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'Megxit': Harry and Meghan formally quit royal life
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NEARBY



Tahsildars authorised to issue passes for travel

CHENNAI
 The Tamil Nadu government has authorised tahsildars across the State to issue passes allowing people to travel within their districts to attend weddings (held earlier) and funerals and in case of health emergencies during the 21-day lockdown period. A prior movement within the jurisdiction of the Greater Chennai Corporation, zonal officers concerned were authorised to issue passes.

TAMIL NADU ▶ PAGE 2

INDOWUD
 INFC BOARD
 Looks, feels & works as plywood
 TERMITE AND WATER PROOF (FLAME RETARDANT)
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Deferment of tax payment announced

CHENNAI
 Chief Minister Edappadi Palaniswami announced a deferment of cooperative loan repayment, payment of property tax and the like by three months in view of the COVID-19 lockdown. The measure would benefit numerous middle and low-income groups, farmers, and entrepreneurs.

TAMIL NADU ▶ PAGE 2

OPPORTUNITIES ▶ BACK PAGE

Officials of Tablighi Jamaat charged with defying restrictions

Over 400 people with COVID-19 symptoms hospitalised, over 1,000 quarantined

**NIJIL BABU
 SURABH TRIVEDI
 NEW DELHI**

With at least 24 of its occupants testing positive for the novel coronavirus, an Islamic centre in the national capital has turned out to be the latest hotspot of COVID-19. More than 400 people with symptoms were admitted to different hospitals and over 1,100 shifted to government-run quarantine facilities in Delhi alone over Monday and Tuesday, officials said.

Hundreds of others who returned home after staying at the centre over the last fortnight might have carried the virus to several States, authorities fear.



Under watch: People being evacuated from the Tablighi Jamaat centre in the Nizamuddin area of Delhi on Tuesday. • R.V. NARATHY

Thousands of people from across the country, as well as from Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Saudi Arabia, attended a gathering at the centre earlier this month over a number of days, officials said. A large number of them were stuck on the premises as the country went into lockdown on March 24. Markaz Nizamuddin is the international headquarters of Tablighi Jamaat, a puritanical Islamic sect.

The Delhi police on Tues-

day registered a case against Maulana Saad and others from Tablighi Jamaat under Section 3 of the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, read with Sections 269, 270, 271 and 120 of the IPC, for violation of government directions in respect of restriction of gatherings and safety measures, including physical distancing.

'No transport available'
 The centre said, in a statement, that many participants could not leave as all means of transport came to an abrupt halt on March 24,

though it tried to make special arrangements with permission from the authorities. "Under such compelling circumstances, there was no option for Markaz Nizamuddin but to accommodate the stranded visitors with prescribed medical precautions till the situation becomes conducive to their movement or arrangements are made by the authorities."

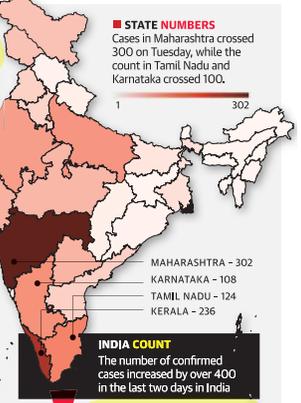
Close community interactions in prayer, dining and travel among Jamaat followers put them at a high risk of the contagion. Participants at the recent congregation

included people from Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Jammu and Kashmir and Kerala — in cases already known.

One of those who attended, a Srinagar-based businessman, died on March 26. He had travelled by air, train and road to Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and back to Jammu and Kashmir. At least 300 people who came in contact with him have been put under quarantine.

Exponential increase

The number of COVID-19 cases crossed 8 lakh globally. The infections in India breached the 1,500-mark on Tuesday.



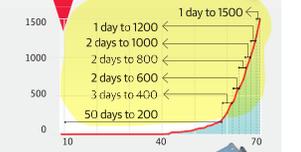
GLOBAL CASE COUNT
 While it took 44 days for the global confirmed cases to reach the 1 lakh mark, it took only 3 days for a jump from 6 lakh to 8 lakh



GLOBAL DEATH TOLL
 It took 58 days to record 10,000 COVID-19 deaths, but just 8 more days for the global toll to cross 30,000



GLOBAL RECOVERED CASES
 While it took 62 days for the number of those who recovered to reach 1 lakh, the count jumped to 1.5 lakh in just six days since then



Supreme Court - Apex court of the country A. 124 to A 147 Est by Regulating Act of 1773 A.32 of the Indian Constitution provides Constitutional remedy A.124 : CJI + 7 other judges. Increase in number of judges decided by Parliament Total strength 34 as of 2019 Judges appointed by Collegium Google NJAC and controversies surrounding collegium Solicitor General is subordinate to Attorney General of India who is the country's highest law officer.

Treat migrants humanely, SC tells officials

It asks govt. to set up a panel and open a portal to put out authentic information about the virus

**KRISHNANANDS RAJAGOPAL
 NEW DELHI**

The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked the police and the authorities to treat migrant workers journeying home in fear of COVID-19 in a humane manner.

"We expect those concerned to appreciate the trepidation of the poor men, women and children and treat them with kindness... The anxiety and fear of the migrants should be understood by the police and other authorities. As directed by the Union of India, they should deal with the migrants in a humane manner. Considering the situation, we are of the opinion that the State governments/Union Territories should endeavour to engage volunteers along with the police to supervise the welfare activities for the migrants," a Bench, led by Chief Justice of India



Stopped enroute: Migrants at a 'gaushala', which has been turned into a relief camp in Manesar, Haryana. • V.V. KRISHNAN

Shardad A. Bobde, said. The court ordered the government to ensure that migrant workers stopped from crossing the inter-State borders were given food, shelter and medicines. The government said it was imperative to stop the mass migration as there was a likelihood that

three out of every 10 workers might be carrying the coronavirus. The court expressed its satisfaction with the government measures.

The Bench, through vide conferencing, asked the government to urge community and religious leaders to speak to the migrant workers lodged in shelters. It asked the government to have trained counsellors talk to the workers.

Authentic information
 The court directed the government, represented by Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, to set up an expert committee and a dedicated portal within 24 hours to disseminate authentic information about the virus and stop the spread of fake news. A status report filed by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs said the propagation of deliberate or inadvertent false information was the "single most unimaginable hindrance" faced by the government in its battle against the virus.

The Bench, comprising Justice L. Nageswara Rao, asked the government to follow up on persons identified as infected and quarantined.

57 more test positive in T.N.; highest single-day rise

National Savings Certificate is an Indian Government Savings Bond used for small savings and income tax saving investments in India. It is part of postal savings system of Indian Postal Service. Interest rates are varied by the GoI rather than RBI. Public provident Fund is also a savings cum tax saving instrument under the Ministry of Finance. Interest rates are decided by government of India AND NOT RBI.

Govt. cuts interest rates on NSC, PPF

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
 NEW DELHI**

The government on Tuesday slashed interest rates on small savings schemes, including National Savings Certificate and Public Provident Fund, by up to 1.4% for the first quarter of 2020-21, in line with the moderation in bank deposit rates.

Interest rates for small savings schemes are notified on a quarterly basis.

With the reduction, term deposits of 1-3 years will now fetch an interest of 5.5% from the existing 6.9%, down 1.4%, according to a notification by the Finance Ministry.

Interest rates are paid quarterly, while the five-year term deposit will earn 6.7%, down from the current rate of 7.7%.

Forced to stay back, these workers now battle hunger

Their ration cards are in Bihar and they have no money left

**SOBHANA K. NAIR
 PRISCILLA JEBARAJ
 NEW DELHI**

"Stay home and stay safe", the global slogan to contain the spread of coronavirus doesn't sound too convincing to Mohammed Hakim and his associates who, unlike many other migrants, were forced to stay back and are battling hunger each day.

Their names are listed on ration cards but the cards, along with their families, are at home in Bihar. Living in five to six persons in the windowless rooms, shanties behind the Bihar bus terminal in the shadow of the posh Lajpat Nagar 1 colony in Delhi, they are now struggling to get one meal a day.

"There are about 180 of us



Double Mammy: Migrant workers Mohammed Hakim (blue mask) and others in south Delhi. •SOBHANA K. NAIR

from Katihar who live here. Majority of us drive auto-rickshaws or pull cycle-rickshaws for a living. On March 28, many of us, by then having exhausted whatever little money we had, couldn't get anything to eat. Then there were rumours that the lockdown will continue for three months. That jolted the others who still had some money to head home," Mr. Hakim says.

For them it's a race between the fear of an unknown virus and very real hunger pangs.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

CM announces 3-month deferral of property tax, co-op loan dues

Move to benefit middle- and low-income groups, farmers and entrepreneurs

DENNIS S. JESUDASAN CHENNAI

Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Tuesday announced the deferment of co-operative loan repayment, property tax and other dues by three months in view of the COVID-19 lockdown. The measures would benefit middle- and low-income groups, farmers and entrepreneurs.

The Chief Minister also called on Governor Banwarilal Purohit at the Raj Bhavan to brief him on the measures taken by the government to deal with the pandemic and its impact.

He announced an extension of the deadline for the payment of property tax and water charges to the local bodies by three months, until June 30.

"Many firms are not in a position to pay salaries and businesses have been severely affected. Daily-wage labourers are among the worst-affected. We are hoping that the CM's announcement would bring them temporary relief as far as their dues are concerned," a top official told *The Hindu*.

Mr. Palaniswami announced a three-month extension of the deadline (until June 30) for the repayment of loans obtained from co-operative banks, fishermen's cooperative societies and



Discussing strategy: Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami calling on Governor Banwarilal Purohit at the Raj Bhavan in Chennai on Tuesday. *SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

handloom weavers' cooperative societies.

He extended by three months the deadline for the payment of dues to co-operative housing societies and the Tamil Nadu Housing Board, until June 30.

He also announced an extension of the deadline for the repayment of loans ob-

tained from the State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu Limited (Sipcot) has been extended by three months. The deadline for the payment of operational and maintenance costs by units located in Sipcot industrial parks has also been extended by three months.

Mr. Palaniswami said a 'COVID Relief and Development Scheme' would be implemented, with an allocation of ₹200 crore for providing loans to help meet the urgent capital requirements of around 2,000 MSME units that have obtained loans from TIIC.

He also extended till June 30 the validity of various li-

cences and fitness certificates obtained under the Motor Vehicles Act, which were due for renewal. The same will apply to licences obtained under the Weights & Measures Act and the Tamil Nadu Shops & Establishments Act that are due for renewal. "Medical experts are insisting that people should remain indoors and prevent the State from entering stage 3 [of the pandemic]. The people should follow the time restrictions announced by the State government for getting essential supplies. I urge the people not to believe rumours. The State government will take severe action against rumour-mongers," Mr. Palaniswami said.

FROM PAGE ONE

Property tax is levied by Municipal authorities on real estate. It is based on the value of property and is paid to the local government

Cooperative banks are financial entities where owners of the bank are also its customers. They are regulated by the RBI.

DON'T GET CONFUSED WITH CORPORATE LOANS

MSME - They are micro, small and medium enterprises that are defined on the basis of investment made in plant and machinery that produces goods or render services. They are important for realising the goal of FINANCIAL INCLUSION

Monitoring*

Persons screened at airports	2,09,288
Persons under home quarantine#	77,330
Persons in isolation wards in hospitals	630
Persons in quarantine facilities	81

Capacity*

Beds in isolation wards	22,049
Ventilators	3,371

Testing*

Samples collected	2,354
Tested positive	124
Tested negative	1,977
Under process	253

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

Doctors due for retirement to be roped in

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Tuesday announced that the doctors, nurses and medical technicians who were due to retire in March 31, 2020, would be appointed as consultants for a two-month period.

He said the appointments would be made on a contractual basis.

"This government has been taking all necessary steps on a war footing to control the spread of the coronavirus disease. I request the public to cooperate with the government on the implementation of the measures being taken for the welfare of the people," he said. The CM's decision came close on the heels of a meeting he had with senior officials.

the State so far

March 30	March 31	Total
57	124	
0	6	
0	1	

IN BRIEF

Use Kalaignar Arangam as isolation ward: DMK

CHENNAI DMK President M.K. Stalin on Tuesday said the government could use Kalaignar Arangam at Anna Aalayam — the DMK's headquarters — as an isolation ward to treat patients affected by COVID-19. He made the offer in a letter, which was handed over to Chennai Corporation Commissioner Prakash.

Free LPG cylinders for 30 lakh Ujjwala beneficiaries

CHENNAI The beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana in the State, numbering around 30 lakh, will get three liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) cylinders free-of-cost for April, May and June. The move by the oil companies follows the Centre's decision to lessen the financial burden of the consumers amid the COVID-19 lockdown.

Senior citizens urged to take precautions

CHENNAI The Tamil Nadu Health and Family Welfare Department has asked senior citizens to take necessary precautions and preventive measures to safeguard themselves from COVID-19. They have been asked to follow social distancing norms and ensure that they don't step outdoors or meet people outside of their homes. If they have any symptoms, they can contact the emergency helpline 104 or the toll-free number 1800 120 555550.

'Facilitate pensioners to contribute towards fund'

CHENNAI The T.N. Retired College Teachers' Association has appealed to the government to facilitate members of their association to donate a day's pension to the Chief Minister's Public Relief Fund to aid the fight against COVID-19. Nearly 4,500 members of the association have decided to pitch in.

AIADMK MP allots ₹1 cr. to combat COVID-19

CHENNAI AIADMK MP S.R. Balasubramanian has allocated ₹1 crore from the MPLADS fund towards efforts to combat COVID-19, according to a press release. Of this, ₹50 lakh would be given to the Government Medical College in Coimbatore, ₹40 lakh to the Government ESI Medical College, Coimbatore and ₹10 lakh to other government hospitals in the district.

It is a scheme of Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas where free LPG connections are given to women from BPL.

THE SCHEME IS NO LONGER RUNNING. 97% LPG coverage has been achieved nationwide. Only three states have achieved kerosene free status. Which three? Find out the larger purpose of the scheme and its benefits.

Pay migrant workers on time, govt. tells employers

Houseowners will face action if they force them to vacate

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

In view of the COVID-19 lockdown, the Tamil Nadu government has directed all District Collectors to ensure that employers pay migrant workers on time and provide for their accommodation for a month without charging rent.

The government has also advised employers against deducting any amount from the salary of the workers.

The landlords of properties where migrants are living on rent "shall not demand payment of rent for a period of one month. If any landlord is forcing labourers and students to vacate their premises, they will be liable for action," Chief Secretary K. Shanmugam said in an order, citing a communication from the Centre.

Separately, in a statement, Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami appealed to all house owners to defer the collection of rent for March and April by two months in view of the difficulties faced by tenants under the current circumstances.

The Chief Secretary, in his order, directed Collectors and others to ensure adequate arrangements includ-



Helping hands: Migrant labourers being provided food packets at Amalur in Chennai on Tuesday. *M. VEDHAN

ing temporary shelters and provision of food, among others for the poor and needy, including migrant labourers, who have been stranded due to the lockdown.

"The migrant people who have moved out to reach their home States/home towns must be kept in the nearest shelter by the respective District Collectors/Commissioner, Greater Chennai Corporation after proper screening for a minimum period of 14 days as per standard health protocol," the G.O. stated.

The authorities were also directed to ensure that all employers — be it in the in-

dustries or in shops and commercial establishments — paid the wages of their workers "at their workplaces on the due date without any deduction, for the period their establishments are under closure during the lockdown".

Talking to reporters, Mr. Shanmugam said he had chaired a meeting with various associations from different States to ensure that migrant workers were provided shelter and remained safe. "Many of them want to go back home but we have urged these associations to insist that the workers stay back under the present circumstances."

Officials inspect COVID-19 hospital

Exclusive facilities being created across State, says Health Minister

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

Exclusive isolation facilities for COVID-19 patients are being created across the State, Health Minister C. Vijayabaskar said.

The Minister, along with Roshini Arthur, senior regional director, Regional Office of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, and two officials of World Health Organisation, Country Office, India, inspected the facility at the Government Medical College Hospital in Omandur Estate.

Speaking to reporters, Dr. Arthur said they inspected Tamil Nadu's first dedicated COVID-19 hospital to check the preparedness, infrastructure, human resources, equipment and adherence to protocols.

"Tamil Nadu, especially Chennai, has a good dedicated COVID-19 unit here. There are three dedicated blocks. There is an outpatient facility on the ground floor with infection protocols in place, sample collection area, waiting room, counselling room and pharmacy as per guidelines. There are 150 isolation beds with spacing, equipment, and disinfection protocols. In addition, another 200 beds for an intermediate care unit is available with 75 ICU beds and 125 step down beds," she said.

She said protocols for biomedical waste, dietary, treatment guidelines are in place. Staff members on rotation for seven days for ICU are in place. There are specialists, including pulmonologists, radiologists and physicians, to man the facilities, apart from portable X-ray, ultrasound, and CT equipment.

"We suggest that more such dedicated COVID-19 centres be opened in all of Tamil Nadu," she added.

Like in Chennai, which has a 500-bed facility with intensive care unit and ventilators at Government Medical College Hospital, Omandur Estate, separate blocks in Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital, Government Stanley Medical College Hospital, Kilpauk Medical College Hospital and ESI Hospital, Avyanavaram, exclusive facilities for COVID-19 are being created across the State, Dr. Vijayabaskar said. "The condition of all patients is stable. None of them is on ventilatory support," he said.

State police to create a healthy standby force

At least 25,000 personnel will remain under home quarantine and will be available for duty on call

S. VIJAY KUMAR CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu police will maintain a third of its total strength — at least 25,000 popersonnel of different ranks — as a "healthy standby force" for deployment during exigencies in the wake of the outbreak of COVID-19.

The reserve strength would be under home quarantine and be available for duty, on call, round-the-clock. The move follows the guidelines issued by the National Disaster Management Authority and the Ministry of Home Affairs to all States, underscoring the necessity to have a healthy standby strength, police sources said on Tuesday.



An aerial view of Kotturupam captured by a drone deployed by the Chennai Police on Tuesday. *SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The reserve strength would be rotated every week and personnel joining duty would be subjected to a mandatory health check-up. With hardly any public movement or traffic on the roads due to the na-

tionwide lockdown enforced with prohibitory orders issued under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code, police deployment has already been reduced to the bare minimum, sources said.

The reserve strength would be rotated every week and personnel joining duty would be subjected to a mandatory health check-up

In a related development, the Chennai Police on Tuesday launched aerial surveillance by deploying drones to monitor major junctions/residential areas and intervene in the event of any public congregation.

At least a dozen drones were hired from a private firm and the surveillance launched in Guindy, Kotturupam, Adyar and

along the GST Road up to Tambaram.

"The drones provide high quality live visuals which are transmitted to the control room and senior police officers for appropriate action. We are now able to get footage of happenings in remote or congested locations that are not easily accessible. Patrol vehicles will reach any scene of disturbance or congregation in less than five minutes," Additional Commissioner of Police (South) Prem Anand Sinha said.

The use of drones is a temporary measure to step up surveillance and its efficacy would be reviewed after the lockdown period,

Tahsildars to issue passes for intra-district travel

Collectors will handle movement between districts

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu government has authorised Tahsildars across the State to issue passes allowing people to travel within their respective districts to attend weddings (the dates for which were fixed earlier) and funerals and in case of health emergencies during the lockdown period.

In a communication to all District Collectors, Revenue Secretary Atulya Misra said, "For movement within districts, powers [to issue passes] have been delegated to

Tahsildars. However, in case the event mentioned needs inter-district movement, it (the emergency pass) may be issued by the Collectors."

As for movement within the jurisdiction of the Greater Chennai Corporation, the regional officers concerned were authorised to issue passes. In case of movement out of the Greater Chennai Corporation, the Corporation Commissioner would take the call. "It may be directed that all the public health guidelines on COVID-19, such as social distancing, hand washing and office disinfection protocol, issued by the health authorities from time to time, should be strictly followed," the communication added.

70 Years of Diplomatic Relations between China and India (1950-2020)



A Space Marketing Initiative

Ambassador's Message



H.E. Sun Weidong

On April 1, 2020, China and India usher in the important moment of the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. Looking around the world, China and India, as the only two emerging countries with a population of more than 1 billion, shoulder the historical mission of national rejuvenation, play a key role in the process of the collective rise of developing countries, and inject strong momentum into the profound changes unseen in a century. At this moment, it is particularly important to revisit the original aspiration of establishing diplomatic relations 70 years ago and carry forward the spirit of good neighborliness and friendship, unity and cooperation.

