



Congress panel led by Manmohan Singh seeks ₹7,500 for the poor
page 8



17 killed as gunman in Canada goes on the rampage
page 12



U.S. crude futures plunge more than 40% to 1986 low
page 13

No communal angle to Palghar incident, says Uddhav Thackeray
page 8



PRINTED AT - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - BENGALURU - HYDERABAD - MADRASI - NODA - VISAKHAPATNAM - THIRUVANANTHAPURAM - KOCHI - VIJAYAWADA - MANGALURU - TIRUCHIRAPPALLI - KOLKATA - HUBBALLI - MOHALI - MALAPPURAM - MUMBAI - TIRUPATI - LUCKNOW - CUTTACK - PATNA

NEARBY



Stalin launches helpline, website

CHENNAI
DMK president M.K. Stalin launched an initiative to help the needy during the COVID-19 pandemic. He introduced a helpline number and a website.

TAMIL NADU ► PAGE 4

Two Bangladeshis in custody test positive

CHENNAI
Two of the eleven Bangladeshi nationals, who were arrested on charges of violating visa conditions and remanded in judicial custody, have tested positive for COVID-19.

TAMIL NADU ► PAGE 2



'Decision on SSLC exam schedule after May 3'

CHENNAI
School Education Minister K.A. Sengottaiyan said the decision on SSLC exam schedule will be taken after the lockdown ends on May 3. Students might have to face a tighter exam schedule.

CHENNAI ► PAGE 3

Speed of virus infections slows, doubling time rises in 18 States

Kerala leads with 72 days; five States with lower rates have 60% of all cases

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Eighteen States and Union Territories have "shown improvement" in containing the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, with Odisha and Kerala leading the pile, the Union Health Ministry said on Monday.

These were States with a 'doubling time' (an indicator of how quickly cases increase) of more than 8.5 days which is higher than the national average of 7.5 days. This was due to effective measures taken to contain the spread of the virus, Joint Secretary in the Ministry Lav Agarwal said at the daily briefing. Kerala leads the list with a doubling rate of 72 days, followed at a consider-

COVID-19

able distance by Odisha at 39.8 days.

The Ministry confirmed 17,655 cases, with 14,255 active infections and 559 deaths on Monday. Reports from States show a jump of 1,214 new cases and 33 deaths in the past 24 hours. The nationwide death toll was 592, with 14,913 active cases out of 18,509 confirmed COVID-19 infections.

Maharashtra recorded

A test of POSITIVES

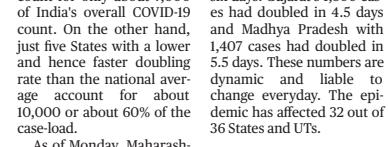
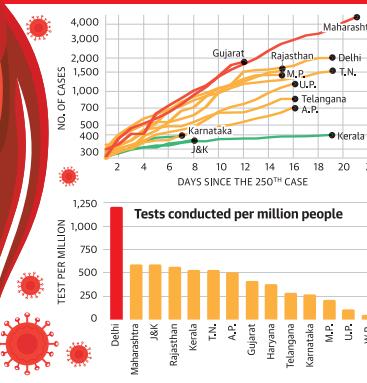


466 new positive cases, including 155 in Mumbai, taking the number of the infected people to 4,666, health officials said. With nine more patients succumbing to COVID-19, the death toll in the State rose to 232.

Fewer cases

However, the Ministry's figures on doubling eclipse the fact that these States ac-

Maharashtra and Gujarat have seen an exponential rise in COVID-19 cases while Kerala, J&K and Karnataka have managed to slow down the spread. Delhi has conducted the most tests per million among States/UTs. The chart shows the day-wise progression of cases since the 250th case in each State



six days. Gujarat's 1,800 cases had doubled in 4.5 days and Madhya Pradesh with 1,407 cases had doubled in 5.5 days. These numbers are dynamic and liable to change everyday. The epidemic has affected 32 out of 36 States and UTs.

As of Monday, Maharashtra had the highest number of cases at 4,666 and it reported a doubling of cases in

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

MORE REPORTS ON ► PAGES 2,3,4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11 & 12

As Centre frowns, Kerala steps back on easing curbs

State not at variance with the Centre on guidelines: Pinarayi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Following the Centre's strong objections to Kerala easing certain COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, the State government on Monday decided not to allow plying of buses in cities, opening of restaurants and pillion riding on two-wheelers.

Responding to the Centre's concerns, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said Kerala was not at variance regarding adherence to guidelines on the national COVID-19 lockdown.

In a letter to Kerala Chief Secretary Tom Jose, on Sunday, the Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla had said the State government had "diluted" the national timetable for the lifting of curfew sanctions and had "violated"

Central government orders and provisions of the Disaster Management Act, 2005.

The Centre had taken exception to Kerala's decision to allow salons, dine-in facility at restaurants, workshops and book stores in districts categorised as relatively low-risk Green and Orange (B) zones.

It had also objected to the opening of industrial units in municipal centres, public transportation, allowing more than two passengers in cars and permitting persons



Rush returns: The police trying to control a large number of vehicles in Thiruvananthapuram on Monday. ■ MAHINSHA

to ride pillion on two-wheelers.

Mr. Bhalla had urged the State to rectify the guidelines and bring the State's containment strategy in line with that of the Centre.

New guidelines
At his daily COVID-19 briefing, Mr. Vijayan announced a new set of guidelines that reflected the concerns raised by the Centre including a rescinding of the decision to reopen barbershops, allowing public transport or dine-in facilities in restaurants.

The Centre has given some latitude in making tactical arrangements.

"Kerala is in touch with the Centre constantly. We had sought the Centre's consent to implement certain measures differently to suit regional requirements. There is no Centre-State dispute or any scope for disagreement," he said.

Mr. Vijayan said Kerala

had witnessed an influx of citizens into public places on Monday.

As the threat of resurgence and new flare-ups loomed large, the State could ill afford to lower its guard.

Mr. Vijayan said the State was not in disagreement with the Centre. The State's containment measures have to reflect regional realities.

The Centre has given some latitude in making tactical arrangements.

"Kerala is in touch with the Centre constantly. We had sought the Centre's consent to implement certain measures differently to suit regional requirements. There is no Centre-State dispute or any scope for disagreement," he said.

J&K police file FIR on The Hindu report

Correspondent called for questioning

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Describing a report headlined "Kin allowed to exhume bodies of militants in Barumala" published by The Hindu on April 19 as "fake news," the Jammu and Kashmir police have registered an FIR in the matter.

The Hindu's correspondent in Srinagar, Peeraza Ashiq, was called for questioning by the Cyber Police in Srinagar on Sunday and then again on the same evening by the Anantnag police before being permitted to return home.

"The details quoted in the news item were factually incorrect and could cause fear or alarm in the minds of public. The news published without seeking confirmation from the district authorities," a JK police release said on Saturday. An FIR

(No. 81/2020) was registered in relation to the news item at the Anantnag police station, the release added.

The Hindu's report was based on a quote from the uncle of a slain militant, Ghulam Nabi Magray. However, contrary to what he conveyed to the reporter, no permission for exhumation of the bodies had been given. Apparently, the families had misconstrued grant of a movement/curfew pass as sanction for exhumation.

The report also said, "Yasin Choudhary, Deputy Commissioner, Shopian, was not available for his comment." No rejoinder/clarification was received by the newspaper prior to the registration of the FIR either from the police or from the information department.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8



Line of duty: Health workers entering Padarayapura, a containment zone in Bengaluru, on Monday to quarantine some people who are the secondary contacts of a COVID-19 patient. ■ K. MURALI KUMAR

Police detain 59 for violence over quarantine round-up

Health officials in Bengaluru had gone to quarantine contacts of a patient

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

The J.J. Nagar police have registered five FIRs and arrested 59 people for allegedly investigating residents and attacking the police when they arrived on Sunday night along with BBMP officials to take secondary contacts of a deceased COVID-19 patient. BBMP commissioner B. H. Anil Kumar said the violence had erupted almost an hour after civic officials had left the ward, adding that none of the BBMP's personnel had been injured.

As many as 500 police personnel have been deployed in the ward, which had been sealed and barricaded on April 10 along with a neighbouring ward after a spurt in the number of positive cases.

On Sunday night, a BBMP team went to the neighbour-

hood to take secondary contacts of the deceased patient into institutional quarantine. However, a group of residents in the area started protesting claiming that they had not been informed of the move, and demanded to speak to their MLA. "They stopped the BBMP team claiming that they were not getting enough food and essentials as the area had been sealed," said a senior police officer. The situation became increasingly tense as residents started protesting.

The police said that a group of people used the confusion to damage police checkpoints and the barricades used to seal the area. They stopped officials, allegedly assaulted them, pelted stones and ransacked the area.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

Doctor's funeral party comes under attack

Mob protests burial in Chennai; last rites done with police protection

SERENA JOSEPHINE M.
CHENNAI

In a shocking repeat of what happened when a doctor from Andhra Pradesh died of COVID-19 a week ago, a mob attacked a group of persons, including doctors, during the burial a neurosurgeon who died after he tested positive for COVID-19 in a private hospital on Sunday night. However, residents quickly gathered and protested.

The body of Simon Hercules, the 55-year-old doctor who heads a private hospital on Poonamallee High Road, was shifted from the private hospital to Chennai Corporation's burial ground near Kilpauk on Sunday night. Ho-

wever, residents quickly gathered and protested.

Drama at midnight

"The Chennai Corporation staff had made all arrangements, and accompanied us from the private hospital to



Police at a burial ground at Velangadu, where locals opposed to allow the last rites of Dr. Simon Hercules (inset), who died of COVID-19, in the early hours of Monday.

reached the burial ground and an earthmover was engaged for digging the pit. As per norms, only a few of us, including doctors and family members, gathered for the burial. "Pradeep Kumar, a consultant arthroscopy surgeon, said,

"Suddenly, some 50 to 60 persons began to attack us. They started to hurl stones and sticks at us. There were about seven to eight Corporation staff at the spot. We had to flee the spot. Some of us were bleeding. The windscreen of the hospital ambulance was damaged by the attackers. We drove back in the same vehicle," Dr. Kumar said.

At around 11.30 p.m., the ambulance reached Kilpauk and Dr. Kumar along with two ward boys of the hospital decided to go back. "I wore the personal protective equipment and drove back in the ambulance. Police personnel were at the spot. The earthmover operator had also fled. We buried the doctor and closed the pit on our own. Our ward boys and police helped," he said.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

T.N. not to relax lockdown

43 fresh cases take COVID-19 tally in State to 1,520

DENNIS S. JESUDASAN
CHENNAI

Forty-three persons tested positive for COVID-19 in Tamil Nadu on Monday. The State now has a total of 1,520 cases, of which 1,406 are active. The total number of deaths stands at 17.

Keeping the current scenario in mind, the Tamil Nadu government announced that the COVID-19 lockdown would continue to be enforced till May 3 without further relaxation.

The decision also meant that there would not be a relaxation for any industry in the State except for the essential services already notified.

The decision not to grant any relaxation from the lockdown was made during a meeting of the State Disaster Management Authority, of which Chief Minister Edap-



The Koyambedu vegetable market in Chennai was chock-a-block with vehicles on Monday. ■ JOTHI RAMALINGAM

padi K. Palaniswami is the chairperson. The SDMA also considered the views of the 21-member expert committee, tasked with formulating an exit strategy.

The SDMA felt that the lockdown needed to go on without any fresh relaxation in the prevailing conditions. "Since containment efforts against the spread of COVID-19 were required to be intensified," the lockdown

would continue till May 3, an official release stated.

"Exemptions granted by the government for essential works and services would continue," it specified and went on to state that "if the severity of the spread of COVID-19 declined, decisions would be taken after receiving the report from the expert committee."

The SDMA felt that the lockdown needed to go on without any fresh relaxation in the prevailing conditions. "Since containment efforts against the spread of COVID-19 were required to be intensified," the lockdown

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

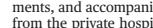
Vijay Mallya loses U.K. High Court appeal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The High Court of Justice in the U.K. on Monday dismissed the appeal of businessman Vijay Mallya against a lower court's order for his extradition to India in connection with the IDBI Bank fraud case.

The High Court did not find any merit in the objections raised by Mr. Mallya to the senior district judge's findings on December 10, 2018, that a *prima facie* case was made out against him on account of misrepresentation to the bank in securing credit facilities, conspiracy and money laundering. Mr. Mallya has 14 days to apply for permission to appeal to the U.K. Supreme Court.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8



A CH-CHE

FROM PAGE ONE

Doctor's funeral party comes under attack

An ambulance driver, who was injured in the attack, said he received four stitches on his head at the Government Kilpauk Medical College Hospital, while a colleague received six stitches, also for a head injury.

Additional Commissioner of Police (South) Prem Anand Sinha said some locals threw stones, damaging the ambulance. A team led by Kilpauk Deputy Commissioner of Police chased the attackers. The body was buried around 1.30 a.m. amid tight security.

The Anna Nagar police arrested 21 persons, including a woman, for rioting and attempt to murder.

State not to relax lockdown

Officials present at the meeting also cited the decisions taken by governments of Delhi, Karnataka, Punjab, Telangana, Maharashtra and Gujarat to continue with the lockdown.

On Monday evening, the State government issued a G.O. to the effect that all restrictions mentioned in the Revenue Department G.O. dated March 25 (G.O. No. 193) would prevail and the G.O. issued on April 15 (G.O. No. 172) would not be applicable in Tamil Nadu.

"On April 15, the State government merely endorsed all the guidelines issued by the Centre, which allowed select activities that were to be allowed after April 20. The fresh G.O. will not allow those activities," sources said.

Since the lockdown had been imposed under the Disaster Management Act, 2005, the SDMA was to decide on whether to continue with it. Though the expert committee was constituted to generate suggestions on the way forward after April 20 and the "strategy to take measures in the post-lockdown period", there was no talk on the latter. "On Monday morning, the immediate issue to be considered was a decision on relaxation, which was not difficult to take. With the prevailing conditions, it was an open and shut case," a senior official said.

Two pilgrims test positive for COVID-19

They were among 127 people who visited Varanasi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

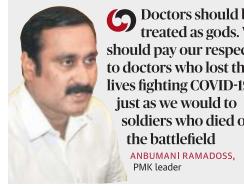
CHENNAI Two women, who were among a group of 127 people who recently went to Varanasi on a pilgrimage, have reportedly tested positive for COVID-19. The pilgrims – mostly senior citizens – from Tamil Nadu were quarantined soon after arriving in Tiruvallur district from Uttar Pradesh last Friday.

"Since the pilgrims had stayed in Uttar Pradesh for over a month and had travelled through many States to reach Tamil Nadu, medical teams took samples of all 127 pilgrims. Two women have now tested positive. Some more results are awaited," a senior State government official told *The Hindu* on Monday.

Campus isolated

The two women were shifted to the Rajiv Gandhi Government Hospital in Chennai. The test results of the 125 other pilgrims were awaited. Officials of the Tiruvallur district administration and the police were monitoring the health status of the pilgrims, the official said.

The campus housing the



Doctors should be treated as gods. We should pay our respects to doctors who lost their lives fighting COVID-19, just as we would to soldiers who died on the battlefield

ANBUMANI RAMADoss,
PMK leader

The State government should use the police force to ensure that those who died of COVID-19 are buried without any problem

K. BALAKRISHNAN,
CPIM State
secretary

The government must create awareness among the public and dispel fears and doubts regarding the burial of those who died of the disease

T.J.V. DHINAKARAN,
AMMK leader



Fear of the dead transmitting disease unfounded: experts

'Usually, bacteria and viruses die if the host dies'

SERENA JOSEPHINE M.
CHENNAI

On April 13 and 19, residents took to the streets to oppose the burial of doctors who died of COVID-19 in the city. But the fear that the disease could spread from the dead was unfounded, and unnecessary, said doctors.

So far, 17 persons have died due to COVID-19 in the State. However, the burial of two doctors – an orthopaedic surgeon from Nellore (the death was part of Andhra Pradesh's tally) and a neurosurgeon who headed a private hospital in Chennai – witnessed opposition from residents living in the area where the burial grounds were located.

Official sources said that the Chennai Corporation did not face any hurdles in conducting the burial of other patients who had died of COVID-19 in the city. "The route to the burial ground was cleared and the burials were conducted

smoothly," an official said. "Last night, an earthmover was engaged in digging a pit at the burial ground. The residents came out on hearing the sound. When they knew that a patient who died of COVID-19 was going to be

COVID-19

buried there, they started to block the entrance to the cemetery. Chances are slim that they knew it was a doctor. They would have objected to and attacked anyone for that matter, considering the profile of the locality," the official said.

R. Selvakumar, professor and head, Forensic Medicine Department, Government Kilpauk Medical College Hospital, explained the standard operating procedure followed in preparing a body for burial or cremation. "If it is a confirmed COVID-19 patient, we take all necessary precautions. We wear personal protective equipment and sanitise the body with antiseptic solution. We wrap

the body in a cloth and pour the antiseptic solution on it. We then cover it using a plastic sheet and put in a body bag which is leakproof with a zipper in the centre. Both the inside and outside of the bag are sanitised," he explained.

If the patient had tubes during hospitalisation, the passages are packed carefully to prevent leaks, he said. He added that sometimes, a person could have been admitted to the COVID-19 ward but died before the test result arrived. "In such a situation, the same protocol is followed. But we keep the body in the mortuary until the laboratory," he said.

Suo moto is a Latin term meaning "on its own motion". It is used in situations where a government or court official acts of its own initiative.

He said and v dies. ' any ir

rying the person. There is no study to prove that the virus spreads from the dead to others," he said. For the burial of persons who died of COVID-19, a deeper pit – six to eight feet deep – is dug.

"A dead person cannot sneeze or cough or breathe. All ways of infection spread stops the moment a person dies. Viral replication also stops. The skin may contain viral particles. So long as there is no touch, there is zero per cent chance of infection spread," J. Amalorpavanan, retired vascular surgeon, said.

"Safe and dignified burial or cremation of those who

Right to decent burial is part of fundamental right to life, says HC

Judges issue warning to those objecting to disposal of bodies of COVID-19 patients; say trespassing into a burial ground is a punishable offence

MOHAMED IMRANULLAH S.
CHENNAI

Observing that the fundamental right to life guaranteed under the Constitution includes the right to decent burial or cremation, the Madras High Court on Monday warned local residents against raising objections to the disposal of the bodies of those who had died due to COVID-19.

Justices M. Sathyanaarayanan and M. Nirmal Kumar took up a *suo moto* public interest litigation petition, with the permission of Chief Justice Amreshwar Pratap Sahi, after a neuro-

surgeon's body was not allowed to be buried in a cemetery at Kilpauk here on Sunday.

The judges said, according to news reports, local residents had opposed burial of the surgeon's body at the Kilpauk cemetery. Consequently, the body was taken to a burial ground at Velangadu in New Avadi Road where again a mob attempted to prevent the burial.

In the process, some public servants had sustained injuries when they attempted to disperse the mob. The ambulance, in which the body was transported, was

also damaged. Such acts were completely unacceptable and legally punishable, the judges pointed out.

"It prima facie appears that as a consequence of the above said alleged acts, a person who practised a noble profession as a doctor, and breathed his last, has been deprived of his right to have a burial in a cemetery earmarked for that purpose," the Division Bench lamented.

The Bench pointed out that the Code of Criminal Procedure contains enough provisions to deal with maintenance of public order,

also pointed out that Section 297 of the Indian Penal Code states it is a punishable offence to trespass into a burial ground or crematorium and cause indignity to the corpse or disturbance to performance of funeral rites.

Centre's guidelines

People found guilty under the Section could be punished with imprisonment that could extend up to one year or with fine or both. The court also recalled that the Centre had already issued an advisory to the citizens and urged them to

action against those who tried to prevent it.

The TNNGDA said a body that was packed was least infective, and stern action should be taken against the "unruly mob" that prevented the burial of a neurosurgeon who had died of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) at a private hospital on Sunday.

"Already, the government sector is burdened with COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 emergencies as most private sector institutions have downed their shutters. At this juncture, such disheartening incidents will demotivate doctors and other healthcare providers. The TNNGDA demands proper action against the perpetrators and protection during similar incidents in

future. Is this (referring to the disturbance during the burial) the reward for our selfless commitment towards the fight against the deadly SARS-CoV-2 virus?" the association said in the statement.

"Government doctors are risking their lives, using existing poor quality/inadequate protective gear in treating the patients. Recently, many doctors have tested positive in spite of wearing protective gear. TNNGDA demands supply of proper specified protective gear immediately to all healthcare providers on COVID-19 duty," the statement said.

Vijayakant offers land on college premises for burials

'WHO has said virus cannot be spread through a dead person'

STAFF REPORTER
CHENNAI

After residents violently objected to the burial of the body of a neurosurgeon who had succumbed to COVID-19, DMDK founder Vijayakant on Monday offered a piece of land on the premises of his Andal Azhagar Engineering College in Manduram for burying those who had died of the disease.

