

CORONA COUNT

33,610 CASES | 1,075 DEATHS

8,373 RECOVERED

8,30,201 samples have been tested as on 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 enterprise (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 within the government.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

EXPLAINED
MSMEs 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.

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



Migrants headed to villages in UP reach Allahabad from MP on Thursday. Ritesh Shukla

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 oppor-

tunities 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 time-bound 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

PRABHA RAGHAVAN & TABASSUM BARNAGARWALA
NEW DELHI, MUMBAI, APRIL 30

IT HAS BEEN a struggle for Dr Rohinton Dastur, Medical Director at South Mumbai's Bhatia Hospital, to get his 700-odd staff back to work after it was first sealed on April 8. He offered them transport, hotel stay

to cut travel risks, and even one-and-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 an empty lane near his home at Cuffe Parade. The 200-bed hospital managed to resume limited services just a day ago. Nurses and doctors have reported to 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



INSIDE

MURSHIDABAD MEDICAL COLLEGE CHIEF REMOVED
PAGE 3

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, a 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



Madhukar Hariyan 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

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 outbreak, Oman has called for all expatriates 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.

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 and professionals, according to 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

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 March-end, with the total number of foreign workers at 13,21,753.

Officially, the Indian government has downplayed the latest directive. Stressing that "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

Way cleared for Uddhav, Maharashtra Governor asks EC to hold Council polls

VISHWAS WAGHMODE & RITIKA CHOPRA
MUMBAI, NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

MAHARASHTRA Governor B S Koshiyari 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



Running out of time to enter House

a six-month deadline expiring on May 27.

Sources told *The Indian Express* that the EC is likely to agree to Koshiyari's request and hold polls to the nine seats, which fell vacant on April 24, at

the earliest. The poll panel has called a meeting Friday morning to examine the matter.

The Governor's letter to the EC came hours after Shiv Sena leaders submitted a letter to him from Thackeray, and two days after 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 khullam-khulla boy everyone loved to love: Rishi Kapoor passes away at 67

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

SHUBHRA GUPTA
NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

"MAIN SHAAYAR TOH NAHIN, MAGAR AII HASEEN, JABSE DEKHA MAINE TUJHKO MUJHKO SHAYARI 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.



RISHI KAPOOR
1953-2020

Raj Kapoor's talent for telling oversize stories melding soppi-

ness 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

The wearer of those trademark double-knit sweaters and 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 'joyful' 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

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3 THE OUTBREAK WEST BENGAL

11

Rise in death figures in 48 hrs

37

New cases in last 24 hours

444

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 Covid 19 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 Shamila Mallick as the new medical superintendent of Murshidabad Medical College and Hospital.

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



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-year-old 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.

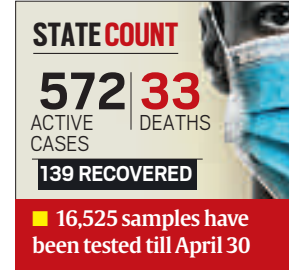
The local people contacted councillor Tarun Saha. "We also contacted an ambulance service, but no one was ready to come. We were also in doubt whether she died of COVID-19 or not," said a neighbour.

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, post-mortem is necessary. I contacted the police, and ultimately the police sent the body for post-mortem." 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 station.



2,000 students 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 Secretary Alapan Bandyopadhyay said on Thursday.

Taking to 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 reach 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

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

RAVIK BHATTACHARYA
KOLKATA, APRIL 30



Trucks being unloaded at Petrapole land port. Express

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, labourers 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.

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 trucks 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 checkpoint 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 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 checkpoint.

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

Particulars	Year Ended	
	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	53,806	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

Notes:

- 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.
- Additional information on standalone financial results is as follows:
(₹ in crore)

Particulars	Year Ended	
	31st March, 2020	31st 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

3. 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, 2015.

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/-
Place : Mumbai Mukesh D. Ambani
Date : 30th April, 2020 Chairman & Managing Director
www.ril.com

'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.

Bus Minibus Samanoy Samity (coordination committee) 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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Dear Sir,

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 Ramkrishna Garments Co., 26, P.K. Thakur Street, Kolkata: 700006 have availed the following credit facilities:

Facility	Limit	Balance outstanding as on 31.12.2019
Cash Credit	₹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 on 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 paise 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 the following properties/assets:

Facility	Security
1. Cash credit	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 paise 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, 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.