Looking back at the past 70 years, China-India relations have moved ahead despite wind and rain and gone through an extraordinary development path. In the 1950s, the leaders of the older generation of the two countries made the historical decision to establish diplomatic relations between China and India, and jointly advocated the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. "Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai" (Indians and Chinese are brothers) resounded throughout our two countries. From the 1980s, the two sides agreed to solve the boundary question through peaceful and friendly consultation, established strategic and cooperative partnership for peace and prosperity, and achieved all-round development of bilateral relations. After 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi initiated the "hometown diplomacy", held two informal summits in Wuhan and Chennai respectively, carried out strategic communication on overarching, long-term and strategic issues of global and regional importance, and agreed to strengthen the closer partnership for development between the two countries.

Today's achievements of China-India relations embodied the great efforts of several generations of our two peoples. We can draw some inspirations and experiences from the past. First, adhere to the strategic guidance of the leaders. Second, grasp the general trend of friendly cooperation. Third, expand the momentum of mutually beneficial cooperation. Fourth, enhance the coordination on international and regional affairs. Fifth, properly manage differences.

At present, China-India relations stand at a new starting point and usher in new opportunities. We should draw wisdom from our thousands of years of civilizations and explore a way for neighboring and emerging major countries to get along with each other in accordance with "enhancing mutual trust, focusing on cooperation, managing differences and seeking common development". We also need to master the four keys of "leading, transmitting, shaping and integrating". "Leading" means to reach consensus and guide the direction of the development of bilateral relations under the guidance of our two leaders. "Transmitting" means to transmit the leaders' consensus to all levels and translate it into tangible cooperation and outcomes. "Shaping" means to go beyond the mode of managing differences, shape bilateral relations actively and accumulate positive momentum. "Integrating" means to strengthen exchanges and cooperation, promote convergence of interests and achieve common development.

Indian President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi have both said that the whole world is a family, which strike a chord with Chinese philosophy concept of "universal peace" and "universal love". The ancient oriental wisdom is still full of vitality today. I believe that China and India have enough foresight and ability to join hands to realize "Dragon-Elephant Tango", create brilliant future in the next 70 years and write together a new chapter building a community with a shared future for mankind!

Memorabilia of 70th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between China and India



Chinese President Xi Jinping held an informal meeting with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Wuhan in April 2018.

Agreement between the Government of China and the Government of India on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquillity along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas was signed.

In 1996, President Jiang Zemin visited India. He was the first head of state from China who visited India since the establishment of bilateral ties. Both sides agreed to build a constructive partnership of cooperation oriented towards the 21st century. Agreement between the Government of China and the Government of India on Confidence Building Measures in the Military Field along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas was signed.

In 2000, Indian President K R Narayanan visited China on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and India.

In 2002, Premier Zhu Rongji visited India. Both sides agreed to enhance mutual understanding and trust and promote exchanges and cooperation in various fields.

In 2003, Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee visited China. The two sides signed The Declaration on the Principles and Comprehensive Cooperation in China-India Relations, and agreed to establish the special representatives meeting mechanism on India-China boundary question.

In 2005, Premier Wen Jiabao visited India. China and India signed the Joint Statement and declared the establishment of the strategic and cooperative partnership for peace and prosperity. The two sides welcomed signing of the Agreement on the Political Parameters and Guiding Principles for the Settlement of the India-China Boundary Question.

In 2006, President Hu Jintao visited India. The two sides signed a Joint Declaration to formulate the ten-prolonged strategy for deepening the strategic and cooperative partnership.

In 2008, Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh visited China. "A Shared Vision for the 21st Century" was agreed upon by the two governments.

In 2010, Indian President Paill visited China in May, which coincided with the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and India. In December, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao visited India and the two sides issued a Joint Communiqué.

In 2013, Premier Li Keqiang visited India in May and the two sides released a Joint Statement. Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh visited China in October.

2014 is the "China-India Friendly Exchange Year". In September, President Xi Jinping paid a state visit to India and visited Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home state of Gujarat. The two sides issued Joint Statement on Building a Closer Developmental Partnership.

In 2015, Indian Prime Minister Modi visited China and went to President Xi Jinping's hometown Xi'an.

In 2016, Indian President Mukherjee visited China. In 2017, Prime Minister Modi visited China to attend the 9th BRICS Summit in Xiamen and met with President Xi Jinping on the sidelines.

In 2018, President Xi Jinping held an informal meeting with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Wuhan. They had in-depth discussions and reached broad consensus on the overarching, long-term and strategic issues of global and bilateral importance and their respective visions for national development as well as domestic and foreign policies. The informal meeting set up a new model of exchanges between two leaders and became a milestone in the history of bilateral relations.

In 2019, President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Modi held the second informal meeting in Chennai, reaffirmed the Wuhan consensus and agreed to build a closer partnership for development, enhance the in-depth strategic communication, promote mutually beneficial cooperation in various fields, and advance exchanges and mutual learning between the two civilizations.

2020 marks the year of the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and India. It is also China-India Year of Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges. The two sides agreed to hold 70 celebratory activities to demonstrate the historic connection between the two civilizations as well as their growing bilateral relationship over the years, and further deepen people-to-people exchanges between the two countries at all levels.

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On April 1, 1950, China and India established diplomatic relations. India was the first non-socialist country to establish relations with the People's Republic of China.

In 1954, Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai visited India. China and India signed the Joint Statement and jointly advocated the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. In the same year, Indian Prime Minister Nehru visited China. He was the first head of government of a non-socialist country who visited China since the founding of the People's Republic of China.

In 1955, Premier Zhou Enlai and Prime Minister Nehru attended the Asian-African Conference in which 29 countries participated in Bandung, Indonesia and jointly advocated the Bandung Spirit of solidarity, friendship and cooperation.

In 1962, the border conflict led to a serious setback in bilateral relations.

In 1976, China and India restored ambassadorial relations and bilateral ties improved gradually.

In 1988, Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi visited China, initiating



Mao Zedong, Chairman of the Central People's Government of China, met with Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlar Nehru in October 1954.

In 1991, Premier Li Peng visited India. The Prime Minister level mutual visits were restored after decades of suspension.

In 1992, Indian President R. Venkataraman visited China. He was the first President who visited China since the independence of the Republic of India.

In 1993, Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao visited China.



Zhou Enlai, Premier of Government Administration Council of the Central People's Government of China, visited India and jointly advocated the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence in June 1954.

Political and Diplomatic Relations

2 Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi held 2 informal summits, and exchanged in-depth views on overarching, long-term and strategic issues of global and regional importance.

3 Since 2014, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has sent 4 senior delegations to visit China, and sent representatives 4 times to China to attend the international conferences held by the Communist Party of China (CPC).

4 The CPC has maintained friendly exchanges with 9 major Indian political parties including the BJP, Congress and left-wing parties for a long time. Exchanges and cooperation have been carried out through high-level visits, study tours, training courses and seminars. These have played an important role in promoting mutual understanding and friendship between the two peoples and promoting healthy and stable development of bilateral relations.

5 The two countries have held frequent exchanges of high-level visits. President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Narendra Modi have had 16 bilateral meetings since 2014, enhancing political mutual trust, properly managing differences, expanding practical cooperation so as to guide a better and more stable development of bilateral ties.

6 Inter-parliamentary friendship groups are set up by China and India. Regular contacts and exchanges are maintained between the leadership and specialized committees of the two Parliaments. More than 20 parliamentarians from both countries have exchanged visits during recent years.

7 Since the establishment of the Special Representatives' meeting on the boundary question in 2003, the two sides have held 22 rounds of meetings, which have played an important role in promoting the settlement of the boundary question and maintaining peace and tranquillity in the border areas.

8 In 2003, the International Department of Central Committee of CPC and the Ministry of External Affairs of India established an exchange mechanism. So far, a total of 10 Chief Ministers from India, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi who used to be Chief Minister of Gujarat, have visited China, and 16 CPC party leaders from the central and local committees of China have visited India. The exchange mechanism has become an important channel to enhance political mutual trust, expand province-state exchanges and practical cooperation in various fields.

9 There are 50 dialogue mechanisms between China and India for exchanging views on various topics of bilateral, regional and global concern.

Practical Cooperation

Economy and Trade

1 The Development Research Center of the State Council of China has held 4 rounds of dialogues with the NITI Aayog of India, reaching

Facts and Figures on China-India Cooperation

consensus on promoting sustainable and high-quality economic development of two countries, safeguarding global multilateral trade mechanisms, promoting the reform of the global governance system and guarding against international economic and financial risks.

2 Occupying 4 of the top 5 smartphone shipments in India, Chinese brand smartphones are popular with Indian people.

3 China and India have held 6 rounds of strategic economic dialogues to exchange macroeconomic policies on infrastructure, high technology, energy conservation and environmental protection, energy and medicine and promote practical economic and trade cooperation.

4 China and India have held 9 rounds of financial dialogues and reached consensus on macroeconomic situation and policies, cooperation under multilateral frameworks as well as bilateral investment and financial cooperation.

5 China and India have held 11 sessions of China-India Joint Group of Economy and Trade to engage in extensive exchanges on bilateral trade in goods and services, investment and industrial park cooperation, trade statistics and trade remedies, and constantly deepen bilateral practical cooperation on economy and trade. At the same time, the two countries have closely cooperated with and supported each other on multilateral trading system and regional economic cooperation, making important contributions to establishing new international economic order and safeguarding the interests of developing countries.

6 Since the beginning of the 21st century, trade between China and India has grown from less than \$3 billion to nearly \$100 billion, an increase of about 32 times. In 2019, the trade volume between China and India was \$92.68 billion.

7 More than 1,000 Chinese companies have increased their investment in industrial parks, e-commerce and other areas in India, with 200,000 local jobs created.

In 2013, Premier Li Keqiang visited India in May and the two sides released a Joint Statement. Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh visited China in October.

In 2014, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao visited India and the two sides issued a Joint Communiqué.

In 2015, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited China and went to President Xi Jinping's hometown Xi'an.

In 2016, Indian President Mukherjee visited China. In 2017, Prime Minister Modi visited China to attend the 9th BRICS Summit in Xiamen and met with President Xi Jinping on the sidelines.

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Chinese President Jiang Zemin visited India and held talks with Indian Prime Minister Sharma and Prime Minister Gowda in November 1996.

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Chinese President Hu Jintao met with Indian President Abdul Kalam in New Delhi in November 2006.

The two sides have made new progress on exchanges and cooperation in the fields of art, publishing, media, film and television, museum, sports, youth, tourism, locality, traditional medicine, yoga, education and think tanks.

2 Confucius Institutes and 3 Chinese language centers have been established in India. Around 20 universities in India offer Chinese courses, among which 8 provide a major in Chinese studies. The contest of the "Chinese Bridge" Chinese Proficiency Competition for Foreign Secondary School Students (India) has been held for 12 sessions. The contest of the "Chinese Bridge" Chinese Proficiency Competition for Foreign University Students (India) has been held for 18 sessions. Chinese language learning is becoming a popular trend in India.

3 The two sides have held 4 sessions of China-India High Level Media Forum and 4 sessions of China-India Think Tank Forum to strengthen exchanges and cooperation in the field of media and think tanks.

4 The two countries have established 14 pairs of sister cities and provinces, and will establish sister provinces and cities between Fujian Province and Tamil Nadu State, Quanzhou City and Chennai City.

5 Since 2006, the hundred-member Chinese and Indian youth delegations have exchanged 14 visits, and more than 4000 Chinese and Indian youth have visited each other's country.

6 There are 134 flights linking major cities of the two countries every week, among which China has 94 flights to India and India has 40 flights to China (excluding the flights between the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China and Indian cities).

7 China has established 1 Luban Workshop and 1 Luban-Mo-See Culture Institute in India, which have trained more than 200 technical Indian students.

8 Over 2,000 young Chinese are studying in India, and more than 20,000 Indian youth are studying in China. Cooperation in the field of education between the two countries has been continuously strengthened.

9 The number of Indian pilgrims to Xizang Autonomous Region of China has surged from several hundreds in the 1980s to more than 20,000 in 2019. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China and Ministry of External Affairs of India have made great efforts in coordination and established the Contact Mechanism for Indian Pilgrims. The government of Xizang Autonomous Region of China has undertaken heavy logistics work to help facilitate the pilgrimage, which has become an important bond between the Chinese and Indian people to enhance mutual understanding and friendship.

10 Two-way personnel exchanges between China and India have exceeded 1 million, among which more than 800,000 Indians visit China (excluding an average of 700,000 Indians visiting the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China each year) and more than 200,000 Chinese visit India.

11 China and India have held 2 rounds of meetings of China-India High-Level People-to-People and Cultural Exchanges Mechanism.

12 China and India have held 2 rounds of meetings of China-India High-Level People-to-People and Cultural Exchanges Mechanism.

Timings CHENNAI

WEDNESDAY, APR. 01

RISE 06:05 SET 18:21

MOONRISE 11:50 SET 00:09

THURSDAY, APR. 02

RISE 06:05 SET 18:21

MOONRISE 12:46 SET 01:04

FRIDAY, APR. 03

RISE 06:04 SET 18:21

MOONRISE 13:46 SET 02:00

Chennai Weather max min

Thiruvallur	36	22
Chennai Airport	34	25
Chennai City	33	26

Chennai Airport Today
35°C A comfortable morning is likely. The sky will remain sunny over the region. A pleasant night is expected.

Chennai Airport Tomorrow
35°C A bright sunny sky is expected. The night is likely to be warm.

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IN BRIEF

92 persons issued passes
CHENNAI The Chennai Corporation has issued passes for 92 persons, permitting them to move out of the city for medical reasons, marriages and funerals during the lockdown. As many as 457 persons had applied for passes, said a civic official.

CITU slams salary cut
CHENNAI The transport wing of the CITU has condemned the State Transport Department, including the MTC, for cutting salaries of its employees who participated in the sit-in protest held from March 10 to 11. The protest was against the delay in wage revision, said a press release.

Police arrest fake doctor
VELLORE Police and health officials raided a clinic and arrested a doctor near Triplichet, on Tuesday, following complaints about him treating patients with anti-cancer drugs, without any qualification. Madhavan, 34, was offering medicines for the prevention of COVID-19.

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Police stress on 'stay-at-home'

It's not all sunshine and rainbow between India and China. India's efforts to contain terrorist threats from Pakistan has always been thwarted by China in the international forum. India's contention for a permanent UNSC seat has also met a similar fate. Proposed Chinese construction of an economic corridor in PoK is another nail in the coffin. The growing trade deficit between the Asian giants is a blow to the Make in India dreams of India. Issuing stapled visas to our country men from Arunachal Pradesh is a direct attack on our sovereignty. However in spite of these hiccups INDIA China relations are far better off and it is very rare to find two countries having cordial relations in spite of so many problems.

Bag of mixed veggies a relief

Move to reduce crowding in supermarkets

VIVEK NARAYANAN
CHENNAI To do away with crowding in market places and prevent the spread of COVID-19, the Tiruvallur district administration has arranged takeaway vegetable bags, on a trial basis, from Tuesday.



Crowd-control measure: The takeaway bags, containing a variety of essential vegetables, cost ₹100.

Each cloth bag, containing half a kg of onions, tomatoes, a bunch of coriander leaves, is priced at ₹100. The programme has been started on a trial basis at Uzhavar Sandhais in Anduli and Red Hills and 100 bags have been provided at each market. The initiative will be taken to the Perkkadu, Tiruttani, Tiruvallur and Poona-mallee too.

"If a person goes to the market, he will have to

spend at least 15 minutes, purchasing the vegetables. This will lead to crowding in markets. Now, people can take the bag and leave after payment," said an official.

M. Kalichelvi, 60, a resident of Puttur near Tiruvallur, welcomed the move. "Being an elderly person, I cannot wait for long in the queue. It took me two hours to purchase vegetables at the supermarket," she said.

Mageswari Ravikumar, Collector, Tiruvallur, said that similar bags would be made available for meat and fish too. "We are also promoting door delivery of grocery and medicines. For details, people can check <http://stopcoronavirus.tiruvallur.com/>," she said.

The Tiruvallur administration is also planning to provide grocery bags to those in quarantine.

Day-care procedure for angioplasty

STAFF REPORTER
CHENNAI

Two patients at the Apollo Specialty Hospital in Vanagaram underwent a coronary angioplasty, and were discharged within 12 hours, after the day-care procedure.

K.A. Abraham, senior interventional cardiologist, Apollo Specialty Hospital, Vanagaram, carried out a coronary angioplasty on a 47-year-old woman and a 75-year-old man. In a release, the hospital said that a day-care procedure was extremely rare and was possible with excellent coordination among all departments in the hospital.

A day-care procedure becomes relevant in case of a "COVID-19 emergency", when keeping patients in the hospital for a minimum period is desirable.

The dilemma of a hospital administrator

The Shakespearean dilemma, "To be or not to be", holds good for most doctors and surgeons in the country right now. The extraordinary times we live in, with the pandemic looming large and around us, a much-needed 21-day lockdown enforced by the Prime Minister seems the last resort left to take the viral pandemic by its horns.

However, remember the viral illness isn't the only illness and other non-communicable diseases still continue to be the major killer. This includes diseases related to diabetes mellitus, hypertension, cardiovascular and neurological diseases. The most notable among these are cancers. Most diseases, with the exception of cancer, require a patient to comply with recommendations of a healthy lifestyle, monitoring and drug intake.

The compliance could potentially reduce the need to travel to a clinic/hospital, temporarily reducing foot-



P. PRAVEEN RAJ
Hospital Administrator

COVID-19

planned surgeries/procedures? Unlike any other profession, we doctors deal with humanity at its most vulnerable. It is not just science, but empathy and trust between the doctor and patient that forms the keystone of this scenario.

So why is it important to say no to a surgery/procedure to a patient who needs it, but who is not in immediate danger? The learning from the West and the East

tients beds, ventilators and other resources, which will become necessary if a potential need arises.

Clear directions from the ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research) and PMO to postpone all elective procedures for a month, is a step taken to handle pandemic transmission. But the buck doesn't stop there – the recent development of implementing a tele-health policy through the recently formed board of governors (replacing the MCI) is a disruption in itself. With high speed internet-enabled smartphones in most hands, tele-consultations for all non-emergency visits is just a click away. What was thought as a tool to reach the unreachable sectors of the society has taken a different avatar now, enabling us to reach everyone.

It is often quoted "chaos is the ladder of opportunity". This pandemic brings forth a lot of fundamental thinking and action in all sectors of

TEST YOUR WRITING SKILLS
Note down those quotes highlighted and try to write an essay on the same. Essay should have intro, body and conclusion

Keeping the virus at bay

TNSCB residents put physical distancing measures in place

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

From physical distancing to helping the elderly, residents' welfare associations of the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board (TNSCB) resettlement colony in Perumbakkam are taking every possible precaution to keep COVID-19 at bay.

There are close to 20,000 families living in over 150 blocks in the colony. Each block has eight floors and there are around 24 houses on each floor in the old ten-

ments and 12 houses in the new ones. Most residents are daily wage earners. "This means that if one person is infected, it won't take much time for the remaining families to fall sick. Hence, precautionary measures have to be taken," said S. Dhanalakshmi, a resident of the tenement.

Associations have put up boards near elevators, asking just two people to travel at a time. "Initially, we switched off the elevator, but many on the seventh

floor were finding it hard," said an L-block resident.

Besides, the associations are also helping individuals who do not have families, living in their blocks, by providing them with food.

D. Karthikeyan, managing director, TNSCB, said that they were disinfecting 1.5 lakh tenements, in over 300 blocks. The board has purchased 91 spraying machines for 18 divisions. Senior TNSCB officials are inspecting the colonies frequently.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

MATHUSRI SUBRAMETI
DHARMAMBAL KRISHNAMOORTHY

07-07-1923 - 30-03-2020

REVERENTIAL HOMAGE DEAR MOTHER

K. Gopalakrishnan • K. Sivaraman • K. Venkateswaram
K. Srinivasan • K. Ramasubramanian • K. Seetharaman
Rathnayaya Madhana Baratham Amala
A. Vasanthi Savithri L., Lathika
Grand and Great Grand Children
Mobile: 9884200220

DEATH

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race..."
2 Timothy 4:7

Mrs. Pricilla Dhyrim (Yanum Natesan)
W/O Mr. Nehru Dhyrim
Chairman GoodNews Group of Churches

May her soul rest in eternal peace.