In a statement, Mr. Vijayakant said he was pained by reports of people objecting to such burials and even resorting to violence to pre-



Vijayakant

vent them. "We are all going to die one day. If doctors who attend to patients are treated like this, we have to think about the common peo-

ple. When Tamils give dignified burials to animals, it is shocking to see them objecting to the burial of a doctor's body," he said.

Mr. Vijayakant said people were attacking ambulances and their drivers despite the World Health Organisation and the State government having clarified that the virus cannot be spread through a dead person. DMDK treasurer Prema-latha Vijayakant urged people not to attack ambulances and those accompanying the bodies of the deceased.

2 Bangladeshis in custody test positive

S. VIJAY KUMAR
CHENNAI

Two of the 11 Bangladeshis who were arrested for violating visa conditions and remanded in judicial custody tested positive for COVID-19 on Sunday. The entire group, lodged in the Borstal School in the Puzhal prison complex with no access to other inmates, was shifted to the Stanley Government Hospital, the official said.

The Bangladeshis, who had come here on a tourist visa to participate in an event conducted by Tablighi Jamaat, were arrested from Dindigul and adjoining areas on the charge of having indulged in religious preaching, violating visa conditions. They were moved to the Borstal School in Chennai after the first COVID-19 test returned negative. However, when the results of the second test came in, two of them, who were asymptomatic, were found to have tested positive, sources said.

The pilgrims, hailing from 9 districts, including Chennai, Madurai, Tiruchi and Salem, had visited Uttar Pradesh in February. They were stranded in Varanasi since Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the Janata Curfew on March 22. The first phase of the nationwide lockdown began, confining the pilgrims to the quarantine camps in Varanasi. After the government announced an extension of the lockdown, they made an appeal to the local authorities to help them get back home, police sources said.

"We immediately shifted the entire group to the quarantine facility at the Stanley Government Hospital. Disinfection of the premises was immediately carried out," Director-General of Police Sunil Kumar Singh told *The Hindu* on Monday.

Discharged tally eclipses case count on Monday

A majority of the 43 fresh cases are family members of those who had tested positive: Health Minister

Keeping count | A tracker, across parameters, on how the pandemic has affected the State so far

	Until April 13	April 14	April 15	April 16	April 17	April 18	April 19	April 20	Total
Cases reported	1,173	31	38	25	56	49	105	43	1,520
Recovered and discharged	58	23	37	62	103	82	46	46	457
Deceased	11	1	2	1	0	0	1	1	17
Persons tested									
In home quarantine	35,741	41,710	21,381	20,619					
Active cases	1,047	411	Died	In hospitals	In quarantine facilities				
Discharged	1,043	457	16	1,987	20				
Deceased		17	2,012	145					
*Changes in 24 hours									
As on April 19, 6 p.m.									
As on April 20, 6 p.m.									

*Changes in 24 hours As on April 19, 6 p.m. As on April 20, 6 p.m.

In home quarantine In hospitals In quarantine facilities

Districts with maximum cases

Chennai 303
Coimbatore 133
Tirupur 109
Dindigul 76
Erode 70

In home quarantine In hospitals In quarantine facilities

Chennai 303
Coimbatore 133
Tirupur 109
Dindigul 76
Erode 70

In home quarantine In hospitals In quarantine facilities

Chennai 303
Coimbatore 133
Tirupur 109
Dindigul 76
Erode 70

In home quarantine In hospitals In quarantine facilities

Chennai 303
Coimbatore 133
Tirupur 109
Dindigul 76
Erode 70

In home quarantine In hospitals In quarantine facilities

Chennai 303
Coimbatore 133
Tirupur 109
Dindigul 76
Erode 70

In home quarantine In hospitals In quarantine facilities

Chennai 303
Coimbatore 133
Tirupur 109
Dindigul 76
Erode 70

In home quarantine In hospitals In quarantine facilities

Chennai 303
Coimbatore 133
Tirupur 109
Dindigul 76
Erode 70

In home quarantine In hospitals In quarantine facilities

Chennai 303
Coimbatore 133
Tirupur 109
Dindigul 76
Erode 70

In home quarantine In hospitals In quarantine facilities

Chennai 303
Coimbatore 133
Tirupur 109
Dindigul 76
Erode 70

In home quarantine In hospitals In quarantine facilities

Chennai 303
Coimbatore 133
Tirupur 109
Dindigul 76
Erode 70

In home quarantine In hospitals In quarantine facilities

Chennai 303
Coimbatore 133
Tirupur 109
Dindigul 76
Erode 70

In home quarantine In hospitals In quarantine facilities

Chennai 303
Coimbatore 133
Tirupur 109
Dindigul 76
Erode 70

In home quarantine In hospitals In quarantine facilities

Chennai 303
Coimbatore 133
Tirupur 109
Dindigul 76
Erode 70

In home quarantine In hospitals In quarantine facilities

Chennai 303
Coimbatore 133
Tirupur 109
Dindigul 76
Erode 70

In home quarantine In hospitals In quarantine facilities

Chennai 303
Coimbatore 133
Tirupur 109
Dindigul 76
Erode 70

In home quarantine In hospitals In quarantine facilities

Chennai 303
Coimbatore 133
Tirupur 109
Dindigul 76
Erode 70

In home quarantine In hospitals In quarantine facilities

Chennai 303
Coimbatore 133
Tirupur 109
Dindigul 76
Erode 70

In home quarantine In hospitals In quarantine facilities

Chennai 303
Coimbatore 133
Tirupur 109
Dindigul 76
Erode 70

In home quarantine In hospitals In quarantine facilities

Chennai 303
Coimbatore 133
Tirupur 109
Dindigul 76
Erode 70

In home quarantine In hospitals In quarantine facilities

Chennai 303
Coimbatore 133
Tirupur 109
Dindigul 76
Erode 70

In home quarantine In hospitals In quarantine facilities

Chennai 303
Coimbatore 133
Tirupur 109
Dindigul 76
Erode 70

In home quarantine In hospitals In quarantine facilities

Chennai 303
Coimbatore 133
Tirupur 109
Dindigul 76
Erode 70

In home quarantine In hospitals In quarantine facilities

Chennai 303
Coimbatore 133
Tirupur 109
Dindigul 76
Erode 70

In home quarantine In hospitals In quarantine facilities

Chennai 303
Coimbatore 133
Tirupur 109
Dindigul 76
Erode 70

In home quarantine In hospitals In quarantine facilities

Chennai 303
Coimbatore 133
Tirupur 109
Dindigul 76
Erode 70

In home quarantine In hospitals In quarantine facilities

Chennai 303
Coimbatore 133
Tirupur 109
Dindigul 76
Erode 70

In home quarantine In hospitals In quarantine facilities

Chennai 303
Coimbatore 133
Tirupur 109
Dindigul 76
Erode 70

In home quarantine In hospitals In quarantine facilities

Chennai 303
Coimbatore 133
Tirupur 109
Dindigul 76
Erode 70

In home quarantine In hospitals In quarantine facilities

Chennai 303
Coimbatore 133
Tirupur 109
Dindigul 76
Erode 70

In home quarantine In hospitals In quarantine facilities

Chennai

**Timings
CHENNAI**

TUESDAY, APR. 21
RISE 05:53 SET 18:23
RISE 04:51 SET 17:09
WEDNESDAY, APR. 22
RISE 05:53 SET 18:23
RISE 05:27 SET 17:55
THURSDAY, APR. 23
RISE 05:52 SET 18:23
RISE 06:03 SET 18:41

Chennai Weather	max	min
Thiruvallur	39	24
Chennai Airport	36	27
Chennai City	35	28

Chennai Airport Today
35°C A dry and warm weather with partly cloudy sky to continue. Night will be comfortable.

Chennai Airport Tomorrow
35°C A dry and warm weather with partly cloudy sky to continue. Night will be comfortable.

© Copyright Skymet Weather 2019
All rights reserved.

THE HINDU

DISCLAIMER: Readers are requested to verify the information contained in this newspaper before relying on it for any purpose. THE HINDU PUBLISHING PVT LTD., the Publisher & Owner of this newspaper, shall not be liable for the authenticity of any advertisement or products and/or services. In no event can the Owner, Publisher, Printer, Editor, Director, or any other employee of the company be held responsible in any way whatsoever for any claims and/or damages for advertisements in this newspaper.

45 toll plazas resume collection

Operators complain staff are exposed to risk; lorry drivers oppose fee collection

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI**

Even as truck owners and political leaders are questioning the commencement of toll collection, 45 toll plazas began working on Monday.

Local authorities did not permit operation of the three plazas, explained NHAI sources.

Selvaraj, a driver who crossed Sulurpet and Naidupet plazas on Monday, said initially they were told that there would be no toll collection for three months.

"But now they are collecting money. This is not fair," he said.

A few toll plaza operators said not many vehicles were seen on the road. They said they have been asked to keep the plazas open even for less number of vehicles.

Staff exposed

"But we have to employ the same number of persons. We are unnecessarily exposing our staff to dangers due to orders from NHAI," said a toll operator.

"With the State govern-



Back in business: Vanagaram toll plaza which was deserted following lockdown. Toll plazas resumed collection of user fees on Monday. • M. VEDHAN

ment continuing with lockdown no public transport vehicles or private vehicles crossed the plaza. Only trucks, government vehicles, ambulances and vehicles with special passes have crossed the plaza. Also a section of vehicles had FASTag without balance since they could not recharge dur-

ing the lockdown," said a toll operator.

M.R. Kumaraswamy, president, State Lorry Owners Federation, said they petitioned the State and Central governments asking them to suspend fee collection.

"We are ferrying essential goods despite the shortage of drivers and in such a

dangerous situation. The increase in toll rates effected from April 1 was also unfair," he said.

Meanwhile, PMK founder S. Ramadoss and MDMK leader Vaiko have both questioned the increase in toll rates at the 26 plazas that came into effect from April 1.

AAI gets busy with eliminating pigeons, beehives

**SUNITHA SEKAR
CHENNAI**

What is happening inside Chennai airport now that there are no commercial flights?

The Airports Authority of India (AAI) is using the opportunity to shoo away pigeons inside both domestic and international terminals.

Recently, a bunch of Narakuravas armed with slingshots quietly walked into the empty terminals. After a quick recess, they waited patiently for the pigeons to emerge, managing to catch quite a few of them.

AAI officials said this was the ideal time to catch the pigeons as their presence inside the terminals had irked many passengers. "There were pigeon droppings in many parts of the terminals. Besides, the birds sometimes enter the security hold area, hop from one table to another, and eat leftovers. This bothered many passengers. So, we thought now



On their way back: Stranded passengers waiting for their turn at the airport to complete formalities before boarding the special flights in Chennai on Tuesday. • B. VELANKANNI RAJ

that there are no operations, let us use this time to catch a few pigeons," an official said.

A challenge

The process is quite a challenge as a few birds keep finding their way into the terminals.

"There may be an opening through which they come in. Anyway, we are keeping a constant vigil. From now on, it is even

more important to keep the terminals clean," he said.

This apart, beehives outside the terminals are also being removed. "Since the hives could pose problems to passengers, we have to get rid of them immediately. We don't know when both terminals will be open again, but we have to continue with these cleaning measures as and when required," the official added.

Food distribution banned within 2-km radius of hotspots

Zonal officers should be informed 48 hours in advance



Volunteers distributing food to poor people, in Chennai on Monday. • R. RAGU

asked to hand over the food to the Corporation officials who will distribute the food after testing it.

The zonal officers should be informed 48 hours before in other places and food should be distributed only after food safety department permits the venue. The preparation should be in the same zone and food distributed within a time frame.

However, the civic officials said that the order was to prevent NGOs and voluntary associations from directly distributing food to any resident because all residential areas in the city were located within 2-km distance of a Corporation hospital or COVID-19 testing facility.

Prince of Arcot urges Muslims to pray at home

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI**

Prince of Arcot Nawab Mohammed Abdul Ali has appealed to Muslims to spend Ramadan, starting from April 24, at home by praying five times and breaking fast (iftar).

He wanted them to continue this even if the lockdown was lifted after May 3.

In a press release, the Nawab urged Muslims to bear in mind the physical distancing norms and the safety measures prescribed by the Union and State governments as a precautionary measure to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

'SSLC exam schedule to be announced after lockdown ends'

Exams may have to be held in May, says Minister

**STAFF REPORTER
CHENNAI**

School Education Minister K.A. Sengottaiyan has said the SSLC exams will definitely take place, and a decision on their schedule will be taken after the lockdown ends on May 3.

"The schedule will be announced by the School Education Department after May 3. Since the situation we are facing is unprecedented, we may be forced to schedule the exams in May, which is usually the time for the summer holidays," he said.

Tighter schedule
The students may have to face a tighter exam schedule, and the officials were



K.A. Sengottaiyan

ments were already adequately spaced.

"After the lockdown ends, a schedule for evaluation of Class XII papers will also be announced."

"As the Chief Minister has said, students who had missed their exams due to the COVID-19 curbs would be given a second chance," he said.

Fiat to schools

The School Education Department had instructed private schools not to force parents to pay their wards' school fees during the lockdown, the Minister said, adding that the government will act on any complaints in this regard.

Three die in wall collapse

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI**

Three persons – a 65-year-old daily wage earner and his two daughters – were crushed to death after a wall from a neighbouring building collapsed on them in New Perungalathur.

The accident occurred on Sunday evening. The names of the victims – who were given as Rajangam, 65, Kala, 41, and Sumithra, 35, a differently abled person. Rajangam was sitting in the front portion of his house and talking with his daughters and suddenly a wall from the neighbouring plot collapsed on them.

Sumithra died on the spot while Rajangam and Kala died in a private hospital, the police said.

Hostels decide to extend discounts

Inmates not to be charged for food and power at many facilities

**SANGEETHA KANDAVEL
CHENNAI**

Many hostels in the city have decided not to charge inmates for food and electricity for April.

"Since most girls have left for their homes, we thought it would not be fair if we charge them for food and other expenses. So some hostels have decided on a waiver of ₹2,000 from the monthly rent while the others are deciding based on location," said K.S. Mahanoharan, secretary, Chennai Hostel Owners Welfare Association.

The order was issued

"There are 300-plus hostels under our association and we have requested members to follow this," he added.

Nageswara Rao, secretary, South Chennai Paying Guest and Hostel Owners Association, said that members of his association were also waiving food and power charges from the monthly rent. "We have left it to the hostels to decide because a hostel in Taramani cannot extend the same cut as a hostel in Navalur. Rates vary from location to location," he added.

Hostels have also indicated that the waiver would be extended in case the lockdown went beyond May 3. The owner of a hostel on Natesan Street in T. Nagar said that she had not decided on the quan-

tum of the cut as some inmates were yet to pay for the month of March.

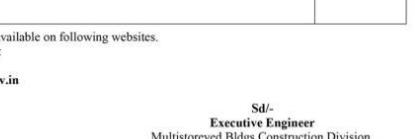
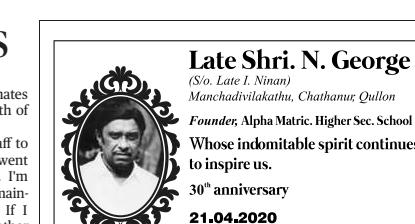
"After IT firms allowed staff to work from home, the girls went back to their native places. I'm struggling to pay the cooks, maintenance and security staff. If I don't pay them they will find other jobs," she said.

Decision misunderstood

Hostels owners have also expressed concerns that those residing in their premises may misunderstand the announcements regarding the rent payments.

Ballpark estimates show that Chennai has over 4,000 hostels.

THE HINDU
Air Surcharge as applicable:
New Delhi - Rs. 15/-;
Port Blair - Rs. 20/-



Govt. of Bihar

Bihar Urban Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd.
A Government of Bihar Undertaking

NOTICE INVITING RE-TENDER
for

DRINKING WATER SUPPLY SCHEME OF MUNGER NAGAR NIGAM
UNDER AMRUT AND STATE PLAN SCHEME (PHASE II)

(Through e-procurement mode only - www.eproc.bihar.gov.in)
NIT No.: BUIDCo/Yo-1248/2019-140

1. Bihar Urban Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (BUDCo) invites bids from eligible experienced Firms/Contractors/Agencies/Bidders registered in appropriate category in any government organisation/PSUs for execution of works as given below:-

Sl. No	Name of work	Estimated Cost	Bid Processing fees (Beltron)	Bid Document Cost	Bid Security (EMD)	Contract Duration
1.	Design and Construction of drinking water supply scheme, of Munger Nagar Nigam under AMRUT and State plan Scheme (Phase II) with six months of trial run and thereafter operation and maintenance of system for next five years. (A) Construction of D/V/C Distribution Network (Zone-I and Zone-II)- 318.20 Km. Providing house service connection - 22671 - C2 Nos. - 12799.75 Lakh. (B) Construction of Water Treatment Plant - 34 MLD. Construction of Floating Jetties, Pumping Station, Filter House (OHSH), 4 Nos. Total Capacity - 1111 MLD Construction of Raw water, Rising main - 2600 Mtr. and clear water rising main - 852 Mtr. house service connection - 12650 - C2 Nos - 7046.943 Lakh.	Rs. 3846.693 Lakh	Rs. 17,700.00	Rs. 75,000.00	Rs. 208.46 Lakh	20 Months

Date of downloading of bid document : From 04.05.2020 to 26.05.2020 up to 05:00 PM Through website www.eproc.bihar.gov.in

Place & Date of Pre-bid meeting : Date 07.05.2020 Time 03:00 PM, Near Rajapur Pul, West Boring Canal Road, Patna-800001

Last date and time for receipt (upload) of bids : Date 27.05.2020 up to 05:00 PM Through website www.eproc.bihar.gov.in

Last date and time for Submission offhand copy of bid : Date 28.05.2020 up to 03:00 PM

Time and date of opening technical bids : To be communicated later on

Time and date of opening financial bids : Through website www.eproc.bihar.gov.in

Place of opening of bid : Date 01.06.2020 Time 03:00 PM

Period of bids validity : 120 days

Officer inviting bids : Chief Engineer, Design, Planning & Monitoring, BUDCO

The detailed NIT can be obtained through website www.eproc.bihar.gov.in and www.buidco.in. For further details please visit website www.prdbihar.gov.in

Chief Engineer,
Design, Planning & Monitoring,
BUDCO, Patna

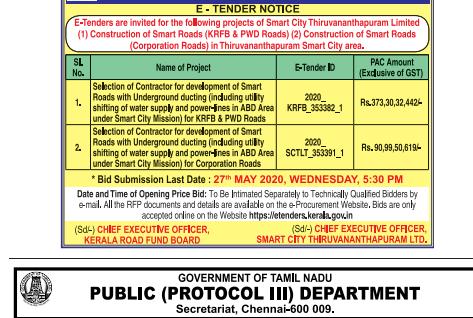
Bihar Urban Infrastructure Development Corporation, Near Rajapur Pul, West Boring Canal Road, Patna-800001
(Tel: 0612-2558412, Email: mduibidco@gmail.com)

PR. No. 000228 (N.III) 2020-21

नेवाल लोकोंसे की संबंध में निरस्त जानकारी एवं सहायता है। टॉफ फ्री नंबर 104 पर संपर्क कर सकते हैं।
बाहर सम्पर्क करने की जानकारी अपना सुनाए दें। दूसरा संयोग नंबर 0612-2217636 पर संपर्क किया जा सकता है।
प्रश्नों का जवाब देने के लिए सहायता देने का तरीका है।

104 पर संपर्क कर सकते हैं।

104 पर संपर्क कर सकते हैं।



IN BRIEF

3,000 litres of illicit liquor destroyed

VELLORE
A special branch police team destroyed 3,000 litres of fermented wash and 500 litres of illicitly brewed liquor, which they seized from Kundrall hill near Odugathur in Vellore district. Ever since the lockdown was announced, the scramble for liquor has been on the rise and people trying to cash in on this opportunity indulged in illegal activities to fetch them the stock.

Constable dismissed for criminal misconduct

PUDUCHERRY
The Police department on Monday dismissed from service a constable for assaulting a colleague who was on the lockdown duty in a containment zone at Reddiyarpalayam. The constable, Aravind Raj, attached to the Lawspet Police, was dismissed from service for criminal misconduct.

PM assured financial aid, says Narayanasamy

PUDUCHERRY
Prime Minister Narendra Modi has promised to release adequate financial assistance to the Union Territory during a telephone call on Sunday night, Chief Minister V. Narayanasamy said. Posting on his Twitter handle, Mr. Narayanasamy said he had also apprised the Prime Minister about the COVID-19 situation.

Four arrested for Vellore murder

VELLORE
Police arrested four persons in connection with the murder of Udhayakumar, an anti-social element, in Kosaipet on Sunday. The arrested were Appu alias Emmanuel, Andriyas, 34, Attappa, 30, and Nirmal, 23. Vellore South Police are investigating.

Puzhal prison chief warden suspended

CHENNAI
The Prison Administration has suspended a Chief Warden of Central Prison-I Puzhal for

Rise in cases leading to loss of hope, says Stalin

'Deceased medical professionals must get a dignified burial'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

DMK president M.K. Stalin on Monday said the death of a neurosurgeon in Chennai due to COVID-19 and the continued rise in infections reinforced the need for the State government to function effectively, without any lapses, in dealing with the pandemic.

