



**Societal relations are fragile, need constant nursing: Hamid Ansari**  
 page 6



**Centre effects reshuffle of officials, Tarun Bajaj is DEA Secretary**  
 page 8



**Don't alienate entire community for mistakes of few, says Bhagwat**  
 page 10

**New York-based Indian artist Zarina Hashmi passes away**  
 page 14



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**'No change in stand on share of Central taxes'**  
 CHENNAI  
 Criticising DMK president M.K. Stalin for repeatedly claiming that the AIADMK government had failed to uphold the State's rights in relation to its share of taxes, despite the government making it clear that it would fight for it, Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam ay said that there was no change in the government's position that it was entitled to a higher share of Central taxes.

TAMIL NADU • PAGE 2

**More time for payment of property, water tax**

CHENNAI  
 The State government has issued an order, allowing three more months to assesses of property tax and water tax in urban parts to pay the taxes for the previous financial year, 2019-20, in view of COVID-19.

TAMIL NADU • PAGE 2

**Heavy rain lashes city, disrupts power supply**

CHENNAI  
 Thunder showers lashed many parts of Chennai early on Sunday, bringing respite from soaring day temperatures. But power supply in several areas in the city was disrupted. The heavy rain, combined with winds, left the power infrastructure in disarray, causing technical snag in areas in both north and south Chennai.

CHENNAI • PAGE 3

EDUCATION PLUS • PAGE 11

## Cases near 27,000-mark with increase of 1,975 in 24 hours

Health Minister puts recovery rate at 21.9%, with 5,913 patients testing negative

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN  
 NEW DELHI

The death toll due to COVID-19 continued to rise on Sunday, with the country registering a total of 826 fatalities and 26,917 cases, according to the Union Health Ministry. While the death toll rose by 46, the number of cases spiked by 1,975 since Saturday evening.

The number of active cases stood at 20,177, while 5,913 people have recovered and one patient has migrated, the Ministry said. The total number of cases includes 111 foreign nationals, while 312 cases are being assigned to States for contact tracing.

However, reports from the States put the total number of cases at 27,579, out of which 20,274 are active. The

### COVID-19

nationwide death toll stood at 880, while 6,425 people have recovered.

Maharashtra accounts for the highest number of fatalities, followed by Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, and Andhra Pradesh.

"Through a graded, pre-emptive and pro-active approach, the Central government is taking several steps along with the States/Union Territories for prevention, containment and management of COVID-19. These are being regularly reviewed and monitored at the highest

### India's progression

While India's COVID-19 cases and deaths are progressing much slower than in many countries, these figures have been steadily crossing certain milestones, not yet reached by many other nations

**Cases comparison:** As of April 26, 48 nations recorded at least 5,000 cases. Of them, 17, including India, have crossed the 25,000 mark

**Deaths comparison:** As of April 26, 39 nations recorded at least 200 deaths. Of them, 19, including India, have crossed the 800 mark



level," said Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on Sunday.

**'Situation improving'**

Speaking after a visit to the Trauma Centre of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences here to take stock of COVID-19 preparedness, he noted that 5,913 people have recovered, with a recovery rate of 21.9%. "The situation is improving in India as Hotspot Districts are moving towards becoming Non Hotspot Districts," said the Minister.

Dr. Vardhan said people should observe the lockdown in letter and spirit and treat it as an effective intervention to cut down the spread of COVID-19.

The Minister said the doubling rate had been showing regular improvement and stood at 10.5 days when seen over a period of 3 days, 9.3 days over a period of 7 days and 8.1 days over a period of 14 days. "These indicators may be taken as positive effects of the lockdown along with the cluster management and containment

strategies," he said. Dr. Vardhan said, "As on date, 283 districts have not reported any COVID cases till date, 64 districts have not reported a fresh case since the last 7 days, 48 districts have not reported a fresh case since the last 14 days, 33 districts have not reported a fresh case since the last 21 days and 18 districts have not reported a fresh case since the last 28 days."

**180 companies**  
 Nationwide, 180 companies participated in the CII survey, which was conducted on April 23 and 24, a few days after the latest round of relaxations came into effect on April 20.

Asked whether permits to operate were easily available for the sectors which were

## Industries hobbled by curbs on mobility of men, material

Waive permits in non-containment zones, urges CII

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
 NEW DELHI

Almost half of the industries which have been allowed to reopen still face hurdles in obtaining permits to function and passes for employees, according to a Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) survey. Over 60% of surveyed companies also said movement of inputs and finished goods is still disrupted.

The industry group demanded that businesses should be allowed to function without need of permits in non-containment areas, with workers allowed to commute to work in their own vehicles on the basis of a letter issued by the employer without need of a government pass.

The Centre has slowly been easing restrictions, first allowing the reopening of essential sector businesses and then permitted industries located in rural areas, as well as certain sectors including construction, information technology and hardware, to begin work subject to certain restrictions.

Nationwide, 180 companies participated in the CII survey, which was conducted on April 23 and 24, a few days after the latest round of relaxations came into effect on April 20.

Asked whether permits to operate were easily available for the sectors which were

### Obstacle course

Excerpts from a Confederation of Indian Industry survey of 180 companies conducted on April 23 and 24:

**46%** of firms said permits to operate were either not made available or were delayed

**42%** of firms said passes to workers were either not readily provided or were delayed

**62%** of firms said transport facilities for inputs and finished goods were either not available at all or were disrupted and delayed

**31%** firms said daily commute of workers is an issue. 36% said it is somewhat of an issue



**Lockdown blues:** A worker of an undergarment factory in Kolkata cleaning a machine, which was not in use for weeks following a shutdown to slow the COVID-19 spread. ■ REUTERS

allowed to function, 19% of companies said permits were not available to them, while 27% said they had faced delays.

CII suggested that permits may be granted on a self-certification basis by State governments, at least in areas which are not hotspots of infection.

Difficulties in transport – of both men and materials – have created a major bottleneck. Workers at functional units require passes from the government to move around. Only 36% of respondents said passes were readily provided, and 67% said

the daily commute was problematic.

In fact, the unavailability of workers or their inability to travel to the workplace was the single largest reason that prevented businesses from operating, the survey showed. CII suggested that employees be allowed to use their own private vehicles, and that government passes should be replaced by company letters.

Only 15% of companies said that movement of raw materials and finished goods was taking place smoothly.

**CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8**

## Do not lower guard against virus, urges PM

India's fight is people-driven: Modi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
 NEW DELHI

Acknowledging that India's fight against the COVID-19 is people-driven, Prime Minister Narendra Modi asked citizens to "remain careful and not lower their guard against the pandemic on the assumption that it will not affect them".

Addressing his monthly radio broadcast, *Mann Ki Baat*, exactly a week before the second phase of the nationwide lockdown is scheduled to end on May 3, Mr. Modi stressed on strictly following social distancing protocols, not spitting in the open, wearing masks or covering faces with *gamchas* [towel] while stepping out.

Though he didn't give any

indication about the government's thinking with regard to the current lockdown, Mr. Modi did express the hope that "the world may be able to somewhat free itself from the virus by the time Id is celebrated".

"Do *gaj doori, bahut hain zaroori* [Two metres distance is very essential]," the Prime Minister said while explaining the need to follow COVID-19 protocols. "I would like to appeal that don't ever get caught in this overconfidence that our city, our village, our lane, our office has not seen corona so far and that's why it won't affect us. Don't ever entertain such a wrong notion," Mr. Modi said.

**CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8**

### Bird's-eye view



**Feathered friends:** With pollution dropping due to the COVID-19 lockdown, a flock of flamingos has found a safe haven in a wetland in Pallikarai near Chennai. ■ SHAJU JOHN

## 'Executive best placed to deal with pandemic'

Courts cannot dictate, says CJI Bobde

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
 NEW DELHI

Amid the biggest health and humanitarian catastrophe in decades, Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde told *The Hindu* that the Executive, with its three 'Ms' of men, material and money, is better equipped than the judiciary and legislature to lead the battle against COVID-19.

In a phone interview, the Chief Justice said the courts cannot dictate to the government how and when to deploy its resources in the present crisis.

The Chief Justice said the job of the courts in the present crisis is to ensure that rule of law is followed by the authorities in their executive and administrative

functions. The CJI clarified that the virtual courts functioning in the Supreme Court and various high courts are not "closed courts" and that the proceedings through video-conferencing cannot be construed as in-camera hearings. He objected to the fact that video-conferencing is being seen in many quarters as an antithesis of the open court system.

Chief Justice Bobde said the pandemic and the ensuing lockdown have reduced actions leading to litigation. "To that extent, pressure is also less on the courts and filing of cases is not what was," the CJI said.

**INTERVIEW ON ► PAGE 10**

## Man jumps quarantine, infects six

SIDHARTH YADAV  
 BHOPAL

A man who escaped quarantine and went to a barber for a haircut is believed to have caused at least six COVID-19 infections in a village in Khargone district of Madhya Pradesh.

Six men who went to the same barber tested positive for the virus. "We don't know yet whether they used the same napkin or had direct contact with each other," said Collector Gopal Chandra Dad. The first patient, who escaped quarantine, had carried back the virus from Indore, officials said.

**CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8**

## Red tape stalls return of bodies from Gulf

Decision of Delhi airport officials, despite MHA nod, leaves envoy shocked

SUHASINI HAIDAR  
 KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE  
 NEW DELHI

Families awaiting the remains of their loved ones from Abu Dhabi, who had died by causes other than COVID-19, spent another agonising night on Sunday, after three bodies were sent back to the UAE by immigration authorities in Delhi on Friday.

Officials said they hoped that the bodies of Kamlesh Bhatt, Sanjeev Kumar and Jagbir Singh would arrive again early on Monday by an Etihad Airlines flight, after the government reversed its decision to ban coffins being brought back as a part of air cargo due to the coronavirus pandemic.



**We are trying our best so that the families will be able to carry out the last rites in India**

PAVAN KAPOOR  
 India's Ambassador to the UAE

Mr. Bhatt's cousin Vimlesh Bhatt, who had even filed a petition with the High Court in Delhi over the issue, said he was driving back to Delhi for the second time in three days, undertaking the seven hour drive from Tehri in the hope that the body would be

allowed to come back to India on Monday morning.

While one of the victims had died in a car accident, the other two suffered heart attacks. But despite appeals from the Indian Embassy and airline officials that they were not COVID-19 patients, officials refused to hand them over to their families, who had driven down from Uttarakhand and Punjab despite lockdown restrictions, to collect the remains.

**Ambassador anguished**  
 "We feel extremely sorry for the families of these three men," India's Ambassador to the UAE Pavan Kapoor told *The Hindu*, expressing shock at the way the bodies were returned summarily to

the UAE by airport authorities.

On Saturday, the Ministry of Home Affairs issued a memorandum (No.25022/06/2020-Imm) revoking the earlier ban and said bodies and mortal remains would be permitted "subject to strict adherence to the guidelines...regarding management of COVID-19 and submission of a no objection approval/concurrence from Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and MEA".

However, the Health Ministry is yet to issue the required SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures), which officials say is delaying matters further.

**CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8**

## Six children among new cases

Of the 64 who tested positive in State, 28 are from Chennai

R. SUJATHA  
 CHENNAI

A 42-year-old man, who was admitted to a private hospital in the city, died due to COVID-19 infection on Saturday, taking the total number of deaths to 24.

According to the Health Department he died around 4.30 pm on Saturday.

As of Sunday, 838 active cases were recorded and a total of 1,885\* positive cases registered.

Of the 64 persons who tested positive in the State, 28 were from Chennai.

A five-year-old boy from Namakkal, a nine-year-old boy in Chennai, two eight-year-old girls and two boys, aged 9 and 11, in Madurai tested positive.

## 3 years in jail for blocking funeral

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
 CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu government has promulgated an ordinance to punish people who prevent burial or cremation of those who die due to COVID-19 with a minimum imprisonment of one year and a maximum of three years. ■ PAGE 2

All the children acquired the infection through contact with people who had tested positive. Thirteen cases were reportedly primary infections

and one person is believed to have been infected through contact.

Officials said the source of infection of a 56-year-old man, who acquired the infection through contact, is being investigated, apart from the source of infection of the other cases of primary infection.

On Sunday, 28 people in the city tested positive, taking the number of positive cases to 523. In Madurai, 15 tested positive, taking the total to 75.

Other districts that reported new cases include Virudhunagar (7); Namakkal and Villupuram 4 each and Tiruppur two cases.

**CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 2**

FROM PAGE ONE

## 6 children among new cases

Kallakurichi, Ramanathapuram, Salem and Tiruvallur recorded one positive case each.

Of the 110 children below the age of 12, who have been infected so far, 51 are girls. A total of 1,062 males and 492 females (total 1,554) fall in the age group of 13 to 60 years of age. Among those, people over 60 years of age include 64 women and 157 men. Among the 60 persons who were discharged from various hospitals in the State were 13 from Chengalpattu and 12 from the Tiruvallur government hospitals. Nine persons were discharged from the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital in Chennai on Sunday and 10 from the Thanjavur GH.

Eight persons from the



Health Minister C. Vijayabaskar at the newly-inaugurated RT-PCR facility at the Pudukkottai GH on Sunday.

Madurai GH, two from Kanyakumari Medical College Hospital and six persons who were being treated in private hospitals were discharged. All those who were discharged would have to remain in home quarantine for the next 15 days. Currently 29,056 are under home quarantine and 26 persons are

undergoing treatment in government quarantine facilities. As many as 1,838 persons who are suspected to have the infection have been admitted to isolation wards.

(\*This is inclusive of two patients who died in other States and one patient who tested negative after his death.)

## Prison term for blocking funeral

The government, in a press release, said the ordinance was promulgated to prevent incidents of people protesting or obstructing the last rites of those who died from complications of the disease.

"As per this ordinance,

persons who prevent or try to prevent the conduct of the last rites in an honourable manner, has been criminalised and is punishable under Tamil Nadu Public Health Act, 1939 with a fine and imprisonment of a minimum one

year and a maximum of three years," the government said.

The ordinance comes after two instances of the public blocking the last rites and using violence to prevent the last rites of those who died due to COVID-19.

## More time for payment of taxes

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

The State government has issued an order, giving three more months to assesses of property tax and water tax in urban areas to make payments for the previous financial year, 2019-20, in view of the COVID-19 situation in the State.

The last date for the payment of tax was March 31. Besides, traders had to renew their licences by the end of March.

As per municipal laws, the local bodies are empowered to take coercive steps against defaulters, such as issuance of notice, distraint of property and prosecution, apart from the levying of penal interest for belated payment of taxes and disconnection of water and sewer lines.

The government's order, issued by the Municipal Administration and Water Supply Department a few days ago, was meant for enabling the assesses to remit the taxes and the traders to renew the licences up to June 30 without any penalty.

# Cities wear deserted look on day 1 of complete lockdown

With major markets shut, vegetables, fruits were made available through mobile units



At a standstill: (Clockwise from left) The grade separator near Koyambedu devoid of traffic; a deserted PTR Bridge in Madurai; and a makeshift vegetable market at Gandhipuram in Coimbatore.

\*B. VELANKANNI RAJ, G. MOORTHY, M. PERIASAMY

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

After witnessing chaotic scenes on Saturday, when people resorted to panic buying, the cities of Chennai, Coimbatore and Madurai wore a deserted look on Sunday – the first day of the complete lockdown imposed by the State government.

Residents of Chennai woke up to rains, and arterial roads like Anna Salai, Poonamallee High Road and 100 Feet Road were devoid of traffic, unlike on other days, when hundreds of vehicles clog the roads.

Police meticulously conducted checks on motorists to ascertain if they were travelling for valid reasons. Even the busy T. Nagar and Purasawalkam areas did not see any major vehicle or pedestrian movement, as all

grocery and vegetable shops remained closed.

An industrialist had suggested the ramping up of the sale of groceries through mobile units, as was being done for vegetables. As on Saturday, the Greater Chen-

COVID-19

nai Corporation operated 4,949 push carts and 1,182 mini trucks, while the Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA) and the Cooperation Department operated as many as 501 vehicles, all for selling vegetables and fruits in the city.

One of the challenges in selling groceries through mobile units was that some people in the city, especially those belonging to the lower

strata of society, expected to get them on credit, like they do in shops.

In Madurai, with shops and markets closed and restrictions imposed on movement of vehicles, major public spaces, including the Kalavasal junction, the Gori-palayam junction, the East Veli Street and the PTR Bridge near Anna Nagar, were free of pedestrians and vehicles.

A senior Madurai Corporation official said that 55 mobile vegetable vending outlets were deployed across the city. Each vehicle sold 75 vegetable bags and 50 fruit bags. Around 11,500 people were served food at the 12 Amma Unavagams across the city.

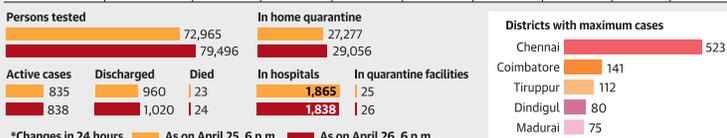
In Coimbatore, access points to the main roads were barricaded in many

areas. The wholesale vegetable market remained shut and vegetables were sold through government vehicles. Uzhavar Sandhais were open, but did not attract traders or customers. In some places, the police noted down the names and employment details of people working in essential sectors such as healthcare when they were going to work.

In Tiruppur, the district administration made arrangements for door delivery of vegetables. Ditto was the scene in Salem, which was into the second day of the total lockdown, as District Collector S.A. Raman had ordered a total lockdown on Saturday and Sunday and the Chief Minister had announced a four-day lockdown from Sunday to Wednesday.

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

	Until April 19	April 20	April 21	April 22	April 23	April 24	April 25	April 26	Total
Cases reported	1,477	43	76	33	54	72	66	64	1,885
Recovered and discharged	411	46	178	27	90	114	94	60	1,020
Deceased	16	1	1	0	2	2	1	1	24



\*Changes in 24 hours As on April 25, 6 p.m. As on April 26, 6 p.m.

Active Cases + Discharged + Died will not equal Total Cases as 2 deaths were cross-notified to other States and 1 patient, who initially tested positive for COVID-19, later tested negative after death, as per the Health and Family Welfare Department

## Helping students get by instead of demanding fees

College staff credit ₹3,000 into bank accounts of poor pupils' parents

B. KOLAPPAN CHENNAI

At a time when the State government is urging educational institutions not to demand fees from students, the Tamil Department of S.T. Hindu College, Nagercovil, has set an example by crediting money into the bank accounts of the parents of 26 poor students.

"Instead of reaching out to unknown outsiders, we decided to help our students, who have borne the brunt of the lockdown. We credited ₹3,000 each into the accounts of the parents of 26 students of our depart-



T.V. Jagatheesan, Head of Tamil Department, S.T. Hindu College

We left it to the students to identify those in need. They selected 26 deserving candidates

ment, because we know the difficulties being faced by their families during the lockdown," said T.V. Jagatheesan,

head of the Tamil Department.

According to Mr. Jagatheesan, most of his students had studied in Tamil-medium schools and came from poor families and socio-economic backgrounds.

### WhatsApp group

"It is not easy to judge the background of the students since we follow a uniform dress code in our college. So, we left it to the students to identify those in need. There is a WhatsApp group in every class under our department, and the students had selected 26 deserving candidates," Mr. Jagatheesan said.

There were 15 teachers in the department, and they immediately came forward to make contributions.

## Deputy CM hits back at Stalin for criticising govt. over tax share

'DMK leader engaging in needless controversies in the time of a pandemic'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam on Sunday criticised DMK president M.K. Stalin for repeatedly claiming that the AIADMK government had failed to uphold the State's rights in relation to its share of taxes.

In a statement, he said there was no change in the Tamil Nadu government's position that it was entitled to a higher share of Central taxes, adding that the government was consistently raising the issue.

The Deputy CM said Mr. Stalin had, while criticising him, quoted only a portion of his Budget speech, in which he had criticised the Centre, adding that he had changed his stance now. "This is wrong, Mr. Stalin is doing this only to find fault [with me]," he said.



O. Panneerselvam

Detailing the State's position, Mr. Panneerselvam quoted certain portions of his Budget speech and said he had "full belief" that Tamil Nadu will receive the revenue deficit grant by the end of the year.

"Despite the government making it clear that we are reading a letter to be sent to the Centre, explaining how the State has been affected

by the recommendations of the Finance Commission and insisting on a higher share [of taxes], it is sad that Mr. Stalin is raising these issues yet again," he said.

Mr. Panneerselvam said the DMK leader was engaging in needless controversies despite the government having clarified its position on the issue multiple times, that too at a time when the State and the country were fighting the COVID-19 battle.

### 'Hasty lockdown'

Mr. Stalin on Sunday alleged that the four-day complete lockdown in Chennai, Madurai and Coimbatore, which the government had announced in a "hasty manner" without making necessary arrangements, had increased fear and confusion among the people about the COVID-19 situation in T.N.

In a statement, he noted that people had rushed to shops in large numbers to buy essentials in the wake of the announcement, undermining social distancing norms.

"The complete lockdown was announced only on April 24, and the announcement had raised doubts as to whether the government had only implemented half measures during the lockdown," he said.

"I had urged the government to extend the business hours of the shops till the evening. But people crowded the areas to buy essential commodities, which defeated the purpose of the complete lockdown," Mr. Stalin said. Had the government made the announcement four days earlier, it could have avoided the rush, he added.

## CM announces measures to help farmers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Sunday announced a few measures meant to help farmers tide over the crisis caused by the COVID-19 lockdown.

In a statement, Mr. Palaniswami recalled that the government had earlier announced that farmers could store their produce for free in regulated market facilities for up to 30 days. Now, this had been extended by another month.

He said the government had announced a moratorium on interest to be paid on loans taken against the produce at storage facilities for 30 days. This had also been extended by a month, he said. The Chief Minister also announced that the waiver of the 1% market charge on the sale of goods had been extended by another month.

## Producers court OTT platforms to cash in on summer movie season

Jyothika-starrer *Pon Magal Vandhal* to debut directly on Amazon Prime Video; cinema owners up in arms, threaten to ban Suriya's films

UDHAV NAIG CHENNAI

How can Kollywood be preserved intact when the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to change the way industries across the world go about their business?

Amid deep uncertainty over whether audiences would feel comfortable walking into cinema halls even months down the line, film producers in T.N., who had been hoping to cash in on theatrical releases during the lucrative summer months of April and May, are now looking for other ways to get their money's worth.

In a surprise move, actor Suriya's production house, 2D Entertainment, decided on Saturday that Jyothika-

starrer *Pon Magal Vandhal*, originally slated to hit the screens in March, will be released directly on Amazon Prime Video in the first week of May. Industry sources said the film had been sold to Amazon Prime Video for ₹5 crore.

