DAILY FROM: AHMEDABAD, CHANDIGARH, DELHI, JAIPUR, KOLKATA, LUCKNOW, MUMBAI, NAGPUR, PUNE, VADODARA

# The Indian EXPRESS JOURNALISM OF COURAGE

THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2020, KOLKATA, LATE CITY, 12 PAGES

**SINCE 1932** 

₹5.00/EX-KOLKATA ₹6.00 (₹12 IN NORTH EAST STATES & ANDAMAN) WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

The ₹20 lakh cr pie **MSMEs NBFCs**, **HFCs**, **MFIs** 

₹5.94LAKHCR ₹4.32 LAKH CR To be announced Announcec Wednesday ₹9.74 LAKH CR: Announced earlier

### Collateral free loans, subordinate debt, eq-

uity infusion, expand ing ambit through change in definition

**IMPACT:** These measures will breathe life into 45 lakh units through equity and debt support. helps them restart, safeguard jobs, and grow big

₹3.7 lakh cr

Special liquidity window, partial credit guarantee with the government absorbing first 20% loss

**IMPACT:** Will improve confidence in the financial system, help institutions raise funds in the debt market, and reduce the risk aversion of banks

₹75,000 cr

### **REAL ESTATE**

Real estate regulators advised to extend registration and completion date of projects

**IMPACT:** This will let developers invoke force majeure to complete works without attracting penalties. All projects registered till March 24, 2020 will benefit

40,000 (Number of projects to benefit)

### **WORKERS**



TDS/TCS; EPF contribution cut for business and

**IMPACT:** Gives more money to businesses that are facing liquidity pressures; also gives more money in the hands of employees

₹56,750 cr

### DISCOMS



REC, PFC to infuse liquidity into power distribution companies against receivables

Govt's cost this

vr: Rs 25.500 cr

SANDEEP SINGH &

NEW DELHI, MAY 13

**PVAIDYANATHANIYER** 

WHILE FINANCE Minister Nir-

mala Sitharaman's MSME pack-

age, which adds up to Rs 5.94

lakh crore, will go some distance

in providing credit to small busi-

ness on the back of government

guarantees, the fiscal cost of her

first tranche in the current finan-

cial year is about Rs 25,000 crore.

which doesn't put any burden on **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2** 

HOW IT ADDS UP

Fund of Funds:

Rs 10,000 cr

First loss on credit

Rs 9,000 cr

guarantee to NBFCs:

Much of it is liquidity relief,

**IMPACT:** With plummeting revenues over the last few years, this will help them tide over cash flow problem. pay power generation and transmission companies

**₹90,000 cr** 

# **COVID ECONOMIC PACKAGE: DAY 1** First dose is liquidity: MSMEs get mega guarantee

Most measures focus on off-balance sheet support; success depends on improving lenders' risk appetite

#### SUNNY VERMA, AANCHAL **MAGAZINE & ANIL SASI** NEW DELHI, MAY 13

UNION FINANCE Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Wednesday announced the first tranche of an economic relief plan whose primary focus was to alleviate the sweeping distress in the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises sector that lies at the heart of the industrial ecosystem and employs an estimated 11 crore persons, including much of the country's migrant workforce.

While the 16 specific announcements announced in the first tranche cut across sectors that range from MSME and Non **Banking Finance Companies** (NBFCs) to real estate and power distribution and the salaried, the overarching theme was that of infusing liquidity. And engineering a pass-through effect that ultimately puts more disposable funds in the hands of both entrepreneurs and employees.

While the package is unlikely to create much stress for the fiscal exchequer as most of the

**Rs 1.000 crore** for welfare of poor, migrant labour from **PM CARES** 





Nirmala Sitharaman at the press conference. Anil Sharma

CASES:

**MORE REPORTS PAGE 3, 8** 

**INSIDE THE PACKAGE EXPLAINED, PAGE 9** 

measures are focused on off-balance sheet support through credit guarantees and tax deferment, the success of the scheme is predicated on these measures working as a multiplier to improve the risk appetite of lenders and catalyse fresh funding of distressed smaller firms.

Sitharaman's announcement followed up on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Tuesday of a Rs 20-lakh-crore plan, almost 10 per cent of the GDP, to cushion the impact of Covid-19 and to be unveiled in a staggered manner.

Sitharaman said banks and NBFCs can provide emergency credit lines to MSMEs up to 20 per cent of their outstanding credit as on February 2, 2020, with these loans having a 4-year tenor, a 12-month moratorium on principal payments, and a cap

on interest costs. A total of Rs 3 lakh crore is projected to be disbursed under this scheme that will be open until October 31, 2020. Sitharaman said this measure could help nearly 45 lakh units to resume business activity. CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Migant workers in Lucknow on their way to Jharkhand from Mumbai, Wednesday. They say they spent Rs 4,000 each on the bicycles, and have been on the road since May 6. Vishal Srivastav

BUSINESS AS USUAL **By UNNY** MICTO SMBU Medium....tediu

# New MSME definition has a message: No longer have to stay small to avail benefits

PRANAV MUKUL& **AASHISH AARYAN** NEW DELHI, MAY 13

IN THE first part of its latest economic stimulus package, the government Wednesday broadened the definition of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) by revising the limit of investment in machinery or equipment and introducing a "turnover" criteria – a reform measure that seeks to reverse the traditional policy bias in favour of units staying small in

In addition, the government has disallowed global companies from participating in tenders up to Rs 200 crore, earmark-

ing that space exclusively for Indian companies.

> changed is done in the favour of MSMEs. There has always been this fear, among successful MSMEs also, that if they outgrow the size of what has been defined as an MSME, they will lose their entitled benefits. This is CONTINUED ON PAGE 2





# Bengal banks on rural schemes to boost jobs, CM says village economy to save us

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE KOLKATA, MAY 13

WITH THE return of migrant om other '



tended by district magistrates. She said, "Village economy will save us in future. So, upliftment of villages will be the only way to save our state." who have She also warned all the refurne

order to qualify for benefits.

Support to CGTMSE: "The definition being Rs 4,000 cr EPF support to business, employees: Rs 2,500 cr

#### **EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** NEW DELHI, MAY 13

THE GOVERNMENT on Wednesday allocated Rs 1,000 crore for migrant labourers from the recently created Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations, or the PM CARES. Fund Trust

An additional Rs 2,000 crore was allocated for buying ventilators and Rs 100 crore for vaccine development against novel coronavirus.

In a statement, the government said the money allotted will be used for "strengthening the existing measures being taken for the welfare of the migrants and poor". It said "lumpsum assistance" will be given to states "to place it at the disposal of the District Collectors/ Municipal Commissioners for strengthening their efforts in providing accommodation facilities, making food arrangements. providing medical treatment and making transportation arrangements (for) the migrants"

Each state will get minimum 10% or Rs 100 crore from the sum CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

DOUBLING **KEYSTATES** TOTAL SURGEIN 7-DAYAVG. CASES 24HRS GROWTH RATE\*\* TOWATCH 6.69% 10.76 Maharashtra 24,427 1.026 5.20% 13.85 Gujarat 8.904 362 7,998 5.41% 13.31 Delhi 359 11.54% Tamil Nadu 8,718 716 6.24 Rajasthan 4,021 138 3.81% 18.90 West Bengal 2,173 110 7.10% 10.13 \* Commounded Daily Growth Rate over last 7 days \*\* Calculated over 7-day growth

TRACKING INDIA'S COVID CURVE

RECOVERED: 24.385 | DEATHS: 2.415

TESTS: 18,54,250 | DOUBLING RATE: 11.99\*\*

CONCERN	CAUTION	A GLIMMER
TAMIL NADU:	GUJARAT: No	TRIPURA: No
Continues to add	surge in past 10	active cases
large numbers	days. Doubling	except 151 in a
every day. Poised	rate slower than	BSF camp in
to overtake Gujarat	national average	Dhalai district

Based on daily data released by Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Indian Council of Medical Research and state governments

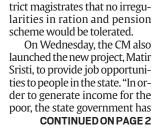


lowing the nationwide lockdown to contain the coronavirus pandemic, the West Bengal government has decided to give them iobs under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) programme and Matir Sristi, a state rural scheme.

At meeting with the officials



of the Panchayet & Rural Development and Irrigation Department on Wednesday, Chief Minister Mamata Baneriee said, "Give 100-day work to those who have come from other states." The meeting through video conference was also at-



# Army proposes 3-yr voluntary 'tour of duty', cites joblessness

**KRISHN KAUSHIK** NEW DELHI, MAY 13

CITING A "resurgence of nationalism and patriotism", and the fact that "unemployment in our country is a reality", the Indian Army has proposed a three-year "internship" for youths, both as officers and soldiers.

According to the proposal, as mentioned in an internal note, the short, voluntary "tour of duty" is for youths who "do not want to make defence services their permanent vocation. but still want to

ture of military professionalism". The proposal is a shift from the concept of permanent service/job in the Armed Forces, towards 'internship'/temporary experience for three years. Unemployment in our country is a reality, however there is resurgence of nationalism and patriotism," says the note.

However, the entry criteria for such candidates will not be relaxed. Army spokesperson Colonel

Aman Anand confirmed that such a proposal is being discussed, and emphasised that, if

experience the thrill and advenaccepted, the "tour of duty" will not be mandatory.

The "major crux", says the note, lies in making the proposal "attractive to the government, Armed Forces, corporates and most importantly the individuals" who opt for it.

For this, it proposes that the individual's earnings for the threeyear period could be made taxfree, and he/she could be given preference in public sector jobs as well as post-graduate courses.

"The government may not make ToD (tour of duty) as a CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Over 3,000 cases linked to Koyambedu market. File

# Over 35% TN cases linked to a vegetable market in Chennai

#### **ARUN JANARDHANAN** CHENNAI, MAY 13

ON APRIL 27, the owner of a hairdressing salon near Koyambedu market – a wholesale vegetable and fruit market in Chennai was among the first Covid-19 positive cases in the area. Since then, over 3,000 cases have been reported from the market.

In fact, over 35 per cent of the cases reported in Tamil Nadu so far have been traced to Koyambedu market. Till Wednesday, the state's total case count was 9.227, of which 4.089

were linked to arrivals from other countries and states, and another 1,365 were linked to the Tablighi Jamaat congregation in Delhi in March. Most of the remaining cases have been traced to the Kovambedu market cluster.

Some regions in Andhra Pradesh which border Tamil Nadu have also reported cases linked to Koyambedu, with many migrants who work in the market returning to their home state in the last week of April.

Chennai, which had 906 cases on April 30 (mostly linked to the Tablighi cluster), touched

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2** 

Judge for adjudication on June 5,

2018 by the then Gurgaon Land

Acquisition Collector. Yadav said

it was curious that while all the

13 claimants have approached

the court, "none of them has de-

manded any criminal action

against the others". He said he

had stumbled upon the case

during his frequent visits to

Yadav has said that "it is heard that the actual Charanjeet Singh,

S/o Sh. Nandi Singh and his wife

Manieet Kaur, actual owners of

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2** 

In his complaint to police,

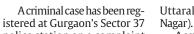
courts over RTI cases

PAGE 1 13 claimants for Rs 400-cr Gurgaon land, 6 Charanjeet Singhs **ANCHOR** over to the Additional District

#### **VARINDER BHATIA** CHANDIGARH, MAY 13

LAND DISPUTES are not new to Gurgaon, but this one has left the Haryana Police perplexed. They have to find the real "Charanjeet Singh" out of 13 people from Delhi, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand. each one of whom claims to be the owner of an 8acre plot on the Delhi-Jaipur highway, worth Rs 400 crore.

Meanwhile, the man who the authorities believe is the actual Charanjeet Singh could be dead, along with his wife, leaving no legal heirs.



police station on a complaint filed by Gurgaon-based RTI activist Ramesh Yadav under IPC sections dealing with impersonation, cheating, fraud, forgery, and criminal conspiracy. But police are struggling to trace or question the men because of the

lockdown. Six of the claimants are named Charanjeet Singh, and each one of them claims to be the son of "Nandi Singh" – as mentioned in the revenue records. These men are based in Uttar Pradesh (Pilibhit), Punjab

(Patiala, Anandpur Sahib) and

Uttarakhand (Udham Singh

A seventh claimant, Gurnam Singh, says he is the son of Charanieet Singh.

The remaining six have either cited a General Power of Attorney or a registered will or sale agreement in their favour. These men are Hari Mohan Singh, Gajender Singh, Harish Ahuja, Dilip, Ravinder Singh and Manish Bhardwaj. All are based in either Gurgaon or Delhi.

The revenue records of Gurgaon mention the owners of the land as Charanieet Singh. son of Nandi Singh, and his wife Manjeet Kaur, residents of



The 8-acre plot off the Delhi-Jaipur national highway. Express

Greater Kailash, New Delhi. They have not been traced so far.

The land, measuring 64.14 kanals (approximately 8 acres), in Narsinghpur village on Delhi-Jaipur NH-48, was acquired on August 7, 2014 by the then Bhupinder Singh Hooda-led government. The acquisition was for the purpose of creating a transport and communication zone, and the land was handed over by the Land Acquisition Officer, Urban Estate, to the Shahri Haryana Vikas Pradhikaran, formerly Haryana Urban Development Authority or HUDA).

At the time, as per Section 9

of the Land Acquisition Act, the owner was awarded compensation of Rs 44.01 crore. However, the deal was stuck as owners of other plots of land acquired for the same project went to court demanding enhanced compensation. Eventually, after a couple of years, this was done, and the 8-acre plot became worth over Rs 200 crore. Its value is around Rs 400 crore now, after accounting for interest. "The amount will keep going

up until the FIR reaches a conclusion and the court finally finds the actual Charanjeet Singh," Yadav said.

The case had been handed



the land, expired long back

# 2 THE SECOND PAGE

# The Indian EXPRESS

### WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM



Covid package, day 1: In first dose of

FOUR BALLS AND A CAREER: CHETAN SHARMA Chetan Sharma always gave his all for the team, but will forever be remembered for two matches - Sharjah 1986 and Nagpur 1987.

#### VIDEO OF THE DAY

**INTERNATIONAL NURSES DAY Chennai nurses** remember Florence Nightingale



**ART AND CULTURE** 

### **Vinod Kapri travels** 1,232 km with a group

# EXPRESS Q AUDIO

## The legal concerns around the Aarogya Setu app

**NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY** 

In today's episode of the 3 Things podcast, we look into the privacy and legal concerns that have been raised about the app.

Panel proposes land pooling to corporatise agri, merging **MNREGA** with skilling programmes

#### SHYAMLAL YADAV NEW DELHI, MAY 13

A LAND pooling model enabling corporatisation of agriculture, opening up EPF and ESIC for the unorganised sector, merging the MNREGA with skill development programmes to create a wage subsidy programme -- these are some of the proposals that have been drafted by a Group of Ministers(GOM) on employment and skill development.

The GoM, headed by Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Thawar Chand Gehlot, was created last week. It is now ready with the draft proposals, which will be approved on Thursday before being sent to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, sources said.

The draft proposes that the land pooling model which is used in building greenfield airports can be used in agriculture to enable corporatisation, which will create demand for skilled labourers.

It suggests merging the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Guarantee Act (MNREGA) with skill development programmes to create a wage subsidy programme, where the MNREGA amount is extended to companies as wage subsidy for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises. It suggests that works in private enterprises such as factories, construction sites and shops can be considered as eligible work under MNREGA. This will lower the cost of wages and make indus-

### **FROM PAGE ONE** Over 35% TN cases linked to a vegetable market in Chennai

5,262 cases on Wednesday. A senior public health official said the Koyambedu market cluster "exploded" in such a way that "not only Chennai, but several other districts such as Arivalur and Perambalur where the case count was in single digits till the last week of April, were also affected."

In the period between April 30 and May 12, Ariyalur, a rural district south of Chennai, saw a spike from 7 cases to 344 cases; Perambalur saw a jump from 9 to 192 - all linked to workers returning from Koyambedu.

In the same period, two neighbouring districts of Chennai city region, Chengalpattu and Tiruvallur, saw their case count jump from 78 to 391, and 55 to 467, respectively.

Health department officials who are engaged in the massive contact tracing exercise said most of them were found to have links to Kovambedu market - vendors, drivers, workers and those who visited the market on a daily basis, and their secondary contacts.

"The Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA) should have taken measures in March itself. It was too late when they finally decided to evict retail vendors from the market and shifted all fruit and flower vendors to another location (on April 28). Hundreds of people who suddenly lost their jobs were forced to travel to their homes in different towns and

liquidity, MSMEs get mega guarantee Borrowers will not be reimpact. The measures for quired to provide any fresh col-MSME through guarantees, equity infusion and debt suplateral and guarantee fee port will incentivise bank lendagainst these loans. The measures are targeted at avoiding ing to MSMEs as well as prolarge-scale business closures, vide crucial support to stressed which could impact the finanentities in the current situacial system systemically and tion," said State Bank of India

disrupt supply chains in the Chairman Rajnish Kumar. While full credit guarantee MSMEs, which make up for is being provided to MSME about 45 per cent of the counwhose loans are standard, try's total manufacturing outstressed small companies put, 40 per cent of exports, alwhose loans have been classimost 30 per cent of the fied as NPA (non performing national GDP and operate assets) will be given subordiacross the value chain - includnate debt by banks against a ing cycle parts, auto parts, texpartial credit guarantee protiles products, toys, hand tools vided by the government. - are stressed due to depleting The Centre will provide Rs

4,000 crore as funding support bility of demand. Availability of to CGTMSE (Credit Guarantee funds through the banking Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises) – which will help in facilitating Rs 20,000 crore rium on repayment, would of subordinate debt to nearly 2 lakh enterprises. While a par-Efforts to make liquidity tial credit guarantee reduces available to MSMEs, NBFCs, the credit risk for the lenders, Housing Finance Companies the effectiveness of this meas-(HFCs) and Micro Finance ure will depend upon their ap-Institutions (MFI) also build praisal.

upon recent measures by the Sitharaman Wednesday Reserve Bank of India aiming said these are the first set of measures and more steps will Bankers are much more be announced in coming days. comfortable to lend when "In each of these tranches we loans are backed by governwill not forget that we have a ment guarantees, and these responsibility towards the poor of this country, towards measures will encourage them to kickstart credit deployment. the needy of the country, to-"The policy bouquet unveiled wards the migrant workers of this country, the divyang and by the government is wellthe aged," she said. structured, suitably targeted,

"Today's annou

crore for both sectors in this

come almost two years after

the Centre first brought the

(Amendment) Bill, which

aimed to change the definition

purely on the basis of turnover.

However, following opposition

from some sections, including

RSS-backed Swadeshi Jagran

Manch, the Bill was put on the

backburner. The Manch had

said that basing the definition

purely on turnover would dis-

incentivise investments by

Reacting to the latest move,

The revised parameters

Development

size.

MSME

**MSMEs** 

long way in addressing issues faced by businesses, especially MSMEs. The steps announced will boost liquidity, empower the entrepreneurs and strengthen their competitive spirit," Modi said in a tweet.

risk of credit culture deterio-

decided to expand the definition of MSMEs, which will enable a larger number of enterprises to be classified as such and, therefore, be able to avail of these benefits. Setting up of a Fund of Funds with corpus of leveraged up to Rs 50,000 crore

Besides the funding boost, the government and central public sector enterprises will release all funds due to MSMEs within 45 days, while global tenders for government procurement orders up to Rs 200 will be a step towards Self-Reliant India and also help MSMEs grow their business, Sitharaman said.

NBFCs, HFCs and MFIs are all facing stress, as banks have turned extremely risk- averse in lending to them. Since many NBFCs do not have access to low cost deposits that banks have, their liquidity position and repayment capacity comes under threat when borrowers start defaulting or delaying repayments.

The government announced Rs 30,000 crore of a special liquidity scheme, under which investment will be made in investment grade debt papers of these institutions. The contours of this scheme are yet to be announced. If a government entity directly buys debt papers of these entities, then it would provide major relief.

The government also extended the partial credit guarantee scheme - under which it guarantees 20 per cent of the first loss to the lenders -NBFCs, HFCs and MFIs with low credit rating. This scheme is estimated to result in liquidity injection of Rs 45,000 crore in debt papers that are rated AA or lower and even unrated securities issued by such entities, including the MFIs. However, industry executives argue that banks may still not be forthcoming to lend to lower-rated companies, given the current risk aversion in

Electrification Corporation would be given against state guarantees.

The 25 per cent reduction on Tax Deducted at Source and Tax Collection at Source is again a liquidity infusion measure. "It only provides temporary cash in the hands of the taxpayer," said Ranen Banerjee, Leader, Economic Advisory Services, PricewaterhouseCoopers India.

### Army proposes 3-yr voluntary 'tour of duty', cites joblessness

compulsory criteria for central/state jobs, however, any terms edge in qualitative/quantitative/supernumerary criteria will give the scheme a boost," it says.

Listing the benefits for the services, it says it will bring in savings from salaries and pensions, and "decrease the frustration" of officers who are released after 10-14 years of short service, when they are in their mid-30s

Pointing out "immense financial benefits to the organisation due to reduction in pay and gratuity payouts", the Army has said the cost of a three-year service per officer will be a fraction of the cost incurred on Short Service Commission (SSC) officers.

It says the cost incurred on an officer, who leaves after 10 or 14 years, is Rs 5 crore-Rs 6.8 crore, which includes the cost of precommission training, pay, allowances, gratuity, leave encashment among others.

The Army estimates that the

corresponding cost for a three-

no more, otherwise he would have sought criminal action against the others.'

### **Rs 1,000 crore** for welfare of poor, migrant labour from PM CARES

allocated for migrants, with the additional grant to be decided on the basis of a state's population (50% weightage) and the number of positive coronavirus cases it has (40% weightage).

The largest share, Rs 2,000 crore, will go into procuring 50.000 made-in-India ventilators, to be distributed to government-run hospitals across the country.

The efforts for vaccine development will be supervised by Principal Scientific Advisor Professor K VijayRaghavan. The government called finding a vaccine against coronavirus a pressing need and said, "Indian academia, start-ups and industry have come together in cuttingedge vaccine design and development"

The PM CARES Fund Trust was created on March 27, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at its head.

In its statement, the government mentioned that while announcing the package, "the Prime Minister has thanked all the donors for their generosity in contributing to the PM CARES Fund which will support India's fight against Covid-19".

### Bengal banks on rural schemes to boost jobs

#### Analysts struck a note of caution too. "The Rs 3 lakh crore guarantee will provide a much-needed push to credit disbursement to cash-starved MSMEs. However, (there is) a

rating...bankers would have no skin in the game and hence adhoc disbursement may in-crease risk," said Isha Chaudhary, Director, CRISIL Research.

The government has also Rs 10,000 crore that can be

and provide equity support to MSMEs that show growth potential was among the other announcements. Analysts, however, said this measure will take time to be implemented and may not provide

immediate support.

tries competitive, creating a local employment wave, the draft says.

To help SMEs, it suggests that the RBI can cut reverse reporate to 0 per cent for a few months, thus incentivising banks to lend more. Banks can also use GST credits as collateral and lend against them, it suggests. It also proposes establishment of a venture capital fund for SMEs

To provide rental accommodation to migrant workers, the panel suggests development and maintenance of rental housing facilities at government and private levels.

It talks of opening up EPF and ESIC for the unorganised sector by registering workers on agreeing to make contributions. Every migrant worker should be automatically enrolled in PMIAY and have access to cashless medical facilities in the place of work, the panel suggests. There is also a suggestion to create a new Department of Hygiene to ensure hygienic practices, which should be made mandatory in all organisations, government or private, and public places. This too has huge employment potential, the panel asserts.

The GoM has proposed a Social Distancing Protocol, which shall be embedded in the functioning of enterprises, and recommends a task force of health experts and industry representatives within a week to decide this protocol.

Suggesting that food processing should be given "cottage industry" status, the panel is understood to have proposed that with the help of Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yoiana (PMKVY), a balance between farm and non-farm activities could be managed.

Apart from a National Employment Policy (NEP), a National Electronic Employment Exchange is proposed to help every worker who has migrated or is proposing to migrate. All such workers should register their skill and enterprises should register their requirement for workers. While a large part of the workforce is unskilled, the panel is understood to have proposed the framing of a standard operating procedure for migrant workers.

villages. Nobody assumed that hundreds of them would be Covid-19 carriers," said a senior health official.

