

High Level Committee chaired by Home Minister approves over Rs. 5,751 crore to eight States for calamity damage relief

The High Level Committee, HLC under the Chairmanship of Home Minister Amit Shah has approved additional Central assistance of over 5 thousand 7 hundred 51 crore rupees under National Disaster Response Fund, NDRF to eight States, which were affected by floods, landslides, cyclone, drought last year. The approved additional Central assistance to eight States from NDRF subject to the adjustment of 50 per cent of balances available in the SDRF account as on 1st April of the financial year. Over 953 crore rupees given to Bihar of which 400 crore rupees already released on account basis, over 460 crore to Kerala, over 177 crore rupees to Nagaland, over 179 crore to Odisha, over 1758 crore rupees to Maharashtra, nearly 1120 crore rupees to Rajasthan, over 1090 crore rupees to West Bengal for floods, landslides, cyclone, drought (kharif) during 2019 and over 11 crore rupees to Karnataka towards additional assistance under Animal Husbandry sector for drought (rabi) of 2018-19. During the 2019-20, till date, Centre has already released over 10 thousand 937 crore rupees to 29 States including erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir as Central share from State Disaster Response Fund and additional assistance of over 14 thousand 108 crore rupees to 8 States under NDRF.

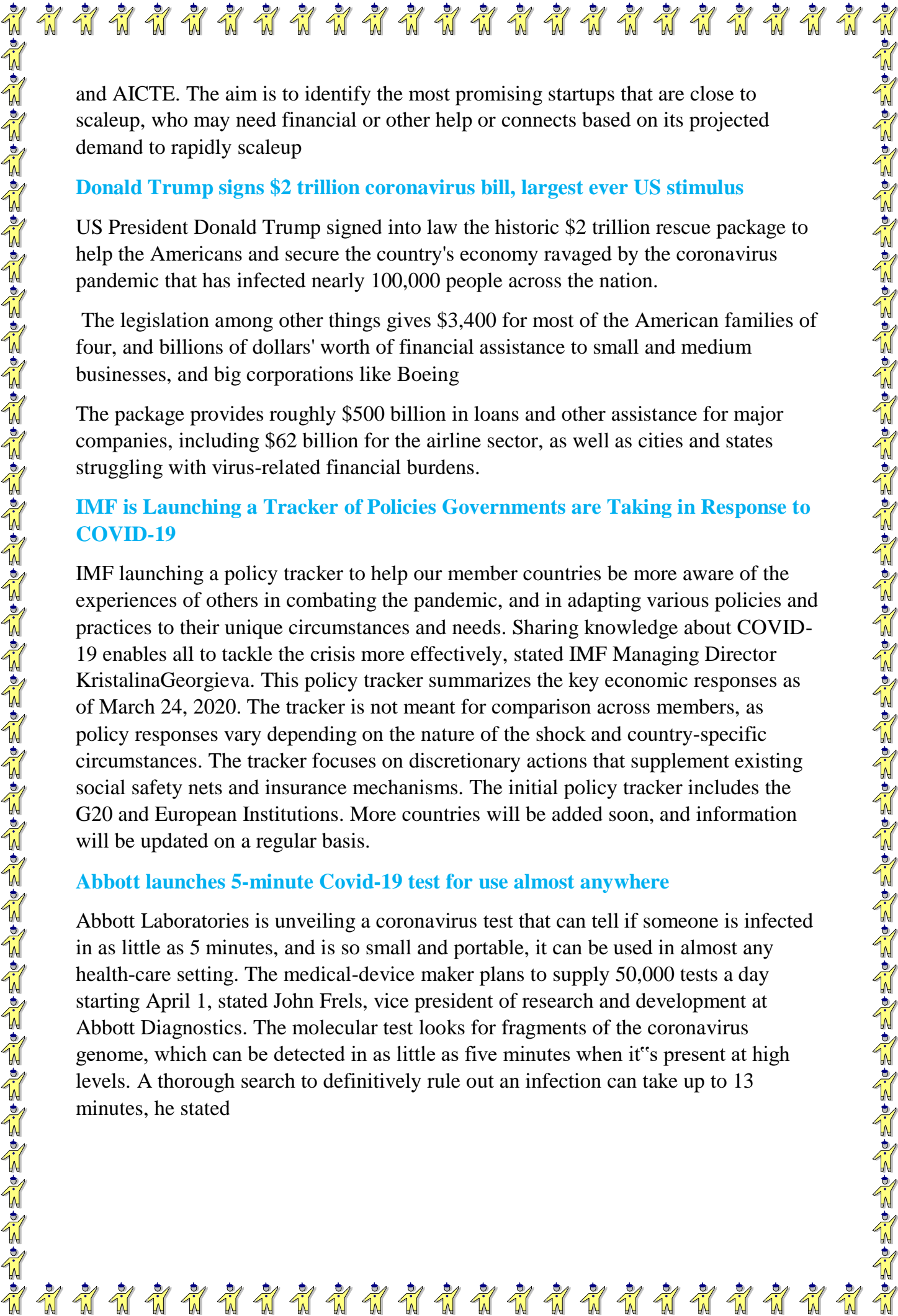
DST launches nationwide exercise to map & boost Covid19 solutions with R&D, seed & scale up support

Rising to the National call to combat the public health crisis arising out of Covid19 pandemic, the Department of Science & Technology (DST) is synergising and consolidating various activities carried out by the Ministry of S&T and its network of autonomous institutions and scientific bodies across the country. The solutions and novel applications to address Covid19 pandemic related challenges are being taken up through a three pronged approach.

