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Market cess waived for farmers, traders

CHENNAI
Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami announced a waiver of market cess and various other charges payable by farmers and traders till April 30. The decision was taken to increase the movement of essential goods, such as foodgrains and vegetables, and to ensure smooth supply to the public during the lockdown.

TAMIL NADU ▶ PAGE 2

Case booked against six Thailand nationals

ERODE
The Erode South police have registered a case against six Thailand nationals for violating visa norms that led to the spread of COVID-19 in the city. The foreigners are now in the isolation ward of the Government Erode Medical College and Hospital at Perundurai. Several persons

Govt. mulls lockdown extension amid requests from the States

Many States have appealed for its continuation in the face of rise in COVID cases

**NISTULA HEBBAR
VIJAYA SINGH
NEW DELHI**

The Union government on Tuesday indicated that it was actively considering an extension of the 21-day nationwide lockdown that began on March 25 and is due to end on April 14, as many States have openly appealed for its continuation as the number of COVID-19 cases continue to rise.

While Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhara Rao had requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi to extend the lockdown on Monday, Chief Minister Shivraj

COVID-19

Singh Chouhan of Madhya Pradesh on Tuesday echoed the plea.

Rajasthan Chief Minister

Lives of people are more important. We can tolerate lockdown. We can resurrect the economy later on but can't bring back lives of people
SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN
Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister

I am for the lockdown of the country furthermore after April 15. We can recover from economic problem but we cannot recover the lives of the people
K. CHANDRASHEKHAR RAO, Telangana Chief Minister

We cannot withdraw the lockdown immediately. It has to be done in a phased manner, that is what I feel
ASHOK GEHLOT
Rajasthan CM

I feel that people have got used to the lockdown. We should take advantage of that and deal conservatively with the question of lifting the lockdown
T.S. SINGH DEO
Chhattisgarh Health Minister

Reuse masks, AIIMS staff told

The AIIMS medical staff have been asked to reuse protective equipment. A circular said they will be provided with only five N-95 masks each for 20 days. The

Kerala panel for phased reversal

The time is not yet ripe for the "full withdrawal of the lockdown" and it should be gradual and phased to ensure that the case load is always kept below the capa-

'Beware of cyberattacks'

The International Criminal Police Organization has warned member countries that cybercriminals were attempting to target hospitals and institutions on

India lifts ban on export of hydroxychloroquine

Move comes hours after Trump warned of 'retaliation'

**SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI**

India on Tuesday announced that it had rescinded its earlier ban on the export of malaria drug hydroxychloroquine (HCQ), which is now being used in countries such as the U.S. as a possible line of treatment for COVID-19.

"In view of the humanitarian aspects of the pandemic, it has been decided that India would licence paracetamol and HCQ in appropriate quantities to all our neighbouring countries who are dependent on our capabilities. We will also be supplying these essential drugs to some nations that have been particularly badly affected by the pandemic," Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said.

In a notification on March 25, the government placed

In focus

• An anti-malarial drug, hydroxychloroquine is an interferon blocker, and works by diminishing the immune system's response to a viral infection. A hyperactive response by the immune system is said to be primarily responsible for pneumonia, also a fallout of a severe COVID-19 infection

• A study in France showed that hydroxychloroquine alone or in combination with azithromycin appeared to reduce virus levels quicker prompting drug regulators in several countries including in India to approve the drug in restricted settings

• However, several scientists fault the design of these trials

• These dosages are also linked to instances of cardiac arrhythmia and liver damage. Wide usage may actually handicap people's ability to fight the infection

• Indian drug manufacturers say they have sufficient stockpiles and enough to export. But there are reports of stock running out and rheumatoid arthritis patients finding them unavailable in stores



Interpol is the world's largest international police organization, with 184 member countries. Established in 1923, it enables cross-border police cooperation, and supports and assists all organisations, authorities and services whose mission is to prevent or combat international crime. Interpol has objectives to facilitate international police co-operation even where diplomatic relations are not present between certain countries. Action is taken within the limits of existing laws in different countries and in the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Interpol's constitution prohibits 'any intervention or activities of a political, military, religious or racial character.'

Cess is a form of tax charged/levied over and above the base tax liability of a taxpayer. A cess is usually imposed additionally when the state or the central government looks to raise funds for specific purposes. For example, the government levies an education cess to generate additional revenue for funding primary, secondary, and higher education. Cess is not a permanent source of revenue for the government, and it is discontinued when the purpose levying it is fulfilled. It can be levied on both indirect and direct taxes.

The government can impose cess for purposes such as disaster relief, generating funds for cleaning rivers, etc. For example, after Kerala floods in the year 2018, the state government imposed a 1% calamity cess on GST and became the first state to do it. In other instances, the central government may levy an education cess, or a health cess, or a sanitation cess. All these levies are usually imposed as a percentage of the taxpayer's basic tax liability. Under the GST (Goods and Services Tax) regime, certain sin goods and luxury items also attract a cess.

line recommendation CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Kerala-Karnataka border row sorted out, Centre informs SC

'Agreement has been reached on protocol to allow patients'

**LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI**
The Supreme Court on Tuesday disposed of a bunch of petitions concerning the Kerala-Karnataka border sealing case after the Union government informed that a consensus had been worked out to allow patients requiring urgent medical treatment to cross the Talapadi border and access hospitals in Mangaluru.

Appearing before a Bench led by Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said a meeting was held among the Union Home Secretary and the Chief Secretaries of the

States to amicably resolve the crisis. An agreement had been reached on the parameters and protocol for allowing patients into Karnataka.

On April 3, the court ordered the Centre, Kerala and Karnataka to confer immediately and "formulate parameters for passage of patients for urgent medical treatment at the border at Talapadi". The court then listed the case on April 7.

The April 3 order was based on petitions highlighting how Karnataka had enforced a blockade which, the court was informed, had resulted in deaths as ambulances bound for Mangaluru

were not being permitted to cross the border. The petitions asked the court to intervene to facilitate free movement of vehicles carrying persons who need urgent medical treatment across the border.

Karnataka argued that the blockade was put in place in the interest of public health. The situation regarding coronavirus was "really dire". Kerala was the "worst-affected" State in the country, with nearly 194 coronavirus cases. In this, Kasaragod, adjoining Karnataka, was the "most-affected" district of Kerala with over 100 positive cases, it said.

T.N. to pool ₹1 crore each from MLACDS funds

Money to be spent to fight COVID-19

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI**

A day after the Centre promulgated an ordinance suspending MPLADS for two years, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Tuesday said he had ordered pooling of ₹1 crore each from the MLA Constituency Development Scheme (MLACDS) funds of all legislators towards precautionary and relief measures being taken against COVID-19.

In a statement, Mr. Palaniswami said ₹1 crore from each MLACDS fund would be used to meet the expenses incurred in the fight against COVID-19.

The Chief Minister's state-

ment came shortly after DMK president and Leader of the Opposition M.K. Stalin tweeted, alleging that funds allotted by DMK MLA V. Senthil Balaji were being turned down by the district administration.

The Chief Minister clarified that the funds were to be integrated at the district and State levels and spent on the fight against COVID-19.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, a DMK MLA said: "When the entire State is facing the threat of novel coronavirus, how can the government take away the already paltry funds allotted to us?"

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 2

One more death, 69 new COVID-19 cases in T.N.

Deceased had contact history, came from a high-risk area

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI**

For the fourth consecutive day, Tamil Nadu reported a death due to COVID-19. A 64-year-old woman, who had no travel history but came from one of the "high-risk areas", died at Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital on Tuesday even as the State's tally of cases surged to 690 with 69 additions.

"The patient from Chennai was in the hospital for 1.5 hours. The woman had comorbid conditions of diabetes and hypertension. She did not have a travel history but had a contact history. She was from one of the



A woman prays in front of a church at Virugambakkam.
• R. KAVINDRAN

high-risk areas and we are in the process of identifying her contact," Health Secretary Beela Rajesh told reporters. With this, a total of seven persons, who had tested

positive for COVID-19, have died in the State.

"We are doing a continuous audit of every death. We have a 10-member expert committee comprising doctors from the government and private sectors. We held a meeting today and they have revised the guidelines. We have increased the protocols for treatment and monitoring. We are analysing the deaths to prevent further deaths," Dr. Rajesh said. As on Tuesday, 19 persons had been discharged from hospitals after treatment, she added.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 2

FROM PAGE ONE

One more death, 69 new COVID-19 cases in T.N.

COVID-19 in T.N. | A tracker, across parameters, on how the pandemic has impacted the State so far

	Until March 31	April 1	April 2	April 3	April 4	April 5	April 6	April 7	Total
Cases reported	124	110	75	102	74	86	50	69	690
Recovered and discharged	106	0	1	0	1	0	0	11	119
Deceased	1	0	0	0	2	2	1	1	7

Monitoring*	Capacity*	Testing*
Persons screened at airports	Beds in isolation wards	Samples collected
2,10,200	22,049	5,305
Persons under home quarantine#	Mechanized ventilators	Tested positive
66,430	3,371	690
Persons in isolation wards in hospitals		Tested negative
1,864		4,414
Persons in quarantine facilities		Under process
253		201

*Status as on date; #Includes only Health and Family Welfare Department figures. People under home quarantine as per Bureau of Immigration advisory not included

Of the 69 new cases, 63 were linked to the "single source event" (the Delhi conference). This included those who attended the event and their contacts. Of the remaining six persons, the source of infection had been identified for three of a family from Thoothukudi. One person had inter-State travel history, another had contact with an international traveller and for one more person, tracking was under way, she added.

Six persons - four women and two males - from Thoothukudi, five persons - two men and three women - from Madurai, three persons - two men and a woman - from Thanjavur, 13 men

from Tiruppur, one person from Coimbatore, 39 persons - 22 women and 17 men - from Chennai and two persons from Ranipet have tested positive.

A total of 1,630 samples from persons who attended the "single source event" and their contacts were sent for testing. Of this, 636 had tested positive, 961 negative and 33 were under process, she said, adding that more persons were coming in.

Overall, a total of 5,305 samples were tested till date in the State, of which 201 were under process. A total of 1,864 persons were admitted to isolation wards in hospitals across the State. Chennai witnessed another

surge in the number of cases. With 39 more persons testing positive on Tuesday, the city's tally of positive cases increased to 149. Coimbatore was second with 60 cases, followed by Dindigul with 45. Tirunelveli had 38 cases and Erode had 32.

Containment activities were expanded to 34 districts, covering 15 lakh households and a population of 53 lakh persons. A total of 30,369 field workers were involved.

Testing facilities
In addition to the 17 existing testing facilities, T.N. got two more laboratories - IRT, Perundurai and a private laboratory, the Health Secretary

said. "The State had the most number of testing centres and testing kits, she said.

On the video conference, she said a video conference was held with micro-ecologists and lab technicians in districts. "We are working out a micro plan. We have also involved Anna University and are doing GIS mapping up to the level of house, street and number of buildings," she said.

As on date, a total of 66,430 persons were under home quarantine in the State, and another 253 in government quarantine facilities. A total of 27,416 persons had completed the 28-day home quarantine.

T.N. to pool MLACDS funds to combat pandemic

The government should have instead said that a majority of the funds should be spent on COVID-19-related expenses within our respective constituencies, he said.

The legislator recalled an incident last week, when his request to use his MLACDS

funds for disinfectants and personal protective equipment for conservancy workers in his constituency was turned down by the district collector. "Instead of issuing an announcement making it mandatory to use the funds for COVID-19, this announce-

ment by the CM shows how his plan is flawed and how this government is blindly following the PM without a clear plan," the MLA said.

Every MLA is allotted ₹3 crore under MLACDS. According to the guidelines issued in June last year for the

scheme, the funds are to be spent on tied and untied components. Funds to the tune of ₹1.5 crore in the tied components basket are to be spent on infrastructure, anganwadis, kitchens in schools and drinking water supply, among others.

Truck repair shops can't function, says government

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI
The Tamil Nadu government on Tuesday issued an order exempting shops on highways involved in repairing trucks, preferably at fuel pumps, from the lockdown aimed at curbing the spread of the coronavirus disease.

The decision is expected to remove glitches in the movement of trucks carrying essential supplies and the transport of fuel to various parts of the State.

In a Government Order, Chief Secretary K. Shanmugam said shops dealing in agricultural machinery, their spare parts (including the supply chain) and repairs can remain open as well.

The Government Order also allowed the tea industry, including plantations with a maximum of 50% of their workers, to function.

The heads of establishments must ensure physical distancing and proper hygiene.

Cracking the Delhi puzzle

It took time and effort; CM's appeal for voluntary disclosure helped

STAFF REPORTER ERODE/SALEM
Cases were registered against six Thai and 11 Indonesian nationals in Erode and Salem, respectively, on Tuesday.

The Erode South police registered a case against six Thai nationals for violating visa norms and having been involved in religious preaching that had even-

come to Tamil Nadu after the conference. Some of them had visited the local mosques, and they were said to have arrived a little earlier than the others. In terms of numbers, this is the smallest

group among the Tablighi Jamaat in Tamil Nadu.

The second category comprises a set of people from Tamil Nadu who had gone to Malaysia and Indonesia to attend conferences there, but had returned after those events were called off or cut short. This is a small group, but has more members than

the first category of people.

Sources say the third category comprises people from other States who had attended the conference at Nizamuddin Markaz, but had landed in Tamil Nadu and are currently here. This group is roughly the size of the first two groups put together, it is learnt.

The final and the largest category of people is a set of Tamilians who had visited Delhi and returned. They had reportedly attended the last few days of the seminar, and possibly landed in Tamil Nadu between March 21 and 23. Since this was close to the 'Janata Curfew' and the subsequent lockdown, it is be-

lieved that they may not have had too much time to mingle. Their samples are being tested, and contact tracing of their family and travel mates is on, according to officials.

The Chief Minister's appeal to people who had attended the Nizamuddin conference to reveal details about themselves seems to have had the desired effect, and many who may have been omitted from a count have now been included. This list has turned out to be distinct from what the special task force had prepared, officials say.

But for this fortunate turn of events, the entire list may have still been in the making.

Cases filed against 6 Thai nationals in Erode, 11 Indonesian citizens in Salem

usually led to the spread of COVID-19 in the city. The accused foreigners are now in the isolation ward of the Government Erode Medical College and Hospital at Perundurai.

Seven persons from Thailand had arrived in the city in the second week of March and had been involved in preaching activities. They had visited two

dargahs and a few houses in the city. Later, one of them developed fever and was admitted to the Coimbatore Medical College and Hospital, but tested negative for COVID-19. However, he later died due to complications of diabetic nephropathy and septicaemia.

The other six were admitted to the ward. Three of them tested positive, while

the other three tested negative. Some of those who had been in direct contact with them also tested positive, leading to the home quarantining of over 30,000 persons in the city. As many as 32 persons have tested positive in the district so far.

'Knowingly spread virus'
In her complaint, Erode Tahsildar Parimaladevi said

the six had arrived in the city on a tourist visa, but had violated their visa norms. Despite knowing that they were infected by the virus, they spread it to others, she added.

The police registered a case under Sections 269 (negligent act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life), 270 (malignant act likely to spread

Traders, ryots don't have to pay charges till Apr. 30

CM announces waiver of market cess, various other levies

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Tuesday announced a waiver of the market cess and various other charges payable by farmers and traders till April 30. The decision was taken to increase the movement of essential foodgrains, vegetables and fruits and to ensure the smooth supply of such commodities to the public during the ongoing COVID-19 lockdown.

In a statement, Mr. Palaniswami announced that the 1% market cess levied on traders who win bids for agricultural produce from farmers in as many as 272 markets across the State will be waived.

The senior government official explained that the waiver of the cess was aimed at encouraging more people to take part in the bidding process. The official added that even if the lockdown is lifted after April 14, the concessions would remain in place till April 30.

Cold storage facilities

Mr. Palaniswami also announced a waiver of the charges collected from farmers for storing their agricultural produce in cold storage facilities in various districts. Since many farmers were not getting a good price for their produce, they could avail themselves of these facilities for free, he said.

The Chief Minister said farmer producer organisa-

Help at hand

The State government has set up agricultural helplines for various districts

District	Helpline
Kancheepuram and Chengalpattu	9843938301
Tiruvallur	7708541376
Vellore, Ranipet and Tirupattur	9442580451
Tiruvannamalai	936110552
Cuddalore	9486420540
Villupuram and Kallakurichi	9443787717
Salem	9443363660
Namakkal	9080386024
Dharmapuri	9865815763
Krishnagiri	9444710229
Coimbatore	9003660358
The Nilgiris	9994934804
Erode and Tiruppur	9435460994
Tiruchi, Perambalur and Ariyalur	7010330487
Karur	7305630487
Thanjavur, Nagapattinam and Tiruvavur	9944669922
Pudukkottai	9443008455
Ramanathapuram	9677367772
Sivaganga	9994621079
Madurai	9443004662
Theni	9442009901
Dindigul	9786785180
Virudhunagar	7598286370
Tirunelveli and Tenkasi	9842789906
Thoothukudi	9487523498
Kanniyakumari	9443432430

Even if the lockdown is lifted after April 14, the concessions will remain in place till April 30, officials said

tions (FPOs) will be granted loans of up to ₹10 lakh so that they could get some working capital. An additional 500 mo-

bile units for selling vegetables and fruits will be introduced in urban areas, he added.

Farmers could call the State-wide helplines 044-22253884, 22253885, 22253496 and 9500091904 between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. for any assistance relating to agriculture and horticulture.

3 doctors have tested positive in Tamil Nadu

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

Three doctors have tested positive for the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Tamil Nadu so far, according to Health Secretary Beela Rajesh.

Addressing the media on Tuesday, she said all three, including a railway doctor, had come into contact with persons connected to the single source event (a conference at Nizamuddin in Delhi). While two of them were from Thoothukudi, the third was from Erode, she said later in the day.

Thailand link

According to the Health Department, the 29-year-old railway doctor had come into contact with a 63-year-old person, a co-traveller of two Thailand nationals who later tested positive, at the Erode Railway Station.

When asked if any of the staff deployed at airports had tested positive for COVID-19, she said two or three persons who worked at an airport had tested positive.

One of them hailed from Kanniyakumari, she said.

Centre has taken MPs' rights away by suspending MPLADS, says Stalin

Legislators from Opposition parties condemn move

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

By suspending the MPLADS for two years, the Centre has deprived the MPs of their rights and powers, DMK president M.K. Stalin said on Tuesday.

"The MPLADS fund is essential for implementing projects in various constituencies for the benefit of the people," he said. The cancellation of the fund will come in the way of fulfilling ordinary people's demands," he added.

Many MPs from Opposition parties in Tamil Nadu

have also criticised the Centre's move. VCK leader and Chidambaram MP Thol. Thirumavalavan said the decision contradicted a circular issued two weeks ago, allowing MPs to utilise the MPLADS funds to address COVID-19-related challenges in their respective constituencies. Madurai MP from the CPI(M) Su. Venkatesan accused the Union government of centralising power at a time when it should be decentralising it.

DMK Chennai South MP Thamizhachi Thangapandian said, "All of us are with

the government in this fight against COVID-19. We realise that this is not the time to criticise [the government]. However, there is sound reasoning for why this decision is wrong."

"When an all-party meeting has been scheduled for April 8, why announce this decision without consultation?" she asked.

Congress MP from Tiruchi Su. Thirunavukkarasar said the Centre's decision had turned MPs into mere couriers for forwarding the people's demands to those in power.