In Profound Grief
The GoodNews Family,
Dr. John Nesan & Dr. Hannah
Mr. Ashwin Dhyrim and GoodNews Church & Mrs. Sheba
Dr. Christina & Dr. Daniel
& Grand Children

The date of thanksgiving prayer will be announced after the lifting of the present curfew.

"How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the peace"

DEATH

"I have fought the good fight...for me the Crown of righteousness."
2 TIMOTHY 4: 7, 8.

Ms. BERYL ABIGAIL DEVANESON

30-04-1927 - 29-03-2020

D/o. Late Mr. N. Devaneson (Sister of Mr. Joel Devaneson) and Mr. Theodor Devaneson) Retired Principal of College of Nursing Madras Medical College Hospital and Former Founder Principal Bishop's College of Nursing, Dharapuram Entered into The Glory of God on Sunday 29-03-2020 Morning

She was a recipient of Presidents Award from the Govt. of India and Lifetime Achiever Award from the Government of Tamil Nadu Twice for her excellence in the field of Nursing

To God be the Glory
Mob: 9884002235 / 9884802237

DEATH

Smt. ALEXANDRINA

W/o. (Late) Shri M. Kanakasabapathi IAS (Retd.)

Passed away peacefully at her residence on 27th March 2020 after brief illness.

Deeply mourned by: K. Kadiresan & Rashma Kadiresan
Dr. K. Ramadevi & Gnanasambandan T.R. K. Indrapriyadarsini & Dr. A. Punithkumar Grandchildren, Family & Friends

Prof. J. Paul
Principal
Madurai Law College
(1982 to 1995).

Entered into the presence of Jesus on March 30, 2020 in the USA
- Dr. Meera Paul (jpaulmr@yahoo.com)

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

16th ANNIVERSARY

Sangeetha Kalanidhi Sri. Paigath
Prof. K.V. Narayanaswamy 16.11.1923 - 01.04.2002
Wife: Mrs. Padma Narayanaswamy

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OBITUARY

"Arulselmani"
Shri S.V. Subramaniam
(Disciple of Sri Vedasthana Theerthapadaiah, Satichandananda Swamikal), attained the Lotus Feet of Theurbhankaman on Tuesday, 31st March 2020.
Fondly Remembered by Family Members

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1934 - 2020
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K VISWANATHAN
1934 - 2020
S/o S.V. Krishnamurthy Sengalipuram
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We wish all our members a very happy Tamil New Year. In view of COVID-19 situation, Govt. Orders thereon all our programmes in April including our 45th Anniversary celebrations, launching of Kartik Fine Arts Harikatha Vidyalayam and Kartik Rajagopal 31st. Kodai Nataka Vizha till 3rd May stand postponed. Last date for renewal of membership has been extended to 15th May 2020. Please visit our website www.kartikfinearts.com as also these columns for further updates.

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Southern States launch operation to identify Markaz delegates

The largest group that visited Delhi to take part in the event from March 15 to 17 was from Tamil Nadu

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

Authorities in the southern States scrambled on Tuesday to identify the large number of people who had attended a congregation at the Markaz Nizamuddin, international headquarters of Tablighi Jamaat in Delhi, and their contacts throughout their journeys.

Tamil Nadu appeared to have the largest number of delegates to the event, followed by Telangana, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh.

Tamil Nadu's Health Secretary Beela Rajesh said a total of 1,500 persons had attended the conference in Delhi. Of this, 1,131 had returned to Tamil Nadu. Health officials managed to trace and quarantine 515 of them. Tracing all those who travelled to Nizamuddin to prevent and control the spread of COVID-19 was being pursued in parallel.

Over half the total COVID-19 positive cases in Tamil Nadu were directly or indirectly linked to the travellers.

Health officials said that the clustering of cases was unexpected and had turned the trajectory of COVID-19 in the State, which otherwise reported positive cases mainly among those who had travelled abroad and their contacts.

COVID-19

500 from A.P. In Andhra Pradesh, officials launched all-out efforts to trace the Tablighi Jamaat members. More than 500 individuals from almost all districts of Andhra Pradesh travelled to Nizamuddin for the prayers held from March 15 to 17, travelling mostly by AP

Express and GT Express between March 10 and March 20. Police were trying find out whether the members used any other mode of transport.

'No need to panic'

Kerala also braced itself for possible spread of COVID-19 after a large group returned from the Delhi event. At least 300 delegates were from Kerala. Officials said there was cause for concern but no panic, and among the first batch who left on March 5, at least 80 reached Kerala. A random check revealed none of them were positive for the virus, and most had passed the incubation period unaffected. However, the situation could change with extensive testing.

Among the 300 attendees, an estimated 150 from the State had left the centre for other regions for religious



Tracking patients: People who attended the religious congregation at the Markaz Nizamuddin in Delhi being brought to a hospital for COVID-19 test in Hyderabad on Tuesday.

work, and the government was ascertaining their status. Some had stayed on in New Delhi during the curfew.

The State government is also concerned that scores of people from Salem, Madurai and Erode had stayed at the Tablighi seminary along with those from Kerala. An official said the delegates had sheltered in mosques in different parts of the country during their journey back, and they were trying to identify the spots.

Isolation centres

About 78 members from Karnataka belonging to the Tablighi Jamaat were quarantined in government

isolation centres and would be tested for COVID-19, said Jawaid Akhtar, Additional Chief Secretary (Health and Family Welfare and Medical Education). Mr. Akhtar said the department did not have specific information if all the 78 members belong to the Jamaat.

"An Order had been issued after the government issued an order permitting medical passes for the alcohol-dependents, the Excise Department received as many as 30 applications.

Kerala records its second death

68-year-old man, with several co-morbidities, dies in Thiruvananthapuram

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala recorded its second COVID-19 death on Tuesday after a 68-year-old man, who had been in a critical condition in the ICU at the Thiruvananthapuram Government Medical College Hospital (MCH) here since the past one week, died.

An official statement issued by the Thiruvananthapuram MCH authorities said he was admitted to the ICU on March 23 and that his condition had worsened progressively as he had several co-morbidities, including high blood pressure and thyroid-related issues. He had been on the ventilator since the past five days after his kidneys failed, requiring him to be on dialysis.



People attending the funeral of the 68-year-old man in Thiruvananthapuram on Tuesday.

While his first test had come out as negative for COVID-19, the second sample showed him to be positive on March 29.

The Minister for Tourism, Kadakampally Surendran, told reporters that the Health Department had not

been able to pinpoint the source of the man's infection as he had not been anywhere abroad nor had he been in contact with anyone with known history of foreign travel.

"He developed mild respiratory symptoms after

March 17 and had been to the local primary health centre (PHC) at Thonnackal twice. He was taken to a private medical college hospital at Venjanmood on March 23, from where he was referred to Thiruvananthapuram MCH on the same day," the Minister said.

The district health administration has, with the help of his relatives, brought out a route map of his movements since March 3 and efforts are being made to trace all he had been in contact with. "He was well-known in the locality and we have a clear list of who the primary contacts could be," Mr. Surendran said.

His family members, staff at the PHC and the staff members of a local bank have been quarantined.

30 applications for liquor on Day 1

Kerala is working on logistics to make available supplies to alcohol-dependents

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT KOCHI

Alcohol-dependents in Kerala who succeeded in securing prescriptions from doctors to get their daily dose of booze may have to wait for one more day to get their hand on the bottle.

Since the first day of every month is being observed as dry day in the State, they may not be able to buy their quota of alcohol from the Kerala State Beverages Corporation (BEVCO) on April 1. On April 2, BEVCO may make alcohol available on production of the medical pass certified by the Excise Department.

Since the government has ordered the closure of li-



On a high: Kerala has the highest per capita consumption of alcohol in the country.

quor outlets, including retail outlets of the corporation, bars, clubs, and toddy shops, alcohol may have to be made available through the warehouses or godowns of the corporation, a senior BEVCO official said.

On Tuesday, the first day

logistics to make alcohol available based on the permits to be issued by the Excise Department. The quantity of the Indian Made Foreign Liquor to be made available will depend on the permit, he said.

On Tuesday, the first day after the government issued an order permitting medical passes for the alcohol-dependents, the Excise Department received as many as 30 applications.

"Some applications were rejected as the certificates indicating that the patient had alcohol withdrawal symptoms were issued by unqualified doctors. Only serving government medical doctors are authorised to issue such certificates," said S. Aananthakrishnan, Excise Commissioner.

The role of the department is confined to the issuance of passes and the distribution of alcohol will be the responsibility of BEVCO, he said.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



Forecast for Wednesday: Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning, hail and gusty winds very likely at isolated places over Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand; with lightning and gusty winds very likely at isolated places over Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Punjab, Delhi and west Uttar Pradesh; with lightning at isolated places over sub-Himalayan West Bengal and Sikkim.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	...	36.0	17.6	Kozhikode	...	32.0	27.2
Ahmedabad	...	37.7	20.6	Kurnool	...	38.6	24.9
Aizawl	...	28.0	...	Lucknow	...	34.4	16.0
Allahabad	...	37.1	17.5	Madurai	...	37.4	22.7
Bengaluru	...	36.1	19.6	Mangaluru	...	35.4	26.4
Bhopal	...	37.1	22.0	Mumbai	...	32.0	24.0
Bhubaneswar	...	37.3	23.5	Mysuru	...	...	20.0
Chandigarh	...	26.6	15.6	New Delhi	...	33.2	16.2
Chennai	...	33.5	25.6	Patna	...	33.8	16.8
Coimbatore	...	38.0	22.6	Port Blair	...	31.8	24.3
Dehradun	...	30.1	13.5	Puducherry	...	33.6	23.6
Gangtok	...	0.4	18.0	Pune	...	32.3	22.7
Goa	...	34.0	25.5	Raipur	...	33.2	21.0
Guwahati	...	35.6	...	Ranchi	...	34.2	17.4
Huaballi	...	37.0	22.0	Shillong	...	23.8	16.9
Hyderabad	...	37.3	23.7	Shimla	...	19.3	11.5
Imphal	...	30.5	12.0	Srinagar	...	14.9	7.0
Jaipur	...	34.4	19.8	Thiruvananthapuram	...	33.6	25.8
Kochi	...	15.4	33.4	Tiruchi	...	37.1	21.8
Kohima	...	24.2	13.0	Vijayawada	...	...	...
Kolkata	...	36.2	24.5	Visakhapatnam	...	33.7	26.8

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO ₂	NO ₂	CO	PM _{2.5}	PM ₁₀	CODE
Ahmedabad	41	39	17	...	...	...
Bengaluru	06	16	77	...	...	...
Chennai	06	26	24	...	...	...
Delhi	18	14	146	...	...	...
Hyderabad	03	29	27	...	...	...
Kolkata	08	29	16	...	...	...
Lucknow	04	11	52	...	...	...
Mumbai	05	22	09	...	...	...
Pune	24	08	52	...	...	...
Visakhapatnam	11	32	06	...	...	...

Air Quality Code: Poor (Red), Moderate (Yellow), Good (Green) (Readings indicate average AQI)
SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.
NO₂: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.
CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.
PM_{2.5} & PM₁₀: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease.

Rabi crops : Wheat, Barley, Mustard, Sesame, Peas, Oats, Chickpea/Gram, Linseed

Kharif crops : Rice, Maize, Jowar, Bajra, Moong, Jute, Sorghum, Pearl Millet, Arhar(Pulses), Soyabean, Ground nut, Cotton

Zaid crops : Watermelon, Muskmelon, Cucumber, Vegetables, Fodder

Zaid is the short summer season between Rabi and Kharif season

Despite the Karnataka government being on overdrive to ensure that agricultural activities continue to be normal during the unprecedented crisis caused by COVID-19, officials are keeping their fingers crossed about pre-monsoon crop cultivation.

Besides the main crops such as ragi and maize, farmers cultivate green gram, black gram and sesame, especially in Mysuru, Chamarajanagar, Mandya and Hassan districts, during this season.

A senior Agriculture Department official acknowledged that there is concern whether farmers will take up cultivation of these crops given the situation.

According to the official, the preparatory work for sowing normally starts by the first week of April. "In a few places, sowing has been completed, but it has not even commenced in many places. In agriculture timing is very important. If sowing is delayed, it will hurt the yield and overall productivity," he said.



Cause for concern: A file photo of a farmer harvesting maize in Shivamogga district of Karnataka.

Kannur-Virajpet route can be considered

Kerala should send request: Karnataka

The Karnataka government on Tuesday submitted before the Kerala High Court that it could consider the reopening of the Kannur-Virajpet route. The Karnataka government said that the Kannur-Virajpet route would be opened for transportation of essential commodities if an appropriate letter was sent by Kerala to the Karnataka Home Department.

Karnataka Advocate General P.K. Navadgi made the submission when a PIL against the earth embankment on arterial inter-State roads by Karnataka came up before a Division Bench of justice A.K. Jayasankaran and Justice Shaji P. Jhali.

Additional Advocate General of Kerala Ranjith Thampi submitted the Kerala proposal.

Advocate General of Karnataka also submitted that the Kannur-Virajpet-Mananthala-Varghese-Begur-Nanjangud-Mysore and Kannur-Sulthana Bathery-Gundlupet-Mysore routes have been opened and will continue to be so throughout the lockdown period.

The court directed the Kannur district Collector to send a communication to the Secretary of the Karnataka Home Department so that the matter could be considered by the latter immediately. The Bench asked both States to make submissions on the arrangement that could be made for the medical needs of patients in Kasargod based on the proximity of the hospital concerned in Karnataka.

IN BRIEF



Darshan at Tirumala suspended till April 14

In line with the nationwide lockdown to contain the spread of COVID-19, the TTD resolved to extend the suspension of darshan at the temple of Lord Venkateswara at Tirumala on April 14. On March 23, the TTD had decided not to allow devotees for the darshan of the presiding deity till the end of the month. Both ghata roads to Tirumala have been closed. Even TTD employees are not being allowed to travel up and down daily.

Head constable suspended in Karnataka

A head constable attached to Sangur police station in Bengaluru was suspended for alleged issuing travel permits in defiance for people in essential services to a businessman and 24 of his relatives so that they could travel to his hometown in Rajasthan for a family function. The incident came to light when the police stationed at the Tamil Nadu border caught two vehicles ferrying the businessman, Pookraj, and 24 others towards Rajasthan.

3 rescue flights to take back stranded Malaysians

Malindo Air has proposed to operate rescue flights on three different dates to take back the remaining Malaysian nationals stranded at Tiruchi following suspension of international flights in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic. The airline has proposed to operate the first rescue flight (OD 223/224) late in the night on April 1. The second rescue flight (OD 221/222) will be operated on April 2 morning and the next rescue flight (OD 221/222) on April 4 morning.



Step up

Citizens must not hide their travel or contact history as authorities deal with the pandemic

With any big crisis comes great responsibility. In this time of a pandemic, while there is extensive, proven value in adopting recommended personal hygiene standards, maintaining physical distance, and demanding the States and Centre provide adequate facilities for testing and treatment for the ill, it is also essential to leave that word on the top of the pile – Responsibility. Every public health emergency requires community recognition that this is an extraordinary set of circumstances requiring far-from-ordinary responses. A reasonable restriction on citizens' rights may come into play on invoking provisions of the Epidemic Diseases Act. State police are already snapping cases on violators of the lockdown conditions; action is also being taken on those who violate quarantine. However, the strongest weapon that one can unleash against this pandemic is with every individual. The time to say this nicely is over. It is time to insist that every individual respond responsibly during this time: To inform authorities of relevant history of travel, stay in quarantine even if asymptomatic, follow all other protocols. Keeping health authorities in the loop could make the difference between life and death.

Individuals volunteering information will help the Central and State governments narrow down on the cluster cases centred around the Tablighi Jamaat conference in Nizamuddin, Delhi. The spread of cases from this one spot, which reportedly had several foreign nationals who later tested positive, and where six among those who attended died, has emerged as a key milestone in India's management of the epidemic. The conference was held on March 13, more than a week before the Sunday lockdown. Since then, people from the conference moved on, back home, and several, including Indonesian nationals who were present at Nizamuddin, have tested positive. While the State has deployed 'hot-spot' containment strategies in ground zero in Delhi, it is the people who have spread out in the community that are absolutely crucial, over the next few days, to shaping one stretch of the course of the epidemic in India. While it is a massive exercise to track down all the attendees (it is now believed that thousands of people were present) and each of their contacts, it must still be done. Some States have already expressed being thwarted, without co-operation from the participants, and their close contacts. Unfortunately, this may leave the job half done, or undone, leading to disastrous consequences. It is indeed a Herculean task, and may even be considered impossible, unless those who went for the meeting in Delhi step up themselves, engage with health authorities, submit themselves to a test, and remain under quarantine for the prescribed period. Humanitarian crises such as pandemics invoke the worst among men and women, but also their best. The latter is eminently possible, as long as people believe that the enemy is the pandemic, and act responsibly.

Weaker, later

The postponement is better than cancellation, but Olympics is not on anyone's mind now

Support at its best is a glorious indulgence that blends adrenaline rush, exultant joy and mind-numbing grief both for the athlete and the expectant fan. However, in its worst form, sport is war minus the shooting while the cause of nationhood whips up jingoistic passions. But whatever be its intrinsic nature governed by context and history, sport can never exist in a vacuum and it needs a functional society to serve as its bedrock. In these distraught times of the pandemic and the resultant social distancing, basic survival takes precedence over moving limbs and the frenzied applause from a thrilled audience. And it was no surprise that sports events have been postponed or cancelled and the latest to face a disruption in its schedule is the Olympics. Football continues to be the beautiful game but the Olympics remains the world's greatest congregation adhering to its eternal 'faster, higher, stronger' motto. Originally slated for a July 24 to August 9 slot at Tokyo this year, the high-voltage event got derailed once the coronavirus took flight from Wuhan's wet market and coursed through the veins of an inter-connected globe. Initially, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and host Japan were in denial and Australia and Canada threatened to boycott the event before better sense prevailed and the Olympics was pushed to a July 23 start, next year.

A postponement is a first in the chequered history of the modern Olympics since its inception at Athens in 1896. But worse has happened, especially the cancellations, during 1916, 1940 and 1944, when the World Wars drew vicious lines of hate. There were also the Cold War years when the United States and its allies boycotted the Moscow Games in 1980 and the erstwhile Union of Soviet Socialist Republics retaliated along with the Eastern Bloc by skipping the 1984 Olympics at Los Angeles. The most heart-rending was the 'Munich Massacre' during the 1972 edition in then West Germany when a Palestinian terrorist group, Black September, killed 11 members of Israel's squad. Seen through that prism of a bloodied past, the latest postponement seems a mere quibble. IOC president Thomas Bach and Tokyo 2020 president Yoshiro Mori concurred that fresh logistics had to be worked out and ideally a year's preparation was mandatory. Initially estimated to cost about \$28 billion, a delayed Olympics will have to factor inflation and a shrinking economy coping with a pandemic. Over the next 12 months, it is hoped the virus will wane and a semblance of normalcy will set the stage for the Olympics. Sport then would be a welcome balm. But for now, universal health is the overriding priority.

An eye each on containment and welfare

In Tamil Nadu, the government's priority has been to fully focus on stopping the pandemic in its tracks



EDAPPADI K. PALANISWAMI

The COVID-19 pandemic has spread around the world – 204 countries/regions/territories so far. In India, the first case was reported from Kerala on January 30, 2020. The first case in Tamil Nadu was reported on March 7 – a person in Kancheepuram who had travelled abroad.

Realising the nature of this virus quite early on and even when this dreaded infection was confined to one country alone, in January 2020, I directed the State Health Department to screen all the international passengers who had arrived in the State. To curtail community spread, Amma's [Jayalalithaa's] government wasted no time in closing down educational institutions and all high-risk areas such as big commercial complexes, malls, theatres, places of worship and so on, on March 15. When positive cases began showing up in the neighbouring States, I announced the closure of the State's borders as well, again on March 15.

The Tamil Nadu government made a life-saving decision on March 24, which was announced by me in the Legislative Assembly – of a complete 'lockdown' and the imposition of Section 144 of the Code Of Criminal Procedure throughout the State till March 31. Our call for social distancing was further strengthened when the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India made the announcement of a national-level lockdown till April 14, 2020 on the same evening which was intended to break the infection chain. The participation by 1.3 billion Indians in this national exercise once again proves our unity in diversity.

