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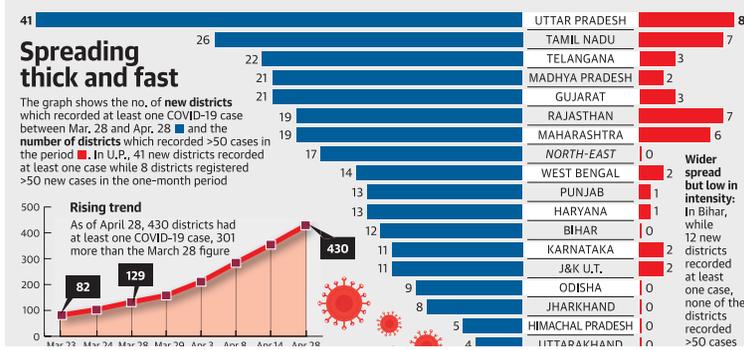
**NEARBY**  
**'People not following distancing norms'**  
 CHENNAI  
 Members of the public have not been realising the virulence of the COVID-19 pandemic and have not been following physical distancing norms, Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami said at a meeting with 12 coordination teams here on Tuesday.  
**TAMIL NADU** ▶ PAGE 2  
**Bodies not to be handed over till lab results come**  
 CHENNAI  
 Government and private hospitals will not hand over

## 51 more deaths as cases near 30,000

Patient count rises by 1,594 in 24 hours; Health Minister promises India-made RT-PCR testing kits

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
 NEW DELHI  
 India has reported 1,594 new cases and 51 new deaths related to COVID-19 in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of cases to 29,974. This includes 22,010 active cases, 7,027 discharged and migration and 937 deaths. The country currently is registering a recovery rate of 23.3%, the Health Minister said on Tuesday.

**Rising doubling rate**  
 "For the last 14 days, our doubling rate is 8.7, while for the last 7 days, it is 10.2 days. In the last three days, it is 10.9 days roughly," Union



## Ministry does U-turn on plasma therapy

Treatment not proven: Health official

**BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN**  
 NEW DELHI  
 Plasma therapy is not an approved treatment for COVID-19 and is only one of the several therapies being explored currently, the Union Health Ministry said on Tuesday. The therapy is still at an experimental stage and the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) is currently studying its efficacy, it added.



The ICMR has not given clearance, says the Centre.  
 • GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

"ICMR has not given any clearance for its use as a prescribed treatment and the misuse can have fatal outcome for the patients," the

Ministry said. "The use of plasma therapy in treatment of COVID-19 is not used in proper manner under proper guidelines, then it can also cause life threatening complications," he cautioned.

Last week, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan had asked the Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) to contact recovered COVID-19 patients to come forward for blood donation, from which convalescent plasma could be collected and used.

Continued on page 8

### About ADB:

**It is a regional development bank established on 19 December 1966. headquartered — Manila, Philippines. official United Nations Observer. The bank admits the members of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP, formerly the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East or ECAFE) and non-regional developed countries.**

### Voting rights:

**It is modeled closely on the World Bank, and has a similar weighted voting system where votes are distributed in proportion with members' capital subscriptions.**

### Roles and functions:

**ADB defines itself as a social development organization that is dedicated to reducing poverty in Asia and the Pacific through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration. This is carried out through investments – in the form of loans, grants and information sharing – in infrastructure, health care services, financial and public administration systems, helping nations prepare for the impact of climate change or better manage their natural resources, as well as other areas.**

## Explain MHA order on full wages, SC tells govt.

Bench asks Centre to reply in 2 weeks

**LEGAL CORRESPONDENT**  
 NEW DELHI  
 The Supreme Court has given the Centre two weeks to explain a Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) order, issued on March 29, directing employers to pay full wages to their workers during the lockdown. A three-judge Bench, led by Justice N.V. Ramana, on Monday, allowed Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the government, to file his response to a batch of petitions filed by several companies challenging the constitutional validity of the March 29 order, which mandates that industry, shops and commercial establishments, without exception, pay their workers without any deduction in the name of COVID-19. The petitions said a blanket direction to private establish-

ments to pay full salaries against no work was arbitrary and violative of Article 14 (right to equality) of the Constitution.

### 'No obligation'

"It is implicit in the fundamental right of an employer to trade or business that there is an obligation to pay when work is actually done and there is no obligation if no work is done. An employer has a right to not pay if no work is done," the petition filed by private firms such as Nagreeka Exports Limited and Ficus Pax Private Ltd. said.

Continued on page 8

## Govt. starts planning for Haridwar Kumbh Mela

Mission for Clean Ganga discusses funds needed for community toilets, urinals

**JACOB KOSHY**  
 NEW DELHI

Crowds, or even the prospect of one, may be anathema everywhere, but the government has begun planning for the Maha Kumbh Mela in Haridwar, Uttarakhand, in January 2021. The gathering has a long history and draws large crowds from the world over, who come to take a ritualistic dip in the Ganga.

An April 16 meeting, organised by the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), the Water Ministry body overseeing the clean up of the river, discussed funds needed by the Uttarakhand government for providing community toilets and urinals for the attendees.

The Maha Kumbh Mela is organised once in 12 years, and the last time the event was held in 2010, about 10 million reportedly congregated in the city.



**Mega gathering:** Maha Kumbh Mela is organised once in 12 years, and 10 million had congregated in Haridwar in 2010.

For organising the event, the State sought ₹85 crore from the NMCG for creating 16,075 community toilets (made of fibre and portable) and 20,000 community urinals. However the Executive Committee of the NMCG deferred a decision on the grounds that several other components of the proposal – making provisions for dustbins and solid waste management – were not yet

included and a decision on the project would be taken at the next meeting, according to a record of the minutes of the meeting. Rajiv Ranjan Mishra, Director-General, NMCG, did not respond to a request for comment.

### Routine meeting

The meeting was convened via video-conference and had officials from the NMCG, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Ut-

tarakhand and is held every month to decide on funding for projects to clean the Ganga as well as its tributaries.

A participant at the meeting told *The Hindu* that there was no discussion with Uttarakhand on whether it would be safe to organise the Kumbh Mela, given that the world is yet to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and the global case count continues to increase.

"There was no discussion on whether the organisation of the Kumbh would be impacted by COVID-19. But there's a lot of time left and the situation could change. If there's still as much of a risk as there is now, I'm sure measures will be taken," the person said.

However, preparing logistics in advance was par for the course, given the size of the event.

A similar Kumbh was organised in Prayagraj in 2019.

## 2 priests found dead on U.P. temple premises

Police nab a suspect within two hours

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
 GHAZIABAD

Two priests were found dead in a temple in a Bulandshahr village in the early hours of Tuesday, the police said. The murders sent shockwaves in the region as it reminded locals of the Palghar incident in Maharashtra, where two priests were allegedly killed by a mob. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath asked the police for a report by the evening.

Within two hours, the police arrested a person in a neighbourhood village and charged him with the murder. Santosh Kumar Singh, Senior Superintendent of Police, Bulandshahr, said the chowkidar of village Pagona found the bodies of Sher Singh, 35, and Jagdishdas, 55, on the Shiv temple premises around 5 a.m.



The suspect allegedly involved in the murders in Bulandshahr. • PTI

"The villagers said Murari, a drug addict who belongs to a Scheduled Caste, had stolen the priests' chimta (tongs) on Sunday and the priests had berated him. He was nabbed in an inebriated state in his underwear. An FIR has been filed against him under Section 302 of the IPC," he said.

Continued on page 8

## About Namami Gange Programme:

It is an umbrella programme which integrates previous and currently ongoing initiatives by enhancing efficiency, extracting synergies and supplementing them with more comprehensive & better coordinated interventions.

Implemented by the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), and its state counterparts—State Programme Management Groups.

National Ganga Council (NGC):

Created in October 2016 under the River Ganga (Rejuvenation, Protection and Management) Authorities Order, 2016, dissolving the National Ganga River Basin Authority.

Headed by the Prime Minister.

It replaced the National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA).

NGC would have on board the chief ministers of five Ganga basin states—Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh (UP), Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal—besides several Union ministers and it was supposed to meet once every year.

Main Pillars of the Namami Gange Programme are:

Sewerage Treatment Infrastructure  
River-Surface Cleaning  
Afforestation  
Industrial Effluent Monitoring  
River-Front Development  
Bio-Diversity  
Public Awareness  
Ganga Gram

River Ganga has significant economic, environmental and cultural value in India.

Rising in the Himalayas and flowing to the Bay of Bengal, the river traverses a course of more than 2,500 km through the plains of north and eastern India.

The Ganga basin – which also extends into parts of Nepal, China and Bangladesh – accounts for 26 per cent of India's landmass.

The Ganga also serves as one of India's holiest rivers whose cultural and spiritual significance transcends the boundaries of the basin.

If we are able to clean it, it will be a huge help for the 40 per cent population of the country.

What are the pollution threats to Ganga?

Rapidly increasing population, rising standards of living and exponential growth of industrialization and urbanization have exposed water resources to various forms of degradation.

The deterioration in the water quality of Ganga impacts the people immediately.

Ganga has become unfit even for bathing during lean seasons.

The impacts of infrastructural projects in the upper reaches of the river Ganga raise issues.

Challenges ahead:

Sewage treatment.

Restoring the flow.

Sludge control.

Cost overruns.

Governance glitches.

Ganga was issued on Monday. The Revenue and Disaster Management Department has also sanctioned additional funds to the tune of ₹20 crore from the State Disaster Response Fund to 528 town panchayats to continue disinfection activities for containing COVID-19.

dense, congested pockets of the city, are the ones consistently showing positive cases, the official added.

The simple reason must be the high number of tests being done in Chennai, epidemiologists feel. Tamil Nadu has edged up to the second slot in terms of tests conducted in the country,

have very mild symptoms, officials add.

While the focus on testing won't lose steam, the State will examine options, such as home quarantine for mild symptoms as advised by the ICMR, and also look after vulnerable populations, in terms of prevention, testing, and treatment.

the Finance Commission and relief for fighting the COVID-19 pandemic," he said in a statement.

He pointed out that government employees had contributed a day's salary to the Chief Minister's Public Relief Fund and were involved in the battle against the pandemic. "Police,

departments, the government has not realised that its decision will demoralise them," he said. Mr. Stalin said the AIADMK government was following the BJP-led Centre in "taking away" the benefits of government employees. "Mr. Palaniswami had boasted that his government was adept at financial manage-

ment. It is not clear what decision that affects their employees. But, the Central and State government have cut the DA and earned leave." AMMK leader T.T.V. Dhinakaran wondered how it would be proper to 'target' government employees instead of controlling "unnecessary expenditure".

Committee for conducting an audit of COVID-19 deaths. It was decided that all deaths linked to SARI/COVID-19/suspected COVID-19 cases should be reported to the Director of Public Health & Preventive Medicine, the Director of Medical & Rural Health Services and the Director of Medical Edu-

cation should be sent to the State- and district-level audit committees and also to the State Death Control Desk at the Directorate of Public Health for future reference," a senior health official said, adding that the recommendations of the committee had been accepted for implementation.

## Pandemic-induced lockdown gives migratory birds and animals a reason to cheer

With reduced human interference and pollution, birds are staying in sanctuaries a bit longer; injuries to marine animals have come down

P.A. NARAYANI  
RAMANATHAPURAM

Unlike in the case of humans, the COVID-19 lockdown seems to have had a positive impact on animals and birds. Limited human interference and reduced pollution levels in the district have helped them reclaim their space in the ecosystem to a certain extent, say environmentalists.

Many bird species which migrate from other parts of the country – known as partial migratory birds – have now extended their stay at the Therthangal and Melasevanoor-Keelasevanoor bird sanctuaries, says Ramanathapuram Forest Range Officer S. Sathish.

"Usually, species like open bill stork, spot-billed pelican, painted stork, grey

heron, spoonbill and ibis depart from here by March. However, this year, they have extended their stay, thanks to the lockdown," he says.

"A good northeast monsoon and comfortable storage in waterbodies across the district had led to an increase in the nesting of birds in these two sanctuaries during the last season," he says. "Forest

department officials released fingerlings into waterbodies last year. The tanks and feeder channels were desilted to ensure that there was good water storage," he adds.

"Reduced human movement has resulted in less disturbance to the birds, prompting them to stay here longer," says N. Raveendran, a Madurai-based birdwatcher. "Also, human-

induced pollution has come down during this [lockdown] period," he adds.

In the absence of grand marriages and other functions, noise pollution is minimal. This has also benefited the birds, says M. Manivannan, a birdwatcher from Karaikudi.

A.S. Marimuthu, Wildlife Warden, Ramanathapuram, says the lockdown period

has helped in reducing injuries to marine animals. "Usually, animals like dugongs, dolphins and sea turtles sustain injuries after getting hit by the propellers of boats. The lockdown has helped in avoiding such accidents," he adds.

According to Mr. Sathish, spotted deer and peacocks were seen in good numbers in Thondi and Thiruvadanai recently.



Good times: A flock of birds at the Therthangal sanctuary in Ramanathapuram district. • L. BALACHANDAR

**A “Cyclone” is an intense vortex or a whirl in the atmosphere with very strong winds circulating around it in anti-clockwise direction in the Northern Hemisphere and in clockwise direction in the Southern Hemisphere.**

**Characteristics:**

**Cyclones are intense low pressure areas – from the centre of which pressure increases outwards. The amount of the pressure drop in the centre and the rate at which it increases outwards gives the intensity of the cyclones and the strength of winds.**

**Cyclones are of two types: Temperate cyclone and Tropical cyclone. Tropical Cyclones are among the most destructive phenomena.**

**Tropical Cyclones:**

**It is a system of low pressure occurring in tropical latitudes**

**The differential heating over land and sea probably causes a small area of low atmospheric pressure to develop.**

**Tropical cyclone activity is at its maximum in late summer and early autumn**

**Tropical cyclones follow a parabolic path; their axis being parallel to the isobars.**

**Necessary Conditions for development of a tropical cyclone and Formation:**

- 1. Continuous supply of abundant warm and moist air**
- 2. Sea temperature in lower latitudes should be around 27°C**
- 3. A distance from the Equator is necessary, so that it allows the Coriolis effect to deflect winds blowing toward the low pressure centre. They develop in inter-tropical convergence zone**
- 4. Pre-existence of weak tropical disturbances**
- 5. Presence of anticyclonic circulation at the height of 9 to 15km above the surface**
- 6. Low vertical wind shear between the surface and the upper troposphere. Vertical wind shear is the magnitude of wind change with height.**

**Runaway COVID-19 patient brought back**

He was picked up from Puliathope

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI**  
A 58-year-old patient who tested positive for COVID-19 went missing from the special ward at Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital (RGGGH).  
The police personnel of the Flower Bazaar station traced him to his house at Puliathope and brought him back.  
The resident of Sivarajapuram near Puliathope was admitted to the special ward on the fifth floor of RGGGH after he tested positive on April 23.

and reached his house by foot. At 9 p.m., hospital staff found that he was missing from the ward and reported the matter to the police.  
The police personnel traced him in his house and brought back to the hospital at 9.30 p.m.  
Hospital sources said the patient had psychiatric illness.

**THE HINDU**  
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**'He walked home'**  
On Monday evening, he stepped out of the hospital

**Tropical cyclone gets Tamil name**

**K. LAKSHMI CHENNAI**  
For the first time since 2004, a tropical cyclone over the north Indian ocean would have a Tamil name, *Murasu*, meaning an ancient musical instrument, a type of drum. It is one of the names listed for tropical cyclones over the north Indian ocean prepared by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) panel.  
With the first list of names suggested for tropical cyclones being used, except for *Amphan* suggested by Thailand, a fresh list of names has been prepared by the WMO panel for identifying cyclones developing over the north Indian ocean, includ-

ing in Arabian Sea. The new list has names suggested by five new member countries – Iran, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Yemen and the U.A.E. The list has 169 names, including 13 names each suggested by 13 member countries. In India, the regional meteorological centres suggest names and those prepared by the public were included.  
S. Balachandran, Deputy Director General of the Meteorology, Chennai, said "We suggested names related to ocean, fish and coastal areas and those pertaining to information. Murasu was suggested as it denoted the percussive instrument used for disseminating information."

**THE HINDU OPPORTUNITIES**  
GENERAL  
Energy Centre, Sivasagar (Assam) of Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology (An Institute of National Importance Established Under an Act of Parliament) Jais, Amethi Website: www.rgipt.ac.in  
**FACULTY RECRUITMENT NOTICE**  
Advt. No.: RGIPT/Sivasagar/FA/01/2020  
Assam Centre, Sivasagar of RGIPT invites ONLINE applications from eligible candidates for post of Lecturer (Pay Level-10) in following disciplines:  
• Petroleum Engg.; Chemical Engg.; Mechanical Engg.; Electrical Engg.; Computer Science & Engg.; Fire and Safety Engg.; Electronics & Instrumentation Engg.; Sciences; Humanities & Social Sciences  
Interested applicants may visit <https://rgipt.ac.in/en/page/faculty-recruitment> for eligibility criteria and apply online.  
Opening date: 01-05-2020 Closing date: 15-06-2020

**Govt. of Bihar**  
**GOVERNOR'S SECRETARIAT, BIHAR**  
RAJ BHAVAN, PATNA-800022  
**NOTIFICATION**  
No.-BSUI(PVC)-09/2020/(GS)1  
In continuation of this Secretariat's notification no.-BSUI(PVC)-09/2020-628/(GS)1 dated 03.04.2020, keeping in view of the spread of Corona Virus, COVID-19 the pandemic and complete Lockdown till 03<sup>rd</sup> May, 2020 the Hon'ble Chancellor of the Universities of Bihar after due consideration has directed that the last date for submission of the application form for the appointment to the post of Pro Vice-Chancellors in T M Bhagalpur University, Bhagalpur, Patna University, Patna, BRA Bihar University, Muzaffarpur, LN Mithila University, Darbhanga, Maulana Mazharul Haque Arabic & Persian University, Patna, BN Mandal University, Madhepura, JP University, Chapra and K S D Sanskrit University, Darbhanga which was extended till 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2020 has again been extended till 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2020 by 06:00 P.M.  
This order will come into force with immediate effect.  
By the order of H.E. the Governor-cum-Chancellor  
**(Ram Anugrah Narayan Singh)**  
Additional Secretary  
PR. No. 000486 (GOVERNOR) 2020-21  
नोडल कोषिका के संबंध में विस्तृत जानकारी एवं सहायता हेतु टोल फ्री नंबर 104 पर संपर्क कर सकते हैं।  
कायदा मामलों—संबंधी किसी भी प्रकार की जानकारी अथवा सुझाव हेतु दूरभाष संख्या 0612-2217636 पर सम्पर्क किया जा सकता है।  
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**BUSINESS CONNECT** A Business Initiative

**ROBOT'S TO SERVE IN COVID ISOLATION WARDS**



SASTRA University will be donating 20 medical supply robots to various Tamilnadu Government Hospitals. The robot was designed and developed by SASTRA in collaboration with one of its IIT incubatees Propeller Technologies. The first Robot was handed over to Thanjavur Medical College hospital in the presence of the District Collector and Dean of the College. This robot is designed with three stacks to carry and serve food, medicine and water to the patients who are in isolation wards. Robots can be operated from a distance of 100 meters. It has an LED screen to enable the doctors and nurses to interact with patients from a distance. It was first tested a week back at Stanley Medical College Hospital in the presence of TN Health Minister Dr. Vijayabaskar and Dean of the College. Two more robot versions – Robot Mops to mop the floor and UV Disinfection Robot are also being prototyped and once tested successfully will be donated to hospitals.

**CSR TOWARDS CORONAVIRUS RELIEF**



Kovai Medical Center and Hospital (KMCH) donated Rs. 1 Crore to the Chief Minister Relief Fund towards Coronavirus Relief. In addition to this KMCH has donated protective body wear and 1200 litres of liquid sanitizer worth Rs. 10 lakhs for the benefit of over 900 sanitary workers of Coimbatore Corporation. Dr. Nalla G. Palaniswami, Chairman, KMCH met Mr. S.P. Velumani, honourable Minister and handed over cheque for Rs. 1 Crore in the presence of Mr. Rajamani, IAS, the District Collector of Coimbatore. KMCH has over 300 workers from North India on contract basis. Keeping their welfare in mind, KMCH has come forward to bear the food expenses for these migrant workforce. Recently KMCH has started a 128 bed hospital exclusively for Covid 19 patients. This hospital is equipped with all facilities including an ICU and isolation ward. The hospital has dedicated doctors, nurses and paramedical staff.

**OVER 1,000 PAINTER FAMILIES TO BE BENEFITTED**



Nippon Paint (India) Private Limited (Decorative Division) Asia's leading paint manufacturer provided financial benefits to over 1,000 plus painters in Tamil Nadu, through its unique Amudha Surabhi card (digital currency card). As part of the initiative, Nippon Paint will now top up the painters' Amudha Surabhi card, thereby enabling them and their families to purchase essential commodities from their neighbourhood Kirana stores. This will ensure the painter families have access to essential grocery items in light of the lockdown. Talking about the effort, Mr. S Mahesh Anand, President - Nippon Paint (India) Private Limited (Decorative Division) commented, "In view of the current Covid-19 pandemic that has shaken the world, we are committed to help reduce the impact faced by our painters who mostly rely on daily wages. We hope that our contribution will help sustain their families during the current lockdown and hopefully endure this crisis together".

**PROSPERITY BEGINS AT HOME**



Akshaya Tritiya is beginning of new things where we honour Goddess Lakshmi by paying obeisance. It is also a festival where we celebrate hope and keep faith that things will be better in the days to come. And no more is faith and hope required than in these uncertain times. We, at Prince Jewellery are encouraging to buy from their comfort of their home this akshaya trititiya whereby the customers can log on to our website and book the jewellery of their choice and gold coins. All customers need to do is log on to [www.princejewellery.com](http://www.princejewellery.com) and book the jewellery or gold coin of their choice and collect them after the lockdown ends from our showrooms. The booking comes with a host of offers: Rs. 125 less per gram on gold jewellery purchases; 10% off per carat on diamond jewellery; For Gold coins- No Wastage (VA) for gold coin purchases. Get 100% Gold Protection. In case the price rises, you end up paying less, if the price falls you get the extra gold benefit. Customers can also call at +91 99620 58840 for queries.

**DONATION OF EQUIPMENTS TO HELP FIGHT COVID-19**



Ramco Cements donated 500, N95 masks and a thousand PPE kits worth Rs. 10 lakhs to Stanley Medical College and Hospital. Mr. Ravichandran, VP (Liaison and CSR) and Mr. Muralidharan, GM (Materials) handed over the materials to Dr. Balaji, Dean and Dr. Prakash, Professor of Urology on the 21<sup>st</sup> of April. Ramco Cements has also donated a new ambulance to the Ariyalur District SP Mr. Srinivasan on 24<sup>th</sup> of April, on their Founder's Day, to assist the Police in handling accidents and emergencies.

