts on ocean ecology and conservation will also share their knowledge. The fee of ₹3,000 will be donated entirely to the Dakshin Foundation, a non-profit that works with Chennai's fishing community. #7550081070



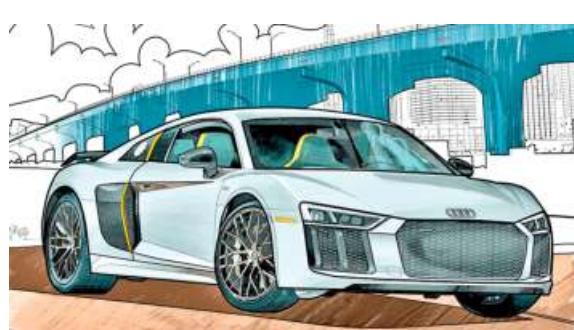
### A global perspective

Widen your film horizons with a curated list of French content that is readily available on streaming platforms like Netflix. The **French Institute in India** has collated a number of resources, including free access to arte tv, the European cultural channel, and an online festival of documentaries and feature films for the whole family (including podcasts, workshops and activities for kids). Look for lessons on cinema by Martin Scorsese and Wes Anderson, among other directors. Details on ifindia.in.



### #LockdownWithWeekend

Today, singer-songwriter **Sona Mohapatra** talks creativity during lockdown with music writer Anurag Tagat. At 6 pm. On Sunday, we have a double-bill. Sports nutritionist **Lovneet Batra** will be conversation with columnist Vasudha Rai on the best foods for various conditions like endometriosis or PCOD. At 5 pm. Followed by **Chef Gaggan Anand** at 7.30 pm – he will be sharing lessons learnt from the pandemic, with Shonali Muthalay, editor, MetroPlus. All sessions are @thehinduweekend.



## Colouring the lockdown

From designer shoes to luxury cars, these colouring pages will keep you occupied while you stay at home

SUSANNA MYRTLE LAZARUS

In a lot of ways, the ongoing lockdown has taken us back to a simpler time. Like 2014, when colouring books for adults were all the rage, courtesy Johanna Basford's best-selling *Enchanted Forest*.

More recently, Google trends show that interest has been spiking in adult colouring pages since March. After all, there is only so much candy you can crush and Netflix you can binge-watch when you are stuck inside for weeks. To cater to this demand, everyone from street artist collectives to singer Billie Eilish have created their own designs. And luxury brands have taken note. Their colouring pages, downloadable for free, feed your obsession for designer shoes and high-end travel.

Glum about missing your annual summer vacation? To make up for it, **Leading Hotels of the World**, a collection of independent luxury properties, has released a printable 34-page book. Explore the grounds of a fairy-tale-like castle perched above Zurich or find your zen during an outdoor yoga class overlooking the Ionian Sea. Available on [lhv.com](#). What colour would you paint the French palaces in Versailles? Or the Hotel Nacional de Cuba? **Embark Beyond**, a luxury travel platform, has a host of online activities open to everyone. Their colouring pages have been designed by renowned artist Elizabeth Sutton. On [embarkbeyond.com](#).

### Automobiles

With mostly empty roads in our cities, the prospect of a leisurely drive seems quite tempting. However, you should probably stick to colouring in your favourite supercars. Pick **Audi's** two activity books where the R8 gets a starring role by appearing on several pages. There's also a Horch touring car, a 1930s grand prix racer and a Quattro rally machine. On [media.audiusa.com](#). **Mercedes-Benz** has released design sketches encouraging people to give a colourful makeover to icons such as the 1950s-era 300 SL, a coupe with gull-wing doors. On [mercedes-benz.com](#). Or go for the **Vanquish 25** by ex-Jaguar and Aston car designer, Ian Callum. On [callumdesigns.com](#).

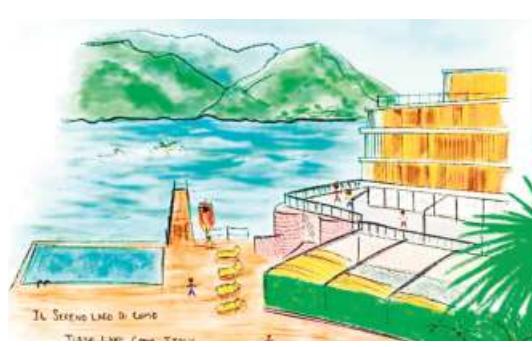


### Fashion

Get your fashion fix by colouring in **Bulgari's** iconic Serpenti bag, HJ necklace or Octo watch, among others. Each product has two versions: one that can be coloured in and one that allows you to get creative and add your own flair to the piece. Download from [bulgari.com](#). Footwear fiends,

check out **Manolo Blahnik's** Smile initiative. Pick your perfect colour palette for the AW 2011 Neringa pump or jazz up the Ossie sandal from Spring 1971. On [manoloblahnik.com](#). **Minju Kim**, South Korean designer and winner of Netflix reality show, *Next in Fashion*, has a dedicated site – [minjukimathome.com](#) – with 13 pages that range from easy to difficult, based on her bold, quirky collections. Take it further with a contest to design a **Ressence** watch; the winning entry will be turned into a watch that will be offered for sale at Sotheby's. Proceeds will go towards KU Leuven University's Covid-19 Research Programme. Details: [ressencewatches.com](#)

### Travel



## Recorded during quarantine

When independent artistes find hope and comfort by producing music in isolation



ANURAG TAGAT

Few independent musicians are at home during this lockdown without anything to help them self-produce, including soundcards, mics and recording software/interfaces. Many have made their voice count, offering succour and hope, while praising frontline workers.

### Spotify advantage

Across genres, from rapper DI-VINE's song 'Salaam' (that offers a nuanced look at the crises born from the pandemic in India) to Shillong bluesman Rudy Wallang's 'Deny the Bogeyman' the idea is to raise awareness.

Mumbai-based singer-songwriter Maalavika Manoj aka Mali has just released her new song 'Age of Limbo', off her upcoming album *Cau-tion to the Wind*. While it was inspired by her disturbed state of mind over global strife, the song



(Clockwise from left) Album art for *Sleep*; Aditi Ramesh, Mali; and Sounak Sen Barat • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT AND SHWETA SHARMA

takes on a different meaning in the current situation.

She sings, "Welcome to the age of limbo, welcome to no man's paradise" over ominous string and synth work. "I wanted people to feel they were stepping into the unknown," she explains. Recently selected amongst 36 global artistes for Spotify's RADAR programme, Mali says, with some amusement, "Right now, I have more listeners in Sydney than I do in Chennai, which is my hometown."

### Finding joy

Meanwhile, The Bangalore Collective has launched a Hindi and English cover of Michael Jackson's evergreen hit 'Heal the World.' Spearheaded by DJ Sasha Sammbi,

who wrote the lyrics to the Hindi version, it has been produced by Brian C Bangera. Surprisingly, fashion designer Sounak Sen Barat (of House of Three) lends his voice to the Hindi version. While the initial objective was to create their own fund, they now work with the 'Feed the Needy' campaign by the National Restaurant Association of India and the Palresha Charitable Trust.

With a UK tour cancelled and studio time reduced, Mumbai-based singer-songwriter Aditi Ramesh began (remotely) working on an all-new song, 'Heal'. The wavy track proclaims early on, "If you're hearing this song, you are privileged." Between her Carnatic vocal harmonies, there are very real spoken-word portions about social inequities and how we can take joy in the little things even if we have trouble making rent.

### Some self healing

Self-healing is a growing theme among musicians. Pune-based post-rock band Aswekeepsearching surprised fans with a new ambient album called *Sleep*. Though it was written much before the lockdown, as a means for frontman Uddipan Sarmah to try and recover from mental health struggles, the tender string section-aided album is an enveloping listen that can, in fact, help those messed-up sleep cycles.