He said the massive contact tracing of 7,500-odd people in different districts including Chennai, and aggressive testing of all immediate contacts, led to a sudden spike in the case count.

Ariyalur, Cuddalore and Perambalur districts was in single digits till early May: these regions have seen a surge over the past week. In Chennai, the doubling time was down to five days on Monday - it is 6 days in the rest of the state, while the national average is 12.6 days.

ported across the state in the last 24 hours, 380 were from Chennai. The state's death rate remains low, at .69% (the national average is 3.25%) with 64 deaths till Wednesday.

everywhere." said lic health on April 30.

under control. Quoting experts, he said the numbers may "go up" further before the state sees a downward curve.

senior officials, he blamed the vendors of Koyambedu market for the outbreak. He said they had refused to cooperate with the government's plan to shift them to a new site, and also did not follow the protocol on social distancing and wearing masks.

but still having the maximum by FM @nsitharaman will go a crore will not be allowed. This markets.

coming days.

internal reserves and low visi-

channel, along with a morato-

help them tide over the lock-

within reasonable fiscal limits

ing their size and can still avail

benefits," Finance Minister

which amendments to the law

will need to be made, micro

enterprises will be those with

investment of up to Rs 1 crore

and turnover of up to Rs 5 crore

the earlier definition classi-

fied investments of up to Rs 25

lakh for manufacturing and up

For small enterprises, the

to Rs 10 lakh for services.

crore in services.

and policy experts.

As per the proposal, for

Nirmala Sitharaman said.

down slump

to inject liquidity.

New MSME definition: Don't have to stay small why MSMEs like to remain within the definition rather than grow With the revised definitions of MSMEs, they will not have to worry about grow-The daily case count in

Of the 509 new cases re-

"The number of deaths increases when the infection starts reflecting on the vulnerable population. We should be preparing for that as well. If it is a reality that we should be learning to live with the virus, it is also important that we need to have more hand-washing facilities Kolandaswamy, who retired from the post of director of pub-

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami on Wednesday said there was no need to panic. Underlining the state's death rate. discharge rate (27 per cent) and increased testing, he said the pandemic was

Addressing a meeting of eral free loans. Since there is a one-year moratorium on repayment of principal by businesses getting credit under the collateral-free loan scheme, no cost will accrue to the government at least in 2020-21.

For subordinate loans of Rs 20,000 crore, its direct support is only Rs 4,000 crore to Credit

classification covers up to Rs 10 Chandrajit Banerjee, director crore in investment and Rs 50 general. Confederation of

crore in turnover, against in-Indian Industry (CII) said: "The vestment of up to Rs 5 crore in most important announcemanufacturing and up to Rs 2 ment with long term implications is the quantum jump in For medium enterprises, the definition of an MSME. the investment limit has been which had not been changed doubled for manufacturing ensince the MSME Development terprises from Rs 10 crore to Rs Act of 2006 and was long 20 crore and quadrupled for awaited. Along with the deciservices from Rs 5 crore to Rs sion to not have global tenders for government procurement 20 crore, in addition to the turnover criteria of up to Rs 100 up to Rs 200 crore, the redefin-

Govt's cost this Guarantee Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) set yr: Rs 25,500 cr up by Sidbi and the government the exchequer, according to tax of India. CGTMSE, in turn, provides partial credit guarantee to

The government's skin in the banks game is limited to credit guaran-Sitharaman also announced tees. For loans to MSMEs, it an equity infusion of Rs 50,000 amounts to guarantees on credit crore through a Fund of Funds worth Rs 3 lakh crore on collatmechanism, operated by a Mother Fund and few daughter funds. In this case, the government is set to contribute Rs 10,000 crore in the Mother Fund, which could be further leveraged. This fund is likely to invest up to 15 per cent in the equity of

> To help financial companies raise funds, the Finance Minister

small businesses

ition will assist the MSME sector in growing and emerging as

a vibrant and dynamic sector, contributing to self-reliance and employment in a big way." However, some representatives of the MSME industry have raised concerns with the package, particularly on the size classification of enterprises and implementation of

reforms. "The packages are welcome, but there are two problems. The first is that the definition should have been comparable to the global scale. We had proposed that companies with turnover of up to Rs 5 crore should be considered tiny, whereas those with turnover of up to Rs 75 crore should be considered small industries. Companies with turnover of up to Rs 250 crore should be considered medium size industries. For these companies, the turnover should have been considered and not the investment made because these days not even machines used are through investment." said Chandrakant Salunkhe,

Founder and President, SME Chamber of India.

"They have kept it up to Rs 100 crore. So what happens is that if we want to join hands with an international player, we are very small in front of them. If any company which has a turnover of more than Rs 100 crore is considered a corporate, how will we survive in front of companies that have turnover and investment of Rs 5.000 crore." Salunkhe added

On disallowing global companies from participating in government tenders up to Rs 200 crore, Vipul Ray, Vice President, Indian Electrical and **Electronics Manufacturers** Association, called for states to introduce structural reforms, too. "These are structural reforms and if the same policy is implemented by the state, only then we will see the benefits. Till then, the benefits will be very partial. Because only if the central PSUs follow the norms and states do not, not much will change. We hope that the states will follow suit," he said.

highest, and could be up to Rs said the government would 9,000 crore.

Another relief announced by the Finance Minister is an extension of the scheme announced on March 26. Here, the government's would directly contribute Rs 2,500 crore towards employer and employee EPF contribution. The companies eligible are those with less than 100 employees and 90 per cent of them earning up to Rs 15,000.

The Rs 90,000 crore liquidity injection to power distribution companies does not have any direct burden on government finances as the loans to be provided by Power Finance Corporation and Rural

### year service will be Rs 80 lakh-

It adds that SSC officers have the option to join the service permanently, which further increases the cost incurred, including pension bills.

For soldiers, who usually serve for 17 years, the Army has calculated a lifetime savings of Rs 11.5 crore per person, as compared to a three-year service.

Saying that it will help to "channelise the youth energy into positive utilisation of their potential", the note adds that rigorous military training and habits inculcated will lead to healthy citizenry".

It says that the entire nation will benefit from "trained, disciplined, confident, diligent and committed" young men or women who have done the three-year service, and an "initial survey" has indicated that the corporate sector will prefer to hire such youths rather than fresh graduates.

Noting that the proposed scheme will be on trial basis with limited vacancies, the Army has said that "it can be expanded further, if found successful".

### 13 claimants for Rs 400-crore Gurgaon land, **6** Charanjeet

## Singhs

without any legal heirs". A senior Haryana officer privy to the details of the case called it "peculiar". "We will wait for what the police investigation reveals and then take action. It is up to the actual owner to claim compensation." The SHO of Gurgaon Sector

37 police station, Narender Singh, told The Indian Express. "Our teams went to New Delhi to trace the actual Charanjeet Singh, but could not find him. It is not clear if he is alive or dead. It is presumed that he might be

launched a massive project --Matir Sristi. Through this project, fallow land will be prepared for horticulture and other activities, including fisheries and animal husbandry, will be initiated." Baneriee said.

The project will cover six districts -- Bankura, Purulia, Birbhum, Jhargram, Paschim Burdwan amd Paschim Midnapore. Nearly 50,000 acre of land will be used, which will help 2.5 lakh beneficiaries.

The government schemes will be implemented with the help of Water Resources Investigation & Development Department," added the CM.

According to a press release issued by the administration, the government will take 10-20 acre land from poor farmers for the project and also add its own plots free of cost. The land owners will form a farmers' cooperative societies that would be linked to cooperatives banks for financial support. Women selfhelp groups will also be involved in several activities by these societies. These groups will directly be associated with the implementation of the projects, with no involvement of contractors and also facilitate marketing of the produce. The funding will be done mostly through MNREGA.

To increase 100-day work opportunities, the state government also emphasised on jobs including, developing kitchen and vertical gardens, fisheries, pond digging, seed production, building and rural road construction.

However, officials said that the state government did not get the total amount of funds allotted for last year's 100-day work from the Centre. They also expressed concern on how much

funds they will receive this year. She added that under the

Rural Housing Scheme, 10 lakh houses will be constructed and migrant labourers will be employed for this.

sure will be only in terms of the guarantee, and any fiscal burden will be limited to the extent of defaults on these papers. The government also pro-

vided for stressed NBFCs, again through guarantees. But here the government said it would take the first 20 per cent loss of the total Rs 45,000 crore to be raised by companies, which

could be even unrated. In this case, the government's risk is

guarantee investment-grade debt paper issued by them.

While this would allow companies in the financial sector to cumulatively raise up to Rs 30,000 crore, the government's expo-

# 85 lakh

would never take such a step. We

will follow the existing labour

laws and ensure that the migrant

Banerjee's comments come

of certain labour laws with the

objective to assist businesses re-

coup from the coronavirus blow.

ried about COVID-19. We will

overcome it. But life cannot

come to a halt because of this

disease," the chief minister

chief also advised the district ad-

ministrations to take precaution-

arv measures against dengue.

The Trinamool Congress

added.

'There is no need to be wor-

# THE INDIAN EXPRESS, THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2020 THE OUTBREAK WEST BENGAL 3

# PM'S 720 LAKH CRORE PACKAGE Mamata on Centre's stimulus: A big zero

'Nothing for unorganised sector, public spending, employment generation'



Passengers board a bus in Kolkata on Wednesday as limited bus services began on 50th day of the lockdown. Shashi Ghosh

#### **EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** KOLKATA, MAY 13

CLAIMING THAT "it has nothing for the states", Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Wednesday called a "big zero" the Central government's special economic package to tide over the economic crisis.

The special economic package announced by the Union government is nothing but a big zero. It is an eyewash to fool the people. There is nothing for the unorganised sector, public spending and employment generation," she said while addressing an e-press conference here.

Yesterday, when the PM (Narendra Modi) announced Rs 20 lakh crore package, we were federalism and mislead people hopeful that the interest of the with the economic package. states will be looked into, the She also hit out at the

FRBM (fiscal responsibility and Bharatiya Janata Party-ruled budget management) limit would be increased. But today, after the Union finance minister made the announcements, it was found that

everything that was said yesterday was a bluff," she said. The Rs 20 lakh crore economic package was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his address to the nation on Tuesday evening. The details of the stimulus were unveiled by Finance Minister Nirmala Sithara-

man on Wednesday evening.

The Trinamool Congress

chief accused the Central gov-

ernment of trying to bulldoze

states to amend labour laws and jeopardise job security. Suggesting a protracted bat-

tle against the pandemic, the chief minister said one should not expect any quick relief from the disease in the near future. Strengthening infrastructure in rural areas was the key to the

state economy, she said. "I think the revival of the state economy lies in rural Bengal. We have to strengthen the rural economy. In the days to come, this will be the roadmap for the entire country. There is no need to be worried about Covid-19.

We will overcome it. But life cannot come to a halt because of this disease," the CM added.

The impact of pandemic mutate - mapping prediction and calulate

The chief minister said that West Bengal would soon map low and high risk areas affected by the novel coronavirus under an initiative, called Sentinel Survey. The initiative is also aimed at tracking the virus's infection journey. She said, "West Bengal is the first state in India to start this community prevalence survey for Covid-19.'

She said the state had generated 13.2 lakh man-days in MSME sectors producing masks, PPEs and hand sanitisers.

# Relief for 10 lakh govt staff: Festival bonus comes early

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE KOLKATA, MAY13

IN A move that could benefit 10 lakh government employees, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee announced an increase in the festival advance and ad hoc bonus for them for Ramzan and Durga Puia. These employees include school teachers, university staff and even contractual employees across civic bodies. The expected burden on the exchequer is Rs 400 crore.

Addressing an e-press conference, she said, "Most states have reduced or delayed salaries of government employees. The Centre has frozen DAs (dearness allowances). But we have not done anything, as we are a humane government," she said.

With the national lockdown and coronavirus pandemic impacting revenue, the Union Finance Ministry had put on hold increment in DA for 50 lakh Central Government employees and 61 lakh pensioners till July 2021. The Delhi government followed suit.

The ad hoc bonus has been increased to Rs 4,200 from Rs 4.000 last year, while the festival advance has been hiked by Rs 2,000 to 10,000. Even, the salary limit for bonus and advance has been widened.

order titled The Announcement of Grant of Adhoc Bonus and Festival



**CM Mamata Banerjee** 

### The burden on the exchequer is estimated to be Rs 400 crore

Advance for 2020-21 (Ramzan & Durga Puja), read, "The State govt has decided to grant the following: Ad hoc bonus of Rs 4,200 for 2020-21, an increase from Rs 4.000 in 2019. Also, the salary ceiling for eligibility for getting bonus is increased from Rs 30,000 (in 2019-20) to Rs 34,250. The festival advance is also being increased from Rs 8,000 in 2019-20 to Rs 10,000. The salary ceiling for eligibility for festival advance is also being increased from Rs 34,250 (in 2019-20) to Rs 41,100."

The order further said, "This increase in Bonus and Festival Advance and also the eligibility will benefit over 10 lakh Govt employees - employees of Panchayat and Municipal bodies, University and School employees, all contractual and casual employees. The total financial implication will be about Rs 400 crore.'

# Bengal will never tweak labour laws like BJP-ruled states did, says Mamata

ENS&PTI KOLKATA, MAY 13

labourers returning to the state WEST BENGAL will never alter can be employed here. The government can employ them unthe existing labour laws in the wake of the coronavirus-trigder the 100-day-work scheme gered lockdown, Chief Minister (MGNREGA)," she said, address-Mamata Banerjee asserted on ing a video-conference on the Wednesday, while criticising the Covid-19 situation. BJP-ruled states that have brought about changes to such in the backdrop of states such as regulations and "jeopardised" Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh announcing suspension

workers' job security. Banerjee said there will be no quick relief from COVID-19 in the near future and the key to revival for the state's economy lies in strengthening the infrastructure of rural Bengal.

"We have come across reports that some BJP-ruled states have either suspended labour laws or tweaked them. The employees and labourers in those states would work more but get paid less, they will not have any job security.

keeping in mind the approach-"We do not support this and ing monsoon.

बिहार लोक सेवा आयोग 15, जवाहरलाल नेहरू मार्ग (बेली रोड), पटना- 800001 आवश्यक सूचना

बिहार लोक सेवा आयोग द्वारा आयोजित विभिन्न प्रतियोगिता परीक्षाओं के आयोजन/ परीक्षाफल प्रकाशन के सम्बन्ध में आयोग के दूरभाष संख्याः 0612-2237999 एवं ऑनलाईन आवेदन भरने के क्रम में शुल्क भुगतान अथवा अन्य कोई तकनीकी समस्या के निदान हेतु आयोग के दूरभाष संख्याः 0612-2215795 एवं मोबाईल संख्या- 9297739013 पर ही सम्पर्क किया जा सकता है।

> हस्ता./-संयुक्त सचिव-सह-परीक्षा नियंत्रक बिहार लोक सेवा आयोग. पटना



Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury

Adhir praises PM for 'sincere



# 45 days of lockdown, factories cautious, services stalled, markets choppy

Tracking the impact of Covid on the financial markets

## attempts' to ferry stranded migrants

#### **PRESS TRUST OF INDIA** KOLKATA, MAY 13

EVEN AS his party has been up in arms against PM Narendra Modi on the migrant labourers issue, Leader of the Congress party in Lok Sabha. Adhir Ranian Chowdhury has appreciated Modi's "sincere attempts" to bring back those stranded to their home.

Chowdhury, the five-time MP from Berhampore Lok Sabha seat, in a letter to the PM last night, urged him to reduce the rate of tickets, if not making it free, keeping in view the fact that these out-of-job labourers are facing severe financial crunch.

"I do like to appreciate your sincere attempt of sending back stranded persons, which include migrant workers, patients and their family, students, pilgrims and tourists, to their native places by announcing 300 special trains," Chowdhury wrote in the letter.

The migrant workers and those grounded away from their home are now facing a severe financial crunch. They cannot afford the fare, which is guite high and beyond their reach, he said.

"Please consider the reduced rates of tickets if not free travel,' the former minister of state for railways wrote.

Chowdhury made a request to add non-AC coaches along with the air conditioned ones of the special passenger trains as common passengers are unable to buy the high-priced tickets.

The Congress, which has repeatedly slammed the Modi government for poor handling of the problems faced by stranded labourers, has already announced that all its state units will bear the cost of rail travel of the needy migrant workers and labourers stranded at their workplaces due to lockdown and seeking to return home.



Presents



with

### Nilesh Shah

Managing Director, Kotak Mahindra AMC, Part-time Member, PM's Economic Advisory Council and Chairman, Association of Mutual Funds in India

Join us for a discussion with Nilesh Shah to understand the impact of the pandemic on businesses and markets. What are the expectations of the markets?

Mr Shah will be in conversation with

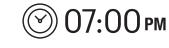
### P Vaidyanathan lyer

Sandeep Singh

Executive Editor (National Affairs), The Indian Express

Associate Editor, The Indian Express







To register, SMS - IEEXP <space> "PD" <space> "Your name and email ID" to 56161 Confirmation SMS will be your registration.



🔇 IndianExpress.com/apps

E twitter.com/IndianExpress

facebook.com/IndianExpress







# THE OUTBREAK WEST BENGAL

# Caregiver must for those in isolation for coronavirus: Govt

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA KOLKATA, MAY 13

THE WEST Bengal government has made it mandatory for those with very mild symptoms of novel coronavirus or are presymptomatic or asymptomatic to have a caregiver during their self-isolation.

The state health department in its orders said that the people who opt for home isolation should also submit an undertaking that self isolation guidelines will be followed by them.

"Such cases should have adequate facility at their residences for self-isolation and also for quarantine of the family contacts. A caregiver should be available at their residence to provide care on 24x7 basis," the notification issued by the health department said.

The caregiver and all close contacts of such people should take hydroxychloroquine prophylaxis as per protocol and as prescribed by the medical officer treating them, it added.

"The patient will agree to monitor his health. For further follow up by surveillance teams, the patient and the caregiver will regularly inform his health sta-

डर्म्वन

बैंक ऑफ महाराष Bank of Maharash

tus to the district surveillance officer." the notification said. According to the protocol is-

sued by the state health department on May 11, the patient or caregiver should download the Arogya Setu app on their mobile phones and keep active their bluetooth and data at all times.

The notification also detailed when to seek medical attention during home isolation.

"Immediate medical attention must be sought if anyone develops serious symptoms like difficulty in breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, mental confusion or inability to arouse the patients, developing bluish discolorations of lips or face or has been advised by the treating medical officer," it added.

The department while outlining signs for discontinuing home isolation for patients said that it could be done after 17 days from the onset of the symptoms with at least 10 days since the remission of fever or after 17 days from the date of sampling for pre-symptomatic or asymptomatic cases.

"There is no need for swab testing by RT-PCR after the home isolation period is over," it added.



Another 117 people were infected in last 24 hours, recovery rate stands at 30%



#### **EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** KOLKATA, MAY13

THE NOVEL coronavirus has claimed nine more lives in West Bengal, taking the death toll to 135, according to health bulletin released by state government on Wednesday. If deaths due to comorbidities are also counted, the total stands at 207.

In last 24 hours, 117 more positive cases were detected taking the total number to 2,290. As many as 702 patients, including 90 on Tuesday, have been discharged from hospital. This means that the recovery rate is 30.66 per cent. According to the health bulletin, the active case count rose to 1,381.

With 5.010 samples in the last



A health desk to screen passengers at Howrah railway station on Tuesday. Shashi Ghosh

24 hours, 57,632 samples have been tested so far. About 3.97 per cent of the total samples have tested positive.

Meanwhile, a statement issued by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) condoled the death of a CISF assistant sub-inspector due to Covid-19. "An ASI of CISF deputed in

GRSE and having history of dia-

betes & hypertension tested positive for Covid-19 and passed away on May 11, 2020. The shipyard stands in solidarity at this hour with the bereaved family. All

CISF personnel who reside within the barrack accommodation of GRSE Main Unit have been placed under quarantine and their samples have been immediately sent for testing. Personnel found Covid positive have been shifted to State

Medical Facilities." The ASI died on Monday. CISF personnel are the frontline warriors against Covid-19.

Meanwhile, a 76-year-old man from Bihar who had multiple age-related ailments died due to alleged negligence of a private hospital in Kolkata that denied admission suspecting him to be positive for Covid-19, his family members said on Wednesday.



nformation can be seen at website <u>www.rtdc.tourism.rajasthan.gov.in</u> & <u>www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in</u> Now the bid documents can be uploaded to <u>ttp://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in</u> and should be deposited on line in electronic format upto .00 P.M, upto 15.06.2020 & documents can be deposited physically upto 4.00 P.M. of 5.06.2020 & will be opened on same day at 5.00 P.M. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR-WORKS

🕋 TAMI	l nadu wat	ER SUPPLY AND DRAINAGE BOARD	
INVI	TATION OF BIDS	- TWO COVER – ITEMWAR TENDER SYSTEM	
IFB No:	F.708 Habs/SDO(T1	)/CE/CBE/2020/Dated :12.05.2020	
Eligible Class	Class-I		
Tender Invitee	The Chief Engineer, TWAD Board, No.30, Siruvani Nagar, Bharathipark Road, Coimbatore-641 043.		
Downloading	www.tenders.tn.gov.in and www.twadboard.tn.gov.in (free of cost)		
Date and time of Pre-bid meeting	27.05.2020 at 11.00 A.M.		
Cost of Tender Document	From the O/o.the Executive Engineer, TWAD Board, Major Project Division, 108, NSR Road, Saibaba Colony, Bakyalakshmi Complex IInd Floor, Coimbatore - 641 011 by Cash or Demand Draft Payable at Coimbatore for Rs.1000/- + GST and additional Rs. 500/- by Post (Each)		
Period of Completion	Package- I, II & III	Construction Period : 18 months, Trial Run : 6 months and Paid maintenance: 12 months.	
Period of Sale	From 15.05.2020 to 15.06.2020		
Last date for submission of Bid and opening		.00 Hours @ O/o.the Chief Engineer, TWAD Board, Coimbatore 0 Hours on the same day.	

Value of work put

# After Hooghly clashes, prohibitory orders imposed, internet suspended

#### EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE KOLKATA, MAY 13

Covid-19.

be spared.

had said.

arrested so far. We are conduct-

DAYS AFTER clashes broke out between two communities at Telinipara in Hooghly district, the District Magistrate issued prohibitory orders under section 144 of CrPC in the area and suspended internet services, including broadband, in Chandannagar and Serampore subdivisions till 6 pm on Sunday. The decisions were taken after fake news and misinformation about the

Violent clashes took place in Telinipara area after members of one community got into a verbal altercation with members of another over why they were roaming around during the lockdown

ing further raids," said a senior clashes were being circulated on police officer of West Bengal Police.

social media platforms. Violent clashes took place in On Wednesday, police Telinipara area after members of stopped BJP MPs Locket Chatteriee and Ariun Singh from one community got into a verbal altercation with members of anvisiting the clash-affected areas. other over why they were roam-They also wanted to meet the ing around during the lockdown Hooghly District Magistrate Y even after five of their commu-Ratnakar Rao. However, Rao could not meet them as he was nity members tested positive for busy attending a video confer-On Tuesday, Chief Minister ence.

"The DM does not have time Mamata Banerjee had slammed a section of BJP leaders for alto meet us. I am an MP from Hooghly, and yet I cannot meet legedly instigating communal clashes and said those who the DM. We have raised this iswould be found guilty would not sue with Lok Sabha Speaker. The police is not taking action against "I have told police to take the members of a particular comstrictest action. Those who viomunity. The situation is being allated the lockdown and indulged lowed to deteriorate by the state

in communal clashes will be government," said Chatterjee. tried under the National Disaster State Urban Development Management Act. None will be Minister and senior TMC leader spared. We will not see whether Firhad Hakim visited the afthe person belongs to commufected area and held a meeting nity A or B," the chief minister with police officers there. He directed the police and adminis-After the CM's strong warntration to offer compensation to ing, raids were conducted. As

those whose houses and properties had been destroyed. "Stern action will be taken

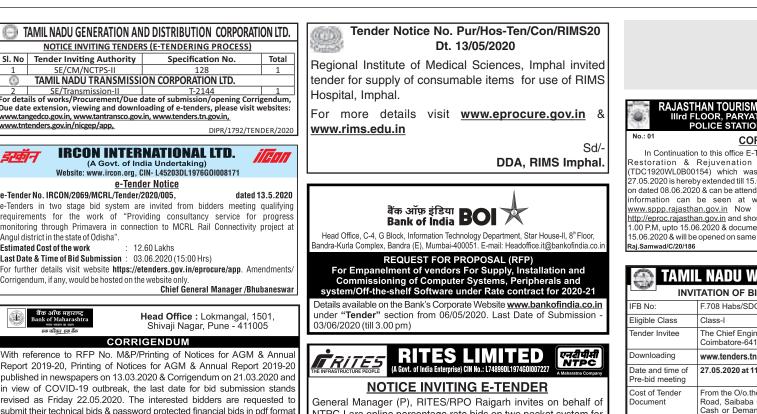
against those who were responsible for the incident. Peace "In total, 93 people have been process should start soon," said Hakim.

