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FOUR DAYS TO END OF LOCKDOWN

Considerable relaxations May 4 onward, says Centre, clears return home of stranded migrants

Curbs to be eased in many districts; no movement from containment zones, hotspots

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
NEW DELHI, APRIL 29

IN AN indication of its plans after May 3 when the current phase of the lockdown ends, the Centre on Wednesday said there will be "considerable relaxations" in many districts.

The Union Home Ministry also issued guidelines for movement of stranded migrant labourers, students, and tourists who want to return home. Sources, however, said this will not apply to those in hotspots or containment zones.

In a statement, the Ministry said, "New guidelines to fight COVID-19 will come into effect from 4th May, which shall give considerable relaxations to many districts. Details regarding this shall be communicated in coming days."

Curbs are expected to be eased in districts where cases are tapering. The Health Ministry has identified 129 of the country's 736 districts as hotspots. On April 15, at the end of the first lockdown, 177 districts had been notified as hotspots.

The order allowing interstate movement of those stranded comes almost a week after states such as Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh began transporting their migrant labour and students stuck in other states. Wednesday's order said, "Due to lockdown, migrant workers, pilgrims, tourists, students and other persons are stranded at different places. They would be allowed to move."

Incidentally, at a video-conference meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



At a cremation ground in Lucknow on Wednesday, ashes await immersion in holy rivers. *Vishal Srivastav*

Punjab extends curfew by 2 wks, joins Bengal in lifting some curbs

KANCHAN VASDEV &
ATRI MITRA
CHANDIGARH, KOLKATA, APR 29

SETTING A possible post-May 3 template, Punjab on Wednesday became the first state to announce a two-week extension of lockdown (until May 17), but said restrictions will be eased for four hours daily, from 7 am to 11 am, in non-containment zones with effect from Thursday. It also decided to allow opening of shops and industries in these areas.

Similarly, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said experts and doctors are of the opinion that the restrictions should continue till May-end, but announced some relaxations



in non-containment zones from May 4 – including movement of private taxis and buses in green zones, within a district, with a limited number of passengers.

Both state governments underlined that the local administration would take the final call on easing curbs.

Announcing his government's decision in a televised ad-

dress, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh said: "The decision on further course of action will be taken after two weeks, depending on the situation. The only solution is social distancing. If it is under control after two weeks, we will take a call."

Singh asked people to maintain discipline and underlined that if they step out, they must wear masks, ensure social distancing and return to their homes by 11 am. "If we have given relaxation, that does not mean you can call your friends home. Social distancing has to be ensured," he said.

Punjab has reported 377 COVID-19 cases and 19 deaths so far. While four districts — Patiala,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Warning signs emerge in Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar

AMITABH SINHA &
KAUNAIN SHERIFF M
PUNE, NEW DELHI, APR 29

WHILE MAHARASHTRA and Gujarat have been attracting attention for the rapid rise in cases of novel coronavirus infection, states in the east have, for the first time now, started to show signs that they could emerge as potential danger zones as well.

The latest analysis of computer modelling results by scientists of the Chennai-based Institute of Mathematical Sciences (IMSC) show that though West Bengal, Bihar, and Jharkhand still had a combined case load of less than 1,200 on April 29, these three states had the highest rate

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

EXPLAINED



**REVISITING CURVE
TO READ LOCKDOWN
PAGE 12**

17 more deaths in Gujarat as total cases cross 4,000

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, GANDHINagar,
VADODARA, RAJKOT, SURAT,
APRIL 29



At a Covid hospital in Ahmedabad. *Express*

CORONAVIRUS CASES in Gujarat crossed 4,000-mark on Wednesday, with 317 new cases reported — highest in a single day — which included seven journalists and five state information department officials.

Deaths in the state touched 200 with 17 more succumbing to the disease. Rajkot reported its first death in a 60-year-old woman with hypertension who was admitted in hospital on April 20. The deceased's husband and two sons, too, are positive, taking the district total to 58.

Nine died in Ahmedabad, including a 20-year-old woman and a 65-year-old man who had a thyroid condition. Three others who died are two men aged 54 and 64 years and a 45-year-old woman who had no co-morbidities.

Deaths in the state touched 200 with 17 more succumbing to the disease. Rajkot reported its first death in a 60-year-old woman with hypertension who was admitted in hospital on April 20. The deceased's husband and two sons, too, are positive, taking the district total to 58.

In Ahmedabad, 234 tested positive, including five employees of the state information department's Ahmedabad unit. Of them, two were kept in home

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Railways readies movement plan, some states push for special trains

AVISHEK G DASTIDAR,
ABHISHEK ANGAD &
DEEP MUKHERJEE
NEW DELHI, RANCHI, JAIPUR,
APRIL 29

WHILE THE Centre has allowed movement of migrant workers in buses, several states have demanded special trains, underlining the sheer numbers of those stranded. According to sources, the Ministry of Railways has also drafted a plan to operate 400 special trains per day, which can

be scaled up to 1,000, with a detailed protocol.

While there has been no indication that passenger train services will resume before May 3, the Railways carried out an internal exercise and communicated the plan to top levels in the government.

According to the plan, each non-AC train will carry 1,000 people per trip — about half the usual number — to ensure adequate social distancing.

"Each bus typically carries 25 people after following social dis-

tancing. The Railways' detailed protocol also had a paragraph stating that states falling in the routes should allow the movement, screening, controlled embarking etc," a senior government official said.

According to sources, by deciding on buses instead of trains, the government has strategically restricted the number of people who can be transported.

"It is just to allow an option of relief for the stranded wanting to travel to their home states,"

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Running out of time to enter House, Uddhav dials PM for help

VISHWAS WAGHMODE &
LIZ MATHEW
MUMBAI, NEW DELHI, APRIL 29

WITH THE Maharashtra Governor sitting on the state Cabinet's recommendation that Uddhav Thackeray be nominated to the Legislative Council,

the Chief Minister dialled Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday evening.

Thackeray sought the Prime Minister's cooperation in resolving the crisis, sources in New Delhi said. In Mumbai, sources in the Maharashtra government said the Chief Minister had expressed unhappiness over the

"politics being played" over his nomination to the Upper House of the state legislature.

Thackeray, who took oath on November 28 last year, has, under Article 164(4) of the Constitution, six months to become a member of the state legislature. However, with the pandemic raging, a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Mumbai's Wockhardt Hospital has been sealed. *Express*

Covid fight: Govt system in front, private hospitals do the distancing

PRABHA RAGHAVAN,
TABASSUM
BARNAGARWALA &
ABANTIKAGHOSH
NEW DELHI, MUMBAI, APRIL 29

OF THE thousands of COVID-19 patients admitted in hospitals around the country, just around 800 are critical, requiring either oxygen support, ventilators or treatment in ICUs (Intensive Care Units). Private hospitals, which account for two-thirds of hospital beds in India, and almost 80 per cent of available ventilators, are handling less than 10 per cent of this critical load.

themselves.

From being sealed in the early stages after their staff tested positive, like Wockhardt in Mumbai or the private hospital in Bhilwara, to refusing to admit patients, from suspending services to playing safe, private hospitals aren't pulling their substantive weight.

That's not all.

Nationwide, private hospitals employ four out of every five doctors, but the refrain from several cities and towns amid the pandemic is that they are locking themselves down even when it comes to providing non-Covid health care.

From Patna to Mumbai, private hospitals cite many reasons to explain their near absence: lockdown restrictions, lack of internal protocols to handle the pandemic, fear of infection to their own doctors and nursing staff, unwillingness to risk the business from non-Covid

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

NEXT: WHAT'S HOLDING BACK PRIVATE HOSPITALS IN THE WAR AGAINST COVID?

Minority institution rights not above law or absolute: SC rules on CMC-NEET

ANANTHAKRISHNANG
NEW DELHI, APRIL 29

STATING THAT rights of religious or linguistic minorities to administer an institution under Article 30 of the Constitution "are not above the law and other Constitutional provisions", the Supreme Court ruled

tions by the Christian Medical College, Vellore, and others, the bench of Justices Arun Mishra, Vineet Saran and M R Shah ordered that NEET will be the only exam for admission to the courses and institutions cannot be allowed to conduct their own separate exams over and above NEET.

"We are of the opinion that rights under Articles 19 (1) (g) and 30 read with Articles 25, 26 and 29 (1) of the Constitution of India do not come in the way of securing transparency and recognition of merits in the matter of admissions. It is open to regulating the course of study, qualifications for ensuring educational standards. It is open to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

THE WORLD



1 MILLION US CASES, TOLL SURPASSES VIETNAM WAR

PAGE 13

INSIDE

GUJARAT'S COVID CARE DOCS, STAFF TO BE QUARANTINED EVERY 2 WEEKS

PAGE 4

PAGE 1
ANCHOR

He dissolved into his part, left no residue...and came home with us

SHUBHRA GUPTA
NEW DELHI, APRIL 29

THERE ARE some obituaries you never, ever want to write. This is one of them. We knew that Irrfan Khan, one of the best actors the world has been privileged to watch, was struggling with a debilitating disease. We knew he was gravely ill. But we also believed that he would rise and shine again, because, how could he not? How could he leave us, this enormously talented human, with his fine

body of work so enriched our inner lives?

Irrfan, who passed away on Wednesday morning at the age of 53, was not just a brilliant actor who dissolved into his part, leaving no residue behind. He also managed to walk off the screen, and come home with us. He made space for himself in our hearts, nestled in unexpected corners, and popped up once in a while, for a chat. Which he would begin, with that characteristic hooded-eyed smile: *chaliye baat karte hain*.

From the very first glimpse

we had of him, in Shyam Benegal's teleserial *Bharat Ek Khoj*, we knew we were in the presence of someone truly special. He went on to become an integral part of some of Indian TV's most popular serials (Zee's *Banegi Apni Baat*, Doordarshan's *Chandrakanta*, and Star TV's *Bestsellers*), but his heart was always set on cinema. And, over a period of 30 years and more, as he essayed one unforgettable part after another, from Asif Kapadia's striking *The Warrior* to Shoojit Sircar's *Piku*, he never let us down. If this sounds like a



IRRAN KHAN
1967-2020



BUSINESS AS USUAL
BY UNNY

gush, yes, it is. An unapologetic, teary-eyed one, because he made things better, even in his no-account parts.

Of his impressive body of work, four films jostle for the top spot for me: Tigmanshu Dhulia's *Haasil*, in which he plays a local Allahabadi student leader; Vishal Bhardwaj's *Maqbool*, in which he was a mobster-with-many-moods-in-Mumbai; Mira Nair's *The Namesake*, in which his Bengali *bhadralok* immigrant finds his place in faraway New York; and Anup Singh's *Qissa*, in which he plays a man desirous

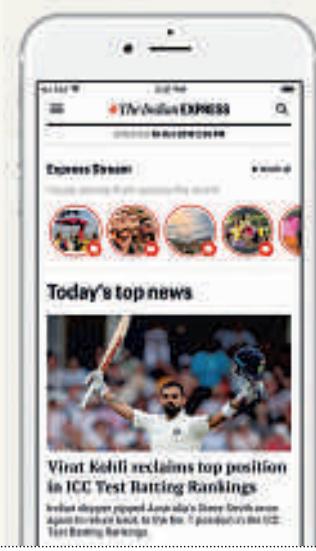
of something he could not have. These roles combine not just the 'skills' of a schooled actor, but deep empathy, a generosity of spirit, and an unfettered intelligence, which shone through everything he did, good, indifferent, or flat-out fantastic.

He did everything. Or at least everything that Bollywood brought to his table, after having learnt that this tall, rangy,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

FULL COVERAGE PAGE 15

Ahmedabad



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KERALA WORRIED AS NEW CASES POP UP IN GREEN ZONES

Between April 21 and April 27, the state saw 74 new COVID-19 cases added to its tally, taking by surprise doctors and health officials who had been keeping a watch on the situation.

VIDEO OF THE DAY



CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF IRRFAN KHAN

Khan owned every character he portrayed on celluloid

CORONAVIRUS



11 LESSONS FROM THE PANDEMIC

Every country has discovered that a shutdown is inevitable

EXPRESS AUDIO

Decoding India's withdrawal of rapid tests

NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY

In today's episode of the 3 Things podcast, we look at why the government introduced and then withdrew rapid testing for the novel coronavirus

FROM PAGE ONE

Cases cross 4,000 in Gujarat with 17 more deaths

quarantine and three were at the care centre in Samras Hostel.

A senior officer from the Ahmedabad unit of information department said that some of them had gone to civil hospital on an official assignment recently. One of them experienced symptoms like fever and body ache following which he got his tests done which turned out to be positive on Tuesday. Subsequently, seven employees at the office got themselves tested, of which four turned out to be positive.

Anand's Khambat area reported 11 new cases, taking the district tally to 77, of which three were men aged 83, 75 and 72 years. Vadodara reported 22 new cases, which included seven mediapersons. Of these, two are employees of digital news organisation who were travelling to Vadodara to report on the COVID-19 pandemic. A 24-year-old reporter and a 54-year-old cameraperson of the organisation tested positive along with their cab driver.

The three were asymptomatic and took part in the free test for mediapersons being conducted at the High Speed Rail Training Institute (HSRTI) on Tuesday when they tested positive. The city administration has quarantined them at the HSRTI facility.

Four other local mediapersons also tested positive but were asymptomatic and have been home quarantined. Dr Devesh Patel, health officer of VMC, said, "A total of 24 contacts of the mediapersons who tested positive have been home quarantined. The three persons are from outside Vadodara and although they have been included in the total in Vadodara as of now, they will be migrated to the COVID-19 tally of their home state and city."

Vadodara also saw four deaths in a single day with two women aged 66 and 75 years with hypertension succumbing to COVID-19 at GMERS Gotri and two other men, aged 54 and 65 years, also with co-morbidities dying later in the day. This takes Vadodara's death toll to 19.

Surat reported three deaths, including a 22-year-old man who had liver disease, and two others — a 68-year-old man and a 60-year-old woman — with hypertension. With 31 new cases, the count went up to 61 in the district.

Bharuch reported two new cases on Tuesday, taking the district total to 27. Mahisagar saw five new cases, including a 39-year-old employee of a hotel where eight staff members of Balasinor COVID-19 hospital are staying, and two male cousins aged 30 and 32 years. Another 60-year-old man from West Bengal who was begging at Lunawada and was shifted to a shelter home, too, tested positive, taking the district tally to 15.

In Botad, a 57-year-old man who is the neighbour of an earlier positive case tested positive, taking the district total to 20. Gandhinagar tally went up to 38 cases with two new cases.

Announcing two policy decisions taken by the health department, Principal Health Secretary Jayanti Ravi said, "If a positive patient comes to a (private) clinic or hospital and if the medical procedure is being done on the patient while healthworkers are wearing PPEs, there shall be no shutdown of the facility. According to ICMR guidelines, if a person wishes to be tested for COVID-19 from a private laboratory before a medical procedure, they are free to do so."

"We have seen as many as 28 deaths in a single day due to swine flu in the past. We have learnt from Gujarat's battle with Ebola, H1N1, SARS and we must imbibe the spirit of learning to live

with COVID-19... focus on staying safe and following basic practices," added Ravi, while reminding that everyone has to download the Aarogya Setu app.

Private hospitals

patients, or even the government's own ambiguity in co-opting the private sector. But, fallen off the radar, they have.

Bihar, in fact, witnessed an "almost complete withdrawal" of the private health sector, which has nearly twice the bed capacity of public facilities.

"Forget COVID-19, even regular services have become unavailable," complained Bihar Principal Secretary (Health) Sanjay Kumar on April 19. The state, with India's third largest population, had to issue an order asking all hospitals to resume services.

This was particularly significant also because all three hospitals handling Covid cases in Patna are government hospitals. Vikash R Keshri, Senior Research Fellow, The George Institute for Global Health, said it was also "surprising" since the number of people relying on private healthcare over public for both outpatient and inpatient services in Bihar is "far higher". Private hospitals have 47,000 beds in the state compared with 22,000 of public hospitals.

"The public sector remains the mainstay of the Covid response. The private sector response has been variable. They have expressed interest but to what extent they are actually providing support required needs to be gauged," said K Srinath Reddy, President, Public Health Foundation of India.

Before the outbreak, the private sector accounted for nearly 70 per cent of critical procedures like chemotherapy and dialysis, according to Indu Bhushan, Chief Executive Officer, Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana and National Health Authority. Yet, "a lot" of these private establishments treating even non-Covid cases had shut down in certain states citing increased costs and reduced footfalls, he said.

"States like Madhya Pradesh, currently struggling with lack of healthcare personnel, and Bihar could do with more private sector intervention here," said Bhushan. "This is the time that the private sector should be looking at a welfare maximisation model and not a profit-maximisation model. Hopefully, this will happen," he noted.

In Mumbai, the city with the largest number of Covid cases, and also the most deaths, *The Indian Express* has reported how patients were turned away from one hospital to another, and even Covid-positive patients have had to wait for hours before they could be admitted.

Maharashtra did not bar private hospitals from treating Covid patient but many would just not admit patients with Covid symptoms, fearing they would be sealed by the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (BMC).

"In Mumbai, BMC is managing 80 per cent load of patients; the private hospitals are handling 20 per cent," said Suresh Kakani, Additional Municipal Commissioner. Of the 4,574 active cases on Tuesday, 400 patients were admitted in private hospitals, whereas 1,600 were in public hospitals. The remaining 2,500 odd were asymptomatic, not requiring admission.

In fact, as on date, Maharashtra has 187 critical patients, of which Mumbai alone accounts for about 120-125, most of whom require just oxygen support. A split of patients requiring critical care between private and public hospitals was not immediately available.

In India, there are three levels of COVID facilities. The first level comprises quarantine facilities in stadia, hostels, schools and lodges, called Covid Care Centres. This is

either home or institutional quarantine.

Existing lockdown guidelines make no allowance for inter-state movement, but the Centre had kept quiet as states recently moved ahead with arrangements to get back their students and migrant labour. Bihar had shot off a letter to the Centre at the time, saying the transportation was in "utter violation of national guidelines".

The latest guidelines, however, make no mention of trains, which were among the modes of transport states had suggested for large-scale movement of migrant workers. The move comes as states

are finding it increasingly difficult to sustain migrant labour, with work and revenue sources drying up. There have been several instances of migrants desperate to get home resorting to violence in Gujarat and Maharashtra. The Uddhav Thackeray government in Maharashtra had sought arrangements for inter-state transport of labour.

However, the move might end up further impacting plans to open up the economy, which is struggling to do so with the few relaxations announced. Many states have said they would like to open the economy completely in green zones after May 3. The MSME sector,

for example, is heavily dependent on migrant labour.

In its order Wednesday, the MHA said: "All States/UTs should designate nodal authorities and develop standard protocols for receiving and sending such stranded persons. The nodal authorities shall also register the stranded persons within their States/UTs. In case a group of stranded persons

wish to move between one State/UT and another State/UT, the sending and receiving States may consult each other and mutually agree to the movement by road."

It also asked states falling in between to allow the passage of such persons.

Relaxations May 4 onward: Centre

Jalandhar, Ludhiana and Mohali — have been declared hotspots, the containment zones are: Jawaharpur in Mohali, Pathlawa village in Nawanshahar, Sujanpur in Pathankot, New Jain Market in Rajpura and Kacha Patiala, Safabadi Gate in Patiala.

Earlier this week, the Punjab government had set up an expert committee to formulate a lockdown exit strategy.

Issuing guidelines for re-

suming economic activity in

non-containment zones, the

government said standalone shops, neighbourhood shops and shops in residential areas will be allowed to open on rotation, from 7 am to 11 am. Shops in market complexes and shopping malls as well as barber shops will remain closed.

All shops in rural areas registered under the Shops & Establishment Act, except those in multi-brand and single-brand malls, will also be allowed to open with 50 per cent staff strength, for four hours daily.

In Kolkata, Chief Minister

Mamata Banerjee announced

that standalone shops, including for electronics, books, paint, laundry, hardware, cellphone recharge and paan shops, will be allowed to open in non-containment zones from May 4.

"We will only allow standalone shops. No hawkers' corner, market or shopping complex will be allowed to open," she said. "We thought we would take a decision after getting clarity from the central government. But we did not get any clarification. So, we an-

dounced our decision today. It will be implemented from Monday," she said.

She said taxis, with not more than three passengers, and private buses, with not more than 20 passengers, will be allowed to ply in green zones.

"Nobody can say when this crisis will end. Most countries have already announced lockdown till the end of May and first week of June. Our experts and doctors believe that the restrictions should continue till the end of May," she said.

But the filmmakers who did like his National School of Drama (NSD) mate Dhulia, and Bhardwaj, made the most of, and their own, innate knowledge of the Hindi belt, long neglected by Bollywood. Their coming together was a great confluence. It brought a new language, new robustness to Hindi cinema, something that old-school Bollywood filmmakers like Mahesh Bhatt recognised. Bhatt's production house gave Irrfan a chance to go over to the other side, away from the raw, visceral gangland/hearthland tales, and explore unfamiliar territories. He lifted brainless comedies (Rohit Shetty's *Sunday*) with the same verve as he did gritty, hard-hitting tales (Dhulia's *Paan Singh Tomar*): it was all grist to his mill, acutely attuned to the world around him.

The state estimates over 9 lakh people from Jharkhand, including 6,43,630 migrant workers, are stranded in various parts of the country. In earlier interactions with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan had also raised the demand for special trains.

Officials from Odisha and

Uttar Pradesh had also informally spoken to Railway officials on the matter. The Punjab government, too, had raised the demand.

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar tweeted in support of the move on Wednesday. "This decision is appropriate and worth welcoming. This was our request and the central government has taken a positive decision," he said.

Welcoming the decision, senior Congress leader P Chidambaram sought "sanitised, point-to-point trains" for the purpose as he said, buses would not be enough.

Irrfan Khan

magnetic-eyed person could transform into anyone, with a particular kind of magic. He could go high, dive low, get intense, go goofy and grumpy, growl and guffaw. He could be dangerous and maniacal. He was also the loveliest, kookiest, most passionate lover you ever saw. It took the film industry many years to find Irrfan, and it isn't as if he was flooded with roles from the big studios immediately after his breakout roles, post 2002, in *Haasil* and *Maqbool*.

But home was really where his heart was. None of these international outings could truly mine what Irrfan was capable of. He did those movies because he could, but saved the razzle dazzle for his *desi dil-hai-Hindustani* outings. Fully switched on, he came up as close to us as possible, to start that conversation, as only he could: *chalaye, baat karte hain*.

CMC-NEET case

imposing reasonable restrictions in the national and public interest," the bench said.

Article 19(1)(g) grants citizens the right to practice any profession, or to carry on any occupation, trade or business, while Article 30 relates to the right of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions.

"The rights to administer an institution under Article 30 of the Constitution are not above the law and other Constitutional provisions. Reasonable regulatory measures can be provided without violating such rights available under Article 30 of the Constitution to administer an institution," the bench ruled.

Writing for the bench, Justice Mishra said "the rights under Article 19(1)(g) are not absolute and are subject to reasonable restriction in the interest of the student's community to promote merit, recognition of excellence, and to curb the malpractices.

Uniform Entrance Test qualifies the test of proportionality and is reasonable. The same is intended to check several maladies which crept into medical education, to prevent capitation fee by admitting students which are lower in merit and to prevent exploitation, profiteering and commercialisation of education. The institution has to be a capable vehicle of education".

"The minority institutions are equally bound to comply with the conditions imposed under the relevant Acts and Regulations to enjoy affiliation and recognition, which apply to all institutions. In case they have to impart education, they are bound to comply with the conditions which are equally applicable to all. The regulations are necessary, and they are not divisive or disintegrative.

Such regulatory measures enable institutions to administer them efficiently. The quality of medical education is imperative to serve the national interest, and merit cannot be compromised.

The Government has the right for providing regulatory measures that are in the national interest," the order stated.

The petitioners had said that unaided minority professional colleges have the fundamental right to choose the method and manner of admitting students, subject to satisfaction of the triple test of a fair, transparent, and non-exploitative process, and that NEET could not be the only parameter to determine the merit of a student.

In Mumbai, a senior Shiv Sena leader told *The Indian Express*: "Uddhavji discussed the current political uncertainty in the state with the PM. He expressed unhappiness over the politics being played over his nomination as MLC at a time when the state is fighting the coronavirus outbreak, and is standing with the Centre in that he would look into the matter and get more details.

In Mumbai, a senior Shiv Sena leader told *The Indian Express*:

"Uddhavji discussed the current political uncertainty in the state with the PM. He expressed unhappiness over the politics being

played over his nomination as MLC at a time when the state is fighting the coronavirus outbreak, and is standing with the Centre in that he would look into the matter and get more details.

On Monday, the Maharashtra Cabinet reiterated the recommendation it had first made on April 9 after a meeting presided over by Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar. On Tuesday evening, a delegation of the Cabinet met Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari, and urged him to nominate Thackeray to one of the two vacant seats in the Council through the Governor's quota.

Sources said the Governor was "non-committal" during his meeting with the leaders of the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi. This, the sources said, may have "forced" Thackeray to speak to the Prime Minister. A senior leader of the ruling coalition said that on Monday night, Thackeray had discussed with NCP leader Sharad Pawar three options going forward.

"The first is to write to the Election Commission requesting that the Legislative Council polls

which were deferred by it earlier this month due to the lockdown, should be held. Since the election

will be unopposed, we also want the EC to reduce the required 21 days period for holding the poll.

The second option is to approach the Supreme Court to ask it to direct the EC to hold polls," the leader said.

The third and last option

would be for Thackeray to resign as Chief Minister, then call a legislative party meeting of all three coalition partners to elect him as leader, and form the government once again, the leader said.

