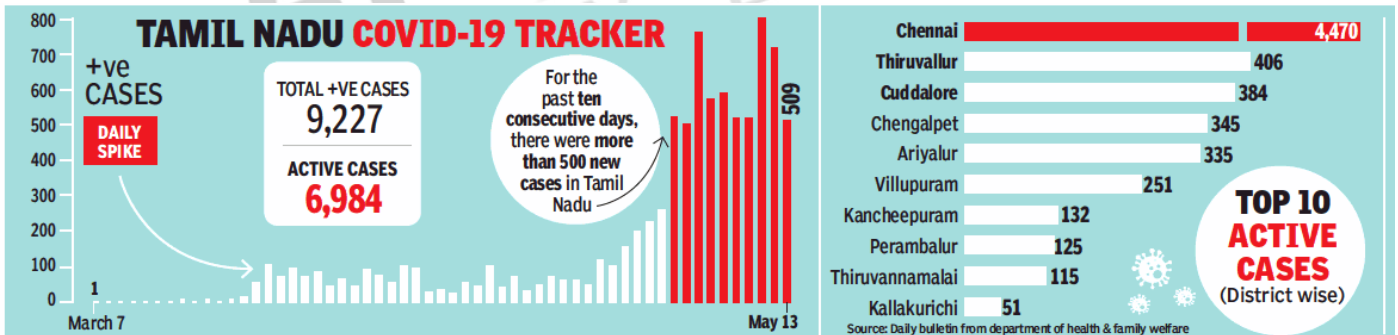


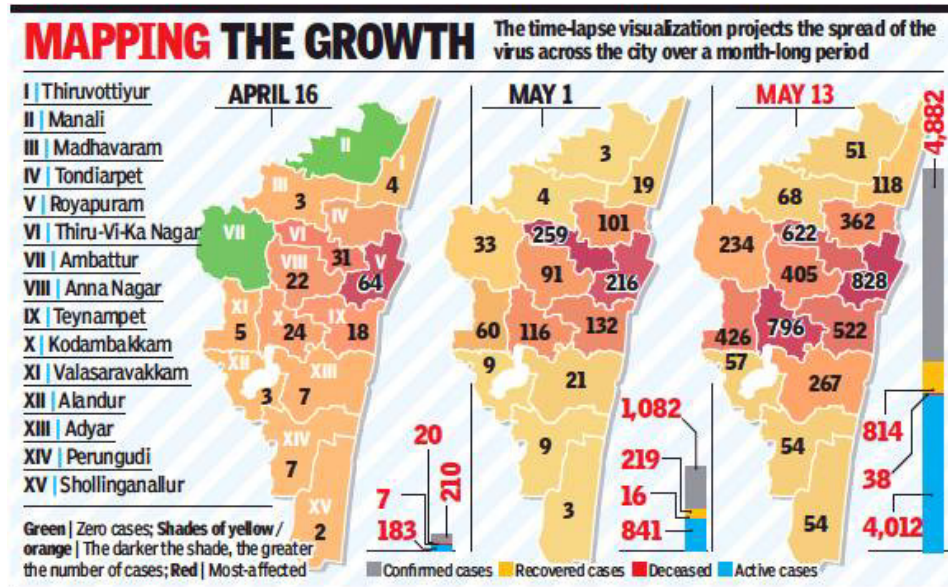
EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – MAY 14, 2020

TAMIL NADU

- On May 13, Tamil Nadu's Covid-19 positive count - rose to 9,227 with the reporting of 509 fresh cases (288 males and 221 females), with 380 of them in Chennai alone.
- ✓ The state's casualty reached 64 with three deaths reported in Chennai on the day.
- ✓ Apart from Chennai, which now has a total of 5,262 cases, 15 other districts reported new infections on the day.
 - ✓ Chennai's neighbours, Chengalpet and Tiruvallur registered 25 cases each while Kancheepuram reported four cases



- ✓ Cuddalore registered 17 cases and Tiruvannamalai 23 cases, while all other districts recorded cases in single digits
- ✓ The toll reported on the day includes - a 41-year old man admitted to KMC Hospital, a 48-year old man and a 43-year old man with comorbidities, both admitted at the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital.
- ✓ The total number of people tested on the day was 12,666, taking the total number of samples tested so far to 2,79,467.
- ✓ As many as 42 patients were discharged from hospitals on the day
- ✓ With this, 2,176 patients have been discharged so far, leaving 6,984 active cases in various facilities including hospitals



- ✓ One more private laboratory — Nu-Med Labs, Kancheepuram — has been approved for testing.
 - ✓ With this, there are a total of 38 testing facilities in the government and 18 in the private sector.
- ✓ Meanwhile, the Government had announced that all thirty-bed upgraded primary health centres (PHC) in the state will be designated as COVID-19 care centres (CCC)
 - ✓ There are a total of 412 upgraded PHCs in the State.
 - ✓ Each of the 385 blocks in the State has an upgraded PHC, while there are a few blocks that have two such centres.
- **The Scientists at the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) - have developed a new hand sanitizer using nanotechnology**

STAYING CLEAN

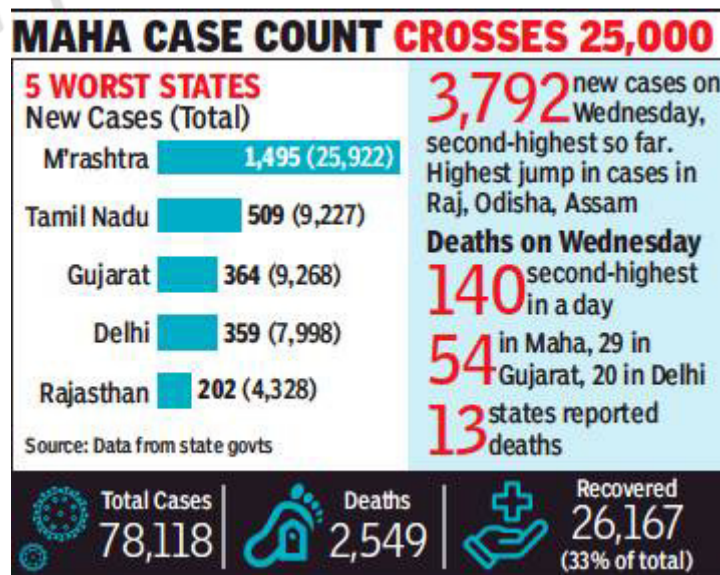
How nano sanitizer is more efficient than normal hand sanitizers

