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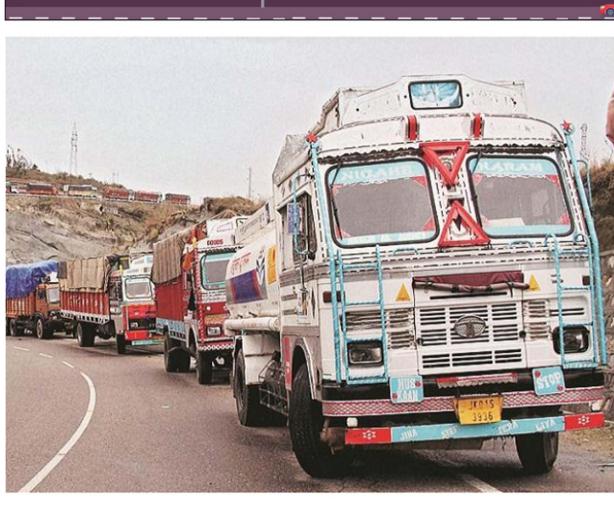
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disruption as Covid-19 cripples road transport The possibility of harassment by cops and fear of the unknown have forced a large number of truck drivers to abandon vehicles at the transport centres and flee home.

Shally Seth Mohile | Mumbai Last Updated at April 1, 2020 00:11 IST



The possibility of harassment by cops and fear of the unknown have forced a large number of truck drivers to abandon vehicles at the transport centres and flee home. Despite a series of steps taken by the government in the first week of the 21-day lockdown to ensure

smooth transportation of goods, the situation on the

various stakeholders and road transport becomes the victim of disconnect between policy makers and local

ground tells a different tale. Transport of goods

remains badly hit as confusion remains among

and shampoo. This is mainly owing to a surge in

"On Monday, there was demand from someone for 50

packets of flour along with some other consumer

goods. I had run out of stock," said Choudhary. The

problem facing Choudhary has its roots in shuttered

factories, distribution centres and a restricted number

demand from donors of such items.

of trucks on the road.

authorities, said transporters and analysts. Almost 2.5 million trucks among the 5 million are off road, according to the Indian Foundation of Transport Research and Training (IFTRT). "It (the government) has constituted a committee on logistics and is making tall claims with regard to smooth movement of essentials. But the fact is that the lockdown has completely crippled the road transport sector," said S P Singh, senior fellow at IFTRT. There is also no clarity on how the procurement and distribution of the bumper rabi crop - the only saving grace at this point

the whole eco-system that comprises dhabas and eateries to tyre repair shops and garages come back to normalcy. "Truck drivers fear they will be stranded without food and water for many days in case of a breakdown. Therefore, they have left for their native places," said Balmalkit Singh, chairman, All India Motor Transport Congress.

The government has allowed movement of non-essential items but it's an insignificant step considering that factories, go-downs and warehouses remain shut, said Singh. He pointed out that all recent initiatives to smoothen movement of trucks will have no meaning unless

are off the road owing to non-availability of drivers. All these are driver-cum-owner trucks. "We have been counselling them and assuring them of their safety so that they can come back and start taking the load. The campaign has started working," said Haritash, adding

Of the 7,000 trucks registered on Mavyn's platform, only 4,000 are plying. The remaining

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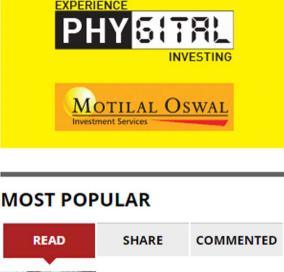
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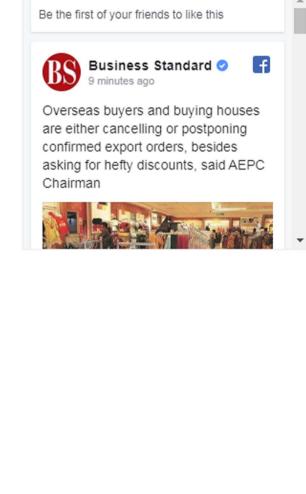
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small savings schemes as lockdown continues

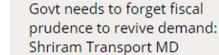
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Almost 2.5 million trucks among the 5 million are off road, according to the Indian Foundation of Transport Research and Training (IFTRT). Mahendra Choudhary, owner of a supermarket in **ALSO READ** Navi Mumbai, has been facing acute shortage of RedBus riding on untapped staples like flour, rice, pulses, lentils and fast moving road transport corporations consumer goods (FMCG) products, including soap, oil to drive growth



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is going to be handled, he added.

Sachin Haritash, founder and chief executive at Mavyn, a truck aggregator that counts Hindustan Unilever, Amazon, Grofers and Flipkart among its key customers, has been

that there has been a communication gap between those manning the borders and the local authorities.

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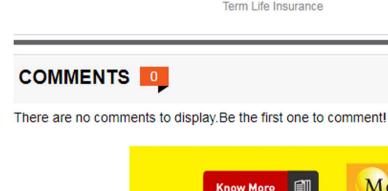
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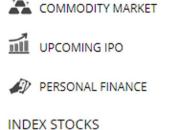
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