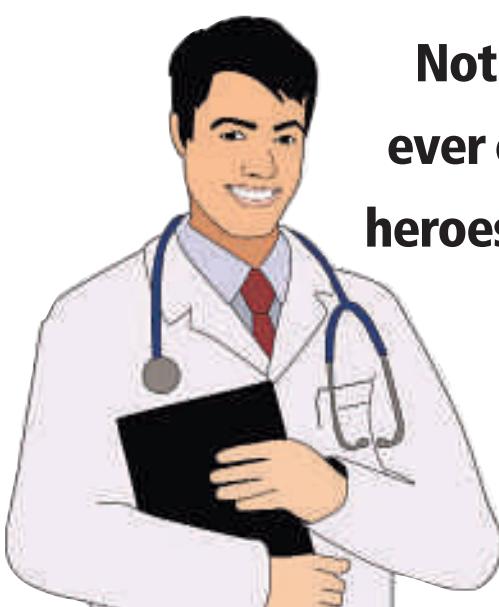
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Ahmedabad

AHMEDABAD SALUTES Frontline Warriors

Thanking the corona warriors



Not all heroes wear capes. They are in fact the only constants in an ever changing world. We literally can't be going without you. To the heroes, the corona warriors, a thank you. For them, amidst their own apprehensions, duty towards nation is paramount. While they are soothing nerves and driving assurances, we need to live it up for them. We should at least be acknowledging their tireless efforts.

AT such a time there are people around the country and the world who have risen to lead community work, bring support and service the people selflessly in different ways they can. The true corona warriors. It is a diverse corona warrior workforce currently mobilizing against corona virus. It is a surge of humanity.

While doctors and nurses are fighting on the frontlines against the novel coronavirus, there are other heroes who are risking their lives to make significant contributions to society. No matter how much we thank the doctors, paramedics, nurses, midwives, the ambulance services, the 108s, the traffic personnel and the other emergency workers doing their duties, it will never be enough and the society will always remain indebted to them. Overwhelmed and under resourced, it has been a job well done.

There are thousands of faceless men and women who are working tirelessly yet enthusiastically across the society taking huge personal risks at the frontlines of the battle against coronavirus. As the crises continue, these warriors are learning to cope with the anxiety and strengthen immunity. They face a unique set of challenges, life or death decisions, real health risks and urgent concerns. Every time they lend a helping hand to those in need, they may be risking the well being of their loved ones.

Yet, it is an ocean of workforce on the field. As part of the initial mission, there were the flying corona warriors, the pilot and crews who brought back stranded Indians from various countries. The same way students, pilgrims, tourists were brought back to their respective states, in buses. These warriors have now embarked on a journey to take the migrant labour to their destination.

Coronavirus pandemic is not just about the virus itself. It has also brought with it hunger, loneliness, violence and domestic abuse. Psychiatrists and psychologists have been assigned helplines, where in they can soothe frayed nerves affected in various ways on a call. They have also been deployed to counsel the COVID-19 patients. We happen to see the physical aspect, but the mental side of patients need to be taken care of as well.

Anganwadi and SHG workers are working as the foot soldiers in this fight and have turned into the eyes, ears and nose of the administration. Municipal school teachers have been on the ground since the beginning, trying to explain the gravity of the situation while surveying and distributing ration kits as well.

Without any disruptions to banking services, bankers are processing transactions, disbursing cash, printing passbooks and keeping the ATMs full. Travelling to the bank amidst a lockdown could be eerie, but all banks are working. The India Post has also at this time



helped people by providing them the service of delivering money home.

Milk federations have been a very important cog to keep the wheel running. While every pouch of milk is important and precious and people even tried to hoard perishables like milk and vegetables initially, milk federations have made suitable arrangements for ensuring uninterrupted collection, chilling, transportation and processing of milk and even availability of fodder in the villages. And then the milkman unfailingly supplying milk every morning at the doorstep.

Vegetable and fruits are other essentials and are being distributed well. This workforce despite falling in the category

of super spreaders, has ensured that things remain normal in terms of delivering the supplies. They are on the move with their carts, unmistakably ensuring people are stocked up on vegetables.

The supermarket workers have been on duty more than ever before. As panicked people throng stores, leaving shelves in need of relentless replenishment, these workers have been working day in and day out to keep stocks in check and sanitised, especially when supermarkets have been drained of essentials. Plus, not to forget the check ins and check outs of people and products require constant attention and disinfection. The neighbourhood grocer



also has been working to keep our homes recharged and replenished, so that we don't have to face the out of stock scenario. While restaurants are not open, Zomato and Swiggy have started home delivering essentials. And the list of deliverables and list of stores increases every day.

Lest we forget the cleaners who religiously come every morning to collect the garbage, to sweep and clean, the sanitation workers cleaning up the vicinity with renewed vigour, the security guards of the residential complexes, the ATMs guarding and checking and keeping a strict vigil.

Always been taken for granted, it is these unsung heroes who have helped us survive and have kept humanity alive. It has been a thankless job, that these people have been doing since ever. The undervalued heroes of the coronavirus crisis need our thanks and our support.

Apart from grit and fortitude, these times call for gratitude. To you all, this is a thank you more profusely meant than any other.

■ **Mallika Wadhwani**



Police Staff



Medical Staff



Govt. Employee



Bank Employee

**We stay at work for you,
You stay at home for us**

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THE OUTBREAK



Vegetable and fruit vendors maintain social distancing in CTM area of Ahmedabad. Javed Raja

Covid-care doctors, staff to be quarantined every 2 weeks

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, APRIL 29

THE STATE health department on Tuesday issued two orders making 14-day rotational duty mandatory for those working in COVID-19 hospitals and forming 11 teams headed by senior bureaucrats and assigned with specific tasks for containing the spread of the virus.

For dedicated COVID-19 hospitals, the policy outlines that there will be four teams comprising physicians, anaesthetists, medical officers, paramedical and service staff with each team working seven days in ICU, seven days in isolation wards and then quarantined for the next two weeks. The quarantined team shall be tested on the seventh day and if negative, "they can be deployed directly to dedicated COVID-19 hospitals' isolation wards," the policy states.

The order notes that the state has seen a constant rise in coronavirus cases because of increased testing. It also states that operations, including purchase and distribution of equipment, training, surveillance, contact-tracing, coordination with the central government are being carried out properly, "yet the prevalence of the disease has increased in the state".

"Taking this into consideration... and to monitor every patient better, by order of the state general administration, senior IAS officials have been deputed in the health and family welfare department... It is deemed fit to have other officers work along with these officials, so that the disease can be rapidly fought against," states the order.

Of the 11 teams, health commissioner Jai Prakash Shrivhare shall be heading four teams the responsibilities of which include managing all dedicated COVID-19 hospitals, coordinating with the Central government, telemedicine helpline, and surveillance, contact-tracing and containment activities.

Principal Health Secretary Jayant Ravi will be in charge of drawing up standard operating procedures and guidelines in tandem with the Centre and WHO guidelines. Haret Shukla,



Police personnel on duty in Vadodara look for respite from scorching sun. Bhupendra Rana

CASE TRACKER

PLACES	CONFIRMED	DEATHS	NEW CASES
Ahmedabad	2,777	137	234
Surat	601	22	31
Vadodara	285	19	22
Bhavnagar	43	5	2
Gandhinagar	38	2	2
Rajkot	58	1	3
Chhota Udepur	14		
Patan	17	1	
Panchmahal	24	2	1
Porbandar	3		
Kutch	6	1	
Gir Somnath	3		
Mehsana	8		
Morbi	1		
Jamnagar	1	1	
Sabarkantha	3		
Anand	77	3	12
Dahod	4		
Bharuch	27	2	
Banaskantha	28	1	
Botad	20	1	1
Kheda	6		
Narmada	12		
Aravalli	18	1	
Mahisagar	15		5
Valsad	5	1	
Navsari	6		3
Tapi	1		
Dang	2		
Surendranagar	1		
Cumulative recovery and discharge: 527			

Total cases: 4,104 | Deaths: 200 | New cases: 317

reach their homes in Fatepur district in Uttar Pradesh.

"It was our first proper meal since Saturday. We literally devoured the dal and baatis and it felt like someone had just given us a new lease of life. We couldn't thank the generous owner of the dhaba enough. We didn't even have the money to pay him but he said he was doing his bit of good karma," Vikram says.

"We have been living on numbered biscuits, namkeen and handful of sugar that we are carrying with us. On Monday, at the Pitoh checkpost on Gujarat-MP border, where we were made to wait for two hours before the officers asked us to go back to where we came from,



The group covered about 320 km Tuesday from their starting point in Jhabua in MP, where they had crossed over from Gujarat on Monday. Express

Although the dhaba was closed due to the ongoing COVID-19 lockdown, the owner who lives in a small room on the premises decided to make hot baatis for the famished group of migrants who have been cycling from Surat since Saturday to

Porbandar man uploads video claiming to have discovered Covid cure, held

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
RAJKOT, APRIL 29

PORBANDAR POLICE on Tuesday arrested a man who released a video on social media in which he purportedly claims that he has discovered a "cure" for COVID-19 and he was willing to share its formula with the Centre if the government enacts welfare schemes of his choice. Police said that the man later confessed that he released the video to gain publicity.

In the video released on Monday, the man identified himself as Raju Keshwala, a resident of Visavada village in Porbandar district. Keshwala can be purportedly seen in the video saying that he holds a degree in Computer Application and that he had discovered the medicine while meditating. He stated in the video that he was ready to give the formula of the medicine to central government on the condition that Parliament enact a law to implement the public welfare schemes suggested by him.

The 36-year-old man was arrested by Miyani Marine police in Porbandar on late Tuesday after booking him under IPC Section 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by a public servant) and National Disaster Management Act's Section 51(1)(a) (obstructing government officers from discharging their duties). Later, he was released on bail.

"He confessed that he hadn't discovered any drug for COVID-19 and that he had release the video only to gain publicity. He also didn't seem mentally very sound," PR Metaliya, Inspector of Miyani Marine Police said.

While the policy order had not accounted for the central health ministry guidelines permitting the option of home isolation for "very mild/pre-symptomatic patients having the requisite facility at his/her residence for self-isolation", Ravi added that the central ministry guideline has been communicated to the department as of Tuesday.

"We communicated as soon as we received the guidelines from the Centre on Monday... A PHC doctor will check if where the patient will be home-isolating, satisfies the condition... we believe that with home isolation, people will recover quickly," said Ravi.

Subsequently, a communication was also issued on April 28 by additional director in the health department Prakash Vaghela, putting home isolation of those mildly symptomatic, subject to conditions, operational.

Ravi also notified of the health department's decision to push private medical practitioners to open up their clinics. "We are motivating doctors to open their OPDs and clinics while factoring in their requirements including PPEs, police protection or any other requirements to facilitate the functioning of our doctors. Rajkot has started 605 clinics and OPDs. Ahmedabad has reopened 400. State-wide 2,186 hospitals and clinics have started their operations but we appeal and order strictly that hospitals, clinics and OPDs be reopened and we expect our doctors to enthusiastically participate in this," added Ravi.

The departmental crisis management committee has also stated in the advisory-cum-policy document that every district and corporation of Gujarat should have a 'task force' which will regularly review cases and availability of human resources.

They gave us a fist-sized bowl of khichdi," Vikram told over phone on Wednesday, almost thrilled that the group has now covered close to 750 km — half of the 1,400 km from Surat to their homes. By Wednesday evening, they reached Guna in Madhya Pradesh.

"We are about 300 km from Jhansi, where we will enter our home state of UP. We are happy that we are closer home. There is a lot of exhaustion but there is no other way," said Vikram.

The group covered about 320 km on Tuesday from their starting point in Jhabua in MP, where they had crossed over from Gujarat on Monday evening and decided to rest in a village. Out

Super spreaders not using masks, sanitisers to be fined more from May 1 in Ahmedabad

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, APRIL 29

IN AN attempt to curb the spread of COVID-19, Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation on Wednesday decided to hike the fine imposed on super spreaders like vegetable and fruit vendors, shopkeepers and supermarket employees who are not using masks and hand sanitisers from last week.

From Wednesday, the AMC

up to 3 years. On April 20, AMC launched a campaign focusing on super spreaders like vegetable vendors, persons working at grocery stores, medical stores, petrol pumps and involved in door-to-door garbage collection from last week.

From Wednesday, the AMC started distribution of free cotton masks to vendors across city. Over 3.5 lakh cotton masks have been procured by the AMC's Urban Community Development (UCD) Department with the help of women self-help groups (SHGs). Also, hand sanitisers are being distributed for free to vendors and shopkeepers.

On the implementation of home isolation of COVID-19 patients, the AMC commissioner said that the guidelines issued by the state government on Tuesday would be implemented from Wednesday.

"As per these guidelines, after visiting a doctor, patients who are asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic, can choose between a Covid-care centre or home isolation. In case the doctor examines the patient as serious, the patient has to decide between a government and a private hospital. For home isolation, there needs to be a separate room with attached toilet," he added.

About resuming operations of AMC's different departments after the lockdown, the commissioner said that preparations are being done to ensure each department functions smoothly taking into account factors like the availability of workforce and social distancing.

50-year-old Covid patient runs away from isolation ward in Surat

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
SURAT, APRIL 29

A 50-YEAR-OLD COVID-19 patient escaped from the isolation ward of New Civil Hospital (NCH) in Surat on Tuesday night. NCH authorities immediately informed Surat Municipal Corporation (SMC) officials, who then launched a manhunt for the patient.

SMC officials, along with Khatodara police, reached the residence of the patient but he wasn't found there. Efforts to nab him are on, police said. The patient had tested positive on April 21 and was admitted to NCH on the same day.

NCH Medical Superintendent, Dr. Preeta Kapadiya said, "Generally, the isolation ward has selective nurses and doctors. Nobody apart from the selected staffers is even allowed to go near the isolation ward. COVID-19 patients are given special dresses and they can be easily identified if spotted in public areas. We have informed SMC and police about the missing patient and they will find him."

Meanwhile, another COVID-19 patient uploaded a video on April 28 which went viral on social media, in which she alleged that the nursing staff and the doctors are not taking care of COVID-19 patients in the isolation ward at NCH.

BJP MLA Harsh Sanghavi, under whose constituency — Majura — NCH falls, said, "We have come across many complaints from COVID-19 patients. Earlier, there were complaints that they were not being given proper food; we then started supplying food to them. Two cases of patients running away from the hospital have come to light, and one patient has shot a video about doctors and nurses not taking proper care. We will make a representation to the Chief Minister in the coming days about the poor administration of NCH."

District collectors asked to ensure smooth supply of drinking water

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
GANDHINAGAR, APRIL 29

CHIEF Minister Vijay Rupani on Wednesday instructed district collectors to make arrangements to ensure smooth distribution of drinking water in Gujarat during summer as the state has sufficient quantity of water available.

In the weekly cabinet meeting held through video-conference, the CM also instructed the collectors to immediately get the hand pumps repaired wherever required, said Ashwani Kumar, Secretary to the Chief Minister. The CM also gave instructions to begin work under MGNREGA expeditiously in the state, including those under Gujarat government's Sujlam Sulam Jal Abhiyan.

Kumar said that the cabinet has decided to resume purchasing of tur dal from farmers between May 1 and 5 at 103 godowns of the Gujarat State Civil Supplies Corporation. Earlier, following online registration, the government had fixed the purchase of tur from farmers at minimum support price (MSP) between January 1 and March 30. However, the process was discontinued due to the pandemic.

Had our first proper meal since Saturday: Workers cycling to UP from Surat

reach their homes in Fatepur district in Uttar Pradesh.

"It was our first proper meal since Saturday. We literally devoured the dal and baatis and it felt like someone had just given us a new lease of life. We couldn't thank the generous owner of the dhaba enough. We didn't even have the money to pay him but he said he was doing his bit of good karma," Vikram says.

"We have been living on numbered biscuits, namkeen and handful of sugar that we are carrying with us. On Monday, at the Pitoh checkpost on Gujarat-MP border, where we were made to wait for two hours before the officers asked us to go back to where we came from,



The group covered about 320 km Tuesday from their starting point in Jhabua in MP, where they had crossed over from Gujarat on Monday. Express

they gave us a fist-sized bowl of khichdi," Vikram told over phone on Wednesday, almost thrilled that the group has now covered close to 750 km — half of the 1,400 km from Surat to their homes. By Wednesday evening, they reached Guna in Madhya Pradesh.

"We are about 300 km from Jhansi, where we will enter our home state of UP. We are happy that we are closer home. There is a lot of exhaustion but there is no other way," said Vikram.

The group covered about 320 km on Tuesday from their starting point in Jhabua in MP, where they had crossed over from Gujarat on Monday evening and decided to rest in a village. Out

of the total distance covered to reach Biaora, they hitched a ride on a transport truck on Monday night for about 170 km till the outskirts of Ujjain town and began cycling again on National Highway 3.

"On Monday evening, we took a route through the jungles to cross over to MP because the officers at the Pitoh checkpoint did not allow us a straight entry. But thankfully they did not impound our cycles and threw us into shelter homes. We were tired and slept in a temple. We don't know the name of the village but we left early morning before anyone could spot us or report us to the police. We are only afraid of being caught and treated like criminals in some shelters. No administration seems to understand that we only want to go home."

The group has decided to cycle about 150 km every day with sufficient time for rest. "We are covering about 14 km in an hour. We stop every two hours at a petrol pump for about half an hour to have some sugar and namkeen that we are carrying..." Rai said. On Tuesday, they stopped by after a distance of about 30 km from Jhabua when they spotted a transport truck on the highway that was willing to drop them till Ujjain. Their families know that they are travelling but they do not know that they are cycling.

don't want them to worry. We have told them that we are taking rides on trucks and resting for meals so that they don't keep bothering us on the phone."

The group has a total of Rs 180 with them — they spent Rs 50 to purchase glucose biscuits on Tuesday that will help them for part of the next 700 km to be covered. "When I reach home, I will ask my mother to make alao paratha. I don't know if she must have made am achaar this year. I haven't eaten paratha in a long time. And of course, kachori with alao sabzi is one thing all of us want to eat. If we find another God-sent angel in Jhansi, maybe we will get kachoris too," he says.

Ahmedabad

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Vadodara in Safe Hands

(Keeping Vadodara Safe)



INTERVIEW | Shri Anupam Singh Gahlaut, IPS, Commissioner Of Police, Vadodara City, Gujarat



Vadodara has emerged as one of the well-facilitated cities of Gujarat. The challenges of serving as the Police Commissioner of the city is both dynamic and demanding, and **Anupam Singh Gahlaut, IPS**, Commissioner of Police, Vadodara City, has been handling the COVID-19 situation in the city to the best of his abilities. In an interview to **ELINA SRIVASTAVA**, he shares his plans and strategies put in place to fight the virus effectively

How is Vadodara Police coping up with the situation?

On March 22, 2020, when the PM announced Janta Curfew, the state government had already announced the lockdown in the four cities of Gujarat — Ahmedabad, Surat, Rajkot and Vadodara. So, in a way, we had already imposed the lockdown two days prior to the country. Everything was going as planned, but on the March 22 evening people started moving outside viewing Janta Curfew is over. It was then difficult to control the sudden rush. We took it very seriously and implemented the rules accordingly and, as a result, from March 23, many things got under control. With a population of 25 lakhs, 98% of citizens in the city are cooperating nicely in every possible manner and via WhatsApp too (which police department has circulated for citizen's help and is monitored by crime branch and on which we receive almost 200 videos daily). Only 2% people are out on the roads daily, including 1% government employees. We are taking strict actions on the rest of incon siderable people and have registered 6,000 FIRs under various sections (Disaster Management Act, and violation of various notifications and other IPC sections). We have arrested 8,500 culprits from March 23 to April 22 and also took custody of over 11,350 vehicles after receiving WhatsApp com-

plaints by societies and common people. After scrutiny, we have registered 400 FIRs and arrested 600 people and kept their (one who complains) names confidential. We have registered 500 FIRs and arrested 1000 people who were found partying, playing outside or in gatherings through the deputation of our 11 drones over high-class societies, fields and other such areas. Then we have scrutinised CCTV cameras of such societies and registered 200 FIRs (more cases are of morning and evening walkers), and then road cameras were also scrutinised and again 350 cases were registered. All this was possible only due to the awareness of people and their valuable cooperation. We have also implemented AMPR camera (automatic plate recognition camera) to know the frequency of a moving vehicle, and after tapping them we found 90% of vehicles are of government employees and 10% are of common people. We have consolidated every red zone, such as Nagawara and Wadi areas, and monitored them strictly by putting halogen lights, CCTV cameras, making videos of every suspected movement and started registering FIRs and arrested many culprits. We have also done naka bandi at several points to keep check with vigilance.

Most of our policemen are working



day and night and doing overtime. In this regard, how is the authority ensuring their safety, along with the safety of their family members. Also, do you have any backup plans?

To protect and keep others healthy, we have to ensure that we're fit and healthy first. Realising this, we have provided full support to our medical team and provided masks, sanitisers, PPE kits, helmets and gloves to every police personnel who are going along with medical team for sampling and testing. Also, we did massive sanitisation drives, including the houses

of police officers, did medical check-ups of every family, and also allowed one-time home visit to every police officer. Those who are unmarried or living without family refused getting back to their homes after their routine logout and supported us in this difficult period along with overtime officers. We provide them with healthy nutritious food and full medical support to them and their families, if needed. So, they are serving and supporting the system in a stress-free manner.

How are you handling issues cropping up in hospitals where sus-

pected patients are not cooperating with doctors? And how is social distancing faring?

Many such cases came to light where patients are not coming for their medical check-ups. Some agreed to explain but some came forcefully, after we took strict action against them. Also, many cases came up when hospitals authorities complained of misbehaving, uncooperative patients and for their unhygienic behaviour. We interviewed them and ensured that police will take strict action against such activities and solve them effectively. Also, we have registered FIRs against home quarantined people who are not taking medical advice seriously. We have put schedule sticker on suspects' hands and ensured that in any situation they should not come out of their isolation place. We have kept check on social distancing through drones, CCTV cameras at every place, including red, orange and green zones. Now the things are under control.

There are many zones. What is the strategy and further plans for these zones?

Actually, there are red, yellow and white or green zones. The orange zone, the buffer zone, comes after yellow zone, where we take extra care and check for minimum movement to protect people. Whereas

movement is strictly prohibited in red zones like Nagawara. Also, we have made mini red zones (in which 50 houses or a small area is covered) to keep extra checks and vigilance. There are 15 protective areas, including Gotri, covered totally by shades, cameras and regular patrolling. And with this, the good news is that our 45 positive cases became negative and were released from hospital so it is a matter of hope for us. We are still doing sampling and testing, and some positive cases have come up from local transmitter. We, the corporation department, collector office and health department are working together in our fight against COVID-19 and hoping that things will be better in the coming days.

What is the message you would like to convey to our readers and residents of Vadodara?

Our police department, health department, corporation department and every such department are working hard 24x7 and conveying various guidelines regarding safety and precaution against Covid-19. So, I would like to appeal to the public of Vadodara to obey and follow every guideline and protect themselves and their family from this pandemic. And whenever the lockdown gets over they must keep taking protective measures and be safe.

Astral SteriTech taking steps to support staff working in lockdown



and the same process is repeated when the product is ready to be sent. Special care is being taken in canteen area by marking spaces for maintaining social distancing. Similarly desk area is also being segregated for maintaining social distancing. The company is working as per the pattern of WHO and guidelines given by the government. The company also provides Corona Insurance Coverage for its employees. Therefore, workers have desirably come forward to work, as cautious steps have been taken by the company against COVID-19.

The employees are being paid salary without checking the attendance and also pick up and drop facilities are being provided by the company. If any of the workers show symptoms like cough, cold or fever, the supervisor is informed about the same and the per-



son is moved to the isolation area. A special isolation ward has been set up in the company itself. Arrangements have been provided to transfer the person in case of immediate need.

Astral SteriTech Pvt. Ltd. symbolises our dedication to quality, our sincerity towards our work and our passion to achieve 100% customer satisfaction.

Support, Praise, Appreciate the Courage, Dedication, Commitment, Bravery, Passion, Spirit, Grit of our Doctors, Healthcare Workers, Gujarat Police and countless others for standing in the front line of the COVID-19 response

ASTRAL SteriTech Pvt. Ltd.
911, G.I.D.C., Makarpura, Vadodara-390 010, India.

We salute the entire Police Force, Medical Team and Safai Soldiers of this Great Nation, for their tireless fighting against this Pandemic.

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VASNA | KARELIBAUG

FOR the first time in the history of corporates across India, Astral Steri Tech, a company based in Makarpura of Vadodara, has resumed its production work along with isolation facility for its employees. Dr Dushyant Patel, Managing Director and Chairman of Astral Steri Tech at Makarpura, GIDC, said that the company manufactures sterilising injectable products. The working has been resumed from April 20, right after receiving instructions from the state government. Currently, the work has been resumed with fewer staff. All kinds of arrangements have been provided to take care of the workers engaged in work. After that training is given to take precautions before entering any of the concern departments. Even though all the processes are operated online, it is yet set by segregating the same. Material bought into the factory are sanitised. The raw materials received from the vehicle outside is first air showered

NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY**NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY****E-Tender****GUJARAT STATE
NARMADA WATER RESOURCES, WATER
SUPPLY AND KALPASAR DEPARTMENT
Damanganga Canal Investigation Division****E Tender Notice No 10 of 2019-20****Corrigendum No.2**

Please read following Corrigendum No.2 made in Online tender Notice No.10 of 2019-20 issued by Executive Engineer, Damanganga Canal Investigation Division, Valsad .

