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Govt changing law to stop attacks on health workers: 7-yr jail, Rs 5 lakh fine

ABANTIKA GHOSH & DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
NEW DELHI, APRIL 22

AMID INCIDENTS of violence against healthcare personnel deployed in fighting COVID-19, the Union Cabinet on Wednesday cleared an ordinance to make such attacks a cognizable and non-bailable offence, with a maximum jail term of seven years and a fine of Rs 5 lakh.

Briefing reporters on the Cabinet decision, Union Information and Broadcasting

Minister Prakash Javadekar said the ordinance to amend the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, will cover all healthcare personnel, including ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activist) workers at the community level.

According to the proposed amendments, if the injuries inflicted are not grievous, the jail term may range from three months to five years, and the fine from Rs 50,000 to Rs 2 lakh. In case of serious injuries, the jail term may range from six months to seven years, and the fine from

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Amit Shah, Harsh Vardhan interact with IMA Wednesday. PTI

BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY



9.9% SHARE FOR MORE THAN RS 43,450 CR

Facebook picks stake, Jio set to tap into vast WhatsApp user base

Deal will boost JioMart, take it to 3 crore small kirana shops, says Mukesh Ambani

PRANAV MUKUL & SANDEEP SINGH
NEW DELHI, APRIL 22

IN THE largest FDI in the Indian technology sector, US Internet giant Facebook will be buying 9.99% stake in Reliance Industries Ltd's digital unit Jio Platforms Ltd, for \$5.7 billion (more than Rs 43,450 crore). While helping Reliance pare its debt of nearly Rs 3 lakh crore, the deal will also give the oil-to-telecom giant access to the over 400 million-strong database of WhatsApp, as it seeks to jumpstart its commerce business under JioMart. Facebook, in turn, makes its long-awaited foray into Indian telecom space.

The deal has come at a time when global mergers and acquisitions have hit roadblocks due to the COVID-19 crisis.

RIL said that concurrent to the investment, Jio Platforms, Reliance Retail Ltd and WhatsApp, which is owned by Facebook, have reached an agreement to "further accelerate"

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

BIG INDIA NUMBERS

388 million
Jio subscribers

400 million+
WhatsApp users

241 million+
active Facebook users

Industry estimates, October 2019

EXPLAINED

Win-win for the firms

THE FIRST major non-distress deal during the pandemic is part of the debt-reduction plan of India's biggest corporate entity — and could lead to the accelerated launch of Reliance's e-commerce plans on the JioMart platform. For Facebook, the partnership could help it navigate the regulatory environment, including for initiatives such as WhatsApp Pay.

Collaboration looks at new areas, e-tail could be first

NANDAGOPAL RAJAN
NEW DELHI, APRIL 22

In the first consumer-facing offering to come out of the Facebook-Reliance Industries deal, the two entities will collaborate over the JioMart e-commerce platform. While details are not available, it is possible the mart will use WhatsApp's business features to quickly bring local stores on board to reach out to customers.

In a call after the announcements, Facebook's VP and Managing Director for India, Ajit Mohan, said the "entire energy" is on trying to figure out how they could help small businesses in the context of the coronavirus pandemic, and the resulting lockdown in India.

"We will really start to explore multiple areas of collaboration," he said, adding they would look at how to "open new doors" and "new avenues". "We have articulated that the first major collaboration involving

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Governor says no takers for Bengal Covid toll, Mamata targets Centre

RAVIK BHATTACHARYA, ATRI MITRA & SANTANU CHOWDHURY
KOLKATA, APRIL 22

WEST BENGAL Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday accused the Centre of dispatching faulty COVID-19 testing kits to the state, and strongly criticised it for sending teams to assess the situation on the ground.

"They are showing an attitude that they would have been happy if there were more COVID-19 cases in Bengal," Banerjee told a press conference. "Rapid test kits sent to the state have now been withdrawn because they were faulty. Thankfully, our health department ordered some kits which were very useful. If there has been a health hazard here, then we are not responsible for it. Whose fault is it? We have to conduct timely tests. If we fail to do so, then patients may die," she said.

"Canards are being spread that Bengal is not conducting enough tests," the chief minister said. However, against the 14,000 test kits sought by the state, the Centre had sent only 2,500, she said.

The ICMR, Banerjee said, supplied rapid testing kits, BGI RT-PCR kits, and antigen kits. Of these, "the rapid testing kits and BGI RT-PCR kits were both withdrawn as per communication from National Institute of Cholera and Enteric Diseases (NICED) on April 21", and "antigen kits are not being supplied to hospitals in the state so far", she said.

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THE EDITORIAL PAGE

GOING BACK TO A NEW SCHOOL

By AMEETA MULLA WATTAL
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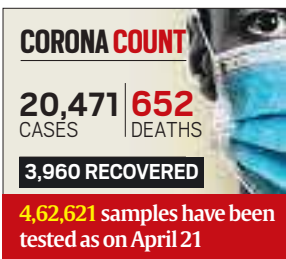
Women workers at an MNREGS site in Chaksu near Jaipur on Wednesday. Express

Ten-fold jump in Rajasthan MNREGS numbers, more than double in Maharashtra as curbs ease

DEEP MUKHERJEE & VIVEK DESHPANDE
JAIPUR, NAGPUR, APRIL 22

AT LEAST two states have seen a sharp jump in MNREGS numbers in the past few days amidst the extended lockdown.

Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot, who also holds the Rural Development and Panchayati Raj portfolio, told *The Indian Express* on



Wednesday that in six days, the numbers in the state had gone up from 62,000 on April 17 to

6.08 lakh on April 22.

In Maharashtra, MNREGS Commissioner Ranga Nayak reported an increase in the rural employment guarantee scheme numbers from about 40,000 on April 12 to over 1 lakh now.

Pilot said the surge had been particularly sharp since some restrictions due to the coronavirus spread were eased on Monday. "We started planning from April 17, before the modified lockdown started, to ensure that

maximum work was generated under the MNREGS. Within days, we have registered an increase of 10 times with the current figure of engaged workers being 6.08 lakh."

Government data show that the total number of MNREGS labourers rose from 62,000 on April 17, to 2 lakh, 2.5 lakh, 3 lakh, 4.5 lakh and 6.08 lakh over successive days.

Pilot said the only way to

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THE WORLD



TRUMP BACKS OFF BROAD IMMIGRATION BAN AFTER ANGER
PAGE 12

Affluent in OBC, SC/ST not letting quota benefits trickle down, review lists: Bench

ANANTHAKRISHNAN G
NEW DELHI, APRIL 22

POINTING TO concerns within the OBCs and the SC/STs that reservation benefits are not reaching the truly deserving among them, the Supreme Court Wednesday said the government is "duty-bound" to periodically

review the process in order to ensure that the benefits "trickle down and are not usurped by" the affluent in these categories.

Ruling as unconstitutional a January 2000 order of the Governor of the erstwhile state of Andhra Pradesh which provided 100 per cent reservation to ST candidates in posts of school teachers in Scheduled Areas, a

five-judge Constitution Bench said: "Now there is a cry within the reserved classes. By now, there are affluent and socially and economically advanced classes within Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. There is voice by deprived persons of social upliftment of some of the Scheduled Castes/Tribes, but

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Palghar lynching: Sarpanch says she watched attack for 2 hrs, NCP leader couldn't control mob either

KAVITHA IYER
GADCHINCHLE (DAHANU), APRIL 22

THE LYNCHING of two sadhus and their driver has set off a political war of words in Mumbai between the Opposition BJP and the government. On the ground in the forest, though, is a story of how local officials, including an NCP leader and former MLA candidate, a sarpanch and the police could do little to check a mob fired by a dangerous rumour mill.

The *Indian Express* spoke to several local residents, eyewitnesses, police and local officials to reconstruct the sequence of events that led to the murders right under the nose of the police. On a normal April evening, 400 men would not have gathered in minutes on the highway



A roadblock outside a village near the attack site in Palghar district of Maharashtra. Kavitha Iyer

alongside this remote village on the border of Maharashtra and Dadra-Nagar Haveli in Dahanu taluka, Palghar, 150 km from Mumbai.

Since the Covid outbreak, the summer's seasonal labourers are

INSIDE

MINISTER PUTS OUT LIST OF ACCUSED, SLAMS OPPOSITION
PAGE 7

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

PRITAM PAL SINGH
NEW DELHI, APRIL 22

WITH MORE than 3,000 convicts across Delhi being granted bail or furlough to prevent overcrowding in jails in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, the Delhi High Court has devised a new way of making sure convicts mark their attendance — via WhatsApp video calls and through Google Maps.

In three different orders temporarily suspending the jail terms of three convicts, Justice Anup Jairam Bhambhani said the step has been taken "in view

of the dire need of decongesting prisons, considering the unprecedented public health emergency existing at this time".

Justice Bhambhani ordered that the convicts, Ompal, Rahat and Babu Lal, make a video call to the investigating officer or share their live location via WhatsApp so they don't have to visit the police station every week.

"The appellant will make a video call every Friday between 11 am and 11.30 am to the IO, and in case the IO is no longer in service or is otherwise unavailable, then to the SHO of the police station where the case was

registered. (The appellant will also 'drop-a-pin' on Google Maps, so that the IO/SO can verify the appellant's presence and location," state Justice Bhambhani's orders in all three cases.

In the case related to Ompal (41), the judge ordered that "this court is persuaded to grant to the appellant interim suspension of sentence for a period of 45 days". As per the prosecution, Ompal, while working as a driver of a van that loaded money in ATM machines, had stolen Rs 51 lakh after handing drugged food to those accompanying him. He is serving eight



To decongest Tihar, jail terms are being suspended. Renuka Puri

years in jail.

Ompal has sought interim suspension of sentence for two months, on the ground that he has a boy aged 14 and twin girls aged two. He told the court that his wife had taken up a teaching job, but since the school was closed, she was not being paid and was unable to sustain the family.

The court suspended Rahat's jail term until July 17, while Babu Lal will stay out of jail for three months.

The court, in three different orders passed on April 20, also said: "Considering the prevailing lockdown, the furnishing of

surety as a condition of bail, is dispensed with at this stage."

Rahat (30), in judicial custody since March 4, is serving six months in jail for rash and negligent driving, which led to the death of a person riding pillion on a scooter. His counsel contended that Rahat would be exposed to avoidable and grave health risk in prison.

The court directed that Rahat "will not leave the State of Haryana without permission of the court and ordinarily reside in his place of residence".

Babu Lal (73) is serving 10 years in jail term for sexually abusing a minor. While granting

him relief, the court said, "Although the record shows that the applicant has only been in prison since February 24, 2020, and that he has been convicted of heinous offences under the POCSO Act, in the unprecedented circumstances of a public health emergency and the consequent need to decongest prisons... this court is persuaded to grant to the appellant interim suspension of sentence for a period of three months."

"The appellants shall furnish to the Jail Superintendent their cell phone number, which is kept active and switched on at all times," the court said.



Maharashtra has also issued orders to publish the list of these beneficiaries at government offices such as that of the collector, zila parishad CEO, sub-divisional officers, tehsildars and gram panchayats. Rajasthan MNREGS Commissioner P C Kishan said the demand for the scheme is expected to increase in the next few months, with even relatively affluent villagers seeking jobs after loss of income during the lockdown.

3 THE OUTBREAK THE CITY



CORONA WATCH

Online or offline exams: JNU says schools, centres can take a call

New Delhi: The Jawaharlal Nehru University administration Wednesday said Schools and Special Centres of the university would be given the freedom to decide if they want to hold online or offline exams or a combination of both, signalling that there would be no set template for examinations in the university this year due to the lockdown. JNU Registrar Pramod Kumar also said the difference in the mode of examinations can vary not just from one School to the other, but also in different Centres within the same School. The decision, the university claimed, was taken by the Academic Council (AC) members through online circulation of the resolution. The JNU Teachers' Association, however, alleged the resolution was not circulated to several members including their representatives in the AC.

4 new cases in Gurgaon, 1 in Noida

Gurgaon: Four new COVID-19 cases were recorded in Gurgaon Wednesday. "A woman from Gurgaon, who works at a bank in Bhiwadi, Rajasthan, tested positive," confirmed Dr Jaswant Singh Punia, CMO, Gurgaon. Officials said the other three patients are residents of Rajiv Chowk, Sector 39, and Om Nagar. A 15-year-old girl from Kasganj tested positive in Noida Wednesday.

