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FRIDAY, MAY 1, 2020, KOLKATA, LATE CITY, 12 PAGES

Almost 50% of the dead are below age 60, up from 25%

ABANTIKA GHOSH NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

OF THE 1,075 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) deaths across the country till Thursday, almost half the patients were less than 60 years old. This marks a shift since April 18, when less than 25 per cent of the deaths occurred in this age group.

On the other hand, those aged over 75 years now account for only 9.2 per cent of the deaths, a sharp fall from the 42.2 per cent earlier.

Ahead of May 3, when the lockdown is scheduled to end, Union Health Secretary Preeti Sudan has asked state chief secretaries to "broadbase" the criteria for red, orange and green zones, and designate areas according to their assessment. As per the revised criteria, she said, green zones are districts which haven't reported a fresh case in 21 days, down from the 28 days earlier. In her letter, she listed 130 red, 284 orange, and 319 green districts.

The districts were earlier designated as hotspots / red zones, orange zones and green zones, primarily based on the cumulative cases reported and the doubling rate. Since recovery rates have gone up, the districts are now being designated across various zones duly broad-basing CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

> We are closed today on account of World Labour Day. There will be no edition of The Indian Express on Saturday, May 2, 2020.

THE EDITORIAL PAGE

THE EXIT DILEMMA BY DEEPAK NAYYAR

THE WORLD

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S KOREA, HONG KONG **MILESTONE: A DAY** WITH NO NEW CASES TRUMP SAYS CHINA WANTS HIM TO LOSE **RE-ELECTION BID**

PAGE 10

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

SHUBHRA GUPTA

NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

DEALING WITH ECONOMIC FALLOUT OF LOCKDOWN

Second stimulus: Govt plans targeting based on need, MSMEs to begin with

PM wary of open-ended provisions: Fund for MSME with guarantee likely

AANCHAL MAGAZINE & SUNNY VERMA

NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

AS THE Covid pandemic and the prolonged lockdown batter all sectors of the economy, the government, sources said, is working on a rescue package that, for now, may address the needs of the micro, small and medium en $terprise (MSME) segment \, rather \,$ than the larger corporate sector.

More than six meetings have been held at the Prime Minister's Office — including Thursday's with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal - to discuss the scope and quantum of the second fiscal package.

But what has held back an announcement is the open-endedness of the stimulus being pushed by sections the government. CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 worst hit

MSMEs are among the worst affected by the downturn. Since they don't have large buffers that blue-chip companies have, the government is planning a relief package for smaller firms to improve their access to funding and their liquidity position.

Adopt proactive approach on investment: PM to team

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

IN ORDER to give a boost to the economy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a detailed meeting Thursday on strategies to attract more foreign investment and promote domestic investment. He also reviewed the contribution of the mining sector in increasing employment opportunities and boosting growth.

Modi advocated a "more proactive approach" to handhold investors, solving their problems and helping them in getting all necessary central and state government clearances in a timebound manner, according to a statement from the Prime Minister's Office.

The meeting was attended by Home Minister Amit Shah CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Sealing fears, dip in patients, wary staff are making private hospitals play safe

ISOLATED

AN EXPRESS SERIES

PART 2

PRABHA RAGHAVAN & TABASSUM **BARNAGARWALA**

NEW DELHI MUMBAI, APRIL 30

IT HAS BEEN a strug-

gle for Dr Rohintan Dastur, Medical Director at South Mumbai's Bhatia Hospital, to get his

700-odd staff back to work after it and doctors have reported to was first sealed on April 8. He offered them transport, hotel stay

to cut travel risks, and even oneand-a-half times the salary. "They were scared," says 67-

year old Dr Dastur, his face half covered by an N-95 mask as he walks in Private & an empty lane near

his home at Cuffe Parade. The 200bed hospital managed to resume limited services just a day ago. Nurses

work, but house-keeping staff is **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

What Bengal's official tally doesn't say: One in 8 who tested positive died of virus

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE KOLKATA, APRIL 30

WEST BENGAL Wednesday revealed that 105 persons infected with the coronavirus had died in the state, but maintained that only 33 of these deaths could directly be attributed to COVID-19. The other 72 had pre-existing diseases, or co-morbidities, and the fact that they had also tested positive for coronavirus was "incidental", Chief Secretary Rajiva Sinha said.

The latest numbers were revealed by an expert committee that was formed to carry out an audit of all the coronavirus deaths being reported in the state and assess the exact reasons.

"The Death Audit Committee has recommended that Health Department officials should keep more records of patients, and improve the procedure of keeping records. The committee

BUSINESS AS USUAL By UNNY Our May Day Robotics: Workers programmed to vanish into villages

INSIDE

MURSHIDABAD MEDICAL COLLEGE CHIEF REMOVED

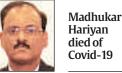
also advised that there should be a uniform format to issue death **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

Officer dies, BMC may exit Mumbai food distribution

LAXMAN SINGH MUMBAI, APRIL 30

In the first death of a municipal staff due to COVID-19 in Mumbai, 49-year-old Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) official who was taking care of food distribution to homeless and migrant workers in Dharavi area passed away on Wednesday.

With his death setting off



died of Covid-19 panic and another municipal

staff testing positive, Mumbai Mayor Kishori Pednekar said the civic body would conduct medical check-up of all its officials involved in food distribution. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

Migrants headed to villages in UP reach Allahabad from MP on Thursday. Ritesh Shukla Covid effect: Oman says its own will replace expats in govt sectors

SHUBHAJIT ROY NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

AS GULF economies face a slowdown due to the oil crisis triggered by the coronavirus outexpatriates employed in the country's "government sectors"

to be replaced by nationals. With government jobs already reserved for nationals under a "decades-old" policy of "Omanisation", the latest move is expected to affect expatriates employed in state-run companies.

VISHWAS WAGHMODE &

MUMBAI, NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

MAHARASHTRA Governor B S

Koshyari on Thursday asked the

Election Commission to hold

elections to nine Legislative

Council seats in the state "at the

earliest". Chief Minister Uddhav

Thackeray needs to win from

one of those seats to become a

member of the legislature before

RITIKA CHOPRA

In New Delhi, the fear is that Oman's move could "become the new normal" for many of the embattled economies in the region. There are more than 7 lakh Indians in Oman, of which about 6 lakh are blue collar workers the Indian Embassy in Muscat.

Besides Indians, Bangladesh and Pakistan nationals form a major chunk of the expatriate community, which totals about one-third of Oman's population of over 46 lakh.

According to a monthly statistical bulletin for April issued by

Way cleared for Uddhay, Maharashtra

Governor asks EC to hold Council polls

a six-month deadline expiring

Sources told The Indian

Express that the EC is likely to

agree to Koshyari's request and

hold polls to the nine seats.

which fell vacant on April 24, at

on May 27.

Running out

enter House

Oman's National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) and published by Times of Oman 53,332 expatriates worked in the government sector as of Marchend, with the total number of foreign workers at 13.21.753.

Officially the Indian or ment has downplayed the latest Stressing that directive. "Omanisation" is a "decades-old policy", the Ministry of External Affairs' spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said: "The policy is not India-specific, and not targeted towards India.'

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

the earliest. The poll panel has

called a meeting Friday morning

EC came hours after Shiv Sena

leaders submitted a letter to him

from Thackeray, and two days af-

ter the CM approached Prime

Minister Narendra Modi on the

matter. Thackeray called up the

PM after the Governor sat on a

recommendation made a month

ago by the state government to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

The Governor's letter to the

to examine the matter.

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"MAIN SHAAYAR toh nahin, magar aii haseen, jabse dekha maine tuhjhko mujhko shaayari aa gayi". The year, 1973. The film,

Bobby. The actor, Rishi Kapoor, singing that song to his beloved. Bobby was a smash hit. Overnight, the Rishi Kapoor-Dimple Kapadia jodi became such a rage that it seemed there had been no youthful romance before it, and in a manner of speaking, there hadn't.



The khullam-khulla boy everyone loved

to love: Rishi Kapoor passes away at 67

RISHI KAPOOR 1953-2020

Raj Kapoor's talent for telling oversize stories melding soppiness and sharpness, combined with his eye for spotting pubes-

cent beauties and a mint-fresh pair, did the trick. Polka-dotted bikinis and an artful streak of 'besan' adorning the hairline

for young women, and every single young love-lorn 'aashiq' became a 'shaayar', praying for a "band kamra" and lost keys. The wearer of those trademark double-knit sweaters and

(Dimple's opening scene in the

colourful mufflers passed away this morning in a Mumbai hospital, after a two-year struggle with cancer. He had spent a year in the US getting treated and had returned late last year, in a buoyant mood. His family said he was 'jovial' right to the end - and that sounds just about right for a man who supped (and sipped) well, laughed loudly, and loved well and fully. He was 67.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

West Bengal

certificates. The committee advised the death certificates should have immediate cause of death, antecedent cause of death and underlying cause of death," Sinha said.

West Bengal had formed this committee on April 2. Till that day, the state had reported seven deaths, but the government revised it downward to three, citing the same reason.

On April 24, the expert committee gave its first report in which it had said that of the 57 deaths of coronavirus-positive patients in the state till then, only 18 could be attributed directly to COVID-19.

Co-morbid conditions in people dying due to COVID-19 is not uncommon, In fact, more than 50 per cent of people who have died in India had a pre-existing disease — diabetes and hypertension were the most common. The details of many of the rest are not known, and it is possible that a significant number even among those would have co-morbid conditions.

Most of the other states have included the deaths of all those who tested positive in its COVID-19 toll, And, no state has reported such a large difference in the numbers of actual deaths of coronavirus-positive patients, and those whose deaths have been ascertained to have been caused primarily by COVID-19.

However, following in the footsteps of West Bengal, several have also constituted death audit committees. Authorities in Delhi, Mumbai and Puniab have announced that expert committees would assess the cause of death in every case where a positive patient dies.

On Thursday, West Bengal reported that it had 572 "active" Coronavirus cases. A total of 139 people who had earlier tested positive had recovered, while 33 had

That would give the state a total caseload of 744. But, by adding the 72 others who have died, since they have been confirmed to have tested positive, the total number of cases would go up to 816. This would mean that at least one in every eight persons who has tested positive in the state has died. No other state in the country has such a high case fatality ratio.

The Indian Express has reported that West Bengal was the state with the fastest spread of the disease right now, and the lowest doubling time.

In the last 24 hours, Sinha said, 1,905 samples were tested. Overall, the 14 designated labs in the state have tested 16.525 samples. "One of our testing laboratories has not been working over the last three days due to some technical problems. Two more private laboratories have been added to the list but they have not started testing samples of COVID-19,"

According to a report by the Health Department, positive cases are now being reported mainly from Kolkata, Howrah, Hooghly and North 24 Parganas districts.

"All over the state, there are 444 containment zones, of which major zones are from three districts, Kolkata, Howrah and North 24 Parganas. In Kolkata, there are 264 containment zones. In Howrah and North 24 Parganas, there are 72 and 70 containment zones, respectively," the report

The official figures show that 5,288 persons are in government quarantine and 10,773 in home.

Officer dies

Pednekar said with the demand for food expected to come down as states take their migrant labour back, the BMC might also stop distribution of food. "After this, corporators can make arrangement for food distribution in (their) respective wards. Also, grains, instead of food packets, will be considered," she said in a recorded video.

The BMC has been distributing about 6 lakh food packets to labourers and homeless across the

city daily. Madhukar Hariyan, who died on Wednesday, was an inspector in the Assessment Department of G-North Ward (Dharavi, Dadar, Shivaii Park) and had been working for the BMC for more than 15 years. A resident of Borivali, he did not have any co-morbidity, a civic official said. According to BMC officials, Hariyan developed fever on April 22 and had not been coming

to office since then. "Initially, he went to a private doctor in Borivali. However, his condition started deteriorating. Since he had COVID-19 like symptoms, he was tested on Monday and the results came positive after two days. On Wednesday, when municipal staff were taking him to Kasturba Hospital for treatment, he died on the way," an official said.

The 30 staff members of G-North Ward who had been in contact with Hariyan have been tested for COVID-19 and sent to home quarantine for 14 days pending re-

sults. "Since none of them has symptoms, we have told them to stay at home," Assistant Municipal Commissioner, G-North Ward, Kiran Dighavkar said. Samples have also been taken of Harivan's mother, wife and two daughters.

With a population density of 35,000 per sq km and more than 8 lakh people, Dharavi remains a challenge for the BMC. On Wednesday, 14 new cases were reported from the slum area, taking the total cases there to 344. It has seen 18 deaths of people with coronavirus.

The BMC is currently distributing food at 700 spots in the city, through more than 800 Planning Department staff. They collect food from 44 community kitchens.

The BMC union said very little had been done to ensure their safety. "Hariyan lost his life due to the BMC's negligence. We had demanded medical check-up of all the municipal staff part of food distribution as they did not have safety gear and directly came in contact with many people. Now, after Hariyan's death, the BMC has promised to conduct check-up of all staff and give them basic protective equipment," said Ramakant Bane, general secretary

On Thursday, Dr Sangita Hasnale, Assistant Municipal Commissioner. Planning Department, and in charge of food distribution, issued a circular saying all the staff would be checked

Almost 50% dead

the criteria. This classification is multi-factorial and takes into conbling rate, extent of testing and surveillance feedback to classify the districts. A district will be considered under green zone if there are are no confirmed cases so far or there is no reported case since last 21 days in the district," Sudan

Among the states and UTs which have 10 or more districts in the red zone are Delhi, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.

Meanwhile, according to the latest data released by the Union Health Ministry, 14 per cent of COVID-19 patients who died were less than 45 years, 34.8 per cent were 45-60 years, 42 per cent were 60-75 years, 9.2 per cent were over 75 years. This means that 48.8 per cent of those who died were aged less than 60 years.

On April 18, when the death toll stood at 488, a similar analysis by the Health Ministry had revealed that 42.2 per cent of the deaths occurred in the over-75years age group, 33.1 per cent in 60-75 years, 10.3 per cent in 45-60 years, and 14.4 per cent below 45 years. So, only 24.7 per cent of those who died were aged less

While the case fatality rate is 3.2 per cent, 78 per cent of those who died had co-morbidities down from 83 per cent on April 18 and 65 per cent were males.

In the last 24 hours, 1,823 new cases and 67 deaths were reported. While the total case count is now 33,610, about 25 per cent have recovered (8,372). A total of 8,30,201 samples have been tested so far.

The national doubling time has now increased to 11 days - it was 3.4 days before the lockdown. The doubling time is even more in several states and Union territories (UTs). In Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Punjab, the doubling time is 11-20 days. In Karnataka, Ladakh, Haryana, Uttarakhand and Kerala, it is 20-40 days; in Assam, Telangana, Chhattisgarh and Himachal Pradesh it is more than 40 days in Himachal Pradesh, it is over 191

Following a letter from Sudan to the states earlier, the Health Ministry reiterated in a statement that hospitals must ensure non-COVID essential services. "A guidance note of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has been issued on April 20 to enable the delivery of essential health services during the COVID-19 outbreak. This includes providing essential services for reproductive and child health.immunisation.communicable diseases such as TB, leprosy and vector-borne diseases, as well as non-communicable diseases

such as cancer and dialysis," it said. The ministry said reports that private hospitals are "hesitant to provide critical services like dialysis, blood transfusion, chemotherapy and institutional deliveries to their regular patients" are "unacceptable".

"States/UTs are also advised to follow the guidelines regarding COVID-19 testing issued by ICMR on April 17. The protocol should be widely disseminated among healthcare service providers and testing for COVID-19 should be as per protocol," it said.

At the daily briefing, Health Ministry Joint Secretary Lav Agarwal said that adequate availability of hydroxychloroquine has

Govt plans targeting based on need

"The Prime Minister has been asking 'searching' questions. What probably weighs in his mind is the aftermath of the massive stimulus the government imparted following the 2008 global financial crisis. Few large industrial groups made the most of the monetary and fiscal stimulus, built huge and unsustainable balance sheets, left banks with large NPAs, and this also led to high inflation," said a source who did not wish to be

The political leadership is keen to avoid this.

While individual ministries and departments are making a strong case for a large-scale fiscal package, there are indications from other quarters for a need to pause, calibrate the impact and then announce any intervention. The Prime Minister is worried about the lack of a "sunset clause" in stimulus provisions.

"He would rather have it more focused. MSMEs, health care, financial sector, and the poor and vulnerable - these will remain the target segments," another official said

Sources involved in discussing the second fiscal package said that a consensus seems to be emerging that within industry, MSMEs have not gained much and continue to feel the pain despite measures an-

Proactive approach

Finance Minister Nirmala

Sitharaman, Minister for

Commerce & Industries Piyush

Goyal, MoS (Finance) Anurag

Thakur and top officials of the

central government. It came

amid expectations that the gov-

ernment plans to announce a

fresh set of relief measures for

MSMEs and needy sections of

society to help them combat the

adverse economic effects of the

scheme should be developed to

promote more plug and play in-

frastructure in the existing in-

dustrial lands/plots/estates in the

country and provide necessary

financing support," the PMO

said. The government may look

at easing some of the existing

regulations to attract greater for-

investments into India in a fast-

track mode and to promote

'Various strategies to bring

eign investment.

"It was discussed that a

 $nounced\,by\,the\,Finance\,Ministry$ in its first package and steps taken by the Reserve Bank of India so far.

Sources said MSMEs may be supported through a fund that carries a government guarantee. "The government could also provide a direct guarantee against fresh loans to units in the sector so that they can raise funds from banks to stay solvent," said a source, not wishing to be named.

Officials indicated there is a clear realisation that there exists limited fiscal space for a big package of the order of the one extended in 2009.

MSME minister Nitin Gadkari had, on April 24, indi $cated\,the\,possibility\,of\,setting\,up$ a Rs 1 lakh crore revolving fund for MSMEs. It is learnt that directions have been given to the PSUs to settle bills raised by MSMEs to ensure the latter's working capital requirements are met.

The government's plan is to ensure higher working capital limits, clearance of any pending dues and credit guarantee against loan losses to MSMEs so that banks lend to them.

While a credit guarantee fund for MSMEs is already run by SIDBI, the new proposal is the government providing a direct guarantee against fresh loans to

This could also be done

Indian domestic sectors were

discussed. Detailed discus-

The shutdown of the econ-

sions were held on guiding states

to evolve their strategies & be

more proactive in attracting in-

omy to combat COVID-19 is ex-

pected to take a severe toll on

economic activity, leading to a

slump in economic growth and

making any possible recovery

gue that the economy, especially

the MSMEs, would require

greater fiscal support to survive

through this worst downturn,

even though the government

will have to balance any expan-

sion in public expenditure with

the needs of maintaining fiscal

Rating agency CRISIL has

lowered its growth outlook for

India in fiscal 2021 to 1.8 per cent,

from the 3.5 per cent estimated

earlier. The forecast is based on

an assumption that the Covid ef-

Economists and analysts ar-

vestments," it said

very slow.

through a government-backed special purpose vehicle which is expected to nudge banks to boost lending to MSMEs and lower-rated companies, for which funding has been choked because of risk-averse banks.

For the corporate sector as a whole, a package, if any, will likely be discussed well after the lockdown is lifted and issues specific to individual sectors such as automobiles or aviation get

There is a view that large corporates got benefits from the corporate tax cut last September when rates for domestic companies were reduced to 22 per cent from earlier rate of 30 per cent. Moreover, the upcoming

salary payment position of companies in early May, when April salaries would be disbursed, is also being tracked closely to gauge signs of distress. As part of the stimulus, the government has also finalised plans to set up a credit enhance-

ment company to support

lower-rated infra projects - a pro-

posal that has been in the works some time. The proposed company, for which inter-ministerial discussions have been completed will provide partial guarantee against loan losses to lenders, enabling the borrower to enhance its

credit ratings for infra projects.

fect will subside materially in the

current quarter, besides a nor-

mal monsoon, and minimum

in March 2019.

obstacles which impede promo-

fiscal support of Rs 3.5 lakh crore. Data released Thursday showed that the output of eight core infrastructure industries shrank by 6.5 per cent in March due to fall in production of crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertiliser, steel, cement and electricity amid the lockdown, compared to 5.8 per cent expansion

The first economic relief package of Rs 1.7 lakh crore was mainly focussed on direct cash transfers to the poor and income support to farmers. The next leg of relief is being aimed at providing help to companies along with a focus to free up lending

"It was also discussed that the reform initiatives undertaken by the various Ministries should continue unabated and action should be taken in a timebound manner to remove any

resources of the banks.

tion of investment and industrial growth," the PMO said.

"This company will de-risk the

banking sector, enable more

funding for new projects of

nearly Rs 3 lakh crore from banks

and the corporate bond market,"

so far tried to remain within the

additional 0.5 percentage point

space provided under the Fiscal

Responsibility and Budget

Management (FRBM) laws,

there is a realisation within gov-

ernment that more needs to

deficit target by 1.5 per cent of

GDP could generate around Rs

3.5 lakh crore that can be used to

provide an economic stimulus,

according to a recent CRISIL re-

Compared to many devel-

oped economies, many analysts

argue that India has done much

less on the fiscal side while the

RBI has been proactive in mone-

lakh crore, comprising direct in-

come transfer and other meas-

ures, is only 0.7 per cent of GDP,

compared with 2.5 per cent in

China, 8.9 per cent in the US, 7.9

per cent in South Korea and 6.6

per cent in Brazil, the report said.

far not responded to queries

seeking comments for the story.

The Finance Ministry has so

India's fiscal package of Rs 1.7

search report.

tary easing.

A relaxation of the fiscal

While the government has

the official said.

Modi discussed potential reforms in the mines and coal sectors to give a boost to the economy - ensuring easy and abundant availability of mineral resources from domestic sources, upscaling exploration, attracting investment and modern technology, to generate large scale employment through a transparent and efficient processes.

According to an official statement, auctioning of additional blocks, encouraging wider participation in auctions, increasing the production of mineral resources, reducing the cost of mining and cost of transporting, increasing ease of doing business while also reducing carbon footprint with environmentally sustainable development also formed important part of the discussions.

biguity in state government policies in involving and allowing pri-

vate facilities.

"An area where additional clarity would help is the testing of patients on admission as well as pre-operatively. This seems important to safeguard other patients and staff from patients who may be positive, but asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic," said Dr Ashutosh Raghuvanshi, Managing Director and CEO, Fortis

"Situations like this may result in quarantine of large numbers of medical staff, which we can ill afford at this juncture," he said. Fortis Healthcare has set up isolation wards and earmarked 350 isolation beds across its 28 hospitals.

Hospitals like Apollo too face constraints in treating patients coming to their facilities for crucial, non-Covid treatment. Unsure if they are carrying the coronavirus, which puts Apollo's staff at risk of infection, the hospital is bulking up on its use of personal protection equipment. While Apollo can still afford this, smaller private nursing homes and facilities in states like Maharashtra have also been demanding PPEs for

their staff. "In every emergency room now, all our staff wears PPEs, because we don't know who has come in. Everyone is treated as (Covid) positive, because we have this major constraint of testing," said Dr Reddy

"There is a lack of communication between government departments. While one department will understand the merit in allowing us to operate a certain way, another department will say the opposite," said the executive of a private hospital in Delhi on condition of anonymity.

In other states like Gujarat, private hospitals were never discouraged from treating Covid patients. However, following the nationwide lockdown, these hospitals operated on thin staff, taking in patients who required emergency procedure, congruent to the state health department's advisory to avoid planned procedures.

On April 19, Gujarat decided that those willing to pay and get treated in private hospitals, can do so in three facilities in Ahmedabad Sterling Hospital, HCG Hospital and Narayana Multi-speciality Hospital. Sterling and HCG Hospital had started treating

Covid patients last week, while Multi-speciality Hospital was still in the process of drafting its treatment protocol.

In the absence of defined treatment protocols and lack of access to protective and testing equipment earlier, some private hospitals were refusing admission to patients with flu-like symptoms, instead directing them to government facilities. Despite warnings and advisories by states, many private hospitals are still unwilling to risk whatever little business they are getting from non-Covid pa-

Oman

Over the past few weeks, Oman has announced budget cuts to stabilise the economy. By Wednesday, the country had recorded 2,274 COVID-19 cases and 10 related deaths.

Two weeks ago, the state barred private companies from sacking Omanis under job cuts targeted to lessen the economic burden caused by the coronavirus crisis. It also urged private firms to ask non-Omani employees "to leave permanently".

The new circular issued by Oman's Ministry of Finance Wednesday called for expatriates employed in the country's government sectors to be replaced by Omanis, so that they can contribute to the development of the Sultanate, according to a report in the Times of Oman published

"The order for Omanisation of government sectors will have its implementation costs included in the 2021 budget estimates, which need to be submitted by July 2020. The circular has also said that the replacement of expats with Omanis will need to be done in a speedy and organised manner,' the report said.

