



The National Investigation Agency (NIA) was constituted under the National Investigation Agency (NIA) Act, 2008.

It is a central agency to investigate and prosecute offences:

affecting the sovereignty, security and integrity of India, security of State, friendly relations with foreign States.

against atomic and nuclear facilities.

smuggling in High-Quality Counterfeit Indian Currency.

It implements international treaties, agreements, conventions and resolutions of the United Nations, its agencies and other international organisations.

It's objective is also to combat terror in India.

It acts as the Central Counter-Terrorism Law Enforcement Agency.

Headquarters: New Delhi

Branches: Hyderabad, Guwahati, Kochi, Lucknow, Mumbai, Kolkata, Raipur and Jammu.

Scheduled Offences

The schedule to the Act specifies a list of offences which are to be investigated and prosecuted by the NIA. These include offences under Acts such as the Atomic Energy Act, 1962, and the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, 1967.

Need of NIA

The terrorist incidents are found to have complex inter-State and international linkages, and possible connection with organised crime, for example, the smuggling of arms and drugs, circulation of fake Indian currency etc.

The agency at the Central level was created for investigation of offences related to terrorism and certain other Act post-2008 Mumbai terror attacks.

Mandate of NIA

The cases are assigned to the NIA by the Central Government in accordance with section VI of the NIA Act, 2008.

The investigation of the cases is done by the Agency independently.

After investigation, the cases are placed before the NIA Special Court.

For prosecuting the accused under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (UAPA) and certain other scheduled offences, the Agency seeks the sanction of the Central Government.

The sanction is granted under the UAPA based on the report of the 'Authority' constituted under section 45 (2) of the UAPA.

It is empowered to deal with terror-related crimes across states without special permission from the states.

Smuggling and Terror Funding

The amendments to the NIA Act has brought the offences related to the smuggling in High-Quality Counterfeit Indian Currency under the definition of a terrorist Act.

To curb various aspects of terrorist financing, a Terror Funding and Fake Currency Cell (TFFC) has been created in the NIA.

The Cell maintains a database of terror financing and cases of Fake Indian Currency Notes (FICN).

TFFC also conducts a part investigation into terror financing aspects of regular cases investigated by the NIA.

TFFC Cell conducts verifications of bank accounts of the suspects that are linked with Naxalite groups.

There is an exclusive Left Wing Extremism (LWE) cell to effectively deal with cases related to terror financing aspects of Naxalite groups.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) reviews the manpower, financial and infrastructure requirements of NIA from time to time.

Recent Amendment

The NIA (Amendment) Bill, 2019 was passed by Parliament amending the original Act of 2008.

The Bill seeks to allow the NIA to investigate the following additional offences:

Human trafficking

Offences related to counterfeit currency or banknotes

Manufacture or sale of prohibited arms

Cyber-terrorism, and

Offences under the Explosive Substances Act, 1908

Jurisdiction of the NIA

The officers of the NIA have the same powers as other police officers in relation to the investigation of such offences, across India.

The officers of the NIA will have the power to investigate scheduled offences committed outside India, subject to international treaties and domestic laws of other countries.

The central government may direct the NIA to investigate such cases as if the offence has been committed in India.

The Special Court in New Delhi will have jurisdiction over these cases.

Special Courts

The Central Government for the trial of Scheduled Offences, constitute one or more Special Courts under Section 11 and 22 of the NIA Act 2008.

Composition: Special Court shall be presided over by a judge to be appointed by the Central Government on the recommendation of the Chief Justice of the High Court.

The Central Government may, if required, appoint an additional judge or additional judges to the Special Court, on the recommendation of the Chief Justice of the High Court.

Jurisdiction of Special Courts:

The Special Courts have all powers of the court of sessions under the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.

Where any question arises as to the jurisdiction of any Special Court, it shall be referred to the Central Government whose decision in the matter shall be final.

The Supreme Court can transfer a case pending before a Special Court to any other Special Court within that State or any other State in some exceptional cases where it is not feasible to conduct a peaceful, fair, impartial and speedy trial.

Similarly, the High Court has the power to transfer a case pending before a Special Court in a State to any other Special Court within that State.

Issues in the Recent Amendments

Under schedule VII of the Constitution, the maintenance of public order and police forces are matters of state list.

However, Criminal law forms part of the concurrent list and national security comes under the domains of union list.

The Central government gets the authority to have the NIA take over the investigation of crimes, which involve allegations of human trafficking, offences under the Explosives Act, and certain offences under the Arms Act. However, not every criminal offence in the above act is a threat to national security and sovereignty and consequently, states have the competence to deal with the same.

The Amendment Bill puts Section 66F of the Information Technology Act into the Schedule listing offences. Section 66F deals with cyber terrorism.

But India does not have a data protection act and there is no definition of cyber terrorism.

The amendment to the NIA Act also gives the agency authority to investigate crimes committed by persons which are against Indian citizens or "affecting the interest of India".

However, the term "affecting the interest of India" is undefined and can be misused by governments to curb freedom of speech and expression.

Further, the laws, under which the NIA has the authority to investigate, themselves do not mention "affecting the interest of India" as an offence.

- How to answer the most common interview

Index of Industrial Production (IIP) is an index which helps us understand the growth of various sectors in the Indian economy such as mining, electricity and manufacturing.

IIP is a short term indicator of industrial growth till the results from Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) and National Accounts Statistics (Eg: GDP) are available. It is available in positive, etc.

The base year of the index is given a value of 100. The current base year for the IIP series in India is 2011-12.

So, if the current IIP reads 180, it means that there has been 80% industrial growth compared to the base year, ie 2011-12.

Who releases IIP?

Index of Industrial Production (IIP) is released by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.

IIP is published monthly, six weeks after the reference month ends.

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India should open its economy in a measured way: Raghuram Rajan

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Ensure three-month loan moratorium is followed, SC tells RBI

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Joe Biden under pressure to address sexual assault charge

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Legendary Indian footballer Chuni Goswami passes away

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NEARBY



T.N. eyes investment from other countries

CHENNAI
 Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami has set up a Special Investment Promotion Task Force (SIPTF) to attract countries likely to shift their supply chains to India in the wake of the pandemic. It will submit its first report in a month.

TAMIL NADU • PAGE 2

Pregnant women to be screened for COVID-19

CHENNAI
 Pregnant women from containment zones will be screened for COVID-19 at hospitals. This comes after samples of a 27-year-old pregnant woman, who died at the Government Kasturba Gandhi Hospital for Women and Children on Monday, tested positive.

TAMIL NADU • PAGE 2

Non-resident Tamils told to register on portal

CHENNAI
 The Tamil Nadu government has requested non-resident Tamils living abroad, who are intending to return (whenever air traffic is restored) to the State in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak, to register on the portal nonresidenttamil.org.

TAMIL NADU • PAGE 2

FRIDAY REVIEW • 4 PAGES

Recovery rate rises to 25%, says govt.

Fatality rate touches 3.2% with 65% male and 35% female patients; average doubling rate stands at 11 days

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
 NEW DELHI

India reported 1,823 new COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of cases to 33,610 on Thursday with 8,373 recoveries. An additional 71 deaths have now taken the total number of fatalities to 1,074.

The deaths since Wednesday include 32 from Maharashtra, 16 from Gujarat, 11 from Madhya Pradesh and three from Uttar Pradesh, the Union Health Ministry said.

According to Ministry data, the highest number of confirmed cases in the country are from Maharashtra at

COVID-19

9,915, followed by Gujarat at 4,082, Delhi at 3,439, Madhya Pradesh at 2,660, Rajasthan at 2,438, Uttar Pradesh at 2,203 and Tamil Nadu at 2,162. The number has gone up to 1,403 in Andhra Pradesh and 1,012 in Telangana.

The country is currently recording a total recovery rate of 25.19% up from 13% about two weeks ago, the Ministry said.

Co-morbidities in 78%

Giving details on the percentage of deaths in various age groups, the Ministry said India has a case fatality rate of 3.2% currently which is 65% male and 35% female. The death rate is less than 14% in

Measuring the spread

The graphs depict the number of days taken by COVID-19 cases, deaths and recoveries in India to progress from one milestone to another. The milestones are spaced out equally to measure the increases in a consistent manner



persons under 45, 34.8% in the 45-60 age group. Co-morbidities were found in 78% of COVID-19 fatalities, Joint Secretary in the Health Ministry Luv Agarwal said at the daily press briefing.

He added that case fatality for those over 60 years is 51.2% which includes 42% for those between 60-75 years. For those above 75 years the rate is 9.2%.

The Ministry added that analysis of doubling rate across the country has revealed that the national average is 11 days presently as

compared to 3.4 days before lockdown.

States/UTs having doubling rate between 11 and 20 days include Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, J&K, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Punjab. Those having doubling rate between 20 days to 40 days are Karnataka, Ladakh, Haryana, Uttarakhand and Kerala.

Assam, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, and Himachal Pradesh have a doubling rate of more than 40 days, as per data released by the Health Ministry.

tor, remain functional and provide critical services so that such patients who need these critical services do not face any difficulty. States are also informed that it is noticed that many hospitals in the private sector are hesitant to provide critical services like dialysis, blood transfusion, chemotherapy and institutional deliveries to their regular patients, which is not acceptable," said Mr. Agarwal.

Post-lockdown steps

Replying to a question on the Ministry's recommendation to end the lockdown, Mr. Agarwal said: "We have to ensure that physical distancing becomes a norm so that the chain of transmission is broken; equally important are containment measures for the disease."

The Ministry reiterated that as of now there is no confirmed treatment protocol for COVID-19 and that Remdesivir is one protocol which is being examined.

"There is no conclusive study to prove its effectiveness and we are waiting for larger evidence to take meaningful action. We have, however, issued a detailed advisory on the use of hydroxychloroquine as prophylaxis 19 and availability of HCQ is being ensured," Mr. Agarwal said.

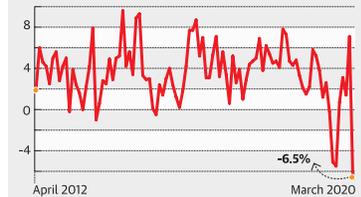
MORE REPORTS ON PAGES 5, 8, 9, 10, 11 & 12

March core sector output slumps 6.5%

Sharper contraction likely in IIP

A new low

The year-on-year growth of the production volume of the eight core industries contracted 6.5% in March 2020, a near eight-year-low



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
 NEW DELHI

Output at India's core sector contracted by 6.5% in March, Commerce Ministry data show, reflecting the early impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent nationwide lockdown.

The index of eight core sector industries, which form 40% of the weight of items included in the broader Index of Industrial Production (IIP), reflected a contraction in key parts of the economy in March, according to the data released on Thursday.

Analysts warned that the core sector data signalled a much sharper contraction in the wider IIP, especially in April, as several core sector industries were actually

exempted from the lockdown.

Steel declines 13%

Leading the contraction at the core industries were a 13% decline in steel output, and a 7% fall in electricity generation. The two sectors account for almost 40% of the index. Cement production crashed 25%, while natural gas production slid 15%, the data showed. Fertiliser production also fell 12%, while crude oil production slipped 5.5%.

Coal was the only core sector which saw some growth, with output up 4%. The largest component of the index — refinery production — also dipped by only 0.5%.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

Ease lockdown in phases, public health experts tell T.N.

State adds 161 fresh cases, Chennai accounts for 138 of them

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
 CHENNAI

The lockdown to check the spread of COVID-19 in Tamil Nadu should not be lifted in one go, but be eased in a phased manner, medical and public health experts suggested to Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Thursday.

The advice came on a day when the State saw its sharpest spike in the number of COVID-19 cases. Tamil Nadu added 161 cases to its tally, with Chennai alone accounting for 138 of them.

"A single decision on the lockdown is not possible," Prabhdeep Kaur of the National Institute of Epidemiology (ICMR) said.

"Our overall lifestyle has to change. The virus will be with us not for a few days but for a long time. When



Workers barricading a street in Cholaimeedu on Thursday. • B. VELANKANNI RAJ

that is so, doing it [precautionary measures] for a day or two is not enough," she explained.

Addressing reporters after the experts' meeting with the Chief Minister, Dr. Kaur said they provided certain indicators to the government from the epidemiological point of view and based

on the health system's preparedness.

"With those indicators, lockdown can be relaxed in some areas or it can be continued in some areas. The government will take a decision," she said.

Indicators finalised

The indicators were finalised based on data and surveillance, and analysing them could help the government in taking a decision, Dr. Kaur said. "But, even if the lockdown is eased, it has to be eased in a phased manner," she cautioned.

During the past two weeks, there had been an increase in testing and hence more COVID-19 cases were being reported, she pointed out.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

NIA arrests ex-Shopian sarpanch

VIJAITA SINGH
 NEW DELHI

A former sarpanch, aligned to the BJP, from Shopian in south Kashmir has been arrested by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in a case registered in January, after a J&K police officer Davinder Singh was caught travelling in a car with a Hizbul Mujahideen militant.

The suspect, Tariq Ahmad Mir, 36, was arrested on Wednesday. An official said his name cropped up during the interrogation of Naveed Mushtaq Shah, the Hizb militant. Shah reportedly told interrogators that Mir was involved in providing weapons to other terrorist groups.

An official said the NIA had raided multiple locations in February and Mir's house was one of them.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

Icon of romance takes a final bow

Rishi Kapoor dies in Mumbai hospital after two-year battle with leukaemia

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
 MUMBAI

One of Indian cinema's leading stars, much loved for his youthful musical romances, Rishi Kapoor, passed away on Thursday after being on ICU support for a week at the Sir H.N. Reliance Foundation Hospital and Research Centre in Mumbai. He died at 8.45 a.m. after a two-year battle with leukaemia.

Kapoor is survived by wife Neetu Kapoor, and children Ranbir Kapoor and Riddhima Kapoor Sahni.

His last rites took place on Thursday afternoon at the Chandanwadi crematorium in Mumbai in the presence of his family, close relatives and friends.

Kapoor, 67, was diagnosed with leukaemia in 2018, following which he had gone to

New York for treatment. He was last seen in Jeethu Joseph's *The Body*.

The second son of legendary actor-director Raj Kapoor, and Krishna Raj Kapoor, Rishi Kapoor showed his acting genes in his debut film *Mera Naam Joker* (1970) for which he won the National Award for the Best Child Artist.

Manmohan Desai's paean to secularism, *Amar Akbar Anthony* (1977), and Subhash Ghai's musical reincarnation thriller *Karz* (1980) were the two landmark films of that phase.

President Ram Nath Kovind mourned his loss in

His first film as a leading man, *Bobby* (1973), was a superhit and established him as a youthful, romantic icon. All through the 1970s and 80s he kept setting the hearts flutter with his musical romances and the trademark dance moves in many a catchy film song.

Manmohan Desai's paean to secularism, *Amar Akbar Anthony* (1977), and Subhash Ghai's musical reincarnation thriller *Karz* (1980) were the two landmark films of that phase.

President Ram Nath Kovind mourned his loss in

a tweet: "Rishi Kapoor's untimely demise is shocking. A huge loss for the entertainment industry."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted: "Multifaceted, endearing and lively...this was Rishi Kapoor Ji. He was a powerhouse of talent. I will always recall our interactions, even on social media. He was passionate about films and India's progress."

"He was the torch-bearer of an illustrious legacy of his family whose contribution to the film industry is unparalleled," said Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray.

The veteran's demise is the second blow to the film industry in succession after actor Irrfan Khan's death on Wednesday.

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Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) Vs Index of Industrial Production (IIP)

The Industrial Output data is captured and monitored, primarily, through two statistical activities – Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) and Index of Industrial Production (IIP).

ASI

ASI is calculated on an annual basis

The ASI is conducted under the Collection of Statistics Act, since 1959.

The objective is to obtain comprehensive and detailed statistics of industrial sector with the objective of estimating the contribution of registered manufacturing industries as a whole to the national income.

ASI data is based on the actual book of accounts and other documents maintained by registered factories.

IIP

IIP is calculated on a monthly basis.

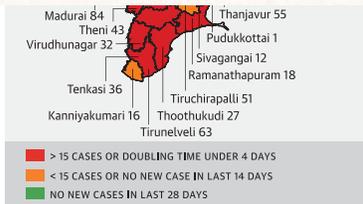
Data for IIP are collected by various source agencies under different Acts/statutes.

The IIP is compiled on the basis of data sourced from 16 ministries/ administrative departments.

caused by COVID-19 has prompted many countries to rethink their existing supply chains, excessively dependent on some countries. Reports indicate that countries like the U.S., South Korea, Japan, Taiwan and Singapore are likely to diversify by establishing supply chains originating in India. Tamil Nadu, which is already a favoured investment destination, is well placed to attract these investments and needs to take proactive steps to attract them," an Industries Department government order said.

The G.O. said that the terms of reference (ToR) of the committee were to identify sectors in which Tamil Nadu could attract investments due to relocation from other countries after COVID-19, and to formulate a special incentive package to attract and facilitate these investments.

Identifying key infrastructure projects, including dedicated industrial townships, that need to be undertaken or expedited to attract in-



vestments; finding measures to fast-track clearances to promote these investments and recommending outreach activities and brand building to position Tamil Nadu as an attractive investment destination were the other ToRs of the committee. Secretaries of Finance, Industries and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Departments; managing director and chief executive officer, Guidance Tamil Nadu; and the Commissioner of Commercial Taxes are among the government authorities on the panel. Two nominees from the

Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO), Korea Trade Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA), Korean Chamber of Commerce and Taiwan External Trade Development Council and two nominees from the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce, US-India Strategic Partnership Forum and U.S.-India Business Council are also part of the panel. One nominee each from Enterprise Singapore, Japanese industrial parks, Japanese companies in Tamil Nadu, U.S. companies in Tamil Nadu and Taiwanese companies in Tamil Nadu too are on the panel.

There were no deaths. As on date, a total of 1,035 persons (active cases) are under treatment in hospitals.

The number of districts that reported fresh cases increased to 11. Apart from Chennai, there were five cases each in Chengalpattu and Madurai, three cases each in Kancheepuram and Ramanathapuram, two in Perambalur, and one each in Ariyalur, Cuddalore, Ranipet, Salem and Tiruvannamalai.

While Chennai's total COVID-19 count soared, cross-

ing the 900-mark, it should be noted that Chengalpattu too has been reporting fresh cases in the last few days. Chennai presently has a total of 906 cases.

Two districts – Ranipet and Ramanathapuram – that moved to the orange zone (districts with less than 15 cases or no new case in the last 14 days) on Wednesday, moved back to the red zone (more than 15 cases or doubling time less than four days) after reporting fresh cases. However, Erode, that

saw a significant number of cases in the beginning, moved from the red to the orange zone, with its present case count being 70. This means that there was no new case in the district in the last 14 days.

COVID-19

According to a bulletin issued by the Directorate of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, detailed investigation is in progress for 34

primary persons. Another 48 persons were discharged after treatment from hospitals in the State. This took the total number of persons discharged in the State to 1,258. In Chennai, 214 persons have been discharged so far. The number of persons discharged from Coimbatore and Tiruppur was 125 and 103, respectively.

More samples were tested with the day's count being 9,787 – an increase of 1,700 from Wednesday. From 7,886 individuals on Wed-

nesday, the number of persons tested increased to 9,643.

Till now, 1,19,748 samples have been sent for COVID-testing. A total of 1,10,718 individuals have been tested so far. As on date, a total of 1,978 persons, suspected to have symptoms of COVID-19, have been admitted to isolation wards.

(*This is inclusive of two deaths cross notified to other states and one patient who died after testing negative for the infection)

Portal for non-resident Tamils who wish to return

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu government has requested non-resident Tamils living, working and studying abroad, intending to return (when ever air traffic is restored) to the State to register on the

nonresidenttamil.org. According to an official release, the registration facility online has been created "for the welfare of Tamils intending to return, their families, to estimate the number of such returnees and to arrange for quarantine facilities".

IAS officer to tackle issues related to stranded persons

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu government has appointed senior Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer Atulya Misra as the nodal officer in the State to regulate issues relating to the movement of people stranded in different

parts of the country during the lockdown.

Pilgrims, tourists, students, migrant workers and others from Tamil Nadu have been stranded in various parts of the country due to the lockdown in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Tangedco buys cheaper power from exchanges

SANJAY VIJAYAKUMAR R. SRIKANTH CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation (Tangedco) has purchased short-term power from the exchanges during the lockdown as prices have fallen below ₹4 per unit.

Between April 1 and 29, the State utility has procured 253.23 million units of power at ₹3.43 per unit from the Indian Energy Exchange and 100.80 million units of power at ₹2.93 per unit from Power Exchange India Ltd.

"As you can notice from the figures, we are purchasing around 5% of our electricity from the exchange, and that too at a cost cheaper than this own generation cost. This is one reason why we are keeping most of our own power plants on reserve shut during this time of low demand due to the lockdown. This has incidentally helped us build our coal stock to over 20 days of full generation," a senior Tangedco official said.

Tangedco's own generating cost is around ₹4.50 to ₹6 per unit.

According to the Indian Energy Exchange, the peak power demand across the country has declined by 25%. The State's requirement for energy during the lockdown has been around 10,000 mega watt (MW).

Contact tracing in Chennai proves tough

Given its high count and population density, more efforts are needed

SERENA JOSEPHINE M. CHENNAI

The city's COVID-19 case count has been increasing day after day. This is partly due to its population density – a factor that has made the already challenging task of contact tracing all the more difficult.

Tracing contacts of patients was taking more time in Chennai than in other districts of Tamil Nadu, a health official said. Carrying out the exercise in the State capital was arduous, he added.

"For instance, we are given the address of a person. On reaching the place, we come to know that he does not live there. We then find out that he resides just behind that particular house," he explained.

As expected, the number of contacts of each patient was relatively higher in Chennai due to urban density, another official said. "Some persons provide incomplete addresses and wrong mobile numbers. This



The Chennai airport wears a deserted look with the lockdown halting domestic and international flights. *B. VELAKANNI RAJ

causes delay in the process. It is their responsibility to provide a complete address with the right phone number," he added.

In fact, the metropolitan city has another problem – many residents do not know their neighbours. "There are people who do not know the names of their neighbours. Such details are important for epidemiological investigation," the official said. An official of the Chennai

Corporation said that extensive efforts were being made in terms of contact tracing in the city. The exercise covered both close contacts, i.e., family members, and extended contacts. "Finding the extended contacts is more like an art," he said. "It is a harder task here. There are places where the population is densely packed. There are narrow streets, or buildings that have 10 families, or sum

areas where people are tightly packed. Narrowly defining extended contacts might be meaningless. So we comb the entire area," he said.