# Cinema hall owners urge govt for aid, loans and tax waiver

Kolkata: Cinema hall owners in West Bengal have urged the state government to waive their taxes and provide financial assistance and interest-free loans to them in view of the closure of the movie screens due to the lockdown.

The Eastern India Motion Pictures Association (EIMPA), Exhibitors' Section, in a recent letter to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, has urged the state government to reimburse at least 50 per cent of the salaries paid by the cinema hall owners to their employees during the lockdown period.

The association has also sought interest-free



NTPC-Lara online percentage rate bids on two packet system for the following work.

NIT No: 01/OT/20-21/NTPC-LARA/LARA SECTION/Erosion Control/2020 Date 14.05.2020: Name of work: Erosion Control & slope Protection measures in deep cutting at Gaiamara hill from mentioned above on 26.05.2020 (Tuesday) at 12.00 AM. Financial bids of Ch:12/300Km-LPto Ch:13/600Km-LP in connection with Coal Transportation System of NTPC-Lara MGR Siding at Raigarh District (CG). Estimated Cost: Bs. 12.99 Cr.: EMD: 12,99,200/-; Period of Completion: 6 (Six) Months; Last time & date of submission of bid: up to 14.00 Hrs on 03.06.2020. The bid forms and other details can be obtained from the website https://etenders.gov.in/eprocure/app. Addendum Corrigendum, if any, shall be hoisted online only.

Date: 14/05/2020 Place: Pune	Assistant General Manager, Marketing & Publicity

on email cmmktg@mahabank.co.in and media@mahabank.co.in

Acknowledgement of receipt of your bid/application may be obtained from

Note: Password of commercial bids may be sent through email ids

technically qualified bidders only will be opened at 4.00 PM on the same day

and name of selected bidder will be published on bank's website

our office by 5.00 PM on 22.05.2020 by e-mail.

### MUMBAI RAILWAY VIKAS CORPORATION LTD

**REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (REOI)** Mumbai Railway Vikas Corporation Ltd. now invites eligible consulting firms ("Consultants") to indicate their interest in providing the Services fo above mentioned assignment. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required gualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services. The consulting services include third party monitoring of the implementation of SIAs, ESMPs and CESMPs, and the Resettlement Action Plans and Evaluate the compliance of the project activities for the projects of MUTP-III as per Terms of Reference. The estimated duration of consultancy services is 05 rears. Detailed REOI with Draft Terms of Reference are available on MRVC web site www.mrvc.indianrailways.gov.in. A Consultant will be elected in accordance with the QCBS method set out in PIR. Further nformation can be obtained at the address below during office hours between 10:00 hrs. to 17:00 hrs. on working days. The corrigendum if any, will be hosted on MRVC's website. Expression of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in person or by email) by 10.06.2020.

#### Address for correspondence:

Sunil N. Maske, CPM-II, Mumbai Railway Vikas Corporation Ltd. 2nd floor, Churchgate Railway Station Building, Mumbai 400020. Tele 022-22092620 / Fax: 022-22096972 Email: cpmii@mrvc.gov.in and/or dycpm4@mrvc.gov.in Website: www.mrvc.indianrailways.gov.in

#### **BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE** Office of the Executive Engineer, Project-Mahadevapura Î Old Madras Road, K R Pura, Bengaluru - 560 036. Date: 13.05.2020 No: BBMP/EE(P)/MZ/TN/04/2020-21

#### INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER (IFT) (Two Cover Tender) (Through GOK e-Procurement Portal only)

The Executive Engineer (Project-Mahadevapura) invites Item Rate Tenders from eligible tenderers for the works detailed in the table given below. The Tenderers may submit tenders for any or all of the works given in the table in appropriate class registered in Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike/CPWD/KPWD/Railways/ MES/any State or Central Govt. Organization.

	,		
SI. No	Name of the Works	Approx. Value of Work	EMD (in ₹)
1.	Developmental Works in Doddanekkundi, Tharahalli, Kundalahalli Colony Seethrampalya Burial Ground in <b>Ward No.85</b> (2nd Call)	(₹ in Lakhs) 100.00	2,00,000/-

Calendar of Events : (1) Availability of RFP Documents is from: 15.05.2020 onwards. (2) Pre Bid Meeting will be held on 18.05.2020 at 11:30 am in the Chief Engineer Office K R Pura headed by Chief Engineer, Mahadevapura, BBMP. (3) Last date for Submission of Tender Documents is on or before 22.05.2020 at 5:00 pm. (4) Technical Bids will be opened in the Office of the Executive Engineer, K R Pura Division on 26.05.2020 at 11:00 am. Further details may be obtained from the above office during office hours on working days or from website: https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in Sd/-

**Executive Engineer, Project - Mahadevapura** Pay Development Charges - Help to Develop Bengaluru

### The Executive Engineer, Jirania Division, PWD (R&B), Jirania, West Tripura invites e-tender against press NIT No. 01/EE-JRN/2020-21 Dt. 11/05/2020

For 'Improvement of road from Champaknagar to Jampuijala via Belbari (Length 13.65 km) under CRF Scheme in the State of Tripura/ (Balance Work) (5th Call).

DNIe-T No-19 /CE/PWD(NH)/CRF/2018-2019. With Estimated cost : Rs. 13,15,06.730.00 Earnest Money Rs. 13,15,067.00 Time of Completion- 24 (twenty four) months. Last Date of bidding for bids on 10.06.2020 upto 15.00 Hrs. kindly For more details visit https://tripuratenders.gov.in

ICA-C/225/20

#### KARNATAKA NEERAVARI NIGAM LIMITED (A Govecoment of Kernataka Enterprises) Office of the Executive Engineer, KNNL No. I T.R.Division, Munirabad. Tel No:08539-270306 e-mail: (rdmrb/@gmail.com CORRIGENDUM NOTIFICATION No.EE/KNNL/KISWRMIP/T-7/EOI/PSC-2/2020-31/183 Date: 13-05-2020 REF:No:EE/KNNL/KISWRMIP/T-2/E00/PSC-2/2020-21/18 Date: 16-04-2020 Loan No.3836-IND: Kamataka Integrated and Sustainable Water Resources Management Investment Program (KISWRMIP) Tranche-2

Request for Expression of Interest (EOI) for Project Support Consultant Services (PSC)

The above notification is in continuation to the Advt. No. EOF No.EE/KNNL/KISWRMIP/T-2/EOI/PSC-2/2020-21/18 Date: 16-04-2020 for inviting expression of interest from eligible firms for assistance in implementing under ADB assisted Karnataka Integrated and Sustainable Water Resources Management Investment Program (KISWRMIP) Tranche-2 (Outputs 2 & 3). The lost date for submission of proposal online notified between ( ) April 2020 to 16 may 2020, is now extended upto 07 June 2020, due to COVID-19 pendemic situation and Lockdown in India. The other terms and conditions in the EOI will remain unchanged.

> Sd/-**Executive Engineer** KNNL No.1 T.R.Division, Municabed

SAVE WATER, CONSERVE WATER, EVERY DROP COUNTS TWAD Board, Coimbatore.					
DIPR / 1798 / TENDER / 2020 Chief Engineer(i/c),					
3.	Phase-III : CWSS to the 107 habitations in Avinashi Union and Bulk supply to 165 Habitations Tiruppur Union with new Source - Package-III		Rs.70,95,000/-		
2.	Phase-II: Augmentation of W.S by regrouping in CWSS to 245 rural habitations in Annur, Avinashi and Sulur Unions covering 378 habitations in Annur, Avinashi and Sulur Unions – Package-II	Rs. 82.50 Crore	Rs.61,88,000/-		
1.	Phase-I : Augmentation of W.S by regrouping in WSIS to Tiruppu Municipality, 4 TPs and 412 wayside Rural habitations covering 223 habitations in Annur and Avinashi Unions – Package-I		Rs.38,52,000/-		
No.	Name of work	to tender including GST	in Rupees		

loans of Rs 2 lakh per cinema hall after reopening of the establishments so that the owners can pay their backlogs and return to business, the letter, made available to the media on Wednesday, said.

The body said it would take at least 18 months for the sector to return anywhere close to normalcy after the lockdown is lifted. It urged the state government to waive GST, show tax, local entertainment tax, property tax and other mu-PTI

#### nicipal taxes for at least two years. EASTERN RAILWAY KARNATAKA INDUSTRIAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT BOARD (A Government of Karnataka Undertaking) Tender Notice No. : 222-S/1/W-II. date # 49, East Wing , 4th & 5th Floor, Khanija Bhavan, Race Course Road, Bengaluru-560 001. Ph: 080-22265383 Website: www.kiadb.in No.: IADB/ENGG/ETND-EP-04/372/2020-21 Date: 13.05.2020 SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER (Through GOK e-Procurement Portal Only) KIADB is inviting tender for Item rate Tenders under two cover system are invited as per the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act 1999 and Rules 2000 through electronic procurement from Class-I Contractors (Electrical) registered in KPWD & KCEI who have got adequate financial resources & sufficient past experience for the following work Drawing 11KV Express Feederline from Proposed Sub-Station and Providing Electrical Infrastructure Facility to Mastenahalli Industrial Area, Chikkaballapura District. The last date and time of receipt of tender is : 04.06.2020 upto 04:00 pm Applicants May Download Bidding Documents from the E-Procurement Portal https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in. Sd/-**Chief Development Officer & Chief Engineer-1** DIPR/BU/61/2020-21 **BORDER ROADS ORGANISATION MINISTRY OF DEFENCE** CHIEF ENGINEER PROJECT DANTAK (NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING) Chief Engineer Project Dantak on behalf of President of India invites tender enquiry from the Original Manufacturer for the following works:-Name of Works: "SUPPLY OF CONSTRUCTIONAL STORES (TMT STEEL BARS VARIOUS SIZES) FOR 504 SS&TC (GREF), PHUENTSHOLING, BHUTAN" Details of Supply Cost/Time of work

(a		07,000/-	(a)	Enquiry	On of aller 09 May 2020	
(b	) Period of Completion	50 days	(b)	Date of submission	Upto 1200 hrs (BST) on 29 May 2020	
No	Note:- Full notice of tender, any change in above details, tender document (including eligibility					

criteria) and other details may be obtained from BRO web site www.bro.gov.in or Central Public Procurement Portal www.eprocure.gov.in. For any queries, please contact HQ Chief Engineer (P) Dantak Telephone: 009752-351082/351086/351088, FAX: 009752-351285. Enquiry can be downloaded from www.eprocure.gov.in

> Sd/-(N D Pandey) Lt Col SO-1 (Res) for Chief Engineer

12.05.2020. Following e-tenders are invite online by Divisional Railway Manage Eastern Railway, Sealdah for the followir works : SI. No. 1. Tender No. : TN-08-20 21. Name of the Work : At Halisahar Raising of existing platform height at PF nos. 1 & 2 by vacuum dewatering concret including extension of PF shed with al other ancillary works under Senior Sectio Engineer (Works)/Line/Kanchrapara in the urisdiction of Sr Assistant Engineer/2/Kar chrapara. Tender Value : Rs. 76,55,850.44 EMD : Rs. 1,53,200/-. Sl. No. 2. Tende No. : TN-09-20-21. Name of the Work CTR(P) and TRR(P) along with othe ancillary works [CTR(P) 40.00 to 44.13 44.500 to 47.40, 47.650 to 48.01, 48.825 to 56.50, 67.500 to 67.80 Down line and TRR(P) 47.40 to 47.65 Down line] in the section of Senior Section Engineer (P.Way) Kanchrapara under the jurisdiction of S Assistant Engineer/2/Kanchrapara. Tende Value : Rs. 1,75,31,106.34. EMD: Rs 2,37,700/-. Sl. No. 3. Tender No. : TN-10 20-21. Name of the Work : Assisting BCM for deep screening and manual deep screening in running track and othe ancillary works in the jurisdiction of Senio Section Engineer(P.Way)/Kanchrapar under Sr Assistant Engineer/2/Kanch rapara, Tender Value : Rs. 68.05.343.68 EMD : Rs. 1,36,200/-. Sl. No. 4. Tende No. : TN-11-20-21. Name of the Work Provision of Automation of Private Number Exchange System working at selected nor interlocking level crossing gates of Sealdal Division, Tender Value: Rs. 37.46.652/ EMD : Rs. 75.000/-. Date and Time o Closing of tender : 12.06.2020 at 15.00 hrs. Date and Time of Opening of tende : 12.06.2020 at 15.30 hrs. Tender documer and details are at www.ireps.gov.in The bidding is to be submitted through e tendering on above website. Manual offers will be summarily rejected. SDAH-04/2020-2

Tender Notice is also available at websites : www.er.indianrailways.gov.in / www.ireps.gov.i

davp 10901/11/0007/2021









bers and 20 other passengers.

"She was identified as a sus-

pected case during transit itself

Principal Health Secretary

and interferon has shown posi-

have procured the drugs and will

start using it from Thursday.

Another expensive injection,

Tocilizumab (an immunosup-

pressive drug) has been report-

edly effective in salvaging criti-

cal patients. The government has decided to purchase it. The drug

is already being administered in

As of Wednesday, 39 patients

According to SVP Hospital

CEO, Ramyakumar Bhatt,

"Including suspected and con-

firmed cases, we are full right

now. Something similar hap-

pened around 10 days ago ...

However, we have more hospi-

tals across the city now to ac-

have been reported from Tapi and

Damor said, "Till Sunday, we had

three positive cases and they re-

covered. At present, our district is

in orange zone and we are hop-

Tapi district also had three

ing to be in green zone soon.'

patients who have recovered.

Dang district in the last 10 days.

Meanwhile, no positive cases

Dang District Collector NK

commodate patients."

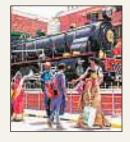
our hospitals.'

were on ventilator.

# THE INDIAN EXPRESS, THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2020 THE OUTBREAK NATION



# WATCH



Migrants at lodhpur station to catch a train to Balliya, UP. PTI

### **UTTAR PRADESH** Four PAC men among 8 new Meerut cases

Meerut: Four Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) personnel, a tehsil employee and a one-year-old girl were among eight Covid-19 cases reported in Meerut on Wednesday. Meerut now has a total of 270 cases. Seventysix have recovered while 14 have died. Uttar Pradesh has reported 3,664 cases. "The 36th PAC battalion premises in Meerut are being sanitised and efforts are being made to trace contacts. The patients have been admitted to the special ward at the medical college here," said Rajkumar Saini, chief medical officer, ENS Meerut.

### MAHARASHTRA Malegaon civic body chief tests positive

Mumbai: Three Malegaon Municipal Corporation employees, including Commissioner Trimbak Kasar and an Assistant Commissioner, tested positive for Covid-19 on Wednesday. Kasar had taken charge of Malegaon which has emerged as a Covid hotspot with 617 positive cases and 34 deaths so far. He was in a meeting with Maharashtra Health Minister Raiesh Tope



An employee of Pune's Jehangir hospital walks past homeless people on a sidewalk on Wednesday. Arul Horizon

also observed. "If the migrant

workers are unable to pay the

train fare, it will be impossible to

facilitate their travel at a faster rate.

Therefore, apart from the Central

government, even the State of

Karnataka must look into the is-

sue and take immediate decision

on the question of paying railway

fare of those migrant workers

who are not able to travel due to

their inability to pay," a division

bench of HC Chief Justice Abhay

Sreenivas Oka and Justice B V

The court was hearing a pub-

Nagarathna stated on Tuesday.

# **'MUST APPRECIATE CONTRIBUTION BY MIGRANT WORKERS' HC to Karnataka: Decide quickly** on paying train fare of migrants

#### **JOHNSON TA** BENGALURU, MAY 13

OBSERVING THAT no migrant worker should be deprived of the opportunity to return home due to her/his inability to pay train fares, the Karnataka High Court has asked the state government, besides the Centre, to "take immediate decision on the question of paying railway fare" of those who are unable to travel "due to their inability to pay'

While some state governments are paying for the travel of lic interest intervention plea on migrant workers, the Karnataka the issue of problems faced by migrant workers in Karnataka durgovernment has employed a poling the lockdown, including the icy of collecting fare from these people for travelling on Shramik state government's abrupt decisspecial trains, the High Court has ion last week of cancelling Shra-

**BACK FROM MAHARASHTRA** 

mik train services after more than 3,000 people gathered, attempting to find a seat on special trains to return to their home states.

Governments, the court said "must appreciate the major contribution made by migrant workers in a large number of public projects as well as private projects which have contributed to improvement of the infrastructure in all states, and the improvement of the economy". The court observed, "Considering the constitutional rights of the migrant workers, no one should be deprived of an opportunity to go back to his own State only for the reason that he has no capacity to pay for the transport... that inability to pay is due to loss of livelihood."

More than 2.13 lakh migrant

workers have registered on a state government portal to avail train services to return to their home states. Around 20,000 of them have been able to find seats so far on special trains to Bihar, UP, Rajasthan, Odisha, Jharkhand and Kashmir. A fare of Rs 970 has been charged on Shramik trains going from Karnataka to UP, and Rs 1,150 for trains to Bihar. The special train services stopped on May 6 in Karnataka and resumed on May 8.

The division bench has asked the state government "to ascertain whether any contribution can come from the employers' association, trade unions and NGOs which can be used for bearing train fares of migrant workers who are not in a position to pay the train fare".

For Mumbai migrants, truck

# **Toddler** among 3 killed as truck carrying UP migrants meets with accident

#### **EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** LUCKNOW, MAY 13

A TWO-YEAR-OLD girl was among three persons who died when a mini-truck carrying around 60 migrant workers from Ahmedabad in Gujarat to UP's Balrampur met with an accident on Wednesday in Kanpur Dehat.

The vehicle had started from Ahmedabad on Monday and was on its way to Balrampur district, police said.

Police identified the dead persons as Sumaiyya (2), Rohit (25), who was driving the vehicle, and Heeraman Ali (50).

Kanpur Dehat Superintendent of Police Anurag Vats said the accident took place around 6.30 am on Wednesday. "The mini-truck rammed into a stationary truck with onions loaded in it on the highway. The driver may have fallen asleep," said Vats.

Station House Officer (SHO), Akbarpur, Amod Kumar Singh, said eight people who were in the mini-truck critical were admitted to the Lala Lajpat Rai Hospital (Hallett Hospital) in Kanpur Nagar in a critical condition.

"The others are being treated at Kanpur Dehat district hospital." said the SHO. "People from several districts in UP were trving to get home in the minitruck," said Singh

The workers belong to from Maharajganj, Balrampur, Basti, Sant Kabir Nagar and Mirzapur, police said. "They had been charged Rs 3,000 each by the driver to bring them back from Ahmedabad. They had managed to reach Kanpur Dehat, evading police check-posts at different places," said an officer.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath expressed grief over the loss of lives in the accident. In a statement issued in Lucknow, he instructed officials to ensure that those injured get proper treatment.

# Gujarat cases hit 9,000, 29 deaths in 24 hours to Amreli with six family mem-

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE AHMEDABAD, SURAT, MAY 13

CORONAVIRUS MADE its way to and had no local contact. Amreli, which was Gujarat's last Therefore, there is no need to create any containment zone in standing zero district, on Thursday with a 67-year-old the district," said Oak. woman who arrived here from Surat testing positive. With this, Jayanti Ravi said, "Remdesivir all 33 districts in the state have been affected by Covid-19, tive results across the world. The though Tapi and Dang have not B J Medical College reported a single case in the past Ahmedabad was to participate 10 days where all those infected in the WHO Solidarity trial. We

have recovered The total number of cases crossed 9,000 in the state with 364 new cases on Wednesday, 292 of them from Ahmedabad. Twenty-nine deaths were reported – 25 were from Ahmedabad. In a further dip in testing, only 2,760 samples were collected across the state in the past 24 hours

Meanwhile, all 1,000 beds of the Covid care facility in SVP Hospital, Ahmedabad, were occupied by Wednesday evening. Amreli District Collector

Avush Oak said that the woman arrived in Amreli on Tuesday and after being screened at the entry point checkpost, her medical check-up was done at a quarantine facility. "It was found that her oxygen saturation was low and she had other symptoms too. She was admitted to the isolation ward in civil hospital in Amreli on Tuesday evening and her samples were sent to Bhavnagar for tests. Result con-

firmed her Covid-19 positive on Wednesday," Oak said. He said the woman travelled

Cops stretched by Covid duty, Maharashtra seeks 20 CAPF companies

Deploy revenue dept staff: Bombay HC

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** MUMBAI, MAY 13

ment has sought from the Centre 20 companies of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) t provide relief to an overworked lice personnel need not be necstate police, most of whose peressary," Justice Ghuge said. sonnel have been on duty with-While seeking central forces, out a break since the lockdown

THE MAHARASHTRA govern-

Anil Deshmukh

He said, "I've been trying to We've also been promising shelter and food. But most seem unwilling to stay back."

rides cost equal to Rajdhani fare

Malegaon MLA Mufti Ismail and senior district officials, when his reports came in. He left the meeting.

### MANIPUR Special train arrives from Chennai

Imphal: The first special train to Manipur, carrying over 1,000 stranded people, arrived at the Jiribam railway station from Chennai on Wednesday. Sources said the train with 1.140 Manipuris onboard reached the station at around 1 pm. Soon after the arrival of the train, a medical team began district-wise screening of the passengers at counters set up at the station. Food and water were also provided to the passengers by the district authorities. Iiribam station. bordering Assam, is the only railway station in Manipur and is around 216 km away from Imphal. ENS

tests positive later

65-yr-old migrant dies

at UP screening camp,

#### ASADREHMAN LUCKNOW, MAY 13

A 65-YEAR-OLD migrant worker back from Maharashtra's Kalyan to his home district Sant Kabir Nagar in Uttar Pradesh collapsed at a screening camp for migrants Tuesday and died. His sample

tested positive for Covid-19 later.

Ram Kripal, who had worked as a painter for around 25 years, had walked and hitched rides to reach his home district after leaving Kalyan Friday. He is survived by his wife and two sons.

Ram Kripal's son Surendra said, "Around noon, we got a call from an official that he had died. The post-mortem was done around 4 pm, and around 6 pm, I cremated his body alone wearing a PPE kit." Officials said the family has

been guarantined at a facility and their samples sent for testing

District Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Hargovind Singh said they received a request from po-

Tuesday. "He was dead on arrival at the district hospital. Later, a post-mortem was conducted." The cause of death could not be ascertained in the postmortem and the viscera has been preserved for further inves-

lice for an ambulance on

tigation, informed the CMO. Sant Kabir Nagar SP Brajesh Singh said, "He came yesterday

and was at the temporary camp in Kotwali police station area for screening. Before he could be screened, he fell unconscious. A sub-inspector sent him to the district hospital, but he died. A sample was collected for COVID-19 test, a post-mortem was done and the body cremated as per

> protocol. Today, his report came in positive. All precautions were taken so there is little chance of anyone contracting the virus."

> About how Ram Kripal reached Sant Kabir Nagar, Singh said. "He did not travel through an official channel. He left Maharashtra four days ago and walked and hitched rides. He

> > "We were talking about the

disease and the lockdown. Sudd-

enly there was a thud... If the truck

would have moved three metres

more, I would have been dead

reached Sant Kabir Nagar alone."