<p>How the nano sanitizer work? The nano system used in the formula acts as absorbents. It allows the alcohol and hydrogen peroxide to adhere to it, and then releases them slowly in a sustained manner, allowing the alcohol and hydrogen peroxide to remain on the hands for longer time</p>	<p>hydrogen peroxide, it evaporates within a minute once it's applied on the hands. While it removes particles that exist on the hand, its effect is not long lasting</p>
<p>How does normal hand sanitizer work? Containing 70% alcohol and</p>	<p>Advantages of nano sanitizer ➤ Can keep the hands clean for 10-25 minutes longer than normal sanitizers ➤ Uses the same formulation so is safe to use on human skin</p>

- ✓ The newly developed sanitizer was found to be more effective than the available products in the market as it provides protection to the hands from any virus or bacteria for at least 10 minutes more than normal sanitizers.
- ✓ In general, the sanitizer contains 70% alcohol, combined with hydrogen peroxide and glycerol, where alcohol and hydrogen peroxide act as disinfectants
- ✓ In the new sanitizer, scientists have used the same formula as approved by health department, but enhanced its efficiency using the concept of nanotechnology
- ✓ They have added 'naturally derived nanosystems' in the combination to act as adsorbents, so that alcohol and hydrogen peroxide molecules are released in a slow and sustained manner.
- ✓ This allows the disinfectants to stay longer on the hand surface.
- ✓ As per the trial findings, the new sanitizer effect was found to remain for 10 to 25 minutes longer than a usual sanitizer
 - ✓ The new sanitizer remains in hand for 10 minutes with the people who do physical work or washing, cleaning, lifting and handling objects frequently after applying the sanitizer had the effect only for 10 minutes
 - ✓ Similarly, people involved in desk work such as writing, typing, watching a movie or just attending an event had the effect on for around 25 minutes.
- ✓ The TNAU has also provided samples to the Indian Medical Association, Dental Association and Veterinary Association members and received positive feedback.

NATIONAL

- **On May 13, India - became the 12th nation to register more than 75,000 Covid-19 cases, crossing the milestone on a day when the country registered the second highest single-day count of both new cases and deaths**



- ✓ A total of 3,783 cases were added to India's coronavirus count on the day, second only to a record 4,308 reported on May 10.

- ✓ Maharashtra contributed the most on the day with 1,495 new cases, even as other states such as Tamil Nadu (509 new cases), Gujarat (364), Delhi (359), Rajasthan (202) and Madhya Pradesh (187) continued to add high numbers.
- ✓ The day's toll across India was 140, again the second-highest till date, with deaths rising in Maharashtra, which reported its highest count till date of 54.
- ✓ The Covid-19 death toll in Delhi crossed 100, as 20 fatalities were added on the day, by far the highest.
- ✓ The total coronavirus cases recorded in India went up to 78,118 late on the day, as per reports from states.
- ✓ On the day, Maharashtra crossed the 25000-mark to reach 25,922 positive cases of the Covid-19 infections with its third-highest jump in a single day.
- ✓ The overall death in the state is also gradually moving towards the 1,000 mark and stands at 975 as on date.
 - ✓ Maharashtra has been adding over 1,000 new cases every day for the last eight days, as a mammoth 10,397 cases and 358 deaths have been added on these eight days.
 - ✓ With respect to Mumbai, the cases again increased sharply to 800 on the day, after a dip in cases, making it the second highest single day addition so far.
 - ✓ With this, the city's overall case tally crossed the 15000-mark to reach 15,747.
 - ✓ Also, of the 54 deaths in the state, 40 were from Mumbai — the highest the city has seen in a single day.
- ✓ Meantime, the count of new cases in Kerala touched double digits (10) after a long time during which the state had reported zero new cases for several days.
 - ✓ Of the 10, four had come from abroad and two from Chennai
- ✓ On the day, Rajasthan reported its highest single-day jump in cases when 202 people were found infected with the virus, 61 of them in Jaipur alone.
- ✓ Besides, four persons died due to the viral infection in the state, taking the total casualties to 121
- ✓ Odisha too reported its biggest jump in infections, registering 101 positive cases, taking its total number of cases to 538
 - ✓ Of these, 90 were migrant workers who had returned from other states.
- ✓ Assam also recorded its highest single-day rise in cases with 15 new infections reported in Guwahati.
- ✓ As per the health ministry's data, the doubling time of confirmed Covid-19 cases improved to 12.6 days from around 10 days it had fallen to last week.
 - ✓ The doubling rate was three days before the lockdown.
 - ✓ The fatality rate from the viral infection stands at 3.2%, whereas the recovery rate stands currently at 32.8%
- ✓ The health minister Harsh Vardhan also announced that India had scaled up its testing capacity to 100,000 samples a day.

- On May 13, the government - unveiled a ₹5.5 lakh crore package as the first instalment of the “atmanirbhar (self-reliant) campaign” with a focus on MSMEs (micro, small and medium enterprises) and other measures for NBFCs and real estate.
- ✓ The package was announced a day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a ₹20 lakh crore stimulus to the ailing industries
- ✓ The package to MSME’s was significant as they were seen as key employers of unskilled, semi- and skilled labourers who have suffered the most during the lockdown implemented to tackle the spread of Covid-19.
- ✓ Under the new scheme, the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced 15 different measures.