It quoted Oman's Finance ministry as saying that the state's Financial and Administrative Audit Institution indicated the presence of a number of expatriates who occupy leadership and supervisory jobs in government firms. It quoted the ministry as say-

ing that government companies are considered an "attractive environment that can accommodate qualified Omani job seekers" and that the companies have "good potential to execute the government's Omanisation policy". On April 7, Prime Minister

Narendra Modi had called up Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tariq to discuss "health and economic challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the steps being taken" by their countries to respond to them.

"Sultan assured PM about the safety and wellbeing of the Indian community in Oman in the present situation." the MEA had said.

Omar's former ruler, Sultan Oaboos bin Said, who died in January, had been a benefactor of the Indian community for decades. India had sent Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi to Muscat to convey its con-

Rishi Kapoor

Bobby was one of those films which turned iconic even while it was playing in theatres. It resurrected the flailing fortunes of Rai Kapoor, who was then reeling from the crash and burn of his 1970 laced-with-melancholy, semi-autographical opus. Mera Naam Joker. It gave the wavyhaired, fair-and-handsome Rishi, who had a small but significant part in the former, his break-out

A star was born, And Rishi Kapoor became the golden boy of Bollywood, the singing-dancingromancing hero we all loved to

That Rishi Kapoor would be a star, was ordained. And he remained one all through his long career that was dotted with all kinds of films, good, bad and plain indifferent, top-lining the youthful, bashful, charmer that he played so well, till there came a time when he couldn't, and tipped over into that stage when an actor can be called a veteran.

In the last few years, in Yashraj's Hum Tum (2004), Kapoor played the kind of suave. worldly, wine-sipping dads who are more supportive pals to their kids. He graduated to grandpa status in the Karan Johar production, 'Kapoor & Sons' (2016), where he was buried under lavers of latex: Kapoor, always a star but also always an able actor, could have given us age without the makeup. He had the mileage.

In his best iteration of the vouthful lover, he dialled down the mannerisms, looked straight into the eyes of the girl, and smiled that smile. Never as crinkly as his uncle Shashi's, it was still a smile that did the trick. It melted the heart of the girl in front of him, and all the swooning ladies in the audito-

In 1976, Rishi was part of Yash Chopra's evergreen romantic multi-starrer, Kabhie Kabhi. Those

were the days of bell-bottoms, bouffants, floppy collared-shirts, and hangdog lovers. Rishi aced the look, and brightened up the film considerably. The same year, he had a huge success as a solo hero with Laila Majnu, in which he and Ranjeeta played the mythic starcrossed lovers.

But Kapoor could also be surprisingly light on his feet. His comic timing was on full display in the 1975 double-bill Khel Khel Mein and Rafoochakkar, in which he made whoopee with Neetu Singh: the two would go on to make another extremely popular 'jodi' in a number of films, and end

Kapoor was right on top, all through the 70s. He had the ability to switch between broad brushstrokes and delicacy, and we saw that in 1977, when he disco-ed it up - in blindingly shiny sequins, strumming the guitar — in Nasir Hussain's musical Hum Kissi Se Kam Nahin. The same year, in a remarkably versatile flip, he appeared in the sombre drama, Doosra Admi.

And once again, the same year,

a switcheroo. Who can forget

Akbar Allahabadi in 'Amar Akbar Anthony': that paan-stainedteeth, dil-phenk 'aashiq', singing that timeless quwaali: "purdah hai purdah", and making puppy eyes at the burqa-clad Neetu Singh? It was a believe-it-or-faint Manmohan Desai entertainer, and Rishi Kapoor provided a welljudged balance to the burly bluster of Amitabh Bachchan and Vinod Khanna, creating an instant classic, which spoke so beautifully to the sectarian, inclusive nature of

So many movies, so many memorable characters. The 80s was the decade when Bollywood was swamped with unimaginative repeats. Even here, Rishi managed eyeballs. Monty in Subhash Ghai's 1980 reincarnation drama 'Karz'; Dev in one of Raj Kapoor's last significant outings Prem Rog (1982); the pain-filled, in-searchof-redemption Mangal in Sukhwant Dhadda's Ek Chadar Maili Si (1983); Ravi in Saagar 1985), chiefly remembered only because it resurrected Dimple Kapadia's dwindling career: Rohit in Chandni (1989), where Sridevi's nau-nau choodiyaan became the staple of all shaadi-songs. And then came Deewana in 1992, in which his co-star was a mophaired.dimpled.ranknew-comer: Shah Rukh Khan.

Kapoor's days of playing loverboy may have been over but there was no way you could keep a good Kapoor down. We saw him play a conflicted son-and-husband in Raikumar Santoshi's Damini: a seasoned lover in Imtiaz Ali's Love Aaj Kal; an out-and-out bad guy in Agneepath; a version of himself in Chintuji; a harried householder in Do Dooni Chaar (along with Neetu, equally delightful): and his star-son Ranbir's father in the plain awful Besharam, one that he would have wanted to throw off his vast-and-varied CV.

Uddhav

nominate him to the Legislative

Sena leaders said the Governor's move ends the uncertainty over Thackeray's continuance as CM.

Sources in the EC said that elections can be conducted amidst the coronavirus outbreak and lockdown, provided precautions as advised by the Health Ministry are taken, and MLAs follow social distancing while casting their vote. "The Commission can appoint an officer of the Health Department to assist the state CEO (Chief Electoral Officer)," an EC officer said on the condition of anonymity.

As per a statement by the Raj Bhavan, "In his letter (to the EC), the Governor has stated that the Central Government has announced many relaxation measures regarding the enforcement of lockdown... As such the elections to the council seats can be held with certain guidelines, he has said."

Sources in the Sena said the party as well as allies NCP and Congress had also submitted separate letters to the EC requesting for polls to the nine seats, and handed over copies of the same to the Governor. Their letters stated that on account of "peculiar extraordinary unforeseen facts and circumstances", Thackeray had not been able to get himself elected to the Legislative Council.

". if the aforesaid elections to the 9 seats of the State Legislative Council are not only held but also concluded on or before 27 May, 2020, inter-alia in the absence of his nomination to the state legislative council by the Honorable Governor, it is apprehended that he will not be able to continue as the chief minister. In such an unlikely situation a very stable government will not be able to continue uninterruptedly," the letters

> **FULL REPORTS ON** www.indianexpress.com

been ensured at the ground level. He reiterated that rapid tests, which have been stopped following reports of varying accuracy, have a limited role in surveillance. "ICMR is working with states to finalise how this should be used on the ground. As for diagnosis and treatment, the RT-PCR test is the best option." he added.

Agarwal said while the country is part of WHO's multi-country Solidarity Trial for potential treatments for COVID-19, the remdesivir trial of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) in the US is inconclusive and India will wait for more studies before taking a call on the drug.

Sealing fears still staying away. The hospital is admitting only emergency Covid

Bhatia Hospital is just one of the 10 private hospitals that had to shut down temporarily after the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai used the blunt instrument of sealing when some heath care staff reported Covid positive. The metro with maximum cases and deaths witnessed an almost complete collapse of private healthcare in the early days of the

Covid pandemic Private hospitals fear admitting Covid patients will expose their frontline staff to infection. and this could attract adverse action. To top this, there is little clarity on testing patients - upon admission as well as pre-operatively. Two, following government advice, many patients rescheduled elective or planned surgeries. OPD (out-patient department) consulting has anyway reduced to a small fraction of pre-Covid days.

But as the number of positive cases continue to rise and reports of hospitals turning away patients pour in, states want private nursing homes to open fully. With the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (BMC) struggling to expand its isolation beds, the Maharashtra government Thursday warned hospitals against refusing patients - Covid or non-Covid. The Delhi government too issued an order asking all nursing homes and hospitals to resume services, and admit non-

But private healthcare facilities in Mumbai are wary after the sealing experience. Those willing to

Covid patients.

reopen find little to no support from paramedical staff.

In Kolkata too, private hospitals feel they are ill-equipped to handle suspected Covid patients. When patients with Covid-like symptoms come, they just redirect them to dedicated COVID-19 hospitals. Peerless, which has an 11-bed isolation ward and is equipped with ICU beds and a couple of ventilators, admits Covid patients. But RTIICS doesn't. Private hospitals in Kolkata did set up a few isolation beds following a meeting with the state government on March 20, but many are scared and fear they are illequipped to handle suspected

Covid patients, and hence refer them to dedicated Covid hospitals. These fears echo throughout the country, especially in smaller private facilities that either shut shop due to lack of PPE, reduced manpower, or the inability to financially sustain themselves following a sharp drop in walk-in pa-

Large corporate hospitals too

are feeling the heat. For instance, Max Healthcare's non-frontline staff across the board, including senior doctors who are not directly involved in its Covid and other facility operations, have taken pay cuts of "above 25 per cent" so that the hospital chain can "continue to be operational during the time of Covid". Abhay Soi, Chairman, Max Healthcare,

told The Indian Express. "Other industries have the option of reducing operations or laying off staff, but the healthcare industry faces a peculiar problem we have to bear increasing costs at this time while simultaneously ramping up capacity to meet a growing requirement," he said.

Several hospitals, especially in Tier II and Tier III cities, are also wary of the "mahamari aspatal (pandemic hospital)" tag affecting business for many months to come even after the epidemic subsides. For instance, Bihar has more than 250 for-profit and not-forprofit private hospitals, empaneled under the Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana. Most of them had, however, shut operations fearing they would not be able to contain the infection if it spread in their hospitals, some state government officials said on condition of

However, in states which have

the capacity given the fact that the case load is manageable, the government has kept private hospitals on standby, while it prioritises treatment at its own facilities. For instance, depending on the requirement, only selective private healthcare facilities in Madhya Pradesh have been involved by the

state as dedicated centres. "If we involve everyone, it would be chaotic," said Dr Lokendra Dave, member, state-Technical Advisory Committee, who is also one of the members of a government team tasked with medical treatment and hospital management. Another reason for this is that not all private facilities have the equipment and resources to follow the

protocol of treatment, he said. "While there is a risk that they could end up spreading the infection, the government has to also ensure that there are facilities for treatment of non-Covid patients. The government may involve more hospitals if they have facili-

ties," he said. The case is similar in Uttar Pradesh, which has not barred private hospitals from treating patients, but has limited Covid facilities to private medical colleges. According to Principal Secretary (Health) Amit Mohan Prasad, the plan is to hire another building like a lodge, smaller private hospital, hotel or hostel around every hospital with an isolation facility so that asymptomatic patients can be shifted there. This way, hospital beds can be vacated for serious pa-

tients. "We have several private medical colleges already in our fold and that gives us a total bed capacity of 10,000 (government and private combined). We have notified a lot of private hospitals and, as and when the need arises, we have told them that they should be ready within three-five-day notice to prepare themselves for providing Covid care. In the meantime, we expect private hospitals should be giving other essential services like dialysis at their facilities," said Prasad.

In Telangana, private facilities like Apollo Healthcare were earlier restricted by directions to send all of their COVID-19 positive patients to government facilities, said Dr Sangita Reddy, Joint Managing Director, Apollo Hospitals

In other instances, there is am-

THE ()UTBREAK WEST BENGAL

Rise in death figures in 48 hrs New cases in last 24 hours

Containment zones in state

Murshidabad medical college chief moved out after order row

Had ordered to not mention COVID-19 in death certificate of +ve patients

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE KOLKATA, APRIL 30

DAYS AFTER medical superintendent of Murshidabad Medical College and Hospital, Debdas Saha, issued an order asking doctors not to mention COVID-19 in the death certificate of coronavirus patients, the Bengal government Thursday removed him. In the April 25 order, Saha directed, "in case of COVID positive, no mention of COVID D/C (death certificate)". A day later, a rectified order was issued asking doctors to state the actual cause of death of patients.

The order had triggered a political controversy in the state with BJP's nominated RS member Swapan Dasgupta calling it "absolutely scandalous". "This official circular in Murshidabad clearly states that Covid19 positive should not be mentioned in the death certificate. Will fudging the figures alter the grim reality of a callous state government?" he had tweeted.

On Wednesday, CM Mamata Banerjee referred to the order and said, "People are raising a hue and cry over who is issuing what kind of order. We have to correct ourselves because we make mistakes." The government Thursday transferred Saha to North Bengal Medical College and Hospital where he will serve as a professor at anaesthesiology department. In his place, the government has appointed Dr Sharmila Mallick as the new medical superintendent of Murshidabad Medical College and

Chief Secretary Rajiva Sinha said, "The state chief secretary is not the right person to speak on



A man sanitises his hand before collecting foodgrains, which was being distributed by the Kolkata Police, on Strand Road on Thursday. Partha Paul

Woman's body lie for over 10 hours for fear of virus spread

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE KOLKATA, APRIL 30

A 34-YEAR-OLD woman died without treatment in her home in the city's Paikpara locality early on Thursday as neighbours refused to step into her house and an ambulance service refused to take her to hospital because of fears about the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

The body remained at home for more than 10 hours, and was collected by the police only in the evening

According to the police, at 6.30 am the woman's 60-yearold mother found her unresponsive and frothing at the mouth.

She contacted the neighbours and told them her daughter might need hospitalisation. However, no one came forward.

The local people contacted councillor Tarun Saha. "We also contacted an ambulance service, but no one was ready to come. We were also in doubt whether she died of COVID-19 or not," said a neighbour.

Saha said he tried to make arrangements for her hospitalisation, but because of the prevailing situation an ambulance could not be arranged. "This is an unnatural death. So, postmortem is necessary. I contacted the police, and ultimately the police sent the body for postmortem." According to the neighbour, the body was collected at 5 pm.

The woman's mother said her daughter had complained of some uneasiness on Wednesday evening. "But, after half an hour she felt normal. In the morning, I found her senseless in her room. I contacted the neighbours but nobody came to send her body to hospital," said the 60-year-old.

"After primary investigation, it seems a natural death. We sent the body to RG Kar Medical College and Hospital. Tomorrow [Friday], they will conduct the post-mortem and after that we will hand over the body for last rites," said a police officer at Tala

2,000 students

16,525 samples have

been tested till April 30

139 RECOVERED

being brought back home from Kota in 95 buses, says state govt Kolkata: A total of 2,368 students

from Bengal are set to return home from Rajasthan's Kota the coaching hub for engineering and medical aspirants – in about 95 buses arranged by the state government, Home Alapan Secretary Bandyopadhyay said on Thursday.

Taking Twitter, Bandyopadhyay said, "2,368 students of West Bengal are being brought back from Kota in 95 buses with State government officers as escorts and likely to tomorrow,' Bandyopadhyay tweeted.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had on Monday said, "I am personally overseeing this and we will leave no stone unturned in ensuring that everyone gets any possible help." PTI

'Cap on bus passengers to worsen cash woes'

Kolkata: A day after Mamata Banerjee government announced that private buses would be allowed to ply in Green Zone (least risky) districts in Bengal with 20 passengers per ride, private bus operators on Thursday said such a measure would further jeopardise their financial condition.

Associations of bus operators demanded subsidy from the government to alleviate their financial burden.

. Cash credit

Bus Minibus Samannoy Samity(coordinationcommittee)general secretary Pradip Narayan Bose said running a bus with only 20 people would lead to huge financial loss to owners, who were already battered by the lockdown. "Once buses are operational, then owners have to buy diesel. From where will they get money if only 20 people are allowed at a time? The state government must provide subsidy to run buses."

On Wednesday, Banerjee said intra-district private bus services could commence in Green Zones with a cap of 20 passengers per trip for maintaining social distancing norms.

Joint Council of Bus Syndicates general secretary Tapan Banerjee seconded Bose. "Most of the routes outside the major cities are inter-district. Now if those buses are run locally, then it will be difficult to get even 20 passengers." ENS

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60 Days' Notice to Borrower

Date: 23.04.2020

Ramkrishna Garments Co., Proprietor: Kaustab Dutta, 26, Prasanna Kumar Tagore Street, Kolkata: 700006 and also a

66/2 Kalipada Mukheriee Road, Kolkata: 700008 NOTICE U/S 13(2) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest

Act 2002, Reg: Account No.2186008700052652/credit facilities availed by M/s Ramkrishna Garments Co. You, M/s Ramakrishna Garments Co., 26, P.K. Thakur Street, Kolkata: 700006 have availed the following credit facilities:

Facility	Limit	Balance outstanding as on 31.12.201
Cash Cred	dit ₹60,00,000/-	₹61,04,566.20
Total	₹60,00,000/-	₹61,04,566.20

Due to non payment of installment/ interest/ principal debt, the account/s has/have been classified as Non Performing Asset or 31.12.2019 as per Reserve Bank of India guidelines. We have demanded/recalled the entire outstanding together with interest and other charges due under the above facilities, vide letter dated 04-02-2020. The amount due to the Bank as on 31.12.2019 is Rs. 61,04,566.20 (Rupees Sixty One Lacs Four thousand five hundred sixty

six and twenty paisa only) with further interest until payment in full (hereinafter referred to as "secured debt"). To secure the outstandings under the abovesaid facilities, you have, inter alia, created security interest in respect of th

Security

Single Storied building of 1142 sq ft on 4 cottah 36 chittak land at Mouza: Muradpur, J.L. No.-13, R.S.No. 192 Touzi no. 74-77 and 82 comprised in part of C.S. and R.S Dag No. 235 and 234 under C.S. Khatian No. 283 and 224 corresponding to R.S. Khatian Nos. 509, 510, 504 and 514, P.S. Thakurpukur under Kolkata Municipal Corporation and being Municipal Premises No. 122, Kalipada Mukherjee Road, Kolkata 700008 under ward No. 123 in the District - South 24 Parganas

We hereby call upon you to pay the amount of ₹61,04,566.20 (Rupees Sixty One Lacs Four thousand five hundred sixty six and twenty paisa only) with further interest at the contracted rate until payment in full within 60 days (sixty days) from the date of this notice. In default, besides exercising other rights of the Bank as available under Law, the Bank is intending to exercise any or all of the powers as provided under section 13(4) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 (hereinafter referred to as "the Act"). The details of the secured asset/s intended to be enforced by the Bank, in the event of non payment of secured debt by you are as under:

1. Single Storied building of 1142 sq ft on 4 cottah 36 chittak land at Mouza : Muradpur, J.L. No.-13, R.S No. 192, Touz no. 74-77 and 82 comprised in part of C.S. and R.S Dag No. 235 and 234 under C.S. Khatian No. 283 and 224 corresponding to R.S. Khatian Nos. 509,510, 504 and 514, P.S. Thakurpukur under Kolkata Municipal Corporation and being Municipal Premises No. 122, Kalipada Mukherjee Road, Kolkata 700008 under ward No. 123 in the District South 24 Parganas.

Your attention is hereby drawn invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act in respect of time available to you redeem the secured assets.

Please take notice that in terms of section 13(13) of the said Act, you shall not, after receipt of this notice, transfer by way of sale lease or otherwise (other than in the ordinary course of business) any of the secured assets above referred to, without prior written consent of the Bank. You are also put on notice that any contravention of this statutory injunction/restraint, as provide under the said Act, is an offence.

If for any reason, the secured assets are sold or leased out in the ordinary course of business, the sale proceeds or incom realised shall be deposited/remitted with/to the Bank. You will have to render proper account of such realisation/income. *We reserve our rights to enforce other secured assets.

Please comply with this demand under this notice and avoid all unpleasantness. In case of non-compliance, further needfo action will be resorted to, holding you liable for all costs and consequences.

This notice is issued without prejudice to the bank taking legal action before DRT/Court, as the case may be This notice is issued without prejudice to the bank's rights in the suit/litigation pending before DRT/Court.

*Due to some technical error, the previous notice dated 04.02.2020 stands withdrawn

Date: 01.05.2020 Place: Kolkata Authorised Officer, Punjab National Bank

India's biggest land port reopens, but only two trucks unloaded as pandemic fear reigns

RAVIK BHATTACHARYA KOLKATA, APRIL 30

INDIA'S LARGEST land port resumed operations on Thursday, over a month after it shut down following PM Narendra Modi's "Janata Curfew" call to contain the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent nationwide lockdown.

Though almost 2,100 trucks have been stranded at Petrapole in the Bongaon area of North 24 Parganas district since March 22, only two trucks carrying jute and maize seeds from India were unloaded at the gate at zero point because of fears about the pandemic. Many clearing agents, labour-

ers and drivers are scared to step foot in the neighbouring country, and the local TMC leadership has also warned of dire consequences if goods are allowed to move. There was a letter from the

district magistrate that asked us to facilitate the opening of the land port," said Kartik Chakraborty, the secretary of Petrapole Clearing Agents Staffs' Welfare Association. 'We are all living under fear

since neither we nor the Bangladeshi side have PPEs [Personal Protective Equipment]. Clearing agents exchanged documents at the gate and labourers from Bangladesh unloaded the goods. What if someone gets infected with COVID-19?" he asked.

Earlier, 500 to 550 Indian trucks used to enter the port area, and about 100 to 150 Bangladeshi vehicles were permitted to do the same. According to sources, from now only trucks from India will be unloaded at the zero point.

Now we are positioning our vehicles at the zero point gate and Bangladeshi labourers are unloading it. We hope everyday eight to 10 trucks are unloaded. There are over 2,100 goods-laden trucks stuck in our side. So, it will take a long time," said Chakraborty.



Trucks being unloaded at Petrapole land port. Express

The massive cargo pile-up started as soon as the lockdown was declared last month. Indian truck drivers on the Bangladeshi side - Benapole - were told to immediately return, leaving their vehicles. The same instructions were issued to Bangladeshi drivers from the other side.

At present, 100 Indian trucks are in Bangladesh and 30 vehicles from the other side are in India. Since the Bureau of Immigration and the Border Security Force are not allowing the drivers to go cross over on foot and unload the cargo from their vehicles, truckers are not ready to move unless those vehicles are offloaded.

Exporters had been urging both the Centre and the state government over the past month to open the port. The demand was opposed by clearing agents, workers, and the local TMC leadership, all of whom called for the checkpost to remain shut because of the pandemic. They also sought the presence of proper medical teams

and protective gear for everyone. Eventually, last week the Centre agreed to open the port, with Union Home Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla writing to state Chief Secretary Rajiva Sinha on April 24 about the government's approval. Five days later, the DM wrote to the manager of the Petrapole port authority, asking the official to ensure maximum social distancing during trade at the checkpost.



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E-mail: investor.relations@ril.com CIN: L17110MH1973PLC019786

Extract of Audited Consolidated Financial Results for the Year Ended 31st March, 2020 (₹ in crore, except per share data)

	Year Ended	Year Ended
Particulars	31st March, 2020	31st March, 2019
Value of Sales & Services (Revenue)	659,205	625,212
Less: GST Recovered	47,560	42,118
Revenue from Operations	611,645	583,096
Profit before exceptional item and Tax	58,050	55,227
Profit before Tax	53,606	55,227
Profit for the Period*	39,880	39,837
Total Comprehensive Income (Net of Tax)	55,173	98,602
Paid up Equity Share Capital, Equity Shares of ₹ 10/- each	6,339	5,926
Other Equity excluding Revaluation Reserve	446,992	381,186
Earnings per equity share		
(Face value of ₹ 10/- each)		
Basic (in ₹) - Before Exceptional Item	70.66	66.82
Basic (in ₹) - After Exceptional Item	63.49	66.82
Diluted (in ₹) - Before Exceptional Item	70.66	66.80
Diluted (in ₹) - After Exceptional Item	63.49	66.80

* Includes Non-Controlling Interest

Place : Mumbai

Date: 30th April, 2020

1. The Audit Committee has reviewed the above results and the Board of Directors has approved the above results and its release at their respective meetings held on 30th April, 2020

2. Additional information on standalone financial results is as follows:

		(₹ in crore)	
	Year Ended	Year Ended	
Particulars	31st	31st	
	March, 2020	March, 2019	
Value of Sale & Service (Revenue)	365,202	401,583	
Less: GST Recovered	14,322	16,082	
Revenue from Operations	350,880	385,501	
Profit Before Exceptional Item and Tax	44,561	47,367	
Profit before tax	40,316	47,367	
Profit for the period	30,903	35,163	
Total Comprehensive Income (Net of Tax)	23,829	94,837	

The above is an extract of the detailed format of the standalone and consolidated financial results for the year ended on 31st March, 2020 filed with the Stock Exchanges pursuant to Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations,

The full format of the standalone and consolidated financial results for the year ended on 31st March, 2020 are available on the Stock Exchanges' websites (www.bseindia.com / www.nseindia.com and the Company's website www.ril.com

For Reliance Industries Limited Sd/-Mukesh D. Ambani Chairman & Managing Director



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Commissioner, Salem Corporatio

Submission of bids -03.06.2020 upto 3.00 P.M.

Opening of bids

0 /TENDER/2020

III

Office of Superintending Engineer 1st Circle PWD Almora NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING (E-Tendering) **Short Term E-TENDER NOTICE**

-03.06.2020 at 3.30 P.M.