Sarmah says, "Mental health and wellness is a serious concern. Most times, we regress inwards and are afraid to express. We made this album with the intent of providing a form of comfort with our music, and we hope it helps anyone in need to, at the very least, sleep peacefully."

**Winning online** (Left) The film's poster; Prashant Nair

describes himself, has gone on to live in USA, France, Czech Republic, Germany, Mexico, India and Spain. He took his first shot at filmmaking with a micro-budget feature, *Delhi In A Day*, that he refers to as his film school. The experience that taught him all. *Umrika* and *Tryst With Destiny* aside, he has also directed two episodes of Amazon Prime Video's *Made In Heaven*.

### Back to 1947

A triptych with three sets of stories and characters, *Tryst With Destiny's* roots lie in the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's landmark speech of 1947 on the eve of India's Independence (incidentally, Nair's first child was born on 14/11, Nehru's birthday, while he was working on this film). "I was moved by the promises made in the seminal speeches, frustrated with several things and was evaluating how far we have come from the goals that we had set for ourselves," he says. The anthology film explores the inequalities endemic in our society, across the entire spectrum, financial and social, in matters of class, caste, gender, race.

One of them is about a billionaire in Mumbai who realises that money can't buy him everything. Then there is one about a lower-caste couple in rural Uttar Pradesh attempting to rebuild their lives, and the third is centred on a corrupt Mumbai cop trying to make his mistress' demand come true.

All of them are seeking a better life, and each story also focusses on one colour of the Indian tricolour.

Nair, who started shooting the film in late 2018 has a strong ensemble of actors on board – Ashish Vidyarthi, Suhasini Maniratnam, Victor Banerjee, Lilette Dubey, Jaideep Ahlawat, Palomi Ghosh, among others. "Each story is provocative, and I was looking at generating discussion around the ideas. It was challenging for the actors as they had to push themselves," he says.

### Up next

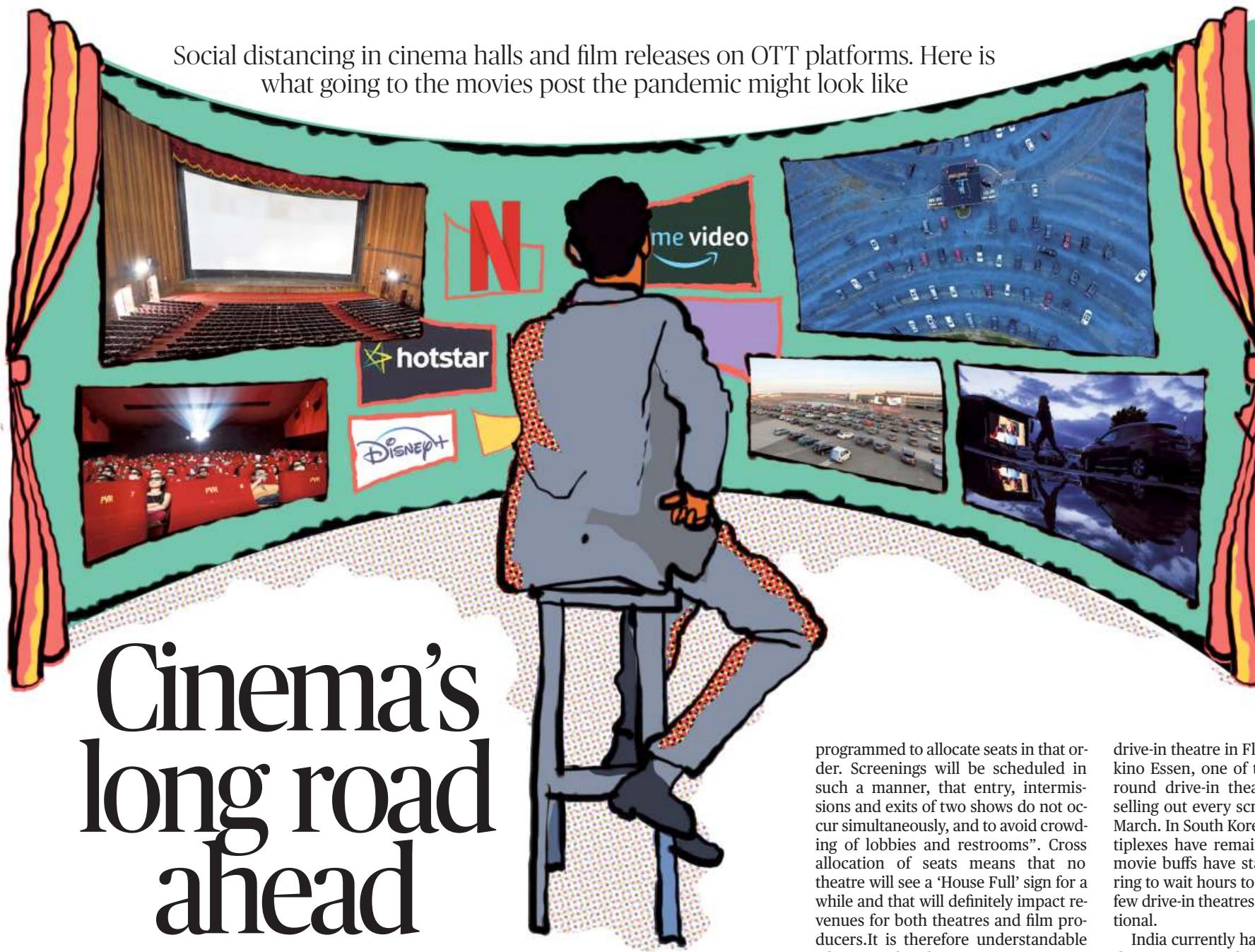
Coming up next is a web series with Endemol Shine India on the Uphaar Cinema tragedy. He is working on it, far away from the film industry, in Mallorca. Doesn't the distance act as a hurdle? No, he says; it helps him stay happy and content and gives him the freedom to pursue what he wants. Though "at times I miss the feel and energy of Mumbai," he admits. It may have made him miss out on opportunities, the films may have taken longer to make, but there is the quality of life, the green countryside and the beautiful sunsets that he wouldn't trade off for anything.

Though the award has generated buzz for *Tryst With Destiny*, the future, as for everyone now, is looking unclear. "There is no manual to consult... we are waiting to see what happens."

Ideally he would like to screen the film in a couple of festivals before public screenings. Most important, however, is a screening for the cast and crew. "Watching your complete film with an audience for the first time is a magical experience," concludes Nair.

Social distancing in cinema halls and film releases on OTT platforms. Here is what going to the movies post the pandemic might look like

■ ILLUSTRATION:  
DEEPAK HARICHANDAN



## Cinema's long road ahead

KARISHMA UPADHYAY

I distinctly remember the roaring in a Chennai theatre when Rajnikanth's character in *Baasha* broke a pumpkin on his head and folded his hands to gesture '*vanakkam*'. More recently, that very loud, collective gasp when Thanos wiped out half of humanity, including some of our favourite superheroes in *Avengers: Infinity War*. And after the mind-numbing climax of *Sairat*, I stayed glued to my seat and wept; as did several others in the hall. Watching a film in a theatre is so much more than just sinking into a plush chair and relishing that tub of caramel popcorn. Its singular charm lies in experiencing a story as a collective with strangers.

As are other public establishments, theatres across the country have also

been in the dark for weeks now. While no one knows when we will be able to return to savour the movie-watching experience, it is obvious that like many businesses this one will also change in the post-corona world.

### The 'new' normal

At present, most of the bigger chains are hoping to be up-and-running by the beginning of June. Once the government gives the go-ahead, they expect it to take another four-to-six weeks before films start releasing. The biggest challenge for every theatre would be building customer confidence.