SANDEEDASHAR MUMBAI, MAY13

"WE'VE PAID Rs 3,500 per head. There is a truck waiting for us at Thane. I had run out of money, so I asked my brother to wire me some," said Vivek Tiwari (26). from UP's Allahabad and is walking towards Thane's Teen Hath Naka from a hotspot in Mulund (West) where 23 people recently tested positive for Covid-19.

Tiwari is part of a group of five who have decided to walk and hitchhike their way to UP. Santosh Jaiswal (30), another member of the group, said, "We live in small houses with four to five other people. We are worried we will catch the infection.. we don't have money for rent. We barely have enough for daily needs and the landlord is unrelenting."

Thousands of migrants continue to pour out on the highways of Maharashtra with nothing more than a few rupees in their pocket, a knapsack over their backs, and a prayer on their lips to take them home.

And for trucks ferrying essentials to city areas, transporting migrants after they have emptied their goods has come as a business



Migrants walk back to their village via the Mumbai-Goa

opportunity. Each truck accommodates around 30 to 40 migrants, charging between Rs 3,500 to Rs 5,000 per head. The fare for the Mumbai-Delhi Rajdhani Express is a little over Rs 4,000. Those walking to the waiting

trucks at Thane are coming from as far as Goregaon, Sion and Wadala in Mumbai.

Mulund BJP MLA Mihir Kotecha said, "There must be at least six police check points between Sion and the Mulund toll booth. How are these people crossing them? Why aren't they being stopped?"

There are "guides" - apparently working on behalf of the truck drivers – accompanying groups of workers to show them roads that bypass police pickets and toll booths. Daboo Pandey, a guide accompanying Tiwari's group, takes them through a broken wall at Mulund's Neelam Nagar that opens beyond the Mulund toll naka into Thane. "They are new to the city. I've just come to drop them," said Pandey. But Vishal Jaiswal (18), one of the workers in the group, said Pandey was helping them cross over to the other side

Though Shramik trains have been leaving Mumbai from Lokmanya Tilak Terminus, Bandra Terminus and Borivali, the number of those walking and hitchhiking hasn't gone down.

Abhay Yawalkar, Director of Maharashtra Disaster Management Authority, said the state had arranged 65 trains, and state transport buses are also being used to ferry migrants to the Maharashtra-Madhya Pradesh border.

began. Besides, Eid-ul-Fitr is on May 25 and more police presence will be needed to ensure people remain indoors and maintain social distancing, said Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh.

Meanwhile, observing that the state "police machinery is under great stress and strain", the Aurangabad bench of the Bombay High Court on Tuesday directed the Maharashtra government to relieve police personnel engaged in Covid-19 duties by deploying revenue department employees.

A single judge bench of Justice RV Ghuge observed that many revenue department officials are off-duty and can be deployed in jobs like dealing with applications for travel passes to lessen the burden on the police.

"The state government should consider deployment of such revenue officials, especially those below 50 years, for the purpose of dealing with such activities and issues wherein po-

Deshmukh said, "The coronavirus pandemic and resultant lockdown have seen the police force stretched as they work in extremely challenging conditions for long hours, both day and night... Eid is also around the corner. We do not want the po-

dened than they are.' One company of CAPF has approximately 120 men, so a total of 2,400 CAPF personnel have been sought by the state government. CAPF includes CRPF and CISF personnel, among other central forces under the Ministry f Home Affairs.

lice to be any more overbur-

Currently, 32 companies of the CRPF are deployed in the state, working in tandem with the state police. "Many Maharashtra police personnel have tested positive for Covid-19 and need time to rest and recuperate." Deshmukh said. "May 25 is Eid when we'll need augmented security presence to ensure law and order is not disturbed. We've hence asked for 20 CAPF companies," he said.

# 2 killed in mishap on way home to Jharkhand

#### **ABHISHEK ANGAD** RANCHI, MAY 13

SUNDAR RAI, 21, had convinced his family that his job would give enough money to save for his sister's wedding. Buddhinath Rai. 23. had told his father that work outside the state would help them make ends meet

Both youths, belonging to the same panchayat in Jharkhand's Godda district. left their homes in February. In March. the Centre imposed the lockdown to contain Covid-19. In UP's Bhadohi, Sundar and Buddhinath grew restless as money ran out. On May 2, they set out for home on foot with 14 others. After walking more than 200 km, they entered Bihar on May 5



In happier times: Buddhinath and his family.

and hitched a ride on the roof of a truck. In less than three hours, the truck hit a bridge, leaving Sunder and Buddhinath dead and two others injured.

too," said Gitan Ray, who has suffered a fracture on his arm.

The truck driver has been booked for rash driving and causing death by negligence, among other charges.

Sundar's mother Kusum Devi said, "His father wanted to go, but he is not well. So, Sundar went and told us that he would earn enough for his sister's wedding.'

She said the family of seven does not even have enough money for the last rites and hopes the government will help.

Buddhinath's father Baleshwar Rai said he had warned his son against setting out for home on foot. "They did not listen, they switched off their phones. Then we heard of his death." Both families said they don't own any land.

#### **GARGI VERMA** RAIPUR, MAY 13

A78-YEAR-OLD man from Madhya Pradesh being taken to a hospital in Chhattisgarh died of a heart attack after being held up at a border post for over an hour by policemen who first refused to acknowledge his e-pass, and later raised objections over the route.

Even after his death, the family had to face a harrowing time from the police personnel there who accused them of travelling with a corpse.

Mishra was being taken for treat-

#### ment to Chhattisgarh by his sons Rakesh Mishra, an employee of government-run South Eastern Coalfields (SECL), and Nilesh Mishra on Tuesday. The septuagenarian was also accompanied by his wife. The family had an epass to travel to the state.

Though the plan was to take him to Bilaspur, the brothers decided to divert the car to Manendragadh in Koriva district as their father had started feeling uneasy. "We had crossed Dhanpuri and Manendrgarh was hardly 90 km away, while Bilaspur was nearly 200 km away. Since Manendragarh has a dedicated SECL hospital, we decided to take him there," Rakesh said.

on way to hospital, 78-yr-old dies of heart attack At the Koriya border, they were stopped by policemen. "First they were angry that I didn't have a printed pass. They said they don't accept e-pass. After a lot of arguing, when they decided to see my pass, they started

Stopped at Chhattisgarh border 'for over 1 hour'

telling me I had come the wrong way to go to Bilaspur," he said. At one point, the senior citizen had to step out of the car himself and beseech the police

with folded hands, but to no avail, several witnesses confirmed. According to Rakesh, by the time someone approved their passage, his father had died of a heart attack. "It had been more than an hour that we had stood at the bor-

der post, and then my mother

started screaming. I ran to the car, to see my brother trying to revive him with CPR, but he had died," he said. "After my father died, the subinspector on duty started abusing me, telling me I had been hiding a dead body." he added.

The district and the state administration claimed the elderly man had died before he reached the checkpost. The statement also said authorities called an ambulance as soon as they were made aware of the situation. Koriya collector Doman Singh was unavailable for a comment. Divisional commissioner Emil Lakda said he had asked for a report from the Koriva collector and is investigating the incident.

Umaria resident Keshav



# THE INDIAN EXPRESS, THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2020 THE EDITORIAL PAGE

### WORDLY WISE PEACE IS NOT THE ABSENCE OF CONFLICT BUT THE PRESENCE OF CREATIVE ALTERNATIVES FOR RESPONDING TO CONFLICT. — DOROTHY THOMPSON

# The Indian **EXPRESS**

S FOUNDED BY S RAMNATH GOENKA BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

# THE FIRST TRANCHE

FM's announcements address credit constraints. Greater clarity on government spending, its financing, is needed

DAY AFTER Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a Rs 20 lakh crore package to help an already struggling economy get back on its feet after the setback of the pandemic, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman unveiled the first tranche of relief measures. The measures, which are designed for the government to take on the credit risk in the economy, and boost liquidity to various segments, follow a three-pronged approach: First, ensuring flow of credit to the micro, small and medium enterprises. Second, easing liquidity constraints of financial intermediaries, and third, addressing cash flow woes of other parts of the economy. So far, the announcements have comprised largely of contingent liabilities like loan guarantees, with some direct fiscal support.

The government has announced collateral-free loans for MSMEs to the tune of Rs 3 lakh crore, where both principal and interest risk will be borne by it. This measure, while limiting the immediate outgo for the government, should encourage risk averse banks to lend to MSMEs. Though it does raise the spectre of moral hazard, as only a fraction of loans extended are likely to turn bad, actual credit flow to MSMEs could be much higher. This will help cash-starved MSMEs access funds to meet their obligations such as paying salaries. Further, relaxing the definition of MSMEs addresses the perverse incentives of wanting to remain small. This will incentivise MSMEs to scale up as and when the economy picks up, without worrying about not being able to take advantage of existing incentives. Clearing all pending due of MSMEs, though not a reform, will help ease their liquidity woes further. To encourage flow of funds to parts of the financial system, the government has announced special liquidity schemes - Rs 30,000 crore to buy investment grade debt of NBFCs, HFCs, and MFIs, and Rs 45,000 crore for investment in lower rated papers. But the question is: Will risk averse banks lend to lower rated NBFCs? Other administrative and regulatory measures which include lowering the rate of tax deducted at source, extending relief to contractors, and relaxations for provident fund contributions will help ease liquidity constraints in the broader economy. However, injecting Rs 90,000 crore to financially stressed state electricity distribution companies, through PFC/REC, while restricting the government's outgo, is at best a stop-gap arrangement as it does not address the core of the problem. Rather, the government should be pushing through contentious reforms in the power distribution segment, as the draft amendments to the electricity law seek to do.

The finance minister has sidestepped questions over the quantum of additional spending being undertaken, how it will be financed. While the government has announced a revised borrowing calendar, it is likely to be only enough to plug its revenue shortfall. This lack of clarity will keep bond markets on tenterhooks. Not much was also shared on the anticipated land and labour reforms. Hopefully, the next set of measures will focus on how the government plans to stimulate the economy, and the structural reforms it intends to implement.

# JUSTICE DEFERRED

SC throwing J&K ball back to committee of those whose decisions are being questioned is disappointing

HE SUPREME COURT order on Monday declining pleas for restoration of 4G internet services in Jammu and Kashmir is disturbing for several reasons. The continued denial of such services in the lockdown constitutes a special injustice to a people deprived of fundamental freedoms since the Centre's August 5 2019 decision to abrogate Article 370 – the present 2G service is not enough for children to access online classes, or for patients to consult doctors, or for businesses dependent on online transactions. But the SC order is also troubling because it appears to be part of a broader pattern of delay and evasion, and passing the buck, in cases that touch upon fundamental rights and crucial policy issues - in ways that amount, effectively, to giving the political executive the benefit of the doubt. Monday's order, for instance, does not just contain no-questions-asked references to "national security" and "compelling circumstances of cross-border terrorism", it also cedes the court's own powers of judicial review to a special committee headed by the Union Home Secretary, which will examine the contentions of the petitioners as well as the "appropriateness of the alternatives" suggested by them. In other words, the apex court has held that another body, consisting of secretaries of the very departments whose orders are in question, should adjudicate on the validity of the restrictions on people's freedoms imposed by them. There is no doubt that in J&K, imperatives of national security need to be factored in, a delicate balance must be struck. But the process of doing so must be both judicious and judicial. More generally, while executive assessments are a crucial input, they cannot be the only, or unquestioningly, the last word, in cases that involve constitutional principle and law. By throwing the ball on internet access back to a government-led committee, and by its delay in taking up cases of habeas corpus in Kashmir, the court has given the executive a free pass, instead of acting as a check and balance on executive power.



PM's woods, FM's trees It is not trade dependence that makes India vulnerable but inadequacy of its human capital

### Sanjaya Baru

IN HIS TELEVISED address on Tuesday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi presented a big picture vision statement on making India a more self-reliant and self-confident nation in a changing and challenging post-COVID world. In a series of televised statements through the week, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is to spell out the roadmap. The central government owes it to the economy and the markets that a macro policy statement be made that shows how the FM's "micro" trees fit into the PM's "macro" woods. The Modi government has made a habit of making economic policy statements into political speeches. Why a political party that has an absolute majority in Parliament should do that is puzzling. The government must present a macro policy statement on the way forward for the post-lockdown economy.

Some have compared the PM's speech to the dramatic policy statements of July 1991. Consider the fact that in 1991, only four policy statements were made — the end of licencepermit Raj, steep cuts in fiscal deficit and tariffs, and devaluation of the Rupee. With four policy measures, the economy was pulled out of a crisis and placed on a new growth path. The key to 1991 was political articulation of a vision that went beyond platitudes. The economy needs such a macro policy articulation, stitching together the numerous micro policy steps to restore confidence in the government's ability to pull the economy out of its pre and post-COVID morass.

The PM's vision statement had four elements. First, a step up in public spending and investment, aimed at promoting welfare and raising the investment rate; second, policy reforms aimed at making the domestic economy more globally competitive; third, a longterm structural shift making the economy more "self-reliant" and less dependent on the world economy. The fourth wheel of this new growth engine will be Lockdown Model 4 that is to be announced in a few days. The success on the first three fronts will, in the short term, depend on the strategy for the fourth.

Increased public spending will certainly boost demand and generate employment in the short term and add to infrastructure capacity in the medium term. Policy reform, inclu-

If, after six years in office, Modi is now truly serious about pursuing development as a primary objective and will set aside his party's divisive agendas, he may still make India a truly selfreliant and self-confident nation. Every political party, from the communists to the BJP, has always sworn by self-reliance. In practice, it has meant different things to different people at different times. Modi has said that his version of self-reliance does not imply isolationism and inward-orientation, but will inject greater self-confidence in the people by reducing the country's dependence on other nations.

ding changes in land, labour and other policies, could yield results in the medium term. But for now, investors will wait and watch to test the sincerity and efficiency of governments at the Centre and in the states. They will wait to see how the various policy steps being announced by the FM get implemented — how quickly and how efficiently. The government can meet with success if investors, consumers and other economic agents believe in the commitment of the political leadership and the capability of the administration to deliver.

In 2014, Modi began his tenure promising development and lost his way. The second term began with the pursuit of a divisive social and political agenda, despite the fact that the economy was already in trouble. If, after six years in office, Modi is now truly serious about pursuing development as a primary objective and will set aside his party's divisive agendas, he may still make India a truly self-reliant and self-confident nation. Every political party, from the communists to the BJP, has always sworn by self-reliance. In practice, it has meant different things to different people at different times. Modi has said that his version of self-reliance does not imply isolationism and inward-orientation, but will inject greater selfconfidence in the people by reducing the country's dependence on other nations.

Theotonio Dos Santos, a principal guru of the Latin American "dependency school" that advocated greater self-reliance for developing economies, defined dependence as a situation in which a country's economy is "conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy". Writing in the 1970s, Dos Santos said that to be self-reliant the growth process of an economy "should not become dominated or dependent on another economy". So what is the kind of dependence that India ought to be now reducing to become more self-reliant? On which economies is ours excessively dependent?

First on the list would be the oil-exporting economies. Oil and gas account for a bulk of India's imports. Whatever new sources of energy India may tap in the foreseeable future, it will remain import-dependent for energy. Fortunately, for India, the global crude oil and gas markets are likely to remain buyers' markets for some time to come. Second is the dependence on foreign exchange inflows both in the form of remittances, mainly from the Gulf and the US, and financial flows into capital markets. It is not clear how the new Modi strategy of self-reliance proposes to deal with this dependence. If anything, India is seeking more FDI and external debt. The third dependence is on imported defence equipment, mainly from Russia, the US, Israel and France. Fourth, import dependence in electronic goods and pharmaceuticals, mainly from China. Thus far, government policy does not address these dependencies. The immediate focus of Modi's self-reliance seems to be China.

Post-Deng Xiaoping China established long ago that for a large economy, it is possible to be both self-reliant and globalised at the same time. Trade in itself does not create dependence if a country is able to grow both exports and imports. China has demonstrated the geo-economic power of both exports and imports by making trade partners dependent on it on both counts. When China refuses to buy wine and beef from Australia, it is using its import power, not demonstrating its import dependence. If an economy is willing to live without those imports or can substitute them with domestic production, then it is not badly hurt.

It is export dependence that can make even a large economy vulnerable and it China's dependence on US markets that President Donald Trump has aimed to reduce by waging a trade war. India has never had such export dependence on any one country. The Modi government's hope that multinational companies exiting China will relocate to India can only make India more export dependent since these MNCs aim to sell globally. Making India less dependent on China cannot be the only measure of self-reliance. For India to be truly self-reliant and self-confident, public investment in education, human capability and research and development has to increase. It is not trade dependence that makes India vulnerable but the inadequacy of its human capital.

The writer is a policy analyst and former media advisor to Prime Minister of India



# The Gentle Builder

New pedagogic edifice that Hari Vasudevan helped shape will endure

The apex court is the custodian of fundamental liberties and the fiercely independent upholder of the letter and spirit of the Constitution. That it should be seen to display a lack of urgency on important cases where the executive needs to do the explaining is disappointing and dispiriting.

# HARD SCRABBLE

The online game franchise has been shined up vigorously, and players are indignant about the loss of Eden

N THE SCRABBLEVERSE, there is a disturbance in the Force. The digital licence of the world's favourite and most exacting word game in 29 languages changed hands in March, and committed players are up in arms. Electronic Arts, which had worked the licence until now, had kept the faith with a clean 15x15 grid, tiles in the traditional rack and no bells and whistles. The new version of the franchise by video game manufacturer Scopely had been greedily downloaded by 10 million people by the end of April, but as the June 5 deadline approaches for EA to take its classical board off the ether, there are murmurs of protest in the player base.

There is already a petition for Scrabble conservatism on Change.org, an online campaign platform that's in deadly earnest and is favoured by people concerned about climate change, Islamophobia and women's rights, and when the version that the world is accustomed to playing goes off the air, there could be an insurrection. Many variations of Scrabble have been played in the decades since Alfred Mosher Butts published the game in 1938. Being social, the game took to online platforms as easily as a fish to water, with Facebook running the third-party Scrabulous. But the version being propagated by Scopely is being rejected as too noisy.

The new version is apparently like Scrabble meets Candy Crush Saga, with bells, whistles, bonuses and other bling. And by nature, Scrabble players are implacable about form and boundaries. They go by the book, which is a dictionary agreed upon for their jurisdiction. Yes, Scrabble has jurisdictions, like nation states. And players expect the game to be as free of distractions as a grandmaster's chessboard. Scopely has strayed into dangerous territory, and should beat a retreat.

### KRISHNA KUMAR

FEW PEOPLE UNDERSTAND that developing a good curriculum is an act of negotiation. It involves bringing people with differing perspectives to probe their own positions. It requires that people look beyond the boundaries of their own disciplines, with curiosity and interest in subjects that others know better. This role can only be compared to that of an architect who recognises that the house to be designed today under adults' orders and resources will shape the imagination of their children. In the sudden death of Hari Vasudevan, at 68, India has lost more than a great historian and teacher. We have lost someone unique who understood the complexity of education as a social system.

That he lost his life to the coronavirus is brutally ironical. My last conversation with him, barely two weeks ago, was mostly about the virus. There was something warmly expansive about his conversational style. It gave a richer meaning and context to every topic. Corona was no exception.

His numerous colleagues and students will comment on his vast scholarship in history. I knew him as the gentle builder of a new pedagogic edifice that is sure to last. It was 2005 when Vasudevan played two key roles in the complex process of curriculum reform that the NCERT had undertaken. In the first, he was leading a vast team, designing a new syllabus for the teaching of social sciences at different levels. His second role was to lead the various committees working to develop new text-



While talking to him, people felt recognised. They could see that he was interested in how they explained their viewpoint. They stopped guarding their own territory when they felt that he knew the importance of what they were saying. Talking to him was like re-discovering one's own memory and interest. No matter what was being discussed, afterwards, you always found yourself renewed. books in his own discipline, history, and in the other social sciences. The common perception was that the NCERT was going to "revise" the old textbooks. In the social sciences, Vasudevan realised, that a revised version of what existed would not serve India well.

The National Curriculum Framework (2005) created the occasion for a critical engagement with established pedagogic routines. The late Professor Yash Pal led the various groups which drafted this futuristic document. It articulated a different way of looking at integrating knowledge and pedagogy. Once the NCF had been drafted, the NCERT's anxiety shifted to locating people who could redefine the nature of each subject. The task in the social sciences was the toughest — to bring children into the centre of academic debates about truth and methods of pursuing it.

Vasudevan saw this task as a vast, systemic deliberation. The idea of child-centred learning at school demanded sophisticated bridging with college and university teaching. He engaged with this task by getting people to talk across the borders of their disciplines. He brought hundreds of professional scholars and teachers, illustrators and designers into a long and patient dialogue. In its geographical reach and conceptual intensity, this dialogue had no precedent in education and curriculum designing in India. How did Vasudevan succeed in pulling this dialogue through sharply-divided rival perspectives and assumptions?

The memory of his success, and now his

memory as a person, offers me two clues. One, he liked people. While talking to him, people felt recognised. They could see that he was interested in how they explained their viewpoint. They stopped guarding their territory when they felt that he knew the importance of what they were saying. His other gift was in making conversation — any conversation — a means to explore life. Talking to him was like re-discovering one's memory and interest.

His interest in people is rare in our ethos now. So was his acute awareness of the past, of how it impinges on life today across the world. In another country and time, he might have been a great diplomat. He was keen to hear every account of life, individual or collective. He was a professional historian, an archivist, an analyst of old documents, a traveller and a polyglot. These specialised tasks occupied him throughout life, in different parts of India and the world. Even a short meeting or talk with him created the feeling that history was in the making all the time – during our conversations too.

History was hardly a subject for him. He infused it with the exuberance of life, its daily warmth. For him, history meant learning to notice the spark that brings space and time, culture and work, ideas and people into a novel relationship. It takes its own time to come into public focus.

Kumar is former director, NCERT and author of The Child's Language and the Teacher



# MAY 14, 1980, Forty Years Ago

#### GROOMING SANJAY AFTER AN AGONISING exercise,

Doordarshan authorities are understood to have decided to clear a script for an election telecast which speaks of an effort to make Sanjay Gandhi Indira Gandhi's successor. The script was submitted by CPI leader Yogendra Sharma, who was to make an election telecast from Muzaffarpur TV centre on his party's behalf. When Sharma went to the TV studios in the capital on Sunday, Doordarshan authorities were flabbergasted by some references in the script to Sanjay Gandhi. According to Sharma, the authorities had raised objections to several sentences and he agreed to delete most of them. Except one particular sentence, which he maintained cannot be removed — pertaining to the grooming of Sanjay as a successor.

### MANIPUR ON ALERT

ALL SECURITY FORCES outposts in Manipur have been "alerted and strengthened" against a possible threat by underground elements to infiltrate into the state, official sources said. The sources said these elements, comprising Nagas and non-Nagas, had been concentrated along the India-Burma border in the Manipur North district for some time with the intention of making their way into the state to attack security forces in the hill areas PARTYLESS IN NEPAL

THE NEPALESE HAVE voted in favour of the traditional partyless panchayat political system over the multi-party system, official sources said. The sources said the panchayat had a clear lead of 4,59,000 votes against proponents of the multiple party system as returns trickled in for the May 2 referendum. The results were delayed due to security precautions and transportation problems in this largely roadless nation. The sources said the figures were based on reports received in Kathmandu from 73 of the 75 districts where counting of votes had already been completed. The results from only two districts, Chitwan and Gulmi, remain.







### THE INDIAN EXPRESS, THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2020

# THE IDEAS PAGE

# The cure that lasts

The way forward is graded opening up, not an indefinite lockdown. Public healthcare system must improve to protect the vulnerable



PEOPLE ARE WATCHING the daily COVID-19 mortality statistics like they watch the Sensex. So, how do we know the truth? We must get our facts clear, only then can we analyse them correctly.

The first case in China was reportedly detected on November 17, 2019. The new coronavirus was announced in December 2019. But they hit the panic button about 68 days or 540 cases, and 17 deaths, after the index case. That is a sufficient delay to infect a large number of people.

Despite the experience of SARS and H1N1, were they able to open the lockdown in two or three weeks? No. The lockdown kept getting extended, and only after 76 days of lockdown did Wuhan reopen, hesitantly, with a death toll of 2,563.