Fight breaks out at hospital

New Delhi: A fight broke out at Lok Nayak Hospital Wednesday between hospital authorities and a CATS ambulance staff member over the admission of a COVID-19 patient. "The hospital refused to admit the patient and paramedical staff questioned the authorities. In minutes it turned violent," a CATS employee said. The hospital said it would respond after a preliminary enquiry.

BSES holds outreach

New Delhi: Power discom BSES organised a virtual outreach session with around 40 representatives of RWAs from South Delhi's Saket and RK Puram Tuesday, wherein its executives took feedback from people on their experiences and expectations as consumers during the lockdown period, the company said in a statement. **ENS**

AT FARIDABAD APARTMENT COMPLEX

Asha worker beaten up on duty, 5 arrested

Police team that rushed to help her also attacked by crowd

SAKSHI DAYAL
GURGAON, APRIL 22

FIVE PEOPLE have been arrested by Faridabad Police for allegedly beating up an Asha worker on Tuesday while she was conducting a door-to-door coronavirus-related survey on behalf of the district administration.

Police said the incident took place at Ashiyana Apartment in Sector 62, and identified the accused as Ird Khan, Hafiz, Shekhawat, Nafis, and Jalalu, all residents. An FIR has been registered under various IPC sections. "When I knocked on this family's door, they refused to cooperate. I had asked if there was anybody in the house who had travelled from outside or attended the Tablighi Jamaat gathering. I called my senior officer; he came and asked them why they were not participating in the survey, but they were disrespectful towards him as well," Asha worker Rekha Sharma said.

"He finally called the police, who also tried to make them understand, but a crowd eventually gathered... people became aggressive and beat us up with sticks," she said.

Sharma, a Sector 65 resident,

has been employed as an Asha worker for the last six years. Her claim that police personnel as well as the health team were beaten up by residents with sticks was confirmed by a police officer, who had reached the scene following the health team's call.

"We were patrolling in Subhash Nagar when we received information that some people were misbehaving with an Asha worker. We reached the spot and tried to urge them to cooperate, but they continued to misbehave. A crowd slowly gathered and people started beating us up. We had to eventually ask for backup to manage the situation and arrest the accused," he said.

Sharma as well as an assistant sub-inspector sustained injuries to their arms and legs and were administered first aid.

District Secretary of the Asha Workers' Union in Faridabad, Sudha Pal, said problems are being faced by field workers on a daily basis.

"We are going out individually to conduct the survey. This is not something new because Asha workers always go to the field alone, but the situation right now is such that people be-

come very aggressive. Some people are trying to say that this has happened yesterday because the residents were from a minority community, but that is not true; it has been happening with other communities as well," said Pal.

"When they go to homes, a lot of our workers are cross-questioned by residents — 'you come to ask about fever and cold, but has your government ever come to ask if we have food in our homes, if our stoves are burning?' This is happening across Haryana. We have spoken to senior officials in Chandigarh about this. In this situation, our workers need to be sent with a team, which also has male members, not on their own," she said.

Police Commissioner K K Rao warned that strict action will be taken against anyone found misbehaving with Asha workers.

"In this difficult time, the health department is working very hard. Asha workers are conducting door-to-door surveys, but people do not seem to understand this and are harassing them. Strict action will be taken against anyone found to be indulging in such behaviour, and they will be sent to prison," he said.



THE HAND THAT FEEDS

A man feeds monkeys near Kamla Nehru Park at North Delhi's Civil Lines area, Wednesday. *Amit Mehra*

Admin gives nod for Maruti plant to reopen

SAKSHI DAYAL
GURGAON, APRIL 22

AUTOMOBILE MANUFACTURER Maruti Suzuki Wednesday received permission from the Gurgaon district administration to resume operations at its Manesar plant with 600 workers.

"Maruti has been given permission to operate their Manesar plant in IMT Manesar. They had to prepare the plant first. When it is in a position to safely handle workers, they can start operations. It is not a permission at that level, but they have to keep us informed of when they start the operations," said V S Kundu, monitoring officer appointed by the state for COVID-19 in Gurgaon.

As per officials, the company had applied for permission to operate with 4,696 employees, but they received permission only for 600 workers. "They have 9,800 employees at the plant and had applied permission for around 50% of those, as per the Government of India guidelines.



The firm sought permission to operate with 4,696 staffers

But we have allowed them to start with 600. We want them to first work out a system for the safety of their workers, which for us is of paramount importance... When this operation stabilises, we will consider scaling it up to more employees," said Kundu.

The "Permission Certificate" states that employees are permitted to work in a single shift. "Further, as directed, no other manufacturing/service activity

is permitted in the unit other than those approved under the guidelines of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India, during the said lockdown period, else strict action will be taken and you will be responsible for the same," states the certificate.

"The application is recommended for permission to operate for 600 employees only during lockdown period, subject to physical inspection and submis-

sion of all necessary documents in support of their claim (declaration, SOP, photographs, etc.) before commencement of actual operation," it adds.

Officials from Maruti Suzuki, said they are still unclear about if and when they will resume operations. "Our Manesar plant cannot operate independent of the Gurgaon unit because components move between the two. We have applied for permission for the Gurgaon unit but have not yet received an update. We are in discussion with the Deputy Commissioner regarding this," said a company spokesperson.

Kuldeep Janghu, general secretary of the Maruti Udyog Kamgaar Union said: "As of now, we have been told that production will not begin... Employees are getting their salary without any deductions so far."

Officials said the administration has received 300 applications from industries looking to resume operations and permission has been granted to "around 30".

lated after she tested positive. Her aunt and sister have tested negative.

Devi has now been advised home isolation for 14 days. "There were many unfamiliar faces (at the hospital) but I found a common spirit among each of them. With my family under quarantine, neighbours pitched in to provide essential items — they would leave them outside our door. They all used to ask about my health and send their blessings," said Devi.

In Delhi, more than 75 healthcare workers across various hospitals have tested positive so far.

ANAND MOHAN J
& SOMYA LAKHANI
NEW DELHI, APRIL 22

THE FEVER came unannounced, confining Asha worker Seema to her home in Prem Nagar. While her mind dwelt on seven prescription cards for pregnant women classified as serious cases in her area, she knew the medicine would not reach them until she recuperates.

Seema's job involves looking after the basic health needs of 1,600 people, including keeping a close watch on 35 pregnant women. With what little strength she had left, Seema attended to multiple phone calls from panicked residents with doubts about coronavirus symptoms. "I have been counseling people in my area about social distancing and symptoms of coronavirus. I also have to make sure pregnant women get their medicines," said Seema.

At the forefront of the COVID-19 fight are Asha (Accredited Social Health Activists) workers, now part of the "corona foot-warriors containment and surveillance teams" tasked with alerting authorities about suspected cases. Team members are supposed to inquire about the well-being of people and availability of essential medical supplies in their area of operation, apart from advising residents on use of masks and social distancing. However, they have to do



ASHA workers at Sangam Vihar, Thursday. They look after basic health needs of people, pregnant women. *Tashi Tobgyal*

these tasks over the phone.

Laxmi, who works with Asha workers and decides if they should visit a patient's house, said most of them don't have masks, gloves or hand sanitisers.

"Asha workers used to visit their areas during the first phase of the lockdown. They later stopped stepping out of their homes and are now advising patients over the phone. The most vulnerable people in this lockdown are pregnant women who need medical attention to reduce the risk of stillbirths and other pregnancy-related complications," she said.



Asha workers are a part of a crucial medical supply chain. There are 6,035 ASHA workers in Delhi, one for every 3,300 people.

Currently, they only step out of their homes to visit their local dispensary and drop the medicines at a patient's doorstep. They also try to convince other women to stay at home and not take their children to dispensaries for vaccinations.

Manju (40), an Asha worker from Dwarka Sector 15, used to counsel pregnant women on nutrition. These days, she is a part of a team of five tasked with checking up on people under home

quarantine. "I have been doing this since March. We go to their homes and ensure they are following rules, and paste the 'home quarantine' poster outside their residence. After this, we take updates over the phone," she said.

Among those she monitors are a few men who were at the Nizamuddin Markaz and are now quarantined at a house in Dwarka: "I have a mask and a pair of gloves. I haven't been given a sanitiser, so I carry one from my own house."

At Pul Prahladpur, Bhagwan Devi's phone does not stop buzzing. She has around 2,000 people in her locality and has to keep a track of anyone complaining of coronavirus symptoms. Recently, along with police, she visited the house of a woman from the neighbourhood who complained of fever. "Thankfully, she did not test positive. I used to step out every day since I don't know how to do my job over the phone. I advise people not to touch their face and clean their hands. It is a tiring job," said Devi.

Asha workers Kundan and Reena said they too have been managing work over the phone and avoid going out as they haven't been given gloves or masks. Reena said she gets at least four calls a day from expecting mothers, and "goes to the dispensary to get them medicines". "I cover my mouth with a *chunni*, get the medicines and drop them off at the woman's house. This happens at least twice a week," she said.

Probe ordered as man quarantined at gov centre dies

ABHINAV RAJPUT
NEW DELHI, APRIL 22

A 60-YEAR-OLD man, who had come to Delhi from Tamil Nadu to attend the Tablighi Jamaat gathering at Nizamuddin Markaz last month and eventually tested positive for coronavirus, died at a government centre in Sultanpuri on Wednesday.

The man, Mohammad Mustafa, had been put under quarantine since he had mild symptoms when his test results came out.

Divisional Commissioner of Delhi Sanjeev Khirwar said he was initially admitted to Rajiv Gandhi Hospital and brought to the centre after being discharged. He said people with mild symptoms are kept at the centre as per government guidelines. There are separate blocks here for positive and negative cases.

He is survived by his wife and two college-going sons. Officials said he was brought to the facility two-three days ago.

A Delhi government official said an inquiry has been ordered. The exact cause of the death will be ascertained after the medical report is out, said an official.

The event has led to a furore, with some who stay there accusing the administration of negligence.

Fathima Muzaffer, a member of All India Muslim Personal Law Board who lives in Chennai and is coordinating with the family, said the man was from Mettupalayam in Tamil Nadu and had come to Delhi in the second week of March.

The event has led to a furore, with some who stay there accusing the administration of negligence. A Delhi government official said an inquiry has been ordered

He was a retired government servant and suffered from diabetes. "He had complained to his family that he was not given proper treatment," Fathima alleged.

Around 700 people, mostly those who attended the Nizamuddin event, are kept at the centre.

Mustafa was taken to Lok Nayak Hospital after his health started worsening, and was declared dead on arrival.

A man from the centre said that soon after the death, many people gathered outside their rooms and started alleging that he died due to negligence of the administration.

He alleged, "There is total chaos here, food is served very late. People here wake up early and have to remain hungry for long hours."

Sub-Divisional Magistrate Nagendra Tripathi said there is food for 800 people, prepared and served on time. He said a team of four doctors and around 12 paramedical staff is also deputed there.

Fatima said he was brought to the facility on April 19. "He was admitted to the hospital on March 29... on April 19 he was discharged," she said.

Charged under UAPA, Jamia panel member denied bail

PRITAM PAL SINGH
NEW DELHI, APRIL 22

NOTING THAT the "gravity of offence" against arrested Jamia coordination committee media coordinator Safoora Zargar is serious, a Delhi Court rejected her bail plea. Police have charged her with hatching a conspiracy to incite riots in Northeast Delhi.

Metropolitan Magistrate Vasundhara Chhaunkar denied relief to Zargar, noting that the Delhi Police's Special Cell has booked her under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

The magistrate, in her two-page hand-written order, observed that she was "not inclined" to grant bail at this stage as sections 13, 16, 17 and 18 of the UAPA (dealing with terrorist acts or funding) have been invoked against the accused, which is "grave", "serious is nature" and can only be tried by the sessions court.

The court also noted that the accused is booked under IPC sections 147, 148, 149 and 120B. Later, police had added IPC sections 124A (sedition), 302 (murder), 307 (attempt to murder), and 153A (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, etc).