Augmenting infrastructure

Tamil Nadu shares its boundary with States which reported COVID-19 positive cases in the early days of infection in India. The four international airports and four major ports in the State also compounded the risk of infection in the State. But the Tamil Nadu government was ready and around 2.09 lakh international passengers have been screened besides screening data obtained from the Immigration Department on per-

sons who are natives of Tamil Nadu but who have entered the country through an airport other than Chennai. As a result of this screening, around 43,537 people are under home quarantine and observation on date for a period of 28 days. The houses of this high-risk category have been identified and stickers were pasted in front of their residences. They are being monitored through audio/video calls made from a dedicated district control room by doctors posted there round the clock. They have also been given medical advice and counselling.

Since Tamil Nadu is right now transiting to Stage II of COVID-19 transmission, the State government has in place a detailed 'Local Containment Plan' of conducting door-to-door surveillance in the zones where positive cases have been identified. People who are identified through active surveillance will be facility quarantined. Passive surveillance to trace the contacts of positive persons outside the zone is also being undertaken in parallel.

The first exclusive block to treat COVID-19 patients has been set up at Chennai's Omandur Government Medical College Hospital, with a capacity of 500 beds; ₹10 crore has also been allocated for the required medical equipment. There are also dedicated COVID-19 hospitals in each district to treat confirmed cases. All medical college hospitals and district headquarters hospitals have been designated as hospitals for the management of suspected patients. Quarantine facilities have also been arranged for passengers arriving from affected countries. These are at Poonamallee, Madurai, Coimbatore and Tiruchi, which are close to all four international airports in the State. The Health Department has earmarked about 17,000 beds in isolation wards; 3,018 of those are equipped with ventilator facilities. I have also ensured the scaling up of the procurement of essential medical equipment, protective gear for health workers, and drugs and medicines. The Health Department has managed to establish 17 COVID-19 testing laboratories to cover all the regions of the State. I am personally reviewing and monitoring these steps.

I have extended full support to all frontline workers (doctors, nurses, para-medical staff and sanitary workers) who are working round the clock. A decision has



B. VILVAKANNIRAJU

been made to recruit 530 doctors, 1,000 nurses and 1,508 lab technicians to augment the robust medical team already in place. Ambulance services have also been increased, by 200.

The challenges in providing adequate masks and other personal protective equipment for health-care workers are being met. I have advised the District Collectors to involve self-help group members to manufacture triple-layered masks and hand sanitisers to augment supply. Highly populated and crowded areas, market places, bus stands, other public places and dwelling areas are being disinfected regularly. Thermal screening is being done in public places and government offices. Besides creating awareness on frequent hand washing through advertisements, hand washing and sanitising platforms have been installed in places of public gathering. I have announced an additional one month's salary in recognition of the untiring work by frontline health workers.

Addressing fundamentals

The national lockdown will have a telling impact on the poorest and daily-wage workers in the unorganised sector. An immediate and comprehensive relief package of ₹3,280 crore has been announced. All rice card holders will receive rice, sugar, dhal and edible oil free for April along with ₹1,000 each. Besides, as a mark of addressing their undue hardship, workers in the unorganised sector including auto-rickshaw drivers will get 15 kg rice, 1 kg dhal, 1 kg oil free and ₹1,000 each. Pavement vendors will get an extra ₹1,000 each. Also, migrant workers from other States will receive the commodities in equal measure. For those migrant labourers who are without shelter, community halls/marriage halls are being utilised, where hot, nutritious cooked food is being provided, apart from medical facilities.

The nationally acclaimed State initiative, "Amma Canteens",

which provide meals at subsidised rates, will serve the needy. Keeping in mind the well-being of Anganwadi children, dry ration for 15 days is being provided in advance to families to meet nutritional requirements. Those under isolation are also provided with nutritious and vitamin-rich food. Senior citizens, who are being served by Anganwadi centres, will be provided food at their places of stay.

I have announced an additional two days wages to cover those rural households which are dependent on their employment under MGNREGA for their livelihood. Around 1.5 lakh pregnant women who are due in the next 60 days are under close monitoring. Necessary steps have been taken to provide medicines for the next two months to patients with hypertension, diabetes mellitus, HIV and TB.

Ensuring physical distancing

The failure of many advanced countries in handling the pandemic has given us enough wisdom not to take the lockdown lightly. Since India has a large number of densely populated urban areas, the world is watching us to know how we are going to tackle the deadly virus.

However, to make this happen, the singular message of social distancing should percolate to every individual citizen. Several effective communication materials have been circulated in the media and displayed in all the public places highlighting the necessity of isolation and staying at home. The State government has a dedicated website (<https://stopcorona.tn.gov.in/>) to pass on verified and valuable messages. Severe legal action is being taken against violators and those spreading rumours on the spread of the infection and its treatment.

There are several initiatives to increase the number of field functionaries to create awareness and to monitor the home quarantine individuals; as on date, around 38,809 volunteers have registered themselves and the count is increasing every day.

For active enforcement of the lockdown and to address the important issues, we have constituted II co-ordination teams with senior-level IAS officers. I have also constituted a State-level task force headed by Chief Secretary to monitor the preventive measures.

Using video-conferencing, we are frequently reviewing the Dis-

trict Collectors for effective and timely implementation of all the steps. With all the schools, colleges, shopping malls, and cinema theatres closed, adequate supply of daily basic necessities including groceries, agricultural products, milk and medicines are being ensured. Petrol bunkers will operate till 2.30 p.m. Only parcel services are being allowed from restaurants. Call centres are operating 24x7 to offer assistance. I have also set up a 'Crisis Management Committee' in all districts under the chairmanship of District Collectors, with representatives from the Chambers of Commerce, private hospitals, NGOs and other stakeholders. I have directed all the Ministers to coordinate prevention and treatment aspects in the districts.

Emerging the economy

It is the responsibility of State governments to ensure the welfare of the poor and the vulnerable. Like many State governments, Tamil Nadu too has also announced relief packages. The Centre has supported these measures with its Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana relief package. The timely intervention of the Reserve Bank of India in announcing liquidity and interest rate reduction measures will also help the economy. However, the economic impact of this unprecedented lockdown is likely to be very severe and State governments will suffer substantial reductions in tax and revenue receipts. A lot of measures will have to be taken to revive economic growth and to stimulate consumption and investment demand. The Centre should help the States continuously in this regard. To overcome this crisis, I have therefore written to the Prime Minister, requesting the Centre to allocate a special grant of ₹1-lakh crore to all the States including ₹9,000 crore to Tamil Nadu; relax, as a one-time measure, the fiscal deficit norm of 3% of GDP for 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 and permit, during 2020-21, additional borrowing of 33% above the previous year's level.

At this juncture, our priority is to fully focus on the eradication of the pandemic. After achieving this primary goal, I hope the country as a whole will join hands and provide the necessary thrust to the economy.

Edappadi K. Palaniswami is the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu

Beyond social distancing to fight COVID-19

In the global South, a military style lockdown, though inevitable given the circumstances, may reinforce prejudices

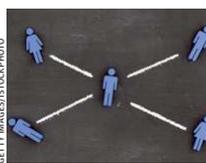


KALINGA TUDOR SILVA

I agree with Eric Klinenberg's recent submission to *The New York Times* that social distancing, advocated by health authorities worldwide, as a means of combating the spread of the coronavirus, can only be a part of firefighting. The rapid worldwide spread of COVID-19 has a lot to do with the fallout of globalisation, including the travel industry, tourism and the neoliberal attack on universal health care. Moreover,

this cult facilitated the transmission of the disease from Wuhan to South Korea because of frequent travel among its followers. Consequently, more than half of all COVID-19 patients at the onset of the epidemic belonged to this religious movement, which accounted for less than 1% of the Korean population.

Social isolation among new immigrants in Korean cities was incidentally a major incentive for people to join this cult. In this context social distancing was not popular among them due to the simple reason that the movement served as an extended family for many of its members. In this instance, social distancing once successfully introduced may have actually served to contain the epidemic, but it also



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

for Shiite Muslims. The next centre was the Iranian Parliament, having strong ties with Qom, the spiritual hub of Iranian society. As many as 23 parliamentarians, comprising 8% of all MPs, were infected with the disease by March 3. Social distancing was contrary to popular forms of social greeting in Iran particularly among the ruling elite. In any case the coronavirus was introduced in Iran through

and their contacts became the first set of local people exposed to the disease triggering local transmissions. Both Sri Lanka and Kerala in India have large portions of their labour force employed overseas. Returnees from these overseas destinations have contributed to the upsurge in the COVID-19 epidemic in South Asian countries. For instance, among 18 conformed COVID-19 patients in Sri Lanka by March 15 as many as 11 (61%) were Sri Lankan returnees from Italy, a popular destination for Sri Lankan migrant workers from the 1990s.

Thus, imported cases and those directly exposed to them comprise over 90% of all COVID-19 cases detected in Sri Lanka as of March 22. Roughly about 20.5% of confirmed cases are imported

region in Sri Lanka.

Thus, the COVID-19 pandemic can be seen as a fallout of globalisation, particularly in the global South. The quarantine and social distancing processes may not be totally effective in so far as these workers and their families are often in between two states, experiencing difficulties at both ends. The workers returning from Italy and South Korea were the first to be sent to quarantine centres in Batticaloa and Kandakadu from March 10. Initially, they resented the mandatory two-week quarantine in a remote location. Both migrant workers and tourist guides already experience discrimination of various kinds because of their occupations and the risks involved. A military style lockdown

Articles given here are important from an ethical perspective and can be used for case studies. Read them thoroughly and pick only the most valuable points. You should imagine that you are the District Collector or Superintendent of Police and then pick those things that you feel will help in containing the spread of the virus and also recommend the government future course of action and what the government must prioritise. If you are the Chief Secretary of State X what measures will you suggest for handling the issue of migrant labourers and what recommendations will you give? Note : NEVER GIVE UTOPIAN SUGGESTIONS. ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS SUGGESTED SHOULD BE FROM OTHER STATES OR COUNTRIES. IT SHOULD NOT BE "WHAT I WOULD HAVE DONE IF I WERE THE PM/CM"

A pandemic in an unequal India

The official strategies place the responsibility on citizens, a majority without privilege, to fight the virus



HARSH MANDER

If the COVID-19 pandemic lashes India with severity, it will not be just the middle class who will be affected. India's impoverished millions are likely to overwhelmingly bear the brunt of the suffering which will ensue. The privileged Indian has been comfortable for too long with some of the most unconscionable inequalities in the planet. But with the pandemic, each of these fractures can decimate the survival probabilities and fragile livelihoods of the poor.

The measures adopted by the government to stymie the progress of the virus were first to introduce a 'work from home' measure, to urge people to wash their hands frequently, physical distancing, and then an unprecedented 21-day lockdown.

Deepening a social divide

Public health experts are divided about whether this lockdown was absolutely necessary and indeed implementable. It should have been clear that a total lockdown was possible only for the rich and the middle class with assured incomes during the period, homes with spaces for distancing, health insurance and running water supply. But how can we justify the choice of a strategy which throws the dispossessed, who lack all of the above, to both hunger and infection?

When ordering the lockdown, did the government not remember the millions of informal workers and destitute people who would have no work if they stayed home, many of them circular migrants, estimated at 100 million? These include casual daily-wage workers; self-employed people such as rag-pickers, rickshaw pullers and street vendors; and people forced to survive by alms.

Many among them are people whose earnings each day barely suffice to enable them to eat and feed their families. Does the government expect them to voluntarily starve and let their children die to prevent the spread of the infection? This crisis of hunger is even more dire for older people without caregivers, and persons with disability. The govern-



Migrants walk to their villages after the announcement of the nation-wide lockdown, near the Delhi-U.P. border. ♦♦♦

ment also seems to be in amnesia about hundreds of thousands of children, women and men in every city whose only home is the pavement or the dirt patches under bridges.

Recorded messages on our phones urge us to wash our hands regularly. We forget, however, that millions live in shanties without water supply, and they buy a pot of water, sometimes for a fifth of their day's earnings (irregular incomes which are further decimated by the lockdown). Regular cleanliness is a remote luxury beyond their means.

We are also advised 'social distancing' (physical distancing) and 'self-isolation'. How is this feasible for large extended families who crowd into narrow single rooms in slums and working-class tenements? Or for the homeless people who have no option except to sleep in overcrowded unsanitary government shelters, veritable breeding centres for infections? Or for destitute people in beggars' homes? Indeed, prisoners in overcrowded jails? And I cannot forget those confined to detention centres in Assam, which are jails within jails.

And then consider the capacity of the health system to deal with the pandemic if (or when) it actually submerges India. India's investments in public health are among the lowest in the world, and most cities lack any kind of public primary health services. A Jan Swasthya Abhiyan estimate is that a district hospital serving a population of two million may have to serve 20,000 patients, but they are bereft of the beds, personnel and

and treatment. This includes planning operations for food and work; security for the poor; for safe transportation of the poor to their homes; and for special protection for the aged, the disabled, children without care and the destitute.

For two months, every household in the informal economy, rural and urban, should be given the equivalent of 25 days' minimum wages a month until the lockdown continues, and for two months beyond this. Pensions must be doubled and home-delivered in cash. There should be free water tankers supplying water in slum shanties throughout the working days. Governments must double PDS entitlements, which includes protein-rich pulses, and distribute these free at doorsteps. In addition, for homeless children and adults, and single migrants, it is urgent to supply cooked food to all who seek it, and to deliver packed food to the aged and the disabled in their homes using the services of community youth volunteers.

To ensure jails are safer, all prison undertrial prisoners, except those charged with the gravest crimes, should be released. Likewise, all those convicted for petty crimes. All residents of beggars' homes, women's rescue centres and detention centres should be freed forthwith.

India must immediately commit 3% of its GDP for public spending on health services, with the focus on free and universal primary and secondary health care. But since the need is immediate, authorities should follow the example of Spain and New Zealand and nationalise private health care. An ordinance should be passed immediately that no patient should be turned away or charged in any private hospital for diagnosis or treatment of symptoms which could be of COVID-19.

While one part of the population enjoys work and nutritional security, health insurance and housing of globally acceptable standards, others survive at the edge of unprotected and uncertain work, abysmal housing without clean water and sanitation and no assured public health care. Can we resolve to correct this in post-COVID India? Can we at least now make the country more kind, just and equal?

Harsh Mander is a human rights worker, writer and teacher

The cost of a cure for COVID-19

If Gilead's drug is successful, the Indian government should issue a compulsory licence under the Patents Act



SHYEL TREHAN

The World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic. However, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) declared COVID-19 an orphan disease, or a rare disease. Which of these statements is true? As of March 23, it seemed both.

COVID-19 and the Orphan Drug Act

In the U.S., under the Orphan Drug Act, 1983, companies are provided incentives to develop therapies, or orphan drugs, for rare diseases. The idea is that without these incentives, companies would find it difficult to recoup their R&D costs given the small number of people suffering from the rare disease. The Act allows seven years of market exclusivity and financial incentives to innovators of these drugs. As a result, orphan drugs are often exorbitantly priced. Privileges under the Act may be conferred to companies for drugs to treat a disease that affect less than 200,000 people in the U.S., or for a disease that affects more than 200,000 people but for which there is no hope of recouping R&D costs. Interestingly, according to the regulations for revocation, if the number of people suffering from the disease exceeds 200,000 after designation but before approval, this would not be a ground for revocation.

In an egregious misuse of the Act, the FDA granted Gilead Sciences orphan drug status for its antiviral drug, Remdesivir, on March 23. Originally developed to treat Ebola but found ineffective, the drug is now being tested for treating COVID-19. Clinical trials are already in Phase III. But in an interesting turn of events, on March 25 Gilead announced that it had submitted a request to the FDA to rescind its designation for Remdesivir. It added to the fact that abbreviated trials were behind the initial designation, though it is well known that there are other avenues for abbreviated trials in such circumstances.

The question that remains is, how did the Act apply to a potential drug for COVID-19, which is anything but a rare disease, with 800,049 confirmed cases across the world? How does the U.S. FDA justify conferring the status of an orphan drug on a therapy designed to treat COVID-19? Sure, as of March 25, the U.S. had 54,941 people suffering from the disease. But this is simply a technicality. Congressional findings for the Act state that the purpose of the legislation is to provide financial incentives for drugs that may reason-

ably expect to generate relatively small sales. Is it legal to apply the benefits of a statute to something entirely outside its stated objective and purpose? The simple answer is no.

Gilead is reported to have said that it intends to make the drug accessible and affordable around the globe. However, Gilead's exorbitant pricing of its drug to treat hepatitis C and its drug to treat HIV attracted attention in the past. Yet in 2017, Gilead placed its HIV therapy in the Medicines Patent Pool, a move that would make the medicine more accessible. For Remdesivir, Gilead's suspension of its "compassionate use" programme raised alarm bells. The programme was reinstated for only children and pregnant women; Gilead said it cannot process "the overwhelming number of applications". Gilead also stated that it had transitioned to an "expanded access" programme, for emergency use in severely ill patients. Public apprehension is somewhat justified, not least of all on account of the FDA's conduct in conveniently interpreting a statute to benefit big pharma during a pandemic.

Impact on the U.S. and India

So, what would have been the impact of this orphan drug status for the U.S., given the status of its patents? Patents are open to challenge. Had Gilead not sought that orphan drug status be rescinded, generic manufacturers would not have been able to market a drug to treat COVID-19 with the same active ingredient till the seven-year period of market exclusivity had ended. This would have given Gilead free rein on pricing and licensing which would have had disastrous consequences on the healthcare system.

What does this mean for India? While the orphan drug status of Remdesivir would have no impact on India, Gilead Sciences does hold a patent in India, which it is likely to claim for this use. As far as its patent rights are concerned, Indian law permits the government to issue a compulsory licence in certain circumstances of a public health crisis under Section 92 of the Patents Act. This would allow third parties to manufacture a patented drug without permission of the patent holder. Indian companies have already expressed their capability to manufacture the drug. The fireproof under this provision has never been deployed before. If the government does not exercise its powers to issue a compulsory license if required, Indian manufacturers would not be able to manufacture generics (without challenging the patent). This would leave the people vulnerable to Gilead's pricing policies and licensing conditions, should its drug be successful.

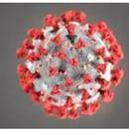
Shyel Trehan practises in the Delhi High Court and the Supreme Court of India

Welcomed then, stigmatised now

India must ensure that messaging and reporting on COVID-19 doesn't stigmatise foreigners

K.P.M. BASHEER

Over a fortnight ago, an Italian tourist at Wagamon, a beautiful hill town in Kerala's Idukki district, reportedly had to spend a night in a cemetery attached to a church. The reason? He had been denied a room in all the hotels and resorts in the area. At the time, government authorities had told hoteliers not to let in foreigners, particularly those from high-risk countries such as Italy, France, China and Iran. If they did, the hotels/resorts were told to keep the tourists in isolation for a fortnight.



In another town, Munnar, in the same district, a British tourist tested positive for COVID-19 on March 15. In a moment of high drama, the individual, along with a group of British tourists, "escaped" from the Munnar resort and boarded a plane at Kochi that was bound for Dubai. The "positive" result came as the tourist was boarding the plane. The authorities got all the passengers offloaded, the flight's departure was delayed by a few hours, and the British tourist group was kept isolated in a hotel. Briefly, there was even talk of shutting down the airport for fear of a virus outbreak.

Viewed with suspicion

Shocked by the news, Munnar imposed a lockdown the following day. The people in the town, which attracts thousands of foreigners during the tourist season, started to view every foreigner with suspicion. In Kochi, a foreign couple was turned out of a restaurant by fellow diners. In Kannur district, a French-Italian pair had to starve for a couple of days as restaurants refused to serve them. The same story played out in many places in Kerala, a State which otherwise prides itself on being extremely tourist-friendly.

Such incidents were reported from other parts of the country as well. A Venezuelan tourist operator, Ma Dagnino, said: "All over India, foreigners began to be seen as a threat." She said over a WhatsApp message: "If guests are treated like

outcasts, and refused the most basic of courtesies, it is India itself that will be the most profoundly hurt."

COVID-19 is a huge threat to India and it's natural that people will panic. But governments and the media need to be mindful that their decisions and reports, respectively, don't evoke knee-jerk reactions from the people. Creating panic might serve to keep people on their toes in the initial stages, but this only becomes counterproductive later. When there is hype and panic, people view foreigners as enemies of the people and want them out of the country. In tourism-reliant States like Kerala, the economic cost of this kind of behaviour will be massive.

The government's steps against the virus should not lead to the kind of scare and stigma that were the outcomes of the anti-HIV/AIDS campaign during the early stages of the epidemic in India. Back then, some doctors refused to examine HIV/AIDS patients, and paramedics sent the afflicted people out of hospitals. The infection caused extensive social stigma and ostracism.

