India eyes over 20,000 tests a day

Modi urges all not to be tired in long fight against virus as 32 die in a day

AGENCIES

India, like a lot of countries plunged into crisis by the pandemic, is struggling to ramp up testing for the coronavirus, but in few places would the odds of containing the disease appear so bleak should domestic transmission start to multiply.

Officials hope to be testing 20,000 people daily by the end of the week, four times the current rate.

Since India's first case was confirmed on Jan 30, they have only conducted 90,000 tests, having focused efforts on identifying people who had come in contact with anyone who has tested positive.

The results show 4,067 people are infected, and 109 have died of the respiratory disease. John Hopkins University data shows the case and death numbers as 4,314 and 118 respectively. 32 people died yesterday and 693 fresh cases were reported in the last 24 hours alone, the highest toll so far.

Officials believe the three-week nationwide lockdown ordered by Prime Minister Narendra Modi will have slowed the spread of the virus in communities, giving them a chance to catch up in the race to stop a full blown epidemic.

Modi yesterday heaped praise on the public for the "maturity and seriousness" shown by them during the lockdown. But said the crisis is not going to fade away soon.

"It is going to be a long war, we can't be tired. Our resolve and mission are to emerge victorious in fight against this pandemic," he told BJP workers on the party's 40th foundation day.

Testing had already doubled in the last two days from 5,000 samples a day, a health official said.

"This is expected to reach 20,000 in the next three days and increase further over the next few weeks as per the plan," the official said.

Worldwide, more than 1.25 million people have been reported infected by COVID-19, and far wealthier countries than India have been fiercely criticised for their slow initial response, particularly regarding testing.

But in a country like India, with 1.3 billion people, hundreds of millions of poor, living in unhygienic and crammed conditions, there is a very real fear that if the testing starts too far behind the curve, the confirmed cases won't even account for the tip of the tip of the iceberg.

Doctors say the campaign for mass screening is handicapped by a lack of both testing kits and protective gear for staff carrying out the tests.

Elsewhere in South Asia, the medical infrastructure can be even more inadequate, and authorities are playing catch up as testing kits become available to them.

Afghanistan has had 367 cases from the 2,737 people it has tested.

In Bangladesh, with a population of 160 million, the government has faced criticism also over a lack of testing. "We are testing at 14-15 different places. We will increase the number of tests to 1,000-1,500 per day in future," Health Minister Zahid Malik said at a briefing on Sunday. The testing rate has varied from 300 on Sunday, to barely 50 to 100 last week.

Pakistan's health ministry said it had conducted 35,875 tests so far. It has quarantined 20,000 worshippers and is still searching for tens of thousands more who attended an Islamic gathering in Lahore last month.

Lack of tests a problem across South Asia

20,000 worshippers quarantined in Pakistan

Lanka may extend quarantine time to 4 weeks

CASES AND DEATHS IN SOUTH ASIA

India	**4067**	cases,	**109** deaths
Pakistan	**3,277**	cases,	**50** deaths
Afghanistan	**367**	cases,	**7** deaths
Sri Lanka	**176**	cases,	**5** deaths
Maldives	**19**	cases,	no deaths
Nepal	**9**	cases,	no deaths
Bhutan	**5**	cases,	no deaths

Modi, MPs agree 30pc salary cut

REUTERS, *New Delhi*

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other top government figures will take a 30 percent salary cut this year, a government minister said yesterday, as the country tackles the coronavirus outbreak and its impact on the economy.

Modi has imposed a three-week lockdown to halt the spread of the virus, but it has left millions without jobs and many of the more vulnerable sections of society struggling for food and shelter.

The federal cabinet has approved a decree under which Modi, along with President Ram Nath Kovind, state governors and members of parliament, will take the salary cut as part of their social responsibility, cabinet minister Prakash Javadekar told reporters.

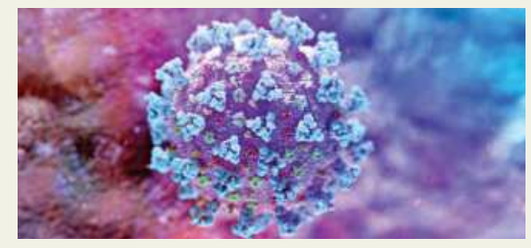
The money will go to the country's consolidated fund, the minister said. The salary cut comes into effect from April.

PHOTO: REUTERS

DISINFECTION DRIVE

Albanian people are being disinfected before entering a market, as Albanian authorities take measures to stop the spread of the coronavirus disease in Tirana, Albania, yesterday. More than 1,169,210 cases of infection, including 63,437 deaths, have been reported in 190 countries and territories around the world since the virus first emerged in China in December.

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC
LATEST UPDATES



70,000 DEAD, 50,000 IN EUROPE

More than 1.277 million cases, including 70,009 deaths, have been reported in 191 countries and territories around the world since the virus emerged in China in December, according to an AFP tally compiled around 1100 GMT Monday based on official sources. The pandemic has killed more than 50,000 people in Europe, including 15,877 in Italy, 13,055 in Spain, 8,078 in France and 4,934 in Britain.