S. No.	Name of work	Cost of Tender Form	Earnest Money (Rupee In lakh)	Validity of Tender	Time of Completion	Contractor's Category of Registration for tendering
1	Renewal work by SDBC in district Almora under Annual Maintenance 2020-21 (1) Almora-Sharpathak Motor Road in Km. 1 to 15 (Length 15.00 Km.) (2) L.R. Saha Motor Road in Km. 1 to 3 (Length 2530 Km.) (3) Almora- Bageshwar Motor Road in Km. 1 to 6 district Almora. Length 5.30 Km. (Length 5.30 Km.)	Rs. 5000,00+ 18% GST	7.00 Lakh	60 Days	12 Months	Category "A" & above (Road Works)
2	Renewal work by SDBC in district Almora under Annual Maintenance 2020-21 (1) Suwakhan- Dhoram- Chalnichina Motor Road in Km. 1 to 12, 14 and 15 (Length 14.00 Km.) (2) Aartola- Jageshwar- Naini Motor Road in Km. 1 to 3 (Length 3.00 Km.)	Rs. 5000,00+ 18% GST	4.20 Lakh	60 Days	12 Months	Category "A" & above (Road Works)
3	Renewal work by SDBC in district Almora under Annual Maintenance 2020-21 (1) Bageshwar- Girechina- Someshwar- Dwarahat- Vimandeshwar- Eira- Ranikhet Motor Road (Binta- Someshwar- Girechina Section) in Krn. 35 to 44 (Length 10 Km.) (2) Koshi- Dolaghat- Korichina- Bagwalipokhar- Binta Motor Road Km. 38 (Length. 0.65 Km.)	Rs. 5000,00+ 18% GST	3.85 Lakh	60 Days	12 Months	Category "B" & above (Road Works
4	Renewal work by SDBC in district Bageshwar under Annual Maintenance 2020-21 (1) Chandra Singh Sahi Motor Road (Bageshwar- Kapkot Motor Road) in Km. 11 to 21 (Length. 11 Km.) (2) Kapkot- Pindari-Glaicier Motor Road in Km. 1 to 4 (Length. 4 Km.)	Rs. 5000,00+ 18% GST	4.12 Lakh	60 Days	12 Months	Category "A" & above (Road Works



Office of Superintending Engineer **1st Circle PWD Almora NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING** (E-Tendering) Short Term E-TENDER NOTICE

The superintending Engineer, 1st Circle, Public Works Department, Almora invites tender through E rendering (Single Bid System) on behalf of Honourable Governor of Uttarakhand for following works. Al information will be available from dated 04.05.2020 & onwards on website http://www.uktenders.gov.in

S. No.	Name of work	Cost of Tender Form	Earnest Money (Rupee In lakh)	Validity of Tender	Time of Completion	Contractor's Category of Registration for tendering
1	Renewal work by PC in Km. 40 to 44 and 46 to 51 of Lohaghat- Barakot - Simalkhet-Kaflikhan - Bhnoli Motor Road (Simalkhet-Kaflikhan Section) under Annual Maintance 2020-21 in district Almora. Length 11.00 Km	Rs. 4000,00 + 18% GST	2.54 Lakh	60 Days	9 Months	Category "B" & above (Road Works)
2	Renewal work by PC in Km. 1 to 3 and 6 to 11 of Dwarahat - Asgoli Motor Road under Annual Maintance 2020-21 in district Almora. Length 9.00 Km		2.08 Lakh	60 Days	9 Months	Category "B" & above (Road Works)
3	Renewal work by PC in Km, 5 to 10 of Kapkot - Pindari - Glacier Motor Road under - Annual Maintance 2020-21 in district Bageshwar. Length 6.00 Km.		1.40 Lakh	60 Days	9 Months	Category "C" & above (Road Works)
4	Renewal work by SDBC in Km. 1,2,9,10,11 and 13 of Kampirayag (Simli) - Gwaldam - Bageshwar - Chokori - Thal- Munshyari- Jauljibi (Baijnath - Bageshwar Section) Motor Road under Annual Maintance 2020-21 in district Bageshwar. Length 6.00 Km.	18% GST	1.60 Lakh	60 Days	9 Months	Category "C" & above (Road Works)
5	Renewal work by SDBC in Km. 69 (400M), 72, 73, 75, 76, 78, 79 and 81 of Almora- Baijnath Gwaldam Karnprayag (Baijnath- Gwaldam Section) Motor Road under Annual Maintance 2020-21 in district Bageshwar. Length 7.40 Km	18% GST	2.70 Lakh	60 Days	9 Months	Category "B" & above (Road Works)

Rajasthan State Mines & Minerals Limited (A Government of Rajasthan Enterprise) 4, Meera Marg, Udaigur – 313001 Phone: (0234) 2428763-67, 2428744, 2428738, Fax (0294) 3428770, 2428769 Email:- project.rammi@rajasthan.gov.in Corrigendum-5 Date-28.04.2020 NIT No. & Date Repairing of INEGs & comprehensive Operation & Maintenance a-Tender No RSMM COPROJWEICHI-6 (O&M) of the wind power project, 15 MW at village Bramsac Pohra Dist. Johnstein in state of Reporture (Phone-V). Last data for (2020-01)/01 tate 28 04 2020 downloading & submission of tender is extended as; Last data & time of online submission 26.05.2020 up to 3.00 pm date of MML+900WL DB00206 opening of techno-commercial (part-1): 29.85.2028 at 3.30 PM ther terms & conditions have been given in detailed tender for which please visit us at our obsito www.rsmm.com or www.sppp.rojesthan.gov/in or oproc.rajesthan.gov.in or GM SM (Admin.) Azj sanwad C/26/61



TRIPURA STATE ELECTRICITY **CORPORATION LIMITED** (A Govt. of Tripura Enterprise)

Notice Inviting E-Tender

Additional General Manager (DP&C), TSECL, Agartala invites e-tenders for the following items of works/ services on behalf of TSECL. Details of tenders will be available in websites http://tripuratenders.gov.in and www.tsecl.in.

- . Selection of Implementation Partner for Supply, Installation, Implementation, Configuration and Integration of ERP system in TSECL, Tripura.
- 2. Engagement of PMC and related support for Implementation of ADB financed 'Tripura Power Sector Improvement Program'.
- 3. Engagement of PMA and related support for Implementation of ADB financed 'Tripura Power Sector Improvement Program'.

Additional General Manager (DP&C) Tripura State Electricity Corporation Ltd.

CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR Green Campus Ganderbal-191131

e-TENDER NOTICE FOR HOUSEKEEPING SERVICES NIT. No: 03 of 2020

For and on behalf of the Vice Chancellor Central University of Kashmir , e-tenders under two bid system are invited from registered Companies/ Agencies for providing Housekeeping services across different campuses of the University at Ganderbal. The bids must be submitted through e-tendering mode available on CPP Portal (www.eprocure.gov.in) from 01.05.2020 to 21.05.2020. The detailed tender document along with a link is available on University website (www.cukashmir.ac.in). The hard copy of the Technical bids along with Tender processing fee of Rs. 1,000/- (Non- Refundable) and EMD of Rs. 1,50,000 (Refundable), should reach the university on or before 22.05.2020 (04.00 P.M.) and the same should be addressed to the Registrar, Central University of Kashmir, Green Campus, Ganderbal 191131 (J&K). The tender fee and the EMD shall be paid deposited online or in the shape of DD, FDR, BG Pledged, to Registrar, Central University of Kashmir / drawn from any nationalized bank payable at Ganderbal (J&K). In case of any clarification, the bidders can send their queries to estates@cukashmir.ac.in or contact at 7006171124 / 9419022101.

Sd/- Officer Incharge Estates Central University of Kashmir No.: CUK/Est/H-KEEPING/F.No.274/19/1097/Home Date: 30.04.2020

CORPORATE ASSOCIATE DIARY

SOUTHERN POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY OF TELANGANA LTD.

TSSPDCL intends to float tenders for procurement of (I) 11 KV 3x185 Sqmm Cable Jointing and Termination Kits, (II) Meter Test Benches, (III) 11 KV 3X300 Sqmm Cable Jointing and Termination kits and (IV) 33 KV 3X400 Sqmm Termination Kits on e-procurement platform. For further details, please visit www.tssouthernpower.com and www.tender.telangana.gov.in Phone: 040-2343 1033, 1448. Sd/- Chief General Manager (P&MM) TENDER ID: SPDCLCORP01841

Rajasthan State Road Development And Construction Corporation Ltd., JAIPUR

कार्य का विवरण

निविदा से संबंधित समस्त विवरण एवं संशोधन वेबसाईट http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, http://sppp.rajasthan.nic.in तथा http://roads.rajasthan.gov.in पर देखा जा सकता है। इच्छुक संवेदकों को अपने डिजिटल हस्ताक्षर के माध्यम से वेबसाईट http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in पर रजिस्टर्ड करवाना आवश्यक है।



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NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

Tender Enquiry No. Work Description	Estimated Cost/EMD (Rs.)	Availability of Bid Document	of Bid Submission/ Date and time of Opening of bids		
PDDL/ENGG/ENQ/200001217/20-21 C for Supply of Polyolefin Sleeves fx 5000001695	38 Lac / 48K	01.05.2020	21.05.2020;1600 Hrs/ 21.05.2020;1630 Hrs		
Complete tender and corrigendum document is available on our					

website www.tatapower-ddl.com→Vendor Zone → Tender / Corrigendum Documents Contracts - 011-66112222



TENDER NOTICE

e-tenders are invited for the supply of following items. (1) 67876 - Purchase of 343 PCs with 3 yrs. Extended Warranty,

Re-invited e-tenders $(2)\ 44795,\ (3)\ 45596,\ (4)\ 45998,\ (5)\ 67285,\ (6)\ 67704,$

(7) 67395, (8) 67529.

4 Study Chair (Teak Wood)

For more details, log on to website https://mahatenders.gov.in. PRO/AAM(M)/04/2020. **GENERAL MANAGER**

Indian Institute of Science Education and Research Berhampul Established by the Ministry of HRD, Govt. of India					
Ten	Tender Enquiry Nos. IISERBpr/S&P/2020-21/01dt. April 28, 2020				
Tender	Tender notices for supply of following items: -				
SI.No.	Detail of Items Qty				
1	Student Hostel Bed (Teak Wood)	100			
2	Class Room Chair with writing pad (Teak Wood)	60			
3	Study Table (Teak Wood)	120			

ast date for submission of e-tenders complete in all respect and confirming ntirely to the specifications along with all necessary documents is, on or before 1500 hrs of May 18, 2020, on https://www.tenderwizard.com/IISERBP. Complete detail and the tender document is available on Institute website i.e. http://www.iiserbpr.ac.in/tender.php and https://eprocure.gov.in. Any corrigendum etc will be notified on the above websites only. ক্লয ঘৰ্ষ শভ্যাৎ প্ৰথিকাং

APPOINTMENTS, MOVEMENTS, CELEBRATIONS, HONOURS

Subrata Mukherjee, a magician for 26 years, was all smiles before the lockdown. Express

With no shows on cards, magicians wait for a miracle

SANTANU CHOWDHURY

KOLKATA, APRIL 30

MAGICIANS IN West Bengal were witnessing a vanishing act of scheduled shows. With social distancing being the thumb rule during the nationwide lockdown to contain the spread of coronavirus, all magic shows had been cancelled since April.

Magicians were now struggling to keep themselves afloat and believed that it would take over a year to get bookings for regular shows.

"I had shows lined up in May and June. All have been cancelled as public gathering is now banned. I was even supposed to perform in Canada and Japan. All shows have now been postponed. If this continues. then it will be difficult for magicians to survive," said

magician Subrata Kumar Mukherjee. Besides being a professional magician for nearly 26 years, Mukherjee was also an advocate at the Calcutta High Court. However, his second source of income also bore the brunt of lockdown. "Even the courts are closed now. There are reports that the lockdown is likely to be extended. If it does, then I will not get clients as well. It feels like the rope is being burnt from both ends," said Mukherjee.

The situation was also grim for lesser-known magicians who were trying to establish themselves in this field.

Partha Roy, 48, who lived in a single room on the terrace of a three-storey house in Central Kolkata, said his life as a magician had been tough during the lockdown. "In April and May, I had 12 shows lined up. Each show would have fetched Rs 2,000. I am not hoping to get shows before next year. I will urge the state government to look into the pleas of magicians, especially the smaller ones," said Partha, who performs in clubs, birthday parties and fairs.

For budding magician Arindam Bhoumik, 27, focusing on an alternative career was the only option now. "I have a part-time job in an engineering consultancy, while being a full-time magician. Since lockdown, I have not got a single call to perform in shows," he said. With uncertainty staring at them, the magicians were now looking at their magic wands, hoping for some miracle to unfold.

NOTICE BOARD

Airports Authority of India, Regional Headquarters, Eastern Region, is doing it's bit in this testing times, where employees contributed & distributed packets of essential commodities to 575 families covering 3 slum areas around Ramkrishna Missior Swami Vivekanand Ancestral House and Culture Centre Kolkata. 90 workers from this low income group were given support of Rs1000 each.



AAI(Kolkata) continued its support in crisis

Contribution of AAI(KoI) in this testing times

Airports continue to support society in this crisis time of COVID19, as Cargo, medical, relief & related essential flights are operating. Housekeeping team at Netaji Subash Chandra Bose International Airport, Kolkata continue to do their bit of keeping the nation safe with sanitising and disinfectant cleaning of the terminal.During this COVID19 Lockdown, Kolkata Airport facilitated operation of relief flights for stranded US, UK, EU, Bhutanese, Malaysian nationals for their safe passage home. Our dedicated teams for Operations, Medical, Engineering, Fire Services, Cargo, ATC and others have ensured to follow standard procedures along with thermal screening & social distancing to provide an unhindered service

Contribution for PM CARES Fund



(PM CARES Fund) was created on 28 March 2020, following the COVID-19 pandemic in India. The fund will be used for combating, containment and relief efforts against the coronavirus outbreak and similar pandemic like situations in the future. Over the years, North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd (NEDFi) a Development Financial Institution of the North Eastern Region has been playing a pivotal role of the catalyst to the overall economic growth of the North Eastern part of India not only by rendering services to the financial

aspects of the entrepreneurial ecosystem but also through facilitating developmental activities through its CSR activities

Hospital Care Assistive Robotic Device (HCARD)

The CSIR-CMERI has developed Hospital Care Assistive Robotic Device (HCARD). This Robot has Video Conferencing Facilities, Delivery System for providing medicines to the patients, Collecting Samples from the Patient or providing food to the patient. This device works both in Autonomous Mode as well as Manual Mode of Navigation. The HCARD assists in solving the distance between the Health Professionals and the Patients. The device iscontrolled and monitored by a Nursing Booth with a Control Station which has the following features: ? Navigation ? Drawer Activation to provide medicines and food to the patients and collect samples from the patient? Audio Visual Communication Prof (Dr.) Harish Hirani, Director, CSIR-CMERI stated that the Hospital Care Assistive Robotic Device will be very effective for



Frontline Healthcare Officials dealing with COVID 19 patients in delivering services while maintaining mandatory Social Distancing". Prof. Hirani further added the cost of the device is Less than 5 Lakhs and the Weight is less than 80 kgs.

Message from Mr. K B Agarwala

Federation of Hosiery Manufacturers Association of India (FOHMA)

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about an upheaval, which is unprecedented in nature. It has upset everything, turning the economic scenario from boom to gloom It has become more challenging due to the fact that countries all over the globe are having to adapt multipronged approaches to contain this disease. We from FOHMA have been representing to the various authorities about the difficulties being faced by our industry / trade due to this pandemic. While, our Government has been trying to take steps to mitigate the hardships – a lot more needs to be done to support our fraternity in these extremely difficult times now. It goes without saying that extensive economic losses are anticipated now and in the foreseeable future.

SUCCESSFUL TRIAL OF 9000HP WAG-9HH LOCO AT 100KMPH

Chittaranjan Works (CLW) built 9000HP, WAG-9HH electric loco(loco no-90002) has successfully passed the Oscillation and EBD trial by Research Design & Standard Organisation . RDSO has issued final speed certifi-



cate for operation of WAG-9HH class of locomotives upto maximum speed of 100kmph on Indian Railways track. Now, after obtaining statutory CRS sanction, will be put in service. CLW produced this high power locomotive on 21.12.2019 and trials were conducted between 31.1.2020 to 26.02.2020 on Northern Railways.

ER FACILITATED DISMANTLING OF TALA ROAD OVERBRIDGE



The dismantling of Tala Road Overbridge (ROB) over Railway track has been completed on 27.4.2020. Situated between Tala & Bagbazar stations of Circular Railway, the ROB consisted of 08 (eight) spans in Railway area. Each span of ROB was of 38 (thirty eight) shallow PSC (Pre-Stressed Concrete) girders interlaced together except span No. 07(seven), which was a RCC (Reinforced Cement Concrete) / Masonry structure.

ER played a considerable role in dismantling of old Tala Bridge by State Government. It may be mentioned that, though the passenger services are presently suspended during this period of lock down, the goods & parcel express trains are being run by ER on 24x7 basis to maintain the supply chain of essential commodities all over the country. ER facilitated the dismantling work of the bridge with controlling the operation of freight trains by imposing traffic & power blocks to suit the dismantling work.

Central Bank of India initiative

During this worldwide pandemic, on 25th April, Central Bank Of India, Regional Office Durgapur distributed food packets to 110 old and poor families of Farakidanga area. This was an initiative taken by the Chief Regional Manager - Joy Mukherjee, Chief Manager- Ajay Kumar, Senior Manager- Sailesh Gupta, Manager- Randhir Nayan, Agm - Debdulal Mondol and other senior dignitaries.



ALREADY OVER 2.42 LAKH PEOPLE RECEIVED FREE HYGIENIC MEALS

South Eastern Railway, till 27th April, 2020 has distributed 2,42,813 free and hygienic meals to the destitute, poor and needy people nearby and outside railway areas at Headquarters & all over its four Divisions viz. Kharagpur, Adra, Chakradharpur and Ranchi. The worst hit victims of lockdown are daily wage labourers, porters, rickshaw pullers, beggars, slum dwellers, homeless vagabonds etc. including their family members. Out of total 2,42,813 meals, 64,555 meals have been served and distributed by Indian Railway Catering & Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) utilising its Base Kitchen infrastructure located in South Eastern Railway stations with the help of Commercial Department. The rest 1,78,258 free meals have been arranged for distribution by Security & other departments of SER. Various associations viz. South Eastern Railway Women's Welfare Organisation (SERWWO), SER Bharat Scouts & Guides, RECEIVED FREE HYGIENIC MEALS St. John Ambulance Brigade, Civil Defence, etc have also joined ARRANGED BY SOUTH EASTERN RAILWAY hands in this mass food distribution activities.



COAL INDIA CONTRIBUTES Rs. 221 CRORES TO "PM CARES FUND" TO FIGHT COVID19 PANDEMIC

Coal India has contributed an amount of Rs. 221 Crores to the "PM CARES FUND" to fight the COVID19 pandemic in India. Employees of Coal India have voluntarily contributed one day's salary which amounted to Rs. 61 crores and CIL contributed an amount of Rs. 160 crores from it's CSR to the 'PM Cares Fund'.

369 TRIPS OF PARCEL EXPRESS TO ENSURE UNINTERRUPTED SUPPLYOF ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES BY SOUTH EASTERN RAILWAY DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Indian Railways, aptly called the 'Life Line of The Nation' is fighting against the Coronavirus pandemic in different fields by adopting various measures including movement of Time Tabled Parcel Express Trains and Freight Trains for maintaining uninterrupted supply of essential commodities to every nook and corner of the country during nation-wide lockdown. As a part of commitment to the nation, South Eastern Railway during this nationwide lockdown has already geared up its entire network to run Time Tabled Parcel Express Trains towards different destinations in the country. South Eastern Railway, during this national crisis, has already run 369 trips of Parcel Express Trains from 2nd to 26th April, 2020 carrying essential commodities viz. food grains, medicines, medical equipments including PPEs, masks, sanitizer, coveralls & gloves, fish, egg, vegetables, grocery items, fruits, sugar, salt, betel leaves, fabrics, plastic goods, poly bundle, e-commerce items, machine parts, cotton goods etc. which amounts to 4,431.13 tonnes of parcel traffic containing 1,59,407 number of packages to different places in the country. These Parcel Express Trains will continue to run till 3rd May,

5 THE OUTBREAK NATION

Make sure no patient is turned away: Delhi, Maharashtra to private hospitals

TABASSUM BARNAGARWALA

& ASTHA SAXENA MUMBAI, NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

FOLLOWING A spate of incidents of patients being refused treatment, mostly in private hospitals, at least two state governments, Maharashtra and Delhi, have issued orders warning of action against hospitals that turn away patients, COVID or non-COVID.

While Delhi on Thursday reiterated its earlier order - this is the third such by the state government — and warned of cancellation of registration of erring hospitals, Maharashtra said "no patient is to be turned away... under any circumstance", failing which action would be taken under the Epidemic Diseases

The Delhi government order

cially those in private sectors, are hereby directed to remain functional and ensure that anyone needing any essential critical services, including dialysis, blood transfusion, chemotherapy and institutional deliveries, is not denied such service. Non-compliance will be viewed seriously and action as per provisions of law, including cancellation of registration of the defaulter hospital/nursing home, will be initiated without further notice".

Sources said the Delhi government had received complaints against two hospitals that have been insisting on a COVID-19 test report before treating patients. "We are looking into the allegations. Their actions can lead to cancellation of their registration if the situation doesn't improve in the next few

Maharashtra's order comes days after the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) issued two circulars in Mumbai, one to nursing homes and private doctors to restart practice immediately, and the second to private hospitals to not seal their facilities and continue functioning with precautions while handling COVID-19 patients.

Noting that "in view of increasing number of COVID-19 positive patients that government, municipal and private hospitals are either refusing or delaying treatment/admission of the patients causing delay in treatment and holding ambulances for long time", the order said hospitals should have standard operating protocol to screen, transfer, admit and discharge patients.

Maharashtra Chief Secretary

Epidemic Act to ask hospitals to have a screening area for patients from May 2 and create a system of triage to segregate suspected COVID patients from other patients.

The order asked hospitals to test suspected cases "on priority" and seek test reports within 12 hours. Saying that the order will come into effect from May 2, an official said the government would give hospitals time to set up infrastructure over the next two days.

The Thursday order mandates that each patient be provided a unique ID before admission. The hospitals have been asked to shift bodies of COVID-19 patients within 30 minutes from the ward and decongest their premises by diverting mild or asymptomatic cases to COVID

declared at least 10 private hospitals as containment zones - implying no new patient could be admitted and no consultation would be carried — after staffers started testing positive. The corporation later realised sealing private hospitals was not a solution to control the spread of the disease.

On April 18, it asked ward officers to disinfect affected wards in hospitals if a positive case was detected and advised hospitals to provide PPEs to staffers and continue essential services. It advised hospitals to have 50 per cent of staff at a time to avoid crowding. On April 23, private clinics were instructed to start operations immediately, and provide treatment to non-COVID patients, specially those with hypertension, diabetes, and chronic obstructive pulmonary

Punjab: 183 Nanded pilgrims test positive, vilification fears rise

KAMALDEEPSINGHBRAR, **NAVJEEVANGOPAL&**

PARTHASARATHIBISWAS AMRITSAR, CHANDIGARH, PUNE, APRIL 30

CONFIRMING the worst fears of the Punjab government, the number of coronavirus cases among the pilgrims who returned to the state from Nanded in Maharashtra over the past couple of days has now reached 183, accounting for 33.7 per cent of the total COVID-19 cases in Punjab.

With 149 pilgrims testing positive Thursday, the state saw its biggest one-day spike in coronavirus cases, of 167, taking its total to 542.

Over 4,000 pilgrims from Puniab were stuck in Nanded since March. There are apprehensions of a Tablighi Jamaat kind of situation, with a similar number at one of its gatherings in Delhi leading to hundreds of cases and contact-tracing across more than

Akal Takht chief Giani Harpreet Singh expressed concern on Thursday that the pilgrims were being targeted. "I am afraid that the Sikh pilgrims are being vilified in the same way as were Tablighi Jamaat followers. It seems that the entire community is being targeted.'

Test reports of 577 pilgrims, out of the 3,525 who have returned to Punjab, have been

The Nanded administration on Thursday said it would conduct tests on all the pilgrims remaining there, plus the priests and sevadars at local gurdwaras. Nanded-Waghala Municipal Corporation Commissioner Sunil

Pilgrims who returned from Nanded at a quarantine facility in Ludhiana.

Lahane said almost all devotees from Punjab have left. "We are left with pilgrims from Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. All the drivers returning from Punjab (after dropping the pilgrims) will also be tested.

The pilgrims who had been staying in accommodations arranged by the gurdwaras hired either private vehicles or took buses organised by the Punjab government and the gurdwara administrations to return.

Over the past few days, apart from the pilgrims from Nanded, 153 students from Kota and 3,085 labourers from Jaisalmer in Rajasthan, have returned to Punjab.