For a sensitive campaign

While working for this newspaper, I had reported an incident which showed how society viewed HIV/AIDS once. In 1996, in a village in Kerala's Malappuram district, a group of men led by a school headmaster rounded up two young women claiming that they had been "spreading AIDS" in the village. The group thrashed the women and got their heads shaved. It was a campaign focusing on infusing fear and loathing against AIDS patients that resulted in such a response. The incident created immediate reactions and caused a drastic rethink on the way the anti-HIV campaign was being run in Kerala.

"Please stop infusing fear among your citizens," was Ma Dagnino's message to the government. "Don't trash your own country by exchanging kindness for fear."

K.P.M. Basheer, a former journalist with The Hindu, is the CEO of a resort at Munnar

Patents or Intellectual Property Rights are an ongoing issue between India and USA. Ever greening of patents is employed by drug manufacturers based in USA increasing the cost of life saving drugs. Generic drug manufacturers are companies that manufacture the patented drugs after the period of exclusivity. Most generic manufacturers are based out of India. This makes the drugs cheaper and accessible. Indian drugs are known for its cheap price and they are also being exported to other countries. Generically manufactured drugs are cheaper but they don't compromise on quality.

DATA POINT

Spreading through clusters

In many COVID-19-affected nations, the case count started rising exponentially after health workers discovered a group of people who got infected at one place and mostly at the same time. Such groups are termed "clusters". In South Korea, close to 56% of the infections emerged from a church frequented by an infected woman. In Singapore, a dinner party was found responsible for 10% of the cases. Earlier this week, India found one such massive cluster in a religious congregation held in mid-March in Nizamuddin, Delhi. By **The Hindu Data Team**

HOW BIG IS THE NIZAMUDDIN CLUSTER?

The cluster was discovered recently. As of 9.45 p.m., on Tuesday, at least 130 cases have originated from this cluster. Meanwhile, other attendees of the event in Nizamuddin are being tested. The treemap shows the primary infected person(s) in each of the clusters across India & the no. of cases related to them

Nizamuddin cluster 130 cases <i>Number of cases in various States linked to this cluster:</i> Andaman and Nicobar: 10 Andhra Pradesh: 15 Delhi: 24 Jammu & Kashmir: 1 Karnataka: 1 Maharashtra: 1 Tamil Nadu: 72 Telangana: 6 Gujarat: 1	Three infected people who came from Germany are responsible for a cluster in Rajasthan that has revealed 26 cases	Family returning to Sangli, Maharashtra, from Saudi Arabia 25 cases	Bhilwara hospital staff in Rajasthan 23 cases
Italian tourists in Rajasthan 17 cases	Family returning to Pune from Dubai: 10 cases	Dilshad garden, Delhi cluster: 9 cases	Returnee from Italy to Delhi: 8 cases
Indonesian tourists in Telangana 11 cases	Mecca returnees in Karnataka: 8 cases	Returnee to Punjab: 6 cases	
Returnees to Kerala from Italy 11 cases	U.K. tourists in Kerala: 7 cases	Returnees to Gujarat: 6 cases	

STATE-WISE CLUSTERS

Kerala (4 clusters) and Maharashtra (3 clusters), the two States with the most number of cases in India, are linked to many clusters. The treemap shows various States and the number of clusters identified in each State

Kerala 4 clusters	Gujarat 2	Telangana 2
Maharashtra 3	Karnataka 2	Chandigarh, J&K, Punjab, J.N., U.P., A.P. and A&N islands 1
Delhi 2	Rajasthan 2	

WHO WERE PART OF THE CLUSTERS?

Clusters are typically made of relatives of the person who was the source of the person who was primarily infected and spread it to others). Acquaintances, random contacts, co-passengers are also part of a cluster

Relatives 57 cases	Random contacts 23 cases
Acquaintance 27 cases	Co-passengers 8 cases

SOURCE: CASES REPORTED BY THE HINDU, HEALTH MINISTRIES OF STATES, INDIA COVID-19 TRACKER

was some other person and had not been a

What measures will you suggest to reduce the stigma against foreigners in the district where you are the DC?

tion of banking activities on the part of the most important among banking institutions, the reluctance, that is to say, on the part to extend their spheres of activity to the tracts of country surrounding them. This is what contributes to the paucity of banking facilities in the country. The number of towns in India in which banks and their branches are situated is, Mr. Shirras points out, only a hundred-and-seventy-six. This means that the majority of Indian towns – areas with a population of 10,000 and over according to the census of 1911 – go without banking facilities. This is to say there are still 700 towns or so in the country which cannot boast of even a single bank serving their population.

FROM PAGE ONE

Tablighi officials charged with defining restrictions

NDMA is a statutory body whose chairperson is Prime Minister of India. National Executive Committee will assist the NDMA. NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF DISASTER MANAGEMENT has the mandate of Human Resource development and capacity building. NATIONAL DISASTER RESPONSE FORCE works under the overall guidance of NDMA. AT THE STATE LEVEL SDMA IS CHAIRED BY CM. DISTRICT DISASTER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY IS HEADED BY DISTRICT COLLECTOR

them pedalled cycle-rickshaws to cover a distance of 1,390 km to Kathir. Three days later, covering a distance of 554 km, they reached Lucknow on Tuesday morning. "Their mobile phones are switched off, so we don't know if the police caught them or if they are still continuing on their journey," Mohammed Nizamuddin, another autorickshaw driver, whose destination is one of the 32 making the journey, says. For the 80-odd who stayed back, each day is get-

'Exodus could have been avoided'

PM should have consulted States before announcing lockdown, says

SOBHANA K. NAIR NEW DELHI

The displacement of lakhs of migrants could have been avoided had Prime Minister Narendra Modi first consulted the State governments, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel said in an interview to The Hindu. "Who is to implement the lockdown? Can the Union government on its own do so? The answer is no. Ultimately, it's the State government's job to implement it. Did the Prime Minister talk to any of the State governments before unilaterally announcing it? No," Mr. Baghel said, speaking over phone from Raipur. Chhattisgarh has reported seven COVID-19 cases, with no deaths so far. It was one of the first States to announce a lockdown on March 21, four days before Mr. Modi announced a nationwide 21-day lockdown. "We have the Mumbai-



Howrah highway cutting across the State and could not have taken a chance," Mr. Baghel said the citing reason for an early lockdown. The Union government should have reached out to the industry also and the economic package should have precluded the lockdown. It should have anticipated that once the lockdown was implemented scores of persons would not be able to earn a living and would obviously head out to places where they felt more secure, Mr. Baghel said.

SC upholds right to discuss COVID-19

It asks the media to publish official version to avoid panic; government told to issue a daily bulletin

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday upheld the right to free discussion about COVID-19, even as it directed the media to refer to and publish the official version of the developments in order to avoid inaccuracies and large-scale panic.

It ordered the government to start a daily bulletin on COVID-19 developments through all media avenues in the next 24 hours.

A Bench, led by Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde, was responding to a request from the Central government that media outlets, in the "larger interest of justice", should only publish or telecast anything on COVID-19 after ascertaining the factual position from the government.

A Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) report in the court, signed by Union Home Secretary



Ajay Kumar Bhalla, explained that "any deliberate or inaccurate" reporting by the media, particularly web portals, had a "serious and inevitable potential of causing panic in larger section of the society".

The Ministry said any panic reaction in the midst of an unprecedented situation based on such reporting would harm the entire nation. Creating panic is also a criminal offence under the Disaster Management Act, 2005, the Ministry said.

But the court took a view balancing free press and the need to avoid panic in society during an unprecedented

crisis. "We expect the media [print, electronic or social] to maintain a strong sense of responsibility and ensure that unverified news capable of causing panic is not disseminated. A daily bulletin by the Government of India through all media avenues, including social media and forums to clear the doubts of people, would be made active within a period of 24 hours as submitted by the Solicitor General of India. We do not intend to interfere with the free discussion about the pandemic, but direct the media refer to and publish the official version about the developments,"

the court ordered. Noting that the 21-day nationwide lockdown was "inevitable" in the face of an "unprecedented global crisis" like the COVID-19 pandemic, the government blamed "fake and misleading" messages on social media for creating widespread panic, which led to mass "barefoot" journey of migrant workers from cities to their native villages in rural India.

Fake news "Deliberate or inadvertent fake news and material capable of causing a serious panic in the minds of the public is found to be the single most unmanageable hindrance in the management of this challenge... Will set up a separate unit headed by a Joint Secretary-level officer in the Health Ministry and consisting of eminent specialist doctors from recognised institutions like AIIMS to answer

er the queries of citizens," the Ministry's 39-page status report said.

The Ministry said the Narendra Modi government, in fact, took "pro-active, pre-emptive and timely" action 13 days before even the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a "public health emergency of international concern". Very few countries responded as well as India.

But the mass migration of the poor would defeat the preventive measures taken by the Central government, the Ministry said. It said "there was no necessity for migrant workers to rush to their villages" when the Centre, fully conscious that no citizen should be deprived of basic amenities, had announced a ₹1.70 lakh crore package under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana to take care of their daily needs.

Ministry extends relief to motorists

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Central government on Tuesday extended the validity of expired driving licences and vehicle registrations until June 30 to help those affected by the nationwide lockdown.

The other documents for which relief has been provided include all other documents required by a person under the Motor Vehicles Act.

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has issued an advisory to all the States and Union Territories communicating its decision.

It requested the States to implement the advisory "in letter and spirit" so that people and transporters and organisations rendering essential services did not get harassed and faced difficulties, a Ministry statement said.

Petition in SC seeks free testing

It challenges legality of advisory that caps the price for testing at ₹4,500

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

A petition was filed on Tuesday in the Supreme Court seeking a direction to the government to provide free COVID-19 testing in all laboratories, including private ones.

The plea, filed by Delhi resident Shashank Deo Sudhi, challenged the legality of a March 17 advisory that caps the price for COVID-19 testing at ₹4,500.

Mr. Sudhi said the advisory was both discriminatory and a violation of the fundamental right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution.

"It is extremely difficult for the common citizen to get himself/herself tested in the government hospital/



Petition said the advisory was both discriminatory and a violation of the fundamental right to life. REUTERS

labs and being no alternative in the sight, the people are constrained to pay the capped amount to the private hospital/labs for protecting their lives. The respondents are completely insensitive and indifferent to

the plight of the common citizen of the country who are already financially burdened on account of completely locked down with no possibility of being unlocked in recent future," the petition said.

In the alternative, the petition asked the court to direct the government to "ramp up the testing facilities at the earliest, given the escalating mortality and morbidity rate across the country".

COVID-19

Mr. Sudhi said the COVID-19 tests should be conducted under NABL (National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories) accredited pathological laboratories as the non-accredited labs were not conforming to the standards of best practices prescribed by International Laboratory Accreditation Co-operation and Asia Pacific Accreditation Co-operation.

States told to track foreign Tablighi members

Home Ministry letter directed that they be screened, quarantined and deported, if possible

VUJAJTA SINGH NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry wrote to all States and Union Territories on March 21 to "identify, screen and quarantine" 824 foreign Tablighi Jamaat members who were travelling to different parts of the country.

While the Centre disseminated information to the States about the movement of the religious group's members, the virus had already spread to various parts of the country.

In Jammu and Kashmir, 80% of the COVID-19-positive cases reported so far are linked to an index patient

who attended a gathering at Alami Markaz Banglewali Masjid in south Delhi's Nizamuddin. The patient died on March 26. In Telangana, 50% of the cases are linked to the meetings organised by the Markaz.

On March 28, the Home Ministry shot off another letter to the States that around 2,000 Tablighi Jamaat members from Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand who entered India on tourist visa appeared to be "potential carriers" of COVID-19. It asked the States to "screen, quarantine" and deport them if possible. All interna-

tionals who entered India for Tablighi activities and the Bureau of Immigration (BOI) started sharing details of all international arrivals with the States from March 6.

But before the Ministry issued the letters, several States had already informed the Union Health Ministry's control room about the positive cases linked to the Markaz. Health Ministry officials did not respond.

On March 21, a day before the "Janta Curfew", Jammu and Kashmir officials informed the Health Ministry's control room of the 65-year-

old index patient. His contact-tracing revealed that he had travelled to Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Delhi, Deoband, Jammu and Srinagar from February 16.

Around 15,000 people are said to have come in contact with him directly or indirectly.

His eight family members have tested positive, and 14 medical staff members, who attended on him at a Srinagar hospital, have been quarantined.

Before this, on March 20, the Telangana police detained 11 foreign nationals from a Tablighi Markaz (centre) in Hyderabad.

INS seeks relief for newspapers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Indian Newspaper Society, in a letter to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharamin, has sought a two-year tax holiday and removal of all import duty on newsprint, seeking an urgent relief for the collapsing newspaper sector.

The society said the industry had been hit by a "triply whammy of coronavirus, plummeting advertising and customs duty on newsprint which has led to an unimaginable situation" where the domestic newspaper industry is on the brink of collapse.

The circulation of newspapers has been badly hit due to the lockdown. The advertising, too, has plummeted severely curtailing two key revenue streams for newspapers.

Last year, a 10% import duty was imposed on newsprint, taking the total customs duty on newsprint to 15%. In this year's Budget, 10% of duty was removed but the newspapers still have to pay 5% duty, which the INS demanded be waived off.

"Media's activity is essential, and our newspapers are going above and beyond their call of duty in this pandemic, with editorial and other colleagues... putting themselves at great personal risk to be at the frontlines, to ensure readers get life-saving and other essential information day after day, in the safety of their homes," the letter said.

It said that last year well-known English newspapers such as DNA and the Financial Chronicle shut their print editions.

It said there needs to be a "level playing field" between foreign digital giants and domestic Indian newspapers.

G20 informal group of 19 countries and European Union + IMF and world bank representatives. India is a member. Does not have permanent secretariat or Headquarters. They work as TROIKA. (GOOGLE).

'COVID-19 crisis a turning point in history'

Modi, Macron hold talks over pandemic

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The COVID-19 pandemic is a "turning point in history", said Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in a telephone conversation with French President Emmanuel Macron on Tuesday.

According to a release by the Ministry of External Affairs, PM Modi expressed his condolences for the loss of lives in the pandemic in France.

"The French President strongly agreed with Prime Minister's view that the COVID-19 crisis is a turning point in modern history and offers the world an opportunity to forge a new human-centric concept of globalisation," the MEA statement said, adding that the two leaders had agreed to have Indian and French experts share preventive measures, research on treatment and vaccines.

The two leaders had both appeared on an emergency video conference convened by Saudi King Salman last week to discuss the pandemic, where leaders of the G-20 had committed to infusing \$5 trillion into the global economy to mitigate the impact of the virus.

During the conference, Mr. Modi had stressed on the need for the G-20 to look at humanitarian aspects to global challenges like pandemics, climate change and terrorism.

Global concerns The MEA said Mr. Modi and Mr. Macron had "underlined the importance of not losing sight of other global concerns like climate change, which impact humanity as a whole. They also stressed the need to devote special attention to the needs of less developed countries, including those in Africa, during the present crisis."

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Viral effect: Migrant workers eating meals supplied by social workers under a flyover in Mumbai on Tuesday; persons from different areas of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh who completed their quarantine being discharged from a hotel in Srinagar; people stand in a queue outside a bank to withdraw money in Bikaner; and a medical team examining a person in Jaipur. • EMMANUEL YOGINI, NISSAR AHMAD & PTI

RS members to donate from MPLAD funds

NEW DELHI
Many members of the Rajya Sabha have consented to contribute from their Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLAD) funds to the common central pool to fight COVID-19. Rajya Sabha Chairman Venkaiah Naidu had asked the MPs to contribute at least ₹1 crore each from their MPLAD funds. Under the scheme, each MP has the choice to suggest to the District Collector works estimated at ₹5 crore a year to be taken up in their respective constituencies.

20 areas declared 'Red Zones' in Kashmir

SRINAGAR
The Jammu and Kashmir administration has declared over 20 villages and five urban pockets as no-go 'Red Zones' as the number of COVID-19 cases jumped to 55. Six more people tested positive on Tuesday. "The six positive cases were reported from the Kashmir division," said J&K spokesperson Rohit Kansal. An official said 20 villages in Pulwama, Budgam, Shopian and Nandipora and five urban areas in Srinagar have been declared 'Red Zones'.

Youth killed for warning about 2 with symptoms

PATNA
A youth in Sitamarhi district of Bihar was beaten to death on March 29 for warning the local authorities that two villagers who had returned from Mumbai recently could be infected with COVID-19. The two villagers and their families were furious with Bablu Kumar Mahto, 20, who had informed the medical authorities. They caught Bablu Kumar alone on March 29 and beat him up, his brother, Guddu Mahto, said. Sudhir Mahto and Munna Kumar Mahto were arrested.

Ambulance staff in U.P. threaten to halt work

LUCKNOW
Around 16,000 emergency ambulance workers in Uttar Pradesh threatened to stop work if the company hiring them did not give them protective gear for handling COVID-19 cases. They also demanded that their salary, which has been allegedly not paid since January, be released immediately. In a letter to GVK EMRI, the private company that hires them, the Ambulance Karmachari Sangh said that if the requirements were not met, they would halt work.

Ministry, Scientific Adviser differ on mask use

Health Ministry says it is 'studying the recommendations' of the office of the PSA for widespread use of masks

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI
India's highest science advisory body, the office of the Principal (PSA), and the Union Health Ministry appear out of sync on whether masks should be widely used by people.

The Ministry's standing recommendation is that not everybody should be wearing masks. Among those who are not healthcare workers, only those who had a cough or exhibited signs of a flu or a respiratory illness need to be wearing them as did those caring for COVID-19 patients. The reason this isn't recommended for the public at large – though now almost anyone on the street can be seen to be wearing them – is that it will lead to a shortage and unavailability for doctors, nurses and other hospital staff.

On Tuesday, however, the

office of the PSA through the Press Information Bureau recommended the widespread use of masks. It endorsed, above all, home-made masks that could easily be made and were reusable with washing and sanitising.

"The proposed guide is meant to provide a simple outline of best practices to make, use and reuse masks to enable NGOs and individuals to self-create such masks and accelerate widespread adoption of masks across India. The key criteria for proposed designs are ease of access to materials, ease of making at home, and ease of use and reuse. Wearing of masks is especially recommended for people living in densely populated areas across India," notes the advisory.

The office of the PSA is a key coordinating agency among government scientific



To wear or not: Health workers wearing protective masks in Bhubaneswar. • BISWARANJAN ROUT

bodies and industry to accelerate decisions on dealing with COVID-19. It does not recommend the use of the health mask or the N95 mask that are expensive, not-reusable and largely used in hospital settings.

K. Vijay Raghavan, Principal Scientific Adviser, did not

immediately respond to a request for comment. The Health Ministry, which is the nodal agency for monitoring the pandemic, said it was "studying the recommendations" of the office of the PSA.

Health Ministry spokesperson Lav Agrawal said at

the daily press briefing on Tuesday, "The World Health Organization hasn't given a categorical opinion on its [mask] usage. However, a technical committee is looking into this issue and suitable guidelines will be issued soon. Our stress is on social distancing. We request that not everyone wear a mask. We have defined guidelines on who should and shouldn't be wearing one."

Raman Gangakhedkar, who was also at the briefing as a representative of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), said: "There's a wide gap between the number of cases in the United States and India and the risk of exposure isn't as much here. Hence only those sick or at risk of exposure should be wearing them."

Other than the question of shortage, the scientific consensus

was that COVID-19 was not an airborne disease and most people contracted it through coming into contact with infectious droplets picked up from surfaces.

"The government's policy regarding the use of masks is evolving. Probably they are now taking more notice of the fact there may be a sizeable number of asymptomatic carriers of the infection – some studies suggest nearly 25% of COVID-19 infected may be asymptomatic – and wearing a mask is a good precautionary measure," said Sunil Singh, molecular virologist, Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University.

The March 31 advisory from the office of the PSA recommends the use of home-made cotton masks that are reusable after appropriate washing and disinfection that can be done at home.

Panel formed to coordinate virus research

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A Science and Technology Empowered Committee for COVID-19 response has been constituted and will be chaired by Prof. Vinod Paul, member, NITI Aayog and Prof. K. Vijay Raghavan, Principal Scientific Adviser to the government, the Health Ministry said on Tuesday.

It said this committee would coordinate among science agencies, scientists, industries and regulatory bodies. The Committee will work with the Department of Science & Technology, Department of Biotechnology, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, Defence Research and Development Organisation and Indian Institute for Science to take speedy decisions on research," it said.