The move has prompted an adverse reaction from exhibitors and distributors, who have threatened to ban all feature films starring Mr. Suriya and made by his production house. In a video message, R. Panneerselvam, secretary of the Tamil Nadu Theatre Owners' Association, said, "I was shocked to learn that *Pon Magal Vandhal* would be released on an OTT (over-the-top) platform before its theatrical release.



Industry sources said *Pon Magal Vandhal* had been sold to Amazon Prime Video for ₹5 crore.

Movies that are produced for theatres should be released in theatres first. The producer has breached this rule. We strongly condemn this. We told the producer not to do this. If they the production

house) press ahead with this plan, we will not release any movies associated with that company."

The tug of war between exhibitors and producers has been going on ever since the

digital platforms, armed with huge cash reserves, entered the film business.

As the cinema owners have come down hard on the producer, the Tamil Nadu Film Producers' Council is likely to throw its weight behind 2D Entertainment.

Disagreeing with the statement made by the cinema owners, producer G. Dhannanjan said, "It is the right of the producer to decide how to cash in on the film. Even big Bollywood movies like Akshay Kumar's *Laxmi Bomb* and *Sooryavanshi* are likely to be released directly on OTT platforms. If theatre owners can decide which films should be screened and how many shows a film should get – small films don't

get screens – then producers should have the freedom to exploit their product in any way they see fit."

Rajsekar Pandian, director and co-producer, 2D Entertainment, declined to comment on the matter as the producers' council was likely to give its response.

A cinema owner, who wished to remain anonymous, said that banning Mr. Suriya's films was not the solution, and that the decision to release *Pon Magal Vandhal* directly on an OTT platform was merely due to the situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic. "This is a COVID-19-induced one-time move, and we expect that things will settle down in the long term. In the end, you

can't prevent actors from working with Netflix or Amazon [Prime Video], and the producers will also make content for OTT platforms as it's a safe business model with a 10-15% assured margin," a cinema owner said. "The general expectation is that till Divali, there won't be much traction in the theatrical business even if the lockdown is lifted. Normalcy is expected to return only next year, after a vaccine becomes available," he added.

Minister for Information and Publicity Kadambur Raju on Sunday said the State government will facilitate talks between producers and cinema owners to arrive at a mutual agreement on the issue.

## Zinc tablets to boost immunity of frontline staff

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Sunday announced that frontline workers involved in the battle against COVID-19 would be given zinc and multi-vitamin tablets to boost their immunity.

Employees from various departments such as Public Health, Revenue, Local Administration, Police and others have been at the forefront of the fight against the pandemic.

The medicines will be given to them from April 27, for a period of 10 days, the Chief Minister said.

**Timings CHENNAI**

MONDAY, APR. 27  
RISE 05:50 SET 18:23  
RISE 08:53 SET 22:05

TUESDAY, APR. 28  
RISE 05:50 SET 18:24  
RISE 09:45 SET 22:59

WEDNESDAY, APR. 29  
RISE 05:50 SET 18:24  
RISE 10:39 SET 23:54

**Chennai Weather** max min

Thiruvallur	32	22
Chennai Airport	32	23
Chennai City	31	23

**Chennai Airport Today**  
35°C The weather will be warm and cloudy. Spell of rain and thundershower will occur.

**Chennai Airport Tomorrow**  
34°C The weather will be warm and cloudy. Spell of rain and thundershower will occur.

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## Shop owner electrocuted in Ennore

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

A 46-year-old hardware shop owner was electrocuted in the early hours of Sunday.

The name of the victim was given as Selvin of S.V.M. Nagar, Ennore.

The police said Mr. Selvin runs a hardware shop near Thazhankuppam. He was electrocuted while opening the shutters of the shop early in the morning.

**Suspected cause**  
Leakage in power line within the shop was suspected to be the cause of electrocution, the police said.

The victim was rushed to the Government Stanley Hospital where the doctors pronounced him as brought dead.

The Ennore police are investigating.

# Turning the spotlight on Chennai

Officials attribute city's large share in COVID-19 cases to population density

RAMYA KANNAN CHENNAI

Chennai has been resolutely at the head of the table of COVID-19 positive cases for a while now. While the first case of a COVID-19 infection was reported at the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital on March 7, it was actually a resident of Kancheepuram.

As a tertiary health care centre, it is likely that a large number of referrals or patients themselves seeking care are reporting in Chennai's hospitals from the neighbouring districts as well. Be that as it may, there is still a pressing need to turn the spotlight on the city, which has had an average of just over 54% of daily new cases since April 19.

April 19 seems to be the day the apple cart was upset in Chennai. For the first time, Chennai accounted for 50% of the 105 positive cases that day. From cruising at about with a share of 14% of the daily Statewide new cases, the figure suddenly shot up to 46%. The next big spike, the highest so far in the epidemic, was on April 21 when with 55 of the 76 new cases, Chennai's share touched its peak yet over 72.4%. However, as a percentage of the total number of active cases in the State, Chennai still remained at under 20, but in subsequent days rose and was at 27.7% (of active cases) on Sunday.

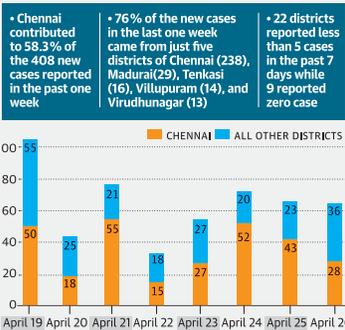
Public health experts say density of population is at the core of the issue. "With about 26,000 persons per sq. km., the population density in Chennai is unparalleled compared to any other part of the State," says P. Kuganathan, former Chennai Corporation Health Officer. It is a tertiary care centre with a large number of government and private hospitals serving COVID-19 patients, he points out. Those who test positive in Chennai may not actually be from the city. "I believe that higher numbers of positive cases per se need not be a source of worry, as in epidemic control it is read as the presence of a good testing mechanism. But we need to do everything to minimise risk to people," he says.

**Higher number of tests**  
Health Minister C. Vijayabaskar says one other reason for the high number of positives is that higher number of tests being done in Chennai. If 7,000 tests are done daily in the State, at least 1,000 to 2,000 of them are in the capital city and there are plans to increase this.

"The government does feel the need to focus on Chennai and the Chief Minister appointed additional officers to monitor the CO-

## A major source of positive cases

The graph shows Chennai's contribution to the number of new cases reported in the past seven days



VID-19 situation here," he says. In addition, facilities have been made to provide real time results of tested samples via a mobile portal. The batches of samples are run in three shifts every day, ensuring that the results are delivered faster, he adds.

A senior official says while the epidemic has dispersed by now, the bulk of the cases come from the red zone areas that are under quarantine or termed as hot spot. For instance, the zones that include Royapuram, Tondiarpet, Thiru. Vi. Ka. Nagar, Anna Nagar, Teynampet and Kodambakkam, where population density is also high. In fact, the official says until April 19, there were only 78 wards that had positive cases, but in five days it had spread to about 108 wards.

A health department official says while "primary" contacts initially provided some worry, subsequent mapping has identified their contacts with persons who were positive or contacts of those who

## The government does feel the need to focus on Chennai

C. Vijayabaskar HEALTH MINISTER

were positive. "That way, we are still able to make out who the source was, in some cases, it was a milk delivery man or a grocer too," the official added. Thanks to the civic body's outreach efforts, more people with symptoms are now being identified and tested with the highest number of testing centres and collection centres in the city.

There were a large number of people who attended the Tablighi Jamaat conference from Chennai and their families and contacts too were at risk. Public health authorities say a positive case was found even 31 days after known exposure to a positive person and that has foxed them, though they try to explain that the virus continues to shed from the human body long after the person's swabs have tested negative. Tests continues to be more movement in Chennai, including inter-State movement, and intra-city as more people go to work than in suburban or rural pockets.

### Fatality rate

While the growing number of cases in Chennai, even as a proportion of the new positive cases is cause for concern, officials point out that the fatality is still at about 1%. "So far it is well within the State average too. We need to now, make sure additional attention is paid to senior citizens, and people who have co-morbidities. Make sure their exposure is limited, and that they remain healthy. We have brought in experts from the National Institute of Epidemiology to help us figure out how to bring down numbers in Chennai," the official added.

# Pushcarts, hawkers not in sight, consumers hunt for veggies

Activist demands helpline numbers to order essentials

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

Many residents who could not buy vegetables on Saturday because of crowd, found it difficult to purchase them on Sunday, day one of the complete lockdown.

In PTC quarters area off Rajiv Gandhi Salai, the lone platform vendor was driven away by the police in the morning.

"The roads are empty. Not a single shop is open. There are no pushcarts selling vegetables or fruits. The apps don't deliver too," said Narayanan, who lives in the area.

The Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority initially announced that vegetables and fruits would be available during the complete lockdown but retracted the statement later in the evening.

On its website, the CMDA has asked residents in apartment complexes to make bookings.

The supplies were being delivered, the officials said. Those in individual houses had to depend on the apps, they added.

### No delivery

A cross-section of residents in Avadi, Navalur, Adyar and Thoraipakkam said that the apps did not deliver in their areas.

Mithun Narayanan of Adyar said he did not buy vegetables on Saturday because the apps did not deliver in their areas.

"I went out but decided it was not worth the risk. I have some vegetables and will be able to manage. A neighbour said he bought vegetables from a pushcart inside another apartment complex," he said.

Consumer activist T. Sa-



**Cherry-picking:** People buying vegetables from a cart at Neelankarai on Sunday. \*M. KARUNAKARAN

dagopan said that a common number should be provided for residents to call and ask for delivery of vegetables and other essentials.

"This is an extraordinary situation and officials should have anticipated demands to make arrangements accordingly. Senior citizens in expanded areas mostly live in individual houses and there are no associations in such places to help them. They cannot move out on foot to buy vegetables either," he said.

Sunday morning too witnessed panic buying of milk in several places in the city including Tiruvanniyur, K. K. Nagar and Vyasarpadi.

There were instances of some varieties of milk not being available, milk being sold at higher prices and people crowding shops.

"Milk shops were crowded and people were buying four or five packets each. Also, blue milk packets with 3.5% fat were not available in our area and I had to buy green magic with higher fat," said Prakash, M.G.R. Nagar resident.

In Vyasarpadi, residents

had to go in search of milk. "Shops in C. Kalyanapuram did not have milk. My son had to go to M.K.B. Nagar to buy milk. It was the same case yesterday when even vegetables too were not available," said Umaphathy, a resident of the area.

### Inflated prices

In Purasawalkam, a resident complained that milk was sold at ₹40 a packet instead of ₹26.

"This is not fair trade practice. The government should take action on such persons selling above the MRP," said the resident.

**THE HINDU**  
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# + Disinfection drive taken up in Koyambedu

A trader in the wholesale market had tested positive for COVID-19

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

The Chennai Corporation and the Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority have started disinfection of Koyambedu wholesale market, as a trader had tested positive for COVID-19.

According to wholesale merchants, the trader in question was from Kundrathur and he usually purchased lemons and onions from Koyambedu market.

S. Chandran, a wholesale merchant, said that officials from the Corporation entered enquired about shops from where he made the purchases.



A Chennai Corporation worker spraying disinfectant on Poonamallee High Road on Sunday. \*R. RAVINDRAN

es. Corporation officials said that work on disinfection would be taken up this week in all shops and collection of

samples from other traders for testing would begin shortly. On Sunday, about 1,000

shops were open in the market and it received nearly 15,000 visitors. Also, officials from the Central team visited the market.

Housing Secretary Rajesh Lakshoni and CMDA Member-Secretary D. Karthikeyan made arrangements to send essential commodities to the residents' associations that made bulk order for vegetables and fruits.

Essential commodities were supplied to gated communities in all 15 zones on Sunday. Many workers who delivered essential commodities to residents were screened for COVID-19.

# Heavy rain lashes many parts of city

Intermittent rain forecast for two more days

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

Thunder showers lashed many parts of Chennai early on Sunday, bringing respite from soaring day temperatures.

Several areas in and around the city received sharp showers accompanied by thunder and lightning. Power supply was disrupted in many areas for several hours. Power supply was stopped as a precautionary measure because of heavy rains, according to sources in Tangedo.

The automatic rain gauges in many areas recorded up to 4 cm of rainfall till 8.30 a.m. on Sunday. While Tarmani and Anna University topped with 5 cm and 4 cm of rainfall respectively, those in Ennore and Hindustan University registered 3 cm of rainfall. Other weather stations in Poonamallee and Nungambakkam recorded 2 cm and Meenambakkam 1 cm of rainfall during the same period.



A pleasant morning: A deserted Maduravoyal bypass near Mogappair West during the rain on Sunday. \*M. VEDHAN

S. Balachandran, Deputy Director-General of Meteorology, said multiple factors caused rain. Besides convective activity that usually occurs during summer and moisture incursion, a trough/wind discontinuity running to south Tamil Nadu across East Madhya Pradesh and interior Karnataka brought moderate to heavy rains in many places.

Mercury level peaked beyond 40-degree mark at many places such as Vellore, Tiruchi, Tiruttani, Salem and Karur on Saturday. The weather stations in Chennai

recorded the hottest day yet, with day temperatures escalating to 38 degree Celsius in Meenambakkam and 36.2 degree Celsius in Nungambakkam.

The soaring temperature aided sharp spell of rains, according to officials of Meteorological Department.

The same weather trend may continue for two days with light to moderate rains expected to occur over Tamil Nadu and Puducherry. Heavy rains may occur in select areas. Chennai may have a break from hot weather till Tuesday, officials said.

## Showers cause blackout

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

Power supply in several areas in the city was disrupted due to heavy rain on Sunday, the first day of the four-day total lockdown.

Several areas in north and south Chennai, including Villivakkam, T. Nagar, Ashok Nagar, Kodambakkam, Adyar, Velachery, Pallikarai and Medavakkam were affected.

A senior official of Tangedco blamed it on rain and strong winds, which damaged power lines, transformers and junction boxes.

The electricity official said despite the maintenance staff working in limited numbers, power supply was restored in phases in the affected areas, including Tambaram, Pallavaram, Madipakkam, T. Nagar and Kodambakkam. Incessant rain hampered the restoration work, he added.

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**IN BRIEF**  
**Celebrating Akshaya Tritiya differently**  
PUDUCHERRY  
Volunteers of the Rajasthan Samaj chose to celebrate the auspicious occasion of Akshaya Tritiya by serving sweets to abandoned cows in a shelter outlying the city. About 500 cows, forsaken for their lack of "market value", are under the care at the shelter in Reddichavadi. On Sunday, volunteers transported 450 kg of jaggery-sweetened ragi halwa to the 'goshala'.

**Follow lockdown rules, says Ramadoss**  
CHENNAI  
PMK founder Dr. S. Ramadoss on Sunday said that it was alarming to note that 104 children tested positive for COVID-19 in Tamil Nadu and urged people to follow lockdown rules put in place. In a statement, he said around 104 children, less than 12 years old, had been affected by COVID-19 for no fault of theirs.

**Centre asked to ensure free rice distribution**  
PUDUCHERRY  
Seeking intervention by the Centre to ensure that BPL cardholders are provided rations urgently, the CPI(M) has demanded action against authorities responsible for the "inexcusable" delay in distribution of essential relief. In a letter to the Home Secretary, CPI(M) secretary R. Rajangam said that there had been an inordinate delay in the distribution of rice due to interference by the L-G and the Chief Secretary.

**Leopard trapped near Vikramasingapuram**  
TIRUNELVELI  
A leopard was trapped by forest officials near Vikramasingapuram in Tirunelveli district early on Sunday. The officials said the movements of the leopard, which was roaming in and around Vembaiyapuram near here, were monitored through camera. On Sunday, the animal entered a trap, bringing relief to villagers.

# We are taking care of migrants, say officials

'Food, accommodation provided, health camps held'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI

Senior officials in Kancheepuram district have said that they have taken several measures to ensure the welfare of migrant workers. According to them, from medical check-ups to food and mental health services, all necessary arrangements have been made.

Kancheepuram Collector P. Ponniah told *The Hindu* on Saturday that over 38,000 migrant workers were living in 163 places in the district. "We found that they were living in congested areas, and took steps to redress it. We have also provided accommodation to 490 of them," he said.

Mr. Ponniah said the district administration had received undertakings from 62 companies and 165 labour contractors that they will provide food and accommodation to their workers and also pay their salaries.

"Some private companies



A Central team visiting a migrant shelter in Nanganallur.

have come forward to donate dry ration kits, and we have been distributing them to migrant workers," he said. The district administration had conducted health camps for all migrant workers in two phases, he added.

In response to a report on the plight of migrant workers, published in these columns on Sunday, Assistant Superintendent of Police of Sriperumbudur K. Karthikeyan elaborated on the steps that local police personnel were taking. They

were going out of their way to help migrant workers, he claimed. "We conducted health camps for these workers twice. In all police stations, we have a separate help desk for migrant workers' issues. The police are working 12 hours [a day] on a rotational basis to address their issues," he said.

Mr. Karthikeyan said the control rooms had received eight pregnancy cases so far, and action was taken within 10-15 minutes of receiving calls. He said a third of the personnel in the stations were dedicated to addressing migrant workers' issues.

"We are going to buy these workers carrom boards and chess boards. We will also make arrangements for them to watch the Prime Minister's 'Man Ki Baat' and films. We have hired auto-rickshaws to announce awareness messages on COVID-19 in Bhojpur, Odia, Hindi and Bengali," he said.

## Miles to go



Tiring walk: Youth, who had gone to Hyderabad for work, walking along a National Highway in Salem on Sunday to reach their home. - E. LAKSHMI NARAYANAN

## 'Declare sanitary pads an essential commodity'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI

Sanitary pads for women should be declared an essential commodity and their production should be allowed, as there was an alarming demand and scarcity during the COVID-19 lockdown period, 'Pad man' Arunachalam Muruganatham said.

While the lockdown's goal was to keep everyone healthy, disruption in manufacture and distribution of pads would defeat the purpose, he noted.

Mr. Muruganatham, the celebrated social entrepreneur

from Coimbatore, whose low-cost sanitary pad-making machine brought about a revolution in rural India encouraging women to come out of unhygienic practices over menstruation, said, "We have been receiving a lot of phone calls on disruption in the supply of pads. It is to be taken seriously."

While the lockdown's goal was to keep everyone healthy, disruption in manufacture and distribution of pads would defeat the purpose, he noted.

## AIADMK seeks intervention of L-G on price rise

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
PUDUCHERRY

The All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam has sought the intervention of Lieutenant Governor Kiran Bedi in controlling the spiralling price of essential commodities in the Union Territory.

In a petition to the Lt. Governor on Sunday, AIADMK leader A. Anbalagan said the prices of essential commodities, including cooking oil and pulses, have shot up after the announcement of lockdown.

'Artificial shortage' Capitalising on the restrictions imposed by the government to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus, the traders had created an artificial shortage and increased the prices of food items.

The price of certain food articles had gone up by 10 to 30%, he said.

## Narayanasamy complains to Amit Shah about L-G

'Bedi interfering in free rice scheme'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
PUDUCHERRY

Chief Minister V. Narayanasamy said on Sunday that he had raised with Union Home Minister Amit Shah the "obstructionist" approach of Lt. Governor Kiran Bedi in implementing free rice distribution to BPL families during the COVID-19 crisis.

Addressing a press conference, Mr. Narayanasamy said Mr. Shah, who had called him to assess the COVID-19 situation in the Union Territory, had agreed to resolve complaints about interference in the implementation of the scheme, which had been announced by the Centre.

While the Congress has hit out in recent days at the Lt. Governor for interfering in the implementation of the rice relief scheme, Ms. Bedi had denied the charges stating that the distribution of free rice and grains was being organised in a fair manner based on a standard operating procedure.

Mr. Narayanasamy also apprised the Home Minister of the

U.T.'s request for financial assistance.

Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu had also been on the phone to enquire about the COVID-19 situation in the U.T., the Chief Minister said.

The Chief Minister has asked the Centre to devise a plan to repatriate overseas Indian employees and students who needed to return to their home States. The government was engaged in efforts to restart sectors of the economy. While small shops such as textiles, electronics and electrical outlets, would be allowed to function, they would operate with half staff strength and ensure PPEs for employees. The government was also seeking to give work for 20,000 rural workers under MGNREGA and arrange soft loans to the tune of ₹10,000 to women SHGs, he said.

The health department, meanwhile, has said it will begin RTP-PCR screening for various categories of staff on the frontlines of COVID-19 management.

## Newspaper vendors reach out to unsung heroes

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI

This year, newspaper vendors in the city will not probably have enough savings to spend on emergencies or wedding gifts and will have to tone down their Ayudha Puja celebrations, a grand event for them.

For, the Tamil Nadu Newspaper Vendors Association in Mylapore, West Mambalam and M.G.R. Nagar covering around 220 vendors has spent it all on COVID-19 relief for its members.

"These are difficult times when we have lost access to the entire apartment com-



The M.G.R. Nagar unit members of the Tamil Nadu Newspaper Vendors' Association during the distribution.

plexes or streets due to one positive case. There are a few cases where offices are closed and we cannot deliver and hence collections are down," said D. Prakash, a

## Will Vitamin C be of any help?

Everybody wants to improve the immune system to avoid infections, specially COVID-19. Vitamin C is the nutrient connected with immune system. It is often prescribed in short courses to promote wound healing and for faster recovery from infections, including cold. So it has been the interest of researchers in COVID-19 also.

Large doses of intravenous Vitamin C are being tried in COVID-19 critical patients on ventilators in China. The results are still not out. In Australia, researchers reported that they did not find any benefit in using Vit C, while the U.S. is planning to try a combination of Vitamin C, Vitamin D, Zinc and hydroxychloroquine for prevention. Many of the internet sites offer vitamin C as immune boosters. Caution is required in consuming mega doses of vitamins without prescriptions, especially for long periods.

A 74-year-old man in Belgium landed up in the hospital with weakness and vomiting. He was found to have severe kidney failure. He was dialysed and his kidney biopsy showed deposition of



DR. RAJAN RAVICHANDRAN  
Senior Nephrologist

COVID-19

oxalate crystals, responsible for the kidney failure. On probing further it was found that he had been consuming for one week a "rejuvenating powder", which he had bought online. The powder on analysis was found to be Vitamin C.

Vitamin C or Ascorbic acid is a water-soluble essential nutrient. Being water-soluble, it is not stored in the body and requires daily intake. It is a powerful antioxidant with an important role in controlling infections and promoting healing of wounds. It has numerous functions such as synthesis of collagen (important component of bones, cartilage,

nervous system, immune system etc) chemical messengers in brain and hormones. Deficiency of Vitamin C is rare and but when it occurs, it is called scurvy. It was reported in sailors in the past since they had no access to fruit and vegetables. It manifested with bleeding gums, delayed wound healing, skin spots, hair loss and anaemia.