The 149 pilgrims who tested positive Thursday belong to Amritsar (76), Ludhiana (38), Mohali (10), Tarn Taran (7), Kapurthala (6), Gurdaspur (3),

Don't walk, planning your

return: Yogi to migrants

Nawanshahr, Jalandhar, Patiala, Ferozepur and Moga (1 each).

Punjab, with 21 of its 22 districts reporting coronavirus cases (the only exception is Fazilka), has so far tested 21,205 people, and seen 20 deaths and 104 recoveries.

SGPC president Gobind Singh Longowal Thursday asked the Punjab government to use gurdwara inns to quarantine the pilgrims, instead of deras as planned. We have everything ready in gurdwaras. We will make the pilgrims feel at home," he said.

Urging that the pilgrims not be vilified, Longowal said, "They were stuck for more than a month and it was essential to bring them back. Some people are making hate comments on social media against the pilgrims... They have been following all the instructions from the first day. What is their mistake if some of them have tested positive for COVID-19 after taking all the precautions?"

Back in Nanded, authorities have sealed the premises where the pilgrims stayed, with District Collector Vipin Itankar asserting that they had screened everybody before they boarded the buses for Punjab. "The pilgrims were in Nanded for one-and-a-half months and none of them had shown any symptoms," he said.

The district authorities said the pilgrims might have picked up the infection on the way, as they had passed through hotspot zones like Indore in Madhya Pradesh and Bhilwara in Rajasthan, and pointed out that the driver of one of the buses had

CORONA WATCH



A construction site in Lucknow on Thursday. Vishal Srivastav

UTTARAKHAND Daily awards for civilians, police

Dehradun: Uttarakhand Police will felicitate a policeman and civilian everyday for contributing to the COVID-19 fight. DG (Law and Order) Ashok Kumar said police personnel will be n cash awards while civilians will get certificates. Meanwhile, the police headquarters has asked districts to deploy personnel above 55 years, who are said to be more vulnerable to COVID-19, only inside offices, ENS

BENGAL

Cops gave in before 'lungi bahini'

Kolkata: The BJP Thursday accused the TMC government of turning Bengal into a "hub of anti-nationals" and claimed that it has lost the moral right to continue in power after police surrendered before a group of people wearing 'lungis' that went on a rampage in Howrah. State BIP president Dilip Ghosh was referring to Tuesday's mob attack on policemen who were trying to enforce lockdown norms at the minority-dominated Tikiapara area of Howrah district, a red zone.ENS

Over 30 lakh free meals by Railways

New Delhi: Indian Railways distributed nearly 30 lakh free meals to stranded people at 300 locations across the country until Wednesday, 10 lakh of those distributed in the last 10 days, according to a statement from the Railways Ministry. The Railways began distributing hot, cooked meals in the afternoon outside its stations and elsewhere from March 28. "Distribution of food is being done with help of RPF. GRP, commercial departments of zones, state governments, district administrations and NGOs," the ministry stated.

In Karnataka, worry over spurt in corona cases among SARI patients

JOHNSONTA BENGALURU, APRIL 30

A GROWING number of people turning up in hospitals with Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI) and then testing positive for the coronavirus, with seemingly no history of travel or contact with COVID-19 patients, has become a source of concern for Health officials in Karnataka.

According to daily state data, 36 persons reported in hospitals with SARI and later tested positive for COVID-19 over the last month making up as much as seven per cent of the 525 cases reported in the state, including 10 of the 21 deaths.

This has led to the closure of as many as five hospitals in the state, fear among non-COVID-designated hospitals to attend to SARI cases, and the use of PPE kits by health workers attending to SARI cases in COVID hospitals.

After the ICMR expanded testing to SARI patients on March 20, a state-level technical expert committee stated that "Severe Acute Respiratory Illness (SARI) cases and Influenza Like Illnesses (ILI), of COVID-19, should be screened at the initial stages of symptoms so that morbidity and mortality due to COVID-19 can be arrested in the community". As of April 29, there were six

cases of ILI(1 per cent) with positive results apart from the 36 SARI cases in Karnataka

Among the recent such cases include a 65-year-old man who died in the SARI ward of the Raijy Gandhi Institute of Chest Diseases on April 13 and a 54-year-old migrant worker from Bihar who tested positive on April 22.

As many as 30 persons linked to the worker have tested positive and one private hospital, where he was initially seen by doctors, has been sealed along with the Hongasandra locality in Bengaluru, where he lived. As many as four other hospitals around Karnataka have been sealed after SARI cases turned COVID-19 positive.

"The SARI cases are proving to be very tricky. A lot of hospitals are turning away patients to designated COVID-19 hospitals. We created a SARI ward on March 27 apprehending such a situation. Our health workers are using PPE kits in the SARI ward as a precau-



Migrant workers from Punjab talk to officials outside the Bengaluru district collector's office to travel home, on Thursday. PTI

tion to prevent infection," said Dr C Nagaraja, director of the Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Chest Diseases in Bengaluru, one of the designated COVID-19 hospitals.

"The number of SARI $with {\it notravel history} \, or \, reported$ contacts with positive persons suggests that there is some level of community transmission occurring in the state," said a senior doctor in the state health and family welfare department.

But others dealing directly with SARI cases suggest that a lack of in-depth investigation of contacts of persons creates an impression of community spread. "There is no community transmission happening. The persons who come with SARI to the hospital and test positive for COVID-19 have had contacts with an infected person but they fail to recall the contact or report it when brought for admission," said Dr Nagaraja.

The numbers of SARI cases returning positive results in Karnataka is in excess of what has been found nationally by the ICMR COVID Group and researchers at the Council's National Institute of Epidemiology (NIE) in a study published on April 28.

"A total of 104 (1.8%) of 5,911 SARI patients tested were positive for COVID-19. These cases were reported from 52 districts in 20 States/Union Territories. The COVID-19 positivity was higher

among males and patients aged above 50 years. In all, 40 (39.2%) COVID-19 cases did not report any history of contact with a known case or international travel," the study by Dr Manoi Murhekar the NIE director and others reported in findings published Tuesday in the Indian Journal of Medical Research.

The study used SARI and COVID-19 case data from February 15 to April 2 for the analysis covering a period when SARI cases were not being tested (February 15 to March 20) and the period when they were being tested.

"Among the 965 SARI patient samples that were tested retrospectively between February 15-29, 2020, and March 19, 2020, two (0.2%) were positive for COVID-19. When the COVID testing strategy was expanded to include all SARI patients, a total of 4,946 samples yielded 102 (2.1%) cases. The positivity increased from zero during the initial weeks to 2.6 per cent in the 14th week," the study reported.

The study showed a positivity rate of 1.6 per cent for Gujarat, 0.9 per cent for Tamil Nadu, 3.8 per cent for Maharashtra and 0.2 per cent for Kerala — the states from where the majority of samples were taken. It suggested that "containment activities need to be targeted in districts reporting COVID-19 cases among SARI pa-

Karnataka panel suggests Fauci's 'promising' drug

Bengaluru: Anti-viral drug Remdesivir, which according to US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases director Dr Anthony Fauci has shown "clear" evidence of helping COVID-19 patients recover, is among three treatment options recommended by a technical expert committee for trial among patients in Karnataka. Remdesivir, produced by US firm Gilead Sciences, costs around Rs 70,000 per dose in India. "We recommended Remdesivir; an anti-infection drug called Sepsivac that can control cytokine storm reported in COVID-19 cases; and plasma therapy, which has received ICMR approval for trials in many places,' said Dr Sacchidanand, V-C of Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences and head of the expert panel.

The recommendation for use of Remdesivir on coronavirus patients in Karnataka, which came before the study results were declared in the US on Wednesday, was made on the basis of findings from smaller studies, published in 'New England Journal of Medicine' on

MAULSHREE SETH LUCKNOW, APRIL 30

EVEN AS nearly 3,000 migrant labourers were on their way to the Pradesh on Thursday, and preparations are on to bring back migrant from Uttarakhand and Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi

Adityanath urged them to be patient and not start walking home. "It is an appeal to all workers to show patience, like they have shown till now, and not to walk on foot. Contact governments of the

respective states. A plan is being

after discussions with the state governments," Adityanath said on Additional Chief Secretary

prepared to bring you back safely

(Home) Awanish Awasthi said: "Today buses from Madhya Pradesh have started bringing people. About 3,000 people in 100 buses have left MP, while those, who belong to MP are being sent in 40 buses.'

Adityanath asked officials to prepare quarantine centres, shelter homes and community kitchens for the returning workers. His office also put out names, phone numbers and email addresses of nodal officers.

Gujarat: UP migrants skip meals, want to return home

AISHWARYA MOHANTY VADODARA, APRIL 30

"WE ARE ready to die of starvation," says Shivam Kumar, a migrant worker at a relief camp in Vadodara. Kumar is among several workers from UP who refused meals Thursday to register their protest. They have only one demand: to be sent home.

Kumar (18) set off for UP from Vadodara with nine others, but was brought to this camp on March 28. "It has been a month and two days...we cannot handle it anymore. I want to go back and see my mother," Kumar says. On Thursday, police announced over a loudspeaker that they will be sent home and should not skip meals.

The administration awaits confirmation from respective state governments to send back the labourers. "There are protocols to be followed. There has been no confirmation from UP and Bihar. As soon as we receive it, we will send them back," said Vadodara Municipal Corporation Commissioner Nalin Upadhyay.

also tested positive. Nanded so far has only three cases of coronavirus. As migrants protest in

Kerala, CM says Centre's move impractical

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, APRIL 30

OVER A hundred migrant workers from Bengal hit the streets in Kerala's Malappuram district demanding that they be sent home. The workers were dispersed by the police who forced them to return to their rented accommodations in Chettiparamba village.

Meanwhile, CM Pinaravi Vijayan said, "The (Centre's) direction is that they should be sent back by bus. But Kerala has informed the Centre that directive is impractical and the Railways should be asked to arrange non-stop trains," he said.

The Chief Minister said that around 3.6 lakh migrant workers have been living in Kerala since the lockdown was announced. adding that taking them to their home states by bus would increase the chances of infection.

As the situation for the return of migration workers to their home states is evolving, there are chances of tension, Vijayan said.

According to Malappuram Deputy SP Jaleel Thottathil, the migrant workers had protested after hearing about stranded students being taken back.

At 1,000 deaths, only Germany had conducted more tests than India

KARISHMA MEHROTRA NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

ONLY GERMANY had conducted more tests than India by the time it reached 1.000 COVID-19 deaths. And, at the 1,000-death mark, India's ratio of positive cases to conducted tests (positivity rate) was the lowest of all countries.

This was found by *The Indian* Express analysis of data from the Oxford University and Global Change Data Lab dashboard, called Our World in Data. The portal feeds in testing numbers from individual government reports. Mortality numbers also come from government reports, via the European Center for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)

According to the analysis, 18 countries have had more than 1,000 COVID-19 deaths. They are Germany, India, United States, Canada, Switzerland, Ireland, United Kingdom, France, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden, Belgium, Mexico, Iran, and Turkey, in order of highest to lowest number of tests done when the country reached this stage. There was no testing data available for Brazil, China, and Spain.

At the juncture of 1,000 deaths, the total case load was higher in Germany, the US, Turkey and China. This means that those

TESTS CONDUCTED AT 1,000 DEATHS 1000000-500000

countries had a smaller proportion of their cases dying. Their mortality rates per cent were 1.3. 1.5, 2.1 and 2.4, respectively. India's current mortality rate is roughly

Nine countries worldwide have conducted more than 7.50.000 tests, a number India surpassed on Wednesday. At this

stage, only Russia and Germany had reported fewer deaths, and only Russia had reported fewer cases. The UK, Italy, Spain, Canada, Turkey and the US all had significantly higher deaths than India on the day they conducted just over 7,50,000 tests

However, when it comes to $comparisons\,with\,other\,countries$ when they were at India's current caseload. India's positioning slumps slightly. When countries hit their 32.000 case mark, six had fewer deaths than India (Peru, China, Turkey, US, Russia and Germany) while nine had higher deaths. Three countries had higher testing at this point (Russia, France and Germany), while no data was available for Spain, Iran, China and Brazil.

Even though India's death count remains relatively low, the rate of increase in deaths is now relatively high. COVID-19 deaths in India are now doubling faster than the current rate in Italy, US, Germany, UK, Israel, Iran and Spain. India currently doubles death numbers every 11 days, on par with Turkey. Canada and Pakistan. The global death count is doubling every 17 days, according to the World in Data dashboard.

Testing, deaths and recoveries have varying definitions across the world, and therefore may limit comparisons.

In another trend, recoveries in

not been as uniform as they were during the first two months of cases. Initially India saw almost all its cases recovering in two weeks. Current recovery numbers are no longer as closely trailing the case load from two weeks ago. When adding deaths (with a

India for the past two weeks have

14-day lag), the gap between cases and "completed" (death or recovery) numbers still remains. Thus, this most likely means that infection periods are longer than they used to be, statistical experts told The Indian Express. Some likely possibilities are that recoveries are taking longer or that infections are being diagnosed

WORDLY WISE

IT'S MY LIFE — ACTING.

— RISHI KAPOOR

The Indian EXPRESS

∽ FOUNDED By ∽

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

GOING HOME

Centre's decision to allow migrants to return home is welcome. Their safety and dignity is the state's responsibility

ORE THAN A month after the nationwide lockdown dried up the sources of livelihood for migrant workers in different parts of the country, the Union Home Ministry has passed an order allowing the inter-state movement of these workers. By all accounts, most of them have spent the past five weeks in overcrowded shelters arranged by state governments, civil society groups or employers. The decision to allow them to return home, though belated, is welcome. The Centre has also done well to direct states to ensure that the homecoming of the workers happens in controlled conditions: "Only asymptomatic people will be allowed to travel, and a second assessment of their health will be conducted after they arrive at their home states". States have been asked to develop protocols for receiving and sending stranded persons. The onus is now on them to draw plans to facilitate their safe return.

A majority of the migrant workers hail from Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Odisha. These states have a varying COVID-19 burden. Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh have more than 2,000 cases while the states in the east have a comparatively low incidence of the disease, though, as a report in this paper shows, West Bengal, Bihar and Jharkhand are showing signs of becoming potential hotspots. The return of migrants could pose more challenges to these states. But that is a responsibility for the respective governments to address — not a burden to be shouldered by the returning workers alone. The local authorities must reach out to the migrants to conduct periodic assessments of their health — as required by the home ministry's guidelines — and the state governments must be ready with quarantine facilities where, if required, they can be isolated in a dignified manner. The humanitarian case for these measures is evident. But, as former chief economic adviser Arvind Subramanian underlined at an e-adda organised by this paper on Tuesday, there is also economic sense in facilitating the exit of workers. Migrant workers will return to work only when they are assured that, in times of crisis, they can go back easily and safely to the sanctuary of their villages

The COVID-19 pandemic has bared the precarious existence of at least a 100-million people, many of them migrants, who work in factories, build roads and houses, pull rickshaws and operate the informal economy. They live in squalor in shanties - even on pavements of the cities they serve – without regular supplies of potable water and electricity. Many of them do not have proof of domicile in the places they work, cannot get a ration card and thus remain out of the ambit of the public distribution system. In rural India, the MGNREGA, the PM Kisan Yojana and crop insurance schemes provide a semblance of relief during distress. But in cities migrant workers do not have even this modicum of social security. Without social safety nets for such workers, the wheels of the economy could stop turning. That's one important lesson of this pandemic.

END THE UNCERTAINTY

Governor Koshyari has urged EC to hold election in which Maharashtra CM will be candidate. EC must act without delay

NTHE MIDST of the pandemic, Maharashtra is staring at a building political crisis. Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray will have to vacate his office if he fails to get elected or nominated to the state legislative assembly or council before May 27. . Thackeray was sworn in on November 28 last year, and as per the law, must become a member of the House within six months, in this case, before May 27. Since the Election Commission has deferred all elections, including to nine legislative council seats in Maharashtra, in the wake of the COVID outbreak, the ruling coalition has proposed that Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari nominate Thackeray to a vacant seat in the legislative council. The governor has been silent on the proposal, though the state cabinet made a formal recommendation, first on April 9 and then, on April 27. On Thursday, however, he requested the EC to declare elections to the nine legislative council seats "at the earliest". It is important that a prolonged political impasse is avoided in a state in which COVID is taking a high and mounting toll. At the same time, it is also imperative that a solution is found only through due process, and not by short circuiting it, or by setting a precedent that could return to haunt, and be misused.

The main opposition party in Maharashtra, the BJP, has argued that Thackeray's nomination to the legislative council would be in violation of the Representation of the People Act. The RPA mandates that a vacant seat be filled only if the remainder of the term extends to at least a year - the term of the seat proposed for Thackeray ends in June. However, some constitutional experts have argued that the cited law applies only to by-elections, and not nominations. It is for the courts to clarify the law. But a resolution - whether by the nomination route, or the holding of election - needs to be reached quickly, taking into account the context, while adhering to due process. If the COVID crisis had not unfolded, it would not be wrong to say that, given the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi's numbers in the assembly, Thackeray's election to the legislative council was a fait accompli.

The Election Commission could find a way of holding the deferred elections to the nine council seats in Maharashtra immediately. There may be logistical issues due to the COVID restrictions, but the EC could explore innovative solutions. Elections to the council require only the MLAs to vote and polling could be held without making them congregate in the House. Most importantly, all the stakeholders must avoid the temptation to politicise or prolong the uncertainty.

LOVELY LOVER

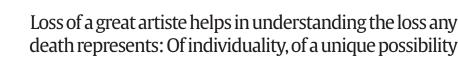
Rishi Kapoor was old Bollywood, but he was also cracklingly fresh, spoke to an India trembling on the cusp of a new era

OME PEOPLE ARE destined to be stars. Rishi Kapoor, who passed away Thursday morning at 67, was one such. He was a Kapoor, grandson of Prithviraj, son of Ranbir Raj, and part of the First Family of Hindi cinema. Prithviraj was a true pioneer, who forged a solid foundation for Kapoor & Sons. Raj was a young man in a young nation, and both in his acting and directorial choices cemented the idea of India. *Mera* joota hai Japani, he sang, yeh patloon Inglistani, sar par laal topi Roosi, phir bhi dil hai Hindustani.

All through his busy acting career, from a "child star" to a veteran, Rishi Kapoor bore that legacy well, while creating an indelible niche of his own, which he kept expanding. It all began with the stupendous success of Bobby, a youthful love story made in 1973, by Raj Kapoor. It gave Hindi cinema a brand new lover, and a brand new way of romancing. The audience, used to the staid ways of the older triumvirate of Raj Kapoor-Dev Anand-Rajendra Kumar had already been shaken by the boisterousness of Shammi Kapoor, and taken in by the boynext-door appeal of Rajesh Khanna. Rishi Kapoor was old Bollywood, sure, but he was also

cracklingly fresh, and spoke to an India trembling on the cusp of a new era. All the world loves a lover, and Rishi Kapoor was a great one. He smiled at his lady-love, danced around fountains, and sang soulful songs. That he was capable of much more was evident in the roles he essayed in light-weight capers, heavy-handed social dramas, romantic comedies, soppy love stories. He was also capable of restraint, as evident in his muchahead-of-their-times serious romances. One of his last films was Anubhav Sinha's Mulk, in which his character, a middle-aged Muslim lawyer, sounded the gong for an India that belongs to us all, and the importance of love and compassion. A credo to live, and die, by.

Matters of Death





DEATH HAS MANY faces. But it has only one truth. It represents an irrevocable loss of value. We are told in most philosophical and religious texts about its inevitability, its certainty, its place in an order where all things are transitory. The Gita enjoins us not to grieve for what is inevitable. But this is just a metaphysical fact, and, like many metaphysical facts, does not capture the truth. The truth is that even in the Mahabharata no one quite believes the Gita's injunctions. Not a single character manages to absolve themselves of the pain of loss: The entire drama is propelled by loss and grief, not by the cold comfort of Krishna's metaphysics. It may not be rational to fight the inevitable. But that is not an argument that death is not loss.

Philosophers have debated to death what kind of loss death represents. And for whom. The person dying or those left behind? A whole tradition, from Socrates to Montaigne, is devoted to preparing us for the good death. For Montaigne, "premeditation of death is a premeditation of freedom": Somehow knowing how to die liberates us from subjection and constraint. But even the composed Montaigne, who thought contemplating death made life more vivid and meaningful, could not easily reconcile to the death of his brilliant 32year-old friend, the young La Boetie, author of The Discourse of Voluntary Servitude, an analysis of the hypnosis tyrants can produce in their subjects. The fact that La Boetie was only 32 when he died made the grief harder, even in an age where dying young was not rare. Coping with the prospect of someone else's death is, in most cases, harder than contemplating your own.

There is, of course, another distinction to be made. Just as the inevitability of death is not an answer to the question of loss, the question of loss is not the same as that of grief or attachment. The question of grief, how one copes with the fact of loss, is a different question altogether, and perhaps the most deeply subjective one. Different people react to the same loss differently. Which is why the answer to the question of grief cannot be a philosophical or theological

The death of an incandescent artiste like Irrfan, at an age much too young for our era, is a tragic loss. The philosopher Thomas Nagel, in 'Mortal Questions', asked why the loss of the young seems more tragic than the loss of the old: Keats's death at 24 seems more tragic than Tolstoy's at 80. In part, this has to do with the sense of unrealised possibilities. Keats was deprived of years to live that come before Death becomes inevitable. But Nagel had warned, rightly, that this does not mean Tolstoy's death was not also an insignificant loss. But the sense of a death being premature adds to both the loss involved and the possible grief associated with it.

one. It has be about knowing the person grieving. In this sense, most of our sermons at death are beside the point. They can, at most, affirm certain public truths; they cannot address the pain of loss.

The death of an incandescent artiste like Irrfan, at an age much too young for our era, is a tragic loss. The philosopher Thomas Nagel, in Mortal Questions, asked why the loss of the young seems more tragic than the loss of the old: Keats's death at 24 seems more tragic than Tolstoy's at 80. In part, this has to do with the sense of unrealised possibilities. Keats was deprived of years to live that come before Death becomes inevitable. But Nagel had warned, rightly, that this does not mean Tolstoy's death was not also an insignificant loss. But the sense of a death being premature adds to both the loss involved and the possible grief associated

But what is the loss we mourn, especially in the case of a brilliant genius like Irrfan, who attained the pinnacle of what art could achieve? He leaves a void in this world. In part, the sense of loss that accompanies every artiste is the sense of their irreplaceability. They are, in some deep sense, unique. But it is also a uniqueness that touches everyone. It is universal. What makes it universal is that its achievement and value is something all of us can acknowledge. It lifts us out of our egotisms and narcissisms to give a glimpse of what artistic excellence looks like. We regret his passing early since the magnitude of his achievement makes you wonder what other possibilities might have been.

But the loss represented by the loss of a great artiste is in some senses the key to understanding the loss any death represents: The loss of individuality — being a unique locus of value in the world. Even at a less publicly recognised scale, any death extinguishes so many possible futures for individuals. We may not be unique in the artistic gifts that we possess. Not all of us are Keats or Tolstoy or Irrfan. But in the circle that has been formed by our life histories. we end up shaping the world in a unique way. Death is an objective loss.

But, in part, what confers value on life is recognition. Artistes, in some sense, expose themselves to a kind of universal judgement. They are recognised, and their loss is instantly felt because they are so universally recognised. But what confers value on the small arts of life, the quotidian quirks that make us who we are, is the fact that someone recognises them, even if only in small and intimate circles. As Adam Smith knew, the greatest ignominy that can befall human beings is not death, it is not having their life acknowledged at all. That is what makes it devoid of value.

This is a moment at which death seems so much to be in the public air. Even though death is inevitable, modernity has the conceit that it can at least try and defeat it for some of the time. Death is not just a metaphysical event. Its course is somewhat determined by science and by sociology, by forms of collective organisation that determine who lives and who dies. We are debating the value of the lives of the old versus the lives of the young. But we are also debating, in some ways, two approaches to the value of life. One that looks at it in purely statistical terms: Where the value of each life can be offset by the value of another. Statistics becomes our new metaphysics. Or we can look at it in artistic terms: Where each life is a source of unique, incomparable possibility. Each death is, in its own way, a oss that cannot be made up. Every time we deprive the poor and all those we make invisible, of their sense of possibility, we inflict this loss on ourselves. Depriving people of possibility is akin to depriving them of life.

There is no absolution for grief. Sometimes death has an inevitability. Sometimes hard choices have to be made. Montaigne coped with the loss of La Boetie by incorporating his work, a scepticism of tyranny, into his own. This was as if to say, the very thing that makes us see death as a loss should lead us to affirm life in all its possibilities

> The writer is contributing editor, The Indian Express



HE WAITED AND WON

Irrfan struggled before he made it. That's what made him such a good actor

KUNAL RAY

IT IS DIFFICULT to write an actor's obituary when everything you might want to say is already in the public domain. It becomes even more difficult when the actor in question is someone like Irrfan Khan, a rare gem in the history of Hindi cinema, a so-called supporting actor who rose to mainstream stardom, and played lead roles in commercially successful films like Hindi Medium (2017) and Piku (2015). Perhaps, only Irrfan could have done that. He created a path for others to follow - a path cemented with sheer hard work, relentless struggle and redoubtable performances.