The court's order came on Zargar's application seeking bail on the ground that she has been falsely implicated in the case, and that she is entitled to the relief being a woman. Zargar's counsel also said she has already been granted bail in another FIR lodged in connection with the violence.

The magistrate, however, was of the view that this is not the appropriate stage for her release on bail.

Flowery welcome home for nurse who recovered

ASTHA SAXENA
NEW DELHI, APRIL 22

FLOWER PETALS, whistles and claps filled the air as 24-year-old Sushma Devi, a nurse working with a private hospital in Delhi, returned home after recovering from COVID-19. Wearing face masks, neighbours came out of their homes in Kishan Ganj, Vasant Kunj, to welcome the 'corona fighter' — in a stark contrast to reports of some healthcare workers being harassed in their localities.

Posted in the liver transplant block of Max Hospital, Saket,

Devi was discharged on April 19.

"I reached home around 10 pm and was pleasantly surprised by the warm welcome from my neighbours. All of them were clapping for me... some even lit candles. I felt extremely special," she told *The Indian Express*.

Devi had resigned from the hospital in February but continued to be on duty during the notice period. On April 13, she gave a sample for testing after some healthcare workers in the hospital tested positive.

"I was sitting in my room when the report came out... I felt helpless. I immediately in-



Sushma Devi (24) was discharged on April 19

formed my team and an ambulance was dispatched to my

home to take me to the hospital. Within those few minutes, I pulled myself together. I thought about my patients who need me and that gave me courage..." she said.

Five days after she tested positive, the hospital tested her again on April 17 and the reports came out negative. "During my stay, I followed proper health hygiene, and the staff extended a lot of support and motivation," said Devi, who was asymptomatic.

Hailing from Manipur, she lives with her uncle. He and nine other family members who live in the same building were iso-

बिहार लोक सेवा आयोग

15, जवाहर लाल नेहरू मार्ग (बेली रोड), पटना - 800001

आवश्यक सूचना

विज्ञापन सं.-05/2020 खान एवं भूतल विभाग, बिहार के अन्तर्गत बिहार खान एवं भूतल सेवा के मूल कोटि, खनिज विकास पदाधिकारी के रिक्त 20 (बीर) पदों पर नियुक्ति हेतु सुयोग्य भारतीय उम्मीदवारों से विहित प्रपत्र में ऑनलाईन आवेदन आमंत्रित किए जाते हैं।

2. ऑनलाईन आवेदन पत्र भरने से संबंधित तिथि एवं अन्य निर्देश निम्नांकित हैं:-

1. रजिस्ट्रेशन (पंजीकरण) की तिथि	04.05.2020 से 18.05.2020 तक
2. ऑनलाईन के माध्यम से भुगतान करने की अंतिम तिथि	25.05.2020 तक
3. ऑनलाईन आवेदन भरने की अंतिम तिथि	02.06.2020 तक
4. आयोग कार्यालय में स्वीड पोस्ट/निर्वाचित डाक से आवेदन की हार्ड कॉपी एवं सभी प्रमाण-पत्र प्राप्त होने की अंतिम तिथि	10.06.2020 के अपराह्न 05:00 बजे तक

नोट-1: जिस तिथि को रजिस्ट्रेशन किया गया है उसकी अगली तिथि को पूर्वाह्न 11:00 बजे के बाद परीक्षा शुल्क का ऑनलाईन भुगतान करने के लिए आवेदक को लिंक उपलब्ध होगा।

नोट-2: जिस तिथि को भुगतान किया गया है उसकी अगली तिथि को पूर्वाह्न 11:00 बजे के बाद आवेदक को ऑनलाईन Application Form भरने के लिए लिंक उपलब्ध होगा। अन्त्यर्था दिनांक-25.05.2020 तक निश्चित रूप से भुगतान कर लें।

3. उपर्युक्त विज्ञापन के संबंध में विस्तृत सूचना/विवरण/ज्ञानकारी एवं ऑनलाईन आवेदन भरने हेतु निर्देश आयोग के वेबसाइट www.bpsc.bih.nic.in पर प्रदर्शित है।

4. अन्त्यर्था ऑनलाईन आवेदन भरने की प्रक्रिया प्रारम्भ करने के पूर्व वेबसाइट पर प्रदर्शित विस्तृत विज्ञापन एवं ऑनलाईन आवेदन भरने हेतु आवश्यक एवं विस्तृत निर्देश का धनी-धार्ति अध्ययन कर लें।

हस्ता./-
संयुक्त सचिव-सह-परीक्षा निबन्धक,
बिहार लोक सेवा आयोग, पटना।

THE OUTBREAK

THE CITY

Ahead of Ramzan, police reach out with 'stay home' message

SOMYA LAKHANI
NEW DELHI, APRIL 22

TO ENSURE that no social gatherings take place at mosques or on the streets in the month of Ramzan, which starts this week, the Delhi Police has spoken to several imams and other religious heads about social distancing norms in the time of fasting and feasting.

"DCPs have held meetings with imams and maulvis about the community offering prayer inside their homes. They have also video-recorded this message and sent it across WhatsApp groups for a wider reach," said Joint CP (southern range) Devesh Srivastava.

DCP (southeast) R P Meena said there are over 150 big and small mosques in his district, and most religious heads have been spoken to personally. "I have requested them to make announcements about this from mosques; many have started already. The video messages recorded by the heads say that social distancing has to be followed, people shouldn't gather at mosques, should stay at home."

DCP (Dwarka) Anto Alphonsse said he has met and spoken to 59 imams, while DCP (outer north) Gaurav Sharma said that apart from announcements being made by maulvis, information is being shared on WhatsApp groups and "Dos &

Dont's are being pasted at each nook and corner".

Joint CP (northern range) Manish Agarwal said that apart from religious heads, they have reached out to Aman Committee members.

"We are getting a lot of co-operation from the community. About sehri (pre-dawn meal) and iftar (evening meal), we will ensure that people stay indoors and that no crowding happens outside shops in the morning. We have told the community that they should stock up on special items they want to eat, such as khajoor, while routine shopping," said Agarwal.

DCP (Northwest) Vijayanta Arya said that there was hardly any trouble during other recent festivals as people are "extremely aware about the pandemic. We will ensure that restaurants only do home-delivery and take-away. Extra deployment is already in place, and if need be, we will have more force".

In Haryana's Faridabad, all mosques will remain closed during Ramzan, said the Deputy Commissioner of the district on Wednesday. "In keeping with the instructions issued by the government, no mosque should be opened at all in view of the lockdown. During the festival, all the people should be in their homes," said Deputy Commissioner Yashpal Yadav.



STOP & SWAB

Commuters coming from Delhi to Noida are checked for symptoms of COVID-19, a day after the Gautam Budh Nagar district administration sealed the border. Only those engaged in essential services, with a UP pass, are being allowed to enter. On Wednesday, however, police let vehicles pass through with a warning. *Abhinav Saha*

'Corona warriors' have new task: Calling everyone aged 60 & above

SOURAV ROY BARMAN
NEW DELHI, APRIL 22

THE DELHI government's team of 'corona warriors', comprising personnel from police, anganwadis and civic bodies, have a new task at hand — checking on every resident aged 60 or above and red-flagging those with serious medical conditions.

The decision was taken after a Delhi Health Department analysis found that of the 48 COVID-19 deaths registered in the city, 25 were aged 60 and above. An overwhelming 88% had comorbidities or pre-existing ailments, which aggravated their conditions.

During his daily briefing Tuesday, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal also shared the concern, appealing to people falling in this age bracket to remain indoors. The CM said they need to take "special care" of their health to avoid complications.

Senior officials told *The Indian Express* that the move to utilise the services of the 'corona foot warriors containment and surveillance teams' — which are multi-sectoral teams constituted at the level of all



The teams will include personnel from police, anganwadis and civic bodies

13,750 polling booths in the city — stems from that concern.

According to an order issued by Chief Secretary Vijay Dev, the teams, which are headed by booth-level officers (BLOs), are expected to have one civil defence volunteer, ASHA/anganwadi worker, MCD sanitation worker and a Delhi Police beat constable.

Senior IAS officer Sanjay Goel, state-level coordinator of the teams, said they have already started collecting data at the ground level. "Each BLO has a list of voters in their jurisdiction. Using the rolls, they have been asked to call up residents aged 60 or above and ask if they

have any medical conditions or not. Every person with a medical condition will be red-flagged. The names will be shared with the health department and the district magistrates concerned," said Goel.

He added that the teams will then recommend that those red-flagged in the rolls be tested first when samples are collected from the respective areas. The Delhi government has started rapid antibody tests at a limited scale, as well as random RT-PCR tests at the community level.

During the last Lok Sabha polls, there were 18.5 lakh voters in Delhi aged 60 and above. As on April 22, Delhi had registered 2,248 COVID-19 cases, of which 1,464 patients were aged less than 50, 359 between 50-59 and 425 aged 60 or above. So far, 724 patients have recovered while 48 have died.

Kejriwal said co-morbidities among the dead include diabetes, cancer, heart and respiratory ailments. "That is why I have been stressing please take proper care of the elderly and people with health complications. Especially those aged above 60," he said.

Other tasks the teams of co-

rona warriors are expected to carry out include making calls to households in their jurisdictions to enquire about the well-being of people, availability of essential items, and advising them to wear masks and ensure social distancing.

"They shall also inquire with the household whether they know any suspected corona case in their neighbourhood. The teams shall also do foot patrolling and visit each household as per their own schedule on a daily basis and identify suspected corona patients, if any. In case any suspected case is identified, to carry out the protocol already circulated for a suspect, including quarantine, testing, tie-up with doctors, etc," the order constituting the teams states.

Goel said not every team has five members as in many cases, ASHA workers also happen to be the local BLOs. "Each team has around 500 households under their jurisdiction. They generally manage to cover around 50 households in a day, through telephone calls and visits," he said. The teams have also been asked to encourage people to download the Aarogya Setu app.

Infant among 92 new cases in capital, one more death

ASTHA SAXENA
NEW DELHI, APRIL 22

THE TOTAL COVID-19 cases in India crossed 20,000 Wednesday, with Delhi accounting for over 10% of the cases. On Wednesday, the number of positive cases in the capital reached 2,248, with 92 fresh cases and one more death. So far, 48 people in Delhi have died due to the virus.

Among those who tested positive are 12 people from two families, including a 45-day-old infant, from Churi Walan Gali in Chandni Chowk. The district administration is tracing their contacts. Of the 12 members, three are admitted to Lok Nayak Hospital. The hospital has advised the family to admit the infant as well. The others are at home.

Frontline healthcare workers, meanwhile, continued to bear the brunt as seven tested positive for the disease at Delhi government-run Babu Jagjivan Ram Hospital. According to sources, the hospital falls in the vicinity of B-Block, Jahangirpuri, from where 31 people recently tested positive during community sampling. "Since all positive cases from the area were asymptomatic, it's difficult to gauge how the staff caught the infection. Residents of the locality came to our hospital for treatment as it is the closest," said a senior doctor from the hospital.

At state-run Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hospital, 57 healthcare workers were quarantined after a patient from Jahangirpuri R Block died. The 40-year-old woman was admitted to the medicine emergency on April 16. The hospital admitted her to the isolation ward as she was a suspected COVID-19 patient. She died on April 18.

"Samples of all healthcare workers have been taken, they have been advised home quarantine. We are also tracing close

CORONA COUNT DELHI NCR	
2,487 CASES	48 DEATHS
846 RECOVERED	

contacts of the patient," said a senior doctor from the hospital.

A nurse working at Safdarjung hospital has also tested positive for COVID-19. Over 75 healthcare workers in Delhi have been infected so far and many are under quarantine.

Nine percent of the total samples sent for testing in Delhi have tested positive for COVID-19. The Delhi government is carrying out daily house-to-house surveillance and sanitisation of areas in 87 containment zones.

So far, 5,619 samples have been collected from containment zones.

Among the total casualties reported so far, the highest number of deaths is due to co-morbid conditions, the data shared by the health department stated. Out of the total deaths, 40 people have died due to co-morbid conditions. The data further states that 90% of those under the age of 50 years died due to co-morbidities.

"Ten people under 50 years have died and nine of them had previous illnesses," said a senior officer from the health department. However, the highest number of deaths is reported between 60 and above age group.