JAPAN MULLING STATE OF EMERGENCY

The Japanese government plans to declare a state of emergency as early as today as new coronavirus infections spike in areas such as Tokyo and Osaka. It also proposes a massive stimulus package worth $1 trillion (915 billion euros).

WORST RECESSION SINCE 1945

France could see its deepest recession this year since the end of World War II, due to the crisis, the government warns. France imposed a nationwide stay-at-home order from March 17 after shuttering all nonessential businesses. Statistics office Insee said last month that the lockdown has slashed overall economic activity by 35 percent, and estimated every month of shutdown would cut annual GPD by three percentage points.

FOURTH DAILY DECLINE IN SPAIN

Spain sees its fourth consecutive daily decline in deaths from the virus, with 637 new fatalities recorded on Monday, its lowest for 13 days. The number of new infections also slowed, rising 3.3 percent to 135,032, down from a rise of 24.8 percent on March 21.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WARNING

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres urges governments to include the protection of women in their response to the pandemic, amid reports that domestic violence has surged globally in the wake of massive lockdowns imposed.

AUSTRIA TO START EASING LOCKDOWN

Austria could start easing its lockdown measures from April 14, starting with smaller shops, while larger shops, hotels, restaurants and other services could also start to open their doors again in stages, the government says.

BRITISH PM JOHNSON 'IN CHARGE'

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson remains in charge a day after being admitted to hospital for tests after he announced on March 27 that he had tested positive for COVID-19. The Times newspaper reports that he has been given oxygen treatment. On Sunday, in a rare special televised address Queen Elizabeth II vows "We will succeed."

SOUTH KOREA REPORTS 47 CASES

South Korea reported fewer than 50 new coronavirus cases for the first time since its peak in late February, earning the praise of the World Health Organization for combatting the spread in one of the first countries to be hard-hit by the disease. The Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (KCDC) said there were 47 new infections as of midnight on Sunday compared with 81 recorded a day earlier, taking the national tally to 10,284. The death toll rose by eight to 191.

20M AFRICAN JOBS AT RISK

Millions of lost jobs, mounting debt woes and plunging remittances are among the economic hardships African countries can expect because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the African Union said in a study published Monday. "Nearly 20 million jobs, both in the formal and informal sectors, are threatened with destruction on the continent if the situation continues," said the study.

MUMBAI HOSPITAL SHUT

A major private hospital in Mumbai was shut to new patients and declared a coronavirus containment zone on Monday after 26 nurses and three doctors tested positive, an official said. Mumbai city authority spokesman Vijay Khabale-Patil told AFP that the Wockhardt Hospital has been declared a "containment zone" after the cases were confirmed.

SOURCE: **AFP**

March 2020 among hottest on record

Temperatures last month were among the hottest on record for March, the European Union's satellite monitoring service said yesterday, with particularly extreme warm weather over Russia, home to much of Earth's permafrost. The Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) said March 2020 was 0.68 degrees Celsius warmer than the average March from 1981 to 2010, and on par with March 2017 and 2019 -- currently the second hottest on record after March 2016. Temperatures across Europe were almost two degrees Celsius hotter than the historical average, it said.

Cyclone lashes Vanuatu

A deadly Pacific cyclone intensified as it hit Vanuatu yesterday, threatening a natural disaster that experts fear will undermine the impoverished nation's battle to remain coronavirus-free. Tropical Cyclone Harold, which claimed 27 lives when it swept through the Solomon Islands last week, strengthened to a scale-topping Category 5 superstorm overnight, Vanuatu's meteorology service said. The cyclone is now packing winds of up to 235 kilometres per hour, prompting red alerts across several provinces. It made landfall on the remote east coast of Espiritu Santo island on Monday morning and was heading directly for Vanuatu's second-largest town Luganville, which has a population of 16,500. The slow-moving storm is expected to pass north of the capital Port Vila early Tuesday.

European barter system insufficient, says Iran

Iran yesterday welcomed the launch of a European barter system to bypass US sanctions as a "good omen" but said it was insufficient in light of the Europeans' commitments. Britain, France and Germany said last week they had carried out the first transaction through the Instex mechanism to deliver medical supplies to Iran, which has been hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic. "We see the launch of Instex as a good omen," Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said in a televised news conference. But "what the Islamic Republic of Iran expects (from now on) is for the Europeans to fulfil the rest of their commitments in various fields (such as) banking, energy, insurance," he added.

SOURCE: **AFP**

Death at home

FROM PAGE 12

In Bergamo province alone, according to a recent study of death records, the real death toll from the outbreak could be more than double the official tally of 2,060, which only tracks hospital fatalities.