"On April 16, Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami said the spread of the novel coronavirus would be brought under control in three days. But the increase in the number of people testing positive for COVID-19 has brought about shock and a loss of hope among the people," he said in a statement.

Mr. Stalin said the government should make use of rapid test kits to expand testing and study the status of the disease. "The situation in the State warrants such measures," he added.

Urging the government to make efforts on a war-footing to protect medical professionals, police personnel, sanitary workers and jour-



M. K. Stalin

nals, he said the rules and regulations of the lockdown should be strictly observed.

Mr. Stalin said he was shocked and pained by the violent behaviour of some people who had tried to prevent the burial of the deceased neurosurgeon.

He said confusion and fear about the virus created such untoward situations. "The government should ensure that deceased medical professionals are given a dignified burial under police protection," he said.

The DMK leader urged the people to cooperate with the government and not give in to unfounded fears.

Helpline, website launched

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

DMK president M.K. Stalin on Monday launched Ondraiavom Va - Let us come together - an initiative for helping the needy during the COVID-19 pandemic. He called upon 200 of his party leaders, including MLAs, MPs and leaders of various wings of the DMK, to work together and combat the COVID-19 pandemic. He introduced a helpline number 90730 90730 and a website ondrainavomva.in

The initiative consists of five categories - Stalin Connect, People's helpline, Nallor Koodam, Feed the Poor, Virtual Neighbourhood Groups - to reach out to the people of Tamil Nadu.

"If anyone faces an issue, they can call my office directly," he said.

College develops 3D printable face shields for healthcare staff

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Faculty and students from SSN College of Engineering have developed 3D printable protective face shields for front line healthcare workers. The first set of 100 face shields were delivered to Stanley Medical College and Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital.

The transparent face shields are biocompatible

made a donation of ₹7 crore to the PM CARES Fund.

Food for migrants

Southern Railway has been distributing food packets to thousands of migrant labourers and homeless people.

A senior official said cooked meals consisting of lunch and dinner packets were being distributed to the needy since the last

Star Health and Allied Insurance Company Ltd. donated 1.5 lakh 3 ply disposable face masks to A.K. Viswanathan, Chennai Commissioner of Police.

Charitable Trust Seva

Shala Trusts unit handed

to the PM CARES Fund.

+

3D printing (also known as additive manufacturing) is a manufacturing process through which three-dimensional (3D) solid objects are created.

It enables the creation of physical 3D models of objects using a series of additive or layered development framework, where layers are laid down in succession to create a complete 3D object.

Recent Development in 3D bioprinting

The idea behind 3D bioprinting was to add independent mechanical properties to 3D structures that can mimic the body's natural tissue. This technology allows the creation of microstructures that can be customized for disease models.

Hardened blood vessels are associated with cardiovascular disease and engineering a solution for viable artery and tissue replacement has historically proven challenging. To overcome these hurdles, researchers found a unique way to take advantage of oxygen's role in setting the final form of a 3D-printed structure.

By keeping tight control over oxygen migration and its subsequent light exposure, researchers have the freedom to control which areas of an object are solidified to be harder or softer all while keeping the overall geometry the same.

This is an encouraging first step towards the goal of creating structures that function like a healthy cell should function.

As a demonstration, the researchers printed a small Chinese warrior figure, printing it so that the outer layers remained hard while the interior remained soft.

The researchers are optimistic that future studies will help improve the capabilities even further. The findings could lead to better, more personalized treatments for those suffering from hypertension and other vascular diseases.

Potential of 3D printing

Car and aircraft manufacturers have taken the lead in 3-D manufacturing, using the technology to transform design and production. For eg. Boeing is using 3D-printed titanium parts in the construction of its 787 Dreamliner airliner, The U.S. and Israeli air forces are already using 3D printers to manufacture spare parts etc.

In medical sciences, 3D printing is being used to customize implants and this technology could soon revolutionize dentistry. In the future, organs and body parts may be created using 3D printing techniques. In fashion, Nike, Adidas, and New Balance are using 3D printing to create prototypes faster than ever, and create customized shoes. In 2018, Nike revealed it had made the first 3D-printed textile upper in performance footwear, called Flyprint.

In the construction industry, companies around the world are making breakthroughs in 3D-home printing. Using layers of concrete, homes can be built in 48 hours, which are stronger than the regular cinder block and only a fraction of the price.

Stroke is an exception, rush to hospital

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed patient care protocols at hospitals all over the world. However, it is important that, in these difficult times, we do not forget the basics of staying healthy.

Stroke or brain attack still remains one of the main causes of death and disability, even during the pandemic. One should not forget the basic concept - time is brain or golden hour - emphasising that time is crucial in any brain emergency. The reason for this emphasis on time is because the brain is extremely dependent on a constant supply of oxygen and nutrition, as it does not have any storage capacity. Its requirements are also very high - almost 20% of the blood that is pumped from the heart goes to the brain. A stroke may occur because adequate amount of blood does not reach the brain, or because there is bleeding in the brain.

Stroke recognition

Remember the mnemonic B (Balance), E (Eyesight), F (Face), A (Arms and legs), S(Speech) T (Time to go immediately to the hospital) - this will help in the early recognition of a stroke. Add to this severe headache and loss of consciousness or fits. The question asked is -

DR. K. SRIDHAR
Senior Neurosurgeon

COVID-19

should we go to hospital even when there are only mild symptoms? The answer is that one has to go to the appropriate hospital even when there is a doubt of symptoms. These should be taken as a warning and treatment started immediately.

While going to the hospital for minor ailments has been discouraged currently, please remember that a stroke is an exception. It is an emergency and therefore, even when in doubt, one has to rush to hospital.

What happens when a patient reaches hospital?

A CT scan is done to see if there is bleeding, and depending on the clinical status of the patient and the time from onset of symptoms, a clot dissolving medicine can be given intravenously. A CT angiogram is

also done which will show if there is any involvement of a large vessel. If yes, the patient will be immediately shifted to the cath lab for a procedure called Mechanical Thrombectomy, where through a small catheter placed into the artery in the groin, the clot is removed.

Remember, for this to happen the patient must reach the hospital at least within 4 hours from the onset of symptoms.

Occasionally, surgery may be indicated as a life saving procedure, to remove a large blood clot or to prevent bleeding again. Decisions and actions are taken in a very short period of time. For this to be effective it is necessary for the concerned hospital to have not only the equipment and infrastructure but also a comprehensive stroke team including specialised doctors in Neurology, Neuro Critical Care, Neuro Radiology, Neuro Intervention and Neurosurgery, other than specialised nursing and technicians.

Currently many stroke teams are working on the concept of tele-stroke, where the stroke team leader at the hospital can remotely direct the general practitioner or family physician on starting the treatment even before the patient reaches the de-

signated hospital. Education of, and good communication between the different health care professionals is key to the success of this initiative that promises to reduce the time taken to initiate treatment of a stroke.

Safety in hospital

All hospitals are taking precautions to keep patients and healthcare workers safe. Limitations on visitors, rational use of PPEs and screening with segregation ensure that the stroke patient is not exposed to a potential COVID-19 positive patient. Sometimes patients may hesitate to go to the hospital for fear of getting infected with corona virus, or that doctors would be too busy treating COVID-19 patients. Both assumptions are untrue.

People in an extremely vulnerable group need to follow the specific advice about their health condition. A healthy diet, regular physical activity (at home) and reduction of anxiety and stress will help maintain your brain health. Smoking and alcohol are to be avoided at all costs.

While the anxiety of contracting the virus is understandable, emergencies like a brain attack or stroke cannot wait - prompt attention at the earliest is the only way to achieve the best outcomes.

CM urges Centre to help fishers stranded in Iran

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami has urged External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar to direct the Indian

Embassy in Iran to make arrangements for the supply of food, water and other essentials to Indian fishermen stranded in various parts of the country.

SARDAR Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy
No.12117/(SC)HK-3/2020. Dated: 18th April, 2020
NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

In his letter to Mr. Jaishankar, Mr. Palaniswami said the State government had been receiving repeated requests from the stranded fishermen and their families

for help in meeting their basic needs.

Around 1,000 Indian fishermen, including over 650 from Tamil Nadu, are stranded in Iran.

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
CORRIGENDUM-2
The date of closing for the following tenders to be opened on 21-04-2020 and 23-04-2020 have been further postponed as under,
Tender Notice No. & date | Tender Ref. No. | Date of Closing

Andhra Pradesh sees spike with 75 fresh cases

Guntur cases double in 24 hours; 18 fresh cases in North Karnataka

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

VIJAYAWADA/HYDERABAD/
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM/
BENGALURU

Andhra Pradesh reported highest number of fresh cases in a day with 75 new COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours on Monday. Tamil Nadu reported 43 new cases, Karnataka 18, Telangana 14

COVID-19

and Kerala six.

The overall case count in Andhra Pradesh rose to 722 and the death toll touched 20 with Aanantapur, Krishn and Kurnool districts each reporting one death. With 25 new cases, Chittoor district reported a doubling of cases in just one day. Guntur district reported 20 cases and Kurnool district reported 16.

Meanwhile, 27 persons, including 15 in Guntur, 10 in

Krishna and two in Visakhapatnam were discharged after recovery. The government has tested 3,775 samples in the past 24 hours, and the total number of samples tested so far has reached 30,733.

The number of cases in Tamil Nadu touched 1,520 with 1406 active cases. The total number of deaths stands at 17. With no declining trend in the number of new cases, the State government announced that the lockdown would continue till May 3 without any further relaxation.

Two deaths in Telangana
Telangana saw two more deaths taking the total number of casualties to 23. The total number of positive cases touched 872 with 12 active cases added from GHMC area and one each from Med-

Strict measures

Governments in southern States are leaving no stone unturned to curb the spread of COVID-19

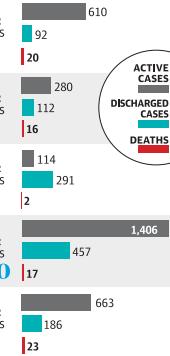


Ready for action: Police deployed around a COVID-19 containment zone in Bengaluru on Monday. ■ K. MURALIKUMAR

chal and Nizamabad during the day. The total number of active cases, according to the bulletin issued by the Public Health and Family Welfare department, stood at 663 and the number of people discharged after being treated remained at 186.

With 18 new cases, the number of cases in Karnataka stood at 408. All the new cases were from North Karnataka – II from Vijayapura, five from Kalaburagi, and one each from Gadag and Bidar.

In Nanjangud, which has



now become a cluster concern, 2,098 persons have been quarantined. Of these, 1,960 were tested and 69 were positive while 1,891 were negative. The results of 138 samples are still awaited. Of the total 84 cases in Mysuru, 69 have emanated from a

pharma company.

The Minister pointed out that some districts have continued to remain COVID free. While Kodagu, for the last 32 days has not seen even a single positive case, Chitradurga has not seen a positive case for the last 26 days. Similarly, Davangere and Udupi have not seen cases in the last 25 days and 22 days, respectively. As on today, there are 10 COVID-19 free districts in Karnataka.

Kerala reported six new positive cases while 21 patients were discharged after recovery. All six cases were reported from Kannur, five of whom had returned from abroad while one had developed the disease through contact with an imported case. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said despite the exemplary manner in which Kerala's health system has managed the outbreak, the State was very vulnerable to a resurgence of the disease once lockdown ends.



No entry: Pushcarts being used to block a road at Kalasipalyam in Bengaluru on Monday. ■ V. SREENIVASA MURTHY

Karnataka extends lockdown till May 3

Cabinet withdraws partial relaxations

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BENGALURU



Takeover fears

A nuanced approach on Chinese investments using automatic route may have been better

The government's decision to ban foreign direct investments (FDI) through the automatic route from neighbouring countries that share a land border with India has raised eyebrows. This is mainly because the move is seen as aimed at Chinese investors who could exploit cheap valuations in the depressed economic conditions post-lockdown to pick up equity interest in select companies. India is not alone in this fear of "opportunistic takeovers", as Press Note 3(2020 Series) of the Commerce Ministry described it. Italy, Spain, France and Australia have already taken similar action to protect their businesses from foreign (read Chinese) investors fishing for distressed entities in need of cash in the post-COVID-19 scenario. China's investment in India has been on a sharp upturn in the last five years. According to a Brookings India study, the total current and planned investment by Chinese entities is over \$26 billion. Chinese capital is invested not just in brick-and-mortar industries but in technology and fintech start-ups where Alibaba and Tencent have funded a host of Indian names such as Paytm, Swiggy, Ola, Zomato and BigBasket. It is quite possible that a move to curb or control Chinese investment in Indian companies was always on the cards and that COVID-19 was a good excuse to pull the trigger. There has always been unease over the fact that there is a thin line that divides the state sector from private enterprise in China and several companies there trace linkages back to the security apparatus of that country.

So, while the decision to introduce a layer of government approval is probably valid in the current circumstances, the government could have adopted a more nuanced approach. Greenfield investments should have been kept out of the purview as they do not pose a threat of takeover of existing business; to the contrary, they create new capacities and businesses in the country. A distinction should also have been made based on the class of investors: venture capital funds are financial investors who may not necessarily be interested in taking over and running a business. While the FDI route has been plugged, it is not clear what happens to investments that come through the market route. SEBI has already sent missives to custodians asking for details of Chinese holdings in listed entities. How will this be regulated? And again, what happens to FDI that comes in through entities registered in countries that do not share a land border with India but which may trace their beneficial ownership to China? And, now that the wall has been raised, approvals should be quick for investment proposals in the technology start-up space, where cash burn is high and existing investors are often tapped for a top-up investment.

Moon rising

South Korean ruling party's win is a chance for President Moon to expedite peace efforts

South Korea's President Moon Jae-in, whose government's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic won acclaim, scored a political victory last week as his Democratic Party (DP) swept the parliamentary elections. Despite the health-care crisis, he decided to go ahead with the poll, with stringent precautionary measures in place. While the DP won 163 seats, up 43, the progressive coalition it leads commanded 180 seats in the 300-strong National Assembly. The Opposition United Future coalition got 103 seats. The results marked a substantial turnaround in public sentiments from last year when protests broke out amid a slowing economy and corruption allegations. With more parliamentary seats, the President, who is into the third year of his five-year presidency, can follow his reform agenda and North Korean rapprochement without legislative bottlenecks. But tackling these challenges arguably poses an even greater test of his leadership and political will than his government's effective handling of the disease. The desire for normalcy with the North is evident among other things from growing impatience to end the disruption of business activity across the border. Since the thaw in ties between the neighbours began in 2018, Mr. Moon and Pyongyang's leader Kim Jong-un have also met on the Demilitarised Zone before a global media blitz. But the endeavour for peace is fraught with challenges, not all of which seem entirely amenable to Mr. Moon's control. Foremost, he would have to consider the implications of his initiatives towards Pyongyang for Seoul's military alliance with Washington.

Besides the suspension of their annual military exercises in South Korea, Seoul and Washington have been unable to agree on more substantial measures to ease tensions with the North. Moreover, the formal declaration of an end to the Korean war of the 1950s, where the U.S. was involved, is hostage to the more recent international demand for the Korean Peninsula's denuclearisation. But progress on the North's nuclear stand-off has been stalled ever since the Trump-Kim Hanoi summit, in February 2019, broke down. Their meeting, in Singapore in June 2018, resulted in no more than vague promises to end the long deadlock. Pyongyang insists on crippling economic sanctions ending as a precondition for any meaningful reduction of nuclear testing in the future. Washington has, meanwhile, harped on access to the North's nuclear sites in exchange for a relaxation of sanctions. Mr. Trump, himself facing re-election in November and focused on combating the pandemic, is unlikely to renew attention to the dispute with North Korea. Paradoxically though, the collective desire among nations to confront the unfolding health emergency could open avenues of cooperation, even defying the ordinary operation of realpolitik. Therein lies a ray of hope. Mr. Moon must make the most of the situation.

The occasion to revisit the sovereign's role

There has to be a discourse on redefining the state's involvement in India's political, economic and social life



PRAKALA PRABHAKAR

Let us make no mistake. COVID-19 is forcing a paradigm shift. We are unlikely to return to a pre-coronavirus homeostasis after the war against it is won. No section or sector is going to remain untouched and unaltered by the devastation the novel coronavirus is now unleashing. The virus is going to stay around for a while. Its annihilation in the near future is not on the cards. Vaccines are going to be slow in coming; therefore, its taming is not immediate. A second wave of outbreak is a realistic probability.

Unlike other threats to humanity such as global warming and a nuclear armageddon, this threat is now, not in the future; it is here simultaneously for everyone, not for someone else and somewhere else; its casualties are around us, not in far away battlefields or polar regions and coastal areas. No country can rescue another; it is each one fending for itself.

Defining moment

COVID-19 threatens to push the world into a deep recession. If the lockdown continues, the world economy will contract by as much as 6% according to the International Monetary Fund. If it is not extended, the loss of human lives could be of unacceptable proportions. The global community will be fortunate if it does not spiral into depression. Both demand and supply contractions are likely to be severe. They are not going to be short-lived. Political systems, economic architectures and cultural mores are on trial. Work patterns, production and distribution practices are up for redefinition. Denial

and wishing away unpleasant, yet probable, realities by governments, global organisations and public intellectuals will only compound economic, social, political and human costs. We must now be quick in seizing lessons from the present crisis and get ready to embark on measures to build a new paradigm of life, work and government.

The enlarged economic role of the state in the aftermath of the Second World War came under major assault since the 1980s. Leaders who asked "where is society?" rode to power on "cut the damn government down" ticket. Systems that were putative alternatives to capitalism fell into disgrace. Entrepreneurs heading unicorns and "unicorns" have become the new demigods. Minimum governance became the mantra. India too willingly signed up to this creed. But COVID-19 is beginning to challenge the political economy of this creed. Very soon the full scores of the performance of state and non-state actors in the COVID-19 stress test will be available across the globe. The Indian state will also have to give answers as far as its report card is concerned.

The retreat of the state

India embarked on the path of trimming the role of the state, initially, with such caveats as "safety net" and "reform with a human face". Gradually, those caveats fell by the wayside. The lurch became sharp, unapologetic and full-throated. The Indian state's role in health care, education, creation and maintenance of infrastructure and delivery of welfare has shrunk or become nominal, half-hearted, inefficient, and dysfunctional. Of course, it is true that it did not give a great account of itself in these sectors even before the 1991 departure. Disappointment with the dismal performance in its economic and administrative functions in the backdrop of a changing global

ideological ecosystem encouraged a sharp de facto downscaling of the Indian state's role. Its retreat from vital functions and abdication of its social responsibility have gained acceptance and legitimacy among the articulate upwardly mobile. While retreat and abdication find influential and forceful evangelists, selective retreat had few advocates.

This departure, however, was not vigorously interrogated. When it was, it was limited to the broad ideological opposition from the left which defended the discredited position of the Indian state occupying the commanding heights of the economy. Supporters of the departure, on the other hand, had little engagement in giving shape to the new policy. Nor did they worry about calibrating the architecture of the emerging role for the state. As a result, "private sector" became the new holy cow in place of the "state sector". What made matters worse is the culture of a simplistic and shallow discourse of public policy that took hold in civil society. It mindlessly privileges the agenda of corporates. It transacts in the idiom of stock exchanges and international rating agencies.

Lost voices

Therefore, those with no social media handles, who cannot organise annual "thought" conclaves, who are incapable of highlighting their problems with impressive presentations are rendered voiceless. Today, those who bear the brunt of the consequences of

shrunken and unresponsive state are the farmer and farm labour, the migrant worker, the unemployed, those in the unorganised sector, the rural poor, and the small entrepreneur. They are paying the highest price for the necessary but unbearable lockdown. They are either stranded far away from home, or confined to their homes with no work and incomes, unsupported by the state. Underfunded public health systems are unable to serve them. Tips on how to beat lockdown blues, how to work from home, use Zoom, spend quality time with family that fill our pullouts are irrelevant for them. But the dominant strand of public discourse is out of its depth. It has no time for these concerns. Worse, this discourse can be gamed from time to time. And the alternative discourse is too feeble to draw the attention of the government to the grave implications of COVID-19 for the weak in our society.

Time for tough questions

But the state's first responsibility is the marginalised. They are also the crucial part of our economy. They lubricate its wheels and generate demand. Announcing stimulus packages that address the supply side alone without beefing up the demand side will be self-defeating to corporates. Prioritising the needs of corporate entities will lead to convulsions in our body politic in the wake of COVID-19. The state is in danger of forfeiting legitimacy if it does not ensure the survival and revival of the marginalised sections.

This is the appropriate context to revisit the political economy of the Indian state and its role. The country should begin a vigorous debate on redefining every aspect of its involvement in our collective political, economic and social life. The relation between the state and economy, its role in allocating resources and addressing

questions of inequality, its duty to provide basic human needs, the extent of the market's role in providing services such as health, education, civic amenities, and the responsibility of the state and private enterprise towards deprived sections, need urgent attention.