PACKAGE ESTIMATED AT ₹5.5L CR

<p>MSMEs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ ₹3 lakh cr collateral-free automatic loans ➤ ₹50,000cr equity infusion through MSME fund of funds ➤ New definition of MSMEs. Investment limit revised upwards, additional criteria of turnover also being introduced ➤ Global tender to be disallowed up to ₹200cr ➤ Other liquidity support steps for MSMEs ➤ MSME receivables from the govt and PSUs to be released in 45 days <p>BENEFIT: 45 lakh units can resume business activity and safeguard jobs</p> <p>EPF</p> <p>₹2500cr EPF support for business workers extended for a period of 3 more months</p>	<p>BENEFIT: Provide liquidity relief to 3.7 lakh units and for 72.2 lakh employees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Statutory PF contribution of both employer and employee reduced to 10% each from existing 12% each for all establishments covered by EPFO for next 3 months ➤ CPSEs and state PSUs will continue to contribute 12% as employer contribution <p>BENEFIT: Relief to 6.5 lakh units covered under EPFO and about 4.3 crore employees, liquidity relief of ₹6,750cr to employers and employees over 3 months</p> <p>REAL ESTATE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ States being advised to invoke Force Majeure clause under Rera ➤ Registration and completion date for all registered projects to be extended up to 	<p>6 months; may be further extended by another 3 months based on the state's situation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Statutory compliances under Rera to be extended <p>TAX RELIEF TO BUSINESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Pending I-T refunds to charitable trusts and non-corporate businesses and professions to be issued immediately <p>OTHER TAX MEASURES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ TDS rates for non-salaried payment to residents, and tax collected at source reduced by 25% for rest of FY 20-21 <p>BENEFIT: Provide liquidity relief of about ₹50,000 cr</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Date of all income tax returns for assessment year 2020-21 extended to Nov 30, tax audit date extended to Oct 31 ➤ Date for payment without additional amount under “Vivad Se Vishwas” scheme extended to December 31
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- ✓ The finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman spelt out the government’s plan in the first set of announcements, which are expected to be spread out over the next few days
- ✓ The government’s move aims to provide liquidity to small and medium enterprises and also initiate reforms that would redefine the MSME sector and encourage firms to remove their fears of “growing bigger”
- ✓ The package focused largely on providing cash for the MSME sector, NBFCs, housing finance firms, micro finance companies as well as reducing tax deducted at source (TDS) and tax collected at source rates (TCS) to ensure more money in the hands of taxpayers.

- ✓ This will not apply to salaried people but help contract payments and those drawing professional fees
- ✓ The definition of an MSME is being expanded to allow for higher investment limits and the introduction of turnover-based criteria.

Existing and Revised Definition of MSMEs

Existing MSME Classification			
Criteria : Investment in Plant & Machinery or Equipment			
Classification	Micro	Small	Medium
Mfg. Enterprises	Investment < Rs. 25 lac	Investment < Rs. 5 cr.	Investment < Rs. 10 cr.
Services Enterprise	Investment < Rs. 10 lac	Investment < Rs. 2 cr.	Investment < Rs. 5 cr.

Revised MSME Classification


Composite Criteria : Investment And Annual Turnover			
Classification	Micro	Small	Medium
Manufacturing & Services	Investment < Rs. 1 cr. and Turnover < Rs.5 cr.	Investment < Rs. 10 cr. and Turnover < Rs.50 cr.	Investment < Rs. 20 cr. and Turnover < Rs.100 cr.

- ✓ The highlight of the package was a ₹3 lakh crore collateral-free automatic loans for businesses and the MSME sector
- ✓ It is expected to help nearly 45 lakh units in the MSME segment and more importantly, a few crore workers.
- ✓ The global tenders up to Rs 200 crore will also be disallowed to help MSMEs get a share of the business and not lose out to bigger competitors
- ✓ The FM also announced a reduction in the provident fund (PF) contribution of employers and employees for the next three months
- ✓ The Minister has also extended the scheme introduced as part of PM Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY) by another three months
- ✓ Under the PMGKY, the government contributes 12% of salary each on behalf of both the employer and the employee to the EPF for those earning less than Rs 15,000 per month in units with less than 100 workers.

TAKE-HOME SET TO RISE

➤ For a person with a monthly salary of ₹25,000, his contribution to EPF at 12% would be ₹3,000 and take-home income would be ₹22,000

➤ The employer would also contribute the same amount in the EPF.



Total contribution to EPF in employee's account would be ₹6,000

➤ Now, at 10% each, total contribution would be ₹5,000 and rest ₹1,000 will be given to employee as take-home. His monthly take-home income will be ₹23,000

- ✓ The extension will be for salary months of June, July and August.
- ✓ The total gain due to the move is about Rs 2,500 crore applicable to about 72.22 lakh employees.
- ✓ The main goal of the package is to build a self-reliant India, which is why the economic package is called 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan' with the focus would be on land, labour, liquidity and laws, as per the Finance Minister
- ✓ The FM also announced that the due date of all income tax (I-T) returns for assessment year 2020-21 will be extended to November 30, 2020.
- ✓ Similarly, the tax audit due date will also be extended to October 31, 2020.
- ✓ The date for making payment without additional amount under the 'Vivad Se Vishwas' tax dispute resolution scheme has been extended to December 31.

HOW MUCH WILL YOU GAIN

Payment	Existing TDS rate (%)	Reduced rate (%)
Interest on securities	10	7.5
Dividend	10	7.5
Life insurance policy payment	5	3.75
Payments for deposits under National Savings Scheme	10	7.5
Rent for immovable property	10%	7.5
Acquiring immovable property	1%	0.75
Payment of dividend by mutual funds	10	7.5
TDS on e-commerce participants	1	0.75

- ✓ The government has also decided to reduce the TDS rate for non-salaried payments and TCS by 25% for the remaining period of the fiscal year 2020-21
 - ✓ The move is expected to provide ₹50,000 crore in the hands of taxpayers and will benefit self-employed, professionals and senior citizens
- **On May 13, the government - announced a Rs 90,000-crore, roughly \$12-billion, cash boost to lift state distribution companies (discoms) from distress**
- ✓ The move is expected to bail out the discoms from their financial misery, restart the cycle of liquidity and investments as well as provide fundamental changes in the power sector.
 - ✓ The details for the power section were announced by finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman
 - ✓ The government also announced a plan to reduce the 'fixed charge' — which has to be paid even when there is no consumption — in the power bills of small industries, businesses and commercial establishments

- ✓ Under this plan, generation companies (gencos) will give rebate in their fixed charge to discoms, which will pass the relief to consumers.
 - ✓ The Power Finance Corporation (PFC) and Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) will extend the money to the discoms in two tranches.
 - ✓ In return, the discoms will have to use the money only for paying their dues to the generation and transmission companies.
 - ✓ Besides, the money will be used by the discoms to improve operational efficiency — such as state governments clearing their dues to discoms in 3 years, installing smart meters, improving billing and collection as well as reducing line losses due to theft or old infrastructure.
- ✓ The announcement is expected to improve infrastructure by the states and discoms and obtain collection efficiency