In less than a month, Italy went from having only three cases to the highest number of cases and deaths outside of China. Despite a total lockdown for weeks, on May 5, Italy had 2,11,938 cases and 29,079 deaths.

After 47 days of lockdown, India had 46,476 cases and 1,571 deaths (Worldometer, 2020). So, are we going the Wuhan or the Italy way? Neither, probably. It seems the timing of the lockdown is important. Reportedly, in India, the "janata curfew" was ordered at 390 cases and seven deaths but extended repeatedly. China at lockdown had 540 cases. How come our situation did not worsen? Many argue that our innate immunity – from exposure to several pathogens or the BCG vaccination – may have helped. The average ambient temperature, higher than 21 degrees celsius, is supposed to kill the virus too. Then, why do we have so many cases south of the Vindhyas? These are all, possibly, mere conjectures. We had the advantage of hindsight and knew many facts about the virus and its spread.

To know community infection, we need 100 per cent testing of the population. No country has done such population-wide testing. Though this was done aboard a cruise ship – Diamond Princess – where they found 18 per cent of all infected people without symptoms; and, in an aircraft carrier – USS *Theodore Roosevelt* – where 60 per cent were asymptomatic, but COVID positive.

Again, how does one explain the low mortality in Germany which has a population similar to France or the UK? One of the reasons given is that Germany adopted aggressive testing, contact tracing, and containment measures. Germany, with the hindsight of experience from China and Korea – and a



which otherwise accumulate in the care space, becoming lethal gas chambers of the virus. This leads to higher staff infections and mortality.

In the US, from the first case on January 19 in Washington to May 5, there were 3,27,374 cases and 24,944 deaths in New York alone - this despite 10,07,310 tests in New York and over 74,62,597 tests in the US as a whole. So, testing alone does not work.

Did India get the timing of its lockdown and containment measures right? All the early cases were related to international travel and known to immigration authorities. One-and-a-half months after my trip to Europe, 10 days after the lockdown, officials came home to check if I was unwell. It is easy track everyone, test all and do aggressive contact tracing. But the entire month of February and early March, which were critical months for stock-taking, were wasted hoping that the infection would not spread.

In India, health planning is not an easy task as health is a state subject. Intensive care beds with ventilators have always been deficient in India. For instance, do we know the number of functioning ventilators, pulse oximeters, syringe pumps, and staff skilled in intensive care?

Quarantine is the isolation of a person suspected of harbouring an infection for a period equal to the longest incubation period of that disease. This is done to prevent that person from infecting others. But isolation is very stressful – fear of death adds to the distress. Many experience psychological problems, show aggression, even violence. In India, a total lockdown like this has not been done before. In public health, the interest of the community is primary - but there is always a tension between the concerns of the individual and the interest of the community. There is no ethical principle that can provide a solution to this perennial tension in public health. Still, there remains the need to pay attention to the rights of individuals when exercising the powers of public health. Was a lockdown essential? I do not think so. Not if we had timed our testing and containment strategy early on. In Sweden, the health experts refused a lockdown. There, the schools are open, public transport is operational, as are offices, restaurants, bars, and parks. The only precaution is to maintain physical distancing. This model could be better in the long-run, with higher herd immunity. A country such as Sweden doesn't have



the "when to unlock" dilemma.

So, what else should have been done in India? Our public health systems have been systematically undermined over the years. The corporatisation of healthcare and the push for insurance-based healthcare has ruined our public hospitals. Earlier, all bureaucrats and politicians would consult these hospitals. So, it was in their interest to keep these facilities well-equipped. Today, they visit corporate hospitals. In the UK, Boris Johnson was taken to a public-funded NHS hospital, not a private facility. And, that gives a message to the masses

My understanding of public health tells me that, unlike private healthcare, public health strives for the greatest good to the largest numbers. Lockdown may have inconvenienced the largest numbers, but mass quarantine should be the last step in our armamentarium. A total lockdown is like a nuclear weapon unleashed on society - with short-term and long-term collateral damage across the board.

In low-income countries, it could mean starvation for people. Why would someone sentence so many people to death if there is another path that is known? The virus exploits the weakness in health and healthcare. The result? Poor people walking on the highways with their bags and baggage. A sea of humanity walking on the roads. Mass migration.

While every death diminishes us as a society, I am more worried about all those marginalised for whom existence is now no

### WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"The US has the largest numbers of infections and deaths, which show it has the weakest prevention and control system against the virus in the world. Washington needs to, first of all, reflect on its deficiencies, and put science above politics."

- TGLOBAL TIMES, CHINA

# From village to nation

After pandemic passes, we must address the disparities and excesses of current system through education, science and technology



Anil Kakodkar

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC will soon be brought under control and the lockdown relaxed. We should also expect vaccines and therapeutic drugs to appear on the scene, which will decisively overcome the virus. It is perhaps time now to think of whether returning swiftly to business as usual of the before corona era should be the only objective or should we also think about a shift to a new normal. The latter would address the root causes that led to the vulnerabilities that have come to the fore during the pandemic.

People often talk about jobs and their changing nature, protectionism and the challenges to globalisation, the impact of emerging technologies and so on when discussing the new normal. It seems to me that a fundamental facet of the new normal will be to ensure livelihood security and living in harmony with nature. Population growth and human greed have driven the earth close to the tipping point, even as a large part of humanity suffers serious deprivation.

I believe, in this context, that the havenots becoming empowered enough to find their own solutions would be a far more effective approach to addressing human deprivation than relying on the vendor-buyer transactions between haves and have nots. The balance between meeting the development needs of all humans and the sustainability of mother earth will depend on solutions determined through science and technology (S&T). The challenge is to empower the have-nots with S&T knowledge and innovation ecosystems so that they can find their own solutions. This approach of local empowerment also presents India a unique opportunity to fast-forward its development, provided we act decisively to leverage our demographic dividend in the ongoing knowledge era.

What can we learn from the pandemic to minimise the loss of lives and livelihoods should a similar episode occur again? Just as we have made progress in minimising loss of life and property from potentially disastrous events like cyclones and earthquakes, we need to develop a credible pandemic management plan. This will need to be a global

schemes like MGNREGA to support rural youth wanting to transition to new-age jobs in addition to government schemes that encourage rural entrepreneurship could make a big difference. This approach would not only relieve high habitation density in urban areas but also bridge rural-urban gap and lead to faster economic growth.

Some of the economic models currently in operation seem to widen disparities. We do not pay adequate attention to the compensation of people at the grass roots in key areas like agriculture, public health and rural education that are crucial to the elimination of vulnerabilities. Our investments in these domains are also significantly below the accepted bench-marks. Our health sector, for example, while it boasts of global competence to the extent of making India a health tourism destination, remains near the bottom of the table. We need policies which can neutralise to a large extent the disparities created by market forces.

More generally, it seems to me that time has come to think about pricing principles based on the true cost of value addition and accepted norms for compensating those who do it. Also, the transactions along the value chain should be restricted only to those who add value. Others who are also necessary for this process should come in as service providers. Leveraging modern technologies and creative business formats, we should be able to develop a healthy and non-exploitative configuration, particularly to the grass roots producers and the consumers.

A balanced approach to land use pat-terns needs careful attention. We need to arrive at an optimum distribution of land for habitat and food for humans as well as animals, industry and other economic activities including infrastructure, energy, for-est cover and water management. Agriculture, water, energy and environment are heavily intertwined and need to be dealt with in a holistic manner. Water harvesting, recharge and management systems also need attention, particularly in the context of groundwater levels, irrigated agriculture, flood control and ensuring that rivers and water bodies remain clean.

Finally, holistic education is perhaps the strongest tool to sustainably eradicate vulnerabilities. Education merits maximum attention as it is the key enabler of our demographic dividend, and necessary to leverage the opportunities of the knowledge era, particularly in rural areas. Many say that education as it exists today may become irrelevant. Technology is of crucial importance to address the issue of quality as well as access to education. Our education environment should be linked with industry and society both in terms of workbased learning as well as real-life problem-solving. The education system should enable outreach for technology, capacity building and livelihood enhancement for rural areas. Such a "cillage" ecosystem that connects modern knowledge and research, currently restricted to cities, with the needs of new-age villages, should enable villages to benefit from the opportunities of the knowledge era. Then villages, rather than being a drag, will become the engines of national development.

robust, free public health system – was able to contain the virus without a lockdown. In Italy and Spain, the average age of the infected was more than 60 years while in Germany it was 40 plus years. South Korea also managed with testing and containment without lockdown. I suspect that here, too, it has to do with the timing of the containment measures.

In the UK, France and Spain, the lockdown happened possibly after the virus had reached the vulnerable masses, thus presenting an "explosive" number of cases

Why were healthcare workers in the UK, Italy, and the US affected more than in China? All had deficiencies in the availability of PPEs and skills. Another possible factor was that after the SARS experience, all COVID positive care areas in China are negative pressure zones. In most countries, only intensive care units are negative pressure areas. Negative pressure washes away virus-rich aerosols

My understanding of public health tells me that unlike private healthcare, public health strives for the greatest good to the largest numbers. Lockdown may have inconvenienced the largest numbers, but mass quarantine should be the last step in our armamentarium. A total lockdown is like a nuclear weapon unleashed on society — with short-term and long-term collateral damage across the board.

more than being on the edge of extinction.

A vaccine is, at best, one-and-a-half years away. Let us not forget that HIV (a virus) was discovered 36 years ago, and we still have no vaccine. Anyway, as yet, there is no drug for any viral illness. Neither the virus nor we are going anywhere.

The way forward would be a graded and gradual opening up. No one can sustain this level of lockdown. But, while we open up we have to protect the vulnerable and ensure the known preventive measures. We need to accept that a large number of the young will get infected. That will provide herd immunity. But, most importantly, this should be a lesson for the time to come – to build our public health facilities, our intensive care facilities, and develop our research and development in public and tertiary healthcare.

The writer is consultant orthopedic surgeon, St Stephen's Hospital, Delhi

action plan with pre-defined roles and actions at various levels going down to a locality or a hospital with mutually agreed SOPs for all stakeholders. Panic-driven irrational responses at any level should be avoided by ensuring transparency.

One of the biggest concerns is the extremely dense population in cities. We must leverage our demographic dividend and knowledge technologies to quickly create attractive jobs in rural areas that make villages not only self-sufficient but net exporters. A new and aggressive approach to the education and skilling of the youth in rural areas, which would build their capacity to earn livelihood in fields that go beyond the traditional concept of rural jobs, is necessary. Broadening our approach to

The writer is former chairman of the Department of Atomic Energy

# The right to be heard

Judges should be large-hearted, not get unduly perturbed by criticism

#### Rekha Sharma

OF LATE, CONCERNS have been expressed about the Supreme Court failing to perform its dharma. Take, for instance, the anguish expressed by Justices Madan Lokur and Deepak Gupta, who have distinguished themselves as judges. They have virtually indicted the Supreme Court.

In an interview to this newspaper (IE, May 8), Justice Gupta, who recently retired from the SC, lamented the manner in which former CJI Ranjan Gogoi conducted himself after allegations of sexual harassment were levelled against him – by presiding over the bench, and then, not signing the order purported to have been passed by the bench. According to Justice Gupta, the Supreme Court has not come out better after the incident.

The learned judge also spoke of the priority - or the lack of it - being accorded to certain cases in the matter of listing. He said that he has seen cases involving big money and fancy law firms being listed in four weeks, while those involving junior lawyers are not listed even after six months. The learned judge's arguments have been strengthened

by the fact that undue haste was shown in listing TV anchor Arnab Goswami's case, while more important cases involving fundamental rights – habeas corpus petitions for example – are crying out for early hearing.

Recently, the Supreme Court refused to hear social activist Harsh Mander's plea seeking registration of FIRs against certain political leaders who made hate speeches which allegedly led to communal violence in Delhi, early this year. The court refused to hear Mander or his counsel after the solicitor general, who was representing the Delhi Police, pointed to a video recording in which the social activist had remarked that justice could only be got on the streets, and not from the apex court or Parliament. It reportedly remarked: "If this is what you feel about the Supreme Court, then, we have to decide what to do with you.

Significantly, Mander has denied having instigated anyone, but the Court, on the mere assertion of the solicitor general, refused to hear him – thus trampling the right of a citizen to be heard before he is condemned. In

any case, the court forgot that matters cannot, and should never, be decided on the basis of just one version.

In a more recent case, concerning migrant labour, the court reportedly slammed senior advocate Prashant Bhushan for maligning and insulting the judiciary. It asked Bhushan why should he be heard when he does not have any faith in the court. The plight of the migrant labour needed urgent attention - not who said what.

In both the cases, petitioners were exercising their constitutional right to seek redressal of their grievances against the State in public interest. But even if we assume that they were appearing as professionals, Mander and Bhushan were entitled to a hearing – no matter what they said in the past about the court or the judges. It is their fundamental right, and no one can deprive them of that right – not even the court.

However, litigants and lawyers – who are officers of the court - should not attribute motives to judges in case of an unfavourable judgment. They should not act in a manner which

brings the courts into disrepute or undermines the confidence of the public in the judiciary. Let us not forget that the courts are the only shield and hope of citizens against the tyranny of the state, so it is the duty of the lawyers to see that the courts are not undermined.

Judges should be large-hearted and not get unduly perturbed by criticism, even though, at times, criticism may be over the top. Not very long ago, in a ruling on Brexit, the British Supreme Court held that parliament, and not the prime minister, had the prerogative to trigger Article 50 to start the process of the country's exit from the EU. British newspapers reacted to the ruling by calling the judges, "the enemies of the people". The judges remained unruffled.

Let me end with Lord Atkin's famous quote: "Justice is not a cloistered virtue, she must be allowed to suffer the scrutiny and the respectful, even though outspoken, comments of the ordinary man."

> The writer is a former judge of the Delhi High Court



# HOME MATTERS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Dear fellow parents and teachers' (IE, May 13). The "bois locker room" incident reveals a dangerous and disturbing truth - rape culture begins early in life. Gender sensitisation at the primary school-level may not be enough because it is the home ethos that is the first and foremost influence on children. Boys from homes with respect across genders are less likely to be brutal to women. Dear fellow parents, it is time we led by example.

Sangeeta Kampani, Delhi

### ONLY A LAW

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Building trust' (IE, May 13). It is heartening to see the government climbing down from its rigid position on the Aarogya Setu app and agreeing to address the concerns flagged by privacy activists. Though issuing necessary guidelines and prescribing penalties for unauthorised data use is welcome, nothing short of a data protection legislation will suffice. The government has already said that the app is not a surveillance tool. Since the coronavirus will be with us for a long time, voluntary adoption of this contact tracing app is needed. SK Prabhakar, Gurugram

**ONLINE** ONLY IN THE EXPRESS POST COVID **OPPORTUNITY: PRAVAKAR SAHOO** REMEMBERING

**IDEAS** 

YOGENDRA SINGH: **SALIL MISRA** 

www.indianexpress.com

### NECESSARY RISK

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Back on the rails' (IE, May 12). The decision to restart some trains from Delhi to important economic hubs is an indication of the Centre's resolve to put the economy back on track. However, the tentative move must not adversely affect the ongoing health crisis. While preventive measures to be undertaken by travellers are fine, the asymptomatic ones may still be silent carriers. But, such risks will have to be undertaken to get the nation back on its feet.

Vijai Pant, Hempur











# **GOVT & POLITICS** 8



# **ON THE HOUSE**

RAJYA SABHA Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla met at Uparashtrapathi Niwas on Wednesday on the occasion of the 68th anniversary of the first sittings of both Houses of Parliament on May 13, 1952. They exchanged views on the functioning of Parliament since then. Naidu reportedly shared with Birla some broad details about the functioning and evaluation of Rajya Sabha since its first sitting.

## FAREWELL SONG

AFTER HAVING been removed from his post of state Health Secretary amid a row over coronavirus-related data from West Bengal, 1990-batch IAS officer Vivek Kumar proceeded to sing the Kishore Kumar number "Musafir Hoon Yaaron" at his farewell on Tuesday evening. The farewell was attended by senior bureaucrats as well as members of the medical fraternity. The bureaucrat's rendition of the song went viral on social media, prompting even Kailash Vijayvargiya, BJP's central observer for West Bengal, to share it on Twitter.

## PLANNING AHEAD

AS THE government prepares to relax restrictions under COVID-19 lockdown 4.0, it has initiated the process of finalising a framework for work from home for government employees. Taking a step in this direction, the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) on Wednesday circulated a draft consultation paper for deciding a standard operating procedure even in a post-lockdown situation. The DARPG has asked all ministries to send their comments by May 21. Apart from other provisions, the draft proposes an option of work from home for eligible officers/staff for 15 days in a year as a matter of policy.

## MP ex-minister says ready to explore options if not given due by BJP MLAs whose rebellion brought

#### **MILIND GHATWAI** BHOPAL, MAY 13

WHILE BY-ELECTIONS to 24 Assembly constituencies, which will hold a key to the survival of the Shivraj Singh Chouhan government in Madhya Pradesh, have not been announced yet, the first signs of anger in ruling BIP against rebel Congress legislators who helped topple the 15-

But the prospects of campaigning for "imported candimonth Congress government of Kamal Nath came with senior dates", who were rivals not long

**APURVA VISHWANATH** NEW DELHI, MAY 13

SEVENTY-TWO per cent of all cases in which Delhi trial courts awarded the death penalty from 2000 to 2015 cited "collective conscience of the society" as an influencing factor, a study by Project 39A, a criminal reforms advocacy group, has found. This was also true of 42% of

cases in Madhya Pradesh and 51% of cases in Maharashtra during the same period, according to the study.

The team led by Dr Anup Surendranath, Executive Director of Project 39A and Assistant Professor of Law at NLU, Delhi, looked at 215 trial court judgments from Delhi, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra to study the award of death sentences by trial courts.

The three states were chosen for the study since they rank

large number of decisions in capital cases were overturned at the appellate level - in the High Courts and Supreme Court. The Supreme Court's 1983 ruling in Machhi Singh And

Others vs State of Punjab which introduced 'collective conscience' into the capital sentencing framework and laid down five categories, where the community would "expect the holders of judicial power to impose death sentence, because collective conscience was sufficiently outraged".

The study found that "in such cases, the trial courts opined that the crime was heinous enough to shake the collective conscience of the society and, therefore, the harshest punishment available under the law had to be meted out to the offenders".

Of the 112 cases in which col-

high on the list of states awardlective conscience was a factor ing capital punishment and a impacting the decisions of courts, absolutely no other mitigating factor was considered in 63 cases.

In most death penalty cases, court invoked 'collective conscience' of society: Study

In 1980, in Bachan Singh vs State of Punjab, the Supreme Court developed a framework for sentences in cases that involved the death sentence while evolving the 'rarest of rare', a doctrine that advocated a restrictive approach to the award of capital punishment.

The Bachan Singh case required trial courts to weigh the circumstances of the offence and the offender, while also considering the probability of reformation, and the suitability of the alternative option of life imprisonment.

While Bachan Singh also requires a separate hearing for sentencing after conviction that would look into relevant facts. the Project 39A study found that sentencing on the same day of conviction was rampant -44per cent cases had sentencing hearings on the same day as the pronouncement of guilt.

"Same day sentencing has an obvious impact on the nature and quality of arguments that are eventually presented before the court," the study noted.

Another indicator of the ineffective quality of arguments by defence counsel, as recorded in the judgments, was the lack of individualised arguments in cases involving multiple accused.

Of 52 cases in the three states, where multiple accused were involved, individual mitigating circumstances for each accused was argued only in nine cases.

The study also found that trial courts mainly relied on aggravating circumstances to impose death sentences.

In Madhya Pradesh, in 51 judgments out of a total 82, no mitigating circumstances were

attacked amid stone-pelting. Budgam SP Amod Nagpure, a text message, said: "DSP Fayaz got trapped, heavy stone pelting started, and miscreants attempted to lynch him. He got severely injured on the head. Meanwhile, reinforcements reached, and DSP Fayaz was res-

Nothing in package for migrant

workers, boosting demand: Oppn

**Gujarat minister** moves top court against HC order settting aside his election

#### **EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** out of 90, and in Delhi, in 18 out NEW DELHI, MAY 13

GUJARAT MINISTER Bhupendrasinh Chudasama on Wednesday moved the Supreme Court challenging the High Court's decision setting aside his 2017 poll victory.

Terming the order erroneous, Chudasama said it had failed to appreciate that his rival Congress candidate Ashwin Rathod had not led positive, reliable and cogent evidence to prove any of the allegations. He urged the top court to set aside the HC order.

Chudasama, who holds charge of multiple departments, was elected from Dholka constituency in 2017, defeating Rathod by 327 votes. In his petition challenging Chudasama's election. Rathod had alleged that the returning officer, Dhaval Jani, had illegally rejected 429 votes received via postal ballot.

# **Delhi Police action** against Express reporter high-handed, says Editors Guild

#### **EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** NEW DELHI, MAY 13

considered during sentencing. In

Maharashtra, it was true of 41

Incidentally, in Delhi, of the

80 death sentences handed by

trial courts between 2000 and

2013. over 60% later resulted in

acquittals or where sentences

were commuted by the Delhi

In Maharashtra, out of ap-

proximately 120 sentenced to

death by trial courts between

2000 and 2013, more than half

the prisoners were acquitted or

had sentences had sentences

commuted by Bombay High

"At the time of conceptualis-

ing the study, the exact statistics

were not available for Madhya

Pradesh. However, we noticed a

trend, especially in cases involv-

ing sexual violence, that there

had been short trials and quick

confirmation proceedings by the

High Court," the authors noted.

of 43 cases

High Court.

Court.

DESCRIBING THE Delhi Police's action against a reporter with The Indian Express as "egregious and high-handed", the Editors Guild of India noted with "concern a growing pattern of misuse of criminal laws to intimidate journalists in different parts of the country".

The Indian Express Special Correspondent Mahender Singh Manral was questioned by Delhi Police on Monday in connection with a May 9 report "Tablighi FIR: Police probe indicates Saad audio clip was doctored". The police had called the report "factually incorrect... purely conjectural" but on May 10 sent a notice to the City Editor and Chief Reporter, requiring the reporter to join the probe on Monday or

face legal action under IPC Section 174. In a statement issued on Wednesday, the Editors Guild called the Delhi Police action 'egregious and high-handed". It said. "While Manral wasn't charged under any law, he was threatened that failure to join the

the Guild said, was booked under Section 124A of IPC for 'spreading false panic" and Section 54 of the Disaster Management Act for "publishing a report suggesting the possibility of a leadership change in the state due to criticism over rising coronavirus cases". It called it a "a misuse of special laws, besides sedition and IPC". The statement said, "These

instances of police action in Gujarat and Delhi are deeply disturbing. The government and the police must recognise that the media is an integral part of the governance structure in any democracy. The Guild condemns these actions and asks the state and central governments to desist from misusing the law to

threaten the free press." The Press Club of India also criticised the Delhi Police action against Manral. It said on Tuesday that the Crime Branch "compelling" the reporter to be present "under threat of criminal prosecution" and "including and implied threat to disclose sources" was "an affront to every canon of independent and responsible journalism".

It stated that the mat

Security personnel at the site of the incident, near Kawoosa area of Budgam. Shuaib Masoodi

# Protests in Budgam after youth shot dead, CRPF orders probe

#### ADIL AKHZER & NAVEED IOBAL

A YOUTH was killed Wednesday car after it allegedly sped past seprotests and clashes with security personnel.

Mehraj ud Din Shah was declared brought dead at the SMHS

through the adjacent road and fearing sabotage, the CRPF jawan, manning this Naka, fired warning shots. This civil car was driving in the wrong direction of the road and that was even more alarming. When the car did not stop, despite warning shots, the jawan fired at the car and in turn, the driver was hit on his left

shoulder," Singh said. In a statement, J&K Police too said the car jumped checkpoints. But Mehraj ud Din's uncle Ghulam Hassan Shah, who was

with him in the car. rejected the police and CRPF versions of the incident. "In the morning, I asked my nephew to drop me at the Police Control Room in Srinagar where I am posted. When we reached Kawoosa, one side of the road was closed because there was a convoy there. We entered cued." the opposite side. As soon as we approached the checkpoint, a policeman stopped us. I told him I was late. He allowed us to move ahead and signalled to a CRPF man, but he raised his weapon

and fired at my nephew," Shah alleged, adding that he stepped out of the confronted the CRPF personnel

The incident led to protests and clashes in the youth's home village Pethmakhama.