We should re-examine the efficacy of our political structures too: the equation between citizens and government and what its implications are for individual freedom, privacy and national security; the equation between legislature and executive; the balance of administrative and financial power between provinces and the union on the one hand and provinces and local bodies on the other. The way we elect our representatives to legislatures must also come under the lens. The issue of atrophied local authorities and enfeebled legislatures needs attention. For, they are at the coalface, delivering the state to the citizen. The way legislatures are elected and governments are made and unmade must be scrutinised. Our outrage at the power of big money in our electoral system has not arrested its growth. The role of serving and retired members of higher judiciary ought to be a part of the debate.

We had an opportunity for intensive debate when the Justice Venkatachalias Commission submitted its report in 2002 (to review the working of the Constitution). We missed it. The opportunity that COVID-19 provides should not be squandered. The Indian state should be strong so that the weak in our society can lean on it. Our rishis told us: *durbalasya balam Raja*. The strength of the weak is the Sovereign. Not the market.

Parakala Prabhakar is former Communications Adviser to the Government of Andhra Pradesh and is Managing Director of RightFOLIO, a knowledge enterprise based in Hyderabad

The invisible face of the fallout

The traditional gender role that women play distinctly affects them in global crises as seen in numerous examples



BINDU SIVASANKARAN NAIR

The world has suddenly woken up to the reality of a virus ravaging it.

While catastrophes affect people at large, the economical, sociological and psychological impact that each catastrophe has on women is profound. Data indicate the need to address this during and after these catastrophic episodes.

Crisis and gender

In the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, the coastlines of countries in the region, including India, were affected and more than 2,00,000 people were killed or listed missing, a fourth of them were women. The traditional "care giver" role that women play has much to do in explaining this. Women stay around looking for their loved ones in order to see them safe. Besides this, women lack many life skills such as swimming and climbing.

During tsunami recovery phases, aid organisations and governments house the homeless in camps where women face many difficulties including abuse by men. Gender-skewed tsunami

deaths resulted in a disproportionate gender ratio where men largely outnumbered women. Women also faced hygiene challenges in these camps due to inadequate sanitation facilities.

In the United States, which has a high incidence of tornadoes, families headed by women are affected the most. Women often are engaged in sector-specific employment which when impacted result in unemployment. Women are also engaged in post-disaster care, missing job opportunities. An economic slowdown also leaves women with additional wage cuts, on a paradigm where pay disparity between genders is a norm.

In Kerala, after the floods in 2018-19, thousands were housed in relief camps. Experts observe that relief measures focus on livelihood and assets, compelling aid agencies to focus on restoring livelihoods. Flood-destroyed kitchens forced women to cook in the open air with whatever they were left with. There was considerable added domestic work by women, which went unnoticed.

Issues faced in the pandemic

Coming to the current COVID-19 pandemic, its impact on both genders is beyond the mere death statistics. According to World Health Organization data, around 70% of the world's health workers are women, 79% of nurses are women. Health workers in general are



highly vulnerable and not ensuring their safety is a high risk that can severely impact the health system. India has a million-plus accredited social health activist (ASHA) workers who are an integral part of its health system. ASHAs, who work at the ground level, are reporting incidents of attacks while on COVID-19 duty. Stringent action against their tormentors is needed to ensure their professional safety.

In many households where both partners work, the work from home (WFH) concept is now common. The entire family is now together within the limited space of their dwellings. As traditional roleplay is still prevalent in most sections of Indian society, the equal division of household responsibilities among couples is still distant. Women from all strata face substantial additional house hold work. Alongside this is the fear of job loss and reduced income which can create mental pressure on women, in turn affecting their physical well-being.

The lower income groups are already facing job losses and anxiety is leading to domestic tensions and violence against women. A large number of daily wage workers resort to alcohol consumption. The ban on alcohol sales as a part of the national lockdown, is contributing to domestic tensions, leading to women abuse.

Hormone-induced depression among women is another key point that needs to be understood and acknowledged. Women are twice as likely to face depression when compared to men. Premenstrual syndrome (PMS) among reproductive age groups, pregnancy-related depressive conditions, postpartum depression (PPD) among new mothers as well as premenopausal and menopausal symptoms are common, interfering in every day life and relationships. The lockdown is adding more intensity to these conditions. These are not discussed as women are trained to follow the "culture of silence". Awareness among men about these conditions women experience is low.

Even in these disruptive times, women's safety should become a priority. Be it domestic violence, women's depression and anxiety related matters, or their safety while at work, all these issues need to be addressed and responded to. According to 2015-16 National Family Health Survey, around 30% of women in the age group 15 to 49 years face domestic violence. A recent report high-

lighted how the National Commission for Women has received 587 complaints relating to crimes against women from March 23 to April 16, out of which 239 were related to domestic violence.

Assigning ASHA workers to specifically address women's welfare during this pandemic, setting up exclusive cells to quickly address domestic violence and women's health-related issues, including men in conversations, and even online counselling for alcoholism in men are not difficult to implement. Steps such as roping in non-governmental organisations, psychology students, teachers and volunteers and also using technology platforms would help speed action. What is important is to develop a culture of including women's safety in the planning phase irrespective of whatever the nature of the crisis is.

On helplines

Gender parity needs to be a conscious act and this observation is related to those who answer helplines. When only women attend these calls, we are reinforcing the stereotypical "care-giver" role of women. Instead, we need to have a well-trained and gender-inclusive team which can handle such calls well.

Bindu Sivasankaran Nair is a diversity and inclusion expert. She is the founder of BEYOND Pink App

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

Not adding up

At a time when steps are being taken in relaxing the national lockdown curbs, it is amusing to note that the actual numbers of COVID-19 cases in the country, registered on Saturday, and submitted by the Indian Council of Medical Research differed from the ones put out by the Health Ministry (Page 1, "Confusion over mismatch in Health Ministry, ICMR figures", April 20). The funniest part was that there was no correlation in the numbers of positive cases given by States, the ICMR and the Health Ministry. When there is no accuracy even in furnishing the correct numbers of COVID-19 cases by the top agencies, how can people be expected to be confident

About other data such as

symptom cases, cases testing positive, cases under treatment, cases in quarantine, and those discharged? It is based on such data that the Centre and States can take further steps concerning welfare. D. SETHURAMAN, Chennai

Notes from the field

It was disturbing to come across the snippet, "Spraying of disinfectants harmful: Health Ministry" ("COVID-19" pages, April 20), as there are many areas in cities, towns and even villages in India that are using tunnels to spray disinfectants on people. The advisory against spraying, citing its physically and psychologically harmful

effects, should reach administrative bodies at all levels immediately and people must be made aware of the dangers of such a procedure. Also, the Central government should have classified areas in States as red, orange I and II and green zones only to assess the situation and not for the purpose of lockdown relaxation. C.R. ANANTHARAYAN, Bangalore

It is distressing to read

reports about people objecting to the burial or even cremation of persons in their locality who pass away after coronavirus infection. This is happening across India. The case of a medical doctor in Chennai, who was treating coronavirus patients, who then got infected and passed away, is one such instance. A civilised society would treat him with respect. However, when his body was taken for burial, local people took objection to this and the police had to step in amid an unpleasant situation. Death is inevitable for all, yet ignorant protesters seem to think they are created differently and behave in a disrespectful and hostile manner. In most such cases of protests, it is not one or two persons but scores who join in. Have we become an insensitive society?

N.S. VENKATARAMAN, Chennai

■ It is a lot of confusion

over the easing of restrictions during the national lockdown period. This state of uncertainty must be removed with the

roll-out of clear guidelines categorically stating what is allowed and what is not for everyone to understand and follow easily without getting into unnecessary trouble with the law enforcement authorities. The government must understand and appreciate the laying down of a cohesive and comprehensive list of dos and don'ts in this period. V. PADMANABHAN, Bangalore

Stifled

The citing of a verse from Sangam period Tamil anthology (OpEd page, "From the Readers' Editor", April 20) prompted me to think of a very popular Thirukkural, "Idippara illathai..." (448). It states that a "king who is without the guard of men who can

rebuke him, will perish, even though there be no one to destroy him". The core issues around the action against Dr. Kafeel Khan, the surrender of Anand Teltumbde and Gautam Navlakha or the FIR registered against Siddharth Varadarajan have been lost in the avalanche of COVID-19 coverage. It is disturbing that nowadays, there is no discussion, debate or interview that reflects the voices of dissent and which draws media attention. Speaking truth to power is the essence of democracy. Overt directions to present purely positive views of the government's handling of the situation is what prevails in much of the fourth estate. S.V. VENUGOPALAN, Chennai



In economics, a greenfield investment (GI) refers to a type of foreign direct investment (FDI) where a company establishes operations in a foreign country. In a greenfield investment, the company constructs new facilities (sales office, manufacturing facility, etc.) cross-border from the ground up.

A greenfield investment is a form of market entry commonly used when a company wants to achieve the highest degree of control over foreign activities. It can be compared to other foreign direct investments such as the purchase of foreign securities or the acquisition of a majority stake in a foreign company in which the parent company exercises little to no control over daily business operations.

Apart from potential tax breaks or subsidies in establishing a greenfield investment, the overarching goal of such an investment is to achieve a high level of control over business operations and to avoid intermediary costs.

Advantages of a Greenfield Investment

There are numerous advantages of a greenfield investment, including:

High level of control over business operations

High-quality control over the manufacturing and sale of products and/or services

High control over brand image and staffing

Economies of scale and economies of scope can be achieved in terms of marketing, research and development, and production

Bypassing trade restrictions

Creating jobs for the economy where the greenfield investment is taking place

Disadvantages of a Greenfield Investment

There are numerous disadvantages of a greenfield investment, including:

An extremely high-risk investment – a greenfield investment is the riskiest form of foreign direct investments

Potentially high market entry cost (barriers to entry)

Government regulations that may prevent foreign direct investments

High fixed costs involved in establishing a greenfield location

are not over, and Kerala needs to continue harnessing its capabilities to withstand recurring disasters.

The response of Kerala's political leadership, its healthcare professionals, and the public to the COVID-19 crisis has been breathtaking. The State has an impressive tracking and surveillance system. It has set up testing kiosks; it has institutes that are ready for plasma trials; and it has also enacted a law on epidemic control. The Kerala government has been distributing food through community kitchens and is running the highest number of relief camps for migrant workers in the country.

It is not only these immediate steps that explain why the State has a low death rate and a high recovery rate in India during the pandemic. The credit also goes to decades of past investments in health and education by both the public and private sector. This has produced a robust health system. This is why Kerala was able to implement the 'break the chain' campaign so swiftly and effectively.

In view of the high uncertainty associated with this new virus, Kerala's leadership knows well that it is crucial to stay vigilant. Singapore's experience illustrates. Singapore did very well in putting a firm lid on new infections, but it has subsequently seen an explosive uptick in cases and even deaths.

Two major challenges

Two eventualities from Singapore's experience are pertinent for Kerala. The first challenge is the plight of returning students and workers as foreign countries become inhospitable for non-nationals. Singapore saw returning travellers bring back the infection, even as it employed a sound and well-tested screening and quarantine system. Kerala handled the returning population well, starting with the first cases from Wuhan. But

pore is the explosive spread among foreign workers, most of whom are from South Asia. A society can only be strong as its weakest link, as illustrated by the thousands of workers in dormitories testing positive for the virus. A good measure of income equality and inclusion are vital for the resilience of a society to calamities. Low income groups and marginalised groups deserve attention, not least in withstanding extreme events.

Drawing parallels

On income and distribution, there is a parallel between Singapore and Kerala. Singapore is a high-income economy. Despite recent progress, it has among the highest income disparities in Asia. Kerala too has a high per capita income compared to other States. But while it scores high on education and health, Kerala also ranks high in income inequality among the States.

To respond to COVID-19, Kerala will need to go full scale in testing, and implement isolation and better hygiene practices. When the pandemic ends, it would be a mistake for activities to return to business as usual. This is a great opportunity for Kerala to redouble its focus on health, education and the environment, which will decide its trajectory of health and climate calamities.

Given its topography, fragile ecology, and high population density, Kerala is highly exposed to health and climate disasters. If the State can revive economic growth in more environmentally and socially sustainable ways, it would not only be more resilient to extreme events but also have a greater chance of using the rich human and natural endowments for the betterment of its people.

Vinod Thomas is a Visiting Professor, National University of Singapore and formerly a Senior Vice President at the World Bank

DATA POINT

Tests vs positives

1. CASES, TESTS IN INDIA | The chart plots the daily samples tested (blue line, left axis) and daily cases recorded (orange line, right axis) in India since April 3



2. CASES, TESTS IN GUJARAT | The chart plots the daily samples tested (blue line, left axis) and daily cases recorded (orange line, right axis) in Gujarat since April 3



3. TESTING CLUSTERS | The graph shows daily cases recorded in Tamil Nadu (blue line, right axis), daily samples tested of those in the Nizamuddin cluster (red line, left axis) and daily samples tested of those not in the cluster (blue line, left axis)



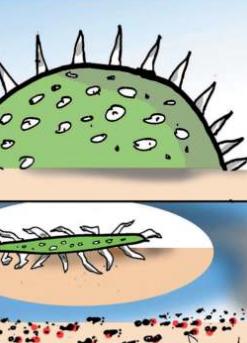
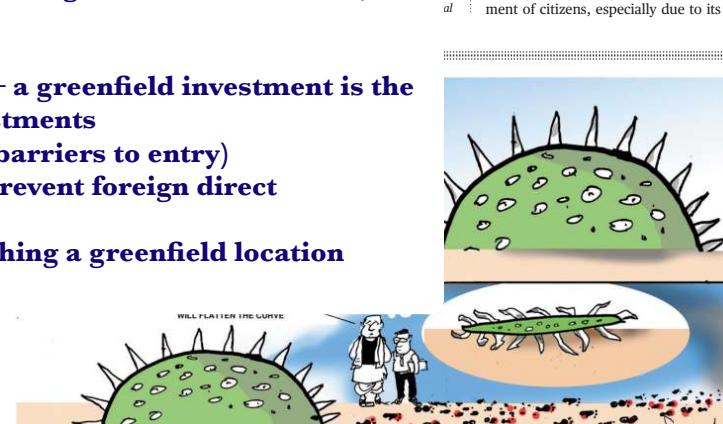
4. TESTS VS POSITIVES | The graph shows the % of positive cases among the samples tested of those in the Nizamuddin cluster (red line) and those outside the cluster (blue line) in Tamil Nadu



Generally, the no. of positive COVID-19 cases increases when the testing rate increases.

However, this is not always the case, as data from Gujarat show. Who gets tested determines the number of positive cases more than how many get tested. In Tamil Nadu, the number of positive cases went up when more people from the Nizamuddin cluster were tested and went down when more people outside the cluster were tested

LAST WORD | As the probability of positive cases inside clusters is high, on days when a State tests more people who belong to clusters, the case count is higher. And the days on which a State tests more people from outside clusters, where the probability of positive is much lower, the case count is also lower



terms of service. Some reports suggest that the government is considering using the app as a criterion for restricting users' movement. The potential restriction on freedom of movement will have considerable impact on an individual's access to basic government benefits and services, thus endangering citizens' right to life. For example, entry into banks and access to PDS may become subject to the colour coding of the person on the Aarogya Setu app. There is no limitation on the gamut of restrictions that may be imposed using the app. The resultant impact will be disproportionately higher on the most vulnerable sections of the society.

The unconstitutional bargain

A seemingly benign app based on voluntary consent is thus loaded with potential to be used as a tool to violate fundamental rights. Individuals may be forced to download the app to be able to access basic amenities and services. This situation could pose the problem of an unconstitutional condition or barter – a situation where citizens are forced to give up their rights (right to autonomy and privacy in this case) in exchange for government benefits. Further, the existing users of the app could be subject to arbitrary restrictions in their fundamental rights without their informed consent as they would not have foreseen such restrictions at the time of giving their consent to downloading the app.

The situation bears resemblance to Aadhaar. Originally designed as an optional programme to provide government benefits to citizens based on their voluntary consent, Aadhaar was later made compulsory, even for private services such as banking and mobile phone registrations. The Supreme Court then disallowed private parties from using Aadhaar for authentication on grounds that it exceeded its intended purpose.

To avoid unforeseeable dangers of mass surveillance and disproportionate restrictions of fundamental rights, it is therefore imperative that the Aarogya Setu app is implemented only through law, especially since India lacks a comprehensive data protection or surveillance law. It is already a settled legal principle that any limitation of fundamental rights must be implemented only through a law pursuing legitimate state interest. Enacting such a law will not only subject government actions to limitations but will also facilitate its constitutional scrutiny.

Kashish Anjea, a practising lawyer in New Delhi, specialises in global health and privacy law; Nikhil Pratap is a practising lawyer in New Delhi

The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO APRIL 21, 1970

President Gives Evidence in Court

President Giri to-day (April 20, New Delhi) created history when he gave evidence before the Supreme Court in the Presidential election case. This was the first time that the nation's President had appeared before a court of law. The appearance of the President, the authority for appointing Supreme Court Judges, in the court was noted as highly significant in legal circles. One senior advocate said it signified "the majesty of law and the utmost respect the Head of the State shows to the supreme judiciary of the land and to the rule of law underlying the basic fabric of our Constitution." Though Mr. Giri as Head of State was entitled to be examined on commission, and the Court had granted the plea for such an examination in Rashtrapati Bhawan, Mr. Giri gave up the privilege and submitted himself to the jurisdiction of the court, as any other witness. There was speculation earlier if the Judges would rise when Mr. Giri entered the courtroom. They did not. Nor did they acknowledge Mr. Giri's name. They maintained their usually dispassionate composure.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO APRIL 21, 1920

The Problem in South Africa.

(From an editorial)

The renascence of the anti-Indian agitation in South Africa is a matter which, in spite of pre-occupation in regard to home problem, should command urgent attention in this country. We have already commented on the meeting of the Transvaal Whites held in September 1919, which transformed itself into the South Africans' League for the express purpose of anti-Asiatic work and propaganda. The full official report of the genesis of this organisation reveals the brazenness of the white-monopolist agitation in a manner which tells the Indians that it is a life and death problem for them. A Commission is at present sitting in South Africa to envisage the question of the Indian settler, but pending its decision it shall be advisable to be informed of the state of feeling among the white Afrikaners and the extent to which they are prepared to go for ensuring their monopoly. The renascence of the anti-Asiatic cry is characterised by features which were less marked in the agitation that led to the settlement of 1914. It is not merely thought to preclude further immigration but in general elimination of the Asiatic residents in the Transvaal is one of the declared objectives of the League.

FROM PAGE ONE

Doubling time of virus goes up in 18 States

Delhi (8.5) and Tamil Nadu (14) were also included in the Health Ministry's list of regions that had doubling times under 20 days but these were also among the leading contributors to India's case load. After Maharashtra, Delhi follows with 2,000 cases and Tamil Nadu is the fifth largest contributor with 1,477 cases.

Ladakh, Uttarakhand, Assam, Chandigarh, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Andaman and Nicobar islands recorded doubling times of 20-30 days.

All COVID-19 patients in Goa were discharged after recovery, and the State now had no active cases.

Central teams

The Centre said it had constituted six Inter-Ministerial Central Teams (IMCTs), two each for West Bengal and Maharashtra and one each for Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan to combat the outbreak.

"Situation is specially se-

rious in Indore (MP), Mumbai and Pune (Maharashtra), Jaipur (Rajasthan) and Kolkata, Howrah, Medinipur East, 24 Parganas North, Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Jalpaiguri in West Bengal," a press release said and added that the teams would focus on complaints of implementation of lockdown measures as per guidelines, supply of essential commodities, social distancing, preparedness of health infrastructure, safety of health professionals and conditions of the relief camps for labour and poor people.

Several states – notably Delhi, Maharashtra and Karnataka – have said that a sizeable number of those testing positive appeared to be asymptomatic.

However, Raman Gangalakshetra, spokesperson for the Indian Council for Medical Research said there were no plans to change the testing criteria, which has been expanded.

Police detain 59 for violence over round-up

"Four police personnel, who are part of enforcement teams, sustained injuries and have filed complaints," said the officer, speaking on the condition of anonymity.

"They targeted CCTV cameras and street lights, which shows that the attack was premeditated," the officer added.

According to police sources, the phones recovered from the accused showed that messages had been shared among them

days before the attack. "The accused formed four teams and carried out attacks separately," said a police officer.

They carried knives, wooden logs and pelted stones at the enforcement teams, the police alleged.

Special police teams have been formed to probe the violence and the search for the remaining accused has intensified after both Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa and Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai condemned the attack.

"Amithi knows there is no communal angle here. I told him we must search for all those fanning hatred on social media," Mr. Thackeray said, adding that Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath too had called him.

He warned those trying to inflame passions to desist.

"There is no Hindu-Muslim angle or communalism

denied the booking of a freelance photojournalist, Masrat Zahra, under the draconian Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. Ms. Zahra was also interrogated by the police.

An "appeal" was also issued by the Inspector-General of Police, Kashmir, Vijay Kumar that any information, which has bearing on national security and can cause "social instability" be clarified/confirmed before publication.

+ J&K police file FIR on The Hindu report

Former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti's Twitter handle, used by her daughter Iltija, said, "A correspondent working for *The Hindu* was interrogated for hours on an article that didn't fit into the narrative of the establishment. Any dissent/counter opinion has been outlawed & criminalised. Filing FIRs & invoking stringent laws meant for criminals is a blot on democracy."