- **On May 13, the government - said it will release ₹3,100 crore from the PM CARES Fund towards care of guest workers, purchase of ventilators and support vaccine development for the Covid-19 virus.**
- ✓ The PM CARES Fund was set up on March 27 to support India's fight against the pandemic.
- ✓ The Trust is headed by the PM with three ex-officio members- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Home Minister Amit Shah and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.
- ✓ The total amount of ₹3,100 crore will be distributed for three activities –
 - ✓ ₹2,000 crore will be used to purchase 50,000 'Made in India' ventilators to support India's healthcare infrastructure
 - ✓ ₹1,000 crore will be provided to state governments towards the accommodation, food, medical treatment and transport arrangements for guest workers, the worst sufferers of the lockdown
 - ✓ ₹100 crore to be utilized for the vaccine development for Covid-19, which will be utilised under the supervision of the principal scientific advisor to the PM
- ✓ According to the government, states will receive funds in proportion to their population as per 2011 census, and the number of corona cases.
- ✓ An equal share of 10% will also be given to all states and UTs to ensure basic minimum sum for all states.
- ✓ The funds will be released to the district collectors through the state's disaster relief commissioners
- ✓ PM-CARES is an abbreviation for PM's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations.

- **The home ministry – has decided that all central armed police forces' (CAPF) canteens and stores across the country will stock and sell only indigenous products from June 2020.**
- ✓ These would, however, include foreign brands manufactured in India

- ✓ The move by the ministry comes a day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi appealed to citizens to use products made in India as part of the theme 'Vocal to Local' and make the country self-reliant
 - ✓ As per the move, the total purchase value of indigenous products would be around ₹2,800 crore.
 - ✓ It will make around 50 lakh family members of about 10 lakh central armed police forces personnel use 'Made in India' products
 - ✓ Central Police canteen (CPC) system was started in 2006 as a welfare measure for serving and retired central paramilitary personnel (from BSF, CRPF, CISF, ITBP, SSB and Assam Rifles) personnel.
 - ✓ These canteens sell all types of products right from daily provisions to electronics items like phones and TV, except liquor
 - ✓ These are procured directly from the manufacturing companies by the central purchase committee at concessional rates with discounts offered to the personnel ranging from 30% to 50%
 - ✓ The central purchase committee of the Central Police Canteen system is headed by an Additional Director General-rank officer.
 - ✓ As per the CPC website, there are 119 master canteens which act as distribution centres and 1,778 subsidiary canteens selling products to personnel and their families.
 - ✓ CPC has also registered two-wheeler and four-wheeler firms to provide vehicles to own troops at cheaper rates.
 - ✓ Of late, CPC canteen facility has also been extended to personnel of various departments under MHA and other central security agencies personnel viz RPF, IB, SPG, NCRB, NIA and all state police organisations.
- **Indian Army – has submitted a radical proposal to the Government for inducting youngsters for a three-year “Tour of Duty (ToD)” tenure as both officers and jawans**
- ✓ The move is being proposed by the around 12-lakh strong Army against the backdrop of the urgent need for cadre-restructuring

'NO CONSCRIPTION'

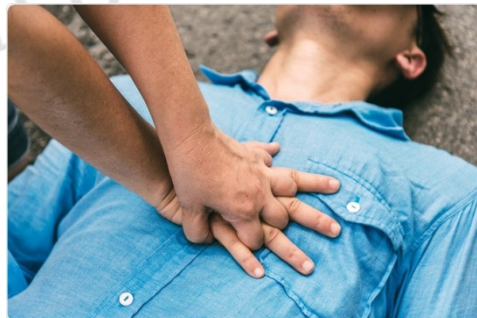
- 'Tour of Duty' scheme will initially be launched with around **100 vacancies for officers and 1,000 for jawans**
- According to an Army study, 'cumulative cost' of training, pay & severance package of an SSC officer is **₹5.1 cr.** Cost for a ToD officer released after 3 years would be **₹80-85 lakh**

- ✓ Once approved by the Government, the ToD scheme will initially be launched with 100 vacancies for officers and 1,000 for jawans.
 - ✓ The ToD scheme would offer “voluntary military service” as against the existing “permanent service” in the armed forces.
 - ✓ It is also expected to provide a savings in the overall expenditure incurred by the Army, against the mounting pension and other benefits served to its personnel
 - ✓ The Army currently has around 43,000 officers, with around 80% of them in the permanent commission (PC) cadre, and 11.8 lakh in other ranks.
 - ✓ The minimum service tenure for a short-service commission (SSC) officer is 10 years
 - ✓ However, around half of them are granted PC to serve till at least 54 years of age and thereafter get pension.
 - ✓ According to the estimates by the Army, the “cumulative cost” of the pre-commission training of an SSC officer, pay and allowances, gratuity and a proposed severance package amounts to ₹5.12 crore, if the officer leaves the force after 10 years.
 - ✓ Against this, the cost for a ToD officer released after three years will be only around ₹80-₹85 lakh
- **On May 13, the government - announced two major relaxations to the private contractors – granting an extension of up to six months for completing the pending works and partial release of bank guarantees to ease cash flows as per the completion status of the projects.**
- ✓ The move is expected to bring some relief to private contractors engaged by central government agencies
 - ✓ According to the announcement, all real estate projects that had a scheduled completion date on or after March 25 will get six months extension
 - ✓ Apart from this, real estate regulators (RERA) will have an extension of another three months considering local conditions.
 - ✓ These relaxations will be extended to goods and services contracts as well.
 - ✓ The first announcement by the government will ensure that the contractors are not harassed by the banks and other financing agencies for delay in meeting the deadlines set by the clients such as NHAI, road transport ministry, railways and CPWD.
 - ✓ The second move of providing partial release of bank guarantee will benefit small contractors, as it will ease their liquidity concerns for executing projects.
 - ✓ Usually the smaller contractors bear the higher cost for bank guarantee as financial institutions seek higher collateral
 - ✓ Already, RERA authorities in Maharashtra, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu have given extensions for completion of projects registered under the law by 3-5 months.