Not an easy task For instance, in the north region of Chennai Corporation, there were 111 index cases, for which a total of 3,081 contacts – 640 direct contacts and 2,441 extended contacts – were traced and tested. "For every positive case, we have 30 more persons who are traced and tested," an official said. By and large, people are cooperating, said officials. "But human memory is fallible. The real challenge is that we come to know that somebody is infected only when they test positive, but they may have been infected 15 days ago," the official said. "Field-level health inspectors make discrete enquiries, and enable patients to recall from memory the places they visited and the persons they met," the official added.

Hospitals to screen pregnant women from containment zones

A woman who died in Chennai on Wednesday tested positive

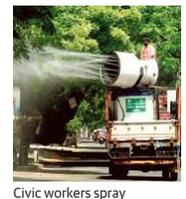
SERENA JOSEPHINE M. CHENNAI

Pregnant women from containment zones will be screened for COVID-19 at hospitals. This comes after samples of a 27-year-old pregnant woman, a resident of Chintadripet who died at the Government Kasturba Gandhi Hospital (KGH) for Women and Children on Monday, returned positive for COVID-19 on Wednesday.

Health Department officials said 59 persons – five doctors, 21 postgraduate students, 17 interns, eight staff nurses and eight workers and security personnel – of KGH had been quarantined for coming in contact with the woman. Nasal and throat swabs were lifted from all of them.

A few patients and family members of the woman were also being screened.

The woman, who was 36 weeks pregnant, was admitted



Civic workers spray disinfectant in Anna Nagar. *R. RAVINDRAN

and the operation theatre were being disinfected.

Adequate protection "First of all, we have told all doctors to fully protect themselves when attending to pregnant women, especially those coming from containment zones. When they come to the hospital in labour pain, we cannot immediately test them. So we have asked doctors and staff to protect themselves and attend to the expectant mothers. They will be screened simultaneously. We will look at those with symptoms and their susceptibility," he said. Official sources said pregnant women, known to be in the high-risk category, were being referred to the Institute of Obstetrics and Gynaecology and Hospital for Women and Children, Egmore, and the Government Kilpauk Medical College Hospital.

ated with complaints of watery discharge. She had no diabetes or hypertension and fell in the low-risk category. However, she developed fits and collapsed suddenly. Doctors and staff in the ward tried to revive her and performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation. But she collapsed and died. The baby also died, said official sources.

An official of the Health Department said the ward

FROM PAGE ONE

'Ease lockdown in phases'

Even after the lockdown is lifted in some areas, measures such as physical distancing, hand hygiene and wearing masks in public places would have to be continued.

Dr. Kaur said vulnerable groups have to be protected. "Young people should not interact much with elderly people. It [interaction] should be in control to some extent," she said. Other vulnerable people such as those with cancer, kidney ailments and diabetes would have to take their treatment so that the risk was reduced.

Under the prevailing situation, certain relaxations could not be granted. The preparedness of health systems had to be enhanced; efforts on surveillance and contact tracing, among others must continue.

Essentials held up at port being released

Huge quantities of edible oil and pulses are being moved out for sale

T. RAMAKRISHNAN CHENNAI

Around 51,000 tonnes of edible oil and 30,000 tonnes of pulses, which was held up at the Chennai Port due to the COVID-19 lockdown, are being released in a phased manner for sale in Tamil Nadu and other southern States, according to members of the State government's committee in charge of essential commodities.

Following the imposition of the lockdown in March, the two commodities, procured by private traders from domestic and international suppliers, could not be moved out of the port for a variety of reasons, such as the need for clearances from Customs and plant quarantine authorities and the non-availability of lorry drivers.

The traders sought the State government's help, and subsequently, the committee held meetings with



Paintings adorn the walls of Tambaram railway station, honouring front line staff battling COVID-19. *B. VELAKANNI RAJ

officials concerned and others to pave the way for the release of the commodities.

Pointing out that huge quantities of black gram (urad dal) had come in from Myanmar and other southeast Asian countries, the members of the panel said that swift action was required, as otherwise, there may have been a shortage of pulses.

On an average, Tamil Na-

du has been receiving 40-60 truckloads of pulses – essentially red gram (toor dal) – from various States, every day.

Likewise, when two private companies – Aachi Masala Foods and Sakthi Masala – which manufacture powdered spices, drew the government's attention to problems they were facing in getting raw materials from States like Gujarat, Rajasthan

and Maharashtra, the committee got the issue resolved after taking it up with officials in charge of departments and agencies concerned in the respective States and the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.

Monitoring availability

A group of officers – Dayanand Kataria, Additional Chief Secretary (Co-operation, Food and Consumer Protection), Gagandeep Singh Bedi, Principal Secretary (Agriculture) and P. Thamarai Kannan, Additional Director-General of Police (Welfare) – has been entrusted with the task of monitoring the availability of essential commodities, both in the government system and the open market.

It has been holding regular meetings with a wide range of stakeholders in the supply chain.

Is this the peak for Chennai or can another be expected?

Experts feel a post-lockdown spike cannot be ruled out

RAMYA KANNAN CHENNAI

Is this the peak of the infection for Chennai? It may well be the peak during the ongoing lockdown, say experts.

Some public health experts feel that another can be expected post the lockdown, before the pandemic flattens in the State.

It is possible that increased testing is the single biggest reason for the large number of cases that Chennai throws up daily. And, yet, experts say, the city is a hotspot also because a common sense approach, community responsibility and participation in public health efforts is lacking.

"Urban pockets continue to be a huge problem across the world. Continuous living spaces and urban sprawls make things difficult from a

public health point of view. Also we cannot deny that there is poor compliance in Chennai," says a public health official.

While the government claims the State does not yet conform to the definition of 'community transmission', the numbers are growing and this is a source of concern.

With the Corporation Commissioner commanding schools for the COVID-19 effort, it is clear that the city is preparing for a possible explosion of cases. These schools will function as COVID-19 care centres, allowing non-symptomatic patients to be isolated, or double up as quarantining centres for vulnerable populations.

V. Ramasubramanian, who was on the expert com-

mittee panel that made recommendations to the government, says: "This is a good move, because I don't think putting an asymptomatic person in a hospital is a great idea. This will be a sort of second tier of care for people who cannot maintain isolation at home."

"The NIE has told us that the numbers will tend to go up, but to remain focused on collection of data, identifying, testing and contact tracing," says Health Minister C. Vijayabaskar, adding, "the positivity rate for the tests we are doing is rather low. We are doing nearly 10,000 cases now. Our recovery rate is good, and fatality rate is really low. The government's focus will be testing, treating, and keeping the vulnerable populations safe, as of now."

Timings
CHENNAI

FRIDAY, MAY 01
RISE 05:49 SET 18:24
RISE 12:35 SET 00:46

SATURDAY, MAY 02
RISE 05:48 SET 18:24
RISE 13:34 SET 01:37

SUNDAY, MAY 03
RISE 05:48 SET 18:25
RISE 14:31 SET 02:26

Chennai Weather max min

Thiruvallur	36	24
Chennai Airport	37	27
Chennai City	35	29

Chennai Airport Today
36°C Dry and warm weather with partly cloudy to prevail during the day. Night will be pleasant.

Chennai Airport Tomorrow
36°C Dry and warm weather with partly cloudy expected during the day. Night will be pleasant.

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IN BRIEF

MTC nurses retiring staff by visiting homes
CHENNAI
For the second month running, the Metropolitan Transport Corporation honoured retiring employees by visiting their homes. A total of 69 staff of the MTC retired on Thursday. Retirement benefit cheques, work appreciation certificates and sweet packets were distributed to them, MTC said in a press release.

Daughter murders father near Chengalpattu
CHENNAI
A 22-year-old woman stabbed her father to death with a knife after an argument in their house in Vadappattinam village near Chengalpattu on Tuesday. Her father Sekar, returned home and had a dispute with his wife. The daughter, who was cutting vegetables, tried to intervene and in the course of the argument, stabbed him, police said.

ICSI postpones exams from June to July
CHENNAI
The Institute of Company Secretaries of India has decided to postpone its examinations of Foundation, Executive and Professional Programme and Post Membership Qualification, amid the lockdown. The exams were to be held from June 1 to June 10, 2020. The examinations will take place from July 6 and a revised schedule will be announced.

HC to continue hearing cases over video link
CHENNAI
The Madras High Court has decided to postpone the summer vacation due in May and continue to hear cases through video conferencing until the threat of COVID-19 subsides. The decision was taken in a Full Court meeting held on Thursday. It was decided that more judges would be assigned to hear cases remotely in May.

THE HINDU
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Three policemen test positive

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI
Three policemen have been admitted to government hospitals after initial tests showed them infected with COVID-19, said police sources.
They were on duty to enforce prohibitory orders. One of them is a 55-year-old sub-in-

Shoppers ignore government's advisory, throng markets

Police had to enforce physical distancing

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

Thousands thronged shops, supermarkets and vegetable markets in the city on Thursday despite the government's appeal to avoid crowding.

Since morning, Villivakkam market saw a steady stream of shoppers. The police had to intervene and regulate the crowd by giving instructions on the public address system, reminding everyone to maintain physical distance while waiting in the queue. A police officer said: "From 6 a.m. onwards, we have been advising people to wear masks and maintain personal distance in the market."

Despite prohibitory orders being in force, many four-wheelers and two-wheelers were found on the roads in Anna Nagar and Thirumangalam areas. Huge



Dangerous proximity: People shopping at Nammalwarpet along the Konnur High Road on Thursday. • B. JOTHIRAMALINGAM

crowds gathered to buy vegetables at Nammalwarpet market.

In Thiruvanniyur market, vegetable market has been partly shifted to a place near the temple tank. A senior police officer said: "Over 25 police personnel have been on duty since 6 a.m. Three inspectors, five sub-inspec-

tors, 15 constables and home guards were regulating the crowd and advising people to maintain personal distance."

Commissioner of Police A.K. Viswanathan has appealed to the public not to do panic buying on Thursday and not rush to buy essential commodities from

neighbourhood shops. In a video message, Mr. Viswanathan said to help people purchase goods, shops will be open from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Thursday alone. "It is not necessary for everyone to purchase whatever they need tomorrow itself. Shops will be open till 1 p.m. from Friday," he added.

Retail traders flock to Koyambedu

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

After four days of total lockdown, the Koyambedu wholesale market saw a large number of traders from the city's outskirts and neighbouring districts thronging it from early Thursday morning.

While entry was restricted for residents, the Koyambedu market saw nearly 30,000-40,000 retail traders from various places, including Ranipet, Arakonam, Gummidipoondi, Tindivanam and even Nellore, visiting on Thursday to make bulk purchases.

Nearly 450 shops of wholesale vegetables, foodgrains and fruits market were open since 2 a.m. Though police personnel were posted, only 50-60% of the shops followed physical distancing norms.

According to wholesale traders, many people jostled for space to buy onions and



People at the Koyambedu market on Thursday. • R. RAVINDRAN

potatoes. Only 180 truckloads of vegetables, which was half the usual daily load, arrived at the market, noted merchants.

P. Sukumar, a wholesale trader, said the prices of vegetables escalated by 10-15% due to the mismatch between demand and availability.

"We did not receive green peas. Beans, broad beans and carrots were costly. Most of the stocks were sold by 7 a.m.," he said.

While about 200 vegeta-

ble shops were open, fruit merchants sold the previous day's stock as they had decided to halt sales till the end of lockdown period.

M. Thyagarajan, president, Koyambedu Vegetables, Fruits and Flowers Merchants Association, said retail traders must be allowed to sell vegetables in places around the market and instructed to follow physical distancing norms. Moreover, action must be taken if retail trading takes place inside the market.

Corporation to turn city schools into quarantine facilities

Civic body's order applies to govt. and private institutions

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

With over 100 persons testing positive for COVID-19 on a daily basis, the Greater Chennai Corporation, on Thursday, decided to take over government and private schools in the city to create more quarantine facilities.

As more than 98% of 906 residents who have tested positive for COVID-19 in the city have been asymptomatic, the Corporation is not taking any chances. It directed that schools be handed over by May 2. Already, the Corporation has created quarantine spaces to isolate and treat about 10,000 persons in places like Anna University, IIT-Madras and Chennai Trade Centre and the addition of schools would enhance quarantine capacity in the city.

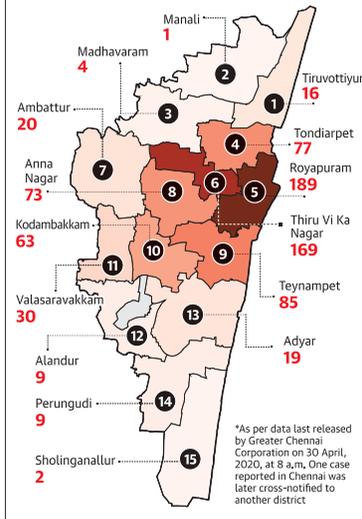
Earlier in the day, Corporation Commissioner G. Prakash said from line staff who tested positive for COVID-19 will be replaced. "We have devised a mechanism to replace front line staff once they test positive for COVID-19," he said.

The Corporation has requested residents and conservancy workers to dispose of masks in a safe manner.

"Waste management of materials remains a challenge in the city, increasing the risk of COVID-19," he said. Front line staff have been directed to stop disposal of masks and gloves in common bins across the city

A rising trend

Royapuram and Thiru Vi Ka Nagar remain the zones with the maximum cases, contributing to nearly 50% of the cases in the city



as the Corporation made arrangements for safe disposal of waste generated by civic workers, Mr. Prakash added.

Ripon Buildings cases

Two employees at Ripon Buildings, the Corporation headquarters, tested positive for COVID-19 this week. Civic officials said all employees working at the headquarters will be tested this week.

The workers in Ezhilgam, another government

building, would also be tested.

Mr. Prakash said the recent price rise would be discussed with the Labour Department to take action against traders demanding higher prices. He urged people to report commercial establishments charging exorbitant prices.

The Corporation has permitted 4,900 push carts for selling vegetables and 1,182 mini trucks for essential commodities, he added.

Police deploy 'robocop' in containment area

Device has a camera for surveillance and a two-way communication system

R. SIVARAMAN CHENNAI

The city police has introduced a robot cop with multiple functions to handle residents who live in containment areas.

It can be controlled using a remote control and has a mounted camera for surveillance. The machine called Robot Cop LD v5.0 was deployed in Meenambal Puram Street, a containment area in Mylapore. It is a congested area with over 11 COVID-19 cases, police said.

The robot cop has a two-way intercom for direct pu-



The Robot Cop LD v5.0 being deployed in Meenambal Puram Street in Mylapore. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

blic announcements and to listen to any communication from the public.

A LED display is mounted

on it to display messages.

Joint Commissioner of Police, East, R. Sudhakar, said, "In containment zones, we

can't enter and visit interior areas. Our personnel had to stand outside barricaded areas. The drones were used to make announcements."

The robot was specially built for the lockdown in four days jointly by the police, Robothoughts, SCI FI Innovation, and Callidai Motorworks.

It has special features such as steering control for precise mobility, LED display for push messages, two-way intercom for direct public announcements and wireless connectivity range for about a kilometre.

Fishing ban dole distribution begins

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI
The Fisheries Department has begun depositing ₹5,000 into bank accounts of 1.75 lakh fishers in the State as dole for the fishing ban period.

Fisheries Minister D. Jayakumar said a total of ₹83.55 crore has been allocated for the scheme.

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I, ANN Diana Ruth D/o. Rajkumar Samuvil (Chennai) presently residing at 15, Jyoti Nagar, Gudio Road, Hubballi-580020 have changed my name after marriage as Diana Swaminathan W/o. Nirmal Swaminathan sworn before Sri S.F. Huligol, Notary (Govt of India), Hubballi (Karnataka) on 03.03.2020.

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(An Autonomous Institute under Ministry of Health & Family Welfare Government of India)
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ADVT. NO. 11/41/2020/ADMINIA/MS/SP/ DATE: 01/05/2020

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What is GI status?

GI status is an indication that identifies goods as produced from a particular area, which has special quality or reputation attributable to its geographical origin.

GI-branded goods possess a recall value amongst consumers who essentially attribute these characteristics, qualities or reputation to such geographical origin.

Importance of GI Tag:

GI tag helps the producers to differentiate their products from competing products in the market.

It enables the producers to build a reputation and goodwill around their products, which often fetch a premium price.

The products help in export earning, promotion of tourism, cultural heritage and national identity.

For example Kanjeevaram silk sarees and Pochampally Ikat contribute to exports and popularity.

GIs have great potential to play a major role in trade between countries.

Legal protection to GIs protect livelihoods and encourage employment

Owing to the premium prices that many GIs command today, there is a possibility of preserving many traditional skills.

Benefit to the rural economy by improving the incomes of farmers or nonfarmers.

GI allows genuine producers to capture the market and creates entry barriers for fakes.

Key Facts:

Under Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property, GIs are covered as an element of IPRs.

GI is governed by WTO's Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).

In India, GI tag is governed by Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection Act), 1999.

This Act is administered by Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trade Marks, who is also Registrar of Geographical Indications.

GI Tags products (2019):

14 products that got a GI tag this year:

Odisha – Kandhamal Haldi

Himachal Pradesh – Kala Zeera

Chhattisgarh – Jeeraphool Rice

Karnataka – Coorg Arabica Coffee

Andhra Pradesh – Araku Valley Arabica

Kerala – Wayanad Robusta Coffee

Karnataka- Sirsi Supari

Challenges:

Min. Status on May 5 and people are min. Status and people have to know.

Donations pour into CMPRF

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

Thiagarajar Mills chairman Karumuttu T. Kannan donated ₹1 crore to the Chief Minister's Public Relief Fund (CMPRF) for supporting COVID-19 relief measures.

He presented a cheque to Madurai Collector T.G. Vinay on Thursday.

The Tamil Nadu Dr. Ambedkar Law University donated about ₹3.02 lakh as contribution from its employees (one day salary in April) and students. In March, its staff members had contributed their one-day salary totalling

about ₹1.81 lakh, it said in a statement. Chennai-based Shree Agarwal Samaj said it had donated ₹32 lakh. The samaj said it had distributed 12,000 rice and grocery kits worth about ₹72 lakh through the district administrations, volunteers and through various charitable trusts and NGOs to stranded and underprivileged families. The kits are distributed in the areas like Chennai Red Hills, Tondiarpet, Vyasaripadi, Ambattur, Ponneri, Avadi, Madhavaram, Tiruttani, remote villages of Chengalpattu district and Tiruvallur district, it added.

App linking ryots, traders finds takers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

The Agriculture Department has launched a free app - Uzhavan e market - to create a direct link between farmers and traders. "Farmers can register their produce through this app and the traders can approach them," said G. Ganesh Kumar, Agricultural Production Commissioner and Principal Secretary to Government.

He said the objective was to find a market for perishable commodities and there was a huge response from the day one itself.

Narmada Water Resources Water Supply & Kalpsar Department (GoG)

Tender Notice no. 1 of 2020-21
Online Tenders (E-tendering) of PMC work for Construction of Bhabhut Barrage Project (EPC) as per RFP System are publicly invited by the office of Superintending Engineer, Gulf of Khambhat Development Project (WR), Project Implementation Unit-2, Vadodara (Phone No. 0265-2323871, 2323872) from the Registered Consultancy Services firms. The last date for online downloading and online submission of tender document is 08/06/2020. The details of above notice will be available on web site www.nprocure.com and www.statelenders.com.
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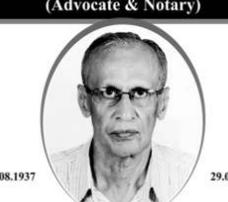
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OPEN TENDER Batch No: 27/20 dated: 29.04.2020, E-Tender Notice for supply of materials-participation in through web portal of IREPS - www.ireps.gov.in offers are invited for supply of the following materials: The closing time for all tenders is at 14.00 hr. **Sl.No. 01 Tender No. 03192962** Brief Description: Reverser switch 1500 Amp **Quantity:** 14. **Other details regarding Consignee and detailed description of stores are available in tender document in tender notice on the above portal.**
Principal Chief Material Manager PR102/HQ/STORE/T20-21/48

राज्य स्वास्थ्य समिति, बिहार आवश्यक सूचना

राज्य स्वास्थ्य समिति, बिहार के विज्ञापन संख्या 04/2020 (पी०आर० नं० 17813/2019-20) द्वारा विज्ञापित Sr. Lab Technician (RNTCP), Clinical Psychologist (NMHP) एवं Psychiatric Social Worker (NMHP) के रिक्त पदों के विरुद्ध दिनांक 09.04.2020 तक आवेदन आमंत्रित किये गये थे। सूचना एवं जनसंपर्क विभाग के विज्ञापन संख्या पी०आर० नं० 00027/2020-21 के माध्यम से उक्त पदों हेतु ऑनलाईन आवेदन प्रार्थि की तिथि दिनांक 30.04.2020 तक बढ़ायी गयी थी। अपरिहार्य कारणवश Clinical Psychologist (NMHP) एवं Psychiatric Social Worker (NMHP) के रिक्त पदों के विरुद्ध ऑनलाईन आवेदन प्रार्थि की तिथि को पुनः दिनांक 15/05/2020 तक बढ़ायी जाती है।

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Dr. C.B. BASKARAN (Age:82)
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Tamilnadu Medical Service, Hony. Civil Surgeon (Retd.) Regional Institute & Govt. Ophthalmic Hospital, Egmore. Senior Ophthalmologist, C.S.I. Kalyani Multiphasic Hospital, Mysore.
Former Asst. Medical Officer - Madras Medical Service.
PRESIDENT
Indian Medical Association (I.M.A) Tamilnadu State 1987-1988
Tamilnadu Medical Council 1989-1992
Tamilnadu Ophthalmic Association 2001-2002
MEMBER
Govt. Ophthalmic Hospital, Egmore - Advisory Committee, First Elected Senate - Dr.M.G.R. Medical University, Medical Council of India, New Delhi 1984-1986, Indian Nursing Council, New Delhi 1987-1997, Tamilnadu Medical Council 1987-2002, Tamilnadu Nursing Council 1988-2002
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TRIPLICANE Co-Operative Bank, Chs
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DEATH
OBITUARY
Mr. AMIRTHARAJ MOUITTOU
(Advocate & Notary)

10.08.1937 29.04.2020
passed away on April 29th 2020 at 7 pm at his residence 38, Labourdonnais Street, Pondicherry-1
Funeral: Yesterday April 30th, 2020
Deeply mourned by:
Wife: Mrs. DANIELLE MOUITTOU
Son: AMANTH MOUITTOU & SOMA
SABINA & GERARD,
Daughters: PRIVA & GILLES,
NEESHA & JEROME
Grand Children: Anish, Tanya, Diya, Rhea
Ph: 98406 76669 / 92821 06365

P.V. SADANAND (91 yrs)
Ex. DGM, UCO Bank, Kolkata
Passed away on 28th April 2020
He is Survived by
Wife: JAYA SADANAND
Children: Rajiv, Ranjeeth & Rekha
Family resides at
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3rd Main Road, Besant Nagar,
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DOB 27-03-1923 DOB 05-07-1935
DOD 25-08-2008 DOD 16-10-2008
Fondly Remembered by Family, Friends & Relatives

The special treatment to wines and spirits in TRIPS Agreement appears to be developed country centric. Developing countries, including India, seek the same higher level of protection for all GIs as was given under TRIPS for wines and spirits.