In a related development, the Kashmir Press Club con-

Vijay Mallya loses U.K. High Court appeal

"Now, Mr. Mallya has 14 days to file an application in the High Court for permission to appeal in the Supreme Court, which takes up constitutional matters and issues of larger public interest. We believe that it will be turned down in all likelihood. Once he exhausts all legal avenues, we will have 28 days to bring him back," said a senior Enforcement Directorate official.

As flight operations are hit globally due to COVID-19, in case his extradition is cleared by the final authority during the lockdown period, he may be brought back on board any special aircraft, including Air India, the official said.

The agencies have alleged that Mr. Mallya, between September 1, 2009, and January 24, 2017, conspired with A. Ragunathan, S. Borkar, A. Nadkami, A. Shah, Y. Agarwal, B. Batra, O. Bunderlu, S. Srinivasan, R. Sridhar and others to cheat those who might deposit funds with the IDBI Bank. This was done "by dishonestly causing and permitting the bank to sanction and disburse loans" to Kingfisher Airlines (KFA) in the order of (a) ₹1,500 million on October 7, 2009, (b) ₹2,000 million on November 4, 2009, and (c) ₹7,500 million on November 27, 2009, with the intention not to repay them on April 21."

Mr. Bisht, 89, was admitted to the gastroenterology department of the AIIMS.

In a statement, the Chief Minister said, "I had the ardent wish to get a glimpse of him at the final moment. However, following a sense of duty towards the State's 23 crore people during the COVID-19 pandemic, I could not do so. For the success of the lockdown and the strategy to defeat the novel coronavirus pandemic, I will be unable to attend the last rites on April 21."

This is the first response from the Chinese side after the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in an April 17 decision imposed restrictions saying companies from countries that share borders with India can invest "only under the government route".

"The additional barriers set by Indian side for investors from specific countries violate the WTO's principle of non-discrimination, and go against the general trend

of liberalisation and facilitation of trade and investment. More importantly, they do not conform to the consensus of the G20 leaders and Trade Ministers to realise a free, fair, non-discriminatory, transparent, predictable and stable trade and investment environment, and to keep our markets open," said Counsellor Ji Rong, spokesperson of the Chinese Embassy.

The official pointed at the Chinese investments in various sectors of the Indian economy. He said China's overall investment as of December 2019 was above \$ 8 billion and it had driven key sectors like telecom, infrastructure, automobile and household goods in India. The revision was meant for sectors and enterprises other

than defence, space, atomic energy and sectors and activities "prohibited for foreign investment".

It was understood that the Indian decision was a response to the news of an incremental purchase of shares in HDFC by the People's Bank of China.

The Chinese spokesperson invoked the principle of free market economy and said, "Companies make choices based on market principles. We hope India would revise relevant discriminatory practices, treat investments from different countries equally, and foster an open, fair and equitable business environment".

The statement said the new policy was clearly going to impact future investment from China.

China says Indian trade curbs are against WTO principles

Additional barriers violate principle of non-discrimination

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Anand Bishnoi died on Monday and will be cremated in Hardikar at a funeral which will not be attended by the Chief Minister, who said he is duty-bound to stay in his State.

Mr. Bisht, 89, was admitted to the gastroenterology department of the AIIMS.

In a statement, the Chief Minister said, "I had the ardent wish to get a glimpse of him at the final moment. However, following a sense of duty towards the State's 23 crore people during the COVID-19 pandemic, I could not do so. For the success of the lockdown and the strategy to defeat the novel coronavirus pandemic, I will be unable to attend the last rites on April 21."

This is the first response from the Chinese side after the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in an April 17 decision imposed restrictions saying companies from countries that share borders with India can invest "only under the government route".

"The additional barriers set by Indian side for investors from specific countries violate the WTO's principle of non-discrimination, and go against the general trend

of liberalisation and facilitation of trade and investment. More importantly, they do not conform to the consensus of the G20 leaders and Trade Ministers to realise a free, fair, non-discriminatory, transparent, predictable and stable trade and investment environment, and to keep our markets open," said Counsellor Ji Rong, spokesperson of the Chinese Embassy.

The official pointed at the Chinese investments in various sectors of the Indian economy. He said China's overall investment as of December 2019 was above \$ 8 billion and it had driven key sectors like telecom, infrastructure, automobile and household goods in India. The revision was meant for sectors and enterprises other

than defence, space, atomic energy and sectors and activities "prohibited for foreign investment".

It was understood that the Indian decision was a response to the news of an incremental purchase of shares in HDFC by the People's Bank of China.

The Chinese spokesperson invoked the principle of free market economy and said, "Companies make choices based on market principles. We hope India would revise relevant discriminatory practices, treat investments from different countries equally, and foster an open, fair and equitable business environment".

The statement said the new policy was clearly going to impact future investment from China.

IT panel to meet via video conference

Tharoor welcomes approval by Speaker; no such order for other committees

SOBHANA K NAIR NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has allowed the holding of a meeting of the Parliamentary Committee on Information and Technology via video conference, committee chairman Shashi Tharoor said.

There is, however, no formal orders for all the committees to use this means.

The Budget session of Parliament had ended abruptly on March 23 and since then no meeting of these parliamentary committees had

been held. Mr. Tharoor announced on Twitter that his committee would meet soon.

"Delighted to announce that Lok Sabha Speaker @ombirlaok has approved the holding of meetings of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Information Technology by video conference. What could be more appropriate than for our Committee to set this welcome precedent?" The Congress leader said.

He had written a letter to Mr. Birla on April 17 request-

ing him to reconsider the curtailing of activities of parliamentary committees since soon.

"It is imperative that our committees also continue to meet periodically so that they can execute their constitutional mandates of scrutinising the activities of the Executive," he wrote.

Mr. Tharoor said a number of pressing issues had developed even in this short duration for each of these committees to consider ur-

gently and, therefore, it was imperative that they were allowed to convene and discuss such time-sensitive concerns.

Rule 267 concerning the functioning of committees says that "The sittings of a committee shall be held within the precincts of the Parliament House, and if it becomes necessary to change the place of sitting outside the Parliament House, the matter shall be referred to the Speaker whose decision shall be final."

Mr. Tharoor had written a letter to Mr. Birla on April 17 request-

ing him to reconsider the curtailing of activities of parliamentary committees since soon.

gently and, therefore, it was imperative that they were allowed to convene and discuss such time-sensitive concerns.

Rule 267 concerning the functioning of committees says that "The sittings of a committee shall be held within the precincts of the Parliament House, and if it becomes necessary to change the place of sitting outside the Parliament House, the matter shall be referred to the Speaker whose decision shall be final."

Mr. Tharoor had written a letter to Mr. Birla on April 17 request-

ing him to reconsider the curtailing of activities of parliamentary committees since soon.

gently and, therefore, it was imperative that they were allowed to convene and discuss such time-sensitive concerns.

Rule 267 concerning the functioning of committees says that "The sittings of a committee shall be held within the precincts of the Parliament House, and if it becomes necessary to change the place of sitting outside the Parliament House, the matter shall be referred to the Speaker whose decision shall be final."

Mr. Tharoor had written a letter to Mr. Birla on April 17 request-

ing him to reconsider the curtailing of activities of parliamentary committees since soon.

gently and, therefore, it was imperative that they were allowed to convene and discuss such time-sensitive concerns.

Rule 267 concerning the functioning of committees says that "The sittings of a committee shall be held within the precincts of the Parliament House, and if it becomes necessary to change the place of sitting outside the Parliament House, the matter shall be referred to the Speaker whose decision shall be final."

Mr. Tharoor had written a letter to Mr. Birla on April 17 request-

ing him to reconsider the curtailing of activities of parliamentary committees since soon.

gently and, therefore, it was imperative that they were allowed to convene and discuss such time-sensitive concerns.

Rule 267 concerning the functioning of committees says that "The sittings of a committee shall be held within the precincts of the Parliament House, and if it becomes necessary to change the place of sitting outside the Parliament House, the matter shall be referred to the Speaker whose decision shall be final."

Mr. Tharoor had written a letter to Mr. Birla on April 17 request-

ing him to reconsider the curtailing of activities of parliamentary committees since soon.

gently and, therefore, it was imperative that they were allowed to convene and discuss such time-sensitive concerns.

Rule 267 concerning the functioning of committees says that "The sittings of a committee shall be held within the precincts of the Parliament House, and if it becomes necessary to change the place of sitting outside the Parliament House, the matter shall be referred to the Speaker whose decision shall be final."

Mr. Tharoor had written a letter to Mr. Birla on April 17 request-

ing him to reconsider the curtailing of activities of parliamentary committees since soon.

gently and, therefore, it was imperative that they were allowed to convene and discuss such time-sensitive concerns.

Rule 267 concerning the functioning of committees says that "The sittings of a committee shall be held within the precincts of the Parliament House, and if it becomes necessary to change the place of sitting outside the Parliament House, the matter shall be referred to the Speaker whose decision shall be final."

Mr. Tharoor had written a letter to Mr. Birla on April 17 request-

ing him to reconsider the curtailing of activities of parliamentary committees since soon.

gently and, therefore, it was imperative that they were allowed to convene and discuss such time-sensitive concerns.

Rule 267 concerning the functioning of committees says that "The sittings of a committee shall be held within the precincts of the Parliament House, and if it becomes necessary to change the place of sitting outside the Parliament House, the matter shall be referred to the Speaker whose decision shall be final."

Mr. Tharoor had written a letter to Mr. Birla on April 17 request-

ing him to reconsider the curtailing of activities of parliamentary committees since soon.

gently and, therefore, it was imperative that they were allowed to convene and discuss such time-sensitive concerns.

Rule 267 concerning the functioning of committees says that "The sittings of a committee shall be held within the precincts of the Parliament House, and if it becomes necessary to change the place of sitting outside the Parliament House, the matter shall be referred to the Speaker whose decision shall be final."

Mr. Tharoor had written a letter to Mr. Birla on April 17 request-

ing him to reconsider the curtailing of activities of parliamentary committees since soon.

gently and, therefore, it was imperative that they were allowed to convene and discuss such time-sensitive concerns.

Rule 267 concerning the functioning of committees says that "The sittings of a committee shall be held within the precincts of the Parliament House, and if it becomes necessary to change the place of sitting outside the Parliament House, the matter shall be referred to the Speaker whose decision shall be final."

Mr. Tharoor had written a letter to Mr. Birla on April 17 request-

ing him to reconsider the curtailing of activities of parliamentary committees since soon.

gently and, therefore, it was imperative that they were allowed to convene and discuss such time-sensitive concerns.

Rule 267 concerning the functioning of committees says that "The sittings of a committee shall be held within the precincts of the Parliament House, and if it becomes necessary to change the place of sitting outside the Parliament House, the matter shall be referred to the Speaker whose decision shall be final."

Mr. Tharoor had written a letter to Mr. Birla on April 17 request-

ing him to reconsider the curtailing of activities of parliamentary committees since soon.

gently and, therefore, it was imperative that they were allowed to convene and discuss such time-sensitive concerns.

Rule 267 concerning the functioning of committees says that "The sittings of a committee shall be held within the precincts of the Parliament House, and if it becomes necessary to change the place of sitting outside the Parliament House, the matter shall be referred to the Speaker whose decision shall be final."

Mr. Tharoor had written a letter to Mr. Birla on April 17 request-

ing him to reconsider the curtailing of activities of parliamentary committees since soon.

gently and, therefore, it was imperative that they were allowed to convene and discuss such time-sensitive concerns.

Rule 267 concerning the functioning of committees says that "The sittings of a committee shall be held within the precincts of the Parliament House, and if it becomes necessary to change the place of sitting outside the Parliament House, the matter shall be referred to the Speaker whose decision shall be final."

Mr. Tharoor had written a letter to Mr. Birla on April 17 request-

ing him to reconsider the curtailing of activities of parliamentary committees since soon.

gently and, therefore, it was imperative that they were allowed to convene and discuss such time-sensitive concerns.

Rule 267 concerning the functioning of committees says that "The sittings of a committee shall be held within the precincts of the Parliament House, and if it becomes necessary to change the place of sitting outside the Parliament House, the matter shall be referred to the Speaker whose decision shall be final."

Mr. Tharoor had written a letter to Mr. Birla on April 17 request-

ing him to reconsider the curtailing of activities of parliamentary committees since soon.

gently and, therefore, it was imperative that they were allowed to convene and discuss such time-sensitive concerns.

Rule 267 concerning the functioning of committees says that "The sittings of a committee shall be held within the precincts of the Parliament House, and if it becomes necessary to change the place of sitting outside the Parliament House, the matter shall be referred to the Speaker whose decision shall be final."

Mr. Tharoor had written a letter to Mr. Birla on April 17 request-

ing him to reconsider the curtailing of activities of parliamentary committees since soon.

gently and, therefore, it was imperative that they were allowed to convene and discuss such time-sensitive concerns.

Rule 267 concerning the functioning of committees says that "The sittings of a committee shall be held within the precincts of the Parliament House, and if it becomes necessary to change the place of sitting outside the Parliament House, the matter shall be referred to the Speaker whose decision shall be final."

Mr. Tharoor had written a letter to Mr. Birla on April 17 request-

ing him to reconsider the curtailing of activities of parliamentary committees since soon.

gently and, therefore, it was imperative that they were allowed to convene and discuss such time-sensitive concerns.

Rule 267 concerning the functioning of committees says that "The sittings of a committee shall be held within the precincts of the Parliament House, and if it becomes necessary to change the place of sitting outside the Parliament House, the matter shall be referred to the Speaker whose decision shall be final."

Mr. Tharoor had written a letter to Mr. Birla on April 17 request-

ing him to reconsider the curtailing of activities of parliamentary committees since soon.

gently and, therefore, it was imperative that they were allowed to convene and discuss such time-sensitive concerns.

Rule 267 concerning the functioning of committees says that "The sittings of a committee shall be held within the precincts of the Parliament House, and if it becomes necessary to change the place of sitting outside the Parliament House, the matter shall be referred to the Speaker whose decision shall be final."

Mr. Tharoor had written a letter to Mr. Birla on April 17 request-

ing him to reconsider the curtailing of activities of parliamentary committees since soon.

gently and, therefore, it was imperative that they were allowed to convene and discuss such time-sensitive concerns.

Rule 267 concerning the functioning of committees says that "The sittings of a committee shall be held within the precincts of the Parliament House, and if it becomes necessary to change the place of sitting outside the Parliament House, the matter shall be referred to the Speaker whose decision shall be final."

Mr. Tharoor had written a letter to Mr. Birla on April 17 request-

ing him to reconsider the curtailing of activities of parliamentary committees since soon.

gently and, therefore, it was imperative that they were allowed to convene and discuss such time-sensitive concerns.

Rule 267 concerning the functioning of committees says that "The sittings of a committee shall be held within the precincts of the Parliament House, and if it becomes necessary to change the place of sitting outside the Parliament House, the matter shall be referred to the Speaker whose decision shall be final."

Mr. Tharoor had written a letter to Mr. Birla on April 17 request-

ing him to reconsider the curtailing of activities of parliamentary committees since soon.

gently and, therefore, it was imperative that they were allowed to convene and discuss such time-sensitive concerns.

Rule 267 concerning the functioning of committees says that "The sittings of a committee shall be held within the precincts of the Parliament House, and if it becomes necessary to change the place of sitting outside the Parliament House, the matter shall be referred to the Speaker whose decision shall be final."

Mr. Tharoor had written a letter to Mr. Birla on April 17 request-

ing him to reconsider the curtailing of activities of parliamentary committees since soon.

gently and, therefore, it was imperative that they were allowed to convene and discuss such time-sensitive concerns.

Rule 267 concerning the functioning of committees says that "The sittings of a committee shall be held within the precincts of the Parliament House, and if it becomes necessary to change the place of sitting outside the Parliament House, the matter shall be referred to the Speaker whose decision shall be final."

Mr. Tharoor had written a letter to Mr. Birla on April 17 request-

ing him to reconsider the curtailing of activities of parliamentary committees since soon.

gently and, therefore, it was imperative that they were allowed to convene and discuss such time-sensitive concerns.

Rule 267 concerning the functioning of committees says that "The sittings of a committee shall be held within the precincts of the Parliament House, and if it becomes necessary to change the place of sitting outside the Parliament House, the matter shall be referred to the Speaker whose decision shall be final."

Mr. Tharoor had written a letter to Mr. Birla on April 17 request-

ing him to reconsider the curtailing of activities of parliamentary committees since soon.</

Maharashtra reports 466 new cases, 9 deaths

53 mediapersons from Mumbai test positive for coronavirus

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE
PUNE

The upward surge in the numbers of new COVID-19 positive cases in Maharashtra continued with the State reporting 466 cases and nine deaths on Monday. The cumulative tally rose to 4,666 cases, and the death toll stands at 232.

Seven of these deaths were reported from Mumbai city, while two more were reported from Malegaon in Nashik. Malegaon had reported four fatalities on Sunday.

With these deaths, Nashik's toll stands at eight.

308 in Mumbai
Meanwhile, 308 of the 466 new cases were reported from Mumbai city alone, as the city's tally crossed the 3,000 mark to reach 3,032 with 139 deaths.

The State has reported more than 1,600 new cases over a five-day period.



A full house: Residents of Mukund Nagar in Dharavi at a private doctor's chamber on Monday.

Private practitioners are now allowed to attend to patients. • ARUNANGSU ROY CHOWDHURY

Pune district witnessed another spurt in fresh cases, reporting as many as 52 positive cases to take the district's tally to 663, with 51 of these being reported from Pimpri-Chinchwad.

The cases in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR),

excluding Mumbai city, continued to mount steadily as well, with Vasai-Virar recording a jump in 21 new cases to take its tally to 107, while Thane district reported 24 fresh cases to take its tally to 154 and Kalyan-Dombivli reported a further 15 cases to

reach 84. A further 11 cases were reported from Navi Mumbai, taking the area's tally to 83 positive cases.

At least 53 mediapersons from Mumbai have tested positive for coronavirus, a city civic official said on Monday.

30 more cases in Dharavi

STAFF REPORTER
MUMBAI

Dharavi in Mumbai reported another 30 cases on Monday, bringing the total to 168. The area has reported 11 deaths so far.

The Asia's largest slum has also become a COVID-19 hotspot, with cases being reported from containment zones. The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation has screened more than 40,000 people in Dharavi. Despite this, cases continue to be reported from newer parts of Dharavi.

On Monday, of the 30 new cases reported, three are from Kalyanwadi, one of the largest clusters in Dharavi. A few cases were reported from areas that had

previously reported cases, including Mukund Nagar, PMGP Colony, Kunchi Kurve Nagar. Cases were reported from newer parts of Dharavi such as Dhorwada, Padmagopal Chawl, Naik Nagar, Kala Killa. A two-year-old boy from Kalyanwadi has tested positive.

Dadar, which falls in the same administrative ward as Dharavi, also reported three new cases.

A 29-year-old man living on Ramade Road near Shrushtu Hospital has tested positive. The hospital has seen eight positive cases so far. This brings Dadar's total to 25.

Mumbai now has 721 containment zones across the city.

journalists, photographers and cameramen.

"Out of the 171 mediapersons, 53 tested positive for coronavirus," BMC spokesperson Vijay Khable said, adding that most of those who tested positive were asymptomatic at present.

West Bengal begins rapid antibody testing

State records its single day high of 54

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

West Bengal on Monday recorded 54 new cases of the SARS-CoV-2 infection, prompting the authorities to urge people to maintain self-discipline and follow lockdown norms.

With 54 new cases of the

viral infection, the highest in the State so far, the number of active cases in West Bengal climbed to 245. During the day, the State also started conducting rapid antibody tests in "Red Zone" areas where containment activities are going on".

State Chief Secretary Rajiv Sinha said that the tests will be conducted first in Kolkata and Howrah and then in districts of north Bengal with the approval of State's Health Department.

"Rapid antibody testing will also be done in low incidence areas so that large populations do not remain out of the ambit of testing," he said

The number of deaths due to COVID-19 infections in the State remains at 12.

The total number of samples tested in the State as on April 20 stands at 5,469. In the past 24 hours, 424 samples were tested in the State. Mr. Sinha added.

Curbs on sweets shops

The Chief Secretary said that sweet shops and shops selling flowers will be open till Noon. Earlier, these shops were allowed to remain open till 4 p.m. He added that attempts will be made to barricade the markets so that a large number of people do not gather there at the same time.

"Lockdown cannot be enforced only by force or by the police. People will have to maintain self-discipline and behave responsibly," he said. Mr. Sinha said that people were coming out of homes on certain pretenses, thinking that the police would not intercept them.

As far as exemptions for industries goes, Mr. Sinha said that no exemptions had been given to industries that were located in the containment zones.

Bandipora emerges as J&K's hotspot after cases rise to 91

People in vulnerable age group are being sensitised: officials



Ensuring safety: Security personnel at a traffic check point in Srinagar on Monday. • NISSAR AHMAD

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

Bandipora district in J&K has emerged as the Valley's hotspot for the novel coronavirus cases, with the count touching 91 on Monday, forcing the authorities to carry out rapid antigen tests (RAT).