"After 30-40 days of lockdown, people would want to experience out-of-home entertainment, whether it is going to cinemas, restaurants or malls. But it's up to us to convince them that it is

safe to do so," says Mohan Umrotkar, CEO Carnival Cinemas.

Among the many changes planned are sanitiser stations, paperless transactions, and even masks for everyone. "We will have to raise the bar now and focus a lot of time, effort and resources on deep cleaning our cinemas beyond the auditorium and lobby areas. We will check the body temperature of customers and employees when they enter the premises," explains Kamal Gianchandani, CEO, PVR Pictures.

Keeping in mind the need for social distancing, there is a possibility that not all seats in a cinema hall would be available for sale. Alok Tandon, CEO, INOX Leisure Ltd says, "We will follow cross-allocation of seats to ensure that distance is maintained among the audience. Online booking modes will be

programmed to allocate seats in that order. Screenings will be scheduled in such a manner, that entry, intermissions and exits of two shows do not occur simultaneously, and to avoid crowding of lobbies and restrooms". Cross allocation of seats means that no theatre will see a 'House Full' sign for a while and that will definitely impact revenues for both theatres and film producers. It is therefore understandable why Gianchandani at PVR Pictures hopes that this measure will only be temporary. "We hope to have the entire capacity at our disposal within two months or so," he insists.

### Back to the future

In the 1950s, when the outbreak of polio in the US became severe, a few drive-in theatres advertised that their venue was the perfect place to be 'flu and polio protected'. It is not surprising that in this age of social distancing, classic drive-in theatres in the US, Canada, Germany and South Korea are seeing a surge in popularity. At the Vilnius International Airport in Lithuania, for instance, a drive-in cinema has come up in its apron area where one would usually see parked planes.

There have been reports of patrons driving a few hours to get to the closest

drive-in theatre in Florida; and of Auto kino Essen, one of the only two year-round drive-in theatres in Germany, selling out every screening since early March. In South Korea, while large multiplexes have remained open, Korean movie buffs have stayed away, preferring to wait hours to book tickets in the few drive-in theatres that are still operational.

India currently has only two drive-in theatres – Prarthana (Chennai) and Sunset (Ahmedabad). PVR has plans of starting one in Mumbai's Bandra Kurla Complex but Gianchandani says it "will take some time before it opens". But he doesn't expect drive-in theatres in India to overtake multiplexes or single-screens in popularity, and he's not alone. Tandon of INOX Leisure lists out factors that work against them.

"The concept comes with its own set of challenges. The biggest one being availability of land parcels closer to the heart of the city. Even if you secure such a land parcel, the possibility of operating only two shows a day would either challenge the commercial viability, or would make the operator charge a premium. Another aspect where the concept would face headwinds would be the climatic conditions in our country. India experiences extremely hot and ex-

tremely cold weather, and the mammoth monsoons may not be too friendly either."

### Straight to digital

For a few years now, theatres around the world have rued the decrease in footfalls and this has traditionally been blamed on the rising popularity of streaming services. Due to the pandemic, people are now filling the void of out-of-home entertainment with streaming services like Netflix and Amazon Prime Video. With the uncertainty of when theatres will reopen and, more importantly, whether audiences will return to them, movie producers across the country are contemplating the merits of going straight to digital. In Tamil Nadu, news of Jyotika's upcoming film, *Ponmagal Vandhal* (originally scheduled for a March release) releasing online, was met with severe opposition from theatre owners. They, along with producers, are now reportedly framing guidelines on how to work in tandem, which will be followed post the lockdown.

In Bollywood, there are rumours of at least half-a-dozen films being in negotiations with OTT platforms. Most of these are mid-sized films that can't afford to wait months for a release and are in real danger of getting cannibalised by bigger releases when they finally do.

Director Shoojit Sircar whose *Gulabo Sitabo* starring Ayushmann Khurrana and Amitabh Bachchan was scheduled to release on April 17, has said he is open to the idea of a digital release. Director-Producer Karan Johar in the past has often talked about how 'big-ticket spectacles' will bring audiences back to theatres and trade analyst Komal Nahta believes that this could be a real possibility for the film business in the near future. Among the big budget films that were expected to hit our screen in the first half of 2020 are Rohit Shetty's *Satyavanshi* and Kabir Khan's 83, Aamir Khan's *Laal Singh Chaddha* and Farhan Akhtar's *Toofan*. "When this pandemic is over and people are ready to return to theatres, there will be a big backlog and only the big films will survive. These films will not go to OTT because it might not be fiscally feasible," says Nahta.

Whether we are watching them in hyper-sanitised theatres, from our cars or in homes, there is no doubt that movies will continue to be an integral part of India's social fabric.

Like director Christopher Nolan, whose *Tenet* is one of the films postponed indefinitely, wrote recently for *The Washington Post*, "When this crisis passes, the need for collective human engagement, the need to live and love and laugh and cry together, will be more powerful than ever."

### FILM REVIEW

## Song of the village home

Achal Mishra's debut, *Gamak Ghar*, turns the lens on his ancestral home to build a portrait of changing times, nostalgia and an assertion of old values

NAMRATA JOSHI

It's very rare in Indian cinema that the backdrop itself becomes the protagonist of a film. Something like that happens in Achal Mishra's fluid and assured debut feature *Gamak Ghar*. The silent but eloquent presence of a village home in Bihar tells the story of the changing dynamics of the extended family to which it belongs. On another plane, the film also becomes the marker – without setting out to be one – of

the social and economic transformation of the country at large. The biography of a house, then doesn't quite remain entirely its own. *Gamak Ghar* is structured like a tripartite movement of a gentle musical piece that encompasses within it the cycle of life. The overtune, set in 1998, is to do with the birth of a child and the festivities that accompany it.

There is very little, almost no action in fact. Mishra's meditative camera captures unhurriedly the myriad

sights and sounds permeating the house – the tulsi plant, the handpump, the laughter of kids, men busy with their game of cards, children playing hide-and-seek and picking mangoes from the grove, women helping each other tie saris, kids watching films on a rented VCR. Avni Goyal's production design gets the minutest of details – from the calendar on the blue wall to the suitcase atop the steel almirah to the mosquito coils and nets – making the home ac-

quire a character and personality of its own. It's a segment that may be viewed as wallowing in nostalgia, but it evokes the same in viewers. Nostalgia for what childhood was for some of us – of living apart in cities and gathering together under the roof of the ancestral home for festi-

vities and holidays at least two to three times a year; the best days of our lives.

Mishra strings together little, fleeting moments, the banal interactions and conversations of the family members. It's like he is laying bare the family photo album, even as we see family mem-

bers in the film clicking pictures themselves and organising the mandatory family photo shoot. As if trying to organise memories to hold on for posterity.

In the second section – set in 2010 – that we are made aware of the changes creeping in. The longing for

### Gamak Ghar

(The Village Home, Maithili with English subtitles)

**DIRECTOR:** Achal Mishra

**CAST:** Abhinav Jha, Mira Jha, Satyendra Jha, Soniya Jha

**RUN TIME:** 91 minutes

**STORYLINE:** Chronicle of over two decades in the life of a village home in Bihar, through the eyes of a family

and writings of the grandfather and the recollection of mutton feasts cooked by him still manage to bind them, however tenuously.

In the third and the last act, in 2019, we see the lonely house collapsing under neglect, with just an indifferent caretaker, and a few sparrows, giving it company. The tulsi plant in the courtyard has since shrivelled. There is persistent talk of the floods having taken its toll on the structure. We see the home framed in misty winter, derelict in its ripe old age. But it's not the end of the road, hopefully. There is also a simultaneous call for renewal and a sense of hope that the glory days may well be back. *Gamak Ghar* is all about asserting that the village home should stay.