The battle for GI tag between states.

False use of geographical indications by unauthorized parties is detrimental to consumers and legitimate producers.

Cheap Power loom saris are sold as reputed Banarsi handloom saris, harming both the producers and consumers.

Such unfair business practices result in loss of revenue for the genuine right-holders of the GI and also misleads consumers.

Protection of GI has, over the years, emerged as one of the most contentious IPR issues.

Way Forward:

The benefits of GI tag is realised only when these products are effectively marketed and protected against illegal copying.

Effective marketing and protection requires quality assurance, brand creation, post-sale consumer feedback and support, prosecuting unauthorised copiers, etc.

For internationally recognised products like Darjeeling tea, international protection is of crucial importance

Legal protection to GIs also extends to protection of traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expression contained in the products.

Hence Intellectual Property is a power tool for economic development and wealth creation particularly in the developing world.

GIs have the potential to be our growth engine. Policy-makers must pay a heed to this and give Indian GI products their true reward.

check post in Adilabad district of Telangana; and another group sleeping on the footpath near the Fishing Harbour in Visakhapatnam on Thursday. *K.R. DEEPAK & S. HARIPAL SINGH

Ordinance on salary gets Governor's nod

HC had stayed decision to defer 6 days' salary of Kerala govt. employees

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM
Governor Arif Mohammed Khan has cleared the draft Ordinance forwarded by the government for deferring six days' salary of government employees and teachers for five months, in the wake of the crisis triggered by COVID-19.

The Ordinance was issued after the High Court stayed the government's salary de-

ferment decision for two months on the premise that it lacked legal sanction. The Ordinance gives the government legal sanction to deduct the salary.

Finance Minister T.M. Thomas Isaac said here on Thursday that the impediment to deducting the salary had now been cleared and the disbursal will commence on May 4. The government was not on a collision course

with the employees and teachers, but was forced to take the decision in the wake of the grave crisis.

The deferred salary would be retained in a separate account and used only for virus containment efforts and not routed to the Chief Minister's Distress Relief Fund, he said.

Delimitation
Another Ordinance to

amend the Kerala Panchayati Raj Act and the Kerala Municipalities Act seeks to relinquish the delimitation of wards before the local body elections in October.

Earlier, the government had amended the Acts to add one more ward each to the rural and urban local bodies. The Ordinance will empower the government to conduct elections on the basis of the existing wards.

tion on Thursday, provided a profile of its COVID-19 cases. About 75% of cases showed no symptoms associated with the disease and only 25% were symptomatic, the State's Department of Health, Medical and Family Welfare said. The Department revealed the details till April 29 on Twitter.

Among asymptomatic patients, 44% were in the 20 to 39-year age group while 29% were between 40 and 59 years old. The rest were below 20 years of age and above 60 years, who were considered vulnerable.

Among the symptomatic patients, 81% were 20 to 59 years old, while 19% were 0 to 19 years old, and others more than 60 years.

The State tally touched

East Godavari and Nellore districts. Kurnool had reported 386 positive cases in all, while Guntur and Krishna reported 287 and 246 cases respectively.

In Telangana, a cluster of cases was observed as the virus spread from two people who work in Malakpet Gunj, Pahadishareef to three shop owners and their family. Of the 1,038 cases reported till April 30, 568 were active cases, 442 had been discharged and 28 had died. From April 27 to 29, single digit cases were reported.

Kerala has two cases
Two persons tested positive for COVID-19 on Thursday in Malappuram and Kasaragod districts in Kerala. One person had returned from Mah-

list. Of the 497 COVID-19 cases reported so far, 111 were undergoing treatment in hospitals. A total of 383 persons had recovered.

Kannur currently had the maximum number of COVID-19 patients, at 47. Kottayam had 18 patients, Idukki 14, Kollam 12, Kasaragod 9, Kozhikode 4, Thiruvananthapuram 2, Malappuram 2 and Pathanamthitta, Ernakulam and Palakkad districts one patient each.

Mr. Vijayan said that of the 1,508 samples collected and tested from among priority groups in the community as part of the sentinel survey, 897 were negative. The Health Department had collected 3,128 samples from select groups in the communi-

30 cases in Karnataka
Karnataka had 30 new cases on Thursday, taking the total to 565. While the condition of 305 people was stable, nine were in the ICU.

Of the new cases, Belagavi reported 14 and Bengaluru Urban 10. In Belagavi, 11 were secondary contacts and three, primary contacts. Two cases were detected in Vijayapura, and one each in Dakshina Kannada, Tumakuru, Davanagere and Kalaburgi.

The Health and Family Welfare Department said, of the ten cases in Bengaluru Urban, nine were from Padarayanaपुरa and one had severe acute respiratory illness. (With inputs from Hyderabad, Thiruvananthapuram & Bengaluru Bureaus)

IN BRIEF



Minor fire at Satish Dhawan Space Centre
TIRUPATI
A minor fire was reported at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota, located 100-km from here. Though the incident happened on Wednesday, it came to light only on Thursday. The accident took place at the Solid Propellant Plant, in which two panels were reportedly gutted. The staff manning the plant immediately doused the fire, though the cause and source of the accident were not immediately known.

9 held for stealing liquor from distillery in A.P.
CHITTOOR
The Chittoor police on Thursday nabbed nine youth in connection with the theft of 110 liquor cases of various brands from a local distillery here over one month during the COVID-19 lockdown, when the factory remained closed. The management of the distillery noticed that the liquor cases were stolen between March 31 and April 25. A five-member gang who sneaked into the factory on Thursday was nabbed by the police. After questioning, four more were arrested.

Karnataka hikes PG medical and dental fees
BENGALURU
The Karnataka government has hiked the postgraduate medical and dental fees for the 2020-2021 academic year at a time when colleges and schools have been instructed not to increase tuition fees. According to an order issued by the Medical Education Department, PG medical and dental fees for institutional quota has been hiked by 30% in private medical and dental colleges. The hike in both medical and dental streams will be 20% for government quota seats in private colleges.

Industries outside containment zones to open in Karnataka

Public transport will continue to remain off the road

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU
The Karnataka Cabinet on Thursday decided to grant permission to industries across the State, except those in COVID-19 containment zones, to resume production from May 4. The Centre's scheduled lockdown ends on Sunday.

This means industrial activities are expected to resume in industrial estates, industrial parks and SEZs in Bengaluru and other major cities from Monday. Only industries that are located in containment zones in urban areas are not allowed to function from Monday.

Public transport, however, will continue to stay off the road for the time being.

Chief Minister B.S. Yeddyurappa cautioned that the COVID-19 crisis may last another two to three months. "But we feel that



Workers undergoing medical test before they leave for their home town, in Bengaluru on Thursday. ©BHAGYA PRAKASHK

the cases are reducing and coming under control in the State. In Bengaluru, not many cases have been reported in the last three to four days. If this continues, it will help us to open industries in and around Bengaluru," he told presspersons after chairing a Cabinet meeting.

A couple of days ago, the government permitted industries in rural areas of 14 districts to start production. Thursday's Cabinet meeting permitted all types of industries in rural and urban areas, except those in containment zones, to begin production from Monday.

Bengaluru police to release 35,000 vehicles

Subject to prosecution outcome: HC

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU
In a temporary relief to owners of around 35,000 motor vehicles seized for violation of the lockdown norms in Bengaluru, the High Court of Karnataka on Thursday permitted the city police to release them after collecting a tentative fine.

However, the court made it clear that the release of the vehicles was subject to the final outcome of the prosecution launched against the owners under the provisions of the IPC and the Disaster Management Act, 2005 before the jurisdictional magistrate.

While the owners of four-wheelers will have to pay a tentative fine of ₹1,000, the owners of two- and three-wheelers will have to pay ₹500, apart from executing a bond as required under Section 102(3) of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

The police will also have to impose a condition that the owners will not violate the conditions again, the court said.

A Division Bench comprising Chief Justice Abhay Shreenivas Oka and Justice Savanur Vishwajith Shetty passed the interim order on an application filed by the State government.

The government had sought authorisation for the police to release the seized vehicles by adhering to procedures of the CrPC and the Motor Vehicles Act, instead of following the normal procedure of the owners having to seek permission from the jurisdictional magistrate.

It was also pointed out in the application that sticking to the normal procedure would result in crowding of the magistrate's court and defeat the purpose of social distancing.

Plan to bring back Keralites in other States by road

Government presses for special trains for migrant labourers

S. ANIL RADHAKRISHNAN
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM
Amidst putting pressure on the Centre for operating special non-stop trains to facilitate the return of 3.6 lakh-odd migrant labourers held up in the State following the lockdown, the government is busy chalking out plans to bring back Keralites stranded in various States by road.

The Transport Department had taken the lead in the consultations with the Home Ministry issuing norms for inter-State movement to allow the stranded to return home by road.

The transportation of 3.6

lakh migrant labourers using the KSRTC fleet to West Bengal, Odisha, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Assam and other States is not feasible in the present condition, official sources told *The Hindu*.

Only non-AC buses can be used and only 22 can travel in a 50-seater bus as only one commuter can be accommodated in two seats. Moreover, per km running cost will come to ₹25, excluding salary. Each will have to shelve out over ₹4,000 minimum as the bus fare.

The other hurdles are the four days' journey, COVID-19 hotspots, medical care, new



Police asking migrant workers to maintain distance while waiting to receive food in Ernakulam. ©THULASI KAKKAT

terrain for drivers, scattered migrant population and buses returning empty after dropping the commuters.

Taking these factors into account, the sources said special trains were the best option for the migrant la-

bourers. However, Railway sources said no decision had been taken on the request of the State. Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, and Maharashtra have also demanded special trains.

Adequate physical distancing norms will have to be followed in trains and only 40 can travel in a sleeper class coach of 72. Each non-AC train will be able to carry 1,000 people per trip.

Transport dept. plan
In the case of bringing stranded Keralites home, the government is moving ahead with the Transport Department's proposal to facilitate entry only through inter-State checkpoints at Amaravali, Aryankavu, Kumily, Walayar, Muthanga and Manjerwaram. Instead of using the KSRTC fleet for bringing the stranded, the government is considering non-AC private contract carriages to operate the services.

WEATHER WATCH



Forecast for Friday: Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning, hail and gusty winds very likely at isolated places over Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh; with lightning and gusty winds at isolated places over Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Goa, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala and with lightning at isolated places over West Bengal, Telangana and Tamil Nadu.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	5.4	31.6	22.2	Kozhikode	...	36.6	26.4
Ahmedabad	...	43.6	29.2	Kurnool	...	42.1	28.4
Aizawl	...	24.6	17.1	Lucknow	...	35.7	23.4
Allahabad	...	38.0	24.4	Madurai	...	38.2	26.6
Bengaluru	...	32.8	21.0	Mangaluru	...	36.8	26.8
Bhopal	...	39.3	25.8	Mumbai	...	35.9	29.0
Bhubaneswar	24.4	36.7	20.7	Mysuru	...	35.4	22.6
Chandigarh	...	33.8	24.7	New Delhi	...	38.6	25.2
Chennai	...	35.5	28.7	Patna	...	34.2	24.2
Coimbatore	...	33.7	23.4	Port Blair	0.6	33.0	25.8
Dehradun	6.3	31.8	20.2	Puducherry	...	36.0	27.4
Gangtok	5.6	18.4	12.4	Pune	...	39.9	24.4
Goa	...	35.2	27.4	Rajpur	...	38.0	22.8
Guwahati	...	33.8	20.0	Ranchi	4.2	32.6	18.0
Hubballi	...	36.0	23.0	Shillong	...	19.6	...
Hyderabad	...	39.8	27.6	Shimla	...	20.6	13.0
Imphal	16.8	26.0	17.9	Srinagar	...	27.3	13.8
Jalpur	4.8	39.0	24.8	Thiruvananthapuram	...	34.4	26.4
Kochi	...	33.4	26.6	Tiruchi	...	36.7	26.8
Kohima	3.8	24.2	11.2	Vijayawada	...	...	...
Kolkata	...	33.9	25.3	Visakhapatnam	...	33.5	26.6

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

CITIES	SO ₂	NO ₂	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE	Yesterday
Ahmedabad	49	25	21	44	75	...	...
Bengaluru	10	18	51	...	71	...	...
Chennai	04	37	32	...	33	...	...
Delhi	...	54	56	155	103	...	...
Hyderabad	06	68	77	...	74	...	...
Kolkata	09	13	14	26	37	...	...
Lucknow	06	21	55	...	91	...	...
Mumbai	53	...	51	...	58	...	...
Pune	27	10	51	34	32	...	...
Visakhapatnam	10	23	06	32	63	...	...

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)
SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.
NO₂: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.
CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.
PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease.



Religion and freedom

India must protect its freedoms, and come down heavily on religious violence

Religious freedom is of paramount importance, not because it is about religion, but because it is about freedom. The characterisation by the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) of India as a country of particular concern, in its annual report, is not entirely surprising, considering its dim and known views about sectarian violence and aggravating governmental measures over the last year. The Indian government not only repudiated the report but also ridiculed the USCIRF. The autonomous, bipartisan commission's influence over any U.S. executive action is limited and occasional but its presumption of global authority appears amusingly expansive. Whether or not the U.S. government acts on its recommendation to impose targeted sanctions on Indian government agencies and officials depends on American strategic interests. The U.S. has used arguments of freedom, democracy, tolerance, and transparency as tools in its strategic pursuits, but there is no proof of any uniform or predictable pattern of enforcement of such moral attributes. The process can be selective and often arbitrary in spotlighting countries. Mirroring this pattern, India selectively approaches global opinions on itself, embracing and celebrating laudatory ones and rejecting inconvenient ones. The frantic, and relatively successful, efforts to raise its Ease of Doing Business ranking by the World Bank is a case in point. Many of these reports have a circulatory life — the USCIRF report quotes UN Special Rapporteurs to buttress its point on the discriminatory outcome of the National Register of Citizens in Assam. Overall, such reports contribute to the construction of an image of a country, and the Indian government is cognisant of this pattern. In March, the Indian government told Niti Aayog to track 32 global indices and engage with the bodies that measure them, to advance reform and growth.

India advertises itself as a multi-religious democracy and as an adherent to global norms of rule of law. It also aspires to be on the table of global rule making. For a country with such stated ambitions, its record on religious freedom as reflected through events of the last one year is deeply disconcerting. The catalogue of religious violence, incitement and wrecking of the rule of law in several parts of the country remains an unsettling fact. The partisan nature of the ruling dispensation is also difficult to wish away. Reputation is important for a country's economic development and global standing but beyond that instrumental perspective, rule of law and communal harmony are essential for any functioning democracy.

Biden's bid

Biden has the support of most Democrats, but he must reach out to other sections too

Every April 26, we celebrate World Intellectual Property Day. This year, it was not a day for celebration, but one for reflection and dedication. It provided us an opportunity to reflect upon the role of intellectual property (IP) in the ongoing health crisis and dedicate IP to finding a solution.

Hillary Clinton, the 2016 Democratic presidential nominee and former Secretary of State, has endorsed the presumptive Democratic nominee for the 2020 election, former Vice-President Joe Biden. With her endorsement Mr. Biden now enjoys unequivocal support across the spectrum of Democratic Party heavyweights, including former President Barack Obama, Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren, and Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders. The support of Mr. Sanders is especially critical to the Biden campaign. Young voters, voters of colour and a variety of other cohorts within the larger body of U.S. progressives through this year's campaign were, and possibly still are, vocal supporters of Mr. Sanders and his "democratic socialist" policy agenda for the middle class. These groups also backed Mr. Sanders in 2016, when he spoke of reining in the excesses of Wall Street, cancelling student debt, Medicare for all, expanding social security and a green new deal emphasising renewable and clean energy over traditional reliance on fossil fuels. While the then nominee, Ms. Clinton, went on to win over 65 million votes in the presidential election, her nomination campaign was hobbled by a long season of bickering with Mr. Sanders. In that regard Mr. Biden has already surpassed Ms. Clinton in securing the support of the most important voices in the Democratic pantheon.

As the nomination race draws to a close at the Democratic National Convention in August, his ground game must now move up a gear to take on incumbent U.S. President Donald Trump, with a special focus on managing the COVID-19 pandemic. On the one hand Mr. Biden's most obvious line of attack will be to highlight a series of bungles that Mr. Trump has made in his handling of the crisis, from not heeding intelligence calls to take decisive action early enough when there were warning signs coming out of China, to playing politics with states desperately in need of medical equipment, and to making bizarre and reckless comments on untested "solutions". Yet, just like Ms. Clinton in 2016, Mr. Biden cannot win without paying heed to undecided and independent voters, especially in the swing states. If the 2016 election held any lessons for Democrats, it is to not underestimate the importance of economic issues, especially job losses. Indeed, in the context of the COVID-19 crisis, there have been numerous rallies across the U.S. where protesters have not only lashed out at Democrats for what they described as deliberate exaggeration and politicisation of the pandemic and its effects, but also appear to genuinely question the lockdowns that impact commercial activity. To win in November, Mr. Biden will have to balance his policies promoting mainstream values of his party with bipartisan outreach that brings a large swathe of the working population of middle America under the Democratic tent.

The making of the modern public intellectual

Public intellectuals should be respected because they speak out against injustice wherever it occurs



NEERA CHANDHOKE

In Sophocles' powerful play, *Antigone*, the daughter of Oedipus defies the edict of King Creon of Thebes that her brother's corpse should be left on the road for birds and vultures to feast on. When Creon charges her with disobedience of the law — "And thou didst indeed dare to transgress that law?" — Antigone replies: "Yes, for it was not Zeus that had published me that edict: not such are the laws set among me by the Justice who dwells with the gods below; nor deemed I that the decrees were of such force, that a mortal could override the unwritten and unchanging statutes of heaven." Antigone articulates the fundamentals of a just law. Law is not the source of its own moral authority and legitimacy.

A setback to democracy

Centuries later, M.K. Gandhi reiterated that a law is binding only if it satisfies the unwritten codes of public ethics. He spoke in the context of colonial rule. Surely democratic regimes ought to respect the right of citizens to dissent. In today's India, however, holders of state power refuse to tolerate ideas, reflection, debate, and discussion. Two years ago, the government arrested eminent members of civil society on charges that were clearly produced by conspiratorial imaginations. On April 14, two of India's well-known scholars/activists, Anand Telumbe and Gautam Navlakha, surren-

dered before the National Investigation Agency. In early April, an FIR was filed by the Uttar Pradesh government against the editor of the news website, *The Wire*, Siddharth Varadarajan. The charges in these cases are flimsy. It is obvious that intellectuals are being penalised for taking on the government.

The arrests are a depressing commentary on the nature of the present government. Sophisticated societies respect intellectuals because they subject the present to historically informed investigation, interpretation, critique and prescription. This is integral to the idea of democratic politics as self-critique. Politics establishes rules that govern multiple transactions of society. It cannot be its own defendant, judge and jury. If politics is, as Aristotle put it, the master science (science for Greeks is knowledge), it has to accept reflective and critical activity. Politics is too important to be left to politicians alone.

While authoritarian societies breed court historians, mature democracies appreciate critical scholarship. But today intellectualism is dismissed contemptuously as elitist. Not only does this attitude foster a culture of mediocrity, intellectuals who hold a mirror to the state are hounded and arrested. This is a setback to democracy, because it forecloses engagement with structures of power. Without its public intellectuals, democracy slides into authoritarianism.

The Dreyfus affair

The first public intellectual was, of course, Socrates. The modern notion of the public intellectual is, however, fairly recent. It took shape in the tumultuous days of what has come to be known as the 'Dreyfus affair' in France in 1894.



Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish army officer, had allegedly handed over important government documents to the Germans. He was convicted of treason amidst a roar of revolting anti-Semitism. When Dreyfus was stripped of his medals, the crowd shouted 'Death to the Jew'. The atmosphere was charged, mob mentality ruled, and sane voices were drowned in the din. Scholars, artists, and novelists could hardly keep away. They had to summon their knowledge to reflect on citizens' rights, the irrational behaviour of crowds, the ugly slogans that stereotyped an entire community, and the unholo glee with which crowds watched the humiliation of an army officer. The incident propelled Paris-based intellectuals into the mainstream of French politics. This was the time when scholars came out from their ivory towers and took sides, despite massive crowd hysteria that broke bounds of civility.

Dreyfus was later exonerated, but the affair split the French intelligentsia wide open. Emile Zola wrote an open letter, *J'accuse*, in support of the beleaguered army officer. Zola attacked injustice, prejudice and intolerance. He reserved for the intellectual the function that Socrates had reserved for the philosopher: stand

by the universal in the quest for truth and in the fight against injustice. Julien Benda, a noted Jewish intellectual, argued that the duty of the intellectual is to defend universal values over and above the politics of the moment.

But other scholars propagated anti-Semitism. In 1942, the philosopher Hannah Arendt wrote an account of the anti-Semitism directed at Dreyfus by right-wing intellectuals in France. Intellectuals who upheld Republicanism and basic rights were too weak to confront the power of the mob. Mobs are fickle, their rhetoric is blood-curdling, they hate debate, detest institutions, and hero-worship leaders. When intellectuals follow the mob or, worse, the leader, they pave the way for fascism, the destruction of institutions, the emergence of the hero, and pogroms of the minority. When intellectuals fail to live up to codes of public ethics, they uphold injustice. Their commitment to truth, reason and justice lapses; they become partners in injustice.

Moral conscience of society

The Dreyfus affair legitimised the idea that a public intellectual has to denounce injustice despite the power of the mob. Since then it has been held that intellectuals are not defined by what they are — professors, writers, artists or journalists — but by what they do. Intellectuals have to be competent in their own field, otherwise they will not be taken seriously by anyone. But there is more to being an intellectual. Scholars have to be public intellectuals. They have to cast their scholarly gaze on issues that cause explosions, sift out the details, analyse, evaluate, and take a position. An intellectual has to be involved in public affairs.

Public intellectuals are the moral conscience of society, simply because they think. To think is to question, to call for freedom, and to invoke the right to disobey. Our intellectuals have to be reflective, philosophical beings, philosophical in the sense that they think about issues, addresses contemporary social problems and see them as the legacies of previously unresolved issues of social injustice.