Last date for receipt of online tender is Dt.15/05/2020 instead of Dt 30/04/2020 Time up to 18.00 Hrs. & Last date of submission of Physical Document by R.P.A.D/Speed post is Dt. 22/05/2020 instead of Dt. 08/05/2020 .Other details remained unchanged.

No.INF/Valsad/Cor/28/2020

निविदा संचालन
No. M-03-2020-C&W-AII

वरिष्ठ मंडल यांत्रिक इंजीनियर (संसदी) अजमेर भारत के सदृशपि एवं उनको और से निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु दिनांक 20.05.2020 को 15.00 बजे तक है-निविदा (Single packet system) आमंत्रित की जाती है।
1. कार्य का नाम : Annual Maintenance Contract of CUMMINS Diesel Engines of SPART UDZ for two years. (Engine Sr. No. 25261220 & 25261221 Model NTA-885-R/IES) 2. कार्य की अवधि : 02 years. 3. कार्य की अनुमानी लागत : Rs. 26,29,848.80 (Rs. Twenty Six Lakhs Twenty Nine Thousand Eight Hundred Forty Eight and Eighty Paisa only) 4. बयाना राशि : Rs. 52,600/- (Rs. Fifty Two Thousands Six Hundred only) 5. ई-प्रस्ताव का सूलना (Technical bid) : दिनांक 20.05.2020 का 15.00 बजे 6. Website particulars : www.ireps.gov.in 421-SP/20

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Please join us on /NWRailways

Gujarat Water Supply & Sew.Bord.**Tender Notice No-6**

Year-2020-21

On line tender are invited through E-tendering by the Office of the Executive Engineer P.H Works Dn. Bhuj (K) Mop No. 99784 06826 for Following Works. The Bidder Who Fullfill the qualification criteria mentioned in the tender documents can bid the tenders.

No.	Details Of Work	1. Estimate Cost 2.E.M.D. Rs. 3.Tender Fees 4.Registration 5.Timelimit 6.Tender L.D. No
1	Operation & Maintenance Of 9 MLD WTP at Bhada Head Works & Operation, Maintenance Repairing Of all Submersible /HSCF/HMSP Pump set & relevant control panel board at various Tube Well sites/EW/Sump with replacement of necessary spare parts & annual operation Maintenance & repairing of Mandvi part I (Bhada Complex) RWSS For (Twenty Four) Months (including to & for Charger) Action Plan 2019-20 M & R Programme	1. Rs 4804554-06 2. Rs 48100-00 3. Rs 1500-00 4. E-I & Above 5. 24 Months 6. 405947

The tender can be Found on the <http://www.eprocure.gov.in> Website. Online bid Submission Date: 07/05/2020 Up to 18:00 hrs & Physical Submission Date: 14/05/2020 up to 18:00 hrs. Further information related to tender may be obtained from the above mention office. GWSSB reserves the all right to accept or rejects any or all tenders without assigning any reason. Any addition & alteration in the tender will be published in the above website only.

For Any Grievances related to Drinking Water in Rural Area Please Contact On GWSSB toll free No. 1916.

(DDI-KUTCH-32-2020)

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OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER OF G.S.T DIVISION
1st Floor, 'Millennium Plaza', Malhar Chowk, Dhramgadhra Road,
SURENDRANAGAR – 363 001
फोन /Phone #: (02752) 290200 फैक्स /Fax #: (02752) 22006.

F. No. I/22-01/MV/Adm/2019 Dated: 24.04.2020

TENDER NOTICE**NOTICE FOR ONLINE BIDS FOR HIRING OF 01 VEHICLE FOR GOODS AND SERVICES TAX, CGST DIVISION, SURENDRANAGAR**

This office requires 01 Non A/c vehicle (preferably white colour) on monthly hiring basis for a period of 01 year (i.e. 01.06.2020 to 31.05.2021) as perthe terms & conditions available at website www.cnic.gov.in and with the GSO/PRO, Goods and Services Tax, CGST Division, Surendranagar. The following vehicles are to be hired by this CGST Division, Surendranagar Office

Sr. No.	Model of the vehicles	No. of vehicles	Criteria for hiring of vehicles	Cost ceiling (exclusive of taxes)	Hiring Period
1.	Small size vehicle like Maruti S Cross/Hyundai Verna/Ford Aspire/Hyundai Xcent/ similar kind of vehicle	01	For 25-26 days subject to maximum of 2000 km in a month. Preferably not more than 02 years old	CNG Vehicles Rs. 35,000/- per month Petrol/Diesel Vehicles Rs. 40,000/- per month	For the period of 01 year from 01.06.2020 to 31.05.2021

Interested parties should submit their Tenders **ONLINE** in two parts Technical Bid (Annexure II) & Financial Bid (Annexure D) on E-procurement portal i.e. www.eprocure.gov.in. No tender document will be accepted which has been sent to this office offline viz. by fax/e-mail or any other such means except Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) amounting to Rs. 10,000/- . The complete bid should be submitted after signing and for accepting the general terms and conditions as per Annexure-I by 15.05.2020 up to 1700 hrs. The online received bids will be opened online on 18.05.2020 the members of the Tender Committee.

**Tender Notice No.5/2020-21****Online Tender ID:- 106275**

Tender are invited through Two Bid E-Tendering by the Executives Engineers P.H.Mech.Dr. "Jai Bhawan" Opp. Sarita Vihar Society, University Rd Rajkot 360005 (Phone 0281-2542059/79

Sl. no	Name of work	Estimated Cost In Rs. In Lacs	EMD Rs.	Tender fee Rs.	Class of Regt.
1	Site of SCF pump set with Floating barge and Co-Ordinated Mechanical Accessories Electrical Equipment etc. Comp. with One Year Comp. O & Mand Security at Vesa Dars (God water) for Vesa RWSS Dist. Rajkot	24.53	24600	1500	E-3 CLASS & ABOVE

Tender Documents can be seen,Down loded & submitted on website // <http://www.eprocure.gov.in> Pre bid Meeting on Dt. 06/05/2020 at 12:00 Hrs, Last date for an file bid submission Dt. 13/05/2020 up to 18:00 Hrs, Physical from latest by Dt. 14/05/2020 up to 15:00 Any additional information of the tender will be available at above mentioned office All Right is reserved to reject any or all Tenders without assigning reasons thereof. If any Amendments will be Published on website. For The Problem of Drinking water in rural water supply scheme contact Toll Free No. 1916 INF/Raj/30/20

INF/Raj/31/20

Sd/- (पंकज कुमार)
महायक आयक
केंद्रीय वस्तु एवं सेवा कर मंडल
सुरेन्द्रनगर

**Tender Notice No.4/2020-21****Online Tender ID:- 406267**

Tender are invited through Two Bid E-Tendering by the Executives Engineers P.H.Mech.Dr. "Jai Bhawan" Opp. Sarita Vihar Society, University Rd Rajkot 360005 (Phone 0281-2562059/79

Sl. no	Name of work	Estimated Cost In Rs. In Lacs	EMD Rs.	Tender fee Rs.	Class of Regt.
1	Site of SCF pump set with Floating barge and Co-Ordinated Mechanical Accessories Electrical Equipment etc. Comp. with Six (6) month Comp. O & Mand Security at Fefal Com (God water) for Fefal RWSS Dist. Rajkot	22.21	22300	1500	E-1 CLASS & ABOVE

Tender Documents can be seen,Down loded & submitted on website // <http://www.eprocure.gov.in> Pre bid Meeting on Dt. 06/05/2020 at 12:00 Hrs, Last date for an file bid submission Dt. 13/05/2020 up to 18:00 Hrs, Physical from latest by Dt. 14/05/2020 up to 15:00 Any additional information of the tender will be available at above mentioned office All Right is reserved to reject any or all Tenders without assigning reasons thereof. If any Amendments will be Published on website.

For The Problem of Drinking water in rural water supply scheme contact Toll Free No. 1916 INF/Raj/31/20

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Sd/- (पंकज कुमार)
महायक आयक
केंद्रीय वस्तु एवं सेवा कर मंडल
सुरेन्द्रनगर

Chief Engineer (Bridges Department)

No. Ch.E./20/07/Bridges/GMLR dated:- 28.04.2020

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION (RFQ)**(INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING)**

HONOURABLE Municipal Commissioner, Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai invites "Request for Qualification (RFQ)" from eligible and experienced bidders through e-tendering as detailed below.

DEPARTMENT Ch. Eng. (Bridges)

e-RFQ/Bid No. 7100177476

SUBJECT "Request for Qualification (RFQ)" for the work of "Design and construction of Twin Tunnel below SGNP from Amar Nagar, Mulund to Filmcity Goregaon along with Cut & cover Box Tunnel in Filmcity area, Goregaon under the Goregaon Mulund Link Road Project"

Sale of e-RFQ Start Date : 29.04.2020 from 1100 hrs

Last Date : 11.06.2020 up to 1300 hrs.

Pre-bid meeting 2000 hrs. on 12.05.2020

Address- Conference room of AMC (P), 2nd floor, Annex Building, MCGM Head Office, Mahapalika Marg, Fort, Mumbai-400001, Maharashtra, India.

Website <http://portal.mcgm.gov.in>

Contact Person Assistant Engineer (GMLR)

a. Name 1. Shri. Ashok Mali (Mob. no. +91 9820847944)
2. Shri. Sudhakar Hande (Mob. no. +91 9869113088)

b. Telephone No. (Office) 022-25626061, Ext. 2006

c. Email che.gmlr@mcgm.gov.in

RFQ documents are available on MCGM portal <http://portal.mcgm.gov.in> under e-tender tab. Any queries about the work can be sent on Email address che.gmlr@mcgm.gov.in on or before 09.05.2020

Sd/- (पंकज कुमार)
Chief Engineer (Bridges)

MCGM HELPLINE NUMBER 1800221292 from 9 a. m. to 9 p. m.

FOR Homeless/Stranded Migrants/ Workers for food & shelters

Important dates:

1. Start of Online Application Process

: 4th May 2020

2. Closing date of Online submission of Application forms

: 30th May 2020

3.. Downloading of Admit card (online) starts from

: Will be declared later on

4.. Entrance test dates for All Courses

: Will be declared later on

5.. Declaration of Results

: Will be declared later on

6.. Counselling (For VET)

: Will be declared later on

7.. Last date of Admission (For VET)

: Will be declared later on

The University reserves the right to change/cancel any Centre of Examination or date without assigning any reason.

Note:- 1. Separate notification will be issued by the University for MBA, M. Tech & M. Pharm., candidates interested in these courses need not apply against this advertisement.

2. In case, the University will not be able to conduct Entrance Tests for courses advertised in this Admission Notice, due to lock down (COVID-19), admissions will be given to the applicants on the basis of their merit/marks scored in the qualifying examination prescribed in eligibility criteria.

3. The closing date is tentative and it can be extended if the governments extend the lock down period.

Online Application form - Rs. 500/- + Bank Charges for GEN,OBC and EWS, Rs. 250/- + Bank Charges for SC/ ST /PWD candidates.

Important dates:

1. Start of Online Application Process

: 4th May 2020



Police personnel on duty at the red zone of Nagarwada in Vadodara. Photo courtesy: Vadodara police

PART OF OUR JOB: COPS IN VADODARA

Policemen in high-risk zone arrange for food, get drains cleaned



AISHWARYA MOHANTY

VADODARA, APRIL 29

FOR THE less than thirty minutes that the in-charge inspector of Karelibaug police station stood outside his office as the entire premise is being sanitized, his phone kept ringing. Even as messages and calls kept coming from unknown numbers, he takes them all. Despite a helpline number being provided, for the residents of Nagarwada, Vadodara's only existing red zone, Inspector RA Jadeja is their go-to man.

For the past 23 days, ever since Nagarwada was declared a red zone to contain the spread of coronavirus, Jadeja has been answering relentless calls, not related to crime, but over issues like delay in the arrival of vegetable vendors, cleanliness workers or need of medicines, food items.

"I receive at least 15-20 calls a day. Most of them are about food and medicines. But we have also received complaints regarding overflowing drainage multiple times which we resolved with the help of the Vadodara Municipal Corporation. With the ongoing month of Ramzan, people also demand rice because many households do not have fridges and the temperatures are soaring, so we have been providing that too," Jadeja says.

The area housing 700 households with a population of almost 5,000 – over 90 per cent of which are Muslims – now wears a deserted look. As the aggressive imposition of containment protocols continue in the area, which has so far reported 180 COVID-19 positive cases, the deserted localities are occupied by a team of 140 police personnel on patrolling and manning 11

entry and exit points in the sweltering heat.

For many of those policemen, like Jadeja, meal hours have been erratic over the weeks. The inspector says he has not had a proper meal with his family in the last three weeks. He now occupies an apartment next to his own, to maintain physical distance from his family.

On days when he returns late, his wife keeps his food in the apartment. He returns to duty even before his children wake up.

His interaction is only limited to looking at his family – his wife, eight-year-old son and five-month-old daughter – through the door as his son enquires about his well-being. "I haven't hugged my kids for 23 days. It is for their good, I know. But at times I feel helpless," Jadeja says.

For most of the policemen deployed in the red zone area, their families are unaware that they are working in one of the riskiest areas of the city. Constable Mukesh Chaudhari, who has been closely working with the health department and guarding them while taking samples, says, "My family in Banaskantha are unaware that I am working in Nagarwada. I have elderly parents and they will get worried. So I downplay what we do here."

Mukesh says initially it was a

bit scary for them too despite wearing PPE suit. "But this is part of our job," he adds.

Mukesh, along with two other constables working with the health department are led by sub-inspector KU Chaudhary. Chaudhary leaves for work at 7 am. As he enters the red zone area, he puts on the PPE suit over his uniform. As the day advances, the double layer of uniform and PPE kit becomes unbearable under the scorching sun.

The day for him ends anywhere between 10 pm and 2 am. As he leaves the red zone area, Chaudhary carefully packs his PPE suit, reaches his quarters and washes his suit and uniform in warm water. Every police officer in this zone has been provided with two sets of PPE kits.

"The first five days were the most hectic when I didn't even sleep. Around 300 people were tested for COVID-19 as a part of the first mass sampling. Thereafter we would get lists of people who tested positive to take them to the hospital. The biggest challenge was to identify them. At times they would provide incomplete names or incorrect addresses. Another challenge was to convince asymptomatic patients when they test positive. We would spend hours convincing them why they should be going to the hospital. We have even roped in community leaders for help," says Chaudhary.

He has not met his wife, two daughters and son who live in his native village in Banaskantha for two months. "Every time my wife calls, she just asks me to take care. My daughters ask me when will I meet them and I have no answer to give," he says.

Sizeable number of healthcare workers battle anxiety: Study

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

AHMEDABAD, APRIL 29

A CONSIDERABLE number of healthcare workers who are battling COVID-19 are suffering from physical and psychological issues, a study carried out in three centres in India and two centres in Singapore has revealed.

Dr Arvind Sharma, Head of the Department of Neurology at Zydus Hospital, Ahmedabad, is among the authors of the study along with Dr Bhargesh Patel and Dr Kenam, also from Zydus Hospital. "Out of the 906 healthcare workers covered in the survey, 96 (10.6%) screened positive for depression, 142 (15.7%) for anxiety. Similarly, 47 (5.2%) for stress and 67 (7.4%) for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)," said Dr Sharma.

As many as 906 healthcare workers, including doctors, nurses, allied healthcare workers, administrators, clerical staff and maintenance workers, from five major hospitals in India and Singapore took part in the study between February 19 and April 17. It was published in the international journal, "Brain, Behaviour, and Immunity".

Among those surveyed, 426 healthcare workers were from India and 480 from Singapore. Out of three centres in India, Zydus Hospitals Ahmedabad contributed 171 responses. The other two centres were Hyderabad and Erode.

While Hyderabad Yashoda Hospital contributed 159 responses led by senior neurologist Dr Komal Kumar Erode, TN Senthil Multi-Speciality Hospital contributed 96 responses led by neurologist Dr Meenakshi G Shankar. In Singapore centres, the project was led by Prof Vijay K Sharma, associate professor of National University Hospital.

while from Surat it was 126, Bhavnagar 47 and Rajkot 28. These complaints came to district helpline number 1077 (489 complaints) and the helpline of the labour and employment department 555155372 (596 complaints), which the government set up after the lockdown was announced in Gujarat.

The state government had asked the industries to pay full salary to the workers during the lockdown period and not to lay off anyone. In 20 days between April 7 and 26, over 1,085 complaints were received by the Gujarat labour and employment department, of which 487 were from Vadodara, according to the data shared by the department.

As many as 192 complaints were received from Ahmedabad,

appraise them about the government notification issued in this regard and ask them to pay the salaries. Though most of the owners cite financial crunch, most of the workers get paid after we intervene. We later cross-check with the worker," said the official.

The government on March 21 issued a notification asking businesses and industries in Gujarat to not lay off workers or to cut wages during the lockdown period. Later the state government also claimed that it will file FIRs against firms who do not adhere to its notification. In April, the labour department resolved 1,036 complaints, which is almost 95.5 per cent of the total 1,085 complaints received so far. When asked why a large number of complaints were from Vadodara, she said, "Even we were surprised. But we could not find any reason for it."

4 booked for killing man over bathing in a pond

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

VADODARA, APRIL 29

FOUR PERSONS were booked

for allegedly murdering a man over taking a bath in a pond in Chandala village of Garbada taluka in Dahod on Tuesday night. According to the police, Himsinh Katara and his wife had gone to the pond which is shared by two villages – Chandala and Simaliya. While his wife had gone to the pond to wash clothes, Himsinh had gone to bathe.

However, the four accused from Simaliya village who thought that Himsinh and his wife were fishing in the pond, attacked them. According to the complaint filed by his wife, the accused brutally thrashed Himsinh killing him on the spot. His wife had raised an

alarm and called other villagers who tried to intervene, the police said. The four then fled the spot.

"The accused have been fishing in the pond. It is on lease with a private party. When the victim went to the pond to bathe, the accused thought that he was fishing and attacked him. We are still looking at if there is any old rivalry between the two," said investigating officer AA Rathwa.

Based on the complaint filed, the accused Suman Mohaniya, his brother Ditya Mohaniya and Ditya's sons Paresh and Hareesh Mohaniya have been booked under IPC sections 302 (murder), 323 (Punishment for voluntarily causing hurt), 504 (Intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of the peace), 506 (2) (Punishment for criminal intimidation) and 114 (abettor present).

Women farmers' produce makes way back to their communities

RITU SHARMA

AHMEDABAD, APRIL 28



Gitaben Boricha (left) hands over a food kit to a villager in Bhavnagar. Express

gruelling lockdown period."

Maksoodaben Madari (40) and 34 other women breadwinners in Mota Sarnaiya village of Mahisagar also received the relief kits. "In the month of Ramzan, this is like a blessing for our family," Madari said.

"The relief provided by government will last for a week at most. The most vulnerable people are the ones who have fallen into this 'gap' (supply of relief versus total demand)...After a rough estimate of foodgrains required in a particular village was worked out, women farmers were approached and local leaders ensured a system where these relief packages were collected by identified families," said Nafisa Barot from Uthana.

The organisation claims that a total of Rs 6.12 lakh was earned by these women framers. The grains weighing nearly 30,000 kg found way into 1,668 kits, each containing 10 kg wheat and 5-10 kg of bajra or maize, resulting in a 22% benefit for the women farmers.

GUJARAT STATE ELECTRICITY CORPORATION LIMITED

GSECL KUTCH LIGNITE THERMAL POWER STATION
S.K.V. Nagar, Panandhro, Kutch, Gujarat-370 601
GSECL www.gseb.com-E&P Dept-GoG http://guj-epgov.in

TENDER-NOTICE no: e-Tender KLTPS-04/2020-21. Tenders for Supply of various materials and other works are put on website: <https://gsecl.procure.com>, www.gseb.com / www.gsecl.in. For Tender above Rs. 5.00 Lacs. Vendors / Manufacturers and contractors are requested to view, download, participate and submit online from <https://gsecl.procure.com>. Tender below Rs. 5.00 Lacs may be view, download & participate only from www.gseb.com / www.gsecl.in

Addl. Chief Engineer (G)
Station Head, KLTPS

GUJARAT STATE ELECTRICITY CORPORATION LIMITED

GSECL KUTCH LIGNITE THERMAL POWER STATION
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GSECL www.gseb.com-E&P Dept-GoG http://guj-epgov.in

TENDER-NOTICE no: e-Tender KLTPS-03/2020-21. Tenders for Supply of various materials and other works are put on website: <https://gsecl.procure.com>, www.gseb.com / www.gsecl.in. For Tender above Rs. 5.00 Lacs. Vendors / Manufacturers and contractors are requested to view, download, participate and submit online from <https://gsecl.procure.com>. Tender below Rs. 5.00 Lacs may be view, download & participate only from www.gseb.com / www.gsecl.in

Addl. Chief Engineer (G)
Station Head, KLTPS

WESTERN RAILWAY

CORRIGENDUM

It is informed to public that a notification was published in newspapers on 17/04/2020 for running of Time Tabled Parcel Special Trains between Bandra Terminus and Ludhiana (Ex BDTS Train No. 00901 & Ex Ludhiana Train No. 00902). The said notification should now be read with following corrigeendum.

THE HALT STATION OF NEW DELHI SHOULD BE READ AS DELHI

The amendment will be applicable for remaining trips of Train No. 00901 (Bandra Terminus – Ludhiana) on 30/04/2020 & 02/05/2020 and Train No. 00902 (Ludhiana – Bandra Terminus) on 30/04/2020, 02/05/2020 & 04/05/2020. Other halt stations and timings will remain unchanged.

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GUJARAT STATE ELECTRICITY CORPORATION LTD.

Sikka Thermal Power Station, At P.O. Sikka, Dist Jamnagar-361141
e-mail : cegstsps.gsecl@gebtmail.com Website : www.gsecl.in
CIN: U40100GJ1993SGC019988

E - Tender Notice No. 148

Online Tenders are invited for (1) PROVIDING WATERPROOFING MEMBRANE TREATMENT ON TERRACE OF VARIOUS PLANT BUILDING AT SIKKA TPS(2) Miscellaneous fabrication work at Sikka TPS..... (As and when required)(3) Maintenance work of Central Air Conditioning microprocessor based system for Unit C/R and Service building including various package AC unit of Unit-3&4 at Sikka TPS. (4) Work of cleaning of various areas of coal handling plant at Sikka TPS on as and when required basis. (5) Work of Thermal Insulation & Aluminum cladding of various Turbine Auxiliaries, steam & feed water pipes, valves and steam strainer of 250 MW Unit 3 & 4 at STPS on As & when required basis. (6) Design, Engineering, Supply, Erection, Commissioning, and Testing of Two Nos. of 140 MT Capacity pit less type fully electronics Rail weigh in Motion (WIM) system for ext. unit no. 3 & 4 at Sikka TPS. (7) Supply of Various Fabricated & Rubber Items for Boiler Unit No. 3 & 4 at Sikka TPS. (8) Supply of Various Spares of Primary Air Fan and Forced Draft Fan for Boiler Unit No. 3 & 4 at Sikka TPS. (9) Supply of ABB make various rating LT motors for CHP at Sikka TPS. Tender documents available on GUVNL / GSECL Website www.guvnl.com / www.gsecl.in & E&P Dept.GoG: <http://guj-epg.gov.in> (for view, download and submission in hard copy). Party has to submit tender in online also on web site www.nprocure.com. Vendor, Manufacturers, Contractors are requested to locate the same from above web site. Please be in touch with our above site for any future Amendment / Corrigendum.

For the Prescribed Application Form, Qualifications, mode of Application and other details please visit the website : www.ecvm.net.

Those who have applied earlier need to apply again.

Chief Engineer (G), GTPS.

CVM UNIVERSITY, VALLABH VIDYANAGAR

(Established Under the Gujarat Private Universities (Second Amendment) Act-2019) (Gujarat Act No. 20 of 2019)

STAFF RECRUITMENT

Applications are invited for the following posts at R N Patel Ipcowala School of Law and Justice on or before 15th May 2020.

Sr. No.	Post	Disciplines / Specialization	No. of Posts
1	Principal	Business Law / Criminal Law / Intellectual Property Rights	1
2	Associate Professor in Law	Business Law	1
3	Assistant Professor in Law	Business Law / Criminal Law / Intellectual Property Rights	9
4	Assistant Professor	Political Science / English / Economic / Commerce Management	5

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Registrar

NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY
E-Tender Notice
NIT No.: 09-LWS-OPN-TW2-2020

Name of work : Hydrostatic testing, inspection and certification of BRPLGR/BTPGLN, LPG Tank wagon as per the procedure mentioned in RDSO Lucknow Maintenance Manual G-65 & G-86, by CCOE approved firms for 02 years (As per scope of work). Estimated cost of work : Rs. 8,50,026.24/- Address of the NIT issuing office : Dy. Chief Mechanical Engineer (Works), Diesel Loco & Wagon Workshop, Lal Phatak, Ajmer (Raj)-305001. Earnest Money to be deposited : Rs. 17100/- (Only through net banking or payment gateway on IREPS portal). Last Date and time for submission and opening of E-tender : 26.05.2020 upto 15.00 PM. E-tender will be opened at 15.30 PM on same day. Due to indispensable reasons bid opening schedule may change. Website particular where complete details of e-tender can be seen and participated : www.ireps.gov.in (Note- This E-tender so tenderer can participate through e-tendering process only on mentioned website within bidding period).