CM renews appeal for donations to fight COVID-19

Precautionary measures will be strengthened in the coming days, says Palaniswami

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

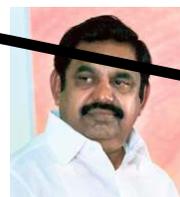
Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Tuesday reiterated his appeal for donations to the Chief Minister's Public Relief Fund (CMPRF) to aid the efforts to combat the spread of COVID-19.

"The precautionary measures will be strengthened in the coming days. The Tamil Nadu government needs the participation of industrialists, leading private companies, NGOs, donors and the people of Tamil Nadu to efficiently adopt these precautionary measures," Mr. Palaniswami said in a statement.

Not many have already pitched in, he said. "Children and students have come forward to donate whatever amount they can."

The CM had previously appealed for donations on March 27.

While the donations made from within the country would be 100% exempted for tax under Section 80G of the Income Tax Act, contributions from NRIs would be eligible for tax exemption under Section 50 of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010, an official press release said. Contributions could be made online using credit/



Edappadi K. Palaniswami

cmprf.html. For those who wish to use the ECS option, the details of the bank are as follows: Indian Overseas Bank, Secretary Branch, Chennai - 600 009. The savings account number is 117201000000070, the IFSC is IOBA00010172 and the CMPRF's PAN is AAAGC0038F.

Those who opt for ECS are requested to provide the following details: name, amount contributed, bank and branch, date of deposit, acknowledgement number, full postal address and e-mail ID.

NRIs wishing to donate could do so by using the SWIFT Code IO-

BAINB0001 for the Indian Overseas Bank, Central Office, Chennai.

Those who do not wish to use any of the above-mentioned options could send a demand draft to Deputy Secretary, Government and Treasurer, Chief Minister's Public Relief Fund, Finance Department, Tamil Nadu Government, Secretariat, Chennai 600009, Tamil Nadu, India.

Donors could e-mail the details of the transactions to dspaycell.fund@tn.gov.in

The CMPRF has received funds to the tune of ₹79.74 crore so far. In the last four days alone, it has received ₹17.44 crore.

Deadline for completion of registered real-estate projects deferred by 5 months

TNRERAs decision comes in the wake of COVID-19 outbreak

SANJAY VIJAYAKUMAR CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu Real Estate Regulatory Authority has extended by five months the deadline for the completion of registered projects, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequential force majeure.

"All registrations which were valid as of February 1 are extended automatically up to June 30. The validity of the registration will also be coterminous, with the revised completion date," the authority said in a circular.

The deadlines for all other statutory compliances in

accordance with the Act, due in March and June, have been extended up to September 2020.

"We had sought an extension for six months, and they have given five months. Most construction workers are being taken care of at the project sites. We hope to resume operations at the earliest," Sridharan, chairman, CREDAI Tamil Nadu, said.

Builder's responsibility
K. Vaitheeswaran, advocate and tax consultant, pointed out that the builder's res-

ponsibility towards the home buyer depends on the terms of the contract they had entered into.

"It is advisable for the real-estate developer to examine the contracts and explore the possibility of sending out a notice to customers, intimating them about the impossibility of performance due to a force majeure event. It is pertinent to mention that most contracts are structured in a manner that require such intimations to be sent in order to validly invoke the force majeure clause," he added.

Timings
CHENNAI

WEDNESDAY, APR. 08

RISE 06:01 SET 18:21
SUN 18:47 SET 06:11

THURSDAY, APR. 09

RISE 06:00 SET 18:21
SUN 19:48 SET 07:00

FRIDAY, APR. 10

RISE 06:00 SET 18:21
SUN 20:49 SET 07:50

Chennai Weather	max	min
Tiruvallur	38	26
Chennai Airport	34	27
Chennai City	36	28

Chennai Airport Today
34°C A warm and humid weather with a cloudy sky will prevail. Rain and thunder-shower is likely to occur.

Chennai Airport Tomorrow
34°C Mostly dry and warm weather is likely to continue with cloudy sky conditions.

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THE HINDU
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Man stages protest for liquor

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

Frustrated over the non-availability of alcohol, a 46-year-old man got into a well to stage a protest.

The incident took place in Pattabiram near Avadi on Monday night.

Manoharan, 46, a construction labourer, is a resident of Gandhi Nagar. He used to consume liquor daily. After the curfew was imposed, he was not able to get liquor.

On Monday night, he climbed down a 25-foot well near his house and stood in neck deep water. When his family members asked him to come out, he demanded a bottle of liquor. His wife alerted the police at the Pattabiram station. SI Amirthalingam and others held talks with him.

Fire and Rescue Services personnel joined them. After a while, the personnel entered the well and pulled him out by tying a rope to his waist.

'Survey safe if precautions are followed'

Surveyors should wear masks and maintain physical distance, say health experts

ALOTUS XAVIER LOPEZ
SERENA JOSEPHINE M.
CHENNAI

After a section of residents expressed apprehensions that the deployment of 16,000 workers of the Chennai Corporation to carry out a COVID-19 symptoms survey might actually cause the disease to spread, public health experts clarified that as long as physical distance was maintained, and masks used, there was no risk.

V. Ramasubramanian, consultant, Infectious Diseases, Apollo Hospitals, said that as long as anyone maintained a three-foot distance, the infection would not spread. "If this distance is maintained, there is absolutely no reason to worry. The surveyors should wear masks, even cloth masks are good enough. Then, there is no risk at all," he explained.

Of the 16,000 workers, more than 12,000 have been recruited for COVID-19 surveillance work in the last four days without any medical test, and this has residents wondering if the process is safe.

The Corporation, too, launched a drive on Tuesday to clear doubts regarding the visit by workers for the survey, and addressed the ap-



Safety first: Chennai Corporation staff taking nasal swab from a man in the city on Tuesday. *SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

prehension that the workers without personal protection equipment would cause infection. Commissioner G. Prakash led a team of workers to localities such as Tiruvottiyar and carried out the survey among residents.

"Once residents report symptoms, a team of doctors will visit their houses with adequate equipment to test for COVID-19. Every three

wards has a team of doctors," said Mr. Prakash.

'Screen affected areas' R.B. Saravanan, a resident of Kamarajapuram in Nungambakkam, asked if there was a real need to screen in unaffected areas by workers who had been recruited without any medical screening. "Let them screen in affected areas. We do not need such

workers visiting our house. Residents are worried. We want to remain safe. No worker has visited my house so far. If there is a need, we will request the Chennai Corporation to send properly trained persons for a survey," he said.

"The person who came to our apartment today for the survey had a mask but he was not wearing it. I told him to wear it because my neighbours are old people. But he maintained a distance. We had to repeat the names many times," said a resident of Purasawalkam.

A T. Nagar resident complained that of the two people who came for the survey, only one was wearing a mask and maintaining the requisite distance.

Egmore MLA K.S. Ravichandran said more than 50% of residents in the area had reported problems, of some sort, relating to the COVID-19 survey in the past few days. "The situation is improving. But many problems are yet to be resolved," he added, urging the Corporation to clarify all doubts first.

College students, who volunteered with the Greater Chennai Corporation to go door-to-door and collect data, in parts of Mylapore,

were seen wearing masks and scarves, but no gloves while approaching households. "We have been going around since morning without any breakfast. While most residents are cooperating and providing data, a few refuse to divulge details. Some ask why we are going around without wearing proper safety gear," said a student who collected data from residents of Balakrishna Street.

Clearly, proper use of masks is essential to this exercise. P. Kuganathan, former city health officer, said Corporation staff should wear masks when they take up door-to-door checks. "They can make inquiries with the residents without entering their homes. They are going to check if any residents have symptoms of fever, cough and breathlessness. They should ensure that they do not touch anyone or any furniture in the house," he said.

He added the staff should maintain physical distance with the residents. "During their visit, they should stand at least one metre (about 3 feet) away from the resident. They should insist on physical distancing while imparting awareness on COVID-19

Corpn. creates 'island pockets' of containment



Swift action: The Erukancherry High Road in Vyasarpadi was sealed after a person tested positive. *B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

The Chennai Corporation has created island COVID-19 containment pockets for 9.25 lakh residents, said Corporation Commissioner G. Prakash.

COVID-19

Speaking to mediapersons on Tuesday, Mr. Prakash said the 'island pockets' of containment would be tightened. He refused to reveal the names of areas to prevent panic. "People are cooperating. There is minimum movement in the sealed area. We have made arrangements, permitting traders to sell essential commodities on boundaries of the sealed areas. Over two lakh families will get essential commodities without

any difficulty," he said. "We held a meeting with traders' association on Tuesday. We have planned to give permission to 1,500-2,000 mobile retail outlets of essential commodities. The traders will be permitted to use 2,000 vehicles for sale of products for 60 days. The outlets will start operating from today," said Mr. Prakash. "There is no shortage of essential commodities. Wholesale trade of essential commodities is permitted. Transportation of commodities has not been disrupted. We are adopting a balanced approach," he said. Pointing to the absence of symptoms in 3,200 persons at Phoenix Mall, he said all contacts were traced on a case-by-case basis.

"I request residents not to get angry with Corporation workers," he said.

Tipplers in city feeling the pinch

After lockdown, psychiatrists see more persons with withdrawal symptoms

SERENA JOSEPHINE M.
CHENNAI

Five days after Tamil Nadu declared a lockdown on March 24, psychiatrists started to see persons walking into hospitals and de-addiction centres, with alcohol withdrawal symptoms.

The sudden closure of TASMAL outlets across the State prompted the District Mental Health Programme to issue guidelines for doctors to assess and treat persons who are addicted to alcohol and who seek help for withdrawal symptoms. Now, there is a steady flow of persons with withdrawal symptoms.

At the Institute of Mental Health (IMH), the outpatient department has been seeing a minimum of three new patients with withdrawal symptoms every day.

"We usually get patients with withdrawal symptoms. Now, the number of patients is more despite lack of public transportation. They come in with complaints of tremors, headaches, restlessness, nausea and vomiting. Many of them have moderate and severe withdrawal



Difficult times: The sudden closure of TASMAL outlets has prompted the District Mental Health Programme to issue guidelines for doctors to treat addicts. *B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

symptoms," a doctor said.

Lakshmi Vijayakumar, a psychiatrist who has been managing the de-addiction centre at Voluntary Health Services, said, "We are seeing quite a number of people with withdrawal issues. There are persons who have experienced seizures and psychological symptoms such as visual and auditory hallucinations. There are persons with underlying psychological disorders with alcohol use disorder (AUD). Co-morbidity is common in AUD. Some have mood disorders. We are seeing a high number of such patients

too." In addition, they were receiving cases of domestic violence associated with withdrawal symptoms, she said.

Most of the patients, she said, are from the low and lower-middle sections of the society.

"Initially, those with withdrawal symptoms require medical treatment. Some will experience tremors, difficulty in eating that could last for four to five days. They will also experience an inability to sleep and will feel the need to seek medical help. We need to provide hydration. They will need IV

fluids and sedatives. Those absolutely addicted to alcohol - AUD - require detoxification for the first three to four days, which can be followed by counselling," she said.

R. Thara, vice-chairman of Schizophrenia Research Foundation, said they have had family members of persons experiencing withdrawal symptoms approaching them with queries. "There are persons with symptoms ranging from mild to severe. In fact, there is an economic dimension too, as they are trying to buy alcohol sold at exorbitant prices in the black market. This has led to an economic drain in the families. In future, these aspects should be taken into account and closure should be in a staggered manner," she said.

IMH doctors said many persons were unaware that treatment was available for withdrawal symptoms. "We are also informing their family members that care should be taken to ensure there is no alcohol relapse after the lockdown is lifted," a doctor said.

With no takers, unsold flowers at Koyambedu market end up in trash

Shutdown of places of worship, cancellation of functions cited

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

With no takers during the lockdown, heaps of flowers are being dumped at the Koyambedu flower market.

With the sharp fall in demand due to the pandemic, over the past few days, several vendors have little choice but to dump the flowers, soon to perish, at the end of the day.

The wholesale market now functions till 1 p.m., every day.

On average, the market receives 40 lorries of flowers from across the State. It normally receives 10 truckloads of flowers.

Flower merchants noted that each lorry brings in five tonnes of flowers.

S. Mookiah, president of the Koyambedu Wholesale Flower Market Merchants' Association, said transportation was a major issue in bringing flowers to the market and transporting them to other markets in the State.

"It may not be an essential commodity like vegeta-



Dip in demand: Of the 50 tonnes brought to the market in a day, about 10-15 tonnes are dumped as waste. *M. VEDHAN

ble and fruits, but we have sought permission to function to help the farmers," he said.

A sharp fall

According to flower merchants, of the 50 tonnes brought to the market in a day, about 10-15 tonnes are being dumped as waste.

N. Shiva Peter, a flower merchant, said that small vendors from other markets such as Parrys' Corner and Tambaram visit Koyambedu.

Now only 25-30% of the retail traders visit the market, he added.

"Demand has dipped, as places of worship are shut, and functions are not being held.

Blue Cross volunteers ensure strays are fed

S. POORVAJA
CHENNAI

Ever since the city went under a lockdown to prevent the spread of COVID-19, a team of volunteers and staff from the Blue Cross of India has been working to ensure that stray animals on deserted roads do not starve.

A team of 10 staff and volunteers have been making trips to feed stray dogs in the city.

"This includes the Marina and the Elliot's beaches, as well as the IT Corridor, the Guindy Industrial Estate and Parry's Corner. These areas have a high concentration of people as well as eateries, and it is here that most stray dogs can be found," said Dawn Williams, general manager.

Mr. Williams said they were focussing on areas where there was no one

around to feed stray dogs.

Residents' gesture

"In some areas, residents themselves have been taking care of stray dogs, ensuring that there are water bowls in place. To other areas, we take rice, dal and soya for the stray animals," he added. In many areas, volunteers have fed stray cattle.

Nearly 200 kg of rice, 30 kg of toor dal, soya powder

and ghee are being used every day to cook food for the stray animals.

Srikanth Ramesh, a volunteer with the Blue Cross, said a small team had been visiting the Marina beach, feeding over 200 stray dogs and around 40 puppies, found on the 5-km stretch. A few days back, the volunteers found a horse that was tied up malnourished. They have started feeding it now.

Workers flag their plight on social media

VIVEK NARAYANAN
CHENNAI

Help arrived for 140 migrant labourer families, who were stuck without food in two brick kilns in Tiruvallur district, after one of them took to social media to highlight their plight.

On Monday, the Tiruvallur police and district administration provided them food and dry ration. Accord-

ing to the report by Rana, a labourer, close to 500 workers came to the brick kilns in Tiruvallur in January.

"Our owner said that we would be provided food only if we work. Even after the lockdown began, we were working, but we were getting less food," he said.

"We took a video and posted it on social media. Our relative then shared it," he said. Kalikesh Singh Deo,

Techie from Andaman dies

STAFF REPORTER CHENNAI

Three days after a 26-year-old techie from Andaman and Nicobar Islands died in Chennai reportedly due to a cardiac arrest, his family is yet to see his mortal remains due to the lockdown.

"On Tuesday, we provided them ration that can last for 15 days," said Mr. Aravindan.

GOVERNOR'S SECRETARIAT, BIHAR
RAJ BHAVAN, PATNA-800022

NOTIFICATION

No. -BSU(V/C PU KDSU BNMU)/08/2020-/GS(1)

Keeping in view of the spread of CORONA VIRUS, COVID-19 the epidemic and complete LOCKDOWN throughout the country, the Hon'ble Chancellor of the Universities of Bihar has directed that the last date for submission of the application form for the appointment to the post of Vice-Chancellor in T M Bhagalpur University, Bhagalpur, Patna University, Patna, BRA Bihar University, Muzaffarpur, LN Mitithia University, Darbhanga, Maulana Mazharul Haque Arabic & Persian University, Patna, BN Mandal University, Madhepura, JP University, Chapra and K S D Sanskrit University, Darbhanga has been extended till **30th April, 2020 by 6:00 P.M**

This order will come into force with immediate effect.

By the order of H.E. the Governor-cum-Chancellor,
(Ram Anugrah Narayan Singh)
Additional Secretary

PR. No. 000035 (GOVERNOR'S SECRETARIAT) 2020-21

नौकर कोटेशन का संबंध में विस्तृत जानकारी एवं सहायता हेतु **104** पर संपर्क कर सकते हैं।
आप सामग्री-संबंधी किसी तरह की जानकारी अथवा सुझाव हेतु दूरभाष संख्या 0612-2217636 पर सम्पर्क किया जा सकता है।
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RAJ BHAVAN, PATNA-800022

NOTIFICATION

No. -BSU(PVC)/09/2020-/GS(1)

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(Ram Anugrah Narayan Singh)
Additional Secretary

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Government of India
Department of Atomic Energy
Further to notification issued inviting applications for the post of **Director (Technical) in Electronics Corporation of India Limited (ECIL)** it is hereby notified that the **last date for receipt of application is extended till 11.05.2020 upto 17.00 hrs.** Other terms and conditions remain unchanged.

For details login to website
http://www.dae.gov.in

IN BRIEF

State gets 38th district
CHENNAI
The State government on Tuesday issued a Government Order formally notifying the formation of the State's 38th district with Mayaputhurai as its headquarters. The new district has been created after the bifurcation of Nagapattinam district.

10 held for hosting lunch
KALLARURICH
The Tirukovilur police on Monday night arrested 10 youth for allegedly hosting a lunch in the open, in violation of lockdown restrictions. A video of the party in Kanaganandal village went viral on a mobile application. The youth were arrested.

Online test for COVID
CHENNAI
Neuberg Diagnostics Private Limited has launched a COVID-19 self-assessment test on its website - <https://neubergdiagnostics.com/covid19-selfassessment/index.html>. In this, a person needs to answer a few questions to know if he/she needs to get in touch with a doctor. The self-health assessment scan to help individuals assess their risk of contracting COVID-19 has been developed as per guidelines laid down by WHO and Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, said Aishwarya Vasudevan, chief operating officer.

'Sanitation workers, mortuary staff too need protective gear'

Expert says aprons, gloves, boots and five-layer masks must be provided

R. SUJATHA
CHENNAI
The government's proposal to provide protective gear to sanitation workers has brought into focus their vulnerability, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Doctors say they need as much protection as healthcare workers.



The city has around 40,000 sanitation workers and the Corporation employs around 30,000. ■ B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

On Saturday, the Municipal Administration Minister had indicated that those who go on door-to-door visits would also be provided protective equipment.

A public health expert said protective gear should be supplied to those on the field and others doing field-related work, such as keeping the city clean or collecting data during house surveys. If they are not well protected, they might get infected or pass it on.

"The city has around 40,000 sanitation workers of which the Corporation employs around 30,000," said P. Kuganatham, former city health officer and currently COVID-19 task force member.

"They are invariably ex-

posed to pollution. They could be provided aprons, gloves, boots and five-layer masks. Workers could be given five sets of masks so that they can wash and reuse them," he added.

It is included in many places that all those who do the survey were not wearing masks. Without proper orientation, it will only result in worsening of the epidemic.

Handling bodies

Forensic medicine expert K. Mathiharan said even those who handle bodies of the infected persons should be provided adequate protective gear.

allowed to participate and they should strictly observe physical distance at all times. They must also maintain the respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene, he said.

Mortuary workers should be provided protective equipment, such as masks, face shields or goggles, gloves, boots and disposable gown with impermeable apron.

Since human coronaviruses can remain infectious on surfaces for as many as nine days, it is important to disinfect the surfaces used to prepare the body with soap and water/detergent and later disinfect the surface with a minimum concentration of 0.1% of sodium hypochlorite (bleach) or 70% ethanol for at least one minute.