It is precisely the unresolved issue of social injustice that has been taken up by Mr. Telumbe, Mr. Navlakha and Mr. Varadarajan repeatedly and insistently. All three of them have battled the reproduction of injustice in their own ways. Mr. Telumbe is a fine chronicler of the injustice that has been heaped on the Dalit community. Mr. Navlakha has fiercely castigated violations of civil liberties. And Mr. Varadarajan has exposed the horrific crimes committed by the merchants of hate. None of them has advocated violence, none of them has asked the Indian people to revolt against the elected regime. All they ask for is that the provisions of the Constitution be honoured by our leaders. Leaders wield the scalpel, they ought to be the healers. Their touch should nurse the wounds in the body politic. Public intellectuals are the conscience of our country. They should be respected because they speak out against injustice wherever it occurs, not be subjected to punitive action. Public intellectuals are of value because they bring the sane, cool voice of reasoned reflection to bear on contentious and stormy public issues.

Neera Chandhoke is a former professor of Political Science at Delhi University

Needed: a pandemic patent pool

This will give all countries the right to implement innovations without further permission from patent-holders



PRATHIBA M. SINGH

Every April 26, we celebrate World Intellectual Property Day. This year, it was not a day for celebration, but one for reflection and dedication. It provided us an opportunity to reflect upon the role of intellectual property (IP) in the ongoing health crisis and dedicate IP to finding a solution.

A long road ahead

The purpose of creating and recognising patent rights is for the common public good, i.e., innovation should be made public in exchange for a limited monopoly. Thus, patents need to be disclosed to the public in order to enable further research. Should pandemics such as COVID-19 be an exception to this?

For human life to become normal again, vaccines or medicines are the only permanent solutions. However, even by conservative estimates, it will take at least 6-10 months for any vaccine/drug to be available. Even when approval for marketing of a vaccine/drug is granted, it will be impossible for it to be made instantly available across the world. This is because even after approval for commercial production is granted, say, in

one country, in order for the product to be available to the rest of the world, approvals will be required in each and every country. Then countries will have to gear up for instant manufacturing and marketing of the drug. For this to happen, continuous dialogue has to take place among innovators, manufacturers and supply chains. This requires massive efforts by private players, governments and international organisations.

With the outbreak of COVID-19, there are several innovations. All these innovations may be the subject matter of patent applications around the world. It will be a few years before patents are even granted. However, friction already exists among various stakeholders. For instance, one country made attempts to obtain exclusive rights to a vaccine being developed. On the other hand, there are also collaborations taking place. However, the spirit of collaborative solutions is only on the anvil. The question that arises is whether the exclusivity that is recognised by patent rights will be detrimental to society. Will patents create roadblocks or is there a solution?

Pandemics need disruptive solutions. Governments and international organisations need to arrive at a consensus in advance to ensure that the system is ready. Procrastination would be disastrous. Creating hindrances through exclusivity claims, in the wake of a pandemic, will result in dividing



countries, corporations and international organisations. This will not benefit patients and the world as a whole. If patent owners create impediments on the strength of patent rights, the world will start despising patents and that is not a situation IP owners ought to be in. Under the TRIPS (Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) regime, there are several tools such as compulsory licensing that are available to ensure access to medicines. However, beyond the laws, society needs to respect innovation. To protect the sanctity and integrity of patent systems, and in order to ensure that an anti-IP sentiment is not generated globally, answers need to be found within the existing regime. In exceptional circumstances such as these, there is a likelihood that societies may resort to extreme steps to protect themselves. Before such ideas are floated, solutions should be created.

Creating a patent pool

One method by which aggregation and dissemination of innovative products can be ensured is by

creating a patent pool. Patent pools are usually effective in aggregating, administering and licensing patents related to specific areas of technology. Such pools are usually managed by a central agency and the patents which become part of the pool are readily made available for licensing. Some pools even publish the royalty rates payable for such licences. Anyone who wishes to obtain a licence will be able to approach the pool, agree to the terms, and begin to manufacture and sell the products. Such pools are prevalent in, for instance, standard essential patents related to telecom and digital innovations.

At the moment, individual efforts are being made by research organisations to create their own pools. A more fruitful endeavour would be to create a global pool of COVID-19-related innovations, or innovations related to rare pandemics, in respect of vaccines and medicines. This could be managed by a trustworthy international organisation. All countries ought to have the right to implement these innovations without further permission from the patent-holders and without resorting to provisions such as compulsory licensing, state acquisition, etc. Even if royalties are at a minimal level, the revenues would still be in billions of dollars owing to the large swaths of the population affected by the pandemic, who will need to be administered these products.

Creation of a pool and im-

mediate licensing will ensure that there are hundreds of manufacturers across the world. As a result, vaccines and medicines will be quickly available. Some part of the royalties could then be disbursed to patent owners on a periodic basis and some part could be retained to fund further research to deal with such pandemics in future.

Such a pool needs the cooperation of not just countries and international organisations but also the hundreds of researchers, innovators, companies and universities involved. Concerns relating to patents and profits to be earned therefrom should be put aside. The world has to come out of this crisis quickly and patents ought to accelerate rather than impede the path. Combating the crisis and earning collectively is the need of the hour.

Pooling of patent resources is also in line with the Doha Declaration on Public Health which is a part of the TRIPS agreement. This declaration recognises the need for taking measures to 'protect public health' and 'promote access to medicines'.

Public-private partnerships (PPP) need to be scaled up. Creation of the 'PPP-pandemic patent pool' at a global level, to pool all innovations, is the way forward. Let us not wait any longer.

Justice Prathiba M. Singh is Judge of the Delhi High Court and was a member of the IP think tank that drafted India's Intellectual Property Rights policy

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.

Finally, going home

Merely allowing migrants to go home is not enough ("Home Ministry clears inter-State movement of stranded people", April 30). The state governments in coordination with the Union government must make proper arrangements for sending home the migrants, keeping in mind the practice of physical distancing. Recently, the U.P. government brought home more than 2,200 workers from Haryana in 82 buses. The government must avoid packing people into vehicles.

JITENDRA NATH NANDI, Kolkata

better late than never. India's migrants had to face many hardships. Some even died on their way home. It was heart-rending to see how badly the government had planned the lockdown and how cruelly the police treated the migrants. At least now we must ensure that the migrants are treated in a humane manner.

V. PADMANABHAN, Bengaluru

Classroom learning

There are many areas which still lack continuous Internet connectivity. As the author says, this denies many students the opportunity to access online classes ("Limitations of online learning", April

30). Further, some subjects demand face-to-face interactions. In Technical Education, for instance, a majority of the subjects involve practical training experience. Also, in a class of 60 students, if 10% of them are above average and 10% below average, the outstanding students who constantly exhibit a thirst for knowledge will somehow study. But teachers really need to invest time in helping the below average students, which is not possible via online classes.

ROY M. THOMAS, Kochi

A poorer film world

Bollywood has been struck a twin blow with the loss of

Irrfan Khan and Rishi Kapoor. Both actors enriched the film industry with their talent, screen presence and charisma. While Khan was a Bollywood star who was also loved by Hollywood, and was known for his understated, yet impactful, performances, Rishi Kapoor was the evergreen heartthrob, the quintessential hero of Bollywood. Though very different in their craft, they both touched the hearts of millions across the world.

N.J. RAVI CHANDER, Bengaluru

Among Rishi Kapoor's films, *Bobby*, *Amar Akbar Anthony*, and *Chandni* are my favourite. Though all of

Raj Kapoor's sons were talented, Rishi made a special mark not only with hard work but also his histrionics. His forthright views won him big bouquets and brickbats. Irrfan Khan seemed to know only one word: surrender. He could surrender to any role with ease and aplomb. He mesmerised us with his eyes and dialogue

modulation. He had scaled great heights in his career, but Irrfan never seemed to throw his weight around. Tributes show how much respect the film fraternity had for him. These are big losses for Indian cinema.

M. SOMASHEKHAR PRASAD, Hyderabad

MORE LETTERS ONLINE: www.hindu.com/opinion/letters/

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS: >>> In the answer to the first question of the interview titled "We cannot let down our guard till April or May next year: Srirath Reddy" (April 30, 2020), a sentence read: "And in a number of other areas like the non-availability of public health carriers, ...". It should have been *public health cadre*.

It is the policy of The Hindu to correct significant errors as soon as possible. Please specify the edition (place of publication), date and page. The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-2848297/28576300 (11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday); Fax: +91-44-2852963; E-mail: readerseditor@thehindu.co.in. Mail: Readers' Editor, The Hindu, Kasturba Buildings, 859 B, 860 Anna Salai, Chennai 600 002, India. All communication must carry the full postal address and telephone number. No personal visits. The Terms of Reference for the Readers' Editor are on www.thehindu.com

Should govt. intervene in platform-publisher relationships?

PARLEY The state's record in dealing with independent news media has been, at best, a mixed one

In the last few weeks, France and Australia have taken significant steps to make news aggregators such as Google pay for re-use of news. The beneficiaries will be news publishers, who for years have been struggling to make a digital transition. While the competition regulator in France has effectively pushed Google into negotiating a remuneration deal with publishers, Australia has proposed to make platforms pay for use of news. In a discussion moderated by Sriram Srinivasan, Rasmus Kleis Nielsen, Director, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, and Parminder Jeet Singh, Executive Director, IT for Change, discuss whether governments should intervene in correcting lopsided platform-publisher relationships.



What do you make of these developments?

Rasmus Kleis Nielsen (RKN): It is a clear political recognition of how difficult many publishers find it to build a sustainable business in the digital space. It is also a political recognition in some quarters, that while independent professional journalism is often inconvenient for people in power, it is fundamentally also a public good. And if the market on its own does not provide this public good [at] the level that we want in a society, then there is room for political intervention. In the developments we see in Australia and France, there is focus on a very particular type of response, which is to force one part of the private sector to transfer money to another part of the private sector. This is quite an unusual approach.

Parminder Jeet Singh (PJS): To the question that the government needs to step in, in managing the relationship between platforms and media, I would say yes. But I would also warn against doing it in a 'plug-the-leak-here and patch-a-tear-in-the-fabric there' kind of approach. It won't work.

And you have seen it since at least 2014, governments trying to make platforms pay for news snippets and the difficulties in doing that. So, we

need to place this problem in the larger problem of the relationship of digital platforms in all sectors, with those small actors who are dependent on the platform. In that sense, this problem is not very different from the problem that small traders have with Amazon platforms.

But some commentators point out that it is an important step because it is about shoring up an essential industry.

PJS: Yes, the media is a very different kind of essential industry. What I am saying is that unless we understand the nature of digital power – what is that platforms have power because of, and go and address those issues – we will not succeed. I completely agree that measures are needed to protect the media sector now. And therefore, even patch-work attempts are good.

Is there an agreement that the platforms have disproportionate clout when dealing with publishers, and this skewed relationship needs to be addressed somehow, if not in this manner?

RKN: It is clear that the largest platform companies are extremely powerful, and that their power extends to all the different fields that they're active in. It is important for us to recognise at the same time that this power is a problem, because unaccountable power is always problematic. But I think it is also worth recognising that the root of this power is relations. It is the choices made by billions of end users and millions of third parties who embrace large platforms because they feel that they benefit from working with them, even as they also rightly have reservations about the power of these companies.

The challenge from a public policy point of view is how can you first ensure a competitive and transparent digital economy where you prevent the abuse of dominant positions, without punishing success or simply protecting incumbent industries who will always scream 'blue murder' when new entrants disrupt



their old and profitable businesses.

PJS: There are a lot of tough decisions to be taken at the top of the political economy system, of who owns the data, whether platforms are essential utilities, whether they should be regulated as utilities, and so on. Also, there is a geopolitical angle. No country can on its own do it because then it becomes a race to the bottom, and the Facebooks and the Googles of this world will always say that we are moving out and the next country is ready to take us.

I want to bring you both in on gauging what is happening in France and Australia from the lens of what role the government is playing.

RKN: The particular model that's being considered in Australia and France, I would be very interested to see more details on how exactly it is proposed to work. It is not a model we use to fund public services in general. We don't fund public education by taxing a few big companies solely for that purpose. We don't fund the public health system by taxing a few large companies solely for that purpose. The normal approach is general taxation and then political positions about where we allocate that money. And I think this sort of form of enforcement of B2B relationships or hypothecated taxes from one sector to another is not that quite complicated. And it tends to be quite vulnerable to people with clever lawyers and clever accountants and the like to find loopholes. And so it is not obvious to me that it is necessarily the best way

digital-era problem. And in the digital platforms, much of the economic interactions do not take place in the nature of typical markets.

India has now a committee of experts by the IT Ministry which is talking about the value of data, including non-personal data and how its economic value should be distributed and so on. We need to get down to those basics. And without that, we would not be able to solve these problems.

RKN: There's probably three basic sides to this. The first is what we can do with the tools that we already have? We also need to recognise that there are some very large companies by now who have built up their position over 10 or 20 years. And that developing entirely new regulatory and policy tools will take time. So, if we want to do something in the short term, it is primarily about how we can use existing rules of competition law, data protection and privacy regulation and the like to ensure that we have a more competitive digital economy that benefits citizens and all legitimate interests. And I am very encouraged by some of the steps being taken in the European Union to do that.

It is really important to recognise, speaking narrowly about news, that the general policy goal in competition is not to protect competitors, but to protect competition and that we cannot assume, a priori, that new regulation in this space will benefit news publishers specifically. That is why we need to make a political decision about whether there is broad public support for the idea that independent professional journalism is in public interest and is a public good, and needs to benefit from public funding.

There's a geopolitical angle too. Many of the large and dominant technology companies are American. And the American government does sometimes let slip that they're keenly aware of this and that they will fight their corner. Many of their main competitors are from mainland China. And it is also clear that the regime in Beijing is not naive about the assets that this represents. We just need to recognise that when governments elsewhere are thinking about intervention in this space, it could also be because they themselves think that national

technology companies are American. And the American government does sometimes let slip that they're keenly aware of this and that they will fight their corner. Many of their main competitors are from mainland China. And it is also clear that the regime in Beijing is not naive about the assets that this represents. We just need to recognise that when governments elsewhere are thinking about intervention in this space, it could also be because they themselves think that national

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champions are in their geopolitical self-interest. Now, how important that is, I think it is a political question. I can totally understand why the French government might like to see a French YouTube or French search engine. But it is not obvious that journalism would benefit more from a relationship with a French search engine or a French video-sharing platform than from a relationship with American platforms.

How do you see this from the point of view of the general Internet user? And also, do you see that the publishers have got onto something which they have never had in many years?

PJS: I see hope. There will be difficulty in trying to do what they're doing right now. But there is a sense of urgency among major countries, and that sense of urgency will make them stick to trying to do something and this time around there would be more sustained progress. There is good traction now for things to move forward and things will move forward much faster now.

RKN: We need to just confront the fact that most politicians around the world regard independent journalism at best with benign indifference, more often with rank hypocrisy, and very often with open hostility. And that many governments have a very mixed record in terms of how they deal with independent news media. Now the fact that in two out of 193 countries that are members of the United Nations, there now seems to be some move to change this, is potentially encouraging. But I don't think we should consider that a trend until we see a much larger number of countries take such steps. France has a long tradition of intervention within this space. Australia is a country where there's a conservative government, and a very well known conservative media owner, who has been very active in this space for a long time.

The only people who care about figuring out the future of the business of news are those who are in it, those who believe in the editorial principles but also the practical commercial realities of digital journalism. Now, in that space, I am an optimist, a cautious optimist but an optimist nonetheless.

Plasma therapy is no silver bullet

To recommend it without undertaking a robust scientific study may cause more harm than good

BALRAM BHARGAVA

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed unprecedented challenges to governments, health professionals and the general public at large, around the world. Every response, administrative, social, economic or medical is being subjected to intense public scrutiny, as it rightly should be in the spirit of mature democracy.

Scientific research in medicine is the only means to overcome novel and complex diseases such as COVID-19 and that too thrives on the same spirit of debate and criticism. The difference, however, is that the standards of evidence required, to generate consensus and arrive at the most optimal protocols, are far more rigorous and time-taking than in most other walks of life.

So is the case with the convalescent plasma therapy, that is being currently studied by the Indian Council of Medical Research, through open label, randomised controlled trial to evaluate it for both safety and efficacy. Already, four patients have been enrolled in Ahmedabad and the study will be rolled out in 20 hospitals by the end of this week and at more centres over the next month.

The therapy involves infusing patients suffering from COVID-19 with plasma from recovered patients. In theory, the antibodies of the recovered person may help that patient's immune system fight the virus. While showing great promise, it is a line of treatment that is yet to be validated for efficacy and safety and cannot be deployed widely without caution. The current evidence to conclude anything about the true benefits of this therapy is very thin.

Need for more research
The most important principle in medical ethics is "do no harm". The transfusion of convalescent plasma is also not without risks, which range from mild reactions like fever, itching, to life-threatening allergic reactions and lung injury. To recommend a therapy without studying it thoroughly with robust scientific methods may cause more harm than good.

Till date, there have been only three published case series for con-

vallescent plasma in COVID-19 with a cumulative of 19 patients. Given the very small number of patients involved in these studies and a publication bias in medicine, we cannot conclude the therapy will work on all patients all the time or even believe that the convalescent plasma was the only reason for their improvement.

To say with certainty whether a drug is truly effective or not, the gold standard in medicine is to conduct a randomised controlled trial, where half the patients get the experimental drug and the other half do not. Only if patients in the first half show substantial improvement over those in the second half, it indicates the drug is beneficial.

Further, convalescent plasma therapy requires intensive resources, healthy COVID-19 survivors to donate, a blood bank with proper machinery and trained personnel to remove plasma, equipment to store it and testing facilities to make sure it has an adequate amount of antibodies. Too much focus on one approach can take away the focus from other important therapeutic modalities like use of oxygen therapy, antivirals, and antibiotics for complicated hospital courses. To overcome the pandemic comprehensively, we should focus on strengthening health systems at all levels, including referral systems, supply chain, logistics and inventory management. We need to work on protecting our healthcare workers, improving prevention methods, promoting cough etiquettes, effective quarantining and accurate testing.

Even these times of collective uncertainty are no reason to lower scientific temper. While it is good to be hopeful, the fact remains there are no real silver bullets in medicine and health outcomes are a result of not just a few pills or therapies but a complex set of factors. Science should be driven by reason and evidence with hope as a catalyst but not by either fear or populism. Pushing one or the other therapy without evidence or caution can only set back our larger fight against COVID-19.

Dr. Balram Bhargava is Director General, Indian Council for Medical Research



NOTEBOOK

Take care of yourself too, fellow journalists

It may not be possible to follow all safety precautions while in the line of duty

SOMA BASU

Journalists out there on the field run the risk of exposing themselves to the highly contagious virus, much like our other foot soldiers: sanitation workers, police personnel and all those in the healthcare sector, rendering selfless service to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

Of course, we understand anything can happen, whether we are covering a war, riot or an epidemic. It is perhaps not always easy to follow every instruction to stay safe especially when in the line of duty. Print journalists can manage to get stories over the phone but our photographers, TV reporters and camerapersons do not have that luxury. This takes me back to my health reporting days for the paper during the 1990s. It makes me realise that city reporters, who are always full of

limited to what I had read in biology textbooks in school perhaps. There were no mobile phones in 1994 to call up doctor friends to understand the disease better, nor was there the Internet to do quick online research en route to the assignment. The best way to get the real story was to be on the spot.

I don't want to delve into the details about the condition of the hospital wards and the residential areas that we visited thereafter. But yes, I could meet the treating doctors who explained how cholera infects, its symptoms and spread. The patients and their attendants cried out loud about contaminated water supply in their habitation. That evening, when I returned home, my father made me wash and leave my shoes outside and advised me to give myself and my clothes a dettol wash.

That became a habit each time I visited hospitals. Those infected with plague in Delhi were mostly quarantined in hospitals such as the Guru Tegh Bahadur (GTB), Kasturba, LNJP and Bara Hindu Rao. The regular health reporters were allowed to see the facilities, with due advisories to wash our hands with soap thoroughly.

As an utmost precaution we also covered the expansion of the hospital wards and the residential areas that we visited thereafter. But yes, I could meet the treating doctors who explained how cholera infects, its symptoms and spread. The patients and their attendants cried out loud about contaminated water supply in their habitation. That evening, when I returned home, my father made me wash and leave my shoes outside and advised me to give myself and my clothes a dettol wash.

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The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO MAY 1, 1970

Naxalites spread out to elude Police

The murder of a wealthy landlord in Prodduvaka village in Krishna district on the night of Sunday (April 26) has brought to focus the growing Naxalite activity in the coastal Andhra districts since three months. In the Srikakulam agency area the last murder took place in the third week of January. Since then Naxalite groups have killed landlords in villages in Anantapur, Warangal, Nellore and Guntur districts. The Naxalite activity has slackened in the Srikakulam agency area. The pattern of attacks showed that the Naxalite groups who once operated in the Srikakulam agency areas have now spread out into the coastal Andhra areas following intense police activity in the agency areas. One theory is that the Naxalites wanted to show off to the country that the entire Andhra Pradesh is under their sway but the second and more plausible theory is that by striking here and there throughout coastal Andhra the Naxalites want to divert the Strong Police force in an effort to weaken police concentrations in selected pockets in the State. Though a number of people have been interrogated in connection with the latest murder in Prodduvaka village, the police have not made any arrests so far.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MAY 1, 1920

Japanese trade in India.

(From an editorial)

Thanks to the deliberate suffocation of indigenous Indian industries in the past and the pursuit of a policy of indifference and hesitation in the opportune days of the war, India, unable as yet to regain her economic and industrial freedom, presents a pathetic sight. The report of the Trade Commissioner, besides giving the cause and extent of the expansion of Japanese trade in the country, is also interesting as revealing a psychology of anxious alarm at Japan's commercial invasion of the Eastern markets of European traders. The report says that the most remarkable and significant feature of India's import trade during the war was the prodigious expansions in imports from Japan, the total value in 1918-19 amounting to almost eight times that of 1914-15. Such notable advances in Japan's trade with India the report attributes more to the shutting-off of normal supplies than to any better quality or more economical production of Japanese goods. On the other hand, the report speaks of the unenviable reputation of Japanese goods and traders, the despatch of articles below samples, late shipments, bad packing and unbusiness-like habits in general.

USCIRF is an independent, bipartisan federal government entity established by the U.S. Congress to monitor, analyze and report on threats to religious freedom abroad.

It makes foreign policy recommendations to the President, the Secretary of State and Congress intended to deter religious persecution and promote freedom of religion and belief.