Meanwhile, to help reduce the burden on ambulances, cab aggregator Uber has offered to help the Delhi government by transporting non-COVID-19, non-critical patients in coordination with CATS ambulance helpline 102. The department has also ordered hospitals to make arrangements for disinfection of hearse vans and ambulances used to transfer COVID-19 patients.

North body teachers, sanitation staff say not paid for 2 months

ABHINAV RAJPUT
NEW DELHI, APRIL 22

WHILE THEY are at the forefront of the COVID-19 battle, teachers and sanitation workers of North Corporation have another worry on their minds — they have not been paid for two months. Around 30,000 sanitation workers and 8,000 teachers are employed in the North body.

Ram Niwas Solanki, general secretary of the Municipal Corporation Teachers' Association, said that though the delay in salaries is a regular feature in the civic body, the problem escalated during lockdown. He said the association is mulling a call to not distribute food for a day, if the situation persists.

The South and East MCDs

have, meanwhile, been able to pay salaries till last month.

North corporation commissioner Varsha Joshi said safai karamcharis have been paid for February. "For the others, the last full salary was paid for January. I try to pay safai karamcharis in the first week of every month. This is the first time it hasn't been possible."

Another official blamed the North body's poor financial condition and a file pending before Delhi government for the situation.

Leader of Opposition and AAP leader Surjeet Panwar said the Delhi government has paid all dues to MCDs. "They keep blaming government just to pass the buck," he said. Another AAP leader said the allegations were baseless: "It's unfortunate that BJP is playing dirty politics in such times."

Police book Tahir Hussain under UAPA

New Delhi: Delhi Police have booked suspended AAP councillor Tahir Hussain under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), officers said Wednesday. Hussain, who is accused of murder and rioting, was also booked under the UAPA by the Special Cell of the Delhi Police for his alleged involvement in Northeast Delhi riots. He was arrested 10-12 days ago for his alleged involvement in the riots, said a senior police officer. **ENS**

IRRIGATION AND FLOOD CONTROL DEPARTMENT GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS

The Executive Engineer, Civil Division No. XIV, I&FCD invites on behalf of the President of India, online tender for the following work:
NIT No. EE/CD-XIV/NIT/02/2020-21 Percentage Rate HOA: (2711 Maintenance Flood)
Name of work: Repair of 10 Nos. Boat Carriage Trolley of small size, 2 Nos. Big size for Shikara Boat, 4 Nos. Motor Boat Engine of 40 HP, 1 No. of 15 HP lying at Timarpur Stores for the year 2020. **Estimated cost Rs. 6,18,900/- & Earnest Money Rs. 12,378/-** **Period of completion:** One (01) Month. **Last date & time of submission of tender:** upto 3:00 PM, on 05.05.2020. (Tender ID 2020_IFC_190268_1). Tender forms and other details can be obtained from the website <https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in> DIP/Shabdarth/0018/20-21

NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY

Open Tender through E-Tendering 2020
1. Name of work: Cutting and welding repair work on wagons at Diesel Loco and Wagon Workshop Lal Phatak, Ajmer (Raj.)-3055001, **4. Earnest Money to be deposited:** Rs. 84,800/- (Only through net banking or payment gateway on IREPS portal), **5. Last Date and time for submission and opening of E-tender:** 18.05.2020 up to 15.00 PM E-Tender will be opened at 15.30 PM on same day. Due to indispensable reasons bid opening schedule may change., **6. Website particular where complete details of e-tender can be seen and participated:** www.ireps.gov.in (Note - This is e-tender so tenderer can participate through e-tendering process only on mentioned website within bidding period) 398-07720
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उ. प्र. पावर ट्रांसमिशन कार्पोरेशन लिमिटेड ई-निविदा सूचना निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु कार्य/ आपूर्ति हेतु ई-निविदायें दो भागों में (जी.एस.टी.) में पंजीकृत, प्रतिष्ठित एवं अनुभवी ठेकेदारों/ फर्मों से आमंत्रित की जाती हैं, निविदा के प्रथम भाग (ऑन-लाइन) में निविदा मूल्य तथा धरोहर राशि आर.टी.जी.एस./ एन.एफ.आई.टी./ बैंक गारंटी के माध्यम से अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, विद्युत पारेषण मण्डल, मुरादाबाद के भारतीय स्टेट बैंक, मुख्य शाखा मुरादाबाद में संचालित खातू खाता सं. 10896364702, IFSC Code- SBIN 0000682 (MICR No. 110024101) में जमा कर विवरण निविदा प्रपत्रों के साथ संलग्न प्रपत्र में 'यूटीआर नं.', बैंक का नाम/ खाता सं., निविदा सं., जारी करने वाले बैंक अधिकारी तथा निविदादाता द्वारा हस्ताक्षरित प्रति, इन्कम टैक्स, चैन नं., जी.एस.टी. पंजीकरण प्रपत्र की छायाप्रति, अनुभव सम्बन्धी प्रपत्र तथा पात्रता की अन्य नियम एवं शर्तें अवश्य होने चाहिए अन्यथा की स्थिति में निविदा का भाग-2 (दरें) विचारणीय नहीं होगा। निविदा सभी प्रपत्रों सहित खुलने की निर्धारित दिनांक को 13.00 बजे तक ई-माध्यम से प्राप्त की जायेगी और उसी दिनांक ई-माध्यम से प्रथम भाग 15.00 बजे तथा प्रथम भाग के परीक्षणोपरत 15.00 बजे खोला जायेगा। उक्त तिथि को अवकाश होने पर निविदायें अगले कार्यदिवस में निर्धारित समय पर खोली जायेगी। आमंत्रित निवेदाई केवल ई-निविदा पोर्टल वेबसाइट 'http://etender.up.nic.in' पर ही खुलने के दिनांक को समय 13.00 बजे तक ही download/ Submit की जा सकेगी। निविदा प्रपत्र उपरोक्त पोर्टल वेबसाइट पर निविदा submit करने की दिनांक व समय तक उपलब्ध रहेंगे। दरों की वैधता निविदा खुलने की तिथि से कम से कम 90 दिन होनी चाहिये। अन्य नियम व शर्तें विभाग के निर्धारित नियम व शर्तें उ.प्र. पावर कार्पोरेशन लि. के फार्म एबी के अनुसार होंगी जिन्हें किसी भी कार्य दिवस में अधोहस्ताक्षरकों के कार्यालय में देखा जा सकता है। किसी भी या समस्त निविदाओं को स्वीकार/ निरस्त करने का अधिकार अधोहस्ताक्षरी को बिना कोई कारण बताये सुरक्षित रहेगा। निविदा संबंधी निविदा शुल्क एवं धरोहर राशि जमा करने संबंधी उक्त पे-इन-सिलेण निविदा खुलने से एक दिवस पूर्व इस कार्यालय को ऑनलाइन (seetcmdb@gmail.com) उपलब्ध

कराना अनिवार्य है, अन्यथा की स्थिति में निविदा नहीं खोली जायेगी। निविदा शुल्क एवं धरोहर राशि के जमा होने के संबंध में बैंक स्टेटमेंट की उपलब्धता पर जांचोपरत ही निविदा का भाग-2 खोला जायेगा। ई-निविदा खुलने का दिनांक: 19.05.2020: 1. ई-निविदा संख्या- 16/ ई.टी.सी.एम./ 2020-21: विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड, सम्मल के अन्तर्गत विभिन्न 132 केवी लाइनों के वार्षिक अनुरक्षण का कार्य। धरोहर राशि रु. 6500/-, निविदा प्रपत्र का जीएसटी सहित मूल्य रु. 1180/-, 2. ई-निविदा संख्या- 17/ ई.टी.सी.एम./ 2020-21: विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड, रामपुर के अन्तर्गत विभिन्न उपकेन्द्रों पर अग्निशामक यंत्रों की रिकिलिंग का कार्य। धरोहर राशि रु. 4000/-, निविदा प्रपत्र का जीएसटी सहित मूल्य रु. 590/-, 3. ई-निविदा संख्या- 18/ ई.टी.सी.एम./ 2020-21: विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड-द्वितीय, मुरादाबाद के अन्तर्गत विभिन्न उपकेन्द्रों पर अग्निशामक यंत्रों की रिकिलिंग का कार्य। धरोहर राशि रु. 6000/-, निविदा प्रपत्र का जीएसटी सहित मूल्य रु. 1180/-, 4. ई-निविदा संख्या- 19/ ई.टी.सी.एम./ 2020-21: विद्युत 400 केवी उपसंस्थान खण्ड, मुरादाबाद के अन्तर्गत 400 केवी उपकेन्द्र, मुरादाबाद पर अग्निशामक उपकरणों की रिकिलिंग एवं अनुरक्षण कार्य। धरोहर राशि रु. 6000/-, निविदा प्रपत्र का जीएसटी सहित मूल्य रु. 1180/-, 5. ई-निविदा संख्या- 20/ ई.टी.सी.एम./ 2020-21: विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड, सम्मल के अन्तर्गत 132 केवी उपकेन्द्र, चन्दीसरी पर विभिन्न क्षमता के एबीसी टाईप अग्निशामक यंत्रों की आपूर्ति। धरोहर राशि रु. 2000/-, निविदा प्रपत्र का जीएसटी सहित मूल्य रु. 590/-, 6. ई-निविदा संख्या- 21/ ई.टी.सी.एम./ 2020-21: विद्युत 400 केवी उपसंस्थान खण्ड, मुरादाबाद के अन्तर्गत 400 केवी उपकेन्द्र, मुरादाबाद पर सेन्ट्र ब्रेक आइसोलेटर हेतु 420 केवी 2000 एम्पी. फ्लैक्सीबिल टाइप कनेक्टर एवं 420 केवी 200 एम्पी. टर्मिनल कनेक्टर की आपूर्ति। धरोहर राशि रु. 2000/-, निविदा प्रपत्र का जीएसटी सहित मूल्य रु. 590/-, 7. ई-निविदा संख्या- 22/ ई.टी.सी.एम./ 2020-21: विद्युत 400 केवी उपसंस्थान खण्ड, मुरादाबाद के अन्तर्गत 400 केवी उपकेन्द्र, मुरादाबाद पर 245 केवी आइसोलेटर्स एवं कॉपर बॉन्ड हेतु रोटेरी हैड अस्सेम्बली की आपूर्ति। धरोहर राशि रु.

2000/-, निविदा प्रपत्र का जीएसटी सहित मूल्य रु. 590/-, ई-निविदा खुलने का दिनांक- 22.05.2020: 1. ई-निविदा संख्या- 23/ ई.टी.सी.एम./ 2020-21: विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड, सम्मल के अन्तर्गत 220 केवी विद्युत उपकेन्द्र, सम्मल पर स्थापित 33 केवी सिंगल मूज बसबार को डबल जेबरा बस से बदले जाने का कार्य। धरोहर राशि रु. 9000/-, निविदा प्रपत्र का जीएसटी सहित मूल्य रु. 1180/-, 2. ई-निविदा संख्या- 24/ ई.टी.सी.एम./ 2020-21: विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड-द्वितीय, मुरादाबाद के अन्तर्गत 220 केवी मुरादाबाद-सी.बी. गंज लाइन पर टावर लोकेशन नं. 166 तक तथा 220 केवी मुरादाबाद-सी.बी. गंज लाइन पर लीलो टावर रामपुर तक पेड़ों, झाड़ी आदि की कटाई एवं छटाई का कार्य। धरोहर राशि रु. 9500/-, निविदा प्रपत्र का जीएसटी सहित मूल्य रु. 1180/-, 4. ई-निविदा संख्या- 26/ ई.टी.सी.एम./ 2020-21: विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड-द्वितीय, मुरादाबाद के अंतर्गत 132 के.वी. उपकेन्द्र, मुलाबाबाड़ी पर 40 एमवीए अरेन्वा मेक परिवर्तक के गैससिकट को बदलने का कार्य। धरोहर राशि रु. 5000/-, निविदा प्रपत्र का जीएसटी सहित मूल्य रु. 590/-, 5. ई-निविदा संख्या- 27/ ई.टी.सी.एम./ 2020-21: विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड, सम्मल के अंतर्गत 220 के.वी. उपकेन्द्र, सम्मल पर विभिन्न साइज के कंट्रोल केबिल के एक्सटेंशन एवं लेइंग का कार्य। धरोहर राशि रु. 2000/-, निविदा प्रपत्र का जीएसटी सहित मूल्य रु. 590/-, 6. ई-निविदा संख्या- 28/ ई.टी.सी.एम./ 2020-21: विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड-द्वितीय, मुरादाबाद के अंतर्गत 220 के.वी. उपकेन्द्र, मुरादाबाद पर विभिन्न प्रकार के डिजिटल मीटर की आपूर्ति। धरोहर राशि रु. 2000/-, निविदा प्रपत्र का जीएसटी सहित मूल्य रु. 590/-, "राष्ट्र हित में बिजली बचाये" हस्ता./- अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, विद्युत पारेषण मंडल-प्रथम, उ.प्र.पा.ट्रां.का.लि., मुरादाबाद, पत्रांक- 971- वि.पा.मं.(मु.)/ ई-निविदा/ 2020-21, दि. 20.04.2020