428-SP/20

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AFTER THE DELUGE

It is time to design clear rules for departure from accepted norms of fiscal prudence

ARVIND SUBRAMANIAN HAS likened the current economic situation to a "pralya (deluge)", in which the government should spend more than even what it ought to in a rainy day. India, the former chief economic adviser said at an e-Adda event hosted by this newspaper, must plan for a "substantially negative" growth this year that might require an additional fiscal expenditure of Rs 10 lakh crore. He has a point. Corporate indebtedness was already high before the lockdown. Not only will insolvency cases mount further, but even companies facing no significant cash flow issues wouldn't invest in an uncertain public health as well as demand-constrained environment. Banks, too, aren't going to lend, no matter how much liquidity the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) may infuse. The burden of non-performing assets, which is set to get heavier in the coming months, makes it impossible for them to finance an economic recovery. Last, but not the least, are households. Faced with layoffs and pay cuts, they would rather save and will be afraid to spend.

Under the circumstances, the onus for ensuring that the wheels of the economy start moving — there's no guarantee of it happening even with all lockdown restrictions being lifted — lies on the government. Without somebody to spend, the economy is in real danger of contraction, which will, in turn, worsen the problem of businesses going bust, joblessness and loan defaults that can spread to the entire financial services industry. The one consolation today is that India is not saddled with its traditional "3F" constraints — food, fuel and foreign exchange — which were triggers for inflation and balance of payments crises. On the contrary, public foodgrain stocks are at an all-time-high, global oil prices have crashed and there is no run on the rupee, unlike during the "taper tantrum" period of May-August 2013. The risks, if at all, are tilted more towards demand-side "deflationary shocks", as Subramanian puts it, than supply-side inflation concerns.

There is a legitimate question, though: If the government has to take up the slack, where will the money for it come from? The finances of both the Centre and states are in a mess, with receipts from tax and non-tax sources hardly covering even existing expenditures. But governments enjoy sovereign borrowing powers that allow fund-raising at rates below that of triple A-rated instruments issued by private corporates, more so in the present risk-averse scenario. Also, there is the option of deficit financing ("printing money") through the RBI subscribing to primary auctions of government securities. There are, of course, costs in such powers being exercised. Past precedents — whether the issuance of ad hoc Treasury Bills to the RBI prior to April 1997 or the stimulus package post the 2008 global financial crisis — do not inspire confidence. This is the time to design clear rules for departure from accepted norms of fiscal prudence. Any stimulus has to be transparent and time-bound.

THE PRICKLY STATE

At a time of crisis, government should welcome, not punish, ideas, criticism. These provide ammunition for the battle ahead

IN FACING THE coronavirus challenge, information and ideas are the only ammunition currently available, and should be welcomed and evaluated irrespective of their provenance, whether they originate from within the government or from the public. But a government which has, in better times, sought suggestions directly from the public over the web and through the Prime Minister's app, has become unduly sensitive at a time of grave crisis. When 50 young officers of the Indian Revenue Service forwarded, through their association, policy suggestions, in a report titled FORCE (Fiscal Options and Response to COVID-19 Epidemic) to the Central Board of Direct Taxes and shared them on social media, the Centre termed it as a position "contrary to current policies of government", read it as a breach of service rules and instituted an inquiry against three senior Income Tax officers. Some of the suggestions may be controversial, for instance, a hike in income tax rate to 40 per cent for those earning over Rs 1 crore a year for a limited period of time, but the response is repressive and excessively out of proportion. The officers never claimed that their document was official. Publicly dismissing the controversial suggestions would have sufficed if the government wanted to distance itself from the report.

Meanwhile, public questioning of the government's handling of the pandemic in Manipur has landed several citizens in trouble with the law — police have invoked sections of the Disaster Management Act and the Indian Penal Code, including sedition. In one case, it had merely been suggested that a proposed quarantine centre in Imphal should be moved from agricultural land to a disused airstrip. The deputy chief minister was stripped of all his portfolios, amid a controversy over rice allocation under the National Food Security Act during the coronavirus lockdown, apparently for being critical of the chief minister's assurances of adequate food supply. And in Port Blair, a journalist was booked for asking why the phone contacts of COVID-19 patients were being home quarantined. Instead of arresting him, the authorities could have simply explained that tracing call records is one way of discovering a patient's close contacts.

It is generally agreed that long after lockdowns are lifted, nations will have to remain in close cooperation, so that ideas that work in one place can be borrowed and deployed elsewhere. The principle applies domestically, too. Over-sensitive and prickly responses betray insecurity, precisely when governments must project confidence.

HIS OWN PATH

Irrfan pushed back against Bollywood mainstream, made his audience see and believe. His best was yet to be

WITH IRRFAN KHAN'S passing, we mourn the loss of a great actor. He was one of those performers who dig deep into themselves to discover the truth, even when he played the flakiest of characters. He had that very unique, most paradoxical quality, something that all great actors possess: To make his audiences accept the falsity of film as an ineluctable truth, to make them believe.

He began, in 1988, in Shyam Benegal's tele-serial *Discovery of India*. His latest film, *Angrezi Medium* released in mid-March, but couldn't reach the theatres because of the lockdown. He was a cinephile's delight. Critics loved him. But the constraints of finding good work in a film industry which coasted on formula-heavy flicks, and star-driven vehicles were also his constant companion. He began work with directors who broke into Hindi cinema, laterally, just like he had. The mid-'90s Bollywood was on the verge of a massive churn: The mainstream, under the steam of the three young Khans, Aamir-Salman-Shah Rukh, was creating demand and supply for family-friendly, mono-cultural, mono-theistic romances and sanitised social dramas. Pushback was arriving, in the shape of filmmakers who came from the Hindi-speaking heartlands of the North, from Vishal Bhardwaj, Anurag Kashyap, Tigmanshu Dhulia, who wanted to tell their stories, and needed actors who could do the job.

This Khan, who was happy to junk his surname, was finally right where he needed to be. He was capable of being as raw and visceral as the stories he was offered. And soon, he was outstanding. Big Bollywood took notice, and made a grab for him. Big Hollywood wasn't far behind, and cast him in a few mega-budget entertainers. By then, Bollywood had turned new-agey enough for Irrfan to be able to make some of his most exciting work. But his best, combining maturity and "thehraav (gravitas)", was yet to be. Farewell, Irrfan. You made us see.



DEEPAK NAYYAR

PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA Modi held his fourth round of consultations with state governments on April 27 to review the COVID-19 situation. The draconian lockdown, which completes 40 days on May 3, was discussed. As in the earlier meetings, several chief ministers urged that the lockdown be extended. While no decision was announced, the lockdown might well continue.

For governments everywhere, more so after the experience of Italy, Britain and the United States, where governments did too little too late, imposing and continuing lockdowns is a risk-averse strategy. If the spread can be curbed, it would bring political kudos. If it is not, the microbe is to blame. It is the equivalent of a one-way option in financial markets, where you cannot lose. This is even more attractive now as it conforms to herd-behaviour by governments worldwide. Of course, exit from a lockdown poses a real dilemma for governments. It is about decision-making under high uncertainty, which requires conviction and confidence.

This dilemma will always be larger than life when there is a single objective of saving lives in a pandemic. But it must also be recognised that the health of people and the health of an economy are interdependent, where both shape the wellbeing of people. Thus, saving livelihoods is an equally important objective. Obviously, getting sick and going hungry cannot be an either-or choice. Everyone would prefer to stay healthy and be well fed. It is the role of governments to strike a balance and reconcile these two objectives, rather than juxtapose them as conflicting, requiring a choice to be made.

Lockdowns, combined with mass-testing, contact-tracing, containment-zones, mandatory-quarantines, can only slow down the speed at which the infection spreads. This might help in countries where public health facilities are robust, yet not adequate for large numbers. But our public health system is poor and could never suffice for our large population if the pandemic spreads. There is no vaccine yet. From development through trials to production will be at least one year, and far longer before it becomes available in sufficient quantities for our massive population.

It is now absolutely essential to begin the process of exit from the lockdown. For one, it would enable the government to find some

Decision-making under high uncertainty requires conviction. It is now essential to begin end of lockdown

The exit dilemma

WORDLY WISE
I WANT TO ENTERTAIN PEOPLE, BUT
WITH SOME SUBSTANCE.
— IRRFAN KHAN

balance between the twin objectives of saving lives and saving livelihoods. For another, it would help restart the economy, which has been almost completely shut down, and the collateral damage is bound to be far greater if the lockdown is extended.

A calibrated, planned and phased exit could also help manage the spread of the virus. So far, morbidity and mortality associated with COVID-19 in India has been much lower than elsewhere in the world. This is possibly attributable to our immune systems, which have antibodies that could be effective in resisting the virus. After all, millions of migrants stranded in megacities or relief camps in cramped spaces have not caught the virus through contagion in large numbers. It suggests that there are already some elements of herd-immunity in India that would grow stronger as the lockdown is lifted slowly.

The economic and social consequences of the lockdown have been severe. A large proportion of the self-employed, casual workers on daily wages, and informal workers, who constitute 90 per cent of the total workforce, have lost their livelihoods. Demand has dropped sharply as employment has contracted. Supply has been strangled by the massive reduction in output. Government revenues, for both Centre and states, have collapsed. And, even if the lockdown is lifted now, economic growth during 2020-21 would be zero or negative.

For the poor - 75 per cent of rural households and 50 per cent of urban households — food security is at risk. It is a matter of survival. Similarly, for micro-small-medium enterprises, their survival is at stake. Large firms, except those with deep pockets, will also struggle. Whatever the government might stipulate, most firms will find it difficult to pay the wages of their employees, for these will only add to their cash losses during the lockdown. Healthcare for patients, except those with COVID-19, has diminished in terms of both access and quality. In education, learning outcomes, already poor, will get worse as schools and colleges remain closed. In every sphere, the short-term effects of the lockdown will have long-term consequences — hysteresis — as future outcomes will be shaped by this past.

For the economy, the sooner the lockdown is lifted the better. But the process of

exit from the lockdown will have to be in calibrated steps based on a planned transition path in terms of sequence and speed. In this phasing, the geographical size and diversity of India provide degrees of freedom that are missing in most countries.

On April 27, of the total 736 districts in India, 283 districts had not reported any COVID-19 cases so far, while another 18 districts had no new cases in the last 28 days (green zones). Thus, economic activity can resume without restrictions in 41 per cent of our districts. In addition, 48 districts had no new case in the last 14 days while 33 districts had no new case in the last 21 days. Thus, in 11 per cent of our districts that are orange zones, economic activity can be resumed in a phased manner.

Similarly, on April 27, there were nine states, in descending order of numbers, that had more than 1,000 infections: Maharashtra, Gujarat, Delhi, Rajasthan, MP, Tamil Nadu, UP, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Taken together, they accounted for 80 per cent of the infections and 57 per cent of the population in India. There were 13 states, in descending order, that had less than 1,000 infections: West Bengal, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, Bihar, Punjab, Haryana, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, Odisha, Himachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Assam (in the last five, the number of infections was in double-digits). Taken together, they accounted for 12 per cent of the infections and 42 per cent of the population. The distribution of green, orange and red zone districts among states is uneven. The distribution of economic activity across states is also unequal. Even so, there are possibilities.

Economic activity can be resumed in districts without infections and in green zones. The orange zone districts can be brought in as they turn green. The lockdown should continue in states such as Maharashtra, Gujarat and Delhi (with limited relaxations where possible) and in red zone districts, containment-zones or hot spots within cities, as long as necessary.

In this decision to begin exit from the lockdown, PM Modi will need to act with the same confidence as he did when imposing the lockdown.

The writer is an economist and former Vice Chancellor, University of Delhi



SHAH ALAM KHAN

I LIVE IN A suburban, gated (let's call it corona-secure) colony in Noida at the edge of Delhi. I don't have to worry about my livelihood, clean water, food, or money to buy hand sanitiser. For work, I take the expressway to Delhi. A few days after the lockdown was declared, I witnessed a stream of migrant workers and their families on the expressway — men carrying children, women, children carrying younger children and the elderly. Poor people, deprived of their livelihoods, were supposedly walking to their villages, some as far as 200 to 400 km.

Sitaram (name changed) sits in front of my corona-secure colony. He sells balloons and had once told me that he earns about Rs 200 a day. Sitaram lives in a shanty across the road and has three mouths to feed. After the lockdown, his only source of income has dried up. But Sitaram is still lucky — he and his family members are apparently healthy. The lockdown could mean death for a large number of the chronically ill or those under treatment or awaiting hospitalisation.

I have written in this newspaper about cancer patients who come to metropolitan cities for treatment. Once their funds evaporate, they live on the streets near the hospitals where they are undergoing treatment ('The cancer refugees', IE, July 23, 2018). Hundreds of such cancer refugees live on the street out-

COMPASSION, ABOVE ALL

Nation's fight against coronavirus cannot ignore the chronically sick and vulnerable

side the AIIMS, in Delhi. Within 24 hours of the announcement of the lockdown, the streets and footpaths near the hospital were empty. I'm not sure where this cohort melted away. What is more worrying is that they might disintegrate their treatment. It's unfair to compare tragedies, but I feel that the chronically sick are the worst affected in situations such as the current lockdown.

According to a WHO report (2015), nearly 5.8 million people in India die every year of non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Constant evaluation and surveillance hold the key to treating such diseases — this anyway is a difficult proposition in a country like India. After the lockdown, a large number of these patients could have been severely affected.

In 2018, 2.15 million new tuberculosis (TB) cases were diagnosed in India. Imagine the plight of these patients, a large number of whom would be on treatment at DOTS (directly observed treatment short-course) centres and/or at hospital OPDs, which are now either shut down or inaccessible due to the stringent curfew. The resurgence of TB — multiple drug-resistant TB — as a result of not following treatment protocols is well known. It is important that we track the health of TB patients during the lockdown period.

The devotion of my colleagues, students, nurses, ancillary staff, and other members of

the hospital where I work is worth mentioning. It was encouraging that the prime minister asked citizens to clap and clang *thalis* (utensils) as a mark of appreciation for healthcare workers. People responded to the PM's call with gusto. Unfortunately, such appreciation was short-lived — junior doctors of the hospital where I work were asked by their landlords to vacate their premises. There were also reports of a female doctor in Telangana being assaulted by the police who had stopped her for violating the curfew — she was reportedly on her way to work. I wish there was less noise and more assurances about providing equipment to medical professionals.

Physical distancing is imperative to check the spread of the virus. But the lockdown could have been implemented with more compassion. People's health is the responsibility of the state. But at no stage should it resort to methods that hurt the marginalised. The healthcare system of a nation should not be judged by its response to an epidemic but by its commitment to its peoples' health in the long term. A well-oiled healthcare delivery system would have been useful in times like these. But it's never too late to learn from bad experiences.

The writer is professor of orthopaedics, AIIMS, New Delhi. Views are personal



APRIL 30, 1980, FORTY YEARS AGO

ASSAM CLIMBDOWN

THE ASSAMESE HAVE modified their original stand on the foreigners issue, saying that they do not want their repatriation "but only their detention". This climbdown to an olive branch now offered to the Centre to "diffuse tensions in Assam", student leaders and Gana Sangram Parishad sources said. Denouncing the "occupation army-like behaviour" of the military and police forces in the strongest possible terms, they seriously regretted that while they had revised their stand, the Centre was "not showing any willingness to budge from their position". The Assamese leaders said that they had changed their position on the repatriation of

Bangladeshi migrants because it would be "inhuman" to do so.

GOLD BONDS

GOVERNMENT MINTS ARE working overtime to refine 13,993 kgs of gold and make bars for refund to the gold bond holders after October this year. The gold had been given by the citizens under the National Defence Gold Bond Scheme in 1965 in wake of the war with Pakistan. About 1.4 lakh bond holders will get back their gold holdings. They were not only getting regular interest on their possession, but the value of gold has skyrocketed during the last 15 years. Prices have gone up from Rs 130 to Rs 1,400 per ten grams.

The finance ministry will refund the precious metal through 1,000 centres.

KOIRALA INTERVIEW

"OUR RELATIONS WITH China will be 'friendly' and our relations with India will be the friendliest," said B P Koirala, Nepal's only democratically elected former prime minister. The man can do it again, become PM, if the Nepalese people vote for multi-party parliamentary democracy in the referendum on May 2. In an exclusive interview to *The Indian Express* on the eve of the elections, Koirala said that "Nepal belongs to the Asian comity of nations. We will have to keep the Americans and Russians at a distance".

Learning in a post-Covid world

Economy and society will not be the same after pandemic retreats. Our experiences during lockdown are pointing us in the direction of necessary and possible changes



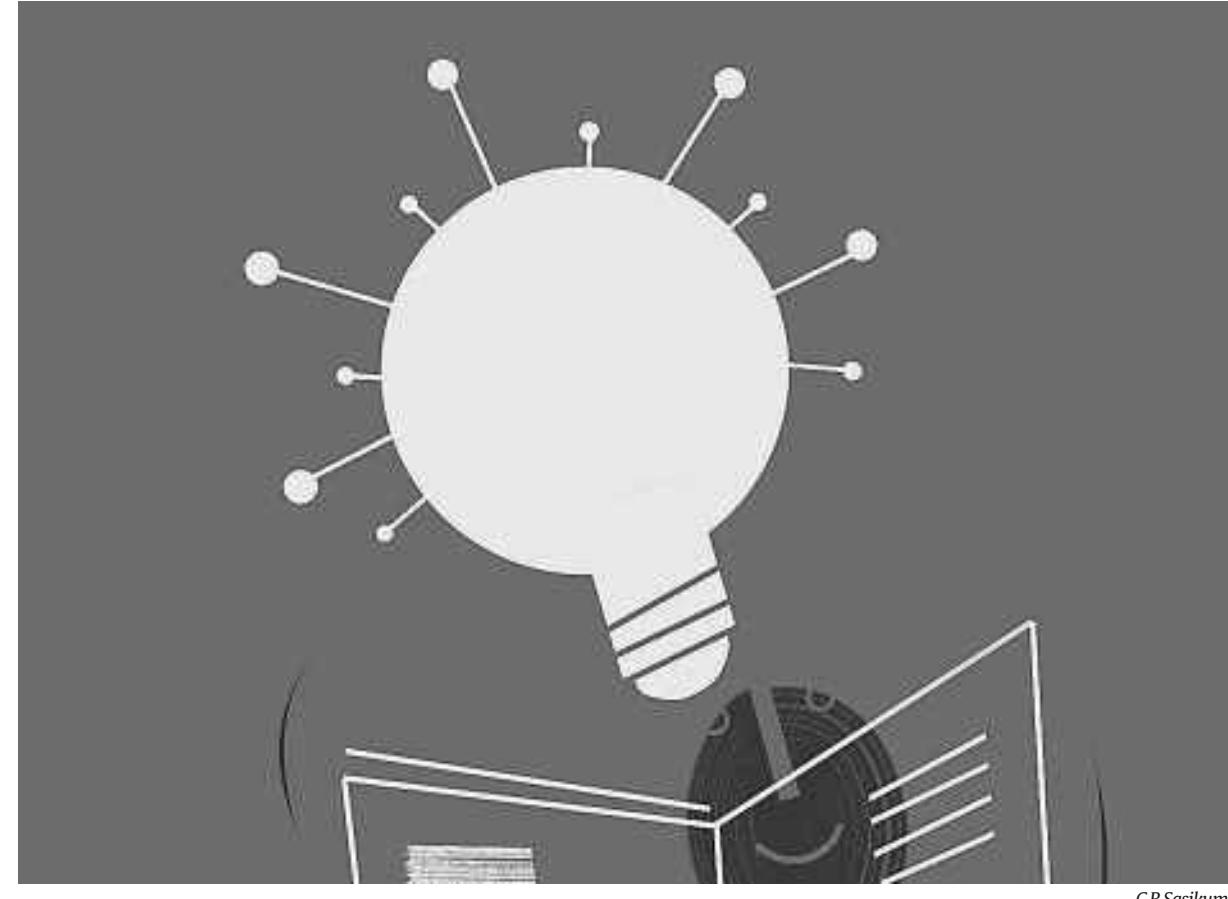
MADHAV CHAVAN

SCHOOLS STARTED SHUTTING down in China in late January and by the last week of March, all the world's schools were closed. Almost like sunset and sunrise, as the last schools in central African countries stopped working, the Chinese schools began to reopen. Other countries too are opening the doors of their schools cautiously. But there is a great deal of uncertainty in the air everywhere. In India, there are murmurs that schools could remain closed until September or October. And there is the question: What will happen "after all this is over"?

As schools began to shut down in different countries, the immediate reaction was to shift the classroom to homes using whatever technology was possible since people were locked in. There is a lot of thinking, planning, and execution happening in a hurry in every country, including India. Countries or regions or even schools that have more easy access to Internet-devices and learning resources in the appropriate medium of instruction seem to have made the transition to online learning rather quickly although not without some pain. How effective these transitions were and how good the relatively short experience was will have to be analysed not only educationally, but also socially and psychologically. Early reports from China do not paint a rosy picture. Although there are more mobile connections than people in China, only 59 per cent of the mobile connections are with internet and only 47 per cent households in China seem to have PCs or laptops. So, it must have been relatively easy for the Chinese to move to a home-based online learning system, but only for about half the population. I have not seen reports about what happened to the rest, which I suspect live in rural China or are on peripheries of the glittering Chinese economy.

In comparison to China, India has about a billion mobile phone connections. Available data indicate that of these, 87 per cent are pre-paid, which gives us a hint about the economic background of the people owning these connections. Of the billion mobile phones, 67 per cent are 3G or 4G interconnected. Some of these owners also have laptops or desktops at home but they are limited to about 13 per cent households. Our ground-level experience matches with these numbers. In rural areas of Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh although 90 per cent families have mobile phones, depending upon the state, about 40 per cent to 60 per cent of these are regular phones without internet access.

So, the Indian population can be divided into several different categories. First, the highly privileged ones with home access to broadband through multiple devices. Second, those with internet access via smart mobile phones. Third, with mobile phones but without internet and finally, those without cell phones. Broadly, this is a problem of 10:40:40:10 division of the population with the ratios varying regionally. In response to this division, various state governments have



C.R.Sasikumar

turned to radio-television technology of the 1980s and '90s. They are trying to get teachers and students engaged with educational resources on portals through WhatsApp messages and so on. Most efforts are centred around school subject learning although this is really vacation time. In the best of times, the classroom is not effective as various assessments have shown. How effective these hurriedly put together home-learning efforts will be, especially for the lower 50 per cent, is a big question mark. Will the underprivileged lag further behind? If we are talking about "completing the portion", almost everyone will. But there are bigger problems to consider.

These are difficult and stressful times for all. Apart from the discomfort of forced lockdown, there is the anxiety about the future among parents. Children can sense these tensions. I would not worry too much about school examination results during this period. Instead, our focus should be on creative learning activities that engage both children and parents and lead to other long-lasting lessons. Relief is needed, not more stress.

Whenever the schools reopen, the sheer relief of going back to schools may also mean there will be the desire to go back to business as usual. But experiences from the shutdown period could be used to modify the education system as we enter a new normal situation.

For example, it is observed that wherever less-educated parents have been invited to facilitate their child's learning, they have shown enthusiasm. Parents of young children today are mostly schooled if not educated and are eager to learn to help their children. Parents' role in children's education has to be enhanced by training them in a "continuing education" mode. This is especially true for the children in anganwadis and early

It appears now that the economy is going to change even more drastically. There will be more people dependent on agriculture and rural livelihoods. We need more productive land resources and more rural livelihoods. A large number of people have returned to villages. Some will go back to old jobs while others will need new skills to find work. The education system has to be sensitive to the immediate needs of the youth as we contemplate long-term reforms.

primary age group where strong foundational skills are learned.

Increasing public access to Internet for school-age learning by creating device libraries is a possibility. Investment in the creation of good contextualised content in Indian languages is a need. Integrating technology in education often means creating more attractive audio-visual textbooks that are really one-way carriers of knowledge. There is a need to recognise that the new technology can do much more and create non-linear paths of learning.

It is said our economy and our society will not be the same from here on. The need for learning skills that will help to survive and thrive in the new economy was already being discussed before COVID. It appears now that the economy is going to change even more drastically. There will be more people dependent on agriculture and rural livelihoods. We need more productive land resources and more rural livelihoods. A large number of people have returned to villages. Some will go back to old jobs while others will need new skills to find work. The education system has to be sensitive to the immediate needs of the youth as we contemplate long-term reforms.

As the economy changes, the need for lifelong learning is becoming more urgent than ever. During the lockdown period, people have learned things that they would never have before. They loved the experience, even if grudgingly. There is going to be individual need to learn new work skills. Our experiences during lockdown are pointing us in the direction of necessary and possible changes. We should reflect on those and act.

The writer is co-founder and president of Pratham. Views expressed in the article are personal

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"On Monday, global coronavirus cases passed 3 million, meaning one in three patients is in the US. The US government has failed its people and also failed the world."

— GLOBAL TIMES, CHINA

The ways out

Stimulus package must focus on rural areas and middle-income groups to help generate demand and kickstart virtuous cycle



SUNIL K ALAGH

BY NOW, we have all read about how unprecedented a crisis COVID-19 is — so I wish to get straight to the main issues, and possible solutions. We need to simplify our communication, present a sustainable plan and, above all, implement. Yes, we must continue testing, but I feel that we are sorely lacking in implementation.

There is no questioning the wisdom of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's strategy in ensuring a complete lockdown. While the Centre, RBI and states have announced a slew of good plans, why do we still hear of the stoning of doctors, the lack of following of the rules, non-availability of essential food and money for the poor. For me, the answer lies in inadequate communication and implementation. While we all

must work in unified fashion, the main onus lies with our elected representatives, right down to the MLA. It is time they earned their votes and the trust that their constituents have placed in them. They must appear at least once a week before the public, after donning masks and gloves and adhering to social distancing norms, to explain in simple terms the government's policies. As the situation is dynamic, they must continuously update the general public of the changes. Making appearances on TV and giving instructions is not enough.