- **On May 13, the Supreme Court – has issued a notification allowing judges and lawyers to appear before virtual courts wearing white shirt and a lawyer’s band**
 - ✓ The notification has given exemption to the colonial practice of wearing black coats and gowns to the Judges and lawyers in the Courts due to the threat of Covid-19
 - ✓ The notification issued by the SC CJI S A Bobde reads – “considering medical advice, as a precautionary measure to contain spread of coronavirus infection under the prevailing conditions, the competent authority has been pleased to direct that advocates may wear plain white shirt/white salwar kameez/white saree, with a plain white neck band during hearings before the SC through virtual court system till medical exigencies exist or until further orders”
 - ✓ On the day, in virtual court number one, CJI S A Bobde and Justices Indu Malhotra and Hrishikesh Roy had assembled to hear important matters through video-conferencing.
 - ✓ While Justice Malhotra was in a saree, the other two judges were wearing white shirts and black ties.

- **India – has set an unwanted record of the longest disruption of Internet in the entire world for a period of thirty-six weeks, 6 days and 9 hours in the second half of 2019.**
 - ✓ During that time, India made 26,698 requests seeking information from 39,664 Facebook accounts, the second highest after the US
 - ✓ This was revealed by the Facebook Community Standards Enforcement Report released on May 12.
 - ✓ It is the latest bi-annual report on policy within the Facebook and government requests it responds to, and challenges on both fronts
 - ✓ The duration of disruption in India is, for the first time, the highest in the world since Facebook started sharing data on internet disruptions in 2016.
 - ✓ The number of disruptions in India, at 40 (out of 45 in the world), remains the highest, as it has in the past four years.
 - ✓ The major shift lies in the state where the disruptions occurred.
 - ✓ Uttar Pradesh, for the first time, displaced J&K as the region with the most disruptions — 17.
 - ✓ In terms of duration, J&K has faced the longest disruption not only in India but world over.
 - ✓ Globally, the number of government requests for user data went up by 9.5%.
 - ✓ India continued to be the second biggest seeker of Facebook account data after the US for the sixth consecutive year
 - ✓ However, the number of content restriction requests from India has been going down — from 1,250 in the first half of 2019 (it was placed third on the list) to 841 in the latter half of 2019 (it’s at eighth spot now).

- **The National council of educational research and training (NCERT) – has recently submitted its proposal to the Ministry of HRD, for the review of the National curriculum framework (NCF), the biggest exercise in school education reforms**
- ✓ As per the proposal, by April 2021 the new curriculum would be ready and the development of the new school textbooks will commence.
- ✓ The textbooks will be ready by April 2023, and the new curriculum content will be reduced in each subject to its core essentials.
- ✓ The development of the new curriculum will be according to the reforms proposed in the National Education Policy 2020 which is likely to be placed before the Union Cabinet by the end of this month.
- ✓ The review of the NCF is a comprehensive exercise which will target both the content and methods of teaching in schools.
- ✓ Earlier, the NCERT started its internal work from November and submitted its proposal for setting up of the steering committee.
- ✓ The revision of NCF will be happening after 15 years.
- ✓ The introduction of the new NCF will be as per the implementation of the examination reforms such as uniform assessment and evaluation system under the proposed National Assessment Centre as proposed by the NEP 2020
- ✓ The new national education policy is likely to be announced by end of this month.
- **The Government – has urged the public that cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) cannot and should not be done in certain circumstances**
- ✓ This was revealed in the ICMR's consensus guidelines on 'Do Not Attempt Resuscitation' (DNAR) published in the Indian Journal of Medical Research.



- ✓ The guidelines, a first in India, state that the decision on whether to perform CPR or to allow natural death is the responsibility of the Doctor.
- ✓ The guidelines have been formulated by a committee set up by ICMR.
- ✓ They state that in certain circumstances doing CPR could increase suffering for patients, like those who have serious terminal illness, without benefitting the quality of life even if they are revived.
- ✓ When performed in time on a relatively healthy patient, it can be life saving.
- ✓ But if done on already seriously ill patient or if the procedure begins late for any reason, then it may not succeed and can lead to a terrible situation, wherein the

heart restarts but the brain is badly damaged by loss of blood circulation for a crucial period of time.

- ✓ In week, ill and elderly patients, it can be a traumatic and useless exercise, leaving behind broken ribs and unnecessarily prolonging death
 - ✓ In a separate announcement, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has announced that it has fast-tracked the rollout of the global 'Solidarity' trial launched by the WHO to help find an effective treatment for COVID-19
 - ✓ As part of the trial, four potential anti-viral agents — Remdesivir, Chloroquine/Hydroxychloroquine, Lopinavir-Ritonavir and Lopinavir-Ritonavir with Interferon (beta-1a) — are to be evaluated
- **The Centre – has organized 690 Shramik special trains till May 13, catering over eight lakh stranded guest workers, students and tourists**

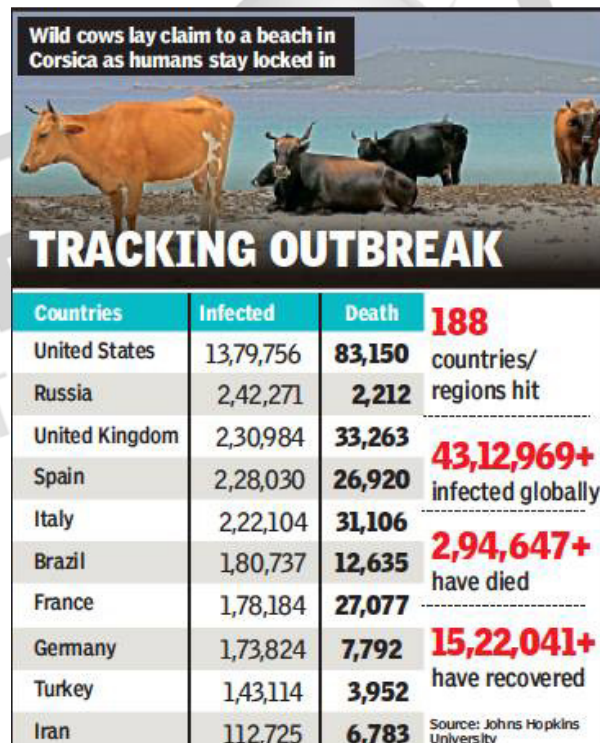


- ✓ Uttar Pradesh was the destination for 301 trains, followed by Bihar (169) and Madhya Pradesh (53).
- ✓ The maximum number of these special trains originated from Gujarat, Punjab and Telangana.
- ✓ The Shramik special trains were started on May 1 with four trains were planned carrying 3,645 passengers
- ✓ On May 12, around 1.43 lakh passengers were carried by 101 trains, which was the highest number of travellers to perform the journey, ever since the operation started.
- ✓ On May 10, another 101 Shramik Specials had carried 1.22 lakh passengers.