A government spokesman said 18 cases tested positive in the Kashmir division taking the number to 368.

"Bandipora has 91 positive cases, the highest in the UT, followed by Srinagar with 79," the official said.

Bandipora's Hajin tehsil is the worst affected after the mysterious death of Ghulam Nabi Mir, 54, was reported on April 7. With no travel history or contact with a positive case, the fruit dealer died just within a day of his admission at the Shri Mahara Hari Singh (SMHS) hospital.

A large population – official figures suggest over 16% – of the hamlet Gund Jahanigir and its surrounding areas have been put under quarantine, after there was no let up in cases.

"We have imposed complete restrictions on the movement of people. Door-to-door survey is being con-

ducted. The people who belong to the vulnerable age group are being sensitised and educated to take precautions," an official said.

The seven positive cases from Bandipora include six members of a family, three of them brothers, from the Gund Jahanigir area.

Deputy Commissioner, Bandipora, Shahzab Ahmad Mirza said samples of 870 persons were taken for testing of which 683 reported negative while 91 reported positive. "The result of 96 tests is awaited."

Of the 27,114 persons screened in 12 Red Zones (population of 48,969), Mr. Mirza said 543 persons were put under administrative quarantine while 3,776 persons are under home qua-

rantine and are being regularly monitored.

He said: "So far 31 dedicated screening teams of health experts in 12 Red Zones of Hajin, Naidkhai, Gund Jahanigir, SK Bala, Bagtagund, Chandeegar, Madwan, Hakbara, Kunan, Gund Qaiser, Gund Dachina, Nowgam and Bonakoot, have screened 27,114 persons in a continuing process."

Mr. Mirza said after receiving the Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) kits, the medical staff have also started conducting the test at the doorstep of the people in the Red Zones. "41 RAT tests were conducted in the district on Monday, including 25 in Gund Jahanigir and Hajin while 16 were conducted in Bandipora town," he said.

Earlier, a case of a two-and-a-half month old girl getting infected with the virus was reported from Jhunjhunu district. The girl, who had returned along with her parents from Italy on March 8, has since recovered.

A 62-year-old COVID-19 positive man from Nagaur district died on Sunday. With another death reported from Kota, the toll in the State increased to 25.

Newborn girl in Rajasthan tests positive

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR

A newborn girl has tested COVID-19 positive in Rajasthan's Nagaur district, making it probably the first case of its kind in the country. The baby was born at Basni village – which has become a hotspot after the detection of 51 coronavirus patients – and was diagnosed with the virus on Sunday.

Ten members of the newborn's family, including her parents, had also tested COVID-19 positive, Nagaur Chief Medical and Health Officer Sukumar Kashyap said on Monday. All the family members were earlier sent to the isolation facility and the pregnant woman was alone at her house when she was shifted to the Primary Health Centre for delivery.

Earlier, a case of a two-and-a-half month old girl getting infected with the virus was reported from Jhunjhunu district. The girl, who had returned along with her parents from Italy on March 8, has since recovered.

Ahmedabad remains top on the curve in infections and deaths. So far, 1,248 people have been found infected. Of them, 38 have succumbed to the disease while 49 have been discharged after recovery.

A 62-year-old COVID-19 positive man from Nagaur district died on Sunday. With another death reported from Kota, the toll in the State increased to 25.

Gujarat records 8 deaths, 196 cases on single day

Ahmedabad remains top in the number of virus cases

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
AHMEDABAD

Gujarat on Monday recorded 196 COVID-19 cases and eight deaths, pushing the numbers of cases to 1,939 and death toll to 71.

Monday also saw 26 patients getting discharged after recovery, making it the largest single-day recovery. So far, 131 people have recovered and been discharged.

However, 19 patients are critical and on ventilator support while the rest 1,718 are stable and under treatment. The critical patients include a senior Congress leader from Ahmedabad and municipal councillor Badruddin Sheikh, who is on ventilator.

Ahmedabad remains top on the curve in infections and deaths. So far, 1,248 people have been found infected. Of them, 38 have succumbed to the disease while 49 have been discharged after recovery.

Surat turns a cluster
Surat has emerged as another cluster with rapid surge in cases – 269 until now. Of them, 10 have died and 11 discharged.

According to the Health



Stringent steps: Rapid Action Force personnel patrolling the streets in Ahmedabad on Monday. • AFP

tal, the SPV hospital and others run by the Municipal Corporation.

According to sources, as the cases rise, the State will allow private hospitals to admit and treat COVID-19 patients in other cities as well.

The State government has also extended curfew till April 24 in parts of Ahmedabad and Surat as the containment strategy for hotspots.

In another decision aimed at smooth operations in hospitals and to oversee measures for lockdown and containment, the government has deputed eight senior IAS officials from the Secretariat to the fields in Ahmedabad and Surat.

Odisha to check people from sneaking into State

10 people test positive after moving in

SATYASUNDAR BARIK
BHUBANESWAR

After more than 10 persons, who have tested positive for coronavirus, are found to have sneaked into Odisha from West Bengal during the lockdown period, focus has now shifted to curb illegal movement along the porous borders of the State.

These infected people had managed to travel hundreds of kilometres either by van, ambulance or goods vehicles dodging border guards during the lockdown period.

A worried Odisha government had to request all those with travel history to West Bengal during the last 28 days to inform the local sarpanch, the Block Development Officer and the Tahsildar and quarantining themselves at home, said Mr. Kishore.

Odisha shares borders with West Bengal, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh.

Village roads
People stranded in other States have reportedly taken

U.P. police stops truck with 94 migrants from Haryana

The labourers, including women, were heading to Bihar

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LUCKNOW

A truck carrying 94 migrant labourers to Bihar, including women, was intercepted by the Uttar Pradesh police on the Jharkhand border with Sonbhadra.

The migrants, natives of Munger and Vaishali districts of Bihar, were coming from Faridabad in Haryana, said a police officer.

A case was registered against the owner of the truck, its driver and the deckhand under the Epidemic Diseases Act, said Ashish Srivastava, Superintendent of Police, Sonbhadra.

The migrants worked in factories in Haryana's Balabagharpur, which is around 1,000 km from the location where the truck was seized.

The truck had set off for Haryana from Tata Nagar in Jharkhand with a supply of pipes a few days ago. On April 17, after the lockdown was extended, the labourers asked the driver to drop them home, said the police.



Onward flow: Migrants heading back to their homes on the back of a truck in Allahabad, in this photo. • AFP

employment," Mr. Rajak said.

Mr. Rajak claimed that the labourers contacted many politicians in Bihar, including Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav, but did not receive any help. "Someone said money would be deposited in our account, others said ration would be sent. With the second lockdown, we had exhausted all our stuff and money."

"We would have died of hunger there. So we decided to take the road."

"There was no work, no

**Government of India
Department of Atomic Energy
CORRIGENDUM**

Date: 20.04.2020

Reference indicative Advt.No.01-R/IMSc/2020 Dated 20.03.2020 inviting applications for the post of DIRECTOR, IMSc, Chennai (Level - I under 7th CPC) which appeared on all leading Newspapers.

Due to COVID-19 Lock Down the last date for receipt of applications, is extended up to **May 31, 2020**.

Other terms and conditions as explained in the detailed advertisement appearing on the following websites remain same.

i) www.dae.gov.in under "Vacancy Notices"

ii) www.imsc.res.in under "other positions"

**A.P. STATE HOUSING CORPORATION LTD.,
S.P River View Apartments, Tadepalli - I, Amaravathi-522501.**

No.4545/APSHCL/EP/Steel Policy/2020 Date: 19.04.2020

NOTICE INVITING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Expression of interest is invited from Steel Manufacturing Companies for empanelment with A.P. State Housing Corporation Limited (APSHCL) for supply of 7,200 lakh MTs of Fe 415/Fe 500 grade Steel to any Manda Head Quarters of A.P. Detailed application can be downloaded from our website www.apgovhousing.apcssn.in from dt. 21.04.2020. The applications shall reach this office before : 08.05.2020

DPR 13PPCL DL20.04.2020 Sd/- Ajay Jain I.A.S., Managing Director

**KARNATAKA POWER CORPORATION LIMITED
(BELLARY THERMAL POWER STATION)**

CIN: U85110KA1970SC001919 Date: 17.04.2020

BRIEF TENDER NOTIFICATION (Through e-procurement Portal only)

Tenders in E-procurement portal mode are invited for the work of Sampling, Sample preparation and analysis of Station coal, Rail coal, Stacked coal, Mill rejects, Bottom Ash and Fly Ash, Oil etc., & Analysis of Coal samples prepared at loading and unloading end for Unit- 2 & 3 at BTPS for One year period. Last date for submission through e-proc mode: 04.05.2020 upto 16.00 Hrs. Opening of Technical Bid: 04.05.2020 at 16.00 Hrs. Tender documents may be downloaded through website: <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in>. Further details can be had from the office of the Asst. General Manager [Chemical]-Fuel Management, KPLC BTPS, Kudlithi-583152, Bellary District. Mob: 94482 90767.

Central teams to monitor situation in 4 States

Rajasthan, Maharashtra, M.P. and Bengal in list; Mamata demands to know criteria used to put select districts under watch

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry rushed six teams led by senior bureaucrats to West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Maharashtra to ensure that the lockdown measures are implemented strictly by their governments. The country is under lockdown till May 3 in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A ministry spokesperson said violation of the lockdown measures posed a serious health hazard to the public and risked a spread of the infection.

He said the situation was serious in Indore, Jaipur, Mumbai and Pune. In West Bengal, Kolkata, Howrah, Medinipur East, 24 Parganas North, Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Jalpaiguri districts



Push and pull: Plainclothes policemen thrash a man for defying the lockdown at Howrah on Sunday. • REUTERS

had troubling situations, he noted.

A ministry order listed the violations by the states: incidents of violence on front line healthcare professionals; complete violation of social distancing norms outside banks, PDS shops,

market places; and movement of private and commercial vehicles with passengers in urban areas.

The centre has constituted six inter-ministerial central teams (IMCT) – led by an official of additional secretary rank and including pu-

blic health specialists – under the disaster management act, 2005 to make on-the-spot assessment of the situation, issue necessary directions to the state authorities and submit reports.

Mamata's objection

West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee said on Twitter that the centre's decision was not consistent with the spirit of federalism. "We welcome all constructive support and suggestions, especially from the central govt in negating the #Covid19 crisis. However, the basis on which the centre is proposing to deploy IMCTs in select districts across India including a few in WB under disaster mgmt act 2005 is unclear.. I urge both hon'ble prime minister @Narender

Modi ji & home minister @AmitShah ji to share the criterion used for this. Until then I am afraid, we would not be able to move ahead on this as without valid reasons this might not be consistent with the spirit of federalism," she tweeted.

She has also written a letter to the prime minister on the issue.

When asked about her objection, an MHA representative at Monday's media briefing, said, "The purpose is to provide support and assistance to the states in their endeavour to combat COVID-19. The teams have been carefully constituted so that support can be provided from the health, administrative and disaster management aspects. The states will benefit."

The ministry order said the logistic support, accommodation, local transportation and personal protective equipment (PPE) and access to documents and records should be provided by the state governments.

Union home secretary Ajay Bhalla has also written to all states and union territories (UTs) asking them to strictly comply with the MHA guidelines and ensure their implementation without any dilution.

On April 15, the ministry revised its guidelines issued under the Disaster Management Act, 2005, to allow the states to decide on the additional public activities to be allowed from April 20 in non-hotspot zones. It said the additional facilities should be based on strict compliance with the existing guidelines.

NICED says testing kits faulty in West Bengal

Large number of inconclusive results

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

Amid claims by the West Bengal department of health and family welfare that testing kits supplied by ICMR-NICED about two weeks ago had started to "throw up a large number of inconclusive results", representatives of NICED (National Institute of Cholera and Enteric Disease) on Monday admitted of glitches in them.

"This has been noted by the ICMR as well.... It is unfortunate that the kits are not standardised by the manufacturer to give exact results... It is difficult for each of the medical college to standardise the kits... hence they are showing different and inconclusive results. The matter is being seriously

addressed by the ICMR," said NICED director Shanta Dutta told *The Hindu*.

On Sunday, the health department tweeted, "The apparently defective test kits supplied by ICMR-NICED, Kolkata are resulting in a high number of repeat/confirmatory tests and causing delays and other attendant problems at a time when we are battling a pandemic. This is an issue that ICMR needs to look into immediately". It said inconclusive results were "necessitating a repeat confirmatory test run". There was no problem when testing kits were received directly from the National Institute of Virology, Pune, but supplies to the government labs have been routed through ICMR-NICED, Kolkata, it added.

IMA seeks law to check violence against doctors

'Hindering cremation is the last straw'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) on Monday asked the Centre to enact a law to check violence against doctors and hospitals across the nation.

"Our legitimate need for safe workplaces have to be met. Abuse and violence should stop immediately. Doctors and medical professionals across the country will light a candle at 9 p.m. on April 22 as protest and vigil against the violence and abuse. The next day, doctors across the country will work with black badges and declare it a 'Black Day' if the government fails to enact a Central

law on violence against doctors and hospitals," it said in a release issued by the group.

Utmost restraint'

"The IMA has maintained utmost restraint and patience despite extreme provocation. Doctors have been abused, beaten up, denied entry and residence. Obstruction to cremation is the last straw that the IMA can bear," the statement said.

The advisory comes as the Union home ministry has relaxed some restrictions from Monday, including for construction activity under certain conditions. On Sunday, the ministry issued an order allowing stranded migrant workers to return to their workplaces within the state

they are located in, provided they are asymptomatic.

Ahead of the resumption of construction work, a video-conference was held on April 17 by the housing and urban affairs ministry with the CPWD, metro rail corporations, and the national capital region transport corporation and NBCC (India), formerly the national buildings construction corporation.

Pre-conditions

According to the minutes of the meeting circulated on April 19, one of the "action points" that organisations were asked to implement was: "Every organisation should ensure that all labour personnel/staff get Aarogya



Long walk: Farm workers carrying vegetables for sale to a wholesale market in Patna on Monday. • RANJEET KUMAR

Setu app downloaded on their mobile, when/he/she resumes work."

The organisations were also asked to make sure there is no resumption of work in a particular site.

Standard operating proce-

dures, such as those issued by the national real estate development council (NAREDCO) for private developers, taking into account the advice of the health and family welfare and home ministries should be prepared and followed, the organisations were told.

Nod from states

Niranjan Hiranandani, the president of NAREDCO, told *The Hindu* that while the real estate developers and the home ministry had agreed on activity resuming where workers are living on site, state governments, like Maharashtra, were yet to give their approval.

He added that some government projects, like the

metro rail, had seen a resumption of work.

Workers restive

Mr. Hiranandani said that while he understood the challenge before the government, there was a possibility that workers living on sites since the lockdown began on March 25 may start leaving. "We are providing them with food and conducting temperature checks, but workers are fed up. They want to work," he said.

Chandan Kumar of the working people's charter, which works with unorganised sector workers, said the government's welfare measures for construction workers seemed "utopian and impractical".

Blood banks running on low reserves, seek urgent help

Health ministry warns hospitals not to turn away the needy

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The employees' provident fund organisation (EPFO) on Monday said exempted PF trusts, which manage the PF and pension funds themselves, have disbursed ₹481.63 crore in advance to over 40,000 PF members during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The EPFO had started its special withdrawal scheme for EPF subscribers on March 28 as a part of the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana. As of April 16, EPFO had disbursed ₹946 crore through 3.31 lakh claims under the special pandemic withdrawal scheme.

"As on April 17, ₹481.63 crore has been disbursed to 40,826 PF members as advance," the EPFO said.



Sticky situation: Shortage in blood supply affect patients requiring dialysis and those with blood disorders. • FILE PHOTO

were not delivered country-wide by her organisation due to the lockdown, which meant that patients with low immunity could be at risk.

Transport for donors

The organisation has suggested that the states should try and arrange transportation for donors, and even patients, if possible, to come to medical centres. The group has noted that the worst hit are patients from small towns and villages.

But the problem is not restricted to the supply of blood alone, with the union health ministry having to intervene and ask hospitals to not turn away patients suffering from respiratory or heart diseases, those who require blood transfusions and pregnant mothers, who have reportedly been facing harassment.

While hospitals are citing the rising numbers of COVID-19 cases as the reason they are advising other patients to stay away from hospitals, health minister Harsh Vardhan noted that the denial of treatment to patients who have been visiting hospitals in case of emergencies, and are being forced to visit a number of hospitals one after another, resulting in the denial of immediate medical attention, which may result in the loss of

lives, is being taken very seriously.

"Hospitals have to remember that patients who are really ill and require urgent medical attention are venturing out with great difficulty to reach the hospital for treatment in this situation. We should not turn them away on any kind of flimsy pretenses as certain procedures like blood transfusion, dialysis etc. can't wait," said Dr. Vardhan.

The ministry has now directed hospitals to use teleconsultation, digital prescription and home delivery of medicines.

Stock blood: Minister

The minister, speaking about the shortage of blood, said that hospitals should now start working on ensuring sufficient stock of blood for transfusion by encouraging voluntary blood donors and utilising various services like mobile blood collection vans with the help of the Indian red cross society.

The ministry has asked the Indian red cross society to send mobile blood collection vans to the premises of regular blood donors.

According to the national blood transfusion council, there are 2,023 blood banks in India, which receive 78% of their blood supply from voluntary donors.

Donations 'diverted' to PM-CARES

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

After an appeal for donations to the prime minister's national relief fund (PMNRF) from the university grants commission and the delhi university (DU), one day's worth of DU staff salaries were deducted for this purpose. However, the DU vice chancellor yogesh tyagi has now said that the collected money – amounting to more than ₹4 crore – was sent to the PM-CARES Fund instead.

The change was made on the basis of direction from the ministry of human resource development, said a senior DU official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The Delhi University Teachers' Association (DUTA) has written to the VC, objecting to the diversion.

She explained that donors were hesitant to travel to hospitals now to donate blood, and medical supplies

Shape up your Child's



with Coach Calls

STEP introduces

STEP COACH for KIDS

10 calls with a certified trainer to provide your child with personalised & targeted coaching.

- Recommended for kids from grades 3-10
- Includes interesting contexts and situations to help your child communicate with confidence

Visit BIT.LY/COACHKIDS1



Scan the QR code

Plea in SC seeks full refund for air fares

Aviation Ministry order covers only bookings made during lockdown, which has no logic: petitioner

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

A petition was filed on Monday seeking directions that airline companies should fully refund tickets cancelled due to the COVID-19 lockdown.

The petition filed by the Pravasi Legal Cell has also challenged an April 16 office memorandum (OM) of the Civil Aviation Ministry which covers only the refund of tickets booked during the lockdown period. The OM leaves out the vast majority of passengers who booked tickets before the flights were banned due to the lockdown.

"There is no question of anyone booking a ticket during the lockdown period knowing the fact that schedule passenger flights were cancelled for period of travel. This makes the Office



Wings clipped: Planes of different airlines parked at the airport in New Delhi on Monday. ■ PTI

Memorandum of the Ministry of Civil Aviation ambiguous and devoid of any logic. The office memorandum is in clear violation of the fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution in so far as directing the airlines to provide full refund of ticket

amount only if the ticket is booked during the lockdown period for travel during the lockdown, which amounts to treating equals unequally," the petition contended.

Credit shell

It said the office memoran-

dum indirectly approves the practice of airlines providing credit shell for booking effected before the lockdown, though the same clearly violates the refund rules of the Directorate-General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

"Airlines, instead of providing the full refund of the amount collected for the tickets due to cancellation, are providing a credit shell, valid up to one year, which is in clear violation of the Civil Aviation Requirement of May 2008 issued by the DGCA," the petition said.

2008 order

It said the DGCA clearly required that "the option of holding the refund amount in credit shell by the airlines shall be the prerogative of the passenger and not a default practice of the airline." The May 2008 DGCA re-

quirement mandates that refunds should be done within seven days from date of cancellation in case of credit card payments. In case of cash payment, the ticket refund should be made immediately.

'Harsh on passengers'

On the other hand, the April 16 Memorandum allows airlines 30 days after receiving a passenger's request for a refund.

"Airline companies, instead of showing humanitarian virtues, are rather seeing these challenging times as an opportunity to extract unlawful gains from the people who are already in misery due to uncertainties. That the present policy is extremely harsh on the ordinary passengers who booked tickets in advance for travelling," the petition said.

No plan for GST relief for key medical items: Centre

Such a move can be counterproductive, say govt. sources

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Centre does not plan to provide an exemption from paying Goods and Services Tax (GST) for key medical items such as ventilators, sanitiser, COVID-19 diagnostic test kits, masks and other protective equipment. Exempting GST would increase manufacturing costs without helping the consumer much, and would also incentivise import of such items from China, official sources said.

Currently, sanitisers are taxed at 18%, while ventilators and test kits are taxed at 12%. Masks attract 5% GST. This comes after a number of demands for tax exemptions, including a tweet by Congress MP Rahul Gandy-

hi on Monday, asking that all equipment related to the treatment of COVID-19 patients should be GST-free. It is wrong to collect GST on sanitiser, soaps, masks, gloves etc. from the people who are suffering from poverty," he tweeted, using the hashtag #GSTFreeCorona.