A constant element to bemoan is the strange way in which stardom functions in Bollywood, where good looks are the definitive markers of a star; where mere acting prowess might make you a good supporting actor, at best. Irrfan could breach that formulaic construct.

His beginnings were far from comfortable. His struggle for recognition could inspire a film script. Many serials, art-house films, years of unending struggle in the unsparing metropolis that is Mumbai and, finally, things began to change for this actor with Haasil (2003) where he played a neg-

If you look at Irrfan's body of work, which spans student diploma films and telIrrfan's success story is a testimony to his acting talent which subverted boxoffice norms. His work abroad helped to further strengthen his prospects in the country. It is rather sad that some of our finest have to wait for Hollywood or Western validation to receive their rightful dues at home.

evision serials amongst other things, it is indicative of the most important thing that actors without a pedigree have had to learn in order to survive Mumbai: To wait. The art of waiting makes for a good teacher,

Maybe, it is this act of waiting that further magnified his performances. He gave everything to his on-screen portrayals that all those years of waiting had taught him. Of course, lest we forget, behind the success of one Irrfan Khan, there still are many stories of failure — forever lost in the boulevards of Mumbai.

Even when Irrfan did succumb to Hindi film stardom, he ensured the script got elevated. In Anurag Basu's Life in a Metro (2007), he played a highly unimpressive character, but there is no way you wouldn't fall for his innocence and boisterous charm. In The Lunchbox (2013), he made the mundane appears intriguing. And it's hard to not absolutely detest him in *Haider* (2014). That is what he always did. Irrfan Khan was never Irrfan Khan on screen. He always became the character.

One cannot think of Ashoke Ganguly from Jhumpa Lahiri's The Namesake without putting Irrfan's face to the character. If one may dare to say so, Ganguly was fully realised on the screen because of what Irrfan brought into the character.

Irrfan's success story is a testimony to his acting talent, which subverted box-office norms. His work abroad helped to further strengthen his prospects in the country. It is rather sad that some of our finest have to wait for Hollywood or Western validation to receive their rightful dues at home.

Can you think of Life of Pi (2012) without Irrfan? He is barely there in the film, which is otherwise dominated by a blitzkrieg of events and great visual effects, et, it is his dialogues in the end that many left the theatre with.

There is a quote from Tom Hanks that has gone viral since the news of Khan's demise spread on social media. Hanks refers to Khan as "the coolest guy in the room" and says he knows he can only be a pale imitation of him. That says something, and not just because Hanks is a big Hollywood star.

A lot of Irrfan Khan's admirers and colleagues have said that the news of his death has left them "numb". There's no better word to articulate the sense of abandonment — of being unable to watch him light up the screen anymore.

> The writer teaches literary and cultural studies at FLAME University, Pune

May 1, 1980, Forty Years Ago

IMPHAL VIOLENCE

VIOLENCE SPREAD BEYOND the limits of Imphal as arsonists trying to set fire to a school building were fired on by security forces at Patsoi village, six kilometres from the city. But the building was razed. A wave of arson and terrorism swept Imphal last night despite patrolling by troops. The situation showed no improvement and the authorities extended by 16 hours, without a break, the 48-hour curfew which was to end at 4 pm on April 30. The curfew was extended following alarming reports of gunmen moving about in the predominantly Nepalese inhabited village of Sagolmang, about 25 km from the city and the burning there of 400 dwellings.

Carter address

PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER, in a solemn report to his country, said the American hostages will be released from Iran only if Ayatollah Khomeini, the Revolutionary Council and the militants agree unanimously to let them go – a task he all but called impossible. "We cannot deal with inhumane people who have no respect for international law, who violate the tenets of their own religion and then persecute innocent people who are American citizens and deprive them of their freedom for six months," Carter said during a nationally

broadcast news conference.

No handcuffs

THE SUPREME COURT has held that the rule providing for handcuffing of undertrials while they are being taken to court is violative of the fundamental rights guaranteed the Constitution. "Armed escorts, worth the salt, can overpower any unarmed undertrial and extra guards can make up for exceptional needs. In very special situations, we do not rule out application of irons," Justice Krishna Iyer and Justice Chinnappa Reddy said on a habeas corpus petition filed by Prem Shankar Shukla, an undertrial in the Tihar jail in Delhi.

THE INDIAN EXPRESS, FRIDAY, MAY 1, 2020

THE IDEAS PAGE

"The world may have been late in reacting to India's abetment of anti-Muslim

terror, but it is positive to note that the global community is finally speaking up. For some time now, Sangh Parivar gangs have terrorised Muslims, be it due to allegations of eating beef, being 'anti-national' or spurious claims of spreading

The New Deal India needs

An open-ended, creative, expanded employment guarantee at minimum wages should be its centrepiece



NIKHIL DEY AND Aruna Roy

THERE ARE NO labour-day rallies, celebrations or meetings this year as everyone is under lockdown, fighting the coronavirus through physical distancing. Nevertheless, it is a day for totting up what has been lost and what the future holds.

This has been a painful year for workers. The world has been turned upside down due to the global pandemic. Worse, however, for the millions of workers in India, was them being forced to stay in camps or cramped accommodation, foregoing the comfort of family, food, and mental peace. It is a cruel irony that after the sacrifice they have been asked to undertake, they don't even get the safety of physical distancing. Workers have lost hardwon rights, despite labour being the biggest contributor to the Indian growth story. As they spend May 1 waiting to get home, the Central government that did so much to get Indians abroad back home has only just allowed migrant workers to go home, along with many conditions, leaving it to the states to facilitate their return.

Those who benefited most from this growth see this workforce in utilitarian, rather than human terms. The privileged must understand that if they do not want to be affected by impoverishment and insecurity that has afflicted these workers, a minimal level of livelihood security will have to be guaranteed to labour, farmers and workers in the informal sector. It is myopia of the worst sort to fight the spread of COVID-19 by wishing away a massive humanitarian crisis. The solution lies in assuring all Indians a measure of livelihood and income security.

This mandate can be met with a creative and expanded Employment Guarantee Act as a human response to this epidemic. Most countries have put together significant recovery packages of up to 10 per cent of their GDP and more. India has repackaged some existing entitlements, added a fraction of 1 per cent of GDP and offered that as a support to all its citizens for coping with the effects of a pandemic and a six-week lockdown imposed in an emergency-like scenario. There is no alternative to ensuring a regular cash flow to all those affected and the argument of cash transfers vs an expanded Employment Guarantee Act is that of dole vs work and dignity. Payment of part of the wages in subsidised foodgrain would be ideal for the 94 per cent of our workforce in the informal sector. It would provide work with dignity, and perhaps be the most inexpensive way to rebuild a shattered economy. Let's look imaginatively at the employment guarantee measures that need to be undertaken.

To begin with, the existing entitlements under MGNREGA need to be taken seriously. Work must be "guaranteed" on demand. The government must put its own counsel to the private sector into practice and use the MGN-REGA budget to pay full wages to all active job card holders during the lockdown. Under a legislation that is designed to provide livelihood security, workers were restricted by a lockdown backed by a strong legal mandate to stay indoors, with no exemption from the Ministry of Home Affairs for MGNREGA work. The Act even makes a provision for unemployment allowance, when the state cannot provide work.



C R Sasikumar

MGNREGA has helped build rural infrastructure through approximately 10 crore families. But because of the superimposed resource constraints, many could not access the entitled 100 days of work. Migrant workers coming back home will swell the already desperate demand for work. The government has existing provisions for expanding MGN-REGA work by another 50 days in situations of any calamity. The expansion of the Employment Guarantee Act must, therefore, be effective and open-ended. The 100 days per family must expand to allow access to any adult seeking any number of days of work during the period of recovery from the

In fact, an Urban Employment Guarantee should also be put in place. The shock of the lockdown, and the loss of employment will be countered only with guaranteed tenure and security of income to help persuade workers to return to their former place of work. As industry revamps and struggles to restart, many casual, and even regular workers in various industries, will need fallback employment.

Apart from the regular public works which must continue with sufficient safety measures, home-based activities must be permitted in the expanded employment guarantee programme to enable "work from home" for this class of workers as well. Labour in their own farms and kitchen gardens can be used to expand productivity. Selected services, and production activities, such as making masks, soaps and sanitisers, will help deal with the challenge of COVID-19. Following Kerala's success, panchayats

and local government units should be empowered and involved in dealing with this epidemic. This would also include providing resources and flexibility via a workforce paid through the expanded employment guarantee programme to address the manifold challenges of COVID-19. The elderly and the vulnerable are under acute threat, and children out of school could face greater malnutrition. The workers, with precautions, could be used judiciously to provide food and care-giving services for the needy.

What would the budget for this look like? Where will the money come from? In 1975, Maharashtra passed an employment guarantee law with no restrictions on the number of days or people. To fund this, the legislature identified four taxes: A professional tax on all salary earners, a tax on petrol, a sales tax surcharge and a tax on the income of three-crop irrigated farms to be put into a dedicated employment guarantee fund. As a consequence, Maharashtra always had enough money to implement the law. As experience has shown, eight hours of work at minimum wages are accessed only when other work opportunities dwindle. As and when the economy recovers, fewer workers will demand work.

The Maharashtra Act served as a model for the NREGA when it was enacted 30 years later. However, its innovative funding pattern was not adopted by the MGNREGA, and consequently, it has always been shortchanged. This is despite a unique legal architecture of being demand-driven, and not budget constrained. The recovery package should contain a set of dedicated taxes for adding a special "Disaster Management Employment Guarantee Programme". Perhaps we could start with a one or two per cent wealth tax so that some of the unequal distribution of the fruits of economic growth that has gone to the top 5 per cent in the country is used for serving the basic needs of those who contributed fundamentally to that growth.

The United States, not a model for its attitude to labour, addressed the financial crisis brought on by the Great Depression, when the then President, Franklin D Roosevelt, offered Americans a "New Deal" to fight the great depression with hope and solidarity and "cooperation" rather than "competition". The centrepiece was a massive public works programme offering work at minimum wages to anyone who sought work. It not only helped build some of America's great highways but also paid accomplished but impoverished artists for doing artwork in public places. Both the highways and the paintings remain of value to generations of Americans.

India urgently needs a New Deal of its own. An open-ended, creative, expanded employment guarantee at minimum wages, could be a centrepiece of that new deal.

May 1 is an important day to remember because it marks the "Haymarket" uprising that led to an eight-hour working day and a long and successful struggle for a more just and humane world. Hunger and indignity is a prescription for many uprisings. While these uprisings will bring about some form of change, they will not necessarily result in a solution that is of value to all. It would be wise if India's rulers understand that. But it is even more important that the rest of us understand it and act with solidarity and cooperation.

The writers work with the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS)

Labour's leader

BR Ambedkar laid the foundation for workers' rights, social security in India



ARJUN RAM MEGHWAL

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR Day is celebrated on May 1 to honour workers. Labour has an undeniable role in shaping the nation's fortune. Since the times immemorial, the working class has struggled and sacrificed for greater causes – first for Independence and then building the nation brick by brick. The ongoing fight against COVID-19 has brought temporary hardship for everyone, including workers. But Prime Minister Narendra Modi has weighed life as being greater than livelihood and has now provided a blueprint for turning this crisis into opportunity in the post-corona world. The proposed change in work culture through adaptability, efficiency, inclusiveness, opportunity and universalism will open up more avenues for workers to build

Many leaders have been a beacon for workers and BR Ambedkar was one among them. As the representative of the Depressed Classes in the Round Table Conference, Ambedkar forcefully pleaded for living wages, decent working conditions and the freedom of peasants from the clutches of cruel landlords. He also fought for the removal of social evils that blighted the lives of the downtrodden.

He went on to form the Independent Labour Party (ILP) in 1936 with a comprehensive programme to meet the needs and grievances of the landless, poor tenants, agriculturists, and workers. In the polls held in 1937, the first election under the newly enacted Government of India Act of 1935, the ILP achieved spectacular success by winning 15 of the 17 seats it had contested for the Bombay Legislative Assembly. On September 17, 1937, during the Poona session of the Bombay Assembly, he introduced a bill to abolish the Khoti system of land tenure in Konkan. He opposed the introduction of Industrial Disputes Bill, 1937 because it removed the workers' right to strike.

His profound knowledge of labour matters was universally acknowledged and demonstrated during his term as Labour member of the Viceroy's Executive Council from 1942 to 1946. When the world order was in flux during World War II, Ambedkar was guiding Indian labour. The changing economy provided opportunities for the expansion of industries. While entrepreneurs and managers could hope for prosperity, labour was not given its due share. Ambedkar piloted and introduced measures for labour welfare by laying the foundation for the basic structure for the government's labour policy. He tackled the knotty problems and won esteem and respect from employees and employers alike. The Indian Trade Union (Amendment) Bill, introduced by Ambedkar on November 8, 1943, compelled the employers to acknowledge trade unions.

On February 8, 1944, in the legislative assembly during the debate on the Lifting of Ban on Employment of Women on

Underground Work in Coal Mines, Ambedkar said: "It is for the first time that I think in any industry the principle has been established of equal pay for equal work irrespective of the sex." It was a historic moment. Through the Mines Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Bill 1943, he empowered women workers with maternity benefits.

Addressing the Indian Labour Conference held in New Delhi on November 26, 1945, Ambedkar emphasised the urgent need to bring progressive labour welfare legislation: "Labour may well say that the fact that the British took 100 years to have a proper code of labour legislation is no argument that we should also in India take 100 years. History is not always an example. More often it is a warning.'

Ambedkar did not accept the Marxist position that the abolition of private property would bring an end to poverty and suffering. In Buddha or Karl Marx, he writes: "Can the Communists say that in achieving their valuable end they have not destroyed other valuable ends? They have destroyed private property. Assuming that this is a valuable end, can the Communists say that they have not destroyed other valuable end in the process of achieving it? How many people have they killed for achieving their end? Has human life no value? Could they not have taken property without taking the life of the owner?"

Inspired by Ambedkar, the current government has taken steps to improve the quality of life of workers. For example, the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan Yojna was launched in February 2019 to ensure protection of unorganised workers in their old age. Through technological interventions like Shram Suvidha Portal, transparency and accountability are ensured in the enforcement of labour law. The government is working to simplify, amalgamate and rationalise the provisions of the existing central labour laws into four labour codes - Labour Code on Wages, on Industrial Relations, on Social Security & Welfare and on Occupational Safety, Health & Working Conditions.

In the extraordinary circumstances brought on by the COVID pandemic, the labour fraternity deserves a special salute. During his Mann ki Baat broadcast on March 29, the PM apologised for the inconvenience: "I extend a heartfelt apology to all countrymen. And I strongly feel from the core of my heart that you will forgive me since certain decisions had to be taken, resulting in myriad hardships for you. And when it comes to my underprivileged brothers and sisters, they must be wondering on the kind of Prime Minister they have, who has pushed them to the brink! My wholehearted apologies, especially to them." PM Modi has championed the fight against the pandemic and been acclaimed globally. Much of the credit for this goes to the perseverance of the labour fraternity

As we recall the innumerable contribution of the countless labourers in nationbuilding, with an ever-increasing spirit of Shramev lavate, we must remember the contributions of Ambedkar.

The writer is Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises. He is the Lok Sabha MP for Bikaner

Renew the pledge

More than ever, the rights of workers, vulnerable need to be secured

May Day is a celebration of labour and labourers, the creators of the wealth of nations. It is a day to demonstrate the strength of the working people, the alliance of workers and peasants, unity of the trade unions and labour movements and to express soli-

darity, nationally and internationally. The COVID-19 pandemic is haunting the world. It has been devastating the lives of people due to mass unemployment, poverty, hunger and despair. The conditions are worsening as economic inequality grows. The poor and working people are bearing the burden of the lockdown the world over. This situation has placed huge challenges before the working people and their political and trade union organisations. The plight of daily wage earners and the migrant labourers is miserable. Hunger deaths are being reported. The lockdown in India has impacted the future of our unemployed young people, students and children. Despite the propaganda about online teaching and learning, the poor, homeless, and hungry children do not have access to any such facilities.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has come out with an alarming report that 40-crore workers in India are at risk of falling deeper into poverty. They are mainly from the informal sector.

The current situation in our country has not changed the character of the BJP-RSS combine. It has not changed the neoliberal trajectory of the present government

May Day has a glorious history. For the first time in May 1886, the Chicago Haymarket Square witnessed a heroic struggle of the working people who demanded an eighthour working day. It was a demand to tell the capitalists that just because they had appropriated the means of production as private property, it did not mean they could ruthlessly force the workers to slog for endless hours without compensation to produce the surplus. It was to convey the message that working people would fight for their rights. In this heroic struggle, several workers were martyred. The Haymarket struggle inspired the working masses of the world. The Second International of the workers of the world — in which Friedrich Engels, the companion and comrade of Karl Marx, played a leading role – declared in 1889 that May Day would be observed as an international day for working people.

In India, too, we have the heroic history of working-class struggles. It is a matter of pride that May Day was first observed in India way back in 1923 in Chennai. Trade union movements started emerging during British and French rule in India. The jute workers of Calcutta were organised under a trade union in 1854. The Madras Press Workers Union was formed in 1903 and Coral Mill workers union in 1908. Though the AITUC was founded in 1920 and we are proudly celebrating its centenary this year, the B&C Mill workers in Chennai organised a trade union and got it registered on April 3, 1918. This was the first registered trade union in India. The textile mill workers of Pondicherry (Puducherry) were fighting for an eight-hour working day under the leadership of the Communist Party of India. On July 30, 1936, there was a brutal attack on the workers and 12 of them were martyred. This finally forced the French colonialists to accept the demand for an eighthour working day for the first time in Asia.

An Urban Employment

Guarantee should also be

lockdown and the loss of

employment will be

countered only with

guaranteed tenure and

security of income to help

As industry revamps and

struggles to restart, many

casual, and even regular

will need fallback

employment.

persuade workers to return

to their former place of work.

workers in various industries

out in place. The shock of the

During the days when the people of India were fighting for independence from colonial rule, the trade unions stood at the frontline of the national movement. Their struggles got intertwined with political struggles.

Even today, working people have to play a leading role in the fight against the present government. The BJP-led NDA government is aggressively attempting to change labour laws to curtail the rights of working people. One can see this in the attempt to increase the working hours to 12.

With political power, the BJP-RSS is pro-

moting its agenda of subverting the secular, democratic republic of India and turning it into a theocratic Hindutva Rashtra. This emerging situation demands that working people have a political and ideological education. Politics is nothing but economics.

World capitalism is in very bad health. Instead of spending on public health, education and social infrastructure, there is competitive spending on military and war equipment. The report released by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute reveals that India is the third-largest military spender, after the US and China. Socialism is the only alternative. But there is the lure of fascism and neofascism. This trend is encouraged by the corporate capitalists.

On this May Day, while saluting the working people for their historic revolutionary role, we renew our pledge to fight for socialism - a society free from exploitation, injustice and all forms of discrimination.

Let us observe this May Day during the lockdown by reaching out to the needy and vulnerable. Let the working people rise against the present government as they rose against the colonial rulers for the independence of the country.

The writer is general secretary, CPI

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

VIRTUE IN LISTENING THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'The

prickly state' (IE, April 30). The policy suggestions given by the 50 young officers of the IRS need serious consideration. The time has come to not only welcome the suggestions given by the public on various platforms but to also implement them after analysis. The conventional methods of governance definitely need a makeover. The citizens are aware about the innovations and are providing ideas and criticism upfront. Omkar Thorat, Mumbai

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'The prickly state' (IE, April 30). In the time of crises, the ruling party should concentrate and think for the welfare of the nation, and not merely of their own image. The government should welcome the advice of the people rather than critise them.

Parul Srivastava, Prayagraj

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'The prickly state' (IE, April 30). It has been repeated time and again that the motto of the central government is "Maximum Governance, Minimum Government". While the coronavirus pandemic warrants departure from the said motto, and the involvement of the central government, the Centre also needs to listen and take cognisance of ideas that can be factored in for fighting the pandemic. Brushing aside worthy ideas and punishing those airing their views on issues concerning the larger community, is unfortunate.

Krishan Kumar Chug, Delhi

LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

To encourage quality reader intervention, The Indian Express offers the Letter of the Week award. The letter adjudged the best for the week is published every Saturday. Letters may be e-mailed to editpage@expressindia.com or sent to The Indian Express, B-1/B, Sector 10, Noida-UP 201301.

DELIVER OR PERISH

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'Covod fight: Government system in front, private hospitals do the distancing' (IE, April, 29). It is unfortunate that private hospitals are reluctant to join the COVID-19 fight. It is the responsibility of the doctors' fraternity to be at the forefront and help government in this international crisis. A big salute to those doctors and nurses who are executing their duties honestly at this time of need. The public expects the best service from the private hospitals as well. If they lag behind in doing their duties, the public will remember their negligence at such juncture forever. The government should cancel the licences if private hospitals do not deliver.

Sarjerao Narwade, Sangli

EXPRESS NETWORK

2 days of kits left, 7 lakh RNA extraction kits arrive

ABANTIKA GHOSH NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

WITH JUST two days worth of kits left, India on Wednesday received the first part of 7 lakh RNA extraction kits, out of an order of over 30 lakh kits placed with various companies.

RNA extraction kits are crucial for diagnostic tests on people suffering from COVID-19.

The supply comes at a time India is looking to ramp up testing in preparation for relaxation of lockdown norms and has set its sights on conducting over 1 lakh daily tests.

After the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) decided to indefinitely suspend rapid antibody tests following complaints about quality of Chinese kits, RTPCR tests remain the only test for coronavirus. The test cannot be done without RNA extraction kits, and many states

have reportedly run out of RNA extraction kits.

Confirming receiving 7 lakh kits on Wednesday, Environment $Secretary\,C\,K\,Mishra, who\,heads$ the empowered group on isolation beds, testing etc, said this does not include kits already available with the states, and that there are "daily arrivals". He said, "We don't have a problem as of now. We reached 70,000 tests today. Our testing targets will definitely be met.'

Asked whether India has adequate kits for testing, Joint Secretary (Health) Lav Agarwal said, "Availability of RTPCR tests have increased from one lab to 292 government labs and 97 private ones. It has been constantly scaled up - from a few hundred to yesterday, when 58,686 tests were done.... Whatever capacity is needed, whenever it is needed. the country has always kept increasing to meet the require-

Ex-sarpanch held in probe

CANCELLATION

No. F. 8(8)/H&SC/TM/2019-20/9237

This is for information of all concerned that the e-tender

having ID No. 2019_Horti_7181_1 is hereby cancelled

due to administrative reasons. Details are available in

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

THE NATIONAL Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested a former sarpanch from Shopian in connection with its probe into suspended I&K Police officer Devinder Singh's alleged connections with terror groups.

Tariq Ahmed Mir, the former sarpanch, was arrested from his home in Baramulla on Thursday. He is said to be currently aligned

Sources said the NIA picked up Mir after it found evidence

that he had been supplying arms to terror groups. "Mir has been on the radar of agencies for a while. The NIA found evidence that he has been acting as a conduit for supply of weapons to terror groups. His connections with the Hizbul Mujahideen have been confirmed," a security

Deputy SP Devender Singh was arrested in January while travelling in his car with Hizbul militant Naveed Babu. The NIA had said he had provided shelter to the militant on multiple occasions.

A Jammu court gave the NIA custody of Mir for six days.

ADMN DEFENDS INTERNET CURBS

Your order 'forged' to spread fake news: J&K to top court

ANANTHAKRISHNANG NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

THE JAMMU and Kashmir administration cited "fake news" involving the Supreme Court that was allegedly being spread in the Union Territory to argue against the lifting of Internet restrictions in its submissions to the top court

In perhaps the first such official acknowledgment, it also talked about the rise of two new "Pakistan-based" militant outfits—The Resistance Front (TRF) and Tehreeki-Milat-i-Islami (TMI)—that were allegedly using messaging apps to "instigate the

on Wednesday.

In an affidavit filed in response to petitions by NGO Foundation for Media Professionals, Shaleen Kabra, the Principal Secretary of the Jammu and Kashmir Home Department, referred to "a fake order purporting to be a Record of Proceeding" of the Supreme Court dated April 9,2020.

In the order, it has been "falsely reflected that administration of Union Territory of J&K has been ordered to take a quick review within 24 hours to restore full Internet communication in the region", the administration

It added that an FIR under sections 465 (forgery), 466 (forgery of court record) and 471 (using forged document as genuine) of the IPC was filed in this regard at the Cyber Police Station, Kashmir Zone.