Budgam has been witnessing protests since last Friday when a DSP entered a mosque in Mir Mohalla in Nasrullapora and, citing the lockdown, told people gathered there for prayers to disperse. The DSP, Fayaz Shah, was

# BEERWAH, BUDGAM, MAY 13

after CRPF personnel fired at his curity checkpoints on the Srinagar-Gulmarg road in Jammu and Kashmir's Budgam district. The incident sparked

**DEEPTIMAN TIWARY** NEW DELHI, MAY 13

FOLLOWING PRIME Minister Narendra Modi's call to go "vocal for local", the Ministry of Home Affairs has asked all paramilitary forces to use only Indian products.

In an order issued on Wednesday, the Ministry has asked the central armed police forces' (CAPF) canteens to "sell only indigenous products" beginning June 1.

The total purchase value of CAPF canteens, the MHA said, would be around Rs 2,800 crore. "With this decision, 50 lakh family members of about 10 lakh CAPF personnel will use indigenous products," an MHA statement said.

Referring to Modi's address to the nation on Tuesday about making India self-reliant, the MHA statement said, "In this direction today, the Ministry of Home Affairs has decided that all the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) canteens and stores across the country will now sell only indigenous products, from Iune 01. 2020."

#### Sources in the CAPF said the forces were still waiting for de-

## MHA asks **CAPF** canteens to sell only 'indigenous products'

leader Deepak Joshi's 'warning' to the party leadership.

Joshi, son of former MP Chief Minister Kailash Joshi and a minister in Chouhan's previous Cabinet, on Wednesday told The Indian Express that he is considering exploring "options" if denied his due by the party he has served for decades

Joshi had lost the 2018 polls from Hatpiplya constituency in Dewas district to Manoj Chaudhary, one of 22 Congress

ago, is seen as having unnerved many BJP cadres.

Chouhan back to power. The 22

MLAs had resigned and joined

BJP on the condition that they

maintained that there is no op-

tion but to give tickets to the 22

former Congress legislators. "That

is the precondition. A national

party can't go back on its promise," a former state BIP chief said.

Party insiders have so far

will be fielded in the bypolls.

"I am not saying you have to give me the ticket, but you should keep me in the team, give me responsibility that will do justice to my contribution," Joshi said. "If vou drop me from the team. I will have to explore options...' Asked whether he will cam-

paign for his former Congress rival, Joshi said he will, if asked by the party. Choudhary was not available for a comment.

tailed guidelines from the ministry on what were to constitute "indigenous products". A Home Ministry official clarified that by

"indigenous products", the ministry meant "made in India" products.

Sources said the canteens already had "made in India" products almost entirely. "Even if it is a foreign company, the products that are sold in the canteen are manufactured in India," a CAPF officer said.

Hospital in Srinagar.

PK Pandey, IG CRPF (Srinagar sector), told The Indian Express that an inquiry had been ordered into the incident.

CRPF spokesman Pankaj Singh said: "At about 1020 hours, a civil vehicle. Wagon R. broke a checkpoint of J&K Police, sped and came across another checkpoint of CRPF. and jumped this check point as well.

"A convoy of the Army, at that point in time, was passing

#### **CENTRE'S ECONOMIC PACKAGE**

Later, videos did the rounds. showing policemen vandalising homes and shops. IG Vijay Kumar said the videos were being verified and a report had been sought from the district SP.

probe could result in legal action under Section 174 of the IPC with punishment of a prison term and fine. This appears to be a little more than a fishing expedition to try and extract the journalist's source and, thus, warn other reporters.'

The Guild also mentioned the instance of a Gujarati journalist being booked for sedition and detained on Monday. Dhaval Patel, who is the owner and editor of news portal Face of Nation,

should have ended with publishing of the rejoinder, but "it appears the government, using the police as a tool of victimisation, is coming down hard on the reporter". It said that it was a "warning" to journalists and media platforms and a rude reminder that they fall in line".

It urged the Union Home Minister to "rein in the freewheeling instincts of Delhi Police".

While we thank

**Prime Minister** 

for giving boost

to this sector.

we plan to dis-

burse about Rs

# Norms eased in Lockdown 2.0, but people stayed away from workplaces: Google data

#### **KARISHMA MEHROTRA** NEW DELHI, MAY 13

DESPITE RELAXED restrictions in the second phase of the lockdown, from April 20 to May 3, people largely restricted themselves to their homes and stayed away from workplaces, an analysis of Google location data shows.

That changed with Lockdown 3.0, which came into effect on May 4 – data from the early days of the third phase of the lockdown shows that nationwide. workplace movement increased by eight percentage points from averages in the second phase. But it was still at roughly half the prepandemic levels.

Trends from Google's latest Community Mobility Reports, using location data from its products up until May 7, show that six states (Delhi, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu), which have a high case count and/or fast growth in cases, had a much slower return to the workplace than the entire country, with Maharashtra's activity even dipping between May 4 and 7.

These states have only seen a three-percentage-point increase in workplace activity - they are now at 40 per cent of their prepandemic levels.



Workers at the canteen of Sudarshan Chemical Industries Ltd office in Roha, Raigarh. Nirmal Harindran

The data shows that of the hotspot states, Delhi has had the

most consistent and substantial reductions in movement of people across all categories, while Tamil Nadu saw an increase in mobility across categories (sometimes at a faster pace than the rest of the country) in the first days of the third phase (May 4 to 7).

The report compares current location trends to a baseline from January 3 to February 6, taking the median value for the corresponding day of the week. The first phase of lockdown was March 24 to April 13, while the second one was April 14 to May 3. The third phase ends on May 17. The mobility data shows that

in the second lockdown, retail footfall declined nationwide by an average of seven percentage points from values during the first lockdown. Transit systems such as metros, buses, and trains too are picking up, with mobility reaching roughly 40 per cent of pre-pandemic levels, between

May 4 and 7. Among states, West Bengal reduced its public life most stringently in the second phase, as cases surged from 200 in phase 1 of the lockdown to 2.000 in the second. While its retail activity dipped 15 points (more than all others in any phase) in this duration, it still did not see the same level of reductions in groceries,

parks, and workplace activity as the rest of the country in this period.

Madhva Pradesh, similarly, saw a tightening of movement in retail(down8percentagepoints) and parks (down 17) in the second phase as cases in the state grew from 900 to 3,000. In this phase. Guiarat (with cases from 800 to 5.500) saw retail dip by seven points and parks by eight, but saw an unusual increase in workplace activity by six points. Second only to Delhi,

Maharashtra already saw a significant reduction in most activities from the first phase.

Nationwide, grocery and pharmacy visits have seen the largest spurt to normalcy throughout the phases. Movement here has roughly doubled over the phases. It saw a 60 per cent average reduction in the first phase, but now is only 35 per cent below pre-pandemic levels. In fact, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Kerala have almost pre-pandemic levels of activity in this category.

There has been little change in activity in residential spaces. staying at a 25-percentage-point increase from the baseline levels - indicating more people staying in homes than during pre-pandemic times.

#### **EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** NEW DELHI, MAY 13

OPPOSITION LEADERS on Wednesday slammed the first tranche of the Rs 20 lakh crore fiscal stimulus announced by the Centre as "disappointing" and a "big zero", saying it provided no

relief to migrant workers and had nothing to stimulate demand. Senior Congress leader P

Chidambaram said the package was a "cruel blow" to those who toil every day. CPM general secretary Sitaram Yechury called the package a "farce".

Barring the "modest" MSME package, the stimulus package was "disappointing", Chidambaram said. He said that even the measures for MSMEs were skewed in favour of the larger ones, leaving the bulk of the 6.3 crore micro. small and medium sized enterprises "high and dry".

The former finance minister said many of the steps announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman were liquidity – as also regulatory - measures which will not spur demand as liquidity measures operate on the supply side. Liquidity measures do not amount to fiscal measures of sup-

port, he said, and nowhere in the world are they included in a fiscal stimulus package. "Except for the modest package of MSMEs...I don't find anything in this package that will stimulate the demand side of the economy," he said.

He, however, welcomed the offer of subordinate debt of Rs 20,000 crore and equity corpus fund of Rs 10,000 crore for MSMEs, but said the Congress would await the terms and conditions as the devil is in the details

Dissecting the steps outlined by the Finance Minister, Chidambaram said, "This government is a prisoner of its own ignorance and fears. The government must spend more, but it is not willing to do so. The government must borrow more, but it is not willing to do so. The government must allow states to borrow more and spend more, but it is not willing to do so."

He hit out at the government for not announcing any relief for the lakhs of "poor, hungry and devastated" migrant workers, saying it was a "cruel blow" to those who toil every day. "There is also nothing by way of cash transfer to the bottom half of the population (13 crore families) who have been pushed into destitution," he said.

#### **VOICES FROM THE STATES**

The MSMEs, the Housing sector, etc have to first survive, and then take

they survive without their workers, who have left them in hordes and seem **YOGI ADITYANATH** in no mood to return any UTTAR PRADESH CHIEF

AMARINDER SINGH, PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER

time soon?



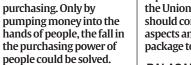
Due to the lockdown. Maharashtra has suffered highest loss of revenue.

Mumbai is the financial capital of the country. So, should start the Union government should consider these aspects and give best package to us

MINISTER

**BALASAHEB THORAT,** 

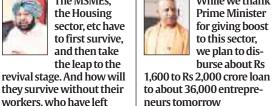
**KERALA FINANCE MINISTER** MINISTER



MAHARASHTRA REVENUE



THOMAS ISAAC,



# THE INDIAN EXPRESS, THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2020 FXPLAINED THE OUTBREAK

### 90 @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** 230.984 221,216 141,475 173,546 Turkey 242,271 **1,372,855** US 179,457 228,030 Brazil TOTAL CONFIRMED: 4,298,269 DEATH COUNT: 293,514 Source: Johns Hopkins University, updated at 11 pm on May 13

# Now, bowel abnormalities seen in Covid-19 patients

A NEW study, published in the journal Radiology, has identified yet another way in which the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 can affect the body - by causing bowel abnormalities.

The retrospective study included 412 Covid-19 patients (241 men and 171 women) admitted to a single health facility from March 27 to April 10. Records showed that 17% of patients had cross-sectional abdominal imaging - ultrasounds, CT scans etc. Bowel abnormalities were seen on 31% of CT

scans (3.2% of all patients) and were more frequent in intensive care unit (ICU) patients than other inpatients.

In a statement issued by the Radiological Society of North America, Dr Rajesh Bhayana of Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, said: "We found bowel abnormalities on imaging in patients with Covid-19, more commonly in sicker patients who went to the ICU. Some findings were typical of bowel ischemia, or dying bowel, and in those who had surgery we saw small vessel clots beside areas of dead bowel. Patients in the ICU can have bowel ischemia for other reasons, but we

> know Covid-19 can lead to clotting and small vessel injury, so bowel might also be affected by this.'

According to the researchers, possible explanations for the spectrum of bowel findings in Covid-19 patients include direct viral infection, small vessel thrombosis, or "nonocclusive mesenteric is-

chemia". They added, however, that further studies are required to clarify the cause of bowel findings in these patients, and to determine whether SARS-CoV-2 plays a direct role in bowel or vascular injury.

"Our study is preliminary, and more work is needed to understand the cause of bowel findings in these patients," Dr Bhayana said.

Source: Radiological Society of North America

65

831

187 59

780

65

934

172

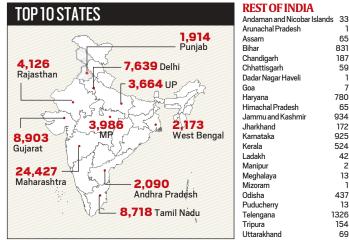
925

524 42 13

437

13

# INDIA COUNT: 74,281 (2,415 DEATHS)



# SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER What MSME package means

In the latest tranche of Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan package, the key thrust is a huge increase in credit guarantees to MSMEs. How do such guarantees work, and how is the move expected to help MSMEs?

#### **UDIT MISRA & NUSHAIBA IQBAL** NEW DELHI, MAY 13

ON WEDNESDAY, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced some details of the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan economic package. This is the second tranche of the package that includes past actions by the Reserve Bank of India as well as the first Covid-19 relief package announced during March and April.

The main thrust of Wednesday's announcements was a relief to Medium, Small and Micro Enterprises (MSMEs) in the form of a massive increase in credit guarantees to them. There was, however, very little actual fiscal outgo that was announced.

In other words, instead of directly infusing money into the economy or giving it directly to MSMEs in terms of a bailout package, the government has resorted to taking over the credit risk of MSMEs should they want to remain in business. These credit guarantees should help the formal banking system meet the credit demand of the MSME sector (see Chart 2).

#### What are credit guarantees?

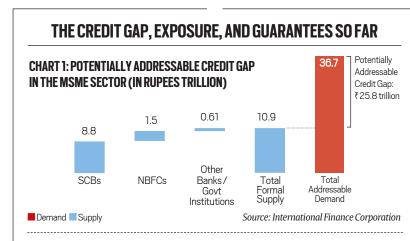
Loans to MSMEs are mostly given against property (as collateral) because often there isn't a robust cash flow analysis available. But in times of crisis, like the one currently playing out, property prices fall and this inhibits the ability of MSMEs to seek loans. It also means that banks are less willing to extend loans.

A credit guarantee by the government helps as it assures the bank that its loan will be repaid by the government in case the MSME falters. For instance, if the government provides say a 100% credit guarantee up to an amount of Rs 1 crore to a firm, it means that a bank can lend Rs 1 crore to that firm; in case the firm fails to pay back, the government will make good all of Rs 1 crore. If this guarantee was for the first 20% of the loan, then the government would guarantee to pay back only Rs 20 lakh.

#### Why credit guarantees?

Even before the Covid-19 crisis, Indian government finances were in poor health. This pandemic has meant that government revenues will come under further pressure. For instance, experts are already talking of a GDP contraction of 5% to 10% in the current financial year. That will result in a revenue loss of anywhere between Rs 5 to 7 lakh crore. And yet, this is also the year when employees and firms want the government to help them out financially.

Efforts to pump liquidity via the banks have been a non-starter because banks simply do not want to lend any new money. Banks, quite justifiably, suspect that any new loans will only add to their growing mountain of non-performing assets (NPAs).



#### CHART 2: CREDIT EXPOSURE OF MSMEs (Rs LAKH CRORE)

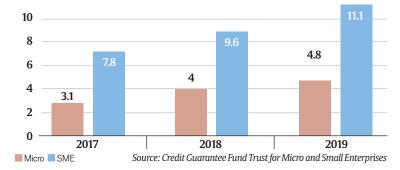
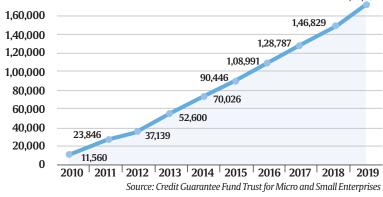


CHART 3: CUMULATIVE GUARANTEES APPROVED TO MSMEs (Rs CRORE) 1.75.961



### CHART A: ESTIMATED EMPLOYMENT IN MSME SECTOR (IN LAKH)

Broad activity category	Rural	Urban	Total	Share	
Manufacturing	186.56	173.86	360.41	32%	
Trade	160.64	226.54	387.18	35%	
Other services	150.53	211.69	362.22	33%	
Electricity*	0.06	0.02	0.07	_	
All	497.78	612.10	1109.89	100%	
*Non-captive electricity generation and transmission					
		Annual Report, Mir	istry of MSMEs		

a result of the Covid-19 crisis, this MSME needs more funds then it can take more loans, without the need for any collateral, because the government will guarantee such loans fully."

#### Why Rs 3 lakh crore?

Gandhi said the total outstanding loan to MSMEs by the banking and NBFC sector would be around Rs 16 to 18 lakh crore. Assuming that 80% of these loans are working capital loans where there would be a 20% incremental funding needs, that gives an amount of approximately Rs 3 lakh crore. So the government is hoping that this credit guarantee will help those MSMEs take out another loan and recover: The hope is that since these MSMEs were able to pay back before the crisis, there is no reason why they cannot after the crisis, provided they are given some extra money to survive this period.

#### What are the other measures?

There is a subordinate debt scheme, worth Rs 20,000 crore, which will allow loans to MSMEs that were already categorised as "stressed", or struggling to pay back. In this case, the government's guarantee is not full, but partial.

The third measure is the creation of a fund with a corpus of Rs 50,000 crore to infuse equity into "viable" MSMEs, thus helping them to expand and grow. The government intends to put in Rs 10,000 crore and get others, possibly institutions like LIC and SBI, to fund the remaining amount.

Then there is a change in the definition of an MSME that was pending for long. Now MSMEs will be judged on turnover and there will be no difference between a manufacturing MSME and a services MSME.

#### How far will these measures help?

The Rs 3 lakh crore credit guarantee is the most substantive announcement as it will most likely have a significant impact in helping MSMEs pay salaries and keep their heads above the water even as the economy slows down.

According to the Finance Minister, this measure will help as many as 45 lakh MSMEs. While this is a minuscule proportion of the overall number of MSMEs, these are likely to be the medium and small enterprises, which employ almost 40% of all employees - although these enterprises themselves are very few in number (just about 0.5% of all MSMEs).

The change in definition of MSMEs will also help because "turnover" is the more efficient way to identify an MSME and it also allows a lot of firms, especially in the services sector like mid-sized hospitals, hotels and diagnostic centres to be eligible for benefits as an MSME.

The other two steps are unlikely to make a huge dent in the overall scheme of things.

NEW RESEARCH



Union Health Ministry update as of 11 pm, May 13. Some states may have reported higher numbers. Only states/UTs with at least one case listed above. 24,386 PATIENTS DISCHARGED IN 32 STATES AND UNION TERRITORIES

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

So the government was facing an odd problem: Banks had the money but were not willing to lend to the credit-starved sections of the economy, while the government itself did not have enough money to directly help the economy.

The solution - credit guarantees - finally chosen by the government is not a new one. because this fiscal conundrum is not a new one either (Chart 3).

#### So, what is the quantum of credit guarantee provided to MSMEs?

There are three proposals but the main one is for standard MSMEs – that is, those MSMEs which were running fine until the Covid-19-

#### CHART 5: DISTRIBUTION OF ENTERPRISES CATEGORY-WISE (IN LAKH)

				• •	
Sector	Micro	Small	Medium	Total	Share
Rural	324.09	0.78	0.01	324.88	51%
Urban	306.43	2.53	0.04	309.00	49%
All	630.52	3.31	0.05	<b>633.88</b> Annual Report, N	<b>100%</b> Iinistry of MSMEs

induced lockdown disrupted their work.

For these, the government has provided a credit guarantee of Rs 3 lakh crore. This is like an emergency credit line, said the Finance Minister, and it is for MSMEs that have an already outstanding loan of Rs 25 crore or those with a turnover less than Rs 100 crore. The loans will have a tenure of 4 years and they will have a moratorium of 12 months (that is, the payback starts only after 12 months). The loan should be taken before October 31, 2020. According to Hetal Gandhi, Director, CRISIL,

"if there is an MSME which had a loan (up to Rs 25 crore) with any bank or NBFC and if, as

#### Are there any downsides to resorting to credit guarantees?

There are, especially if it is a 100% credit guarantee. That's because such a guarantee leaves no incentive for either borrower to pay back - he has nothing to lose - or for the lender - the banker is assured of payback from the government so why should he bother to check if the borrower is deserving or not.

A more prudent option would have been a split (say an 80%-20%) wherein the government assures to pay back only 80% of the new loan. This circumvents the problem of a moral hazard.

As a result, it is quite likely that the government will have to start shelling out money in the next financial year when MSME NPAs rise once the moratorium is over.

# Labour short, can direct seeding be alternative to paddy transplanting?

#### HARISH DAMODARAN & **ANJU AGNIHOTRI CHABA** NEW DELHI, JALANDHAR, MAY 13

THE TWO granary states of Punjab and Harvana could face a shortage of an estimated 10 lakh labourers, mainly seasonal migrants from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, to undertake transplantation of paddy in the upcoming kharif season. With lockdown relaxations not extending to trains to ferry these labourers who usually arrive by early June, farmers are now being encouraged to adopt 'direct seeding of rice' (DSR) in place of conventional transplanting.

#### How is DSR different from normal transplanting of paddy?

In transplanting, farmers prepare nurseries where the paddy seeds are first sown and raised into young plants. These seedlings are then uprooted and replanted 25-35 days later in the main field. The nursery seed bed is 5-10% of the area to be transplanted.

In DSR, there is no nursery preparation or transplantation. The seeds are instead directly drilled into the field by a tractor-powered machine. The Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) in Ludhiana has developed a 'Lucky Seed Drill' that can both sow seeds and simultaneously spray herbicides to

control weeds. This machine is different from the more popular 'Happy Seeder', used to directly sow wheat on combine-harvested paddy fields containing leftover stubble and loose straw.

#### But why spray herbicides along with sowing seeds?

Paddy seedlings are transplanted on fields that are "puddled" or tilled in standing water using tractor-drawn disc harrows. For the first three weeks or so after transplanting, the plants have to be irrigated almost daily (if there are no rains) to maintain a water depth of 4-5 cm. Farmers continue irrigating every 2-3 days even for the next 4-5 weeks, when the crop is in the tillering (stem development) stage. The underlying principle here is simple: Paddy growth is compromised by weeds that compete for nutrition, sunlight and water. Water prevents growth of weeds by denying them oxygen in the submerged stage, whereas the soft 'aerenchyma tissues' in paddy plants allow air to penetrate through their roots. Water, thus, acts as a herbicide for paddy. The threat from weeds recedes once tillering is over; so does the need to flood the fields.

In DSR, water is replaced by real chemical herbicides. Farmers have to only level their land and give one pre-sowing irrigation or *rauni*. Once the field has good soil



A farmer on his direct-seeded rice field in Punjab last year. Anju Agnihotri Chaba

moisture, they need to do two rounds of ploughing and planking (smoothening of soil surface), which is followed by sowing of the seeds and spraying of herbicides.

#### What are these herbicides?

There are two kinds. The first is called pre-emergent, i.e. applied before germination. In this case, the pre-emergent herbicide used is Pendimethalin. The Lucky Seed Drill that sows paddy can also spray the chemical, which costs Rs 450-500 at one litre per acre. Alternatively, farmers can use

an ordinary seed drill and apply the herbicide immediately after sowing. The second set of herbicides is post-emergent, sprayed 20-25 days after sowing, depending upon the type of weeds appearing. They include Bispyribac-sodium (Rs 600-700 at 100 ml/acre) and Fenoxaprop-p-ethyl (Rs 700-800 at 400 ml/acre).

#### What is the main advantage with DSR?

The most obvious one is water savings. According to PAU's director of research Navtej Singh Bains and principal agronomist Makhan Singh Bhullar, the first irrigation (apart from the pre-sowing rauni) under DSR is necessary only 21 days after sowing. This is unlike in transplanted paddy, where watering has to be done practically daily to ensure submerged/flooded conditions in the first three weeks. The second savings, relevant in the present context, is that of labour. About three labourers are required to transplant one acre of paddy in a single day. Pritam Singh Hanjra, a farmer from Urlana Khurd village in Haryana's Panipat district, says that the transplanting labour costs last year were around Rs 2,400 per acre, "which may double this time". As against this, the cost of herbicides under DSR will not exceed Rs 2,000 per acre.

#### Are there drawbacks?

The main issue is availability of the herbicides. Pendimethalin is sold by companies such as BASF (under 'Stomp' brand) and PI Industries ('Bunker'). Bispyribac-sodium and Fenoxaprop-p-ethyl are marketed, among others, by PI Industries and Bayer under 'Nominee Gold' and 'Ricestar' brands, respectively. "If every farmer does DSR, will the demand for these chemicals be met? The seed requirement for DSR is also higher, at 8-10 kg/acre, compared to 4-5 kg in transplanting, Further, laser land levelling, which costs Rs 1,000/acre, is compulsory in DSR.

This is not so in transplanting," Hanjra said.