**GREAT PERFORMANCE AMID COVID-19 LOCKDOWN**



In the just concluded financial year 2019-20, LIC has achieved its highest number of policies for the last six years. Individual New Business performance of the Corporation as at March 2020 has shown impressive figures of 2.19 crores in number of policies and Rs 51,227 crores in first year premium income. While ensuring growth in Number and Premium both, in spite of the truncation of the most productive fortnight of the year, the Corporation has achieved a healthy business mix. It collected Single premium of Rs 21,967 crores and a Non Single premium of Rs 29,260 crores, the ratio being 42.88 for single premium and 57.12 for non single premium. LIC Pension and Group Schemes Vertical created a new record by clocking more than One Trillion Rupees Premium Income during the Financial Year 2019 - 20. LIC collected Rs 126,749 Crores as Group Schemes New Business Premium Income and a market share of 80.54%.

To form a cyclone, warm, moist air over the ocean rises upward from near the surface. As this air moves up and away from the ocean surface, it leaves less air near the surface. So basically as the warm air rises, it causes an area of lower air pressure below. Air from surrounding areas with higher air pressure pushes in to the low pressure area. Then this new "cool" air becomes warm and moist and rises, too. And the cycle continues. As the warmed, moist air rises and cools the water in the air forms clouds. The whole system of clouds and wind spins and grows, fed by the ocean's heat and water evaporating from the ocean surface. As the storm system rotates faster and faster, an eye forms in the centre. It is very calm and clear in the eye, with very low air pressure. Higher pressure air from above flows down into the eye. Tropical cyclones usually weaken when after they hit land (landfall), because they are no longer being fed by the energy from the warm ocean waters.

**Cyclones in India:**

Cyclones mainly occur during post monsoon and less in pre-monsoon and monsoon season. Cyclones affect both the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea; however, the Bay of Bengal witness more cyclones than the Arabian Sea. This is because:

**Bay of Bengal has higher ocean surface temperature than the Arabian Sea. This helps in formation and intensification of cyclonic storms**

**High rainfall and inflow of fresh water:**

The Bay receives higher rainfall and constant inflow of fresh water. Therefore, the its surface water keeps getting refreshed, making it impossible for the warm water to mix with the cooler water below, making it ideal for a depression.

On the other hand, enhanced vertical mixing in the Arabian Sea, limits cyclone intensification

**Role of remnants:**

Cyclones that form over the Bay of Bengal are either those develop insitu over southeast Bay of Bengal and adjoining Andaman Sea or remnants of typhoons over Northwest Pacific and move across south China sea to Indian Seas. As the frequency of typhoons over Northwest Pacific is quite high, the Bay of Bengal also gets higher number of cyclones.

On the other hand, the cyclones over the Arabian Sea either originate insitu over southeast Arabian Sea or remnants of cyclones from the Bay of Bengal that move across south peninsula. As the majority of Cyclones over the Bay of Bengal weaken over land after landfall, the frequency of migration into Arabian Sea is low.

...erences have been treated to gorgeous sunsets over the past few days. Multiple hues and streaks of light can be spotted in the twilight sky. Many have taken to social media to share photographs of orange and red streaks adorning the evening sky over the weekend.

Meteorologists said such hues are typical of a pre-monsoon sky. Officials of the Meteorological Department said that at times crepuscular rays, commonly referred to as Buddha rays, are visible in the early evening sky over Chennai. These rays form when the sun goes below the horizon during the twilight hours.

K. Srikanth, who blogs with Chennaiyil Oru Mazhakkalam, said the phenomenon was due to the moisture left in the air after the thunderstorms in interior parts. "There is a refraction of the sun's rays over the sky. This is like the effect when light is

...to as paths, just like beautiful sunsets during the pre-monsoon season, sunrises can be brilliant during the northeast monsoon as thunderstorms occur over the sea," he added.

**Rain likely**

The Meteorological Department has forecast isolated rainfall, particularly over coastal and interior areas, till April 30. Chennai could experience thundershowers on Wednesday.

In the 24 hours ending 8.30 a.m. on Tuesday, many places recorded light to moderate rainfall. Sholingur in Vellore district and Cinnona in Coimbatore district were among the places that received 4 cm of rainfall.

N. Puviaarsan, director, Area Cyclone Warning Centre, Chennai, said dry weather might return after April 30 as a low pressure area was likely to form over South Andaman sea.

**COVID-19: The tests reveal all**

What are the important timelines and symptoms characteristic of COVID-19 infection we need to understand before testing?



Dr. RAJARAM ANANTHARAMAN, Senior Cardiologist

After exposure to SARS-CoV-2, the incubation period is typically 5 to 6 days. It can range from 2 to 14 days. In the first week, only viral RNA and antigen particles will be present.

During the second to third weeks, the initial antibody response in the form of IgM will be seen which may be present for another 2 weeks. IgG antibody response will appear after 2 weeks in the blood and provides long term immunity. Currently we do not know how long the long term immunity lasts as this is a novel virus.

From the available literature, the COVID-19 infection will be asymptomatic/mild in 81%, severe in 14% and critical in 5% of cases as shown. But the infection can be transmitted from persons through droplets, even from those with mild symptoms or asymptomatic carriers.

What are the two major types of tests?

The antigen test is the diagnostic test for COVID-19 in which the viral RNA is directly identified by real time reverse transcriptase polymerase chain reaction (rRT-PCR).

This is an extremely sensitive test to identify whether someone is currently infected and active.

The antibody test is to identify the immune response to earlier infection. By identifying the type of antibody positivity (IgM or IgG or both or none) we can determine whether the indi-

**COVID-19**

dual had exposure to infection or not, still has active infection or has developed long-term immunity.

What is the best diagnostic test to identify if a person is currently having active COVID-19 infection?

The rRT-PCR antigen test is the best diagnostic test to identify if someone is currently infected and active with SARS-CoV-2. In this, a nasopharyngeal (nasal) or oropharyngeal (mouth) swab is taken and sent in a cold storage box to the central laboratory, where the viral RNA is converted to complementary DNA (cDNA) using reverse transcriptase, and amplified following the addition of a primer and fluorescent dye and DNA binding enzymes.

A positive test will be indicated by the raise in fluorescence.

Depending on the equipment and method used, the time taken may vary between a few hours to a day to get the reports. This test is very sensitive and specific and can detect even if a single viral RNA particle is present in the swab.

Some of the reasons why we get a false negative (negative test when the patient is

actually COVID-19 positive) may be improper swab sampling, prolonged time to get sample to lab causing degradation of RNA.

What is the best test to identify if a person had exposure (with or without symptoms) to COVID-19 and their immunity response?

The test for antibodies will give information on whether a person had exposure to SARS-CoV-2 at any point in time and whether immunity has developed. When exposed to SARS-CoV-2 our immune system will form proteins called antibodies to neutralize the virus, initially antibody response will be IgM and long-term durable response will be IgG. Presence of IgG antibody alone will indicate development immunity.

Why are the currently available point of care (POC) rapid testing kit (COVID-19 antibody test) results variable?

The currently available POC rapid testing kits have been brought into the market without quality assurance by the regulatory authorities of the countries in which they were manufactured and they lack the validation process.

Several of the testing kits have been fast-tracked due to increasing demand, hence lacking in quality, with variable sensitivity from 30% to 80%. The main concerns raised by several European countries and India are that these kits are showing a higher percentage of false negative reports (i.e. results of the test is negative while the patient is COVID-19-positive).

**OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE**

<b>DEATH</b>	<b>DEATH ANNIVERSARIES</b>	<b>DEATH ANNIVERSARIES</b>
<b>SAD DEMISE</b>  Shri E.Venugopal (age 92) Joint Director of Medical Education (retd) passed away on 25th April in Myslapore after brief illness.	<b>FOURTH ANNIVERSARY</b>  Smt. VIDYAVATI BATRA Fondly Remembered by FAMILY MEMBERS	<b>Sixth Anniversary</b>  Mr.V.G.B. SARMA Ch: 26700370
<b>DEATH ANNIVERSARIES</b>	<b>ANNIVERSARY REMEMBRANCE</b>	<b>5th Death Anniversary</b>
<b>FIFTH ANNIVERSARY</b>  Smt. S. Seethalakshmi (Retd., N.L.C Ltd, India) Attained Shivaloga Praapthi on 27th April 2020. "Deeply Mourned By" Sons, Daughters and all of the L43 family members! PH: +91 92480 33551; +91 95661 06572;	<b>S.GOPALAN (Gopulu)</b> (FOUNDER - ARMAVE ADVERTISING PVT.LTD.) You were great, eminent, accomplished, noble in character and a very successful and admired person. Your greatness has reflected in your professional and personal life. You shall always be remembered for ever. Directors: Duraikandaswamy Tmt. Mangalam Balu D. Sai Naveen Kumar and Staff Ph: 044-24346002	<b>B. SUJATHA</b> D.O.B: 12.07.1972 - D.O.D: 29.04.2015 Fondly remembered by: Family & Staff of Hi-Tech Industries, Ch-58

...was extended on 30 April 2020 has again been extended on 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2020 by 06:00 P.M.

This order will come into force with immediate effect. By the order of H.E. the Governor-cum-Chancellor, (Ram Anugrah Narayan Singh) Additional Secretary

PR. No. 000487 (GOVERNOR) 2020-21

नेपाल कोसेम के संघ में विस्तृत जानकारी एवं सशोध हेतु Call Free No. 104 पर संपर्क कर सकते हैं।  
चाय सम्पर्क-संवेदी किसी तरह की जानकारी अथवा सूचना हेतु दूरभाष संख्या 0612-2217636 पर सम्पर्क किया जा सकता है।  
परिचय के सहयोग पर सलाह हेतु प्रश्न समाधान विभाग का Toll Free No.: 18003456138

**बिहार सरकार**  
**अधीक्षक का कार्यालय**  
नालन्दा मेडिकल कॉलेज अस्पताल, पटना-7  
निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना  
ज्ञापक-1942 पटना

वित्तीय वर्ष 2020-21 में नालन्दा मेडिकल कॉलेज अस्पताल, पटना में रेडियोलॉजी विभाग के वास्तु विभिन्न साईज के एक्स-रे फिल्ट्र, डी0आर0 एक्स-रे फिल्ट्र, डेमलपर केमिकल आदि की आपूर्ति हेतु वास्तु एवं सेवाकर (GST) अधिनियम 2017 के अन्तर्गत बिहार राज्य में निर्बंधित सरकारी / गैर सरकारी निर्माता, फर्म या प्राधिकृत आपूर्तिकर्ताओं से निर्बंधित डाक / स्पीड पोस्ट द्वारा निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। इस संबंध में विस्तृत जानकारी हेतु अधीक्षक कार्यालय से निविदा प्रकाशन के पश्चात सम्पर्क कर निविदा की प्रति प्राप्त कर सकते हैं। निविदा प्रथम प्रकाशन की तिथि से 21 दिनों के अन्दर तक प्राप्त किया जायेगा एवं निविदा प्रथम प्रकाशन की तिथि से 25<sup>वें</sup> दिन 12.30 बजे दिन में कय समिति द्वारा अधीक्षक कार्यालय कक्ष में खोला जायेगा। यदि उक्त तिथि को अवकाश होता है तो उसके अगले दिन निविदा खोली जायेगी। निविदा खुलने के दिन निविदादाता अथवा उनके प्रतिनिधि उपस्थित रह सकते हैं, इस संबंध में भाग लेने वाले निविदादाता को अलग से सूचित नहीं किया जायेगा। निविदादाता की अनुपस्थिति में भी कय समिति द्वारा निविदा खोल दिया जायेगा। निविदा समाचार-पत्र में प्रथम प्रकाशन की तिथि से ही मान्य होगा। इस निविदा की सभी जानकारियों वेबसाइट [www.prdbihar.gov.in](http://www.prdbihar.gov.in) पर देखी जा सकती हैं।

अधीक्षक,  
नालन्दा मेडिकल कॉलेज अस्पताल,  
पटना-7

PR. No. 000470 (Health) 2020-21

नेपाल कोसेम के संघ में विस्तृत जानकारी एवं सशोध हेतु Call Free No. 104 पर संपर्क कर सकते हैं।  
चाय सम्पर्क-संवेदी किसी तरह की जानकारी अथवा सूचना हेतु दूरभाष संख्या 0612-2217636 पर सम्पर्क किया जा सकता है।  
परिचय के सहयोग पर सलाह हेतु प्रश्न समाधान विभाग का Toll Free No.: 18003456138

केन्द्रीय मत्स्यीय मण्डलिकी अनुसंधान संस्थान  
(Indian Council of Agricultural Research)  
Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute  
(Department of Agricultural Research and Education, Ministry of Agriculture, Govt. of India)

Post Box No. 1603, Ernakulam North P.O., Kochi - 682018, Kerala, India  
Phone : 91 484 2394867/2391407 Fax: 91 484 2394909/2396685  
Email: director@cmfri.org.in Web: www.cmfri.org.in

Dated 28.04.2020  
**INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**  
CMFRI invites Expression of Interest (EOI) for Establishment of one Aqua - One Centre in cage farming villages in Sindhuraj District, Maharashtra to extend Technical and Laboratory Services to the Cage Farmers. For further details, specifications, qualification, criteria etc., interested parties may visit [www.cmfri.org.in](http://www.cmfri.org.in)  
Last date for submission of EOI : 20.05.2020.

Sd/-  
Assistant Administrative Officer (Cdn.)

**SAD DEMISE**  
Age: 91 years  
**T. VEDANTHA CHARI**  
Retired Joint Manager Food Corporation of India Ahmedabad Region (Threat) on 27/04/2020 at 5:35 p.m. Deeply mourned by sons, daughters, daughters-in-law, sons-in-law, grand children and great grand children  
Ct: T. Raghunath - 98414 01970  
T. Shyam Sundar - 99802 00325

**DEATH**  
**OBITUARY**  
  
**Dr. SUBRAHMANYA RAMAMURTHY**  
of Anna Nagar Western Extension (formerly IMF Adviser and Cognizant Foundation Board Member), Chennai has passed away on the 27th April 2020.  
He was a loving man who travelled the world bringing reforms to many countries (Papua New Guinea, Namibia, Kazakhstan, Middle East among an extensive list).  
He will be missed by his two sons and their wives and grandchildren in Australia and USA.  
Condolence messages can be sent to: [rama@invoc.com.au](mailto:rama@invoc.com.au)

**DEATH ANNIVERSARIES**

**1<sup>ST</sup> ANNIVERSARY**  
"Sing unto the Lord a new song" - Ps. 96 : 1.  
  
**Dr. HELEN SATYA**  
The Legendary Nightingale of Gospel Music.  
Safe in the arms of Jesus !  
We Love & miss You Mom!  
The SATYA Family.

**DEATH ANNIVERSARY**  
  
**S.KASTHURIRANGAN**  
EXPIRED ON 29.04.2019  
**K.VIJYALAKSHMI**  
EXPIRED ON 08.04.2004  
"You are always in our hearts"  
Fondly remembered by: Brother, Sisters, Sons and Daughters, Sons in-law, Daughters in-law, Grand Children and Relatives.

# Kerala community sampling finds new cases

Three of four fresh cases in State found through special drive; In A.P., burden of new cases continues to rise

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM/  
VIJAYAWADA (HYDERABAD)/  
BENGALURU  
Four persons tested positive for COVID-19 in Kerala on Tuesday. Three of the cases were picked up from the community in the Health department's augmented sampling drive on Sunday with 3,101 swabs.

For the third day, Andhra Pradesh reported more than 80 fresh cases taking the tally to 1,259. Eleven new positive

cases were reported in Karnataka on Tuesday, taking the State total to 523. Telangana continued to show a dip with only six cases, and 42 people were discharged.

Two of Kerala's positive cases on Tuesday had a travel history abroad while the other two were "contacts". Three were in Kannur and one at Kasaragod.

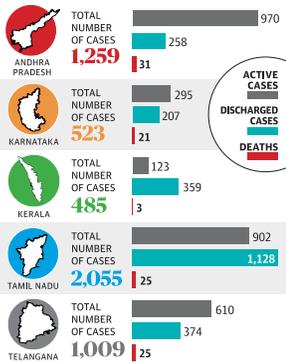
Though the Idukki district

## Maintaining vigil

Though the Kerala government has allowed partial relaxation of the lockdown norms in some districts, it has not compromised on the restrictions to prevent the spread of COVID-19



Take your pick: A shop owner displaying coloured masks at a shop in Thiruvananthapuram on Tuesday.



administration said it had three fresh cases, which had been shifted to the hospital, Chief Minister, Pinarayi Vijayan, said that these cases needed reconfirmation.

The patients in question had been moved to hospital and were under treatment,

he added. Of 485 COVID-19 cases reported in the State so far, 123 were under hospital care and 359 on the recovery list.

Mr. Vijayan said that the Health department was doing a sentinel survey for health workers, guest work-

ers and those who had increased social interaction with the public. Of 875 samples tested, 801 were negative. Of the 3,101 samples tested as part of the augmented sample survey, 2,682 were negative. The results of 391 samples were awaited,

and 25 samples had to be re-tested. The State had tested 23,980 samples, of which 23,277 were negative.

## 62 frontline staff

In Andhra Pradesh, 62 frontline staff were infected till date. They included 31 health care providers, 12 doctors, 12 nursing staffers, five sanitation workers and two pharmacists who were dealing with COVID-19 patients, said Special Chief Secretary (Health, Medical and Family Welfare) K.S. Jawahar Reddy. Many personnel of revenue and police departments were also infected.

Addressing the media on Tuesday Dr. Reddy said that the Governor Biswa Bhushan Harichandan and all other staff at Raj Bhavan tested negative. He said they were tested after four staffers of the Raj Bhavan were infected.

During the 24 hour period, 82 samples tested positive of a total 5,783 tests, the bulletin of the Health Depart-

ment said. So far, 80,334 tests were conducted and the State stood first with 1504 tests per million population.

Kurnool reported 40 fresh cases, crossing the 300-mark while Guntur reported 17 fresh cases. Krishna district reported 13 cases, Kadapa seven, Nellore three and Chittoor and Anantapur one case each.

In Karnataka, six cases were from Kalaburagi. On Tuesday, 14 patients were discharged. Primary and Secondary Education Minister S. Suresh Kumar said 39.5% of the total 523 patients had been discharged. Seven of the 295 patients isolated in different hospitals were in intensive care units. Also, three new cases were from Bagalkot district and one each from Bengaluru Urban and Gadag.

In Telangana with 1,009 cases - 610 active - the six new cases were from Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation limits.

# Kerala HC stays State govt. order on salary deferment

'Financial difficulty not a valid reason'

K.C. GOPAKUMAR  
KOCHI

The Kerala High Court on Tuesday stayed for two months the operationalisation of the State government order to defer the payment of the salary of government employees and the staff of State government-owned undertakings.

Justice Bechu Kurian Thomas passed the interim order on a slew of petitions filed by various unions challenging the order to defer payment of six days' salary every month from April to August. The order is not applicable to employees who draw a gross salary below ₹20,000.

The court observed that prima facie the law authorising the government to issue such an order was found wanting. There was ambiguity in the order on the manner in which the amount deducted was proposed to be set apart or was to be utilised. The order only referred to the financial difficulties faced by the government due to the COVID-19 situation.

**Financial difficulty**  
Financial difficulty was not a ground for the government to defer payment of salary of its employees. Prima facie, deferment of payment of salary, for whatever purposes, amounted to denial of the right to property, the court added.

Counsel for the unions contended that Article 300A of the Constitution (right to property) would include within its ambit 'salary' as well. The article mandates that no person shall be deprived of his/her property save by the authority of the law. They further argued that no



Deferment of payment of salary amounts to denial of right to property, the HC said.

## Pinarayi silent about filing appeal

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Tuesday refused to reveal whether the State would file an appeal against the High Court's stay on deducting the salary of government employees. Mr. Vijayan said the government was yet to review the order in its entirety. The State was constitutionally bound to obey the decision of the court.

law empowered the government to defer the salary payment of the employees. Besides, the payment could not be deferred without their consent.

Rejecting a contention of the government, the court pointed out that the Disaster Management Act or the Epidemic Diseases Act did not specifically confer any power on the government to defer salary payments during the times of any disaster.

# Kerala to register those stranded in other States

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM  
The Department of Non-Resident Keralites Affairs (Norka) will commence online registration of those stranded in various States wanting to return home.

They can log on to the website [registernorkaroots.com](http://registernorkaroots.com) from April 29 evening and provide details. As the same website is used for registration of non-resident Keralites wishing to return from foreign nations, a separate section will be available for those stranded in various States.

The government has prioritised the categories of those stranded for their return journey. A meeting

chaired by the Chief Minister on Tuesday took stock of the arrangements.

Unlike those arriving at the international airports, the government is looking into a proposal of the Transport Department to restrict the movement through six interstate checkpoints - Kumily, Arayankavu, Amaravila, Walayar, Muthanga and Manjeswaram.

**2.76 lakh NoRNs register**  
Meanwhile, 2,76,700 NoRNs from 150 nations have registered on the website till Tuesday evening for returning to Kerala. The registration had commenced on Sunday but the Centre is yet to take a call on the flights and the dates for the same.

## Left high and dry



Seeking a bailout: Lockdown-hit toddy tappers staging a protest seeking relief measures at Rajupalem in Andhra Pradesh's Prakasam district on Tuesday. •KOMMURI SRINIVAS

## IN BRIEF



### Kerala Chief Justice in home quarantine

Kochi  
Kerala Chief Justice S. Manikumar has gone into home quarantine in Kochi on Tuesday after a road trip from Chennai to Kochi. The Chief Justice is likely to confine himself to his official residence for 14 days as mandated by the quarantine protocol. The travel was facilitated after discussions between the Home Secretaries of the two States.

### 'Vidya Deevana' to benefit 14 lakh students

Vijayawada  
Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Tuesday launched 'Jagananna Vidya Deevana', a fee reimbursement scheme that to benefit 14 lakh college students in the State. From 2020-21 academic year, the fee reimbursement would be credited directly into the accounts of the mothers of the students in four instalments. The government has released over ₹4,000 crore for the scheme and ₹1,880 crore more towards pending dues.

### Return of bodies of Anantapur students

Anantapur  
The bodies of two students from Anantapur district, who died in an accident in the Philippines on April 5, are likely to arrive in an air ambulance from Manila on April 30. Vamsi Kondigalla Peddinti hailing from the city, and Revanth Kumar Katikella from Kadiri, both aged 21, were studying medicine in Cebu City. The bodies have reached the Manila airport and are expected to reach Anantapur by Wednesday midnight or early on Thursday.