The daily requirement of Vitamin C is 90mg in adult males, 75mg for females which increases to 120 mg in pregnancy. Smokers require additional 35 mg since smoking depletes Vitamin C. The source of Vitamin C is fruits, especially citrus fruits, and vegetables. Sailors were given an orange daily to prevent scurvy. Heat destroys Vitamin C. So prolonged cooking and leaching of the water can reduce the intake of the Vitamin. The Vitamin C consumed after absorption is metabolised in the body to oxalate and is removed by the kidneys.

Large doses of Vitamin C called mega doses are popular to improve the immunity and promote wound healing. The scientific evidence for this is lacking or at best, controversial. Similarly me-

ga doses have been taken for common cold. Normally the body can cope with this high dose by reducing the absorption and increasing the oxalate loss in urine. But in some people the oxalate can get deposited in the kidneys resulting in kidney failure. This is likely in patients with intestinal disorders and pre-existing kidney disease. The toxic dose reported has been anywhere from 480 mg to several grams taken over variable periods. Fortunately this is a rare complication but lay people and physicians should be aware since there is popular concept that extra vitamins in large doses are helpful during stressful situations. Of course, the toxicity of large dose oil soluble vitamins like Vitamin A and D are well known since they produce high calcium in blood leading to stones and kidney failure.

The Eskimos traditionally would never eat the polar bear whose meat is very rich in vitamin A and D. It is very important that we maintain a balanced diet, regular exercise and exposure to sunlight as a routine in life. Mega doses of vitamins are best avoided without monitoring.

## Now, pregnant women in Theni have ambulance on call

OPS apologises to women who failed to get transportation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
THENI

After media reports on how two pregnant women in Bodinayakanur failed to get transportation to reach home from hospital as autorickshaws were impounded by the police, Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam called them on the phone and apologised to them.

He also tweeted that it was unfortunate that such a thing had happened to the women, who were forced to walk home in the scorching sun.

Further, he announced that in all eight blocks, an ambulance would be sta-

tioned for the exclusive use of pregnant women, and said they could avail of it by calling the number 045-46261039. He added that the SP had shifted the Inspector of Police from the Bodinayakanur police station to put an end to the issue.

The Deputy CM was inspecting the municipalities in Bodinayakanur, Chinnamanur, Cumbum and Guda-

ur areas accompanied by District Collector M. Pallavi Baldev, Superintendent of Police, E. Sai Charan Tejaswi.

Mr. Panneerselvam said Theni had not reported even a single COVID-19 positive case in the last 11 days and attributed it to the commendable work of the district administration and the wholehearted support for it from the residents.

After the pandemic broke out, the district had reported 43 cases.

However, 34 patients have been discharged from the Theni Government Medical College Hospital.

## Sri Lankan nationals return home

STAFF REPORTER  
COIMBATORE

As many as 113 Sri Lankan nationals who got stranded in Tamil Nadu and Kerala due to the national lockdown returned to their country by a repatriation flight on Sunday.

A majority of them were students of various institutions. Sources at the Coimbatore international airport said the Deputy High Commissioner of Sri Lanka, Chennai, arranged the repatriation of the 113 persons. They said that those from Kerala and far away places in Tamil Nadu, namely Chennai, Chidambaram and Theni, were brought to Coimbatore by buses.

## Two killed in road accident

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
TIRUNELVELI

In a case of suspected rash driving, two persons were killed on the spot on Sunday morning. Clinton and his friend of Kalakkad were riding a two-wheeler when they hit a wall near a flyover near Kadamboduvazhvu. The rider is suspected to have lost control and caused the accident.

The Kalakkad police are investigating.

## NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY

**E-Tender**  
For and on behalf of the President of Indian, Chief Administrative Officer (Construction), North Western Railway, Jaipur invites e-tenders under "Two packet system" from the agencies fulfilling the eligibility criteria for the following work: - 1. E-Tender No. UDZ-HW-TGC-453. 2. Name of the work with location: Construction for Construction of Minor bridges. Earth work in cutting & filling for formation, drain work, protection work, leading muck. Construction of Sub at Khawa Chanda station and all other ancillary works between Khawa Chanda-Dungarpur stations in connection with Udaipur-Himmatnagar GC project. 3. Approx. cost of the work : Rs. 16,48,11,564.43. 4. Earnest Money to be deposited : Rs. 9,74,100.00. 5. Date for submission of e-tender : 27.05.2020 at 15:00 hrs. 6. Details and particulars of website where e-tender can be seen & filled up : www.irpns.gov.in 7. Official email address: dyceccud@gmail.com. (154720)

## S. E. Railway Tender

Tender Notice No. - GETTender/Notice/Part-XV/2020/CP02, Dated: 23.04.2020. Tenders are invited by the Principal Chief Engineer/Garden Reach, South Eastern Railway for and on behalf of the President of India for supply of the following store through e-Procurement System. Following tender have been uploaded on website www.irps.gov.in. Tender No.: CETP SIER 2020CP02, SI, No. Description of Material, Eligibility Criteria & Quantity are as follows: (1) Manufacture and supply of 60 Kg., 1 in 12 over riding Curved Switches as per RDSO Drg. No. T-4219, Alt-6 with fittings as listed in Annexure-B of Special Conditions of Tender for Combined Procurement of Four Railways. The Bulk/Full quantity for the item of 60 Kg., 1 in 12 over riding Curved Switches to RDSO's Drg. No. T-4219, Alt-6 will be procured from the Vendors whose names are appeared in the list of "Approved Vendor" or "Vendors for Developmental Order" of RDSO Vendor Directory (QA-Civil) for Drg. No. T-4219, Alt-6 as on date of closing of Tender & 2823 nos. (2) Manufacture and supply of 52 Kg., 1 in 8.5 over riding Curved Switches as per RDSO Drg. No. T-4866, Alt-6 with fittings as listed in Annexure-C of Special Conditions of Tender for Combined Procurement of Eight Railways. The Bulk/Full quantity for the item of 52 Kg., 1 in 8.5 over riding Curved Switches to RDSO's Drg. No. T-4866, Alt-6 will be procured from the Vendors whose names are appeared in the list of "Approved Vendor" or "Vendors for Developmental Order" of RDSO Vendor Directory (QA-Civil) for Drg. No. T-4866, Alt-6 as on date of closing of Tender & 513 nos. Tender Value : ₹ 63,25,32,704.37 for both works. EMT : ₹ 60,00,000/- for both works. Completion Period : 24 months for both works. Date of Opening : 21.05.2020. Closing date and time of tender opening : 21.05.2020. PK-09

### OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

**DEATH**

**MR. R SAMPATH (76)**, Retired Junior Engineer (Composing), The Hindu, Chennai, passed away on 26-04-2020. Address: 168, Singanna Street, Chintadripet, Chennai - 600002. Contact: 9884089670

**DEATH**

**MRS. CHELLAMMAL SAMPATH**, aged 95, passed away in Dallas, Texas on April 24. She is survived by her sons Rajappa and Vijai, daughters-in-law Rajini, Lata, and Aruna, six grandchildren, and nine great grandchildren. Email: rajappa46@gmail.com

**DEATH ANNIVERSARIES**

**11<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

**S. Jaspal Singh Aneja**  
28.07.1946 - 27.04.2009

Deeply loved and greatly missed.

Fondly remembered by **FAMILY MEMBERS** and **Sintron Electronics P. Ltd** Singh Trading Company **MAK Electronics CHENNAI**

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**DEATH**

**SAD DEMISE**

**Dr. MAGANET RAJARAM**  
02.06.1928 - 25.04.2020  
Mourned by:  
**Son - R. Gopalakrishnan & Family Members**  
Contact : 98844 53761

# In fresh spike, Andhra Pradesh records 81 cases

One patient dies in Karnataka. 11 test positive in Kerala. Telangana tally 1,001

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
VIJAYAWADA/HYDERABAD/  
BENGALURU/  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Andhra Pradesh witnessed another spike in the number of COVID-19 positive cases on Sunday, the highest so far, with 81 new ones being reported in eight districts. The tally went up to 1,097, although no deaths were reported.

## COVID-19

A 45-year-old woman, who tested positive for COVID-19, died at a designated hospital in Bengaluru, raising the virus death tally in Karnataka to 19.

Krishna district in Andhra Pradesh, particularly Vijayawada, was in focus with 52 cases in a single day, taking the tally to 177.

The cases in the district doubled in three days, as two "super spreaders" met several people and played indoor

games in different areas of the city despite having a history of travel outside the State.

West Godavari reported 12 new cases and Kurnool four. Guntur, Kadapa and Prakasham reported three new cases each, and Anantapur two. Meanwhile, 60 persons recovered and were discharged.

In a bid to track people showing symptoms such as fever, cold, cough, respiratory issues and others related to COVID-19, the Health Department has launched a mobile application for pharmacies.

The total number of COVID-19 cases in Telangana stood at 1,001 as 11 more were detected up to Sunday evening.

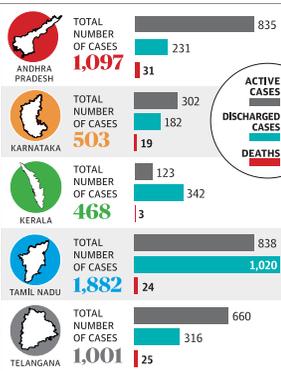
While the Union Ministry of Health data indicated that one more death was reported in the State, the Telangana Health department stated that there were no deaths.

## Ensuring safety

States across the country are leaving no stone unturned to ensure that all measures are taken to curb the spread of COVID-19



**Preventive measures:** Health workers in protective suits preparing to disinfect a locality in Hyderabad on Sunday. ■PTI



Among the people in isolation wards of government hospitals, nine were discharged.

All 11 new cases were reported in Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation limits.

Officials said all contacts of COVID-19 cases were tested and containment mea-

sures imposed in Suryapet, Gadwal and Vikarabad districts. The State Health department said of the 1,001 cases, 660 were active cases, 316 were discharged, and 25 people had died.

**Karnataka toll touches 19**  
A Karnataka Health Department bulletin said the wo-

man who died was admitted on April 24, and was a resident of Bengaluru Urban district with a history of Severe Acute Respiratory Illness (SARI) and pneumonia. She was also diabetic, and had a history of tuberculosis.

Three new cases were reported in Karnataka on Sunday, two of them from Kalab-

uragi, and one from Dakshina Kannada. All three were in contact with those who had tested positive earlier. The total number of COVID-19 cases in Karnataka stood at 503.

A total of 24 patients were discharged on Sunday, eight from Bengaluru Urban, and the total going up to 182. Of 302 active cases, six were in the intensive care unit.

## Health workers hit

In Kerala, new COVID-19 cases with no epidemiological link from districts not designated as "red zones", including among health workers sent alarm bells ringing about possible silent transmission at the community level.

Of 11 new cases on Sunday, six were from Idukki and five from Kottayam district. In Idukki, one person had returned from Spain, and two from Tamil Nadu.

The other three were contacts of people who contracted the disease from the community, one of them a doctor.

# Kerala set to seal all inter-State borders

Rise in fresh cases in border districts

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has directed the police to seal all inter-State borders to discourage the movement of people between Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

Chairing a meeting of District Collectors and District Police chiefs by video link on Sunday, Mr. Vijayan reportedly flagged the up and down travel through the porous boundary Kerala shared with neighbouring States as a significant cause for fresh COVID-19 flare-ups in border districts such as Idukki.

He said Tamil Nadu was in the middle of an intense lockdown in five districts from April 26 to April 29. They included Coimbatore and Tiruppur, which shared a common frontier with Kerala. Hence, it was essential for the police to seal the borders of Kerala tightly.

Law enforcers should sanitise cargo vehicles at borders, and examine drivers and crew for COVID-19 symptoms, the Chief Minister said.

He made temperature checks at border checks posts mandatory.

**Racketeers at work**  
The police had earlier told the government that tightening of lockdown restrictions had spawned a mafia that moved people between States and districts for cash. The racketeers had contracted a network of ambulance, cargo and container lorry drivers to facilitate the illegal movement.

An official said some persons living on properties straddling inter-State borders helped the racket flourish, and used the same method and routes to smuggle bootlegged liquor and other contraband.

## Game on



**Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-in) was established in January 2004. The main function of CERT-In is to provide early security warning and effective incident response. It operates on 24 x 7 basis and is actively engaging its users with early warning alerts and advisories. It is aimed at catering to the needs of critical sectors, defence, banks, law enforcement & judiciary and e-governance project owners. In the Information Technology (Amendment) Act 2008, CERT-In has been designated to serve as the national agency to perform the functions in the area of cyber security. CERT-In has taken steps to implement National Information Security Assurance Programme (NISAP) to create awareness in government and critical sector organisations.**

# BJP MP's Twitter account locked

Won't delete my tweet, says former Union Minister

**STAFF REPORTER**  
BENGALURU

The Twitter India has locked BJP MP from Uttara Kannada and former Union Minister



been published on his personal website and their links published on Twitter.

Mr. Hegde said he was "close-knit" about the

# 164 tourists from Europe leave Kerala

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
KOCHI

Stranded in Kerala since the national lockdown



## Body of second Forest staff found in Kabini

**MYSIURU**

The authorities on Sunday retrieved the body of a Forest Department employee who went missing during an operation to thwart illegal fishing in the Kabini backwaters that led to clashes with unidentified Shivcreants. The body of Shivakumar, 33, was found floating in the backwaters and was retrieved. Two Forest Department employees died due to drowning. The body of Mahesh, 26, was retrieved on Saturday.

## Donate blood, TRS leader tells party cadre

**HYDERABAD**

Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) working president K.T. Rama Rao called upon the cadre to raise the party flag at their homes and to donate blood to mark the 20th formation day of the party. Mr. Rao donated his blood at the Pragathi Bhavan on Sunday. Maintain social distance and coordinate with the hospitals to donate, he said, asking them to continue the programme for a week to avoid large gatherings.

## 'Doodh Duronto' starts from Chittoor for Delhi

**TIRUPATI**

The South Central Railways came up with a major intervention by taking milk from Chittoor in Andhra Pradesh to Delhi. Scheduled to run between Renigunta and Hazrat Nizamuddin to meet the requirements of Delhi, the first of the proposed two "Doodh Duronto Special" trains (milk trains) started here on Sunday. This is in tune with the nod given to the Railways to operate both freight and parcel trains on a continuous basis to ensure transportation of essential items.

# after simple wedding

Manikantan marries Anjali in temple

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
KOCHI

Actor Manikantan Achary tied the knot at a simple function at a temple at Eror, Tripunithura, on Sunday.

His bride Anjali and he were engaged six months ago. Despite advice that the wedding should be postponed due to the lockdown, they decided to get married on the scheduled date and donated a part of the funds earmarked for the marriage to the Chief Minister's Distress Relief Fund (CMDRF).

The gathering at the Ayambillykavu Bhagavathy temple was limited to close family. Most people who attended the small function were masks.

After the wedding, the couple handed over the amount to Tripunithura MLA M. Svaraj.

Mr. Achary shot to fame with Rajiv Ravi's film *Kammattipadam*. He later ac-



**Happyly married:** Manikantan Achary and Anjali at the temple in Eror.

ed in several Malayalam and Tamil films.

**Facebook message**  
In a Facebook post on his marriage, he sought the blessings of his friends and extended family members for his marriage. He said that in these times, he would like to celebrate his wedding on social media and would like everybody's mental presence for it.

# audit of COVID-19 data

It will ensure safety of details collected on cloud platform

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

In the wake of the controversy surrounding the Sprinklr deal, the Kerala government has decided to carry out a security audit by CERT-In, the nodal agency responsible for dealing with cyber security threats, of the various data collected by government departments and agencies related to COVID-19.

The Kerala State IT Mission (KSITM) Director has been authorised to entrust the agency empanelled under CERT-In (Indian Computer Emergency Response Team) under the Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology to carry out the audit work. The agency will have to execute the security audit of the data stored in the Amazon cloud platform in line with the guidelines of the govern-

ment. The KSITM Director has been asked to execute a Non-Disclosure Agreement with the agency before commencing the audit, which shall include conditions to ensure security of data shared for audit purposes.

## High-level meeting

The decision was taken at a high-level meeting chaired by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. The Information Technology Department had made a presentation to the Chief Minister, who also handles IT portfolio, on processing and utilisation of data for containment activities of COVID-19.

The government felt it necessary to analyse the data collected using data analytics techniques and tools and to ensure the security of the data collected and captured in the Cloud system, says the order issued by the Electron-

ics and Information Technology Department.

Incidentally, the government order has been issued on April 21 when the Sprinklr row was raging in the State. The Left Democratic Front (LDF) government has roped in the U.S.-based company to collate the personal health data collected by field-level workers from nearly 1.75 lakh people categorised as "vulnerable and potentially exposed" to the pandemic.

## Opposition slams govt.

The Opposition was critical of the government for procuring a healthcare worker mobile application from the firm using disaster management funds to input the details of persons under surveillance without inviting tenders, seeking legal opinion, and the approval of the Cabinet.

# Karnataka plasma donor wants to inspire others

The recovered HR professional hopes more will come forward and donate

**STAFF REPORTER**  
BENGALURU

Karnataka's first plasma donor, whose plasma will be administered to a COVID-19 patient, hopes to inspire others to come forward and help in the fight against the pandemic.

The 40-year-old HR professional said he did not think twice about signing up as a donor when he heard that HCG Hospital in Karnataka had got approval for plasma therapy.

"I got in touch with the hospital and told them I wanted to do this. I felt that it

was my moral responsibility. I wanted to make a difference," he said.

He contracted the virus in the end of March after travelling to Dubai. "As soon as we landed at the Bengaluru airport, we were taken to a hospital and given strict instructions to follow home quarantine. A week later, I started showing symptoms."

He spent over a fortnight in the hospital and initially found it challenging as he had high fever. The HR professional said that he too had done his homework and read up extensively on plas-



**Ray of hope:** The therapy will be tested on at least 12 critically ill patients.

ma therapy.

As Karnataka's first donor, he hopes that more people who are hale and hearty and

have recovered from COVID-19 would come forward and donate their plasma. The team at HCG Hospital conducted a series of blood tests on Sunday and he will be able to donate his plasma in a day or two.

## Uses antibodies

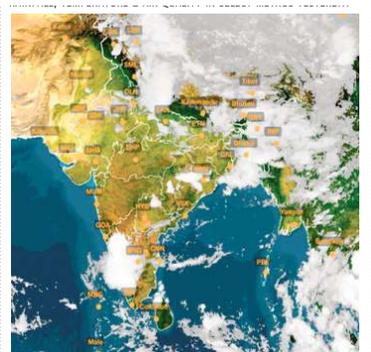
Vishal Rao, associate dean of HCG, said the plasma therapy used antibodies from the blood of cured patients, to treat severely ill COVID-19 cases in the clinical trial setting.

"The recovered patient's blood develops antibodies to fight against COVID-19 and the plasma of this cured patient has medicinal properties that when infused to the

infected serious patient, will assist in elimination of coronavirus in infected patients who are in a serious condition," he said.

HCG Hospital has tied up with the Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute (BMRCI) for plasma therapy.

The Central Drugs Control Organisation under the Director General of Health Services has approved a research proposal to study the use of convalescent plasma therapy in treating COVID-19. The therapy that holds promise in treatment of COVID-19 cases will be tested on at least 12 critically ill patients in the State in the initial phase.



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT3IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

**Forecast for Monday:** Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning, hail and gusty winds very likely at isolated places over Chhattisgarh and Odisha; with lightning, hail and gusty winds at isolated places over Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Telangana and with lightning and gusty winds at isolated places over Punjab, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	0.2	32.0	21.6	Kozhikode	0.0	36.2	28.8
Ahmedabad	0.0	40.0	26.8	Kurnool	0.0	41.1	28.6
Aizawl	7.0	23.9	14.9	Lucknow	0.0	34.3	23.1
Alibabad	0.2	39.1	23.6	Madurai	14.3	38.0	27.6
Bangaluru	0.0	32.0	22.6	Mangaluru	0.0	35.0	27.0
Bhopal	0.0	38.7	23.6	Mumbai	0.0	33.7	25.5
Bhubaneswar	0.8	29.9	24.4	Mysuru	0.0	33.5	24.0
Chandigarh	0.0	35.1	21.8	New Delhi	5.2	36.8	22.4
Chennai	13.2	36.2	23.1	Patna	0.4	28.2	22.2
Coimbatore	0.0	36.6	27.0	Port Blair	3.1	33.0	26.8
Dehradun	29.7	37.0	18.8	Puducherry	1.6	28.5	26.6
Gangtok	1.0	22.7	9.7	Pune	0.0	38.7	20.4
Goa	0.0	35.2	25.9	Raipur	0.0	40.4	24.0
Guwahati	0.2	30.8	19.0	Ranchi	0.0	30.0	20.0
Hubballi	0.0	37.0	23.0	Shillong	1.0	19.1	10.0
Hyderabad	0.8	32.0	26.0	Shimla	16.8	20.1	10.7
Imphal	0.0	27.0	14.3	Srinagar	0.0	25.0	7.2
Jaipur	0.0	35.0	23.0	Thiruvananthapuram	0.0	34.4	27.3
Kochi	0.0	33.8	27.8	Tiruchi	65.0	37.0	27.4
Kohima	6.8	22.4	11.8	Vijayawada	0.0	37.0	27.4
Kolkata	0.0	33.5	25.7	Visakhapatnam	81.0	33.0	24.2

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

## Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO <sub>2</sub>	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE	Yesterday
Ahmedabad	17	18	41	72	100	100	100
Bangaluru	06	25	53	81	100	100	100
Chennai	02	15	62	38	100	100	100
Delhi	11	46	22	65	84	100	100
Hyderabad	11	46	22	65	84	100	100
Kolkata	11	07	17	33	34	100	100
Lucknow	04	11	55	105	100	100	100
Mumbai	09	16	05	37	79	100	100
Pune	26	44	52	100	31	100	100
Visakhapatnam	-	-	-	-	-	100	100

**Air Quality Code:** Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)  
**SO<sub>2</sub>:** Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.  
**NO<sub>2</sub>:** Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.  
**CO:** Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.  
**PM2.5 & PM10:** Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease.



## Safe return

Amid the COVID-19 crisis, the distress faced by migrant workers must not be ignored

A month after one of the most stringent global lockdowns was imposed in India to tackle the pandemic, the travails of the migrant worker have shown no signs of ending. The government told the Supreme Court in late March that arrangements had been made to provide temporary shelters with food for migrant workers and as of then, none of them was on the road, just days after the lockdown had triggered an exodus of people to their native places. But reports have shown that thousands continue to travel long distances, most of them by foot, to escape distress conditions or to their families. Meanwhile, lakhs of workers, who were dependent upon daily and casual labour, are still stranded in Mumbai and Delhi without wages. The functioning of shelters in several places has been uneven across States and metropolitan cities. With the on-going lockdown hurting the economy, the Finance Ministry's relief measures have been insufficient in providing for their needs. Some migrant workers, who stare at a continuing loss of livelihoods in their adopted places of work, are better off depending upon the social safety nets and familial support structures in their native places. They should be allowed to avail these in a dignified and humane way. Restarting work under the MGNREGA that went dormant in the earlier period of the lockdown, has provided an incentive for workers to leave for their native places. It is evident that the option of keeping workers at their respective places is no longer viable and the Centre must work at ways to allow for their transport to their native places.