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 to 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 provided 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 income 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 needful 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

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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-Tendering (Single Bid System) on behalf of Honourable Governor of Uttarakhnad for following works...

Rajasthan State Mines & Minerals Limited (A Government of Rajasthan Enterprise) Corrigendum-5. Description of Work: Repairing of WEGs & comprehensive Operation & Maintenance (O&M) of the wind power project...

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...

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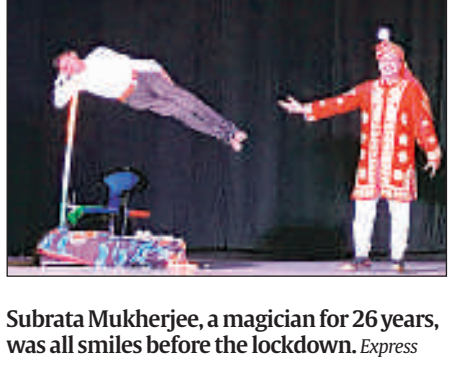
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Rajasthan State Road Development And Construction Corporation Ltd., JAIPUR. Collection of Toll Tax (From Private Vehicles) Nasrabad-Kokri-Doodi Road for 368 Days. UEN No: RRCD1920W50B086834

TATA POWER DELHI DISTRIBUTION LIMITED A Tata Power and Delhi Government Joint Venture. NOTICE INVITING TENDERS. TATA Power-DDL invites tenders as per following details:

The Brihanmumbai Electric Supply & Transport Undertaking (Of The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation) TENDER NOTICE. e-tenders are invited for the supply of following items. (1) 67876 - Purchase of 343 PCs with 3 yrs. Extended Warranty...

Indian Institute of Science Education and Research Berhampur. Tender Enquiry Nos. IISERBpr/S&P/2020-21/01 dt. April 28, 2020. Tender notices for supply of following items:



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.

NOTICE BOARD CORPORATE ASSOCIATE DIARY APPOINTMENTS, MOVEMENTS, CELEBRATIONS, HONOURS

Contribution of AAI(Kol) in this testing times. Airports Authority of India, Regional Headquarters, Eastern Region, is doing its bit in this testing times, where employees contributed & distributed packets of essential commodities to 575 families covering 3 slum areas around Ramkrishna Mission 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. 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.

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.

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.

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.

SUCCESSFUL TRIAL OF 9000HP WAG-9HH LOCO AT 100KMPH. Chittaranjan Locomotive 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 certificate for operation of WAG-9HH class of locomotives upto maximum speed of 100kmph on Indian Railways track.

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.

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 - Debudul 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.

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 its CSR to the 'PM Cares Fund'.

369 TRIPS OF PARCEL EXPRESS TO ENSURE UNINTERRUPTED SUPPLY OF 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.



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

MORE 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

IN THE 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

SOME 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 Shammai Kapoor, and taken in by the boy-next-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 much-ahead-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

Loss of a great artiste helps in understanding the loss any death represents: Of individuality, of a unique possibility



PRATAP BHANU MEHTA

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 32-year-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

one. It has to 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 with it.

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.

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 loss 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 negative role.

If you look at Irrfan's body of work, which spans student diploma films and tel-

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, perhaps.

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, yet, 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 Patsi 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.

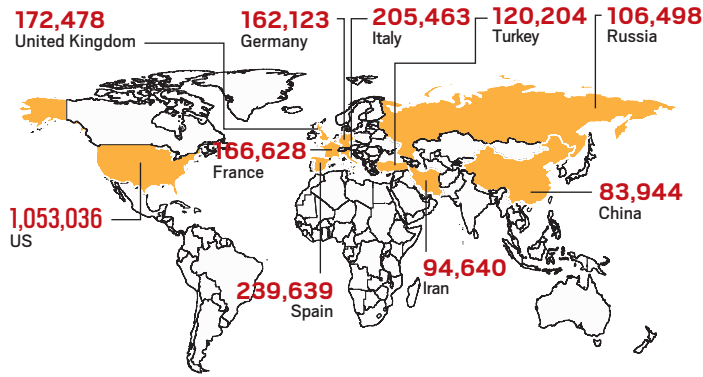
NO HANDCUFFS THE SUPREME COURT has held that the rule providing for handcuffing of undertrials while they are being taken to court is violative of the fundamental rights guaranteed the Constitution. "Armed escorts, worth the salt, can overpower any unarmed undertrial and extra guards can make up for 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.