# Bodies of Tamil Nadu, Kerala & Goa natives brought from UAE

They died of diseases other than COVID-19

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
KOZHIKODE

Bodies of seven Indians who died of diseases other than COVID-19 in the United Arab Emirates landed at the international airport here on Tuesday.

The bodies - of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Goa natives - were repatriated via Flydubai cargo flight FZ 8189 from Dubai at 12.40 p.m., airport director K. Srinivasa Rao said.

He said the freighter aircraft departed for Dubai with over 18,000 kg of fruits, vegetables and medicines later.

### Given to relatives

A senior police officer said the bodies were of Koshy Mathai and Sijo Joy of Pathanamthitta; Punakkal David



Back home: Bodies of Indians who died abroad being shifted from the cargo hold at Kozhikode airport. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Shamy of Kannur; Johanna John of Kollam; Velayudhan Sathyan of Thrissur; Sreenivas Muthukarappan of Sivaganga in Tamil Nadu and Henrique D'Souza of Goa. The bodies were handed over to their relatives.

The bodies were repatriated after the Ministry of Home Affairs issued an order permitting their transport subject to guidelines issued by various Ministries and government departments related to the management of COVID-19 and the submission of No Objection Certificates from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

### Clearance needed

Indian Embassies and High Commissions abroad can give clearance for repatriation of mortal remains of Indian citizens who died due to reasons other than the COVID-19 infection.

# How many vehicles used for Nikhil's wedding: HC

Have received several pleas, says court

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
BENGALURU

What is the policy of the government on giving passes to vehicles during the lockdown and how many passes were given to allow people to attend the wedding of K. Nikhil, son of former Karnataka Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy, the High Court of Karnataka asked the government on Tuesday.

A Division Bench, comprising Chief Justice Abhay Shreenivas Oka and Justice B.V. Nagarathna, posed these questions orally after noticing that the government had not responded to the court's April 21 direction on whether there was breach of social distancing during the ceremony.

The Bench pointed out that the High Court had received several pleas through e-mails from various persons from within and out-

### Money kept for event to be spent on relief work

Bengaluru  
After plans of performing his son K. Nikhil's wedding with all the voters of Ramanagara in attendance getting dashed due to the COVID-19 epidemic, former Karnataka Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy has decided to distribute 1.2 lakh dry ration kits from the money earmarked for the wedding expenses.

side Karnataka on the breach of social distancing norms and the grant of vehicle passes for the wedding.

Is it the policy of the government to grant passes for a wedding during the lockdown? If yes, then everyone will apply for passes, the Bench observed orally asking the Additional Advocate-General to submit the government's response by the next hearing.

## WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSTAT/IMO (TAZEN AT 18.00 HRS)  
**Forecast for Wednesday:** Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning, hail and gusty winds very likely at isolated places over Maharashtra; with lightning and gusty winds at isolated places over Rajasthan, Meghalaya, Goa, Tamil Nadu and Kerala and with lightning at isolated places over east Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Odisha, Telangana, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	...	34.0	22.7	Kozhikode	...	35.6	27.2
Ahmedabad	...	40.7	26	Kurnool	...	39.9	28.4
Aizawl	...	23.9	15.2	Lucknow	...	34.0	22.3
Allahabad	...	32.0	23.0	Madurai	...	38.2	27.6
Bangalore	...	32.4	23.0	Mangaluru	...	36.1	26.2
Bhopal	...	36.8	23.4	Mumbai	...	36.6	26.1
Bhubaneswar	...	34.4	25.0	Myuru	...	34.9	23.0
Chandigarh	...	26.4	18.7	New Delhi	...	32.8	21.6
Chennai	...	34.6	28	Patna	...	38.2	21.8
Coimbatore	...	13.3	37.4	Port Blair	...	33.6	27.4
Dehradun	...	46.5	14.7	Puducherry	...	33.4	28.3
Gangtok	...	12	15.2	Pune	...	38.2	23.0
Goa	...	34.5	25.5	Raipur	...	33.0	22.0
Guwahati	...	28.5	21.8	Ranchi	...	56.4	29.5
Hubballi	...	38.0	22.0	Shillong	...	11.8	19.2
Hyderabad	...	40.7	25.6	Shimla	...	4.9	23.8
Imphal	...	0.5	26.2	Srinagar	...	21.7	8.9
Jaipur	...	37.0	24.0	Thiruvananthapuram	...	34.9	28.1
Kochi	...	2.6	33.4	Tiruchi	...	38.9	28.6
Kolkata	...	14.6	20.8	Vijayawada	...	33.2	25.6
Kolkata	...	10.0	30.2	Vishakhapatnam	...	33.2	25.6

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

### Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO <sub>2</sub>	CO	PM <sub>2.5</sub>	PM <sub>10</sub>	CODE	Yesterday
Ahmedabad	37	30	17	66	94	...	...
Bengaluru	10	17	50	...	74	...	In observation made at 6:00 p.m., Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 153 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution.
Chennai	03	17	47	...	15	...	...
Delhi	...	32	47	159	65	...	...
Hyderabad	14	39	19	48	68	...	...
Kolkata	08	13	32	16	32	...	...
Lucknow	05	13	53	83	...	...	...
Mumbai	...	51	54	64	55	...	...
Pune	32	11	53	40	38	...	...
Vishakhapatnam	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

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.  
**PM<sub>2.5</sub> & PM<sub>10</sub>:** 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.



## Signalling support

RBI's liquidity facility for mutual funds still hinges on banks' willingness to lend

The Reserve Bank of India's decision to open a special facility to ensure the availability of adequate liquidity for the mutual fund industry is a timely move in signalling to investors that the central bank is alert to the need to preserve financial stability in these challenging times. In assigning ₹50,000 crore exclusively for commercial banks to lend to mutual funds, the RBI made clear on Monday that it wants to ramp down on any build-up of liquidity strains at mutual fund houses in the wake of heightened volatility in the capital markets and increased redemption pressures as a fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic. The proximate trigger for the central bank's move was last week's announcement by Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund that it was winding up six debt funds – funds that collectively had assets under management (AUM) amounting to about ₹26,000 crore. The RBI has rightly recognised the urgent need to ward off any incipient contagion impact from the closure of these six funds. With the overall industry-wide AUM for debt funds at about ₹15-lakh crore, it was crucial for the banking regulator to reassure investors that liquidity need not be a concern while deciding on whether to retain or redeem their investments in these mutual funds. The Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) had, separately, last week, sought to assure investors that a majority of debt fund schemes had "invested in superior credit quality securities" and had appropriate liquidity to back their normal operations.

While the facility is a straightforward 90-day repaid lending window from which banks can avail credit to provide loans to mutual funds, there are concerns about the banking industry's willingness to expose itself to the credit risk involved in making these fresh loans. That the RBI was cognisant of this is evident in the way that the norms have been tailor-made to incentivise the banks to lend. From allowing banks to breach their 25% ceiling on held-to-maturity investments as a consequence of lending to mutual funds, to exempting the support extended from banks' overall capital market exposure limits, the central bank has sought to ease the flow of credit to the fund houses. Still, if the recent experience of getting lenders to support the non-banking financial companies through a targeted long-term repo operation backed by ₹50,000 crore is any pointer, clearly the banking industry – beset by bad loans – appears to have little appetite for adding any credit that it deems risky. Moreover, with the economy still in lockdown and the credit ratings of even relatively well-established companies facing a real and not-too-distant threat of downgrades, how willing banks would be to use this facility to lend to debt mutual funds remains to be seen. The Centre may need to be ready to step in with direct intervention if the RBI's gambit fails to ease the pressure on mutual funds.

## No end in sight

India must learn from other countries in devising strategies to contain the epidemic

It took 94 days to reach one million novel coronavirus cases on April 3 after China reported the first cluster of 41 cases to WHO on December 31, the number of days needed to double to two million sharply reduced to 12. It again took just 12 more days to cross three million cases globally on April 27 night. The virus has now spread to 188 countries/regions. The true number of infections will be several-fold higher as most countries have not been testing people who have mild or no symptoms. For instance, in the U.S., the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has said that those with mild symptoms of COVID-19 who do not meet the criteria for priority testing will not be tested. While new cases have declined in Europe, there is an uptick in Africa and South America. The virus is still spreading quickly in the U.S. – with 0.99 million cases, it has the most number of cases globally, a little more than four times that of Spain, which has the second most number of cases. There have been over 2.1 lakh deaths worldwide, with the U.S. again accounting for the most – over 56,600, which is double that of Italy – over 27,000. New York City alone has 17,515 deaths, which is multiple times higher than that of many countries. The mortality figures too may be an underestimation.

India has reported over 30,300 cases and 973 deaths, based on data collated from States. The number of cases has multiplied several-fold from over 600 since the national lockdown from March 25. At nearly 8,600 cases, Maharashtra has the maximum in the country; Dharavi alone has 330 cases and 18 deaths. With a population close to 1,00,000 that lives cheek by jowl, physical distancing is an impossible luxury. A central team has indicated that nearly 3,000 people might need institutional quarantine in the absence of effective containment in Dharavi. In this context, India could look at the experience of Singapore. Much appreciated for its efforts in almost containing the spread of the virus early on, the city-state has seen numbers rising since late March. Fresh cases have been reported from dormitories that house over 0.2 million migrant workers from other countries. The crowding in the dormitories, which is akin to what is seen in Dharavi and other slums in India, has provided an ideal setting for easy infection spread. Despite shutting down educational institutions and workplaces on April 3, when the number of cases was 1,114, and moving many workers to alternative accommodation and quarantining others, it has not been able to contain the spread; nearly 15,000 cases have been reported as on April 28. As India nears the end of its extended lockdown, it needs to learn from the successes and failures of other countries.



RAJEEV BHARGAVA

The current pandemic has forced us to think about the plight of workers in our country. While the virus has demonstrated the enormous value of health workers, it has also enhanced public awareness of the pivotal role of migrant workers in our economy. We have been compelled to realise that between 100 million to 125 million people leave their villages, families and homes to find work far away wherever they can find it; their invisible hands harvest the crops and feed us, clean streets, run factories, build roads, and construct our houses.

### The trek back home

Living away from home is never easy. A home is not made of brick and mortar, certainly not tin or planks of wood. It is where one finds comfort, nurtures relationships, and raises a family. It gives sanctuary from daily struggles. An extension of one's identity, it provides us a sense of belonging. A place of tranquillity and serenity, it is where one longs to be when not there. This can only be where one's family, friends and community reside, not an inhospitable, overcrowded room with strangers. Not surprisingly, hungry migrant workers were determined to trudge hundreds of kilometres to reach "home" in their village. I believe many would have preferred to do so even if they were fed by their employers or the State, which clearly they were not. Sure-

ly, they were entirely justified in asking why Indians stranded abroad were flown back in special planes or middle-class students brought back to their hometowns from coaching centres in Kota, Rajasthan, but no such arrangements were made for them? Why this differential treatment? Are they not citizens of the same country? Are they any less Indian?

### Condition in 'normal' times

The current plight of migrant workers during the lockdown should become an occasion to reflect on their abysmal condition in "normal" times. Many "contractual labourers" rarely see a written contract. A minimum, regular wage per month is legally required but seldom paid. Many do not receive wages for months, and at the end of the season when they are finally paid it is often less than what was agreed. There is a lack of transparency in accounting – excessive, arbitrary and unexpected deductions from final payments are common.

Lack of regular wages means that workers either borrow from employers or from local moneylenders. This renders them even more financially vulnerable because of indebtedness. Quite often they work long hours, between 10 and 13 hours a day, live in tents or makeshift shanties without access to potable water, toilets, and electricity. I doubt if they are ever fully protected from the elements. Many of them do not have a kitchen and are forced to eat from local street vendors who live in similar conditions. Under such dire working and living circumstances, is it a surprise that under an unexpected lockdown they all wish to return to their original homes?

The Prime Minister recently spoke of the need for empathy and



PHOTO BY AP/WIDEWORLD

compassion during pandemics. These are admirable moral virtues, always necessary, not just in emergencies. But ultimately, individual virtues are insufficient to deal with social malaise. For it is not feelings of individuals but enduring collective sentiment crystallised around a stable course of action by public agencies that really matter. Effective public policies are indispensable. Gurudwaras and non-governmental organisations may complement its efforts to feed the hungry, but it remains the prime duty of the state to do so.

### Work, home and dignity

In short, a regime of social policy, pivotal for a minimal welfare state must be installed to address the basic needs of all Indian citizens, not only during pandemics but for all times, to meet any contingency. Socioeconomic rights, including the right to work, have long been part of our Directive Principles of State Policy. By enacting the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act in 2005, the Indian Parliament had set in motion a process that makes a specific and significant welfare provision constitutive of the very idea of citizenship. To be a citizen of a polity is to be entitled to an opportunity to work. Now, manual work in extremely hot conditions on parched terrain is an energy-

draining, back-breaking chore, not quite a source of self-realisation central to the emancipatory vision of Gandhi, Hegel or Marx. And yet, even such paid manual labour is a far cry from receiving charity. Under democratic norms of equality, living on charity is demeaning and lowers self-esteem. There is a sense in which any voluntary work, no matter how arduous, quietly uplifts and enhances dignity and basic self-respect – a point gracefully underscored by a group of painters (migrant labour) in Palana, Sikar in Rajasthan, when they chose to give a fresh coat of paint to an entire school building in return for the shelter provided to them during lockdown.

Work is one among many sources of satisfaction and self-respect. Our Directive Principles focus on others – proper housing, for instance. It is time the state took these seriously. While no state can build a home – which needs personal care and must be our own handiwork – the right to housing can certainly be guaranteed for it is implicit in the article enjoining the state to provide a decent standard of living.

### Multiple deprivations

However, such social policies will not be forthcoming unless we, who make these policies, stopped viewing the poor as sub-human. This is a controversial statement and requires some explanation. I believe the best of us carry the image of the poor as labouring creatures with basic material needs who beg children. They suffer when deprived of these material needs. Our humanity lies in empathetically acknowledging this suffering. This, however, is not an image that we have of ourselves. We have more complex social, cultural, political and even spiritual

needs. We need quality time with our children, and leisure for ourselves; companionship and friendship, a flourishing social life; music, literature, art, poetry; time to fulfil our obligations in the public domain. And of course, we need our privacy, hours of solitude, space for self-reflection. Our suffering too is different: we have anxieties and phobias, inner turmoil, loss of a sense of self.

Assuming these profound differences between them and us, it does not cross our minds that the poor have multiple deprivations – not only material but social, cultural, familial, spiritual. When did a policymaker ever worry about the quality of family or spiritual life among the poor? Or whether they have time for their children or for leisure? Or how impoverished they might be because of their inability to adequately self-reflect.

I do not wish to make the absurd demand that our state policies be designed to care for all these non-material needs. My point is that unless policymakers have the same conception of the poor as they have of themselves – persons with rich, varied and complex needs – they will not realise the grave consequences of the material deprivations endured by the poor or show the urgency to remove them. In short, policymakers need to realise that they deal with complete human beings. Unless they are able to vividly imagine the poor as fully human they will never design proper policies to address even their material needs. Alas, this will not happen unless policymakers feel their pain – literature and cinema can help here – and there is real, continuing contact between the two.

Rajeev Bhargava is Professor, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi

# The outline of another pandemic combat strategy

A way out is to lift restrictions in a graded way, with reverse quarantine for the elderly and those with comorbidities



R. PRASAD

With the number of novel coronavirus cases reported so far continuing to rise in most States even during the national lockdown that came into force since March 25, India faces the great challenge of containing its spread just days before the May 3 deadline for lifting the lockdown. With the number of cases increasing from 519 on March 24 to nearly 28,000 on April 27, the lockdown has indeed prevented an explosion of cases.

As the World Health Organization (WHO) had pointed out on March 25, the unprecedented measures of the shutdown can only buy time and reduce the pressure on the health-care system. But by itself, it cannot "extinguish epidemics".

Contrary to WHO's advice of using the opportunity to carry out more precise and targeted measures to chase and contain the virus, there have been no concerted efforts to aggressively test and isolate positive cases even in hotspot and containment areas.

In light of this, will extending the lockdown become a default option as was done after the first phase of restriction ended on April 14 even as the government believes there is no community transmission yet in India? Or, as

many experts have been advocating, will India bite the bullet and opt for lifting the restrictions in a phased manner?

### Weighing in

Dr. Giridhar R. Babu, an epidemiologist at the Public Health Foundation of India, Bengaluru and a member of the COVID-19 task force of Karnataka and Dr. Jayaprakash Mulyil formerly with the Christian Medical College, Vellore, say that without doubt there will be an increase in the number of cases once the lockdown is lifted; particularly so as no effort was made to hunt the virus during the lockdown period. But a careful, graded approach to lift the restrictions can still help prevent a huge spike in cases and create a concomitant strain on the health-care system.

Any strategy adopted for lifting restrictions should bear in mind that the actual number of people who have been infected is many times more than the laboratory-confirmed cases. Dr. Babu estimates the total number of infections to be around 2,50,000 while Prof. Mulyil says that for every recorded case, there are 60 people who have not been counted.

While extending the lockdown in hotspot areas appears not only prudent but also essential, there should be more focus during the remaining days of the lockdown on silent areas that have not reported any case or just a few cases. Increased surveillance of those exhibiting severe acute respiratory infection (SARI), influenza-like illness (ILI) and any COVID-19 sus-



PHOTO BY AP/WIDEWORLD

pect cases in the silent areas will help determine if restrictions should be eased or continued after May 3. Sikkim, which has walled itself up has not reported a single case; some northeast States have reported only a few cases. These States would not need a continued lockdown, once the true infection prevalence is ascertained. Most importantly, the decision on whether to continue the restrictions or not should be taken at the local level; a centralised approach to decision making will be hugely counterproductive.

As Dr. Babu strongly advocates, it is important to segregate essential and non-essential activities and encourage more people to work from home till such time as an effective vaccine or anti-viral becomes available. Universal mask wearing, physical distancing and observing hand hygiene will help in curtailing the spread; but these will not be practical in slums and other crowded neighbourhoods.

### On herd immunity

This brings to the fore a more natural way to slow down and bring the epidemic to an end through herd immunity that happens naturally during an epidemic. Herd immunity arises when a sizeable population gets naturally infected

over a period of time so that the virus does not easily find a susceptible host to infect, thus bringing the epidemic to a halt – this is what Dr. Mulyil and virologist Dr. T. Jacob John advocate.

The herd immunity that these scientists are referring to is not very dissimilar from the one practised by British Prime Minister Boris Johnson who intended using it as a strategy to end the epidemic. But the difference is that while Mr. Johnson put even the elderly and those with comorbidities at risk of infection through his approach, both these scientists have kept the interests of the elderly and those with comorbidities as top priorities. While these two categories of people who may experience serious symptoms and even death can protect themselves by self-isolation – also called as reverse quarantine – the young, who mostly exhibit only mild symptoms, can go out by following containment measures together with universal mask wearing, physical distancing and hand hygiene.

Strictly following containment measures, wearing a mask and maintaining physical distancing not only slow down the rate of infection but also the rate at which herd immunity is achieved naturally. But that is a small price to pay in order to avoid overwhelming the health-care system, if many require hospitalisation.

In the case of H1N1, in 2009, the swine flu pandemic died out in two years when 40% of the population where the virus was spreading had been naturally infected. But it comes back each year as the

susceptible population through new birth grows beyond the threshold. The same was true for all the previous influenza pandemics – the 1918 Spanish flu, 1957 Asian flu, and 1968 Hong Kong influenza. Even during the pre-vaccination days, measles used to strike once in three years and German measles every seven years. Dr. Jacob John expects at least one year for herd immunity to develop naturally for the novel coronavirus, provided shutdowns are eased.

Though other strains of coronavirus, which cause the common cold, infect people almost every winter, the same strain does not infect people twice. But the mutations that these viruses undergo make most people susceptible to infection. Fortunately, the novel coronavirus appears more stable (experiences fewer mutations) than other influenza viruses and so an infected person may probably be protected against future disease, Dr. Mulyil hopes.

WHO cautions that "there is currently no evidence that people who have recovered from COVID-19 and have antibodies are protected from a second infection". Infected people may have some level of protection against the virus, but the level and duration of protection is still unknown. In South Korea, at least 222 people who have recovered from the disease have again tested positive. It is still not clear if it is a case of reinfection or reactivation (where infected people have not been able to completely clear the virus).

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## 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.

### Humane and inclusive

The daily "bombardment" of news about the extent and the impact of the novel coronavirus pandemic shows the extensive damage it has caused to countless lives, societies and economies, gripping every nation with fear and anxiety. It is not just the poor and the marginalised but also the affluent and the corporates who are gripped with uncertainty. Leaders of nations with a very high count of cases must rollout strategies to cope with the crisis. At the same time, even during this testing time, the leaders of some powerful nations, especially the United States, have not shown the needed tenderness and compassion to other nationals working

in their countries. Many of them now are not assured of jobs and are looking at an exit. Human resources are a great asset to any countries, and contribute immensely to the respective economies. Hence, it is time national leaders make wise decisions that are humane and inclusive.

RITA DHANABALAN,  
Chennai

News of hapless, hungry and quarantined people in Agra being treated like animals is a reflection of the apathetic and insensitive functioning of government machinery (Editorial, "Casting out stigma," April 28). The ghastly incident makes me think of a thought-provoking scene in the film, *Pratidwandi*, directed by the

legend, Satyajit Ray, where the protagonist raises his voice vociferously against administrators on seeing the plight of job-seekers who are compelled to wait endlessly and painfully for their turn to face the interview in a cramped hall without seats, water, food and fans in summer. It is unfortunate that even 50 years since its release, there has not been much progress in this regard in establishing political and administrative accountability and attitudinal changes in the delivery of efficient governance.

N. RAVENDRA BABU,  
Hyderabad

### Real development

Most of us should stop daydreaming – that in a post-COVID-19 world, many

will flock to India for economic purposes. India's standing in the new order will be determined by how Indians restructure themselves within. Sadly, when we hear the word "infrastructure", we tend to think of roads, bridges, railway lines and commercial complexes. We forget the social infrastructure – of health care and education which are more important to nation building and which also reduce inequality, human development, democracy and the institutions enshrined in the Constitution are the prerequisites for a strong India. Pluralism and inclusiveness have to be preserved. Social security in terms of basic public health care and free education to all

must be the priority (Editorial page, "India in the post-pandemic world", April 28).

