

Headlines at a Glance - 6th April 2020

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Poor will be eligible for free COVID-19 testing and treatment under AB-PMJAY

Testing and treatment for COVID-19 will be free of cost for Ayushman Bharat beneficiaries at private laboratories and empanelled hospitals, the National Health Authority (NHA) said on Saturday. The NHA, which implements the national health insurance scheme, said this will strengthen the country's response to the novel coronavirus pandemic. Hospitals empanelled under the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) can use their authorised testing facilities or tie up with an authorised testing facility, the NHA said. The COVID-19 tests will be carried out as per protocols of the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) and by private labs approved or registered by it, the authority said.

SOURCE: *Business Standard*

Indian Railways develops low-cost ventilator 'Jeevan'

The Indian Railways has developed a low-cost ventilator, Jeevan at its Kapurthala Rail Coal Factory that could save thousands of lives at a time the country is grappling with a shortage of the medical equipment in its fight against coronavirus. The prototype is now awaiting ICMR clearance to go into production, the Railways said. It will cost around Rs 10,000 without the compressor. Once we have the ICMR approval, if we have all the materials, we will be able to produce 100 such ventilators a day. India might need anywhere between 110,000-220,000 ventilators by May 15 in the worst-case scenario. The number of ventilators today available in the country is a maximum of 57,000 and come with a cost of Rs 5-Rs 15 lakh, according to a Brookings report.

SOURCE: *India Today*

FCI sets record: Movement of 1.93 lakh tonnes of grains in one day

Food Corporation of India (FCI) has set a new record in single day movement by moving 70 rakes carrying one lakh 93 thousand Metric Tonnes food grains continuously for two days. The Consumer Affairs Ministry said, FCI is ensuring that enough food grain stocks are made available in every part of the country during countrywide lockdown. During the 12 days since the start of lockdown on 25th of last month, FCI has done an average movement of one lakh 41 thousand tonnes of food grain per day as against the pre-lockdown daily average of about 80 thousand tonnes. The Ministry said, a total of 605 rakes carrying around 17 Lakh tonnes of food grains have been transported across the country during this period. Punjab accounted for about 46 per cent of total food grain movement followed by Haryana, Telangana and Chhattisgarh.

SOURCE: *The Indian Express*

“Mo Prativa”: Odisha-UNICEF Programme to engage children during Lock Down

The Odisha government in collaboration with UNICEF has launched an online competition programme ‘Mo Prativa’ to engage the children and youth who are staying at home during the lockdown. Announcing the initiative, Chief Spokesperson on COVID-19 Subroto Bagchi said entries will be invited on two themes, ‘Being at home during lockdown’ and ‘My responsibility as a young citizen during Covid-19’. Those in the age group of 5 to 18 years can participate in art, slogan writing, short story writing (within 500 words), poem writing and poster making, he said and added that winning entries will get certificates and may be used in IEC materials. He said all the entries should be original.

SOURCE: *The New Indian Express*

TB Machines approved by ICMR for COVID-19 testing

Diagnostic machines used to test drug-resistant tuberculosis (TB) have now been approved by Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) for conducting Covid-19 tests. “ICMR has recommended use of Truenat beta CoV test on Truelab workstation validated by ICMR as a screening test. Also, use of US-FDA approved closed real time Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) systems like GeneXpert and Roche Cobas – 6800/800 have been approved under emergency use,” ICMR has stated in its guidance. Over 800 Truenat machines already in place across India primarily for use in detecting drug-resistant TB, of which close to 400 were in government set-ups. Out of which 257 are in Andhra Pradesh alone, at district and sub-district level.

SOURCE: *The Hindu*