*Gamak Ghar* will stream on Mubi India from May 10 onwards



Old-world charm A scene from the film ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

### FOOD SPOT

## Carpe chicken 65 diem

RAHUL VERMA

You realise you had good food days only once they're over, but to get a tiny glimpse of what you're missing, there's always delivery

Some said the name came about because it was started and popularised by Chennai's Buhari Hotel in 1965; a few others claimed that the dish had to be prepared with a chicken that was 65 days old. And then there were others who insisted it was cooked



with 65 different spices. I like all these stories, but I like the dish even more. It is hot and spicy, and leaves you asking for more (and for numerous glasses of cold water, if not a fire extinguisher).

That is why, when I was going through the menu of a restaurant called Kerala Café the other day, I decided that I had to order in their chicken 65. It was one of those evenings when we wanted to eat something different. The choices are limited these days, but we had heard from our friend Jayan that Kerala Café, in Mayur Vihar Phase I, had moved to a new place in the same neighbourhood. I called them up (9650696710) and found that

they were delivering through Swiggy and Zomato. So we asked for a plate of Chicken 65 (₹220), Kadala Curry (₹120), Parottas (₹30 for one), Chick-en Biryani (₹200) and Set Dosa (₹120).

And what a meal we had!

### Dish of the day Chicken 65

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

loped in thick gravy – so together, the light rice and rich chicken did quite a nice tango.

We saved the set dosa – three round and soft dosas – for breakfast. The next morning we had the dosa with the light, onion-and-tomato-flavoured sambar that it had come with. It was quite a heavenly breakfast.

It was nice to have Kerala food after a long time. The menu includes fish curry, egg curry, and chicken curry, as well as chicken roast and egg roast. Then there are utthapams, puttu, and egg dosas. The prices vary between ₹120 and ₹230, except for the prawn curry which is ₹300. There

was a time when I used to regularly pick up food from the small Kerala eateries in INA Market. Those days seem like the golden age now. I find myself humming Mary Hopkins, "Those were the days, my friend; we thought that they'd never end". That is why the wise say: seize the day.

The chicken in it was enve-

### THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13351

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To play The Guardian Quick Crossword, The Hindu Cryptic crossword, Sudoko, and other puzzles online, scan the QR code.

- 5 Tolerate (6)
- 6 Ashamed (9)
- 7 Thrift (9)
- 11 3-D art form (9)
- 12 Vehicle designed to carry the sick (9)
- 13 Wooden-soled shoes (5)
- 14 Fragrant resin burned as incense (5)
- 18 First in order of birth (6)
- 19 Agreement (6)
- 22 Group that's part of a larger organisation (4)
- 23 Scoff (4)

The solution will appear on May 14, 2020.

Solution No. 13350

A	S	S	H	E	I	T	S	T	R	A	P	P
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AN-NDE

# 20.5 million Americans lost job in April

Unemployment rate has surged to 14.7%, shattering the post-Second World War record of 10.8%

REUTERS  
WASHINGTON

The U.S. economy lost a staggering 20.5 million jobs in April, the steepest plunge in payrolls since the Great Depression and the steepest sign yet of how the novel coronavirus pandemic is battering the world's biggest economy.

The Labor Department's closely watched monthly employment report on Friday also showed the unemployment rate surging to 14.7% last month, shattering the post-World War Two record of 10.8% touched in November 1982. It strengthened analysts' views of a slow recovery from the recession caused by lockdowns imposed by States and local governments in mid-March to curb the spread of COVID-19, the respiratory illness caused by the virus.

The economic crisis spells trouble for President Donald Trump's bid for a second term in the White House in November's election. After the Trump administration was criticised for its initial reaction to the pandemic, Mr. Trump is eager to reopen the economy, despite a continued rise in COVID-19 infections and dire projections of deaths.

"If there is a silver-lining in today's dismal jobs report, it is in the realisation that the economy cannot possibly get any worse than it is right



**Tough times:** A woman takes a photo of phone numbers posted on the locked doors of a Georgia Department of Labor office. ■ AP

## Russia adds 10,000 cases

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
MOSCOW

Russia on Friday registered more than 10,000 new COVID-19 cases for the sixth day in a row.

A government tally showed 10,669 new cases over the past 24 hours, fewer than Thursday's record of 11,231 and bringing the total to 1,87,859. The country also recorded 98 new deaths, for a total of 1,723. Russia ranks fourth in Europe in terms of the total number of cases, behind Britain, Italy and Spain.

now," said Chris Rupkey, chief economist at MUFG in New York. "Joblessness can only diminish from this point forward as many states start reopening."

Economists polled by Reuters had forecast nonfarm payrolls diving by 22 million. Data for March was revised to show 870,000 jobs lost instead of 701,000 as previously reported. A record streak of job growth dating to October 2010 ended in March.

The jaw-dropping job loss-

## China for WHO-led review of global response to virus

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
BEIJING

China said on Friday it supports a World Health Organization-led review into the global response to the coronavirus outbreak, but only "after the pandemic is over".

The comments from Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying came as China faces pressure to allow an international probe into the origins of the pandemic.

The review should be

conducted in an "open, transparent and inclusive manner" under the leadership of WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Ms. Hua said at a press briefing.

She said China would cooperate with WHO efforts to trace the origin, but rejected U.S. calls for an investigation, accusing it of "politicising the issue".

She stressed that any inquiry should be based on the International Health Regulations.

at offices of dentists, doctors, other health practitioners and hospitals.

Dentists have closed offices, while general practitioners and hospitals have seen a reduction in patient visits as people stay at home in fear of contracting the highly contagious virus. Hospitals have also suspended elective surgeries to focus on the treatment of COVID-19 patients.

Though the unemployment rate jumped from 4.4% in March, its ascent was blunted by the drop of 6.432 million from the labour force.

Some of the people who lost their jobs but are unable to look for work because of the coronavirus are not counted as unemployed. According to the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics, which compiles the employment report, a

## Tsunami of hate and xenophobia'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
UNITED NATIONS

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called on Friday for an "all-out effort" to end the "tsunami of hate and xenophobia" sparked by the novel coronavirus pandemic, without naming specific countries.

"Anti-foreigner sentiment has surged online and in the streets. Anti-Semitic conspiracy theories have spread and COVID-19-related anti-Muslim attacks have occurred," Mr. Guterres said in a statement.

person has to be looking for work and available to do it to be considered unemployed.

### Participation rate

The labour force participation rate, the proportion of working-age Americans who have a job or are looking for one, dropped 2.5 percentage points to 60.2% in April, the lowest rate since January 1973.

A broader measure of unemployment, which includes people who want to work but have given up searching and those working part-time because they cannot find full-time employment, surged to 22.8% last month from 8.7% in March.

Though millions of Americans continue to file claims for unemployment benefits, April could mark the trough in job losses.

More small businesses are accessing their portion of an almost \$3 trillion fiscal package, which made provisions for them to get loans that could be partially forgiven if they were used for employee salaries.

The Federal Reserve has also thrown businesses credit lifelines and many states are also partially reopening.

# U.S. Justice Dept. to drop case against former NSA Flynn

His contact with Russian envoy was entirely appropriate'

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN

The U.S. Department of Justice (DoJ) will drop its case against former National Security Adviser Michael Flynn as per a court filing. Mr. Flynn, who had pleaded guilty in a case related to Special Counsel Robert Mueller's probe into Russian meddling in the 2016 U.S. elections, was awaiting sentencing.



Michael Flynn

to take down a President.

"And I hope a lot of people are going to pay a big price because they're dishonest, crooked people," Mr. Trump said, referring to the Obama administration Justice Department. Mr. Trump had repeatedly criticised the case against the former three-star General.

"Attorney General Barr's politicisation of justice knows no bounds," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said in a statement, adding that Mr. Barr's Justice Department was trying to cover up for Mr. Trump.