NAGARAJAMANI M.V.,  
Hyderabad

### Virtual courts? It's a no

The Bar Council of India is right in calling upon the Supreme Court to open its doors and function normally. And, let the top court, High Courts and all other courts restrict the entry of the litigants to reduce crowds and the pressure on courts – which should be a part of the COVID-19 parameters to observe sufficient precautions. However, as an advocate with 45 years of experience in the Bar, I state with respect that courts of law, including the Supreme Court and High Courts,

cannot function with a new type of hearing – virtual hearings or video-conferencing or 'Court-nars' (corrupting the word seminars). I wish to add that the new technology could be used to speed up desk work in court offices. The functioning of our Courts leaves much to be desired. And last but not least, court proceedings cannot at all but be an oral hearing face-to-face with the judges; to cross swords with them, if necessary, and arguing cases forcefully before our honourable judges in the larger interests of the Bench, the Bar and the litigant public.

B.M. BALIGA,  
Bengaluru



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Plain Lead !!

# Privacy concerns during a pandemic

The government's technology solutions to fight COVID-19 do not meet minimum legal requirements

SUHRITH PARTHASARATHY,  
GAUTAM BHATIA & APAR GUPTA

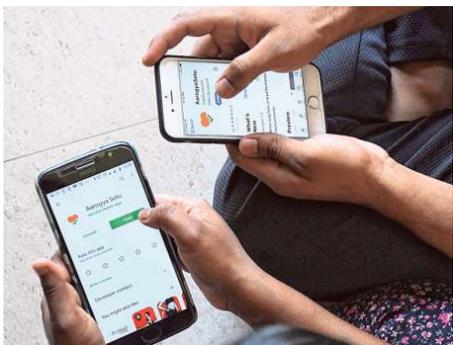
In his now-legendary dissenting judgment, delivered at the height of Indira Gandhi's Emergency, Justice H.R. Khanna, invoking Justice Brandeis of the U.S. Supreme Court, wrote that "[the] greatest danger to liberty lies in insidious encroachment by men of zeal, well-meaning but lacking in due deference for the rule of law." Justice Khanna was not speaking about the crushing of freedom at the point of a bayonet. He was concerned, rather, about situations where the government used the excuse of a catastrophe to ignore the rule of law. Quoting Brandeis, he said, "experience should teach us, to be most on our guard to protect liberty when the Government's purposes are beneficent."

Today we live in the midst of a grave public health crisis. There is little doubt that the government is best placed to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. Doing so requires it to take extraordinary actions. This is why the efforts of the Central and State governments to maintain a nationwide lockdown, to enforce norms of physical distancing and to restrict movement, have been met with support.

It can be tempting in these circumstances to argue that the executive's powers are limitless; that, if the government so chooses, fundamental rights can be suspended at will. The pandemic, the argument goes, is an existential threat and the paramount need to save lives takes precedence over all other interests. Appealing though it is, this argument is not only wrong but also dangerous, for precisely the reasons that Justice Khanna outlined: when faced with crises, governments — acting for all the right reasons — are invariably prone to overreach. Any temporary measures they impose have a disturbing habit of entrenching themselves into the landscape and creating a 'new normal' well after the crisis has passed. Paying close attention to civil rights, therefore, becomes critical, not to impede the government's efforts, but to ensure that rights — fragile at the best of times, and particularly vulnerable in a crisis — are not permanently effaced.

## Data and public health

The state's most significant responses to the pandemic have been pre-



SOMASHEKAR G. R.N.

dated on an invasive use of technology, that seeks to utilise people's personal health data. While the measures deployed intuitively sound reasonable, the mediums used in implementing the programme overlook important concerns relating to the rights to human dignity and privacy.

Broadly, technology has been invoked at three levels. First, in creating a list of persons suspected to be infected with COVID-19; second, in deploying geo-fencing and drone imagery to monitor compliance by quarantined individuals; and third, through the use of contact-tracing smartphone applications, such as AarogyaSetu.

Each of these measures has induced a miasma of despair. In creating a list of infected persons, State governments have channelled the Epidemic Diseases Act of 1897. But this law scarcely accords the state power to publicise this information. What's more, these lists have also generated substantial second-order harms. As the director of the All India Institute of Medical Science, Dr. Randeep Guleria, pointed out, the stigma attached to the disease has led to an increase in morbidity and mortality rates, since many with COVID-19 or flu-like symptoms have refused to go to hospitals.

The use of geo-fencing and drone technologies is similarly unactioned. While cell-phone based surveillance might be plausible under the Telegraph Act of 1885, until now the orders authorising surveillance have not been published. Moreover, the modified surveillance drones

used are equipped with the ability to conduct thermal imaging, night-time reconnaissance, and also — as some private vendors have claimed — the ability to integrate facial recognition into existing databases such as Aadhaar. Contrary to regulations made under the Aircraft Act of 1934, the drones deployed also do not appear to possess any visible registration or licensing. Indeed, many of the models are simply not permitted for use in India.

Most concerning amongst the measures invoked is the use of contact-tracing applications that promise to provide users a deep insight into the movements of a COVID-19 carrier. The purported aim here is to ensure that a person who comes into contact with a carrier can quarantine herself. Although the efficacy of applications such as these have been questioned by early adopters, such as Singapore, the Union government has made AarogyaSetu, its contact-tracing application, its signal response to the pandemic.

Thus far, details of the application's technical architecture and its source code have not been made public. The programme also shares worrying parallels with the Aadhaar project in that its institution is not backed by legislation. Like Aadhaar it increasingly seems that the application will be used as an object of coercion. There have already been reports of employees of both private and public institutions being compelled to download the application. Also, much like Aadhaar, AarogyaSetu is framed as a necessary techno-

logical invasion into personal privacy, in a bid to achieve a larger social purpose. But without a statutory framework, and in the absence of a data protection law, the application's reach is boundless. One shudders to think how the huge tranches of personal data that it will collect will be deployed.

## The importance of civil rights

The Supreme Court's judgment in *K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India* (2017) is renowned for its incantation, that each of us is guaranteed a fundamental right to privacy. But the Court also recognised that the Constitution is not the sole repository of this right, or indeed of the right to personal liberty. For these are freedoms that inhere in all of us. The Court additionally thought it important, as Justice S.K. Kaul wrote, that the majority opinions of Justice Khanna's brethren be buried "ten fathom deep, with no chance of resurrection."

To be sure, the right to privacy is not absolute. There exist circumstances in which the right can be legitimately curtailed. However, any such restriction, as the Court held in *Puttaswamy*, must be tested against the requirements of legality, necessity and the doctrine of proportionality. This will require government to show us, first, that the restriction is sanctioned by legislation; second, that the restriction made is in pursuance of a legitimate state aim; third, that there exists a rational relationship between the purpose and the restriction made; and fourth, that the State has chosen the "least restrictive" measure available to achieve its objective.

In this case, not only are the government's technological solutions unfounded in legislation, there is also little to suggest that they represent the least restrictive measures available. A pandemic cannot be a pretext to abrogate the Constitution. *Inter arma silent leges*, said Cicero: "For among (times of) arms, the laws fall mute". But our fight against COVID-19 is no war. Even if it were, our Constitution is intended for all times — for times of peace and for times of crises.

Suhrith Parthasarathy is an advocate practising at the Madras High Court; Gautam Bhatia is a Delhi-based lawyer; and Apar Gupta is a lawyer and executive director of the Internet Freedom Foundation

# A task for South Asia

The virus reminds us that it is in our collective interest to look at health security and not just national security



AAMIR JAFAREY & SANJAY NAGRAL

South Asia, one of the world's most populous regions, is also affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Both Karachi and Mumbai, among the world's most densely populated cities, where we live and work, are being overwhelmed by cases. While the death rate in these places may not be as alarming as in Europe and the U.S., the collateral damage of the lockdown is taking its own toll.

While there are many differences amongst the countries of the region, there are also common features which impact the health of its people, some of them a result of our shared cultural and geopolitical history. The collective experience of dealing with COVID-19 may provide important lessons, which transcend national boundaries.

## Poor healthcare system

South Asian countries have invested very little in health. This is reflected in our abysmally low health parameters. It is interesting that Britain, which formulated our health policies before independence, went on to form one of the world's strongest public health systems, the National Health Service, whereas its South Asian colonies chose to stray from that path. This resulted in a dysfunctional public healthcare system.

Governments have also relinquished what ought to have been their primary duty, of health care provision, to the private sector. Having become an industry, the focus of healthcare in the private sector is on profit rather than on people's needs. Whilst privatisation has brought in advanced technology and expertise, the high costs of treatment in the private sector have resulted in impoverishment as most of the population has no insurance or third-party coverage, and pays out of pocket. The sector has also been poorly regulated. The result is that it is responsible for several excesses in its quest for profit.

Hunger, malnutrition, poor sanitation and large-scale migration are features of this region. Existing infectious diseases like TB, HIV and malaria have been worsened by emerging ones like dengue, chikungunya, healthcare-associated infections and antimicrobial resistance. The region is also an epicentre of an epidemic of lifestyle diseases.

Constant internal and external conflicts in South Asia not only consume a large portion of national budgets, but also divert the attention of the public and policymakers from

healthcare needs. Defence budgets take the largest share of national budgets, and obviously adversely impact social sector spending. Underfunded public health is going to hinder our capacity to fight COVID-19.

Religion continues to occupy a central space in the society and politics of the region. Though it offers succour to many, religious dogma can impact health policy and religious-seeking behaviour. The refusal of devotees across Pakistan to avoid religious congregations during Ramadan despite the government's orders has significantly fed the community spread of the virus. On the other hand, the Tablighi Jamaat congregation in Delhi was used to whip up sentiments against the entire Muslim population in India. This will only put a further strain on the social fabric. The medical community must emphasise that religious practices cannot be exceptions to epidemic-control practices.

## A silver lining

If there is a silver lining, COVID-19 has forced us to seriously reflect on our healthcare system. This is welcome if it results in policy change. Healthcare professionals and bodies must seize this opportunity to push our respective governments to address it seriously and not just as a pre-election strategy. A long-term commitment to universal health care, with not only a national but also a regional and global focus, is needed.

The SAARC heads of state have already offered help to one another. A regional strategy has a better chance of controlling the pandemic than isolated national-level efforts. Pooling of resources and sharing data may not only help flatten the curve but perhaps even develop into longer-term efforts towards effective treatment. It is being speculated that our populations are behaving differently; that the BCG vaccine may be a protective influence. Joint research into such areas can be a unifying point for SAARC.

The region's healthcare community has many tasks. We have the responsibility of upholding science as the guiding principle of policy, of guarding against fake cures, unethical experimentation and quackery. We also have the onerous task of convincing our people that regional conflicts fuelled by geopolitical interests are not in our mutual interest. This could even mean standing up to populist narratives on nationalism and reminding our citizens that the real threat to the security of our nations is our misplaced priorities. It is in our collective interest to look at health security and not just national security. By the accident of their birth, South Asians have endured a lot. They merit better.

Aamir Jafarey is a surgeon based in Karachi and Sanjay Nagral is a surgeon based in Mumbai

# Unlocking justice in the lockdown

Without legal practitioners being classified as essential, fundamental rights cannot be realised

G. S. BAJPAI & ANKIT KAUSHIK

The pandemic has compelled the government to suspend work, movement, businesses, services, liberty and more. The Constitution itself, however, cannot be suspended. Any measures enforced under statutory frameworks must conform to the Constitution. Nevertheless, practically, with the near-complete shutdown of India's justice system, such operation of the Constitution lies in limbo.

Several situations today warrant the intervention of the judiciary. For instance, the enforcement of the constitutional rights of life, health and food requires urgent resolution. Any constitutional challenge, however, requires unfettered access to lawyers and courts. The non-inclusion of both in the state's list of permitted activities effectively denies such access.

Peculiarly, the judiciary too has retreated into the background. While the higher courts are hearing 'urgent' matters, the lower courts are entertaining only 'remand' cases. In doing so, they have denied important constitutional and legal space to the executive. Video-based online proceedings have been proposed as an alternative. But their success rests on the assumption that everyone has equal access to properly functioning equipment as well as fast Internet. The idea also assumes that all courts are Internet-enabled and all functionalities are tech-savvy.

## No legal protection

Meanwhile, the state is still active in its traditional policing functions. In Guwahati, on April 7, two activists were arrested in connection with a 2018 case, a day after complaining that officials were siphoning off rice meant for public distribution. Last week, the Delhi police booked two students under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, in a case related to communal violence in Delhi over the Citizenship (Amendment) Act of 2019. Article 22 of the Constitution guarantees every individual the right to consult and to be defended by a legal practitioner of their choice upon being arrested or detained in custody by the state. While arrests by the police are rampant, legal protection has

almost vanished on account of non-functioning lawyers and courts. Without legal practitioners being classified as essential, one wonders if fundamental rights can substantively be enforced.

Moreover, in the enforcement of lockdown, reports of summary punishments by the police without any sanction of the law are pouring in from across the country. Videos of police forcing persons to perform push-ups and squats; vandalising vegetable carts; and harassing migrant labourers and the homeless are evidence of arbitrariness. The ease with which we have given up on the principles of rule of law is deplorable.

With justice being inaccessible, the populace has become powerless in both the public and private spheres. The National Commission for Women has reported an increase in incidents of domestic violence. Despite abusers and victims being locked down for over 40 days, the institutional response has been to take away the civil remedy of obtaining 'protection orders' against the abuser under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005.

## The lacunae must be remedied

In contrast to India's response, the U.K. first notified legal practitioners as key workers and then notified how different categories of courts shall function. In the U.S., the Department of Homeland Security categorises 'workers supporting the operations of the judicial system' as essential.

In India, the judiciary and the executive should have instituted means to serve the cause of justice. A comprehensive response should have outlined the minimum judicial infrastructural requirements; the nature, type and manner of priority cases; enforcement of physical distancing guidelines; and list of key personnel permitted to ply to and from courts, prisons, police stations, residences, etc. These lacunae must be remedied. Justice must not become a casualty to the pandemic.

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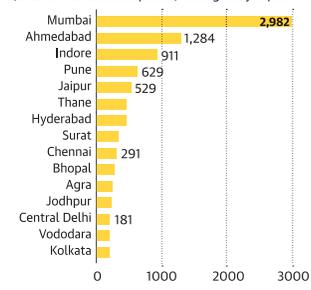


## DATA POINT

# Geography of the spread

As of April 28, as many as 430 districts in India have recorded at least one COVID-19 case, 301 more than the March 28 figure. Five districts recorded more than 500 new cases in the one-month period: two from Maharashtra and one each from Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. Mumbai district recorded the most number of new cases in the period followed by Ahmedabad. By Sumant Sen, Naresh Singaravelu and Vignesh Radhakrishnan

**DISTRICTS WITH MOST CASES** | The chart depicts the 15 districts which recorded the highest no. of new cases (March 28-April 28). Maharashtra and Gujarat accounted for three districts each. Mumbai recorded 2,982 new cases in this period, the highest jump



**NUMBERS RISING** | Table divides districts into four categories: those with 0-50 new cases; 51-100 new cases; 101-500 new cases; and >500 new cases (March 28-April 28). In Maharashtra, 26 districts recorded 0-50 new cases, three recorded 51-100 cases, one recorded 101-500 cases and two recorded > 500 cases

State	0 to 50	51 to 100	101 to 500	>500
Maharashtra	26	3	1	2
Rajasthan	19	4	2	1
Gujarat	24	0	2	1
M.P.	25	0	1	1
T.N.	28	4	3	0
Delhi	6	2	3	0
U.P.	44	6	2	0
A.P.	7	2	2	0
Telangana	26	2	1	0
W.B.	15	1	1	0
Kerala	12	1	1	0
Karnataka	19	2	0	0
J&K	12	2	0	0
Haryana	18	1	0	0
Punjab	18	1	0	0
Northeast	19	0	0	0
Bihar	14	0	0	0
Odisha	10	0	0	0
Jharkhand	8	0	0	0
H.P.	6	0	0	0
Uttarakhand	6	0	0	0
Chhattisgarh	5	0	0	0
Goa	2	0	0	0

## The Hindu

### FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO APRIL 29, 1970

### Yahya Khan faces criticism

(From an editorial)

The Pakistan President, Gen. Yahya Khan's plans for framing a new constitution have been severely criticised in East Pakistan and last Sunday, a political demonstration was organised to protest against the terms of his Legal Framework Order. The Working Committee of the East Pakistan Awami League, the biggest political party in the east and led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, has raised objections to Sections 25 and 27 of the Presidential Order. The first says that, if the President refuses to authenticate the Constitution Bill, the National Assembly will stand dissolved and fresh elections will be held. Section 27 provides that any doubt as to the interpretation of the Order must be resolved by the President, not by the Assembly. The Awami League argues that these provisions render illusory the sovereign character of the constituent assembly and that the two offending sections should be removed. Another leading party of East Pakistan, the National Awami Party, takes objection to the doctrine that Islamic ideology should permeate the constitution. It says that the effect of this provision will be to perpetuate communal division within the people and deprive the religious minorities of their fundamental rights. The N.A.P. also holds that the Order will not permit the concession of full regional autonomy for East Pakistan or for the provinces of West Pakistan.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO APRIL 29, 1920.

### All-Indian Home Rule League.

Mr. M.K. Gandhi has joined the All India Home Rule League and accepted the office of the President of the League. Mr. Gandhi writing to the press in that condition says that he would engage the league, if he can carry the members with him, in activities such as the promotion of Swadeshi, Hindu-Muslim unity, with special reference to Khilafat, acceptance of Hindustani as the national "lingua franca" and linguistic redistribution of provinces. He proposes to treat the Home Rule League as a non-party organisation and considers the Congress of which the League is an auxiliary as a national organisation providing a platform for all parties. While he will not expect the League to follow him in civil disobedience methods, he expects the principles of uncompromising truth and honesty in political life accepted and acted upon by the All-India Home Rule League.

FROM PAGE ONE

## 51 more deaths as cases near 30,000

"It is also noticed that in many places they are insisting on COVID-19 tests before providing services. The Ministry wants to insist that all health centres should remain open and cater to patients," the Health Ministry said.

The Ministry said that across India there have been some instances of hospitals having closed down as few health care workers working there turned out to be positive for COVID-19.

"Also some non-COVID health facilities have reported confirmation of COVID-19, in patients admitted for unrelated/non-respiratory illness, causing undue ap-

prehension among health-care workers, sometimes leading to impaired functionality of such hospitals," it said.

The Ministry has said guidelines have been issued that all health care facilities (HCF) have a staffing plan in place including a contingency plan for infection in staff and patients to maintain continuity of operations.

"Staff HCF can be divided into groups to work on rotation basis every 14 days and a group of back up staff which is pooled in case some high risk exposure with suspected COVID-19 infection is detected," it has suggested.

## Ministry does U-turn on plasma therapy

"The IRCS may like to take up this at the earliest so that the blood collected from the recovered patients could be used for transfusion for the benefit of corona patients," the Ministry said.

Several States across India too have been using and advocating for the therapy with Uttar Pradesh Chief Mi-

nister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday directing officials to encourage use of plasma therapy for the treatment of infected people and to increase testing capacity.

Delhi, Gujarat and Maharashtra, among other States, have started clinical trials for the plasma-based treatment.

## \$1.5 billion ADB loan to fund COVID response

It will also be used to provide social protection for 80 crore poor people over the next three months, according to Finance Ministry additional secretary Sameer Kumar Khare, who signed the loan agreement.

The loan, approved by the ADB under its COVID-19 Active Response and Expenditure Support (CARES) Programme, is the bank's largest ever to India. The Centre will also take the ADB's technical support to strengthen its implementation framework and capacities to deliver the Rs. 1.7 lakh crore welfare package announced last month.

The bank was also in talks to provide "further possible support for stimulating the economy, support strong growth recovery, and to

build resilience to future shocks", an official statement said.

During an April 9 telephone meeting, ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa told Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman that apart from emergency needs, the bank was also willing to support "short- to medium-term measures to restore the dynamic economic growth of the country by exploring all available financing options", it added. This would include support for the MSMEs by facilitating access to finance through credit guarantee schemes, integration into global and national value chains through enterprise development centers, and a credit enhancement facility for infrastructure projects.

## Two priests found dead at U.P. temple premises

In the FIR, chowkidar Aminchand stated that he saw Murari running away with a sword and he made noise, prompting villagers to pursue him. Later, Harendra Kumar, Superintendent of Police (Rural), told *The Hindu* that the murder weapon was a *lathi* [stick]. "The nature of injuries also suggested the same. We have recovered the murder weapon. The chowkidar made the initial statement on the basis of what the villagers had told him," he said.

Mr. Kumar said locals confirmed that Murari was a drug addict and had a violent streak. "Till afternoon, he was not in his senses to record a statement as he was under the influence of 'bhang' [cannabis]. Later, he admitted to the crime

and said the priests reprimanded him and berated him." However, he added, there was no caste angle as the priests also belonged to the same caste group as the accused. Both priests hailed from Aligarh district and turned priests only a decade ago. "Sher Singh suffered from an ailment that limited his movement," said Mr. Kumar.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra tweeted that the killings should not be politicised and the crime should be investigated. Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav said the incident should not be politicised; instead, the reasons for such a violent and criminal mindset should be investigated and action should be taken.

## Explain MHA order on full wages, SC tells govt.

Nagreeka said it was engaged in manufacture and export of cotton yarns, fabric and textiles. It said stoppage of operations since the lockdown had led to losses to the tune of ₹1.50 crore.

Separate petitions have also been filed by entities from the micro, small and medium sector against the government's order to pay full wages to their workers. MSME industries have said they are compelled to slide

into insolvency by the government, which has ordered them to continue to pay full salaries to their workers. These petitions have asked the court to order the government to support them by taking responsibility for 70% of their staffers' pay by drawing funds from the PM Cares Fund or the Employees State Insurance Corporation. The court is yet to list these pleas.

## Convalescent Plasma Therapy

### Convalescent plasma (CP) therapy is not a new therapy and banks on the age-old concept of passive immunity.

#### Basis of the Therapy:

The convalescent plasma therapy seeks to make use of the antibodies developed in the recovered patient against the coronavirus.

The whole blood or plasma from such people is taken, and the plasma is then injected in critically ill patients so that the antibodies are transferred and boost their fight against the virus.

#### Time Period for Infusion:

A study in *The Lancet Infectious Diseases* stated that a Covid patient usually develops primary immunity against the virus in 10-14 days.

Therefore, if the plasma is injected at an early stage, it can possibly help fight the virus and prevent severe illness.

#### Infusion into Covid-19 Patients:

The plasma can be infused into two kinds of Covid-19 patients, those with a severe illness or individuals at a higher risk of getting the virus.

However, while plasma transfers immunity from one person to another, it is not known if it can save lives in Covid-19 infection.

The treatment could be effective for patients in the age group 40-60, but may be less effective for people aged beyond 60 years.

#### Previous Application:

The United States used plasma of recovered patients to treat patients of Spanish flu (1918-1920).

Hong Kong used it to treat SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) patients in 2005.

In 2009, the Swine flu (H1N1) patients were treated with plasma.

It has also been used to treat critically ill patients during Ebola as well.