उ.प्र.पावर ट्रांसमिशन कार्पोरेशन लि. ई-निविदा सूचना अनुपची को श्रेणी कार्यदायी संस्थाओं/आपूर्तिकर्ताओं से विद्युत पारेषण मंडल, ग्रेटर नोएडा के अन्तर्गत निम्न सामग्री/कार्य हेतु ई-निविदायें ई-पोर्टल etender.up.nic.in पर दो भागों में निविदा अन्तर्गत की दिनांक को 12.00 बजे तक आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। जिसका प्रथम भाग उसी दिन क्रमशः 03.00/03.15/3.30/03.40 बजे (यदि अवकाश/अन्य कारण हो तो अगले कार्य दिवस में) खोला जायेगा। ई-पोर्टल etender.up.nic.in पर दो भागों में निविदा अन्तर्गत की दिनांक को 12.00 बजे तक आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। जिसका प्रथम भाग उसी दिन क्रमशः 03.00/03.15/3.30/03.40 बजे (यदि अवकाश/अन्य कारण हो तो अगले कार्य दिवस में) खोला जायेगा। ई-पोर्टल etender.up.nic.in पर दो भागों में निविदा अन्तर्गत की दिनांक को 12.00 बजे तक आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। जिसका प्रथम भाग उसी दिन क्रमशः 03.00/03.15/3.30/03.40 बजे (यदि अवकाश/अन्य कारण हो तो अगले कार्य दिवस में) खोला जायेगा। ई-पोर्टल etender.up.nic.in पर दो भागों में निविदा अन्तर्गत की दिनांक को 12.00 बजे तक आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। जिसका प्रथम भाग उसी दिन 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5 THE OUTBREAK NATION



CORONA WATCH



A woman sells poultry in Assam's Baksa district. *Dasarath Deka*

J&K

Amarnath Yatra may be cancelled

Jammu: Uncertainty prevailed over the fate of this year's pilgrimage to the Amarnath cave shrine in South Kashmir with an official release on Wednesday announcing its cancellation due to the coronavirus pandemic, before being withdrawn. The yatra has been scheduled from June 23 to August 3. The decision to "cancel" it was taken at a meeting of the Amarnath shrine board, chaired by J&K L-G G C Murrmu. A later statement said it "may not be possible" to organize the pilgrimage in 2020. **ENS**

KARNATAKA

Relief for IT services, construction

Bengaluru: The Karnataka government Wednesday issued an order extending the lockdown in the state till May 3, but brought "select additional activities" like in situ construction work and IT services with minimal work force under a category that can begin operations from midnight on April 23. "IT firms can work with minimum staff but rest should work from home. No number of employees has been specified," education minister S Suresh Kumar said. **ENS**

MAHARASHTRA

92-year-old woman in Pune recovers

Pune: A 92-year-old woman in Pune has recovered from COVID-19. What makes it even more remarkable is that she had suffered paralysis seven months ago. She and four other members of her family tested positive and were admitted to Symbiosis Hospital in the first week of April. "All members including her 3-year-old great-granddaughter were discharged Tuesday," said Dr Vijay Natranjan, hospital CEO. **PTI**

Sample testing shift: In Maharashtra, private labs overtake govt facilities

KAUNAIN SHERIFF M
NEW DELHI, APRIL 22

MAHARASHTRA, WHICH has emerged as the ground zero of the coronavirus outbreak in the country, has become the first state where the number of samples tested at private facilities has overtaken those at government labs — by nearly double on Tuesday alone.

With 5,221 cases so far, the highest in any state, Health officials are banking on largescale testing as a key tool to isolate and contain the spread. And, according to official figures available Wednesday morning, Maharashtra has tested 82,304 samples so far, of which 41,794 — 50.78% — were done in the private labs.

The figures show that on Tuesday, private labs tested 4,211

samples while government facilities totalled 2,255 in the state.

There are two main reasons for the surge in private testing, a government official said. "Physicians have been given wider discretion, they can prescribe lab tests for asymptomatic people too. Also, in the case of Maharashtra, a few labs stopped testing temporarily after the Supreme Court ordered free testing for all. They have now resumed in full capacity," he said.

The official was referring to the court modifying its order and clarifying that free tests are only for Ayushman Bharat beneficiaries and economically weaker sections. The court ruled that the Centre's price cap of Rs 4,500 per test would continue for others.

"Private labs, in my opinion, have twice the capacity as that of government labs as we oper-

ate 24x7. Also, the outbreak in Dharavi is contributing to big numbers coming to private labs," Arokiaswamy Velumani, CEO of Mumbai-based Thyrocare, said. Dharavi has recorded over 180 cases.

Officials also pointed out that Maharashtra has the largest private lab network in the country, with 20 of a total of 87 operational in the state.

In Delhi, meanwhile, only 25% (6,734) of the total 26,627 samples tested are from private labs, up from 19% two weeks ago.

Official figures show that the rise in testing at private labs in Maharashtra has also resulted in an increase in positive cases being reported. In the last one week, the average total positive cases in the state stood at 5.30% of total samples tested as against 4.33% the previous week.

In government labs, this number stood at 6.46% for the last week and 5.47% the week before; in private labs, it was 4.085% and 2.97%, respectively.

Mapping the shift, the figures show that private labs tested an average of 3,133 samples per day over the last seven days, compared to 2,175 in government labs. An identical trend was reported the previous week, when private labs tested an average of 2,029 samples per day, as against 1,898 in government facilities.

Official figures from across the month present a stark contrast, and show the pace at which testing at private labs have gained ground in Maharashtra.

On April 9, government labs tested 12,984 samples, 5,091 more than private labs. The trend held over the next week, with government labs testing 25,283 sam-

ples, 5,424 more than private labs.

The trend started shifting subsequently in the weeks that followed, with two days recording the maximum gap between the two.

On April 19, 4,241 samples were tested in private labs, compared to 2,389 in government facilities. Tuesday marked the next big jump.

In Delhi, similarly, there has been an increase in testing in the 10 approved private labs after the apex court order on April 14.

In the last one week, private labs tested 551 samples per day, on average, against 926 in government facilities — but on April 17 alone, private labs tested as many 2,048 samples. In the previous week, private labs in Delhi tested 152 samples per day, on average, compared to 882 in government labs.

CENTRAL TEAM VISITS DHARAVI



Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope with the central team in Dharavi. *Express*

Step up testing, quarantining in slums, Maharashtra told

SANDEEP PASHAR
MUMBAI, APRIL 22

MAHARASHTRA needs more institutional quarantine facilities and a ramp-up of its contact tracing programme in slum pockets to contain the spread of coronavirus in Mumbai, a central team told state authorities on Wednesday.

Following an on-spot assessment of COVID-19 care arrangements in Asia's largest slum Dharavi and another slum settlement at Marol in Andheri, an inter-ministerial central team (IMCT), headed by Additional Secretary (Ministry of Food Processing Industries) Manoj Joshi, instructed officials to augment quarantine facilities in dense slum pockets on an urgent basis.

Concerned over the high infection rate and routine lockdown violations in Mumbai, the Home Ministry had earlier sent two separate IMCTs to Mumbai and Pune, authorising them to give directions to the state authorities for redressal.

When contacted, Joshi told *The Indian Express*, "We have sought more data from the BMC on how many people have been tested in

the major slum colonies. We have also asked for more data regarding quarantining arrangements in these dense pockets."

After cases were detected in Dharavi and the other slum pockets of Mumbai, the sheer density of population sparked fears of community transmission.

In Dharavi alone, which has now seen 189 cases, including 12 deaths, more than 60,000 families and roughly 8.5 lakh people are cramped in a 2.4 sq km sprawl, making it one of the densest human habitations in the world.

Advocating aggressive isolation as the best form of defence in dense habitations, the central team on Wednesday demanded a 200 per cent increase in institutional quarantine-beds. Local assistant commissioner Kiran Dighavkar, who accompanied the team to Dharavi, said, "We've set up quarantine camps that can accommodate 1,000 people at one time for now. The central team has asked us to augment this to accommodate up to 3,000 people."

On Wednesday, when the IMCT visited Dharavi, local authorities highlighted these challenges, while presenting how they had resorted to swift contact tracing and aggressive isolation of

high-risk categories.

Between April 1 (when the first case was reported in the area) and Wednesday, Dighavkar claimed they screened a population of 40,000 people in the settlement with the help of private medics and fewer clinics. "We have taken swabs of 680 people. So far 2,780 people have been put under observation. This includes 2,100 under home quarantine and 680 under institutional quarantine. Of the latter, 210 have been discharged," Dighavkar informed the team, while showing them quarantine facilities set up by the BMC — a 300-bed facility at the Rajiv Gandhi Sports Complex and another 700-bed facility in a municipal school complex.

The team is expected to visit slum settlements near Govandi in the eastern suburbs on Thursday.

While the civic authorities shared a ward level data of various arrangements put in place, the team has now sought "slum specific data".

The Centre has also taken cognisance of allegations made by Maharashtra Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnis over violation of the ICMR protocols regarding suspected COVID-19 deaths by major hospitals in Mumbai.

Stuck with no work, Central team writes to Bengal Chief Secy; reply awaited

RITIKACHOPRA
NEW DELHI, APRIL 22

THE TWO Inter-Ministerial Central Teams (IMCTs) tasked with assessing West Bengal's handling of the COVID-19 outbreak in seven districts could not do any meaningful work for the third successive day, with the state government ignoring the Kolkata team's request for a detailed presentation on nine points and inspection visits to 12 hotspots, nine COVID hospitals, six markets, and four quarantine centres across Kolkata, Howrah, East Midnapore and North 24 Parganas districts.

Among the points the Central team has sought details on are the testing scale, testing facilities, availability of personal protective equipment (PPE) for health workers, availability of ICU beds, ventilators and oxygen supply, incidence of COVID-19 among health workers, and the process of determining the cause of death.

The team in North Bengal, tasked with monitoring preparedness in Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Jalpaiguri, also could not move out on Wednesday.

The team had its first briefing in three days from the Jalpaiguri Commissioner on the overall status of the outbreak in Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and Kalimpong. Another detailed briefing, requested by team leader Vineet Joshi, was initially scheduled at 7 pm, but was postponed to 10.30 pm on account of rain and hailstorm in the evening.

The IMCT, led by Additional Secretary Apurva Chandra, is

learnt to have spent Wednesday waiting for West Bengal Chief Secretary Rajiv Sinha to respond to a letter requesting field visits and detailed presentation by the state Health Department.

"We haven't heard from them the whole day. This is our third day here, and we haven't done anything meaningful yet," a team member said on the condition of anonymity.

In a detailed letter to Sinha on Wednesday morning, Chandra, besides seeking presentation on nine points, also requested information on the method of identifying suspected cases and quarantining those patients. "The IMCT would also like to understand any problems faced by the state government in implementation of the lockdown orders, availability of testing kits, etc, and support required from the Government of India in this regard," the letter states.

On field visits, Chandra wrote, his team should be accompanied by "relevant officers of the health department, local bodies and other departments involved in implementing the health and disinfection measures, apart from supply of essential commodities, operation of quarantine centres and the management of the relevant hospitals", and not a police officer.