India, among other Asian countries such as its neighbours in the subcontinent, Malaysia and others, has managed to avoid the high fatalities and infection rates that have been seen in Europe and North America. The lockdown has helped, but it has come at a huge humanitarian and economic cost. The question of whether to extend a lockdown amid an economic crisis is a moral dilemma that can be resolved only through practical steps that compensate the poor and the workers in the unorganised sector, and protect the old and the infirm. Maharashtra, the State with the highest incidence of COVID-19 cases, besides having the largest number of migrant workers, has urged the Centre to plan and resume railway services for the labourers once the lockdown ends on May 3; it is a request the Centre must heed. It is futile trying to blame workers for flocking to railway stations as had happened in mid-April. States such as Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh are also gearing up to facilitate their return. These steps are welcome. Allowing migrant travel in a safe way by train that provides for the necessary physical distancing is the least that the government can do.

## Pandemic and panic

While ensuring distancing, govts should not trigger crowding through abrupt changes

The Tamil Nadu government's order intensifying the lockdown in Chennai, Coimbatore, Madurai, Tiruppur and Salem from April 26 briefly convulsed these cities with panic, threatening to undo the gains achieved from avoiding crowding, maintaining physical distancing and preparing the public for a calibrated exit from restrictions. If the idea was to halt the rising rate of infections, which cumulatively touched 1,821 on April 25, the government's announcement of a "complete lockdown" was counterproductive. Thousands crowded grocery stores, vegetable shops and petrol pumps, with many ignoring safety norms. Anxiety over access to essential goods, particularly among those who do not store articles for long periods, triggered panic buying. Confusion also marked the issue of new passes for delivery agents in places such as Madurai, attracting massive crowds. Such chaotic events are an invitation to disaster, since the dangerous virus is also highly contagious. Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami must worry that the government's commendable efforts to manage the pandemic while raising health system capacity during the lockdown have suffered a jolt. Tamil Nadu's hard-won gains from quarantine of travellers, systematic screening and monitoring of individuals at higher risk, contact tracing and community surveillance face an unexpected challenge.

Although its fallout will be known in the days ahead, the crowding episode could pass off as an aberration if the focus returns to raising administrative efficiency. This should not be difficult, since the government has a white list of permitted activity. Barring emergencies, care needs of patients with chronic non-COVID conditions and death of kin, the average citizen can weather a lockdown reasonably well if food, medicines and other essentials are available. Longer shutdowns will create other stresses, since no household maintenance work is possible and spares are not available. But the crowding challenge during the lockdown is posed mainly by the use of personal vehicles. Restricting this is feasible if governments can bring essential articles virtually to one's doorstep or make them available within walking distance. Physical distancing and a 'no mask, no service' rule should apply. An expanded permit system for delivery agents not just from online platforms, but authorised local merchants could address this. Such an approach was envisaged even in the Home Ministry's lockdown order last month, and it assumes greater significance now. Creating scannable codes can help essential services function smoothly and enable easier policing. A system of codes may be inevitable, when select activity such as movement of industrial workers is permitted in future. Periodic lockdowns may also become common, when there are infection spikes. The administration needs refined tools and a consultative process with all sectors for this new normal.

# At the edge of a new nuclear arms race

The U.S.'s moves to resume nuclear testing, also signalling the demise of the ill-fated CTBT, could be the first signs



RAKESH SOOD

In mid-April, a report issued by the United States State Department on "Adherence to and Compliance with Arms Control, Nonproliferation, and Disarmament Agreements and Commitments (Compliance Report)" raised concerns that China might be conducting nuclear tests with low yields at its Lop Nur test site, in violation of its Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) undertakings.

The U.S. report also claims that Russia has conducted nuclear weapons experiments that produced a nuclear yield and were inconsistent with "zero yield" understanding underlying the CTBT, though it was uncertain about how many such experiments had been conducted.

Russia and China have rejected the U.S.'s claims, but with growing rivalry among major powers the report is a likely harbinger of a new nuclear arms race which would also mark the demise of the CTBT that came into being in 1996 but has failed to enter into force even after a quarter century.

### What does CTBT ban mean?

For decades, a ban on nuclear testing was seen as the necessary first step towards curbing the nuclear arms race but Cold War politics made it impossible. A Partial Test Ban Treaty was concluded in 1963 banning underwater and atmospheric tests but this only drove testing underground. By the time the CTBT negotiations began in Geneva in 1994, global politics had changed. The Cold War had ended and the nuclear arms race was over. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, or the USSR, had broken up and its principal testing

site, Semipalatinsk, was in Kazakhstan (Russia still had access to Novaya Zemlya near the Arctic circle). In 1991, Russia declared a unilateral moratorium on testing, followed by the U.S. in 1992. By this time, the U.S. had conducted 1,054 tests and Russia, 715.

Negotiations were often contentious. France and China continued testing, claiming that they had conducted far fewer tests and needed to validate new designs since the CTBT did not imply an end to nuclear deterrence. France and the U.S. even toyed with the idea of a CTBT that would permit testing at a low threshold, below 500 tonnes of TNT equivalent. This was one-third of the "Little Boy", the bomb the U.S. dropped on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945 – its explosive yield was estimated to be the equivalent of 15,000 tonnes of TNT. Civil society and the non-nuclear weapon states reacted negatively to such an idea and it was dropped. Some countries proposed that the best way to verify a comprehensive test ban would be to permanently shut down all test sites, an idea that was unwelcome to the nuclear weapon states.

Eventually, the U.S. came up with the idea of defining the "comprehensive test ban" as a "zero yield" test ban that would prohibit supercritical hydro-nuclear tests but not sub-critical hydrodynamic nuclear tests. Once the United Kingdom and France came on board, the U.S. was able to prevail upon Russia and China to accept this understanding. After all, this was the moment of the U.S.'s unipolar supremacy. At home, the Clinton administration in the U.S. satisfied the hawks by announcing a science-based nuclear Stockpile Stewardship and Management Program, a generously funded project to keep the nuclear laboratories in business and the Pentagon happy. Accordingly, the CTBT prohibits all parties from carrying out "any nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear ex-



GETTY IMAGES/SUSAN COOPER PHOTO

### Why it lacks authority

Another controversy arose regarding the entry-into-force provisions (Article 14) of the treaty. After India's proposals for anchoring the CTBT in a disarmament framework did not find acceptance, in June 1996, India announced its decision to withdraw from the negotiations. Unhappy at this turn, the U.K., China and Pakistan took the lead in revising the entry-into-force provisions. The new provisions listed 44 countries by name whose ratification was necessary for the treaty to enter into force and included India. India protested that this attempt at arm-twisting violated a country's sovereign right to decide if it wanted to join a treaty but was ignored. The CTBT was adopted by a majority vote and opened for signature.

Of the 44 listed countries, to date only 36 have ratified the treaty. China, Egypt, Iran, Israel and the U.S. have signed but not ratified. China maintains that it will only ratify if the U.S. does so but the Republican dominated Senate had rejected it in 1999. In addition, North Korea, India and Pakistan are the three who have not signed. All three have also undertaken tests after 1996; India and Pakistan in May 1998 and North Korea six times between 2006 and 2017. The CTBT has therefore not entered into force and lacks legal authority.

Nevertheless, an international organisation to verify the CTBT was established in Vienna with a

staff of about 230 persons and an annual budget of \$130 million. Ironically, the U.S. is the largest contributor with a share of \$17 million. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO) runs an elaborate verification system built around a network of over 325 seismic, radionuclide, infrasound and hydroacoustic (underwater) monitoring stations. The CTBTO has refrained from backing the U.S.'s allegations.

### Competition is back

The key change from the 1990s is that the U.S.'s unipolar moment is over and strategic competition among major powers is back. The U.S. now identifies Russia and China as 'rivals'. Its Nuclear Posture Review asserts that the U.S. faces new nuclear threats because both Russia and China are increasing their reliance on nuclear weapons. The U.S., therefore, has to expand the role of its nuclear weapons and have a more usable and diversified nuclear arsenal. The Trump administration has embarked on a 30-year modernisation plan with a price tag of \$1.2 trillion, which could go up over the years. Readiness levels at the Nevada test site that has been silent since 1992 are being enhanced to permit resumption of testing at six months notice.

Russia and China have been concerned about the U.S.'s growing technological lead particularly in missile defence and conventional global precision-strike capabilities. Russia has responded by exploring hypersonic delivery systems and theatre systems while China has embarked on a modernisation programme to enhance the survivability of its arsenal which is considerably smaller. In addition, both countries are also investing heavily in offensive cyber capabilities.

The new U.S. report stops short of accusing China for a violation but refers to "a high level of activity at the Lop Nur test site through-

out 2019" and concludes that together with its lack of transparency, China provokes concerns about its intent to observe the zero-yield moratorium on testing.

The U.S. claims that Russian experiments have generated nuclear yield but is unable to indicate how many such experiments were conducted in 2019. It suggests that Russia could be testing in a manner that releases nuclear energy from an explosive canister, generating suspicions about its compliance.

The New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) limits U.S. and Russian arsenals but will expire in 2021 and U.S. President Donald Trump has already indicated that he does not plan to extend it. Instead, the Trump administration would like to bring China into some kind of nuclear arms control talks, something China has avoided by pointing to the fact that the U.S. and Russia still account for over 90% of global nuclear arsenals.

### Current context

Both China and Russia have dismissed the U.S.'s allegations, pointing to the Trump administration's backtracking from other negotiated agreements such as the Iran nuclear deal or the U.S.-Russia Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. Tensions with China are already high with trade and technology disputes, militarisation in the South China Sea and most recently, with the novel coronavirus pandemic. The U.S. could also be preparing the ground for resuming testing at Nevada.

The Cold War rivalry was already visible when the nuclear arms race began in the 1950s. New rivalries have already emerged. Resumption of nuclear testing may signal the demise of the ill-fated CTBT, marking the beginnings of a new nuclear arms race.

Rakesh Sood is a former diplomat and presently Distinguished Fellow at the Observer Research Foundation

# Rollback the distrust, remember the core values

Societal relations are fragile and need constant nursing; social peace is a pre-requisite for progress



HAMID ANSARI

Sanity, said in a line in an old movie, exists in every contract. It is so in every social compact that precedes the establishment of any society or social grouping. One is reminded of it by recent reports of expressions of hostility and downright hatred by a section of our people against another. Are these expressive of atavistic impulses of yore or generated by more recent trends seeking social hegemony premised on an imaginary past?

### Foundational values

The basic values of India's Constitution assert the principles of justice, equality and fraternity and are reiterated by all sections of social and political leadership. Yet, those who profess to be their followers tend to forget them time and again.

We have in recent weeks witnessed social debates and contestations, normal in a democracy, derail into aggressive assertions that typecast fellow citizens as enemies or undesirable creatures. The trend even finds its reflection in pronouncements of public figures and officials. Both have been prone to forget that even if a citizen is charged with an offence against the law or found to be guilty of it by the due process of law, he or she does not cease to be a citizen and stands deprived of rights and duties of citizenship. The conclusion is inescapable that the sole purpose of such typecasting is to find an excuse for an administrative failure and instead cast a slur, stigmatise and socially degrade a group of fellow citizens.

The trend is so pervasive that it finds expression in sections of our citizens living in foreign lands; it is so aggressive that it offends local sentiments and norms of behaviour; so alarming that it has invited reaction from otherwise friendly local hosts and compelled our authorities, belatedly, to state the official position at the highest level.



GETTY IMAGES/SUSAN COOPER PHOTO

This ailment of the mind is being reflected in the discharge of normal duties by officials at different levels and is alarming enough to induce a group of 100 of our most eminent former civil servants to appeal, recently, to State Chief Ministers "to instruct all public functionaries to be particularly vigilant to prevent social boycott of any community in the State and to ensure that all the entitlements including medical and hospital care, rations and financial assistance are available equally to all those in need".

Why is this happening? What have we forgotten or disowned?

The plurality of our society and its diversity is an existential reality. The imperative of coexistence and tolerance has been accepted

down the ages. Sages and society leaders have reiterated it time and again. We need only to recall Swami Vivekananda's advocacy of religious pluralism, to his vision of India "being the junction of two great systems – Hinduism and Islam – having a Vedantic brain and Islamic body".

### Approach worth reiterating

This same approach in a more practical sense was reflected in the Inter-communal Unity Appeal made in October 1923 by a group of Indians led by Lala Lajpat Rai, Mufi Kifayatullah, Swami Shirdhanand, Maulana Azad, Kasturba Gandhi and 95 others. All sections of our public need to be reminded of its pragmatic approach:

"If any individual or group of individuals belonging to any community commits an act of violence against, or attacks the person, property or honour of women or places of worship (mandir, mosque, church or gurdwara, etc) of his neighbour or townsman or helps those who indulge in such misdeeds, he is, from the religious point of view, guilty of a great sin; and that it is the duty of co-reli-

gionists of such offenders to stand up and resist such miscreants and to protect those who are so attacked."

Why can we not show the mirror in this shape to our professedly religion-minded public and urge it to follow in word and deed? The present approach of distrust is disquieting, resulting in resentment, and injection of suspicion and viciousness in social relations. It impacts adversely on the promotion of fraternity. Is it serving any purpose, either of fighting the pandemic or of expediting the process of proceeding against those who may have transgressed the law? Alternatively, is it serving a political purpose?

History tells us that human relationships are fragile and need constant nursing; the same holds for societal relations. We have in our own times witnessed the fragmentation, even destruction, of societies elsewhere. Social peace is thus a pre-requisite for progress and development. Let sanity prevail. Let this be our motto.

Hamid Ansari is Former Vice President of India (2007-2017)

## 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.

### Trump's musings

It is not surprising that U.S. President Donald Trump's thoughtless suggestion of "injecting disinfectants" into people to combat the COVID-19 virus, has drawn ire from many quarters ('World' page, "Uproar after Trump suggests 'injecting disinfectant' as cure", April 25). POTUS has never failed to shock the world with such statements beginning with threatening India with consequences if it did not send hydroxychloroquine across.

E.S. CHANDRASEKARAN, Chennai

When the world is working hard to try and control the pandemic, controversial statements from responsible leaders are disappointing. Ever since the outbreak of the novel coronavirus in the U.S. the American leader has made statements which are least expected from a person of his standing. With the presidential elections round

the corner and with the disease at its peak in the U.S., the President should avoid controversy.

AJAY S. KUMAR, Thiruvananthapuram

### Who is wrong again

Early on, the World Health Organization (WHO) denied person-to-person transmission for want of evidence – subsequently proven wrong. Later, WHO did not assess the spread of infection to countries on all continents as pandemic; its declaration was thereby delayed by at least four weeks, misleading the world. Then, WHO advised that mask-wearing was not necessary for the uninfected, based on the knowledge that a mask on the infected person cuts down transmission. Apparently evidence for infection-reduction by the uninfected wearing mask was not available, but the protection from inhaling droplets was not appreciated. Now,

everyone appreciates the value of the universal use of masks. WHO now says that it is currently no evidence that people who have recovered from COVID-19 and have antibodies are protected from a second infection ('World' page, "Recovered patients not immune to re-infection", April 26). If true, recovered persons do not necessarily have virus neutralising antibodies to prevent infection. That is indirect discouragement of convalescent plasma therapy for severe COVID pneumonia. Absence of evidence is conflated as evidence of an absence of antiviral immunity. Unless proven otherwise, recovered persons have antibodies that can be transfused to save lives. There is no precedent for a virulent virus infection not inducing antibodies in humans – that is applicable only to the original hosts, bats. The human immune system is different and recovery from an infection

means immunity.

D. T. JACOB JOHN, Vellore, Tamil Nadu

### Textbook examples

It needs to be stated that notwithstanding the pitfalls in handling of the crisis in certain areas – the most prominent among them being the inability to address the concerns and grievances of migrant labourers – the response of the Centre in imposing a nation-wide lockdown was swift and calibrated keeping in mind the urgency of the situation. The Union government has done a creditable job of containing the quantum of deaths as compared to the situation in developed countries that have floundered on the basics (Editorial page, "Troughs and crests in the pandemic response", April 25). In addition to Germany and Kerala, it is relevant to mention the invaluable efforts taken by Cuba in fighting the novel

coronavirus and helping other nations in these times of crisis. And this has been despite hostility by way of economic sanctions imposed on it by the western world. In this hour of crisis, it is imperative to remember Cuba's iconic Fidel Castro, who strengthened the vital pillars of a welfare state.

B. SURESH KUMAR, Coimbatore

### Wet markets

If there is a possibility that the coronavirus pandemic has its origins in a wet market, it only calls for scrutiny of such facilities. As wildlife is sold too, despite policies designed to protect them, there is only a blurred distinction between a wet market and a wildlife market, if at all it exists. Poorly maintained wet markets are thus conducive to the transmission of pathogens. Perhaps the enforcement of a ban on the trade in wildlife for food, ensuring strict food safety and hygiene

standards, protective clothing, and less meat in one's diet can reduce the risks that wet markets pose.

G. DAVID MULLON, Maruthancode, Tamil Nadu

### Coconut cricket

Hailing from a small town in Kerala, my childhood was also set in a similar arena as we played cricket in coconut groves and paddy fields with gusto (Open Page, "No gully game, it's grove cricket", April 26). As the writer has described his experience, wet made bats, balls and stumps out of coconut tree branches. A PTT article of 2019 described how Brian Lara began his baby steps in cricket with a bat made by his brother that was made from a coconut branch. On a lighter note, our similarities end there as Lara ended up stamping his class in the annals of world cricket.

MANOJ A.M., Bengaluru

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**The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)—described as the “longest sought and hardest fought for arms control treaty in history”—was opened for signature in September 1996. The CTBT obligates countries that sign and ratify “not to carry out any nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion.”**

**It provides for an extensive verification regime including an International Monitoring System (IMS) to detect nuclear explosions, a global infrastructure for satellite communications from IMS stations to an International Data Center (IDC) that processes and distributes data to State Parties, and for on-site inspections, which may be requested by any State Party to determine whether suspected cheating has occurred. To implement these verification arrangements, the treaty establishes a Comprehensive Test Ban Organization (CTBTO) located in Vienna.**

**CTBT and India**

**India’s commitment to a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing dates back to 1954 when Jawaharlal Nehru called for a “standstill agreement” whereby testing of all nuclear weapons was to be immediately suspended, pending an agreement on their complete prohibition. It was again at India’s initiative that the item “Suspension of Nuclear and Thermo-Nuclear Tests” was included in the agenda of the UN in 1959.**

**During the course of the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) Geneva on the CTBT, India put forward a number of proposals consistent with the mandate adopted by the CD in 1994. These proposals were aimed at ensuring that the CTBT would be truly comprehensive and would be part of the step-by-step process of eliminating all nuclear weapons.**

**However, these proposals were regrettably ignored and instead, Article XIV on Entry. Into Force requiring India to join the treaty before it became operational was adopted in violation of basic treaty law. India was thus forced to declare its opposition to the CTBT as it emerged.**

**India is not a member of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. India’s is neither a signatory to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) nor to the CTBT because it believes its present format to be discriminatory. A part of the scientific sector in India believes that signing CTBT would obstruct India’s nuclear development.**

**About New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty):**

**It is a nuclear arms reduction treaty between the United States and the Russian Federation with the formal name of Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms.**

**It was signed on 8 April 2010 in Prague, and, after ratification entered into force on 5 February 2011.**

**New START replaced the Treaty of Moscow (SORT), which was due to expire in December 2012. Its name is a follow-up to the START I treaty, which expired in December 2009, the proposed START II treaty, which never entered into force, and the START III treaty, for which negotiations were never concluded.**

**Under terms of the treaty:**

**The number of strategic nuclear missile launchers will be reduced by half.**

**A new inspection and verification regime will be established, replacing the SORT mechanism.**

**The number of deployed strategic nuclear warheads is limited to 1,550, which is down nearly two-thirds from the original START treaty, as well as 10% lower than the deployed strategic warhead limit of the 2002 Moscow Treaty.**

**It will also limit the number of deployed and non-deployed inter-continental ballistic missile (ICBM) launchers, submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) launchers, and heavy bombers equipped for nuclear armaments to 800. The number of deployed ICBMs, SLBMs, and heavy bombers equipped for nuclear armaments is limited to 700.**

**Timeline to meet these Targets:**

**These obligations must be met within seven years from the date the treaty enters into force. The treaty will last ten years, with an option to renew it for up to five years upon agreement of both parties.**

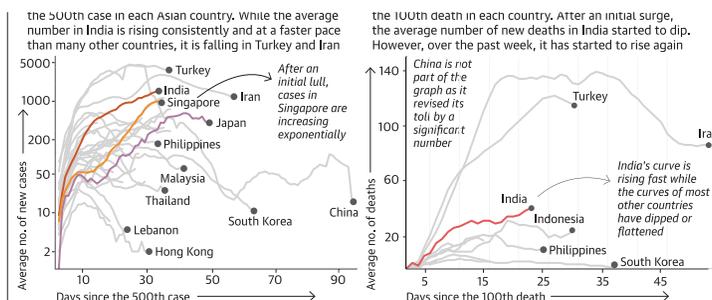
“natural selection in humans following zoonotic transfer.”

If we can now assume the origins were natural, the source remains a mystery. Whether the original source, presumably a bat, was being studied at a lab (we know the WIV did indeed research bat coronaviruses), sold at a market, or infected another animal that was sold at a market remains a matter of pure conjecture.

Could the virus have leaked from the lab in an accident? Some lab leak advocates have pointed to 2018 U.S. State Department cables expressing serious concerns over safety practices at the WIV. Others cite a February 6 study by Xiao Botao of the South

community, new theories are usually regarded as credible based on the evidence with which they are offered; they aren’t believed to be true until evidence disproves them. That isn’t, however, how the rest of the world operates. This may explain why the lab leak theory appears to be less popular with scientists than it is with politicians, journalists and foreign policy experts. Which side of the debate you stand on may have less to do with a question of science than your political beliefs, even if this still unanswered question is one perhaps best left to the scientists.

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valence of anarchy and excesses in nations where legality is abused and the legal spirit is decadent. And with the growth of democracy, when legislative responsibility from the hands of the few, more and more into the hands of the people, and the ideas of the average citizen begin to have a direct and immediate influence on matters municipal, imperial and universal, it becomes the duty of the State to prepare the masses for the increased responsibilities of citizenship by giving them an adequate knowledge of the machinery of the Government, an appreciation of the meaning and importance of legal institutions, their justification and plans in national life and thus help them to understand the correct relation between the individual and the State.