'Follow protocol'

A similar protocol should be followed if a person dies at home, Dr. Mathiharan said. Similarly clothes and fabrics used by the deceased should be machine-washed in warm water at 60-90°C (140-194°F) and laundry detergent, he added.

NCC cadets join fight against COVID-19



Chipping in: An NCC cadet on duty in Puducherry. ■ M. SAMRAJ

DEENNIS S. JESUDASAN
S. PRINCE
CHENNAI/PUDUCHERRY
Over 3,000 men and women from the National Cadet Corps (NCC) across Tamil Nadu and Puducherry have joined authorities in the fight against COVID-19. They assist officials in distribution of food and other relief material and ensure that people maintain social distancing in crowded areas.

Following approval from the Centre, the NCC has accepted requests from cadets, who have come forward to assist the authorities.

"Since NCC cadets are a trained force, it would be easy for them to assist officials," a senior official said.

Though this was voluntary, parental consent was necessary.

"Some 3,000 cadets have come forward to assist the authorities. Presently, over 200 cadets in Tiruchi and 70 in Puducherry have reported for duty and about 50 would soon join in Kancheepuram," Commodore

Malay K. Kukreti, Deputy Director-General of Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Andaman & Nicobar Islands (TN, P & AN) NCC Directorate told *The Hindu*.

Over 70 cadets in Senior Division (college boys) and Senior Wing (college girls) would be involved.

All Collectors are informed and they could be enlisted closer to their homes in assisting authorities in crowd management and ensuring social distancing, he said.

70 cadets

Over 70 cadets in Puducherry have been assigned to assist the district administration with various protective measures.

According to a senior police officer, 46 senior male cadets and 27 female cadets headed by two officers, five Associate NCC Officers and seven Permanent Instructor staff have been deployed on duty.

"They have been provided with face masks, sanitisers and bottled drinking water.

TAMIL NADU WATER SUPPLY AND DRAINAGE BOARD
INVITATION OF BIDS - ITEM WAR (TWO COVER SYSTEM) (TURN-KEY-BASIS)

IFB No: No. 28/SS to M/s GVMCH/OD/2019/02/01 Dated: 03.04.2020

Name of Work: Providing Water Supply Scheme in Tiruvannamalai Government Medical College and Hospital in Tiruvannamalai District (Deposit with open-bid - 4 Nos as source - Execution period - 9 months, Trial run period - 6 months and maintenance of the scheme - 12 months).

Approximate value of work: Rs.205 Lakhs.

Bid security: Rs.1.54 Lakhs.

Eligible class: Class -I.

Tender invitee: The Chief Engineer, TWARD Board, Vellore - 632006.

08.04.2020 to 08.05.2020. Bid document may be purchased by remitting an amount of Rs.100/- (100/-) from the Executive Engineer, TWARD Board, RWIS Division, No.312, Indira Nagar East, Virugudi, Tiruvannamalai - 606 604. If bid documents are required by post an amount of Rs.500/- to be paid additionally.

Website downloading: www.tenders.tn.gov.in and www.twardboard.tn.gov.in (free of cost)

1. Date and time of Pre bid meeting: 24.04.2020 at 11:00 AM

2. Last date and time of downloading bid documents: 04.05.2020 upto 5.45 PM

3. Last date and time for receipt of bid document: 11.05.2020 upto 3.00 PM

4. Date and time for opening of Technical bid: 11.05.2020 at 1.30 PM

DIPR/1801/2019/02/020 SANMATHI CONCRETE WATER SUPPLY (GROUP) Chief Engineer (WC), TWARD Board, Vellore-6

TAMIL NADU WATER SUPPLY AND DRAINAGE BOARD
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, TWARD BOARD, PROJECT DIVISION (RCWSS), MUTHARASANALLUR, TRICHY.

ADDENDUM / CORRIGENDUM

TENDER EXTENSION NOTICE NO.1(DT) - 02.04.2020.

Ref: Tender Notice Reference No.F. Outsourcing -08M/JD/Pro/D/NI/RCWSS/TR/2019/12/3.2020

The period of sale of Tender Documents and receipt and Opening of Tenders called for in the reference is extended as below:

Name of work: Outsourcing of Operation and Maintenance of Package II under CWSS to 5 Municipalities 11 Town Panchayats and 3163 Rural Habitations in Sivagangai, Ramanathapuram and Pudukkottai Districts for the period from 01.04.2020 to 31.03.2021 (12 Months).

Period of sale of Bid documents: Upto 5.45 PM on 20.04.2020

Last date for receipt of tenders: Upto 3.00 PM on 22.04.2020

Opening of Tenders: At 3.30 PM on 22.04.2020

Actual date of maintenance will be commenced from the date of taking over of this scheme. All other terms and conditions already published remain unaltered.

DIPR/1801/2019/02/020 EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, TWARD BOARD, PROJECT DIVISION RCWSS, TRICHY

Korean inmates at Tiruchi special camp approach HC

'Physical distancing not followed'

MOHAMMED IMRANULLAH S.
CHENNAI

Two Korean inmates of a special camp in Tiruchi have approached the Madras High Court alleging that norms for physical distancing were not being followed at the camp though some of the 80 inmates were suffering from symptoms such as cold and fever.

Justice S. Vaidyanathan heard the writ petitions filed by Choi Yong Suk (46) and Choe Jae Won (41) on Tuesday through videoconferencing and directed State Government Pleader V. Jayaprakash Narayanan to obtain detailed instructions from the authorities concerned by Thursday.

The petitioners' counsel C. Anand Kumar told the judge that his clients were the Managing Director and General Manager respectively of Chowel India Private Limited, a company operating from Sriperumbudur Taluk and engaged in manufacture of cowl bars, bumpers and seat frames for motor vehicles.

Last year, the company was accused of not remitting Goods and Services Tax (GST) collected from its customers since 2017 and the total liability was assessed to be more than Rs. 40 crore. Hence, the authorities concerned initiated prosecution against the company and arrested its top brass.

Though an Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate in Egmore had granted bail to the petitioners on November 19 last year, the Superintendent of GST and Central Excise chose to detain them at the camp and such detention was challenged by way of habeas corpus petitions.

The HCPs were slated to be heard on March 26 but could not be taken up due to the nationwide lock down to fight COVID-19, the petitioners said in their affidavits and alleged that there was every chance of the pandemic spreading in the camp due to lack of preventive measures.

They claimed that the camp lacked medical facilities and that no disinfectant was sprayed till date.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH **DEATH ANNIVERSARIES**

In Memoriam

SHRI S.V. Seshadri (80), Ex-union Secretary, TN govt. attained Acharyan Thiruvadi on 07.04.2020, Thirumangal Mannan St, East Tambaram. Mourning by wife Visvaya (A) Guruvoy, Son, Daughter-in-law, Grandsons. Contact: 98402 83208

OBITUARY

With profound grief we inform the sad demise of **Prof. K. S. Ganapathy**, M.A., Ph.D. Quos valde amas nunquam vere moriuntur

IN MEMORIAM

Dr. A. SUNDARAMURTHY
07 Mar 1956 - 08 Apr 2016

Fondly remembered by Kanchana, Durgaprasad, friends, family & colleagues

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

SIXTH ANNIVERSARY

V. MOHANKUMAR
Fondly Remembered by Wife and Children

One more tests positive in Puducherry

CHENNAI CORRESPONDENT

A second COVID-19 case has been reported in Mahe on Tuesday, taking the tally in the Union Territory to five.

The patient, in his early 70's, has been admitted to the Kannur Medical College at Anjarakandy after he tested positive for the virus.

Be alert, not anxious

The COVID-19 pandemic is on everyone's mind right now. A majority of those infected recover from the disease. Twenty per cent of the patients may require hospitalisation, especially when there are complaints of breathlessness.



DR. SURESH RAO K.G.
Senior Heart & Lung Transplant Critical Care Specialist

COVID-19

If they have coexisting conditions like chronic renal disease, cardiac disease, respiratory disease, cerebrovascular diseases, uncontrolled diabetes or hypertension, they carry a higher risk of mortality. Mortality in COVID-19 positive cases ranges from 2% to 8% worldwide.

When we talk about COVID-19 infections and heart diseases, we face four scenarios - patients with known cardiac disease; cardiac patients developing COVID-19 infection; patients with COVID-19 infection developing cardiac complications and patients waiting for or have already had cardiac transplant

For cardiac patients:

The most important thing to remember is to continue taking your medication if you have a known cardiac condition. You must also take the following precautions: Avoid physically visiting the hospital for your routine check-ups. Utilise their online consultation facility, if available. Stay at home to prevent contact with carriers. Practise social distancing in case you have to interact with others.

Consciously avoid touching your face. If it's absolutely necessary, wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use

a hand sanitiser containing at least 70% alcohol.

Work on optimising your immune system. Getting adequate sleep, staying hydrated, eating a balanced diet and exercising every day are paramount.

Keep in touch with friends, colleagues, family and others remotely. Your mental health can affect your physical health, so don't neglect that!

Even if you don't catch the infection, stressing about the situation can worsen your heart condition. So, it's important to be alert and not anxious.

For cardiac patients who develop an infection:

Maybe you've come to the hospital with chest pain. You may not have COVID-19 but the hospital may have to test you for it. This is for everyone's safety. If you test positive, you and anyone you have come in recent contact with you should be quarantined for two weeks.

There's some evidence that shows a fever may actually be beneficial to your immune system in fighting the infection. So, for mild in-

fections, fever can be treated with antipyretics. Antibiotics may be prescribed to you to treat secondary bacterial infections, if the symptoms are worse. Remember to consult your physician and do not self-medicate!

If you develop breathlessness or other serious respiratory symptoms, you may be admitted to the ICU. Any kind of infection may worsen cardiac failure or cardiac disease.

COVID-19 positive patients who develop cardiac complications are conservatively managed. For example, a patient with Triple Vessel Disease who is a candidate for coronary bypass surgery may instead be managed by angioplasty or medically managed with plaque stabilising drugs.

What about end-stage heart failure patients?

End-stage heart failure patients are medically managed. End-stage heart failure patients are medically managed. End-stage heart failure patients are medically managed.

Patients who have already had heart transplantation are at a much higher risk for infection as they are on immunosuppressive drugs.

Our strategy is to prevent the infection among such patients by advising them to stay at home, use personal protective devices and maintain physical distancing. It's normal to get worried about the pandemic. But worrying is not good for your health. Let the healthcare workers do their job and you focus on following the necessary precautions. Remember - stay alert, not anxious.

34 patients shifted to Vellore hospital

STAFF REPORTER

VELLORE

Thirty four patients, who tested positive for COVID-19 from Ranipet and Tirupattur, were shifted to Government Vellore Medical College Hospital in Adukkamparai, on Monday.

In Vellore, six cases tested positive and five of them are being treated at GVMCH.

The first case in Vellore district was from Katpadi. The patient has been admitted to Christian Medical College Hospital. In Tirupattur district, 10

people tested positive till Sunday. One more tested positive on Monday. In Ranipet, 25 were admitted to the Government Hospital in Wattham. Twenty four of them were shifted to Vellore for better medical care and co-ordination.

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Deaths rise to four in Andhra Pradesh

45-year-old patient who died in Kurnool had diabetes; Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala record more cases

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HYDERABAD
A 45-year-old person died in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh, becoming the fourth in the State to succumb to COVID-19, while one new case was reported overnight on Tuesday.

The total number of novel coronavirus cases in the State touched 314 while active cases remained at 304, a Medical and Health Department bulletin said.

The 45-year-old person in Kurnool did not have any travel history but was admitted to the government hospital with symptoms of COVID-19 on April 1.

He had Type-2 diabetes and died on April 3, State nodal officer Arja Srikanth said. The person, who died tested positive for the coronavirus, the official said.

In all, six patients had recovered from the disease and been discharged from hospitals. The fresh case was reported from Guntur district, which now has 33 cases. The latest case was also related to the Tablighi Jamaat event. With 74 cases, Kurnool led other locations in the State followed by SPS Nagar with 42. North coastal districts Srikakulam and Vizianagaram remained unaffected.

40 cases in Telangana
Health authorities confirmed 40 fresh COVID-19 cases in Telangana on Monday, taking the total number of active cases in the State to 348, officials said.

The state government health bulletin added that 12 people were discharged on Monday and no death was reported. So far, 11 people have died due to the virus and 45 patients were discharged after treatment, it said.

Karnataka tally rises
Twelve new coronavirus cases were confirmed in Karnataka, pushing up the total number in the State to 175, the Health department said on Tuesday.

Of the 175 positive cases, 25 had been discharged, it said.

Three from Mandya had attended Tablighi-Jamaat congregation at Delhi from March 13-18 (one from Bagalkote, two from Bengaluru city and one from Bengaluru Rural). Three from Mandya were contacts of pa-

tients who were at the Jamaat meeting.

Others included a 41-year-old woman from Bagalkote, the neighbour of a 75-year-old man who died on April 3, an 80-year-old woman from Gadag with history of Severe Acute Respiratory Infection, a 68-year-old male from Bengaluru with travel history to Dubai, a woman contact of a patient and a man with history of SARI from Kalaburagi.

Sea of people: A large number of people turned up to replenish their supplies at the wholesale Kothapet fruit market in Hyderabad on Tuesday. ■ NAGARA GOPAL

State	Total number of cases	Active cases	Number of those cured	Deaths
Andhra Pradesh	314	304	6	4
Karnataka	175	146	4	4
Kerala	336	263	71	2
Tamil Nadu	690	664	19	—
Telangana	404	348	45	11

COVID-19

No lessons learnt
Though the southern States are reporting more cases, the advisories on social distancing continue to be defied

Kerala has 9 new cases
In Kerala, nine people tested positive for the coronavirus on Tuesday, taking the total number of active cases to 263.

The worst-hit Kasaragod reported four cases, Kannur three, Kollam and Malappuram one each, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan told reporters here. Samples of 12 people were returned negative on Tuesday, he said.

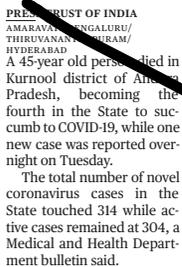
Four of the nine had returned from abroad, two went to the Jamaat meet in Delhi and others contracted the virus through contact with infected people. The total cases in the State touched 336.

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The team was declared as winner of its track - "Who to test and when?" under "How to protect vulnerable populations from the effects of COVID-19?" There were a total of ten tracks.

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Winners all: (From left) Adri Rajaraman, Akshatha Kamath and Shubham Rateria. ■ MANIPAL ARRANGEMENT

They teamed up with Media Watson, Washington DC (respiratory therapist, MBA), Hsiang Wei Hu, Taiwan (co-founder of Acusense Biomed), and Mariane Melo, U.K. (M.D.).

They narrowed down to the problem of overcrowded hospitals with inappropriate admissions, whereas less than 5% of the population under 50 years needs hospitalisation.

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Their solution was to build a tele-health platform for non-contact monitoring of vital signs such as heart rate, res-

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"This cross-platform application avoids reliance on contact-based pulse oximeters," Ms. Kamath told *The Hindu*. "This can be further developed into a telemedicine platform, wherein doctors can remotely identify the progress of the patients. This is useful in prevention of transfer of COVID-19 to healthcare professionals,"

Mohammad Zuber, Assistant Director (Innovations), Manipal Institute of Technology, said.

Ensure no breach of ban on religious meets: HC
No nod for Karaga congregation: govt.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT BENGALURU
The Karnataka High Court on Tuesday said the government should show "zero tolerance" and law enforcing authorities across the State should come down with a heavy hand on any breach of lockdown conditions imposed by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) banning all kinds of religious congregations and closure of all places of worship for the public.

Observing that the objective of a lockdown and imposition of Section 144 is to stop mass congregation to prevent spread of novel coronavirus by maintaining social distancing, the Bench directed the government to scrupulously implement and enforce the MHA's guidelines related to religious and other congregations/functions.

A Special Division Bench comprising Chief Justice Abhay Shreenivas Oka and Justice B.V. Nagarathna issued the directions after the State government clarified that Bengaluru City Police have not granted any permission for religious congregation for the Karaga festival on the night of April 8.

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He said the IIT had multiple projects on hand such as portable low-cost emergency ventilator for COVID-19 patients and real-time tracking of crowd and quarantine of people using cellular network data.

Psychiatrist withdraws plea after HC ruling
A psychiatrist on Tuesday withdrew his public interest litigation petition filed in the High Court of Karnataka seeking opening of liquor shops in the State to prevent suicide by people suffering from withdrawal symptoms. Vinod G. Kulkarni decided to withdraw the petition after the court cautioned him of imposing heavy cost for abusing the process of e-filing of cases of extreme urgency enabled by the court.

Congress slams LDF govt. for 'partisan politics'
The Congress on Tuesday slammed the Left Democratic Front (LDF) government in Kerala for "playing partisan politics" when the COVID-19 outbreak demanded united action. KPCC president Mullaappally Ramachandran, Leader of the Opposition Ramesh Chennithala and former Chief Minister Oommen Chandy accused the government of excluding the Opposition on key matters of the State that demanded political consensus.

Adventure, interrupted: Cliffin Francis, Dona Jacob and Haseeb Ahsan are driven by a passion to explore.

Some time lost in getting a visa for China, till they entered Bangladesh last month. No coronavirus case had been reported there till then. Then they started emerging. Anticipating a lockdown, which would have trapped them in a foreign country, they returned across the border in a hurry.

"We were advised to undergo a 14-day quarantine in Agartala and taken to the Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital where we stayed till April 2. Since then we have been the skill development institute run by a priest here, to Dona, and helping him make masks," said Cliffin.

With the Olympics postponed, the trio just want to get back home. Pedalling back is ruled out as that would mean successive quarantines.

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The time is not yet ripe for the full withdrawal of the lockdown on April 14 and the withdrawal strategy should be gradual, phased and calibrated to ensure that the case load is kept below the capacity of the healthcare system to deal with it, an expert committee appointed by the Kerala government has said.

"Continuing to restrict large-scale movement of people across international and State boundaries is critical and should not be considered unless and until the situation is under control in every State," the committee, comprising 17 eminent persons and headed by K.M. Abraham, said in its report to the government. The panel was specifically asked to look into the strategy to ease the lockdown restrictions.

However, it said it is cognizant that a prolonged and stringent lockdown will lead to economic hardships, famine, and law and order issues, which may undermine both the lockdown and health management objectives. The committee said a phased approach should be operationalised at the district level while easing the restrictions.

The State should continue to ramp up preparatory work for the possible rapid rise of COVID-19 cases. As the cases may exceed the local capacity in some cities, a protocol for assistance should be prepared to avoid unnecessary divisions at the height of the crisis.

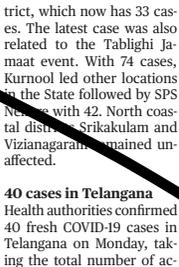
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Mutual assistance
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The Centre should ensure effective coordination between the States as well as logistics operators. Supporting the agricultural sector, in production, marketing, storage and transport is essential for the country to tide over the crisis.

The COVID-19 crisis is taking the country into the online world at a rapid pace. Innovations and practices which would have needed years to achieve are being introduced in weeks. Education, judiciary, local business and telemedicine, among others, "It should be ensured that such modern technological leaps are not lost after the lockdown as there are huge economic and efficiency gains," it added.

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Mangaluru police pull down posters barring Muslim traders
Karnataka MP trolled for tweeting fake news

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MANGALURU
The Mangaluru police have pulled down three posters which stated that Muslim traders are not allowed into two areas near Ullal and the rest of the city until the situation eases.