### 'Outrageous move'

This is not the first time Mr. Barr has faced such allegations. In February, more than 1,100 former DoJ officials had called on Mr. Barr to resign for his "interference in the fair administration of justice," because department officials had sought to reduce the sentencing recommendation of Mr. Trump's friend, Roger Stone.

House Intelligence Committee Chair, Jerrold Nadler, called the Department's move "outrageous" and said Mr. Barr would be called by the House to testify.

## Trump to get virus tested daily

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN

U.S. President Donald Trump will be tested daily for COVID-19 after one of the President's military aides tested positive for the infection on Thursday.

The President also said that he and Vice-President Mike Pence tested negative on Thursday.

"I just had a test, as you probably heard. In fact, I had one yesterday and I had one today, and it's negative. Mike [Pence] just had a test, and it's negative," Mr. Trump said.

"Now we're going to go testing once a day. But even when you test once a day, somebody could – something happens where they catch something."

Hogan Gidley, Deputy White House Press Secretary, confirmed that a White House staff had tested positive for the virus and that Mr. Trump and Mr. Pence had tested negative.

**Presidential valet**  
The story of the U.S. Navy member, who serves as a personal valet to the President, testing positive, was

first reported by CNN. Normally, presidential valets, who work either in the West Wing or in the residence part of the White House, have duties that bring them up close to the President – from wardrobe management to handling food and drink.

President Trump said on Thursday that he had had "very little contact" with the aide in question.

On Wednesday, visuals emerged of President Trump, without a mask, interacting with nurses in the Oval Office.

## U.S. pulls out Patriot missile batteries from Saudi Arabia

It feels threat from Iran has waned

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
WASHINGTON

The U.S. is pulling out four of its powerful Patriot missile systems from Saudi Arabia, after determining that the threat from Iran that sparked an arms buildup in the region last year had waned, a Defense Department official said on Thursday.

Two of the anti-missile batteries deployed following the September attacks on Saudi oil installations "are now leaving," the official said on condition of anonymity.

Tehran and Houthi-backed rebels in Yemen were blamed for the combination rocket and drone attack which left two of state oil giant Aramco's processing facilities – one in Khurais and another in Abqaiq – heavily damaged, roughly halving Saudi Arabia's oil production.

Though the unemployment rate jumped from 4.4% in March, its ascent was blunted by the drop of 6.432 million from the labour force. Some of the people who lost their jobs but are unable to look for work because of the coronavirus are not counted as unemployed. According to the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics, which compiles the employment report, a

Two other batteries had been kept in the region in March following an attack by pro-Iran factions on the Iraqi base of Taji, north of Baghdad. Two Americans and one British soldier were killed in the attack.

"I think everyone knew it was going to be a temporary plus-up at the time, unless things got bad," the official said. "Things did not get bad, so they had to go."

## China, U.S. commit to implement trade deal despite row over virus

Vice-Premier Liu He speaks to USTR Lighthizer, Mnuchin

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
BEIJING

Chinese and U.S. trade representatives agreed on Friday to "create favourable conditions" for the phase one trade deal signed in January, officials said, despite recent tensions over the coronavirus pandemic.

Vice Premier Liu He, who had led Beijing's negotiations, held a call in the morning with U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin.

**'Good progress'**  
"Both sides said they should strengthen macroeconomic and public health cooperation, strive to create a favourable atmosphere and conditions for the implementation of the phase one U.S.-China economic and trade agreement, promoting

positive results," a notice from China's Ministry of Commerce said.

U.S. officials said after the call that both parties agreed "good progress" is being made on creating the governmental infrastructures needed to make the agreement a success.

"They also agreed that in spite of the current global

health emergency, both countries fully expect to meet their obligations under the agreement in a timely manner," said the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative and Treasury in a statement.

The countries have also agreed to maintain communication and coordination.

The call is believed to be the first time they have officially spoken about the agreement since it was signed, and comes after both nations traded barbs over the deadly virus.

Last week, U.S. President Donald Trump threatened new tariffs against China after claiming there was evidence linking COVID-19 to a top-security lab in the central city of Wuhan, where the pathogen first emerged late last year. China denied the claims.

Trump, in a statement, said, "Today, as we reflect on the 75th anniversary of the end of the World War II, we are reminded that no challenge is greater than the resolve of the American spirit," he said. "Over the past months, our Nation has faced remarkable adversity during the pandemic. But just as we have so many times before, America will triumph."

Russian President Vladimir Putin, in a video message for the Austrian people to mark the anniversary, said, "We are all fighting against this epidemic and mutual support is very important at this difficult time."

## India sends essential medicines to Colombo

This is the fourth consignment

MEERA SRINIVASAN  
COLOMBO

The Government of India on Friday sent a 12.5-tonne gift consignment of essential medicines to Sri Lanka, as part of its ongoing COVID-19 assistance in the neighbourhood.

High Commissioner-designate of India to Sri Lanka Gopal Baglay travelled on the same flight, and will assume duty as per the stipulated health protocol, the Indian High Commission in Colombo said.

High Commissioner Baglay succeeds Ambassador Tarun Singh Sandhu, who was posted to Washington DC earlier this year.

On his arrival, Mr. Baglay greeted President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision conveyed to SAARC leaders during the March 15 video conference, the Indian mission said.

strongest commitment to sharing our resources with our friends and partners," he told *The Hindu*.

Friday's gift consignment of medicines is the fourth to arrive in recent weeks, and underscores Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision conveyed to SAARC leaders during the March 15 video conference, the Indian mission said.

## Pakistan court orders auction of ex-Taliban chief's property

Mullah Akhtar Mansour was killed in a drone strike in 2016

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
KARACHI

A Pakistani judge ordered the auction of five properties purchased by former Taliban chief Mullah Akhtar Mansour with fake documents before he was killed in a U.S. drone strike in 2016, two investigators familiar with the case said on Friday.

Mansour bought the properties, estimated to be worth about \$2,000,000, after he replaced Taliban foun-

der Mullah Mohammad Omar, whose death was announced in 2015.

Mansour's properties were detected in the port city of Karachi after he was killed in a drone strike in Balochistan province, the investigators said on condition of anonymity for security reasons.

The officials said the judge, whose name was not revealed for security reasons, recently ordered the

government to quickly finalise arrangements for auctioning the properties, which were seized earlier this year.

The investigators said authorities published advertisements in Pakistani newspapers to determine if there were any claims to the properties. Money collected through the auction will go to the government. The properties include small apartments and plots.

Leaders urge the world to unite in fight against virus

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
BERLIN

The world must draw lessons from the past and work together to beat the coronavirus pandemic, European leaders urged as the continent marked 75 years since the end of the Second World War in Europe.

With parades and commemoration events cancelled or scaled down as part of measures to contain the outbreak, Europe and the U.S. marked the victory over

Nazi Germany in sombre mood.

In Berlin, German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Chancellor Angela Merkel kept their distance as they paused in front of wreaths at Neue Wache – the country's main memorial to the victims of war and dictatorship. Mr. Steinmeier called on nations to remember how they joined forces to fight the tyranny of Nazism and said the same unity was needed to defeat the virus that has killed over 2,70,000 people. "We want more, not less cooperation in the world – also in the fight against the pandemic."



German Chancellor Angela Merkel and other dignitaries attending a wreath laying ceremony in Berlin on Friday. ■ AFP

In Britain, Prime Minister Boris Johnson, in a letter to veterans, said: "On this anniversary, we are engaged in a new struggle against the coronavirus which demands the same spirit of national endeavour that you exemplified 75 years ago."