Highlights of the report:

India- specific:

India is at the lowest ranking, “countries of particular concern” (CPC).

This is the first time since 2004 that India has been placed in this category.

India is placed alongside countries, including China, North Korea, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

India was categorised as a “Tier 2 country” in last year’s listing.

Reasons for this downgrade:

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.

Besides, 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.

Recommendations made by USCIRF to US government:

Take stringent action against India under the “International Religious Freedom Act” (IRFA).

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.

How effective can these recommendations be?

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.

How are other countries placed in the report?

In the 2020 Annual Report, USCIRF recommends 14 countries to the State Department for designation as “countries of particular concern” (CPCs) because their governments engage in or tolerate “systematic, ongoing, egregious violations.”

These include nine that the State Department designated as CPCs in December 2019—Burma, China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan—as well as five others—India, Nigeria, Russia, Syria, and Vietnam.

Instead of using its own “Tier 2” category, as in past reports, the 2020 Annual Report also recommends 15 countries for placement on the State Department’s Special Watch List (SWL) for severe violations.

These include four that the State Department placed on that list in December 2019—Cuba, Nicaragua, Sudan, and Uzbekistan—as well as 11 others—Afghanistan, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Central African Republic (CAR), Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, and Turkey.

The Report recommends six non-state actors for designation as “entities of particular concern” (EPCs) for systematic, ongoing, egregious violations. These consist of five groups that the State Department designated in December 2019—al-Shabaab in Somalia, Boko Haram in Nigeria, the Houthis in Yemen, Islamic State in Khorasan Province (ISKP) in Afghanistan, and the Taliban in Afghanistan—plus one other—Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) in Syria.

Important Terms and definitions:

Tier 2 countries are those in which violations engaged in or tolerated by government are serious and characterized by at least one of the elements of systematic, ongoing, and egregious (horrible)’.

CPC is designated to a nation guilty of particularly severe violations of religious freedom under the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) of 1998. The term ‘particularly severe violations of religious freedom’ means systematic, ongoing, egregious violations of religious freedom.

any further as none of the petitioners was actually an aggrieved party.

On March 27, RBI gave liberty to banks and financial institutions to allow moratorium in respect of loans outstanding as on March 1. It said the repayment schedule for these loans as well as the residual tenor would be shifted across the board by three months after the moratorium period.

Sources in RBI said the court order was a rap on the knuckles of the banks that were not extending the benefit to many customers.

(With inputs from Manojit Saha)

SANGEETHA KANDAVEL
CHENNAI

Chak-Hao, which is a black rice variety of Manipur, and Gorakhpur terracotta have bagged the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.

Chinnaraja G. Naidu, Deputy Registrar, Geographical Indications, confirmed that the GI tag had been given for the two products on Thursday.

The application for Chak-Hao was filed by the Consortium of Producers of Chak-Hao (Black Rice), Manipur and was facilitated by the Department of Agriculture, Government of Manipur and the North Eastern Regional



Expertly crafted: Gorakhpur has a centuries-old tradition of terracotta art. • T. SINGARAVELOU

Agricultural Marketing Corporation Limited (NERA-MAC).

In the case of Gorakhpur terracotta, the application

was filed by Laxmi Terracotta Murtikala Kendra in Uttar Pradesh.

Chak-Hao, a scented glutinous rice which has been in

cultivation in Manipur over centuries, is characterised by its special aroma. It is normally eaten during community feasts and is served as Chak-Hao kheer.

Chak-Hao has also been used by traditional medical practitioners as part of traditional medicine. According to the GI application filed, this rice takes the longest cooking time of 40-45 minutes due to the presence of a fibrous bran layer and higher crude fibre content.

At present, the traditional system of Chak-Hao cultivation is practised in some pockets of Manipur. Direct sowing of pre-soaked seeds

and also transplantation of rice seedlings raised in nurseries in puddled fields are widely practised in the State’s wetlands.

The terracotta work of Gorakhpur is a centuries-old traditional art form, where the potters make various animal figures like, horses, elephants, camel, goat and ox with hand-applied ornamentation.

Some of the major products of craftsmanship include the Hauda elephants, Mahawatdar horse, deer, camel, five-faced Ganesha, single-faced Ganesha, elephant table, chandeliers and hanging bells.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation has taken over the probe into an Arms Act case following a Rajasthan High Court directive to look into the allegation that one of the accused was framed by policemen in Bharatpur.

The matter pertains to an FIR registered on October 28, 2015, at the Nadbai police station in Bharatpur against Suraj and Himanshu, who were arrested. An illegal country-made pistol with two live rounds was allegedly found in their possession.

The police filed the first charge sheet in December

2015 against the duo and five others – Rinku, Manoj, Raju, Ajay and Virendra Singh. Further investigation was kept open against Rinku, Manoj and Virendra. In September 2019, a supplementary charge sheet was filed against them.

Subsequently, Virendra filed a petition in the High Court seeking a fair probe. He alleged that he was framed. The court, in its judgment on February 7, 2020, ordered a CBI probe, stating that from bare perusal of the record and the proceedings conducted by the police, it appeared the personnel were involved in implicating the accused.

Virus claimed 105 lives in West Bengal

Of them, 72 died of co-morbidities, says govt.; testing for virus increased by 13% in a span of 24 hours

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

As many as 105 persons who tested positive for COVID-19 in West Bengal had died, and of these, 72 were due to co-morbidities, Chief Secretary Rajiva Sinha said on Thursday, referring to a report by a government audit committee.

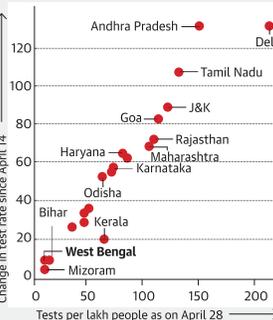
Meanwhile, the number of testing went up hugely - 13% - in a span of 24 hours from 14,620 to 16,525.

The committee was set up on April 3 for "conducting an audit of suspected deaths due to COVID-19". It is only after its nod that a death gets reflected in the tally of fatalities in the official bulletin. If, after investigation, it feels that a death was due to "severe co-morbidity" - or due to other ailment - then the death is excluded from the list.

Till Wednesday, the number of deaths due to COVID-19 was 22. When asked whether the 11 deaths added to the official tally occurred within the past 24 hours, Mr. Sinha denied it. He said that only two deaths occurred in

Poor testing rate

As of April 28, West Bengal had conducted 13.4 tests per million of its population, among the lowest in the country along with Mizoram and Bihar. Also, while other States have ramped up their testing rates compared to a fortnight back, West Bengal has recorded a minimal increase



Line up: Porters and labourers queue up near a grain market in Kolkata to collect lunch parcels distributed by the city police on Thursday. ■ RAJEEV BHATT

■ As on April 14, 3,081 samples were tested in West Bengal. The number increased to 13,223 as on April 28

■ State-wide testing data has been sourced from health ministries and directorate of information and public relations of respective States

■ The latest population projections were sourced from Unique Identification Authority of India's Aadhaar saturation report

the past 24 hours and the additions were because the audit committee's recent report had approved 11 more deaths due to COVID-19.

Another role of the audit

committee, he said, was to look into the "treatment protocol" of COVID-19 patients.

Questions about setting up such a panel were raised in several quarters, includ-

ing Opposition political parties. Parties took to the streets during the day raising questions about Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's remarks on Wednesday that

she had no role in setting up the committee.

In Kolkata

The government said there were 444 containment zones, of which 264 were in Kolkata. Howrah had 72 and North 24 Parganas had 70.

Mr. Sinha said no relaxation would be allowed in these zones. There had been no case of COVID-19 in eight districts. Meanwhile, 37 fresh cases were reported in 24 hours. The total number of active cases had increased to 572. Over 1,900 samples were tested during the period, taking the number to 16,525.

In another development, the Health Department transferred the Superintendent of the Murshidabad Medical College and Hospital after certain notifications were made public where it was stated that COVID-19 positive should not be mentioned in the circular. The Chief Secretary said he was not the one who issued orders of such transfers. They were done by the respective departments, and the lar-

M.P. reports 65 fresh cases, death toll increases to 137

Ujjain records highest fatality rate in the State at 17%

STAFF REPORTER
BHOPAL

Madhya Pradesh recorded 65 new COVID-19 cases on Thursday, taking the tally to 2,625, the State Directorate of Health Services said. However, these figures do not include the latest data from Indore.

With four more deaths, the State-wide toll rose to 137. Bhopal, Ujjain, Khandwa and Hoshangabad reported one death each, the Directorate said.

The day saw 21 persons being discharged after treatment across the State. So far, 482 persons have recovered.

Most recoveries at 177 have been reported from Indore, where 1,486 cases and 68 deaths have been reported as on Wednesday. But Bhopal, which has a third of the cases of Indore, has notched a better figure proportionally at 162.

The case fatality rate in Ujjain stood at 17%, the highest in the State. Indore, the most populous and the lar-



Taking no chances: A health worker screening a person at Satpura Bhavan in Bhopal on Thursday. ■ A.M. FARUQUI

gest city in the State, recorded a rate of 4.6%, whereas it was 3% for Bhopal.

Meanwhile, Health Minister Narottam Mishra said no patient as on April 30 was on ventilator support in Bhopal, whereas six were being given oxygen support in Indore.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said 65 samples out of 2,617 had tested positive, marking a test positivity rate of 2.5%. In Bhopal, 25 of 1,275 samples, in Jabal-

pur seven of 157 and in Ujjain 11 of 96 samples tested positive.

During a review meeting, Additional Chief Secretary for Health Mohammed Suleman said three districts - Ujjain, Indore and Bhopal - remained in the red zone.

So far, 35,000 migrant workers who were stuck in different States have returned to the State. Of these, 25,000 had returned from Rajasthan and 6,000 from Gujarat.

Confusion in Punjab over relaxation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KHARAR

After Punjab permitted the opening of shops in a staggered way on rotation for four hours every morning from Thursday, a state of confusion prevailed among shopkeepers in many parts of the State.

Several shops in the markets at Kharar in Sahibzada Ajit Singh Nagar district were open between 7 a.m. and 11 a.m. Though the owners said the curfew was "relaxed", the district authorities issued guidelines only later.

The order issued by Deputy Commissioner Girish Dayalan said that in rural areas all shops registered under the Shops and Establishments Act will be allowed to operate with 50% of employees. In urban areas, all stand-alone shops, neighbourhood shops and shops in residential complexes will be allowed to operate.

The State reported one more COVID-19 death, taking the number to 20, and 105 fresh cases, an official statement said. The number of the cases has reached 480.

Most of the fresh cases were pilgrims who had recently returned from Gurdwara Hazur Sahib in Nanded.

Maharashtra's case tally crosses 10,000 mark

583 new cases, 27 deaths reported in the State in one day

STAFF REPORTER
PUNE

The COVID-19 pandemic surged relentlessly in Maharashtra, as the State breached the 10,000-case mark on Thursday. It reported 583 new cases and 27 deaths, as the cumulative tally and the death toll surged to 10,498 and 459 respectively.

According to figures given by the State Health Department, 20 of the deaths were reported from Mumbai city, while three were reported from Pune city. Pune district authorities, though, reported five deaths today, including of a person hailing from Kolhapur.

On the other hand, 180 persons left hospitals on Thursday, taking the total discharged in the State till date to 1,773, said State Surveillance Officer Pradeep Awate.

Mumbai's death toll now stands at 290, while that of Pune district (the State Health Department's figure) is 88.

According to the Pune district administration, however, the district's death toll has now touched 90.

Nagpur reported its second death on Thursday and



Hard trek: Tribals carrying relief material at the Sanjay Gandhi National Park in Mumbai. ■ AADESH CHOUDHARI

25 new cases in Dharavi

STAFF REPORTER
MUMBAI

Dharavi reported 25 new COVID-19 cases on Thursday, bringing the total in Asia's largest slum to 369. Of the 25 new cases reported in Dharavi on Thursday, some were from areas like Kalyanwadi, Kumbharwada,

Kunchikur Nagar and Muslim Nagar that had seen cases in the past. Besides, cases were reported from newer parts, including Chaulghule chawl and Labour camp.

Total cases in Dharavi now stands at 369. With no death reported today, the toll remains at 18.

HIV patient and one was suffering from cancer," said Dr. Awate.

Information regarding co-morbidities of four of the patients was not available as yet.

Ahmedabad records over 3,000 cases, 149 deaths

249 new infections, 12 deaths reported

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
AHMEDABAD

With over 3,000 COVID-19 cases and 149 deaths, Ahmedabad is the second city after Mumbai in number of cases and deaths.

On Thursday, the city added 249 new infections and 12 deaths. The city alone accounts for nearly 65% of total cases and 70% of deaths in Gujarat.

Despite stringent stay-at-home measures and even curfew in hotspots, the number of cases has been rising and so are deaths, with one of the highest death rates, around 5%, in the country.

Gujarat reported 313 cases and 17 deaths on Thursday, taking the total to 4,395 cases and 214 deaths. So far, 613 persons have been discharged, including 86 on Thursday.

"It is a community transmission in Ahmedabad with remnant contagion in congested areas and slums," a top expert of infectious diseases told *The Hindu*, adding "with or without lockdown, Ahmedabad will only see higher infections and higher deaths."

Data of cases suggest that the city has begun community transmission weeks ago and now cases are increasingly surfacing because of the aggressive testing strategy adopted by the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation.

33 new cases in J&K, masks made mandatory

Over 92% of cases traced, say officials

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

As many as 33 new cases of COVID-19 infections were reported in J&K on Thursday, taking the tally to 614. The rising numbers forced authorities in Srinagar to make wearing a mask mandatory for all from May 1.

"All 33 cases were reported from Kashmir. The total number of positive cases is 614, with Jammu having 58 and Kashmir 556 cases," said Rohit Kansal, Principal Secretary (Planning).

South Kashmir's Anantnag recorded the highest number of cases with 12 and north Kashmir's Baramulla reported 11 cases.

Mr. Kansal said the UT's

testing rates continue to be among the highest while the percentage rise continues to be low resulting in a high doubling rate, which is over 12 days.

"Our mortality is just above 1%, which is quite low given the number of cases. The most notable part is that over 92% of the cases can be traced. All these are positive factors," he added.

Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner, Jammu, Sushma Chauhan said all reported 26 positive cases from the district have recovered. "It's indicative of being on the right course, nevertheless declaring the district COVID free, will be premature," she said.

BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE
Office of the Executive Engineer, BBMP, K.R. Pura Division,
Old Madras Road, K.R. Pura, Bengaluru-560036
Date: 29.04.2020

INVITATION FOR TWO COVER TENDER (IFT)
(Short Term Tender Notification) (Through GOK e-Procurement Portal Only)

The Executive Engineer (K.R. Pura), invites Item Rate tenders from eligible tenderers for the works details in the table given below. The tenderers may submit tenders for any or all of the works given in the table in appropriate class registered in Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike / CPWD / KPWD / Railways / MES / any State or Central Govt. Organization.

Sl. No.	Name of the Work	Approximate value of work (Rs. in Lakhs)	EMD (in Rs.)
1	Sinking of borewells and providing motor pumpsets and electrification to newly drilled borewells and providing water supply pipeline at Kalkere, NRI Layout, Banjara Layout, K. Channasandra Village and surrounding area in Ramamurthy Nagar, Ward No. 26.	100.00	2,00,000/-
2	Package-1: Sinking of borewells and providing motor pumpsets and electrification to newly drilled borewells and providing water supply pipeline at Horamavu and other village in Horamavu, Ward No. 25.	100.00	2,00,000/-
3	Package-2: Sinking of borewells and providing motor pumpsets and electrification to newly drilled borewells and providing water supply pipeline at Kothanur, K. Narayanapura, Nagenahalli, Geddalahalli and other villages in Horamavu, Ward No. 25.	100.00	2,00,000/-
4	Sinking of borewells and providing motor pumpsets and electrification to newly drilled borewells and providing water supply pipeline at Kalkere, K. Channasandra Village and surrounding area in Ramamurthy Nagar, Ward No. 26.	100.00	2,00,000/-
5	Sinking of borewells and providing motor pumpsets and electrification to newly drilled borewells and providing water supply pipeline in Basavanapura, Ward No. 53.	100.00	2,00,000/-

Calendar of events : (1) Tender Documents may be downloaded from the e-procurement website <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in>. (2) Availability of RFP documents date: 02.05.2020 onwards. (3) Pre bid meeting will be held on: 06.05.2020 at 11:30 a.m. in the Chief Engineer Office, K.R. Pura. (4) Last date for submission of tender documents on or before 14.05.2020 at 4:00 p.m. (5) Technical bids will be opened on the website <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in> in the office of the Executive Engineer, K.R. Pura Division on 16.05.2020 at 4:00 p.m. Further details may be obtained from the above office during office hours or website <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in>.
Sd/- Executive Engineer, K.R. Pura Division, BBMP

"Pay Development Charges, Help to Develop Bengaluru"

KERALA MEDICAL SERVICES CORPORATION LTD.
(Department of Health & Welfare, Govt. of Kerala)
THYCAUD P.O., THIRUVANANTHAPURAM - 695014. Tel: 0471-2434646, 2945600 Fax: 2945647
website: www.kmscl.kerala.gov.in, email: md@kmscl.kerala.gov.in
CIN No. U24233KL2907SGC021616

Quotation Notice
No. KMSCL/KCP/Q2/Covid/2020-21 Dated : 30.04.2020

In view of the Covid - 19 pandemic Online Quotation are invited for the supply of Anti Cancer Drugs as per the quantity mentioned in Annexure -I 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.

Last Date of Online Submission : 12.05.2020.
Sd/- Managing Director (Tender Inviting Authority)

JAWAHARLAL INSTITUTE OF POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION AND RESEARCH
पञ्चवीर नगर, पुणे-411014/Dhantvantri Nagar, Pudukkottai - 605 006
Phone: 0413 - 2296022 Website: www.jipmer.edu.in

Advt. No. JIP/AMBS (Bibinagar)/2020/01 Date: 01.05.2020

All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Bibinagar (Telangana) is an Autonomous Institution, established by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India under the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY). JIPMER, Pudukkottai has been designated its Mentor Institute. Online applications are invited for the following regular faculty posts at AIIMS, Bibinagar.

Departments	Name and Number of Posts			
	Professor	Additional Professor	Associate Professor	Assistant Professor
Anatomy	1	1	2	6
Biochemistry	1	1	1	5
Physiology	1	1	4	4
Pathology and Lab Medicine	1	3	1	6
Pharmacology	1	1	1	4
Community and Family Medicine	1	1	1	7
Forensic Medicine & Toxicology	1	1	1	1
Microbiology	1	2	2	3
Paediatrics	1	1	2	3
Psychiatry	1	1	1	2
Anaesthesiology	1	2	2	2
Dermatology	1	1	1	1
General Medicine	1	-	2	4
Ophthalmology	1	1	2	2
Orthopaedics	1	1	2	2
ENT	1	1	1	2
General Surgery	2	1	3	3
Obstetrics & Gynaecology	1	1	2	3
Radio-Diagnosis	1	1	2	3
Total	20	22	33	63

Details of reservation, age, qualification, experience, fees and other conditions of eligibility etc., are available at www.jipmer.edu.in and www.pmsmy-mhrta.nic.in. Last date of receiving online application is 12th June 2020 03:00 P.M.

DIRECTOR

GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU
HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT
TAMIL NADU ROAD SECTOR PROJECT II

Assignment Title: Independent Engineer for "Four Laning of Gobi - Erode Section of SH-15 ("The Project State Highway") from Km 123+000 to Km 153+600 in the State of Tamil Nadu under TNRSPI-II to be executed on Design, Build, Finance, Operate, Maintain and Transfer (DBFOMT) on Modified Annuity Basis"

Reference No: IE03/PPP01/TNRSPI-II/2020/AE-8, dt.24.04.2020

Request for Expression of Interest (REOI)

Experienced Consultants are invited to submit their Expression of Interest (EOI) for carrying out the above mentioned assignment. The EOI with credentials must be submitted to the office mentioned below. Further details and REOI are available in the website: www.tnrspp.gov.in.

Consultant will be selected in accordance with the selection based on Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS) set out in the Consultant Guidelines, "Selection and Employment of Consultants (under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants) by World Bank Borrowers, dated January 2011 as updated in July 2014".

Last date for receipt of EOI: 29.05.2020 upto 15.00 hrs.

Superintending Engineer (H),
(For and on behalf of the Governor of Tamil Nadu)
Tamil Nadu Road Sector Project II, Chennai-28.
TNMB Building, 1st Floor, 171, South Kesavaapuram Puram,
Off Greenways Road, R.A.Puram, Chennai - 600 028. Tamil Nadu, India.
Telephone No: +91 44 24951072. Fax: +91 44 24952414
Email: tnrsp1@gmail.com / Website: www.tnrspp.gov.in

DIPR/1708/Tender/2020

GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU
HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT
TAMIL NADU ROAD SECTOR PROJECT II

Assignment Title: Independent Engineer for "Strengthening and Widening (Four Lane) of Tirunelveli - Sengottai - Kollam Road of SH-39 ("The Project State Highway") from Km 5+000 to Km 50+600 in the State of Tamil Nadu under TNRSPI-II to be executed on Design, Build, Finance, Operate, Maintain and Transfer (DBFOMT) on Modified Annuity Basis excluding the cost of Construction of Project Highway in the stretch from Km 28+000 to Km 31+000 (which will be paid on BQ Basis)"

Reference No: IE02/PPP03/TNRSPII/2020-01, dt.24.04.2020

Request for Expression of Interest (REOI)

Experienced Consultants are invited to submit their Expression of Interest (EOI) for carrying out the above mentioned assignment. The EOI with credentials must be submitted to the office mentioned below. Further details and REOI are available in the website: www.tnrspp.gov.in.

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Last date for receipt of EOI: 29.05.2020 upto 15.00 hrs.

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(For and on behalf of the Governor of Tamil Nadu)
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TNMB Building, 1st Floor, 171, South Kesavaapuram Puram,
Off Greenways Road, R.A.Puram, Chennai - 600 028. Tamil Nadu, India.
Telephone No: +91 44 24951072. Fax: +91 44 24952414
Email: tnrsp1@gmail.com / Website: www.tnrspp.gov.in

DIPR/1708/Tender/2020

Trucks don't need passes, says Ministry

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry reiterated on Thursday that separate passes were not required for trucks and goods carriers to move across States.

In a letter to the States and Union Territories, Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla asked them to ensure free movement of trucks, including empty ones.

The Ministry wrote to them on April 3 and 12 stating the same. "It is now reiterated that no separate passes are required for trucks through traffic of trucks and goods carriers, including empty trucks, etc. This is essential for maintaining the supply chain of goods and services," it said.