However, government sources say that such a move could be counterproductive. Basic customs duty and health cess have been exempted on most of these items till September. As GST is a value added tax collected on net basis at each stage of the supply chain, an exemption would lead to blocked input tax credit, thus increasing the cost and compliance burden for manufacturers, without reduc-

ing the cost for consumers.

The increased manufacturing cost would discourage domestic manufacturers and incentivise imports from foreign players who would not face any input tax credit blockage, said sources pointing to a previous experience with GST on sanitary napkins. They added that such imports would mostly be sub-standard quality goods from China.

Given that the government itself is the single largest buyer of these medical items now – and is supplying such goods for free – it may not be desirable to distort the rate structure at the cost of the domestic supplier who is making a much-needed effort to ramp up production capacity, sources said.

Only 20 can attend funeral:
Assam govt.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GUWAHATI

The Assam government on Monday capped the number of people attending funeral or burial services to 20 for the rest of the COVID-19 lockdown period and beyond.

This is among a slew of decisions to be applicable from Tuesday.

"All officers will be attending office while only 33% grade 3 and grade 4 staff will join duty on a rotation basis from Tuesday," Chief Secretary Kumar Sanjay Krishna told newspersons.

"There will be no inter-district and inter-State travel by rail or road except for medical services and government-approved movement for emergencies," Mr. Krishna said.

Sea escape from Chennai ends in quarantine in A.P.

27 workers attempted to dodge lockdown by taking a boat

STAFF REPORTER BERHAMPUR

Twenty-seven migrant workers – 10 from Odisha and 17 from Andhra Pradesh – made a daring five-day sea journey in a fishing boat from Chennai to dodge the continuing lockdown and reach their homes.

They travelled around 1,000 km in the Bay of Bengal, but ended up in the hands of waiting officials.

On receiving information about this group, the administrations of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh were keeping track of its movement. On Monday morning, their boat was brought to the coast at Donkurti, in Andhra Pradesh, around 35 km from Berhampur in Odisha.

According to Ganjam dis-



Red signal: The workers from Chennai waiting on the Odisha-Andhra Pradesh border. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

trict collector Vijay Amruta Kulange all the workers have been quarantined in Andhra Pradesh.

Factories shut
Sources said they were working in different facto-

ries in Chennai and had been unable to return home due to the lockdown. Their factories had closed. Most of them belonged to the fisherman community. They pooled their savings to buy a fishing boat for ₹1.6 lakh.

Army issues guidelines on rejoicing

Personnel in hotspots, containment zones exempted from orders

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

All Army personnel from Nepal and presently on leave there are to remain at their home stations till the COVID-19 situation in the neighbouring nation stabilises and the government opens the border for movement of personnel, Army sources said on Monday.

These are part of the broad guidelines issued by the Army for those rejoicing from leave, temporary duty and courses. Requisite instructions would accordingly be passed to such personnel from their parent units, headquarters or establishments, the sources said.

Conference postponed
Separately, the Unified Commanders Conference (UCC), which was scheduled to be held on April 22 and 23 has



Parent units will pass on instructions to personnel.

been postponed, defence sources said.

The UCC is an annual event chaired by the Defence Minister and attended by the three Service Chiefs and senior officers of the Services and the Defence Ministry in addition to the Minister of State for Defence, the Chief of Defence Staff and the National Security Advisor.

The sources stated that the overall guidelines for rejoicing have been planned in

a phased manner considering the number of individuals rejoicing and the requirement for smooth reporting, quarantine and onward dispersal to units.

The instructions state that personnel will rejoin only on receipt of specific instructions from unit, formation or establishment that has granted leave or temporary duty. Any individual whose leave station is within 500 km of the unit or duty station is allowed to directly report to the unit using private transport only, while individuals who are beyond the 500-km criteria will report to nearest unit, station headquarter in private vehicle only.

The Army has also stated that orders for reporting do not apply to 'hotspots, containment zones'. Individuals in hotspots and containment zones would follow strict 'No Movement' till the areas were denoted as containment zones.

The sources said all personnel in the Army would be classified as Green, Yellow and Red. Those who have completed 14 days of quarantine would be classified as Green, those who need to undergo 14 days quarantine as Yellow and those symptomatic, requiring isolation and further treatment in COVID-19 hospitals, as Red.

As per instructions, the first priority for rejoicing is for all ranks of the Northern Command and all Army medical, dental and Military Nursing Services personnel, as well as other personnel with the unit or duty stations within 500 km and can reach by private transport.

The next priority is for all ranks of the Eastern Command.

Inspector enters temple, suspended

STAFF REPORTER BHUBANESWAR

A police inspector has been placed under suspension for allegedly entering Shree Jagannath Temple in Puri in violation of the lockdown.

Deepak Kumar Jena, inspector in charge of the Badachana police station in Jajpur district, allegedly entered the 12th century temple with his family members on Sunday evening.

"A case has also been registered against him," the Odisha State police said in a statement on Monday.

A 25-day journey from Gujarat to Assam

Robbed of cash and phone, Gogoi walked and hitch-hiked to cover 2,800 km

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GUWAHATI

A 45-year-old man reached his home district in central Assam on Sunday night after partly walking for 25 days from Vapi, an industrial town in Gujarat, 2,800 km away.

Jadav Gogoi, a migrant labourer in Vapi, told his rescuers that he began walking on March 27 along the highway. He dodged the police in several districts along the route and hitch-hiked on trucks, sometimes for a fee, to reach a toll gate near his home at Gadharia village in Nagaon district.



Tired feet: Jadav Gogoi, a labourer, started walking on March 27 from Vapi in Gujarat. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

He had set out with ₹4,000 but was robbed of the money, mobile phone and other belongings on the way and had to beg to survive.

"He could barely move about when he reached the

toll gate, walking the last 1,000 km from Bihar. He called up members of his family from the phone of a local person who took pity on him. Our members took him to the nearest police station from where he was admitted to the civil hospital in [district] Nagaon," said Dibyajit Hazarika of the Asom Jatiyatbadhi Yuba Chhatra Parishad.

Doctors said Mr. Gogoi's condition was stable but he would have to be under quarantine as he had arrived from outside the State. His swab sample has been sent for COVID-19 test.

Rajasthan frees 630 prisoners, shifts over 2,000 inmates

SC wanted jails decongested to check COVID-19

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT JAIPUR

Over 630 inmates have been released from various jails in Rajasthan in compliance with the Supreme Court's recent direction to decongest prisons for preventing the spread of the novel coronavirus.

The District Legal Services Authorities filed applications for bail and parole on behalf of prisoners in the

courts. The Prisons Department has also shifted over 2,200 inmates from overcrowded jails and sub-jails to less crowded prisons. No inmate has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or is showing symptoms of the infection in any of the jails in the State.

State Legal Services Authority member-secretary Ashok Kumar Jain told *The Hindu* here on Monday that the bail and parole were granted to first-time offenders and those booked for crimes punishable with imprisonment of up to seven years.

The Undertrial Review Committee, headed by District & Sessions Judges, have also released inmates booked for petty offences. Mr. Jain said the committees were holding weekly meetings to identify those who could be released during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A high-power committee headed by State Legal Services Authority's executive chairman Justice Sangeet Lodha has issued directions for creation of isolation wards in the jail, quarantine of new prisoners and inclusion of nutritious food.

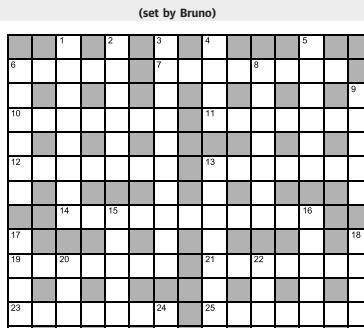
TH CROSSWORD + 12915

(set by Bruno)

You will never run out of intellectual challenges
at <https://crossword.thehindu.com>



SCAN TO PLAY



■ ACROSS

- 6 Big, short, round and slow (5)
- 7 Having Coronavirus, perhaps, Jack was isolated, given IV dose to contain onset of fever (8)
- 10 Company's demand – leader should be dismissed for lie in (7)
- 11 Last pastry in front of closer church was stolen – it was more delicious (7)
- 12 Greek character kept records on wild lion (7)

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★★★★

Solution to puzzle 12914

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

M	E	A	R	H	I	N	M	A
E	A	R	L	O	B	E	S	D
R	U	B	A	L	I	X	M	O
L	O	G	A	N	T	E	N	V
O	N	N	E	N	T	E	N	O
N	E	N	T	E	N	E	N	O
E	N	T	E	N	E	N	E	O
N	E	N	E	N	E	N	E	O
E	N	N	E	N	E	N	E	O

EARLOBES EDIBLE LONG ALLTIMELOW DAINITY AUTOMATIC NICE AND TENDER JALOUSIE CRAVAT MELTING POT CLOY WARMING UP OOBEEZER

FAITH

Parental concern

Periyazhvar sang pallandu for Lord Narayana. These verses were to ward off evil eyes! Periyazhvar's concern for the Lord was that of a parent, and so, naturally, he was anxious about the safety of the Lord. His Pallandu verses reflect this anxiety, said M.A. Venkatakrishnan in a discourse.

Periyazhvar sees every aspect of the Lord as cause for worry, even the ones that inspire us with awe! We see this clearly in his words about the Narasimha avatara. But what is there to worry about the avatara that was taken in an instant, and where the Lord destroys Hiranyakasipu in the most terrible manner. In fact, the avatara was taken to save the boy devotee Prahlada, and shows His mercy towards His devotees. But it is in the details of the avatara that Periyazhvar's worry lies. Hiranyakasipu had obtained certain boons, one of which was that he should not be killed during the day. Devas are powerful during the day, but the Lord came during twilight. Demons become powerful as it gets closer to night-time. So Periyazhvar wants to know why the Lord took risks by coming when daylight was fading!

Periyazhvar uses a very interesting word – bandanai. Periyavachan Pillai says this means a shiver. Periyazhvar prays that Narasimha's shivering should stop! But how can the Lord shiver, and why should He? Here again, it is the parental attitude of Periyazhvar that is the cause for such an expression. Krishna killed Kamsa when He was 16 years old, and Rama was much older than that when He killed Ravana. So Narasimha faced a demon soon after His appearance. So Periyazhvar sees Him as a just-born infant. A baby just entering the world shivers, because it has exited the warmth of the mother's womb. And Periyazhvar prays that this shivering should be absent in Narasimha!

Europe begins easing lockdown steps

Shops reopen in Germany, Denmark; nurseries begin in Norway; death rates drop in France and Spain

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE
LEIPZIG

Germany and other parts of Europe took tentative steps to ease lockdown measures on Monday but officials warned the battle against the COVID-19 pandemic was far from over.

Some shops reopened in Germany and Denmark and parents dropped their children off at nurseries in Norway as tight restrictions were lifted in parts of the continent. But Chancellor Angela Merkel urged Germans to stay disciplined, warning: "We stand at the beginning of the pandemic and are still a long way from being out of the woods."

COVID-19

After being hit hard by the virus that emerged in China late last year, Europe has seen encouraging signs in recent days, with death rates dropping in Italy, Spain, France and Britain.

Fears of a 'new wave'
The hope is tempered by fears of new waves of infections, warnings that life will not be back to normal for many months and deep concern over the devastating impact the virus is having on the global economy. But even the smallest return to normalcy was welcome.

Governments around the world are mulling how and when to ease lockdowns that have kept more than half of humanity confined to their homes. The virus has so far infected more than 2.4 million people globally and killed more than 165,000, with nearly two thirds of the victims in Europe, according to an AFP tally.

Germany, which has been hailed for keeping fatalities



Cautious steps: People walking in a street in Gelsenkirchen, Germany, on Monday. ■ AP

low despite a significant number of cases, was allowing smaller shops to reopen in some regions from Monday. Larger shops and those in major German cities will open later as part of an attempted phased return to a more normal existence that will also see some students go back to school from May 4. Denmark also reopened some small businesses, including hair salons, massage and tattoo parlours and dentists, while Italy allowed bookshops to open doors.

Hard-hit Spain, where a nationwide lockdown has been extended, also said it would ease some restrictions to allow children time outside. Spain on Monday recorded 399 deaths in the last 24 hours, its lowest daily count in weeks, and authorities are starting to shut some makeshift facilities set up to relieve the overburdened health system, including a morgue at a Madrid ice rink.

"Today for the first time we've fallen under 400 deaths... these figures give us hope," said Fernando Simon, the Spanish Health Ministry's Emergencies Coordinator. France, which on Sunday recorded its lowest number of hospital deaths since March 23, also said a nationwide lockdown in force for a month was beginning to bear fruit. "We are scoring points against the epidemic," French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe said.

Australia opens beaches

In Australia, the authorities in Sydney reopened three beaches for walking, running, swimming or surfing, while New Zealand announced it will ease a lockdown next week, with Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern saying: "We have stopped a wave of devastation."

And in the U.S. – the country with the highest number of deaths and infections – the Governor of New York, Andrew Cuomo, said the outbreak was "on the descent".

South Korea extended its social distancing policy for

deaths... these figures give us hope," said Fernando Simon, the Spanish Health Ministry's Emergencies Coordinator. France, which on Sunday recorded its lowest number of hospital deaths since March 23, also said a nationwide lockdown in force for a month was beginning to bear fruit. "We are scoring points against the epidemic," French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe said.

Hard-hit Spain, where a nationwide lockdown has been extended, also said it would ease some restrictions to allow children time outside. Spain on Monday recorded 399 deaths in the last 24 hours, its lowest daily count in weeks, and authorities are starting to shut some makeshift facilities set up to relieve the overburdened health system, including a morgue at a Madrid ice rink.

"Today for the first time we've fallen under 400

deaths... these figures give us hope," said Fernando Simon, the Spanish Health Ministry's Emergencies Coordinator. France, which on Sunday recorded its lowest number of hospital deaths since March 23, also said a nationwide lockdown in force for a month was beginning to bear fruit. "We are scoring points against the epidemic," French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe said.

Hard-hit Spain, where a nationwide lockdown has been extended, also said it would ease some restrictions to allow children time outside. Spain on Monday recorded 399 deaths in the last 24 hours, its lowest daily count in weeks, and authorities are starting to shut some makeshift facilities set up to relieve the overburdened health system, including a morgue at a Madrid ice rink.

"Today for the first time we've fallen under 400

South Korea relaxes social distancing rules

REUTERS
SEOUL

South Koreans are returning to work and crowding shopping malls, parks, golf courses and some restaurants as South Korea relaxes social distancing rules amid a continued downward trend in coronavirus cases.

A growing list of companies, including SK Innovation and Naver, has ended or eased their work from home policy in recent weeks, though many continue to apply flexible working hours and limit travel and face-to-face

meetings. Parks, mountains and golf courses brimmed with visitors over the weekend, while shopping malls and restaurants were slowly returning to normal.

South Korea extended its social distancing policy for

Map powered by FB unveiled

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE
WASHINGTON

Researchers on Monday unveiled a "heat map" powered by Facebook data which is aimed at helping track the spread of the disease. The Carnegie Mellon University project offers "real-time" indications of COVID-19 activity not previously available from any other source," according to a university statement. The map was developed with millions of responses to surveys of Facebook and Google users as part of an effort to monitor the spread of the virus.

Map powered by FB unveiled



Diners eating lunch at a market in Seoul on Monday. ■ AP

another 16 days on Sunday but offered some relief for religious and sports facilities previously subjected to strict restrictions.

The Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (KCDC) reported 13 new cases on Monday, a day after posting just eight – the first single digit daily rise since the Feb. 28 peak of 909. The death toll stands at 236.

"Today is a devastating day for Nova Scotia, and it will remain etched in the

17 killed in 12-hour rampage by gunman in Nova Scotia

This is Canada's worst mass shooting incident

REUTERS
PORTAPIQUE

A gunman who at one point masqueraded as a policeman killed at least 16 people in the Canadian province of Nova Scotia during a 12-hour rampage, authorities said on Sunday, in what was the country's worst modern-era mass shooting.

Among the victims of the shooting spree that spread across part of the Atlantic Canadian province was RCMP officer Heidi Stevenson, a 23-year veteran of the force with two children. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police said the gunman, 51-year-old Gabriel Wortman, who worked as a dentist, appeared at one stage to have been wearing part of a police uniform. He had also painstakingly disguised his car to look like a police cruiser.

Motive unclear
Police added they had ended the threat posed by Wortman, who was dead, but would not confirm a report by the CTV network that the RCMP had shot him. Wortman shot people in several locations in Nova Scotia, the RCMP told a briefing. RCMP Commissioner Brenda Lucki told the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. the police knew of at least 16 victims, besides the shooter. She added there was no indication at this time that the killings were terrorism-related.

The Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (KCDC) reported 13 new cases on Monday, a day after posting just eight – the first single digit daily rise since the Feb. 28 peak of 909. The death toll stands at 236.

"Today is a devastating day for Nova Scotia, and it will remain etched in the



In tribute: Flags of Nova Scotia and Canada flying at half-staff outside police headquarters in Dartmouth on Monday. ■ AFP

minds for many years to come," said Lee Bergerman, commanding officer of the RCMP in Nova Scotia.

The death toll exceeded that of a Montreal massacre in 1989 when a gunman killed 15 women.

Mass shootings are relatively rare in Canada, which has tighter gun control laws than the United States. Nova Scotia, like the rest of Canada, is under a stay-at-home order because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Exchange of gunfire

Police discovered the killings late on Saturday after multiple reports of shots at a house in the small coastal town of Portapique, about 130 km north of the provincial capital, Halifax.

"When police arrived on the scene, members located several casualties inside and outside of the home," said Chris Leather, the Nova Scotia RCMP's criminal operations officer. Several buildings in the town were ablaze and police exchanged gunfire at one point with Wortman. Probes subsequently disclosed he had also killed

people in several other locations. "We're not fully aware of what (the total might be)," said Mr. Leather.

Gunman in uniform

At one point on Saturday evening, Wortman "appeared to have been wearing – if not all – then a portion of a police uniform," Mr. Leather said. "The fact that this individual had a uniform and a police car at his disposal certainly speaks to it not being a random act," Mr. Leather said. According to the websites of the Dentist Society of Nova Scotia and the province's Better Business Bureau, Wortman operated a denture clinic in Dartmouth, close to Halifax.

In response to a question, Mr. Leather said police would look at a possible link to the COVID-19 outbreak, which has forced the closure of non-essential businesses.

Nova Scotia Premier Stephen McNeil decried what he called senseless act of violence. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said his government would help Nova Scotians "as they heal from this tragedy."

Australia to force tech giants to share revenue

Move comes after talks on code failed

REUTERS
SYDNEY

Australia will force Facebook Inc and Alphabet Inc's Google to share advertising revenue with local media firms, the country's treasurer said on Monday, becoming one of the first countries to require digital platforms to pay for content they use.

Treasurer Josh Frydenberg said the move comes after talks with Facebook and Alphabet failed to yield a voluntary code to address complaints by domestic media players that the tech giants have too tight a grip on advertising, their main source of income. "We understand the challenge that we face, this is a big mountain to climb," Mr. Frydenberg said.

The government has asked the country's competition watchdog, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission to frame a mandatory code of conduct between media outlets and digital platforms.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal, the Afghan government and the insurgents were by now supposed to have concluded a prisoner exchange and started talks aimed at bringing about a comprehensive ceasefire. But the stalled prisoner swap has been beset with problems – with Kabul claiming the Taliban are demanding the release of some of the group's most notorious warriors – and peace talks seem as elusive as ever amid ongoing attacks.