U.S. President Donald

## MARKET WATCH

	08-05-2020	% CHANGE
Sensex	31,643	0.63
US Dollar	75.54	0.24
Brent oil	29.88	-2.54

## NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	285.05	2.65
Asian Paints	1578.40	-15.90
Axis Bank	382.05	-15.30
Bajaj Auto	2419.05	12.50
Bajaj Finserv	4601.00	-72.40
Bajaj Finance	2024.15	-36.40
Bharti Airtel	530.05	2.00
BPCL	324.75	-4.80
Britannia Ind	2994.65	79.30
Cipla	591.90	2.35
Coal India	129.00	-1.80
Dr Reddys Lab	3984.00	146.35
Eicher Motors	13858.85	-151.65
GAIL (India)	91.35	-0.15
Grasim Ind	486.30	1.10
HCL Tech	518.40	6.65
HDPC	1689.70	-14.20
HDFC Bank	929.05	4.05
Hero MotoCorp	1962.60	-37.70
Hindalco	117.10	-0.55
Hind Unilever	2089.45	97.40
ICICI Bank	337.70	0.95
IndusInd Bank	440.35	-14.00
Bharti Infratech	174.25	1.45
Infosys	674.20	9.25
Indian Oil Corp	74.35	-1.40
ITC	158.25	-2.75
JSW Steel	168.65	-3.55
Kotak Bank	1217.45	17.65
L&T	815.95	-6.90
M&M	386.70	-13.95
Maruti Suzuki	4654.15	95.15
Nestle India Ltd.	17802.95	660.50
NTPC	87.00	-3.45
ONGC	76.00	0.40
PowerGrid Corp	159.00	-2.75
Reliance Ind	1561.80	54.85
State Bank	166.65	-4.10
Shree Cement	18732.75	300.35
Sun Pharma	469.00	16.80
Tata Motors	81.05	-1.45
Tata Steel	272.90	-2.95
TCS	1893.40	1.75
Tech Mahindra	536.20	19.85
Titan	832.85	-16.25
UltraTech Cement	3305.80	52.95
UPL	364.60	-3.80
Vedanta	77.40	-1.15
Wipro	184.00	-0.10
Zee Entertainment	150.65	3.30

EXCHANGE RATES		
Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on May 08		
CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	75.34	75.66
Euro	81.69	82.04
British Pound	93.25	93.68
Japanese Yen (100)	70.84	71.14
Chinese Yuan	10.65	10.69
Swiss Franc	77.59	77.92
Singapore Dollar	53.30	53.53
Canadian Dollar	53.99	54.23
Malaysian Ringgit	17.37	17.46
Australian Dollar	49.10	49.31

Source: Indian Bank

## + Indian smartphone market grows 1.5% in Jan.-March quarter

India only country among top 3 markets to see some growth

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

India's smartphone market grew 1.5% year-on-year to 32.5 million units in the January-March 2020 quarter, according to the data released by IDC. However, even though the pace of growth was tepid, India was the only country among the top three markets to see some growth.

The IDC's 'Quarterly Mobile Phone Tracker' noted that both China and the U.S. markets registered a double-digit decline of 20.3% and 16.0% during the first quarter of 2020, respectively.

## Virus impact

"COVID-19 will have a substantial impact on the Indian mobile phone market in 2020, with potential supply chain disruptions and slower-than-expected consumer demand for the next few quarters," Navkendar Singh, research director, Client Devices & IPDS at IDC India, said.

IDC expects the India mobile phone market to follow a

## Govt. raises borrowings to ₹12 lakh crore in FY21

Revision necessitated due to pandemic

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

The government on Friday increased its market borrowing estimate by staggering ₹4.2 lakh crore to ₹12 lakh crore for the current fiscal to deal with the expected shortfall in revenue due to the impact of COVID-19 crisis on the economy.

The government resorts to market borrowing to make up for mismatch between its revenue and expenditure. "The estimated gross market borrowing in FY 2020-21 will be ₹12 lakh crore in the place of ₹7.80 lakh crore as per BE 2020-21. The revision has been necessitated due to COVID-19 pandemic," the Finance Ministry said. The government has also increased the weekly borrowing target to ₹30,000 crore from ₹21,000 crore fixed on March 31.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget for 2020-21 had pegged gross borrowing in the new fiscal at ₹7.8 lakh crore, higher than ₹7.1 lakh crore estimated for 2019-20. With the increase in estimate, the government would have to revise upwards its fiscal deficit target from 3.5% pegged for the current fiscal.



A revival in consumer demand is expected around the festive quarter of 4Q20. ■ REUTERS

## Goi borrows \$500 million from AIIB

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Government of India has taken a \$500 million loan from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank to support its emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This is part of a \$1.5 billion project being co-financed by the World Bank.

In terms of immediate needs to slow and limit the spread of the pandemic, the project will help scale up procurement of personal protective equipment, oxygen delivery systems and medicines, according to an official statement.

CM YK

## Vista dials up Jio with ₹11,367 cr.

Transaction values the Reliance Industries' arm at ₹4.91 lakh crore

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

U.S.-based private equity firm Vista Equity Partners will invest ₹11,367 crore to buy a 2.32% stake in Jio Platforms Ltd., valuing the company at ₹4.91 lakh crore in terms of equity and making Vista the largest investor in Jio Platforms behind Reliance Industries and Facebook.

On April 22, social media behemoth Facebook Inc. picked up a 9.99% stake in Jio Platforms for ₹43,574 crore. Early this week, Silver Lake agreed to invest ₹5,655.75 crore in Jio Platforms at a 12.5% premium to the equity valuation of the Facebook investment.

Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd. (RJIL), which provides connectivity platform to over 388 million subscribers, will continue to remain a wholly owned subsidiary of Jio Platforms.



Money bags: Private equity firm Vista becomes the third entity after Facebook and Silver Lake to invest in Jio. ■ AFP

Commenting on the transaction, Mukesh Ambani, CMD, RIL, said, "Like our other partners, Vista also shares with us the same vision of continuing to grow and transform the Indian digital ecosystem for the benefit of all Indians. We are excited to leverage the professional expertise and mul-

ti-level support that Vista has been offering to its investments globally for the benefit of Jio."

Asked to comment, Utkarsh Sinha, MD, Bexley Advisors said, "As with the SilverLake investment, Vista's decision to invest in Jio also comes as a strong vote of confidence in the sector and

its long term prospects. It is also another validation of Jio's decision to partner with Facebook."

Vista has more than \$57 billion in cumulative capital commitments and its global network of companies collectively represent the fifth largest enterprise software company in the world.

Robert F. Smith, founder, chairman and CEO, Vista, said, "We believe in the potential of the digital society that Jio is building in India. We are thrilled to join Jio Platforms to deliver exponential growth in connectivity across India, providing modern consumer, small business and enterprise software to fuel the future of one of the world's fastest growing digital economies."

RIL shares on the BSE closed up 3.62% at ₹1,561.8 in a firm Mumbai market on Friday, valuing the company at ₹9.9 lakh crore.

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has urged the government to announce an immediate stimulus package of ₹15 lakh crore, which translates into 7.5% of GDP, said Vikram Kirloskar, president, CII.

The broad elements of the stimulus include cash transfers amounting to ₹2 lakh crore to JAM account holders.

"A key fallout of this economic slowdown would be the human cost in terms of loss of jobs and livelihoods, which need urgent government intervention," said

This needs to be offset by a large fiscal stimulus so that

## Bank credit contracts by ₹69,000 cr. in a fortnight

Goldman Sachs says rate cut in offing

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Loans of commercial banks contracted by a whopping ₹69,340 crore in the fortnight ended April 24, 2020 as economic activity came to a grinding halt following a nationwide lockdown.

In the last two fortnights, outstanding advances of commercial banks declined by a staggering ₹1 lakh crore, latest data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) showed.