INTERNATIONAL

- **The Covid-19 - is expected to drastically reduce global economic output by nearly \$8.5 trillion over the next two years, as per the UN's mid-year report**
- ✓ The United Nations is forecasting that the world economy will shrink by 3.2% this year, the sharpest contraction since 1930s Great Depression.

- ✓ On May 13, the European Commission announced its recommendation for travel across the EU, saying countries with similar levels of outbreaks should ease restrictions.
- ✓ The safety precautions to be followed include - airlines and airports should insist passengers wear masks, and reorganise check-ins and drop-offs to avoid crowd build-ups.
- ✓ Austria said its border with Germany would reopen fully on June 15, and that border checks would be reduced from May 15.
 - ✓ It is also aiming for similar agreements with Switzerland and its eastern neighbours.
- ✓ The Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have also agreed to allow travel among the three nations from May 15.
- ✓ New Zealand, which reported no new cases on May 13, and Australia have also agreed to allow travel between the two nations.
- ✓ Meanwhile, UK started easing curbs but only in England, where people were allowed to leave their homes.



- ✓ In US, the House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has unveiled the Democrats' proposal for the next phase of Covid-19 relief package, named as 'The Heroes Act'.
 - ✓ The \$3 trillion stimulus bill broadly covers assistance to state and local governments, direct cash aid to individuals and a work visa extension of 90 days after expiry.
 - ✓ It also intends to expedite processing of visas for medical professionals.
 - ✓ The bill will be voted this week by the US house representatives.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **Russia – has announced that the drug Favipiravir has produced promising results in early clinical trials and is a candidate drug for treating the new coronavirus**
- ✓ The Russian Direct Investment Fund has provided 150 million roubles (\$2 million) in funding for the clinical trial project.
- ✓ Around 60% of the 40 patients taking tablets of Favipiravir tested negative for the virus within five days
- ✓ As per the trials, the treatment was expected to cut coronavirus recovery times in half.
- ✓ Favipiravir was first developed in Japan under the name Avigan
- ✓ Avigan was developed in the late 1990s by a company, which was later bought by Fujifilm.
- ✓ The drug works by short-circuiting the reproduction mechanism of certain RNA viruses such as influenza.
- ✓ Favipiravir is also undergoing trials in India by Glenmark Pharmaceuticals Ltd.
- ✓ The clinical trial of 330 patients is expected to be completed by May.

APPOINTMENTS

- **On May 12, senior IAS officer V. Vidyavathi – has been appointed as the new Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet**

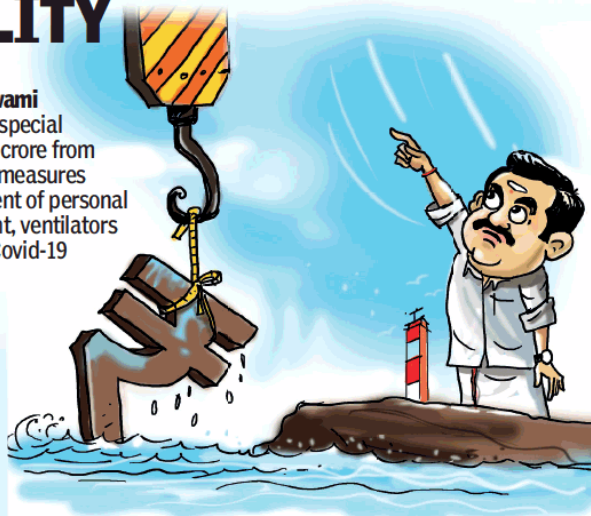


- ✓ She will be serving in the rank of Additional Secretary to the Government of India.
- ✓ Vidyavathi is a 1991 batch Karnataka cadre officer
- ✓ The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet is headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

COVID-19 FUNDS FOR TAMIL NADU FROM CENTRE – A REPORT

TAMIL NADU'S EXPECTATION & REALITY

TN chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami sought on March 25 special assistance of ₹4,000 crore from the Centre for relief measures including procurement of personal protective equipment, ventilators and masks to fight Covid-19



SPECIAL AID

Through a letter to PM Narendra Modi, Palaniswami sought ₹9,000 crore assistance on April 2



TEST KITS

TN sought supply of 2 lakh rapid test kits from the Centre



LIFE LINE

State demanded a separate financial package for Tangedco to pay off power companies



FARM PUSH

Special package for agriculture and horticulture promotion



LOCAL BODY FUNDS

TN sought 50% of 2020-21 Finance Commission grants to urban & rural local bodies and 50% of revenue deficit grant for the current fiscal

WHAT TN GOT FROM CENTRE (in ₹ crore)

December-January GST compensation	1,369
SDRF share	510
Share of Central taxes as per finance commission devolution	1,920
Urban local body grants	987.85
Rural local body grants	910.55
Share from National Rural Health Mission	312

SDRF: State Disaster Response Fund



Text: B Sivakumar

Instalments to clear revenue deficit

₹1,928 crore and ₹355 crore

Centre has announced

₹90,000 crore financial package for all discoms, including Tangedco. Specific allocation for Tangedco not yet announced

GST PIE



Sought release of GST compensation due for December-January 2019-20. After RBI increased ways and means limit of the states by 30%, TN demanded that it be made double and it be provided without interest

State demanded release of ₹7,214 crore GST dues from Centre, pending since 2017

TN also wanted relaxation of fiscal deficit cap of 3% on GSDP for 2019-20 and 2020-21

HOW TO BUILT IMMUNITY AGAINST COVID-19 – A REPORT

IT'S OFFICIAL: VITAMIN C, ZINC HELP BUILD IMMUNITY AGAINST COVID-19

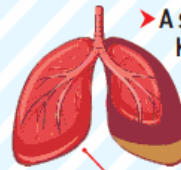
Research into efficacy of vitamin supplements suggests that **Vitamin C and Zinc** help cut down infection, apart from boosting immunity, crucial in the war against Covid-19



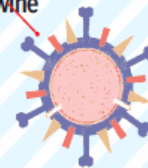
Vitamin C or **ascorbic acid** is a **water-soluble vitamin** found in **citrus fruits and green vegetables**. It is a potent antioxidant critical for skin health and immune function