The posters were found hanging on poles at Krishanagara in Thokkottu and at Kaneerthota in Kolya under the Ullal police limits, and at Alape under the Kankanady police limits in the city on Sunday and Monday. The posters were attributed to "Hindu baandhavaru" (Hindu fraternity).

U.T. Khader, MLA, Mangaluru, told *The Hindu* that the posters had been removed and the police had formed a special team to find out who was responsible for writing and hanging them. "In one case, the police have identified the suspects," he said.

The Dakshina Kannada district administration is acting swiftly against attempts to communalise COVID-19 issues, he said. "Locals are being involved to curb such attempts and mischief mongers are being dealt with in a stern way," he added.

Police Commissioner P.S. Harish told *The Hindu*: "We are registering cases wherever a case is made out. Complainant has come forward. We will investigate and initiate appropriate legal measures."

Karnataka MP trolled for tweeting fake news
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT BELAGAVI
Shobha Karandlaje, BJP MP and former Minister, was trolled on social media for tweeting a fake news report about COVID-19 patients misbehaving" in the district hospital in Belagavi.

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The present conflict between Iran and U.S. is the result of longstanding differences between the countries spanning around four decades. The decades saw Iran aspiring a nuclear program and the resulting trade sanctions imposed on it by U.S., formulation of JCPOA and the withdrawal of U.S. from the deal in 2018. The tensions have escalated presently with the killing of the Iran's top security and intelligence commander Major General Qassem Soleimani in a drone attack in Baghdad claimed by U.S.

Iran has pursued a nuclear program since at least 1957, with varying degrees of success. By the late 1980s during a brutal war with Iraq, Iran decided to develop nuclear weapons to ensure its security. Consequently, Iran pursued nuclear agreements with China and Russia throughout the 1990s to support its ongoing research into the development of nuclear weapons. Under growing scrutiny and international pressure, in 2003-04 Iran agreed to terminate its nuclear weapons program, insisting only that it maintain its nuclear centrifuges for nuclear energy. However, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) exposed that Iran had continued to pursue nuclear weapons later in 2003. P5+1 countries (United States, China, France, Germany, Russia, and the United Kingdom) began a series of negotiations in an effort to constrain Iran's nuclear program and prevent the development of nuclear weapons. To encourage Iran to cease uranium enrichment and come to the negotiating table, the UN Security Council imposed economic sanctions on Iran in 2006. The negotiations of P5+1 resulted into an agreement called JCPOA in 2015, giving Iran relief from some sanctions. The U.S. government under Trump opted out the deal in 2018 citing it was redundant, bringing the countries on front foot again.

Iran has announced its full withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is an agreement between Iran and P5+1 countries (United States, China, France, Germany, Russia, and the United Kingdom).

The nuclear deal was endorsed by UN Security Council Resolution 2231, adopted on July 20, 2015 and requires Iran to significantly cut its stores of centrifuges, enriched uranium and heavy-water, all key components for nuclear weapons, in exchange of relief from the sanctions implied on it. Donald Trump had walked away from the landmark nuclear treaty in May 2018 arguing that it emboldened Iran to act against American interests and gave Iran greater negotiating power. Iran decided to fully withdraw from the pact criticizing U.S. for General's killing and the international community for failing to adequately pressure the U.S. to return to the deal. (To be continued)

raging bicycle use where feasible, avoiding congestion.

Sanctions and pandemic

Iran needs all the help it can get. The U.S. must review its hostile policy

America's refusal to ease sanctions on Iran even when the West Asian country is struggling hard to contain the novel coronavirus spread with limited resources shows its total disregard for the humanitarian situation in the Islamic Republic. Iran, the hardest hit by the pandemic in West Asia, has already seen 3,739 deaths and 62,589 infections. To be sure, Iran failed on multiple fronts in the battle. The government was initially reluctant to enforce drastic restrictions on businesses, religious establishments and people. As infections began spreading at an exponential pace, it was more than what Iran's health-care system could handle. And during the crisis, the cash-strapped, isolated regime struggled to meet people's needs. But what accentuated these failures are the American sanctions. Last year, the sanctions, reimposed by President Trump after he unilaterally pulled the U.S. out of the Iran nuclear deal in 2018, shrank the country's economy by 8.7%. The fall in oil prices and the pandemic have multiplied Iran's woes. The sanctions have also debilitated its ability to import even humanitarian goods. The U.S. rejected calls for easing sanctions, saying exports of these goods to Iran are already exempted. But it is not that easy. Most global banks, fearing U.S. retaliation and legal consequences, stay away from doing business with Iran, which makes it difficult for the Islamic Republic to find a functional payment mechanism. With the economy in dire straits, it also lacks the resources to make purchases.

The U.S., which has the most number of COVID-19 infections, should be in a better position to understand Iran's woes than any other country. America has already seen about 11,000 deaths from 368,533 infections. Despite the U.S. being the world's largest economy, and home to a gigantic health-care industry, authorities there appear clueless on quick containment. Learning from its own tragedy, Washington should have suspended or at least eased the sanctions on Iran, allowing the country to import food, medicines and other humanitarian goods without restrictions. Such a decision would also have provided an opportunity to both countries – on the brink of a military conflict early this year – to resume diplomatic engagement. It is still not too late for Mr. Trump to take a humanitarian decision and turn it into a diplomatic opening. The Iranian leadership should realise that this is not the time for America-bashing. This is an hour of crisis, globally. Tehran's focus should be on getting maximum help from abroad and beefing up its fight at home to save lives. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei's recent comment that Iran "has the capability to overcome any kind of crisis and challenges" is far removed from reality. Iranians need help and the U.S. should reconsider its policy of punishing them, at least in this time of a pandemic.



RAJ B. SINGH

A month ago, few in our country would have thought that in a month's time we would be confined to our homes for weeks on end, and with all the disruptions that we are facing now. Today we are in the midst of an unprecedented and concerted attack on an infection, mobilising the resources and ingenuity of the entire world to control (and not even annihilate) a single virus. The new strain of the coronavirus, named SARS-CoV-2, has been ravaging the world, with nearly a million-and-a-half infected and more than 75,000 confirmed deaths. And the end is nowhere in sight. How did we get to this situation?

About 12,000 years ago, our ancestors decided to settle down in various places, mostly large river deltas, and began agriculture and the domestication of cattle. This is deemed the birth of civilisation, as once the need to constantly gather or hunt for food was removed it gave mankind the time and the opportunity to develop art, music, language and science.

During the period of hunting and gathering, many died of injuries from encounters with predators or rivals, and starvation and disease. But those who did survive were strong and healthy. This changed once they stayed in one place and shared their settlements with animals. This also allowed microorganisms to mutate and jump from animals to humans. It is estimated that 60-70% of human infections may have been acquired this way, and the new coronavirus is one of them.

Health-care ripple effect

Our public health system has done a tremendous job of eradicating two other viruses from the world: smallpox and polio. The objective this time is not to eradicate SARS-CoV-2. Considering the ease with which it spreads and its ability to produce asymptomatic carriers, that would be almost impossible. On the other hand, it may be possible to slow the spread of the virus to give the health-care system time to cope with it; meaning that eventually, hundreds of millions or billions of people will be infected once the lockdowns and travel restrictions are eased.

However, it is not all doom and gloom. The current measures in India may have slowed down the spread of SARS-CoV-2. But it also probably would have prevented



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

thousands, and potentially millions, from being infected by other respiratory infections too. Tuberculosis is still the world's single most lethal infectious disease, killing 1.5 million worldwide in 2018, 220,000 of whom were in India. Further, 27% of tuberculosis cases in India is drug resistant.

The present steps being taken in the containment of the novel coronavirus are equally effective in preventing the spread of tuberculosis. However, if we are to take full advantage of the present scenario, we should piggyback a tuberculosis control programme on the existing CoV-2 programme – which would be simple sputum testing for tuberculosis bacilli (which could be one hundredth the cost of testing for the coronavirus), chest X-rays if required, and complete treatment of identified cases.

With the current steps, tuberculosis is not the only infection that we can prevent from spreading.

Other common respiratory infections killing thousands in India every year are Influenza, Respiratory Syncytial Virus, Pneumococcal Pneumoniae and Haemophilus influenzae.

Some of the beneficial effects of the lockdown and other measures may be long standing. Hopefully the culture of personal hygiene which includes taking showers, practising hand washing, and avoiding spitting in public places will stay even after the threat of SARS-CoV-2 has receded. Moreover, there may be a more widespread awareness of how infections spread and the difference between infectious and non-infectious diseases. Among the temporary benefits are fewer road traffic accidents and reduction of respiratory deaths due to cleaner air.

We can take heart in the remarkably decisive way in which our country has reacted. It is obvious that: our government can make quick and well-informed decisions; our administration can put in place effective steps despite the size and diversity of our country, and our scientists and doctors can lead the world in providing useful and timely solutions and information.

A new concern

Finally, it may seem a bit illogical to be terrified of COVID-19 but not

worried about other diseases. Today, a person above 65 years of age in India is still far more likely to die of a heart attack, stroke or even tuberculosis than of COVID-19. Somehow we seem to believe that these diseases only affect "others" and continue to smoke, eat and drink in excess.

A dose of terror here may do some good. Moreover, there is an air of familiarity with these diseases. Our minds have adjusted to live with them. But it would be prudent to remember that about 20,000 people die every day in our country, about 5,000 due to heart disease and another 2,000 due to strokes. Even if there is a 10% increase in these numbers caused by delays or denied access to health care in the current scenario, it could translate into thousands of additional deaths every day.

But COVID-19 is a new threat. Many things about it are still unknown. And every one of us feels the possibility of becoming its next victim.

In this latest crisis, no country can expect to come away unscathed. But we would have surely learnt a lot. And only time will tell if we used the lessons well and it was all worthwhile.

Dr. Raj B. Singh is Consultant Respiratory Physician, Apollo Hospital, Chennai

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

Recasting policy

One can understand the anguish of senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh that the Prime Minister delayed initiating a dialogue with other political parties when there was a dire need to fight the pandemic by taking all into confidence right from day one (inside pages, "Interview - A second Budget may be required to deal with COVID-19 aftermath," April 7). The Indian National Congress, as a party which ruled the country for decades, has faced many a calamity in the past. The party still has leaders with the required knowledge who would be in a position to help this present government in this time of a

crisis. Moreover, naming the Prime Minister's Relief Fund as PM-CARES seems to a marketing exercise; it would have been more sensitive and appropriate to call it INDIA-CARES. Mr. Ramesh's rooting for a second Budget also makes sense given the fact that the clock of the economy was put back at least by a few years. It is absolutely essential to redraw fiscal policies to bail out corporates and the common man with the overall aim of ensuring economic stability.

V. SUBRAMANIAN,
Chennai

Response and the gaps

With the global crisis multiplying, the health-care sector has emerged and

rushed to the aid of those affected. In such a scenario, it is evident that the government has allowed high-quality accredited private laboratories to research and test coronavirus samples. By thorough supervision of the entire process, the process of testing of samples is only allowed after these private laboratories receive the required sanction from the government. Additionally, the Ayushman Bharat scheme has stepped up to offer hospitalisation packages for intensive care units, high dependency units and normal wards. While there is no provision for isolation wards under the health assurance scheme, the cost of these wards which cater to

underprivileged citizens will be borne by Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY), even though it will be higher than usual. Decades of neglect have left India's public health system with very weak arsenal to fight and eliminate contagious diseases. Improvements in several health systems have not been uniform, with some developing countries including India lagging behind others in ramping up public health systems. In conclusion, India is the frontrunner in economic terms, but in a crucial situation such as this, it is necessary that India bridges its solutions and efforts to contain the virus. Announcements such as

remote working do not seem a feasible solution for an informal economy such as ours, because over 90% of the workforce is in the informal sector. Medicine is science and science is research. We have neglected and are still neglecting this important aspect. Immunology, biomedicine and molecular biology are all crucial, even more evident in these times. The bureaucracy and regulatory bodies have to see to it that we progress.

D., K.M. CHERIAN,
Chennai

Letter to the PM

Makkal Needhi Maiam leader Kamal Haasan has unleashed words that do not reflect ground realities

(Inside page, "PM repeating the mistake of note ban, says Kamal Haasan", April 7).

It is not the Prime Minister's intuitive decision one has to highlight. Epidemiologists, medical scientists, economic experts have researched data from disease outbreaks; it is this result which is behind the Prime Minister's action. Comparing an economic event (demonetisation) with an unprecedented health emergency is illogical. Instead, Mr. Haasan should have suggested practical ways to take care of the poor.

D., K.G. RAJAMANIKHAM,
Tiruch



To read more letters online, scan the QR code

Plain feed

Ten questions posed by the virus

Our life after COVID-19 will be defined by questions on the prevailing organising principles of humankind



VARGHESE K. GEORGE

The COVID-19 pandemic is reopening several questions that were considered resolved by the end of the last century. It is upending our familiar world that was built over the last century, challenging certitudes that held our sanity. Our life after the pandemic will be defined by at least 10 questions on the prevailing organising principles of humankind.



PHOTO: JAIN PARIKAS

Utilitarian question

First, the virus has resurrected the classic utilitarian question in an immediate life and death situation: whether or not, how many, and whose deaths will be acceptable for a greater common good. "I'm sorry, some people will die... that's life," declared Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro. "You can't stop a car factory because of traffic deaths," he said. That an ageing population is an economic burden on society has long become our common sense. There is indeed an incentive in their dying – social Darwinism, the survival of the fittest principle has never been tested this close to the bone. Data will be harvested to debate the relative net utility of different responses to the virus. Was Kerala rational in saving the lives of a nonagenarian couple? What is the balance between economic and social goals?

Second, what is national power? "We need to have more 'germ games' like we have war games," Bill Gates said some years ago. The U.S. is the pre-eminent military and economic superpower. The diminishing potency of military hardware has been constantly demonstrated since 26/11, but that has not reduced the global appetite for weaponry. Strategies for expanding national power involve extracting and transferring public wealth to global corporations while the accompanying politics deludes the masses into a faux sense of power. The paradox of power is global. India is in a particularly pitiful situation. Hindutva nationalism's celebration of militarism has correspondingly reduced the attention on social

infrastructure. Its middle class speaks about India's dubious military prowess but an unwanted encounter with the country's healthcare infrastructure may have disrupted their fantasy. Will there be a new understanding of power and security?

Third, whither globalisation? All countries have tried to enforce border controls to stop the virus, which ironically also demonstrated their futility. Global cooperation and multinational governance can be jettisoned only at the world's peril as we know now. A more serious threat to humanity, climate change, has always appeared distant, but this one is urgent. Hence, the question is not whether we have more or less globalisation but about its character. It is now a profiteering expedition of soulless greed. Can there be a new globalisation where humanity and environment take precedence?

Fourth, how much more power will the state accumulate? The 9/11 security horror, followed by the 2008 economic crisis, had ushered in the steady comeback of the state. This pandemic could ascribe divine powers to the state. Their dread now hysterical, the citizenry seeks vengeance and control from the state. We see ingenious uses of technology for surveillance.

Fifth, will this expanding state be increasingly democratic or progressively authoritarian? China and Singapore showed that authoritarian measures work; Germany showed that democratic and inclusive methods work too. But Italy and the U.S. showed that individualism and markets can impede collective goals. In

India, which has deployed a hybrid of democratic and authoritarian measures, remains an open test case.

Sixth, what will happen to the neoliberal wisdom that unbridled competition of all against all improves efficiency and brings progress? "This is not the way to do it. I'm competing with other States, I'm bidding up prices," New York Governor Andrew Cuomo lamented. It is not that competition is universal – the poorer undercut one another while the richer cartelize in a neoliberal world. Cuba, considered inefficient, has sent healthcare professionals to many countries. The virus tells us that competition is risky; cooperation could be redeeming. What is the alternative? Chinese President Xi Jinping, in his speech at the 19th Communist Party Congress in 2017, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his speech to capitalist moguls in Davos in 2018, outlined alternatives to liberal orthodoxies. Collectivisation has a new life. Italy has nationalised Alitalia; Spain has nationalised all hospitals. History may not have ended.

Seventh, what will happen to populism? Populists have shown remarkable resilience in the face of crises, not necessarily by resolving them, but usually by blaming other countries, communities and political opponents. All populists around the world will have a virus-mutated version; they will use the new context to advance their pre-existing agendas. Which of them will tighten their grip over their countries? Will anyone face public wrath triggered by the pandemic and wilt?

Eighth, the inhuman exploitation

of labour under globalisation, labelled 'efficiency' and 'competitiveness', has been concealed by the glitz of globalisation and consumerist seduction. Reports on sweatshops in the developing world have occasionally explored the exploitation of labour, but the virus has brought the lives of labourers out into the spotlight, in a parade of shame – working 16-hour days but unable to get paid leave or healthcare in the U.S.; migrant labourers in India walking several days to go home; and the wretched labour camps in West Asia.

The ninth question is whether we need to travel as much as we do. At the end of 2019, when the virus was just about launching its global tour, some were travelling for no better reason than keeping their frequent flyer status. In October, a report commissioned by the U.K.'s Committee on Climate Change had called for "a ban on air miles and frequent flyer loyalty schemes that incentivize excessive flying." An emergent no-fly movement still struggles to get attention but now it might. "May be we can save a few business trips now that we know that these digital tools work well," Ola Källenius, CEO of Daimler/Mercedes-Benz, told BBC. The travel of the privileged has a parallel parody too: the large-scale forced relocation of people.

Idea of community

The tenth is how our idea of community and boundaries has changed. The COVID-19 crisis has let loose contradictory forces. On the one hand everyone is confined within the tiniest spaces, but on the other, the crisis has also urged us to community action. Neoliberalism had made all human interactions transactional, and each transaction standalone. Such short-termism delinked the current quarter from the next; the current generation from the future – the prevailing approach to climate change being instructive. A sustainable organising principle of self-interest that is not immediate in terms of time or geography. The risks and rewards need to be spread over a longer period of time and larger expanse of space. And that is the most consequential challenge thrown up by the pandemic.

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India's overall relationship with Iran can also get affected by the growing tensions, according to observers. For India, Iran provides an access to Central Asia and Europe by bypassing Pakistan.

It can adversely affect Indian investments in Chabahar Port in Iran, as the tensions in the country will be detrimental to the completion of the project.

It can lead to rise of Taliban in Afghanistan, backed by Iran, in order to disturb the Afghan Peace Deals as it is in the interest of US. This can hamper Indian interests and investments in Afghanistan.

Over 8 million Indian migrants who live and work in West Asia could be affected by a potential conflict in the region.

The conflict has caused oil prices to increase which are further expected to soar if it continues to exist.

The conflict has led to downfall in Share markets and will lower Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) and Foreign Institutional Investments (FIIs), hitting Indian economy further. Iran is listed under the blacklist of CAATSA? What is CAATSA?

Why healthcare workers above 60 should be 'benched'

There is a moral imperative to protect those who have already done their part all their lives

SOUMYADEEP BHAAUMIK & GIRIDHARA R. BABU

COVID-19 has posed an unprecedented global health challenge. World over, including in high-income countries, the pandemic has exposed the non-resilience of health systems. Some countries that already have a part of their elderly population in the workforce are considering increasing the retirement age further, while some others are asking retired healthcare workers to rejoin to meet the looming health crisis. But is this a wise decision?

A recent study in *The Lancet Infectious Diseases* shows a steep aggregate in deaths from COVID-19. The case fatality rates are nearly four times higher for those over 60 years of age. They are 12 times higher for those above 70 years. With this evidence in hand, and no exceptions being reported, governments across the world have advised isolation for all those aged 60 and above.