'Step up checking in patients'

Jacob John says chasing the virus should be phased down in a strategy shift

SERENA JOSEPHINE M.
CHENNAI

At a time when hotspot containment measures are among the focus areas for prevention and control of the coronavirus outbreak (COVID-19), renowned virologist T. Jacob John has called for a shift in strategy – chasing the virus should be phased down and checking for the virus in infected persons should be stepped up.

"This is not a hotspot transmitting virus but it is a virus that transmits everywhere... Containment measures have to continue. But now, containment measures should have 30% priority, and healthcare testing 70% priority. Healthcare checking is another way of containment measure as we will be finding infected people who had no travel history," said Dr. John, retired professor of virology, Christian Medical College, Vellore.

Silently infected
That community-based transmission is happening in



Dr. T. JACOB JOHN
Virologist

COVID-19

India is not accepted, he stated. "We do not see it because the majority of people are silently infected and only a few will show symptoms. We are not looking at symptomatic people. We are looking at test results, tests based on travel and contact with those who have travelled. That phase is more or less over. Continuing to chase people who had travelled and their contacts is alright if we have sufficient manpower and energy. But today, what we need to understand is that

the virus has widely spread," he stated.

COVID-19 is a pandemic, meaning that all countries are affected. It means it is a widely transmitting virus, he said, adding: "In every pandemic, within countries, the virus will spread to every nook and corner where human beings live. Even in tribal areas where the neighbouring house is one mile away, the virus will reach there as people will have contact with someone. If not this month, next month. So that kind of a spread should be anticipated now, a widespread community spread is going to happen."

What should be done now? He said now is the time to prepare the healthcare system to face huge numbers of sick people. "That preparation is what we need now, not chasing the virus. Chasing the virus must be phased down and checking for the virus in sick people must be stepped up. The strategy from now onwards should be lesser and lesser on efforts paid for travel-related

search and more emphasis on illness-related testing," he said.

Fever, cough

Dr. John added that it was high time that the strategy be shifted to testing people with fever and cough. "Anybody with fever and cough must be checked. Additional symptoms like fatigue, headache, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, body ache are common to both influenza and COVID-19. High fever is common in COVID-19 but not in common cold. So, influenza and COVID-19 should be in one category, and all other respiratory infections in another. If there is a loss of smell, if taste disappears for one day, if there is breathing difficulty, it is more like COVID-19. Those people should be tested for influenza and COVID-19," he explained.

"The testing strategy must expand to illness testing as the virus is on the loose in the community. Whether the government accepts it or not, it is already in the community," he said.

Doctors suspect community transmission in Indore

Lack of contact, travel history amid spike in cases

SIDHARTH YADAV
BHOPAL

As most COVID-19 patients in Indore, where 17 persons tested positive on Tuesday, have no contact or travel history, health workers are grappling to identify the source, indicating the most populous and largest city of Madhya Pradesh may already be witnessing the community transmission stage.

"We are not able to detect the source as such, because there is no person with international travel history who has tested positive," said Sali Sakalle, Professor, Community Medicine, Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Medical College, Indore, the only facility testing for the illness in western Madhya Pradesh.

Dr. Sakalle pointed out there were some patients with national travel history. "During travel, they probably might have come in contact [with those infected]," he said.

Indore bears the burden

of 44 patients, most residents of congested localities, of the 66 cases in the State. In addition, three persons from the city died of COVID-19. Besides, eight cases in Jabalpur, six in Ujjain, four in Bhopal, and two each in Shivpuri and Gwalior have been registered.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), community transmission is evidenced by the inability to relate confirmed cases through chains of transmission for a large number of cases, or by increasing positive tests through sentinel samples.

"Coincidentally almost all positive cases, including first ones, have come from congested areas, so probably they have done a lot of community transmission," Dr. Sakalle said. Though pockets have been identified, that doesn't spell a possible wiping out of the virus locally. "If we are able to contain it in certain pockets and cover

all contacts, then maybe we can make it controlled. We have no way to control their [overall] number," he added.

Aggressive testing in relation to other cities such as Bhopal and Jabalpur has yielded more numbers too. Until March 30, the college had tested 261 samples since March 21. "Most cases in the first lot for Indore were those admitted to government and private hospital ICUs whose samples we took to test for acute severe respiratory illnesses when the testing for COVID-19 was restricted to only those with travel history abroad. When the ICMR revised the guidelines, we ran their samples for COVID-19 too, and many tested positive," explained Dr. Sakalle.

Those who had come into contact with these persons tested positive. "Those who're dying, are either elderly or have some comorbidities of diabetes or hypertension," he said.

Centre's extra ration promise yet to be kept at PDS shops

Orders issued only on Monday; States yet to lift additional grain for the distribution of extra 5 kg rice or wheat

MPLAD funds - centrally sponsored fully sponsored by the GoI. Non lapsable funds. Funds are directly released as grants in aid to district authorities. MPs have recommendatory role. It comes under the Ministry of statistics and programme implementation. It's purpose is to bring development at the local level and caters to a bottom up approach.

National Food Security Act - introduced in 2013. Provide subsidised food grain. Mid day meal scheme, PDS and Integrated Child Development Services are included under the Act. 75% of rural population and 50% of urban population will be covered under it. Nutritional support to women and children. Will cover households under Antyodaya Anna Yojana and Priority Households. Two thirds of the population will be covered.

Hydroxychloroquine combination allowed

Ministry issues revised guidelines

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Health Ministry has allowed the use of Hydroxychloroquine in combination with Azithromycin under close monitoring for patients with severe disease and requiring ICU management as per the revised Guidelines on Clinical Management of COVID-19.

Hydroxychloroquine was previously under testing and was allowed to be administered only to doctors and caregivers in direct contact with COVID-19 positive cases.

The Health Ministry has noted that no specific antiviral have been proven to be effective as per currently available data. However, based on the available information (uncontrolled clinical trials), the following drugs may be considered.

It has, however, cautioned that the medication is presently not recommended for children less than 12 years, pregnant and lactating women. "The re-

vised guidelines are based on currently available information and will be reviewed from time to time as new evidence emerges," it added.

Health Ministry's Revised National Clinical Management of COVID-19 is intended for clinicians taking care of hospitalised adult and paediatric patients of COVID-19. "This is not meant to replace clinical judgment or specialist consultation but rather to strengthen clinical management of these patients and provide up-to-date guidance," noted the document.

"We are also offering support to treating physicians and AIIMS, New Delhi is running a 24x7 helpline to provide support to the treating physicians on clinical management. The helpline number is 9971876391. The identified nodal doctor of the State, appointed for clinical management of COVID-19 should only contact AIIMS Call Centre," said a senior Health Ministry official.

Centre tells States to help the disabled

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry on Tuesday asked all States to implement its advisory for the care of persons with disabilities (PwD) during the lockdown as complaints on difficulties in accessing care and essential services continued to pour in.

In a letter to all State Commissioners on Tuesday, Department Secretary Shakuntala Gamlin said that her office was "receiving complaints regarding difficulties being faced by PwDs in getting services of caregivers, maids and access to essential items due to non-issue of travel passes to NGOs/PwD associations/caregivers etc."

INTERVIEW | GITA SEN

'Preventing stigma requires a full-throated campaign'

Health expert says it will have the effect of removing the fear created by the barrage of information on COVID-19

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN

Gita Sen, Director and Distinguished Professor, Ramalingaswami Centre on Equity & Social Determinants of Health (RCESDH), Public Health Foundation of India, speaks about how the stigma attached to COVID-19 is much like what was seen with HIV/AIDS and how it is a result of poor knowledge.

In this time of stress associated with COVID-19, why is a small group of people being stigmatised? How is this different from other health crises we have faced?

■ Stigma and fear are the result of people's poor knowledge about COVID-19 and how it spreads. This is compounded by the large amount of fake news and false information being generated today. Some groups face the additional element

that discrimination against them is already there, and COVID-19 has become one more reason to stigmatise them. In terms of stigma, the closest we have come is with HIV/AIDS patients. But HIV-related stigma did not extend, in general, to health workers.

Which are the groups most vulnerable to stigma related to COVID-19?

■ Three sets of people are being stigmatised now: (i)

those in quarantine, whether they have tested positive or not – many State governments are violating medical ethics codes by publicising address details, marking doors of their homes with stickers and even large posters, stamping them with indelible ink – and stories are coming in of people being thrown out of their homes, shunned, etc (ii) health workers from doctors down to the frontline workers are facing stigma and discrimination including losing their homes because their landlords somehow think they will be contagious, and (iii) those who traditionally face discrimination like migrant workers, people from the northeast, victims of religious or other persecution.



The health worker that you stigmatise today may be the one you have to turn to tomorrow

What can we as government/community do to prevent this?

■ We have a long way to go because we haven't even fully acknowledged the eco-

nomie and health challenges of 80% of our people in what we have done so far. The main responses put forward thus far, needed as they may be, such as social distancing, hand washing and sanitising, nourishing food are out of reach for the large majority of people.

The most vulnerable groups to the virus are the poor in urban slums, migrant workers with no homes, people living in close proximity with little possibility of social distancing or even hand-washing. Very important among them are women who are the traditional providers of home-based health care, which is where many poor people get their health care. These same citizens of our country are un-

dernourished and have few resources to combat non-communicable diseases even in ordinary times. Think of a woman who has to feed her family, take care of sick people and is herself suffering from poor general health – that is the section that is going to be very vulnerable.

Preventing stigma requires a full-throated campaign of public information. How good it would be if the Union Health Minister were to give a daily briefing to let people know what is happening, together with creative social media campaigns about the virus itself that gets rid of the stigma? How valuable it would be if the Prime Minister were to speak against stigma, on behalf of health workers, on behalf of

migrant workers and those suffering discrimination, in support of women?

We need clear, informative and fun messages of the kind that our social marketers surely know how to produce. How good creative a series of Amul ads could be! People also need to understand that the same health worker that you stigmatise today may be the one you may have to turn to tomorrow.

What effect would this have on the groups of people who are discriminated against?

■ It would have the effect of removing the fear that the COVID-19 information barrage is creating. And that is the most important need.

Air India pilots flag poor protective equipment

The Union have to fly flights chartered by countries such as Germany and the U.K. to repatriate their citizens stranded in India

What is the meaning and difference between

1. Stigma
2. Stereotype
3. Prejudice

UNDP provides assistance to least developed countries and is UN's global development network. UNDP had launched Accelerator Lab in India in collaboration with Atal Innovation Mission.

about their safety as they continue to work on the front line during a pandemic.

The unions represent nearly 500 pilots who operate the wide-bodied planes such as Boeing 787, 747 and 777.

The March 30 letter states that the personal protective

equipment is "ill-fitting and flimsy and tears easily on rescue flights, sanitisers are not provided in sufficient quantities and disinfection processes are short of industry best practices."

They also point out that the airline has not made any arrangements for crew members to go into a quarantine,

who are then forced to join their families despite operating flights to some of the global hotspots of COVID-19.

'Poor facilities'

The pilots have also raised questions about the lack of medical facilities as the Air India Medical Services Department has been allowed

to work from home, which the cockpit crew say implies, "that any illness suffered by the crew or their families because of these high-risk flights is the sole responsibility of the crew."

While the airline has not provided any additional medical insurance to crew members to cover them for

any COVID-19 related risks, it has gone a step further and recently advised its employees, "enquiries on reimbursement of bills, sick leave, fitness certificate, are considered as undesirable."

While some of these pilots have operated special flights to Wuhan and Rome to bring back Indians and have oper-

ated flights for countries like Israel to help their citizens return home, they have not been paid 70% of their salaries for the past three months and "have also recently been informed by our management of a substantial pay cut, while in the midst of the above mentioned COVID rescue operations!"

Export of medical items to Serbia triggers debate

90 tonnes of protective supplies sent

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Despite reported shortages of necessary items for medical professionals, India exported a major consignment during the weekend.

According to the UN Development Programme (UNDP), Serbia procured nearly 90 tonnes of "medical protective equipment" from suppliers located in different parts of India.

"The transportation of valuable supplies purchased by the Serbian government has been fully funded by the European Union while the UNDP, Serbia organised the flight and ensured the fastest possible delivery," UNDP in Serbia declared in a social media message.

The delivery has triggered discussion in social media with comments pointing at shortages of many necessary items that the

medical community in India is facing in the fight against the novel coronavirus.

Doctors and nurses from various parts of the country have been sending out videotaped messages urging the

government to ensure necessary items for their safety during treatment of COVID-19 patients.

While the Ministry of External Affairs is yet to elaborate on the full list of items that the Serbian government has purchased from here, available information from Customs suggests that the items exported included 35 lakh pairs of sterile latex surgical gloves.

The Centre, in recent weeks, has prohibited several items from being exported in view of the urgent requirement in the country. India is also looking at procuring equipment from abroad, including from China and South Korea.

Captive audience: film

What is the link between Chaitra Jatra Festival and Indian Navy?

PM CARE - public charitable trust with PM as Chairman. It enables micro donations.

Contributions to PM CARE will qualify as CSR expenditure.

Similar existing fund is PM's National Relief Fund. Set up in 1948 by Nehru. Fund does not have budgetary support and depends entirely on public contributions. Disbursements are made with the approval of PM. Fund is recognised as a trust.

Maharashtra govt. to pay salaries in two instalments

No reduction in amount, assures Uddhav Thackeray

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

As Maharashtra stares at a major economic crisis as a result of lockdown due to COVID-19, the State government has begun taking steps to cut down on the expenditure. In its first step, the government will be releasing salaries of March in two instalments.

Deputy Chief Minister and State Finance Minister Uddhav Thackeray said the decision was taken considering the grim financial condition of the State as well as to give moral

and financial support to the fight against coronavirus. "The State was to receive its due amount of ₹16,654 crore from the Central government by March 31. But it did not receive the amount even on the last day and as a result, the State government was forced to take the decision to disburse the salaries in two instalments," he said.

Mr. Pawar added that every employee would get the salary due, but in two instalments.

This is a change from an earlier statement where he had said that there will be a salary cut of up to 60% due to the financial impact of coronavirus and lockdown. The earlier statement had



The State was to receive its due of ₹16,654 crore from the Centre by March 31. But it did not receive the amount even on the last day and as a result, the State government was forced to take the decision to disburse the salaries in two instalments.

AJIT PAWAR, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister

April 2020. However, a Government Resolution (G.R.) issued later said that the salaries would be given in two instalments and that there would be no cuts.

According to sources in the Finance Department, the Maharashtra government spends around ₹12,000 crore per month on salaries of its employees. Mr. Pawar on Monday written to Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman demanding a special package worth ₹25,000 crore for Maharashtra. He had also demanded ₹16,654 crore dues from the Centre. Meanwhile, Housing Minister Jirendra Awadh has said that he would donate his salary to the whole year for

the relief work related to COVID-19.

It's a crisis: Uddhav

Issuing a clarification on the subject, in a social media address, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray too said there will be no salary cut of government employees.

"After this war against corona is over, we will be facing a financial crisis. We have to take actions and be prepared for it from now itself. For that, we have taken some measures. We will be giving salaries of government employees in instalments. No salary cut has been announced," said Mr. Thackeray, appealing to citizens to not trust rumours.

Monkeys get a feast at hill temple in Odisha

They are fed the 'annaprasad' that has no takers since the lockdown due to COVID-19

SIB KUMAR DAS
BHIRAMPUR

Over 3,000 monkeys are being provided food by the management of the Tara Tarini hill shrine every day to save them from starvation.

This famous hill temple in Odisha's Ganjam district has been closed to devotees since March 16. The annual Chaitra Jatra festival that attracts lakhs of pilgrims was also cancelled.

The monkeys live in the woods on the hill on which the Tara Tarini temple is built. They had grown dependent on devotees for sustenance. The nationwide lockdown due to COVID-19 has prevented the monkeys from getting their quota of fruits, nuts and 'prasad' (food offered to the deity) from devotees.



Full stomach: Monkeys at Tara Tarini. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

"To save the animals from starving and to stop them straying into nearby villages, we decided to feed them every day from March 17. As there are no visitors to take

'annaprasad' of the temple, it is being given away to the monkeys at the hill top," said Executive Officer T.K. Reddy.

In fact, the quantity of

'prasad' being cooked has been increased to feed the monkeys. "When prasad falls short, we again cook upma for these monkeys, adding vegetables and tomatoes," Mr. Reddy said. Now, the monkeys have started gathering around noon at the hilltop to get their meal for the day.

Villagers' gesture

On the request of the Tara Tarini temple administration, some nearby villages have started providing rotis for the monkeys. Villagers are also sending vegetables from their fields for the animals. But now, the monkeys – which are getting used to cooked food, fruit and nuts – seem to be turning up their noses at raw vegetables.

Donations pour in for COVID-19 fund

PM's mother, Mamata among donors

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
AHMEDABAD/KOCHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's nonagenarian mother Hiraba on Tuesday donated ₹25,000 from her personal savings to a special fund set up to fight the coronavirus pandemic in the country.

She deposited the money in the PM-CARES Fund, created by the Centre to help in efforts to contain the spread of the virus and provide relief to those affected by COVID-19, said the Prime Minister's younger brother, Panikaj Modhi.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee donated ₹5 lakh each to the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund and the State Emergency Relief Fund to help combat the spread of the novel coronavirus.

Taking to Twitter, Ms. Banerjee said the contribution was made from her "limited resources".

In Mumbai, legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar, actors Priyanka Chopra, Kareena Kapoor Khan, Alia Bhatt, Vicky Kaushal, among others on Tuesday pledged money to various relief funds aimed at combating the virus.

Actor Prakash Raj said he was donating 250 homeless daily wage earners in Kerala's Kochi every day. Anupama V. Nadella, wife of Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella, has donated ₹2 crore to the PM-CARES Fund, her family sources said on Tuesday. Former Indian captain and coach Anil Kumble on Tuesday made a donation to the Central and Karnataka State relief funds.

Spain reports record 849 deaths in a day

The spike in COVID-19 toll has dampened hopes that the country crossed the peak of the crisis

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MADRID

Once again, Spain hit a new record with 849 COVID-19 deaths in 24 hours on Tuesday although health chiefs said the rate of new infections was continuing its downward trend.

After Italy, Spain has suffered the world's second most deadly outbreak, which has now claimed 8,189 lives there. The latest figures came a day after the death toll fell slightly, dampening hopes it could have passed the peak of the crisis.



Day of mourning: Turin Mayor Chiara Appendino, left, stands at attention as an elderly woman walks past during a minute of silence on Tuesday. •AFP

COVID-19

Over the same period, the number of confirmed cases rose to 94,417 after another 9,222 people tested positive: a nearly 11% increase.

That figure was seen as a setback after a week, in which the rate had been steadily falling, with Monday's figures having shown a rise of just over 8%.

"It's true that today we have a slight increase in the number of cases," said Maria Jose Sierra, from the health ministry's emergencies coordination unit. But the downward trend "is continuing", she added.

This time last week, the rate of new infections stood

at around 20%. Now on day 18 of an unprecedented four-week national lockdown to slow the spread of the virus, Spain has sought to dramatically ramp up testing. It is sourcing kits from around the world in order to test some 50,000 people per day, up

from the current 20,000. Meanwhile, Italy marked a minute of silence and flew flags at half mast on Tuesday to mourn the 11,591 people who have died. The death toll in Italy has climbed by 837 to 12,428, the Civil Protection Agency has said.

Doctor who met Putin tests positive

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MOSCOW

Denis Protsenko, the head of Moscow's main coronavirus hospital who met with President Vladimir Putin a week ago has tested positive, he said on Tuesday, as the Kremlin said the Russian leader's health was fine.

12-year-old dies in Belgium

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BRUSSELS

A 12-year-old girl infected with COVID-19 has died in Belgium, health officials said on Tuesday. Fatality at such a young age "is a very rare occurrence," said government spokesman Dr Emmanuel Andre.

U.S. death toll crosses 3,500

The Navy's 1,000-bed USNS Comfort arrived in New York

ASSOCIATED PRESS
AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

The U.S. death toll from COVID-19 climbed past 3,500 on Tuesday, eclipsing China's official count.

New York was the nation's deadliest hot spot, with about 1,550 deaths statewide, the majority of them in New York City.

President Donald Trump has been criticised for an initially slow response by the federal government to the now-accelerating pandemic spread. USNS Comfort, a Navy hospital ship with 1,000 beds that docked in New York on Monday, was expected to begin accepting non-coronavirus patients on Tuesday.

A 1,000-bed emergency hospital set up at the Javits Convention Center began taking patients Monday night. And the Billie Jean KingUSTA National Tennis Centre was being transformed into a hospital.