The Ministry asked the States to convey it to district authorities and field staff to avoid ambiguity.

'Half-hearted bid to transport migrants'

Congress, other Opposition parties say Centre should have anticipated problems of stranded workers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Opposition parties have called the order of the Union Home Ministry allowing the State governments to ferry back those stranded outside their boundaries a hogwash and a measure to buy time.

Jairam Ramesh, Rajya Sabha member of the Congress, said that at best it was a half-hearted measure. "The fact that it took 36 days for the government to respond to the plight of the migrant workers shows both apathy and a lack of planning before the lockdown. Even now, it's a half-hearted attempt. Why aren't special trains being deployed? Many State governments have asked for it," he told *The Hindu*.

'No coherence'

Congress spokesperson and Lok Sabha member Manish Tewari said the order showed utter lack of coherence or strategy. "How many inter-State meetings has the Ministry held so far? Does the government have data on migrant workers, about who from which district is stranded where? And is it safe to cover long distances in buses," Mr. Tewari asked.



Long ordeal: Migrants from Madhya Pradesh waiting for buses in Prayagraj on Thursday. ♦♦♦

All these problems should have been anticipated when the lockdown was first announced on March 24. Trinamool MP and former Railway Minister Dinesh Trivedi said that if the government was indeed serious, it would have considered trains and not specified that

only buses could be used. Whether the order would actually be implemented or not was anyone's guess. "Buses are not the answer. This will only create confusion and not a solution. They are merely buying time. There was too much pressure on the Union govern-

ment to come up with a policy on migrant workers, so they brought out this order," he said.

CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury called the order condescending, coming after days of suffering for the migrant workers and others stranded miles away from their homes. He questioned the fact that the Centre had delegated it to the States instead of taking the initiative.

CPI general secretary D. Raja said the Centre had virtually abdicated its responsibility of helping the migrant workers or assisting the States in this time of crisis.

"In both the interactions the Chief Ministers had with the Prime Minister, the main issue of contention was lack of financial aid to the States. They can't deceive people who are in unimaginable misery. The hunger deaths are rising."

Bihar seeks non-stop trains for migrants

27 lakh people from State stranded

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PATNA

Bihar on Thursday urged the Union government to run special non-stop trains to bring back 27 lakh people of the State stuck in distant places because of the lockdown. The appeal came a day after the Centre issued an order allowing the States to bring back students, migrants and tourists.

"Since the Central government has passed the order, I will appeal to it to run special non-stop trains to bring back those people from far-off places like Surat and Porbandar in Gujarat, Chennai, Bangalore, Maharashtra and Delhi," Deputy Chief Minister and BJP leader Sushil Kumar Modi said.

In a two-minute video released to journalists, Mr. Modi said it would not be "possible to bring back such a large number of stranded



Sushil Modi

people by bus as it will take months". "Over five lakh people stranded in Delhi, 2.68 lakh in Maharashtra, over two lakh in Gujarat ... over one lakh in Karnataka have applied for the relief to the office of the Chief Minister," he said.

The Bihar government appointed the Principal Secretary of the Disaster Management Department, Pratyaya Amrit, as the nodal officer to supervise the process of bringing back the stranded people, he said.

Approach ICMR, SC tells NGO

People for Better Treatment submits plea on hydroxychloroquine

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday asked an NGO to approach the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) with its reservations about seriously ill COVID-19 patients in intensive care units being subjected to "controversial, unproven, non-specific and potentially toxic off-label" use of anti-malarial drug Hydroxychloroquine and broad-spectrum antibiotic Azithromycin.

A Bench led by Justice N.V. Ramana stopped short of intervening on a writ petition filed by NGO People for Better



ter Treatment, saying the court is not an expert. It asked Dr. Kunal Sahai, president of the NGO, to submit his research to the ICMR.

People for Better Treatment had drawn the court's attention to an extraordinary bulletin issued jointly on April 8 by the American

Heart Association (AHA), the American College of Cardiology (ACC) and the Heart Rhythm Society (HRS) with warnings on the use of the two drugs on COVID-19 patients with existing cardiac conditions.

The bulletin said the use of these drugs on patients with cardiac conditions would possibly trigger abnormal heartbeat, heart failure and death. It advised specific therapeutic measures in such cases. "Most of the drugs presently being used to treat COVID-19 patients are based primarily on anecdotal evidence and not

on direct scientific data because very little actual research has been published on this new strain of coronavirus, which was isolated for the first time only a few months ago. COVID-19 patients receive primarily symptomatic therapy because no specific drug against the new SARS-CoV-2 virus has been invented till now... Needless to say that when treating the vulnerable patients with an unproven drug for its off-label use, doctors should be extra vigilant about its potential harmful adverse effects on COVID-19 patients," the petition said.

Oman job cuts not Indian-specific: Centre

Gulf country decides to fire expat workers from state-sector companies

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Expatriate Indian citizens have played a significant role in creating prosperous economies in the Gulf region, the External Affairs Ministry said on Thursday.

The statement came amid reports of continued job cuts in several Gulf countries, including Oman, which has instructed government-owned companies to replace expat workers "as quickly as possible" with Omanis.

"The Gulf countries greatly value their relation with India. They also value the role of the Indian diaspora in

the development of the region. The policy of Oman is not specific to India and it does not target Indians," Ministry spokesperson Anurag Srivastava told presspersons.

Oman's Finance Ministry on Wednesday issued a new set of guidelines ordering state-owned companies to "expedite replacement of expatriates with Omanis".

According to some estimates, around a third of Oman's 4.6 million residents are expatriates who work in state-owned and private sectors.

There are at least

Gulf countries greatly value their relation with India

ANURAG SRIVASTAVA
Spokesperson, External Affairs Ministry

8,00,000 Indian workers in the kingdom and a part of them are likely to be impacted by the order. Though the order is limited to the state-owned companies, it is understood that the private sector will be under pressure to follow the state sector's example.

The Omani order, when carried out, is expected to force significant part of the expat Indians to return

home. In view of the COVID-19 outbreak in the Gulf States and the accompanying regional economic downturn, India is already preparing to evacuate a large number of citizens from the Gulf. Mr. Srivastava said, "The issue of evacuation is receiving attention of the government," though he refused to spell out the plans saying, it is "remature" to discuss the details of the evacuation.

Sultan of Oman Haitham bin Tariq had assured Prime Minister Narendra Modi that the salaries and well-being of the Indian community would be protected.

Special leave for disabled bank staff

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry on Thursday said persons with disabilities (PwD) employed by public sector banks and insurance companies would be given special leave without loss of pay for the duration of the lockdown imposed in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Department of Empowerment of PwD under the Ministry took up the issue with the Finance Ministry's Department of Financial Services on Tuesday after receiving information that State Bank of India was treating the absence of PwD as "sick leave". The National Federation of the Blind had raised the issue with the department, it said on Thursday.

EPFO gives payment relief to employers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) on Thursday said it had separated the filing of monthly electronic challan-cum-return (ECR) from the payment of PF contributions, giving employers more time to pay the amount in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The ECR can now onwards be filed by an employer without the need of simultaneous payment of contributions and contributions may be paid later by the employer after filing the ECR. Filing of ECR by the employer in time is indicative of employer's intent to comply and will not therefore attract penal consequences if the dues are paid within the extended time as announced by the government," it said.

KARNATAKA URBAN WATER SUPPLY & DRAINAGE BOARD
JALBHAVAN, BTM Layout, Bannerghatta Road, Bangalore - 560 029.
Ph: 080 - 41106507 - 18, Fax: 080 - 26539206/41106504
E-mail: cekwbng@gmail.com, Website: https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in

TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through Electronic Procurement portal only)
Item rate for the following work is invited (two cover system) through e-Procurement from eligible Agency / Contractors who satisfy the Financial and Technical eligibility criteria as detailed in the Bid Document.

Tender No. In e-Procurement Portal : **KUWSDB/2020-21/WS/WORK_INDENT 2764**
Name of Work : Deepening and Improvements of Echanur tank near Tiptur City under Improvements to Water Supply Scheme to Tiptur City with Echanur tank as source. Approximate Amount put to Tender : **Rs. 2704.39 Lakhs**, Bid Security : **Rs. 27.05,000/-**.

Calendar of Events : (1) Documents will be available from : **30-04-2020** (2) Pre-bid meeting date : **27-05-2020 at 11.30 hours** (3) Last date and time for submission/uploading of the tender in the e-procurement portal : **29-06-2020 upto 17.30 hours** (4) Date & Time of Opening of Technical Bid : **02-07-2020 after 11.00 hours**.

For further details, the Office of the Chief Engineer (Bangalore), KUWS & D Board, Bengaluru, may please be contacted or Website : <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in> or e-procurement helpdesk : 91 - 080 - 22371090, 22373788, email support : hphelpdesk.blr@intarvo.com

Sd/-
Chief Engineer (B)
KUWS & D Board, Bangalore

DIPR/DDU/2991/2020-21

BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE
Office of the Executive Engineer, KR Pura Division,
Old Madras Road, KR Pura, Bangalore - 560 036.
No: EE/KRP/TEND/07/2020-21 Date : 29.04.2020

INVITATION FOR TENDERS (IFT)
(Two Cover System) (Short Term Tender Notification) (Through GOK e-Procurement Portal only)

The Executive Engineer, KR Pura Division, invites Item Rate tenders on behalf of the Commissioner BBMP Bangalore from eligible tenderers for the following works. The tenderers may submit tenders through e-registered in BBMP / BWSSB / KUWSDB / PRED / PWD / Railways / MES / any State or Central Govt. Organisation.

Sl. No.	Name of the work	Approx. Value of Work (In Lakhs)	EMD (In Rs)
1	Improvements & Providing CC Drains from Brindavan Layout to Vengaiyana Kere Back Side in Ward No. 52, KR Pura	100.00	2,00,000.00
2	Improvements & Providing CC Drains from TC Palya Main Road to Brindavan Layout in Ward No. 52, KR Pura	100.00	2,00,000.00
3	Improvements & Providing CC Drains from VB Layout Main Road to Vengaiyana Kere Park in Ward No. 52, KR Pura	80.00	1,60,000.00
4	Improvements of CC Drains & CC Roads in Ajith Layout Cross Roads in Ward No. 52, KR Pura	54.00	1,08,000.00
5	Improvements of CC roads & drains and Asphalted roads in Bhattarahalli and surrounding areas in Ward No. 52, KR Pura	55.00	1,10,000.00
6	Improvements of CC roads & drains and Asphalted roads in TC Playa and Anandapura surrounding areas in Ward No. 52, KR Pura	56.00	1,12,000.00
7	Improvements of drains and roads in Vinayaka Layout Cross Roads in Ward No. 52, KR Pura	55.00	1,10,000.00

(1) Availability of RFP Documents date : **04.05.2020** onwards (2) Pre-bid meeting will be held on **11.05.2020 at 11.30 hrs** in Chief Engineer Office, KR Pura (3) Last date for submission of tender documents on or before : **16.05.2020 at 16.00 hours** (4) Technical Bids will be opened on : **18.05.2020 at 16.00 hrs**.

Further details may be obtained from the above office during office hours on working days or from website <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in>

Sd/-
Executive Engineer, KR Pura Division

PAY DEVELOPMENT CHARGES-HELP TO DEVELOP BENGALURU

FACT THE FERTILISERS AND CHEMICALS TRAVANCORE LTD.
(A Govt. of India Enterprise)
CENTRALIZED MATERIALS, PD ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, UDOYOGAMANDAL, COCHIN, KERALA - 683 501
Phone: (0484)-2560 270, 254 5196, E-mail: julian@factltd.com, depu@factltd.com, Website: <http://www.factltd.com>

E-tender for Clearing, Handling & Transportation of Bagged Products at various Rail Heads in Tamil Nadu
(ENQUIRY NO. MM/TS1/E21454 dated 29/04/2020)

Online bids (two cover system) are invited for undertaking the work of clearing, handling and transportation of bagged products at various Rail Heads (RH) in Tamil Nadu for a period of 2 years, through <https://eprocure.gov.in> portal. Any change / Extensions to this tender will be informed only through our website / CPP e-procurement portal and will not be published in newspapers.

Due date / time for submission of bids: **15-05-2020 3.00 PM**

Sd/- Asst. General Manager (Materials)-T&S

SOUTHERN RAILWAY
TRIVANDRUM (WORKS BRANCH)
E-TENDER NOTICE NO VVV/TVC/S/2020 DATED 29.04.2020
Divisional Railway Manager/Works Branch/Trivandrum Division, Trivandrum - 14 for and on behalf of the President of India invites online tenders for the following works as per tender notice given in our e-tender portal www.reps.gov.in The tenderer(s)/contractor(s) to apply for e-tender for WORKS in Trivandrum Division, need to get enrolled in the e-tender portal www.reps.gov.in and online tenders will be accepted.

Sl. No.	Description
1	Shoranur - Ernakulam section: Br. No 132 at km. 64/375 - Repairs to bridge abutments damaged in Flood 2019.
2	Trichur Sub Division - Desilting of IC, Manhole and sewage
3	Alappuzha P.Way section - TSR(P) with TRT machine for 3.100 km and manual TSR(P) for 2.300 km (PB 873/19-20).
4	Proposed Renovation of Senior Section Engineer/Bridge Office at Ernakulam.

Proposed Electronic interlocking buildings at Ochira, Karunagapally, Sasthankotta, Perinad and IBS huts in between Quilon - Perinad and Perinad - Sasthankotta.

Sl. No.	Approx. Value (₹ In lakh)	Earnest Money Deposit (₹)	Cost of tender (₹)	Period of completion in months
1	99.07	198100	5600	THREE
2	9.96	19900	2240	TWELVE
3	186.46	243200	5600	TWELVE
4	18.79	37600	2240	FOUR
5	220.30	260200	11200	FIFTEEN

Tender Closing date and time: **Sl No 1 to 5 : 21.05.2020 at 11.00 hrs**
Details of approximate value of tender, tender form cost, EMD & location are given on the e-portal, www.reps.gov.in For details of bid submission, please refer website portal www.reps.gov.in
Senior Divisional Engineer / Co-ordinator, Trivandrum - 14

NLC India Limited
"Navratna" - Government of India Enterprise
Regd. Office: First Floor, No.3, Mayor Sathyamurthy Road, FSD, Egnora Complex of Food Corporation of India, Chelkeri, Chennai - 600 031.
Corp. Office: Block -1, Newelley 607 801, Gudalore District, Tamil Nadu, India.
CIN No. : L2959TN1990G00307, Website: www.nlcindia.com

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS FOR SUPPLIES (e-Tender Notices Sl.No 2 to 7)

Sl. No.	Tender Ref./Scope of Supplies & Qty. Reqd.
1.	1.NTPL/TUTICORIN:ENQ/NTPL/20-21/000035/C&P(01) dt.22-04-2020: Purchase of Micro Processor based automatic bomb calorimeter. B.G.Amount: ₹ 50,000/-
2.	2. UNIT, M.COMPLEX: ENQ/19-20/003778/MM24(01) dt.25-03-2020: Bench Top density viscosity meter - 1 No. Due date of opening: 11-05-2020
3.	ENQ/19-20/003792/MM23(01) dt.13-04-2020: Retrofitting 2 sets of digital static Excitation system for 210 MW generator - 2 Sets. Due date of opening: 13-05-2020
4.	ENQ/20-21/000183/MM 25(01) dt.27-04-2020: 500 KVA Outdoor type Transformer - 5 Nos. Due date of opening: 26-05-2020
5.	20-21/000193/MM10(01) dt.27-04-2020: CS ERW pipe of size 914 mm thickness 10 mm grade FE410 with beveled ends conforming to IS 3589, required length of each pipe is of 12 mt. Qty.: 2897 Metres. Due date of opening: 27-05-2020
6.	ENQ/20-21/000183/MM11(02) dt.24-04-2020: Silver Brazing Foil conforming to IS 2927/1975 BA Cu Ag 12 having 49% to 51% silver in size 0.25 mm thickness x 75.0 mm width x 300 mm long. Qty.: 370 Kgs. Due date of opening: 27-05-2020
7.	PTE-ENQ/20-21/000219/MM02(01) dt.29-04-2020: 4 Items - New roller shafts for 2400 mm conveyor. Due date of opening: 01-06-2020

Sl.No.	Tender document cost	Date & Time of Opening
1	1000/-	03-06-2020 At 15.00 Hrs.

FOR e-TENDER DOCUMENTS/DETAILS/CORRIGENDUM VISIT: www.nlcindia.com
PUBLIC SECTOR IS YOURS - HELP IT TO HELP YOU

BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE
Office of the Executive Engineer, Govindarajanagara Division,
2nd Floor, Shakti Soudha 13th Cross Road, 4th B Main Road,
M.C. Layout, Vijayanagara, Bengaluru-560 040.
No: EE/GRN/TN/GL-03/2020-21 Date: 30.04.2020

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through GOK e-Procurement Portal only)
(STANDARD TENDER DOCUMENT KW - 1,2,3 & 4)

Tenders on Item Rate Basis are invited by the undersigned for the work mentioned below from the registered contractors of Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike or Equivalent registration with CPWD/KPWD/Railways/MES or any State Government Organizations.

Sl. No.	Name of the Works	Est Cost (₹. in Lakhs)	EMD (in ₹.)
Single Cover Works			
Works Reserved for Schedule Caste (SC) Category			
1.	Improvements to UGD works in Kaveripura Ward no. 103	20.00	25,000/-
Works Reserved for Schedule Tribes (ST) Category			
2.	Drilling of borewell pumping machinery and pipeline in Kaveripura in Ward no. 103	20.00	25,000/-
Works Reserved for General Category			
3.	Providing water supply line and other necessary works in Chandra layout 2nd stage and behind Siddaganga school in Ward no. 128	22.50	45,000/-
4.	Providing External GYM Equipments and other civil works to ayappa swamy temple park in Ward no. 128 Nagarabahi	25.00	50,000/-
5.	Maintenance of General Public Toilet works in Ward no. 128	7.50	18,750/-
6.	General Public Toilet and Septage Maintenance works in Ward no. 128	15.00	37,500/-
7.	Providing Park Maintenance at New Income Tax Layout in Ward no. 128	15.00	37,500/-
8.	Maintenance of Public Toilets and ward office in Kaveripura Ward no. 103	10.00	25,000/-
9.	Drilling of borewell and pipeline in Ward no. 104 Govindarajanagara jurisdiction for the year 2019-20	20.00	50,000/-
Two Cover Works			
10.	Improvements to drains and footpath at Vidyanigri Layout in Ward no. 128	75.00	1,50,000/-
11.	Improvements to drain and footpath at Teachers Layout in Ward no.128	75.00	1,50,000/-
12.	Improvements to drain and asphalted to road in Vinayaka Layout and ITI Layout surrounding area Nayandahalli in Ward no.131 (Call-2)	200.00	3,00,000/-
13.	Improvements to drain and asphalted to road in Gurusaravabommanagara surrounding area Nayandahalli in Ward no. 131 (Call-2)	100.00	2,00,000/-
14.	Improvements to Akkamahadevi park road and other civil works in Ward no. 128	60.00	1,20,000/-
15.	Improvements to drain and footpath at Jyothinagara in Ward no. 128	75.00	1,50,000/-

Calendar of Events : (1) Last date for Receipt of Queries is **07.05.2020** upto 3:00 pm (2) Pre-Bid meeting will be held at the Office of the Executive Engineer, (Govindarajanagara Division) on **13.05.2020 at 3:30 pm**. (3) Last Date for uploading the filed proposal is **16.05.2020** upto 4:00 pm (4) Date of opening of Technical Proposal is **18.05.2020** after 4:30 pm (5) Date of Opening of Financial Proposals After approval of Technical Proposal through e-Procurement. Further details may be obtained from the above office during office hours on working days or from website: <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in>

Sd/-
Executive Engineer - Govindarajanagara Division

Pay Development Charges - Help to Develop Bengaluru

Investigate 'denial of dialysis': HC

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SHUBANESWAR

The Orissa High Court has directed the State government to expedite investigation into the death of a patient suffering from chronic kidney disease, and who was denied dialysis at a private hospital at Cuttack, allegedly for his Muslim identity, during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Azra Jamal, a lawyer activist, had moved the HC seeking legal action against a Cuttack-based private hospital that denied dialysis treatment to a patient identified as Sayed Abdul Hasan, leading to his death on April 10.

"Shanti Hospital in Cuttack had refused to treat the chronic kidney disease patient because he belonged to Muslim community. As a result of which he died the same day," Ms. Jamal said in her petition.

She said the private hospital had turned the patient away, demanding the production of "COVID-19 test certificate" before allowing him to access the dialysis facility.

Experts call for proper disposal of PPE

India needs 20 to 25 lakh pieces of personal protective equipment a day for workers fighting COVID-19

LALATENDU MISHRA
MUMBAI

With India needing an estimated 25 lakh units of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) every day, experts and scientists have highlighted the need for their proper disposal, treatment and recycling to safeguard the environment. These PPEs have given a new lease of life to plastic, which was facing severe scrutiny across the world on environmental grounds.

Even India had banned single-use plastic to protect the environment, and today except a few, no one seems to be complaining.

Since the COVID-19 outbreak, plastic items such as PPE suits, masks, gloves, sanitiser, handwash and water bottles, and shoes and head cover have been the only protective shield for the front-line workers.

Participating in a discussion, K.K. Aggarwal, former president, Indian Medical Association, and president, Confederation of Medical Associations of Asia and Oceania, said currently medical workers need protective gear which were made from an impermeable and non-



Stay safe: People wearing protective suits at an awareness campaign in New Delhi. —REUTERS

porous material such as plastic to avoid COVID-19 infection.

Hence masks, gloves, protective shield for eyes and face, head and shoe cover, and apron made from plastics were used since impermeable material stopped virus-containing droplets from touching the skin.

"Although the virus stays on the outer surface of the protective gear. It is also essential that healthcare workers change their personal protective equipment every 8 hours, and regularly decon-

taminate the hospital," Dr. Aggarwal said.

"Currently, 40 lakh health workers are fighting against COVID-19. We need 20 to 25 lakh protective equipment every day to protect the workers from the infection," he said.

Ashok K. Agarwal, President, Indian Association for Hospital Waste Management and former Dean, IIHMR, New Delhi, said the improper handling and disposal of medical waste could put healthcare workers at a higher risk of infection. "All bio-

medical waste needs to be disposed of in colour coded categories — yellow, red, white and blue — as per the guidelines stipulated in the Biomedical Waste Management Rules 2016 and by the Central Pollution Control Board," he said.