An unwise decision

Healthcare workers – be it doctors, nurses, paramedical staff, or community health workers – are clearly at an increased risk of contracting COVID-19. In Italy, 20% of healthcare workers have been infected with COVID-19, and hospitals have been the focus for infection. Health workers go back to their homes too. With these facts in mind, it is unwise to engage any health worker above the age of 60 years unless there is no other option. There is a global crisis of medical-grade personal protective equipment (PPE) and so health workers are at an even higher risk. If the PPE crisis is not solved, the proportion of health workers affected might be even higher than what has been experienced previously in other countries (which could import supplies from other countries, but that is impossible today).

Elderly healthcare workers are more likely to face serious consequences. Having a colleague succumb very early in the pandemic will hamper the morale of not only the health workforce but also the com-

munity. It is evident now that the COVID-19 battle will last for months and not a few weeks as was initially envisaged.

All elderly healthcare workers above 60 years should be 'benched' in phase 2 of the transmission and even in early phase 3 and sent home, much like what has been advised to the general public.

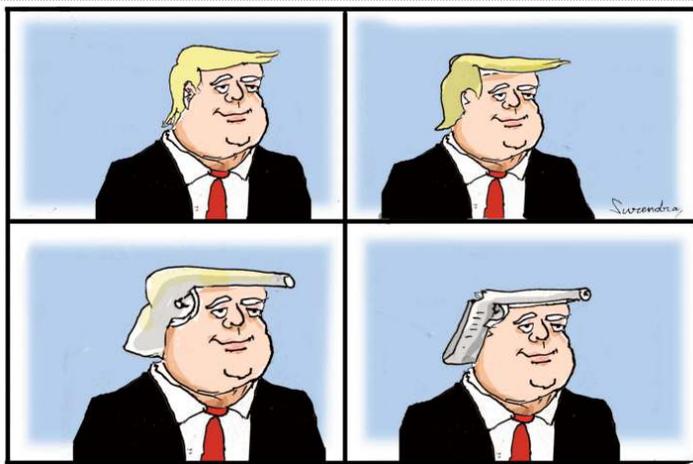
Shortage of resources

However, the shortage of human resources for health is a reality that needs to be pragmatically overcome. The elderly health workforce should not be engaged at all in the initial phase, and the focus should rather be on upskilling students, trainees, and younger health workers up the professional ladder. As the crises deepens and when there is a need, the upskilled younger health workers can take up high-risk positions in emergencies, intensive care units, and in areas with community COVID-19 transmission. In contrast, elderly health workers, irrespective of their skill set, can take up low-risk positions.

A time to be humane

When this happens, the priority allocation of medical-grade PPE should be for elderly health workers. When ventilators run out it would mean that elderly people will not be provided one. Elderly healthcare workers should mandatorily be given preference over younger non-health workers. Governments across the world need to declare and enforce these policies and guidelines. This is a moral imperative for the society to protect those who have already done their part all their lives. Whatever way COVID-19 pans out, humans will survive. What we do now would determine if humanity will.

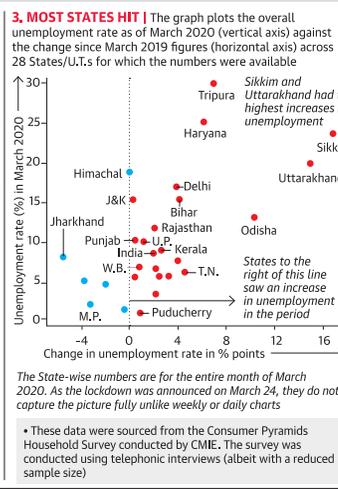
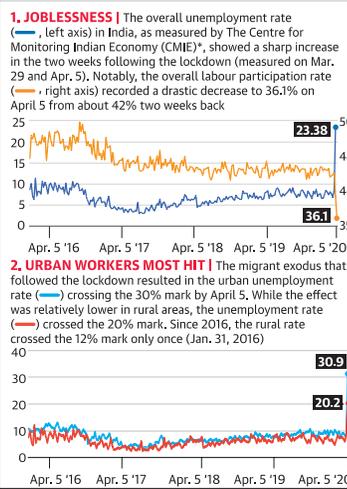
Soumyadeep Bhaumik is a medical doctor and international public health specialist working in the injury division and on policy impact at The George Institute for Global Health, New Delhi, and Giridhara R. Babu is Professor and Head, Lifecourse Epidemiology, Public Health Foundation of India, Bengaluru



DATA POINT

Locked down & out of work

In the two weeks following the lockdown that began on March 24, the estimated share of the unemployed in India has reached a peak. While urban workers are the most hit, rural workers too recorded significant job losses. The labour participation rate (employed plus those searching for jobs) also significantly decreased. Fewer people are actively searching for jobs than before, and of them, more now are unemployed. By Vignesh Radhakrishnan



The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO APRIL 8, 1970

Body to study beating up of M.P.s.

The Lok Sabha to-day (April 7) decided to refer to the Privileges Committee the beating by the police of some members of Parliament yesterday and their being prevented from proceeding to the Lok Sabha even while it was in session. The motion for referring the matter to the Committee was made by the Leader of the Opposition Dr. Ram Subhag Singh, and supported by Mr. R. D. Bhandare (Ruling Congress). The Speaker held the motion to be in order. When the Law Minister rose to say something after the Speaker had given his consent to move the motion Opposition members shouted him down and said that unless he had some objection to the reference, he need not rise. The Speaker said he did not think there was any objection and asked Dr. Singh to move the motion. The Speaker said he had received notices of identical motions from 10 members including Dr. Ram Subhag Singh. He also received from Mr. K. L. Gupta (Jan Sangh) notice of another motion which, he said, related to a different matter.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO APRIL 8, 1920

Oxford History of India.

(From an Editorial)

The true object of history, in the words of Mr. Frederick Harrison, is to show us the life of the human race in its fulness and to follow up the tale of its continuous and difficult evolution. Judged from this accepted standard, Mr. Vincent A. Smith's recent work, "The Oxford History of India" fails to fulfill its function. It is rather unfortunate that his point of view should be one that generally pervades the psychology of almost all European or American students of Oriental culture and politics sickled over with the dogma, of the "Superior race!" Mr. Benoy Kumar Sarkar in his admirably critical view of Mr. Smith's "The Oxford History of India" remarks that the sense of historical perspective is lacking in the book and that Mr. Smith has been led, in spite of himself, to interpret his entire story with an eye to the "event of 1757" as if the three or four thousand years of Hindu political life and Indo-Saracenic evolution were merely preliminary to Plassey. He also notices in the pages of the book a strong current of prejudice that is born of the political propaganda on behalf of the vested interests and the powers that be, to which Mr. Smith's scholarship happens to be hampered.

FROM PAGE ONE

Government mulls lockdown extension

Government sources told *The Hindu* that "many State governments as well as experts have requested the Central government to extend the lockdown and the Centre is thinking in this direction." The number of COVID-19 affected districts increased from 62 on March 20 to 284 on April 6 across 30 States and Union Territories.

On Tuesday, the Border Security Force (BSF) sent a message to all its formations that leaves of all those on leave be extended up to April 21. The personnel who went on leave before the lockdown came into force were to join work in the coming few days. It also issued similar instructions to its training centres where programmes are already running and due to terminate in the coming days. "No movement before April 21. Stay wherever you are," the BSF said in a statement. A Group of Ministers

(GoM), led by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh met on Tuesday to review the situation. This was its fourth meeting since March 25. Inputs, suggestions and feedback from the discussions at the meetings are conveyed to the Prime Minister by Mr. Singh.

The GoM recommended steps to enhance testing facilities in laboratories and expressed satisfaction over the measures in place to provide shelter and food to migrant workers.

Mr. Singh tweeted that the GoM had an extensive discussion on the prevailing situation.

"The amount saved through these decisions would be utilised in strengthening India's fight against COVID-19. The ministers also shared their insights on how we can overcome the situation and help the people stay motivated & vigilant in the battle against COVID-19," he tweeted.

India lifts ban on export of hydroxychloroquine

While the drug's efficacy is not yet clinically proven, Mr. Trump has been a proponent of its use, calling it a "game changer".

The Indian Council for Medical Research has also cleared HQC to be used as a prophylaxis, or preventive medication, by doctors, nurses and other health staff.

Despite the requirement, the Centre said it had assessed that current stocks of HQC and other drugs that had been freed for export were sufficient for "for all

possible contingencies".

The MEA also denied criticism that its decision to reverse its ban had been taken under pressure from the U.S. and other countries.

"Like any responsible government, our first obligation is to ensure that there are adequate stocks of medicines for the requirement of our own people. In order to ensure this, some temporary steps were taken to restrict exports of a number of pharmaceutical products," the spokesperson said.

Schools, colleges may remain closed till May 15

Stating that India had moved from a local transmission phase to the next higher scale of large outbreaks amenable to containment phase, Mr. Agarwal said three types of health care facilities have been set up for various categories of COVID-19 cases for triaging and decision-making.

State government have now been asked to offer COVID Care Centres (CCC) for mild to very mild cases, dedicated COVID health units or blocks for moderate cases and dedicated COVID hospitals for cases clinically assigned as severe.

"These [last] facilities should either be a full hospital or a separate block in a hospital with preferably separate entry/exit and fully equipped ICUs, ventilators and beds with assured oxygen support," added Mr. Agarwal.

"We have issued guidelines for cluster outbreak containment and this strategy is working well in areas like Agra, Gautam Buddha

Nagar, Pathanamthitta, Bhillwara and East Delhi which saw large number of cases recently. Government has been adopting a strategy for cluster containment and for outbreaks that are amenable to management. This strategy is producing positive results," he said.

"Indian Railways has prepared 40,000 isolation beds in 500 coaches and they are making 375 isolation beds daily and this is going on across 133 locations across the country," he added.

The Minister added that technology-led initiatives for undertaking surveillance, monitoring quarantine facilities, tracking the health of suspected patients and their contacts placed under home quarantine providing up-to-date information to citizens, making predictive analytics using heat maps, with real-time tracking of ambulances and disinfection services are being conducted across districts.

Mehbooba leaves jail, detained at home now

Leader of the newly formed JKAP Rafi Ahmad Mir urged the Centre to take a purpose-oriented call on these unwarranted detentions and free all political detainees, including Ms. Mufti. "Ms. Mufti's release would provide some solace to her family. The situation demands that all political leaders and activists should be freed," he added.

JKAP also called for release of NC's Ali Mohammad Sagar, PDP's Naem Akhter, Sartaj Madni, Preetzada Mansoor, JKPM's Shah Faesal, Hilal RATHER and Kashmir Bar Association president Mian Qayoom and traders' leader Yasin Khan.

"Ms. Mufti is home but still booked under the PSA.

Media wasn't given access to her at all despite waiting for hours. Is the Government of India aware that she'll articulate her views on illegal abrogation of Article 370? Time doesn't change facts or erase a betrayal etched in memory," Ms. Mufti's daughter Iltija Mufti said in a tweet.

She said her mother will approach all stakeholders for a joint strategy to move forward, once restrictions are finally lifted on her. "Opposing a move that seeks to obliterate our identity has been criminalised. But you can't wish away the resentment and alienation people feel by criminalising a debate about illegal abrogation of Article 370," she said.

Opposition slams drug export

'Indians have the first right over life-saving medicines during the pandemic'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Opposition criticised the Union government for the quick capitulation in the face of a veiled threat by U.S. President Donald Trump on the ban on export of anti-malarial drug hydroxychloroquine. The government lifted the ban within hours of Trump's comments.

Former Congress president Keshav Gandhi took to Twitter to argue that Indians have the first right over life-saving medicines during the coronavirus pandemic.

"Friendship isn't about retaliation. India must help all nations in their hour of need but lifesaving medicines should be made available to Indians in ample quantities first," he said without mentioning President Trump's name.

Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said that though the Congress valued and cherished India's friendship with the U.S., it saw Mr. Trump's language as

Supply story

India revoked its ban on export of hydroxychloroquine on Tuesday. A look at the export history of the drug:

(in US \$ million)					
2017-2018	2018-2019	Change	April-Feb 2018-19	April-Feb 2019-20	Change
35.31	51.67	46.33%	48.01	36.41	-24.16%

- India's installed capacity of hydroxychloroquine active pharmaceutical ingredient: **40 tonnes**
- Capacity translates into **200 million** tablets (200 mg strength each) a year
- Domestic consumption is around **24 million** tablets a year (excess capacity, but need to factor in likely increase in domestic demand: IDMA)
- The country's overall pharmaceutical exports are worth **\$19 billion**



'unwarranted'. Allowing the export of hydroxychloroquine by bowing down before a foreign power cannot be in national interest, he said.

"Modi ji, we request you with folded hands to adopt India and Indians first policy. The government

should think deeply about the export of essential medicines as our citizens have the first right over them".

Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor expressed shock over the language used by President Trump. "Never in my decades of ex-

perience in world affairs have I heard a Head of State or Govt openly threatening another like this. What makes Indian hydroxychloroquine "our supply", Mr President? It only becomes your supply when India decides to sell it to you," he tweeted.

Let down India: Yechury CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury said the statement by the U.S. President was completely unacceptable. "But Modi gov has succumbed to the threat by allowing the export. That this happened after an expensive gala was organised for him by Modi, instead of preparing to contain Covid-19, shows how this govt has let down India," he tweeted.

Senior TMC leader and Lok Sabha member Saugata Roy said that while the humanitarian gesture made by the Indian government was welcome, it should have raised concern over the language used by Mr. Trump.

'Fix responsibility for Tablighi event'

Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot demands judicial inquiry into the Delhi meet

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Tuesday demanded a judicial inquiry to fix responsibility for the Tablighi Jamaat event in Delhi's Nizamuddin area becoming a super carrier.

"An inquiry by a sitting or retired Supreme Court judge should be conducted in the Nizamuddin episode to make clear who all are responsible. Those who are at fault should be booked and punished. It will also make clear whether there was any

mistake on part of the administration," he said.

"The truth should come out as the issue has drawn global attention. And it is being used to create an atmosphere that is not right under present circumstances," Mr. Gehlot added.

Congress communication chief Randeep Surjewala, who also addressed the press conference, said the party was not against action against Tablighi Jamaat in Ni-

zamuddin if they violated any rules.

Mr. Gehlot said Rajasthan would start rapid testing within a week as his government had ordered 10 lakh testing kits from China that were expected soon.

He said his government had set up two task forces that would go into challenges posed by COVID-19 and a decision would be taken only after their recommendations.

Ms. Gandhi made it clear that the suggestions were in response to the Prime Minister asking for suggestions from the Congress during a telephone conversation last Sunday.

"First, impose a complete ban on media advertisements - television, print and online - by the Government and Public Sectors Undertakings (PSUs) for a period of two years. The only exceptions should be advisories related to public health," she wrote.

"Secondly, suspend the ₹20,000 crore 'Central Vista' beautification and construction project forthwith. I am certain that Parliament can function comfortably within the existing historical

Assam MLA arrested for quarantine centre remarks

Gaganyaan is the human space flight programme under which Indian astronauts will go into space by 2022. This will be done by using its own capabilities.

A GSLV-Mk III launch vehicle will lift them to their orbit, which has the necessary payload capability to launch a three-member crew module in low earth orbit.

If successful, India would become the fourth nation to conduct a human space flight programme after USSR/Russia, USA and China. It is a ₹10,000-crore Indian human space flight scheduled for 2022.

India has signed agreements with Russia and France for cooperation on the Gaganyaan mission.

DRDO signed MoUs with ISRO to offer technologies for the mission, including space food, survival kits for crew, radiation protection equipment and parachutes.

SC seeks reply on plea to evacuate Indian students

Centre has to respond by April 13

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked the government to respond to a petition to urgently evacuate hundreds of Indian students stranded in the United Kingdom due to lockdown and disruption following the COVID-19 pandemic.

A Bench led by Chief Justice of India, Sharad A. Bobde issued notice to the Ministries of External Affairs and Civil Aviation. They have to reply by April 13, the next day of hearing.

The petition, filed by Supreme Court advocate Madhurima Mridul, whose daughter is one among many students stuck in the U.K., said India is "probably

the only country that has imposed an embargo on the return of its own citizens, and while other countries are making all possible efforts to repatriate their stranded citizens, India, with its travel bans, has made it impossible for its own citizens to come back home."

The petition said countries with far greater incidence of mortality like China, Spain, Italy, Iran, South Korea and the United States had not imposed any embargo on the return of their nationals from foreign shores. "It was unreasonable and arbitrary to not make optimum use of the national resources at this critical juncture," it said.

Amid lockdown in Russia, Gaganyaan trainees healthy

'Training neither stopped nor suspended; it is on track'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Countries and organisations around the world have halted routines and chosen isolation as the way to check the COVID-19 pandemic. Evidently the four Indian astronaut candidates training in Moscow are no exception to a lockdown in their own spaces - for at least this month.

"Lockdown has strongly been recommended for the astronaut-elecs, as well as for the personnel" of the Gaganyaan Research & Test Cosmonaut Training Centre (GTC), Mr. Loskutov said.

Glavkosmos stressed that the training has been neither stopped nor suspended and is going on as scheduled. They are healthy and have been working and exercising on their own for the last week or so at the GTC.

try Loskutov as saying that isolation applied to the Indian astronaut trainees as employees across Moscow switched to tele-work from March 30 up to the end of April.

While space missions have been quietly suspended and deferred in India and everywhere else.

In an e-mailed reply to *The Hindu*, Russian space company Glavkosmos JSC (Joint Stock Company) quoted its Director General Dmitri

Sonia offers suggestions to govt. in pandemic fight

Congress president writes to Modi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

In the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak, Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Tuesday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, offering five suggestions to cut government expenditure, including scrapping the ₹20,000-crore for the Central Vista project, banning government advertisements to media and putting on hold all official foreign trips.

"I am writing to convey our support for the decision taken by the Union Cabinet to reduce salaries of Members of Parliament by 30%. Austerity measures which can be used to divert much needed funds to the fight against COVID-19 are the need of the hour. In this spirit, I am writing to offer five concrete suggestions," she said.

COVID-19

Ms. Gandhi made it clear that the suggestions were in response to the Prime Minister asking for suggestions from the Congress during a telephone conversation last Sunday.

"First, impose a complete ban on media advertisements - television, print and online - by the Government and Public Sectors Undertakings (PSUs) for a period of two years. The only exceptions should be advisories related to public health," she wrote.

"Secondly, suspend the ₹20,000 crore 'Central Vista' beautification and construction project forthwith. I am certain that Parliament can function comfortably within the existing historical



Sonia Gandhi

buildings," she stated.

"The money could be spent on "constructing new hospital infrastructure and diagnostics along with equipping our front line workers with Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and better facilities," she added.

Ms. Gandhi said there should be a proportionate 30% reduction in the expenditure budget (other than salaries, pensions and central sector schemes) for the Union government. "This 30% (i.e. ₹2.5 lakh crore a year approximately) could then be allocated towards establishing an economic safety net for migrant workers, labourers, farmers, MSMEs and those in the unorganised sector," she said.

"All foreign visits, including that of the President, the Prime Minister, Union Ministers, Chief Ministers, State Ministers and bureaucrats must be put on hold," she wrote. Exceptions could be made in case of special emergency or exigencies in national interest.

Lastly, Ms. Gandhi suggested that all money under the PM CARE Fund moved to the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund PMNRF to ensure "efficiency, transparency, accountability and audit in the manner in which these funds are allocated and spent."