FROM PAGE ONE

## Cases near 27,000-mark with increase of 1,975

On the status of availability of medical equipment and facilities in the country, Dr. Vardhan said the government had already made available sufficient quantities of Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) at the State level. "Now we have around 106 manufacturing units which are capable of making them in India itself which will be enough to meet the increasing requirement of our country in future."

"There are now 10 manufacturers of N-95 masks in the country," he said.

Speaking about the availability of ventilators, he said, "Through the efforts of

the government and our various research labs, the production of ventilators by domestic manufacturers has also started and orders have been placed for more than 59,000 units through 9 manufacturers."

Elaborating on the adequacy of the ventilators, oxygen supplies and ICUs that have been made available by the Centre and the States, he said "When we compare the number of active patients who are currently hospitalised, we find that only 2.17% patients have been admitted to ICU, 1.29% patients have required oxygen support and mere 0.36% are on ventilator."

## Industries hobbled by curbs on mobility of staff

Almost 40% of companies faced delays and disruptions, while 23% said such movement was not taking place at all. Even those businesses which have restarted work are still functioning at partial strength. Only 10% of plants were functioning at more than 50% of their full capacity, while only 9% of firms have more than half their workers back on site. "The return of workers is

critical to commencing business operations. Timely and effective transport and safety strategies are imperative to ensure that workers have the confidence to return to workplaces as well as commute on a daily basis," said CII Director General Chandrajit Banerjee. Almost 70% of respondents expressed fear that they would face criminal cases if any of their workers tested positive.

## Do more testing: Manmohan

Congress calls for comprehensive strategy in dealing with the lockout-exit

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has said that without aggressive testing facilities, India will find it difficult to "conquer" the challenge posed by COVID-19, according to the Congress.

The party on Sunday released a short video of an online meeting of the Congress consultative group, headed by Dr. Singh. Senior leaders and former Union Ministers, forming part of the group, discuss different aspects of the pandemic every alternate days.

"There are problems with regard to the inadequacies of the testing facilities. Without aggressive testing facilities, we are not going to conquer this menace," Dr. Singh said.

Former Union Minister Jairam Ramesh said India had the capacity to triple the number of testing. "If we have to reach the threshold of 1% of the population, we should do something like 10 million tests," he said.



Former party president Rahul Gandhi called for a policy for protecting migrant workers, and said the State governments should drive the fight against the novel coronavirus. "Our migrant strategy should include 100% protection. The idea that you can tell the migrant to forget it or it is his problem, that has to be censured. The movement of the migrant should depend on and done through the States, and they should have a conversation," Mr. Gandhi said.

Agreeing with Mr. Gandhi, former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram said the Centre should leave it to the States, from where the migrant workers came, to find ways to take them back. "But

the bulk will remain where they are and they need to be given cash and foodgrains," he said.

While Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said the government's first financial assistance plan was inadequate, Lok Sabha member Manish Tewari called for a plan for the country to come out of the lockdown.

"It is incumbent upon us to collectively apply our minds and see if we can suggest a smart plan as to how do we transition out of this lockdown because of all the issues which have been flagged," Mr. Tewari said.

At an online press conference, Mr. Tewari questioned the government's mo-

tive. "Is there any attempt to play down the magnitude of the problem or is the government unsure that if we go in for enhancing the testing capacity, it does not have the capacity to deal with its implications," he asked. "We hope that the Prime Minister puts out a comprehensive, holistic strategy in dealing with the lockout-exit and the situation for the next three months, during his meeting with chief ministers on Monday," he said.

Mr. Tewari said that until there was a national plan to deal with disasters or pandemics under the relevant laws, the State governments could not formulate plans to deal with post-lockdown issues. He stressed that information from experts indicated that "the virus is here to stay and India needs to work out a strategy with the virus around".

He also asked the government to prepare a plan to mitigate the pain of the migrants.

## Assam's BTAD might see Governor's rule

Polls were deferred due to the pandemic

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

The COVID-19 pandemic may earn Governor's rule for the Bodoland Territorial Area Districts (BTAD) in Assam.

The State's Governor is the constitutional head of the BTAD that falls under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution and is administered by the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC).

The BTAD covers four districts of western and northern Assam.

Elections were scheduled to be held for the BTC on April 4 but was deferred indefinitely in view of the pandemic.

The council's current term expires on April 27.

Some political parties, including the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), do not want the term to be extended.

After a meeting with Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal last week, a BJP de-

legation met Governor Jagdish Mukhi and sought imposition of Governor's rule in BTAD.

The delegation argued that the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath would make it impossible to hold the elections in the near future.

The BJP rules Assam in alliance with the Asom Gana Parishad and the Bodoland People's Front (BPF), which has been ruling BTC since its creation in 2003.

The All Bodo Students' Union, an influential organisation, has also appealed against extending the council's term.

The BPF, on the other hand, wants the term extended by six months or elections held soon.

Party leader and Social Welfare Minister Pramila Rani Brahma said the election can be conducted as BTAD does not have a single COVID-19 case.

## Centre effects major reshuffle of officials

Two senior officials from the Prime Minister's Office moved out to important positions

MAHESH LANGA  
AHMEDABAD

In a much-awaited large-scale reshuffle in the Central administration, the Modi government has appointed or

(SME) would be the focus of the government after the pandemic, Mr. Modi has posted his trusted aide to concentrate his efforts and energies on it, which forms



shifted as Secretary Culture. Ravi Kant, Secretary, Food and Public Distribution, has been made Secretary, Ex-Servicemen Welfare in the Ministry of Defence. Inter-

IN BRIEF



Kanika Kapoor responds to quarantine allegations  
LUCKNOW  
Singer Kanika Kapoor on

### What is the INF Treaty?

**The INF Treaty was signed in December 1987 by President Ronald Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev.**

**It prohibited the United States and the Soviet Union from possessing, testing and deploying ground-launched cruise and ballistic missiles with ranges between 300 and 3,400 miles (488km and 5,472km).**

**Under the treaty, Washington and Moscow destroyed 846 and 1,846 missiles, respectively.**

**Short flight times and unpredictable flight patterns made these missiles hard to detect, so strategists argued that these systems exacerbated crisis instability and increased the chances of accidental nuclear war.**

**Given their relatively limited range, these systems were designed chiefly to fight a theatre nuclear war in Europe.**

**European countries, therefore, considered the destruction of these missiles highly beneficial to regional security.**

**INF Treaty covered all types of ground-launched cruise and ballistic missiles — whether their payload is conventional or nuclear.**

**Moscow and Washington are prohibited from deploying these missiles anywhere in the world, not just in Europe.**

**However, the treaty only applies to ground-launched systems. Both sides are free to deploy air- and sea-launched missiles within the 300- to 3,400-mile range**

**Reasons for US withdrawal:**

**President Barack Obama's administration first voiced concerns about Russian violations in 2013, and a year later, Obama sent Russian President Vladimir Putin a letter urging discussions. Both the Obama and Trump administrations communicated with Russia more than thirty times over the issue, but to no avail.**

**The US officials have identified the 9M729 cruise missile as their main concern. Earlier this year, President Donald J. Trump said the United States would terminate the treaty because of Russian noncompliance. U.S. officials claimed that Russia breached the treaty by deploying systems for an intermediate-range missiles known as the SSC-8.**

**Trump also raised concerns about China's missiles, which are not constrained by the agreement even though an estimated 95 percent are in the INF range. But the majority of these Chinese missiles are fitted with conventional, not nuclear, warheads, and the United States and Russia possess more than 90 percent of global nuclear stockpiles, far exceeding China's capabilities.**

**Moscow denied the treaty violation, demanded to see the evidence and responded with its own list of alleged US infractions, as well as the exhibition of a launch tube that it claimed was that of the 9M729 of US. Putin said his country would suspend its INF obligations as well. Russian officials charged that the United States had also violated the treaty, though Washington and its allies called those charges spurious**

**Some observers have argued that the INF Treaty is "Eurocentric," failing to take into account the US-Chinese military balance — which is becoming increasingly central to Washington's strategic calculations**

## Impact on global politics:

The INF withdrawal issue has been controversial with US allies, further straining the Nato alliance at a difficult time for transatlantic relations. Nato had favoured a policy designed to push Moscow back into compliance. It is unlikely that Nato allies will agree to host US intermediate-range systems on their territory, a move some fear would lead to a new arms race in Europe

The abandonment of the pact leaves Europe exposed to Russian land-based missiles capable of hitting their targets within minutes. Russia's new missiles are land-based, mobile, difficult to identify, rapidly employable and armed with conventional or nuclear warheads, and can strike almost any target in most European countries with little to no warning time. According to the experts, with the loss of the treaty, "Europe loses a central pillar of its security"

Withdrawal will probably not lead to a new INF deal binding the United States, Russia and China. China has rejected the US offer of trilateral arms control talks. Moscow and Washington engaged in strategic stability discussions this year, but as yet nothing substantive has emerged

The collapse of the INF Treaty leaves New START, (is a nuclear arms reduction treaty between the United States and the Russian Federation. It entered into force on 5 February 2011 and is expected to last at least until 2021)

governing strategic weapons, as the only US-Russia nuclear arms control deal still standing. But the USA's recent comments criticising New START as "flawed from the beginning" suggest that the Trump administration is unlikely to extend it past its expiration date of 2021. In the absence of new accords, the five-decade-old US-Russian nuclear arms control regime will meet its demise

## Implications for Asia

China, India, North Korea, and Pakistan – these four nuclear weapons states in Asia also have missiles in this class. The U.S. decision to abrogate the INF Treaty is a signal to the leadership of all four nations that arms control and disarmament is no longer an important global norm. If Russia and the United States continue to undermine that norm, all four of these nations may feel less constrained in the development of their nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs.

Without the INF's constraints, the U.S. may begin to pressure Japan, Taiwan, and other Asian allies to deploy U.S. ground-based intermediate-range missiles on their territory. Those missiles need not be armed with nuclear weapons. Most of China's missiles in this class are armed with conventional high explosives. The United States will try to persuade its Asian allies by arguing new missiles are needed to counter China's. Increased numbers of conventionally-armed missiles kept on high alert will create new uncertainties that increase the risk of rapid escalation in a future military conflict.

Lessons learnt during the Cold War will need to be learned all over again. There is still strong support among the non-nuclear weapons states to uphold the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and to pressure the nuclear weapons states to honor their NPT obligation to return to the negotiating table. The passage of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) is an important step forward

ES said a total 22,010 tests using RT-PCR method and 4,975 rapid antibody tests were carried out in the State. Of the total tests, 103 were found to be positive. Now, 68 are active COVID-19 cases, 35 have been discharged and one is reported dead.

As of now, highest 46 positive cases were detected in Khordha district followed by Jajpur with 18 and Bhadrak with 16 cases. Balasore has reported 10 cases.

The reason behind the spurt in positive cases is attributed to the arrival of people from West Bengal.

According to the government, 39 cases with travel history to the neighbouring State were reported.

Another serious health threat – snakebite.

Once the coronavirus scare recedes, the ventilators will prove a key life-saving asset for hundreds of people in the State who die due to snakebites every year. Snakebites have claimed 3,565 lives in Odisha in the past five years. In 2019-20 alone, as many as 723 persons died from snakebites. The year 2018-19 had worse numbers with 913 snakebite deaths.

According to Pratyush Mohapatra, a scientist with Zoological Survey of India, toxin injected during snakebite affects the nervous system and the bite becomes fatal especially in the case of bites by the common krait in



Many fronts: The Odisha government has made available 5,486 beds in 34 COVID-19 dedicated hospitals. ▶

which no local symptoms are detected.

"If not treated immediately, victims may die from respiratory failure. It is often found that absence of ventilator facility in district level government health institutions increases chances of fatality in snakebites," said Dr. Mohapatra.

Although snakebite was declared as a State-specific disaster in 2015, health infrastructure was not upgraded

to deal with the threat.

"Acute neuromuscular paralysis, a type of neurotoxicity, is caused due to bite of cobras and kraits. Mechanical ventilation, intensive care and anti-venom treatment with prolonged hospital stays are key to snakebite treatment," said the ZSI scientist.

Despite recording high snakebite deaths, the government had never added ventilator facilities as well as

panchayat response, the State government has ramped up ventilator facilities in government health-care institutions.

"Prior to COVID-19 pandemic, we had 297 ventilators available in the State. Now, we have already added 57 while ventilator facilities have significantly improved in private sector," said Bijay Mohapatra, State Director of Health Service.

During past one month, the government has made available 5,486 beds in 34 COVID-19 only hospitals. As many as 352 ICU beds are available. Many of these ICUs have ventilator facilities.

As the monsoon is approaching, people in rural areas will become more vulnerable to snakebite.

community transmission had been the highlight of the fight against COVID-19 in the State.

Restricting the positive cases to quarantine centres and keeping a few cases of secondary transmissions from public contact had been a success story for the State, he claimed.

Assam has till date recorded 35 COVID-19 positive cases with one of them, a 65-year-old man, having died a fortnight ago. All but one of these cases have been linked to the Tablighi Jamaat event in Delhi's Nizamuddin in March.

While 25 of more than 600 Tablighi Jamaat returnees tested positive, nine



Himanta Biswa Sarma

caught the virus from them either at home or at small gatherings in specific places. The government is yet to find the source of one of the positive cases, who recovered later.

"We have nothing to fear if more cases come from quarantine centres, but we will have to assess from a different perspective if a case is reported from a village or a town tomorrow," Mr. Sarma said.

The doctors' body has sought "more intensive testing, especially for each and every healthcare provider..."

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## Shah supervising anti-virus fight, SC told

Status report says Home Ministry has taken effective and proactive actions

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

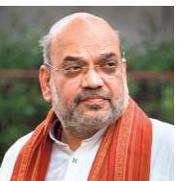
A status report filed by the government in the Supreme Court said Union Home Minister Amit Shah is personally supervising the implementation of directives and advisories issued by his ministry in the fight against COVID-19.

The report, which is the second one filed in a petition in connection with a petition filed by advocate Alakh Alok Srivastava, said the Home Ministry has taken "immediate, timely, effective and proactive actions almost on a daily basis". The case is

scheduled to be heard on April 27.

The report, signed by Union Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla, said, "Home Minister is personally supervising the implementation of various directives/advisories issued by the Home Ministry along with the Cabinet Secretary, Home Secretary and senior officers in the control room which is operational 24 hours".

The reports also lists how the Civil Aviation Ministry has started 'Lifeline Udan' to transport essential medical cargo. Over 180 flights have flown over 1.6 lakh km carry-



Amit Shah

ing 258 tons of medical cargo.

It said the Indian Railways have served over 10 lakh free meals besides converting 4950 train coaches to COVID-19 care centres.

Among other steps taken, the report said the Press Information Bureau's Fact Check Unit had received, between April 2 and April 9, a total of 1,458 cases and replied or countered 1,324 cases. The status report said a Twitter handle by the Information Ministry called @COVIDNewsBy has 38,000 followers and its tweets have appeared 13 million times on the timelines of users.

The report said the Information Ministry engaged 165 celebrities in its awareness campaigns against virus spread through 620 video bulletins.

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**Expression of Interest**  
Sealed bids are invited through [www.eprocure.gov.in](http://www.eprocure.gov.in) Website from the eligible bidders for Supply and Fixing of LT TVR Meters with AMR Modems (DLMS with 5 years warranty)/ CT Operated Smart Meters with 5 years warranty. Implementation of MDMS Software to 65,650 Nos. Three Phase Transformers to LV Side of Agriculture Distribution Transformers and also for the New Agriculture Distribution Transformers being changed from time to time along with 5 years comprehensive AMC in the jurisdiction of APEPDCCL against specification No No. CGMO&CS/APEPDCCL/SP/10/2020-21. The EOJ will be made available from 27.04.2020 in [www.eprocure.gov.in](http://www.eprocure.gov.in) Web site. Further details can be viewed in [www.eprocure.gov.in](http://www.eprocure.gov.in) Contact Phone No: 0891-2582212.

Note: E-Tender notice issued earlier for supply and fixing of meter to Agricultural DTRs vide Bid No. CGMO&CS/APEPDCCL/SP/09/2019-20 is hereby cancelled. Advt-5

Chief General Manager/O&CS

CC shall be paid through PayTm and also POS machines at our counters at EOPDC for cashless transactions

**GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH, APEWIDC, VIJAYAWADA**  
Door No.576, Sai Fortune Heights, BlockA, Vaddeswaram, Guntur (D)-522502.

**NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING**  
"e-Procurement Notice Inviting Tender"  
NIT No. : 11 to 12 /MDI/APEWIDC/JA/2020-21 dated 25-04-2020

Tenders are invited on e-procurement from Original Equipment / Product manufacturers for Procurement of the following items

a) 4<sup>th</sup> Call - Water supply & Sanitary items (Toilets & Bath Rooms)  
b) 2<sup>nd</sup> Call - Painting to the Government Schools in Andhra Pradesh.

Submission of Tender / Bids through online - From 27-04-2020 to 05-05-2020 up to 15.00 Hrs and opening of Technical Bids on 05-05-2020 at 16.00 Hrs. For all details, visit e-procurement Platform @ [www.aeprocurement.gov.in](http://www.aeprocurement.gov.in). Changes if any will be communicated through the above e-Procurement platform only.

Sd/- Managing Director, APEWIDC, Vijayawada.

**Tamil Nadu Urban Finance and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited**  
(A Government of Tamil Nadu Undertaking)  
No.490/1-2, Anna Salai, Nandanam, Chennai - 600 035.  
Phone No.044-24329800, 24329801, Fax: 044-24350814, E-mail: [projsec.tufidco@tn.gov.in](mailto:projsec.tufidco@tn.gov.in)

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**  
Date: 10-03-2020

Lr.No.TUFIDCO/AMRUT/1055/AM (M)/2019

**Invitation of Bids for Establishment of Programme Management Unit (PMU) to provide Handholding support to TUFIDCO for implementation of AMRUT, Smart Cities Mission and Other Schemes in Tamil Nadu.**

TUFIDCO invites Bid from eligible and willing firms for Establishment of Programme Management Unit (PMU) to provide Handholding support to TUFIDCO for implementation of AMRUT, Smart Cities Mission and other schemes in Tamil Nadu.

The Bid Document for the above assignment may be downloaded free of cost from the websites: <http://www.tenders.tn.gov.in>, [www.tufidco.in](http://www.tufidco.in) from 11-03-2020 onwards.

**Revised Last Date and Time for Submission of Bids: 29-05-2020 - 3:00 p.m.**

Any clarification in this regard may be obtained from Dr. R. Murugan, Deputy General Manager, TUFIDCO, Chennai. Contact No.044-24329800, 24329801. Additional Chief Secretary/Chairman and Managing Director

DIPR/1691/Tender/2020

INTERVIEW | S.A. BOBDE

# 'Executive is better suited to deal with the COVID-19 crisis'

CJI says courts ensure that the rule of law does not suffer and people's lives and properties do not suffer, but they cannot deal with the situation on the ground

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL

Chief Justice of India S.A. Bobde says that the three 'Ms'—money, men and material—are with the Executive, which is the most suitable organ of governance to deal with the problems arising out of the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown. In a telephone interview, the CJI clarified that hearing of cases through videoconferencing are not in-camera hearings and virtual courts are not closed courts.

The Supreme Court has acted with certain restraint during the lockdown days

Imagine if this was an earthquake or floods or whatever... This is really a situation when the Executive gets into action. The usual three 'Ms' are 'men, material and money'. It is very difficult for the court to assume charge and say 'this is what the priority should be' and 'this is what it should be like'. The

Executive is better suited to decide on the 'whats', 'hows' and 'whens' of deploying money, material and men.

Of course, the courts ensure that rule of law does not suffer and people's lives and properties do not suffer. But courts cannot deal with the situation on the ground. What do courts normally do? Courts declare rights, which are given effect to by the Executive. This is not a situation where declaration of

rights has much priority or as much importance as in other times.

So, it comes down to the question of which organ of governance is best suited for the situation. Other than looking at the validity of administrative and executive action and protecting, say, the right to life, the courts have little to do.

The virus has changed the way cases are heard, from open court system to videoconferencing

Videoconferencing does not mean courts are closed. Virtual courts are not in-camera courts. When the video links are given, there are people who can see what is happening on the screen



from where the lawyers address the court. We are not prohibiting that. It is not a binary situation.

The distinction made between videoconferencing and open court system is not accurate. A better description would be virtual courts and 'courts in congregation'.

There is no absence of openness in the present videoconferencing proceed-

Courts are doing their best to cope... they are selecting and prioritising matters they must hear. They are continuing to hear cases through videoconferencing despite constraints

ings. Things are not being decided without anybody coming to know. Litigants can watch the proceedings. Lawyers are present. The other side is there. The court staff is there. Live reporting by the media is happening. Even people who are waiting for their cases to be called out are watching. Yes, maybe the number of

people who could attend like in a court in congregation is reduced. That is because a social distancing norm is in place as it is being done all over the country.

What has changed in the justice administration system after the lockdown?

The fact of the matter is there is much less pressure on the courts as very few actions are being taken in the country which normally generate litigation. The courts are not executing decrees, landlords are not throwing tenants out, there is no employer-employee trouble. Yes, there was total disarray in the labour field... But what I am saying is, normally problems come from recovery,

execution, tenants and landlords, administration action... The police are not as active in law and order area as it was earlier. I suppose criminals are less active in their areas, I suppose, I don't know... So, generally, events that generate litigation are few and far between. To that extent, pressure is also less on the courts and filing of cases is not what it was.

The court is going through a unique experience during the time of the COVID-19 lockdown which has crossed 30 days

The whole country is going through it and bearing it stoically. One has to be stoic in such a situation. The courts are doing their best to cope

with the situation, in particular, they are selecting and prioritising matters they must hear. Courts are continuing to hear cases despite constraints through videoconferencing.

Will the functioning of the court return to normal after May 3?

Too hazardous to say anything now. WHO projection for Maharashtra is a huge number. We don't know what is going to happen in Delhi. We are watching the situation closely and reviewing it once or twice a week. I am doing it. There is a committee set up by the judges to meet with the members of the Bar and take a decision.

## Over 30% ED officials resume work from office

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Over 30% of officials and staff of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) have started attending offices in the States where there are no specific restrictions on opening the office premises.

At the ED headquarters in Delhi, agency chief Sanjay Mishra and other senior officials have already been coming to office, whenever required.

"Even during the lockdown period, some officials had to work from office for urgent matters, like court proceedings on bail applications," said an official.

### Orders issued

Instructions had earlier been issued that all Ministries and departments under the Central government would become functional with effect from April 20.