The report of a study, *Proceedings of National Academies of Sciences (U.S.)*, highlighted that CP therapy shows a potential therapeutic effect and low risk in the treatment of severe Covid-19 patients.

According to the study, one dose (200 ml) of convalescent plasma with a high concentration of neutralising antibodies is well-tolerated by patients and it can rapidly reduce the viral load in patients and improve clinical symptoms significantly

the opaque funding of the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP). Emailed queries by the government think tank, seeking list of its donors, remained unanswered. India has moved to the seventh position from the previous year's eighth in the annual Global Terrorism Index (GTI) 2019. The countries ahead of it are Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria, Syria, Pakistan and Somalia.

In March, the Cabinet Secretary asked NITI Aayog to track 32 such global indices to see how they could

which of the indices can be used to drive reforms or which of these would require some amount of engagement with the publishing agency to make the indices more relevant," a NITI Aayog official said.

"Emailed queries sent to the IEP requesting a list of its donors have also remained unanswered. The IEP's 2019 annual report shows that the organisation has only 12 full-time staff, 12 full-time equivalent staff and 6 volunteers," the report said.

The Maharashtra CM added that he informed Mr. Adityanath about the arrests made in an identical incident earlier this month in Palghar. "I am sure that you will do the same. While we support each other in such times, I am sure that no attempt will be made to communalise the incident," he added.

Mr. Thackeray's correspondence is seen as a 'return favour' as the U.P. CM had called him after the Palghar incident to express his concern.

ished under the anti-corruption law, the court said.

Deemed universities come within the ambit of the term 'university' in Section 2(c)(xi) of the Prevention of Corruption (PC) Act, 1988.

A deemed institution under the University Grants Commission Act of 1956 has the same common public duty like a university to confer academic degrees, which are recognised in the society.

Officials of a deemed varsity, though not seen as pu-

viduals who might conventionally not be considered public servants. The purpose under the PC Act was to shift focus from those who are traditionally called public officials, to those individuals who perform public duties. Keeping the same in mind, it cannot be stated that a deemed university and the officials therein, perform any less or any different a public duty," Justice Ramana, who authored the main judgment shared with Justice Mohan M. Shantana-goudar, observed.

1 join 12 crore binaris in expressing concern."

#### Release Teltumbde and Navlalkha: PUDD

NEW DELHI Activists Anand Teltumbde and Gautam Navlalkha, who surrendered before the National Investigation Agency in Mumbai and Delhi respectively on April 14 in connection with the Bhima Koregaon case, should be given interim bail in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, People's Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR) demanded on Tuesday. In a statement, it said other vulnerable prisoners of advanced age and ailments should also be released.

#### Most posts flagged by U.P. police inflammatory

LUCKNOW Since March 16, most of the offensive and inflammatory social media posts around COVID-19 flagged by the Uttar Pradesh police were related to communal issues. Of the 578 FIRs lodged by them against objectionable posts online, the majority, 310, are those that could "impact communal harmony," the UP DGP headquarters said in a state-memo. While 151 posts related to spreading misinformation or rumours, 117 were linked to other reasons like indecent remarks, said the police.

#### CRPF officer dies of COVID-19 in Delhi

NEW DELHI A 55-year-old Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) Sub-Inspector died of COVID-19 at the Safdarjung Hospital here on Tuesday. This is the first such death reported in the Central Armed Police Force, comprising the CRPF, the Border Security Force, the Central Industrial Security Force, the Indo-Tibetan Border Police, the Sashastra Seema Bal and the Assam Rifles. A resident of Barpeta in Assam, the deceased was posted at the CRPF unit as Mayor Vihar in East Delhi. A senior CRPF official said the victim was a diabetic.

## 'Country stares at a fourth lockdown too'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Bihar BJP chief Dr. Sanjay Jayaswal said the failure of employer States, especially in western India, to keep migrant labour in good conditions may lead to a "fourth lockdown" till at least the festival of 'Chhath' (celebrated in Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh in October-November.)

He said there was need for a uniform country-wide policy for the return of migrant labour and students to their States.

"However poor a person is, at least in rural India, they don't starve. Cereals and grains are available even to landless labourers. Employers and State governments depending on migrant labour should take this into account, and should have taken better care. Now we want our people back at least after May 3," he said. "We are looking at the prospect of a fourth lockdown till 'Chhath' in western India, solely on account of labour that powers their economies having returned home."

## USCIRF downgrades India in 2020 list

Religious freedom panel lists nation among 'countries of particular concern'

SUHASINI HAIDAR  
NEW DELHI

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has downgraded India to the lowest ranking, "countries of particular concern" (CPC) in its 2020 report. The report, released in Washington by the federal government commission that functions as an advisory body, placed India alongside countries, including China, North Korea, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. India was categorised as a "Tier 2 country" in last year's listing. This is the first time since 2004 that India has been placed in this category.

"India took a sharp downward turn in 2019," the commission noted in its report, which included specific concerns about the Citizenship Amendment Act, the proposed National Register for Citizens, anti-conversion laws and the situation in Jammu and Kashmir. "The national government used its strengthened parliamentary majority to institute national-level policies violating religious freedom across India, especially for Muslims." The panel said that the CPC de-

signation was also recommended because "national and various State governments also allowed nationwide campaigns of harassment and violence against religious minorities to continue with impunity, and engaged in and tolerated hate speech and incitement to violence against them."

The Centre reacted sharply to the USCIRF report on Tuesday, terming it "biased and tendentious" and rejected its observations.

"We reject the observations on India in the USCIRF Annual Report," official spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said. "Its biased and tendentious comments against India are not new. But on this occasion, its misrepresentation has reached new levels. It has not been able to carry its own Commissioners in its endeavour. We regard it as an organisation of particular concern and will treat it accordingly," Mr. Srivastava added.

Three of the 10 USCIRF commissioners, including Gary Bauer, Johnnie Lee, and Tenzin Dorjee, dissent with the panel's recommendation on India as being



A file photo of an anti-CAA protest in New Delhi.

"too harsh" and that ended up placing the country alongside what they termed as "rogue nations" like China and North Korea.

"I am confident that India will reject any authoritarian temptation and stand with the United States and other free nations in defence of liberty, including religious liberty," wrote Commissioner Bauer in his dissenting note.

The commission also recommended that the U.S. government take stringent action against India under the "International Religious Freedom Act" (IRFA). It called on the administration

to "impose targeted sanctions on Indian government agencies and officials responsible for severe violations of religious freedom by freezing those individuals' assets and/or barring their entry into the United States under human rights-related financial and visa authorities, citing specific religious freedom violations". In 2005, Prime Minister Narendra Modi who was at the time the Chief Minister of Gujarat was censured by the USCIRF. The commission had recommended sanctions against Mr. Modi for the 2002 riots and the U.S. government had subsequently cancelled his visa.

The USCIRF 2020 report makes a specific mention of Home Minister Amit Shah, for not taking what it deemed as sufficient action to stop cases of mob lynching in the country, and for referring to migrants as "termites". In December 2019, the USCIRF had also asked the U.S. government to consider sanctions against Mr. Shah and "other principal leadership" over the decision to pass the Citizenship Amendment Act.

## Brother of victim also dies in M.P.

STAFF REPORTER  
BHOPAL

Around mid-April, a 63-year-old man was brought to M.V. Hospital in Indore. After he was denied an ambulance, his son took him to the hospital in a scooter. But as soon as they reached the hospital, the man died.

That day his brother, 60, rode beside them on another scooter. And a week later, he too died. The brothers showed COVID-19 symptoms, but only the younger was tested.

"If my uncle's body had been tested, we could have probably saved my father," said Rahul Chandne, 34. The government-run COVID-19 facility refused to take in his uncle's body. As the body was not tested, no contact-tracing was done. Two days after the younger brother's death at the hospital on April 22, his report confirmed him positive.

## Fatality rate in Ujjain at 14.28%

Officials in the city scramble to shore up crumbling health infrastructure

SIDHARTH YADAV  
BHOPAL

Madhya Pradesh reported 57 new COVID-19 cases on Tuesday, taking the tally to 2,387. On the day, seven deaths were reported across the State.

However, a cause of concern is the fatality rate in Ujjain, a neighbouring district of Indore, which shot to 14.28% on Monday, arguably the worst in the country.

The rate is even higher than that of Ahmedabad, Mumbai and New Delhi, which have recorded more than 20 times the cases found in Ujjain.

Faced with spiralling mortalities, Ujjain officials are scrambling to shore up a crumbling health infrastructure in the city, where all is dependent on just one private medical college. Even patients from neighbouring Agar Malwa and Ratlam districts are treated there. The hospital's senior manage-



Helping hands: People receiving food packets from volunteers in Bhopal on Tuesday. ♦♦♦

ment has gone into quarantine; several staff members refuse to attend to duties and patients complain of bad quality of food and lack of proper treatment.

Just four of the 17 deaths until April 27 occurred on the hospital's beds, while the rest could not even reach in time. "Around eight could not wait to see their test results," said Additional Collector Sujay Singh Rawat.

The case fatality rate for Indore, where it had touched 10% around mid-

April, dropped to 4.6% on Monday. On the same day, it was 1.7% in New Delhi, 3.3% in Surat, 3.8% in Mumbai, 5% in Ahmedabad and 7.6% in Pune. The rate is a measure of disease severity which records the proportion of those who die from a disease among all those diagnosed.

The administration received complaints of improper treatment at the Ujjain hospital, said H.P. Sonaniya, district COVID-19 nodal officer. The government has set up CCTV cam-

eras in wards to keep an eye on the treatment. "The main issue was food, which we have resolved now," he said.

### Skipping duty

Majority of class-4 employees, including sweepers, had stopped coming for duty fearing infection. The hospital's director and its medical superintendent, who was ill, and the attached college's dean, all went into quarantine. "We have given the hospital additional staff of 11 workers. Those who were not returning to duty have been asked to come back. Nine have returned," added Mr. Rawat.

The State suspects that the outbreak in Ujjain had occurred owing to carriers who returned from Indore.

On Tuesday, Madhya Pradesh reported seven deaths, Ujjain reported three deaths, while Bhopal, Dewas, Raisen and Ashoknagar districts reported one death each.

## Jailed father, son in M.P. turn super spreaders; 21 infected

An IPS officer is among those who contracted the illness

STAFF REPORTER  
BHOPAL

A father-son duo arrested for allegedly attacking a police constable on lockdown enforcement duty have infected at least 21 persons, including 18 other inmates of the Indore Central Jail, with COVID-19. Two jail guards and an IPS officer have also contracted the illness from them.

Nasir Khan was arrested on April 7 for the assault along with his son Javed Khan and four others. Nasir Khan was initially kept in the same barracks as the other inmates at the Central Jail, said Akash Tripathi, Indore Divisional Commissioner. The government had invoked the National Security Act (NSA) against Javed and three others, and he was sent to the Jabalpur jail with another accused.

Only on April 10, when his son tested positive in Jabalpur, was Nasir tested in Indore. When his result came back positive, the 125 inmates in the barracks were moved into a hostel-turned-quarantine centre, said an official of the Jail Department.

Although the six arrested for the attack on the constable came from a COVID-19 hotspot, they were housed up in the jail without being tested for the illness, said an official of Indore's COVID-19 combat team, requesting anonymity.

Four of the infected inmates were admitted to the MRTB hospital, while the others were lodged at the quarantine centre, guarded by the police, in the Asrawad Khurd area. "Three of them are asymptomatic," said Mr. Tripathi. Two guards who

had handled the father also tested positive.

A few days ago, Javed pulled off a dramatic escape from a government-run hospital in Jabalpur while undergoing treatment for the illness. He took a lift on a truck to Narsinghpur district and tried to ride back on a motorcycle to Indore.

A police team arrested him at a checkpoint. Personnel who had come into contact with him, including a 2017-batch IPS officer, went into quarantine. The officer tested positive later.

"Invoking the NSA against them was perhaps right, but immediately putting them in jail, just to show an exemplary action, was negligent," said the official. He claimed the decision imported the virus into the jail, virtually an isolation centre, which has hundreds of inmates.

## 'Private clinics, hospitals can't refuse patients'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOLKATA

The West Bengal government is set to issue an advisory to private hospitals making clear that they cannot turn back patients and directing private clinics and doctors' private chambers to remain open during the ongoing lockdown.

"Private hospital will have to be more energetic," Chief Secretary Rajiva Sinha said. "We have to ensure that they do not refuse patients... We are issuing an advisory," he added.

"Clinics are shut and doctors are saying that they cannot treat patients as they have their chambers in the private clinic's building," said a patient's relative. "Many private hospitals are shut too," the relative added.

Over 28 new cases were reported in the last 24 hours in the State.

## Gujarat reports 226 fresh cases, 19 deaths

Ahmedabad sees 164 of the new cases

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
AHMEDABAD

Gujarat on Tuesday saw 226 new infections and 19 deaths due to COVID-19, with 164 of the cases and all the fatalities reported from Ahmedabad. So far, the State's cumulative figures are 3,774 cases and 181 deaths, while 434 people have recovered and been discharged, including 40 on Tuesday.

The situation in the State's commercial capital continues to be grim with the number of infections and fatalities increasing. Ahmedabad's cumulative figures are: 2,543 cases, 129 deaths and 242 recovered. In the past five days, Ahmedabad has recorded 59 deaths and 890 cases.

"Ahmedabad continues to be grim and there is no let up," a State government offi-



Keeping vigil: Policemen inspecting an area in Ahmedabad. ♦♦♦

cial said, adding that the city has emerged as the second in terms of cases and deaths after Mumbai.

Meanwhile, Ahmedabad's Municipal Commissioner told mediapersons on Tuesday that the civic body had turned its focus on super spreaders (vegetable and fruit vendors, shopkeepers etc.), slums and senior citizens.

## Dharavi records 42 new cases

STAFF REPORTER  
MUMBAI

Dharavi reported its highest single-day tally on Tuesday, reporting 42 new cases of COVID-19. The area also reported four deaths. Its tally now stands at 330 cases, including 18 deaths.

The new cases are from areas like Matunga labour camp, Kunchikurve Nagar, 90-foot road. Besides, cases were reported from newer parts of Dharavi, including Markandeya Society, Dhobi Ghat, Mochi gully, Agas Wadi and Uday Society. Dharavi reported four deaths on Tuesday, two from cases reported earlier. These two, a 60-year-old man and a 60-year-old woman, died at Sion Hospital.

Besides, a 48-year-old man from Kasarwadi and a 55-year-old man from Social Nagar passed away at KEM Hospital.

## Mumbai hits spike of 25 deaths

Six donate plasma; critical patient in Lilawati Hospital gets transfusion

JYOTI SHELAR  
MUMBAI

Mumbai recorded the highest number of 25 deaths on Tuesday pushing the death toll to 244. With 393 new cases, the tally of COVID-19 cases in the city have gone up to 5,982. The case fatality rate of the city now stands at 4%.

The deceased included 13 men and 12 women. An expert committee, set up to stem the rising fatalities in the city, has submitted its preliminary report to the State government, a health official said. The report highlighted the ordeal of victims who were forced to go from one hospital to



Long journey: Migrant workers from Hyderabad on their way to Chhattisgarh climbing onto a passing truck. ♦♦♦ RAJAGOPAL

another after being turned away from treatment. The committee has proposed the setting up of a call centre where people who develop symptoms can call for gui-

dance and can be helped in reaching the right hospital. Meanwhile, Maharashtra is preparing to return 75,000 rapid testing kits received from the Indian Council of

Medical Research (ICMR). Dr. Anup Kumar Yadav, commissioner (health services), said, "Now with the debate over the wide range of variations in the results, we have been asked to send them back."

As a part of the plasma therapy trial, the BMC has received plasma from six patients who have recovered from COVID-19. One critical patient at the Lilawati Hospital has received a plasma transfusion. Doctors are closely monitoring his condition. Dr Jai Parkar from Lilawati Hospital said the patient has been on a ventilator since April 21.

## NITI Aayog employee tests positive in Delhi

Building sealed for 48 hours

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

A NITI Aayog employee in Delhi has tested positive for COVID-19, and the building has been sealed for 48 hours.

"An employee working at NITI Bhavan has been detected positive with COVID-19. It was informed to the authorities at 9 a.m. this morning. NITI Aayog is following all the due protocols necessary as per the Ministry of Health guidelines. The building has been sealed," the government think tank

said in a tweet. Disinfection and sanitisation of building was on and the patient's contacts had been asked to go into self-quarantine, the think tank stated.

Working from home NITI Aayog added that all officials were functional, available and currently working from home.

"As per the protocol of the Ministry of Health, NITI Bhavan will resume normal operations after 48 hours," the think tank tweeted.

## 'Give PPEs to teams in non-pandemic areas'

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Taking serious note of rising infections from asymptomatic patients, the Supreme Court has ordered the government to examine and make necessary arrangements to provide protective medical gear to medical staffers working in "non-COVID treatment areas".

"We direct the Union of India to examine this issue and make necessary suggestions in the 'Rational Use of Personal Protective Equipment' guidelines so that PPEs are provided to all health officials, as stated above, who are working in non-COVID treatment areas," said a three-judge Bench led by Justice N.V. Ramana.

The case was heard on Monday but the order was published on April 28.

### 'Should be protected'

The court found substance in a plea made by Jerry Banait, a doctor, that health workers, including doctors, nurses, ward boys and paramedical staff, in non-COVID zones should also be protected.

The petition said the issue was of utmost urgency as infections from asymptomatic patients were on the rise in the country.

**ANDHRA PRADESH CENTRAL POWER DISTRIBUTION CORPORATION LTD**  
Corporate Office, Beside Govt. Polytechnic, ITI Road, Vijayawada - 520008

**"e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE**

Tender Notification No. 27/2020-21 of APCPDCL/CM/DCGM/O&M/ID/29-04-2020

The APCPDCL invites online bids under e-procurement for obtaining cloud servers for hosting of SAP and IT applications of APCPDCL. Tenderers can have further details and download the tender schedule from e-Procurement market place i.e. <https://tender.apcprocurement.gov.in> (published by APTRANSCO). Cloud servers are required for APCPDCL.

Contact No: General Manager/SAP & IT: 94906 19834, Chief General Manager/O&M: 43329 99178, Place: Vijayawada Date: 29.04.2020 CHAIRMAN & MANAGING DIRECTOR

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**TAMIL NADU WATER SUPPLY AND DRAINAGE BOARD**

Tender Extension 2<sup>nd</sup> Notification No. 28-3/UGSS to Added areas - STP-Vilupuram Mpty/DO/CE/VLR/2020 Dated: 24.04.2020

The APCPDCL invites online bids under e-procurement for obtaining cloud servers for hosting of SAP and IT applications of APCPDCL. Tenderers can have further details and download the tender schedule from e-Procurement market place i.e. <https://tender.apcprocurement.gov.in> (published by APTRANSCO). Cloud servers are required for APCPDCL.

Contact No: General Manager/SAP & IT: 94906 19834, Chief General Manager/O&M: 43329 99178, Place: Vijayawada Date: 29.04.2020 CHAIRMAN & MANAGING DIRECTOR

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The tender for the above works have been called for in the reference cited is hereby extended as follows:

Sl. No.	Description	Already given	Extended upto
1	The sale of Tender Schedule	Upto 5.45 PM on 24.04.2020	Upto 5.45 PM on 22.05.2020
2	The last date of receipt of tender	Upto 3.00 PM on 27.04.2020	Upto 3.00 PM on 25.05.2020
3	The date of tender opening	At 3.30 PM on 27.04.2020	At 3.30 PM on 25.05.2020
4	Pre Bid Meeting	At 11.00 AM on 17.04.2020	At 11.00 AM on 15.05.2020

The other terms and conditions specified in the tender documents for above works remain unaltered. Please Visit our Website [www.tenders.tn.gov.in](http://www.tenders.tn.gov.in) and [www.tnwaterboard.gov.in](http://www.tnwaterboard.gov.in) for further details.

Chief Engineer (I/c),  
TWAD Board, Vellore - 6

DIPR/1701/TENDER/2020

**MUNICIPAL CORPORATION OF GREATER MUMBAI**

**e-TENDER NOTICE**

Department	Chief Engineer (Sewerage Operation)
Division	Executive Engineer Mechanical ( Sewerage) Western Suburbs
Bid no.	7100177454
Subject	Designing Providing Constructing and commissioning Modernized and fully automated package/modular sewage Treatment plants based on MBR capacities 1.5 MLD and 5 MLD along Dahisar river on Design Build Operate (DBO) along with 15 years of Operation & Maintenance and providing and laying of sewer network provision of interceptors for diversion of DWF construction of service road and road side drains on either banks of Dahisar River. For interception & Diversion Works of sewerage.
Sale of tender	From 18, 04,2020 Time 11.00 Hrs. To 26.05.2020 Time 12.00 Hrs.
Website	<a href="http://portal.mcgm.gov.in">http://portal.mcgm.gov.in</a>
Communicating officer:	
A) Name	Shri R. T. Sonavne Shri D.P. Varade
B) Telephone No.	26318728
C) Mobile No.	9833539063, 8879699521
D) E-mail Address	eemechsws.so@mcgm.gov.in

Sd/-  
E.E.Mech.(Sew.)Malad Zone

PRO/50/ADV/20-21

**MUNICIPAL CORPORATION OF GREATER MUMBAI**

No. Dy.Ch.E./ 92 / SWD / WS Dated 27.04.2020.

**OFFICE OF DEPUTY CHIEF ENGINEER (STORM WATER DRAINS) WESTERN SUBURBS**

Greenwood Complex, Andheri Kurla Road, Near Gurananak Petrol pump, Andheri (E), Mumbai-400 093.

**THIS IS A e-TENDER NOTICE**

Sr. No.	Name of the Work	Estimated Cost (in Rs.)	Earnest Money Deposit (in Rs.)	Class	Time Period	Cost of Blank e-Tender form
1	<b>Et No.7100177427</b> <b>WS-536</b> Designing Providing Constructing and modernized & fully automated package/modular sewage treatment plant along Poisar River on Design Build Operate (DBO) along with 15 years of operation & maintenance & providing & laying of sewer network, provision of interceptors for diversion of DWF, construction of service road and road side drains on either banks of Poisar river.	7,51,69,34,651/-	7,51,69,400/-	Category C.II, C-III & V and Class-I (A) in Civil works (as per new registration rules 2015 & 2016) and/or in Class AA in M&E works as per registration of 2015 & class A in M&E as per registration rules of 2016	Thirty Six (36) Months (Excluding Monsoon)	Rs.8085/- (Rs. 7700/- +2.5% CGST +2.5% SGST)
2	<b>Et no.7100177428</b> <b>WS-537</b> Rejuvenation of Oshiwara / Walbhat River by Designing, Providing, Constructing and commissioning modernized & fully automated package/modular sewage treatment plant along Oshiwara / Walbhat River on Design Build Operate (DBO) along with 15 years of operation & maintenance & providing & laying of sewer network, provision of interceptors for diversion of DWF, construction of service road and road side drains and construction of retaining walls on the banks of Oshiwara / Walbhat River.	5,03,42,43,363/-	5,03,42,500/-	Category C.II, C-III & V and Class-I (A) in Civil works (as per new registration rules 2015 & 2016) and/or in Class AA in M&E works as per registration of 2015 & class A in M&E as per registration rules of 2016	Thirty Six (36) Months (Excluding Monsoon)	Rs.8085/- (Rs. 7700/- +2.5% CGST +2.5% SGST)

The dates and time for uploading e-Tender & opening of the e-Tenders are as under If there are any changes in the dates the same will be displayed on the MCGM portal (<http://portal.mcgm.gov.in>) or will be displayed on the notice board in the office of Dy.Ch.E (S.W.D.) WS.