IN BRIEF

Christian Michel James's interim bail plea rejected

Delhi HC says claims are 'unfounded'



Christian Michel James

Delhi High Court on Tuesday rejected the interim bail plea of Christian Michel James, a French national, who had sought bail after being arrested in connection with the 2012 Delhi gang rape case.

The court said that the plea was "unfounded" as it did not provide any new evidence or reasons to believe that James was not a flight risk or that his release would not be in the public interest.

The court also noted that James had already been granted bail in the past and had failed to appear for his trial, which further weakened his plea for interim bail.

The court's decision is a setback for James, who has been in custody since his arrest in 2012. He is currently being held in a central jail in Delhi.

The court also mentioned that it would continue to monitor the situation and may consider the plea for interim bail again if there is any change in the facts or circumstances of the case.

Woman dies at detention centre for 'foreigners'

A 60-year-old woman in one of Assam's six detention centres for 'declared foreigners' has died. Official records say she was the 27th such person to have died since 2009 and the 2nd this year.

Officials of the Kokrajhar Central Jail, which is also a detention centre for women declared foreigners, said Rabeeda Begum died of cancer on April 5. Kokrajhar is about 225 km west of Guwahati. She was in the detention centre on February 22, 2018, after a Foreigners' Tribunal in Central Assam's Hojai district adjudged her a non-citizen who entered India illegally.



The sense of smell is part of our chemical sensing system, or the chemosenses. Sensory cells in our nose, mouth, and throat have a role in helping us interpret smells, as well as taste flavors. Microscopic molecules released by the substances around us (foods, flowers, etc.) stimulate these sensory cells. Once the cells detect the molecules they send messages to our brains, where we identify the smell. Olfactory, or smell nerve cells, are stimulated by the odors around us--the fragrance of a gardenia or the smell of bread baking. These nerve cells are found in a small patch of tissue high inside the nose, and they connect directly to the brain. Our sense of smell is also influenced by something called the common chemical sense. This sense involves nerve endings in our eyes, nose, mouth, and throat, especially those on moist surfaces. Beyond smell and taste, these nerve endings help us sense the feelings stimulated by different substances, such as the eye-watering potency of an onion or the refreshing cool of peppermint.

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations (UN), [1] charged with ensuring international peace and security, [2] recommending that the General Assembly accept new members to the United Nations, [3] and approving any changes to its charter. [4] Its powers include the establishment of peacekeeping operations and international sanctions as well as the authorization of military actions through resolutions – it is the only body of the United Nations with the authority to issue binding resolutions to member states. The council held its first session on 17 January 1946

der sections of the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, and the Disaster Management Act, 2005," Principal Health Secretary Sanjay Kumar said.

"hire" the buildings near hospitals to accommodate the asymptomatic patients and treat them there, he said. U.P. has also set up 4,243

Secretary, Home Department. The district police chiefs and magistrates have been instructed to ensure "entertainment" facilities for people lodged in these

The number of positive cases in U.P. has climbed to 314, spread across 37 districts, said Mr. Prasad. Out of these, 166 were linked to the Tablighi Jamaat.

ing laboratories would be set up in district hospitals of all divisional headquarters. Sample collection centres would be set up in all 75 districts, he said.

"It is imperative that in accordance with evidence-based scientific literature these N-95 masks are to be disinfected by individual users [by keeping them in

while decontamination and reuse of PPEs may extend existing on-hand supplies, currently decontamination of PPEs for purposes of reuse is not recommended.

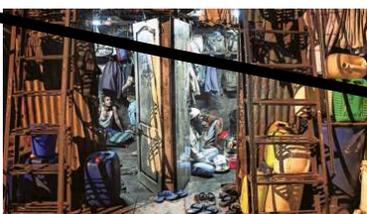
and global bodies like G20 have convened urgent virtual summits, the Security Council's inability to meet raised concern in world capitals in recent weeks.

Dharavi reports two more cases

MP asks Uddhav to lock down slum; around 78 have been tested for the virus

STAFF REPORTER
MUMBAI

As Dharavi reported two more positive cases on Tuesday, Shiv Sena MP from the area Rahul Shevale has demanded that Asia's biggest slum be locked down. He has demanded that every resident of the slum, with a population of eight lakh, be tested and the Reserve Police Force be stationed here as people are not maintaining social distancing.



No breathing space: Maintaining social distance in the wake of COVID-19 is a distant dream in Dharavi. • PRASHANT NAKHVE

The two patients reported on Tuesday are the 80-year-old father and 49-year-old brother of a 30-year-old woman who had tested positive earlier. The three are residents of Baliga Nagar that had been declared a containment zone earlier. Her fami-

ly members had already been declared high risk contacts and were under isolation. The father has now been moved to Kasturba hospital while her brother is at the COVID-19 facility in Andheri. With this, the num-

ber of positive cases in Dharavi have now increased to seven, including one death. Of the seven, four were in Baliga Nagar alone, one on Dharavi main road, one at Mukund Nagar and one in Madina Nagar.

Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation has been holding health camps in these containment zones and so far, more than 3220 people have been screened for symptoms. They are considered highly probable to have been quarantined already. In all, 78 people have been actually tested for the virus in Dharavi.

Mr. Shevale wrote to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, demanding a complete lockdown of Dharavi.

Dadar reported a third case, a 69-year-old man living on Chitale Road in Dadar West. Prior to this, one case has been reported at Shivaji Park and another near Portuguese church.

Centre files report on migrant workers

Kerala has most shelters for them, Ministry of Home Affairs tells Supreme Court

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A status report filed by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in the Supreme Court on Tuesday shows that Kerala government operates over 65% of the total number of relief shelters and relief camps for stranded migrant workers run by the States governments in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic.

Maharashtra government comes a distant second with 1135 camps, though NGOs in this State run 3397 camps. Tamil Nadu government operates 178 active relief camps and shelters for migrant workers. Two in the State are run by NGOs.

While the number of relief camps run by other State go-



Long wait: Migrant workers stand in a queue to collect food at a shelter in New Delhi. • R.V. MOORTHY

vernments for migrant workers is in two and three digits, there are 15541 such camps and shelters in Kerala, all of them run by the State government. The total number of active

migrant workers were given shelter and food by their own employers/industry following the COVID-19 lockdown.

A Bench led by Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde was informed that the government, Centre and States gave food to 54,15,458 migrant workers while NGOs fed over 30 lakh.

PILs criticised

The Ministry criticised the PILs asking questions about the plight of migrant workers following the lockdown. The hearing was based chiefly on a petition filed by activists Harsh Mathur and Anjali Bhardwaj.

The case was listed for further hearing on April 13.

Veterans to assist civil administration in States

Work will be coordinated by DESW

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Several thousand ex-servicemen have been mobilised across the country to assist the civil administration in dealing with COVID-19, the Defence Ministry said on Tuesday. This is being coordinated by the Department of Ex-Servicemen's Welfare (DESW) and veterans are being contacted through the Kendriya Sainik Board and a network of 32 Rajya Sainik Boards at the State level and 403 Zila Sainik Boards.

"Brig. Satinder Singh (Retd.), Director Rajya Sainik Board, Punjab, has said they have employed 4,200 ex-servicemen (ESM) as guardians of governance who are present in every village of Punjab for data collection and community surveillance," the Ministry said in a statement.

According to Brig. Ravi

(Retd), the Zila Sainik Boards in 75 districts of Uttar Pradesh are assisting a team of ESM in monitoring ration distribution, community surveillance and running of community kitchens. They have already identified and contacted 6,592 ESM from the Army Medical Corps and put them on standby for any contingency, the statement said.

In Andhra Pradesh, around 300 ESM are assisting the police while some ESM associations are distributing food and essential commodities among the poor, the Ministry said. Brig. Ravi Muniswamy (Retd.), who is coordinating the effort across Karnataka, is leading a team of 45 veteran bicycle riders in Bengaluru, who through a WhatsApp group are providing medicine and essential supplies to the old and the infirm.

Loss of smell may be linked to cells: study

'Virus could be inflicting an indirect attack on olfactory sensory cells'

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

Can a loss of smell be an early warning for a COVID-19 infection? Multiple reports have surfaced, primarily from Europe and the United States, from physicians and ear, nose and throat specialists, of COVID-19 patients complaining of an inability to smell – or anosmia. However, it is not clear whether neurons in the brain that are responsible for recognising various odours are damaged, or whether other cells may be involved.

Researchers at Delhi's Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology report in the study that it is still being peer-reviewed but available as a public preprint, that it is not neurons but a class of cells in the upper regions of the nasal cavity that may be involved: these are called sustentacular cells and horizontal basal cells. Crucially, both are not directly in-



Workers seen spraying disinfectant in New Delhi.

involved in helping us smell, but nourish and support the cells that help us do, and so the virus may be inflicting an indirect attack on the olfactory sensory cells.

While research on this aspect of the disease is emerging, studies say the loss of smell is different from diminished smell or a lack of perceiving flavour in food when one is afflicted with a cold or stuffy nose.

Researchers Krishan Gupta, Sanjay Kumar Mohanty,

Siddhant Kalra, Aayushi Mittal, Tripti Mishra, Jatin Ahuja, Debarka Sengupta and Gaurav Ahuja inferred this by bio-informatics tools and estimating the presence of a key enzyme – called ACE 2 (Angiotensin Converting Enzyme) – in these olfactory cells. The coronavirus has spike proteins that bind to ACE 2 receptors on human cells and the enzyme's presence is a proxy to revealing the signature of the virus in the body's cells.

Clinical symptoms
Research so far suggests that it take between 5-14 days for clinical symptoms of the virus – dry cough, laboured breathing and fever – to show and unless this manifested, those infected are likely to continue socialising and spreading the virus.

The authors did not offer comment on their work because it has not yet been published in a scientific journal.

RAMAN RESEARCH INSTITUTE

C W Raman Avenue, Sadahisivanagar, Bengaluru - 560 080, India.

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS / NOMINATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR

Raman Research Institute (RRI) is an autonomous research institute under the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, engaged in research in basic sciences. The current main areas of research at the Institute are: Astronomy & Astrophysics, Light & Matter Physics, Soft Condensed Matter and Theoretical Physics with the required Electronics, Mechanical, Computer and other supporting services. More information about the institute is available at its Website: www.rri.res.in

RRI invites Applications / Nominations, from eminent Academicians / Researchers with substantial experience and achievements in the area of Physical Sciences for the position of Director by Direct Recruitment or Deputation. The Director is the Chief Executive and Academic Officer of the Institute and will have the overall administrative control of the Institute and will provide high-level leadership to the Institute in identification of research programmes and projects of national and international relevance in various specialized fields of research undertaken by the Institute.

The incumbent will be appointed on Direct Recruitment / Deputation basis, on a contract basis for maximum of five years or until the age of superannuation, whichever is earlier, as per the Government of India norms. The present age of superannuation is 60 years. The Applicant's / Nominee's age should not exceed 56 years and s/he is an Indian Citizen. The crucial date for determination of age limit is 1st January 2020. The position carries the apex scale of pay level 17, i.e. Rs. 2,25,000/- per month as per the Revised Pay Rules, 2016 of the Government of India.

The Last Date for Receipt of Applications / Nominations is 18th May, 2020. The detailed advertisement can be viewed at http://www.rri.res.in/other_openings.html

British PM moved to intensive care

Spokesman says Johnson is stable and conscious; Foreign Secretary takes over 'many of PM's duties'

ASSOCIATED PRESS
LONDON

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was taken into intensive care on Tuesday with COVID-19, while Japan's leader declared a month-long state of emergency for Tokyo and six other regions to keep the virus from ravaging the world's oldest population.

Mr. Johnson, 55, the first major world leader confirmed to have COVID-19, was in stable condition and conscious at a London hospital, where he was receiving oxygen but was not on a ventilator, said his spokesman James Slack.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab has taken over many of Mr. Johnson's duties temporarily while he is being treated. Britain has no official post of deputy Prime Minister.

"We're desperately hoping that Boris can make the speediest possible recovery," said Cabinet minister Michael Gove, who is among scores of British officials in self-isolation. Mr. Johnson's fiancée is recovering from coronavirus symptoms.

Japan's Prime Minister made the emergency declaration after a spike in infections in Tokyo, but it was a stay-at-home request — not an order — and violators will not be penalised. Despite having relatively few infections and deaths, Japan is a worrying target for a virus that has been killing the elderly at much higher rates than other age groups.

Caution ahead of Easter
Italy's commissioner for fighting COVID-19 appealed to Italians ahead of Easter weekend not to lower their guard and to abide by a lockdown now in its fifth week.

Citing data that shows that pressure on Italian intensive care wards is easing, Domenico Arcuri, Italy's commissioner for the coronavirus emergency, said "the crucial reality is stronger that algorithms."



Under care: A journalist at work and a woman, right, with a banner seeking protective gear outside London's St. Thomas' hospital, where PM Johnson is under treatment. •AFP



Abandoned pets die in Pakistan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KARACHI

The carcasses of hundreds of caged cats, dogs and rabbits have been found inside Pakistan's pet markets, which were hurriedly shuttered when the country plunged into a lockdown. In Karachi, animals still alive in the corner of the sprawling Express Market were rescued only after intervention by activists. The carcasses of about 20 dogs were found dumped in a sewer near Tollinton market in the city.

repeatedly. "I beg you, in the next hours and days, do not cancel this number from your memory."

Sense of normalcy
U.S. Surgeon General Jerome Adams said that if Americans continue to practice social distancing for the rest of April, "we will be able to get

U.K. set for 66,000 deaths, highest in Europe: study

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS

Britain could see as many as 66,000 COVID-19 deaths during the first wave of the current pandemic, a study showed on Tuesday, making the outbreak there by far the deadliest in Europe.

Modelling conducted by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) at the University of Washington's School of Medicine showed that approximately 1,51,680 people were likely to die

from the virus across the continent. More than 5,000 people have died from COVID-19 in Britain, fewer than in Spain, Italy and France.

But Britain's epidemic lags behind the rest of the continent by several days.

The study found that Britain could experience 66,000 COVID-19 deaths by July, far more than Italy, the next most severely impacted, with around 20,000. Spain and France were next, with 19,000 and 15,000 predicted deaths.

back to some sense of normalcy."

"I want the American people to know there is a light at the end of this tunnel, and we feel confident that if we keep doing the right thing for the rest of this month, that we can start to slowly reopen in some places," he said.

Worldwide, more than 1.3

Spain's toll rises to 743 after drop

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MADRID

Spain's death toll from COVID-19 increased to 743 on Tuesday after falling for four straight days, lifting the total to 13,798, the Health Ministry said. However, it emphasised that the rise was due to weekend deaths being tallied and that the overall "downward trend" is continuing. The new figure represents a 5.7% increase over Monday's 637 deaths.

Daytime jogging banned in Paris

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS

Paris officials said on Tuesday they would ban daytime jogging as people continue to flout anti-coronavirus lockdown rules, after France recorded its highest daily death toll of 833 in just 24 hours. Under nationwide confinement rules that came into force on March 17, people can leave their homes only for essential purposes, which had included a solo walk or run within one km of their homes.

million people have been confirmed infected and over 76,000 have died, according to Johns Hopkins University. The true numbers are almost certainly much higher, because of limited testing, different rules for counting the dead and deliberate under-reporting by some governments.

U.S. death toll crosses 11,000

Officials tell Americans to brace for one of the worst periods

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

Americans were put on notice on Monday not to let up in the fight against COVID-19, as a grim milestone of 11,000 deaths cast a pall over the first signs of optimism about the outbreak's trajectory.

The U.S. has emerged as one of the world's worst-hit nations, with a steadily mounting number of fatalities and millions facing the possibility of economic ruin.

Authorities began the week by telling frightened communities to brace for one of the worst periods yet in an outbreak that has not yet reached its peak.

Johns Hopkins University, which has been keeping a running tally of coronavirus numbers, said more than 3,69,000 U.S. cases had been confirmed, with 10,986 deaths by late Monday.

New York State has recorded its highest number of COVID-19 deaths in 24 hours, Governor Andrew Cuomo said on Tuesday, adding that hospitalizations approached to be "plateauing."

Mr. Cuomo said 31 people succumbed to the new



Making it count: A man casting his ballot in a Democratic presidential primary poll in Wisconsin on Tuesday. •AFP

coronavirus on Monday, bringing the State's total death toll to 5,489. The previous single-day record was 630, set on Friday.

He said New York appeared to be nearing the peak of its pandemic, with a three-day average of hospitalizations down.

"If the curve is turning, it's because the rate of infection is going down. If the rate of infection is going down, it's because physical distancing is working."

Authorities have warned that between 1,00,000 and 2,40,000 people could die in the U.S., even in a best-case scenario.

Nine States — all con-

trolled by Republican governors — have still not yet ordered total lockdowns, much to the frustration of public health experts.

SC nod for voting
The Wisconsin Supreme Court blocked a last-minute attempt by the Governor there to postpone the next day's Democratic presidential primary and other elections because of the epidemic and ruled that the vote should go ahead.

In a 4-2 decision, the top State court overturned an executive order from the Democratic Governor Tony Evers, who had sought to delay the election until June due to the outbreak.

No new COVID-19 deaths in China

REUTERS
BEIJING

Mainland China reported no COVID-19 deaths for the first time since the pandemic began and a drop in new cases on Tuesday, a day before the central city of Wuhan, where the virus emerged late in December, was set to lift its lockdown.

China had reported 32 new infections on Monday, down from 39 a day earlier, according to the National Health Commission.

For the first time since the

Commission began publishing nationwide data in late January, Wuhan saw no new deaths.

Wuhan, a city of 11 million that reported only two new infections in the past fortnight, is due to allow residents to leave the city on Wednesday for the first time since it was locked down on January 23 to curb the spread of the virus.

From midnight, traffic control checkpoints in Wuhan will be dismantled, and normal operation of rail-

ways, airports, waterways, highways and buses will resume.

But zero new cases do not mean zero risks, the province's counter-epidemic authority said in a statement.

Wuhan residents are urged not to leave their neighbourhood, and the city and even the province are less necessary.

Zhejiang, a populous province in the east, will conduct all the necessary tests on people arriving from Wuhan over the next 14 days.

'Stay at home for the country'

India sends emergency medical supplies to Sri Lanka

MEERU ANJIVASAN
COLOMBO

For people who have survived a war for 30 years, living camps and amid fear, staying at home in the wake of pandemic cannot be difficult, Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa said, urging citizens to stay at home for the country's sake.

Speaking at a televised address on Tuesday night, Mr. Rajapaksa outlined the initiatives being taken by the government led by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, his younger brother, to combat COVID-19 that has so far affected 185 persons, of whom six have died.

Underscoring the pandemic's impact on the global economy, and on Sri Lanka's garment exports and revenue from foreign remittances, PM Rajapaksa sought the country's cooperation to take on the "enemy" (virus), in order to put the country back on track.



Mahinda Rajapaksa

Even as calls from the political opposition to reconvene Parliament grow louder, Mr. Rajapaksa said: "When we tried to pass an interim budget before dissolution of Parliament [on March 2], the Parliament did not support us," asking "what use" reconvening Parliament could be now. The opposition has maintained that reconvening Parliament would be in democratic spirit, and allow for grievances from all parts of the country to be heard better.

Apparently responding to requests from former Mus-

lim parliamentarians and civil society members, seeking burial rights for Muslim victims — authorities cremated the body of a Muslim victim sparking concern — Mr. Rajapaksa said: "This is not the time to fulfil special religious or ritual rights... this is the time to think about the country."