On Tuesday, the IMCT was accompanied by an ACP of West Bengal Police for its hour-long tour of Kolkata to assess the implementation of the lockdown.

Chandra wrote to Sinha after the state government sought to de-escalate confrontation with the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Punitive action for corona among staff misinterpreted: MHA

EXPRESSNEWSERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 22

IN A move to assuage fears raised by industrial units, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Wednesday said that punitive measures in its guidelines to allow some industries to restart operations with conditions have been misinterpreted.

The clarification follows representations by various industry and export associations to clarify the provisions.

While the Press Information Bureau called these apprehensions to be "wrong and incorrect", as provisions were precautionary in nature, the MHA's official handle tweeted, "MHA Guidelines misinterpreted. Penalties under DM (Disaster Management) Act '05 applicable if offence occurs with consent, cognisance or negligence of employee."

Industry representatives said that employers should not be held responsible if any employee tests positive for coronavirus.

"...If carried out as a randomised inspection with transparency and submission of report, monitoring could be effective without being heavy-handed," CII

director-general Chandrajit Banerjee said. "At the same time...CII suggests that it would not be correct to hold employers culpable in case COVID-positive cases are found among employees, as it is found that infections can spread even through asymptomatic carriers."

"There should be no criminality in COVID management in industry. We will take it to the highest level," Labour Secretary Heeralal Samariya said during a webinar in response to similar concerns raised by members of industry association FICCI.

Ravi Sehgal, chairman, Engineering Export Promotion Council of India, said that while the problem is not at the ministry-level in Delhi, "everything boils down to the state level and their interpretation of the law and rules. The MHA needs to call all state chief secretaries and form a modulus common to all of India."

The Indian Express had on April 21 reported that firms in pockets across the country had raised red flags over the interpretation of punitive measures for violation of safety procedures, especially if workers test positive for COVID-19 despite the firms following safety and sanitisation procedures.

Kerala to deduct salary of govt staff, cut MLAs' pay

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, APRIL 22

THE KERALA Cabinet on Wednesday decided to deduct one month's salary over five months from government employees, PSU workers and staff of quasi-government institutions in order to mop up resources during the economic crisis stemming from the lockdown.

A 30 per cent cut in monthly salary will be effected for ministers, legislators and members of all governing boards for a year. Elected members in the three-tier local bodies will also take a 30 per cent cut in honorarium.

CM Pinarayi Vijayan said COVID-19 has had a huge economic impact. "Kerala has been hit badly and we are a consumer state. The state is going through a

fiscal crisis as tax collection revenue has fallen drastically and remittances from expatriates have also stopped... Expenses for healthcare services and food safety are unavoidable..."

He said that government employees and their organisations expressed willingness to contribute one month's salary to Chief Minister's Distress Relief Fund. Accordingly, the salary for six days every month will be deducted for the next five months. Those earning less than Rs 20,000 a month will be exempted, the CM said.

Kerala reported 11 new cases of COVID-19 on Wednesday — seven from Kannur, two in Kasargod, and one each from Kottayam and Malappuram. Five of them came from abroad and three were infected through a primary contact. One person is a health worker and two are house surgeons at Kozhikode Medical College.

Alphonso feels the heat, farmers struggle to reach markets

MAYURA JANWALKAR
RATNAGIRI, APRIL 22

EVERY summer, said Devdutta Patil, customers wait for the Alphonso. This year, for the first time that he has been in the mango business for 30 years, it is the king of fruits that is waiting for buyers.

On Sunday night, son Vikram supervised the packing of 72 boxes containing two dozen mangoes each at their home in Ratnagiri, for their first dispatch to Mumbai this season, with some easing of the lockdown starting the next day. As four workers and members of the family placed the Alphonso in layers of hay, Vikram said the boxes were headed for the APMC market in Vashi, Navi Mumbai, about 340 km away.

Still, he doesn't expect to come anywhere close to their usual sales. "We are readying about

1,000 boxes, last year we sold 2,500," Devdutta said.

Ratnagiri had four active COVID-19 cases Sunday. For the mango trade, that fuels the economy of Maharashtra's coastal districts, the lockdown is a second blow in close succession, after the untimely rain in December costing 40 per cent of the yield.

Vivek Bhide, the president of a cooperative of mango producers and sellers, estimates that the three districts of Konkan region produce 3.5 lakh metric tonnes of mangoes each year.

An estimated 30,000 to 40,000 metric tonnes of top-grade mangoes from Konkan are exported every year. The overseas demand has also been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic.

Recently, mango farmers reached out to the government to facilitate the retail sale of Alphonso, including in major markets



Workers weigh and segregate Alphonso mangoes as per grade at a warehouse owned by Sanchin Lanjekar in Ratnagiri. *Amit Chakravarty*

like Mumbai, Thane and Pune.

While Alphonso rates, in the range of Rs 800 to Rs 2,000 for a peti (box of four to seven dozen mangoes), are not dramatically lower than earlier, problems in

supply chains have made the business sluggish, said Bhide. "Usually by April 20, most farmers have sold 50 per cent of their produce," he said.

Amar Desai said that not just

the fresh fruit, with its short shelf life, but also the mango processing business has been affected. A number of small entrepreneurs in Ratnagiri trade in mango products like sweets, pulp and bottled juice, pointed out Desai.

Sunil Pawar, managing director of Maharashtra State Agricultural Marketing Board, said they have started to directly link farmers with consumers in urban areas now. The board has a list of mango farmers ready for this up on their website. "We have also started sending vehicles to districts like Satara, Nashik, Sangli and Kolhapur for farmers to sell to consumers there," he said.

Pawar said around 300 tonnes of mangoes have been sent to buyers in other cities via the Board's intervention, while around 2,235 tonnes have left for markets abroad from its Vashi treatment centre. "Similar interventions are be-

ing carried out by Agriculture Department. Some wholesale traders have tied up with food delivery applications like Zomato to home deliver mangoes," he said.

Last week, Konkan Bhumi Pratishthan, an NGO associated with around a thousand mango farmers that works with the state government, stepped in to enable farmers to reach urban customers. Founder Sanjay Yadavrao said Alphonso sales may drop to Rs 1,000 crore as opposed to Rs 3,000 crore last year. However, social media has helped. "Now demand is so high, we are trying hard to fulfill it."

Amar Desai fears the pinch may be felt the most ahead of the next harvest. "Whatever the farmer earns during March, April, May is what sustains him for the year. He uses it in October-November for his next harvest."

—WITH INPUTS FROM PARATHA SARATHI BISWAS IN PUNE

6 THE OUTBREAK NATION

AFTER BURIAL ROW

TN: Rs 50 lakh for kin of those who die in COVID fight

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHENNAI, APRIL 22

TAMIL NADU Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami Wednesday announced ex gratia payment of Rs 50 lakh to the kin of frontline personnel who die during COVID-19 duty, a decision that came in the wake of the controversy over the burial of a Chennai neurosurgeon and a protest by city doctors demanding better facilities.

Palaniswami said it was the duty of the state government to show gratitude towards health workers, and promised a safe and dignified system for burying those who die of the coronavirus. Frontline workers from different departments such as health, police, local administration and sanitation, will be eligible for the solatium if they die due to the virus. "A family member will also be provided with a government job based on their qualification," Palaniswami said. The earlier ex gratia sum was Rs 10 lakh.

On Sunday, the family of the neurosurgeon—who ran a private hospital in the city and died of COVID-19—was attacked when they tried to bury him. The AIADMK government copped criticism from opposition parties and the medical fraternity over the lack of coordination between the police and the Health Department that led to the ugly episode.

Also, a protest call by resident doctors of Chennai's Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital—who threatened to abstain from duty on Wednesday if not given a better quarantine facility—left the government firefighting more controversy. The protest was withdrawn after the hospital arranged hotel rooms for them.

COVID ward home now, Lucknow hospital staff meet challenge head on

ASADREHMAN
LUCKNOW, APRIL 22

FOR THE last several weeks, the medicine ward of King George's Medical University (KGMU) has become home for 120-odd employees, including doctors and other staff.

"We look out for each other. It is challenging for us because we have not been in a situation like this before where everyone is staying at the hospital after their shift," says Dr Farman Khan (26), junior resident at the medicine ward, which has been turned into the COVID-19 ward.

The ward has till now had 11 positive cases out of which 7 have been discharged. It was established in the first week of March after the hospital received its first suspected case.

Dr Khan says everyone is battling issues back home but is trying their best to not let it show while working. "My 65-year-old father, who suffers from high blood pressure and heart problems, is stuck in Rampur since the lockdown started. I am worried about him, but I can't be distracted while on duty," says Khan.



The staff of King George's Medical University. Express

His family lives in Dubai and his father had come to Rampur to look after their ancestral farm in Rampur when the lockdown was announced. "Since then, he has been there, alone. That worries me the most," says Khan.

Dr D Himanshu (40), the nodal officer and ward in-charge, says the biggest challenge is the fear of infection. "Four teams have gone into quarantine and some have returned to duty. In each team, there were around 25 people. Currently, there are 53 staff members in quarantine," he adds.

Dr Saurabh Pandey (31) was



among the doctors who were quarantined. A senior resident doctor, he was in quarantine from March 18 to April 1.

Pandey said the biggest challenge for him was to maintain distance from his wife, also a doctor, who is in an advanced

stage of pregnancy. "I would have liked to be around her then. But I knew I cannot take any risk so she moved to a relative's house and I moved to a quarantine facility," says Pandey, who has tested negative.

Lucky Balmiki (26) is a sanitation worker at the COVID ward. Working at the ward and living in a room provided at the hospital since April, Lucky says his shift stretches beyond the stipulated six hours on most days.

"I have no issues working extra hours. This is the first time I feel I am doing something for the country and its people. Otherwise, who cares about a cleaner," says Balmiki.

Lucky's supervisor Kamlesh Kumar (48), who is posted as a clerk at the medicine ward of KGMU, feels this is the time for people like him and others working under him to step up. "I have not met my family for more than a month, but it doesn't bother me much. People like me have worked all our lives, but this is the time to really show our worth. It feels like I am a soldier fighting for the country. The day the PM told the country to applaud for us, I felt pride."

Mumbai man refuses to take delivery from Muslim, held

SRINATHRAO
MUMBAI, APRIL 22

A 51-year-old man who refused to collect groceries from a delivery man on Tuesday was at the home of Supriya Chaturvedi at Jaya Park at 9.40 am. As mandated by his employers, Patel was required to give Chaturvedi her parcel outside the gate of her apartment complex. Just as he was about hand over the parcel, Chaturvedi's father, Gajanan stopped her.

According to the phone video that Patel handed over the police, the accused first wanted to know

ing with grocery service Grofers.

The first of Patel's nine deliveries on Tuesday was at the home of Supriya Chaturvedi at Jaya Park at 9.40 am. As mandated by his employers, Patel was required to give Chaturvedi her parcel outside the gate of her apartment complex. Just as he was about hand over the parcel, Chaturvedi's father, Gajanan stopped her.

According to the phone video that Patel handed over the police, the accused first wanted to know

the name of the delivery man.

"The lady wanted to take the parcel but the man said no. When he said he would not take parcel from Muslims, I did not say anything and started to record him on my phone. It was very hurtful," he said.

On Tuesday evening, Patel registered a complaint at Kashmiria police station. The police booked Gajanan Chaturvedi under the Indian Penal Code for committing a deliberate or malicious act with the intention of

outraging Patel's religious feelings and beliefs.

Sanjay Hajare, senior inspector, Kashmiria police station, said that the accused was found at the address where Patel was to deliver the groceries and identified as the man recorded in the video.

Patel said that ever since the lockdown was enforced, customers have been treating him with more respect. "We are taking a huge risk while doing so. Most customers understand why I am out," he said.

Stranded in Ahmedabad, migrant teen makes video call, family finds him ailing, starving

VAIBHAV JHA
AHMEDABAD, APRIL 22

ON SUNDAY, 19-year-old Parvez Ansari woke up with high fever and acute cough at his rented residence in a migrant colony in Amraiwadi of Ahmedabad, and made a video call to his family back in Ranchi in Jharkhand.

The family was shocked. Between their last photo of Ansari one-and-a-half months ago and Sunday, he appeared to have transformed from a cheerful teenager to a scrawny figure, unable to even speak properly. Ansari had been trying to come home but couldn't due to the lockdown, they added.