Accordingly, the Defence, the Central Armed Police Forces, Health and Family Welfare, Disaster Management and early warning agencies, like the National Centre of Seismology, National Informatics Centre, and the Customs are functioning without any restriction.

### Curbs on attendance

Other Ministries and departments, and offices under their control, are functioning with 100% attendance of officials of the deputy secretary level and above.

As regards the remaining officials and staff, up to 33% of them are to attend office as per requirement.

## 'Blaming a community unfair'

Crisis due to the pandemic is an opportunity to build a new India: RSS chief

ALOK DESHPANDE MUMBAI

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat on Sunday said an entire community could not be blamed for the acts of a few. He appealed to leaders of communities to urge their members not to be part of such acts.

In an address to RSS workers through social media, Mr. Bhagwat said the crisis arising out of the spread of the novel coronavirus should be taken as an opportunity to build a new India that would lead the world. "Both sides should stay away from fear and anger. Those who lead the respective communities must save their communities from it. They should teach their communities that we must not be part of any act that takes place out of fear or anger," he said.

Mr. Bhagwat said that when such a precaution was not taken, two saints were killed in Maharashtra. "Keep the debate over it aside. But should that act be allowed? What should the police do when such an act takes place?" he said.

Earlier, he said the RSS decided in March itself to postpone all its programmes till June-end. "But someone might feel that the government is obstructing their



Swadeshi chant: RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat addressing workers online from Nagpur on Sunday. PHOTO BY TWITTER

programmes. There is no dearth of people who ignite a fire. It leads to anger and losing sense, resulting in an extremist act. We know that there are forces that want to benefit from it. It is one of the reasons for the manner in which the novel coronavirus has spread in India," Mr. Bhagwat said.

He added that even if someone committed any act

out of fear or anger, the entire community could not be blamed for it. "People with faults are everywhere. Ordinary people must realise that their position should be of co-operation and not of opposition. There are people who use doubts to spread fear and anger. They are playing games. For selfish reasons, many with thoughts like 'Bharat tere tukde honge' work towards this," he said.

Mr. Bhagwat said the crisis stemming out of the novel coronavirus should be converted into an opportunity to create a new India. "Not only the government but also society should participate [in the process]. We will use what is made here. We will buy foreign-made essentials on our own terms. We will have to use swadeshi [products]. We have to encourage swadeshi businesses," he said.

## Pawar seeks financial package for Maharashtra

It faces a shortfall of ₹1 lakh crore to sustain expenditure'

ALOK DESHPANDE MUMBAI

Nationalist Congress Party leader Sharad Pawar on Sunday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, saying Maharashtra would face a shortfall of ₹1,00,000 crore to sustain projected expenditure during the fiscal 2020-21 because of the lockdown. He demanded additional grants to close the gap.

"Revenue receipts projected in Maharashtra's budget for 2020-21 are about ₹3,47,000 crore, and economic activity is not likely to pick up much in the short term and may improve slightly in the medium term. Accordingly, as per the revised estimates, the expected revenue shortfall would be ₹1,40,000 crore. This is



Sharad Pawar

around 40% of the expected revenues and will leave a huge hole in the State's finances," he said.

Mr. Pawar said that as per the present borrowing limits (3% of the GSDP), the State could borrow up to ₹92,000 crore, of which ₹54,000 crore was planned for meeting the capital expenditure requirements. "So, it is clear the State is going to face a shortfall of ₹1,00,000 crore

to sustain the projected expenditure," he said. Covering the entire shortfall only with borrowings would push the State to a debt trap.

"The other strategy could be to cut public spending. But that would be counterproductive in view of the subdued economy. The State makes a repayment of ₹10,500 crore every year on account of the NSSF loan given by the Government of India. It is requested to extend a two-year moratorium on the repayment. Further, it is imperative that in these testing times, the Government of India should offer suitable financial assistance to the States. The Government of Maharashtra requests additional grants of untied nature to the tune of ₹1 lakh crore for FY 2020-21," he said.

## Food controller answers RTI queries in 12 hours

SIDHARTH YADAV BHOPAL

Information sought under the Right to Information (RTI) Act usually takes days, even months, to reach applicants. However, a social worker in Madhya Pradesh's Rewa district was in for a pleasant surprise.

Raghvendra Dubey, the social worker, got a reply to his query in just 12 hours—that too on WhatsApp. He had submitted the application through email at 9.30 p.m. on April 23. He wanted to know how many people in Kot village had been given free rations under the Prad-

han Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana, to tide over the lockdown. "Villagers had informed us that rations were not distributed to those eligible," said Mr. Dubey.

On the next day, at 9 a.m., his WhatsApp chimed. The district's Food Controller, Rajendra Singh Thakur, informed him that the supply of 113.75 quintals of rice to 2,275 individuals for each month was pending for two months.

Mr. Thakur was on a previous occasion fined by the State Information Commission for delay in giving out information.

## Australia cancels premier air exercise

Pitch Black 2020, scheduled to be held in July, scrapped in view of COVID crisis

DINAKAR PERI NEW DELHI

Australia has informed India that its premier multilateral air combat training exercise—Pitch Black 2020—scheduled from July 27 to August 14 has been cancelled due to the COVID-19 situation, defence sources said.

This was conveyed by Air Marshal Meg Hupfeld, Chief of the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), in a letter to Air Chief Marshal R.K.S. Bhaduria, in mid-April.

"The RAAF Chief informed of his decision to cancel the exercise this year



R.K.S. Bhaduria

due to the current and anticipated impacts of the worldwide pandemic of COVID-19," a defence source told *The Hindu*. He also noted

that while the IAF was not participating with aircraft, Ex Pitch Black 2020 would have provided an opportunity for engagement between our personnel, the source said.

### Next edition in 2022

The exercise is also an opportunity to interact with forces from across the globe, a second defence source said. The next edition of Pitch Black is scheduled for 2022.

In the last edition of Pitch Black in 2018, the IAF for the first time deployed fighter

aircraft which it had said would "provide a unique opportunity for exchange of knowledge and experience with these nations in a dynamic warfare environment".

The defence and strategic engagement with Australia has steadily gone up in recent years especially on the bilateral front with naval cooperation at the forefront. The bilateral naval exercise AUSINDEX early last year saw participation of the largest Australian contingent ever to India with over 1,000 personnel.

## IGNCA to start online lectures today

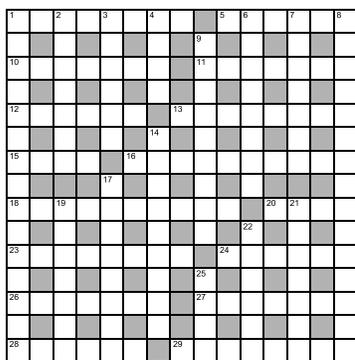
STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

With all its events cancelled due to COVID-19 crisis, the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) has decided to move its lectures online.

IGNCA member secretary Sachidanand Joshi told *The Hindu* that the lectures would be streamed on its Facebook page every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 4 p.m. The first lecture will be on the role of art and culture after COVID-19 by IGNCA trust president Ram Bahadur Rai.

## THE CROSSWORD+ 12920

There is no lockdown for your brain! Try solving a puzzle today! @ <https://crossword.thehindu.com>



- 15 Protester in demo conceals rough exterior (4)
- 16 Train disaster evokes the German complaint (10)
- 18 Documentation gets personal assistant to protest loudly after each time (5,5)
- 20 Western section is heated (4)
- 23 Further on behalf of hospital sections (8)
- 24 Space allotted to doctor in vault (6)
- 26 One taken captive by the army rages endlessly (7)
- 27 Old academics with no limits to audacity and to wit (7)
- 28 More inactive son leaves gardening equipment (6)
- 29 Pit is said to house girl without reservation (5,3)

### DOWN

- 1 How people should go to rescue when a bowler falls (2,3,4,2,1,3)
- 2 A number told to manage hazard (7)
- 3 Indian valley's up to the French simpleton (6)
- 4 At Indian lake, king gets Tamil leader to chat (4)
- 6 Solve and close up the holes? (8)
- 7 Prevent old boy endlessly avid to have tea spilt (7)
- 8 Befitting hero artfully protects me temporarily (3,3,4,5)
- 9 A fine fellow and kinky diva with sex appeal produce legal document (9)
- 14 Laid up, eastern doctor gets ordered about (9)
- 17 Fracture? Rest for a long time! (8)
- 19 Chunks of text on old broken sunshade (7)
- 21 Get rid of sailor removing cover of man from Warsaw (7)
- 22 To such a person French spa might be the answer (6)
- 25 The old expression of delight? For sure! (4)

- ACROSS
- 1 A fine female in big town about to leave relationship (8)
- 5 Quickly leave urn? (3,3)
- 10 Hard task to confine rum trouble in confused state (7)
- 11 Always in favour of woman, right? (7)
- 12 Entirely missing TN in circulation in a strange manner (6)
- 13 Robin in attempt at UK town to find water container (8)

## SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

### Solution to puzzle 12919

F	O	L	A	M	P	D	O	G	G	E
R	L	R	E	D	O	X	A			
E	J	E	C	T	N	E	S	S	G	R
N	A	T	I	T	E	C	R	O	P	
C	A	N	A	S	T	A	S	O	A	N
H	E	A	G	R	R	I	R			
P	E	R	O	N	R	E	N	T	R	A
O	A	M								
L	E	V	A	C	E	M	I	A	I	N
I	R	M		C	N					
S	T	O	P	P	E	R	I	M	A	G
N	E	L	L	E	A	N	G	R	E	P
E	M	O	L	L	I	E	N	D	O	N
D	G	L	V	E	R	L	L	T		
G	V	R	A	T	E	S	R	V	N	E

### Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

## FAITH

### Nathamuni's qualities

In our Acharya we must see God Himself. To understand the Supreme One, we need the help of the Vedas and other difficult texts. But an Acharya is right before us, making it easier for us to worship. If a man had a vessel full of water in his hands, would he not use it? Will he wait for it to rain, collect the rainwater and then use that? When an Acharya is present before us, to show us the right path, is not worshipping him the right thing to do? That is why Alavandar, in his *Stotra Ratnam*, praises Nathamuni, said Valayappam Ramachariar, in a discourse. A Sri Vaishnava's wealth lies in jnana, bhakti and vairagya, and Alavandar praises these three qualities of Nathamuni. We are drawn to an Acharya because of his qualities. In the *Kishkinda Kanda*, when Lakshmana speaks about Rama to Hanuman, he extols Rama's virtues and says that he became Rama's slave because of these qualities of Rama. Nathamuni was the sort of Acharya, who would attract people by his possession of desirable traits.

Alavandar uses adjectives *abdhuta*, *achintya* and *aklishta*, when talking of Nathamuni's qualities. His qualities cannot be comprehended by us. They are astounding. His jnana is not something that came to him after tapas. It was the Supreme One's gift to him. His jnana is *alokishta jnana*. Vishnu Puranam says that only jnana that pertains to Vedanta is jnana. All other knowledge is inferior. Only an Acharya with Vedantic knowledge can help us attain moksha. If an Acharya lacks jnana, can he guide us? Can a leaky boat help us cross a river? Nathamuni's jnana is about the Lord's rupa, His *svarupa*. His *kalyana gunas* etc. His bhakti is like a deep, unfathomable ocean. *Vairagya* is his quality of not attaching importance to anything that is worldly, and is a characteristic of Acharyas like Nathamuni.

■ KRITHVI SHYAM

Youngsters facing relationship issues and losing patience with their partners. Employees worried about when (if at all) their next paycheck will come in. Students with hazy academic futures. People living alone who just want someone to talk to. These are some of the phone calls that Amatullah Lokhandwala fields every day. A clinical psychologist, she volunteers with Wellbeing Volunteers United (WVU), an initiative started by Prakriti Poddar, Managing Trustee of the Poddar Foundation. With over 500 volunteers from all walks of life, WVU is a free distress line created during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, offering support in English and multiple regional languages. Its helpline number is 1800-121-0980.

"This is a time for action", says Amatullah, when asked why she volunteered. "During and after a pandemic, one should not lose sight of mental health. We are in unprecedented times, and it is natural to need help in coping with our situation."

#### Survival tips

Experts in the field share some coping mechanisms that might make the experience easier for you and those around you.

**Don't lose sight of a routine:** Stick to healthy eating and sleeping habits.

Dr. Alka Subramanyam, Associate Professor of the Department of Psychiatry at TNMC and BYL Nair Ch. Hospital in Mumbai, recommends that families plan their schedules together, so that everyone knows what the other is doing, and individual preferences can be accommodated. Seemingly harmless changes to a schedule

## Coping with lockdown anxiety

Maintaining one's mental wellbeing during a pandemic is as important as containing the viruses. Here are a few tips to make sure you stay clear in your head

can cause discomfort to others – for instance, if the family decides to eat a meal an hour later than the older adults are used to, it could impinge upon the latter's medication routine or have physiological consequences like reflux.

**Be mindful of each other:** Living through a lockdown is a new experience for everyone.

For youngsters used to going out, staying in can feel like a stifling loss of independence; for those whose work has come to a halt, it can feel like a loss of purpose; even for those older adults who have been home-bound, staying indoors isn't an issue – but if they live with family, having people around all the time can be quite an adjustment. Be mindful of this and find ways to listen to or accommodate each other's concerns.

Being in confined, shared spaces is also bound to cause friction between family members. Anshuma Kshetrapal, a psychotherapist and drama and movement therapist, says, "We are responsible for setting our own personal boundaries." She suggests picking the right time and having a conversation about it with loved ones – it could be something as simple as asking those around you to knock

before entering your room. To make the conversation go smoother, using the "I" language might help (for example, "This is something I would like, and I am checking if it is okay with you; it's not about causing offense or discomfort to you.")

**Minimise "corona time":** If you wish, spend 30-60 minutes in the morning or evening absorbing news and updates about the

pandemic. "The rest of the time, dedicate to self and to relationship," says Dr. Subramanyam.

For those who live away from their elderly parents or relatives, she advises against causing panic, and instead promotes "cautious concern". Though one might have good intentions, repeatedly calling one's parents to issue instructions could not only increase stress but also ruffle feathers; after all, those at the receiving end might bristle at the idea of their life suddenly being managed by their children, when they have run it themselves all this while.

**Social connectedness:** Make phone and video calls on a daily basis to others. Staying in touch has never been easier.

**Express yourself:** The arts are a representation of the conscious and unconscious thoughts and feelings that we carry around. Giving these an outlet, especially at this time, is important. "Anyone is capable of creating art, irrespective of their range of expression," says Anshuma. She encourages people to spend less time consuming content and more time in creating it. She also advocates spending more time on movement, even if it is just to perform mundane tasks. She warns against taking too much of a "capitalist outlook" towards these activities – it doesn't matter how "good" you are at the arts, or how many calories you burned in a day.

Seek help when you need it: If you begin to feel stress, anxiety or depression and need someone to talk to, do not hesitate to seek help. A list of contacts is provided at the end of this article.

**What's next?** This pandemic will eventually pass, and life will move on. The return to normality can be an

**Resources:**  
**Teleservices:** <https://www.thehindu.com/education/help-is-a-click-away/article27947838.ece>  
<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/mental-health-tool-available-free/article31297628.ece>  
**Free counselling services:** <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/chennai/helpful-numbers-in-these-times/article31323032.ece>  
**Resources recommended by mental health experts:** <https://www.thehindu.com/life-and-style/what-mental-health-experts-say/article31185530.ece>

overwhelming experience, and we need to pace ourselves. Anshuma emphasises on "gradualty" being key. If you haven't immediately achieved all you set out to, "Be gentle – Don't punish or criticise yourself," she advises.

The same can be said of organisations too. Prakriti Poddar points out that for many people, the home ecosystem has slowly become the new normal. So returning to work at an office could require a major adjustment. Their thoughts and worries may still be tied to the goings-on at home. It is important for employers to recognise this and demonstrate empathy by giving their employees time to adapt.

Prakriti urges mental health practitioners to use this as an opportunity to collaborate with each other. "We need to work together," she reaffirms. Doing so will not only widen their reach and enable more Indians to get help, but will also introduce standardisations in the way teleservices for mental health are delivered.

The writer is a psychologist and management consultant. [krithvis@gmail.com](mailto:krithvis@gmail.com)



#### E-LEARNING

## The buzzword is AI

Atal Innovation Mission's #Tinkerfromhome learning modules are an opportunity to explore AI and its applications

■ RAMA VAIDYANATHAN

Wake up and rush to a tuition centre at 6 a.m., get back for a hurried breakfast, off to school to cover portions, tests and exams, back home for a quick snack and off to another tuition class. Manage to squeeze in some screen and game time with your friends in between. Does this routine sound familiar? But surely, come coronavirus lockdown, life has changed. In many cases, students have online tutoring sessions for their curricular learning.

A Dell Technologies report claims that 85% of jobs in 2030 have not been invented yet. We did not know that we would be under such a strict lockdown, two months back. As life around us is changing, it is important for students to use this time to focus on computational thinking methods, work on better ways to explore their innate creativity and articulate their ideas better.

#### Learning modules

Can you imagine a situation where you can spend time playing games on the computer and convince your parents you are actually learning artificial intelligence (AI), neural networks and writing algorithms? You are in luck. Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), a flagship initiative of the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog), Government of India, has released #Tinkerfromhome learning modules on AI and gaming.

AI is a new buzzword in the higher education sector. It is not just for the software engineers but is a must-have skill for all. We can see AI applications in agriculture, medicine and automotive sector. The #TinkerfromHome module, suitable for students from class VI to XII, teaches concepts of AI in bite-sized units. These are good primers to learn AI, dabble in programming and create gaming modules. The modules have been prepared in collaboration with NASSCOM and are available on the AIM website under the Atal Tinkering Lab curriculum. Besides, video tutorials and live YouTube sessions are available on the AIM's YouTube channel.

#### ADMISSIONS

##### Undergraduate and postgraduate courses

**INSTITUTION:** KIIT Group of Colleges  
**COURSES:** B.Tech. (CSE ECE, EEE, Civil Engineering and Mechanical Engineering), M.Tech (ECE & CSE), MBA, BBA and BCA.

**QUALIFICATION:** Candidates must have appeared/passed the 10+2 exam in order to apply for a bachelor's degree, and appeared/passed graduation for master's degree programmes.

**SELECTION:** On the basis of an entrance exam, group discussion and personal interview.

**SCHOLARSHIPS:** Will be given to meritorious students and to those from under reserved categories, as notified by the Haryana State Technical Education Society.

**DEADLINE:** June 30

##### Ph.D programmes

**INSTITUTION:** IIIT Naya Raipur  
**COURSES:** All disciplines of Engineering (CSE, ECE), Science (Physics, Math), Humanities and Management for the Autumn 2020 session.

**ELIGIBILITY:** The minimum educational qualification for admission is a master's degree with a consistently good academic record in the relevant discipline. Those seeking admission under Institute Scholar category must possess requisite marks/grades in the qualifying exams given below:

Ph.D. (Engineering)-GATE/UGC-NET/CSIR-NET Ph.D. (Science, Management)-GATE/UGC-NET/CSIR-NET/ NBHM Ph.D. (HSS)-UGC-NET/CSIR-NET <https://www.iiitr.ac.in/>



learning Lab curriculum. Besides, video tutorials and live YouTube sessions are available on the AIM's YouTube channel.

The do-and-learn approach using tutorials and activities are captivating. The weblinks that give an opportunity to experience AI in action are fun. Simple explanations of complicated terms like neural networks, binary programming and algebra are the winning features of the module.

The self-paced modules can be done by students on their own. Students can start their baby steps in programming with Scratch and Python. Scratch is a visual programming software that helps students to create their own animations and visual stories. Assignments are an opportunity to demonstrate creativity. Practise sessions are often games you can play online with friends. The module gives the students just enough background in algebra, probability and statistics to understand machine learning. It is also wrapped up with a note on the ethics of using AI with a few real-life scenarios.

The modules were released to NITI Aayog's Atal Tinkering Lab students initially but are available to all students and schools from the AIM website. Schools like Kaligi Ranganathan Montford Matriculation School, Chennai, have introduced these modules through their class WhatsApp groups. Sai Praseedha, a class VIII student, has completed the module in record time. Her assignment in which she has imagined an AI pen was featured on the ATL Facebook page.

The COVID lockdown, though has been tough on the economy and life in general, has ensured more focus on online education. A focus on recognising creativity and new ideas will for sure develop new age students that we are all looking for.

The writer is a Mentor of Change with Atal Innovation Mission.

## Time to take notes

Note-taking aids retention – one glance at them effectively refreshes one's memory

■ VINEY KIRPAL

Note-taking is the method of stringing the main and subordinate concepts in a logical framework so that the whole topic/chapter is available to us in a nutshell. It is advantageous to students. Its purpose is to understand, remember and recall what we have read/heard in class. Many students find note-taking difficult because it means listening or reading with total concentration and knowing how to distinguish between important and unimportant concepts. It helps to master active note-taking so that we can learn the topic the very first time, without postponing it to a second reading.

In first year, a little before my preparatory holidays began, my mother had to undergo a major surgery. Being the eldest, I had to manage the house and did not get the time to revise my textbooks for the exams. It was my luck that I had made notes and studied them through the year. I barely had to skim them before each paper and write them. This was my first experience with reading entirely from notes, for the exam. However, I found I could recall every concept and example vividly as I attempted the questions.

#### Mistakes

Most students either record every word uttered by the professor, or just a few words, which do not make sense later. They buy cyclostyled notes from the previous year's notes and read these to clear their exams. Obviously, they get lacklustre marks.

Taking notes actively during class helps students focus and understand the topic well. Note-taking aids retention. The skill should be developed as early as possible because, as we move higher in our studies, we are expected to read, grasp and remember more complex, more numerous textbooks/reference books. Note-taking helps in

mentally consolidating the inputs.

#### Process

The goal of note-taking should be to record on just one sheet, the concepts one by one with their sub-points along with relevant examples/figures/statistics, and so on. One glance at the notes which have knitted all the concepts together into a relationship, refreshes one's memory. Visual representations or graphic organisation of concepts aid better recall. Given below are some possible frameworks taken from the Internet, for exemplification.

The first is a **Fish bone** which helps record factors/features/causes and effects, and so on, of a topic.

The second is the **Web concept**, also called the Spider web concept because it looks like one, names the main concept of a topic at the centre of the web, and has web threads going outwards from the middle in different directions to name all subconcepts.

The third is **Mind mapping**, a popular technique which can capture one or several chapters on one page.

Besides, we can use tree diagrams, tables or flow charts depending on the requirement. You might be familiar with these.

#### Benefits

The advantage of note-taking is that we can record all important concepts of a topic on just one sheet. For revision, we need to study merely 12 pages of notes representing 12 topics. Human beings think in images; so, visual/diagrammatic notes are easily recalled. It is a skill worth mastering. Constant practise in the early stages ensures mastery. The more you take notes while reading/listening, the more will you understand and remember them.