Under the

MARKET WATCH

	20-04-2020	% CHANGE
Sensex	31,648	0.19
US Dollar	76.53	-0.18
Brent oil	26.54	-6.35

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	270.50	+2.35
Asian Paints	1730.45	+25.80
Axius Bank	455.95	+2.28
Bajaj Auto	2230.25	+1.55
Bajaj Finance	4882.25	+117.45
Bajaj Finance	2308.25	+0.10
Bharti Airtel	490.30	-12.15
BPLC	368.40	+8.30
Britannia Ind	2833.30	+0.85
Cipla	585.40	+12.60
Coal India	144.25	+1.55
Dr Reddy's Lab	384.75	+8.40
Eicher Motors	555.50	+55.00
GAIL (India)	87.40	+2.30
Grasim Ind	521.65	+23.90
HCL Tech	470.00	+14.75
HDPC	1727.70	+47.10
HDPC Bank	944.85	+34.55
Hero MotoCorp	1805.60	+30.15
Hindustan Zinc	1141.45	+7.70
Hind Unilever	2336.55	+48.45
ICICI Bank	361.30	+14.25
IndusInd Bank	456.70	+17.75
Bharti Infratel	159.30	+9.00
Infosys	653.30	+24.55
Indian Oil Corp	87.55	+1.55
ITC	180.70	+7.40
JSN Steel	160.20	+2.25
Kotak Bank	1177.75	+8.50
LBT	915.60	+17.30
M&M	355.85	+7.35
Maruti Suzuki	5331.35	+173.65
Nestle India Ltd.	16976.40	+347.90
NTPC	98.90	+3.40
PowerGrid Corp	74.00	+2.30
Reliance Ind	1243.00	+18.80
State Bank	192.50	+0.75
Shree Cement	18996.90	+50.15
Sun Pharma	473.40	+16.30
Tata Motors	80.45	+3.60
Tata Steel	286.40	+6.95
Tech Mahindra	1818.65	+12.45
Titan	524.85	+1.80
UltraTech Cement	3516.55	+17.50
UPL	87.45	+8.55
Vedanta	81.45	+2.65
Wipro	181.10	+5.90
Zee Entertainment	140.65	+0.50

EXCHANGE RATES

	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	76.34	76.66
Euro	82.89	83.27
British Pound	93.45	95.51
Japanese Yen (100)	70.85	71.15
Chinese Yuan	10.79	10.84
Swiss Franc	78.77	79.14
Singapore Dollar	53.65	53.88
Canadian Dollar	54.15	54.38
Malaysian Ringgit	17.45	17.54
Australian Dollar	48.60	48.81

Source: IndiaBullion

IN BRIEF



RBI announces MPC meeting dates for FY21

MUMBAI The first meeting of the monetary policy committee for the current financial year will be held between June 3-5, 2020, the Reserve Bank of India said on Monday while announcing the meeting schedule for 2020-21. There will be five such meetings this year. By law, RBI should hold at least 4 meeting a year.

Make laptops, routers essentials: Nasscom

NEW DELHI Industry body Nasscom has urged the government to expand the list of essential items to include products like laptops and routers to facilitate work from home amid the lockdown. Four days after allowing e-commerce firms to also deliver non-essential items such as electronic goods and readymade garments, the government on Sunday said non-essential items will continue to be prohibited during the lockdown till May 3. PTI

Rudratej Singh, CEO, BMW India, passes away

He 'collapsed' during a workout

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

Rudratej Singh (46), president and CEO, BMW Group India, passed away on Monday, the company said.

"The cause behind the sudden and unexpected demise is yet to be ascertained. Our prayers are with his family and loved ones during this difficult period," BMW Group India said.

Mr. Singh had joined BMW Group India on August 1, 2019. Earlier, he was global president of Royal Enfield and vice-president with Unilever in Singapore. He had also worked with Dabur India.

"His demise comes at a juncture when BMW Group India is in the midst of implementing strategic measures for strengthening the

Finance Ministry sets time frame for banks to disburse loans

Government steps in to revive credit flow as economic activities resume after nationwide lockdown

MANOJIT SAHA

MUMBAI

As business activities resumed on Monday after a nationwide lockdown, the Finance Ministry swung into action to ensure credit flow to companies and set a specific time frame for banks within which loan needs to be disbursed.

In a communication to State-run banks, the government said the move is aimed at ensuring credit flow for economic activities and the guidelines come into effect from Monday when the business activities resume.

"In the context of resumption of business activities w.e.f. 20.4.2020, timely

origination, sanction and disbursement of fund-based and non-fund based credit is critical for revival of economic activity," the communication from the Finance Ministry said.

Risk aversion

The move comes as banks have turned risk averse to extend loans amid an uncertain economic outlook caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As per the indicative time frames, from processing to disbursement of COVID-19 emergency credit lines, the Ministry said banks have to complete the disbursement

within six to nine working

days of working capital loans to existing micro, medium and small enterprises; corporate and agriculture borrowers as well as financial assistance to self-help group borrowers.

Working capital reassessment of up to ₹5 crore for



Spreading the word: The Ministry has also asked banks to ensure wide publicity of the details of the COVID-19-related credit schemes. ■ MAHISHNA

Details of COVID-19 credit schemes must be tweeted by banks and tagged to Twitter handle of DoFs

existing borrowers have to be processed within six to nine days, while facilities of ₹5 crore and above need to be processed within 12 to 15 working days.

"Banks are advised to draw a detailed activity-time frame to achieve the turnaround time sought," the Ministry said in the communication which has been reviewed by *The Hindu*.

The Ministry has also asked banks to ensure wide

publicity of the details of the COVID-19-related credit schemes, checklist of documents required for each scheme and time frames for communicating decisions regarding sanctions. This information needs to be tweeted by banks and tagged to the Twitter handle of Department of Financial Services (DoFs).

"Banks should ensure that relevant internal communication of the above-mentioned schemes along with clear responsibilities and defined time frames are conveyed to the field-level functionaries and monitored on an ongoing basis," the Ministry said.

Infosys Q4 net rises 6%, revenue up 8%

IT services major to offer guidance after visibility improves; declares final dividend of ₹9.50 a share

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BENGALURU

Following in the footsteps of Wipro, India's second-largest IT services firm Infosys, too, on Monday did not give any guidance for fiscal 2021 while announcing its fourth quarter results for FY2020.

"Considering the business uncertainty emanating from COVID-19, the company is unable to provide guidance on revenue and margins for FY21 at this stage. The company will provide guidance after visibility improves," said Infosys.

Infosys CEO and MD Salil Parekh, while speaking about the mandatory steps taken due to the pandemic, said, the Infosys' team has achieved 93% remote working to ensure consistent service delivery for clients in this rapidly-changing environment.

"While the immediate short-term will be challenging, looking ahead, we can see that there is a strong in-

Future tense



Given the uncertain environment, we don't feel it is appropriate to provide guidance for revenue and operating margins in FY2021

SALIL PAREKH, CEO and MD, Infosys

Metrics	Q4FY20	Q4FY19	Growth %
Revenue (₹ cr.)	23,267	21,539	8
Profit (₹ cr.)	4,335	4,078	6
Basic EPS (₹)	10.19	9.37	-
Final dividend (per share, ₹)	9.5	-	-

terest to consolidate with partners with high-quality and agile service delivery and strong financial resilience. I am confident we will emerge from this stronger," he added.

Displacement in model'

Infosys COO Pravin Rao, too, while speaking on the results, said the impact caused by the COVID-19 over the last weeks of March has led to a

"significant displacement" in the operating model while severely testing the business continuity plans of companies.

Meanwhile, Infosys reported a 6% rise in its consolidated net profit to ₹4,335 crore for the fourth quarter of fiscal 2020.

Infosys' revenue grew 8%

to ₹23,267 crore for the quarter under review from the ₹21,539 crore of the corres-

Pandemic is severely testing the companies' business continuity models

PRAVIN RAO

Infosys COO

ponding period of the last fiscal, the company's statement added.

Infosys' FY20 net profit was up 8% to ₹16,639 crore, while revenue rose 9.8% to ₹90,791 crore from the previous fiscal. The company declared a final dividend of ₹9.50 per share.

Commenting on the future of business, Mr. Parekh said, "Clients want to consolidate with stronger players like us. 'We feel well-positioned in terms of staying relevant to clients globally in helping them in their digital play, cloud virtualisation, automation and cost-cutting initiatives.'

"Clearly, there is a concern across industries and around the globe. Some dis-

cernation work has come under pressure which is visible in Q1, Mr. Parekh added.

Responding to a query on the impact of COVID-19 on business, Mr. Rao said, "Several sectors are under pressure. There is a struggle in the cards and the payment space."

Supply chain broken'

"Manufacturing is under huge challenge in terms of both demand and supply. The industrial supply chain has completely broken down. Aviation, media and entertainment sectors are going through tough times.

Communication is doing reasonably well; however, 5G roll-out will be delayed," he added.

All sectors are under pressure currently from the crisis emanating from the pandemic; the IT sector another

d export sectors more so because of their exposure to the markets most impacted by the virus.

Extension comes as markets volatility expected to continue

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

The tightened surveillance

measures for stock markets,

introduced on March 23 for

a period of one month, have

been extended until May 28.

In a statement on Monday,

the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) said the stock markets

are expected to remain volatile

in the near future owing to

concerns relating to COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant fear of economic slowdown, keeping in view the

measures had to be extended.

"As the stock markets (both domestic and global) are expected to be volatile in the near future owing to concerns relating to COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant fear of economic slowdown, keeping in view the

measures had to be extended.

Meanwhile, foreign portfolio investors and mutual funds, among others, were allowed to short positions in index derivatives only to the extent of the notional value of their holding in the underlying stocks.

COO, Infosys.

Further, commenting on the success of work-from-home environment, Mr. Rao said, both employees and clients have gotten used to it and the remote working arrangement has been a success.

"We are not in a hurry to come back to office. We will do it gradually, may be 5% of our workers in two to three weeks, another 10 to 15% of workers in three to four weeks. We will have a high standard of sanitation, hygiene and social distancing for employees while working and while on the commute."

Responding to a query on a recent ransomware attack, the IT services firm said it had taken all precautions, invested in protection software in advance and also engaged threat detection advisories and agents who would look for any possible cyber danger.

"However, we will honour all job offers given out. Onboarding was happening on schedule and we have even onboarded some people remotely during the lockdown," said Pravin Rao,

U.S. crude futures plunge over 40% to 1986 low

Supply-demand imbalance hits prices

to cut supply. The two sides, with U.S. urging, agreed more than a week ago to cut supply by 9.7 million bpd, but that will not quickly reduce the global glut.

Brent oil prices have collapsed around 60% since the start of the year, while U.S. crude futures have fallen more than 80%, to levels well below break-even costs necessary for many shale drillers.

This has led to drilling halts and drastic spending cuts.

Prices have been pressured for weeks since the COVID-19 outbreak, hammering demand even as Saudi Arabia and Russia failed to reach an agreement

on cutting output. The oil price hit a low of \$10.01 a barrel, the lowest since 1986. Analysts said the sell-off was exaggerated by the contract's imminent expiry.

U.S. crude futures hit a low of \$10.01 a barrel, the lowest since 1986. Analysts said the sell-off was exaggerated by the contract's imminent expiry.

Global wholesales of all passenger vehicles in Q4 FY20 stood at 159,321 units, lower by 49% over Q4 FY19.

Global wholesales of Jaguar Land Rover stood at 12,697 vehicles (number for Q4 FY20 includes CILR volumes of 6,288 units).

Global wholesales of Tata Motors Group global

Tata Motors' sales slide 35% in Q4 FY20

Extension comes as markets volatility expected to continue

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

The tightened surveillance measures for stock markets, introduced on March 23 for a period of one month, have been extended until May 28.

In a statement on Monday,

the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) said the stock markets

are expected to remain volatile

in the near future owing to

concerns relating to COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant fear of economic slowdown, keeping in view the

measures had to be extended.

Meanwhile, foreign portfolio investors and mutual funds, among others, were allowed to short positions in index derivatives only to the extent of the notional value of their holding in the underlying stocks.

Amway, a global leader in direct selling, has entered into a strategic partnership with Tata Consultancy Services to transform its global technology operations.

"TCS will leverage its Business 4.0 framework to deliver a new operating model by consolidating and standardising IT operations,

implementing TCS' Machine First Delivery Model (MFDM), powered by ignio, its cognitive automation software, continuing Amway's journey from a reactive to a proactive and predictive model," TCS said in a statement.

Amway's Infrastructure

plans 51% stake in the joint ventures with Dassault Aviation holding 49% in DRAL.

Reliance Infrastructure

will scale up operations in consultation with district administration and Mihani authorities.

DRL has resumed operations to Nagpur, the company said in a statement adding that all precautionary measures had been taken to ensure safe working environment under the prevailing circumstances.

This demand needs to be met and nurtured towards restoration rather than being suppressed to a future date," Subho Ray, president, IAMAI, said.

To begin work with 25-30% of strength

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Dassault Reliance Aerospace Limited (DRAL), a joint venture between Reliance Infrastructure and Dassault Aviation, has resumed operations, at MIHAN SEZ, in Nagpur.

"As part of the government's initiative to restart operations in phased manner, Dassault Reliance Aerospace Limited (DRAL) has resumed operations today, at MIHAN SEZ, in Nagpur," the company said in a statement adding that all precautionary measures had been taken to ensure safe working environment under the prevailing

circumstances.

What are Ways and Means Advances?

They are temporary loan facilities provided by RBI to the government to enable it to meet temporary mismatches between revenue and expenditure.

The government makes an interest payment to the central bank when it borrows money.

The rate of interest is the same as the repo rate, while the tenure is three months.

The limits for WMA are mutually decided by the RBI and the Government of India.

Background:

The WMA scheme for the Central Government was introduced on April 1, 1997, after putting an end to the four-decade old system of adhoc (temporary) Treasury Bills to finance the Central Government deficit.

What if the government needs extra money for extra time?

When the WMA limit is crossed the government takes recourse to overdrafts, which are not allowed beyond 10 consecutive working days.

The interest rate on overdrafts would be 2 percent more than the repo rate.

Types of WMA:

There are two types of Ways and Means Advances — normal and special.

Special WMA or Special Drawing Facility is provided against the collateral of the government securities held by the state. After the state has exhausted the limit of SDF, it gets normal WMA. The interest rate for SDF is one percentage point less than the repo rate.

The number of loans under normal WMA is based on a three-year average of actual revenue and capital expenditure of the state.

Alex Albon and Guanyu Zhou, who races in Formula 2. "I'm actually enjoying very much playing, and streaming. And I enjoy it even more when I win," tweeted Leclerc. AFP

OF DOUBT.
"It is mandatory to attend the camp as none of the top players have been playing and it will be helpful to them. The camp will be

Aravindan.
For the camp, TNBA is also planning to get the girls onboard. "We are thinking of how to accommodate them," he said.

lockdown, in what shape they return, I don't know. I am sure they will get back to fitness once they start the routine," he said.

Pasha said it's a loss for

months due to non-conduct of summer camp, but there is hardly anyone can do anything," said V. Chandrasekar, three-time National table tennis champion and Director

"In the first few State-ranking tournaments, players' game and fitness level will, obviously, be quite low. Much will depend on how he/she picks up."



V.L. Anand Babu.



S. Ganesh Babu.

Contrasting wins for Caruana, Vachier-Lagrave

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Top-ranked American Fabiano Caruana proved a lucky winner against Russia No. 1 Ian Nepomniachtchi while Frenchman Maxime Vachier-Lagrave cruised to an easy victory over Dutchman Anish Giri in first round encounters of the \$250,000 Magnus Carlsen Invitational online chess on Sunday.

Caruana, in serious danger in the first two games, was lucky to draw both

games. After drawing the third, Caruana nailed a frustrated Nepomniachtchi in the fourth for a 2.5-1.5 result. Against Giri, Vachier-Lagrave raced away to victories in the first two games and drew the next two.

The results (first round): Fabiano Caruana (USA) bt Ian Nepomniachtchi (Rus) 2.5-1.5; Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (Fra) bt Anish Giri (Ned) 3-1; Magnus Carlsen (Nor) bt Hikaru Nakamura (USA) 3-2; Ding Liren (Chn) bt Alireza Firouzja (FIDE) 2.5-1.5.



Proud master: Soumyadeep, right, with Sutirtha after she clinched the National crown. ■ FILE PHOTO: G. RAMAKRISHNA

TABLE TENNIS

K. KEERTHIVASAN
CHENNAI

Soumyadeep Roy, former National table tennis champion and one of the National coaches of the senior teams, said it was important to maintain a positive outlook to life during lockdown.

Mental strength
He urged the paddlers to employ visualisation techniques to improve their mental strength.

"Visualisation is an effec-

tive tool in modern-day sport. Players could do visualisation where they can think of going to the academy and playing their shots, or playing in top tournaments.

"To begin with, it can be once a day for 10 minutes and twice a day for around 30 minutes on Monday while interacting online with the Sports Authority of India coaches and players on the topic of 'mental health during the present time and the importance of change

and adaptability'.

Soumyadeep said it took him nearly a year to change a few things in National champion Sutirtha Mukherjee's game.

Giants leap

"It won't happen overnight, We worked on a lot on her game.

"We were thrilled when she reached the (women's) top-100 in the World rankings this month for the first time in her career after being in the 500s last year," said Soumyadeep about his ward.

Djokovic against forced vaccination

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BELGRADE

Novak Djokovic said he was against a compulsory coronavirus vaccination if it became a requirement for tennis players to travel to tournaments.

"Personally, I'm against vaccination. I wouldn't like that someone forces me to get a vaccine in order to be able to travel," he said. "I think it will be the number one challenge."

Milkha Singh's daughter doing her family proud

Mona, a doctor, is attending to coronavirus cases in NYC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Legendary athlete sprinter Milkha Singh's daughter and ace golfer Jeev Milkha Singh's elder sister has been running a "marathon" in New York – not on a track but at a hospital, battling the COVID-19 pandemic that has ravaged the world.

Mona Milkha Singh is a doctor at the Metropolitan Hospital Center in New York, attending to emergency patients of coronavirus, which has so far claimed more than 40,000 lives in the US alone.

"She is basically an ER (Emergency Room) doctor in Metropolitan Hospital Center in New York city.

"So, when someone comes with the coronavirus symptoms, she has to treat them," Jeev told PTI.

"She checks the patients, stabilises them, performs intubation (insertion of artificial ventilation tube into a patient) before they are sent to special wards to quarantine the COVID-19 patients," he added.

The 54-year-old Mona



At the forefront: Dr. Mona Milkha Singh, centre, is doing marathon sessions at a New York hospital. ■ JEEVMILKHASINGH/TWITTER

passed out of Patiala Medical College before moving to the USA in the '90s. She has been working there for more than 20 years.

"I am so proud of her. She says it is like running a marathon every day."

"I keep asking how she is feeling and if there are any symptoms."

"She has been working five days a week, sometimes day shifts, sometimes night shifts, 12-hour shifts and it is tough but she has to do the

I am so proud of her. She says it is like running a marathon every day

job as best as she can."

"We keep asking how she is feeling and if there are any symptoms."

"I tell her to stay positive and boost her immune system," said Jeev.

Home gardening blooms around the world

It's a soothing, family friendly hobby that eases concerns over food security

REUTERS
CHICAGO

Jaime Calder all but gave up on gardening after moving from the fertile soils of Illinois to dusty Texas, but the novel coronavirus has changed her mind.

The magazine editor and her family of five planted collard greens, chard, onions, blackberries, watermelons and peppers expanding their garden while buckling down at home during the pandemic.

People around the world are turning to gardening as a soothing, family friendly hobby that also eases concerns over food security as lockdowns slow the harvesting and distribution of some crops. Fruit and vegetable seed sales are jumping worldwide.

Its supplementary gardening, said Ms. Calder. "There's no way this would sustain a family of five. But we're amping it up, so we can try and avoid the store a little more in the coming months."

Russians are isolating in out-of-town cottages with plots, a traditional source of vegetables during tough times since the Soviet era and rooftop farms are

planned in Singapore which relies heavily on food imports.

Furloughed workers and people working from home are also looking for activities to occupy their free time, after the cancellations of major sporting events and the closure of restaurants, bars and theatres. Parents too are turning to gardening as an outdoor activity to do with children stuck at home after schools shut.

"Planting a few potatoes can be quite a revelation to a child," said Guy Barter, chief horticulturist at Britain's Royal Horticultural Society,

which has seen a five-fold rise in queries for advice on its website during the lockdown.

Gardeners without yards are even planting potatoes in trash bags at home instead of dining out.

The U.S. seed company W. Atlee Burpee & Co sold more seed than any time in its 144-

year history in March as the contagious respiratory virus spread, Chairman George Ball said.

When they cannot find seeds in stores, British gardeners in Britain are seeking advice on how to extract them from tomatoes and squash purchased in supermarkets, he said.

Gardening could trim retail demand for produce but trips to the grocery store will still be necessary. Bert Hambleton, retail consultant for Hambleton Resources, said supermarkets will continue to see an overall increase in produce demand as would-be restaurant-goers eat at home instead of dining out.

The U.S. seed company W. Atlee Burpee & Co sold more seed than any time in its 144-

year history in March as the contagious respiratory virus spread, Chairman George Ball said.

"It doesn't take long for people to become very concerned about the food supply – either the cost or getting it," Mr. Johns said.

Johnny's Selected Seeds in Fairfield, Maine, saw a 270% jump in orders the week of March 16, after U.S. President Donald Trump declared a national emergency over the virus.

"It doesn't take long for people to become very concerned about the food supply – either the cost or getting it," Mr. Johns said.

Johnny's Selected Seeds in Fairfield, Maine, saw a 270% jump in orders the week of March 16, after U.S. President Donald Trump declared a national emergency over the virus.

IN BRIEF



Harry and Meghan cut ties with U.K. tabloids

LONDON Prince Harry and his wife, Meghan, have told Britain's biggest tabloids that they would be "zero engagement" with them in future because of their false and invasive coverage.

In a letter to the editors of *The Sun*, *Daily Express* and *Daily Mirror* newspapers, the couple, who are now living in Los Angeles area, said they would no longer engage with their publications. REUTERS



Idris Elba launches UN fund for poor farmers

BARCELONA British actor and filmmaker Idris Elba launched a new United Nations fund on Monday to help farmers in poorer nations, calling on richer economies to provide aid to prevent "needless hunger and suffering" stemming from the coronavirus pandemic. REUTERS