After the family reached out to them, officials took Ansari to hospital. They said he had tuberculosis and had suffered kidney failure. In the Rabari colony where he stays, large parts of it now empty of its migrant labourers, neighbours said they had offered him food several times, but he couldn't eat due to illness.

On seeing his state, the family told Ansari to make a video seeking help and send it to them. The family then sent the video to Bhor Singh Yadav, the Officer on Special Duty to the Jharkhand Chief Secretary, after which the



An emaciated Parvez Ansari

Ahmedabad Police was notified.

In the video, a half-dressed Ansari is sitting on the threshold of his one-room flat, his hands folded, speaking feebly through long pauses: "Meri haalat bahut kharab hai. Ghar pahuncha dijiye (My condition is extremely bad. Please send me home)."

Yadav told *The Indian Express* over the phone: "The boy appeared extremely feeble and malnourished and we sought the help of the Ahmedabad Police to rescue him. When a team arrived at his residence, they realised he had been sick for many days. His neighbours had offered him food, but he couldn't eat. He was taken to a hospital."

RT Udayat, the in-charge at Amraiwadi Police Station, said: "Ansari was found in a frail condi-

tion and we admitted him to Ahmedabad Civil Hospital."

Ansari's family said he went to Ahmedabad one-and-a-half years ago, and did odd jobs for a living. His last employment was at a packaging company.

Elder brother Tauhid, 25, said Ansari was healthy when he came home. However, on return to Ahmedabad, he wasn't able to find work. "We asked him to come back, but he insisted he would stay. He had taken a room on rent for Rs 1,200. Then, around March 20, he informed us he was not feeling well and we asked him to return. When he said he had no money, we sent him some using mobile banking. Because of Janata Curfew on March 22 and later the lockdown, he couldn't leave."

Tauhid added that while they spoke regularly with him, he didn't tell them he had taken a turn for the worse or that he had stopped eating.

A test at the Civil Hospital has shown Ansari doesn't have coronavirus. Medical Superintendent Dr J P Modi said, "He has TB and due to this, his symptoms are anorexia and weight loss." Acknowledging that Ansari had no one by his side, he said they were taking good care of him.

The family knows this, as it waits to speak to him again.

Under new norms, coverall makers can be prosecuted over low-quality product

AVISHEK G DASTIDAR
NEW DELHI, APRIL 22

MANUFACTURERS of coveralls suits, a critical PPE item, will have to give a sworn affidavit to the government saying they will maintain quality standards and be liable to prosecution under law if there is a "wilful lapse" in quality.

Battling a shortage across India, the government on Wednesday revised norms for manufacture of coveralls — considered the most essential personal protective item for frontline staff engaged in containing the spread of COVID-19. It will allow only genuine manufacturers to vie for testing their samples and be legally accountable for sub-par quality of product — a key policy element missing in the regulation of manufacturing and testing of this item so far.

Traders getting coveralls to cash in on the captive demand in the country have, therefore, been taken out of the picture due to the revised norms. Only textile manufacturers can now apply for testing and, upon passing of samples, manufacture the item.

Another loophole plugged by the revised norms is that manufacturers will have to declare where their manufacturing units are, based on which their samples and products will be assigned a unique code.

The revised norms, shared with the two labs of the government that are engaged in testing — DRDO and SITRA in Coimbatore — say that the Uniform Certification Code should "form the basis for placement of orders by HLL", which is procuring for the government.

The new norms, framed by the Textiles Ministry, are applicable retrospectively. All codes to coverall samples assigned in March will thus have to be modified.

Officials told *The Indian Express* that this will ensure that substandard coveralls do not flood the market or get procured by organisations in large numbers. "The testing laboratory may be responsible for the integrity of the prototype sample submitted by the applicant," the norms say. "It is the responsibility of the procuring organisation to complete its due diligence process before placement of the supply agreement."

Recently, a large part of a coverall consignment from China, part of a donation, was found to be below acceptable standards in India.

As per estimates, India might need 1.5 crore coveralls for medical staff fighting COVID-19 by June. The government is trying to ramp up domestic production by identifying reliable manufacturers. It is also exploring options to import, officials said.

'Enough foodgrain in godowns, no shortage'

UNION MINISTER of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution **RAM VILAS PASWAN** tells **HARIKISHAN SHARMA** that there is no shortage of foodgrain in the country, and about the steps being taken to ensure the smooth supply across states. Excerpts:

How will you ensure that the supply of foodgrain remains smooth in coming days?

As on April 20, we have a stock of 524.5 lakh metric tons (LMT) of foodgrain—289.5 LMT rice and 235 LMT wheat. Besides, procurement has been started for the rabi crop from April 15, which will increase the stock further.

Our monthly requirement is about 60 LMT. If we take into account requirement under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, an additional 180 LMT will be required. Thus, we have sufficient foodgrain in our godowns. There is no shortage. As far as lifting of foodgrain and its transportation is concerned, that work is being done at war footing. All employees and workers of the Food Corporation of India are doing a fantastic job; the Prime Minister himself has recognised their efforts. In just 27 days, about 44.58 LMT grain has been lifted and transported to different parts of the country until Monday. That's not child's play.

But there are complaints regarding non-availability of foodgrain to the poor, particularly migrant labourers in many states.

We are monitoring the situation regularly. I am in constant touch with states. I have spoken to ministers in-charge of food supplies departments of 18 states, including UP, Bihar, West Bengal, Telangana and Tamil Nadu. These



states have started lifting foodgrain according to their quota.

Besides, we are providing rice at Rs 22 per kg and wheat Rs 21 per kg under the Open Market Sale scheme. Any state can buy grains for distribution among people not covered under Food Security Act. There is no requirement of auctioning—they can take as much grain as they require.

Under PMGKY, there was an announcement of providing 1kg pulses to poor families at free of cost. Is that available on ground?

There are some problems as far as supply of pulses are concerned. We have a buffer stock of pulses but these are un-milled. There was a problem of milling these pulses but now that has been sorted out. Some states have received supply of pulses, while others are in the process. We will ramp up supply of pulses in the

coming days.

Will the Centre extend additional 5-kg foodgrain to the poor under PMGKY beyond 3 months?

As of now, it is up to June. We will assess the situation after that.

Some states, including Bihar, have failed to identify about 40 lakh beneficiaries under NFSA-2013. Have you taken up the matter with these states?

Yes, it's true that about 40 lakh people, out of the total number accepted under NFSA, have not been identified as beneficiaries under this Act. I have spoken to Bihar Deputy CM Sushil Modi and requested him to take necessary steps to complete identification of such people. I have also spoken with the CM of Himachal Pradesh. Identifying beneficiaries is the responsibility of states.

There is a demand for universalisation of the Public Distribution System. Do you think its time has come?

We want to help the needy. States can give ration to as many people as they want; they can take foodgrain under OMS and use State Disaster Response Fund.

There is a demand that NFSA beneficiaries' number, which was fixed on the basis of 2011 Census, should be revised. Will the government take a step in this direction?

The number of beneficiaries under NFSA is fixed as per 2011 Census. According to the provisions of this Act, the revision of the population coverage will happen at an interval of 10 years. The next Census is due in 2021. So, the revision of NFSA beneficiaries' number will be done on the basis of that.

Doctor, policeman pelted with stones in MP

MILIND GHATWAI
BHOPAL, APRIL 22

A DOCTOR and a policeman were pelted with stones in Gaswani area of Sheopur district on Wednesday.

Dr Pawan Upadhyay, posted at a government hospital in Vijaypur, went to the village, about 140 km from the district headquarters of Sheopur, to check on Gopal Shivhare, a 21-year-old who had returned to the village recently.

Gopal's father Gangaram argued with the team, claiming that his opponents in the village gave officials false information. He said his son was not at home.

Gaswani police station in-charge Brijmohan Rawat said ASI Shriram Awasthi reached the spot when doctors sought the police's help to locate Gopal. When they tried to enter the house where Gopal was reportedly hiding, Gangaram allegedly threw a stone which hit Awasthi (52) on the head, causing heavy bleeding. His sons also allegedly threw stones. The doctor and others in the screening team were unhurt, while Gopal escaped.

Rawat said Gopal worked for a liquor contractor in Guna. A local panchayat secretary had informed the police and health workers about Gopal's arrival in the village.

The police booked Gangaram, his two sons and wife. Gangaram and his son Ashish were later arrested. Sheopur SP Sampat Upadhyay said NSA will be invoked against the main accused.

Vegetable vendors clash with police in Aligarh, one constable injured

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, NOIDA, APRIL 22

A POLICE constable was injured when vegetable vendors allegedly pelted stones at a police team trying to impose lockdown norms in the old city area of Aligarh on Wednesday, officers said. The Aligarh district administration ordered closure of Bhojpura area, which has a vegetable market, after the incident, which occurred when a police team asked vendors to close their shops after the scheduled time fixed by the administration. Two coronavirus cases - the first from the district - were reported in Aligarh on Tuesday.

The injured constable, Junaid, 43, was admitted to the district hospital for treatment. His condition was stable, doctors said. Six persons were detained in connection with the incident. An FIR was registered against 34 named and 50 unidentified persons at City Kotwali police station on several charges including attempt to murder and

voluntarily causing hurt to deter public servant from his duty, police said.

Later in the day, Aligarh District Magistrate Chandra Bhushan Singh ordered that the market in Bhojpura area would remain closed and added that people should opt for Numaish Ground for purchasing vegetables.

According to the police, on Wednesday, they were informed that shops at the Bhojpura market were open even after 11 am even as the scheduled timing was 6 am to 10 am due to the lockdown. A police team went to the spot and found two vegetable vendors arguing over money. When constable Junaid intervened and asked them to close their shop, both vegetable vendors beat him up, police said.

Circle Officer, City, Vishal Pandey said around 10 minutes later, other shopkeepers reached the spot and started pelting stones at the police team. Additional police force reached the spot and used force to disperse the gathering, he said.

Vegetable vendor dies after 'assault' by cop

AMIL BHATNAGAR
NOIDA, APRIL 22

A VEGETABLE vendor died on Wednesday, two days after he was allegedly assaulted by a police sub-inspector (S-I) in Aligarh. Family members of Luvkush alleged that he was beaten up by a police officer on Monday morning and succumbed to injuries. They staged a protest with the body outside Jalapur Police Chowki on Wednesday afternoon demanding action against the officer.

"We have asked the family to give us a written complaint letter, with any evidence they have and we will take action accordingly. The body has been sent for post mortem and once the report comes, we will be able to ascertain the cause of death and the facts of the case can be highlighted," said Aligarh

Superintendent of Police, City, Abhishek.

"Around 9 am on Monday, a policeman posted in Jalapur Police Chowki under Delhi Gate Police station hit Luv with a stick because he was late in clearing his stall. He began experiencing pain in his back and chest since he was hit in his spinal cord. He was treated in a government hospital and was brought home the following day. On Wednesday morning his condition worsened and he died. We demand strict action against the policeman," claimed a relative of Luvkush, who hailed from Delhi gate area.

The family members, along with nearly 50 local residents, blocked the lane outside the police booth for a few hours. Senior police officers reached the spot and persuaded the family members to hand over the body for post mortem.

SALUTE THE SOLDIER

CT/GD SHISHU KUMAR MISHRA
ONGC JORHAT
23-04-1999

CISF proudly remembers the supreme sacrifice of this brave-heart. On this day, he laid down his life at altar of duty while fighting with militants. His courage and bravery would remain an abiding source of inspiration for the force. The force will remain eternally indebted to him for his noblest deed.

Lt Col DS Mahlawat
(17 June 1973 – 20 April 2020)

Fraternity of Army Educational Corps expresses profound grief and sorrow on the sad demise of Lt Col DS Mahlawat on 20 April 2020. The Officer was posted at Sainik School Gopalganj as Vice Principal. Commissioned into Army Educational Corps on 08 December 2001, he will always be remembered for his selfless and dedicated service to the Corps. We pray to the Almighty to bless eternal peace to the departed soul and give strength to the bereaved family.