The writer is former Professor of English from IIT Bombay. [vineykirpal@gmail.com](mailto:vineykirpal@gmail.com)

#### ETCETERA

##### Free online student counselling services

In the wake of the COVID-19 led lockdown, Mumbai edtech startup Yocket has announced that they will be providing free access to students across the world. Yocket will be opening up a helpline where students can schedule calls with their advisors on any kind of issues. The company has also decided to provide free webinar services to international universities, so that they can directly interact with candidates and solve their queries. For details, visit, <https://yocket.in/>

##### Jindal School of Environment and Sustainability launched

O.P. Jindal Global University (JGU), recently launched its ninth school – The Jindal School of Environment and Sustainability (JSES). It will offer B.A (Hons.) in Environmental and Sustainability Studies. In the near future, JSES will integrate Study Abroad; Postgraduate (Master of Environmental and Sustainable Development, Master of Environmental Legal Studies, Master of Environmental management/Sciences and policy); Doctoral programme (Doctor of Philosophy in Environment and Sustainability).

##### BYJU steps up

BYJU'S is providing free access to its complete app to school students till the end of April – students across classes I to XII can download and access BYJU'S learning programmes for free. Students in classes I to III can access math and English lessons, while students in classes IV to XII can learn math and science concepts on the app.

Students can download BYJU'S-The Learning App and Disney BYJU'S Early Learn for free from the Play Store. Students with the pre-installed app (free version) will need to update it in order to access the complete learning content for free. For details, visit, <https://byjus.com/>

##### Career guidance and mentoring

iDreamCareer (IDC), multilingual and full-stack career solution and guidance platform, has launched "Industry connect hub", a platform to offer career guidance and mentoring. Students between classes VIII and XII will benefit from this. The hub connects students on a real-time basis with mentors who can help them better understand a career, help with test preparation, college admission process besides scholarship and financing options.

##### e-Learning scholarship

Internshala has announced free access to Internshala Trainings, its e-learning platform, for academically bright students from the economically weaker sections. Those currently enrolled in a school or college (including distance education), with a history of good academic performance – a score of 75% and above in class X and XII and college, and whose annual family income is less than ₹2.4 lacs – will be eligible for the scholarship. They can learn varied skills including programming, data science, business, design, creative writing on Internshala Trainings through its short duration online training programs. The last date for the scholarship is May 15. [bit.ly/Internshala-Scholarship](http://bit.ly/Internshala-Scholarship)

##### Digital platform for entrepreneurs

Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode, recently announced the launch of an online platform 'LiveBuzz - Startup Digital Diaries' for innovators and entrepreneurs to creatively share their innovations and engage with other interested stakeholders.

The platform invites blog posts from innovators and start-up founders that are first-hand accounts of their innovations and experiences. Each blogpost would be enhanced by Weblites – an embedded, interactive 'nano website' that provides an image slide-show or a short demo video as readers click the highlighted startup name in the article. Weblite feature is developed by an emerging startup Kozhikode startup Gettrix Techservices LLP, which also gets launched today through this platform. [blog.iiimkive.org](http://blog.iiimkive.org)

# 6 weeks on, Spain lets children step out

Hard-hit European countries relax restrictions as cases plateau; total COVID-19 toll crosses 2,00,000

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
MADRID**  
Spanish children were allowed outside on Sunday for the first time in six weeks as countries eased lockdown measures and reopened economies gutted by the COVID-19 pandemic that has infected nearly three million people worldwide.

Governments from France to Italy and the United States are gearing up for a partial easing of severe restrictions that have kept more than half of humanity indoors for weeks on end.

Coronavirus cases around the world rose to 2.9 million and deaths have doubled since April 10 – hitting nearly 2,03,000 people on Sunday – with well over half of them in Europe, according to an AFP tally.



**New-found freedom:** A woman and children walking in Seville, Spain, on Sunday. •AFP

## COVID-19

The daily toll in Western countries appeared to be levelling off and even falling, but fears abound in many places of a second surge after restrictions on movement are lifted.

### New rules

Spanish families embraced new rules allowing children outside for the first time since March 14, with kids hopping on bicycles and scooters on the streets of Madrid – some wearing small masks and gloves.

Under the revised rules, children are allowed out once per day between 9.00 a.m. and 9.00 p.m., but cannot venture more than one kilometre from their homes. The new rules were rolled out as the death toll in the hard-hit country dropped to 288 people on Sunday, the lowest since March 30.

With more than 23,000 fa-

talities, Spain has the third highest death toll in the world after Italy's 26,000 and more than 53,000 in the United States. Other hard-hit countries across Europe are also starting to look toward a slow crawl back to normality. Italy on Sunday said schools would reopen in September, while many businesses could resume work next week, and France was expected to unveil details of its de-confinement plan on Tuesday. Belgium said schools and businesses will reopen from mid-May, while Germany started to reopen some shops last week.

U.S. President Donald Trump has repeatedly said he wants to resume business in the world's biggest economy, even as medical advisers have cautioned against easing lockdown too soon or too fast. Mr. Trump faced criticism after suggesting that coronavirus could be treated

by shining ultraviolet light inside patients' bodies, or with injections of household disinfectant.

### Trump's daily briefings

He lashed out at the media on Twitter, accusing journalists of posing hostile questions, and suggested his daily coronavirus briefings were not worth his time. "They get record ratings, & the American people get nothing but Fake News. Not worth the time & effort!", he wrote. While new reported cases appear to have plateaued at about 80,000 a day, the world remains in wait as companies and governments race to develop treatments and, eventually, a vaccine.

Meanwhile in Beijing, a new set of regulations were introduced to combat the pandemic, banning "uncivilised" behaviour such as not covering the mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.

## No remaining cases in Wuhan hospitals

**REUTERS  
SHANGHAI**

The Chinese city of Wuhan, where the global COVID-19 pandemic began, now has no remaining cases in its hospitals, a health official told reporters on Sunday.

The novel coronavirus is believed to have originated in a wet market in Wuhan.

"The latest news is that by April 26, the number of new coronavirus patients in Wuhan was at zero, thanks to the joint efforts of Wuhan and medical staff from around the country," National Health Commission spokesman Mi Feng said at a briefing.

The city had reported 46,452 cases, 56% of the national total. It saw 3,869

## Australia launches app

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
SYDNEY**

Australia has launched a smartphone app to trace people who come in contact with coronavirus patients despite privacy concerns. The COVIDSafe app uses a phone's Bluetooth wireless signal to store information about people's interactions, and can be accessed by health officials if a person contracts coronavirus.

Australia has recorded just over 6,700 cases of COVID-19 and 83 deaths. The rise in infections has slowed considerably in recent weeks, with just 16 new cases recorded across the country on Sunday.

## Pandemic is China's biggest crisis since Tiananmen, says academic

There was certainly a cover-up at some levels, says McGregor

**ANANTH KRISHNAN**

China's response to COVID-19 has shown both the weaknesses and strengths of its system, says Richard McGregor, Senior Fellow at the Lowy Institute and author of *The Secret World of China's Communist Rulers*, adding that the Communist Party is fighting battles on many fronts both at home and abroad.

**Is the pandemic the Party's biggest challenge since Tiananmen and 1989?**

■ Every challenge looks like the biggest crisis, but I would say the answer is yes. The global financial crisis in 2008 was a big challenge. They got through that through a massive stimulus programme. This time is a little bit different. We've not only got what is going to be an extended economic downturn, plus a global political fight over the origins of the virus, and responsibility and accountability for it. They are fighting on a number of fronts.

**China's recovery has been portrayed at home as a vindication of its political system. Has this narrative been successful?**

■ Can you imagine even a month ago that China would be heralding its handling of this crisis as a vindication of their system? We should say, of course, that in some respects, that sort of propaganda is as much directed internally as it is externally. But I think this really shows the deep weaknesses and also some of the strengths of their system.

There was certainly a cov-



Richard McGregor

er-up at some levels. There was a bureaucratic mess, fighting between the localities and the centre. In other words, a lack of openness, lack of transparency, endemic bureaucratic problems, and a fear of offending and reporting to the centre. Once China started to take it seriously, we did see a quite remarkable demonstration of the power of the party-state, when you think what they managed to do in a short period of time. I don't believe every Chinese figure to the tee, but there's no doubt that we've got rapidly declining infections and large parts of the country getting back to normal. We saw the good side and the bad side of the system.

**Will China emerge from this stronger or in a worse-off position globally?**

■ It's really hard to say. In many Western countries, China is going to be in a worse off position. The U.S.-China relationship continues to break down at a rapid pace. China's relations with a lot of European countries – France, Germany, Britain – has been strained by this. It's also going to depend on what happens in the U.S. with Trump in the (presidential) election, and whether the U.S. economy and political system can

right itself. That's another unknown. It's also going to depend on countries surrounding China immediately, like Japan, South Korea, and of course, India.

But without some sort of open accounting of what happened in Wuhan, which China is resisting, it's hard to see how they come out of this with their reputation enhanced.

**Scholar Wang Jisi recently said China-U.S. decoupling is now irreversible. Would you agree?**

■ I'm not so sure. Political decoupling might be; economic decoupling or trade decoupling is another matter because the two countries and global systems generally are so enmeshed. It's very difficult to unwind them. There's going to be a lot of countries hedging their bets with China. But you know, China's logistical strengths, its industrial clusters, its ports, its railways, in other words, the ability to trade and do business, are immensely powerful. So I'm a bit cautious to overstate that at the moment.

**India has amended FDI policy to tighten scrutiny of Chinese investments. Is this broader backlash temporary or long-lasting?**

■ I think it's more long-lasting... The boom in outward Chinese FDI, which we saw in 2015-16 – that's over for the moment. It might not matter as much to China as it did a few years ago because China itself is advanced far along up the industrial chain. But yes, I think this is now a permanent feature of the landscape.

## ELSEWHERE



### Khalilzad urges Taliban to embrace truce

**REUTERS  
KABUL**  
U.S. special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad said on Sunday that the Taliban should observe truce, while Afghanistan tries to tackle its coronavirus crisis. "Ramadan offers the Taliban an opportunity to embrace a humanitarian ceasefire to reduce violence and suspend offensive military operations until the health crisis is over," he tweeted. AFP

### Saudi Arabia eases curfew in most places

**REUTERS  
DUBAI**  
Saudi Arabia eased curfews on Sunday across the country but kept 24-hour lockdowns in place in the city of Mecca, state agency SPA said. It also signed a deal with China to conduct nine million tests. Saudi has so far recorded 17,522 cases of infection and 139 deaths. REUTERS

## Herat struggles to implement lockdown

People in Afghan town violating social distancing norms

**REUTERS  
KABUL**

Afghan authorities are struggling to implement lockdowns to prevent the spread of the coronavirus in a province bordering Iran where the outbreak is widening due to an influx of Afghan returnees and men refusing to adhere to social distancing. Herat, the country's third largest city and a bustling province in eastern Afghanistan, has reported a high number of cases.

The country is grappling with acute shortages of testing facilities at a time when violent clashes between government forces and the Taliban insurgents show no signs of decline.

The medical and security crisis has worsened in the province as thousands of men continue to ignore social distancing rules and attended a mass religious gathering at the start of the holy month of Ramadan. "We request people to follow the rules but they just don't lis-



**Breaking fast:** Residents distributing food in Kandahar. •AFP

ten, the religious preachers are not obeying too," said Jalani Farhad, a spokesman for Herat's provincial Governor.

Verified photographs and videos shared on social media of the event organised last week on a vacant plot of land highlighted the challenges faced by officials to prevent gatherings organised by powerful religious preachers. As of April 26, Afghanistan reported 1,531 cases of COVID-19 and 50 deaths, but international ob-

servers and medics on the ground believe the real number of infections could be much higher.

At least 390 infected people are from Herat province, which recorded eight deaths, with the majority of positive cases found among Afghan returnees from Iran, said Health Ministry officials in capital city, Kabul. Up to 2,000 Afghans cross the border from Iran, a global coronavirus hot-spot, every day into Herat, where there are just 10 ventilators.

## 'Kim Jong-un's train' spotted at Wonsan town

Site publishes satellite images from N. Korea's east, indicating leader's presence

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
SEOUL**

A train likely belonging to North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has been spotted at a resort town in the country's east, satellite photos reviewed by a U.S.-based think tank showed, as speculation persists over his health.

The train was parked at a station reserved for the Kim family in Wonsan on April 21 and April 23, the respected 38 North website said in a report published on Saturday.

38 North cautioned that the train's presence "does not prove the whereabouts of the North Korean leader or indicate anything about his health."

"But it does lend weight to reports that Kim is staying at an elite area on the country's eastern coast," it said.

### Rumours on health

There has been growing conjecture about Mr. Kim's health since his conspicuous absence from the April 15 celebrations for the birthday of



Kim Jong-un in Hanoi, Vietnam, last year. •AFP

his grandfather Kim Il-sung, the regime's founder – the most important day on the North Korean political calendar.

Mr. Kim has not made a public appearance since presiding over a meeting of the Workers' Party politburo on April 11 and inspecting drills by fighter jets at an air defence unit, which was reported by state media on April 12.

Daily NK, an online media

outlet run mostly by North Korean defectors, has reported Mr. Kim underwent a cardiovascular procedure earlier this month and was recovering at a villa in North Pyongan province.

### Undergoing treatment

Citing an unidentified source inside the country, it said Mr. Kim, who is in his mid-30s, had needed urgent treatment due to heavy smoking, obesity and fatigue.

South Korea, which is still technically at war with the North, has played down the report.

CNN, quoting what it said was an anonymous U.S. official, reported that Washington was "monitoring intelligence" that Mr. Kim was in "grave danger" under ongoing surgery.

But on Thursday, U.S. President Donald Trump rejected reports that Mr. Kim was ailing. "I think the report was incorrect," Mr. Trump told reporters, but declined to state when he was last in

touch with him. "We have a good relationship with North Korea, as good as you can have," he said. Mr. Trump has met Mr. Kim three times in historic summitry and has voiced admiration for him, although hopes have dimmed for reaching a comprehensive agreement.

Reporting from inside the isolated North is notoriously difficult, especially on anything to do with its leadership, which is among its most closely guarded secrets.

On Thursday, citing an unidentified government official, South Korean broadcaster SBS reported that Mr. Kim appeared to have been in Wonsan for at least the past four days and would soon return to the public eye.

The report added that the military was monitoring Mr. Kim's train, which had been seen in Wonsan, while his personal jet – frequently used by Mr. Kim on his trips to Wonsan – remained in Pyongyang.

## Yemen separatists declare self-rule in south

STC to take control of Aden port

**REUTERS  
ADEN**

Yemen's main southern separatist group announced early on Sunday that it would establish self-rule in areas under its control, which the Saudi-backed government warned would have "catastrophic consequences". The move threatens to renew conflict between the UAE-backed separatist Southern Transitional Council (STC) and the Saudi-backed government, allies in Yemen's war.

The STC is one of the main groups fighting against the Houthis as part of a coalition led by Saudi Arabia. But the separatists have clashed with government forces in the past.



The separatist flag of Southern Transitional Council, in Aden. •AFP

In a statement, the STC announced emergency rule in Aden and all southern governorates, saying it would take control of Aden's port and airport and other state institutions such as the central bank.

## Tech-challenged Japanese struggle to work from home

Due to lack of up-to-date IT systems, offices in the country have not been able to nurture flexible work practices

**ASSOCIATED PRESS  
TOKYO**

When the Japanese government declared an emergency to curb the spread of the coronavirus earlier this month and asked people to work from home, crowds rushed to electronics stores.

So much for social distancing. Many Japanese lack the basic tools needed to work from home. Contrary to the ultramodern image of Japan Inc. with its robots, design finesse and gadgetry galore, in many respects the country is technologically challenged. But the bigger obstacle is Japanese corporate culture, experts say. Offices still often rely on faxes instead of email. Many homes lack high-speed Internet connections, and documents often

must be stamped in-person with carved seals called "hanko," which serve as signatures. So many Japanese really cannot work remotely, at least not all the time.

A survey by YouGov, a British market researcher, found only 18% of those recently surveyed were able to avoid commuting to school or work, even though a relatively high 80% of people in Japan are afraid of catching the virus.

### No clearly defined job

One factor, says Yuri Tazawa, a pioneer in Japan of "teleworking," or working from home, is that Japanese workers often do not have clearly defined jobs like Americans do, so companies expect their staff to be in constant communication with each



Work travel: Commuters in a train in Tokyo in March. •AFP

other, working as teams. Ms. Tazawa is offering an online crash course on how to immediately start working from home, using just mobile phones, if a personal computer is not available. She calls the approach a "hypothetical cloud office."

Unlike regular Zoom meetings, in which workers check in and out for discussions, she

is proposing using Zoom for just voice connections, keeping it on throughout the work day so that employees can feel as if they're in the same room.

Some of Japan's biggest companies, like Toyota Motor Corp. and Sony Corp., already have announced work-from-home policies. The main problem is with the

small and medium-sized businesses which make up about 70% of the economy.

Nicholas Benes, a corporate governance expert who has been offering a free webinar on teleworking, said interest was surprisingly low.

A lack of up-to-date IT systems means Japan lags in nurturing flexible work practices, office rules, management methods and even attitudes toward remote work.

It's one factor contributing to relatively low labour productivity. "Telework requires that managers trust and delegate much more decision-making to employees because it takes too much time in email or Skype to check with the boss," said Mr. Benes. Japanese companies still rely on nuances of face-to-face interaction, or

being able to "smell the air," or "read the air," Mr. Benes said.

### Fax is sacred

And then, there's the fax machine.

A third of Japanese households have faxes, according to a government study. Many respectable institutions shun emails and insist on receiving documentation by fax only.

Futoshi Takami, a "salaryman," as Japanese workers are called, says he had to work from the office until mid-April, when he was finally told he could work from home. But so far, he's gotten few directions about what he's supposed to be doing. He might soon be assigned to take some online classes, he said.

ASK US

N. SREEKANTH

**Q. My parents are senior citizens. My father has subscribed to a group health insurance policy covering self and spouse (my mother) through a nationalised bank where he has a savings account. The annual premium for this policy is paid through a cheque drawn on this account. If I make a deposit into this account towards the premium, can I claim deduction under section 80D?**

T.S. MAHADEVAN

**A.** Under section 80D, an assessee can claim deduction for the health insurance premium paid by you for yourself, your dependants (spouse and children) and your dependant parents based on the limits prescribed. In your case, if you are going to pay the premium on behalf of your parents, then you can claim the benefit of the deduction up to ₹50,000 as they are senior citizens. Further, the insurance policy should be in the name of the person claiming the deduction.

**Q. My daughter had taken a health insurance policy for her mother a few years back. Now, she has left for higher studies. She has not claimed any deduction u/s 80D till date. Now, I want to know whether the premium paid by her can be claimed by her mother u/s 80D?**

A.P. JAYARAJAN

**A.** Under section 80D, an assessee can claim deduction for the health insurance premium paid by him for self, dependants (spouse and children) and dependant parents based on the limits prescribed. In your case, only your daughter can claim the benefit based on the limits prescribed in the section. You may change the proposer's name from that of your daughter to your wife's for claiming the benefit in future and the payment done by your wife.

**Q. I am a central government servant. I have invested ₹1 lakh in PPF and ₹50,000 in SBI Insurance. My NPS tier 1 deduction is ₹68,000. Will I be able to claim extra ₹50,000 benefit apart from the ₹1.5 lakh?**

AMIT MISHRA

**A.** Under 80CCD(1B) of the Income Tax Act, any individual making a voluntary contribution to the prescribed pension fund/scheme shall be allowed a deduction of up to ₹50,000; this is over and above the limit of ₹1,50,000 under 80C that can be availed of.

**Q. Is the education loan to fund studies abroad eligible for deduction under 80E? What is the document required for claiming the deduction?**

CHARAN KUMAR P. R.

**A.** Deduction under section 80E can be claimed for the interest paid on education loan for higher studies, including foreign studies, taken from any bank or approved financial institution or approved charitable institution, up to 7 assessment years from the year of repayment, making it eight assessment years.

Although there is no mention about any document, in the act or the rules, to be maintained, it is advisable to obtain a loan certificate from the financial institution clearly mentioning the interest and principal portion as a record to be preserved.

**Q. My friend, a senior citizen, has medical insurance for ₹1 lakh. Recently, he had undergone a heart surgery, which cost him about ₹3 lakh. The insurance company paid him about ₹50,000. Could you please explain the procedure for claiming income tax deduction for medical expenditure under sections 80D, 80DD, 80DDB?**

M.P. KANNAN

**A.** Under 80D, in case of senior citizen, a deduction of up to ₹50,000 can be availed for the medical insurance premium paid for self and dependants.

No other expenses incurred for surgery and medicines can be availed of as you are insured under Medicaid policy. It is also to be noted that the benefit under sections 80DD and 80DDB cannot be availed of as they pertain to specific disabilities for dependants and self, respectively, such as autism, cerebral palsy, among others, and does not cover heart surgery.

(The author is partner, GSS Associates, Chartered Accountants, Chennai)

Readers can send in queries on personal finance and investing to moneywise@thehindu.co.in. Our experts who write on personal finance will answer these queries. Moneywise will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund scheme, share or fixed deposit.

MIND YOUR MONEY

# Why insurance doesn't tango with investment

Combining two financial products can never be a good idea as one of them can become redundant at any time

GAURAV MASHRUWALA

Many investors take decisions to invest funds in equity markets based upon the IIP which the Government of India releases.

IIP is the Index of Industrial Production. It is a barometer of performance of certain manufacturing sectors in the country. IIP would have direct impact on the movement of equity markets.

My IIP

Many a time, the same investors' own 'IIP' is in a mess. Here the interpretation of 'My IIP' is 'My Insurance or Investment Plan.' They either don't have an insurance cover or it is combined in the form of life insurance policies that also have investment components.

Why take life insurance

Life insurance policies in India are taken either to save tax or

help some relative, friend, associate who is an insurance agent to achieve his or her insurance premium collection target or number of policies target.

A friend of mine from Ahmedabad always says jokingly, most Indians die in the months of February or March. This is because many of us purchase life insurance policies in the month of February or March to save income tax.

Whenever a life insurance policy is purchased along with an investment component, I find it weird. Why purchase a policy which gives benefit if the insured does not die? If the individual is so certain that he is not going to die, then, why purchase the insurance cover?

In that case, opt for a pure investment product. This will ensure that the entire amount, equivalent to the premium, will be invested instead of a portion of it being used for obtaining

life insurance cover.

Also, as a cardinal principle, never combine two financial products. For some reason one does not perform or its functionality is no more needed in an overall financial plan, it cannot become redundant.

"At the time of taking a home loan, we had also taken a life cover to ensure that in the case of any eventuality to me, Smita and children can repay the outstanding home loan from the proceeds of the life insurance cover," said Venkatesh, an IT professional from Bengaluru.