The crisis became perso-



Comfort by the sea: The Navy's 1,000-bed USNS Comfort on its way to dock in New York. •AP

nal for New York Governor Andrew Cuomo with words that his brother was infected. Chris Cuomo tweeted that he suffered fever, chills and shortness of breath but will continue broadcasting from his basement.

Seeking help

On Monday, the Governor pleaded for help from volunteer medical workers, and close to 80,000 former nurses, doctors and other professionals were already said to be stepping forward.

Iran reports 141 deaths, raising total to 2,898

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
TEHRAN

Iran said on Tuesday 141 more people have died from the novel coronavirus, raising the official toll in one of the world's worst-affected countries to 2,898.

Health ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour said 3,111 new infections have been confirmed over the past 24 hours, bringing the total to 44,606.

He said 3,703 of those hospitalised are in a critical condition and 14,656 have recovered.

Iran has been scrambling to contain the COVID-19 outbreak since it reported its first cases on February 19.

After weeks of refraining from imposing a lockdown or quarantine measures, Tehran decided last Wed-

nesday to ban all international travel until at least April 8. The government has repeatedly urged Iranians to stay at home.

President Hassan Rouhani reneged those warnings on Tuesday as the climax of the two-week Persian New Year holiday nears.

He said authorities would close parks across the country on Wednesday, in a move that effectively blocks the family picnics that traditionally mark the 13th day of holiday. Mr. Rouhani called on people to "leave this tradition for some other time" and said violators would be fined.

The authorities have also stopped the print editions of all Iranian media until at least April 8, state news agency IRNA reported.

Indonesia declares state of emergency

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
JAKARTA

Indonesia on Tuesday declared a state of emergency as COVID-19 deaths in the world's fourth most populous country jumped again.

However, he has resisted calls for a nationwide lockdown.

President Joko Widodo has been heavily criticised for not imposing lockdowns in major cities, including the capital Jakarta, home to about 30 million people. He announced \$1.5 billion in beefed-up social assistance and subsidies for low-income workers.

On Tuesday, 136 people died after contracting the virus, with 1,528 confirmed cases of infection.

Study shows middle-age COVID-19 mortality risk

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS

Middle-aged people, and not just the elderly, have a dramatically higher risk of dying or developing serious illness from COVID-19, says a study published in *The Lancet Infectious Diseases* journal. Researchers from Britain analysed more than 3,600 confirmed COVID-19 cases as well as data from hundreds of passengers repatriated from Wuhan.

They found that age was a key determining factor in serious infections, with nearly one in five over-80s requiring hospitalisation, compared to around 1% among people under 30.

Taking into account estimates of the number of cases that may not have been clinically confirmed - that

is, mild or asymptomatic infections - the data showed the hospitalisation rate of patients in their fifties was 8.2%.

It estimated that the mortality rate from confirmed cases in China was 1.38%.

The *Lancet* study showed that 18.4% of patients in their 80s were hospitalised in China. This compared to 4.3% for 40 to 49-year-olds and roughly 1% for people in their 20s.

"There might be outlying cases that get a lot of media attention, but our analysis very clearly shows that at aged 50 and over, hospitalisation is much more likely than in those under 50, and a greater proportion of cases are likely to be fatal," said Azra Ghani, a co-author of the study.

China focuses on patients with no symptoms as infections rise

Asymptomatic people under observation numbered 1.5 million

REUTERS
SHANGHAI/BEIJING

China will start releasing information from Wednesday on coronavirus patients who show no disease symptoms, ordering them into quarantine for 14 days, a health official said, after the mainland witnessed its first rise in infections in five days.

As local infections peter out and new cases surface among travellers returning home, the existence of virus carriers with no symptoms is fuelling public concern that people could be spreading it without knowing they are ill.

From April 1, the daily report of the National Health

Commission will include details of such cases for the first time, Chang Jile, a commission official, told a briefing. People in close contact with them face 14 days of medical observation.

Asymptomatic patients under observation numbered 1.5 million Monday, with 205 of the cases having come from overseas, the Commission said separately. Monday's 48 new infections, and one death, in mainland China were up from 31 the previous day, the commission said, reversing four days of declines. All were imported, taking China's tally of such cases to 771, with no new local infection

reported. Many were students returning from overseas - about 35 infected Chinese citizens are still studying abroad, Education Ministry official Liu Jin said.

Fearing a second wave of infections sparked by such inbound travellers, China will delay its college entrance exam by a month, until July 7 and 8, China Central Television said, although Hubei province, where the virus emerged late last year, and Beijing, the capital, will get more leeway in scheduling it.

The annual two-day "gaokao" test drew more than 10 million candidates last year, state media have said.

Harry and Meghan formally bid farewell to royal life

He will remain a Prince but without any military appointments

REUTERS
LONDON

Prince Harry and wife Meghan posted their last message as working members of Britain's royal family on Monday before officially embarking on new careers without their "Royal Highness" styles.

The couple shocked Queen Elizabeth and the other Windsors in January by announcing plans to step back from their royal roles. A later deal brokered by the 93-year-old monarch means they will go their own way from April.

So from Wednesday, the couple, the Duke and Du-



Prince Harry and Meghan at Westminster Abbey in London on March 9. •AP

But they will no longer be able to use the word "royal" in their branding or carry out official duties and have agreed not to use the style of HRH - His or Her Royal Highness.

Harry, 35, the Queen's grandson and sixth in line to the throne, will remain a Prince but relinquish his military appointments.

"While you may not see us here, the work continues," the couple said in the last message on their Sussex Royal Instagram page.

The pair, along with their son Archie, relocated to California from Canada earlier this month.

Myanmar scribe hit with terror charges

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MANDALAY

A Myanmar journalist faces up to life in prison for publishing an interview with a rebel group operating in the country's restive Rakhine state a week after the insurgents were classified as a terrorist organisation.

A March 27 interview with a representative of Arakan Army, a group seeking greater autonomy for Rakhine people, published by Voice of Myanmar led to the detention of editor-in-chief Nay Myo Lin, who was brought to court on terrorism charges on Tuesday. The government had classified the insurgents as a "terrorist group".

U.S. outlines plan for transition in Venezuela, sanctions relief

Power-sharing govt. to include allies of Maduro and Guaido

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MIAMI

The U.S. is prepared to lift sanctions on Venezuela in support of a new proposal to form a transitional government representing allies of both Nicolas Maduro and opposition leader Juan Guaido, officials said.

The plan, which will be presented on Tuesday by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, echoes a proposal made over the weekend by Mr. Guaidi that shows how growing concerns about the coronavirus, which threatens to overwhelm the South American country's already collapsed health system and

crippled economy, are reviving U.S. attempts to pull the military apart from Mr. Maduro.

What's being dubbed the "Democratic Framework for Venezuela" would require Mr. Maduro and Mr. Guaidi to step aside and hand power to a five-member Council of State to govern the country until presidential and parliamentary elections can be held in late 2020, according to a written summary of the proposal.

The plan also outlines for the first time U.S. requirements for lifting sanctions against Mr. Maduro, officials and the oil industry.

Those accused of grave human rights abuses and drug trafficking are not eligible for sanctions relief.

But for sanctions to vanish, U.S. Special Representative for Venezuela Elliott Abrams said the council would need to be functioning - and all foreign military forces - from Cuba or Russia - would need to leave the country.

Still, any deal is unlikely to win Mr. Maduro's support unless the issue of his future is addressed and he's protected from the U.S. justice system, said David Smilde, a senior fellow at the Washington Office on Latin America.

ELSEWHERE



19 people killed in forest fire in China

Nineteen people have died while fighting a raging forest fire in Sichuan province and hundreds of reinforcements were sent to fight the blaze and evacuate nearby residents, state media reported on Tuesday.

Pakistani journalist exiled in Sweden missing

Pakistani journalist Sajid Hussain, who was in exile in Sweden, has been missing for nearly a month, stoking fears that his disappearance is tied to his reporting on Balochistan, a press rights group said on Tuesday. •AFP

China chases Indonesia's fishing fleets, staking claim to sea's riches

Fishers in Natuna islands say they feel vulnerable with Beijing's presence in South China Sea becoming more aggressive

HANNAH BEECH
MUKTITA SUHARTONO
NATUNA ISLANDS

Dedi knows where the fish run strongest in Indonesian waters off the Natuna islands. The Chinese know, too. Backed by Chinese coast guard ships, Chinese fishing fleets have been raiding the rich waters of the South China Sea that are internationally recognised as exclusively Indonesia's to fish.

While Mr. Dedi catches the traditional way, with nets and lines, the steel Chinese trawlers scrape the bottom of the sea, destroying other marine life. So not only does the Chinese trawling breach maritime borders, it also leaves a lifeless seascape in its wake.

"They come into our wa-



Troubled waters: A Vietnamese boat that was sunk after caught fishing in Indonesia's Natuna Islands on Monday. •NYT

ters and kill everything," said Mr. Dedi, who like many Indonesians goes by a single name. "I don't understand why our government doesn't protect us."

Wary of offending its lar-

gest trading partner, Indonesian officials have played down incursions by Chinese fishing boats. But with the Chinese presence growing more aggressive, fishers in the Natunas are feeling vul-

nerable. "There was a vacant period, then China came back," said Ngesti Yuni Suprapti, the Deputy Regent of the Natuna archipelago.

Global ambitions

The latest episode occurred in February, fishers said, when Chinese boats flanked by coast guard vessels dropped their trawl nets yet again. It seemed as if the coronavirus outbreak peaking in China at the time hadn't diminished the country's global ambitions.

The Indonesian Fisheries Ministry, however, denied any intrusion by the Chinese. China's illegal fishing near the Natunas carries global consequence, reminding regional governments of Beijing's expanding claims to a

waterway through which one-third of the world's maritime trade flows. But local leaders in the Natunas don't control what happens near their shores.

Chinese impunity was on full display in January when President Joko Widodo of Indonesia visited the Natunas. "There is no bargaining when it comes to our sovereignty," Mr. Joko said. Earlier, Indonesian fighter jets buzzed the sky, while warships patrolled the seas.

But the day after Mr. Joko left the Natunas, the Chinese showed up again. Its fishing fleet, backed by the coast guard, took days to leave the area, local officials and fishers said.

The Fisheries Ministry de-

ned that any such incident had taken place. "Little by little, I think the Chinese will take the Indonesian sea, the Philippine Sea, the Vietnamese sea," said Wandamar, a fisherman in the Natunas. "They are hungry: oil, natural gas, and lots and lots of fish."

The Chinese fishers are helping feed the country's growing appetite for seafood by trawling the South China Sea.

But they are also serving a broader purpose.

"Beijing wants Chinese fishers to operate here," said Ryan Martinson, an assistant professor at the China Maritime Studies Institute at the U.S. Naval War College, "because their presence helps to embody China's maritime claims." •NYTIMES

South China Sea - Islands involved, countries involved, what are the outstanding issues, the INDIA angle. Prepare a consolidated essay covering all these points. Always end an essay with future course of action or way forward and end it on a positive note.

MARKET WATCH table with columns: 31-03-2020 % CHANGE, Sensex, US Dollar, Brent oil

NIFTY 50 table with columns: PRICE, CHANGE

Bricks fall apart for construction sector

COVID-19 lockdown brings all site activities to a grinding halt; new housing launches fall 42% in Q1

LALATENDU MISHRA MUMBAI The construction industry, which generally gets busy in the January to March quarter, has been severely impacted by the spread of COVID-19 and the subsequent lockdown, industry executives said.

“Material supplies have stopped, and key subcontractors were unable to arrange resources for construction activities. All mobilised resources and plant and machinery are idling. Construction programmes have also been impacted due to these work stop-

pages,” he added. Work involving imported items and foreign construction crews have also been impacted. The COVID-19 crisis will seriously impact revenues of construction companies and almost all of them will face huge financial losses in the months to come, company officials said.

“Even after the crisis is contained and work resumes, hopefully by end of April 2020, it would take another 7-8 months for things to return to normal,” the Shapoorji Pallonji company spokesperson said. “Moreover, the upcoming monsoon will additionally and severely obstruct construction works June 2020 onwards,” the spokesperson added.

“Unprecedented crisis” Srinji Srinivasan, MD, India, Project Management Institute (PMI) said, “As the COVID-19 spread es-

calated in China in early January, it became evident that we are facing an unprecedented crisis.” “We do expect a slowdown in the April-June quarter. However, if COVID-19 is controlled by the end of the second quarter, we will see a rebound in the third and fourth quarters for PMI,” he said.

When construction sector fails it will generally lead to unemployment and there will be spillover effects to other sectors of the economy. Some economists call this the PARADOX OF THRIFT. Find Paradox of Thrift from NCERT Microeconomics text book.

Centre to borrow 63% of gross in first half of fiscal

‘Borrowing sufficient to fight COVID-19’ SUFFICIENT amounts to do its cash management to meet such requirements. The Centre proposes to revise its Ways and Means Advances (WMA) limit to ₹1.2 lakh crore.

Temporary loan facilities given to central and state governments are called ways and means advance. Introduced in 1997 money borrowed through WMA has to be returned within 90 days. Interest is charged at the existing repo rate. Governmental borrowing can lead to “crowding out”. Find out.

EXCHANGE RATES table with columns: CURRENCY, BUY, SELL

Refinery Products Electricity Steel Coal Crude oil Natural Gas Cement Fertilisers

Decreasing weightage order of 8 core industries.

Core sector growth up 5.5% in February

Eight core sector industries recorded a growth of 5.5% in February, the highest in 11 months, mainly due to healthy expansion in output of coal, refinery products and electricity, according to government data.

BPCL bid date extended to June 13

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI The government on Tuesday extended the deadline for bidding to buy its entire 52.98% stake in Bharat Petroleum Corp. Ltd. (BPCL), to June 13. The government had earlier this month invited bids by May 2.

Taipa calls for boosting telecom network capacity

Data usage up due to work-from-home SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI With data traffic in the country surging by at least 30% in the past few days amid most people working from home, the Tower and Infrastructure Providers Association (Taipa) on Tuesday said there is a need to quickly enhance telecom network capacity for which the States need to align their policies with the Centre’s Right of Way (RoW) 2016 norms.

Consumers find buying goods from stores easier than online, says survey

Many unable to get most essential goods ordered via e-com platforms COVID-19 A majority of consumers have been able to buy essential goods from their local retailers during the ongoing lockdown as against from e-commerce platforms, according to a survey by online social community platform LocalCircles.

Indian Bank, IOB slash lending rates

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI Indian Bank and Indian Overseas Bank have slashed their benchmark lending rates by 75 basis points. The rates will come into force from April 1.

Construction halt to hit L&T revenue

PIYUSH PANDEY MUMBAI The COVID-19 lockdown in India has brought construction activities to a halt in the peak season, a move that will hurt revenues of engineering and construction major Larsen and Toubro (L&T), according to analysts.

Lakshminarayanan is MD, Sundaram Home Finance

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI D. Lakshminarayanan, a whole-time director of Sundaram Finance Ltd., has been elevated as the managing director of its wholly owned home finance subsidiary, Sundaram Home Finance. He will take charge from April 1.

Table with 5 columns: No., Nos., Nos., Nos., Nos. containing various data points.

Advertisement for EPROC (Electronic Procurement) with details on registration, login, and contact information.

'Have to educate people and save lives'

Drawing from personal experience, Yuvraj stresses the need to be disciplined in dealing with solitude

EXCLUSIVE

VIJAY LOKAPALLY
NEW DELHI

As the world strives to cope with the COVID-19 virus, Yuvraj Singh, having been through spells of fear and dreadful solitude, speaks to *The Hindu* on how to stay positive and the need to be extremely disciplined.

Your views on the current situation in the world following a lockdown...

It's heartbreaking to see so many people dying all over the world. People, rather than panicking, should visit the official health sites (WHO and Union Health Ministry) to really understand what the disease is. I was also very scared in the beginning (of cancer) but then I got the right information, went to the right doctor and hospital. There is rampant misinformation about the virus on social media. First of all people need to stop reading (social media) and look for correct information.

How much have you understood from various official campaigns?

Kids and middle-aged people should avoid hugging their parents (over 60 years) and grandparents. It is your responsibility not to spread the virus. My heart bleeds for the migrant workers because they are very susceptible to catch the virus. We have to guide and protect them. We have to educate people in rural areas.



Right approach: Yuvraj Singh says people need to stop reading social media and look for correct information to help them combat the pandemic. *FILE PHOTO: VIJAY LOKAPALLY

Don't you think each individual matters in this fight?

Yes. People often remark 'How much will my one vote matter?' If everyone begins to have this attitude, then what if five lakh people say how would an individual vote

matter. In effect, it would mean five lakh people will miss sending the right information to others. We have to save lives.

How are you coping with it? Everybody has to find a routine to follow. Can't keep brooding. If you do that, eventually you will get tied

down. I begin with a gym training (in the house). If you don't have a gym, start doing exercises at home. Do lots of reading. You can do yoga, meditation, rather than mourn at the situation.

Your experience of the lockdown? I have seen stars for the first

time since I started living in Delhi. No air pollution and no noise pollution. We must take a pledge now that, when things improve, we won't take our car out for a day, spend a day with the family, respect Mother Earth, plant trees, etc. [We need to] Cut down on creating pollution of any kind.

On the cricket front, do you see anything amiss from your time?

Today, the youngsters get such (lucrative) IPL contracts even before playing for India that they don't want to play four-day cricket. The attitude towards four-day cricket and Test cricket is very poor.

How do you view the recent struggles witnessed by Rishabh Pant and Prithvi Shaw?

They play under a lot of pressure. I keep speaking to Rishabh. Prithvi is a great talent. But there are too many expectations from them. Lot of noise when they fail. Too much of scrutiny. I think we need to give them some time because they are the future.

How to deal with Pant and Shaw then?

Coaches and seniors have to be in touch with them constantly and tell them there are certain things they can't do on and off the field. They really need guidance because they are at a fragile stage. They can either become great players or their careers could break.

COVID-19 AID

Rohit Sharma chips in with ₹80 lakh

MUMBAI Rohit Sharma has donated ₹80 lakh to fight the rapidly-spreading COVID-19 pandemic, saying the onus is on the citizens to help the country get back on its feet. Rohit has given ₹45 lakh and ₹25 lakh to the PM's and CM's Relief Fund (Maharashtra) respectively. He has also given ₹5 lakh to 'Zomato Feeding India', which is helping families affected by



the ongoing national lockdown, and another ₹5 lakh to help aid the welfare of stray dogs. PTI



Anil Kumble does his bit

BENGALURU Former India captain and coach Anil Kumble on Tuesday made a donation to the Central and

Neeraj Chopra gives ₹3 lakh to relief funds

NEW DELHI Asian Games gold medal-winning javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra on Tuesday said he has donated a total of ₹3 lakh to the central and Haryana State relief funds. IANS

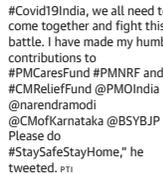


TTFI contributes ₹5 lakh

NEW DELHI Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI) pledged ₹5 lakh to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund. PTI

Mithali and Deepthi help with donations

BENGALURU Mithali Raj has decided to give ₹5 lakh to the Prime Minister's fund and a similar amount to the Chief Ministers Assistance Fund of the Telangana government. Deepthi Sharma has contributed ₹50,000 to the West Bengal State Emergency Fund and also separately contributed to PM's fund and UP relief fund. IANS



Lord's opened up for NHS

LONDON The Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) has decided to provide parking and storage spaces available at the iconic Lord's cricket ground to the National Health Services (NHS) Staff

Augusta Masters hosts donates \$2 million

WASHINGTON The Augusta National Golf Club in Georgia, which in most years would be preparing at this time to host the Masters, said on Monday it will give \$2 million to help fight the pandemic in its region. The aid features \$1 million to Augusta University for expansion of coronavirus testing and \$1 million to the



Lord's opened up for NHS

batting the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the custodian of cricket laws are also providing food to City Harvest London, which helps redistribute fresh surplus food to organisations that feed the hungry. AFP



emergency response fund for relief efforts to aid most vulnerable people. AFP

COVID-19 IMPACT

David Warner shaves head in support

MELBOURNE Australia opener David Warner has shaved his head in support of those working on the frontline for tackling COVID-19. "Been nominated to shave my head in support of those working on the frontline #Covid-19 here is a time lapse. I think my debut was the last time I recall I've done this. Like



it or not?" Warner said in an Instagram post. IANS

Joe Root expecting talks over pay cut

LONDON England Test captain Joe Root expects his country's cricket board and the players' body to discuss a possible pay cut for him and his centrally-contracted teammates "in the coming weeks" as the ECB faces the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. PTI



F1 simulator keeps Esteban Ocon in shape

Hunkered down in Normandy, Renault driver Esteban Ocon is racking up the hours on a Formula One virtual simulator to be ready when the season finally gets underway. "My days are full and I behave as if I was going to race next week. I do a lot of racing on the simulator." AFP

Duration of WTC should be extended: Misbah

KARACHI Pakistan head coach and chief selector Misbah-ul-Haq has suggested extending the time span of the ICC World Test Championship as COVID-19 has thrown the international schedule haywire. "I just think

that all teams must get equal opportunities in the championship even if matches are rescheduled. The tournament can be extended beyond 2021," he said on Tuesday. According to the original schedule, the inaugural competition runs from 2019-2021. PTI

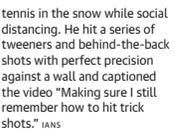
Bala Devi joins AFC's awareness campaign

NEW DELHI Indian women's football team captain Bala Devi on Tuesday joined compatriots Bhattacharya and Sunil Chhetri in AFC's #BreakTheChain video campaign and urged people to stay at home and practice social distancing to defeat the dreaded coronavirus. IANS



Federer practises 'trick shots' in snow

NEW DELHI Roger Federer is trying whatever he can to remain in touch with the sport and on Monday posted a video on Twitter in which he is playing



tennis in the snow while social distancing. He hit a series of twentens and behind-the-back shots with perfect precision against a wall and captioned the video "Making sure I still remember how to hit trick shots." IANS

How Australia was the start of something special for India – and one Indian



BETWEEN WICKETS
SURESH MENON

How did it all begin, we ask ourselves in these unsettling times. Not the pandemic – we know the answer to that one – but our personal passions. It is not just television that is replaying old matches and connecting us with past experiences; our minds are doing that too.