**No rate cut impact**  
This indicates the 75 basis point repo rate cut to 4.4% by the RBI at end March had no impact on generating

loan demand. Besides, the RBI had ensured adequate liquidity in the banking system. However, banks continued to park money with the RBI which was more than ₹8 lakh crore as on May 6. Deposits also contracted during the fortnight by ₹3,932 crore.

Meanwhile, Goldman Sachs expects the central bank to reduce the repo rate further to revive economic growth. "Under our economic forecast of sharply below-trend growth in FY21, and headline inflation within the central bank's target band, the RBI should be able to reduce rates further," the brokerage said.

## Credit/deposit growth

Fortnight ended	Variation in credit (*)	Variation in deposits (*)
April 24, 2020	(-69,340)	(-3,932)
April 10, 2020	(-31,562)	1,47,435
March 27, 2020	2,31,440	2,31,883
March 13, 2020	35,627	12,871

\* ₹ CR. | SOURCE: RBI

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD

Pharmaceutical exports from India grew 7.57% to ₹20.58 billion during 2019-20.

A rather subdued show, considering the 10.72% growth in 2018-19 and the target for FY20 set at ₹22 billion, this came amid COVID-19 denting the fourth quarter performance, especially that of March. The pandemic impact cast a shadow on the gains made in the previous three quarters.

"As the fourth quarter brought in a negative growth of almost 3%, overall exports growth rate has been brought down to 7.57% from

11.5% which was the growth at the end of the first nine months," said Udaya Bhaskar, Director General of Pharmaceuticals Export Promotion Council of India

(Pharmexcil). Usually, Indian pharma exports during February and March are quite brisk. "Having seen the good pace of export trend in first three quarters and price

stabilisation in the United States, it was estimated that FY 2020 exports would reach ₹22 billion mark," he said, attributing the comparatively lower, single-digit growth to COVID-19.

Elaborating on the impact, he said supplies from China, on which India depends for 60-70% of bulk drug needs, were disrupted with the outbreak of COVID-19. "Our imports of bulk drugs went down significantly in February. Combined with lockdown measures across the countries and export restrictions on some of the products contributed to the situation of downturn in export growth," he said.

## Moody's warns of downgrade

Negative outlook reflects increasing risk, it says

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Rating agency Moody

## IN BRIEF



## K-League kicks off football's post-virus era

JEONJU The towering stands of the 42,477-capacity Jeonju World Cup Stadium stood empty on Friday as South Korea opened football's post-coronavirus era without fans, but with an unprecedented international TV audience. K-League is the first competition of any standing to come back to life. Only the media section of the stadium was occupied. AFP



## Rules changed to allow up to five subs: FIFA

BERN Teams will be allowed up to five substitutions per match, instead of the usual three, as a temporary measure to help cope with potential fixture congestion in the aftermath of the coronavirus outbreak, FIFA said on Friday. The change will be allowed in all competitions which are due to finish by the end of this year and it will be up to the competition organisers whether to implement it, FIFA said. REUTERS

## F1 looking to host races at new circuits

PARIS Formula One could stage a series of races at new venues in an attempt to salvage the coronavirus-hit season, the sport's chief Chase Carey said. "We're in discussion with all of our promoters as well as some tracks that are not currently on our 2020 calendar to ensure we explore all options." AFP



## Woods, Mickelson, QBs to donate \$10 million

HOBESOUND 'The Match: Champions for Charity' featuring Tiger Woods, Phil Mickelson and Super Bowl-winning quarterbacks Tom Brady and Peyton Manning will be held on May 24. The four stars will make a charitable donation of \$10 million to benefit COVID-19 relief. REUTERS

## Ameeta Singh is the new DCBA president

NEW DELHI Ameeta Singh, part of the bronze-winning Indian women's team in the 1982 Asian Games, is the new president of faction-ridden Delhi Capital Badminton Association. Known as Ameeta Kulkarni in her playing days, she takes over at a time when DCBA is facing infighting and litigation amidst allegations of financial mismanagement.

## FIH Congress officially postponed to 2021

NEW DELHI The FIH Executive Board has confirmed postponement of its upcoming Congress this year till May 2021 in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic. The 47th Congress was scheduled from October 28-November 1 this year in New Delhi. The decision also means the tenure of Batra and other EB members (two men and women each) would also be extended till the next Congress.

## When can sports resume in India?

Experts from a wide range of disciplines weigh in on the matter

ASHWIN ACHAL  
N. SUDARSHAN  
BENGALURU

The German Bundesliga will be that rare sports event to restart, on May 16, even as the world continues to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. This raises the question – how ready is India to resume action? *The Hindu* caught up with eminent sports personalities for their views.

**Vimal Kumar, former National badminton champion and coach:**

Tournaments can start only after September, but elite athletes have to start training now to be ready. But at the moment, no decision-maker is taking responsibility. Many people are making a living out of sports, but no one is bothered. Countries like Australia have come out with clear guidelines to reboot sport, but here there is only fear. Sportspersons are the most health conscious people and will certainly take precautions. What bothers me is that sportspersons themselves are keeping quiet and instead sending messages like 'stay home and stay safe'. If Virat Kohli bats for the athletes, the whole country will listen.



**Voice of the nation:** Former National badminton champion Vimal Kumar feels that if players like Virat Kohli bat for the athletes, the whole country will listen. ■ FILE PHOTO: K.R. DEEPAK

**Terry Phelan, former Manchester City footballer and South United FC technical director:**

I don't expect to see football matches with packed crowds any time this year. The Bundesliga is set to resume, but is it really behind closed doors? You will still have around 300 people – players, club staff, ground-staff, officials, etc. – at the

venue. No safety plan is fool-proof; there is still risk involved. When medical experts in India give the green light to resume playing, we can start by building confidence among kids, their parents and schools. Health comes first.

**Vinay Kumar, former India cricketer:**

With cases still on the rise, resumption of cricket any

time soon is out of the question. We do not have full knowledge about this virus yet. Unless a vaccine is discovered, the risk is too high. A player or umpire could be infected – that infected person may even be asymptomatic. Fielders and bowlers – purely by habit – will use saliva and sweat, which is dangerous. What happens if a player or umpire contracts

the virus in his neighbourhood? It is impossible to monitor everyone all the time.

**Zeeshan Ali, Indian Davis Cup coach:**

About 70% of tennis in India is recreational and such an activity will be the last to start. For now, I only see serious tennis players beginning one-on-one sessions. There are certain precautions to be taken: like marking tennis balls with player names for individual use and wearing gloves. These may have sounded ridiculous three months ago, but will be the norm. I am in touch with the AITA but I don't see tournaments happening before September.

**Ashwini Nachappa, athlete and Olympian:**

The AFI says the season will begin in September. Within the country not many spectators come anyway and they can be distanced out. But it is going to be difficult because preparation is uncertain. If athletes are already staying together in training centres, they can train rather than just be confined to their rooms. But the problem is that fear has set in. You cannot lead a life in fear.

## BCCI mulls hosting simultaneous series

The idea is to 'make up for lost time'

AMOL KARHADKAR  
MUMBAI

Cricket, like everything else, may emerge in a new avatar in the post-pandemic world. And Indian cricket – the cash cow of the global cricketing fraternity – may adopt an innovative measure to make up for lost time by making the white-ball and red-ball squads play international games simultaneously.

It may sound incredible, but playing multiple internationals on the same day is among the different options being considered for "making up for lost time".

"None of us know when sport, especially international cricket, will resume. But if we have to safeguard the interests of all our stakeholders – from sponsors to spectators – one of the options is to select two different squads and play a Test series and a T20I series simultaneously," a Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) official told *The Hindu*.

If the BCCI is forced to squeeze several games into a limited window to take care of the broadcaster's interest, it will have to field two squads. Fans may thus watch a Test during the day followed by a T20I under floodlights.