Surjit Singh, a 60-acre farmer from Gakhlan village in Punjab's Jalandhar district, tried out DSR for the first time on two acres in 2017. This he increased to 6 acres and 10 acres in the next two years. "I am planning to do 15 acres in the coming season. The yields are as good as from normal transplanting, but you need to sow by the first fortnight of June. The plants have to come out properly before the monsoon rains arrive. There is no such problem in transplanting, where the saplings have already been raised in the nursery," explained Singh, whose spring maize crop on the balance 45 acres will be harvested only towards June-end.

#### How much area is likely to come under direct seeding of rice?

The adoption of any new technology, be it Happy Seeder or Lucky Seed Drill, is ultimately dependent upon farmers feeling the need. The maximum area covered by DSR in Punjab was roughly 1.60 lakh hectares (lh) in 2015 - which dropped to 19,600 hectares, 1,100 hectares, 5,000 hectares and 23,300 hectares in the subsequent years. Sutantar Kumar Airi, director of Punjab's Agriculture Department, expects it to rise to 2-2.5 lh this time on the back of labour shortages. Even that would be hardly a tenth of the state's total 29-30 lh paddy area.

# THE INDIAN EXPRESS, THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2020 **10** THE OUTBREAK THE WORLD

# PANDEMIC WATCH

In Kathmandu, after some curbs were lifted

## **NEPAL**

### Highest 1-day spike in Covid cases reported

Kathmandu: Nepal registered its highest spike in the number of cases with 85 new infections within a day, including 26 from the Indo-Nepal border taking the total tally to 219, health officials said. Nepal, which is under lockdown to contain the spread of deadly coronavirus, is among the nations that has the least number of cases of the deadly COVID-19 with no deaths. The total number of people infected by the novel coronavirus has climbed to 219 in Nepal with 85 new cases, the highest number of confirmation of virus transmission in 24-hours.

### LESOTHO Last African nation to confirm virus case

Maseru: Southern Africa's tiny kingdom of Lesotho on Wednesday confirmed its first case of COVID-19, making it the last African country to report the disease. With the announcement, all 54 countries in Africa have now reported coronavirus cases. Lesotho's health ministry said one person who recently arrived in the country had tested positive but was not showing signs of being ill. The patient was being isolated. The country of 2 million people is surrounded by South Africa, which has the highest number of confirmed cases in Africa

# **Next step for Europe: Unlocking travel**





(Left) Commuters at Stratford station in London on Wednesday; two young travellers at the international airport in Frankfurt, Germany. Reuters

## EU pushes for measures to salvage tourism UK eases lockdown as

#### THE NEW YORK TIMES NEW YORK, MAY 13

The coronavirus pandemic has devastated the tourism industry, as countries sealed their borders, flights grounded to a halt and billions of people sheltered at home. As summer draws closer, increasing fears that many areas reliant on tourism will miss out on their biggest season, countries and businesses are beginning to take cautious steps to ease restrictions or reinstate travel services.

The European Commission on Wednesday, in a bid to resume travel and salvage the summer tourism season, announced its recommendation for travel across the European Union, saying countries with similar levels of coronavirus outbreaks should ease restrictions. It said this should ultimately lead to a complete restoration of free movement among its 27 member states. Some countries have already

E.U. GUIDELINES FOR TRAVEL AMID CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK



encouraged to buy tickets, reserve seats and grade air filtering check in online. Passenger flows should be

managed with early arrival, Passengers should wear facemasks Transport staff should have adequate

begun plotting their own way forward. Three border checkpoints between Austria and Germany were opened Wednesday morning, a day after Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany and Chancellor Sebastian Kurz of Austria agreed to the measures that would institute free movement between the two nations.

protective equipment.

Chancellor Angela Merkel

5 plagues from China in last

20 yrs, it has to stop, says US

### priority for e-check-in Minimise contact at baggage drop-offs, security and border control points urged Germans to be "coura-

geous and vigilant" Wednesday as the country emerges from its shutdown, calling on them to avoid a relapse into tougher restrictions even as officials set out plans to relax border controls, as per an Associated Press report.

Germany started loosening coronavirus restrictions on April 20, about a month after they were introduced. The easing has



seats empty between them Rail operators should use passenger counting systems to manage capacity.

gathered pace in the past week. with the country's 16 state governments gradually opening other facilities.

# EXPLAINED Patchwork

# policies

THE EU'S response to the coronavirus has led to experts highlighting a potential issue with the system: that the Commission's advice is not mandatory. This means that member nations will likely follow their own directions without sufficient coordination. This, as per analysts, could become a serious concern: It could create difficulties in planning travel. It could also lead to erratic variations in restrictions, which could be detrimental to public health.

Malaysian PM delays confidence vote citing virus, Mahathir objects new local cases

economy takes a hit likely to be even worse as the

country was under lockdown for

of GDP contraction) here with

only a few days of impact from

the virus so it is now, yes, very

likely that the UK economy will

face a significant recession this

year and we are in the middle of

that as we speak." finance minis-

The government is loosening

Scotland, Wales and

Northern Ireland, which have

semi-autonomous govern-

ments, are sticking with a "stay

at home" message for now,

'We are seeing one (quarter

the entire month.

ter Rishi Sunak said.

cult" balancing act.

#### ALISTAIR SMOUT & **BEN MAKORI** LONDON, MAY 13

ENGLAND TENTATIVELY began easing its coronavirus lockdown on Wednesday, with some people who cannot do their jobs at home urged to return to work, as stark economic data showed the disastrous impact of the pandemic.

The worst-hit country in restrictions only gradually, for Europe with more than 40,000 fear of triggering a second peak deaths from COVID-19 accordof infections. Prime Minister ing to official data, Britain has Boris Johnson has described the been in extensive lockdown process as a "supremely diffisince March 23.

As of Wednesday morning, people in manufacturing and certain other sectors were being asked to return to work if they could. GDP data on Wednesday

leaving England, the most popshowed the economy shrank by ulous UK nation, to take the a record 5.8% in March from lead in sending some people back to work. REUTERS February, and the April data is

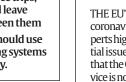
> **Breaking 23-day** streak, Hong Kong reports

restaurants, schools, gyms and The Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania will allow travel among the three nations beginning Friday, though travellers from outside the region will be required to spend 14 days in quarantine.

**3 KEY TAKEAWAYS** 

**FROM U.S. HEALTH** 

**EXPERTS' HEARING** 



#### with 11,350.

#### **THAILAND**

### No new cases for first time in two months

Bangkok: Thailand has reported no new confirmed cases of the coronavirus for the first time in more than two months. There also were no new deaths reported on Wednesday. leaving the country's total at 3,017 cases with 56 fatalities. Since the beginning of May, Thailand has reported single-digit daily increases with the exception of May 4, when a cluster pushed the number to 18. The last time Thailand reported no new cases was on March 9, when there were 50 cases in total with a single death.

LALIT K JHA WASHINGTON, MAY 13

AS MANY as five plagues have come out of China in the last 20 years and at some point it has to stop, US National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien has said, holding the country responsible for the origin of the coronavirus pandemic which has killed over 250,000 people globally.

People across the globe are going to rise up and tell the Chinese government that "we can no longer have these plagues coming out of China", whether it is from labs or wet markets, neither one is a good answer, he told reporters at the White House on Tuesday.

"We know it came from Wuhan and I think there's circumstantial evidence that it could have come from the lab or the wet market. But, again, if you're China, neither one's a good answer," O'Brien said. "We've had five plagues from

It mandates the President to make a certification to Congress within 60 days that

coronavirus.

had SARS, avian flu, swine flu, COVID-19 now and how longer can the world put up with this terrible public health situation that you've got in the People's Republic of China that is being unleashed on the world," the top American official said.

He, however, did not mention the fifth plague to come out of from China. When asked that the US is still looking for evidence China in the last 20 years. We've about the origin of the virus, he re-

Afghan military and security

forces in Kabul, as well as civil-

ians. The Taliban denied they

were involved. In the past, most

of the attacks in Dashti Barchi

Afghan President Ashraf

Ghani announced that Afghan

security forces would no longer

operate in the defensive posture

against Taliban insurgents.

were carried out by IS.

Washington: Nine influential China has provided a full and US senators have introduced complete accounting to any a legislation in Congress seek-COVID-19 probe led by the ing to authorise President United States, its allies or the Donald Trump to impose United Nations affiliates such sanctions on China if it fails to as the World Health cooperate in providing a full Organisation and has closed all operating wet markets that accounting of the events leading up to the outbreak of the have the potential to expose humans to health risks through the introduction of zoonotic disease into the human population. PTI

frained from giving a timeframe.

that. That's something that we're

continuing to review and it is obvi-

how to deal with its public health

because we cannot have another

one of these virus outbreaks and

plagues come from China. This

was a terrible thing that happened

to the entire world, not just to the

United States," he said. PTI

ously a very serious concern.

"I can't give you a timeframe on

"Look, China's got to figure out

Legislation to sanction China proposed

#### LACK OF TESTING, **TRACING CAPABILITY** Experts noted the US lacked critical testing

capacity and the ability to trace contacts. Dr Anthony Fauci warned "there is a real risk that you will trigger an outbreak that you may not be able to control"

#### **VACCINE UNLIKELY TO BE READY SOON** Fauci said it was a

"bridge too far" to think a vaccine or treatment would be ready by the time classes start this fall, on a question about college students returning to campus

#### **DEATH TOLL LIKELY GREATER THAN 80,000** The official also said the

coronavirus death toll in the US is likely greater than 80,000 due to some going unrecorded

REUTERS KUALA LUMPUR, MAY 13

MALAYSIAN PRIME Minister Muhyiddin Yassin will not face a confidence vote on May 18 as scheduled, the speaker of parliament said on Wednesday after the government said the battle against the coronavirus was a priority.

His predecessor, 94-year-old Mahathir Mohamad who resigned in February after his coalition collapsed, denounced the decision as a possible sign of Muhyiddin lacking a parliamentary majority.

Speaker Mohamad Ariff Md Yusof last week approved a motion brought by Mahathir seeking a vote of no confidence in Muhyiddin's leadership.

But, in a statement, the speaker said Muhyiddin later told him the government had decided to list only a single order of parliamentary business for the one-day sitting, the opening THE NEW YORK TIMES

### NEW YORK, MAY 13 HONG KONG reported two new

locally transmitted infections on Wednesday after more than three weeks of no such cases and as social distancing measures began to relax, and a third case recorded on the same day was imported from Pakistan, bringing the total infections in the city to 1,051.

A 66-year-old woman and her 5-year-old granddaughter, who live separately, were infected, health officials said on Wednesday. Neither had recently travelled, and it was unclear how they had contracted the virus, the officials added.

The news came as Hong Kong, having seen no local transmissions for 23 days, began to restart some previously restricted activities. Health officials said on Wednesday that there were currently no plans to bring back the measures and closures imposed more than a month ago.

Death toll from attack on Kabul maternity clinic rises to 24

#### **ASSOCIATED PRESS** KABUL, MAY 13

AFGHAN OFFICIALS on Wednesday raised the death from the militant attack on a maternity hospital in Kabul the previous day, saying that 24 people were killed, including two newborn babies, their mothers and an unspecified number of nurses.

Militants stormed the hospital in Dashti Barchi, a mostly Shiite neighbourhood the western part of Kabul, on Tuesday morning, setting off an hourslong shootout with the police.

The Interior Ministry spokesman, Tareq Arian, initially



Outside the hospital. Reuters

said 16 people were killed in the attack and over 100 women and babies were evacuated from the building under fire.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack, but both the Taliban and the Islamic State group frequently target

## 'Evidence of Russian role in German parliament hack' Spiegel reported that correspon-

**OTHER TOP GLOBAL STORIES** 

**ASSOCIATED PRESS** BERLIN, MAY13

GERMAN CHANCELLOR Angela Merkel said Wednesday there is "hard evidence" of Russian involvement in a cyberattack on the German parliament in 2015 that reportedly also involved the theft of documents from her own parliamentary office.

taken in the wake of the peace German daily Sueddeutsche agreement. Instead, he called on security forces to launch attacks Zeitung reported last week that federal prosecutors have issued an "The Taliban have not given arrest warrant against an alleged up fighting and killing Afghans, officer with Russia's GRU military instead they have increased their intelligence agency identified as attacks on our countrymen and Dmitriy Badin, who already is bepublic places," despite repeated ing sought by US authorities. On calls for a cease-fire, Ghani said. Friday, news magazine Der

dence from Merkel's parliamentary office was among the documents targeted in the 2015 hack. Merkel was asked about the

theft of data from her office in a question-and-answer session with lawmakers in parliament Wednesday. She replied: "I get the impression that they picked up relatively indiscriminately what they could get."

"I can say honestly that this pains me: on the one hand, I work every day for a better relationship with Russia, and when you see on the other hand that there is such hard evidence that Russian forces are involved in acting this way, this is an area of tension," she added.

# Israel: Pompeo meets Netanyahu to talk West Bank annexation

**Muhyiddin Yassin** 

been fully cleared".

convene.

address by the king, "as the

COVID-19 pandemic has not

6,779 coronavirus patients, with

111 dead. The Southeast Asian

country has not held any parlia-

Muhyiddin does not have ma-

jority support," Mahathir, once

the world's oldest head of gov-

ernment, said in a video mes-

sage on Facebook. "It looks like

there is an attempt to block me

from even speaking as a mem-

ber of parliament."

mentary session this year.

Malaysia has so far reported

"Parliament is not allowed to

which means

#### **DAVID M HALBFINGER &** LARA JAKES JERUSALEM, MAY13

WITH ISRAEL preparing to annex territory in the occupied West Bank and a flurry of clashes claiming the lives of an Israeli soldier and a Palestinian teenager, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo arrived in Jerusalem on Wednesday promising to push ahead with the Trump administration's proposal to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"There remains work yet to do, and we need to make progress on it," Pompeo said of the administration's "vision for peace" at the



Mike Pompeo with Benjamin Netanyahu. Reuters

start of a lightning-quick, sevenhour visit. It is the first official trip to Israel by any country's diplomats since the coronavirus pandemic shunted face-to-face meetings onto videoconferences. Pompeo, who disembarked from his jet wearing a red, white and blue mask, said his meetings with Israeli leaders would also address efforts to fight the coronavirus and to stop Iran's nuclear project and contain its expansionist moves in the Middle East.

Opponents of annexation have warned that it would kill the chance of a two-state solution to the long-running conflict and would spark violence that could quickly lead to the collapse of the Palestinian Authority, which governs the West Bank under the Oslo accords. The State Department has in recent weeks sought to downplay the Trump administration's role in shaping Israel's annexation plans. NYT





International market data till 1900 IS

We are happy the govt

# THE INDIAN EXPRESS, THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2020 ECONOMY

 $\bigcirc$ GOLD RUPEE OIL SILVER ₹41,705 §26.15 **⊗** ₹38,100 Note: Spot gold markets shut due to lockdown in major states; Indian basket as on March 19, 2020

SENSEX: 32,008.61 ▲ 637.49 NIFTY: 9,383.55 ▲ 187.00 NIKKEI: 20,267.05 ▼ 99.43 HANG SENG: 24,180.30 ▼ 65.38 FTSE: 5,948.02 ▼ 46.75 DAX: 10,677.48 ▼ 142.02

# **FM OUTLINES DETAILS OF ECONOMIC PACKAGE 79,250-cr liquidity boost from EPF** contribution cut, waiver extension

#### **ENSECONOMIC BUREAU** NEW DELHI, MAY 13

THE FINANCE Minister announced relaxations on contribution to Employees' Provident Fund in a bid to provide liquidity to both employees and employers of private sector companies. While it announced a 3-month extension (till August) of the ongoing waiver from payment of EPF contribution both for the employer and emplovee for establishments having up to 100 workers with 90 per cent having income below Rs 15,000, it also provided relaxation to all other private sector companies by reducing the statutory PF contribution of both employer and employee from 12 per cent to 10 per cent for the next three months.

In aggregate, the two decisions would cover 10.17 lakh establishments and 5.06 crore employees and provide a total liquidity of Rs 9,250 crore to both the employees' and employers of these establishments. The government also announced a cut in rates of Tax Deduction at Source and Tax Collection at Source by 25 per cent for non-salaried payments such as professional fees, interest, rent, dividend, commission, brokerage to



#### Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman with Minister of State for Finance Anurag Thakur in New Delhi Wednesday. Anil Sharma

dues." said Sitharaman.

of 12 per cent earlier.

What this will do is that while

provide more cash in hand to the tune of Rs 50.000 crore.

While the extension of waiver the employees will benefit in the for employees and employers of form of getting the 2 percentage smaller organisations and the contribution to be made by the government instead, is a continuation of the benefit that was announced plovers will also save on it as they by the Finance Minister in the first

relief package on March 26, on Tuesday she provided some relief to the employees' and employers of other businesses too. "It is necessary to provide more

take home salary to employees and also to give relief to employers in payment of Provident Fund about 4.3 crore such employees.

The benefit for employees is, however, available to only private sector entities as the government clarified that central public sector enterprises and State PSUs will continue to contribute 12 per cent as employer contribution.

The earlier decision, where the government will continue to provide for employee and employer contribution for smaller companies for three more months till August, will provide liquidity relief of Rs 2,500 cr to 3.67 lakh establishments and for 72.22 lakh staff. Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh said

raising the takeaway salary for emplovees to increase liquidity is good but the reduction of EPF rate could have been avoided.

In other tax compliance repoint of their EPF contribution as lated measures, the government part of their take home income for extended the income-tax return the next three months, the emdeadline for FY20 from July 31 and October 31 to November 30 will be required to provide for only and tax audit from September 30 to October 31. The deadline for 10 per cent PF contribution instead making payments under the The FM said that this move to Vivad se Vishwas Scheme withreduce statutory contribution will out paying interest and penalty provide liquidity of Rs 6,750 crore has also been extended to to both employers and employees December 31 from June 30, proover 3 months and will provide reviding an extension to the lief to about 6.5 lakh establishscheme by six months.

# Almost 40K projects to get relief from Rera compliance for 6 mths

### KARUNJIT SINGH& SANDEEP SINGH NEW DELHI, MAY 13

IN A relief to the real estate industry, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday announced that the Urban Development Ministry will give a directive to state regulators to allow extension of up to six months for the completion or registration date of projects which were set to expire on or after March 25, 2020.

The FM also announced a Rs 30,000-crore special liquidity scheme, in which the government will fully guarantee investments in investment grade debt paper of non-banking financial institutions, housing finance companies and microfinance institutions The FM said, "Treat COVID-19

as an event of 'Force Majeure' under RERA. Extend the registration and completion date suo-moto by 6 months for all registered projects expiring on or after 25th March, 2020 without individual applications'

Industry insiders say that the six month grace in compliance of norms under Real Estate Regulation and Development Act, is expected to provide some relief to almost 40,000 projects across the country. "There are around 45,000 RERA registered projects and almost 90 per cent of them are

"Treat COVID-19 as an event of 'Force Majeure' under RERA. Extend the registration and completion date suomoto by 6 months for all registered projects expiring on or after 25th March, 2020 without individual applications"

#### NIRMALA SITHARAMAN FINANCE MINISTER

ongoing and have a completion date after March 2020. So. all of them can extend their completion date by six months without having to pay any delay penalty to the customer," said Pankaj Kapoor, founder and MD, Liases Foras.

He further added that this is no significant relief for developers and the government should have provided for demand revival and financing for real estate companies.

There are some who feel this will provide a big relief. Sanjay Dutt, MD & CEO, Tata Realty and Infrastructure Limited said, "We welcome the Government's decision to treat the COVID-19 period as an event of force majeure to extend the registration and completion date by 6 months for all registered real estate projects. This will certainly alleviate a great amount of stress on the developers and also

has considered the recommendation on help homebuyers get their dream providing back-stop homes in the stipulated amount of time."While the FM also anfacility and stepping in nounced the special liquidity for 20% First Loss scheme, "Under the scheme in-**Guarantee for AA and** vestment will be made...in both debt paper of NBFCs HFC and mibelow cro finance institutions," said CHANDRAJIT BANERJEE, Sitharaman noting that NBFCs with lower credit ratings were DIRECTOR GENERAL, CII finding it difficult to get liquidity.

Sitharaman also announced a The stage is now set to partial credit guarantee scheme for rebuild the Indian investments of Rs 45,000 crore for industry and economy investment guaranteeing the first 20% loss from such investments. SANGITA REDDY

"The problem was that despite PRESIDENT, FICCI the RBI reducing repo and reverse

repo rates, I think there was limited on lending by banks to HFCs With this new and even NBFCs" said Arindam classification, a number Guha, partner at Deloitte India. of ACMA members Guha also said that the anstand to benefit as the nouncement of a "standstill period" of six months would help real sector is dominated by

estate companies avoid individual negotiations with state regulators for each project because of COVID-19 related delays.

"In the absence of such a provision, the issue (delay in construc-Announcement of ₹3L tion) would have to be dealt with crore collateral-free on a case by case basis with each state's real estate regulatory auautomatic loan ... will thority," said Guha. benefit 45 lakh units He added while this was only a

across the country directive, most state authorities would likely extend timelines for SHARAD KUMAR SARAF project completion and registration in the current circumstances.

# PRESIDENT, FIEO

smaller enterprises

**DEEPAK JAIN** 

PRESIDENT, ACMA

# Move will restore stability in financial markets: SBI chief

#### **ENSECONOMIC BUREAU** MUMBAI, MAY 13

BANKS ARE set to extend funds to lower rated non-banking financial companies and housing finance companies following the government's decision to offer credit guarantee support.

Banks which were pressing for a guarantee from the government to lend money to NBFCs despite the Reserve Bank of India opening a liquidity window for NBFCs and microfinance firms have welcomed the government guarantee announced in the stimulus package. "The envisaged support of full credit guarantees to the lower rated NBFC and HFC entities will restore stability in financial markets and could act as a clear enabling factor for compressing credit spreads," SBI Chairman Rainis

well as providing crucial support to stressed entities in the current situation," Kumar said.

Manoj Kumar Nambiar, MD, Arohan and Chairman of MFIN, said, "The first measure with full guarantee for Rs 30,000 crore and the second one for Rs 45,000 crore with 20 per cent partial guarantee for NBFCs, HFCs and MFIs is path breaking from the government of India." Deo Shankar Tripathi, MD & CEO, Aadhar Housing Finance, said, "the special liquidity of Rs

30,000 crore with government guarantee will encourage banks to subscribe investment grade debt papers of AA and below rated NBFCs, HFCs and MFIs."

"Now banks with government guarantee will happily draw funds from the RBI and support low rated companies. Another Rs 45,000 crore with 20 per cent first loss partial guarantee from government will encourage lenders to

Pandemic hit: 'Major states stare at ₹97,100 cr revenue loss in Apr'

Major states are collectively looking at a revenue loss of around Rs 97,100 crore in April alone due to the COVIDdriven lockdown, which has hit the revenues of businesses and the government alike, according to India Ratings

STATE GOVTS IN TROUBLE Both the Centre and states are struggling due to the dried-up cash inflow but the problems of states are

more precarious because the actual battle against the pandemic and the associated expenditure are met by them.

PUSHTOWARDS AUSTERITY

This is pushing them to adopt austerity measures and combine it with exploring new/more ways of generating revenues

**FROM WHERE DO STATES** EARNOWN MONEY? State GST, VAT, excise, tax and duty on electricity, and own non-tax revenue The revenue loss

for the 21 major states in April alone at ₹97.100 crore **Economic activity** is unlikely to normalise

until Q2

#### The lockdown has more debilitating impact on the states, which have a high share of own revenue in the total revenue mix Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala,

WORSTHIT

Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Telangana stand out Gujarat will be the worst hit as its own revenue head is highest at 76 per cent, followed by Telangana with 75.6 per cent, Haryana at 74.7 per cent, Karnataka at 71.4 per cent, TN at 70.4 per cent, Maharashtra 69.8 per cent. Kerala 69.6 per cent and Goa at 66.9 per cent

# 'Cash desperate' discoms to get ₹90K cr infusion: PFC, REC to manage amount

The funds will be

#### **ENSECONOMIC BUREAU** NEW DELHI, MAY 13

IN A move to bail out "cash desperate" electricity distribution companies (discoms) that have been struggling with repayment of dues to power generating (gencos) and companies (transcos), the government Wednesday announced a Rs 90.000 crore one-time "emergency liquid injection" to clear these dues. This government expects central public sector gencos to pass on the benefits of this move to the population by giving a rebate to discoms to pass on to their customers upon receipt of dues.