"These guidelines must be followed studiously to contain coronavirus infection. The government should ensure the availability of plastic garbage/disposal bags in hospitals, quarantined places and general households, so the waste can be collected

and treated (medical waste) or recycled (general waste)," he added.

According to Vijay Habbu, Adjunct Professor, Institute of Chemical Technology, the protective equipment such as masks, gloves, PPEs and plastic bags/bottles used while delivering essentials such as grains, oil, water must not be carelessly thrown away.

"They must be properly disposed of so they can be treated/recycled. The earth is healing itself; it is an ideal time to cut down on non-ecofriendly human practices such as littering and utilise this time to strengthen the plastic waste management ecosystem in India," he said.

Dr. Habbu said that scientifically all types of plastic products/equipment were recyclable and every Indian citizen must know this fact.

"The responsibility to ensure proper disposal of waste and source segregation is on every Indian citizen, it will prevent the highly hazardous practice of waste dumping in landfills/waste bodies and help in keeping our earth clean and green," he said.

Ambulance driver from Chennai tests positive

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

One of the two drivers of an ambulance that travelled more than 3,100 km from Chennai to drop five people in Tripura has tested positive for COVID-19.

Tripura's Education Minister Ratan Lal Nath said the five residents - two women patients from Gomati and Baikhora and their attendants - returned in the ambulance on April 27.

"Thermal screening was done at the Churaibari (Assam-Tripura border) entry point but the two drivers and the passengers were found asymptomatic. Their samples were collected and tested on Tuesday," the Minister said, adding that one of the drivers from Tamil Nadu tested positive on Wednesday. The test result came after the ambulance had already left Tripura on its return trip since the e-pass was valid till April 28. The vehicle was stopped at Silguri on northern West Bengal late on Wednesday.

Officials in Tripura said the five people from the State were put in institutional quarantine as per guidelines. Two families shared

Bride, groom pose as patients

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUZAFFARNAGAR

Nine members of a family were quarantined after a newly wed couple returned from Ghaziabad to Uttar Pradesh's Muzaffarnagar district in an ambulance in the guise of patients, police said on Thursday.

The groom, bride and their seven family members were quarantined at their home in Khatauli. A case has registered against the ambulance driver who brought the couple home, police added.

the ambulance charges of ₹1.40 lakh.

The process of tracing the contacts of the drivers in the State had started, they said.

At least six other ambulances from Chennai have so far dropped patients and their attendants in various districts of Tripura. A 60-year-old male patient could not survive one of the trips.

74-year-old patient beats the odds after 32 days in hospital

Makhmuddin, a blacksmith from Indore, is out of the ICU

SIDHARTH YADAV
BHOPAL

The odds were stacked against Makhmuddin. The 74-year-old blacksmith had previously suffered bouts of jaundice that had weakened his immunity. And he came in late to the hospital with a feverish breath and a frantic cough that jolted his heaving chest. Doctors immediately put him on non-invasive ventilation support. For 12 days, his life hung precariously on the edge — on oxygen support.

Yet, he knew he would recover, Mr. Makhmuddin said. And survive he did, trumping COVID-19. On Wednesday, the septuagenarian, Indore's longest-treated patient for the illness after having been in bed for 32 days, walked out of the city's MRTB Hospital. Unfazed by the fact that the novel coronavirus has been sickening older people more gravely, he also became the city's oldest to bounce back from the infection.

Weakened system

Previously, a year-long battle with jaundice had weakened his body. But the experience of having overcome that condition, Mr. Makhmuddin said, had steeled his resolve for facing future challenges. "Twice, I thought I was



Makhmuddin

Most of the 68 patients who have died in Indore presented so late at hospitals that the COVID-19 condition had taken complete hold by then, opined health experts. Despite pulling out all the stops, it was difficult to save them. "Most who have come to us in Makhmuddin's condition have died," Dr. Bhargava said. "Although the illness doesn't have a defined remedy at present, his recovery shows supportive treatment works. Therefore we should not lose hope," the doctor said.

Cheerful company

As he showed improvement, Mr. Makhmuddin was moved out of the ICU to another isolation ward. There, he drew support from the company of those recuperating alongside him. Six patients of varying ages occupied beds set wide apart. They chatted away their time, on the road to recovery. "Acha time pass hua udhar. Dil behelta raha (We passed our time pleasantly. We kept ourselves entertained)," he chuckled.

Two recently admitted youth, with uncertainty gripping them, had asked him about recovery. "I told them to have patience and the willpower to fight it out," he recalled.

Songs of peace from Manipur's conflict zone

Group's creativity spurred by lockdown

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

The COVID-19 lockdown has inspired a musical initiative for peace and bonhomie in Manipur, a State troubled by decades of conflict.

A group of musicians in the State has produced a multilingual music album titled 'Yes We Care' with the objective of bridging the ethnic divide believed to have been widened by the lockdown that has minimised human interactions.

The album, released on YouTube on April 28, has the same song in English and seven other languages, including Hindi. Extremist groups in the northeast have ideologically been against Hindi, which they say is the language of "imperialist Delhi".

The local languages in which the song has been sung are Nagamese, Tangkhul, Khoibu, Vaiphei, Paite and Manipuri.

While Nagamese is the pidgin lingua franca of Nagaland, Tangkhul and Khoibu are Naga dialects of Manipur. Manipuri is the tongue of the non-tribal Meiteis of Imphal Valley and Vaiphei and Paite are languages of the tribal group classified as Kuki-Zomi.

The Meitei, Naga and Kuki-Zomi groups have had a strained relationship with each other. There have been



A screen grab from the music album.

several instances of ethnic violence.

"The idea behind the album was to spread the message of peace and brotherhood and enlighten the people in this time of the pandemic," said Norbert Khayi, the president of the Tangkhul Music Forum based in Manipur's Ukhrul. "Apart from appealing to the people to stand up and fight the pandemic together, our aim was to celebrate Manipur's ethnic diversity," he said, adding that the project cost the forum about ₹40,000.

The main person behind the concept, Mr. Khayi said he felt the need to remove the misunderstandings between the people living in Manipur's hills and the valley as also different tribal groups within the hills.

"The song is about overcoming the situation brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic by sticking together," said Mandira Das, who sang the Hindi version.

Activists seek testing of Ganga water for COVID-19 treatment

Mission under Jal Shakti Ministry sends the pitch to ICMR

JACOB KOUSHY
NEW DELHI

The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), an arm of the Jal Shakti Ministry that deals with the Ganga clean-up plan, has forwarded to the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) a proposal to undertake clinical trials and examine if Ganga water can be used to treat COVID-19 patients.

The proposal was made by a collective of activists involved in the clean-up of the river as well as in the litany of litigation surrounding it.

The thrust of the proposal is that research for over a century — and most recently an investigation by the CSIR-National Environmental Engineering and Research Institute, Nagpur — had found that the upper stretches of the Ganga had several species of bacteriophages. Phages, as they are also called, are viruses that specifically target bacteria and are also extremely strain-specific. While there is research to suggest that these phages may have anti-microbial properties and could potentially destroy bacteria such as *Mycobacterium streptococcus* and *Pseudomonas Yersinia*, it is unclear how phages — being viruses themselves — could have anti-viral properties.



There is no evidence that the waters of the Ganga can destroy viruses.

COVID-19 is caused by SARS-CoV-2 virus infection. "There's no evidence that viruses can, even in principle, be used to destroy other viruses. Phage therapy has its uses in experimental medicine and has been used to treat infections from antibiotic-resistant bacteria," Sunil Singh, virologist, Benares Hindu University, told *The Hindu*.

'Experimental medicine'

The proponents of the proposal — Anil Gautam, A.K. Gupta, Bharat Jhunjunwala and Narendra Mehrotra — said the Ganga "could have" anti-viral properties, but the scale of the pandemic and the need for new drugs and treatment mean that there could be "immense benefit"

from undertaking such studies on the lines of "experimental medicine."

Before being forwarded to the ICMR, the letter reveals, the NMCG discussed the feasibility of the proposal with NEERI, on April 24. NEERI, which is a Council of Scientific and Industrial Research organisation, has an ongoing study examining whether the phages in the Ganga water are responsible for destroying pathogens and delaying putrefaction.

"The considered opinion of CSIR-NEERI is that overall, clinical trial on water alone may not yield very useful results, though this would need the considered opinion of agencies such as ICMR," notes the NMCG letter, signed by D.P. Mathuria, Executive Director, NMCG, and addressed to the Director General, ICMR. "...It is true Ganga water has special properties which is prominent in upper stretches. Since no virus related studies have been yet carried out, one could attempt a pilot in the Upper Regions of Ganga."

Most studies have been done in the context of years-long movement that sees Ganga water as "unique," particularly the water in the upper stretches of Rudrapur and before Tehri.

THE CROSSWORD+ 12924

(set by Arden)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10						
11				12			
13	14	15	16	17			
18				19			
20						21	
22	23	24	25				
26				27			
28				29			

- There is no lockdown for your brain! Try solving a puzzle today! @ <https://crossword.thehindu.com>
- 12 Strict usage allows for some sudden attack (5)
13 First casting inside mould is cubic in shape (4)
15 Time to plug extra covers, it's a pledge (8)
18 Don't allow to carry tin bottle (8)
19 Not often will you see in a letter — a reminder (4)
22 Horse — one could be found in Goa or Mangalore, perhaps (5)
24 Exaggerated — close by backward point (9)
26 Daily work, very essential trait (9)
27 Flower sample attached to plant (5)
28 Back on, Arden's off (4-3)
29 Complete success in a gallop (4,3)
- DOWN
1 Bond covers thousand acres of lake (6)
2 Distressed ladies get help, saved (4,5)
3 Lost the election, party becomes better (5)
4 Winger's remorse over the French physician (9)
5 Bird breaking many hearts (5)
6 Dismissed oil worker to keep things on even keel (9)
7 Play to get girl out of reach (5)
8 However, decreases — only to provide support (4,2)
14 Make way heading North, talk will disappear (9)
16 They are rather placed in the periodic table (4,5)
17 Possible merger, also included the plant (9)
20 Washer's room, right underneath... (6)
21 ...as one finds bliss finally in marriage (6)
23 One slept inside, rose to find a horny beast (5)
24 Close to take some time and performed the surgery (5)
25 Pride is missing, there is inner belief in God (5)

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

Solution to puzzle 12923

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

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Basis of upasana

Adyatma sadana is demanding as it takes root only when one is able to distance oneself from the immediate world and the impact of the physical awareness that is a constant presence in each one. In the Gita, it is clearly shown that Adyatma sadana is something that cannot be practised by one whose mind is caught in desire and anger, pointed out Swami Sashishikananda in a discourse.

Arjuna asks who and what is prompting him to act in a particular way, especially in doing wrong when he wants to avoid such acts. Krishna points out to Kama, desire, and also Krodha, anger that are present in all beings in the form of rajjas. When prompted by desire one seeks to fulfil them; in case the effort is thwarted, it gives rise to anger and the ego in one regards this as a personal failure. This leads to being caught in a vicious cycle. Moreover, since there is no end to desires, chasing them in life is like entering a fathomless ocean. The answer is first of all to accept the presence of desires in us. They are a part of the human personality comprising the senses, mind and intellect. But one should be wary of desires and not allow them to occupy the mind as they can easily cause harm to one's spiritual sadana when they lead to wrong actions, even as a strong virus can attack the physical health of a person. Instead, one can try to focus on one's ordained duties, that is, what has evolved on one owing to birth, circumstances, etc and not encourage selfish tendencies.

The Tenopanishad teaches the foundations of upasana, the practice of austerities, such as self control and contentment and so on, and encourages one to cultivate and sustain these at all times. This is the only way to attain chitta suddhi which is conducive for Adyatma sadana.

The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) recently has issued a 15-point directive to the 11-Ganga basin states to prevent idol immersion into river Ganga and its tributaries and on their banks, including cordoning off the ghats.

According to the directive, a fine of Rs. 50,000 would be imposed if immersion of idols took place in the Ganga or its tributaries during festivals, including Dussehra, Diwali, Chhath and Saraswati Puja. According to NMCG officials, the large-scale immersion of idols and puja material in the Ganga and its tributaries during festive occasions led to an alarming rise in pollutants in the river.

The directive has been sent to officials of these 11 states namely- Uttarakhand, UP, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh.

The Chief Secretaries of these 11 states have also been asked to submit an action taken report within seven days from the end of each festival.

These directives were issued by NMCG under Section-5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

Initiatives to Clean Ganga

Ganga is a trans-boundary river of Asia which flows through India and Bangladesh. It is the longest river in India and is a lifeline to millions of people who live along its course.

Causes of Ganga Pollution: The main causes of water pollution in the river Ganga are: Industrial waste (dumping of various harmful & untreated industrial waste into the river), Human waste (human activities such as bathing, washing clothes, etc.), Religious waste (religious bath, cremation near the ghats, idol immersion, etc.)

Initiatives to Prevent Ganga Pollution

Ganga Action Plan: It was the first River Action Plan that was taken up by the Ministry of Environment & Forests in 1985, to improve the water quality by the interception, diversion, and treatment of domestic sewage. It also aimed to prevent toxic and industrial chemical wastes (from identified polluting units) from entering the river.

National River Conservation Plan was an extension to the Ganga Action Plan, so as to cover all the major rivers of the country.

'National River Ganga Basin Authority (NRGBA)' was formed by the Central Government of India in the year 2009 under Section-3 of the Environment Protection Act, 1986. It is chaired by the Prime Minister of India. It declared the Ganga as the 'National River' of India.

In 2010, 'Government clean-up campaign' was started to ensure that by 2020 no untreated municipal sewage or industrial runoff enters river.

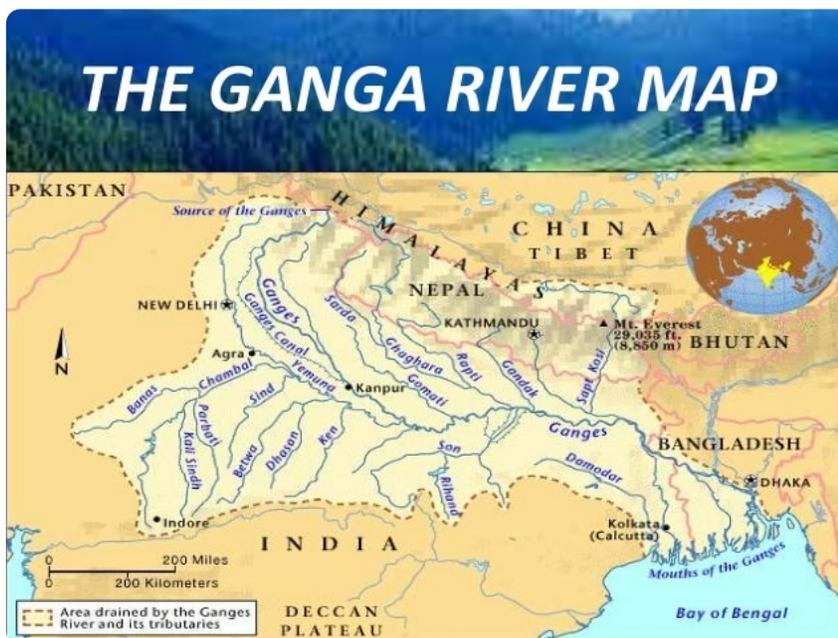
In 2014, 'Namami Gange Programme' was launched as an Integrated Conservation Mission, to accomplish the twin objectives of effective abatement of pollution, conservation, and rejuvenation of National River Ganga.

The program is being implemented by the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), and its state counterpart organization viz., State Program Management Groups (SPMGs).

It is the flagship programme of the Union Government with a budget outlay of Rs. 20,000 crore.

The main pillars of the programme are:

- Sewerage Treatment Infrastructure & Industrial Effluent Monitoring,**
- River-Front Development & River-Surface Cleaning,**
- Bio-Diversity & Afforestation,**
- Public Awareness.**



At 12 years old, she clocked in for long shifts in an overcrowded factory. But the \$30 she made each month ensured that for the first time, her family had regular meals and could buy previously unheard-of luxuries like chicken and milk.

A decade later, Ms. Khatun more than tripled her wage.

But when Ms. Khatun and her husband were laid off in March as Bangladesh, like much of the world, went under lockdown because of the coronavirus pandemic, she dropped back to dark places



Pushed into penury: A file photo of workers sewing garments at a factory in Bangladesh. •NYT

she hoped she had left behind.

"The garment factory helped me and my family to get out of poverty. But the coronavirus has pushed me back in," Ms. Khatun, now 22, said in a recent interview.

The gains the world was making in fighting poverty are now at grave risk.

The World Bank says that

for the first time since 1998, global poverty rates will rise. By the end of the year, 8% of the world's population – half a billion people – could be pushed into destitution, largely because of the wave of unemployment brought by virus lockdowns.

While everyone will suffer, the developing world will be hardest hit. The World Bank

Informal sector
Most at risk are people working in the informal sector, which employs 2 billion people who have no access to benefits like unemployment assistance or health care. In Bangladesh, 1 million garment workers like Ms. Khatun – 7% of the country's workforce – lost their jobs because of the lockdown.

The financial shock waves could linger even after the virus is gone, experts warn. Countries like Bangladesh, which spent heavily on programmes to improve education and provide health care,

to destroy," said Abhijit Banerjee, a winner of the 2019 Nobel Prize for economics.

"There will be groups of people who climbed up the ladder and will now fall back," he added. "There were so many fragile existences, families barely stitching together an existence. They will fall into poverty, and they may not come out of it." The gains now at risk are a stark reminder of global inequality and how much more there is to be done. In 1990, 36% of the world's population, or 1.9 billion people, lived on less than \$1.90

per day, out of poverty from 2006 to 2016, according to the UN. Since 2000, Bangladesh lifted 33 million people – 10% of its population – out of poverty.

Famines that once plagued South Asia are now vanishingly rare, the population less susceptible to disease and starvation. But that progress may be reversed, experts worry, and funding for anti-poverty programmes may be cut as governments struggle with stagnant growth rates or economic contractions as the world heads for a recession. NY TIMES

ruing African national congress and stood trial alongside Nelson Mandela. He spent 22 years in prison for his involvement with the ANC's fight against apartheid, the racist system of oppression imposed by the white minority government.

When his fellow accused were sent to Robben Island, as a white prisoner Mr. Goldberg was separated from them and imprisoned in the capital, Pretoria.

Mr. Goldberg had continued his activism in post-apartheid South Africa and was a critic of former Presi-



Denis Goldberg

dent Jacob Zuma, who stepped down in 2018 and faces multiple allegations of corruption.

Mr. Goldberg was a critic of the ANC's performance in government and the socio-economic conditions of the largely black poor majority in South Africa, one of the world's most unequal countries.

National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)

It is the implementation wing of the National Council for Rejuvenation, Protection, and Management of River Ganga also known as National Ganga Council (set in 2016; which replaced the NRGBA).

NMCG was established in the year 2011 as a registered society.

It has a two-tier management structure and comprises of Governing Council and Executive Committee.

The aims and objectives of NMCG are:

To ensure effective control of pollution and rejuvenation of the river Ganga by adopting a river basin approach to promote inter-sectoral coordination for comprehensive planning and management.

To maintain minimum ecological flows in the river Ganga with the aim of ensuring water quality and environmentally sustainable development.

Ganga Manthan- It was a national conference that was held in 2014 to discuss issues and possible solutions for cleaning the river. The event was organized by the National Mission for Clean Ganga.

In 2014, Clean Ganga Fund was also formed for cleaning up of the Ganga, setting up of waste treatment plants, conservation of biotic diversity of the river, and development of public amenities (activities such as Ghat redevelopment, and Research and Development and innovative projects). This fund will also be used to finance National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG).

In 2017, the National Green Tribunal banned the disposal of any waste in the Ganga.

Suitable alternative arrangements for idol immersion must be made in an environmental-friendly manner in order to preserve and conserve both the religious beliefs & sentiments and the environment.

The concerned authorities must ensure effective monitoring and strict enforcement of the enacted rules and regulations.

Even though the government has claimed that significant progress has been made, the data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) from earlier this year (2019) stated that water from River Ganga at several stretches is still unfit for direct drinking and bathing. So proper auditing and reporting must be done to take relevant actions.

Wipro 190.95 10.30
Zee Entertainment 159.35 -0.05

EXCHANGE RATES
Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on April 30

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	74.91	75.23
Euro	81.42	81.77
British Pound	93.66	94.08
Japanese Yen (100)	70.23	70.54
Chinese Yuan	10.63	10.68
Swiss Franc	77.09	77.43
Singapore Dollar	53.15	53.38
Canadian Dollar	54.01	54.25
Malaysian Ringgit	17.42	17.52
Australian Dollar	49.15	49.36

Source: Indian Bank

in oil prices consequent to the spread of COVID-19. Chairman Mukesh Ambani decided to forgo his full compensation for this year. Hital Meswani, executive director, RIL, in a letter to employees said, "The hydrocarbons business has been adversely impacted due to reduction in demand for refined products and petrochemicals. This has, of course, put pressure on our hydrocarbon business, necessitating optimisation and

board of directors, including executive directors and other senior leaders, will see a 30-50% cut in compensation, while the hydrocarbon division employees earning over ₹15 lakh a year will see a 10% pay cut. Performance-based pay and annual cash bonuses also stand deferred. "We will closely monitor the economic and business environment, re-evaluate a response to the situation on a continuous basis," Mr. Meswani said in his letter to RIL

activity, efficiency and costs. Together, we will embrace these opportunities and work towards restoring our compensation levels to normal." *The Hindu* has a copy of the letter. Mr. Mukesh Ambani's salary in 2018-19 stood at ₹15 crore, unchanged for the eleventh consecutive year. The Reliance Industries board approved Mr. Ambani's proposal to forgo his salary till the impact of COVID-19 abates.

spends took a massive hit amid the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing national lockdown. Further, volume growth, which denotes the actual number of products that consumers purchased, registered a decline of 7%. For the quarter ended March 31, 2020, income from sales was pegged at ₹8,885 crore as against ₹9,809 crore in the year-earlier period. Net profit dipped marginally to ₹1,519 crore from ₹1,538 crore. Net profit for FY20 rose 12% to ₹6,738 crore. "The slowdown in the market growth was visible in



the food and refreshment vertical declined 6.7%. The homecare segment declined 4.34%. Incidentally, the impact of COVID-19 was clearly visible as the company saw a jump of almost 60 times in the sales of hand sanitiser. Meanwhile, the board proposed a final dividend of ₹14 per share which, when combined with the interim dividend of ₹11, would result in a total dividend payout of ₹25 per share for FY20.

COVID-19 pulls down FMCG growth: Nielsen

Sector sees major impact in March

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI
In the first quarter of 2020, India's fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry grew at 6.3% - across traditional trade, modern trade and e-commerce - down from 7% in the previous quarter, largely due to the effect of COVID-19 felt in the month of March.