The Union Territory also submitted that "cross-border terrorism and violent activities carried out by terror outfits like JeM, LeT, HM, operating with the external support are too well known" and that "new outfits are being launched, like TRF and TMI, instigating the youth to join terrorism and there has been a spurt in terror

activities in the last fortnight". "The terror modules operating within the UTs and handlers from across the border aid and incite people by transmission of fake news and targeted messages through use of Internet...," the administration said.

Defending the decision to cap Internet speed at 2G, it added that "Pakistan-based terrorism handlers like TRF and TMI, instigating youth to join terrorism, are using messaging applications to communicate as also to raise the morale of terrorists; however 2G mobile data services considerably restrict the use of such applications".

Pointing to instances of fake news creating a law-and-order scare, the administration said there were rumours relating to COVID-19 deaths, the health of Hurriyat chairman Syed Ali Shah Geelani, and "circulation on social media particularly in WhatsApp groups showing PoK flag atop Clock Tower, Lal Chowk,

The affidavit added that "religious preachers from Pakistan had urged people via social media to recite Azan in Masjids during midnight and on viewing this video, people across the valley recited Azan in different Masjids, which created panic and lawand-order situation



DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



TRINAMOOL CONGRESS MP Dr Santanu Sen has written to Health Ministry officer Lav Agarwal, who is the government's face in the battle against COVID-19, protesting against his comments on the reason for doctors getting infected by the virus. Sen, a doctor by profession and state secretary of the Indian Medical Association's West Bengal unit, has demanded an apology from Agarwal for his alleged remarks that "some professionals are getting infected in parties". Sen has also sent copies of his letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and

Srinagar".

Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan.

against suspended J&K Dy SP

NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

with the BJP.

www.tripuratenders.gov.in

ICA-C/116/20

establishment officer said.

(Dr. P.B. Jamatia)

Tripura, Agartala

Director,

Delhi cases dip below 100, three more deaths; Govt releases home isolation protocol

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

THE RATE of growth of COVID-19 cases slowed a little on Thursday, as the city recorded 76 cases. Delhi has recorded over 100 cases each day over the past five days, with 293 cases — the second highest in the city so far — being recorded on Sunday.

Three people, all above the age of 50, suffering from co-morbid conditions and on ventilators, succumbed to the disease on Thursday, talking the death toll to 59.

Those who tested positive include four staff members at AIIMS - a hospital attendant and four security guards. So far, 20 staff members from the hospital have tested positive.

A nurse, who worked at Hindu Rao Hospital, also tested positive. She had come in contact with another nurse from the hospital, who had tested postive earlier. The hospital has quarantined 76 of its staff. Thirty of them have tested negative, while results of others

At least 294 healthcare workers have ested positive so far.

The Delhi government, meanwhile, released guidelines on home quarantine Thursday. The city will follow the Centre's decision to allow those with mild or no symptoms, who test positive for the disease, to isolate at home, provided they have adequate facilities to ensure self-isolation, where they do not come in close contact with family members.

A team of anganwadi workers will assess the feasibility of home quarantine under the supervision of the incharge at a public health facility. A caregiver, who can communicate with the health department, should also be present in the house.

700-800 STUDENTS STUCK, SAY OFFICIALS

Arranging to bring back students from Kota: CM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

THE DELHI government is making arrangements to bring back students stuck in Kota to the city, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said Thursday. An estimated 700-800 students from Delhi are stuck in Kota, a coaching hub for medical and engineering aspirants in Rajasthan, said officials. The Transport department has also reached out to private bus operators to arrange vehicles, sources said.

"Delhi governemnt is making arrangements to soon bring Delhi students back home from Kota," the CM said in a tweet. Keiriwal's tweet comes a day after the Union Ministry of Home Affairs directed states and Union Territories to develop protocols for sending and receiving stranded migrant workers, pilgrims, tourists, stu-

Senior government of ficialssaid they are still developing an SOP in accordance with the MHA guidelines. "We will make an announcement only when the plan is fully ready. A half-baked announcement may trigger another round of chaos," said an official.

Sources said district magistrates are likely to be designated as nodal officers to carry



The CM's announcement comes a day after the MHA issued an order allowing movement of migrant workers, students

out registration of stranded migrants, after which transit passes will be issued to only those without any influenzalike symptoms.

Presently, there are close to 10,000 migrant workers in 111 schools, which have been converted into shelters

Delhi Police, meanwhile, said they too were coming up vith a plan and that those v want to go back to their hometowns will have to register themselves.

Workers who have been housed at the Yamuna Sports Complex said they were desperate to get home. Mehrushi, a construction worker, who is with her family at the Yamuna Sports Complex, said, "We want to go back to Badaun in UP but police are still not allowing us. How will we get registered or show any proof without documents? How long will we stay here?" Delhi Police PRO Mandeep

Singh Randhawa said, "The government and Delhi Police are finalising the modalities and the SOPs. We are in touch with resident commissioners of different states in Delhi, In the guidelines one thing is clear that all migrants and other stranded people need to get proper registration done so their movement to their hometowns can be traced and necessary precautions can be made. I want to appeal to everyone to not move out and follow lockdown guidelines till SOP is made and registration is

NO BRAKE ON BREAK

EVEN AS the Supreme Court has restricted its functioning to hearing only urgent cases for over a month now in view of the pandemic, the court is likely to continue with its six-week summer break. The court notified two vacation officers who will be in charge of listing important cases before a vacation bench on Wednesday. Incidentally, two high courts—Delhi and Karnataka-have already announced that they will not take a summer break to make up for the hours lost to the pan-

KEEPING AWAY

FOLLOWING THE fiasco over number mismatch between the Health Ministry and ICMR, the ICMR has not only stopped issuing daily figures of samples that tested positive for coronavirus but its representatives have also missed the daily briefings on the situation of the pandemic. The last the ICMR was represented at a briefing was last Thursday, when D-G Dr Balram Bhargava made an appearance.

SPECIAL MENTION

IT'S NOT often that an Indian official finds mention in a foreign minister's letter to his Indian counterpart. In his thankyou letter to External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Israel's Foreign Minister Israel Katz has made a special mention of Nikhilesh Giri, joint secretary in MEA, and Pradeep Singh Kharola from the Civil Aviation Ministry for their help in evacuation of Israeli nationals stranded in India due to the lockdown. Insiders say the unsung hero in the evacuation exercise was a young, 2012-batch officer, Rakhee Mayuri, posted in the West Asia & North Africa division of MEA.



Thursday. Anil Sharma

e-TENDER NOTICE FOR HOUSEKEEPING SERVICES NIT. No: 03 of 2020 For and on behalf of the Vice Chancellor Central University of

CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR

Green Campus Ganderbal-191131

Horticulture & Soil Conservation,

Kashmir, e-tenders under two bid system are invited from registered Companies/ Agencies for providing Housekeeping services across different campuses of the University at Ganderbal. The bids must be submitted through e-tendering mode available on CPP Portal (www.eprocure.gov.in) from 01.05.2020 to 21.05.2020. The detailed tender document along with a link is available on University website (www.cukashmir.ac.in). The hard copy of the Technical bids along with Tender processing fee of Rs. 1,000/- (Non- Refundable) and EMD of Rs. 1,50,000 (Refundable), should reach the university on or before 22.05.2020 (04.00 P.M.) and the same should be addressed to the Registrar, Central University of Kashmir, Green Campus, Ganderbal 191131 (J&K). The tender fee and the EMD shall be paid deposited online or in the shape of DD, FDR, BG Pledged , to Registrar, Central University of Kashmir / drawn from any nationalized bank payable at Ganderbal (J&K). In case of any clarification, the bidders can send their queries to estates@cukashmir.ac.in or contact at 7006171124 / 9419022101.

Sd/- Officer Incharge Estates Central University of Kashmir No.: CUK/Est/H-KEEPING/F.No.274/19/1097/Hor Date: 30.04.2020

DELHI JAL BOARD: GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (C)DR-II DELHI GATE STP PHASE-II, OPPOSITE DELHI SECRETARIAT IP ESTATE, NEW DELHI-110002 E-mail - eecdr2@gmail.com

	(Tender ID:- 2020_DJB_190370_1)							
S. No.	Name of Work	Estimate cost (in Rs)	Earnest Money (in Rs)	Tender Fees (in Rs)	Date of release of tender in re- procurement solution	Last date/ time of receipt of tender through e-procurement solution		
	Shifting of 2X1200 mm dia sewerage pumping main coming in alignment of proposed underpass at Ashram Chowk.		273700/-	1500/-	27.04.2020	21.05.2020 upto 03:00 PM		

NIT NO. 01 (2019-20) EE(C)Dr-II

(K.U. Khan) Executive Engineer (C)Dr-II

DAHOD SMART CITY DEVELOPMENT LIMITED Dahod Smart City Development Limited (DSCDL) invites online E-Tenders for "Treatment (Processing) and Scientific disposal of Municipal Solid Waste as per SWM Rules 2016 including Design, Procurement, Construction, Operation and Maintenance of facilities for minimum 60 TPD capacity as well as to augment the same to cater future increase in Municipal Solid Waste during the Operation and Maintenance period

of Five years" Tender ID: 405396	
Estimated Cost (In Rs.)	Rs. 24.78 Cr/-
EMD (in Rs.)	Rs. 24,78,188/-
Tender Fee (in Rs.)	Rs. 18,000/-
Bid Document Downloading start date	29/04/2020
Last Date for online Submission of Tender Document Date/Time	16/05/2020 up to 17.30 Hrs

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS: (1) The tender document for this work can be downloaded from website www.nprocure.com. (2) Other Details of NIT shall be seen on website. (3) One Copy of Technical Bid including all drawings, data sheets and duly filled up formets excluding the Financial Bid along with original Tender Fee and Bid Security to be submitted to the Owner up to 17:00 Hrs. on or before 22-05-2020 at the below mentioned address: Chief Executive Officer, Dahod Smart City Development Limited, Jilla Sava Sadan, Chhapri, Dahod-389151. Gujarat. By RPAD/ speed post only. Chief Executive Officer, DSCDL reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof. This Tender notice shall form a part of contract document.

Tender No. 07 of 2018-19 Part 2 Chief Executive Officer Phone: 6291005046

dahodsmartcity20@gmail.com

The raconteur of Delhi, lover of its charms, chronicler of its secrets

SOMYALAKHANI

NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

"DID YOU know there was only tall, wild grass here once upon a time? Nilgai would come to graze right where we are sitting and grazing today," said Delhi's beloved chronicler Ronald Vivian Smith, with a chuckle, as we ate cucumber sandwiches on the India International Centre (IIC) lawns last August.

Conversations with Smith, who turned 83 in January, traversed through anecdotes, stories of odd dishes and lanes, and were peppered with tales and fables of the kings and ghosts who inhabited the capital.

On Thursday morning, Smith — author, columnist, journalist - passed away at a city hospital after a brief illness.

With 11 books on Delhi to his credit,

Smith is survived by his wife Elvina, and children Enid, Bunny, Esther, Tony and Rodney. His funeral service took place at the Burari Christian cemetery. His son Tony (48) said, "He had a breath-

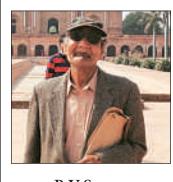
ing problem and recently suffered from a kidney ailment too. He was admitted to the hospital Monday, and passed away at 7.30 am Thursday." Calling it a "huge loss for Delhiites," Delhi

Chief Minister Avind Kejriwal tweeted: "RV

Smith, the chronicler of our great city Delhi

passed away this morning. His work kept alive the stories and memories of our city." An Agra boy, born to Anglo-Indian parents, Smith's love affair with Delhi began in the '60s when he moved to the city and started to work at the Press Trust of India.

He had a room at the Naaz Hotel in Jama



R V SMITH 1937-2020

Masjid, and soon moved to a room at the Azad Hind Hotel

"He got a job at The Statesman, from where he retired as News Editor in 1996. Even after he got married and had us, he stayed at the hotel. He loved the Walled City, and we moved to our house in Mayapuri in 1978," said Tony.

His books, Delhi: Unknown Tales of a City and Delhi That No One Knows, have informed readers about the many suggested names of Chandni Chowk, the kebabs and parathas of Gali Paranthe Wali, havelis, and ghosts of Old Delhi.

A few months ago, Smith asked me to stand on the steps of the Jama Masjid and look at the balcony of Haji Hotel, where I would see its owner and his friend Haji Faivazuddin. "He will tell you everything you want to know about Old Delhi, Meet him, tell him Smith sent you," he had said.

On Thursday, the 82-year-old owner of Haji Hotel recalled their days of youth spent in the hotel balcony in the company of poets. "He went to an English-medium school but loved Urdu poetry. We would eat at Karim's, get paan, talk about Delhi, its people, and he would put those details in his book," he recalled.

Every year, Faiyazuddin sends biryani, korma and paan to Smith's house in Mayapuri after Bakr Eid. "My father Zahooruddin and Smith's father Thomas were friends, and would meet for a meal every time the Smiths' would visit from Agra," he said.

Smith's last book, Delhi's Curly Tales (2018) is dedicated to Faiyazuddin: "the successor of a historic family of Delhi and a repository of cultural heritage of the Walled City".

After studying English Literature at an Agra college, Smith began writing under the guidance of his father Thomas Smith, an English teacher in Agra, who too went on to work at The Statesman, and was a master chronicler of Agra. Smith compiled a book of his father's pieces and his own, and also wrote about his family in The Smiths of Agra.

"His father got him a typewriter, and till January this year — just before he fell sick – he used a typewriter," said Tony.

In the '90s, Smith began his column at The Hindu, and also worked at The Indian Express briefly, said his son, and his last column appeared on April 25.

Writer Sadia Dehlvi, who called him Ronnie, reminisced about Christmas meals at the Smiths' in the '80s, and the regard that the late Khushwant Singh had for Smith's writings on Delhi.

Gurgaon steps up travel curbs to check spread

SAKSHIDAYAL GURGAON, APRIL 30

ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS on public movement will come into place at all borders of Gurgaon district starting 10 am Friday, as per an order issued by the District Magistrate Thursday.

Stating that the "emergent nature and potential magnitude of the pandemic" makes it important to enforce "stricter measures" to ensure "health and safety of human life", the order adds that this will be done "through curbs on cross-movement across all borders of the district".

It states that in case of positive cases reported in the district, "incidences of cases are mostly within the same household/family and epidemiologically linked". '... there remains a potential

threat to the district due to its distinct geographical location. The district shares its border with the NCT of Delhi and is on crossroads of major transport routes. A considerable number of people travel to Gurugam and back because of either their workplace or residence being located here...." states the order, adding, "despite lockdown efforts, there still have been cases of COVID-19 in Gurugram, with the contact history traced to cross-border sources".

#ExpressExplained

If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to explained@indianexpress.com

CORONAVIRUS DASHBOARD



TOTAL CONFIRMED: 3,249,022

DEATH COUNT: 230,615

Source: Johns Hopkins University, updated at 11:00 pm on April 30

COCKTAIL OF GERMS ON MOBILES. LIKELY CORONAVIRUS TOO: PAPER



NEW RESEARCH

A NEW study has warned that mobile phones could be acting as "Trojan horses" for coronavirus. It found that phones host a cocktail of live germs.

The research was a review of 56 previous studies from 24 countries. While all those studies predate the current pandemic, the authors said SARS-CoV2 is probably present on mobiles and other touch-screen devices of coronavirus sufferers.

The review, scheduled for publication in Travel Medicine and Infectious *Disease*, found that 68% of the phones sampled in these studies were contaminated. Golden staph and E. coli microbes were among the most com-

mon bugs on phones. "Our recommendation is that

phones should be decontaminated daily and regularly with either 70% isopropyl or by sanitising with (ultraviolet) devices like PhoneSoap," said the study, led by biomedical scientist Lotti Tajouri of Bond University, Australia.

In a statement, Dr Tajouri described mobile devices as "five-star hotels with premium heated spas, free buffet for microbes to thrive on". "They have temperature control, we keep them in our pockets, we are addicted to them. We talk into them and deposit droplets that can be full of viruses, bacteria - you name it. We eat with them, so we give nutrients to micro-organisms.."

He said people travelled with their phones "and no border officers check them". "That's why mobile phones are Trojan horses. We don't know that we

are carrying the enemy." Dr Tajouri said even the average phone user handled their mobiles an average of three hours a day. "You can wash your hands as many times as you like - and you should - but if you then touch a contaminated phone you are contaminating yourself all over again. Think of your phone as your third hand."

Source: Bond University

496 22

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

Can COVID hit sense of smell?

US disease control authority has newly listed loss of sense of smell among COVID-19 symptoms. A look at this less commonly described symptom, and what the evidence worldwide has shown so far

ABANTIKA GHOSH

NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

EARLIER THIS week, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) introduced "a new loss of taste or smell" in a list of COVID-19 symptoms. While loss of smell is a known symptom of several diseases, it is less common than hearing loss or vision loss, and patients become conscious of it later than they would notice a fever or body ache.

What has the CDC said?

"People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported — ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms or combinations of symptoms may have COVID-19 —Cough and Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing," the CDC says.

In addition, it lists symptoms that include fever, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, and a new loss of taste or smell. If a patients has two or more of these symptoms, the CDC says there is a chance that the person has COVID-2019 infection.

Why is the inclusion of loss of smell important?

Rhinology, ENT and otolaryngology experts have been pushing for inclusion of loss of smell – known as anosmia – in the list of symptoms for some time now. These include the American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery and the British Association of Otorhinolaryngology.

Chills are associated with many other infections, such as malaria, and muscle pain and body ache are typically associated with common flu. For these reasons, health experts have repeatedly noted that it is impossible to symptomatically differentiate between COVID-19 and the common flu.

Anosmia, however, is a less common symptom. Johns Hopkins University too lists unexplained loss of taste or smell, alongside cough, fever, shortness of breath, muscle



Nasal swab being collected in New Delhi last week. PTI

aches, sore throat, diarrohoea, headache and also fatigue among the symptoms.

Most of the other symptoms are common among the lists developed by various international health organisations. According to the World Health Organization: "The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, dry cough, and tiredness. Some patients may have aches and pains, nasal congestion, sore throat or diarrhea. These symptoms are usually mild and begin gradually.

The WHO list of symptoms has been adopted by the Health Ministry in India.

Why do people lose their sense of smell?

It can happen during a severe cold, when we say the nose is "blocked". Only, this is hyposmia, a reduced sense of smell rather than a complete loss of it. According to Mayo Clinic: "A stuffy nose from a cold is a common cause for a partial, temporary loss of smell. A blockage in the nasal passages caused by a polyp or a nasal fracture also is a common cause. Normal aging can cause a loss of smell too, particularly after age 60." It is usually also associated with reduced we seem to lack taste in our food. In a 2017 review in the Journal Chemical Senses, researchers from Wageningen University in Netherlands wrote: "Anosmia and hyposmia, the inability or decreased ability to smell, is estimated to afflict 3-20% of the population. Risk of olfactory dysfunction increases with old age and may also result from chronic sinonasal diseases, severe head trauma, and upper respiratory infections, or neurodegenerative diseases.

appetite because our sense of smell is part of

our sense of taste. That is why during a cold,

Other diseases with anosmia among its symptoms include Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease and multiple sclerosis. In such cases, it is permanent.

Is this the first time COVID-19 has been linked to a loss of sense of smell new?

No. There have been very early reports from various countries about some patients complaining of a loss of smell. According to ENT UK, a professional membership body, "There is already good evidence from South Korea, China and Italy that significant num-

bers of patients with proven COVID-19 infection have developed anosmia/hyposmia. In Germany it is reported that more than 2 in 3 confirmed cases have anosmia. In South Korea, where testing has been more widespread, 30% of patients testing positive have had anosmia as their major presenting symptom in otherwise mild cases.'

In a communication with Public Health England on COVID-related anosmia, ENT UK also flagged the fact that many people report only anosmia without any of the more usual symptoms like fever etc. "Iran has reported a sudden increase in cases of isolated anosmia, and many colleagues from the US, France and Northern Italy have the same experience. I have personally seen four patients this week, all under 40, and otherwise asymptomatic except for the recent onset of anosmia - I usually see roughly no more than one a month. I think these patients may be some of the hitherto hidden carriers that have facilitated the rapid spread of COVID-19. Unfortunately, these patients do not meet current criteria for testing or self-isolation," wrote Prof Claire Hopkins, president of the British Rhinological Society, and Prof Nirmal Kumar, president of

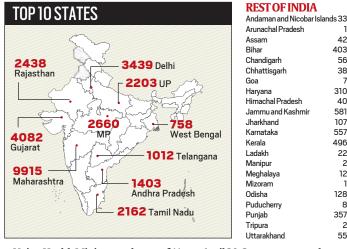
In an article in The Lancet Infectious Diseases, researchers from the US Medical Corps wrote: "Our multinational group, including one otolaryngologist currently infected with COVID-19 and experiencing anosmia and dysgeusia (altered sense of taste), suggest that physicians evaluating patients with acute-onset loss of smell or taste, particularly in the context of a patent nasal airway (ie, non-conductive loss), should have a high index of suspicion for concomitant SARS-CoV-2 infection."

Have patients in India reported loss of sense of smell?

Some have. In a now viral clip, a doctor in Lutyen's Delhi, who was quarantined after testing positive, talks about how he decided to get himself and his wife tested after he noticed, following a few days of cough and body ache, that he could not "smell perfume or

INDIA COUNT:

33610 (1075 DEATHS)



Union Health Ministry update as of 11 pm, April 30. Some states may have reported higher numbers. Only states/UTs with at least one case listed above. 8373 PATIENTS DISCHARGED IN 30 STATES AND UNION TERRITORIES

Have a question on the COVID-19 outbreak and what you should/should not do? Write to explained@indianexpress.com

What coronavirus 'copy machine' looks like

KABIR FIRAQUE NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

ONCE THE novel coronavirus SARS-CoV2 invades a human cell, the crucial next stage is replication, when it creates copies after copies of itself. For this, the virus uses its "copy machine", which is an enzyme with this function. Trials with various drugs are targeting various stages of virus activity, and some of them, notably remdesivir, seek to inhibit specifically the enzyme that multiplies

Now, researchers have reported that they have determined the 3D structure of this "copy machine". This makes it possible to investigate how drugs such as remdesivir work, they note.

the genetic material of the virus.

How it works

The first stage of infection is the virus entering the human cell. On the surface of the virus is a spike-shaped protein, the so-called "corona", which binds itself to a human cell enzyme, ACE2. The virus then acidifies compartments on the cell surface, enters, and

then begins to replicate using the body's own mechanism.

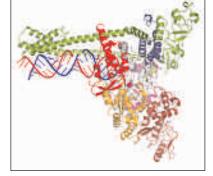
SARS-CoV2 is made of a single strand of RNA, which is what is copied and recopied. Enzymes that enable the creation of RNA (or DNA) are called polymerases; in the case of SARS-CoV2, the polymerase is called RdRp, also named nsp12. It is the polymerase whose structure researchers have now described.

What is new

The 3D structure has been determined by researchers at the Max Planck Institute in Germany, led by director Patrick Cramer, the institute said in a statement.

They reconstituted the polymerase from three purified proteins. Once it was functional in the test tube, they examined the samples under an electron microscope, magnified more than 100,000 times, "One sample looked different, somehow strange. Our first thought was to discard it. Fortunately, we did not: This sample, over all, provided us with the high-quality data we needed," researcher Dimitry Tegunov said in the statement.

The team reported that in overall architecture, the SARS-CoV2 "copy machine" is



3D structure of the SARS-CoV2 polymerase. The red and blue depict RNA. Max Planck Institute

similar to that of SARS-CoV, the coronavirus responsible for SARS. However, they also noted distinguishing features. One of these is an additional element in the SARS-CoV2 polymerase, with which it binds the RNA until it has copied the genetic material.

"We were surprised to find that the struc-

ture of the coronavirus polymerase is special – it differs from other structures that we have been investigating so far," researcher Hauke Hillen said.

Why it matters

The researchers repeatedly referred to remdesivir, which work by blocking the polymerase. Their description of the 3D structure comes amid mixed signals from studies on remdesivir. While some trials have found the results encouraging, a study published in The Lancet this week has reported that the clinical benefits from administering remdesivir were not found to be statistically significant.

Knowledge of the architecture of the polymerase on an atomic scale is important, nevertheless, as it opens up new avenues to understand and combat the virus. The team plans to investigate how antiviral substances block the proliferation of coronaviruses.

"With the structure at hand it might be possible to optimize existing substances such as remdesivir and to improve their effect. But we also want to search for new substances that are able to stop the virus polymerase," said Cramer, the Max Planck director.

AN EXPERT EXPLAINS

'We need global access agreements before a vaccine is developed'



SETH BERKLEY

How far has science travelled in the search for a COVID-19 vaccine, and what role will Gavi — The Vaccine Alliance play?