(PFC) and Rural Electrification Corporation(REC) will provide the amount owed to discoms by their customers so that this m nevcar

They desperately need help...all the state discoms are in serious crisis,' said Sitharaman.

Discoms have not been able to

"We want the benefit (of the

infusion) to be passed on to the

customer. We are, in fact, telling

the Central Public Sector genera-

tion companies that they shall give

rebates to those discoms which

infused once states give PFC and REC guarantees extract money from customers for providing electricity, which has left to ensure repayment them unable to pay their dues to of the amount gencos and transcos.

will be infused once states give PFC and REC guarantees to ensure repayment of the amount in the event that the discom is unable to pay back the corporations.

At the same time, some exhave passed these benefits to the perts have said that the move, final customer," she added. According to ReNew Power while beneficial in the short term, may not act as more than a quick-CMD Sumant Sinha, this may also be an opportune time for the govfix. If several systemic issues are not resolved, discoms may be back ernment to convince states to expedite distribution sector reforms, in a position where they are unable to pay gencos and transcos 'so that distribution companies again going forward, as per them. don't need a bailout next time and are able to become financially vi-

As per a presentation by the M discoms currently owe anproximately Rs 94,000 crore to power gencos and transcos. "Discoms today are facing unprecedented cash flow problems.

transmission

**Power Finance Corporation** 

Kumar sai "The measures for MSME through guarantees, equity infusion and debt support will incentivize bank lending to MSMEs as

support low and even unrated NBFCs, MFIs and HFCs, This measure will largely solve the liquidity issues of these lenders." he said.

Outlook: Things may improve somewhat in May due to the easing of some restrictions, the liquor sale being allowed is the most prominent one and a number of states while allowing have also raised the excise duty and some have raised VAT on petrol and diesel

Source: India then be used to pay off their dues Ratings/PTI

to the entities providing them with the power, said Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The funds

'No immediate relief': Industries in

According to analysts, the move may help discoms with short term liquidity issues, but it also raises several questions.

bleentitie

### Firms sign deal with Gilead to make Remdesivir

#### **ENSECONOMIC BUREAU** MUMBAI, MAY13

CIPLA ON Wednesday said it has signed a non-exclusive licensing agreement with Gilead Sciences for the manufacturing and distribution of Remdesivir, which has been issued an emergency use authorisation by the US FDA to treat COVID-19. As part of the deal, Cipla will be permitted to manufacture the API and finished product, and market it in 127 countries under its own brand name.

As per a PTI report, Jubilant Life Sciences. Hetero and Mylan have also entered into non-exclusive licensing agreements with Gilead for manufacturing and dis-

www.indianexpress.com

Employees' State Insurance (ESI) to pay the workers, was also not heard The Industrial Estate Manufacturers Association had

written to Sitharaman last month seeking relief and had reminded the Centre that the immediate priority of industries after the lockdown period will be to pay wages, electricity charges and the regular bank interests and "mainly bring back our workers and labourers back from their native places who have been trained all these years to work in our factory and workshops and to restart all the idle machinery all

these days due to lockdown." Full report on

tribution of Remdesivir. **US Fed's Powell** calls for more

#### REUTERS WASHINGTON, MAY 13

THE HEAD of the Federal Reserve warned on Wednesday of an "extended period" of weak economic growth, vowed to use the US central bank's power as needed, and called for additional fiscal spending to stem the fallout from the coronavirus pandemic.

Powell pointed to uncertainty over how well future outbreaks of the virus can be controlled and how quickly a vaccine can be developed, and said policymakers needed to be ready address "a range" of possible outcomes.

### BRIEFLY — NDB gives \$1 bn loan to India

Beijing: The New Development Bank of the BRICS countries has disbursed \$1 billion loan to India.

### **US** proposes Novelis to divest

Washington: The US Department of Justice is proposing a federal court to order Hindalco-owned company Novelis to divest Aleris Corporation's entire aluminium automotive body sheet operations in North America. PTI

### New role for Gawande

Bengaluru: Harvard surgeon Atul Gawande will step down as CEO to take on the role of chairman at Haven, the healthcare JV of Amazon, Berkshire Hathaway and [PMorgan Chase. REUTERS

### NFL fertiliser sales jump

New Delhi: NFL posted 71 per cent growth in fertiliser sales in April, as against year ago, as per a statement.

### Sebi chairman, Ficcie-conference

New Delhi:Sebi chairman Ajay Tyagi had a conference call with Ficci on Wednesday. ENS



#### **ENSECONOMIC BUREAU** MUMBAI, MAY 13

DOMESTIC STOCK markets on Wednesday rallied by 2 per cent as the much-awaited Rs 20 lakh crore stimulus package announced by the Prime Minister cheered investors. The Sensex gained 637 points to 32,008.61 and the NSE Nifty closed with a gain of 187 points at 9,383.55.

paise to 75.46 against the US dollar as fiscal stimulus by the government bolstered investor sentiment. However, risk sentiments were negative and the investor sentiment remained fragile over coronavirus concerns, analysts said. The stimulus package trig-

Growth rate

projected to

slow to 1.2% in

**PRESSTRUSTOFINDIA** 

UNITED NATIONS, MAY 13

2020: UN report

THE UN slashed India's projected

growth rate to 1.2 per cent in 2020

and forecast that the global econ-

omy will contract sharply by 3.2

per cent as the COVID-19 pan-

The World Economic Situation

demic paralyses the world.

### Maruti Q4 net falls 28.1%, unsure on demand revival

EXPLAINED The rupee appreciated by 5

gered a decent rally in the bench-

### Markets to read fine print

WHILE THE stimulus package has certainly boosted market mood, a lot will depend upon the details of the Rs 20 lakh crore package. Market participants will react to those details in the coming days and that would also set the tone for the rest of the session

mark as well, with the indices witnessing a huge gap-up opening and remained range-bound thereafter.

NEW DELHI, MAY 13

#### ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU MUMBAI, MAY13

MARUTI SUZUKI India is not sure by when the demand for cars would see a recovery.

Chairman RC Bhargava said it would be difficult to predict the recovery timeline as it would take 6-8 months to understand when the recovery would happen.

The company reported a 28.1 percent year-on-year fall in its net at ₹1.292 crore in the March quarter due to lower sales volume and higher sales promotion expenses. Despite the fall, Maruti's profit was in line with estimates as the effect of lower sales was partially offset by lower operating expenses, cost reduction efforts and reduction in corporate tax rate. FE

#### **ARUN JANARDHANAN** CHENNAL MAY 13

EVEN AS Tamil Nadu welcomed some of the measures such as collateral-free loans worth Rs 3 lakh crore, confederations of industries in the state seemed "deemployees pressed" after Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's slew of

measures were announced. Industry representatives who spoke to The Indian Express said crucial grievances they raised beabout the rate of interest," he said, fore the Finance Ministry in peti-

be satisfied to keep the status," said S Anburajan, head of the apex

#### referring to a demand raised by industries to reduce the interest tions were ignored. "New definition of MSME will rate from 10 or above to 6 or 7 per lead to confusions as both investcent Mohan C K, another leader ment and turnover conditions to of Tamil Nadu Small and Tiny

#### TN say crucial grievances ignored body of MSMEs in the state. crucial demand to use the A Shanmugavelayutham, a leader of the Tamil Nadu Small

and Tiny Industries Association, said a large majority of industries in the state, which are about 10 lakh with 20 to over 100 workers each, haven't paid wages for Shanmugavelayutham said MSMEs welcome the decision to provide collateral-free automatic loans worth Rs 3 lakh crore. "But again, the government is silent



by the debt schemes across the industry in a bid to stop the redemption pressure that could have created a liquidity problem not only for the industry but could

have led to a larger contagion effect in the financial markets.

over Rs 30,000 crore, Shah, who is also the chairman of Association of Mutual Funds in India. took the lead and came out promptly along with other indusplanning

try leaders to clam investors fiscal support nerve. Stating that the Templeton episode was a case in isolation, he came out to inform investors about the quality of papers held

Shah has held leadership roles with Axis Capital, ICICI Prudential Asset Management, Franklin Templeton and ICICI securities in the past. A gold medalist chartered accountant and a merit ranking cost accountant, his hobbies include reading and educating investors on financial

# Nilesh Shah at E-XPLAINED session today

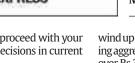
#### May 14 at 7 PM.

**ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU** While he will talk about the impact of pandemic on business and WITH THE coronavirus panmarkets, he will also address concerns of investors who have turned wary not only on their existing investments in mutual funds and stock markets but are even worried about their investments in bonds and fixed deposits with

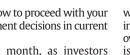
> A part-time member of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, Shah, an op-Asset timist on the Indian economy, will be available to demystify the economic package, how it may work and impediments to it be-



Franklin Templeton ddecision to



Last month, as investors investments following the



# ing aggregate investments worth

Nilesh Shah, MD at

Industries Association said a

Kotak Mahindra Asset Management wind up six of its schemes, block-

sides how to proceed with your investment decisions in current

turned wary on their debt fund



#### demic throwing challenges on all fronts including health, economy and livelihood among oth-

ers, financial security and capital protection have emerged as the top priority for individuals in current times.

Having spent 25 years in the capital markets and managed funds across equity, fixed income banks. and real estate for local and global

# THE INDIAN EXPRESS, THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2020 12 SPORT

SUPERFINAL



conked out briefly on the second day. Dutch

Grandmaster Anish Giri was so worried about

his internet connection that he spent the week

leading up to the tournament fishing out meth-

ods to keep the connection stable. "I was play-

ing in a smaller online tournament and the Wi-

Fi went out. I was furious. I did a lot of research

and I upgraded everything. Now my Wi-Fi is

To nail the wobbly connection, Dinara

Saduakassova, playing from her home in Nur-

Sultan, set up two mobile routers as a backup.

'We have a lot of unannounced power cuts in the city. So it's better to keep the mobile-

For Italian-American Caruana, a bigger

problem was that he couldn't go to the bath-

room between rounds. To keep the integrity of

the tournament and prevent cheating allega-

tions, FIDE had insisted on players not moving

from the chairs, which means they can't move

from where they are sitting and there are mul-

Indian Grandmaster Vidit Gujrathi. "I was just

trying to play as quickly as possible because

kind of had to use the restroom. I just wanted

the match to get over as fast as possible and I lit-

erally ran to the rest-room," he said in the post-

physical. Playing someone who's sitting miles

away, staring into a virtual board and the head of your opponent blinkering from the corner of

the screen. Admitted India's B Adhiban: "It's

like you're playing a computer. The whole in-

tensity and body language are missing. You get

used to it, but you miss that human element.

Though you ideally like to play in quieter envi-

ronments, you miss your opponent's face." It's

not fake, but as Caruana noted: "It's like play-

missed. "We are missing the emotional part

when people meet and shake hands. People

love when they look over the board into the

eyes of their opponent. People are missing that.

But this is a very good substitute," said FIDE

president Arkady Dvorkovich. He though could

not imagine a China-US finale in a real tourna-

ment. "That would have been sensational." he

said. It could have been the perfect storm too,

where political symbolism and posturing

would not have been too far away.

The emotional face of the game was

ing someone from a parallel universe.'

For many of them, the adjustment was

The urge forced him to play quicker against

phones ready. It's a saviour," she said.

tiple cameras gazing at you.

match interview.

absolutely insane," he told ChessBase.com.

"It depends on the character, Virat (Kohli) is such an imposing character, all encompassing, it would be difficult for him to hand over, he wouldn't want to hand anything over. Whereas with England, we have (Eoin) Morgan and (Joe) Root, two likeable, laidback (characters)." NASSER HUSSAIN ON SPLIT CAPTAINCY

# Enter the dragon, in black and white

China beats USA in Online Nations Cup superfinal; Kasparov says new superpower has emerged

SANDIP G NEW DELHI, MAY 13

IT WAS around midnight in Beijing that Chinese Grandmaster Wei Yi broke into a rueful smile, as his American opponent Fabiano Caruana, sitting in his beachside house in Miami, where it was just noon, killed a thrilling faceoff with a slick end-game manoeuvre. The victory left the FIDE Online Nations Cup superfinal locked in a 2-2 draw, though China were declared winners as they had won the roundrobin phase.

The four Chinese Grandmasters—Yi, Ding Liren, Hou Yifan and Yu Yangyi-appeared briefly for a video conference on the ChessBase website, that was live-streaming the weeklong tournament. Following on the livestream, their eyes looked sleepy but beaming, the voices sounded happy but drowsy to all who followed them online. Their American counterparts were dreary and downcast, though Caruana later lifted the gloom with his characteristic humour.

Bafflingly, despite the mounting friction between the two countries, the Chinese victoryor the American defeat—was not lost in political symbolism, layering and interpretations. Like when the Cold War was raging, and the Soviet chess machine was meant to demonstrate mental and athletic primacy over the decadent West. Here, even if you take the Trump administration's swelling antagonism of China, the accusations and castigations that had flown from the White House to Beijing in the last few weeks, tropes of ideological victory or metaphors of global domination weren't woven into China's triumph. For all what it was, the context didn't leap out of the 64 squares on the board. There was no political rhetoric.

It was as Garry Kasparov, agonisingly watching Team Europe plunge in the tournament, said after the final: "Solely the moment to acknowledge China as a superpower in chess. They have an exceptional generation of quality players. Maybe, one of them could be a future world champion."

A few weeks ago, in an entirely different context, the legendary chess player had criticised the country: "China will have to be held to account, and their free world enablers too. Past time to end the one-way street of engagement of dictatorships with the free world, ex-



A screenshot of the FIDE Online Nations Cup match between China's Ding Liren and the United States's Hikaru Nakamura.

porting corruption and death along with oil and goods." But here, he had kept the politics out of the board.

#### **Golden** generation

Whether one of their golden generation could wrestle the crown and sceptre from Magnus Carlsen (still only 29) has to be seen, but China has been making rapid strides in the game. Long ago chess was banned by Beijing for the first eight years of the Cultural Revolution.

Then in 1975 the Malaysian patron Dato Tan, in partnership with Chinese officials, conceived and financed the "Big Dragon" project to make China a global chess power. Its model was the USSR's state-run strategy in the 1930s and 40s, spotting players at a young age and putting them into the right climate to blossom. The state nourishes and develops them from childhood, carefully grooms them for the international arena, and handsomely awards them when they start yielding results, which they have been steadily accomplishing.

First China captured the women's world title from the previously dominant Georgians, before they advanced in the biennial team Olympiad until winning it in 2014. Finally, after many years when Chinese grandmasters stalled in the top 20 or 30, they found Ding,

who has a classical and dynamic playing style. Apart from the third-ranked Ding, they have three more in the top-25. Only Russia has more. And unlike the USA's talent pool, China's is entirely home-grown.

As much as the outcome of the tournament was a symbol of China's emergence as a chess superpower, it was a metaphor of hope in these trying times. When the pandemic and lockdown shuttered the sporting world, chess managed to conduct a tournament featuring the best of the world, barring Carlsen, who had just finished hosting his own online tournament recently.

Yifan candidly put the overwhelming emotion of the chess fraternity into words: "I'm actually more excited about that we are here. Under this global climate, it is very important that we are trying to bring up something together that makes chess somehow lift in the air. This is I guess a privilege for chess, that we can do a lot of different events online. I certainly had a lot of fun, and thoroughly enjoyed it."

It was fun, but it also required a lot of adapting and adjusting, for players, organisers, audience and arbiters. They had just three weeks to organise and prepare, and though it was not exactly a plunge into the unknown, it posed a whole new set of challenges.

Like Team Europe's Zoom conferencing

# Aarogya Setu app must for hockey players: HI

#### **MIHIR VASAVDA** NEW DELHI, MAY 13

TO BE eligible for tournaments, India's hockey players will first have to download the Aarogya Setu app on their mobile phones. The sport's governing body, Hockey India, has made it mandatory for all players and staff of its member associations to download the government's Covid-19 tracker, which has come under scrutiny for privacy-related issues.

In its 20-page guidelines to state units, Hockey India has said the app will be used to check the participant's health status and only those who are 'safe' or 'low risk' will be allowed to take part in tournaments, when they begin post-pandemic.'

"Before leaving for the upcoming event, all players and staff must review their status on 'Aarogyasetu' and travel only when the app shows 'safe' or 'low risk' status," the document reads. "Member Units are advised that in case the App shows a message that a person has a moderate or high risk calculated on the basis of Bluetooth proximity, he/she should not travel to attend the event.'

Other instructions handed out by Hockey India for the domestic teams to restart training include: playing five-a-side hockey matches on a full-length pitch; training in small groups, with the same set of players at all times; arriving at the ground dressed and ready to train; cleaning and sanitising the balls; and identifying areas to isolate a person who shows symptoms.

Although there is no direct reference, the guideline provides a glimpse into how national team training could look like in the near future. The women and men's national teams have been locked inside the Sports Authority of India's Bangalore centre since mid-March. The players from the two teams and the respective coaching staff will be emeeting sports minister Kiren Rijiju on Thursday. During the meeting, the players are expected to request Rijiju to allow the resumption of training, which has been halted after the enforcement of the nationwide lockdown on March 25, at the earliest.

Rijiju has said there will be a phase-wise resumption of sports, and priority will first be given to the athletes who have already qualified for the Tokyo Olympics with those @indianexpress.com

WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

#### THOSE MONTHS, **THOSE MINUTES**

Forced into an unprecedented lockdown, sport is staring at an unfathomable despair. Indian athletes, though, have given the country reasons to rejoice in the past. The Indian Express looks back at a bunch of these memories.



**CHETAN SHARMA** tells Vishal Menon how the hat-trick against New Zealand at the 1987 World Cup helped

exorcise ghosts of the Javed Miandad six a year earlier. indianexpress.com

already inside the SAI centres getting first preference. Hockey India has also been recommended that "organizers should look at naving Hockey 5s on the full length pitch".

"Full pitch could be divided into 4 parts, and maximum of 3-4 players could use each part at a time with minimum of 1 meter space between each player," the guideline reads. "The same set of 3-4 player(s) should train together at all times to avoid any spread of infection if incase anyone is affected at some point."

It further adds that only players and staff will be allowed at the training ground during practice, and even groundsmen will not be allowed to be around during a session. The players have also been advised to carry their own water bottles to the ground, fill it themselves and ensure no one else touches it. They have also been told to minimize the use of changing rooms and bathrooms at the ground and arrive for training in their kits.

The players will also have to refrain from the use of high-fives and fist-bumps, and 'avoid physical contact other than in normal play.' In the post-pandemic scenario, the guidelines state that 'spectators should ideally be limited.'





ACROSS			Down		
1	Pass, momentarily fail, then break down totally (8)	1	A short cut for sailors (4)		
5	Four-point bulletin (4)	2	Oaf holds some wood for making attack (4,3)		
9	Artist can't make a self- portrait without it (5)	3	Every kind of repetition is initial repetition (12)		
10	Feeling I'm one to get pushed around (7)	4	The outlook is misty from my seat (6)		
11	Debases actions meant otherwise (12)	6	Order of letters in the dictionary (5)		
13	Article getting serious towards the end (6)	7	Left with the threat of $evil(8)$		
		8	It's responsible for a boom in		
14	Grind a new bread (6)		flying(5,7)		
17	Spirited relations (5,7)	12	Sea passages (8)		
20	Shocking in respect to certain individuals	15	Possibly name one kind of plant (7)		
	(7)	16	Many dwell on this anagram		
21	Club youth leader's dramatic device (5)		made by setter (6)		

Public minister raised in the Declines to see games of 22 18 tennis(4) Old Testament (5) 23 Fish in turn goes bad (8) 19 A good song? (4)

Solutions Crossword 4116: Across: 1Reinforce, 8 Nouns, 9 Vintage, 10 Repeat, 11 Assign, 12 Decrease, 15 Tumblers, 18 Traits, 20 Reload, 21 Prevent, 22 There, 23 Signorina. Down: 2 Exits, 3 Nitwit, 4 Organdie, 5 Endear, 6 Funeral, 7 Isotherms, 11 Austerity, 13 Cast iron, 14 Implies, 16 Leaves, 17 Salver, 19 Tenon

SOLUTION: MAUVE, VIXEN, SUMMED, FLUNKY



#### CALVIN & HOBBES by Bill Watterson





JUMBLED WORDS **SOLUTION SUDOKU 4208 Difficulty Level 5s** Instructions 6 1 9 4 2 3 Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to To solve a Sudoku puzzle 8 4 the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get every digit from 1 to 9 7 σ 9 8 5 3 4 2 6 the answer for the given quip must appear in each of the 6 one - Philip Sidney (4,..,4) Either I will \_\_\_\_ a way, or I will \_\_\_ 1 6 5 7 8 4 9 3 2 nine vertical columns, in 4 each of the nine horizontal 6 4 2 3 9 MUVAE SEMUDM rows and in each of the 2 5 8 5 7 4 6 2 3 9 DOK nine boxes. 9 8 2 9 3 5 4 7 6 LNUYFK EVXIN 5 4 16 9 8 9 4 8 SU **Difficulty Level** 2 7 9 1 8 1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 6 3 5 4 7 6 8 4 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard; 7 5 384 2 9 6 1 2 3 5 5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius Answer: Either I will **find** a way, or I will **make** one - Philip Sidney

There's a lightness in the air today which has been lacking over the last few days. You'll find it easier to put serious long-term issues to one side and link up with people who are out to enjoy life. You

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23) cycles have shifted slightly. If your intuitions are functioning well, next week could bring might be surprised by the considerable change, so your strength of a partner's current actions are therefore passions, though. incredibly important. SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21) Your current behaviour is strongly driven by your beliefs, and there are now indications that you could be a little too rigid. It is one thing to have high principles but another to be obstinate when circumstances call for compromise. A little flexibility goes a long way.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23) Obviously you need to strike while the iron is hot, but whether that time is now is questionable. True, this is a suitable moment, but everything you do will be affected by changing circumstances in the future. That's obvious, I know, but easy

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23) Family members, or people you live with, seem to be playing an inhibiting role. perhaps cramping your style. However, should you feel unduly hemmed in by their habits and demands, think again. You may have unconsciously manoeuvred

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23) The Moon's challenge to your sign is gently romantic, but it also makes it easier for you to play the passive partner. It could be relaxing to let others go out and take the lead. That way you can share the pleasure if plans work out, but avoid the blame if they don't.

yourself into the

current situation.

to forget.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20) Financial pressures seem to be closely connected to social commitments. It may be that you have made promises which it will be difficult to fulfil, in which case you may now be able to make a dignified exit. If you can't escape from your commitments, then perhaps you can get some help.

This is often a very powerful time of

year for you, but

your long-term

You will no doubt

at home, so

hopefully circumstances will permit! If all

is in a state of upheaval, or if you

absolutely must go to work,

wherever you go. And avoid

risks: safety first, as they say.

you should try to create a cosy and domesticated atmosphere

enjoy spending time

AQUARIUS (Jan 21- Feb 19)

It is high time that you stopped allowing other people to take you for granted. You must recognize, though, that if you have allowed yourself to be undervalued in the past, some of the responsibility lies with you. Not all of it, I have to say, but some of it.

#### PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

The Moon is extending its passionate role in your chart, sensitising your emotions and bringing out those elements of your character which make you such an easy touch. You will eventually find it almost impossible to turn down romantic appeals.

R.N.I. No. WBENG/2005/20789 VOL. XVI No.46 Printed by V.Srinivasan and Published by V.Srinivasan on behalf of The Indian Express (P) Ltd JL No.29 & 30, N.H.-6, Mouza -Prasastha & Ankurhati, P.O. - Salap, P.S.-Domjur, Howrah - 711 409. Ph: (033) 66043825 & 66043847. Chairman of the Board : Viveck Goenka, Chief Editor : Unni Rajen Shanker, Editor (Kolkata): Rakesh Sinha\* (\*Responsible for selection of news under the PRB Act)Copyright : The Indian Express (P) Limited. All rights reserved. Reproduction in any manner, electronic or otherwise, in whole or in part, without prior written permission is prohibited. The Indian Express(R)











# Invest in independent journalism. Subscribe to The Indian Express E-paper

Introductory offer



OURNALISM OF COURAGE