The e-tender sale starts from:-	29.04.2020 from 11.00 a.m.
Prebid meeting	11.05.2020 at 15.00 Hrs. in Conference room of AMC(P)'s Conference Hall, Head Office, Fort, Mumbai-400 001.
The last date & time of e-tender sale :-	26.05.2020 up to 12.00 noon
Last date for Submission of e-tender :-	26.05.2020 upto 16:00 Hrs.
Opening of Packet - 'A'	27.05.2020 after 16:05 Hrs.
Opening of Packet - 'B'	27.05.2020 after 16:15 Hrs
The packet 'C' to be opened on:-	09.06.2020 at 15.00 Hrs

The e-Packet 'A', e-Packet 'B' & e-Packet 'C' shall be uploaded online before last date and time for submission. The Municipal Commissioner reserves the right to reject any or all e-tenders without giving any reason to the tenderers.

Sd/-  
Deputy Chief Engineer (Storm Water Drains) Western Suburbs

The details are available on MCGM's website <http://portal.mcgm.gov.in>

PRO/49/ADV/20-21

INTERVIEW | SITARAM YECHURY

# 'Centre is behaving like a big brother by centralising authority'

CPI(M) general secretary says the Union government is neither giving the States resources nor allowing them to assess whether to continue the lockdown or not

SOBHANA K. NAIR

Stating that economic restoration post the lockdown will require much higher government allocation, CPI(M) General Secretary Sitaram Yechury calls for greater freedom and financial aid for the State governments at the frontlines of the battle against COVID-19, and warns that democracy will be a casualty if there is a totalitarian clampdown.

Is the lockdown and its extension justified considering the extent of adverse impact on the economy?

A lockdown may have been inevitable sometime or the other. The point is, it should have been imposed with a proper preparation. The lockdown should be used effectively and scientifically to isolate the areas where the disease is spreading and start reopening the remaining areas, like many other countries are doing or have done. But with a four-hour notice, the Prime Minister gave no time either for the State governments to prepare or people to be prepared. This led to unnecessary chaos.

Secondly, during the lockdown, there has to be widespread testing to isolate the areas where community transmission is taking place.

And slowly start easing the other areas, with normal restrictions, of what I have always maintained, physical distance with social solidarity and not social distancing. We weren't prepared with the testing facilities or personal protection equipment. We were unprepared for both effectively tackling the pandemic and providing relief to the people.

How do you look at the recent consultations between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Chief Ministers via video-conferencing?

There was a direction given by the PMO for yesterday's [Monday's] meeting listing out the nine CMs who will speak. So why would the others go, if the speakers are already pre-decided? Of these nine, one was Odisha

and the other was Puducherry, the others were either BJP-led or supported governments. What is this sort of consultation?

At every meeting the PMO decides which CM will speak. Now if you are going to have a CM's video conference, then allow everyone to air their opinion. This kind of pick-and-choose and then putting out disinformation saying that four out of these nine wanted extension, that really impacts credibility of such meetings.

The Union Home Ministry shot off a letter to the Kerala government when it eased restrictions briefly; the Centre sent out teams to Opposition-ruled States such as West Bengal and Rajasthan. How do you see these events?

If you really want the States, which are on the battlefield, to be on board, you have to arm the State governments properly. For that, financial resources are absolutely essential. You are not returning them even GST dues. You have collected crores of rupees under this



If you want a totalitarian clampdown, then democracy will be the casualty

new fund, PM CARES; what is this money for? You transfer this money to the State governments. The Centre is behaving like a big brother, centralising the authority, wanting the States to do the job but the Centre will tell them how to do it. The Centre will not give them resources or allow them to have their own assessment on how to continue with lockdown or ease it.

Not only fiscal federalism but political federalism is also being adversely affected. Why are Central teams only to the Opposition-ruled states? BJP-ruled states of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh

are reporting one of the highest number of COVID-19 positive cases. From January 30, when the first case was reported in Kerala, till March 22, the Union government did nothing. This is the period when we should have armed ourselves. On the contrary, they organised Namaste Trump, and now the situation in Gujarat is of major concern with the pandemic on rampage.

And then you had toppling of Kamal Nath government and the public swearing-in with huge crowds. Then you had the Tablighi Jamaat, which was a very irresponsible act by the organisers to have held congregation at that time. But who permitted it? How come the Maharashtra government refused permission for a similar congregation when they were asked by the Delhi police, that comes directly under Home Minister Amit Shah, allowed it?

How does democracy survive this pandemic?

Unless you bring back some degree of normalcy, which is possible only when

you have a scientific approach, of identifying-isolating on the basis of widespread testing in the areas where it is spreading. Start your normal activities slowly with the necessary precautions. That is how even democracy will survive.

If you want a totalitarian clampdown, then democracy will be the casualty. Every time such an epidemic or health emergency arose, draconian laws were brought in. In the 1890s during the plague, British herded the patients into congested camps virtually condemning them to death. In protest to that the national movement rose and the famous case of Chapekar brothers shooting down the Pune Plague Commissioner Walter Charles Rand happened. Then came the Epidemic Diseases Act of 1897 with its draconian measures.

The same thing with some cosmetic amendments in 2005 is what we have now. Then came the sedition act - [Bal] Gangadhar Tilak was arrested for writing an editorial condemning the British approach in mishandling the pandemic.

So always the ruling class have used epidemic conditions for greater authoritarian control. But that cannot be the reason to say that we should not fight this epidemic properly; this has to be fought, people's lives have to be protected.

How will this pandemic impact the Indian economy? And what would be your prescription to pull it back from the brink.

This has to be tackled in three stages; in my opinion, there are short-, medium- and long-term measures required. All of these have to start now.

In the short term, immediately the government must do a cash transfer of ₹7,500 for three months. Immediately, distribute the foodgrains in the FCI (Food Corporation of India) godowns. Hunger and lack of nutrition makes people vulnerable to the virus.

Arrange for the migrant workers to return to their homes. Providing relief to the people is actually you are maintaining your workforce. In the medium term, go-

vernment should now announce a much larger relief package than what was announced of ₹1.7 lakh crore, which is less than 1% of our GDP.

Many countries in the world have given 20% of their GDP. Why are we being so mealy, we don't know. If you are able to write off loans that the rich took and not paid back to the tune of ₹7.78 lakh crore in the past five years, surely there is no dearth of resources in the country. You restore the wealth tax of 4% on the super rich.

This will give us enough funds to work out a package worth 10% of our GDP if not more.

In the long term, which also has to begin now, the main emphasis should be in public investments on health, education and much needed infrastructure. This will give employment to lakhs and crores of people. The budgetary allocation under the MGNREGA should significantly increase. Instead of the promised 100-day of guaranteed work, it should be increased to 200 days.

# Centre starts preparing for post-lockdown urban services

Urban Affairs Ministry to ready protocols for metro trains and missions

DAMINI NATH  
NEW DELHI

Officials of the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry were on Tuesday asked to start preparing the post-lockdown protocols for the various urban missions and services, including operation of Metro trains.

Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri reviewed the progress of the various urban missions, including the Smart Cities Mission, the Swachh Bharat and the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban), being implemented by the Ministry.

Status check

Officers presented the status of the missions and were asked to prepare protocols, an official said. For instance, the officers were asked to have the protocols for restarting Metro services ready, the official said.



Empty corridors: The Rajiv Chowk Metro station in New Delhi remains closed during the lockdown. ♦PTI

After the meeting, Mr. Puri said in a tweet that he had reviewed the progress of the flagship missions with the Secretary and senior officers.

"Happy to note that the missions are also contributing extensively towards COVID-19 related work along with their normal work and implementation of projects." Among the urban infrastructure projects into service are the integrated command

and control centres built as part of the Smart Cities Mission that are being used to monitor the spread of the pandemic and the response to it.

"Integrated Command & Control Centre in Agra Smart City has transformed into District Control Room for fight against COVID-19. It offers doorstep delivery of items of daily need, security services, detection of loitering, medical assistance &

other services to citizens," Mr. Puri said in a tweet.

While construction activities have been allowed with certain conditions, availability of workers has been hit as the lockdown led migrant workers to return to their hometowns or are stuck in camps on the way.

However, Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry Secretary Durga Shankar Mishra said works under the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) had started.

"229 projects worth more than ₹27,000 crore have started/restarted under AMRUT with available local manpower in 10 States. All prescribed precautions for fighting COVID-19 are being observed. This will provide livelihood opportunities to those who have lost their jobs temporarily," he said in a tweet after the meeting concluded.

# Unfair to call test kits faulty, says China

Committed to assisting India in fight against pandemic, embassy says

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

It is irresponsible to term Chinese products "faulty", a spokesperson of the Chinese Embassy here said after the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) asked the States to stop using the rapid antibody test kits and return them to manufacturers in China.

"We are deeply concerned with the evaluation results and the decision made by Indian Council of Medical Research. China attaches great importance to the quality of exported medical products. The Chinese Embassy maintained a close contact with ICMR and the two Chinese companies to find out the real situation,"

said Ji Rong, Counsellor and spokesperson of the embassy.

The official said China was committed to assisting India in the fight against the pandemic, and reminded the test kits were sent to India after the ICMR and the National Institute of Virology approved them.

"It is unfair and irrespon-

sible of certain individuals to label Chinese products "faulty" and look at issues with pre-emptive prejudice," the spokesperson said.

The Hindu reported on April 28 that despite the decision of ICMR to return the test kits, India remains on track to import more medical goods in the coming days.

# Massive evacuation planned from Gulf

Naval ships and IAF, AI planes readied

DINAKAR PERI  
NEW DELHI

The Union government is drawing up a major evacuation plan involving the Navy, the Indian Air Force (IAF) and Air India to bring back Indians stranded in West Asia following the nationwide lockdown and travel restrictions due to COVID-19, multiple defence sources said.

"A major evacuation plan is under discussion with the Ministry of External Affairs being the lead ministry. When, where and how many and factors like who are to be evacuated and so on are under deliberation," a defence source told The Hindu. The tentative window for evacuation has not been decided yet but it is expected to be after the lockdown ends on May 3.

Defence sources confirmed that Navy and IAF had been asked to work out the modalities from their end and accordingly preparations were on. "An exercise of aircraft availability was done to have a picture about capability, turn around time, sortie generation possibility and so on," a second source said, adding there was no tasking yet. The IAF has a fleet of US



The IAF will deploy its transport aircraft.

origin C-130 Hercules medium transporters and C-17 Globemaster heavy transport aircraft, in addition to older Russian IL-76 aircraft, which have been playing a major role in recent humanitarian and Disaster Relief (HADR) efforts.

Naval ships need enough time to sail from their home ports with requisite preparations to handle civilians. "The nation lockdown ends on May 3. So there is reaction time and there is also lot of administrative and logistical issues to be worked out," another defence source said on this.

There are more than eight million Indians who live and work in the Gulf region and with plummeting oil prices there have been concerns of massive job losses.

# Mid-day meals on during vacation

Centre to provide ₹958 crore

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Centre plans to extend the mid-day meal scheme in government schools over the summer holidays due to the COVID-19 lockdown.

An additional ₹958 crore will be provided for this purpose, Human Resource Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank told State Education Ministers on Tuesday. An extra ₹790 crore would be provided to buy pulses, vegetable, oil, spices and fuel by hiking the annual allocation for cooking costs. The Centre will also provide 3 lakh tonnes of foodgrains, worth approximately ₹990 crore, officials said.

However, reports from States suggest that the current implementation of the mid-day meal scheme has been patchy and variable across different regions. While Kerala is providing actual cooked meals delivered to the homes of poor students, a large number of other States, including Karnataka and West Bengal, are providing dry rations to students' families in lieu of cooked meals during the lockdown. Delhi schools do not seem to be offering either option, with officials

simply pointing to the cooked meals being offered at general relief centres across the city.

Nationwide, 11.5 crore children studying in Class 1 to 8 in 11.34 lakh schools depend on the scheme for a nutritious lunch.

Board exam papers

Mr. Nishank also urged States to begin the process of evaluating answer sheets of completed State Board exams during the lockdown itself, and facilitate the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) in its correction of answer sheets as well, according to an official statement.

Noting that an alternative academic calendar has already been released by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), the Union Minister said States could adopt it according to their local situation. He also urged them to prepare safety guidelines in preparation for opening of schools post the lockdown.

The Education Ministers of 22 States and secretaries from another 14 States and Union Territories participated in the videoconference with the Union Minister.

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WESTERN RAILWAY-RAJKOT DIVISION CORRIGENDUM An NIT of Engineering Department was published in newspapers on 07/04/2020, for which a corrigendum notifying amendments has been issued on the Railway's website. The amendments are as following-

S. No.	Tender No.	Existing Date & Time of Opening of Tender	Revised Date & Time of Opening of Tender
1	DRM-RJT-20-E-01	01/05/2020, 15:00 Hrs.	15/05/2020, 15:00 Hrs.
2	DRM-RJT-20-E-02	01/05/2020, 15:00 Hrs.	15/05/2020, 15:00 Hrs.
3	DRM-RJT-20-E-03	01/05/2020, 15:00 Hrs.	15/05/2020, 15:00 Hrs.
4	DRM-RJT-20-E-04	01/05/2020, 15:00 Hrs.	15/05/2020, 15:00 Hrs.
5	DRM-RJT-20-E-05	01/05/2020, 15:00 Hrs.	15/05/2020, 15:00 Hrs.
6	DRM-RJT-20-E-07	01/05/2020, 15:00 Hrs.	15/05/2020, 15:00 Hrs.

D-11 DRM (Eng) Rajkot  
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THE HINDU Air Surcharge as applicable: New Delhi - Rs. 15/-; Port Blair - Rs. 20/-

# GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR POWER DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, TLMD-IV, PAMPOR KASHMIR, FRESH NOTICE INVITING TENDER E-NIT NO: 01 OF 2020-21

Executive Engineer, TLMD-IV, Pampore Kashmir on behalf of the Lt Governor of Jammu & Kashmir invites tenders in Two Cover System for 365 days from reputed, experienced and financially sound Electrical Contractors and Executors fulfilling the eligibility criteria specified in the standard bidding documents for the work detailed below. E-Tenders need to be accompanied by earnest money deposit (EMD) in the shape of DD/CDR/BG from any Nationalized/ Scheduled Bank equivalent to 2% of the advertised cost pledged to Superintending Engineer, JKPTCL Kashmir, Srinagar J&K.

The complete bidding process is online. However, hardcopies consisting of Tender Fee & EMD (original instruments) in cover and Techno-Commercial bid (as per SBD) in cover- II has to be submitted only by the Lowest Bidder in the office of Superintending Engineer, JKPTCL Kashmir, Srinagar J&K, on the day which will be communicated to lowest bidder. Financial bids must be submitted online only as per prescribed format.

S. No	Scope Of The Work	Estt. Cost (Rs. in lacs)	EMD (Rs. in lacs)	Cost Of Tender Documents	Last Date of Submission of bids	Time of Completion after issuing of LOA
1	Design, engineering, manufacture, assembly of 3Phase, 132, 33KV 50MVA Power Transformer complete with all fittings and accessories required for efficient and trouble free operations of the transformer, testing at manufacturer's works and customer's premises, supply, loading at factory, delivery at site, unloading, handling, dragging at site on the plinth of transformer, erection and commissioning as per terms, conditions, technical specifications and schedules thereto of this tender document. Refer BOQ for full details, other items, for Grid station Chaddora.	378.31 Lacs	7.57 Lacs	Rs. 10000	11.05.2020	6 Months

The Standard Bidding Document is available at Govt. E-Procurement website http://tenders.gov.in.

Position of Funds: Demanded

CRITICAL DATES	
1	Issue of NIT 25-04-2020
2	Downloading of bidding documents (Start) 27-04-2020
3	Downloading of bidding documents (End) 11-05-2020
4	e-Bid submission (start) date & time/ Submission of e-tender fee, EMD and other supporting documents in PDF formats) 27-04-2020 from 10:00am
5	e-Bid submission (end) date & time/ Submission of e-tender fee, EMD and other supporting documents in PDF formats) 11-05-2020 upto 02:00am
6	Online Techno-Commercial e-Bid opening date and time. 12-05-2020 at 02:00pm
7	Venue of opening of Techno-Commercial-Bids Office of the Superintending Engineer, O&M Circle-4, JKPTCL, Kashmir/Bemina Srinagar
8	LOA Issuing Authority Superintending Engineer, O&M Circle-1, JKPTCL Kashmir, Bemina, Srinagar
8	Cost of e-Bid document (to be submitted in the form of e-challan or treasury challan / receipt) Rs.,10000/-
9	Amount of earnest Money Deposit (2% of Advt cost) Rs.,7.57 Lac

- Only the bidders possessing the qualifying criteria as mentioned in the SBD should participate in the bidding process.
- Clarifications can also be sought from the office of the under signed on E-mail xen104@gmail.com.
- Before participating in the bids, the bidder shall acquaint himself with the site work and local conditions.
- The department reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without assigning any reason therefor.
- The Power transformer to be supplied has to be operated in parallel with the existing transformer of capacity 3x25MVA.

No. TLMD-IV/33-36, Dated: 25-04-2020  
DIPK-NB-138/20  
Executive Engineer, TLMD-IV, Pampor.

# Gearing up for floods during pandemic

The National Disaster Response Force is preparing to face the twin challenges in many States

**DEVESH K. PANDEY**  
NEW DELHI

With the southwest monsoon around the corner, the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) is preparing to face the twin challenges of COVID-19 and floods in different parts of the country. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast a normal monsoon, which is expected to hit Kerala on June 1.



**Staying alert:** In this August 2018 photo, members of the National Disaster Response Force patrolling along the Periyar during the floods in Kerala. •H. VISHU

"In the rainy season, managing the situation in areas that have been reporting COVID-19 cases, particularly in the hotspot and containment zones, will be an uphill task. Given the forecast, it will require more preparation," said a senior NDRF official.

There is a chance of above normal rain in August and September, according to the IMD.

Over the past week, the NDRF has been working on an action plan to meet all

possible exigencies. The top brass has been briefing the field formations on measures to be taken. The organisation has been in constant touch with the IMD and the local administration in the respective States.

Assam, which witnesses

heavy rains and flash floods during the monsoon, leading to several deaths and displacement of lakhs of people in the affected areas, had asked for monsoon pre-deployment of NDRF teams. "Response teams in other States are awaiting further

instructions. It is an unprecedented situation wherein more than 90% resources will have to be mobilised. Last year, when the country recorded the best monsoon over the past 25 years, 200 of the 216 teams had to be deployed in close to 20 States

for rescue and relief operations. Before that, we also responded well to Cyclone Fani which had hit eastern India in the first week of May 2019," the official said.

The NDRF has taken note of the latest IMD warning of the likely formation of a low pressure area over the south Andaman Sea and the neighbourhood around April 30, which is likely to intensify into a depression during the subsequent 48 hours, triggering moderate and heavy to extreme rainfall in isolated areas.

Following the COVID-19 outbreak, NDRF teams in several States joined the local administration in implementing preventive measures and distributing essentials, including medical supplies. They also stepped in to alleviate the problems faced by thousands of stranded migrant labourers, particularly in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

**The Disaster Management Act has made the statutory provisions for constitution of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) for the purpose of specialized response to natural and man-made disasters.**

**Why was it needed?**

**Two national calamities in quick succession in the form of Orissa Super Cyclone (1999) and Gujarat Earthquake (2001) brought about the realization of the need of having a specialist response mechanism at National Level to effectively respond to disasters. This realization led to the enactment of the DM Act on 26 Dec 2005.**

**ROLE AND MANDATE OF NDRF:**

**Specialized response during disasters. Proactive deployment during impending disaster situations. Acquire and continually upgrade its own training and skills. Liaison, Reconnaissance, Rehearsals and Mock Drills. Impart basic and operational level training to State Response Forces (Police, Civil Defence and Home Guards). Community Capacity Building Programme. Organize Public Awareness Campaigns.**

## BRICS should help entrepreneurs: India

Jaishankar calls for global reforms

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

Member countries of the BRICS group should assist private entrepreneurs to help them deal with the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said on Monday. He also spoke of the need for reform in the multilateral global platforms during the video-conference of Foreign Ministers of the BRICS group which was convened by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

"He [Mr. Jaishankar] em-

phasised that we need to provide support to businesses, especially MSMEs, to tide over the crisis and ensure livelihoods are not lost. The Minister emphasised that the pandemic is not only posing a great risk to the health and well being of humanity but is also severely impacting global economy," said a government release.

China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi, South African Minister of International Relations Grace Naledi Pandor and Brazilian Foreign Minister Ernesto Araujo participated.

## No improvement in Ganga water quality

But pause in industrial activity has aided Yamuna

**JACOB KOSHY**  
NEW DELHI

The lockdown may have dramatically reduced air pollution across the country but it hasn't significantly reduced pollution in the Ganga, according to a report by the Central Pollution Control Board.

The dissolved oxygen (DO) concentration, a measure of the amount of free oxygen available in river systems, "rose marginally" from March 22-April 15. A high DO value is considered a good



**Few gains:** All boat jetties along the Ganga remain deserted, but pollution continues due to sewage discharge into the river. •RANJEET KUMAR

indicator of river health. However, two other measures, BOD (Biological Oxygen Demand) and COD (Chemical Oxygen Demand) – both indicators of the amount of oxygen necessary to break down organic and inorganic

pollution – showed "insignificant reductions", the CPCB report notes. The lower these numbers are the better they indicate river health.

"Reduction in BOD concentration has been less significant owing to continual

from 9/ towns situated near though projects worth trial activity.

## Boat with 33 migrants reaches Odisha coast from Chennai

**STAFF REPORTER**  
BERHAMPUR

A fishing boat carrying 33 migrant workers from Chennai reached Odisha's Ganjam district on Tuesday. This is the third motorboat to bring migrants from Chennai to Ganjam since April 25. To dodge the lockdown to contain the spread of COVID-19, these workers opted for a dangerous journey without any navigation equipment.