In the winter of 1967, I fell in love with cricket. Completely, irrevocably, conclusively. First, in the pages of *Sport and Pastime*, and then on radio where I followed my first series as India played in Australia. The magazine was serialising Ralph Barker's two books, *Ten Great Innings* and *Ten Great Bowlers*. My early heroes, then, were Spofforth and Grace, Ranji and McLaren, Spooner and Lohmann.

"This thing," Spofforth was quoted as saying, "can be done." I marvelled at the certainty of a bowler who could personally guarantee England would not score 85 runs to win. Today, it isn't the words I remember so much as the emotions: my madeleine, unlocking memory in the Proustian manner.

I remember my mother, ear fixed to the radio, keeping scores as Farokh Engineer and Chandu Borde put on a partnership. Mother kept scores and updated friends. She taught me the joy of listening to cricket. The sport was an audio treat before it became a visual one. When Dad came home from work, they would discuss the day's play. Dad and Mom fired a boy's imagination, helped by an uncle who had played the game.

Heroes began to emerge to replace those distant ones in books: Erappali Prasanna, who claimed 25 wickets in that series and brought India back into the match many times. M.L. Jaisimha, who arrived in Brisbane one afternoon and scored a Test century the next day. Engineer, Ajit Wadekar, Bishan Bedi, and above all the captain, the Nawab of Pataudi, who missed the first Test, and finished with scores of 75 and 85, 74 and 48, 51 and 6 – I haven't had to look these up! That 74 was in Brisbane where he shared the top score with Jaisimha; the 48 was a let-down. A few more, and India might have won the Test they lost by just 39 runs. Jack Fingleton wrote that India could have won two Tests.

Pataudi said later that the Australians were not as good as the 4-0 scoreline suggested, and that if the series had begun with the Brisbane Test, the result might have been different. He was probably right, since

India followed that with a 3-1 victory in New Zealand, their first series victory abroad (the West Indies under Garry Sobers who toured next could only draw 1-1).

That tour was important, and not just for firing the imagination of a little boy far away. It was the first step India took to coming together as a team and demanding a place at the high table, something that would be conceded with series wins in the West Indies and England three years later.

World-class spin combination
A world-class spin combination came together. The spearhead, Bhagwat Chandrasekhar, had to return home after breaking down in the first Test. That brought the focus on off spinner Prasanna, who finished with 49 wickets in the twin series. India's strengths and weaknesses were both on public display – the reliance on spin, and the woeful catching. Bob Cowper and Ian Chappell made big centuries aided by dropped catches.

On one horrendous occasion, two fielders running for a catch – Rusi Surti and V. Subramanyam – clashed, and the latter broke his nose. That was another memory of that period. For, when Subramanyam returned to Bengaluru, he was admitted to the same hospital where an aunt was having surgery too.

"Do you want to meet a cricketer?" my father asked. He had

checked with Subramanyam, who had kindly agreed. I can recall the feel of dad's hand as I slipped mine into it. Subramanyam, nose banded, speaking strangely, greeted me warmly. His was the first Test star's hands I shook, a story I lived off for a while. Decades later at a function in Bengaluru, I narrated this story to Subbu (familiarity breeds contraction), and his spontaneous response was, "Of course I remember that handshake." Lovely man.

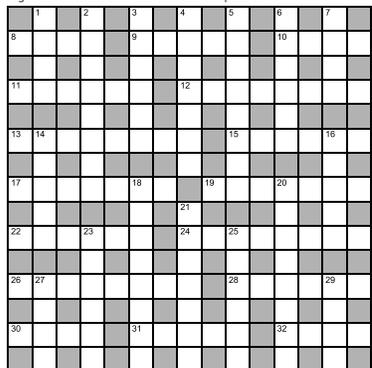
Over the years, members of the squad became good friends. Tiger Pataudi himself, a conversation-stopper whenever he entered a room. Bedi, whose biography I wrote. The late Jaisimha, in whose company I watched junior matches. Prasanna, who told me when I first began reporting, "I shall be keeping an eye on you." Wadekar, whose room on tours when he was manager, was "liberty hall", open to friend and foe alike. Chandrasekhar, whose self-deprecating humour remains unmatched.

1967 was also the year I determined to play for India. I calculated that some of the players on that Australian tour would be colleagues when I made my debut (in my mind I was a child prodigy). Sadly, I went from being a promising youngster to a has-been without a significant career in between. These things happen.

(A version of this appeared in UK's *Wisden Cricket Monthly*)

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12898

Log on to crossword.thehindu.com for more puzzles



(set by Incognito)

- 13 Bagpipe played around central Chelsea in New York (3,5)
- 15 Saint has thousand and one units of old Finnish currency (6)
- 17 Extend prison time (7)
- 19 In-charge carries mails about/pertaining to a particular religion (7)
- 22 Visit doctor having nothing and run back (4,2)
- 24 Steel hat designed for runners, for example (8)
- 26 Cherish art travelling around Europe? Certainly (8)
- 28 Placate leaders of Public Accounts Committee if yelling initially (6)
- 30 Left, for example, papers in empty suitcase (4)
- 31 Get into a cosy position, lad, around beginning of private one-on-one (5)
- 32 Little Sidney returns with hot plate (4)
- 1 Urge to get trophy and breakfast dish (6)
- 4 Better remuneration at Queen's Emergency Room (7)
- 5 Manu sits awkwardly giving big waves (8)
- 6 Goat milk product (6)
- 7 Fruit's horrible looking, I hear (4)
- 14 Bury in hinterland (5)
- 16 Stab knight in face at first with energy (5)
- 18 Criminal's search results in defeat (8)
- 20 ZIP or PIN, for example, of arcade built around end of avenue and circle (4,4)
- 21 Animal operation theatre at Arthur's place (7)
- 23 Buries deceased in Police Station and covers with metal (6)
- 25 Wishing to run skewer through pig (6)
- 27 Spoil Bruin's insides? (4)
- 29 Complete, ignoring Indian angle (4)



SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

Solution to puzzle 12897

P	R	A	T	H	E	R	A	N
U	A	C	N	G	A	B	E	A
P	R	A	T	H	E	R	A	N
A	I	R	P	O	W	E	R	A
M	W	N	E	T	T	I	N	G
A	S	I	M	O	V	E	S	A
E	S	P	R	E	S	O	P	R
M	O	N	G	L	U	O	N	S
O	A	E	E	S	S	R		

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Search for Self identity

Study of Vedanta focuses on the search for the ultimate reality and this begins and ends in self knowledge, atma jnana. This knowledge grows from the practice of dissociating the self from the body. But body identification is as unavoidable as the reflection in the mirror and one cannot wish it away, pointed out Swami Anubhavananda Saraswati in a discourse. But an ardent spiritual aspirant always tries to rise from the body level to the mind and further to the level of consciousness. After all, the mirror image is not independent and exists only because of the person in front of it.

The mirror cannot reflect the image of one who is not present in front of it. The person alone exists and the reflection is a mere appearance. Likewise, one has to understand that the self alone always exists in each being; and that the body mind personality is able to function only owing to the self. The self is the 'I' sense or the 'ahamkara' and its identity is shaped by each one's perception of it. It could be seen as the 'I' with a certain name, status, scholarship, who is involved with this world during one's lifetime. This 'I' then takes up various roles as father, son, husband, etc, with great earnestness.

The other option is to ponder over what it means if the 'I' is someone else altogether with no connection to the body mind personality at the moment. Then certain issues get revealed in the consciousness. This is the journey to be traversed and it is not in time and space but in the inner experience of each individual. One has to start playing the game of what it is like to be someone other than the body. This exercise helps one to shed body identification. It can free one from the stress and strain of daily living and can confer equanimity.

Sania joins hands with NGO to help the needy

Involved in bringing aid to hapless daily wage-earners

V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM
HYDERABAD

Tennis star Sania Mirza, winner of six Grand Slam titles, is donning a different role – saviour to the needy in these troubled times.

Sania, who has just completed the mandatory 14-day self-quarantine on her return from the US, has joined hands with an NGO – Safa Society – to help daily wage-earners who have been badly hit by the lockdown.

Irrelevant

"The pandemic has made tennis, or for that matter, any sport irrelevant. Right now, I am not concerned about events getting cancelled, even Wimbledon. Tennis is a small part of our lives. We are fighting a larger issue," said Sania in an exclusive chat with *The Hindu* on Tuesday.

"First I donated to the NGO, then I felt it would be great to be involved in a collective effort for better results. I am glad within one week we could raise ₹1.5 crore," Sania said.

"This crisis has reminded us that we take many things for granted. I am saddened by visuals of people walking 800km just to reach their homes," she said.

On her activity during the lockdown, Sania said, "Given the kind of response from across the country, it has been a really challenging task to identify real beneficiaries. But, we are taking utmost care that the needy are well and truly addressed in Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, North Karnataka and Hyderabad to start with."

Sania said she and her family had always honoured their social obligations and as such she was proud to be



Optimistic: On the post-virus scenario, Sania feels humans adapt easily and will move on. • FILE PHOTO: V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM

Tennis is a small part of our lives. We are fighting a larger issue

associated with this initiative.

On the post-virus scenario, she said, "Human beings adapt easily and we will move on."

The difference between an injury-break and this lockdown, she said, was "when injured you are focused on getting back into rhythm, for you know the problem and there is a solution and a time-frame. Here

you are fighting a deadly disease," she said.

"I will be back on the circuit, and, hopefully, win a few more titles for I do believe that I have a lot more to give on the tennis court," she said.

Special day

April 12 is a special day for Sania, as it was on this day in 2015 that she became World No. 1 in women's doubles. "That is still the most memorable moment for me. And, also the fact that I finished two year-endings as numero uno," she said.

Crisis deepens in AICF as president removes secretary

CHESS

RAKESH RAO
NEW DELHI

The crisis-ridden All India Chess Federation (AICF) plunged into further turmoil when its president P.R. Venketrama Raja removed Bharat Singh Chauhan from the post of secretary of the federation on Monday.

In a three-page letter, dated March 30, addressed to Chauhan, Raja detailed the reasons for his action, and said he had no option but to exercise his "extraordinary powers as the president of AICF under Article 15 (a) of the AICF Constitution and Bye-Laws."

It may be recalled that the AICF is awaiting a directive from the Madras High Court regarding fresh date of elections of its office-bearers.

In February, Chauhan (secretary), Ajay Patel (president) as well as three others were declared elected unopposed to the principal posts of AICF.

Later, the Madras High Court ordered fresh elections and the Supreme Court dismissed a Special Leave Petition challenging the verdict.

When contacted, Chauhan questioned Raja's authority and dismissed his action of removing him as a "malicious attempt to cover his tracks."

He argued, "Raja ceased to be the AICF president from February 11, the date on which the court-appointed Returning Officer declared Mr. Patel as the newly elected AICF president.

"Despite the Hon'ble Madras High Court ordering fresh elections of AICF, Mr. Patel, being the last person to hold the AICF president's office, remains the interim president till fresh elections are conducted."

Strange development

In another strange development, 12 affiliates have jointly called for AICF's Special/Extraordinary General Meeting on April 24 in the Capital.

Bindra for revising Olympic selection

'A year is a long time, especially in a sport like shooting'

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
NEW DELHI

Indian shooting was primed to finalise the team for Tokyo Olympics before the Games was postponed to 2021 due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Can the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) afford to select the team, when the situation settles down, more than a year in advance?

"It may not help to announce the team, and hope that they all would be in prime form when the Olympics comes around.

"A year is a long time, especially in a sport like shooting," said former World and Olympic champion Abhinav Bindra.

Conceding that a change in selection policy would be required, Bindra pointed out that it was important "to tune the policy quickly so as to ensure the best team represents the country in the Olympics.

"There can be argument both ways. There can be no ideal policy. You can't make



Abhinav Bindra. • PHOTO: KAMESH SRINIVASAN

everyone happy.

"There is that element of unknown. The nature of the sport is such that it can cut either way," said Bindra.

Conceding that a change in selection policy would be required, Bindra pointed out that it was important "to tune the policy quickly so as to ensure the best team represents the country in the Olympics.

"There may be a rejig in the team, even though the process had been completed and the team was to be announced."

With 15 Olympic quotas secured, most of the shooters who won them were in excellent form throughout the season.

Widen core group

"The core group can be widened a bit. But, don't open it for 30 shooters. One or two reserves in an event should be fine.

"Form the Olympic group, and back the shooters," reasoned Bindra.

More than anything, the Beijing Olympics gold medalist in air rifle, Bindra emphasised the need to put the best minds to work on the right path ahead and form the guidelines.

"Get clarity, and find the right balance. And do it quickly.

"Once you achieve clarity about what is required for the shooters to make the team, they will plan accordingly. There has to be coordination," said Bindra.

The NRAI will swing into action once the sporting world springs back to normal life.

The Hundred: ticket sales postponed

IANS
LONDON

In view of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the tickets sale for the inaugural edition of The Hundred competition has been postponed.

"... We feel it is appropriate at this time to postpone opening our second priority ticket window and general sale. We will continue to review this and will let you know any further information in due course," said an official statement on the tournament's website.

BWF freezes rankings

Positions as on March 17 will be basis for entry, seedings in future events

BADMINTON

PREST TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Badminton World Federation (BWF) on Tuesday decided to freeze the world rankings, saying standings as on March 17 will be the basis for entry and seedings when it restarts the international calendar that has been thrown haywire owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

There was a clamour for freezing the world rankings with Indians Saina Nehwal, B. Sai Praneeth, P. Kashyap and H.S. Prannoy leading the way in expressing their concerns.

"The Badminton World Federation (BWF) can announce it will freeze World Rankings and World Junior Rankings until further notice.

"The freezing of rankings will be backdated to Week 12, which is the week following the last international tournament that was played – the YONEX All England

Open 2020," BWF said in a release.

"The ranking lists issued on 17 March 2020 will serve as a basis for entry and seeding into the next international tournaments – although it is difficult to say at this stage when this may be."

Shuttlers in the singles competition have to be inside the top-16 of the world rankings to qualify for the Olympics. The cut-off for doubles is also top-16.

BWF said it will start reviewing the Olympic qualification system but a decision will take several weeks.

"Following Monday's announcement to reschedule the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games from 23 July to 8 August 2021, BWF will also initiate a review process to confirm any impact on the Olympic qualification system," BWF said.

THE HINDU

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Is it time for a new normal?

As Corporate India continues to work remotely on a massive scale, this question is inevitable

PRINCE FREDERICK

The massive scale in which companies in India are remote-working now is a straw in the wind suggesting that the COVID-19 crisis will go down as a major inflection point in the history of work.

It is going to nudge the fence-sitters really hard, and they would certainly land on the side of the corporate garden where one will be treading on those pavers: One, greater digitisation of work processes; two, greater reliance on distributed teams; and three, greater resolve to address long-pending questions around data protection.

Digitalisation mindset

"Before COVID-19, globally, even technologically much-advanced companies were willing to allow only 40 p.c. to 50 p.c. of their workforce to operate on the basis of a remote-working arrangement," begins Rituparna Chakraborty, president, Indian Staffing Federation. "Globally, companies consider only one-third of those in the 25 to 65 age group eligible for a remote-working arrangement. Among those in the entry-level jobs, and aged below 25, only 7 p.c. are said to be allowed to remote-work. To remote-work, one has to rise to a particular role, and that usually comes with age. Now, the percentage is bound to change in all categories. Though I would not say there would be a dramatic

adoption of remote-working, post COVID-19, but I could safely say there would be a significant increase in the percentage of the workforce that would remote-work from now on, and that includes companies in India. At the least, there will be a greater openness to work in a format where the workforce is distributed. Another thing that is for sure: Undue dependence on physical structures of work will be questioned. The lockdown is unprecedented, and it has underlined the need to be prepared digitally. There would be a digitalisation mindset, with efforts being made to digitalise the work flow as much as possible. So, a scenario where on day one, fresh recruits are by default handed laptops that are fully configured for remote working is not a far-fetched idea."

Dynamic workplaces

Aditya Mishra, director and CEO, CIEL HR, points out that if the lessons from COVID-19 are internalised, there will be a rise in the number of companies that have a hard-desking policy. At present, those that have one constitute a minuscule part of the corporate world.

"In a futuristic scenario arising organically from the COVID-19 experience, companies may be inclined to reduce costs incurred on account of real estate. On any given day, only a portion of the employees will report at office for work, and this will be done to effect savings on overheads. So, if an organisation has 1000 employees, say, only 500 desks may be provided for, and this would enable the company to work in a smaller work space. At any given

point, half of the workforce will be remote-working. As this workplace is dynamic, "desks" would be designed to fit roles, and not individuals. So, there won't be a specific desk for anyone to return to, day after day. There will be executive desks, and if you are an executive, you log in to an executive desk with a password, and the password will also ensure that the phone has your number for that day. Similarly, there will be manager desks, and a manager can log in to one of them."

Business agenda

Rituparna says the COVID-19 crisis may signify a point from where one can only expect a broader leadership mandate for remote-working, as the possibility and benefits of remote-working, particularly in the area of transactional work, have stood to reason, even in the case of traditional companies, some of which may be having an in-built resistance to flexible working culture. "So far, remote working was only an HR agenda, and now the odds are high that it will become a business and finance agenda as well," she explains.

The empathy factor

Earlier, the resistance to remote-working would have come from a section of the workforce, usually at the managerial level, and now when uniformly, across the board, the workforce is being pitchforked into a mass remote-working arrangement, there is bound to be marked difference in the way managers perceive remote-working.

"There is a tendency to look down upon those who opt for work-from-home often, and there are also compa-

nies that would consider restructuring the compensation package of those who work-from-home often. But now, with everyone from the top of the totem pole to the bottom having had a taste of remote-working, that too in an incredibly remarkable way, hopefully, remote-working is seen for what it is – a tool that can be extremely effective, if used wisely, as something that tackles productivity-sappers such as long commutes. It can also be a counter to a 9to5 work culture that has fallen into such a rut that clock-watchers manage to pass off undetected, despite lack of sufficient productivity. In a remote-working arrangement, the work completed at the end of the day alone matters. A well-planned remote-working system can augur in a metrics-driven work culture," says Aditya.

Data security

One challenge that is as obvious as daylight is data security. Kamal Karanth, co-founder, Xpheno, says: "The corporate world is accustomed to scenarios where even contract-based work is carried out at the office due to the demand for data protection. Now, due to the current exigency, a lot of work is being carried out of the office, because there is no other way to do it. Though two or three weeks make a short sample size, from here, one can expect more openness to having non-IP work done outside office systems, either by remote-working employees or freelancers; and two, greater efforts to improve data security by making checks such as multi-factor authentication more cutting-edge."

GENERAL



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