This is the need of the hour. Because the void of information is quickly filled by speculations and rumours, mainly through social media. Leon Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance basically explains that people tend to look for consonance in their action — right or wrong. For instance, we are well-aware of the fact that smoking leads to cancer, but smokers bring about ill-advised consonance by following any 80-year-old doctor who smokes and has no cancer. And so it is, that when some MLAs, MPs and self-proclaimed leaders have weddings, and break the rules as VIPs, the average person wonders, "why can't i?" — thus bringing about consonance to their wrong actions.

The eminent virologist Ian Lipkin has said that complete normalcy will return to the world after a vaccine is developed, which is about a year away. The economy, though, is floundering. So what do we do in the meantime other than communicate as outlined? We should have a very short-term plan (three months) and a short-term plan (nine months), that will need to be frequently reviewed.

The very short term plan involves the

government having transparent discussions. All meetings that the prime minister has with the chief ministers should be open — like in Parliament. The people are eager to hear not only what the prime minister has to say, but what their chief ministers are planning. Agriculture must be given the top priority — buying of farmers' goods, their transportation and storage. Export-oriented industries need to be opened up. White-collar workers can work from home, but not the blue-collar workers. They are the backbone of the economy. Migrant workers are grappling with no income and crowded living conditions — with rents to pay and not enough food. They must be provided these basic survival resources. It will be difficult to get these workers back from their homes when the economy opens up. The current Rs 500 per month is not enough, and this should be increased to at least Rs 3,000. The total cost for this entire exercise would not be very high — about Rs 50,000 crore. This is a small price to pay when one considers alternate scenarios which may be disastrous.

In the short-term, a fiscal stimulus needs to be given directly to the rural areas, and taxes must be reduced for the middle-income group to incentivise them to spend and generate the much-needed demand. Stimulus must also be given to the MSMEs in order for them to pay their wages and reopen their operations. Lastly, support must also be given to large industries to open up with specific guidelines, but without any draconian laws or many impediments for either new or existing industries. Nobody will open up or enter if fear is drilled into them.

Where will the money for all of the above come from? We must empower the states to act within the broad guidelines framed by the Centre which cannot, and must not act as a police force. If alcohol is an income source, then let the states decide on it. The Centre spends far too little as a percentage of GDP when compared to other countries. Any stimulus must focus on the rural areas and the middle-income group to not only tide over the crisis, but also generate demand to kickstart the virtuous cycle. Industry will not produce anything without demand, even if it is opened.

As the PM said, "Jaan Hai toh Jahan Hai". The time has come to follow his motto in letter and spirit. A lot of the building blocks have been put in place by the PM. If a new stimulus package manages to keep/bring back workers, it will be an opportunity for us to get back on the path of growth. States, industry and citizens — all of us must support and act as Indians. The future is in our hands and our efforts can make all the difference between jannah (heaven) and ja-hannum (hell).

The writer is a business consultant

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

GLARING GAPS

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Reset and reform' (IE, April 29). Inadequacies and deficiencies intrinsic in our health system and the absence of a support system, especially for daily wage workers, are attenuating our efforts to contain the Coronavirus. Though our government is seemingly making all-out efforts to cope with this contagion, the initial delay in our response to it cannot be just wished away. Our taking shelter under the extenuating claims like the small death toll in our country as compared to those in other countries will only show our reluctance to learn from our mistakes.

Tarsem Singh, Mahilpur

LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

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

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Reset and reform' (IE, April 29). Through Ayushman Bharat component of PM-JAY, the government has tried to improve tertiary healthcare access for the vulnerable who are insured under the scheme by taking advantage of the hitherto under-utilised private healthcare infrastructure. Public health infrastructure is indispensable for any government to improve the health of its people and over-reliance on private infrastructure won't suffice. This is evident from the examples of South Korea and Singapore, which have effectively contained the spread of COVID-19. Higher spending on public health in general and investment in public healthcare infrastructure, in particular, can't be delayed. Health, along with education, is a pillar on which the health of a society and country depends.

Dimpay Bhatia, Delhi

phones with high-speed internet connections. Given their curiosity, children then access images and videos glorifying violence and bigotry. A young mind is a sponge and absorbs all this. Parents and the government an extra responsibility to imbibe out-of-syllabus social concepts for the betterment of tomorrow's society and the prosperity of the nation.

Prashant Singh, Rae Bareli

VIRTUAL DISTANCE
THIS REFERS TO the editorial 'School's out' (IE, April 29). There is no way online education can replace physical classrooms, but such is the crisis and need of the hour that online education has become inevitable at all levels. And barring urban locations, online education still remains a distant reality due to various issues like poor internet bandwidth, lack of awareness among students and parents and poor skills of teachers. In both healthcare and education, the COVID-19 crisis has exposed huge gaps. Going forward, both the central and state governments must focus on infrastructure.

Better Tomorrow
THIS REFERS TO article, 'The other pollution' (IE April 29). The transition into schooling from home has given the younger generation a rightful claim to electronic devices such as mobile



RAM MADHAV

ONE HUNDRED years ago, there were no visas and passports for people to travel in Europe, America and their colonies. Then came World War I and things changed — national boundaries became rigid. Economic stagnation, and recession followed. Nationalism turned into ultra-nationalism, leading to another world war. After World War II, we created an interconnected and institutionalised global order. For the last 65 years, despite several hiccups, the world order has remained largely intact.

This pandemic threatens to undo that world order. Just as before, countries are turning inwards, becoming authoritarian.

Some political scientists are predicting the rise of a more closed, narrow-nationalist world. Economists are writing off globalisation and free trade.

Where does this pessimism stem from? From a coronavirus virion? Not really. Two countries, considered the most powerful, have shaken the confidence of the entire world. Niall Ferguson, the American historian from the Hoover Institution, had called them "Chimerica". For the last decade or more, China and America have created an economic relationship model that Ferguson compared with Nichibei, the US-Japan economic bonding prominently in existence until the end of the last century. Coronavirus has shown that Chimerica is just a chimera.

The Chinese leadership faces accusations of hiding facts from the world, allowing the virus to cross borders and turn into a pandemic. Till last week, their official figures

stood at 82,000 infections and 4,500 deaths. Derek Scissors of the American Enterprise Institute, a Washington-based think-tank, argues that the number of infections could be as high as 2.9 million instead.

Some countries don't follow any conventional course. China is one of them. It follows what is described as "historical experience".

Whatever it is today, is a product of the long revolution that had culminated in Mao capturing power in 1949. The Chinese worldview is guided by three important principles:

GDP-ism, China-centrism and Chinese exceptionalism — derived from that revolution.

Deng Xiaoping had reportedly declared in the 1980s that the most important logic is economic development. Chinese economists describe it as "GDPism". The second is China-centrism. Mao insisted on independence, autonomy and self-sufficiency. "Ode to the motherland", the famous patriotic song composed by Wang Shen that declares the "grand and beautiful" land of China "over the mountains, across the plains, across the Yangtze and Huang rivers" as the "dear home of ours", is entrenched in the psyche of every Chinese. Third, is Chinese exceptionalism. China doesn't believe in learning from others. China should follow its own wisdom for answers to its problems, its leaders insist.

The Chinese nationalist worldview has a parallel in history in pre-World War II Germany. Ethnic superiority, historical claims and the Aryan exceptionalism were all very familiar to the people of the world in the 1930s. When Hitler occupied

Sudetenland, a German-speaking area of the former Czechoslovakia, Europe decided to appease him, rather than confront. Roosevelt was watching from afar when the European nations — like Britain, France and Italy — were celebrating the Munich Agreement. He even praised Hitler saying, "I am convinced that hundreds of millions throughout the world would recognise your action as an outstanding historic service to all humanity".

Unsurprisingly, Hitler violated his promise of "no further aggression" in less than one year, and World War II began. Where Britain was in 1939-40 is where America stands today.

The US president Donald Trump allowed coronavirus to devastate its states before finally waking up. As late as February 28, Trump was asking his supporters in South Carolina to heed warnings about the virus outbreak in America. He was blaming the media for "hysteria" and calling the corona threat "their new hoax". Now, the European nations, having cuddled up to China for "Belt and Road" benefits, are struggling to contain the pandemic fallout.

Interestingly, the countries that stood up to this contagion are mostly the Asian democracies. South Korea led the way, conducting more tests than America on a single day. Singapore undertook extensive testing, making a huge effort to track down any viral symptoms. Hong Kong and Taiwan, with their past experience of SARS fatalities, have taken timely measures to contain the virus effectively. India, on the other hand, has set an ex-

ample of democratic activism in combating the corona challenge. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, together with his colleagues, is leading from the front, and has successfully implemented a lockdown and social distancing measures, with full popular support.

A country with a population of about 1.3 billion has reportedly seen about 17,610 active cases. Modi did not resort to any arbitrary or authoritarian measures though there were deliberate acts of provocation and misinformation like Islamophobia. In the face of such provocations, Modi displayed enormous equanimity, calm and optimism. He proved that democracies with visionary leadership can tackle such challenges without compromising on liberal values.

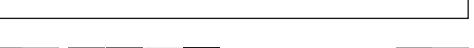
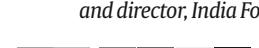
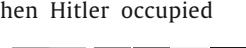
In the unfolding new world order, India,

along with countries like America and Germany, can play a pivotal role in building a world based on "human-centric development cooperation" as suggested by Modi. It is time for a new Atlantic Charter: Environment, healthcare, technology and democratic liberalism can be its foundations.

China has an opportunity today, even as

it faces opprobrium globally and unrest within the country. The Chinese Communist Party has a phrase, "Luxian Douzheng" or line struggle. It means power struggle for some, but it also denotes the struggle for a new party line. There were several in the past. Can the world hope for a better one now?

The writer is national general secretary, BJP and director, India Foundation



Ahmedabad

'Present situation in Kashmir stable but fragile... peace goal for all forces'

LIEUTENANT GENERAL BS RAJU took over as GOC of Chinar Corps, which looks after the Army's operations in the Kashmir region, including the highly active Line of Control, on March 2. He speaks to SUSHANT SINGH about the situation in Kashmir and the LoC, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Excerpts:



THE EXPRESS
INTERVIEW

WITH
BS RAJU
GOC OF CHINAR CORPS

Should we expect the situation on the LoC to change anytime soon?

Pakistan's persistence in infiltrating terrorists, proliferating false propaganda are intended to disturb peace and its actions are unlikely to change anytime soon.

What is the internal security situation in the Valley? What are the indicators you are monitoring closely?

The present situation in Kashmir is stable but fragile.

Maintaining peace has been the prime goal of all the Security Forces, working in close synergy with each other, ie. Army, J&K Police, CAPF, intelligence agencies and the civil administration.

He was referring to the murder of Hindu outfit leader Kamlesh Tiwari in October last year and the killing of another leader in Lucknow.

Rajput said, "I work for cow protection and Hindutva, and there is a threat to my life as well, but I did not say that members of any particular community cannot sell vegetables. I was just concerned about someone hiding his identity."

In the video that went viral, the MLA from Charkhari in Bundelkhand purportedly asked the vendor to reveal his real name, failing which he would be beaten up. A boy who was with the vendor was asked his name. The boy is heard saying the name, and promising that they would not repeat the act. The MLA is heard telling the vendor not to return to his locality.

Rajput said his security guard bought vegetables from the vendor. Rajput claimed that when the vendor was questioned about requisite permission, he tried to flee. "This made me suspicious that he was hiding his true identity," the MLA said. He alleged the vendor, "a Muslim, was citing a Hindu name and did not have any identity proof".

Asked about the video, BJP spokesperson Rakesh Tripathi said, "The BJP does not support any discrimination. The MLA is just asking for a name."

How have the guidelines on COVID-19 altered your working routine or that of your headquarters, and of units in the field?

All precautions as per guidelines are being followed in letter and spirit by our headquarters and units. Necessary adjustments have been made in our routine and functioning in order to maintain our working and there has been no difference in our efficacy to conduct operations. Along the LoC, all the locations are isolated and to maintain social distancing and isolation norms, there is no problem at all.

FULL INTERVIEW ON
www.indianexpress.com

How do you assess the current situation on the LoC? Why has it become active now?

Pakistan has consistently been aiding and abetting infiltration for more than 30 years now. All the terrorist camps and launch pads in POK are full. These terrorist cadres are desperate to infiltrate with the help of Pakistan Army. Numerous infiltration attempts have been foiled and Pakistan Army is constantly resorting to ceasefire violation to support the terrorist infiltration. Our befitting response to ceasefire violations has been swift, hard and punishing.

An impervious Counter Infiltration Grid and our effective response to ceasefire violations have left Pakistan helpless in furthering its agenda.

Isn't it fair to expect that when both India and Pakistan are grappling with COVID-19, the situation on the LoC would be more peaceful and local villagers would be spared? What is Pakistan's gameplan on the LoC?

There is only one reason for the near constant ceasefire violations, Pakistan's attempt to assist more terrorists to infiltrate into India in order to disrupt normalcy in the Kashmir valley. Pakistan Army facilitates these infiltration attempts. Even in times when the world is together in combatting the spread of the pandemic, there is no respite from Pakistan. Our soldiers along the borders are well equipped. We are ensuring that our borders are safe while the country is fighting COVID-19.

The Army along the LoC provides all types of succour and assistance to the population. Our outreach programmes range from medical help, evacuation, provisioning of rations and other material aid, help in reconstruction of damaged houses and even providing job opportunities to locals. Apart from this, education, skill development and women empowerment initiatives are undertaken regularly. We live with the locals and share the relationship of a 'Humsaya' (co-inhabitants), which means that we stand shoulder to shoulder with them through good and not-so-good times.

FULL INTERVIEW ON
www.indianexpress.com

OWING TO LABOUR SHORTAGE

Punjab and Haryana farmers switch from paddy

ANJU AGNIHOTRI CHABA & HARISH DAMODARAN

JALANDHAR, NEW DELHI, APR 29

COVID-19 has opened a window of opportunity to wean away farmers in Punjab and Haryana from growing rice to less water-guzzling crops such as cotton and maize.

The driver: Uncertainty over the availability of an estimated million labourers from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar who undertake the bulk of the paddy transplanting that begins from mid-June. That, plus the lack of mechanical transplanting options, in contrast to the ubiquitous combines used for both paddy and wheat harvesting, means fewer farmers are likely to take up rice cultivation in the coming kharif season.

Manjit Singh Sidhu has, for over a decade, been paddy farmer on his 13 acres at Uddat Bhagat Ram village in Punjab's Mansa district. But this time he has decided to sow cotton on 11 acres, limit paddy to 2 acres, that too, subject to getting enough local labour. "I finished harvesting wheat on April 20, and I am waiting for water from the Kotla Branch of the Sirhind Canal (on the Sutlej River). They (government) normally release it



Farmers in Vinzol village, on the outskirts of Ahmedabad city, water bajra crop before harvest. Amid the lockdown, farmers in Gujarat are also struggling to source labourers. Javed Raja

around April 30, which will enable me to plant cotton," says the 43-year-old.

Shamsher Singh, from the same village, also plans to only grow cotton on his 8-acre holding, which was entirely under paddy until the 2019 kharif season. Jagbir Singh from Jhumba village of Bathinda district is going for cotton on four of his nine acres, again previously fully planted to paddy.

"The people who transplant paddy are from Bihar and UP.

Nobody knows if they will come. Even if the lockdown is lifted on May 3, train services are unlikely to resume soon and I cannot take a risk. While local labourers can be used, they will demand Rs 4,500-5,000 per acre, whereas the migrant workers charge only Rs 2,500," he points out.

Southwest Punjab — mainly the districts of Mansa, Bathinda, Muktsar and Fazilka — was traditionally a cotton belt. Many farmers in recent times, however,

switched to paddy, thanks to assured minimum support price-based procurement and free power supply for groundwater irrigation during the cropping season.

This was further supported by the availability of migrant labour for transplanting paddy seedlings, which are first raised in nursery beds for 25-30 days before being uprooted and replanted in the main field.

"It is a very labour-intensive operation. The plant population in paddy is about 33 per square metre, or 133,550 per acre. This is more than thrice the 40,000-odd plants per acre for cotton. Also,

since paddy transplanting is in puddled (muddy standing water) conditions, there is both drudgery and difficulty in movement. A single labourer typically does around 10 acres from mid-June to mid-July," explains A K Singh, director of the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) in New Delhi.

The roughly 43 lakh hectares (106 lakh acres) under paddy in Punjab and Haryana, translates to a requirement of 1 million-1.1 million labourers, an estimated 90 per cent-plus of them being seasonal migrants from UP and Bihar. With a question mark over their availability — they normally come by train in early June — transplant-

ing could well be impacted.

While mechanical transplanting is possible in theory, it needs raising the seedlings in special mat nurseries or trays. "Farmers have gone in for mechanisation only in harvesting, where the combines are also manufactured indigenously and adapted to our conditions. The machines used in transplanting are largely imported and farmers haven't felt the need for them when they could rely on migrant labourers. Necessity is the mother of invention," adds Singh.

But labour shortage might this time prompt farmers to plant more area under cotton or maize. Crop diversification — weaning farmers away from paddy, with all its associated problems of groundwater depletion and pollution due to burning of the leftover stubble from harvesting by combines — is a strategy the Punjab and Haryana governments have for long tried to implement in vain.

It stands a chance now, at least in the old cotton belts of southwest Punjab and east Haryana (Sirsia, Fatehabad, Jind, Hisar and Bhiwani). In cotton, planting can be done by farmers themselves, employing family labour.

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

Start academic session for first-year students in Sept, UGC advises varsities

RITIKA CHOPRA
NEW DELHI, APRIL 29

THE 2020-21 academic session will start one-and-a-half months late for students entering higher education this year.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) on Wednesday released an indicative academic calendar for higher education institutions, suggesting that classes for first-year students can start by September 1 and for intermediate year students on August 1. It also indicated that the admission process for fresh batches of students be conducted in August.

For the graduating batch, as first reported by The Indian Express on April 26, universities and colleges have been advised to hold their final-year or terminal semester examination from July 1 to July 15 and declare their results end of the month.

For intermediate (read 2nd or 3rd year) students, higher education institutions can hold their semester or year-end examination from July 16 to July 30 and announce results by August 14. June, as advised by UGC, can be treated as summer vacation.

Aside from making changes to the suggested academic calendar, universities and colleges, the UGC clarified, are also free to

conduct their examination in either offline or online mode and reduce the time from three to two hours. However, the examination should be held "observing the guidelines of 'social distancing' and keeping in view the support system available with them and ensuring fair opportunity to all students", the UGC guidelines states.

In case higher education institutions are unable to conduct term-end exams because of the COVID-19 outbreak, they have been advised to promote students by giving 50% weightage to internal evaluation and the rest to "performance in the previous semester".

search scholars.

The 2020-21 academic year may not have a winter break and follow six-day teaching week to make up for the learning time lost due to the classroom shutdown.

Examination for the first semester of 2020-21 is likely to take place in January 2021 and for the second semester in May-June. The 2021-22 academic year is expected to start on August 2.

For research students, vivae

voce examinations are expected to take place through video-conferencing. All MPhil and PhD students will get an extension of six months. The lockdown period will be treated as "deemed to be attended" by all students and re-

Three workers of private firm in Silvassa wanted to go home over 'lack of food and facilities'; held

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, APRIL 29

THREE EMPLOYEES of a private firm at Naroli in Silvassa, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, were arrested on Tuesday evening after they uploaded a video on Facebook claiming the lack of food and facilities and demanded to be sent home amid the nationwide lockdown.

According to police, a probe was ordered by the special executive magistrate (SEM) in Silvassa after the video went viral. In the investigation, it was allegedly found that the workers were provided "sufficient food ration" by the company a week ago.

The three workers were booked under IPC sections 505 (Statements conducing to public mischief), 269 (Negligent act likely to cause infection of a disease) and 188 (Disobedience to order given by public servant). According to Dadra and Nagar Haveli Police, the workers were booked as they were seen "not maintaining social distancing" in the video.

The workers have been identified as Hasan Mohammad Salim, a native of Madhya Pradesh; Ravindra Rajaram Yadav and Deepu alias Ram Karan Yadav, both natives of Uttar Pradesh.

In her statement to *The Indian Express*, Ravi said that when she was appointed as the Health Commissioner in 2017, she had informed the General Administration Department that her husband's firm Argusoft had in 2013 developed the ImTeCHO app for the Gujarat government, used as a tracker for maternal and infant health.

It

was officially "dedicated to the people" on October 7, 2017, by Prime Minister Narendra Modi from his hometown Vadnagar, Ravi's statement said, adding that the information is also used on the CM Dashboard.

Ravi added that the ImTeCHO app was used for "door-to-door surveillance... after COVID-19 pandemic struck and was also used to monitor treatment". "... in the first week of April when the Central government launched a mobile app for the treatment and observation of COVID-19 patients and when governments were directed to use it, instead of TeCHO, the decision was taken at our level to use the Indian government's app".

As of April 21, according to a Gujarat government press release, 3,304 doctors were registered on ImTeCHO+ application.

Dr Kamlesh Saini, state secretary of the Gujarat chapter of the Indian Medical Association, said doctors were expected to enter details such as name, age, phone number, residential address, travel history, co-morbidities or existing health conditions of SARI or ILI cases, as well as the symptoms being exhibited and since when.

BY GANDHINAGAR AUTHORITIES

IMA asked to ensure private docs keep their clinics open

PARIMAL DABHI
GANDHINAGAR, APRIL 29

FOLLOWING COMPLAINTS that private doctors in rural parts of the district don't keep their clinics open causing great difficulties to people even in cases of normal ailments, Gandhinagar district authorities have written to the Gandhinagar chapter of the Indian Medical Association (IMA) asking them to ensure that private doctors keep their clinics/hospitals open, especially in rural areas.

In the letter on April 27, the authorities stated that they have got presentations that in some rural parts of the district; private medical practitioners do not keep their clinics/hospitals open causing difficulties to the people even in getting treatment for normal ailments.

The authorities have appealed the IMA to ensure that these clinics/hospitals remain open so that the rural population does not have to travel to government hospitals which will decrease the possibilities of them getting COVID-19.

District Development Officer of Gandhinagar R R Raval said, "We have appealed to the Gandhinagar chapter of IMA to do the needful so that the private doctors especially in rural areas keep their clinics/hospitals open. When such private clinics/hospitals are not open, the load on government clinics, which are busy in dealing with COVID-19, increases for normal ailments."

Raval said that in such times, when the government hospitals are quite busy in dealing with COVID-19, private clinics/hospitals can be quite helpful by handing the patients of normal ailments.

"On humanitarian grounds, they should keep their clinics/hospitals open. They can be helpful in deceasing people's travel outside their locality for normal illnesses. And they can also be helpful in getting authorities know about any suspected cases in rural areas whose samples can be taken subsequently," Raval said.

Raval said that they have written to the IMA after receiving complaints from people.

President of Gandhinagar chapter of IMA, Dr Anil Chauhan said, "We have appealed to the doctors to keep their clinics open. It will decrease the load on civil hospital for normal ailments. The scenario has improved with more than 50% private doctors keeping their clinics/hospitals open."

Chauhan said that the doctors who are not opening their clinics/hospitals are scared of their own health due to indiscipline among common public to maintain social distance.

"Like any other person, those doctors are scared of getting COVID-19 infection. Even after all this, there is lack of self discipline in public in maintaining social distance. We have asked the district collector to provide one home guard jawan to private clinics/hospitals at our expense to maintain the social distance among the visiting patients," said Chauhan.

Ahmedabad



CORONA WATCH



A man feeds monkeys in Jaipur. Rohit Jain Paras

MADHYA PRADESH
3 workers run over by truck while sleeping

Bhopal: Three migrant labourers who were stranded in Rajasthan died a few kilometers away from their village in Ujjain district when a truck ran over them while they were asleep on Wednesday. The trio, including a couple, was part of a group of 12 workers who were dropped near the Madhya Pradesh border by a Rajasthan government bus. Another bus arranged by the Madhya Pradesh government dropped them near Nagda Naka near Ujjain late on Tuesday. Fatigued, the workers had then decided to sleep on the roadside.

ENS

UTTARAKHAND
Homoeopathy medicines for health staff

Dehradun: Uttarakhand cabinet on Wednesday decided to provide homoeopathic and ayurvedic medicines to frontline health workers to "boost their immunity". Homoeopathy drug Arsenicum Album 30 and ayurvedic syrups of herbs such as Tulsi and Ashwagandha will be procured at a cost of Rs 2.48 lakh and given to medical and para-medical staff, said Uttarakhand minister Madan Kaushik.

ENS

ASSAM
Austerity measures announced

Guwahati: The Assam government Wednesday announced a slew of austerity measures in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak. Among the steps are reduction of establishment expenditure—from 20 per cent to 10 per cent of the budget for the first quarter—and suspension of sops to industries. The release of MLA Funds was suspended for the first four months of the fiscal or until further orders.

ENS



The Mumbai Agricultural Produce Market Committee's vegetable market wears a deserted look on Wednesday. Officials have closed roads leading to the market after some traders tested positive for COVID-19 on Tuesday. Amit Chakravarty

Attacks on frontline workers: UP to bring in ordinance for strict penalty

MAULSHREE SETH
LUCKNOW, APRIL 29

Yogi Adityanath

THE UTTAR Pradesh government is set to promulgate an ordinance to amend the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, to ensure that those involved in attacks on frontline workers amid the COVID-19 pandemic face stiff penalties, including a jail term of up to seven years and Rs 5 lakh as fine.