Leaders seek link India

Earlier, Both Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Mahinda Rajapaksa tweeted thanking India for a special consignment of essential medicines that arrived in Sri Lanka via a special Air India charter flight. The 10-tonne consignment of "life-saving" medicines were requested by the Government of Sri Lanka, a press release from the Indian High Commission in Colombo said.

"This is yet another manifestation of India's unwavering commitment to stand with Sri Lanka, in rain and in shine," the statement said.

White House pushes unproven drug

Scientists say more testing is needed before hydroxychloroquine is proven safe

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump and his administration are promoting an anti-malaria drug not officially approved for fighting the new coronavirus, even though scientists say more testing is needed before it's proven safe and effective against COVID-19.

Mr. Trump's Trade Adviser Peter Navarro championed hydroxychloroquine in television interviews Monday, a day after the President publicly put his faith in the medication to lessen the toll of the coronavirus pandemic.

"What do I know, I'm not a doctor," Mr. Trump said on Sunday. "But I have common sense." In promoting the drug's possibilities, the President has often stated, "What have you got to lose?"

Mr. Trump held out promise for the drug as he grasps for ways to sound hopeful in the face of a mounting death toll and

with the worst weeks yet to come for the U.S. The virus has killed more than 10,000 in the U.S., and measures meant to contain its spread have taken a painful economic toll and all but frozen life in large swaths of the country.

But medical officials warn that it's dangerous to be hawking unproven remedies, and even Trump's own experts have cautioned against it.

Severe side effects

The American Medical Association's president, Dr. Patricia Harris, said she personally would not prescribe the drug for a coronavirus patient, saying the risks of severe side effects were "great and too significant" without large studies showing the drug is safe and effective for such use.

"People have their health to lose," she said. "Your heart could stop."



President Donald Trump opening a COVID-19 test kit in Washington. •AP

In a heated Situation Room meeting of the White House's coronavirus task force on Saturday, Mr. Navarro challenged the top U.S. infectious disease expert, Dr. Anthony Fauci, over his concerns about recommending the drug based only on unscientific anecdotal evidence.

Mr. Navarro, who has no formal medical training, erupted at Mr. Fauci, raising his voice and claiming the reports of studies he had col-

lected were enough to recommend the drug widely, according to a person familiar with the exchange who spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe the blow-up.

Mr. Fauci has repeatedly said current studies provide only anecdotal findings that the drug works. In response, Mr. Navarro told CNN on Monday, "I would have two words for you — second opinion."

Off-label prescribing

Doctors are already prescribing the malaria drug to patients with COVID-19, a practice known as off-label prescribing.

Research studies are now beginning to test if the drug truly help COVID-19 patients, and the Food and Drug Administration has allowed the medication into the national stockpile as an option for patients who cannot get into one of the studies.

ELSEWHERE



1960s Bond girl Honor Blackman dead at 94

LONDON
Honor Blackman, one of the most memorable co-stars of the early James Bond films, has died at the age of 94. The actress shut to fame in her late 30s after playing legendary Bond girl Pussy Galore in the 1964 movie *Goldfinger*. Ms. Blackman also became well-known for her role as Cathy Gale in 1960s TV spy series *The Avengers*. •AFP

Taliban to end 'fruitless' talks over prisoner swap

KABUL
The Taliban said it will no longer participate in "fruitless" discussions with the Afghan government over a prisoner swap that had formed a key part of a deal with the U.S. The group's spokesman Suhail Shaheen blamed the Afghanistan government for delaying the prisoner release. •AFP

Cardinal Pell acquitted of sexual offences

Vatican welcomed the decision, says ex-treasurer waited for truth to emerge

REUTERS
MELBOURNE

Australia's highest court acquitted former Vatican treasurer George Pell on Tuesday of sexually assaulting two teenaged choirboys in the 1990s, freeing the 78-year-old cardinal after 404 days in jail.

The Vatican welcomed the decision and praised Mr. Pell for having "waited for the truth to be ascertained". In a statement it said it always had confidence in Australian justice, that Mr. Pell had always maintained his innocence and that the Holy See reaffirmed its "commitment to preventing and pursuing all cases of abuse against minors".

The High Court, ruling

from Brisbane, ordered Mr. Pell's convictions to be quashed and verdicts of acquittal be entered in their place, ending the most high profile case of alleged historical sex abuse to rock the Roman Catholic Church.

The seven judges of the High Court agreed unanimously that the jury in the cardinal's trial "ought to have entertained a doubt" about his guilt. Mr. Pell, who has maintained his innocence throughout the lengthy court process, cannot be retried on the charges.

"I hold no ill will toward my accuser, I do not want my acquittal to add to the hurt and bitterness so many feel; there is certainly hurt and bitterness enough," Pell said



George Pell

A few hours after Mr. Pell's acquittal, Pope Francis offered his morning Mass for those who suffer from unjust sentences. Francis did not mention Mr. Pell by name.

Unjust sentences?
"I would like to pray today for all those people who suffer unjust sentences resulting from intransigence (against them)," Pope Francis said, speaking extemporaneously at the start of the Mass.

An investigation of Mr. Pell by the Vatican was mooted but never formally begun.

The Pope appointed Mr. Pell to overhaul the Vatican's vast finances in 2014 and has withheld comment on the case throughout the trial and appeals.

Chad's former dictator under house arrest

ASSOCIATED PRESS
DAKAR

Former Chadian dictator Hissene Habre has been granted 60 days of home arrest by Senegal's Justice Ministry because of the threat of COVID-19 in the prison where he is serving a life sentence.

"Habre was not released," Hissene Habre is still in prison but simply the place of detention has changed," Justice Minister Malick Sall said in the announcement late Monday. "Habre is an international political prisoner who has been entrusted to us by the international community his security is the responsibility of the state of Senegal."

Prince Harry and Meghan to start non-profit in U.S.

They have planned many projects under the name Archewell

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

Prince Harry and his wife Meghan Markle are planning to launch a wide-ranging non-profit organisation named Archewell, reports on Tuesday said.

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex told the *Daily Telegraph* newspaper they were establishing the organisation in the U.S., where they are now based.

The charitable organisation will include emotional support groups, a multimedia educational empire and a well-being website among other things.

They said they wanted "to



Prince Harry and wife Meghan in London, in this file photo. •REUTERS

Telegraph said. They have delayed releasing full details about it because of the COVID-19 pandemic and will make an announcement "when the time is right", they told the paper.

Their proposals are for "a vast and ambitious array of projects" under the name Archewell to replace their previous "Sussex Royal" brand, it added.

The new name is reportedly derived from the Greek word Arche, meaning "source of action", and was the inspiration behind the name of their son, Archie Mountbatten-Windsor.

MARKET WATCH

07-04-2020	% CHANGE
Sensex	30067 8.97
US Dollar	75.64 0.64
Brent oil	33.17

NIFTY 50

PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	248.10 3.30
Asian Paints	1623.80 102.90
Axis Bank	388.85 63.40
Bajaj Auto	2280.05 246.30
Bajaj Finserv	4724.90 214.15
Bajaj Finance	2253.35 45.85
Bharti Airtel	470.20 46.25
BPL	351.10 33.95
Britannia Ind	2834.50 271.25
Cipla	492.25 43.05
Coal India	140.15 2.40
Dr Reddys Lab	3583.20 436.40
Eicher Motors	13096.05 416.00
GAIL (India)	84.50 3.60
Grasim Ind	518.55 63.85
HCL Tech	451.15 45.35
HDFC	1555.15 55.60
HDFC Bank	896.10 82.25
Hera Motocorp	1769.20 187.15
Hindalco	103.95 15.15
Hind Unilever	2444.90 290.80
ICICI Bank	326.10 39.45
IndusInd Bank	383.85 70.65
Infratel	159.65 3.25
Infosys	639.00 53.30
Indian Oil Corp	83.00 3.50
ITC	181.55 3.65
JSW Steel	158.10 17.40
Kotak Bank	1198.05 57.20
L&T	801.65 27.00
LICI	321.85 40.30
Maruti Suzuki	4552.65 542.15
NTPC	17038.65 1934.00
Nestle	81.55 2.00
ONGC	72.90 3.05
PowerGrid Corp	158.00 1.80
Reliance Ind	1206.10 128.65
Surekha Bank	186.40 10.90
State Cement	16634.55 850.75
Sun Pharma	417.45 41.40
Tata Motors	67.25 1.95
Tata Steel	276.20 22.45
TCS	1775.20 121.00
Tech Mahindra	549.85 28.95
Titan	947.45 84.65
UltraTech Cement	3279.50 237.90
UPL	323.65 25.55
Wendton	66.75 3.95
Wipro	131.90 11.90
Zee Entertainment	140.90 16.55

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on April 07

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	75.63	75.75
Euro	81.93	82.28
British Pound	92.68	93.08
Japanese Yen (100)	69.14	69.43
Chinese Yuan	10.69	10.73
Swiss Franc	77.48	77.81
Singapore Dollar	52.88	53.12
Canadian Dollar	53.73	53.98
Malaysian Ringgit	17.38	17.47

Source: Indian Bank

SBI cuts MCLR by 35 bps

State Bank of India, the country's largest lender, has reduced the marginal cost of fund-based lending rate (MCLR) by 35 basis points (bps) across all loan tenures. The new rate will come into effect from April 10.

With this cut, the one-year MCLR of SBI will be 7.4%.

"EMIs on eligible home loan accounts (linked to MCLR) will get cheaper by around ₹24 per ₹1 lakh on a 30-year loan," SBI said.

The move comes after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) reduced the repo rate by 75 bps in the last week of March.

The lender has also reduced the savings account deposits rate, the second such cut in a month and third cut since November 2019.

"In view of adequate liquidity in the system, SBI realigns its interest rates on savings bank deposits, with effect from April 15, 2020," SBI said.

The new rate will be 2.75% for both savings account balance of less than ₹1 lakh and above ₹1 lakh.

IndusInd Bank shares surge 22.6%

Shares of private sector lender IndusInd Bank shot up 22.6% to ₹384.05 apiece on Tuesday after the lender reported healthy business growth for the fourth quarter.

In a filing with the exchanges, the lender said its advances grew 13% for FY20 to ₹21 lakh crore while deposits rose 4% to ₹2.02 lakh crore. Retail deposits and deposits of small business customers were up 34% year-on-year, the bank said.

Liquidity coverage ratio stood at 112.2% for the quarter ended March 31, 2020. The share of low cost deposits to total deposits fell to 40.5% in March end from 42.4% three months ago.

Total invests ₹3,707 crore in Adani JV

The equal joint venture with the French energy giant includes 2.15 GW of solar projects

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT AHMEDABAD

Gujarat-based Adani Green Energy Ltd. (AGEL), a part of the diversified Adani Group, had formed an equal joint venture with French energy giant Total SA.

Total SA has invested ₹3,707 crore in the JV that includes 2.148 GW of solar projects operating across 14 States in India. The deal portfolio also includes Restricted Group 1 and 2 projects, that had recently raised \$862.5 million from international bond markets.

Restricted Group 2 was the first investment grade rated issuance by a renewable business in India and was widely recognised by global capital markets and international publications, the Adani Group said in a release.

"The transaction underlines the partners' commitment to contribute to addressing India's sustainable development goals through the establishment of the joint venture, both partners aim to adhere to highest standards of governance and strengthen the foundation of the partnership between the two groups," Adani Group stated in the release.

The closing of the transaction in the current environment reinforces the strength of the relationship between the two partners and underscores the robust joint climate commitment of both, it said.



Sunny days ahead: AGEL has set a target of achieving 25 GW solar power capacity by 2025, which will make it the largest solar player in the world. • AFP

AGEL has set an ambitious target of achieving 25 GW solar power capacity by 2025, which is aimed at becoming the largest solar player in the world by 2030.

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Developers sitting on ₹3.7 lakh cr. in unsold inventory

May take longer than usual to sell existing 4.55 lakh units, says real estate consultancy firm JLL

LALATENDU MISHRA MUMBAI

The COVID-19 spread in India has added to the woes of the real estate sector, which is saddled with huge unsold inventory.

The January-March quarter of 2020 has witnessed an increase in unsold inventory as launches outpaced sales by a significant margin.

Unsold inventory increased from 4.42,228 units in the last quarter of 2019 to 4.55,351 units in the first quarter of 2020, according to a report by JLL.

In this report, Mumbai surpassed Delhi NCR to become the market with the maximum quantum as well as value of unsold inventory, the real estate consulting firm said.



The situation may aggravate liquidity challenges developers face and restrict new launches for some time. • RAJEEV BHATT

"Across the top seven cities, developers are sitting on an unsold inventory worth ₹3.7 lakh crore at the end of March 2020," JLL said.

"An assessment of years to sell (YTS) reveals that the expected time to liquidate this stock has increased marginally from 3.2 years in the last quarter of 2019 to 3.3 years in Q1 2020. With anticipated slower sales in the coming quarters, the time to sell is likely to increase," it said.

"Having said this, the RBI's intervention to provide a 3-month moratorium on all term loans by financial institutions will alleviate shorter-term liquidity concerns and help developers survive in these uncertain times," it added.

Despite the concerns of the outbreak of COVID-19 in many countries, the January to March quarter saw a 3% increase in new launches of residential units compared to the same period last year.

Out of total new launches of 40,574 units in the top seven markets, Mumbai and Bengaluru accounted for nearly 60% of the overall launches during the quarter.

JLL said a rebound in India's residential property market will be influenced by the intensity, spread and duration of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tata Power unit bags 300 MW deal for ₹1,730 crore

Commercial operation dates Sept. 2021

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

Tata Power Solar, a wholly owned subsidiary of Tata Power, has received approval to build a 300 MW CPSU-II for NTPC post the reverse auction held on February 21, at a price of ₹1,730.16 crore.

The commercial operation date (COD) for this grid-connected solar photovoltaic project is set for September 2021.

With this order, the order book of Tata Power Solar stands at approximately ₹8,541 crore, including external and internal orders.

Ashish Khanna, MD & CEO, Tata Power Solar, and president, Tata Power (Renewables), said, "This being a DCR project, we will be building the project with our own cells and modules."



In September 2019, post reverse auction, Tata Power Solar had received a Letter of Award to develop a 105 MW Floating Solar Project worth about ₹343 crore, including three years of operations and maintenance.

This venture is executed on the reservoir of NTPC Kayamkulam district in Alappuzha, Kerala, and is to be commissioned within 21 months.

"This arrangement will come into force with immediate effect and will remain valid till September 30, 2020," the RBI said.

RBI eases overdraft rules for States

Commercial operation dates Sept. 2021

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

In order to provide greater flexibility to State governments to cover their cash flow mismatches due to the lockdown, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to increase the number of days for which a State or a union territory can be in overdraft continuously to 21 working days from the current stipulation of 14 working days.

The RBI has also increased the number of days for which a State / UT can be in overdraft in a quarter to 50 working days from the current stipulation of 36 working days.

"This arrangement will come into force with immediate effect and will remain valid till September 30, 2020," the RBI said.

Virus to cull 80,000 retail jobs: RAI survey

Over 95% of non-food retailers have shut shop since lockdown took effect

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

About 80,000 jobs are expected to be cut by retailers due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, according to a survey by industry body RAI.

Retailers Association of India (RAI) conducted a survey of 769 retailers, which employ 3,92,963 people across India, to gauge their view on the impact of COVID-19 on their business and manpower.

"Small retailers are expected to lay off 30% of their manpower going forward, this number falls to 12% for medium (sized) retailers and 5% for large retailers. On the whole, retailers who were surveyed expect lay-offs of about 20% of their manpower," RAI said.

The expectation of retrenchment of 20% amounts to 78,592 people.



Shutters speak: About three retailers surveyed want employee salary and financial support from the government. • AP

According to the industry body, small retailers were impacted on March 25, more than 95% of non-food retailers have closed their outlets and are looking at practically no revenues during the period and expect to earn only about 40% of last year's revenue in the next six months, the survey said.

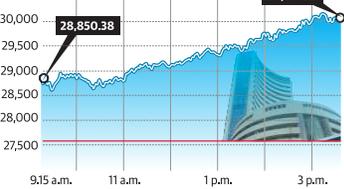
As for food retailers, in the next six months they expect to earn 56% as compared to last year's revenues. With most of food retailers also selling non-essential goods in the same or different stores, the non-food business in the stores has come to a standstill during the lockdown, leading to revenue loss, it added.

On the business outlook, 70% of the retailers expect business recovery to happen in more than six months, while 20% expect it to take more than a year.

On expectations from the government, RAI said two out of three retailers employing substantial workforce want employee salary and financial support to manage their fixed costs and limit manpower downsizing.

RAI further said two out of five retailers want concessions and relief on GST, taxes and loans.

Some cheer



Markets surge on hopes of virus peaking

FPIs net buy ₹742 crore in shares

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

Indian equity benchmarks registered their biggest single-day gain in absolute terms on Tuesday as global markets rose on hopes that the COVID-19 pandemic may be hitting its peak and the rising curve would flatten soon.

The 30-share Sensex gained almost 9%, or 2,476.26 points, to close above the psychological 30,000-mark at 30,067.21.

The Sensex pack saw stocks such as IndusInd Bank, Axis Bank, ICICI Bank, M&M, Hindustan Unilever, Maruti Suzuki India, Nestle, and Reliance Industries, all gaining over 10% on Tuesday.

The broader Nifty gained 708.40 points, or 8.76%, to close at 8,792.20. The India VIX, meanwhile, dipped almost 6% on Tuesday – the first trading session after an extended holiday.

"The rally in the market was driven by positive news with regard to data from New York and Spain on the rate of corona infections," said Abhimanyu Sofat, head, research, IIFL Securities.

"The flattening of the curve would help a risk-on trade in the market. However, for Nifty to go above the 9,000 levels, one would need some additional positive news on the domestic front with regard to corona," added Mr. Sofat.

As per reports, the state of New Jersey, which has the second-highest number of COVID-19 cases and deaths, saw a 12% increase in the number of cases on Monday – a sharp fall compared with the 24% rise registered on March 30.

In India, however, the total number of cases is nearing the 4,500-mark with a few State governments suggesting extending the 21-day lockdown.

On the BSE, more than 1,800 stocks rose compared with the less than 550 that declined. Further, more than 400 stocks hit their upper circuit on Tuesday.

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) were net buyers at almost ₹742 crore while their domestic counterparts bought shares worth ₹422 crore.

Among leading Asian indices, both Hang Seng and Nikkei gained over 2% each while the benchmarks of South Korea, Taiwan, China, Malaysia, Singapore and Philippines all ended with significant gains on Tuesday.

Virus forces corporates to rethink on hygiene

Companies shift their employees from PGs and hostels to co-living facilities

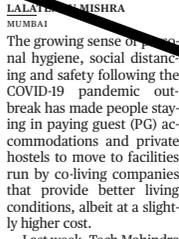
LALATENDU MISHRA MUMBAI

The growing sense of personal hygiene, social distancing and safety following the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak has made people staying in paying guest (PG) accommodations and private hostels to move to facilities run by co-living companies that provide better living conditions, albeit at a slightly higher cost.

Last week, Tech Mahindra moved its staff numbering about 100 living in PG accommodation and elsewhere to a co-living facility run by Guesture at Electronics City, Bengaluru. More corporates are considering similar arrangements to protect their employees as the work-from-home culture is likely to continue.

Analysts said following the virus outbreak, the unorganised housing sector (PGs and private hostels) is facing major issues because of the health, hygiene, cleanliness, infrastructure, density and maintenance of the space during this hour of crisis. These places, according to them, are not best suited to adjust to work from home.