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THE INDIAN EXPRESS, FRIDAY, MAY 1, 2020

E.**EXPLAINED****@ieExplained**
#ExpressExplained

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

CORONAVIRUS DASHBOARD**THE WORLD****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**PAPER CLIP**

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-CoV-2 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 common bugs on phones.

"Our recommendation is that

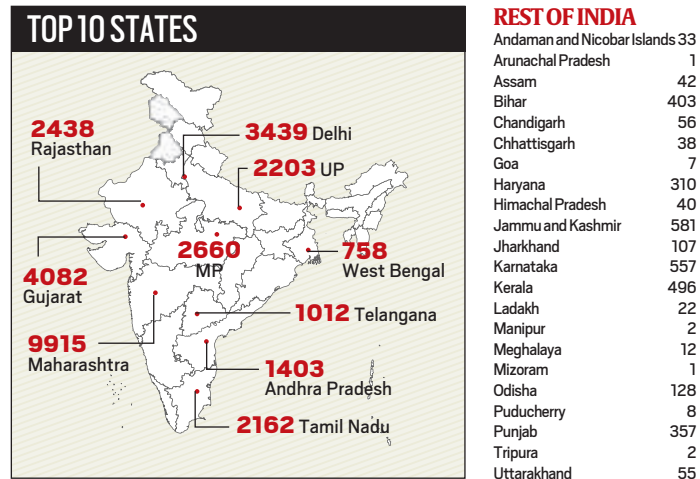
phones should be decontaminated daily and regularly with either 70% isopropyl or by sanitising with (ultraviolet) devices like PhoneSoap," said the study, led by biomedical scientist Lotti Tajouri of Bond University, Australia.

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

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

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 patient 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. PFI

aches, sore throat, diarrhoea, 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 diarrhoea. 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

appetite because our sense of smell is part of our sense of taste. That is why during a cold, 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."

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 ENT UK.

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 Lutyens' 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 agarbhattis".

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 the genetic material of the virus.

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.

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.

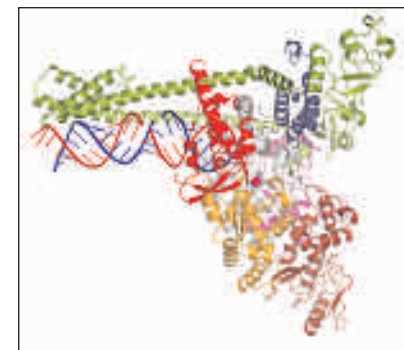
SARS-CoV2 is made of a single strand of RNA, which is what is copied and recopied. Enzymes that enable the creation of RNA (or DNA) are called polymerases; in the case of SARS-CoV2, the polymerase is called RdRp, also named nsp12. It is the polymerase whose structure researchers have now described.

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 distribu-

tion, 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 impact - 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.

PANDEMIC WATCH



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 83-year-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 development 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 contact tracing of new infections to halt the virus's spread.

The Korea 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.



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 mirrored in Hong Kong, which on Thursday reported that there had been no new cases in the semi-autonomous 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-from-home 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 Kerry 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



VIRUS ORIGINATED IN CHINA, BUT NOT MAN-MADE, SAY INTEL AGENCIES

Washington: US intelligence 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 as-yet-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

Britain is past coronavirus peak: Boris

COSTAS PITAS & ESTELLE SHIRBON
LONDON, APRIL 30

PRIME MINISTER Boris Johnson said Britain was now past the peak of its coronavirus outbreak and promised to set out a lockdown exit strategy next week, despite rising deaths and criticism of his government's response.

Johnson offered hope to locked-down Britons, but urged them to stick with restrictions designed to slow the spread of the virus.

"I can confirm today that for 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 term."

Nevertheless, Britain now has the second-highest official COVID-19 death toll in Europe with more than 26,000 deaths.

With rising unemployment and companies crippled, the government is under pressure to outline an exit strategy.