The motorboat set out from Chennai on April 24 and reached the Arjyapalli fishing jetty near the Gopalpur port at 1 a.m. Twenty-nine passengers were from Ganjam and one from Puri, and the other three were from Srikakulam district of



**Risky ride:** The boat carrying migrant workers at Arjyapalli fishing jetty near Gopalpur port. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Andhra Pradesh. They were kept in quarantine at Arjyapalli High School.

Swabs of persons showing symptoms will be sent for testing, an official said.

One of the two engines of their boat developed a snag

near the Andhra Pradesh-Odisha border. As the boat ran on a single engine, they arrived late. The migrants, who worked at the Kasimedu fishing jetty in Tamil Nadu, contributed ₹2 lakh to buy the boat.

## 19 sailors on oil tanker float in misery off Mumbai

Lockdown delays auction of ship that has been placed under 'arrest' for non-payment of debt

**JAGRITI CHANDRA**  
NEW DELHI

With food, water and diesel likely to run out in two days, 19 sailors on board an oil tanker off Mumbai are an anxious lot. Their ship has been under "arrest" for the past three months after the owner failed to clear its debt owed to the erstwhile UTI Capital Private Ltd. and an auction scheduled last month could not conclude due to the lockdown.

"The Bombay High Court has asked the agency which has arrested the ship to provide us essentials through our company, Mercator Ltd. But we can't be certain until the supplies arrive on board," says Captain Ifthikar Modak, Master of MT Prem Mala. Last week, he sent an

SOS to various stakeholders including the Sheriff of Mumbai, the Directorate General of Shipping, the shipping company and Axis Trustee Services Ltd. (ATSL), requesting for supplies yet there is no clarity on who will provide them.

**Unfinished business**

On January 31, the Bombay High Court granted a plea by the ATSL, a beneficiary of Axis Bank, for issuing an arrest warrant against MT Prem Mala.

The owner of the ship owed UTI through the ATSL ₹196 crore. On March 3, the Bombay High Court directed the Sheriff of Mumbai to conduct an auction. The bids were to be submitted on March 24 and an auction pur-



**In troubled waters:** The Prem Mala. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

chaser declared by the court two days later. But these were left incomplete after the lockdown was announced.

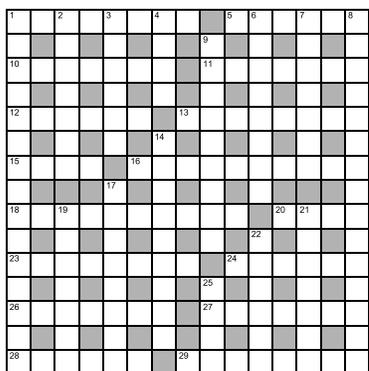
"In April, UTI paid for the essential supply on humanitarian grounds though it is not obliged to do so. On Monday, we approached the court to ask that it must either direct somebody to pay for the essentials or allow for

the sale of the ship or guarantee that whoever pays for these supplies will get paid on priority after the sale. The court, however, thought that there was no urgency in this matter and effectively passed no order," Ashwin Shanker, lawyer for ATSL told *The Hindu*. The water, food and diesel supply for a month cost ₹35 lakh. "We are obeying govern-

ment regulations which require a minimum of 17 crew members to be mandatorily on ship. But if these supplies don't reach us on time, we will be forced to abandon the ship. The morale onboard is very low as we have not been paid our salaries since January and our insurance has also expired. We have no idea when we will be able to return home or send money to our families. We have no contact with our owners, who have simply abandoned us. I was assigned duty for two months and my four-month long contract expired last week, but the shipowner says he can't even send a boat to allow us to leave the ship because there are dues owed to them too," says Chief Officer Ankit Maurya.

## THE CROSSWORD+ 12922

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



- 15 That man's a journalist. Take care! (4)  
16 Sarah's turned to men in street in constant intimidation (10)  
18 Press media employee worsened it by poor handling (4,6)  
20 Chop up hardwood? (4)  
23 Adoption by Poles settled around the States (8)  
24 Go with complaint relating to digestion (6)  
26 Brother to have central lien on old camera (7)  
27 Trooped off to get a missile (7)  
28 There's the struggling woman (6)  
29 Kind of permit for an architectural technique (4-4)
- DOWN**
- 1 Easy to swap out. Nitre may be got (15)  
2 French friend clever and good-humoured (7)  
3 Laughed at model and toned down (6)  
4 Change central savant's line (4)  
6 It's ample, extravagant and most prosperous (8)  
7 Music – Indian music form not completely given by US magazine (7)  
8 Under time pressure, somehow tack a close thing (7,3,5)  
9 I think tyrant leaves Chhattisgarh's capital after me (9)  
14 Sanctioned half of suitcase I saw (9)  
17 In France, what is in exotic scene? Particular order (8)  
19 Nuke without the paper dropping exercise (4,3)  
21 A right code set out for a building design style (3,4)  
22 Proceed as new oar is handed out (4,2)  
25 Don't move broken pots (4)

- ACROSS**
- 1 We need to do nothing to be so (8)  
5 Almost declare about section of ancient city (6)  
10 Vanishing point? (4,3)  
11 Goalie running around United leader gets accolades (7)  
12 A kind of condom may be made from it (6)  
13 No uniform for this person (8)

## SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

**Solution to puzzle 12921**

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

## FAITH

### Overcome bias

The human mind gives in to discriminating tendencies that arise spontaneously and it needs great effort to overcome them and remain unbiased in any situation. In a discourse, Swami Paramasukananda drew attention to how Sri Ramakrishna would explain this issue by quoting the case of the Trimurtis who subject themselves to human emotions and gunas during the time of avatar, merely to enable human beings to learn the art of overcoming them. An interesting incident from the life of Adi Sankara illustrates this point.

Believed to be an avatar of Shiva, there is no limitation to his jnana. Yet as a human being, he is subject to a situation when he reacts with a sense of discrimination. It is perhaps the Lord's way of enabling the acharya gain the subtle Advaita jnana and thereby also teaching humanity how to deal with such feelings that frequently show up in the life of every being. It is held that once, when Adi Sankara was proceeding towards the Ganga for his ablations through the narrow lanes in Kasi, he sees a chandala and asks him to move aside. The chandala merely asks, 'Are you referring to my physical frame or my inner atma?' Immediately realisation dawns in the acharya and he sees the very Lord in front of him who out of His grace has granted him jnana. This incident is the cause for the birth of Manisha Panchakam, a Stotra full of divine wisdom and jnana that can help people realise the true value of human life.

It is also held that once Swami Vivekananda was entertained by a dancer to grace her dance performance. But when he declined, she sang a soulful song of Surdas, wherein the saint pleads with God to accept him with all his faults. It enabled him to shed his prejudices and refine his own feelings about life and people.

## BRICS: Origins and now:

On November 30, 2001, Jim O'Neill, a British economist who was then chairman of Goldman Sachs Asset Management, coined the term 'BRIC' to describe the four emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India, and China.

It started as an investment banker

BRIC on the basis of econometric analyses projecting that the four economies would individually and collectively occupy far greater economic space and become among the world's largest economies in the next 50 years or so.

It was agreed to expand BRIC to BRICS with the inclusion of South Africa at the BRICS Foreign Ministers' meeting in New York in September 2010.

South Africa attended the third BRICS Summit in Sanya on April 14, 2011. Last year, leaders of the grouping commemorated the 10th anniversary of BRICS in Johannesburg.

During the sixth BRICS Summit in Fortaleza, Brazil (2014), the leaders signed the Agreement for establishing the New Development Bank (NDB).

India and BRICS:

From the Indian perspective, BRICS has emerged the voice of developing countries, or the global south. With raising challenges on issues from WTO to climate change, New Delhi believes BRICS has to protect the rights of the developing countries.

India has to maintain the balancing act between Russia-China on the one side and the US on the other.

India should move closer to Latin America.

BRICS has put counter-terrorism on top of the agenda, this has been a success for India.

India is making efforts to address glaring gaps in areas such as counter-terrorism, the fight against climate change and UNSC reform

India was the main BRICS country behind the establishment of the NDB and proposed the idea at the fourth BRICS summit in New Delhi.

2021 BRICS Summit is scheduled in India.

## India's stand in the BRICS Summit 2019

India put forward the concern of increasing terrorism in the world.

As per PM Modi's speech in the summit, the menacing threat of terrorism has caused the world economy of huge value of \$1 trillion.

He proposed various steps that are needed to be taken in to account in order to overcome this loss.

India invited the leaders of the participating countries to invest in India's infrastructure development which will eventually help in increasing the trade participation of India.

India also proposed to hold the first meeting of BRICS Water Ministers in India.

on drugs trafficking charges – with "restructuring and reorganization" of the OPEC member's crippled oil industry.

Mr. Maduro also named Asdrubal Chavez, cousin of the late President Hugo Chavez, as interim President of the state oil firm PDVSA.

The U.S. in 2017 designated El Aissami as having played "a significant role in international narcotics trafficking" and placed him on a most-wanted fugitives list in August last year.

"In his previous positions, he oversaw or partially oversaw narcotics shipments of more than 1,000 kg from

**Key appointment:** A file photo of Tarek El Aissami, left, and Nicolas Maduro in Caracas, Venezuela. •AP

Venezuela on multiple occasions, including those with the final destinations of Mexico and the United States," the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency (ICE) said on its website.

Mr. El Aissami declared his innocence and said the move was "a dirty trick."

The U.S. has been seeking for more than a year to oust Mr. Maduro. More than 60 countries recognise opposition leader Juan Guaido as interim President.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo renewed support

for Mr. Guaido in a telephone call on Monday. The two discussed a new U.S.-proposed "framework" that calls for both Mr. Guaido and Mr. Maduro to step aside temporarily for a transitional government that would hold fresh elections.

The U.S. has tried earlier to persuade nations, including Russia and India, from buying Venezuelan oil. Although the South American country has the world's largest oil reserves, the oil sector suffers from corruption and lack of investment.

created China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Authority, has replaced Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan as the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) for information and broadcasting.

Lt. Gen. Bajwa was credited for making former PM Nawaz Sharif a larger-than-life figure.

Mr. Khan also appointed Senator Shibli Faraz as the new Information Minister. The steps seek to allay the perception that the media handling of the government was not good and its works were not being properly highlighted.

cal newspaper *Estado de S.Paulo*, that the federal police have 60 days to question Sergio Moro, Mr. Bolsonaro's former Justice Minister whose resignation last week pitched the administration into turmoil. The Justice's authorisation was also reported by several other local media.

During Mr. Moro's announcement of his resignation on April 24, he said Mr. Bolsonaro had told him on multiple occasions that he wanted to replace the head of the federal police with someone who could facilitate access to investigations and intelligence reports.

Jair Bolsonaro

Brazil's Prosecutor-General, Augusto Aras, last week asked the Supreme Court to open an investigation into the allegations made by Mr. Moro, who made a name for himself as the top judge in the sprawling Car Wash corruption investigation.

He was by far Mr. Bolsonaro's most popular Minister and, throughout a series of crises in the Bolsonaro administration, his place in Cabinet helped secure the administration's base of support and appearance of respect for the rule of law.

The Prosecutor-General

ice's director general. Mr. Bolsonaro claimed the former official had resigned of his own accord, which Moro said was untrue and also that he hadn't signed off on any resignation.

Mr. Bolsonaro, in his address the same day as Mr. Moro's exit, denied wanting to know about investigations underway, but did not address the accusation he wanted a successor who would share information.

The Supreme Court's press office didn't reply to requests for information late Monday night. And there was no immediate reaction from Mr. Bolsonaro.

government's handling of a toxic dump in 2016, as well as other controversial issues. AFP

**Norwegian tycoon held for wife's disappearance**

OSLO Norwegian police said on Tuesday they had arrested a wealthy businessman over the disappearance of his wife 18 months ago. Tom Hagen, 70, was arrested on suspicion of "murder or accessory to murder," Commissioner Ida Melbo Oystese told a press conference. Mr. Hagen's wife Anne-Elisabeth Hagen disappeared without a trace from their home in Lorensborg on October 31, 2018. AFP

## Trump's bleach statements echo claims by pseudo-scientists

'Miracle cure' quacks have long promoted industrial bleach to treat autism, malaria and many other medical conditions

ANDREW JACOBS

President Donald Trump's public statements about using disinfectants to potentially treat the coronavirus have put him in the company of pseudoscientists and purveyors of phony elixirs who promote and sell industrial bleach as a "miracle cure" for autism, malaria and a long list of medical conditions.

The President's comments, at a White House briefing last week, have already prompted widespread incredulity, warnings from health experts and a spike in calls to poison control centres around the country. The makers of Clorox and Lysol urged Americans not to inject or ingest their products.

But some scientists fear Mr. Trump's remarks could breathe life into a fringe movement that embraces the medicinal powers of a powerful industrial bleach known as chlorine dioxide. Among its adherents are Alan Keyes, the conservative activist and former presidential candidate who has pro-

moted a chlorine dioxide-based product called Miracle Mineral Solution on his online television show.

The impact of Mr. Trump's words "is going to be huge, especially among people who are desperate," said Myles Power, a British chemist who works to debunk quack medical remedies. "My fear is [that] it will cause widespread harm to people who think that drinking bleach can prevent or cure COVID-19."

**Letters to President**

Mark Grenon, the self-described archbishop of a Florida church that sells Miracle Mineral Solution as "a wonderful detox that can kill 99% of the pathogens in the body," took credit for Mr. Trump's comments in a Facebook post on Friday. In an online radio show earlier this month, he said he and his supporters had sent letters to the President about the product he peddles.

The White House did not respond to an email seeking comment after Mr. Grenon's letter was reported by *The Guardian* last week. A per-



**Dangerous proposition:** President Donald Trump looks at a decontamination device at the White House. •NYT

son familiar with senior administration officials said they were not familiar with him or his letter.

It is unclear what inspired Mr. Trump to suggest disinfectants as a cure for COVID-19 – and he did not mention chlorine dioxide or bleach specifically in his comments during the White House briefing. But promoters of such solutions have seized on his remarks with vigour.

"Do you realise how freaking cheap and easy it would be to mass produce chlorine

dioxide for 100,000's of people?" Jordan Sather, a follower of the pro-Trump QAnon conspiracy theory, wrote on Twitter. "We could wipe out COVID quick!"

**Unproven products**

In a statement earlier this month, the Food and Drug Administration reiterated its warnings about ingesting chlorine dioxide, which it described as "dangerous and unapproved". Chlorine dioxide is widely used in paper processing, by water treatment plants and as a disin-

fectant in hospitals. "We will not stand for this, and the FDA remains fully committed to taking strong enforcement action against any sellers who place unsuspecting American consumers at risk by offering their unproven products to treat serious diseases," the administration's commissioner, Stephen M. Hahn, said in the statement.

Mr. Grenon and his son, Jonathan did not respond to interview requests. Chlorine dioxide has also been embraced by vaccine opponents who say the toxic substance treats autism. Emma Dalmayne, a mother of five autistic children who maintains a website about the dangers of so-called bleach cures, said the treatments have left some children with skin burns, seizures, damaged digestive tracts and other injuries. "The harm done to these kids has been unconscionable," she said.

Melissa Eaton, a mother of a child with autism in North Carolina who campaigns against phony cures, said she sees overlaps between those who embrace chlorine diox-

ide as a curative, conspiracy theorists like Alex Jones, and the strident protesters who have clamoured for loosening social distancing measures across the country.

"It's like a Venn diagram," she said. "What they all have in common is the idea that the government is hiding something from you. These people not interested in what scientists, doctors or the media has to say."

Dr. Alan Levinovitz, a professor at James Madison University who studies the relationship between science and religion, said Mr. Trump's comments about disinfectants were in keeping with his previous support for conspiracy theorists, agitators against the deep state and his promotion of two antimalarial drugs to fight the coronavirus, despite warnings from medical experts about their possible dangerous side effects.

"For a lot of people, Trump represents an alternative to pointy-headed experts in white lab coats who speak a language we can't understand," Dr. Levinovitz said. NY TIMES

## One killed as violent protests rock Tripoli

Banks set ablaze after a night of rioting

REUTERS  
BEIRUT

Violent protests erupted in Lebanon's Tripoli again on Tuesday, with more banks set ablaze after a night of rioting that left one protester dead, according to security and medical sources, in demonstrations renewed by growing economic despair.

A collapse in the Lebanese pound and soaring inflation and unemployment are compounding hardship in Lebanon, which has been in deep financial crisis since October.

A shutdown to curb the spread of the new coronavirus has exacerbated economic woes.

Overnight, protesters in the northern city of Tripoli set several banks and an Army vehicle on fire. Soldiers fired into the air and used tear gas and rubber bullets, a security source said.

The man who died was in his 20s and it was not immediately clear who was responsible for his death, the source said.

Protesters returned on



Anti-government protesters smashing the facade of a bank in Tripoli. •AFP

Tuesday, lighting two commercial banks on fire and smashing their facades, prompting the Army to re-deploy. Dozens of soldiers positioned themselves in a main commercial street lined with several banks, and some fired rubber bullets and tear gas to repel protesters.

The Army said that overnight a fire-bomb was thrown at one of its vehicles and a hand grenade was hurled at a patrol and blamed the trouble on "a number of infiltrators," calling on peaceful protesters to quickly leave the streets.

## Challenges:

Where BRICS has failed its founders is in the vision of interdependence between the five countries Economic slowdown in all countries eg India is growing at 4.5%, Russia at 1% and South Africa & Brazil less than 1%.

Despite their combined population accounting for 40% of humanity, intra-BRICS trade still makes up just 17% of world trade.

The New Development Bank's (NDB) vision to 'supplement the existing efforts of multilateral and regional financial institutions for global growth and development' remains far away from realisation.

So far the only members of NDB are its founders and its own limitations.

Lack of transparency and good governance among member States with the bank.

Politically, these countries are not all on the same page at the same time.

China has been shielding Pakistan and has been uneasy discussing the issue of terrorism on this platform.

Lack of a binding ideology, bilateral differences, diversity in terms of socio-cultural and political systems

China's overwhelming presence, which reduces the space for other countries in the grouping.

## Conclusion:

BRICS should promote comprehensive development of all states both big and small and enhanced mutually beneficial cooperation among them on the basis of shared interests.

A civil society dialogue is much needed.

BRICS nations should strive for peaceful and politico-diplomatic settlement of crisis and conflict in various regions of the world.

BRICS, being one of the pillars of the emerging fairer polycentric world order, plays an important stabilising role in global affairs.

Democratization of international issues agreements on global agendas should be reached with the widest and equal participation of all stakeholders and be based on universally recognised legal norms.

The principle of respect for cultural and civilizational diversity of the world should be a top priority.

In the storming ocean of world politics, BRICS can contribute significantly in maintaining international stability and ensuring global economic growth and becoming a united centre of the multipolar world.

Australian Dollar 49.36 49.58  
Source: Indian Bank

### IN BRIEF



#### Deadline for Air India bids extended again

The government on Tuesday extended the deadline for submission of bids for Air India by two months until June 30. The deadline was being extended after "request received from (interested bidders) in view of the prevailing situation arising out of COVID-19," the Department of Investment and Public Management said.

#### TVS Motor to raise ₹500 crore via securities

CHENNAI TVS Motor Company Ltd. announced that it would raise up to ₹500 crore through issue of securities on a private placement basis. The company's board, which met on Tuesday, approved the issuance of non-convertible debentures aggregating up to ₹500 crore on a private placement basis, the company said in a regulatory filing. The firm did not disclose the reasons for raising the capital. Recently, the company had acquired U.K.-based sporting motorcycle firm Norton in a ₹16 million all cash deal.

further downside risks.

According to Morgan Stanley, mutual funds have gradually moved towards better assets after the IL&FS crisis came to the fore in September 2018 and hence should be able to tide over the current crisis.

"Recent events at credit

highlighted the fact that non banking finance companies (NBFCs) and housing finance companies (HFCs) that, till last year, constituted a big part of the assets under management (AUM) of debt schemes now account for a much lesser share. "... driven by decline in

which are down to around 1.5% of mutual fund debt AUM," said the report released on Monday.

Last week, Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund decided to wind up six debt funds with combined AUM of nearly ₹26,000 crore on account of illiquid, low-rated instru-

mutual fund exposure towards the sector.

The financial major, however, noted that while the dependence of the NBFC/HFC segment on mutual funds has decreased, such potential outflows would coincide with banks' turning risk-averse towards NBFCs.

"RIL's announcement that it's considering a rights issue was a surprise. While a rights issue, if successful, could be slightly earnings accretive under various scenarios, it would also reduce investor focus on asset divestments," Morgan Stanley said in a note.

were at ₹1,839 crore.

As on March 31, 2020, the bank's gross NPA and net NPA levels were 4.86% and 1.56% respectively, as against 5% and 2.09% respectively as on December 31, 2019. Amitabh Chaudhry, MD & CEO, Axis Bank, said the business and oper-

grew 13% to ₹3,985 crore in Q4. Fee income grew 6% on quarter to ₹2,931 crore.

Loans grew 15% year-on-year to ₹5,71,424 crore, while retail loans rose 24% to ₹3,05,400 crore, accounting for 53% of net advances. Overall deposit growth was 17% year-on-year.

## Goldman Sachs to honour all pre-lockdown offers

Firm to on-board 1,460 campus hires in calendar 2020

MINI TEJASWI BENGALURU

Goldman Sachs says it will honour its commitments made prior to the country-wide lockdown to all summer interns and full-time hires in India this year.

The firm will be onboarding 1,460 campus hires, comprising 740 summer interns and 720 full-time employees, during calendar 2020. It said it had already on-boarded several candidates remotely during the lockdown period.

Gunjan Samtani, head of Goldman Sachs Services in India told *The Hindu*: "Specific joining dates are being communicated individually based on the academic calendar. The first batch of 98 students will start their internship programme with us in India on May 4, 2020."



"We are proceeding with a virtual internship in India for a shortened duration of four to six weeks, compared with the usual duration of eight to ten weeks," he added. "However, Goldman Sachs will honour the full financial compensation of the original programme duration for all the interns," he said. This is applicable to all those who are joining the firm from about 100 busi-

ness schools, engineering colleges and undergraduate schools across the country. According to Goldman Sachs, the virtual internship will encapsulate all the facets of a physical internship at the firm, "facilitated by a strong work-from-home infrastructure".

Some 98% of the firm's employees in India currently work from their homes. The firm said this was possible due to continued investments over the years in technology and risk management framework.

Mr. Samtani added, "Interns joining us this year are aligned to a multitude of functions across several divisions - investment banking, global markets and engineering. They join us in their final year of the academic programme."