These include

- (a) extensive mapping of solutions requiring R&D support, startups with viable products requiring facilitation and manufacturing support;
- (b) identification of market deployable products requiring seed support and
- (c) support for solutions already in market but requiring substantial scale up to augment their manufacturing infrastructure and capabilities.

DST has set up a “Covid19 Task Force” for mapping of technologies from R&D labs, academic institutions, startups and MSMEs. The capacity mapping group has representatives from DST, DBT, ICMR, MeitY, CSIR, AIM, MSME, Startup India



and AICTE. The aim is to identify the most promising startups that are close to scaleup, who may need financial or other help or connects based on its projected demand to rapidly scaleup

Donald Trump signs \$2 trillion coronavirus bill, largest ever US stimulus

US President Donald Trump signed into law the historic \$2 trillion rescue package to help the Americans and secure the country's economy ravaged by the coronavirus pandemic that has infected nearly 100,000 people across the nation.

The legislation among other things gives \$3,400 for most of the American families of four, and billions of dollars' worth of financial assistance to small and medium businesses, and big corporations like Boeing

The package provides roughly \$500 billion in loans and other assistance for major companies, including \$62 billion for the airline sector, as well as cities and states struggling with virus-related financial burdens.

IMF is Launching a Tracker of Policies Governments are Taking in Response to COVID-19

IMF launching a policy tracker to help our member countries be more aware of the experiences of others in combating the pandemic, and in adapting various policies and practices to their unique circumstances and needs. Sharing knowledge about COVID-19 enables all to tackle the crisis more effectively, stated IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva. This policy tracker summarizes the key economic responses as of March 24, 2020. The tracker is not meant for comparison across members, as policy responses vary depending on the nature of the shock and country-specific circumstances. The tracker focuses on discretionary actions that supplement existing social safety nets and insurance mechanisms. The initial policy tracker includes the G20 and European Institutions. More countries will be added soon, and information will be updated on a regular basis.

Abbott launches 5-minute Covid-19 test for use almost anywhere

Abbott Laboratories is unveiling a coronavirus test that can tell if someone is infected in as little as 5 minutes, and is so small and portable, it can be used in almost any health-care setting. The medical-device maker plans to supply 50,000 tests a day starting April 1, stated John Frels, vice president of research and development at Abbott Diagnostics. The molecular test looks for fragments of the coronavirus genome, which can be detected in as little as five minutes when it's present at high levels. A thorough search to definitively rule out an infection can take up to 13 minutes, he stated



ULA's Atlas 5 launches AEHF-6 communications satellite in its first mission for U.S. Space Force

A United Launch Alliance Atlas 5 rocket lifted off from Space Launch Complex-41 at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, carrying a \$1.4 billion Advanced Extremely High Frequency (AEHF-6) communications satellite for the U.S. Space Force. This was the sixth and final satellite of the AEHF constellation that provides secure, jam-proof voice and data communications for U.S. national leadership, military forces and international partners Canada, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Australia. All six were manufactured by Lockheed Martin. This was ULA's 138th launch, the 83rd of the Atlas 5 rocket since 2002 and the 11th in the 551 configuration.

In a first, India, France conduct joint patrols from Reunion Island

India and France, for the first time, have conducted joint patrols from the Reunion Island, signalling New Delhi's intent to engage with friendly foreign partners in expanding its footprint in the Indian Ocean, focusing on the stretch between the East African coastline and the Malacca straits. India has so far carried out Coordinated Patrols (CORPAT) only with maritime neighbours and had rejected a similar offer by the US. The Indian Navy conducted a joint patrol with the French Navy last month from the Reunion Island. The patrol was conducted by a P-8I aircraft with French Navy personnel onboard. Currently, under the „Neighbourhood First“ policy and broader maritime cooperation, the Indian Navy undertakes joint EEZ surveillance with Maldives, Seychelles and Mauritius and CORPATs with Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand and Indonesia.

Indian Army launches 'Operation Namaste' to help govt fight COVID-19

Army Chief General MM Naravane launched „Operation Namaste' to combat the spread of COVID-19. His troops, deployed on the Line of Control or Line of Actual Control, to not worry about their near and dear ones and cancellation of leaves as a similar situation had been observed during Operation Parakram and the force had come out successfully from it and will execute Operation Namaste too successfully.