Developing vaccines is a time-consuming and resource intensive process. It typically takes up to 10-15 years from the discovery of a novel way to produce a vaccine to respond to an unmet medical need and the licensure of a vaccine for commercial use. Given the unprecedented levels of data sharing and global collaboration, with a full-scale push, we could potentially have a coronavirus vaccine — at least an investigational one for potential use in outbreaks — within 18 months to two years. That would be an incredible achievement compared to any previous vaccine development, and would require luck in terms of the approaches currently in the pipeline.

Gavi is positioned to play a key role in each

phase of the development and delivery of a SARS-CoV2 vaccine. Drawing upon our experience enabling access to critical vaccines including the Ebola vaccine — we are working closely with the World Health Organization (WHO), the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, the industry and other partners in the R&D community to create optimal conditions for the identification of priority candidate vaccines, with a focus on potential to scale and equitable access. Gavi's innovative financing mechanisms

are also being made available. Gavi's 'Vaccine Bonds', through the International Finance Facility for Immunisation (IFFIm), will be open to additional donor commitments that can be spread over the long term but, thanks to IFFIm's unique frontloading features, make significant funding available to accelerate vaccine candidates. Gavi will also enable its private sector Matching Fund to be rapidly deployed for quick assistance from private sector partners to scale up funding and proven technologies to fight coronavirus...

The 300,000 Ebola vaccine doses [access to which was facilitated by Gavi] were investigational doses made available through an Advanced Purchase Commitment after the vaccine was determined to be efficacious, but before the product was fully licensed... Such an effort might also be made in the case of coronavirus vaccines to help control outbreaks or protect health workers.

Does the challenge of fighting COVID-19 end with the discovery of a vaccine?

With more than 100 candidate vaccines already in development, the response from the scientific community and industry has been unprecedented. But of course, vaccine development on its own isn't enough. There is currently no global system to oversee the allocation of vaccine supply and many countries who have the capacity to manufacture at the required scale will also face pressure to make that supply available first to their own population. We need global access agreements before a vaccine is developed.

For me, there are two axes. The public health need — if there are out of control outbreaks anywhere in the world, it threatens not only those countries but the rest of the world... Two, there will need to be some type of agreement on priority use - health workers probably most important, followed by high risk such as elderly, those with chronic conditions and finally, the general population.

What has been Gavi's experience in evolving access to vaccines?

Gavi's role will be to shape markets from development to manufacturing to distribution, so that there is equitable access at scale to them. Gavi is working with partners under the leadership of WHO to help select and accelerate candidate vaccines and ensure they are managed as global public goods.

This work will build upon Gavi's successful experience of shaping vaccine markets. This includes expanding the number of vaccine suppliers; the Advance Market Commitment for pneumococcal vaccine which has saved 700,000 children's lives by pre-committing incentive payments for vaccine manufacturers who have developed appropriate vaccines for developing countries; the accelerated licensing and rollout of the first Ebola vaccine in the past four years through an Advance Purchase Commitment; and managing stockpiles against outbreaks. Indian manufacturers have an important role to play in COVID-19 vaccine supply as they do in supply of high-quality vaccines globally.

Do you anticipate the COVID-19 fight disrupting routine immunisation

programmes and vaccination drives? The COVID-19 outbreak is a reminder that infectious diseases know no borders, and that the world must be prepared for the evolutionary inevitability of the emergence of novel pathogens. In countries with weaker health systems, such outbreaks can

have even more devastating aimpact — both within and beyond national borders. The importance of preparedness and early detection, meaning investing in strong primary healthcare and immunisation systems as the first line of defence against threats to global health security, cannot be overstated.

We are already seeing the impact the pandemic is having. Major Gavi-supported vaccination campaigns against polio, measles, cholera, HPV, yellow fever and meningitis have been postponed in low-income countries. These would have immunised more than 13.5 million people. The number of people missing out on vaccines is likely to rise substantially as we expect a significant proportion of planned vaccine campaigns to be postponed in the coming months, with routine immunisation programmes also severely impacted as key staff are redeployed.

How can countries mitigate such risks?

For now, the focus of governments needs to be on continuing routine immunisation as well as robust public health measures for COVID-19 and this is what they are doing. Without routine immunisation, we will face potential outbreaks of regular vaccine-preventable diseases, which will overwhelm the health system on top of the COVID-19 challenge.

We also must remember that strong routine immunisation ensures people are protected against the spread of infectious disease and, by connecting them to health services, enables early detection of novel threats. It also means the existence of supply chains, trained health workers, data systems and, crucially, disease surveillance and

in some cases basic laboratory testing... Beyond routine immunisation, we have also recognised procuring stockpiles as an important aspect of global epidemic preparedness. Gavi funds emergency vaccine stockpiles for cholera, yellow fever, meningococcal disease and Ebola to ensure that when an outbreak does occur, we are prepared to quickly deploy vaccines to protect affected communities and limit the spread. These emergency stockpiles are a last-resort insurance policy that guarantee vaccines will always be available for rapid delivery when needed, benefiting not just directly affected nations, but the entire global community.

Dr Seth Berkley is CEO of Gavi — The Vaccine Alliance, a partner of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which works for better and more equitable access to vaccines. Gavi has helped vaccinate 760 million children in

the world's poorest countries. He was interviewed over email by Kavitha Iyer.

10 THE OUTBREAK THE WORLD



A crowded passageway in Tokyo. AP/File

JAPAN

Emergency may be extended by a month

Tokyo: Japan is preparing to extend its state of emergency over the novel coronavirus, originally set to end on May 6, for about a month, government sources told Reuters on Thursday, even as some other countries begin to reopen after strict lockdowns. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told parliament that he would consult infectious disease experts on whether to extend the emergency, which he declared on April 7 for seven prefectures including Tokyo. The state of emergency gives local governors greater power to tell people to stay at home and ask businesses to close.

PAKISTAN Coronavirus cases jump to

15,759

Islamabad: Pakistan reported 874 new cases of coronavirus in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of infections to 15,759 with 346 deaths so far, a statement said on Thursday. The Ministry of National Health Services said the deaths of 19 more patients have been reported in the provinces of Punjab, Balochistan among others, taking the total death toll to 346. Punjab reported 6,061 cases, Sindh 5,695, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa 2,313, Balochistan 978, Gilgit-Baltistan 333, Islamabad 313 and PoK reported 66 cases.

SOUTH AFRICA Highest daily

count as easing of curbs looms

Johannesburg: The number of coronavirus cases in South Africa surged past the 5,000-mark on Thursday after it recorded the highest single-day jump, just a day before the country was set to gradually ease its over a month-long nationwide lockdown. Health Minister Zweli Mkhize said that there had been a 73 per cent daily increase in confirmed COVID-19 infections, with 354 new cases taking the total to 5.350. There were also 10 deaths overnight, raising the total death toll to 103.

MALDIVES First COVID-19 death reported

Male: Maldives has reported its first death to the new coronavirus with the total number of positive cases standing at 280. Health Minister Abdulla Ameen said Thursday that the victim was an 83year-old woman from the capital Male'. First cases of COVID-19 were reported at tourist resorts in this Indian Ocean archipelago state and authorities for sometime kept it from spilling over into the community. However, there is now a sudden spike in the number of patients in the capital island as well as far off islands with no traceable

source of infection.

South Korea, Hong Kong milestone: A day gone with no new local cases

AGENCIES

SEOUL, APRIL 30

WITH SOCIAL distancing and virus testing policies in place for months in several countries, a few governments are now reporting remarkable milestones: recording zero new domestically transmitted coronavirus cases, or no new cases at all.

South Korea on Thursday reported that for the first time since the virus's February 29 peak, it had no new domestic cases and just four cases among people who came in from outside the country. The develop-ment was a stark turnaround for a nation that was battered early on by the virus — with 909 cases on February 29 alone and quickly conducted widespread testing and contract tracing of new infections to halt the virus's spread.

The Koreas Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said in a statement Thursday that the additional figures took the country's total to 10,765 with 247 deaths. It says 9,059 of them have recovered and been released from quarantine.

It says the four new cases are all imported ones and that there were no newly reported cases of local infections

Britain is past

coronavirus

peak: Boris

COSTAS PITAS &

LONDON, APRIL 30

ESTELLE SHIRBON

PRIME MINISTER Boris Johnson

said Britain was now past the

peak of its coronavirus outbreak

and promised to set out a lock-

down exit strategy next week, de-

spite rising deaths and criticism

locked-down Britons, but urged

them to stick with restrictions

designed to slow the spread of

the first time, we are past the

peak of this disease," Johnson

said. "We're past the peak and

we're on the downward slope,

and we have so many reasons

to be hopeful for the long

has the second-highest official COVID-19 death toll in Europe

with more than 26,000 deaths.

and companies crippled, the

government is under pressure to

next week a "menu of options"

on how the lockdown could be

relaxed, but said exact dates

would be driven by scientific ad-

outline an exit strategy.

vice and data. REUTERS

With rising unemployment

Johnson promised to set out

Nevertheless, Britain now

"I can confirm today that for

Johnson offered hope to

of his government's response.

CELEBRATING BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY: People observe social distancing at an event to mark the birthday of Buddha at a temple in Seoul, South Korea, on Thursday. Reuters

Local media said it's the first time for South Korea to have no daily increase of local infections since February 15.

South Korea's caseload has been slowing in recent weeks after it recorded hundreds of new cases every day between late February and early March.

South Korea has subsequently relaxed some of its social distancing guidelines. It expected to ease up on more restrictions in coming days if its

caseload maintains a downward trend. That progress has been mir-

rored in Hong Kong, which on Thursday reported that there had been no new cases in the semiautonomous Chinese territory for five straight days. The city has had more than 1,000 cases over all, and had a resurgence in infections in late March that prompted strict lockdowns on travel, including quarantining

of foreign arrivals, social distanc-

ing measures and the widespread adoption of work-fromhome policies.

Hong Kong residents overwhelmingly wear masks when going outside, even with the recent plunge in new cases.

Other countries are flirting with similar successes. Australia reported just nine new cases on Wednesday, and New Zealand had two days over the last week with just one new confirmed coronavirus infection

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY FREE OF COVID-19

Canberra: The Australian Capital Territory has become the first of the country's eight states and mainland territories to declare itself free of all known cases of the coronavirus.

Chief Health Officer Kerryn Coleman said the territory surrounding the capital city Canberra was free of any recorded infection on Thursday for the first time in seven weeks after the last patient recovered.

There have been 106 confirmed COVID-19 cases in Canberra and three patients have died.

The capital territory has a population of 420,000, and its infection rate per head of population ranks in the middle of the field.

Everyone with cold or flu symptoms have been offered free testing in Canberra for the past week and the government said that offer will be extended for another week. AP



President Donald Trump in the Oval Office. Reuters

Trump says China wants him to lose bid for re-election

STEVE HOLLAND WASHINGTON, APRIL 30

PRESIDENT DONALD Trump said on Wednesday he believes China's handling of the coronavirus is proof that Beijing "will do anything they can" to make him lose his re-election bid in November.

In an interview with Reuters, Trump talked tough on China and said he was looking at different options in terms of consequences for Beijing over the virus. "I can do a lot," he said.

The Republican president, often accused of not acting early enough to prepare the United States for the spread of the virus, said he believed China should have been more active in letting the world know about the coronavirus much sooner.

Asked whether he was considering the use of tariffs or even debt write-offs for China, Trump would not offer specifics. "There are many things I can do," he said. "We're looking for what happened."

"China will do anything they can to have me lose this race," said Trump. He said he believes Beijing wants his Democratic opponent, Joe Biden, to win the race to ease the pressure Trump has placed on China over trade and other issues.

"They're constantly using public relations to try to make it like they're innocent parties," he said of Chinese officials.

He said the trade deal that he concluded with Chinese President Xi Jinping aimed at reducing chronic US trade deficits with China had been "upset very badly" by the economic fallout from the virus. REUTERS



THE WHITE **HOUSE VIRUS ORIGINATED**

IN CHINA, BUT NOT MAN-MADE, SAY **INTEL AGENCIES** Washington: US intelli-

gence agencies have concluded the coronavirus was "not manmade or genetically modified" but say they are still examining whether the origins of the pandemic trace to contact with infected animals or an accident at a Chinese lab.

The statement from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, the clearinghouse for the web of US spy agencies, comes as President Donald Trump and his allies have touted the asyet-unproven theory that a lab in Wuhan was the source of the pandemic.

"The Intelligence Community also concurs with the wide scientific consensus that COVID-19 virus was not manmade or genetically modified," said the statement. AP

THE LONG WAIT

A Peruvian lives in a tent on the street, while waiting to be tested for COVID-19 and obtain permission to return home to another part of the country, in Lima, Peru. Reuters

China's battle against coronavirus major strategic achievement, says Xi Jinping

BEIJING, APRIL 30

CHINESE PRESIDENT Xi Jinping has termed China's battle against COVID-19 as a major strategic achievement, as the ruling Communist Party is all set to hold the postponed Parliament session on May 22 amid a steady decline in the coronavirus cases. The virus has claimed 4,633

lives in the country. China's arduous efforts to contain the coronavirus have brought a decisive outcome to

Outbreak 'under control', China looks to get economy on track

China's decision to hold its postponed Parliament session on May 22 is widely seen as a sign that the government considers the outbreak under control. Now, the CPC's focus appears to be turning to the economy, with reports saving that the agriculture sector and pillar industries such as auto manufacturing and biomedicine will be among those to get a push as part of economic recovery efforts.

the fight of defending Hubei and its capital city Wuhan, Xi told a high-powered

Committee meeting of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) on Wednesday.

against the epidemic has gained major strategic achievements. the state-run Xinhua news agency quoted Xi as saying.

Xi said Hubei, including Wuhan, should continue strengthening community-level epidemic prevention and control.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues its explosive growth overseas, Xi said, noting the mounting pressure to prevent imported infections and the growing complexity of stemming domestic epidemic resurgence. PTI

Social distancing rules set to fade out as 3.8 mn more file for jobless aid

NEW YORK TIMES NEW YORK, APRIL 30

THE FEDERAL guidelines put in place to slow the spread of the virus by encouraging people to curtail nearly all public life are set to expire and President Trump has indicated he has no intention of extending the measures as states across the country move ahead with a variety of plans to gradually re-

open their economies. "They'll be fading out, because now the governors are doing it," Trump told reporters on Wednesday, referring to the restrictions. The devastating cascade of dismal financial news has increased pressure on all levels of government to restart commercial activity.

An additional 3.8 million workers filed for unemployment benefits across the country last week. The figures announced Thursday by the Labor Department bring the number of workers joining the official jobless ranks in the last six weeks to more than 30 million, and underscore just how dire economic conditions remain.

Many state agencies still find themselves overwhelmed by the flood of claims. "The problem is even bigger than the data suggest," said Elise Gould, a senior economist with the institute, a left-leaning research group. "We're undercounting the economic pain."

'He Is Afraid — Afraid For His Ratings And For The System He Has Spent 20 Years Creating'

Putin, Russia's man of action, lets others act against the virus

ANDREW HIGGINS MOSCOW, APRIL 30

Boris Johnson

THIS WAS supposed to be a moment of triumph for President Vladimir V Putin, a celebration of his grand successes in restoring the Russian state to a place of pride in the world and consolidating his grip on power, all topped off by a glorious military parade in Red Square on May 9, the 75th anniversary of the Red Army's victory over Nazi Germany.

But the coronavirus has changed all that.

Now, having bowed to the inevitable and canceled the parade, Putin seems less a can-do executive than a bored monarch

cooped up in a palace, checking his watch during televised video conferences with his underlings about the pandemic as his popularity ratings dip.

For 20 years, Putin has made his mark as a man of action, a hyperactive leader ever ready to face down the Kremlin's foes at home and abroad, and even wild tigers in remote Russian forests. Confronted with the coronavirus, however, a leader who was reelected in 2018 with nearly 80 percent of the vote and who faces no serious threats to his power has been oddly passive.

"He is afraid — afraid for his ratings and for the system he has spent 20 years creating," said Gleb O Pavlovsky, a disenchanted for-



President Vladimir V Putin led a meeting with members of Russia's Security Council via a video link this month. Reuters

mer Kremlin adviser. Faced with a viral enemy that he cannot eas-

ily vanquish, "Putin understands that the best thing to do is stand to

the side," Pavlovsky added.

Adding to Putin's troubles, the collapse of oil prices removes a major stream of revenues for social programs, while Russia's oiland gas-dependent economy is expected to shrink by 6 percent this year. But turmoil in the global oil market, unlike the health crisis, at least plays to Putin's strong suits of geopolitics and highstakes diplomacy.

By contrast, the pandemic has only highlighted what has always been Putin's biggest vulnerability: a pronounced lack of interest or success in tackling intractable domestic problems like dilapidated hospitals, pockets of entrenched poverty and years of falling real incomes

Adding to the gloom, an April 22 referendum on constitutional amendments had to be canceled because of the virus. The amendments, already approved by Russia's legislature, allow Putin to crash through term limits and stay in power until 2036. Faced in 2014 with a simi-

larly grave threat to Russian interests created by the ouster of Ukraine's pro-Kremlin president, Putin seized the moment by grabbing Crimea. When, two years later, it looked as if Russia's closest ally in the Middle East, President Bashar al-Assad of Syria, might also fall, Putin jumped in to reverse the tide of Syria's civil war by sending Russian warplanes and soldiers.

But his display of machismo before the advancing pandemic did not work out quite as planned: He visited infected patients at a new Moscow hospital dressed in a canary yellow hazmat suit, only to find out a few days later that the head doctor who showed him around and gave him a long fleshy handshake had tested positive for the virus.

Since then, Putin has been sheltering at his country villa. It was from there, warmed by gentle flames from a fireplace in a cozy-looking living room, that he on April 19 delivered a what-meworry Orthodox Easter message to the nation.

"The situation," he said, "is $under\,total\,control."\,\,\textbf{NYT}$

₹75.09

9 \$26.15

⊘ ₹38,100

SENSEX: 33,717.62 ▲ 997.46 NIFTY: 9,859.90 ▲ 306.55 NIKKEI: 20,193.69 ▲ 422.50 HANG SENG: 24,643.59 ▲ 67.63 FTSE: 6,025.92 ▼ 89.33 DAX: 11,001.48 ▼ 106.26

₹1 lakh crore

fund raising

THOUGHTHE volatility in oil prices has impacted its bottom

capital raising programme, totalling over Rs 1.04 lakh crore by

line, RIL is going ahead with its mega investment and fund

raising plans. The company is expected to complete the

COVID-19 EFFECT **ECONOMY**

'Permanent loss of 4% to real GDP likely; revenue decline of up to 15% for India Inc'

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

INDIA IS expected to witness a permanent loss of around 4 per cent of its real GDP, or nearly Rs 9 lakh crore, on account the economic impact of spread of coronavirus and a nationwide lockdown, said a report released by Crisil Research, Projecting a base case GDP growth rate of 1.8 per cent for FY21, with a downside scenario of zero GDP growth for the year, the report projected a sharp recovery beginning the first quarter of next financial year when the GDP is expected to grow at 7.5 per cent - benefitting from the base effect. For India Inc, the report projected a revenue decline of up to 15 per cent and dip in profitability by 25-30 per cent for the

current year. As the pandemic is hurting economic activity across sectors and demographic profile of the country, DK Joshi, chief economist at Crisil said. "We feel that a fiscal stimulus to the tune of Rs 3.5 lakh crore is required (including what has already been announced by the finance minister earlier). While the government has provided for food distribution and cash transfer to bank accounts of the needy, the focus for the next set of stimulus should be around small and medium enterprises so as to support their survival as they are the biggest job creators. We will need stimulus later during the time of recov-

ery too.' Crisil said India should prepare to benefit from any global business realignment opportunity. As all major economies are impacted by the pandemic, Shaun Roache, chief Asia -Pacific economist, S&P Global Ratings, said a global realignment of supply chain is on the cards and India could benefit from it, Joshi, however, added domestic conditions ave to be made more favourable to attract companies moving away from China.

Stating that India will have to grow at an average of 8.5 per cent for three years up to FY24 to make up for the permanent loss of around 4 per cent of its real GDP this year,

the report said high growth rates of 8.5 per cent would require, "extraordinary and extended policy support, reforms and facilitations to support domestic business and supply chains, and attract

foreign investment." While India Inc has seen a near halt in business activity, the report projected a decline in revenue growth of 8-10 per cent on a base case (GDP growth of 1.8 per cent). It, however, said on lower GDP growth, revenue decline could be 12-15 per cent. "We have never witnessed such a scenario in our lifetime," said, Prasad Koparkar, senior director at Crisil Research.

The impact is expected to be severe for certain sectors. While consumer discretionary services such as airline, hospitality, media and organised real estate could see a revenue decline between 20 and 30 per cent, auto and consumer durables could witness a decline between 12 and 22 per cent. On the other hand, pharma, FMCG and telecom are expected to do better. The report projects a revenue growth of 15-18 per cent for the telecom sector "on account of price hike last year and increase in data consumption."

Profitability of companies is also set to come under pressure and India Inc could see 15-18 per cent decline in earnings before interest tax depreciation and amortisation (Ebitda) on the base case GDP projection. In line with decline in revenue and profits, more companies are expected to become vulnerable for degrade and default, the

report said. It stated while 22 per cent of Indian companies with total debt of Rs 16 lakh crore had interest coverage ratio of less than 1 till March 2020 it is set to rise to 32 per cent by the end of FY21. As banks turn cautious, NPAs are set to rise by 150-200 basis points this fiscal.

Among the sectors metric on parameters of erosion in revenue growth and credit risk, shows that auto components, real estate, gems and iewellery, airline, construction, poultry and meat and textiles are the weakest positioned.

RISK SCALE

Vulnerability:■High ■Medium ■	Low
Sector	Workforce size (crore)
Agriculture	20.53
Industry	11.53
Mining and quarrying	0.19
Manufacturing	5.64
Electricity and water supply	0.27
Construction	5.43
Services	14.44
Trade	4.69
Transport	2.29
Accommodation and food service	s 0. 87
Other services	6.59

MARCH QUARTER: JIO POSTS 177.5% RISE IN NET PROFIT AT ₹2,331 CR

RIL net drops 37.2% on fall in oil prices, poor demand; board okays ₹53,125-cr rights issue

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU MUMBAI, APRIL 30

HIT BY the fall in crude oil prices and demand for refined products, Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) has reported a 37.2 per cent fall in net profit at Rs 6,546 crore for the quarter ended March 2020 as against Rs 10,427 crore in the same period a year ago. The board of RIL also approved a mega rights issue of Rs 53,125 crore — probably the largest in the corporate sector's history — to shareholders.The board has priced the rights issue at Rs 1,257 per share in the share ratio of 1:15.

RIL's revenue was down by 2.5 per cent at Rs 1,51,209 crore in the quarter from Rs 1,55,151 crore in the year-ago period. RIL's subsidiary, Reliance Jio, posted a 177.5 per cent rise in net profit at Rs 2.331 crore during the March quarter as against Rs 840 crore a year ago.

RIL said the decrease in revenue is primarily on account of 10.1 per cent decline in refining and petrochemicals business revenues. The sharp fall of 20.5 per cent in average Brent oil price led to lower product price realization across the hydrocarbon chain. "This was partially offset by continuing growth in consumer businesses, even amidst the operational issues posed by the pandemic. Digital services and re-

Core industries'

output shrinks

6.5% in March

Q1 of the current financial year. This includes the investment by Facebook in Jio Platforms, the Rs 53,125-crore rights issue and the previous investment by British Petroleum in FY20. tail business recorded an increase

of 30 per cent and 4.2 per cent, re-

spectively, in revenue during the

quarter," it said.

RIL Chairman and MD Mukesh D Ambani, said: "Despite the daunting challenges arising from the fallout of the global pandemic, our company has once again delivered a resilient performance for FY 2019-20. Our O2C (oil to chemicals) businesses delivered sustained earnings due to its integrated portfolio, cost-competitiveness, feedstock flexibility and product placement capabilities. We continue to operate all our major facilities at near normal utilisation levels."

RIL's proposed rights issue will be its first in three decades. "The promoters have confirmed that in addition to subscribing to their aggregate entitlement in full, they will also subscribe to all the unsubscribed portion," RIL said.

Facebook aims to extend products,

tech built with Jio

New Delhi: Facebook's mega Rs 43,574-crore pact with Reliance Jio will help the social media giant build products and technology that can be extended to other parts of the world, CEO Mark Zuckerberg said.

He said the social media giant aims to create a "much better shopping and commerce experience" in India working with JioMart by leveraging WhatsApp's communication and payments

Facebook is focused on a longterm play in India and its deal with lio is indicative of the company's commitment, its India Managing Director Ajit Mohan said. PTI

Salary deduction at RIL's hydrocarbon division, Ambani to forego salary

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU MUMBAI, APRIL 30

RIL CHAIRMAN and MD Mukesh Ambani's has decided to forego his entire salary "until the impact of COVID-19 abates". Ambani ĥad his salary capped at Rs 15 crore since

RIL announced it will reduce salaries of some of its employees in the hydrocarbon division by 10 per cent in view of the "adverse impact" of the pandemic on fuel demand. The company's board of directors would forego 30-50 per cent of their salary, RIL Executive Director Hital R Meswani said.