VITAMIN C & INFLAMMATION

> In an article published in the Chinese Journal of Infectious Diseases, the Shanghai Medical Association endorsed use of high dose vitamin C as a treatment for people hospitalized with Covid-19



> A study in the same journal by Kim H and Jang M found that Vitamin C can reduce lung inflammation in severe respiratory illnesses caused by influenza A virus/H1N1 infection (swine flu). Perhaps this prompted Chinese physicians to start using intravenous Vitamin C doses for Covid19 patients



> However, it's important to note that vitamin C is not yet a standard part of the **treatment plan for Covid-19** because **conclusive evidence is still lacking**

FOOD RICH IN VITAMIN C (mg per 100g)



Green chilli
242 mg



Guava
228 mg



Blackcurrant
181 mg



Red pepper
142 mg



Broccoli
90 mg

ZINC & HUMAN HEALTH

> Zinc, a mineral required for function of over 300 enzymes, maintains our immune system and repairs body tissues



> Diabetics, hypertensives, elderly and women who are pregnant or breastfeeding run the risk of zinc deficiency. Meat, poultry and eggs are good sources of zinc

ZINC FOOD



ZINC & IMMUNITY

Zinc is a general stimulant of antiviral immunity. Studies have shown that zinc has a broad-spectrum antiviral activity against viruses

> A Cochrane medical review involving 18 randomized trials on 1,781 participants across all age groups found that **zinc - particularly in lozenges or syrup form - inhibits replication of the virus that causes common cold**

> Leiden Medical researchers in the Netherlands reported that zinc inhibits a cousin of SARS-

CoV-2 | **SARS-CoV, the original SARS of the 2003 outbreak**

> James A Robb of University of Colorado School of Medicine, says **zinc will inhibit the replication of many viruses, including coronaviruses**, while he admits he has no direct experimental support for this claim