As the global fight to save lives centres on boosting the supply of hospital ventilators, some doctors say a lack of primary healthcare is proving just as costly because medics cannot or will not make home visits, in line with a worldwide tactic of switching to remotely delivered medical advice.

A spokeswoman for the state-run ATS health agency in Bergamo said authorities in the Lombardy region, rated among the world's most efficient for health services, told family doctors to "deal with patients by phone as much as possible", limiting home visits "to reduce contagion and waste of protective equipment".

Italy's official death toll reached 15,887 on Sunday, almost a third of the global total, but there is growing evidence that this vastly understates the real total because so many people are dying at home.

A study by local newspaper L'Eco di Bergamo and research consultant InTwig, using data provided by local municipalities, estimates that 5,400 people died in the Bergamo province during the month of March, or six times more than a year ago.

Of these, it reckons that as many as 4,500 people succumbed to the coronavirus - more than double the official tally. This took into account 600 people who died in nursing homes and evidence provided by doctors, it said.

The ATS did not respond to a request for comment on the study's findings.

Pietro Zucchelli, director of the Zucchelli funeral home that serves several villages in the Seriana Valley around Bergamo, said over the past two weeks more than 50 percent of his job had been collecting bodies from people's homes.

Before, most of the dead were in hospitals or nursing homes.

Munda, the doctor working in Selvino and Nembro, said he had been visiting patients at home since late February, administering antibiotics for bacterial pneumonia and oxygen therapy if required.

He said that although antibiotics were no cure for the virus, they could treat some of the debilitating complications and help patients recover without hospitalisation.

To protect himself, he bought 600 euros' worth of face masks which he sterilises at home with steam every evening.

More than 11,000 health workers have contracted the virus in Italy and 80 have died, many of them family doctors.

The Bertuletti family's ordeal shows how primary care, a health system's first line of defence, has sometimes buckled in the face of the coronavirus outbreak.

Ambulances that used to arrive within minutes of a call to emergency services now can take hours, medics say. Oxygen bottles are so scarce that nurses rush to claim them back from bereaved families as soon as patients die.

"We are used to seeing people die, but normally it feels like you are accompanying them at the end of the road," said Maura Zucchelli, a nurse at Itineris, a private company which provides medical assistance at home in the Bergamo area.

"Now you go to people's homes, and within 48-72 hours the patient is dead. It's draining. It's like war."

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Memo No. 46.02.1000.000.14.044.2020.1180 Date: 05.04.2020

Corrigendum Notice for e-Tender Notice No. 18/2019-20

Due to unavoidable circumstances following amendments have been made to the Tender Notice No. 18/2019-20 vide Memo No. 46.02.1000.000.14.044.2020.1010 Date: 09/03/2020.

Tender Proposal ID	Name of the Scheme with Package No.	Tender document last selling/downloading date & time		Closing & opening date and time	
		Original	Revised	Original	Revised
423416	Improvement of Sonahata GC (Dhunot) - Tangramagur RHD via Amrul UP - Naimile (Shajahanpur Portion) at Ch. 00m to 8870m under Shajahanpur Upazila District Bogura (Road ID: 110962006) (Total cost of salvage materials Tk 10,00,220.00). **Package No. CW-50(a)/RCIP/BGR**	12/04/2020 up to 17.00pm	04/05/2020 up to 17.00pm	13/04/2020 13.00pm	06/05/2020 13.00pm
426363	Improvement of Horikhali GC - Halsherpur GC via Charpara Road at Ch: 00m to 10010m under Sonatola Upazila District Bogura (Road ID: 110952006) & 02. Improvement of Matidali NHW - Pirgacha GCM Road at Ch: 00m to 9200m under Sadar Upazila District Bogura (Road ID: 110202001) (Total cost of salvage materials Tk 1,02,25,432.00). **Package No. CW-50(b)/RCIP/BGR**				
420589	Improvement of Nasratpur-Murali-Raykali-Beragram (Tilokpur) at Ch. 00m to 6610m under Adamdighi Upazila Road ID 110062006 (Total cost of salvage materials Tk 1252707.00) District Bogura. **Package No. CW-50(c)/RCIP/BGR**				
423417	01. Improvement of Dupchanchia-Namoja via Tindighi GC Road at Ch. 00m to 11750m under Kahaloo Upazila District Bogura Road ID 110542005 & 02. Improvement of Ranirhat-Durgapur Road at Ch. 00m to 10675m under Kahaloo Upazila District Bogura Road ID 110542001 (Total cost of salvage materials Tk 7058431.00). **Package No. CW-50(d)/RCIP/BGR**				

Salvage materials value will be deducted from the contractor's bill amount. All other terms & conditions will remain unchanged.
Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd) and also from e-mail: xen.bogra@lged.gov.bd or call to: 051-60096.
Interested persons can communicate with the undersigned during office hours.

Kazi Saiful Kabir
Executive Engineer
LGED, Bogura
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e-mail: xen.bogra@lged.gov.bd

GD-725