These pay cuts would apply to the employees in the hydrocarbon division who are earning more than Rs 15 lakh a year. Those earningless than that would not be impacted, the letter said.

"In light of the outbreak .. Ambani has voluntarily decided to forego his entire salary," RIL said. "And now, he is forgoing his salary until the company and all its businesses are fully back to their earnings potential," it said.



RIL Chairman and MD Mukesh Ambani. File

\$75-bn O2C biz to be hived off

New Delhi: Reliance Industries Ltd on Thursday said its board has approved hiving off its \$75 billion worth oil-to-chemicals business into a separate division to enable the sale of 20 per cent stake in the unit to Saudi national oil company Aramco. PTI

BRIEFLY

Compliance

norms for liquid funds eased

New Delhi: Sebi has given three more months for liquid funds to comply with the requirement of holding at least 20 per cent of assets in liquid assets.

USTR report is defamatory: Snapdeal

Washington: Snapdeal has said the USTR report that placed it in the Notorious Markets List is based on "unverified inputs" and is "defamatory" in nature. PTI

NABARD staff contribute to **PM-CARES**

New Delhi: NABARD employees have contributed Rs 9.85 crore to the PM-CARES Fund, said a statement.

Vedanta enables mass output of PPEs

New Delhi: Vedanta has enabled mass production of Personal Protective Equipment in Gurgaon, said a statement. ENS

Need to open up in a measured way, but as fast as possible: Rajan

PRESSTRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

THE OUTPUT of eight core infrastructure industries shrank by a record 6.5 per cent in March due to significant dip in production of crude oil, natural gas, fertiliser, steel, cement and electricity amid the coronavirus lockdown. The eight core sectors had ex-

panded by 5.8 per cent in March 2019. In February this year, the sectors recorded a growth of 7 per cent. Production of crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertiliser, steel, cement and electricity contracted by 5.5 per cent. 15.2 percent, 0.5 percent, 11.9 percent, 13 per cent, 24.7 per cent and 7.2 per cent, respectively, in the month under review, according to data of the Commerce and Industry Ministry released on Thursday.

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU

IN A move that will ease compli-

ance burden for employers, the

Employees' Provident Fund

Organisation (EPFO) has permit-

ted companies to file their elec-

tronic challan cum return (ECR)

without the simultaneous require-

ment to pay their PF contributions.

Through this move, the govern-

ment is also expected to get an es-

timate of the companies under

EPFO which are facing cash crunch

and wage payment related issues

NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, APRIL 30 INDIA NEEDS to lift its lockdown

in a "measured way" but as fast as possible as it does not have the capacity to support people across the spectrum for too long, former RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan said, as he argued that the country needs to spend Rs 65,000 crore to support the poor. He said India has to be "cleverer" about opening up and argued a second or third round of lockdown will be devastating for the Indian economy.

In a conversation with former noress president Rahul Candh Rajan said "there will have to be a rethinking of everything in the global economy" post-COVID-19 and argued India has an opportunity in shaping that dialogue towards "one which has greater

EPFO allows firms to file PF returns

the COVID-19 pandemic.

without simultaneous payment of dues

owing to the lockdown to counter

on those companies which file the

ECRontime.even if their payment

contributions get delayed, "The

ECR can now onwards be filed by

an employer without the need of

simultaneous payment of contri-

butions. The contributions may be

paid later by the employer at his

convenience after filing the

ECR...filing of ECR shall establish

employer's intent to comply and

unwillingness to default which

will not attract penal conse-

quences and employees also get

There will be no penal action



Rahul Gandhi (left) in a conversation with former RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan via a video link. in New Delhi. Screenshot posted by @RahulGandhi Twitter handle via PTI

place for more countries in the global order, a multipolar global lar global order." He said India can find opportunities for its industries and its supply chains.

He said there has to be a sequencing when it comes to opening up and the first should be those

assurance of their employment

and membership," the EPFO said.

planning and decision-making re-

garding supporting the businesses

and EPF members in wage pay-

ment or contribution payment or

extended the deadline for filing

ECR and making payment of PF

dues for the month of March till

May 15.The ECR and PF dues pay-

ments for March were due on April

15. Thereafter, the employers were

to get 10 days' grace period for

compliance till April 25.

Earlier this month, the EPFO

otherwise", it added.

This will also "help in policy

places where social distancing can be maintained. But, for that, he said "a lot of work needs to be done both on creating the structures, as well as ensuring that the work place is relatively safe.' Referring to a survey by Centre

for Monitoring Indian Economy which said an estimated 100 million workers have been rendered jobless due to the lockdown, he said the numbers are "worrying" and "mindboggling" and "I think it says, we need to open up in a measured way but as fast as possible so that people start having jobs. We don't have the capacity to support people across the spectrum too long. Being a relatively poor country, people start out with significantly lower reserves."

"We need to find ways of getting both money as well as food through PDS to as many of these people as we can," he said.

Fitch downgrades viability ratings of

The global rating agency also downgraded Bank of Baroda's VR

The agency affirmed the long-term issuer default ratings of SBI and BOB at 'BBB-' and those of ICICI Bank and Axis Bank

SBI, BoB, ICICI and Axis Bank New Delhi: Fitch Ratings on

Thursday downgraded the viability ratings of SBI, ICICI Bank and Axis Bank to 'bb' from 'bb+ on account of deteriorating operating environment for banks amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

by one notch to 'bb-', from 'bb'.

give shot in the arm to e-comm adoption **PRANAV MUKUL**

Pandemic, lockdown

NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

THE COVID-19 outbreak and subsequent lockdown has led to a shift in buying behaviour of fast moving consumer goods in favour of online purchases as regions across the country, with higher dependence on traditional retailers, saw a fall in volumes of such items. This is despite the fact that traditional channels continue to dominate the contribution to India's retail channels for FMCG sales.

As per a study by among the four zones of India, eastzone was under maximum stress during the January-March period, while the south zone continued to see sustained growth. The study noted that the east zone recorded 0.4 per cent on-year sales volume growth for FMCG products during January-March period this year, compared to 10.9 per cent growth last year. Traditional trade contributed to 95 per cent of the FMCG sales in this region.

The south zone, which was least impacted - recording 6.4 per cent growth in January-March this year, compared with 8.7 per cent last year — has the least contribution from traditional trade in all four zones at 84 per cent.

Prasun Basu, south Asia zone president, Nielsen Global Connect, said the COVID-19 episode is expected to cause significant shift in consumer patterns going ahead but the magnitude of how the behaviour gets altered will only be known once lockdown is lifted. "There will be a new normal for retailers for sure," he said during a A grocery shop in New Delhi.

Regions with higher dependence on traditional retailers saw a fall in FMCG

webinar on Thursday.

A survey by CARE Ratings observed while sectors such as ecommerce and retail are expected to do well in the ongoing financial year, with 82 per cent of the survey's respondents expecting positive growth in these sectors, "it can be inferred that the growth will be supported by the e-commerce sector rather than retail".

The push towards online commerce is also evident from the fact that several large companies are tweaking strategies to give a leg up to their e-commerce operations on back of expectations that consumers may not immediately return to physical stores. "While we are taking all measures to ensure social distancing and have even laid down SOPs to ensure safety. there is an expectation that people might be afraid to visit stores at least immediately post the lockdown is lifted," said a senior sales department executive at a large fashion and lifestyle brand.

HUL net slips 3.9% to ₹1,512 cr on virus hit

PRESSTRUSTOFINDIA NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

HINDUSTAN UNILEVER on Thursday reported a decline of 3.93 per cent in consolidated profit to Rs 1,512 crore for the fourth quarter, impacted by the coronavirus crisis from mid-March.

The company had posted a net profit of Rs 1,574 crore in the January-March period of the previous fiscal.

Sales during the quarter under review stood at Rs 9,055 crore, down 9.61 per cent from Rs 10.018 crore in the corresponding period a year ago, Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL) said in a regulatory filing.

The spread of COVID-19 impacted the business from mid-March," said HUL.

Gold demand plunges 36% in March quarter

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU MUMBAI, APRIL 30

GOLD SEEMS to be losing lustre with the economic slowdown and the lockdown triggered by the coronavirus pandemic hitting the demand for the yellow metal. As a result, demand for gold fell 36 per cent to 101.9 tonnes during the January-March quarter of 2020 as compared to 159 tonnes in the same period of last year.

According to the World Gold Council, in value terms, gold demand value for the quarter was Rs 37,580 crore, a decline of 20 per cent in comparison with Rs 47,000 crore a year ago. Total jewellery demand in India for Ianuary-March period was down by 41 per cent at 73.9 tonnes as

The value of jewellery demand declined 27% to ₹27,230 crore from ₹37.070 crore a year ago

compared to 125.4 tonnes in the same period of last year.

The value of jewellery demand declined by 27 per cent to Rs 27,230 crore from Rs. 37,070 crore a year ago. Total investment demand for

down by 17 per cent at 28.1 tonnes as compared to 33.6 tonnes a year ago However, in value terms, gold investment demand was Rs. 10.350 crore, a rise of 4 per cent

from Rs 9,940 crore last year.

the January-March quarter was

Sensex jumps 997 points on COVID-19 drug, lockdown easing

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU MUMBAI, APRIL 30

DOMESTIC MARKETS Thursday staged a strong rally buoyed by reports of encouraging drug trials in the US to treat COVID-19 and probable easing of lockdown post May 3 in some of the states The Sensex rallied 997 points,

or 3.05 per cent, to 33,717.62 and the NSE Nifty Index spurted 307 points to 9,859.90. The rupee also rose by 57 paise at 75.09 per dollar amid expectations of capital inflows and another economic package from the government. However, economic fundamentals remain unchanged as of now, and any pick-up in macro aggregates will take some time, as per experts.

25-30% flights may resume after lockdown; airlines, airports begin preparations

PRANAV MUKUL NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

ASTHE government prepares to relax certain restrictions May 4 onwards, airlines and airports have started to lay down the ground for resumption of scheduled commercial flight operations that have been shut since March 25. The indication from government officials, however, is that flights are expected to resume with 25-30 per cent capacity mid-May onwards.

In a communication to airport managers across the country, the Airports Authority of India (AAI) asked all airports to be in preparedness to handle flight operations. Issuing a set of standard operating procedures, AAI's directorate of opperiod is declared to be over, airports shall be facilitating limited domestic/international scheduled flights in phases, to start with, may be at 30 per cent capacity to facilitate required social distancing." It added initially, airline operations may be limited to Tier-I cities and

major Tier-Il cities Similarly, Air India's management has written to its staff to begin preparing for resumption of flight operations. "There is a probability to commence 25-30 per cent operations post-lockdown in mid-May 2020," a communication sent to operations staff read.

Government officials have said airlines and customers will be given 10 days for bookings before operations are allowed to resume.

implemented in letter, spirit **EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

THE SUPREME Court on Thursdayexpressed doubts on whether banks were passing on the reliefs announced by the RBI to borrowers in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and nationwide lockdown, and asked the apex bank to ensure compliance.

A Bench headed by Justice NV Ramana, which heard a plea that claimed the March 27 circular of the RBI has not been implemented by banks, said "in view of the above, we direct the Reserve Bank of India to ensure implementation of the Circular dated 27.03.2020 in its letter and spirit".

The plea urged the court to set

SC directs RBI to ensure its

moratorium circular is

But the Bench, also comprising Justices S K Kaul and B R Gavai, which heard a clutch of PILs related to RBI circular via video conferencing, refused to interfere after noting none of the petitioners were personally aggrieved.

Meanwhile, the RBI extended regulatory benefits to all banks including those deploying their own resources to extend liquidity support to the mutual funds under the Special Liquidity Facility for Mutual Funds (SLF-MF) scheme. It also permitted banks to file regulatory returns with a delay of up to 30 days from the due date as several entities face difficulties in timely submission in view of the disruptions on account of the outbreak. WITH PTI

We've lost one of the leading lights of Indian sport today. Not too many can boast of being top-notch in two different sports. You played your part to the fullest, rest well, Chuni sir."

SUNIL CHHETRI, INDIA CAPTAIN

CHUNI GOSWAMI, 1938-2020

Quick feet, sharp mind

Goswami was inarguably India's finest footballer ever, and arguably the country's finest ever all-round sportsman

SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY KOLKATA, APRIL 30

CHUNI GOSWAMI was India's greatest-ever footballer. His superiority was beyond any doubt. He was also arguably India's greatestever all-round sportsman, for he led Bengal to a Ranji Trophy final. He was Mr Quicksilver of Indian sport.

Goswami, 82, breathed his last in Kolkata on Thursday. He was suffering from age-related ailments. His family confirmed that he was admitted to a city hospital earlier in the day, where he died of a heart attack around 5pm. He is survived by wife Basanti and son Sudipto.

India won the 1962 Asian Games football gold under Goswami's captaincy. He also led India to the 1964 Asian Cup silver medal. His top-flight football career spanned from 1954 to 1968 before he made a seamless transition to cricket. Goswami, however, was a lot more than his longevity as a player, the number of goals he scored, the medals he won, the postage stamp in his honour or the Padma Shri and the Arjuna Award he was conferred with.

Former President S Radhakrishnan was a fan. Old-timers at Mohun Bagan still speak about how the great philosopher and statesman loved to watch Goswami skipping past defenders during Durand Cup matches in Delhi. He was so good that even Tottenham Hotspur made an offer. But as the story goes, Goswami had just got a job at State Bank of India and the safety net weighed heavy.

Chuni was a fantastic dribbler. His close control was superb. But those weren't the biggest attributes of his game. His greatness





GOALS AND GLORY: Goswami netted 200 goals for Bagan, besides winning nine league titles, five IFA Shields and Durand Cups each and three Rovers Cups; (left) he met idol Pele too. AIFF

lay in his brain. Great players play with their brains, which sets them apart with regards to decision-making, And decision-making (on the pitch) separates a great footballer from a good one,"Tulsidas Balaram, Goswami's India team mate and a part of Indian football's 'Three Musketeers' – PK Banerjee, Chuni and Balaram told The Indian Express.

"I am devastated. Pradip (Banerjee) passed away last month and now Chuni. For me, the losses are unbearable. We played for different clubs. Chuni was a Bagan man through and through (a Mohun Bagan Ratna), while I played for East Bengal. And yet, when we played for Bengal and India, our understanding was telepathic. Chuni, PK and Balaram played football with their brains," said Balaram. He agreed that there was a healthy rivalry when they played club football. "Yes, we wanted to outshine each other in Bagan versus East Bengal matches. It helped us become better players."

Subimal Goswami, who became famous by his nickname, was born on January 15, 1938 at Kishoreganj in erstwhile East Bengal. In 1946, he joined the Bagan junior team and was nurtured by Balaidas Chatterjee. In 1954, he graduated to the senior team and played for the them until he retired in 1968. As per AIFF stats, Goswami scored 200 goals for his club – 145 in the Calcutta Football League, 25 in the IFA Shield, 18 in the Durand Cup, 11 in the Rovers Cup and one in the Dr HK Mookerjee Shield.

Goswami made his international debut against Burma (now Myanmar) at the 1958 Tokyo Asian Games and scored in his first game, as India rallied to win 3-2. He went on to represent India in 36 internationals, captaining in 16 of them, and netting 13 goals. The 1962 Asian Games was his crowning glory; India beating South Korea 2-1 in the final to win the gold medal. The late PK Banerjee once recalled how the entire stadium in Jakarta was booing India and baying for blood, because an Indian official had supported Israel's inclusion in the Asiad. The football team bore the brunt but the final was a triumph of the collective will of 11 Indians.

As a cricketer, Goswami was an all-rounder - a middle-order batsman and decent medium-pace inswing bowler. He made his first-class debut in 1962 and for six years played cricket and football at a high level. He led Bengal to the 1971-72 Ranji Trophy final where his team lost to Bombay. He also played for East Zone. In 46 first-class matches, Goswami scored 1,592 runs including a century and took 47 wickets. He was also a very capable tennis player, a regular on the South Club courts.

All India Football Federation president Praful Patel condoled Goswami's death. "It's sad to hear that Chuni-da, one of India's greatest footballers, is no more. His contribution to Indian Football will never be forgotten... He will stay synonymous with the golden generation of Indian football."

The BCCI mourned his death through a tweet. Cricket Association of Bengal president Avishek Dalmiya said: "His contribution to football would be cherished forever. In the same vein, he was not only the Captain of Bengal Cricket Team but had also received the Kartick Bose Lifetime Achievement Award of The CAB in 2011-12 for his Cricketing Excellence." Former BCCI secretary Niranjan Shah called Goswami a "rare" sporting talent and a "true legend". Former India spinner and ex-Bengal captain Dilip Doshi said: "He had a great sense of humour which he timely applied to release the tension in the dressing room. India is poorer without such stalwarts and icons of sport.'

Swerve, dribble, shoot... repeat

DESPITE BEING a prodigious talent, Syed Abdul Rahim —India's most successful coach-ignored Goswami for the Melbourne Olympics in 1956. He, however, was named as Calcutta University's captain and led them to All India Inter-University Championship title, himself scoring the winning goal against Bombay University in the final. His reputation, domestically, kept on increasing since then and in 1958, he was chosen for the Tokyo Asian Games, where he made his international debut against Burma (now Myanmar). That moment on, he was a regular with the national team until he retired in 1965 having scored 13 goals in 36 international appearances and captaining in 16 of them.

As much as his goals, Goswami will be remembered for leading the national team to unmatched heights. The gold medal at 1962 Asian Games remains his greatest triumph – he scored a brace in the semifinals against South Vietnam that had eight players with French League experience. He also captained the team to a runner-up finish in the 1964 Asian Cup in Israel.

Dribbler

GOSWAMI BELONGED to a generation of greats. What separated him from the rest, though, was his body swerves and dribbling abilities. Olympian SS Hakeem recalled a Santosh Trophy match between Services and Bengal, when Goswami was trapped near the corner flag. Hakeem, who played for Services, thought he could steal the ball away from Goswami with a sliding tackle. But doing that to India's best dribbler wasn't going to be easy. Before Hakeem could even move, Goswami wriggled past the defender from the tiniest of spaces and

charged towards the box. His abilities with the ball made him in-



comparable to any other player of that generation as well as the ones that have followed. He had an aura, so much so that despite not being the most disciplined player, he was often forgiven. Goswami had a reputation of turning up late for the national camps - once, in fact, he turned up a fortnight late for the 1960 Rome Olympics preparatory camp in Hyderabad.

According to historian Novy Kapadia, when some players raised voices against the preferential treatment given to him, Rahim – the coach – retorted: "Uska maafik ball control karlo, tum bhi fir late aana."

Loyalist

Goswami was eight when he joined Mohun Bagan. And he never left them. Not when arch-rival East Bengal's general secretary Jyotish Guha, according to the book Barefoot to Boots, tried to lure him by offering to buy the latest Fiat car. Not even when he received an invitation to train with Tottenham Hotspur, who-under Bill Nicholson—had just won the European Cup Winners Cup. Not exposed to international club football, Goswami said he did not take the offer seriously because he didn't want to forsake the stability his employers, SBI, guaranteed. MIHIR VASAVDA

PSG to be named winners as standings remain frozen

PARIS ST Germain moved within a fingertip of being crowned Ligue 1 champions when the French league recommended to freeze the 2019-20 standings amid the COVID-19 crisis on Thursday, French sports daily L'Equipe reported.

According to the newspaper, the LFP's board will ratify the recommendation on Thursday afternoon and effectively hand PSG their seventh title in the last eight years. The decision would mean that second-placed Olympique de Marseille and third-placed Stade Rennais would be in next season's Champions League with

Football's return good for everyone: Mourinho



Tottenham manager Jose Mourinho believes bringing football back. even behind closed doors, would be a much-needed morale boost for fans starved of action during the coronavirus crisis. No

Premier League games have been played since March 9 due to the pandemic, which has claimed more than 26,000 British lives. Dutch football chiefs have called an end to the Eredivisie season while French sports minister Roxana Maracineanu on Thursday called for the French league to end the Ligue 1 season. England's top-flight clubs are due to meet on Friday with "Project Restart" at the top of their agenda. They will discuss how they can complete the season despite the logistical difficulties.

MotoGP cancels races

The MotoGP races in Germany, the Netherlands and Finland in June and July have been cancelled, the International Motorcycling Federation (FIM) and promoter Dorna Sports announced. "The ongoing coronavirus outbreak has obliged the cancellation of all three events," they said in a joint statement. The German Grand Prix was scheduled from June 19-21 at the Sachsenring and the Dutch MotoGP from June 26-28 at Assen, the only circuit to have hosted a motorcycle grand prix every year since its inception in 1949.

PSG. Lille, Stade de Reims and Nice would qualify for the Europa League. Amiens and Toulouse would be relegated with Ligue 2 leaders Lorient, and second-placed Lend, promoted to the elite. "I think we have to accept the decisions that have been taken, in all sports and in all countries," said PSG defender Thilo Kehrer on the club's website earlier this week.

"I think the teams that are at the top of their leagues at the moment deserve to be there. If the decision is taken to call an end to the season then the title will be deserved too." The LFP did not comment. REUTERS

Outbreak will not affect women's sport: Perry

Amidst concerns that cash-strapped governing bodies will give priority to men's events over less-lucrative women's fixtures once the health crisis triggered by COVID-19 pandemic is over, star Australia all-rounder Ellyse Perry believes that women sport will emerge unscathed. Sporting activities around the world have been brought to a grinding halt by the coronavirus outbreak. Boards like Cricket Australia are facing a financial crisis and were forced to lay off majority of their staff but Perry believes that governing bodies will look for new ways of revenue generation.

"Sport in general is resilient and I can't actually see it having a long-lasting negative effect," Perry told the Australian Associated Press." "It's certainly made organisations rethink how they run their sports and their codes and potentially strip it back to what is really important.

Diamond League cancelled

The Diamond League track meet in Lausanne, Switzerland, won't happen as scheduled on Aug. 20. Organizers of the Athletissima say they are now looking at ₹ alternative options and formats that could still be considered in order to offer athletes the possibility to compete." Switzerland's government has prohibited gatherings of more than 1,000 people until the end of August. Athletissima organisers say "it is currently impossible to allow a high number of people to gather in a confined area."

ECB says The Hundred delayed until 2021

The launch of The Hundred was postponed until 2021 on Thursday as the COVID-19 pandemic forced the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) to put its new flagship tournament on hold. The franchise-based league, including an American sports-style draft and featuring eight teams with names such as London Spirit, Manchester Originals and Trent Rockets, was scheduled to run from mid-July to September. The announcement that the new limited overs experiment will not start this season seemed inevitable once the ECB last week extended the suspension of the professional game until July 1.

No need to change saliva rule: Warner

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA MELBOURNE, APRIL 30

STAR AUSTRALIAN opener David Warner does not see the need to abolish the use of saliva to shine the ball when cricket resumes in the post COVID-19 world as he feels it is no more or no less risky than sharing the change room with fellow players. There is speculation that use of saliva to shine the ball will be stopped to cut down the risk of the highly contagious infection when international cricket restarts. "You're sharing change rooms and you're sharing everything else, I don't see why you have to change that," Warner told 'cricket.com.au'.

"It's been going around for hundreds of years now, I can't recall anyone that's got sick by doing that. If you're going to contract a bug, I don't think it'd necessarily be just from that. I'm not too sure but it's not my place to comment on whether or not we should or shouldn't (use saliva to shine the ball). It's up to the ICC and the governing bodies to decide."

However, former fast bowler Shaun Tait believes it is important to be open about changes and the use of saliva could become a thing of the past. "I've never been a huge fan of the saliva on the ball, it's not very nice really," Tait said. "We have to open to some possible changes there."

Khawaja axed; Labuschangne, **Burns land CA contracts**

Senior batsmen Usman Khawaja and Shaun Marsh missed out but the fast-rising Marnus Labuschagne and Joe Burns were rewarded for their performances in Cricket Australia's annual player contracts announced on Thursday. The list, which has come later than scheduled due to the upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, features six new faces for the 2020-21 season -- Mitchell Marsh, Ashton Agar, Burns, Labuschagne, Kane Richardson and Matthew Wade to the list.

The 33-year-old Khawaja, who was Australia's most important batsman during Warner and Steve Smith's suspension, hasn't come close to national selection since being dropped and is seemingly unlikely to add to his 44 Tests and 40 ODIs. "As Mitch Marsh and Matthew Wade have proven there are always plenty of opportunities for those who have missed out to be re-selected by performing consistently at domestic level," chairman of selectors Trevor Hohns said.

"And importantly to make the most of any opportunity that comes their way at international level. As is always the case there are unlucky omissions but, however, because you are not on the list does not mean you cannot be selected," he explained.

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