Citing the attack on health workers and police in Kanpur and Moradabad, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday said, "Attacks on our corona warriors are a serious crime which cannot go unpunished as these warriors are working for the society by putting their lives at risk."

"That is why we have moved forward to amend Epidemic Diseases Act..." he said.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, state Law Minister Brijesh Pathak said that after the Centre amended the Act, each state was supposed to amend rules concerning it. "Uttar Pradesh has decided to implement all provisions, like punishment from six months to seven years and fine imposed in the Central Act. We have decided to bring a fresh ordinance, making the punishment more strict."

While the new ordinance will be called Uttar Pradesh Epidemic Disease Control Ordinance, 2020, sources said it would include punishment for offences like spitting, running from quarantine facilities and violating restrictions.

The CM said medical teams, security personnel or even those engaged in doorstep delivery, are helping people of the state by putting their lives at risk and just a handful of people cannot be allowed to create unrest. He said that he has asked police officers not to hesitate in taking action.

"Such attacks are a direct challenge to the law and order system, and in no situation, they can be accepted. I had said it earlier too and will say it again that in Uttar Pradesh, all the health workers, security personnel, all the sanitation workers, and even social organisations are working to break the chain of coronavirus... Attacking them is an unpardonable crime," he said, adding that Gangster Act and National Security Act would also be invoked against those involved in such attacks.

Police said those who targeted the police personnel demanded that health workers should test the patient's family members at the residence and take away only those who test positive for coronavirus.

Fifty area residents have been booked in a case filed at the local police station.

At 71, highest 24-hour toll; cases doubling in 11.3 days

ABANTIKA GHOSH
NEW DELHI, APRIL 29

EVEN AS discussions on where each district stands in terms of coronavirus cases and the opening up formula continued in the government, the country recorded its highest 24-hour toll—71, it was announced on Wednesday.

In all, 1,008 people have died of COVID-19 across the country so far.

In the last 24 hours, 1,813 new cases were reported, taking the total number of cases to 31,787, and 7,796 patients have recovered, making the recovery rate nearly 25 per cent.

So far, 7,70,764 tests have been conducted in the country in private and ICMR laboratories.

In an interaction with the Lions Club International members from across the country, Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan said that there are "a little over 300 districts in the country with no cases and another 300 with minimal - between 1 and 5 - cases".

He also said that the doubling time over the last three days is 11.3 days.

According to the minister, although the global mortality rate is around 7 per cent, India has so far shown a mortality rate of around 3 per cent, with nearly 86 per cent fatality of patients with co-morbidities.

While the discussion currently is centred around a graded opening up of the na-

tionalwide lockdown, a source close to the Health Minister indicated that he is in favour of continuation of the lockdown.

The source said, "The decision has not been taken yet on how the relaxations will be implemented. The Prime Minister himself is consulting all stakeholders and taking as many inputs as possible... We cannot risk a disaster."

"If you ask the minister personally," the source added, "he would tell you that it may be better to maintain status quo."

Signalling a change in the protocol so far, the Health Ministry has already announced that offices where a COVID case has been detected need not be closed down, as was the protocol earlier.

"If there is a COVID patient in a non-COVID hospital, that facility can be used after disinfection. The same process is to be followed for any other location where a COVID patient is detected. The building can be used after proper disinfection," Joint Secretary Lav Agarwal had said on Tuesday.

In his interaction with the Lions Club members, Vardhan said: "This time the hallmark of our approach has been five-fold: (i) maintaining a continuous situation awareness, (ii) preemptive and proactive approach, (iii) graded response as per continuously evolving scenario, (iv) inter-sectoral coordination at all levels, and, most importantly (v) creating a people's movement to combat this disease."

Kerala-based institute gets ICMR nod to test plant extraction for corona cure

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, APRIL 29

EVEN AS the medical research world is looking at a vaccine and drug for coronavirus, a Kerala-based research institute is exploring the possibility of a plant-based drug to tackle the virus.

Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanical Garden and Research Institute (JNTBGR), based at Palode in Thiruvananthapuram district, has received the ICMR's approval for testing the effectiveness of the plant's extraction for treatment of coronavirus, according to the institute's director, Dr R Prakash Kumar. The test would be held at National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune, he said.

The institute's ongoing project on "anti-viral from medicinal plants of Western Ghats" had found that a compound from a particular plant extraction is effective against chikungunya and dengue, both viral infections. The extraction has effective anti-virus property, the research found.

The findings on chikungunya and dengue is in the stage of patenting, and the project is supported by the Department of Biotechnology, under the Union Ministry of Science and Technology, Prakash Kumar said: "It is not a preliminary research work. We have a lead molecule (that was) found very effective for chikungunya and dengue. Now we are going to address whether that lead molecule is effective for coronavirus as well. We don't want to make any predictions; if we get positive result, it would be a major breakthrough."

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

Lancet study: No statistically significant clinical benefits of remdesivir in COVID patients

ABANTIKA GHOSH
NEW DELHI, APRIL 29

THE RESULTS of the first randomised control trial for remdesivir, a drug originally developed for Ebola, in patients of COVID-19 are in, and the results are not promising.

In a study in the medical journal *The Lancet*, Chinese researchers have reported that they could not find any "statistically significant clinical benefits".

The researchers reported: "Although not statistically significant, patients receiving remdesivir had a numerically faster time to clinical improvement than those receiving placebo among patients with symptom duration of 10 days or less. Adverse events were reported in 102 (66%) of 155 remdesivir recipients versus 50 (64%) of 78 placebo recipients. Remdesivir was stopped early because of adverse events in 18 (12%) patients versus four (5%) patients who stopped placebo early."

It was used in between February 6 and March 12, and 237 patients were enrolled and randomly assigned to a treatment group. Of these, 158 patients in 10 hospitals in Wuhan, China, had actually received the drug.

The study, however, was stopped midway by the data safety monitoring board since there were not enough COVID patients left in Wuhan after the outbreak there was brought under control. So the authors highlighted the need for larger studies.

Remdesivir, developed by Gilead Sciences Inc, a research-based biopharmaceutical company, is a broad-spectrum antiviral previously tested in humans with Ebola virus and has also shown promise as a drug against the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), both of which, like COVID-19, are caused by coronaviruses. It has been touted as one of the most promising therapies against COVID. It is a part of the SOLIDAR-

ITY trial of WHO, under which it is likely to be used in Indian patients, too.

There are other trials underway, including one at the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) in Omaha, USA, whose regulatory sponsor is the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, part of the National Institutes of Health.

Prof Bin Cao from China-Japan Friendship Hospital and Capital Medical University in China, who led the research, wrote: "Our trial found that while safe and adequately tolerated, remdesivir did not provide significant benefits over placebo... but we are mindful that we were only able to enrol 237 of the target 453 patients because the COVID-19 outbreak was brought under control in Wuhan... restrictions on bed availability resulted in most patients being enrolled later in the disease course, so we were unable to adequately assess whether earlier treatment with remdesivir might have provided clinical benefit."

Chhattisgarh dist throws up first case, question on transfer during quarantine

GARGI VERMA
RAIPUR, APRIL 29

ON TUESDAY, a 58-year-old man tested positive for COVID-19 in Chhattisgarh's Surajpur—the first confirmed case in the district. In the rapid test, nine others quarantined at the same shelter camp were suspected to have been infected.

A 10th person suspected to have contracted the infection was housed at a quarantine camp in Jashpur district.

Both were green zone districts, and all 12 people had arrived, along many others in a group of around 400, from quarantine centres in Rajnandgaon district on April 17.

"We have sent all patients (man who tested positive and

those suspected to have been infected) to AIIMS-Raipur. I was contacted by the Rajnandgaon collector and we made arrangements for 106 people they sent to our district," Surajpur district collector Deepak Soni said on Wednesday.

This transfer of nearly 400 people to decongest Rajnandgaon quarantine centres—the district has 58 quarantine camps, housing nearly 9,000 people—has raised a question of whether people should be allowed to travel during their mandatory quarantine period.

While Rajnandgaon collector JP Maurya said the people sent out had completed the required 15-day quarantine period, state Additional Chief Secretary Subrat Sahu said they had been there for hardly a "few" days.

Sahu, however, said: "It is the

state's (government's) prerogative where people are kept. They were quarantined in Rajnandgaon, were transported by our vehicles, and kept in the quarantine facility in (different) districts. It doesn't break the quarantine."

According to a Health Department official, quarantine is meant to restart after every instance of travel.

The man who has tested positive in Surajpur worked as a labourer in Maharashtra's Wardha district and is a resident of Jharkhand. He was quarantined in Rajnandgaon on April 5 and was moved to Jajawal in Surajpur on April 17. The same day, four groups of about 100 people each were transferred from Rajnandgaon to quarantine centres in Jashpur, Surajpur, Koriya and Raigadh districts.

Maurya also said he had written to senior bureaucrats in the state to help him transfer some migrant workers from Rajnandgaon's quarantine centres. "We also requested the (Union) Home Ministry to allow us to transport migrant workers to their states (of origin), but it was denied," he said.

Explaining why he ordered transfer of so many people to quarantine centres in other districts, Maurya said he decided to make small groups to ensure containment after more than 400 people congregated at one camp. "Quarantine centres work in theory, but in reality everyone wants to go home. We took the decision of sending them to other districts after they started posing law and order problems," he said.

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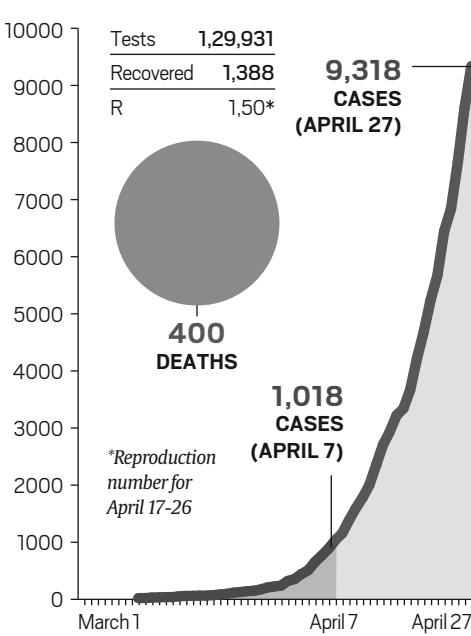
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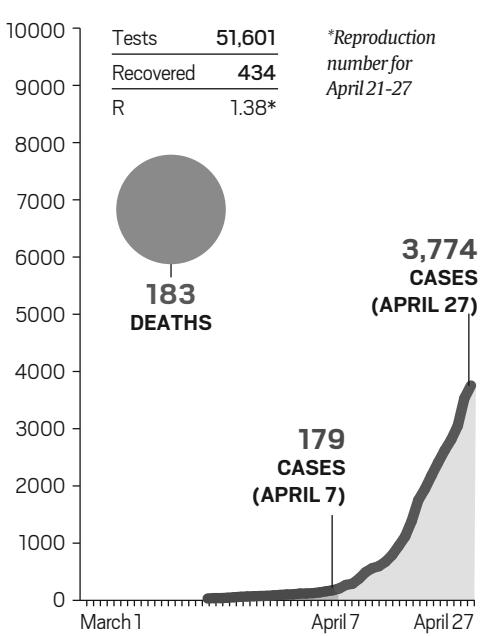
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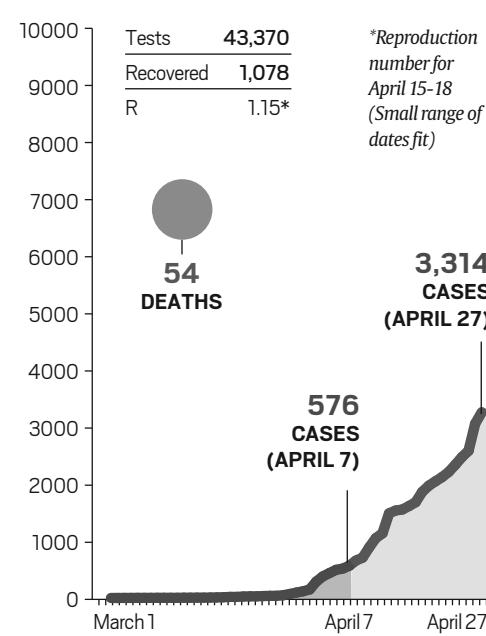
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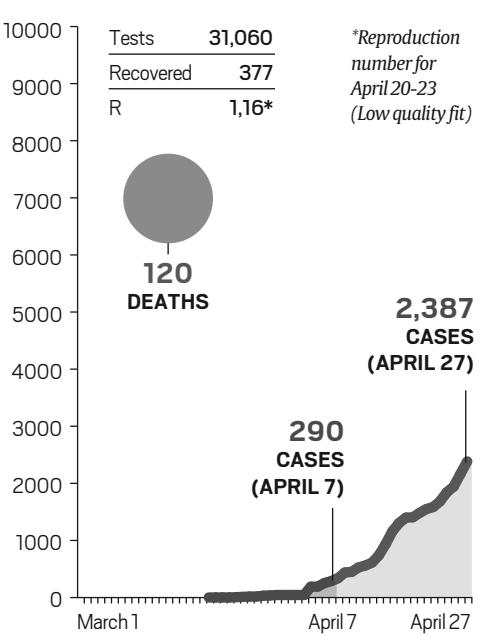
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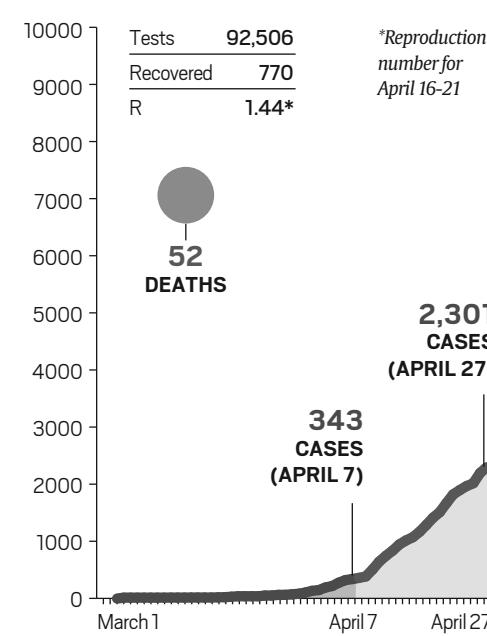
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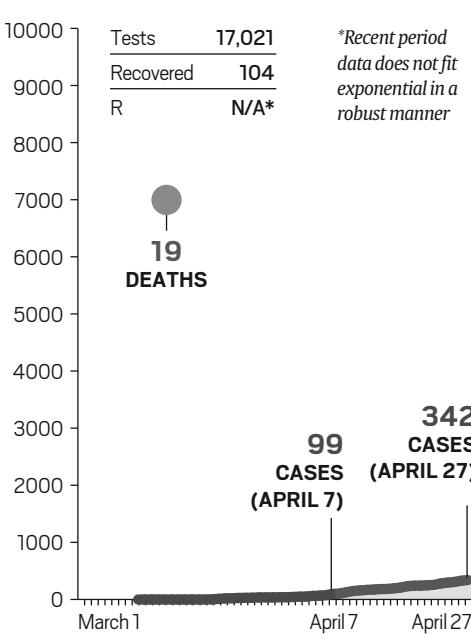
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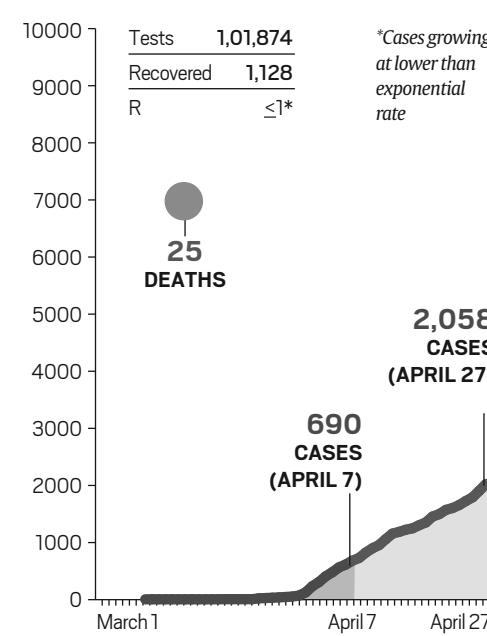
RAJASTHAN



PUNJAB



TAMIL NADU



Revisiting virus curve, to read lockdown effect

On April 9, *The Indian Express* analysed the national and state-wise COVID-19 growth curves. How have these shaped since? In updated curves, trends during last 3 weeks of lockdown

AMITABH SINHA

PUNE, APRIL 28

ON APRIL 9, we had published the growth curves of the novel coronavirus epidemic in various states. Covering data until April 7, we had showed how, just over a month after the outbreak began in the first week of March, the trajectory at the national level and in many states had begun to resemble what is so typical of the spread of an infectious disease — an exponential curve.

With less than a week to go before India steps out of a national lockdown, and into the next phase of the containment strategy, we revisit those growth curves here, in an attempt to illustrate the impact of the lockdown, or at least look at what happened during this period. The national lockdown imposed at midnight of March 24 — often described as the biggest human quarantine ever — was aimed at slowing down the rate of growth of the epidemic, so that the number of patients needing urgent medical attention could remain at manageable levels while government and local authorities would ramp up health infrastructure and prepare themselves to deal with larger number of people at a later stage. As we move towards the end of that period, the lockdown does seem to have resulted in a significant slowdown of the epidemic.

"I don't think there is any doubt that the lockdown did manage to achieve a considerable slowdown in the growth of the disease," said Sitabhra Sinha, a scientist at the Chennai-based Institute of Mathematical Sciences, who has been studying the spread of the epidemic in India through computer modelling.

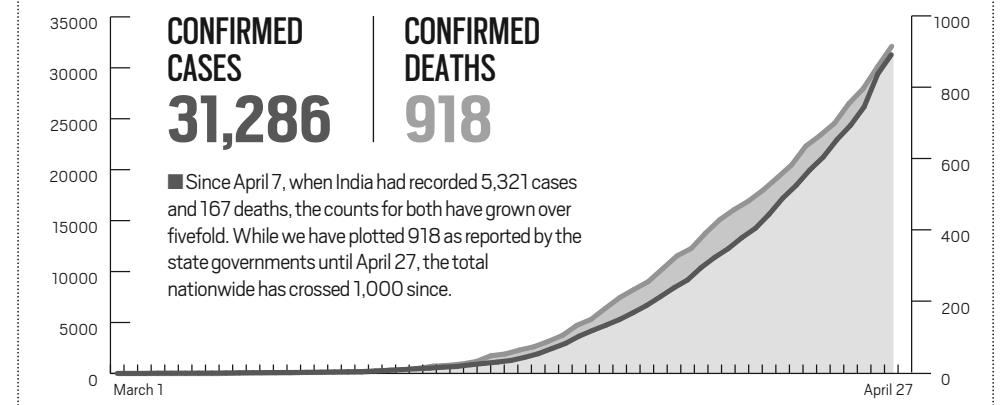
Sinha had told *The Indian Express* on April 12 that, according to a study he had been carrying out with his colleague Soumya Easwaran, the number of confirmed infected cases was likely to remain below 20,000 by April 20. This, he had said, was a direct impact of the lockdown, in the absence of which, computer models showed, the number would have reached 35,000. The number on April 20 was 18,465, well within the prediction.

The reproduction number (R) we mention here — a reference to the average number of persons infected by an already infected person — are those calculated by Sinha's team.

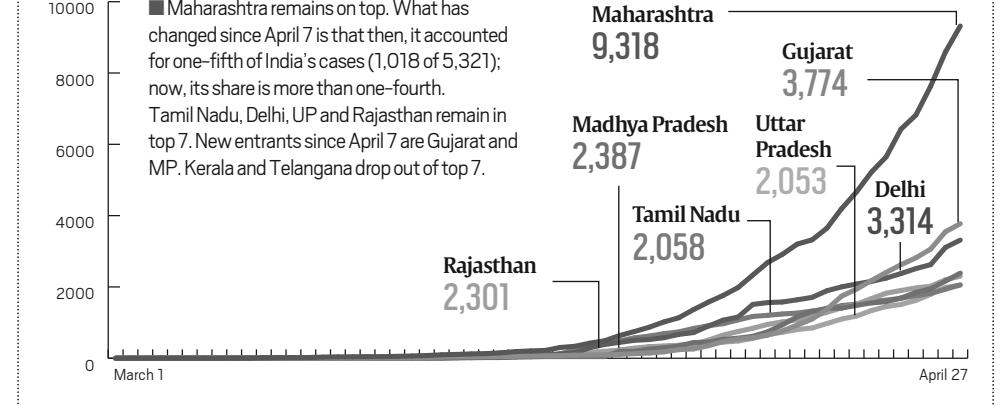
There has been a significant change in the growth curves of the states from the last time. Some states, such as Kerala, have done well to contain the epidemic, winning global acclaim for their efforts, while others, like Maharashtra and Delhi, have seen a steady rise in numbers.

Some other states, like Gujarat, which had a modest case load at that time, have emerged as fast-growing hotspots. And states such as West Bengal, Bihar and Jharkhand have just begun to show signs that they could potentially turn into trouble zones over the next few days, although their current case load is not very high.

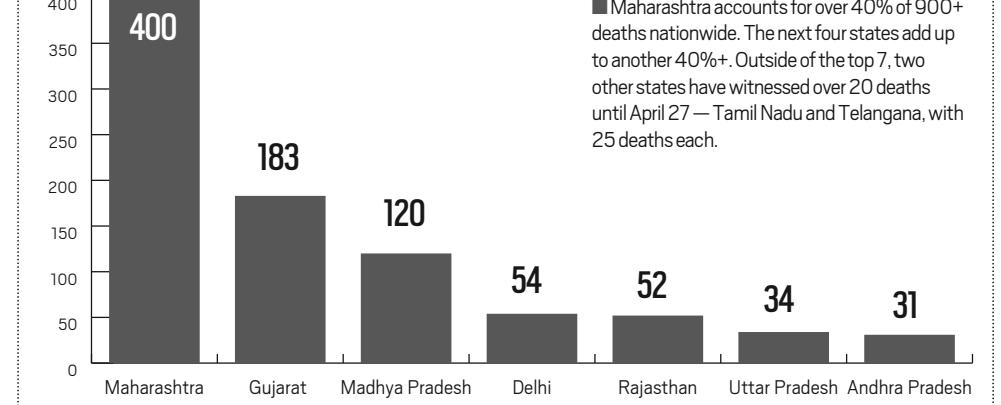
ALL INDIA COVID 19 CASES & DEATHS



TOP 7 STATES INFECTED BY COVID 19



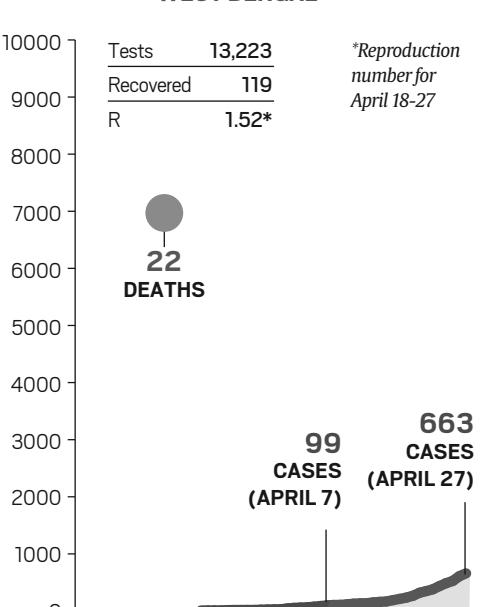
TOP 7 STATE-WISE COVID-19 DEATHS



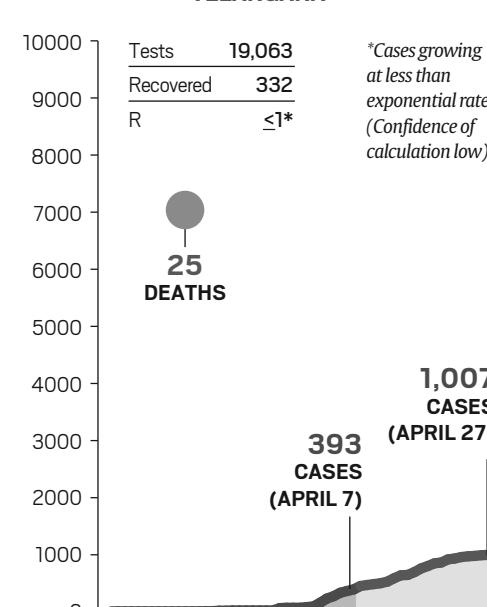
OTHER STATES

State	Cases	Deaths	Recoveries
Andaman	10	0	10
Arunachal	1	0	1
Assam	37	1	27
Chandigarh	56	0	17
Chhattisgarh	37	0	32
Daman	1	0	0
Goa	7	0	7
Haryana	308	4	224
Himachal	41	2	25
Jharkhand	105	2	19
Ladakh	20	0	18
Manipur	2	0	2
Meghalaya	12	1	0
Mizoram	1	0	1
Odisha	118	1	37
Tripria	2	0	2
Uttarakhand	54	0	34

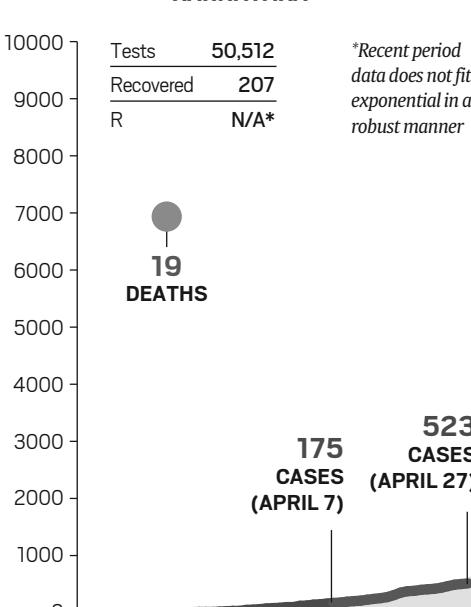
WEST BENGAL



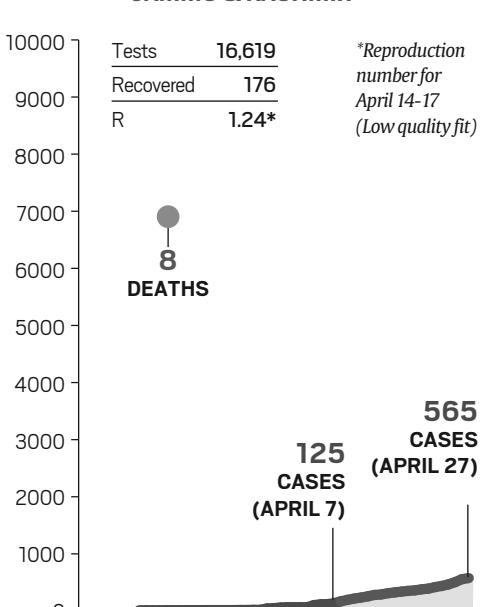
TELANGANA



KARNATAKA



JAMMU & KASHMIR



Editing: Kabir Firaque

Graphics: Mithun Chakraborty & Ritesh Kumar

Ahmedabad

13

THE INDIAN EXPRESS, THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 2020

THE OUTBREAK

THE WORLD

PANDEMIC WATCH



In Bangkok. AP

THAILAND
Bangkok to ease some restrictions

Bangkok: Officials in Bangkok say they are preparing to ease restrictions that were imposed to fight the spread of COVID-19, including the reopening of restaurants under strict conditions. The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration announced Wednesday that it hopes to lift restrictions on eight kinds of establishments it had ordered closed through April 30. The city's plans call for the reopening of restaurants, markets, exercise venues, parks, hairdressers and barbers, clinics and nursing homes, animal hospitals and pet salons, and golf courses and driving ranges.