*The Hindu* understands that the BCCI hierarchy has sounded out the coaching staff, who have been crunching numbers to work out the possibilities of having two competitive squads at their disposal, should the need arise.

## Second instance

If the plan is adopted, India would become the second team, after Australia, to play two different series simultaneously.

In February 2017, a day after hosting Sri Lanka in a T20I at the Adelaide Oval (Feb. 22), Australia began a four-Test series in India in Pune. Obviously, Australia fielded two different squads in the series, something that India – and others – may be forced to do in future.

## Different strokes for different folks

Vishnu and Saketh on their dissimilar paths to success

KAMESH SRINIVASAN  
NEW DELHI

They are two of the best students of coach C.V. Nagraj from The School of Power Tennis in Secunderabad.

Davis Cuppers and multiple Asian Games medallists Vishnu Vardhan and Saketh Myneni took different paths to success, as they explained to hundreds of coaches around the country in a webinar.

## Preparing for life

While Vishnu stayed at home and pursued the sport, Saketh chose collegiate tennis in America, which prepared him well for life, as he was out of his comfort zone, doing everything himself.

"I didn't give up education because it does teach you a lot of things," Saketh said.



Saketh Myneni.



Vishnu Vardhan.

Both serve big, a specialty of the trainees of Nagraj, but play different styles.

Vishnu recalled how his game hit a different level once he was chosen to partner Leander Paes for the 2012 London Olympics.

"Leander's dad Dr. Veer Paes made a three-month training plan for me, which included a stint in the US. I was really sharp when I

reached Wimbledon for the Olympics.

"Leander helped me get the best out of myself and taught me how to deal with pressure," said Vishnu.

While Vishnu won silver with Sania Mirza in the mixed doubles at the 2010 Asian Games, Saketh won gold with her in the 2014 edition. "I was nervous playing with Sania, but he was re-

laxed," said Vishnu. "Each person is different. Some are vocal and some silent. There are no rights and wrongs. You decide what works for you," said Saketh.

## Focus on fitness

A crafty player, Saketh conceded that he could have gained more by focusing on fitness at an early age.

"I was growing tall and was injury-prone. With the height, the mechanics of strokes also change," recalled Saketh.

For Vishnu, the transition from juniors to the big league was tough.

"I started focusing on men's tournaments when I was around 16. For the first couple of years it was depressing as I was losing a lot. But it certainly helped me develop," said Vishnu.

## Anand takes India to first win

Outwits Rest of the World after drawing with Russia

RAKESH RAO  
NEW DELHI

Viswanathan Anand overpowered Teimour Radjabov to give fifth-placed India its first win in the FIDE Chess.com Online Nations Cup, over Rest of the World (RoW), on Friday.

For India, which had held Russia 2-2 before losing to USA 1.5-2.5 on Thursday, P. Harikrishna nailed Cori Jorge while Vidit Gujrathi lost and D. Harika drew.

Top seed and leader China defeated Europe 2.5-1.5 to reach the Superfinal, scheduled on May 10.

After draws, Anand pulled off a 17-move stunner against Russia No. 1 Ian Nepomniachtchi, had USA's Harikrishna Nakamura on the run in their drawn encounter before punishing Radjabov for two late errors.



Viswanathan Anand. ■ FILE PHOTO

Anand's conquest of Nepomniachtchi stood out. The maestro chose to sacrifice a bishop and pushed one of the kingside-pawns to the sixth rank. Nepomniachtchi resigned while staring at the impending checkmate of his castled king.

India was very close to beating Russia on Thursday when it led 2-1 and Harikrishna

appeared set to hold Vladislav Artemiev. But an apparent mouse-slip saw Hari blunder his rook and resign immediately.

**The results: Seventh round: India bt RoW 2.5-1.5 (Anand bt Radjabov; Vidit lost to Firouzja; Harikrishna bt Cori; Harika drew with Muzychuk); China bt Europe 2.5-1.5; USA bt Russia 2.5-1.5.**

**Sixth round: USA bt India 2.5-1.5 (Nakamura drew with Anand; Caruana drew with Vidit; So bt Adhiban; Krush drew with Humpy); China bt RoW 3.5-0.5; Europe bt Russia 2.5-1.5.**

**Fifth round: India drew with Russia 2-2 (Anand bt Nepomniachtchi; Harikrishna lost to Artemiev; Adhiban drew with Karjakin; Harika drew with Giriya); China bt USA 1.5-1.5; Europe bt RoW 2.5-1.5.**

**Standings:** 1. China (13); 2-3. Europe, USA (9); 4. Russia (5); 5. India (4) and RoW (2).

## BCCI ad-hoc body may run DDCA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Without a president and its secretary in jail, the controversy-ridden Delhi and Districts Cricket Association (DDCA) is set to be directly governed by the BCCI through an ad-hoc committee.

The BCCI, which has already stopped DDCA's annual grant, conducted an Apex Council members' teleconference a couple of days back to discuss the formation of an ad-hoc panel.

"There are endless complaints of corruption at all levels in the DDCA. Most of the Apex Council members feel that an ad-hoc panel should manage the association's affairs until a proper set-up can be put in place," said a senior BCCI official.

## Manu gets electronic target installed at home

Boost to ace shooter's basic training

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI



Focused: Manu Bhaker trains on the electronic target at her home in Haryana.

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

## Only four foreigners in ISL, I-League

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

The Technical Committee of the All India Football Federation on Friday recommended the implementation of the continental body's rule on fielding foreign players in a domestic match from next year, reducing the number to four from five, a decision which is in line with national team coach's thinking.

India head coach Igor Stimac had in March expressed unhappiness at the number of foreign players featuring in a match in Indian Super League and I-League.

The AIFF's Technical Committee met on Friday via video conference and took the decision to recommend the 3+1 (three non-Asians and one Asian) rule.

## Shyama Dey eager to resume her cricket connection after lockdown

Bengal selector has fully recovered from mishap injuries

Y.B. SARANGI  
KOLKATA



Shyama Dey.

Cricket Association of Bengal's initiative.

Shyama, a top-order left-handed batswoman who played three Tests and five ODIs in the mid-1990s, underwent several surgeries for multiple facial injuries and fractured bones. Recently she was declared fully fit.

Now, Shyama is eager to experience her 'new life'.

"I have missed the ground so much and can't wait to rejoin. This is a new life for me and I want to tell everybody to stay positive and stay safe in the difficult times we are going through. We will get through this," said Shyama.

The 48-year-old thanked the CAB for its support. "I don't know how to thank the CAB and everyone who was there with us during that period. CAB took care of every possible thing, starting from bearing all hospital expenses to the aftercare costs.

"Avishek Dalimya (CAB president) is working hard for women's cricket. I have seen few who support women cricketers like this," she added.

## Mass hatching of Olive Ridley turtles begins at Odisha's Rushikulya rookery

The Forest department had put up a metal net fencing along a section of the coast to protect the eggs

SIB KUMAR DAS  
BERHAMPUR

Mass hatching of Olive Ridley turtles began at Odisha's Rushikulya rookery, a major nesting site of these marine turtles, on Thursday night.

Thousands of hatchlings came out of the nests buried in sand to crawl towards the sea to start their long journey. On an average 80 to 100 turtles hatch from each nest. According to Berhampur Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Amlan Nayak, the

event marked the beginning of mass hatching at the rookery.

**Set to increase**  
The number of mass hatching were expected to increase in the coming days. "In the past few days, the eggs collected from sporadic nesting spots to be incubated at artificial hatcheries of the Forest department along this coast have also started to hatch," he added.

This year, 3,23,063 Olive

Ridley turtles had nested at the Rushikulya rookery. The mass nesting process began in the wee hours of March 21 and continued till the night of March 28. Olive Ridley turtle eggs incubate on their own in the heat of the beach sand.

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