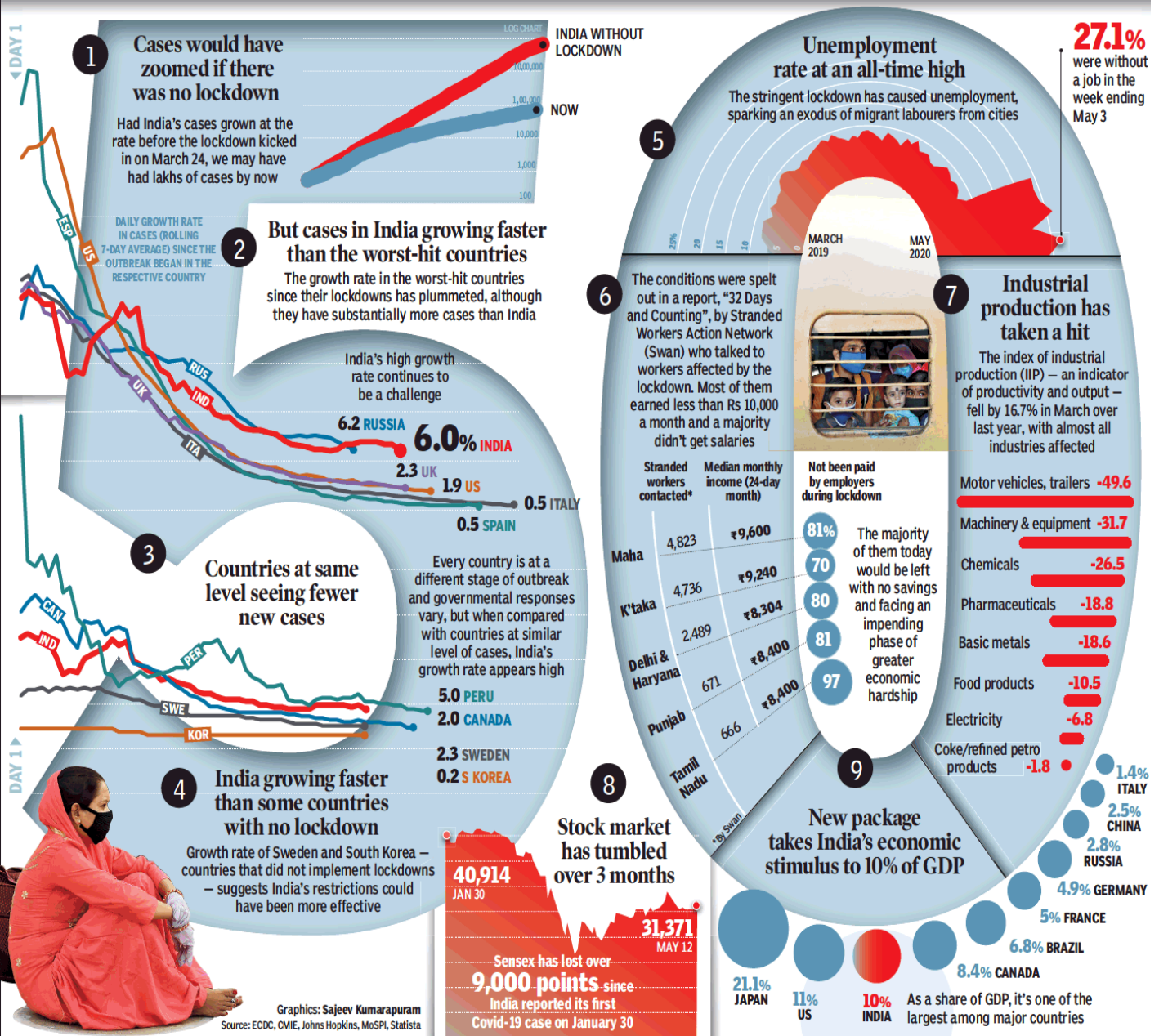
Text: Dr T S Chandrasekar

50 DAYS OF LOCKDOWN – A REPORT

LEARNING TO LIVE WITH THE CORONAVIRUS



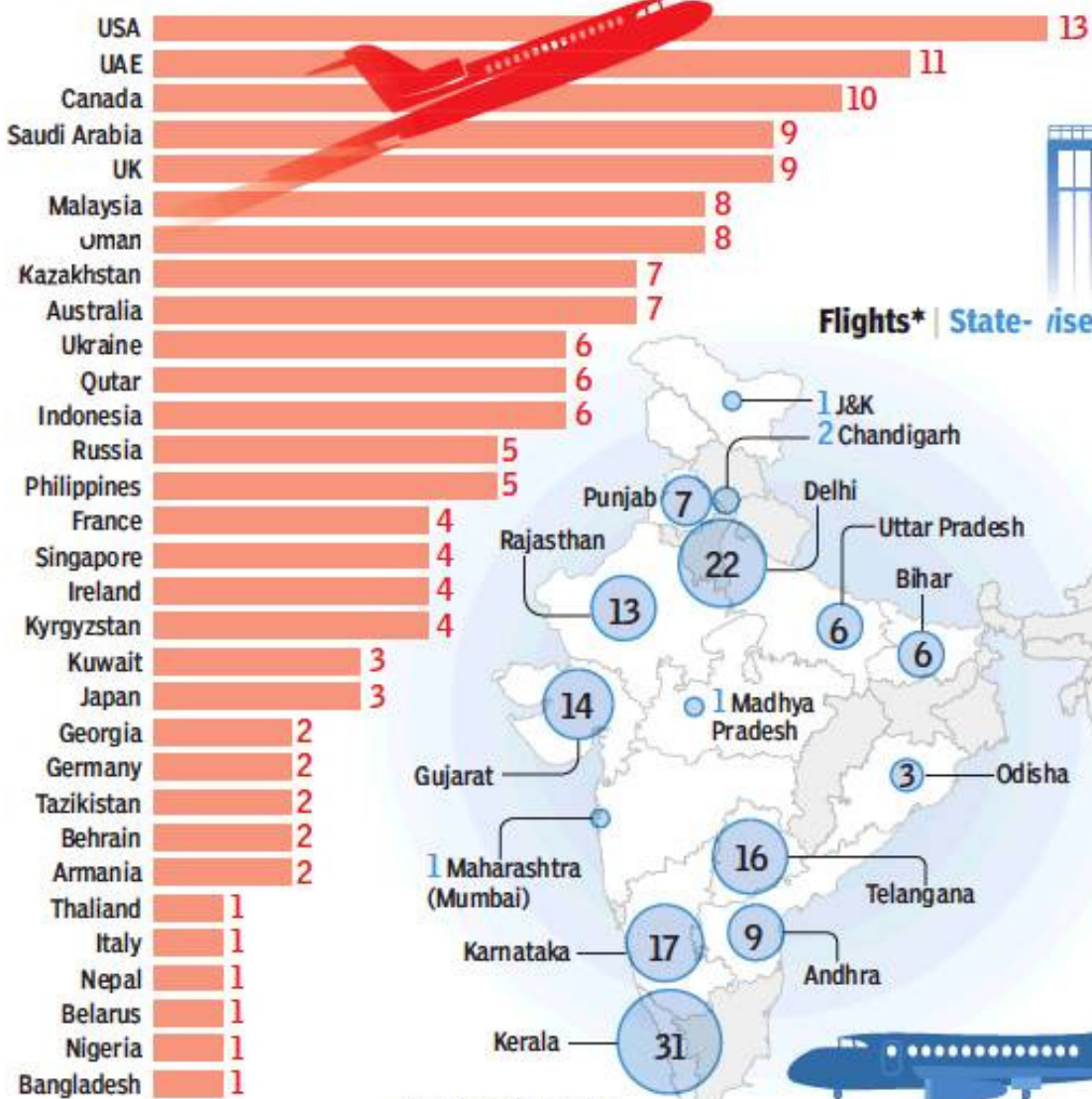
Today, we complete 50 days under lockdown. Two things are now very clear. One, our coronavirus numbers would have been much higher had we not locked down in March-end. And, two, the economy is in bad shape: unemployment has shot up, factory production has crashed and the stock market has tanked. But now, a substantial stimulus package has been announced, and there are indications that even if the lockdown is extended beyond May 17, large parts of the country will open up. After 50 days, it is evident that the coronavirus is not going away in a hurry, and we will have to learn to live with it – take every precaution, but not be paranoid. Atul Thakur looks at the numbers to see how we performed, and why it is now clear that staying fully locked down is no longer an option



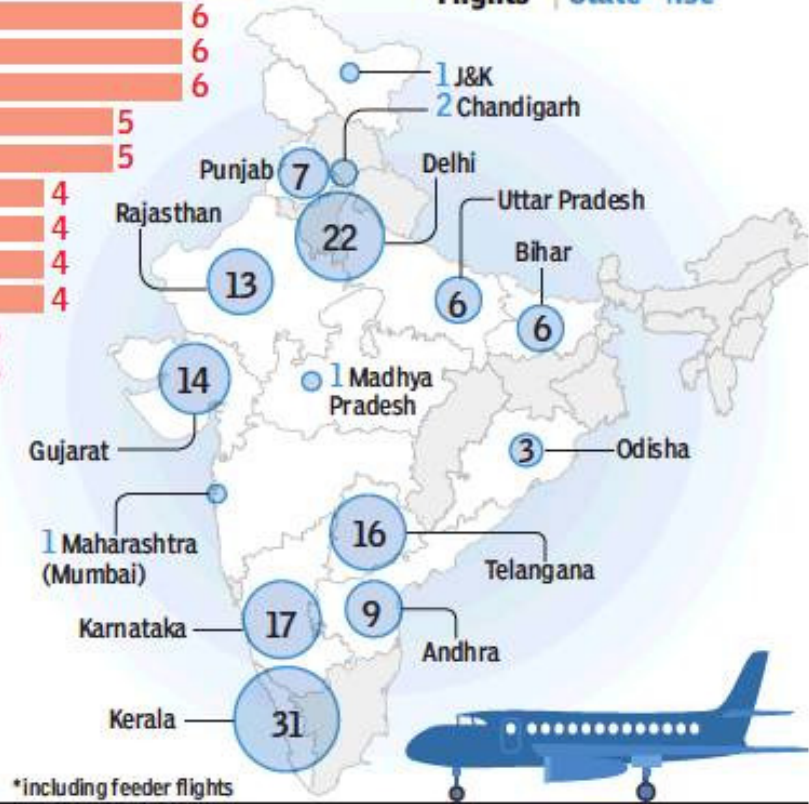
FLIGHTS IN SECOND PHASE OF VANDE BHARAT MISSION – A REPORT

FLYING IN THE EXPATS

Flights* | country-wise



Flights* | State-wise



*including feeder flights