Sriram Chitturi, founder of Guesture and founding president of the Rental Housing Association of India said, "The transition from the unorganised to the organised sector has gained momentum. A lot of requests are coming from people and companies asking if we could accommodate them."



No clean zone: Paying guest units and hostels have hygiene and maintenance issues. • V. SREENIVASA MURTHY



No clean zone: Paying guest units and hostels have hygiene and maintenance issues. • V. SREENIVASA MURTHY

"This mega trend is playing out in this industry. Earlier, when we cautioned them [corporates] about such living conditions, they were not that receptive. Today, COVID-19 has changed that attitude," he added.

He said companies themselves would realise that there should be emphasis towards hygiene, cleanliness and sanitisation.

"The unorganised players will be losing out substantially because governments have started enforcing rules on the number of people that can be accommodated in a particular space," he said.

Besides, corporates have now realised that for their business continuity issues, their people must live and work from a place which does not lead to productivity loss.

Economy to contract 4.5% in fourth quarter, says ICRA

Ratings agency pegs FY21 GDP growth at 2%

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

The Indian economy is likely to witness a sharp contraction of 4.5% during Q4FY20 and is expected to recover gradually to post a GDP growth of just 2% in FY21, rating agency ICRA said.

ICRA said it reduced the growth forecast due to the nationwide lockdown imposed in the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Concerns morphed from the impact of exports from China on domestic supply chains into domestic and external demand shock, with social distancing and lockdowns leading to production shutdowns and job losses in some sectors," ICRA said. Sectors that will be impacted the most are aviation, hotels, restaurants and tourism, auto dealerships, ceramic tiles, gems and jewellery, retail, shipping, ports and port services, seafood and poultry and microfinance institutions.

The impact on sectors such as automobiles, auto components, building materials, construction, chemicals, residential real estate, consumer goods, pharmaceuticals, logistics, banking, mining, paper, consulting, ferrous metals, footwear, glass, plastics, power and trade are going to be moderate.

ICRA said it reduced the growth forecast due to the nationwide lockdown imposed in the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The low inflation sectors will be the education, FMCG, healthcare, food and food products, insurance, telecom, utilities, sugar, tea, coffee and agricultural produce," ICRA said.

The rating agency said extended demand disruptions are likely to lead to elongated payment cycles.

"Since an entity's liquidity position is of paramount importance to support its credit profile, it is expected that several entities would seek to conserve cash, either by invoking force majeure clauses to revoke payments or by deferring payments to the extent possible," it said, adding this could result in many entities facing working capital blockage as their receivables get stretched and inventory not reducing simultaneously.

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IN BRIEF



Gavaskar donates ₹59 lakh; Pujara also makes a contribution

NEW DELHI
Sunil Gavaskar has donated ₹59 lakh and Test regular Cheteshwar Pujara has also made an unspecified contribution to the PM-CARES Fund. Rohan Gavaskar tweeted "...this was done last week. 35 because he scored 35 hundreds for India and 24 because he scored 24 for Mumbai. Prayers for everyone's good health and that we are all safe and sound." Pujara, for his part, thanked all the frontline warriors, including doctors, para medical staff, and police, who are doing selfless service at this critical juncture. PTI

Japan to end display of Olympic Flame

TOKYO
The Olympic flame, kept for public display in the Fukushima region since last week, will be removed, officials said on Tuesday. The country is bracing for a state of emergency due to the coronavirus pandemic that has forced the postponement of Tokyo 2020 to next year. AFP



Italy and Catalonia MotoGPs postponed

PARIS
The start of the MotoGP season has been pushed back to June-end at the earliest after organisers on Tuesday postponed the Italian GP (May 31) and Catalanian GP (June 7) due to the coronavirus. The first race of the season is now scheduled for Germany on June 21. AFP

Former Real and Barca coach Antic passes away

MADRID
Serbian coach Radomir Antic, the only person to manage Atletico Madrid, Real Madrid and Barcelona, died on Monday at the age of 71 following a long illness. His first stint at one of Spain's big clubs came during a 10-month spell with Real in 1991-92. Antic managed Atletico across three different spells between 1995 and 2000 and Barcelona during the second part of the 2002-03 campaign. AFP



La Liga eyeing May return, says Tebas

MADRID
La Liga could return to action as early as next month, its president Javier Tebas said on Tuesday, following the coronavirus shutdown. Tebas also warned clubs could lose as much as €1 billion if the season is not completed. AFP

New dates for World Team TT Championships

LAUSANNE
The World Team Table Tennis Championships, originally scheduled for March 2020, will now be held from September 27 to October 4, the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) announced on Tuesday. PTI

World Athletics suspends Olympic qualification period

LONDON
World Athletics on Tuesday suspended the qualification period for the Tokyo Olympics until December 2020. "Qualification for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games is suspended effective from 6 April 2020 until 30 November 2020 included," World Athletics said in a statement. "Subject to the global situation returning to normal, the qualification period will resume on 1 December 2020 and continue to the new qualification deadline in 2021 set by the International Olympic Committee." PTI



No NBA decisions likely until May: Silver

LOS ANGELES
NBA Commissioner Adam Silver says he thinks it will be at least May before any decision can be made about resumption of the 2019-20 season that was shut down amid the coronavirus pandemic. Silver also said the league was considering resuming play without fans, whether in NBA arenas, at practice facilities or in a single site tournament-style playoffs. AFP



Nick Kyrgios offers to personally drop off food

SYDNEY
Controversial tennis star Nick Kyrgios has offered to deliver food personally to people finding themselves hungry during the coronavirus lockdown. "Please don't go to sleep with an empty stomach. Even just for a box of noodles, a loaf of bread or milk. I will drop it off at your doorstep, no questions asked!" he said in an Instagram post late on Monday. AFP



Aman Balgu makes a difference in these tough times

Former India paddler is doing his bit for the society

K. KEERTHIVASAN
CHENNAI

Former India paddler and reigning Telangana No. 1 Aman Balgu is doing his bit during the time of COVID-19.

With the help of a few friends, the 31-year-old, an Income Tax Inspector in Hyderabad, has been distributing sanitizers and face masks to Police stations in

Nampally, Punjagutta and Banjara Hills areas.

Balgu has also distributed food packets to migrant labourers and an orphanage.

"We distributed 1,000 sanitizers and around 500 masks to a few police stations.

"We went to the police area heads and they handed over them to others," Balgu



Helping hand: Balgu, right, and his friends distributed masks and food packets in Hyderabad recently. *SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

'Football the last thing on my mind'

It's important to take care of physical and mental health, says Chhetri

ASHWIN ACHAL
BENGALURU

In these tough times, with lockdown in effect and long days passing ever so slowly, one might feel an emotional emptiness deep inside. To best avoid this slippery slope, this downtime should be used to exercise the mind in order to keep spirits high, India and Bengaluru FC (BFC) football star Sunil Chhetri believes.

"It is important that everyone exercises their minds. These are unprecedented times; it's easy to get bogged down. The key is to stay calm, take care of your physical health and, more importantly, your mental health.

"Find things to keep yourself busy, hoping that these days will pass soon," Chhetri told *The Hindu*.

The striker appealed to everyone to stay indoors in the fight against the coronavirus outbreak, while offering some advice on how to spend time wisely.

"Now is a great time to read that book you've been putting off, finally getting down to cooking something you've been wanting to put together, learning a language, taking a short course online — the options are plenty.

You have to think about the battle faced by people who will be beginning from scratch. You have to be grateful

"And if you can squeeze in a little basic workout at home, that would be ideal. Most importantly, whatever it is you choose to do, make sure you're exercising your mind," he said.

Raising funds

Chhetri led the effort to raise funds from current and former Indian footballers to donate an undisclosed amount to the PM-CARES Fund.

"All the national team boys came together and decided we needed to help. It didn't take any forcing or coaxing. Everyone came forward willingly, and that was heartening. Even some of the former players, when they heard of this, jumped right in with their contributions," Chhetri said.

He is not concerned about the lack of football action, as there are far bigger concerns to tackle.

Fortunate

"Football is the last thing on my mind. It's easy for us sitting in homes to talk about what we miss doing. We're fortunate. There are so many out there who are struggling to get meals, and don't have a roof over their heads.

"When things get back to normal, football will happen again. But you have to think about the battle faced by people who will be beginning from scratch.

"You have to be grateful," he said.



The bigger picture: Sunil Chhetri feels that keeping active and staying fit will work wonders under the circumstances.

*FILE PHOTO: K. MURALI KUMAR

Ready to play in empty stadiums: Harbhajan

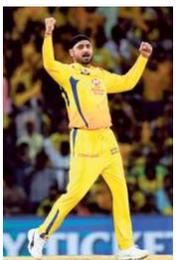
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Veteran off-spinner Harbhajan Singh says he won't mind an IPL played in empty stadiums but the event should go ahead when the COVID-19 pandemic is brought under control as several livelihoods are dependent on it.

"Spectators are important, but if the situation arises, I don't mind playing without them. Yes, as a player I won't get the vibe, but this will ensure that every fan will get to watch IPL on television," Harbhajan, who plays for Chennai Super Kings, told Star Sports' Cricket Connected.

Priority

"We will have to be cautious about everything and should prioritise players' safety by ensuring that the match venues, team hotels, flights are properly sanitised. A lot of lives are on the line so we should organise



Harbhajan... optimistic.

*FILE PHOTO: K. PICHUMANI

the IPL when everything is fine," he added.

The BCCI has suspended the IPL till April 15.

Harbhajan said he is keeping himself fit for the league as and when it happens.

"I hope that the IPL happens soon, till then I will keep myself fit," said the 39-year-old veteran of 103 Tests.

A ploy to limit ways of getting out: Smith

The run-machine explains rationale behind his unusual batting stance

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

His unorthodox batting stance has left many befuddled, but Steve Smith says though it depends on a number of factors, he generally positions himself outside the off-stump to limit ways in which he can be dismissed.

Smith, the World's No. 1 Test batsman, has amassed 7227 runs in 73 Tests and 4162 runs in ODIs with an unconventional technique, which many have failed to decode.

During a podcast organised by his IPL team Rajasthan Royals, Smith opened up about the unusual technique to New Zealand spinner Ish Sodhi.

The Royals' skipper said: "It depends on who's bowling, how is the wicket playing, how I gonna score and stuff like that or how people are trying to get me out,

probably that determines how open I am or otherwise how closed I am.

Visual judgement

"But my general stance where my back foot is going to almost off stump, or may be even outside at stages, I know that anything outside my eyeline isn't hitting the stumps," he said.

"For me, you shouldn't get out if the ball is not hitting the stumps, so that is just a trick from me when I first started doing it, just limiting the ways I get out," he explained.

The 30-year-old said his off-stump stance helps him to leave the ball which are outside his line of sight.

"Sometimes, I get trapped in front but I'm okay with that at stages, knowing that if it is outside my eyeline, I don't need to try and play the ball, I can just leave that," he said.

Aussies went soft on Kohli and India: Clarke

'Were too scared to sledge players to protect their IPL deals'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MELBOURNE

The Australian cricketers were so keen on protecting their lucrative IPL deals that they felt "scared" of slogging India captain Virat Kohli and his teammates during a particular period, former skipper Michael Clarke has claimed.

"Everybody knows how powerful India are as regards the financial part of the game, internationally or domestically with the IPL," Clarke told *Big Sports Breakfast*.

"I feel that Australian cricket and probably every other team over a little period were too scared to sledge Kohli or the other Indian players because they had to play with them in April," the World Cup-winning Australian skipper said, dropping a bombshell.

Compromised

Clarke believes that some of Australia's ruthless on-field character got compromised because the top-10 draws at the IPL auctions gave an impression that they would never sledge Kohli.

"Name a list of ten players and they are



Clarke and Kohli. *PTI

bidding for these Australian players to get into their IPL team," he said.

"The players were like: 'I'm not going to sledge Kohli, I want him to pick me for Bangalore so I can make my USD1 million for my six weeks'

"I feel like that's where Australia went through that little phase where our cricket became a little bit softer or not as hard as we're accustomed to seeing," Clarke said about the time after the ball-tampering scandal when terms like "Elite honesty" were propagated.

India and Australia have always had a fiery on-field chemistry.



Logical reasoning: Steve Smith says his stance depends on the bowler or the playing surface. *FILE PHOTO: V.V. KRISHNAN

As with so many recent questions, no one knows the answer to the fate of the IPL



BETWEEN WICKETS

SURESH MENON

The American novelist and short story writer John Cheever said it best, although others too have said something similar: "I can't write without a reader."

It is the reader who makes the writer; the audience which makes the performer. Can you conceive of a concert, for example, in an empty hall, or a cricket match with no one in the stands? A few months ago this would have sounded absurd. Now we are forced to consider it in our virus-induced world of isolation and inactivity.

The UEFA Champions League, Serie A in Italy, the English Premier League, Mexico's football league were only some of the events that experimented with matches in empty stadiums before lockdowns and travel restrictions became the norm. There is something weird about playing in empty stadiums — especially since we call popular sports 'spectator sports'.

Cricket has sometimes been

played in empty stadiums — but that was because no one turned up to watch. The expression "two men and a dog" was used so often to describe the turnout at some county matches in England that it has evolved into a sporting cliché. In India in recent years, Ranji Trophy matches would sometimes count as well attended if two men and a dog actually sat in the stands.

Immoral feel

There is something almost immoral about sport sans spectators. True, at the top level, it is not the paying spectator at the stadium who keeps the sport alive, but those munching on chips and nuts on their sofas back home lounging before a television set. Cricket has long ceased to be only a game played over 22 yards and become one played on the 22 inches (and more) of the television screen.

I suspect it is possible, thanks to CGI, to put cheering crowds into the background when a game is in reality being played in empty stadiums, and maybe that is where we are headed. I don't know if technology is advanced enough for us to be shown Don Bradman fading up to Jasprit Bumrah or C.K. Nayudu taking on Shane Warne.

However, that is a discussion for another day. Meanwhile, the IPL. It hasn't been formally called off yet

nor have fresh dates been announced. That's understandable. It certainly can't take place this month nor does it seem likely it can in the near future.

As with so many issues relating to the current situation, no one knows. Can India squeeze in a small window for a truncated tournament in September? No one knows. By when should a call be taken? No one knows. Contact-tracing and curve-flattening enter the discussion — two terms few had heard of till recently.

Already the World T20 in Australia in October-November is looking shaky, while the World Test championship is stuck in limbo and the ODI league (scheduled to begin next month) might have to be cancelled.

'Has the weight'

Not surprisingly, players and those involved with the tournament are hoping the IPL is held this year. England's Jos Buttler told ESPNcricinfo that the IPL "has the weight" to force changes in the calendar. Sanjay Manjrekar thinks it will kick start the economy. These are positive thoughts even if built on nothing more substantial than hope. The International Cricket Council meeting May 8-10 might provide some answers, or at least a set of alternatives.

Star India acquired the rights for IPL for five years in 2018 for

₹16,347.50 crore while franchises have paid a king's ransom for some of the players. You can see their dilemma.

It is crass to speak of such huge figures at a time when the country, and especially its poor are in dire straits. Not playing a tournament for one year is hardly in the same league as lives lost and livelihoods deprived in recent weeks. If there is a school of thought which believes that playing a truncated IPL — whenever that might be — at empty stadiums would salvage something from the wreckage of the coronavirus, that is understandable too.

But this is not like transporting the whole tournament lock, stock and barrel to South Africa as the second edition was. There was no treacherous virus then, no travel restrictions, no danger in crowds and no need for social distancing. The 13th edition faces something sport hasn't had to deal with in such numbers and with such intensity.

If Cheever were to return to our midst, he might be surprised to hear a fan has 'heard' all his short stories. 'Readers', in the classic sense may not be necessary in the age of audio books. Perhaps spectators may not be necessary in the age of television and live streaming. Still, the human cost of even a curtailed tournament might be too high.



Foreign Portfolio vs. Foreign Direct Investment: An Overview

Foreign investment, quite simply, is investing in a country other than your home one. It involves capital flowing from one country to another and foreigners having an ownership interest or a say in the business. Foreign investment is generally seen as a catalyst for economic growth and can be undertaken by institutions, corporations, and individuals.

When making foreign investments, investors have to consider economic factors as well as other risk factors, such as political instability and currency exchange risk. These factors can be used to decide if an investment should be direct or through a portfolio.

Foreign Direct Investment

Foreign direct investment (FDI) involves establishing a direct business interest in a foreign country, such as buying or establishing a manufacturing business, building warehouses, or buying buildings.¹

Foreign direct investment tends to involve establishing more of a substantial, long-term interest in the economy of a foreign country.¹ Due to the significantly higher level of investment required, foreign direct investment is usually undertaken by multinational companies, large institutions, or venture capital firms. Foreign direct investment tends to be viewed more favorably since they are considered long-term investments, as well as investments in the well-being of the country itself.

At the same time, the nature of direct investment, such as creating or acquiring a manufacturing facility, makes it much more difficult to liquidate or pull out of the investment. For this reason, direct investment is usually undertaken with essentially the same attitude as establishing a business in one's own country—with the intention of making the business profitable and continuing its operation indefinitely. Direct investment includes having control over the business invested in and being able to manage it directly, but it also involves more risk, work, and commitment.

Foreign Portfolio Investment

Foreign portfolio investment (FPI) refers to investing in the financial assets of a foreign country, such as stocks or bonds available on an exchange. This type of investment is at times viewed less favorably than direct investment because portfolio investments can be sold off quickly and are at times seen as short-term attempts to make money, rather than a long-term investment in the economy.

Portfolio investment typically has a shorter time frame for investment return than direct investment. As with any equity investment, foreign portfolio investors usually expect to quickly realize a profit on their investments.

As securities are easily traded, the liquidity of portfolio investments makes them much easier to sell than direct investments. Portfolio investments are more accessible for the average investor than direct investments because they require much less investment capital and research.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Foreign direct investment is building or purchasing businesses and their associated infrastructure in a foreign country.

Foreign portfolio investment is purchasing securities of foreign countries, such as stock and bonds, on an exchange.

Direct investment is seen as a long-term investment in the country's economy, while portfolio investment can be viewed as a short-term move to make money.

Direct investment is likely only suitable for large corporations, institutions, and private equity investors.

Marginal Cost of Lending Rate: It came into effect in April 2016.

It is a benchmark lending rate for floating-rate loans.

This is the minimum interest rate at which commercial banks can lend.

This rate is based on four components—the marginal cost of funds, negative carry on account of cash reserve ratio, operating costs and tenor premium.

MCLR is linked to the actual deposit rates. Hence, when deposit rates rise, it indicates the banks are likely to hike MCLR and lending rates are set to go up.

Base Rate: Banks stopped lending on base rate from April 2016.

Loans taken between June 2010 and April 2016 from banks were on base rate.

During the period, base rate was the minimum interest rate at which commercial banks could lend to customers.

Base rate is calculated on three parameters — the cost of fund, unallocated cost of resources and return on net worth. Hence, the rate depended on individual banks and they changed it whenever their cost of funds and other parameters changed.

Benchmark Prime Lending Rate: BPLR was used as benchmark rate by banks for lending till June 2010.

Under it, bank loans were priced on the actual cost of funds.

However, the BPLR was subverted, resulting in an opaque system. The bulk of wholesale credit (loans to corporate customers) was contracted at sub-BPL rates and it comprised nearly 70% of all bank credit.

Under this system, banks were subsidising corporate loans by charging high interest rates from retail and small and medium enterprise customers.