As per market research firm Nielsen, the initial two months of the quarter - January and February - saw signs of recovery before the COVID-19 pandemic impact led to a fall in the growth rate. "There were distinct signs of recovery in January and February, which is considered pre-COVID-19 for the India market. The industry clocked a growth of 7.5% in January and February.

This growth was significantly impacted in March, with the initial effect of COVID-19 bringing growth down to 4%. This led to a slowing down of overall growth for the quarter," the Nielsen report stated. In terms of distribution of growth across urban and rural markets, the study found that smaller towns in India with less than 10 lakh population witnessed a significant slowdown in March.

Minister talks to auto captains

Holds discussions on ways to bring the sector back on track

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA NEW DELHI



Prakash Javadekar

Heavy Industries Minister Prakash Javadekar, who on Thursday interacted with leaders from the automobile industry, said that the sector needs to be brought "back on wheels" even as the industry pitched for measures to stimulate demand as well as manufacturing.

The virtual meeting to discuss the plan to revive economic activity post the nationwide lockdown was attended by industry leaders including Maruti Suzuki India's Kenichi Ayukawa and Ashok Leyland's Vipin Sondhi. Additionally, presidents of the two auto industry bodies - SIAM's Rajan Wadhwa and ACMA's Deepak Jain - were in attendance. "This meeting was an important one because all the captains gave the scenario...

This industry is very important for India and we have to bring this industry back on its wheels," the Minister said.

Demand for GST cut
He added that the industry's demands included reduction in GST, employment support, support for retail as well as supply, and liquidity support. "... naturally, after what the industry has gone through, they have put up

demands but they have also given very good suggestions such as batch testing before workers rejoin duty, online registration of new vehicles and registration of BS-IV vehicles sold in March." He said these suggestions will now be discussed with other Ministries.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Kirloskar, also CII president, said one of the things industry highlighted was that the supply and value chains were integrated. "We cannot build vehicles even if one part is missing. Supply chains are spread around India and a few parts of the world... unless all is open, it is difficult to start production." He said on the demand side, it was important that dealerships be reopened first. For, unless they start selling, there won't be any demand.

Best monthly gain in Apr. for Sensex in 11 years

Possible virus drug adds to vigour

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

Indian equity benchmarks rose for the fourth consecutive day on Thursday on the back of strong global cues to register the best monthly gain in almost 11 years. The 30-share Sensex, that gained 1,167 points during intra-day trades to touch a high of 33,887.25, ended the day at 33,717.62, up 997.46 points or 3.05%.

More importantly, the benchmark Sensex rose 14.42% in April, which is the highest monthly gain since May 2009 when the 30-share barometer had gained 28.26%. Incidentally, the significant gains have come on the back of a 23.05% fall in March - the worst monthly fall since October 2008. Meanwhile, the broader

Nifty gained 306.55 points, or 3.21%, to settle the day at 9,859.90. Elsewhere in Asia, the benchmarks of China, Taiwan, Indonesia, Hong Kong, South Korea and Singapore, among others, all gained ground on Friday.

Investor optimism witnessed renewed vigour after reports surfaced about U.S. pharmaceutical major Gilead achieving a possible breakthrough in testing for a medicine to treat COVID-19. The U.S. Federal Reserve has committed to continue its support to fighting the economic impact of the pandemic while keeping interest rates at near zero. Foreign portfolio investors net bought almost ₹1,970 crore while their domestic counterparts net bought ₹579 crore on Thursday.



K.M. Mammen

ATMA seeks policy for tyre industry

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

The Automotive Tyre Manufacturers Association (ATMA) has urged the Centre to come out with a policy to address the genuine needs of the tyre industry with utmost urgency so that it would lead to significant increase in exports from India.

"Amid the new geo-political warfare, China is fast losing currency as the factory of the world. Led by nations such as the U.S. and Japan, the world is keenly looking for alternatives to China, for sourcing a host of products," said K.M. Mammen, chairman and managing director, MRF Ltd., and chairman, ATMA. This could be India's moment to seize the opportunity, as it had the potential to lead the march of manufacturing sector globally in the new world order, he said.

In this regard, ATMA urged the Centre to address two issues on urgent basis - imposing curbs on indiscriminate import of tyres into India and making available natural rubber at internationally competitive prices, through reduced duties. Asserting that a majority of international vehicle majors (OEMs) in India have been rolling out marquee models on India-made tyres, he said it truly represented "Make In India" spirit.

Crisil pegs govt. support at ₹3.5 lakh cr.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

Ratings agency Crisil has pegged the minimum fiscal support by the government to counter economic losses due to the lockdown at ₹3.5 lakh crore, excluding guarantees that the Centre may provide. This includes the ₹1.7 lakh crore stimulus that was announced by the government earlier.

Crisil, which has cut the GDP growth projection to 1.8% for the current financial year, said the forecast assumed the effect of the pandemic subsiding materially in the current quarter, besides a normal monsoon, and minimum fiscal support of ₹3.5 lakh crore. "We see a permanent loss of around 4% of GDP. Fiscal 2022 is likely to see a V-shaped recovery at over 7% real GDP growth," Dharmakirti Joshi, chief economist, Crisil, said.

Bank credit to NBFCs rises most since Jan. '08

Firms received funds to tide over virus

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

With bank credit registering a significant growth in March, the biggest beneficiaries are the non-banking financial companies (NBFC) and the industry sector, a report by the State Bank of India said.

"Credit to NBFC sector in March expanded by a sharp ₹1.15 lakh crore, the highest in 147 months/ January 2008," said the report, authored by Soumya Kanti Ghosh, group chief economic adviser, SBI. Incremental credit to industry in March stood at ₹1.34 lakh crore, which was also a 147-month high. Credit to micro, small and medium enterprises were at a 24-month high while infrastructure registered a 12-month high growth. "Even retail credit did not perform too badly with the

MF scheme benefits now for all banks

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

The RBI has extended the benefits of the special liquidity facility for mutual fund scheme to all the banks, irrespective of whether they avail funding from the central bank or deploy their own resources under the scheme.

Some of the benefits for the loans extended under the scheme include classification of such investments under the 'held to maturity', such exposures not be reckoned under large exposure framework. Exposures under this facility will not be reckoned under the Large Exposure Framework and also exempted from banks' capital market exposure limits. There are a number of mutual funds sponsored by banks, and these banks are providing liquidity support to the MFs from their own funds.

DCGI nod to Glenmark for trials of Favipiravir on COVID-19 patients

Multiple trials initiated on patients in China, Japan and U.S.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD

Glenmark Pharmaceuticals on Thursday said it had received approval from the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) to conduct clinical trials of Favipiravir antiviral tablets on COVID-19 patients.

The company said it was geared to immediately begin the exercise. "The clinical trials will let us know the efficacy of this molecule on COVID-19 patients," executive vice-president - Global R&D, Sushrut Kulkarni said. A generic version of Avigan from Japanese firm Fujifilm Toyama Chemical Co, Favipiravir has demonstrated activity against influenza viruses. It has been approved in Japan for the treatment of novel influenza virus infections. Multiple clinical trials have been in-

itiated on COVID-19 patients in China, Japan and in the U.S.

Glenmark said that having internally developed the active pharmaceutical ingredient (API) and the formulations for the product, it had filed for clinical trials with the DCGI. The regulator gave approval for conducting the trial on mild to moderate patients.

Strides exporting
Meanwhile, Strides Pharma Science announced that it had developed and commercialised, and was exporting the antiviral Favipiravir tablets. With regard to the India market, the company said it would immediately apply to Indian drug authorities to commence necessary studies and make the drug available to Indian patients

'expeditiously'. Strides said the product is currently being exported to GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) countries to treat patients under their treatment programme for COVID-19. The tablets were being manufactured at a Strides facility in Bangalore that can produce up to 6 billion units of solid orals annually. Also, the company has entered into a preferred arrangement with a leading Indian API manufacturer for supplies of Favipiravir API. CEO and MD R. Anantharayanan said Favipiravir had demonstrated positive outcomes in several studies on COVID-19 patients. The drug has demonstrated positive outcomes, including a reduction in the duration of COVID-19 and improved lung conditions for the patients.



BOBBY | 1973



AMAR AKBAR ANTHONY | 1977



EK CHADAR MALI SI | 1986



KAPOOR & SONS | 2016



MULK | 2018

Rishi and the inheritance of romance

Cool and retro-cool came to live happily ever after in the persona of the actor who embodied youthfulness

NAMRATA JOSHI
MUMBAI
If one were to describe Rishi Kapoor in a single phrase, it would be the embodiment of youth and romance. He defined love and all its protocols for the Gen X in India. An idea that, surprisingly, far from getting frayed at the seams, has been embraced heartily by millennials and Gen Z as well. Cool and retro-cool have come to live happily ever after in the persona of Rishi Kapoor.

Perhaps it has been so because the energy and liveliness he brought to romance was infectious and timeless. It's also the reason why it's hard to imagine him robbed of it now. That too at the age of just 67. He was full of life even in the thick of his treatment for leukaemia in the United States in 2018.

For a young man bequeathed with the enviable Kapoor blood and genes, Rishi was born into acting. The evidence of which was for all to see in his debut itself. Not the song 'Pyaar hua iqar hua' in his legendary father Raj Kapoor's *Shree 420* (1955), when he was barely three, but as the young Raju later in *Mera Naam Joker* (1970). It was a complicated role, of a boy's deep infatuation with his school teacher (played by Si-mi Garewal) and he brought alive the pain and anxieties of unattainable love well enough to bag the National Award for the Best Child Artist.

It was the following film, again by his father, *Bobby* (1973), a quintessential Bollywood romance, that unleashed him, along with Dimple Kapadia, as heartthrobs of the nation. The film came to form a new template for rebellious love. It was a love across class barriers, a love

in which eloping was a way of making a grand statement against societal constrictions. It was all about breaking free.

More of such youthful films started piling up for him in the 1970s and early 1980s - *Rafoo Chakkor* (1975), *Khel Khel Mein* (1975), *Laila Majnu* (1976), *Kabhie Kabhie* (1976), *Hum Kisise Kum Naheen* (1977), *Sargam* (1979), *Zamane Ko Dikhana Hai* (1981) and more. All of them were marked by a zesty musical score and cool dancing moves that have been rocking the dance floor till date.

Wholesome package

For the Spartan, pre-liberalisation 1970s and 80s India, his cinema would have been a wholesome package of heat-

1952 - 2020

diness, abandon and recklessness. It reflected in his own body language and the colours and designs of the trademark sweaters and mufflers he wore while singing and dancing with his lady love against fetching backdrops, in the hills, by the sea and often abroad. These films were dreamscapes in which the audience could live vicariously. Some even tried to turn the aspirational into attainable. Bollywood screenwriter Ishita Moitra tells me that one of the reasons her mother agreed to marry her father was because he was called Rishi. Such was the delirious passion for him.

Heady phase

His stand-out turns in *Akbar* (1985) and *Manmohan Desai's Amar Akbar Anthony* (1977), a lost and found film



From the album: Rishi Kapoor, right, with wife Neetu Singh and son Ranbir Kapoor in a photo dated September 3, 2013. • AFP

about three brothers which became a paean to the secular spirit of the nation. The element of cool reached the peak as music got mixed with murder to serve the most entertaining reincarnation saga - Subhash Ghai's *Karz* (1980). As Monty, Rishi strummed the guitar and sang 'Dard-e-dil' and danced to 'Om Shanti Om'. The young India did as well.

Late 1980s and 90s marked the decline of those romances. There were two stand-out films that were love triangles, in fact. One had him and Kamal Haasan vying for Dimple in her much-touted return *Saagar* (1985), and *Chandni* (1989) in which it was a fight between him and Vinod Khanna for Sridevi. *Bol Radha Bol* (1992), *Damini* (1993) and *Ena Meena Deeka* (1994) paved the way for the character roles of the 2000s. In between, in 1999,

Rishi also turned to direction with *Aa Ab Laut Chalen*.

Undervalued versatility

Cinema has way of often creating neat demarcations. It can box people in limiting slots. So a mainstream star may often get disregarded as an actor, unfairly so. Rishi Kapoor's versatility and the ability to transform was immense and criminally undervalued. If his debut wasn't radical enough, a few years down the line came Ramesh Talwar's *Doosra Aadmi* (1977) that looked at the tantalising possibility of a young man-older woman relationship. He played a man, forced by tradition, to marry his widowed sister-in-law Hema Malini in Sukhwant Dhadva's *Ek Chadar Maali Si* (1986), which was adapted from a Rajendra Singh Bedi novella. Raj Kapoor's *Prem Rog* (1982) made a progres-

sive call for widow remarriage. "I did offbeat films like *Doosra Aadmi* and *Ek Chadar Maali Si* back then, both of which failed. I was stuck with the identity of a lover boy in colourful sweaters singing songs in Ooty and Switzerland. I wasn't given enough challenging roles," he said.

He also took easily to the new ways, transitioning seamlessly into character roles and films made by a new brigade of filmmakers. From Zoya Akhtar's *Luck By Chance* (2009) to Rakshesh Omprakash Mehra's *Delhi 6* (2009) to Imtiaz Ali's *Love Aaj Kal* (2009), from Nikhil Advani's *D-Day* (2013) to Atul Sabharwal's *Aurangzeb* (2013) and more recently as the lascivious grandfather in Shakun Batra's *Kapoor and Sons* (2016) and the patriarch with a secular heart in Anubhav Sinha's *Mulk* (2018). The

most scintillating of them all was Habib Faisal's real slice of Delhi life - *Do Dooni Chaar* (2010) - in which he and wife Neetu returned to the screen as the middle-aged, middle-class Duggals working hard to bring up their two bright children. It felt so lived in, as though they hadn't left the big screen at all.

Social media stint

In his later years, he took just as easily to the social media as he did to the new filmmakers. Anushka Sharma introduced him to Twitter and Abhishek Bachchan revived his long defunct account. And so he started tweeting with his characteristic bluster, was blunt, forthright, disagreeable and often politically incorrect and aggressively in putting his views across.

I also got a glimpse of his mercurial side once. It was for the interview on his new online avatar that I WhatsApp-ed, him only to be rebuffed for not having appreciated him in *Kapoor and Sons*. However, within minutes, he seemed to have cooled down and had me come over the next day for an interview.

"I started acting when I was 15. Now, I have played a 90-year-old in *Kapoor & Sons*. I know you didn't like me in it, but it was important for me as an actor to have covered the entire spectrum," he told me. It was a wide-ranging conversation conducted over glasses of *pudina chaas* (mint buttermilk), which he claimed was the best he could get in Mumbai. I couldn't have agreed more. What lingers on still is this one line: "I am happy being an *abhineta* (actor), not a *neta* (politician)... Acting gives me a high".

Film fraternity recalls star's jovial personality

'Rishi had a larger-than-life presence'

STAFF REPORTER

MUMBAI

Rishi Kapoor's death was mourned by the film industry, as Lata Mangeshkar, Amitabh Bachchan and Karan Johar called it the end of an era of Hindi cinema, recalling his jovial and larger-than-life persona.

In a statement, his family said that the actor remained "determined to live to the fullest right through two years of treatment across two continents". The actor died at the age of 67 on Thursday at H.N. Reliance Hospital after a two-year-long battle with leukaemia. His last rites were conducted at the Chandanwadi crematorium in Marine Lines and was attended by close family members. On social media, daughter Riddhima Kapoor Sahni said Rishi Kapoor was her "strongest warrior".

Mr. Bachchan, a close friend and frequent collaborator of the actor, was the first to break the news on social media, but deleted his tweet later. They last acted together in *102 Not Out* (2018).

Actor Rajinikanth, who worked with Rishi Kapoor in *Dosti Dushmani* (1986) said he was heartbroken. Ms. Mangeshkar said the actor's passing away has created a huge void in the cinema industry. "It's really tough for me to bear this pain," she tweeted.

Singer Asha Bhosle said the actor was always by her side but she could not be with him in this hour of grief. Filmmaker Habib



Neetu Singh and Abhishek Bachchan at Rishi Kapoor's funeral. • PTI

Faisal, who directed Kapoor in *Do Dooni Chaar* (2010), told *The Hindu* that the actor was keen on doing a sequel to the film once. "He was passionate about three things: films, food and people," said Mr. Faisal. Filmmaker Nikhil Advani, who worked with Kapoor in *D-Day* told *The Hindu*, "We were pretty honest with each other and I would call it a unique friendship".

Aamir Khan said that the industry has lost one of the greats today, who was "100 percent a child of cinema". "You will be badly missed Rishiji," he said. Madhuri Dixit said working with the veteran actor in films like *Yaarana* (1981) and *Prem Granth* (1996) was an honour and that she was "absolutely heartbroken" with his demise.

Filmmaker Maneesh Sharma, who directed him in *Shuddh Desi Romance* (2013) said, "He was the oldest person on set but the youngest at heart. It was the biggest pleasure for me when he agreed to do that film, and I was a fanboy throughout the shoot."

Football legend Chuni Goswami passes away

Led India to glory at the 1962 Asian Games; also captained Bengal in the Ranji Trophy

AMITABHA DAS SHARMA
KOLKATA

Subimal 'Chuni' Goswami - the man who inspired India to its most talked-about moment of football glory, gold at the 1962 Asian Games in Jakarta - is no more. The footballer extraordinaire breathed his last in a city nursing home on Thursday evening. He was 82.

The high point of India's presence in international football came in the 1960s, and it was Goswami's leadership that brought together a group of outstanding players who produced magic for the team, which beat South Korea 2-1 in the final.

Extremely skilful

"I always called him 'Captain'. There was a commanding [quality] about him that made him the natural choice as captain," said Arun Ghosh, the great defender of the gold-winning team. "He was extremely skilful as a forward and most of our opponents planned their strategies keeping Chuni da (elder brother) in mind. He possessed the skill and ingenuity to beat any kind of defence."

According to statistics available with the All India Football Federation (AIFF), Goswami represented India in 36 official international matches, including 16 as captain. He scored 13 international goals. He was honoured with the Arjuna Award in 1963 and the Padma Shri in 1983.



Multifaceted: Chuni made his mark both as a brilliant footballer and a quality cricketer. • FILE PHOTO: K.N. CHARI

Goswami had spoken many times of receiving an invitation from prominent English club Tottenham Hotspur to appear for trials.

This came after news of India's win in Jakarta spread far and wide. But Goswami refused to travel. He was not

keen on leaving Mohun Bagan, where he enjoyed immense popularity as captain and spent the entirety of his career.

"It is sad to hear that Chuni-Da, one of India's greatest footballers, is no more. He will stay synonymous with

Greats pay tribute

Tulsidas Balamram (part of the football trinity with PK and Chuni): I am really shocked. First PK Banerjee and now Chuni is gone. We were very, very good friends. We had mutual respect. I have so many fond memories. I'm really not in a frame of mind to speak further.

S.S. Hakim (Olympics teammate): I vividly remember he played the best against France in the 1960 Games. India may not see such great footballers. They were passionate about the game, simple, humble and gentlemen to the core, who put national pride ahead of anything.

the golden generation of Indian football. Chuni-Da you will remain alive in our hearts," said AIFF president Praful Patel in a statement.

Darling of fans, peers

Goswami's quick reflexes and dribbling ability made him the darling of both fans and peers. "The stories about his exceptional skill which helped Mohun Bagan win scores of titles have been passed down through generations and make him so popular even now," said Olympian Samar Banerjee.

Sunil Gavaskar: Today is a truly depressing day. First Rishi (Kapoor) and now Chuni da have left us. Both champions and legends in their craft. The world will be the poorer for their departure.

Bhaichung Bhutia: It's a big loss for Indian football in two-three months. First PK Banerjee and now Chuni Goswami. He was a true sporting icon.

He was the first superstar of Indian football.

Sunil Chhetri: We've lost one of the leading lights of Indian sport. Not too many can boast of being top-notch in two sports. You played your part to the fullest, rest well, Chuni sir. Strength to the family.

"Chuni Goswami is a god for me. He is definitely one of the best footballers to have played for the country. The loss is irreparable," said former India captain and Mohun Bagan stalwart Subrata Bhattacharya.

A versatile sportsman, Goswami captained the Bengal cricket team to the Ranji Trophy final in 1971-72 and was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Cricket Association of Bengal in 2012.

Goswami is survived by his wife and son.

Bengal's cricket family fondly remembers Chuni

Y.B. SARANGI
KOLKATA

Bengal's cricket fraternity too mourned deeply at the passing away of Chuni Goswami.

Former Test cricketer Dilip Doshi said it was a privilege to follow with Goswami. "He was India's all-round sportsman and there was much to learn from him about fitness and fighting spirit."

"His will to fight the issue out was infectious and as a footballer and India's captain as well, we learnt much about fitness attitude from him. He had a great sense of humour which he used timely to release the tension in the dressing room. India

is poorer without such icons," said Doshi.

First Class cricketer Satyabrata Mukherjee, who also played with Goswami, remembered the multifaceted icon.

"He set examples for others to follow. The best thing about him was his tremendous sense of humour. Once, a Bengal batsman was worried about the size of the sightscreen and Chuni da said, 'Are you going to watch the sightscreen or the ball?'"

Former Bengal captain Sambaran Banerjee hailed Goswami as a natural athlete. "He was equally good in football, cricket and tennis. He was always cheerful and boosted youngsters."



Long vigil ends: Chuni Goswami, being dismissed by Milind Rege, scored 96 and 84 for Bengal in the 1969 Ranji Trophy final against Bombay. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

IN BRIEF



Sania nominated for Fed Cup Heart award

NEW DELHI

Sania Mirza on Thursday became the first Indian to be nominated for the Fed Cup Heart Award from the Asia/Oceania zone. She recently made a comeback to Fed Cup tennis after four years, with her 18-month son Ishaan present in the stands. • PTI

Labuschagne gets CA contract, Khawaja out

MELBOURNE

Marnus Labuschagne and Joe Burns were rewarded for their performances in Cricket Australia's annual player contracts announced on Thursday. Usman Khawaja and Shaun Marsh missed out. • PTI

Virus forces Hundred delay

LONDON

English cricket's new Hundred competition has been delayed until 2021 because of the coronavirus pandemic; it was announced on Thursday. • AFP

Nakamura, Caruana and Iren make the last four

NEW DELHI

Hikaru Nakamura, Fabiano Caruana and Ding Liren joined Magnus Carlsen in the semifinals of the \$250,000 Magnus Carlsen online chess tournament on Wednesday. **Sixth round results:** Hikaru Nakamura (USA) bt Ding Liren (Chn) 3-2; Fabiano Caruana (USA) bt Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (Fra) 2.5-1.5.