NEPAL
3 returnees of Tablighi meet test positive

Kathmandu: Nepal on Wednesday said that three persons, who returned from India after attending a Tablighi Jamaat gathering, have been tested positive, bringing the total number of the COVID-19 patients in the country to 57. The three men, who were staying in quarantine after returning from the Tablighi Jamaat gathering in Delhi's Nizamuddin area last month, have been brought to an isolation ward of Narayani Hospital in Birgunj for treatment, according to a government spokesperson.

SINGAPORE
Govt warns of fake news

Singapore: Singapore on Wednesday warned against spreading fake news and videos about migrants workers, saying this could disturb law and order in dormitories where a large number of foreign workers, including Indian nationals, have been tested positive. Law and Home Affairs Minister K Shanmugam warned such videos can lead to serious law and order incidents. He said the authorities are watching those who spread the videos "very carefully". Warning those spreading fake news maliciously, he said, they will be charged if a crime was committed.

1 mn US cases, toll surpasses Vietnam War

AGENCIES
NEW YORK/WASHINGTON, APRIL 29

IT HAS been 100 days since a 35-year-old man presented to an urgent care clinic in Snohomish County, Washington, with a four-day history of cough and fever and tested positive for the virus.

His was the first case to be detected.

Since then, more than one million people had tested positive in the United States.

In that time, residents in most states in the country – along with more than half of all humanity – have been ordered to shelter in their homes in the hopes of slowing the spread of the highly contagious virus and to try to keep hospital systems from being overwhelmed.

The death toll climbed above 58,000 on Tuesday, surpassing the loss of American life from the Vietnam War, as Florida's governor met with President Donald Trump to discuss an easing of economic restraints.

Epidemiologists have estimated that the true number of infections may be about 10 times the known number, and preliminary testing of how many people have antibodies to the virus seems to support that view. Similarly, the official death toll is likely to vastly underestimate the true number by at least sev-



Vice President Mike Pence during a visit to the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota. AP

eral thousand, according to analysis of mortality data by *The New York Times*.

While the timeline for the spread of the virus has shifted as public health authorities find evidence that the pathogen was spreading in communities earlier than believed, the speed at which the world has been transformed is shocking.

Masks are becoming an accepted part of public life, which is why there was such a backlash on Tuesday after Vice President Mike Pence flouted the Mayo Clinic's protocols on wearing a protective

face covering on a visit there.

In the last 100 days, the global economy has suffered such a swift and sudden decline that economists have had to reach back to the Great Depression for analogies.

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, among the latest to lock down his state against the pandemic, has been weighing whether to join other states in a relaxation of workplace restrictions and stay-at-home orders that have been credited with slowing the contagion but which have battered the economy.

EXPLAINED

Misinformation emerges as challenge

As the US looks at long-term plans and economic recovery initiatives, misinformation about vaccines is shaping to be a major concern before one is even ready.

The claims range from concerns that vaccine trials will be rushed, to conspiracy theories that Bill Gates wants to use the vaccine to inject microchips in people. Given that a vaccine is widely accepted as the best way to definitively end the pandemic threat, fake news-fuelled resistance to the use of vaccines could have devastating consequences.

Final journeys are getting lonelier, last goodbyes shorter

SRIRAM VEERA
MUMBAI, APRIL 29

BEIT a graveyard in central Indore, a funeral home in the midwestern US state of Wisconsin or a cemetery in Italy's northeastern region of Friuli-Venezia-Giulia; the final journeys are getting lonelier and the last goodbyes shorter. At these three COVID-19 hot spots, continents apart, fear is getting the better of grief and even death doesn't provide an escape from social distancing.

Indore's Hafiz Javed, a cemetery caretaker, says the most disconcerting moment for him these days is to watch the coffin pushed, rather than lowered, into the grave. "Everyone stands some distance apart from each other. At times, there aren't enough people to lift the body, so it is difficult to lower them softly. We have to slide them into the pit," Hafiz says.

With few relatives attending burials, the last rites finish quickly. "We instruct family members to pile mud over the body, and once that is done, we rush to finish the job. No one hangs around, there is not much crying," Hafiz says.

At the Malwa mill region's crematorium, too, the pandemic's shadow looms large. Cloth pouches and steel boxes with ashes hang from hooks or sit on the floor. The lockdown means life – and death – are at a standstill.

Family members of the deceased aren't turning up to collect the mortal remains. "Some are waiting for things to open so they can travel for ashes immersion; others are paranoid about infection," says Gauri Kailashpati, a social activist from Indore.

In the US, meanwhile, funerals follow a strict protocol. Wisconsin funeral director John Wenig shares how his son was left speechless by a lady who had lost her husband after 60 years of marriage to COVID-19. "She told my son, 'Are you telling me I can't even have a proper funeral for my husband?' My son said he couldn't even hug the lady who



Bodies being buried in New York's Hart Island. Reuters/File

had broken down. Rules and precautions, you see."

Elaborate funerals featuring tributes and sharing of memories are a thing of the past.

A US government advisory directs for COVID-19 deceased to be covered in two body bags, and for the face to be covered with a mask. "No one really knows if the virus is active and harmful after death; so, these are precautions."

There is also a cap on the number of mourners. A maximum of 10 relatives are allowed in the cemetery. Technology has helped. "We started live-streaming the final rites. I remember the first time we had 38 people, second time it jumped to 167 friends and relatives watching it."

In Friuli-Venezia-Giulia, in north east Italy, Claudio Prescherini is thankful that the worst seems to be over in his region. "All cemeteries are closed here. They are open only when a body is buried. No one is coming to cemetery to lay a rose in these times," Prescherini says.

"Newspapers in Bergamo are filled with death notices, page after page. That tells you the real story of how many people have died."

Prescherini's family have been funeral directors for 150 years now. "Scenes of death and grieving are familiar to me but this has been a strange experience. From fear to sorrow, everything has been different... I think we, as a country, remain shocked by this and need to heal as a group... but first, this virus has to be stopped."

FULL STORY ON

www.indianexpress.com



STADIUM TESTING

Johannesburg residents gather in a stadium to be tested for the virus on Wednesday. South Africa will begin a phased easing of its strict lockdown measures which have been in place since March 27, on May 1. It has over 4,360 cases and 86 deaths. AP

'Life has to go on': How Sweden faced virus

THOMAS ERDBRINK & CHRISTINA ANDERSON
STOCKHOLM, APRIL 29

SHE STOOD leaning on her cane, briefly resting among dozens of bubbly young Swedes out enjoying one of the first sunny spring days of the year.

"I'm trying not to get too close to people," said Birgit Lilja, 82, explaining that she had left her house to pick up a new identity card in person. "But I trust them to be careful with me."

Although international comparisons are difficult, the new figures confirm Britain's place among the European countries worst hit hardest by the pandemic. REUTERS



Picnickers in Stockholm last week. NYT

wholesale lockdown to "flatten the curve" of the epidemic, public health officials pointed to trust as a central justification.

Swedes, they said, could be trusted to stay home, follow social distancing protocols and wash

their hands to slow the spread of the virus – without any mandatory orders.

Sweden's death rate of 22 per 100,000 people is the same as that of Ireland, which has earned accolades for its handling of the pandemic, and far better than in Britain or France. Yet, on this warm spring day, at least, there was little evidence that people were observing the protocols – adding further mystery to Sweden's apparent success.

While other countries were slamming on the brakes, Sweden kept its borders open, allowed restaurants and bars to keep serving, left preschools and grade schools in session and placed no limits on public trans-

port or outings in local parks.

Gatherings of more than 50 people are banned. Museums have closed and sporting events have been cancelled. At the end of March, the authorities banned visits to nursing homes.

That's roughly it. There are almost no fines, and police officers can only ask people to oblige. Pedestrians wearing masks are generally stared at as if they have just landed from Mars.

Throughout the crisis Sweden has had enough intensive care units to deal with Covid-19 patients, the minister of health and social affairs, Lena Hallengren, said in an interview. "We have 250 empty beds right now." NYT

Clinton endorses Biden: 'Wish he were president right now'

PRIMARIES:
THE DEMOCRATS

port the kind of person that we want back in the White House," Clinton said on Tuesday afternoon during a virtual town hall-style event with Biden about the impact of the coronavirus on women.

Accepting her support, Biden said: "I really appreciate your friendship. What a just a wonderful personal endorsement."

The Biden campaign had advertised that the event would feature a "special guest," and on her Twitter account Tuesday, Clinton all but confirmed the endorsement as she disclosed that she would be appearing with Biden.

After Clinton endorsed Biden, the event turned into a conversation about the coronavirus crisis. With an easy banter that recalled the breakfast meetings they both repeatedly harked back to, the two shared ideas to support women who were struggling because of the outbreak.

"You've been way ahead on these issues for a long time," Biden said to Clinton – a show of respect that was often returned. NYT

Boris, fiancee announce birth of boy, two days after he returned to work

ASSOCIATED PRESS
LONDON, APRIL 29

BRITISH PRIME Minister Boris Johnson and his fiancee Carrie Symonds announced the birth of a son on Wednesday, just two days after Johnson returned to work following hospitalisation for the coronavirus.

Johnson's office said Symonds gave birth to a "healthy baby boy at a London hospital" on Wednesday, and both mother and infant were doing well.

Johnson, 55, and Symonds,

they said the baby was due in early summer. No wedding date has been announced.

Symonds, an environmental campaigner and former Conservative Party staffer, also said she was sick for a week with COVID-19 symptoms, though she wasn't tested for the virus.

The baby is the third born to a sitting British prime minister this century. It wasn't immediately clear whether Johnson planned to take paternity leave.

OTHER TOP GLOBAL STORIES

Pak media mogul remanded in judicial custody in 34-yr-old case

April 28.

An accountability court

Tuesday sent Rehman to jail on

judicial remand till May 12 after the

prosecutor said the NAB did not

need him anymore for investiga-

tion, the Dawn News reported.

The charges against Rehman

relating to the purchase of several plots of land in Lahore go back to 1986 when Sharif was the chief minister of Punjab province.

The NAB alleged that Sharif allowed Rahman illegally to acquire more government-owned land than he was allowed by law.

However, Presiding Judge Jawadul Hassan expressed displeasure over the bureau for not presenting the suspect and also refused to entertain the medical certificate of a private hospital. Later, the NAB brought Rehman to the court in an ambulance from the hospital.

The 70-year-old supremo of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz is currently in London for medical treatment.

NAB officials said Sharif ille-

gally leased the land to Rehman.

At the outset of Rehman's re-

mand hearing on Tuesday, NAB Special Prosecutor Asim Mumtaz told the court that he could not be brought to a private hospi-

tal owing to bad health.

However, Presiding Judge Jawadul Hassan expressed displeasure over the bureau for not presenting the suspect and also refused to entertain the medical certificate of a private hospital. Later, the NAB brought Rehman to the court in an ambulance from the hospital.

LISA LERER, MAGGIE ASTOR & SYDNEY EMBER
NEW YORK, APRIL 29

HILLARY CLINTON, the 2016 Democratic presidential nominee and a political veteran who knows firsthand what it is like to compete against President Trump, threw her support behind Joseph R. Biden Jr. on Tuesday, the latest party leader to make the case for returning the White House to Democratic hands in November.

"I've been not only a colleague of Joe Biden's, I've been a friend, and I can tell you that I wish he were president right now but I can't wait until he is – if all of us do our part to sup-

Ahmedabad Ahmedabad

SENSEX: 32,720.16 ▲ 605.64 NIFTY: 9,553.35 ▲ 172.45 NIKKEI: 19,771.19 ▼ 12.03 HANG SENG: 24,643.59 ▲ 67.63 FTSE: 6,016.53 ▲ 58.03 DAX: 10,835.21 ▲ 39.58



GOLD

₹41,705



RUPEE

₹75.66



OIL

\$26.15



SILVER

₹38,100

Note: Spot gold markets shut due to lockdown in major states. *Indian basket as on March 19, 2020

International market data till 1900 IST

FINAL REPORT OF TASK FORCE ON NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE PIPELINE

2020-25 infra funding pegged at ₹111L cr: Energy, roads, railways to get lion's share

ENR ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, APRIL 29

ENERGY, ROADS, railways and urban projects would account for the bulk of allocations, involving total estimated infrastructure investment of Rs 111 lakh crore during the five fiscal year period 2020-25. This is according to the final report of the task force on National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) submitted to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday. Of the total project capital expenditure, sectors such as energy (24 per cent), urban (17 per cent), railways (12 per cent) and roads (18 per cent) are pegged to contribute nearly 70 per cent of the infra investments in India.

While Centre and states are expected to have almost equal share in implementing NIP, private sector contribution is expected around 21 per cent, as per a statement by the Finance Ministry. The NIP captures all projects – greenfield or brownfield, under imple-

EXPLAINED

Aim is to boost infrastructure investments

AGGRESSIVE PUSH towards asset sales, monetisation of infrastructure assets, setting up of development finance institutions and strengthening the municipal bond market are some measures suggested by a government panel to boost infrastructure investments. The panel has drawn up a National Infrastructure Pipeline to bring greater focus in this area, which is crucial to boosting economic growth.

mentation or under conceptualisation – costing greater than Rs 100 crore per project.

Besides strengthening the municipal bond market, an aggressive push towards asset sales, monetisation of infrastructure assets, deepening of corporate bond markets, and setting up Development Financial Institutions for infrastructure sector, are among the measures that have been recommended by the government panel

to aid the process of galvanising investments in infrastructure sector in next five years.

The task force, headed by Economic Affairs Secretary Atanu Chakraborty, has also recommended setting up of three committees: a panel to monitor NIP progress and eliminate delays; a steering committee in each infrastructure ministry for following up implementation; and a committee in Department of Economic

Affairs for raising financial resources for the NIP.

Out of the total expected capital expenditure of Rs 111 lakh crore, projects of Rs 44 lakh crore (40 per cent of NIP) are under implementation, projects worth Rs 33 lakh crore (30 per cent) are at conceptual stage and projects worth Rs 22 lakh crore (20 per cent) are under development. The task force was set up after Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his Independence Day speech last year, highlighted Rs 100 lakh crore worth of infra investment over the next five years to make India a \$5-trillion economy.

The summary report for 2019-2025 was released by Sitharaman on December 31, 2019. The final report has revised up NIP from earlier Rs 100 lakh crore "in light of additional/amended data provided by central ministries/states governments since the release of summary NIP report," the Centre said.

In its summary report, the panel had suggested effective dispute resolution, contract enforce-

ment and asset monetisation among other reforms for achieving infra investment targets. A critical step in addressing dwindling private sector participation in infrastructure can be institutionalising dispute resolution mechanism to effectively resolve disputes related to PPP projects. Investments must be made in the institutions created under The Commercial Courts Act 2015, The Specific Relief (Amendment) Act 2018 and the New Delhi Arbitration Centre Act 2019 for speedy resolution, it said.

The RBI's latest credit growth data shows that year-on-year growth in credit outstanding to the infrastructure sector fell to a 19-month low of 3.3 per cent. FY20 saw a decline in banks' appetite to lend to infrastructure companies. Data shows in the 11-month period ended February 2020, credit outstanding for the infrastructure sector as a whole shrank from Rs 10.55 lakh crore in March 2019 to Rs 10.18 lakh crore in February 2020, thereby contracting by 3.5 per cent.

'GSK plans to sell HUL stake'

REUTERS
BENGALURU, APRIL 29

BRITISH DRUGMAKER GlaxoSmithKline Plc is planning a sale of its \$3.7-billion stake in Unilever Ltd's listed India unit, Bloomberg News reported on Wednesday, citing people famil-

iar with the matter.

GSK plans to offload part or all of its 5.7 per cent holding in Hindustan Unilever Ltd through a series of block trades, according to Bloomberg News.

In December 2018, Unilever struck a deal to buy GSK's Horlicks nutrition business for \$3.8 billion, boosting the Anglo-Dutch group's

position in India.

The deal consideration was paid in cash and shares of HUL, and was completed earlier this month.

GSK spokesman declined to comment on the matter. Hindustan Unilever did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

US GDP contracts 4.8% in Q1, sharpest fall since Great Recession

REUTERS
WASHINGTON, APRIL 29

THE US economy contracted in the first quarter at its sharpest pace since the Great Recession as stringent measures to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus almost shut down the country, ending the longest expansion in the nation's history.

The decline in gross domestic product (GDP) reflected a plunge in economic activity in the last two weeks of March, which saw millions of Americans seeking unemployment benefits. The Commerce Department's snapshot of first-quarter GDP on Wednesday reinforced analysts'

predictions that the economy was already in a deep recession.

"The economy will continue to fall until the country opens back up," said Chris Rupkey, chief economist at MUFG in New York. "If the economy fell this hard in

'Govt has to step in to protect 11 crore Indians, give hope to MSMEs'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 29

The time to make bold decisions to save MSMEs is now. If businesses do not see hope, they will decide to close'

P CHIDAMBARAM
FORMER FINANCE MINISTER

be seen as a "no-go area".

"The time to make bold decisions to save MSMEs is now. If businesses do not see hope, they will decide to close"

On Sitharaman's remark that scheduled commercial banks had written off Rs 1.45 lakh crore in the UPA period, he said: "I am sure between 2004 and 2014, banks were applying the rule and technically writing off 1.6 lakh crore, but by the same token, between 2014 and 2019, Modi government has written off 6.66 lakh crore. So, when you mention 1.6 lakh crore should not the FM also mention the 6.66 lakh crore rupees that her government has written off between 2014 and 2019... But the point we are asking is, these are fugitives. They fled India under your nose. You have declared them fugitives and absconders. Why are you applying this rule to them?" he said.

Addressing a press conference, former Finance Minister P Chidambaram lashed out at the NDIA government for remaining "non-committal on everything", albeit an exit strategy after the lockdown, financial assistance to states or a financial package or assistance for businesses. He said monetisa-

Sensex rises 606 points on easing of curbs, Fed meet

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, APRIL 29

DOMESTIC INDICES rose on Wednesday as global markets edged up ahead of US economic growth figures and a Federal Reserve rate decision while investors seemed buoyed as more governments, including India, planned to ease anti-virus controls and allow some businesses to reopen. The Sensex rose 606 points,

or 1.89 per cent, to 32,720.16 and the NSE Nifty Index gained 172

points to 9,553.35

The rupee strengthened as

much as 52 paise against the dollar to move above the 76 mark to 75.66 in the wake of the improvement in global risk environment.

Analysts said markets continued their momentum for the third consecutive session and ended with strong gains tracking encouraging global cues.

Oil prices surged after US crude stockpiles grew less than expected and gasoline posted a surprise draw. Brent crude futures were up \$2.23, or 11 per cent, at \$22.69 a barrel by 12:05 p.m. EDT (1605 GMT). US WTI futures soared \$3.58, or 29 per cent, to \$15.92 a barrel.

Ex-Fin Secy is PESB chief

New Delhi: Ex-finance secretary Rajiv Kumar has been named PESB chairperson. PTI

ILO: 305 million jobs may be lost

Geneva: The ILO estimated 305 million full-time jobs could be lost in Q2. AP

ADB approves \$346 mn loan

New Delhi: The Asian Development Bank on Wednesday said it has approved a \$346-million loan to the government to provide reliable power connection in rural areas of Maharashtra. The loan will support the state government's high voltage distribution system programme for new grid-connected rural agricultural customers across the state, said the multi-lateral funding agency. PTI

NMC founder on private probe

Dubai: NMC Health founder BR Shetty said a probe conducted by his own advisors has found alleged fraud at the firm and Finabl.

'Groups surge delay in digital tax'

New Delhi: Lobbying groups have urged India to delay a new digital tax that will hit firms like Facebook and Google. REUTERS

THE INDIAN EXPRESS, THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 2020

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, APRIL 29

SNADEAL, ONE of India's largest e-commerce companies, along with four Indian shopping complexes have figured in the US' 2020 edition of the Notorious Markets List for counterfeiting and piracy.

Other than Snapdeal, the four markets are Tank Road in Delhi, Heera Panna in Mumbai, Kidderpore in Kolkata and Millennium Centre in Aizawl. According to a November 2018 survey, 37 per cent of its customers reported that they had received a counterfeit product from Snapdeal. Delhi's Tank Road market was in the Notorious Markets List (NML) in 2019. Right holders confirm that this market continues to sell counterfeit products, including apparel and footwear. Wholesale counterfeit goods are also reportedly supplied from this market to other Indian markets, including Gaffar Market and Ajmal Khan Road (in Delhi), it said. PTI In all, the US Trade Representatives' (USTR) annual list has 38 online markets and 34 physical markets that are reported to engage in or facilitate substantial trademark counterfeiting and copyright piracy.

"Snapdeal, one of India's largest e-commerce platforms, is known as a place to purchase counterfeit watches and shoes," the USTR said.

US adds 5 of Amazon's foreign operations to list

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, APRIL 29

THE UNITED STATES for the first time added five of Amazon's overseas operations to its list of "notorious markets" where pirated goods are sold. The e-commerce giant dismissed the move as part of the Trump administration's "personal vendetta" against it.

The Office of the US Trade Representative on Wednesday added the Amazon.com Inc. domains in Canada, France, Germany, India and the United

US places India on 'Priority Watch List' for IP protection

PRESSTrust of INDIA
WASHINGTON, APRIL 29

■ The USTR said India had been placed on the 'Priority Watch List' for lack of sufficient measurable improvements to its IP framework.

property rights violators accountable and to ensuring that US innovators and creators have a full and fair opportunity to use and profit from their work," said US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer after the release of annual Special 301 Report on the adequacy and effectiveness of trading partners' protection of IP rights.

In its report, the USTR said that India had been placed on the 'Priority Watch List' for lack of sufficient measurable improvements to its IP framework on the "long-standing" and "new challenges" that have negatively affected US right holders over the past year.

THE US on Wednesday placed India on the 'Priority Watch List' for lack of sufficient measurable improvements to its Intellectual Property framework on the "long-standing" and "new challenges" that have negatively affected American right holders over the past year.

The US placed 10 countries, including India and China, on the list, alleging that enforcement of the intellectual properties have deteriorated or remained at inadequate levels and the Americans who rely on their protection have difficulty with fair and equitable market access. The countries placed on the list by the Trump administration on Intellectual Property (IP) related issues are Algeria, Argentina, Chile, China, India, Indonesia, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Ukraine and Venezuela.

The Trump administration is committed to holding intellectual

property rights violators accountable and to ensuring that US innovators and creators have a full and fair opportunity to use and profit from their work," said US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer after the release of annual Special 301 Report on the adequacy and effectiveness of trading partners' protection of IP rights.

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27 of top 100 companies can't sustain current salary bill'

As many as 27 of the top 100 companies listed on the National Stock Exchange will not be able to sustain current wage bill if revenue dips 30 per cent or more, a Deloitte study said

METHODOLOGY

Deloitte conducted a study of the top 100 companies listed on the NSE in terms of market capitalisation

Temporary solution: Dip into cash balance or borrow in short term

All the companies covered have an ability to pay their fixed opex, interest and compensation cost from cash and cash equivalents for about 5.5 months at the median, it said



Former Finance Minister P Chidambaram. Express file

Impact will be larger since the cash stuck in inventory and receivables is likely to increase in such a scenario

11 of the 27 vulnerable companies have a debt to equity ratio of more than 1



27 companies won't be able to sustain current wage bill from cash profits, if their revenue dips by 30 per cent or more

Source: Deloitte/PTI

Fed sticks to zero rate pledge, vows to utilise tools to help economy

REUTERS
WASHINGTON, APRIL 29

US FEDERAL Reserve policymakers on Wednesday left interest rates near zero and repeated a vow to do what it takes to shore up the economy, saying the ongoing coronavirus pandemic will "weigh heavily" on the near-term outlook and poses "considerable risks" for the medium term.