"Because of prudent financial planning, we have paid back the home loan about five years earlier than originally planned, however, we have to continue paying life insurance premium as there is an investment component. If we surrender or stop the policy now, we will lose substantially," he added.



COVER NOTE: RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

## It's just more than taking a policy

The insured has some obligations and common sense procedures to follow, too

K. NITYA KALYANI

We saw some basic insurance principles that govern the contract in the last instalment of Cover Note.

Let us see some more principles that spell out rights and responsibilities, and some obligations and common sense procedures you should follow.

You have entered into an insurance contract with a valid insurable interest (financial ownership in the event of a loss) in what is insured and are conducting yourself with utmost good faith by disclosing all material facts.

When a loss takes place, at which point you will be entitled to prefer a claim, you have to observe the principle of loss minimisation (act as a prudent uninsured) and you will be indemnified (compensated) for your loss as per policy terms.

After this comes the principle of subrogation.

This means the insurer, after paying you the claim as per the terms of the policy now comes into all your rights against the party or parties that caused your loss.

If your property was damaged by somebody's vehicle, in the normal course you would try to get him to pay



No room for error: The insured must see to it that accurate information is given in the proposal form. •GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

for the repairs. Since you are insured, the insurance company steps in and compensates you. Once that is done, your right to compensation is transferred to the insurance company which can proceed against them to recover their expenses. (If they recover anything in excess of that, you are entitled to it!)

There are sixth and seventh principles of insurance that are not a part of your responsibilities but form the bases for determining the liability and its extent under an insurance contract. They are the principle of proximate cause and principle of contribution, and apply under certain circumstances.

Apart from the legal foundations of insurance, which gives you these responsibilities, you have other responsibilities when you buy a policy. Ensure correct information in your proposal form. This includes personal and contact information that should be updated as and when required.

Aadhaar link

These days Aadhaar is linked with insurance policies, a process that protects your interests. So, please ensure the proposal form and the policy spell your name and give your address as it appears in your Aadhaar.

PAN number is also a necessity in insurance proposal

forms and later, in case of claims. If an error occurs, immediately pursue it with the insurance company and get it corrected.

Always pay for your policy via cheque or Internet banking or any recorded method of payment such as credit cards. This establishes your premium payment because, according to Indian law, risk commences only after premium is received by the insurance company.

If you issue a cheque, do verify that the debit appears in your bank account and maintain a copy and a record of all the documentation you share with your insurance company such as cheque number, bank statement, copy of your proposal form (which the insurance company has to supply to you as per regulations when they issue the policy), any correspondence with the insurance company and, of course, the contact information of your insurance company branch and the agent who sells the policy.

Create a method to track the renewal dates of various insurance policies.

(The writer is a business journalist specialising in insurance & corporate history)

BLACKBOARD: DEBT FUND CLOSURE

## Why Franklin closed 6 funds

ASHISH RUKHAIYAR

What has Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund done?

Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund has decided to wind up six debt funds with combined assets under management of almost ₹26,000 crore. It said this had been done on account of illiquid, low-rated instruments in their portfolio. The schemes that have been shut are Franklin India Low Duration Fund, Franklin India Dynamic Accrual Fund, Franklin India Credit Risk Fund, Franklin India Short Term Income Plan, Franklin India Ultra Short Bond Fund and Franklin India Income Opportunities Fund.

Why was the fund house forced to take this step?

The fund house said that it had decided to wind up the schemes to preserve the value, at least, at the current levels, for the value was getting eroded due to a combination of redemption pressures and market losses following the lack of liquidity on account of the COVID-19 impact on markets. Franklin also said that some of the schemes that were closed had direct exposure to high-yielding securities across the rating spectrum but the instruments rated below 'AAA' were the most impacted.

What does it mean for investors?

Investors will not be able to redeem their investments for the time being as the fund house has barred both purchases and redemptions. Franklin said it would endeavour to

return the 'maximum value possible' to the investors. Further, while the net asset value of the schemes would continue to be published, investors will not be charged any investment management fee, going forward. Franklin said it would proceed with the liquidation of the assets and the funds with the shortest duration would be liquidated at the earliest. It has, however, added that selling all the securities in the market immediately would hit the valuation hard and hence, it would evaluate the opportunities once the COVID-19 situation improved and liquidity returned to the market.

Will this hit other fund houses or schemes?

While this would definitely impact investor sentiment and debt schemes could see a spurt in redemptions, the mutual fund industry has been quick to point out that the Franklin Templeton issue was a one-off instance and not an industry-wide phenomenon. The Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI), the industry body of fund houses, has said that credit risk funds – the worst affected of the lot – constituted a mere 5% of the overall debt schemes.

Also, a bulk of the assets were rated at least AAA or above. AMFI also said while regulations allowed mutual funds schemes to borrow up to 20% of their assets to meet liquidity needs for redemption/dividend payout, only four funds, out of a total of 42, had borrowings aggregating to ₹4,427.68 crore.

LOOSE CHANGE

RAVIKANTH



"I am looking for one with a cash withdrawal facility. I think you offer safe deposit box services here..."

Bank Fixed Deposit Rates

Bank Name	Interest Rates (%)				Bank Name	Interest Rates (%)								
	Highest Slab	1-year tenure	3-year tenure	5-year tenure		Highest Slab	1-year tenure	3-year tenure	5-year tenure					
<b>SMALL FINANCE BANKS</b>														
Suryoddy Small Finance Bank	9.00	8.00	8.25	9.00	Karnataka Bank	6.00	6.00	5.90	5.90					
Utkarsh Small Finance Bank	9.00	8.20	8.00	8.35	HDFC Bank	6.00	5.80	6.00	6.00					
Fincare Small Finance Bank	9.00	7.50	8.50	8.00	ICICI Bank	6.00	5.80	6.00	6.00					
Jana Small Finance Bank	8.25	8.00	7.75	8.00	Kotak Mahindra Bank	5.80	5.75	5.50	5.50					
Ujjivan Small Finance Bank	8.10	8.00	7.50	7.00	Jammu & Kashmir Bank	5.75	5.75	5.50	5.50					
Naianta Small Finance Bank	8.00	8.00	7.30	7.30	<b>PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS</b>									
Equitas Small Finance Bank	8.00	7.75	7.55	7.65	Indian Overseas Bank	6.20	6.10	6.10	6.10					
North East Small Finance Bank	8.00	7.50	7.25	6.50	Bank of India	6.00	6.00	5.90	5.90					
AU Small Finance Bank	7.53	6.75	7.53	7.25	Indian Bank	5.90	5.90	5.80	5.80					
Capital Small Finance Bank	7.00	6.60	6.60	6.50	IDBI Bank	5.90	5.85	5.75	5.90					
<b>PRIVATE SECTOR BANKS</b>														
DCB Bank	7.60	6.75	7.60	7.50	Union Bank of India	5.90	5.75	5.75	5.80					
IDFC First Bank	7.50	7.25	7.25	7.25	UCO Bank	5.85	5.85	5.85	5.80					
Lakshmi Vilas Bank	7.25	6.75	6.50	6.50	Punjab & Sind Bank	5.85	5.85	5.85	5.85					
RBL Bank	7.25	7.20	7.00	7.15	Canara Bank	5.85	5.85	5.80	5.80					
Industrial Bank	7.00	7.00	6.75	6.75	Punjab National Bank	5.80	5.80	5.80	5.80					
Naianta Bank	7.00	6.00	6.10	6.10	Bank of Maharashtra	5.75	5.75	5.50	5.50					
Bandhan Bank	6.75	6.75	6.60	6.50	State Bank of India	5.70	5.70	5.70	5.70					
Karur Vysya Bank	6.50	6.25	6.30	6.30	Bank of Baroda	5.70	5.70	5.70	5.70					
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	6.40	6.30	6.25	6.25	Central Bank of India	5.70	5.70	5.70	5.70					
Dhanlaxmi Bank	6.40	6.25	6.25	6.15	<b>FOREIGN BANKS</b>									
South Indian Bank	6.30	6.30	6.25	6.25	Deutsche Bank	6.75	4.60	5.50	6.75					
Federal Bank	6.25	6.00	6.25	6.25	DBS Bank	6.25	6.00	6.25	6.25					
Axis Bank	6.10	6.00	6.10	6.10	HSBC Bank	4.25	3.50	4.00	4.00					
CSB Bank	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	CitiBank	4.00	3.50	4.00	4.00					
City Union Bank	6.00	6.00	5.90	5.90	FD rates as on April 23 Source:paisabazar.com									

Home Loan Interest Rates

Name of Lender	Loan Amount (Rs.)			Name of Lender	Loan Amount (Rs.)						
	Up to 30 lakh upto 75 lakh	Above 30 lakh upto 75 lakh	Above 75 lakh		Up to 30 lakh upto 75 lakh	Above 30 lakh upto 75 lakh	Above 75 lakh				
<b>PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS</b>											
State Bank of India	7.15-7.80	7.40-7.95	7.50-8.05	Karnataka Bank	8.55-9.50	8.55-9.50	8.65-9.50				
Punjab National Bank	7.20-7.45	7.35-7.70	7.35-7.80	Standard Chartered	>=9.16	>=9.16	>=9.16				
Bank of India	7.25-8.15	7.25-8.15	7.25-8.15	HSBC Bank	7.95-8.50	7.95-8.50	7.95-8.50				
Central Bank of India	7.25-7.35	7.25-7.35	7.25-7.35	Bandhan Bank	8.50-11.75	8.50-11.25	8.75-11.25				
Canara Bank	7.30-9.30	7.30-9.30	7.30-9.30	South Indian Bank	8.05-9.30	8.05-9.30	8.05-9.30				
Bank of Baroda	7.25-8.25	7.25-8.25	7.25-8.50	Lakshmi Vilas Bank	8.95	8.95	8.95				
Indian Overseas Bank	7.45	7.55	7.70	RBL Bank	9.55-11.75	10.90-11.40	10.90-11.40				
IDBI Bank	8.25-9.00	8.25-9.00	8.25-9.00	<b>HOUSING FINANCE COMPANIES (HFCs)</b>							
Indian Bank	7.40-7.65	7.40-7.75	7.40-7.90	HDFC Ltd.	8.00-9.25	8.25-9.50	8.30-9.60				
Punjab & Sind Bank	7.30-7.65	7.30-7.65	7.30-7.65	LIC Housing	8.10-9.00	8.35-9.20	8.45-9.20				
UCO Bank	7.30-7.40	7.30-7.40	7.30-7.40	IIFL	>=8.70	>=8.70	>=8.70				
Union Bank of India	7.10-7.65	7.35-7.75	7.40-8.05	PNB Housing	8.95-9.70	8.95-9.70	8.95-9.70				
<b>PRIVATE SECTOR BANKS</b>											
Citi Bank*	7.34-8.29	7.34-8.29	7.34-8.29	Indiabulls Housing	>=8.99	>=8.99	>=8.99				
Axis Bank	8.55-11.50	8.55-9.40	8.55-9.40	Aditya Birla Capital	9.00-12.50	9.00-12.50	9.00-12.50				
ICICI Bank	8.10-9.00	8.10-9.10	8.45-9.20	GIC Housing Finance	9.10-12.50	9.10-12.50	9.10-12.50				
Karur Vysya Bank	8.20-10.05	8.20-10.05	8.20-10.05	Reliance India Home Finance	8.99-12.00	8.99-12.00	8.99-12.00				
IDFC First Bank	7.40-11.40	7.40-11.40	7.40-11.40	Fortis Home Finance	>=9.25	>=9.25	>=9.25				
Federal Bank	8.35-8.40	8.40-8.45	8.45-8.50	Tata Capital	>=9.25	>=9.25	>=9.25				
Kotak Mahindra Bank	8.20-8.85	8.30-9.00	8.55-9.25	Pramal Capital & Housing	>=9.65	>=9.65	>=9.65				
*Linked to 3-Month TBLR Rates as on April 23 Source:paisabazar.com											

Kapil live!

Catch the 1983 World Cup-winning captain and Indian cricketing legend Kapil Dev in a live chat on Sportstar's Instagram handle (@sportstarweb) on April 27 (Monday) at 5 p.m. IST.

IN BRIEF



Gayle to block 'annoying' Chahal on social media

NEW DELHI Chris Gayle says India spinner Yuzvendra Chahal is "very annoying" on social media and he is going to block him. "I am going to tell TikTok to block you as well, seriously. You are very annoying on social media, man. You need to get off social media right now. We are tired of Chahal. I don't wanna see you in my life again. I am gonna block you," Gayle said during a live session on Instagram. PTI

Chess event raises ₹8.8 lakh for waste pickers

NEW DELHI Former World champion Viswanathan Anand and India cricketer Yuzvendra Chahal among others took part in an online 'Chess for Charity' event on Saturday and raised ₹8.8 lakh for the waste pickers' community fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. PTI



Nakamura registers third victory

NEW DELHI Hikaru Nakamura beat top Russian Ian Nepomniachtchi 2.5-1.5 for his third victory in four rounds in the \$250,000 Magnus Carlsen Invitational online chess tournament. The results (fourth round): Hikaru Nakamura (USA) bt Ian Nepomniachtchi (Rus) 2.5-1.5; Ding Liren (Chn) bt Anish Giri (Ned) 3-2.

Ravi Mittal is the new Sports Secretary

NEW DELHI Ravi Mittal was appointed Sports Secretary, replacing Radheshyam Jhulaniya, in the round of transfers announced on Sunday. Currently the secretary in the I&B Ministry, the 1986-batch officer is expected to take charge as soon as he is relieved of his duties in I&B.

# 'Fans are the heartbeat of Indian cricket'

Stars, past and present, feel playing in front of empty stands will rob the game of charm and excitement

RAYAN ROZARIO  
COIMBATORE

After Sachin Tendulkar and R. Ashwin expressed their reservations over playing in empty stadiums, quite a few former and current cricketers too echoed their sentiments.

The likes of Sunil Gavaskar, Sachin Tendulkar, Cheteshwar Pujara and others told *The Hindu* how playing without spectators will rob the game of charm and excitement.

"Fans are imperative for a performer - be it in sport, theatre, cinema, music, entertainment or anything else," said Gavaskar.

Share the happiness

In fact, Tendulkar had a few more thoughts to share on the subject. "They (spectators) are extremely important. Without them, God knows where I would be.



L. Balaji. FILE PHOTO: G. KARTHIKEYAN



Catalysts: Sachin Tendulkar and Sunil Gavaskar share the view that spectators inspire the performers. FILE PHOTO: K.R. DEEPAK



Hemang Badani. FILE PHOTO: M. SRINATH

Anything good that happens to you in life, you need people around you to share your happiness - be it the personal ones or your teammates. I have always been fortunate

to have them around," said Tendulkar.

Cheteshwar Pujara was of the view it is best to stay flexible given the tough current situation. "If the situation de-

mands that spectators will not be allowed, then we will have to be prepared for that as well. After all, it is for the sake of safety of both players and fans."

compared to football crowds in European leagues. They bring so much energy to the game and to players."

"There can be a lot of heat and pressure with the fans around, but I enjoyed them. They have motivated me, and thanks to them, I was able to raise the bar," said fellow international Hemang Badani.

Revenue generators

"Our lives depend on them. If they are not around, then sports is nothing. They are also revenue generators. The television rights, the sponsorships and the advertisements depend on the amount of fan-following a sport has," added Badani.

All said, it will be a completely new experience for the players. "It is something that I have not experienced. It will be a big challenge," summed up Tendulkar.

## Play Ashwin in the shorter formats, says Saqlain

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Pakistan spin great Saqlain Mushtaq fails to understand how a proven performer like R. Ashwin has been kept out of India's limited-overs set-up, saying a successful Test bowler is bound to succeed in the shorter formats.

"He knows how to get batsman out in the five-day game, which is much tougher than limited-overs cricket. Anyone can do the containment job but someone who knows how take wickets can contain also. He knows both. How can you keep him out? You have to back your best players."

"After Ashwin, you have tried many off-spinners but none of them has been of his class."

## Pujara toughest Test batsman: Cummins

Pacer recalls the difficulty Aussie bowlers faced in dislodging the India No. 3

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MELBOURNE

Australia's World No. 1 pacer Pat Cummins finds India's middle-order mainstay Cheteshwar Pujara the toughest batsman to bowl at in Test cricket, describing him as a "pain in the back" for his team.

Influential role

With his solid batting at number three, Pujara played an influential role in India's historic triumph in Australia in 2018-19.

In a Q&A session arranged by the Australian Cricketers Association (ACA), Cummins said: "There are a lot of them out there, unfortunately. But I am going to go with someone different, and he is (Che-

teshwar) Pujara from India. He was a real pain in the back for us."

Man-of-the-Series Pujara helped India claim a maiden Test series victory in Australia last year amassing a staggering 521 runs at an average of over 74 with three hundreds and a half-century.

Cummins recalled the difficulty the Australian bowlers faced in dislodging Pujara.

Ultra concentration

"He (Pujara) was an absolute rock in that series. (He was) really hard to get out. Just ultra concentration all day, day after day.

"He is the hardest one in Test cricket so far, I think," Cummins added.



Rock solid: Cheteshwar Pujara's tenacious approach had the Australians groaning in despair. GETTY IMAGES

## Once I scribbled adidas on my spikes, now I wear custom-made shoes: Hima

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Sportswear giant adidas now manufactures custom-made shoes for Hima Das with her name printed on them but country's top quarter-miler on Sunday revealed that there was a time when she had to write the famous brand name manually on her sub-standard spikes.

"When I started running, I ran barefoot. But in my first Nationals, my father brought running shoes with spikes on them. It was just a normal pair of running shoes. I wrote 'adidas' on the shoes with my hand. You never know what fate can do, adidas is now making shoes with my name," the 20-year-old said in an Instagram chat



Hima Das. FILE PHOTO

She said "people started following athletics more than ever after the 2018 Asian Games" in Indonesia where she won a silver in individual 400m and a gold each in women's 400m and mixed 400m relay races.

Extra motivation

"People know the athletes and fans chant your name, it gives you extra motivation," the Assamese athlete, known as "Dhing Express" due to her native town, said.

She said she now gets more time to prepare for the Tokyo Games.

Hima also revealed Sachin Tendulkar is her role model and meeting the cricket icon was the best moment of her life.

## East Bengal terminates contracts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
KOLKATA

In a big blow to the players and officials, I-League side East Bengal has terminated all the existing contracts, citing 'Force Majeure' in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Left with no option, the players have knocked on the

doors of the Football Players Association of India which has assured full support and referred the matter to the world body for players (FIFPro).

Confirming this, East Bengal's top Spanish winger Jaime Santos Colado said the entire team was not happy with the decision.

"This is true, they have terminated our contracts citing the COVID-19 pandemic (Force Majeure). The entire team disagrees with that decision, we hope to reach an agreement soon. We are working on that," said the 24-year-old, who has two more years left in his contract.

## Zarina: A fiercely independent artist

She made an indelible mark with her powerful yet restrained works

NADA RAZA

as she was known, made an indelible mark in the international art world as one of South Asia's leading artists. Widely recognised in her lifetime, she will be remembered as a fiercely independent woman artist who achieved artistic recognition on her own terms, through powerful yet restrained works that drew on her linguistic and cultural heritage and experiences of estrangement, dislocation and loss.

Aligarh's milieu

Zarina was raised within the cultural and intellectual milieu of the Aligarh Muslim University, a world that informed her aesthetic sensibility, encompassing her father's history books and the strong feminine bonds of the *zenana*. She took up printmaking while married to an officer in the Indian Foreign Service, first wood-block carving in Bangkok, then learning experimental ink and intaglio techniques at the Atelier 17, the cosmopolitan Paris studio run by Bill Hayter (the subject of a focused exhibition in 2016 at the Metropolitan Museum, *Workshop and Legacy: Stanley William Hayter, Krishna Reddy, Zarina Hashmi*). Zarina is best known for her series of etchings and wood-block prints that express the estrangement of migration, geographical dislocation and exile, captured in works

such as *Travels with Rani* 2008, a dotted diagram of all the towns and train stations she and her family had passed through, forming a mind map of an undivided subcontinent.

She experimented with papermaking techniques, testing the limits of the medium with expert craftsmen in India, moulding and piercing paper into sculptural and architectural forms that resembled packed earth, terracotta and stone (*I Whispered to the Earth* 1979, *Wall II* 1979, *Fence* 1980, *Pool I*, 1980, *Tate Collection*). The opportunity to leave Delhi for the United States in the 1970s brought personal and artistic freedom, but also many years of quiet struggle.

After itinerance for many years between training in Japan, teaching in California and New York, her family in Aligarh, Delhi and Karachi, and an artistic circle in New York, she was able to base herself in her studio in Manhattan while continuing to exhibit regularly in India. With strong opinions and immense self-discipline, Zarina resisted being pigeonholed into the prevalent art world orthodoxies.

Her peers included Judy and Krishna Reddy, Ram Rahman, Mehli Gobhai and Meena Alexander among others, and she joined post-colonial feminist networks, co-curating an exhibition with the Cuban artist Ana Mendietta at the A.I.R. Gallery



1937-2020

titled *Dialectics of Isolation:*

An exhibition of *Third World women artists in the United States* in 1980. The exhibition *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* at MOCA in 2007 led to critical attention, and her first major museum exhibition. The retrospective exhibition *Paper Like Skin* travelled from the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles (2012) to the Guggenheim, New York and the Art Institute of Chicago (2013).

Zarina's works on paper, in print and collage, and her sculptures, made from paper pulp or metal, found homes in prominent museum collections such as the Tate Modern in London, the Metropolitan Museum, MoMA, Whitney and Guggenheim in New York. Her work is in many private collections and recent exhibitions have been held at the Kiran

Nadar Museum in New Delhi (2020) and the Ishara Art Foundation in Dubai (2019).

Of exile

It was in the poetics and yearnings of exile that she grounded her work, after the Partition and its upheaval fractured their lives in Aligarh, a world relentlessly yearned for; 'Language ties my work together. Urdu is home', and this included its capaciousness for metaphor and multiple meanings. '*Ghar*' was always the floorplan of her father's academic bungalow in Aligarh, described poignantly in *Letters from Home* 2004.

In recent years, claiming that time was running out and that she wanted to use up all the scraps left in her studio, she had worked mostly with paper collage, referencing Faiz, Ghalib and Iqbal in the titles of inky star-scapes, lines such as '*Akhri shab ke humsafar*' or '*Sitaron se age jahan aur bhi hain*'.

Zarina departed on Saturday for the world beyond the stars, cared for and survived by her sister's children in London. Zarina *apa*, as I called her, was a role model for how to live an independent life without compromise, navigating the world with the dignity, etiquette and razor-sharp wit of Aligarh.

(Nada Raza has been a curator for South Asian art at the Tate Modern museum)

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