Johnson promised to set out next week a "menu of options" on how the lockdown could be relaxed, but said exact dates would be driven by scientific advice and data. REUTERS



Boris Johnson



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

K J M VARMA
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

EXPLAINED

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 saying 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 Central

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

The nationwide battle 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 reopen 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 lev-

els 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

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 re-elected 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 oil- and 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 high-stakes 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 similarly 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-memo-worry Orthodox Easter message to the nation.

"The situation," he said, "is under total control." NYT



GOLD

₹41,705



RUPEE

₹75.09



OIL

\$26.15



SILVER

₹38,100

Note: Spot gold markets shut due to lockdown in major states. *Indian basket as on March 19, 2020

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

International market data till 19:00 IST

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 of 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.

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

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-

EXPLAINED

₹1 lakh crore fund raising

ALTHOUGH THE volatility in oil prices has impacted its bottom line, RIL is going ahead with its mega investment and fund raising plans. The company is expected to complete the capital raising programme, totalling over Rs 1.04 lakh crore by 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, respectively, 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 platform.

Facebook is focused on a long-term play in India and its deal with Jio is indicative of the company’s commitment, its India Managing Director Ajit Mohan said. PTI

Core industries’ output shrinks 6.5% in March

PRESS TRUST 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 expanded 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 per cent, 0.5 per cent, 11.9 per cent, 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.

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

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, APRIL 30



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

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 Congress president Rahul Gandhi, 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

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 “mind boggling” 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 for 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.

EPFO allows firms to file PF returns without simultaneous payment of dues

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

IN A move that will ease compliance burden for employers, the Employees’ Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has permitted companies to file their electronic challan cum return (ECR) without the simultaneous requirement to pay their PF contributions. Through this move, the government is also expected to get an estimate of the companies under EPFO which are facing cash crunch and wage payment related issues

owing to the lockdown to counter the COVID-19 pandemic.

There will be no penal action on those companies which file the ECR on time, even if their payment contributions get delayed. “The ECR can now onwards be filed by an employer without the need of simultaneous payment of contributions. 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 consequences and employees also get

assurance of their employment and membership,” the EPFO said.

This will also “help in policy planning and decision-making regarding supporting the businesses and EPF members in wage payment or contribution payment or otherwise,” it added.

Earlier this month, the EPFO 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 payments for March were due on April 15. Thereafter, the employers were to get 10 days’ grace period for compliance till April 25.

Fitch downgrades viability ratings of 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.

The global rating agency also downgraded Bank of Baroda’s VR by one notch to ‘bb-’ from ‘bb’.

Pandemic, lockdown give shot in the arm to e-comm adoption

PRANAV MUKUL NEW DELHI, APRIL 30



A grocery shop in New Delhi. Regions with higher dependence on traditional retailers saw a fall in FMCG volumes. Gajendra Yadav

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 Nielsen, among the four zones of India, east zone 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

webinar on Thursday.

A survey by CARE Ratings observed while sectors such as e-commerce 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

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA 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 January-March period was down by 41 per cent at 73.9 tonnes as

The value of jewellery demand declined by 27 per cent 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 the January-March quarter was 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.

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

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU MUMBAI, APRIL 30

DOMESTIC MARKETS Thursday staged a strongly 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 spurred 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

AS THE 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 op-

erations said: “Once the lockdown period 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-II 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.

SC directs RBI to ensure its moratorium circular is implemented in letter, spirit

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

THE SUPREME COURT on Thursday expressed 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

aside the circular. But the Bench, also comprising Justices SK Kaul and BR 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. WITHPTI

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 “un-verified 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

\$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

These pay cuts would apply to the employees in the hydrocarbon division who are earning more than Rs 15 lakh a year. Those earning less 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



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 greatest-ever 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 Cup's 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 Balam, Goswami's India team mate and a part of Indian football's 'Three Musketeers' - PK Banerjee, Chuni and Balam - 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 Bengal and India, our understanding was telepathic. Chuni, PK and Balam played football

with their brains," said Balam. He agreed that there was a healthy rivalry when they played club football. "Yes, we wanted to out-shine 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 Baladas Chatterjee. In 1954, he graduated to the senior team and played for the team 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 Crickering 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

Leader

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. **MIHIRVASAVDA**

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. **AFP**

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. **AFP**

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. **REUTERS**

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; Labuschagne, 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.

The Indian EXPRESS

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