The Federal Reserve is committed to using its full range of tools to support the US economy in this challenging time, thereby promoting its maximum employment and price stability goals, "the US central bank said in a statement at the end of a two-day policy meeting held via videoconference because of the coronavirus pandemic.

During two emergency meetings in March, the central bank cut its benchmark rate to a range between zero and 0.25 per cent.

Fed said it expects to maintain the target range for its benchmark overnight lending rate "until it is confident that the economy has weathered recent events and is on track to achieve its maximum employment and price stability goals."

With so much uncertainty around the economic outlook, the



US Fed Chair Jerome Powell. file

Sidbi launches liquidity window for MSMEs, SFBs, NBFCs and MFIs

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, APRIL 29

SMALL INDUSTRIES Development Bank of India (Sidbi) has launched a special liquidity scheme for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), small finance banks (SFBs), non-banking financial companies and microfinance institutions (MFIs) through banks.

The scheme would provide financial support to banks, NBFCs and MFIs by way of term loans to ensure operational continuity and promote onward lending to MSMEs. The tenor of these loans will be 90 days.

Mohammad Mustafa, Chairman and Managing Director of Sidbi said, "We were provided a special liquidity window of Rs 15,000 crore by the RBI... The funds will be channelised to MSMEs through eligible banks, NBFCs and MFIs."

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15

THE INDIAN EXPRESS, THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 2020
TALK ART, MUSIC, STYLE, FOOD



IRRAN 1967-2020

'Gone too Soon'

Film industry and fans come together to mourn
 Irrfan, Indian cinema's finest actor

ALAKA SAHANI

HIS NUANCED acting, his eyes that spoke and a dialogue delivery that was so uniquely his, won him much love and admirers during his versatile career, but on Wednesday, actor Irrfan left the world quietly. As everyone came together online to mourn, few could attend his burial at the Versova cemetery due to restrictions imposed in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak. While media persons stood beyond the barricades outside, present for his last rites were his wife Sutapa Sikdar, sons Babil and Ayan, and 15-20 relatives and friends, including filmmakers Tigmanshu Dhulia, Vishal Bhardwaj, Abhinav Deo and singer Mika Singh.

The 54-year-old was admitted to Mumbai's Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital on Tuesday for a colon infection. An official statement on his passing away said: "Irrfan was a strong soul, someone who fought till the very end and always inspired everyone who came close to him. After having been struck by lightning in 2018 with the news of a rare cancer, he took life soon after as it came and he fought the many battles that came with it."

Irrfan, who received the National Award for *Paan Singh Tomar* (2012) and Padma Shri in 2011, was diagnosed with neuroendocrine tumour in 2018, for which he underwent prolonged treatment in the UK. In between his

treatment, he played the role of a loving father in *Angrezi Medium* (2020), his last release.

After the news of his death became public, social media was flooded with posts by many of his colleagues in the film industry and his admirers. Filmmaker Vishal Bhardwaj, who has worked with him in *Maqbool* (2003), *7 Khoon Maaf* (2011) and *Haider* (2014), told *The Indian Express*: "I feared that the (Irrfan) will be gone much before his time but didn't expect that it will be so devastating and ravaging to me personally. It feels as if I am torn into two parts. A part of me has died with him."

Vidya Balan tweeted she couldn't stop crying because Irrfan's performances affected her in "a personal way". Calling him "an incredible talent and gracious colleague", his *Piku* (2015) co-actor Amitabh Bachchan said his passing away was the "most disturbing and sad news". Actor Shah Rukh Khan, who was the producer of Irrfan's *Billu* (2009), called him "my friend, inspiration and the greatest actor of our times".

Making an immense contribution to the world of cinema, Irrfan remains one of the most successful crossover artistes, with movies such as *The Lunchbox* (2013), *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008), *Life of Pi* (2012), *The Amazing Spiderman* (2012) and *Jurassic World* (2015). Many international personalities, including director Ava DuVernay, paid tribute to him. "Gone too soon. When he is on screen, you can't take your eyes off him. He lives on in his films," tweeted DuVernay.



Cinema's Chameleon

TANUJA CHANDRA

IRRAN THOUGHT long and hard before accepting my offer (for *Qarib Qarib Singde*, 2017). He was uncertain if he would be received well in a romantic role at this stage of his life because romance was more of a playing field for the young, he said. If people didn't approve, he wouldn't have anyone to share the flak with other than his own misplaced choice of subject.

Then one morning, while reading the lines of a scene, Irrfan found what he had been looking for. The scene had Yogi call his driver to fetch him after a dinner date. He carried packed food for him and it hit Irrfan, who often shared meals with his staff, that here was a man who cared for people. Yogi loved people, it didn't

Irrfan in a still from *Qarib Qarib Singde*

matter what they did for a living. This became the reason Irrfan agreed to do the movie.

In the editing room, I discovered something magical. I discovered that Irrfan's performance had a dynamic quality. It changed upon each viewing. The cinematic frames hadn't shifted,

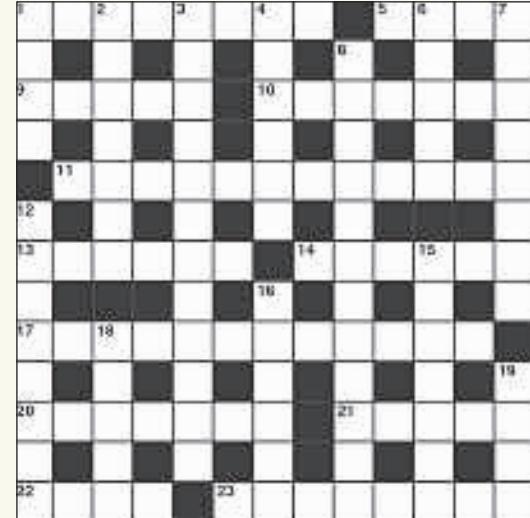
the lines hadn't been altered, the character, the locations, the costumes, they were all the same, and yet, a tiny movement, a fleeting look, the quietest gesture, one hadn't seen before would reveal itself.

This was the reason one never tires of seeing this actor on screen, this was the reason that even though his work often has tell-tale signs of classic Irrfan, each performance varies.

The loss of this magnificent actor is incomparable one for Indian cinema. He had crossed only some part of his journey of sublime acting. There was so much more for him to explore within himself, to discover. He would have had no dearth of remarkable scripts coming to him for the next couple decades. We can only imagine the kind of beauty he would've brought to our screens. It will be a longing left unfulfilled. But it's no small thing that all he leaves behind will be cherished for a long, long time.

Chandra is the director of Qarib Qarib Singde

CROSSWORD 4105



ACROSS

- 1 He may act well, but he paints badly (8)
- 5 A girl is after one, right (4)
- 9 Trace misdirected supply (5)
- 10 Rattle caused by a loose ratchet (7)
- 11 It won't keep you fully occupied (4,4,4)
- 13 Battle suit (6)
- 14 A dynamic proposition (6)
- 17 Sporting event that has its ups and downs (12)
- 20 Sped too much, and went over the limit (7)
- 21 Concerning a morning's papers (5)
- 22 Lockers A to G perhaps (4)
- 23 Call for a rising (8)

DOWN

- 1 Staple food (4)
- 2 Passage taken from a pamphlet (7)
- 3 Contenders for the high jump (12)
- 4 Pole position (6)
- 6 At heart an oration shows a sense of proportion (5)
- 7 Imposing corporal punishment (8)
- 8 Don't take legal action for nothing (4,2,6)
- 12 Every year one may await its return with added interest (8)
- 15 After this month there's everything to put in (7)
- 16 Occasion when spirits are called for (6)
- 18 Three points go to my opponent (5)
- 19 Offshore spot I stole away to (4)

Solutions Crossword 4104: Across: 1 Desertion, 8 Arena, 9 Mailbag, 10 Rig out, 11 Athens, 12 Flagging, 15 Sanskrit, 18 Emigre, 20 Averse, 21 Tamish, 22 Elite, 23 Tailorress. Down: 2 Exact, 3 Eileen, 4 Transfer, 5 Naming, 6 Deposit, 7 Castigate, 11 Apostates, 13 After all, 14 Inherit, 16 Kismet, 17 Dinner, 19 Rests.

JUMBLED WORDS

Below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given quiz.

—ideal, it is the work of the imagination.— Marquis de Sade (9))

LVAEI

ADIJNP

CORSS

EPARCH

SUDOKU 4195

Difficulty Level 3s
 Instructions
 To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Difficulty Level
 1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy;
 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard;
 5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius



SOLUTIONS SUDOKU 4194



LASTING MEMORIES

Among Irrfan's last social media posts is a photo he had tweeted of the cast and crew of his last film *Angrezi Medium* catching up over a Zoom call, which included actors Radhika Madan, Pankaj Tripathi and Deepak Dobriyal, among others.

THE BEST OF THE BEST

As an actor, Irrfan's range was unparalleled — he could play any character with conviction — allowing him to cross over forms, languages and later, even continents. Here are 10 of his most noteworthy performances:

THE WARRIOR

(2001): In Asif Kapadia's debut film, Irrfan plays Lafcadia, a Rajasthani feudal lord who lives by his sword and struggles to give it up.



LIFE OF PI (2012): As the adult Pi Patel, Irrfan does not have a meaty role in Ang Lee's adaptation of Yann Martel's novel. But he makes every scene he is in count — and Hollywood sat up and took notice.



THE LUNCHBOX (2013): As Saajan Fernandes, a lonely widower whose humdrum life changes when he receives the wrong lunchbox, Irrfan embodies a quiet grace that lights up the screen.

QISSA (2013): As Umber Singh, whose desire to have a son leads him to raise his youngest daughter as a boy, Irrfan is not only singularly terrifying but absolutely terrific.



PIKU (2015): As Rana, an unlikely foil to Deepika Padukone's outspoken Piku, Irrfan is content to let bigger stars do all the talking while he stays in the background, doing all the acting.

HINDI MEDIUM (2017): His biggest commercial success, the film is testimony to the fact that Irrfan could be Everyman in mainstream Bollywood fare as well.

ANUSHREE MAJUMDAR

was one of the quietest students in the class of 1987. His classmates, such as Bharti Sharma, founder of Kshitij Theater Society in Delhi, used to wonder, "Pata nahi yeh itna chup kyun raha hai?" He never missed any class but he also did not participate in discussions. It was only when he performed that we understood that Irrfan was a person who believed in listening rather than speaking. He had absorbed everything we were taught and was implementing it in his performance," she adds.

Dinesh Khanna, who was a year senior to Irrfan and his close friend, says the actor, who was shy in person, was always trying to push the envelope on stage. His best friend was a studious girl from his batch, Sutapa Sikdar, who would become his wife.

"There was a seriousness about him that's well known but he also had a sense of mischief which we see in his roles," says actor Mita Vashisht.

The Quietest Boy in Class

Irrfan's friends from NSD remember the actor

DIPANITANATH

IN THE corridor that students of the National School of Drama (NSD) take to reach the main auditorium, Abhimanch, a row of photographs used to hang, until a year or so ago, of past graduates. Whether these were meant to celebrate achievements of pass-outs or goad the current crop towards future excellence was never clear but the displays did offer a glimpse of a number of stalwart performers in their early days. In this gallery was a rare black-and-white shot of Irrfan on stage. The actor had cut his teeth in acting in the halls of this famous Delhi institute.

Alankit boy with a head of curly hair, Irrfan



Irrfan from his NSD days NSD Archives

DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

For the second day running your emotional alignments are strong, something which you never find easy mainly because feelings can be such messy things. It's all a question of relaxing into it, accepting whatever happens. Go with the flow, as they say.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

Your natural instinct for self-preservation is boosted by two very helpful aspects to Venus, the planet which represents your emotional needs and desires. Your intellect and instincts should be functioning as one, so your judgment could be impeccable hopefully.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

You must get your priorities right. First among these is the need to co-operate with other people, whether at work or at home. It therefore follows that you should be as charming as possible. You must be a good listener for that's one of the best ways to see to it that others do take you seriously.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

Not everything works out as expected, but then what would life be like if everything went according to plan? Pretty boring, probably. Bear this reassuring and simple truth in mind over the coming days as partners, loved ones and colleagues start to play up.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

This is a time for realism. You should accept that errors have occurred and that you'll soon be in a position to work out who was responsible and why. There is no need to apportion blame, only to prevent the same errors being repeated. In fact, if you learn from your mistakes you will deserve praise.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

You ought to be able to ensure that partners are never again in a position to force your hand. However, whether such an aim is realistic is another matter. Probably the best you can do is state your case and attempt to win them over to your way of thinking.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

You still have all your wits about you, that goodness. In fact you may be able to see where other people are completely confused. The only thing bothering you may be a long-distance affair, or even a family connection which is stretching the limits of your affections.

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBES by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



'Difficult' to host Olympics if pandemic not contained: Abe

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

TOKYO, APRIL 29

JAPANESE PRIME Minister Shinzo Abe said on Wednesday that the Tokyo Olympics could not take place next year unless the coronavirus pandemic is contained, as the city's governor called for an extension of the nationwide state of emergency. The International Olympic Committee and the Japanese government last month postponed the Games until July 2021 because of the coronavirus crisis. With the epidemic's worldwide infection rate climbing and experts suggesting a vaccine is a long way off, doubts have been raised about the chances of holding the huge event next year.

"We've been saying the Olympic and Paralympic Games must be held in a complete form, in that athletes and spectators can all participate safely. It would be impossible to hold the Games in such a complete form unless the coronavirus pandemic is contained," Abe said in response to an opposition lawmaker.

Abe's summary of the situation was later underlined by IOC President Thomas Bach.

"The IOC fully agrees with the position of Prime Minister Abe," Bach said in response to a question from Reuters. "From the very beginning of this crisis, we established the principle that the Olympic and Paralympic Games can only be organised in a safe environment for everyone involved. This principle has driven all our decisions so far, and we remain committed to it in the future." Abe has staked part of his legacy as Japan's longest-serving premier on holding the Games and was hoping for a boom in tourism and consumer spending. Japan has gathered some \$3 billion in domestic sponsorship, an Olympic record, and spent close to \$13 billion on preparations.

The prime minister said on Wednesday that the Olympics "must be held in a way that shows the world has won its battle against the coronavirus pandemic," and cautioned that Japan should "brace for a protracted battle."

Tokyo confirmed 47 new infections on Wednesday. The national tally stands at 13,895 infections, including 413 deaths, national broadcaster NHK said.

Abe's comments echoed statements made by other senior Japanese officials this week. Tokyo 2020 president Yoshiro Mori told Nikkan Sports on Tuesday that the Games would be "scrapped" if they could not take place in 2021.

The head of the Japan Medical Association (JMA), Yoshitake Yokokura, told a news briefing on Tuesdays that "unless an effective vaccine is developed, I expect hosting the Olympics will be difficult."



We've been saying the Olympic and Paralympic Games must be held in a complete form, in that athletes and spectators can all participate safely. It would be impossible to hold the Games in such a complete form unless the coronavirus pandemic is contained."

SHINZO ABE, JAPAN PRIME MINISTER

DR ANTHONY FAUCI

'Don't have to act on impulse... we are not ready to have all sports back'

JAMES WAGNER & KEN BELSON

APRIL 29

DR. ANTHONY S. Fauci, the leading public health expert on President Trump's coronavirus task force, said this week that it might be very difficult for major sports in the United States to return to action this year. "Safety, for the players and for the fans, trumps everything," he said. "If you can't guarantee safety, then unfortunately you're going to have to bite the bullet and say, 'We may have to go without this sport for this season.'"

Dr. Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases since 1984, is an avid runner who grew up playing basketball and baseball, is a fan of the Washington Nationals and the New York Yankees. He says he will feel comfortable returning to a stadium when the level of infection is far lower than it is now. Excerpts:

Wagner and Belson: When and how can sports return?

What we need to do is get it, as a country and as individual locations, under control. That sometimes takes longer than you would like, and if we let our desire to prematurely get back

MIHIR VASAVDA

NEW DELHI, APRIL 29

LEGAL EXPERTS and market-watchers, assessing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on sports, feel that the cancellation of this year's Indian Premier League might be the best-case scenario for all stakeholders.

Advising against delaying or shortening of the season, they say that by considering 2020 as a 'zero year', the broadcaster, Star, and BCCI will be able to deal with the present economic uncertainty better and also benefit in the long run.

"Since the pandemic will result in a change of timelines or loss of a season, broadcasters will need to review their contracts with event organisers. They may consider extending the term of their contract to include an extra season where a season has been cancelled," a paper produced by lawyer Nandan Kamath's firm LawNK says.

However, BCCI hasn't yet given up on the IPL idea. Earlier this month, BCCI secretary Jay Shah had said: "The BCCI will continue to monitor and review the situation regarding a potential start date in close partnership with all of its stakeholders and will continue to take guidance from the Government of India, state governments and other state regulatory bodies."

On the impact of the pandemic on the Star-BCCI deal, a top BCCI official said: "We will keep consulting the government and, based on their inputs, it will be decided if the IPL can take place or not. As for the Star deal, it's too early to talk about it."

However, with most mega sporting events around the world - Olympics, Grand Slam tennis, European football championship - getting cancelled or postponed by a year, the chances of IPL Season 13 taking place seem bleak.

This, according to lawyer Anish Dayal, who specialises in sports law and IPL contracts, is "a clear situation of force majeure". Explaining the legal term, he says, "Force majeure allows the suspension of obligations and this will help both, the BCCI and franchises, to mutually discuss mitigation of the loss that arises."

However, the tricky problem for the BCCI will be the implementation of the 'force majeure' clause in the broadcasting deal with Star that has promised to pay the Indian board ₹16,347.50 crore over five years till 2022.

As part of their 2020 obligation, Star has already paid the BCCI approximately ₹1,500 crore as an advance for this season's IPL. Those in the know say that in the case of cancellation, and the enforcement of 'force majeure', BCCI is expected to return a part of or the full advance payment.



The decision won't be so straightforward as a host of other commercial aspects will be decided on whether the season is cancelled or truncated as well as possible visa restrictions, which could have an impact on viewership and sponsor interest. BCCI file

As part of their 2020 obligation, Star has already paid the BCCI approximately ₹1,500 crore as an advance for this season's IPL. Those in the know say that in the case of cancellation, and the enforcement of 'force majeure', BCCI is expected to return a part of or the full advance payment.

Star to re-negotiate deals with advertisers who have already booked IPL slots keeping in mind the original April-May slot. An IPL later in the year could see them changing their minds. A product launch or promotion of seasonal goods can't be expected to be showcased on-air if the IPL's schedule changes.

"In such scenarios, they may be forced to renegotiate on existing bookings, rates and packages," Kamath, who has previously advised the BCCI and other stakeholders on various issues, says.

Another predicament that Star could face is the drop in advertising spending in the coming months because of the COVID-19 forced economic slump. There are those who feel that even BCCI might face the same problem. "In case they somehow do hold Season 13 in September-October this year, as it has been proposed, within months they will have to hold Season 14 in April, 2021. These back-to-back IPLs will dry up the advertisers. A market dealing with a slowdown will not be conducive for another IPL," Dayal says.

"It depends on how the contract is worded. If it is a yearly restriction, they will have to negotiate another year. However, if it is season-wise, then the contract will continue till the particular number of seasons are played," Kamath says.

The idea of contract extension hasn't found takers in the BCCI. "That might not be possible. We will go for a fresh tender once the Star deal ends in 2022," an official said.

However, if the tournament is held in October - an option the BCCI is exploring - it could result in Star losing out on advertising revenue due to a combination of factors, including the gloomy economic outlook, while still having to pay the entire rights fees.

A truncated and postponed IPL will force

How suspension of obligations through force majeure can mitigate losses

What is force majeure?

It's an event beyond the control of a party; something that could not be foreseen at the time of entering into an agreement - in the present circumstances, the COVID-19 pandemic.

Is the pandemic a force majeure event?

To trigger the clause, the BCCI will have to prove that it wasn't just inconvenient, but impossible, for them to hold the tournament because of events beyond their control. According to lawyer Anish Dayal, who specialises in sports law and has advised on IPL contracts, the present situation - the COVID-19 pandemic and the government imposed lockdown - is clearly an event of force majeure".

What happens if force majeure is invoked?

It will give IPL stakeholders - BCCI, broadcasters, franchises, players, and advertisers - temporary reprieve as they would no longer be tied down by their contractual obligations. This can possibly help the parties arrive at a negotiated settlement by coming to the table with a clean slate, not burdened by strict clauses. "Force majeure allows the suspension of obligations and this will help both, the BCCI and franchises, to mutually discuss mitigation of the loss arising," Dayal says.

What happens to the BCCI-Star deal?

The fate of this deal has worried all IPL stakeholders the most. As is the case with all sporting leagues, it is the media rights revenue that keeps cricket's biggest brand running. In 2017, Star India bought the broadcasting rights of the tournament and promised to pay BCCI ₹16,347.50 crore over five years. Earlier this year,

as part of the deal, the broadcasting behemoth already paid BCCI close to ₹1,500 crore - half of this season's installment.

On the face of it, in case the "force majeure" clause comes into play and IPL gets cancelled, the BCCI will have to refund the advance payment to Star. However, it is open to interpretation. Chances are the BCCI might just return a part of the advance bringing in the image rights clause. Those in the know also say that there is also a possibility that the amount could be carried over to next year and considered as an advance for next season.

Will Star get an extra year in case this season is cancelled?

That's the best-case scenario for Star in the present circumstances. Experts say that in case the tournament does not take place this year, Season 13 can be considered a 'zero year'. An extra year would mean Star getting another season to recover its losses.

Will the franchises have to pay the players if the season is cancelled?

The franchise-player contract has two main payment conditions: the player needs to pass a fitness test and has to get a bonafide no-object certificate from national boards. According to those in the know, the contract does not contemplate cancellation of a season.

In a normal season, a franchise has to pay 60 per cent of a player's fee by April 30. So far, none of the players have been paid for the season. However, if the season is cancelled because of the pandemic, the franchises will probably not have to pay the players. "The cancellation of

the IPL by the BCCI is likely to be treated as force majeure in the context of player contracts. Unless the BCCI decides otherwise, payment obligations to players will stand suspended," says noted lawyer Nandan Kamath.

What happens if the season is postponed and truncated?

According to Vidushpat Singhania, managing partner of Krida Legal, if the IPL is postponed "the player can still perform his duty, which means the franchises will have to pay the player his full fees".

In case of a truncated season, it will depend on whether there is a clause relating to variable pay. However, it is likely that there will be a pay cut across the board - from player salaries to broadcast payments - in case the IPL season is shortened and/or held behind closed doors.

As per a paper produced by Kamath's firm LawNK, broadcasters might also face re-negotiation and refund requests from their advertisers, who have already booked spots. This means that the advertisement sales for a specific period (for example, a mobile phone launch or summer-specific products) may no longer be relevant if the tournament is held in, say, October. "In such scenarios, they may be forced to renegotiate on existing bookings, rates and packages," Kamath says. Another predicament Star could face is the drop in advertising spending in the coming months.

According to reports, before the crisis hit, the broadcaster was selling a 10-second advertisement slot for ₹13-14 lakhs. The slowdown could impact these estimates in case the tournament is held this year.

MIHIR VASAVDA



Anthony Fauci, the leading public health expert on US President Donald Trump's coronavirus task force, said that return of sports must happen gradually. Reuters

that physical distance because the virus doesn't travel that much farther than that. If you can do that, it isn't completely free of risk, but you diminish the risk substantially. The density of the infection in the community will dictate the degree to which you can loosen up. I've said that many times that the virus decides how quickly you're going to get back to normal.

All sports aren't created equal. Golf might be more suited to maintaining distance, but it would be harder in basketball or hockey. What can be done?

You've got to be really creative. That's going to be more difficult and more problematic. But you know, there have been some suggestions that if you want to have a situation where play-

ers are going to have to come into contact, like basketball, there are certain things you can do. It may not work. I'm not saying this is the way to go, but you want to at least consider having players, if they're going to play, play in front of a TV camera without people in the audience. And then test all the players and make sure they're negative and keep them in a place where they don't have contact with anybody on the outside who you don't know whether they're positive or negative.

That's going to be logically difficult, but there's at least the possibility of doing that. In other words, we said that for baseball, get the players in Major League Baseball, get a couple of cities and a couple of hotels, get them tested and keep them segregated. I know it's going to be difficult for them not to be out in society, but that may be the price you pay if you want to play ball.

Is it even fair to think about sports leagues and teams getting broad access to testing if the general public or other industries aren't getting the same?

I hope when we get to that point, when we're going to try and get the sports figures tested, then we will have enough tests so that anybody who needs a test can get a test.

Sports are an unusual business because athletes are in close quarters for many months. What kind of runway do leagues need to start up again?

That's the reason I stress the idea of testing everybody and having available for them tests from which you can get a result immediately.. I don't want to make this conversation sound like it's going to be an easy thing. We may not be able to pull this off. We're going to have to see: Is it doable? Do we have the capability of doing it safely? Because safety, for the players and for the fans, trumps everything. If you can't guarantee safety, then unfortunately you're going to have to bite the bullet and say, "We may have to go without this sport for this season."

Some people are clamouring for sports to resume, including Mr. Trump. Do you think that is the correct impulse?

There's a difference between an impulse and what you're going to do. You don't have to act on every impulse. I would love to be able to have all sports back. But as a health official and a physician and a scientist, I have to say, right now, when you look at the country, we're not ready for that yet. We might be ready, depending upon what the sport is. But right now, we're not. NYT