## 'Aarogya Setu for feature phones soon'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Centre is working on a Aarogya Setu application-like solution that can be used by feature phones users, IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said on Tuesday. In a videoconference with IT ministers of all States on Tuesday, the Union Minister said that the solution would be launched soon.

He also called upon States to promote electronics manufacturing through pro-investment initiatives to tap the 'great opportunity' likely to emerge following COVID-19. "Every state highly appreciated the #AarogyaSetu app and shared their thoughts on it. I have assured them that a similar solution for feature phones is being developed and will be launched very soon," he tweeted.

## Axis Bank to buy 29% stake in Max Life Insurance

Mitsui to swap insurance arm stake for that in Max Financial

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

Private sector lender Axis Bank has signed a definitive agreement with Max Financial Services Limited (MFS) to buy 29% stake in Max Life Insurance Company in an all-cash deal, the bank said in a statement. Axis Bank, which already holds 1% stake in the insurer, will hold 30% after the deal is closed.

The two parties had begun discussions on the deal in February.

Max Financial Services currently owns a 72.5% stake in Max Life and Mitsui Sumitomo Insurance (MSI) holds 25.5%. The transaction with Axis Bank will follow swapping by MSI of 20.6% stake that it holds in Max Life, with a 21.9% stake in MFS. Max Financial also plans to purchase MSI's balance



Anajit Singh

board of MFS shall be a person identified by Axis," the bank said. The transaction is expected to be completed in 6 to 9 months. According to the agreement, Axis Bank will sell 30% stake in Max Life at ₹294 per share if "value is not created" in 63 months from the time of closing the deal.

This is the second attempt by Anajit Singh, founder and chairman, Max Group, to sell to the insurance firm. In 2017, Max Life had been in talks with HDFC Life to sell stake but the deal fell through after the insurance regulator rejected the proposed structure of the deal and an alternative structure could not be worked out. Incidentally, Mr. Chaudhry was the MD and CEO of HDFC Life when the deal with Max was contemplated.

## Circulate Capital invests in Lucro

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

Circulate Capital, the Singapore-based investment management company has invested in homegrown, Mumbai-based manufacturing firm Lucro Plastecycle Private Limited (Lucro) through the \$106 million Circulate Capital Ocean Fund (CCOF), the world's first investment fund dedicated to the ocean plastic crisis in South and Southeast Asia.

"CCOF has made its inaugural investments in two plastic recycling companies located in India and Indonesia for a total investment of \$6 million," the company said.

CCOF is backed by several leading companies, including PepsiCo and Procter & Gamble.

## Manufacturing of PPE coveralls ramped up

Over 1 lakh units made per day

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT COIMBATORE

The capacity to produce coveralls in the country has been ramped up to more than one lakh units a day, according to an official press release.

Bengaluru has emerged as the hub for manufacture of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), accounting for nearly 50% of the production. Other places that have a large number of approved production units are Tiruppur, Chennai, Coimbatore, Ahmedabad, Vadodra, Ludhiana and Bhiwandi. Large-scale garment units in Bengaluru had taken to PPE coverall production in a big way. Some of these companies, that have scale of manufacturing, have invested in addi-

tional machinery as well. A large number of non-woven textile manufacturers in Coimbatore-Erode belt in Tamil Nadu supply fabric to the coverall producers.

The release added that four laboratories in India have the synthetic blood penetration resistance test facilities and necessary approvals to conduct tests and certify body coveralls required for COVID-19.

These are, the South India Textile Research Association in Coimbatore, Defence Research and Development Establishment in Gwalior, and two laboratories under the Ordnance Factory Board - Heavy Vehicles Factory at Avadi and Small Arms Factory at Kanpur.

**KARNATAKA POWER CORPORATION LIMITED**

CIN: U85110KA1970SGC001919

No. KPCL/2020-21/PSW/WORK\_INDENT/9964 Date: 24.04.2020

**ABSTRACT BID NOTIFICATION**  
(Through e-Procurement Portal Only) (Two Cover System)

KPCL invites sealed bids in English through Gok e-Procurement platform <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in> from the qualified bidders for design, manufacture, quality surveillance, supply, testing at manufacturer's works, transportation, unloading at site, supervision of erection, Testing and commissioning at site of the following: a) 1 No. 50/31.5/31.5 MVA, 220/6.9/6.9 KV, 3Ø, outdoor, 4 winding, 50 Hz, rated Station Transformer with 14.0 % impedance voltage between (HV-LV1), 14.0 % impedance voltage between (HV-LV2), and 25.2 % impedance voltage between (LV1-LV2). All the above impedances are on 31.5 MVA base. VYn0Yn0d1 connected with -12.5% to +7.5% on load taps in steps of 1.25 % on HV winding ONAN/ONAF cooled with initial filling of oil and 10% extra oil in non-returnable steel drums along with other accessories and essential spares. b) 2 Nos. outdoor Neutral Grounding Transformers with Off circuit taps of +/- 5% in steps of 2.5% on HV side for grounding LV neutrals of station transformer as detailed above. c) 2 Nos. outdoor Neutral Grounding Resistors of 0.65 Ohms, 600 Amps, 234 KW continuous rating with off circuit taps at 25% and 50% complete with fittings and accessories for use in conjunction with the station transformer as detailed above. The details of NIT can be seen on KPCL website: [www.karnatakapower.com](http://www.karnatakapower.com) and <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in> under login for Contractors. Further details can be had from Chief Engineer (Thermal Designs), KPCL, No-3, (Green Building), 2nd Floor, Behind Grid Controller Office Premises, Palace Road, Bengaluru - 560 001. Mob: 9481547035 (Exe Engr Ele-2) E-mail : [kpclcetd@gmail.com](mailto:kpclcetd@gmail.com), [cpetkpc@karnataka.gov.in](mailto:cpetkpc@karnataka.gov.in)

**KERALA MEDICAL SERVICES CORPORATION LTD.**  
(Department of Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of Kerala)

THYCAUD P.O., THIRUVANANTHAPURAM - 695014, Tele: 0471-2945646, 2945600 Fax: 2945647  
website: [www.kmscl.kerala.gov.in](http://www.kmscl.kerala.gov.in), email: [md@kmscl.kerala.gov.in](mailto:md@kmscl.kerala.gov.in)  
CIN No. U24233KL2007SGC021610

No. KMSCL/KCP/01/Covid/2020-21 Dated: 28.04.2020

**QUOTATION NOTICE**

In view of the Covid - 19 pandemic Online Quotation are invited for the supply of Anti Psychotic Drugs as per the quantity mentioned in Annexure-4 on behalf of Karunya Community Pharmacy, Kerala Medical Services Corporation Limited.

Quotation documents and Annexures related to the bidding process can be downloaded from the website [www.kmscl.kerala.gov.in](http://www.kmscl.kerala.gov.in).

Last Date of Online Submission : 05.05.2020.

Sd/- Managing Director (Tender Inviting Authority)

TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS: TIRUPATI CHITTOOR DISTRICT, ANDHRA PRADESH. OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE					
Adv.No.03/03/CE/TTD/2020-21					
Sl. No.	NIT No.	Name of the Work	Estimate Amount Rs. In Lakhs & Time for completion	Schedule Download Start Date	Down Load End Date & Last Date for Bid Submission
<b>SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER-I</b>					
1	11/SE-I/TTD/2020-21	Construction of Sports Complex near TTD Press Building at Tirupati	1000.00 12 Months	29-04-2020 5.00 p.m.	16-05-2020 1.00 p.m. & 3.00 p.m.
2	12/SE-I/TTD/2020-21	Construction of Additional hostel block for S.V.Balamandir School at Tirupati.	1075.00 9 Months	11-05-2020 5.00 p.m.	27-05-2020 1.00 p.m. & 3.00 p.m.
3	13/SE-I/TTD/2020-21	Construction of 50 Special rooms in 3rd floor over existing ALFC Block in third floor, BIRRD Hospital	520.00 8 Months	13-05-2020 5.00 p.m.	29-05-2020 1.00 p.m. & 3.00 p.m.

Note: For full details log on to the web site <https://tender.apecurement.gov.in/> or <http://www.apecurement.gov.in/>

Proc.No.PR4/13917/Adv.No.05/PRO/2020; Dated:28-04-2020 EXECUTIVE OFFICER

## IN BRIEF



## Tendulkar lends a shoulder to Shaw

**NEW DELHI**  
Sachin Tendulkar has started helping Prithvi Shaw deal with life on and off the 22 yards after he endured a rough patch following a bright start to his India career. "I have had a number of interactions over the years with Prithvi. He is a very talented player and I am happy to help him. I spoke to him about cricket and also about life beyond the cricket field," said Tendulkar during an interaction. **PTI**



## Arunkumar to coach USA men's team

**BENGALURU**  
Former Karnataka captain and coach J. Arunkumar has been appointed the head coach of the United States of America men's cricket team, it was announced. A statement from USA Cricket explained that J. Arunkumar's role will see him be "permanently based in the United States, as and when his working visa is obtained." This will be the first international coaching assignment for Arunkumar.

## UEFA sets May 25 deadline for leagues

**MUNICH**  
European football leagues have been given a May 25 deadline to inform governing body UEFA of their plans to restart their domestic competitions. Soccer has ground to a halt in Europe. In a letter to the 55 Federations in UEFA, president Aleksander Ceferin wrote that any league cancelling this season would need to produce a list of teams that have qualified for European club competitions, also by May 25.

## Ding and Nakamura join Carlsen in lead

**NEW DELHI**  
Ding Liren and Hikaru Nakamura joined Magnus Carlsen in the lead with 11 points after five rounds of the \$250,000 Magnus Carlsen Invitational online chess tournament on Monday. Ding defeated Ian Nepomniachtchi 2.5-1.5 and Nakamura took one point off Fabiano Caruana, who went on to post a 3-2 victory.

**The results (fifth round):** Fabiano Caruana (USA) bt Hikaru Nakamura (USA) 3-2; Ding Liren (Chn) bt Ian Nepomniachtchi (Rus) 2.5-1.5. **Standings:** 1-3. Ding Liren (Chn, 11 points), Hikaru Nakamura (USA, 11), Magnus Carlsen (Nor, 11), 4. Fabiano Caruana (USA, 10), 5-6. Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (Fra, 5), Ian Nepomniachtchi (Rus, 5); 7. Anish Giri (Ned, 4); 8. Alireza Firouzja (FIDE, 3).

## 'Olympics cancellation likely if vaccine not found in time'

Further delays impossible, says Tokyo Games organising panel chief Mori

## GENERAL

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE TOKYO**

The postponed Tokyo 2020 Olympics will have to be cancelled if a vaccine isn't found and the coronavirus pandemic brought under control by next year, the organising committee's president warned, ruling out further delays.

The comments, in an interview with Japanese sports daily *Nikkan Sports* published on Tuesday, come as medical experts doubted whether the pandemic can be sufficiently contained by the time to hold an event drawing participants and spectators from around the world.

The pandemic has already forced a year-long delay of the Games, which are now scheduled to open on July 23, 2021.

But, Tokyo 2020 presi-



**Bleak prospects:** The very magnitude of the Olympics makes its conduct possible only after a complete end to the pandemic. **AFP**

dent Yoshiro Mori was categorical when asked whether the Games could be delayed until 2022 if the pandemic remains a threat next year, replying: "No. In that case,

it's cancelled," Mori said.

Mori noted the Games had been cancelled previously only during wartime, and compared the battle against coronavirus to "fighting an

invisible enemy".

If the virus is successfully contained, "we'll hold the Olympics in peace next summer", he added.

"Mankind is betting on it."

## ICC should step in: Azhar

**V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM HYDERABAD**

Former India captain Mohammad Azharuddin says it is time the ICC confers with all cricket boards and revisits the Future Tours Programme to finalise the international calendar for the next three years in the wake of the prevailing COVID-19 crisis.

"Since there is a global problem now because of COVID-19, this is mandatory in the interest of the game," Azhar, currently the Hyderabad Cricket Association

president, said in a chat with *The Hindu* on Tuesday.

"It is pretty obvious that even the domestic season, for instance HCA's leagues, will be off to a delayed start and consequently the whole calendar of BCCI will be affected."

"There will definitely be far fewer tournaments on the domestic front," he said.

"These are tough times and hence I feel the ICC should come out with a concrete plan to offset whatever losses the boards suffer financially," he said.

## Vijay would have preferred Bhupathi as partner

Prakash Amritraj says it was hard to live up to the famous surname

## TENNIS

**KAMESH SRINIVASAN NEW DELHI**

It was sheer entertainment as Vijay Amritraj and son Prakash had a lively chat with Purav Raja on his Instagram show, *Chai with Raja*.

Recalling the 1987 Davis Cup summit clash in Gothenburg, Vijay said, "The Swedish public and organisation was fantastic. Wish we could have spent a few hours more on court. We managed to win

one set in five matches in that Davis Cup final. It was very special, as it was the second time in my career to be in the Davis Cup final after 1974. We learnt a lot from that match."

The 66-year-old, a regular at Wimbledon for the last 50 years, applauded Raja for his choice of questions.

Vijay, who reached a career-best rank of 18 in 1980, tried his best to groom Prakash from the junior days, but injuries meant that the

latter could not crack the top 150.

Prakash said that if anything could be changed, he would have loved to listen to his gut, make his own decisions and have peace of mind about his tennis career. It was hard to live up to the famous surname and handle all the media attention.

"Winning the fifth match against Uzbekistan [in 2008]," said Prakash, about his most memorable Davis Cup tie.

When queried about taking up Davis Cup captaincy, a candid Vijay said it was "important for others to do it".

He picked Ramesh Krishnan, who reached a career-high rank of 23 in 1985, ahead of his father Ramanathan Krishnan, and called Ramesh "the Therapist".

Between Leander Paes and Mahesh Bhupathi, Vijay opted for the latter as his doubles partner, saying that it was because he himself played the deuce court.

## Desperate ideas we must take seriously in desperate times

It is better to have some cricket rather than none at all, and if compromises have to be made, so be it



## BETWEEN WICKETS

**SURESH MENON**

It might well be the Lockdown Blues. Or the Isolation Syndrome.

Maybe administrators around the world are merely taking a leaf out of US President Donald Trump's book and being "sarcastic." But desperate times have given rise to desperate ideas, some of which we must live with if cricket as we know it is to live on.

The Big Three — India, England and Australia — need one another to survive. Cricket Australia has calculated that if India's tour slated for October is called off, they stand to lose \$300 million. In anticipation, the Chief Executive has already

asked his staff to take pay cuts up to 80%.

## Various options

Ideas being discussed involve playing the India series (if the Australian government allows) at a single venue, a "quarantine hub", and play matches to an empty stadium.

Should that fall through, and with television needing live action, there is a proposal to play a series of matches between the national team and the 'A' team.

The hope is that it will be fiercely competitive, with those outside the main team using the opportunity to prove themselves. It will be "gripping", says former player Simon Katich.

It is an idea England's cricket board is toying with too. England's focus for the moment is the new tournament, the Hundred, which the board hopes will bring in much-needed money. Currently the Hundred is to England what

the IPL is to India — a cash cow that is in danger of being put out to pasture. It is why neither tournament has been officially called off yet; there are few folks more optimistic than those in danger of losing millions.

England believes they could lose "in excess of £300 million" if no cricket is played this year. They are looking at playing in "bio-secure" environments — no audience, players staying at hotels attached to the stadium, and quarantine being the key — but nothing is slated to happen before July 1.

The idea is to use the "minimum number of grounds for our desired international schedule," according to the chief executive.

"After international cricket," former England captain Michael Vaughan has said, "the Hundred is the most important aspect of the game." Cricket officials around the world have the confidence of knowing that whatever decision

they make — good, bad, indifferent — there will always be some prominent player to support it.

## Relatively safe

As reported in this newspaper, India are relatively safe, with the board not needing to make cuts even if no cricket is played the rest of the year. But even here, the ripple effects of lack of international cricket and home series will be felt by the average domestic cricketer.

"Even in the worst-case scenario, the BCCI will try and protect the staff and cricketing fraternity, and do its best to minimise the impact on our cricketers and administrative staff," the BCCI treasurer has said, and that must come as a relief.

Cricket boards in Sri Lanka, Pakistan, West Indies, South Africa and Bangladesh are on the brink of bankruptcy; at the moment the International Cricket Council has no plan for them, or for the non-Test playing countries.

Hence the importance of the World T20 (to be held in Australia later this year, but likely to be postponed to February next) and other ICC tournaments which bring in money.

## Accept what is given

All of which is why we might have to bite our tongues and accept what comes our way by way of domestic and international cricket once the governments give permission.

Playing to an empty stadium might be anathema to the sports fan, maybe sport itself, but we might have to reconcile ourselves to that. Playing four Tests at a single venue might not be a great idea, but it is both acknowledged that television is what sport is for, and that the sports ecosystem goes beyond the players and coaches.

Hundreds of thousand make their living off cricket — officials, employees of various associations,

players at the lower end of the scale, umpires, groundsmen, journalists, caterers and other important professionals at the venues of matches, radio and online commentators, airlines operators, taxi drivers at the cities where matches are played, hotel owners, hotel employees and others all gain by the multiplier effect.

## Business reason

In times like these, sport has to be seen as a business that feeds families, that puts money in the pockets of those who depend on it.

I wish we didn't have to play in empty stadiums, I wish we didn't have four successive Test matches in a series at the same venue, I wish "bio-security" weren't an issue.

But we need to look seriously at all the desperate ideas, which even a year ago we would have laughed off. It is better to have some cricket rather than none at all, and if compromises have to be made, so be it.

## Sharath live!

Catch Olympian and India's highest-ranked table tennis player, A. Sharath Kamal, in a live chat on *Sportstar's* Instagram handle (@sportstarweb) on April 29 (Wednesday) at 4 p.m. IST.

## BFI loses hosting rights of 2021 Worlds

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI**

India lost the hosting rights of the 2021 men's boxing World Championship to Serbia after the International Boxing association (AIBA) alleged non-payment of host fee by the National federation.

Boxing Federation of India (BFI) blamed it on "procedural complications" arising out of AIBA's failure to resolve "issues" with regards to the account to which the money was to be transferred. The payment was due on Dec. 1 last year.



Purav Raja chatting with Vijay and Prakash Amritraj. **SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT**

## Vikalp@Prithvi goes online with a 48-hour link

Starting this Friday, it will screen a documentary film on its Facebook page

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI**

One of the positive sides of the ongoing global lockdown has been the wealth of films, in all formats, that have been coming home to us through the streaming world, some with complimentary treats attached.

So this Friday, May 1, you don't just get the opportunity to watch Mark Achbar and Peter Wintonik's *Manufacturing Consent*, but can also put forward your questions to Mr. Achbar and to the towering intellectual, linguist, philosopher and political commentator Noam Chomsky, on whose seminal book of the same name the film is based.

The film will kick off a new online initiative of Vikalp@Prithvi.

Starting this Friday noon, it will provide a 48-hour YouTube or Vimeo link, valid till Sunday noon (or longer, depending on the discretion of the filmmaker), to a docu-



**For cinephiles:** The lockdown has brought many films to online platforms. **GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO**

mentary film of acclaim on its Facebook page.

## Viewers' queries

'Vikalp: Films for Freedom' has been bringing a monthly series of documentaries and short films, followed by a discussion, at Prithvi House, at 7 pm on the last Friday of every month.

"We can't do that anymore during the lockdown... we are going online with our interactive documentary

film screenings on a weekly basis till the lockdown ends," said filmmaker Anand Patwardhan, the driving force behind the initiative.

Viewers can send in any questions they have for the filmmaker by leaving a comment on the Facebook post about the film by Saturday 5 pm.

The filmmaker will reply to any or all of the questions and the answers will be posted on the same comments thread by Sunday night or latest by Monday.

Vikalp: Films for Freedom was born as a parallel film festival in Mumbai in 2004 in the face of the censorship imposed on documentary filmmakers during the Mumbai International Film Festival (MIFF).

A collective of a large number of filmmakers was formed and the "rejected" films were screened right across from the MIFF venue. Several filmmakers with-

drew their films from MIFF and screened them at Vikalp, drawing packed houses everyday. Since then it has transformed itself from a parallel festival into a movement.

## Relevant to the times

Curation is the all-important factor and Vikalp@Prithvi's idea is to showcase films, old or new, that are passionate and relevant to the times we live in and address the socio-political and economic issues of the day.

In that sense, Chomsky's analysis of mass media and his critique of the political forces at work behind the daily news couldn't have come at a better time.

Vikalp@Prithvi is also inviting suggestions for films and is asking filmmakers who already have their work on YouTube or Vimeo to submit their preview links to [vikalpscreenings@gmail.com](mailto:vikalpscreenings@gmail.com) if they'd like it to show the film online.

## 'Animal disease detectives' look towards India

Equipping vets with tools for investigation crucial after recent outbreaks: experts

**RAHUL KARMAKAR GUWAHATI**

India is on the radar of a consortium of veterinary scientists formed to train a new generation of 'animal disease detectives' in the Asia-Pacific region amid the coronavirus crisis.

The \$4.3 million programme currently involves 11 countries in the region — Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Vanuatu and Vietnam.

The three-year programme is funded by the Indo-Pacific Centre for Health Security at the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

"A year after African swine fever wiped out more than a quarter of the global pig population and with more than 200,000 people dead from COVID-19, equipping veterinarians with the tools for disease outbreak investigation and surveillance has never been more impor-



**In focus:** Pets being vaccinated against zoonotic diseases. **R. RAGU**

tant," said programme leader Navneet Dhand, an Associate Professor in Veterinary Biostatistics and Epidemiology at the University of Sydney.

"The coronavirus outbreak has underlined how urgent this work is. The majority of emerging infectious diseases, such as coronaviruses, are zoonotic: they spread from animals to humans," added Mr. Dhand, who heads the consortium of more than 40 experts from veterinary schools across Australia, New Zea-

land and the Asia-Pacific.

Researchers, however, said that while this coronavirus has its origins in animal transfer, there is no evidence the virus can be contracted from pets or other animals.

"We are looking to expand to India and are already collaborating with epidemiologists in India. We are preparing a project proposal for submission to the Australia India Council to develop a strategic plan for establishing a similar training programme in India," Mr. Dhand told *The Hindu* via email.

Although the Australia India Council call for proposals has been postponed due to COVID-19, the consortium has developed collaborations with the National Institute of Veterinary Epidemiology and Infection in Bengaluru and the National Institute of Epidemiology in Chennai.

"To protect humans from these diseases, we must look for pathogens and disease 'upstream' in domestic animals and wildlife before they spread to the human population," Mr. Dhand said.

"These diseases can spread rapidly across borders and have huge economic and health impacts. We are finding this out right now with coronavirus," Mr. Dhand said.

The 'detective' model will see the consortium engaging with government animal health authorities and educators in the Asia-Pacific region for strengthening the capacity to detect, respond, control and prevent animal disease outbreaks.