Maj Gen Devesh Gaur
Addl DGMT (AE) & Col Comdt
and All Ranks of Army Educational Corps

NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY E-Tender

DRM (S&T) NWR, Ajmer on behalf of the President of India invites E-Tender for the following work up to 15.00 Hrs. on the mentioned date. **Tender No. :** 1. DRM-S&T-33-2019-20 (Re-tender) 2. DRM-S&T-01-2020-21, **Name of Work:** 1. Ajmer Division: Hing of 02 No. Multi Utility Vehicles for two years for transportation of Telecom materials for day-to-day maintenance of Telecom gears under JE (Tele) Ajmer and JE (Tele) Bhilwara section of Ajmer Division. 2. Ajmer Division: Annual Maintenance of Effitronics Make Data - Loggers & RTUs provided at stations & LC-Gates on MD-PNU Section of Ajmer Division NWR For Three Years 2019-20, 2020-21 & 2021-22. **Approximate cost of work :** 1. Rs. 1966076.16, 2. Rs. 14375651.79. **Earnest Money:** 1. Rs. 39300.00, 2. Rs. 221900.00. **Date & Time of opening E-Tender :** 18.05.2020 at 15.30 Hrs.. The details of above E-Tender are available on website **www.irops.gov.in** 396-DT/20

Please join us on **NWR/Railways**

TAMIL NADU HOUSING BOARD -MADURAI CIRCLE

Tender Notice No: 01/2020-21
Sealed tenders with **Prequalification System** duly super-scribed on the covers with Name of work, Reference No., Due Date and Name of the Tenderer, are invited for the following work so as to reach office of the **Superintending Engineer, Madurai Circle, Ellisnagar, Madurai-16** up to **11.00 AM** (as per office clock) on the date mentioned below. The tenders will be opened by the under signed at his office at **11.30 AM** on the same day in the presence of the tenderer or their agent who choose to be present.

Sl. No.	Description of Work	Approximate value (Rs. in Lakhs)	EMD in Rs.	Tender due date	Period of sale date
1	Construction of Amma Thirumana Mandapam at Veerapandi Village in Theni District	890.00	4,55,000/-	22.05.2020	15.05.2020 to 21.05.2020

Time for receipt and opening of tender on due date upto **11.00 AM & 11.30 AM** respectively. Cost of Tender Schedule (Non refundable) - **Rs. 15,750/- (including Tax)**. Further particulars and tender documents can be had from the **Office of the Superintending Engineer, Madurai Circle, Ellisnagar, Madurai-16**. The undersigned reserves the right to reject any or all the tender documents without assigning any reasons therefore. The tender schedule can also be downloaded from the web site **www.tenders.tn.gov.in** at free of cost. **Madurai Circle, Ellisnagar, Madurai-16** **Superintending Engineer, Madurai Circle** **Phone- 0452-2600 901** **DIPR/ 1674 /TENDER/2020**



DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



AT THE GRASSROOTS

AFTER HAVING interacted with people from different walks of life during the lockdown, PM Narendra Modi will address gram panchayats across the country on the occasion of National Panchayati Raj Day on Friday. He will also interact with participants through video-conferencing. According to the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, the Prime Minister will launch the e-GramSwaraj Portal and Mobile App on the occasion. The Swamitva Scheme will also be launched during the event. It will add momentum to efforts to alleviate poverty in rural areas, the PM later said in a tweet while referring to the April 24 event. "I look forward to this interaction," he wrote.

TESTING TIMES

CONDUCTING THE remaining board exams after the lockdown ends is not the only worry for the CBSE. Over 1 crore answer scripts need to be evaluated. Evaluation work was stopped midway in March after the CBSE decided to put the ongoing examination on hold. It needs at least one-and-a-half months to complete the evaluation process. The CBSE is now considering whether the answer scripts should be delivered to examiners' homes for evaluation.

HIGH PRAISE

MICROSOFT CO-FOUNDER Bill Gates has written to PM Narendra Modi commending his handling of the COVID-19 crisis. He has praised Modi's leadership and proactive measures of the government to flatten the curve, such as the nationwide lockdown and identifying hotspots. Gates has also commended the Arogya Setu app in his letter, pointing out that the Indian government is "utilising its exceptional digital capabilities".

GREENER FUTURE

SPEAKING ON Earth Day on Wednesday, Union Minister for Environment, Forests and Climate Change Prakash Javadekar said that despite the pandemic, 40 environment ministers from across the world will meet virtually to discuss Sustainable Development Goals in the light of COVID-19. He said that since the lockdown, we have witnessed clean rivers, good flora and fauna, a green earth, blue skies and stars at night, pointing towards a more sustainable lifestyle through less pollution from cars and industries. Cautioning people not to take a romantic view of a resurgent planet, Javadekar said the way forward was not reverting to "village living" but attaining Sustainable Development Goals.

Maharashtra minister releases names of Palghar accused, slams 'communal politics'

MOHAMED THAYER
MUMBAI, APRIL 22

MAHARASHTRA HOME Minister Anil Deshmukh on Wednesday released the names of 101 individuals who have been arrested for the lynching of three men in Palghar last week, and reiterated that there was no communal angle to the crime.

Deshmukh accused the opposition in the state of indulging in "communal politics", and mocked their claims as "Mungeri Lal ke hasene sapne" (daydreaming).

After two sadhus — Kalpruksh Giri and Chikne Maharaj — from an ashram in Kandivili, Mumbai, and their driver Nilesh Telgade were lynched in the presence of police in Gadchinchile village in Palghar on April 16 night, allegations were made on social media that the killers were Muslim. A video of the lynching surfaced on April



Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh

19 and quickly went viral. "I have put out the list of 101 people... not one among them is Muslim. While the incident took place, someone in the video said 'oye bas, oye bas...' now stop, now stop... however, it was twisted as... Shoaib bas (Shoaib, stop)... It was given a communal colour and then communal politics was played using this," Deshmukh said during an interaction on Facebook.

Over the past few days, both the home minister and Chief

Constitutional crisis looms for Uddhav amid corona crisis

LIZ MATHEW & APURVA VISHWANATH
NEW DELHI, APRIL 22

MAHARASHTRA MAY still be grappling with the coronavirus crisis in May, but Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray also has a constitutional crisis to resolve by then.

Thackeray, who took oath on November 28, will have to get elected to either of the houses of the state legislature before May 24, as Article 164(4) of the Constitution stipulates. However, the Election Commission has already postponed Rajya Sabha polls, byelections and civic body elections in the wake of the pandemic.

There is also the legal issue of Thackeray having to be nominated to the Legislative Council on one of its two vacancies. According to Section 151A of Representation of the People Act 1951, election or nomination to the post cannot be done if "the remainder of the term of a member in relation to a vacancy is less than one year". The terms of the two vacancies in the Legislative Council end on June 6.

Sources in the BJP — which was accused of having a role in Maharashtra Governor B K Koshiyari not approving the state cabinet's recommendation to nominate Thackeray as MLC from the governor's quota —



Uddhav Thackeray

said the issue was just "constitutional and not political".

"The Maharashtra government should consult constitutional experts or legal luminaries and seek advice to resolve the crisis. Or it should approach the EC for a way out. It is not a political issue but a constitutional crisis," said a senior BJP leader.

The Maharashtra cabinet recommended Thackeray's name to Koshiyari for one of the vacant posts in the Upper House after the EC deferred elections indefinitely. As the decision was delayed, Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut, in a veiled attack on the BJP, sought to know who was stopping the Governor from approving the recommendation. "There is nothing to hide about Koshiyari's BJP affiliation. But I would like to make one thing clear, that Uddhav Thackeray is going to be CM of Maharashtra even after May 27," Raut said.

BJP sources said the legal position was clear. The time limit

for a bypoll to fill vacancies is six months from the date of occurrence of vacancy. "Provided that nothing contained in this section shall apply if - (a) the remainder of the term of a member in relation to a vacancy is less than one year; or (b) the Election Commission in consultation with the Central Government certifies that it is difficult to hold the by election within the said period," the RP Act says.

The posts in question fell vacant after the resignation of former NCP leaders Ramrao Wadkute and Rahul Narvekar, both of whom joined the BJP in October 2019 ahead of the Assembly election. The governor nominates 12 of the Council's 78 members and the six-year term of all the nominees ends on June 6.

While it could be argued that the Governor's nomination is reserved for "persons having special knowledge or practical experience in respect of such matters as the following, namely: Literature, science, art, co-operative movement and social service" under the Constitution, courts cannot interfere with the Governor's decision even when a political appointment is made.

Legal experts pointed out that there could be an alternative solution to the COVID-induced constitutional crisis. This may be found in a political situation in Punjab in 1995. Congress leader Tej Parkash Singh, who was then not a member of the Assembly, was appointed a minister in September 1995. In March 1996, before he could get elected within six months, the minister resigned but was subsequently appointed again as minister during the term of the same legislature.

When the appointment was challenged, the Punjab and Haryana HC dismissed the plea but the Supreme Court held that Singh's second appointment "without getting elected in the meanwhile was improper, undemocratic, invalid and unconstitutional". The decision, however, was only an academic exercise as it came in 2001, well after the Assembly had completed its term.

J Jayalithaa also briefly resigned as Tamil Nadu Chief Minister in 2001 despite winning a huge mandate owing to legal troubles. As she was convicted in corruption cases, Jayalithaa was not allowed to contest elections but was elected party leader and became CM. Before her six-month window to get elected expired, the SC ruled that her appointment was unconstitutional. Jayalithaa resigned, appointing O Panneerselvam as CM for five months. However, after the Madras High Court acquitted her, she contested and won a by-election in 2002 and returned as CM.

Rs 15,000-crore COVID package gets Cabinet nod

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 22

THE RS 15,000-crore COVID-19 emergency package announced by the government on April 9 got the Cabinet nod on Wednesday.

Under the India COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health System Preparedness Package, the funds will be utilised in three phases with Rs 7,774 crore, sanctioned for immediate COVID-19 emergency response. The remaining funds will be utilised for support over the next one to four years "to be provided under mission mode approach", the government said.

The package is aimed at slowing and containing the spread of coronavirus in the country by developing diagnostics and COVID-dedicated treatment facilities. It will also be used for centralised procurement of essential medical equipment and drugs needed to treat patients. The fund will be used to prop up "resilient national and state health systems to support prevention and preparedness for future disease outbreaks, setting up of laboratories and bolster surveillance activities, bio-security preparedness, pandemic research and proactively engage communities and conduct risk communication activities", the government said in a statement on Wednesday.



Union minister Prakash Javadekar announces the cabinet's decisions. Anil Sharma

In the first phase, the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare with the support of all the other line ministries has undertaken several activities including expanding diagnostics laboratories network and increasing testing capacity. The government said that "leveraging on the existing multi-disease testing platforms under National TB Elimination Programme, orders for procurement of 13 lakhs diagnostic kits have been placed to augment COVID 19 testing".

A majority share of the package, apart from the mentioned activities, will also go towards "strengthening pandemic research and multi-sector national institutions and platforms for One-Health, community engagement and risk communications and implementation, management, capacity building, monitoring and evaluation component".

2 brothers killed in mob violence in Assam

ABHISHEK SAHA
GUWAHATI, APRIL 22

TWO BROTHERS with criminal records, who were recently released from jail owing to a Supreme Court directive to decongest prisons due to the COVID-19 outbreak, were killed in mob violence in Assam's Baksa district on Wednesday, police said.

Thube Prateek Vijay Kumar, SP of Baksa, told *The Indian Express* that Biswajit Das (24) and Haradhan Das (35), residents of Athiabari village under Gobardhana police station of the

district, were killed Wednesday morning. Two persons were arrested, and police are on the hunt for others even as most people in the village have gone into hiding, he added.

"We are trying to ascertain what transpired between the villagers and the men. A mob of villagers attacked their house and killed the two persons. People in the village really disliked them," a police officer said.

Residents of neighbouring areas told *The Indian Express* that the brothers had earned the ire of villagers because of extortion, threats and accusations of kidnapping.

Chouhan allocates portfolios

Bhopal: A day after he inducted five ministers in his cabinet, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Wednesday allocated portfolios. Health and Home were allocated to senior BJP leader Narottam Mishra, while Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare went to BJP MLA Kamal Patel.

Jyotiraditya Scindia loyalists Tulsiram Silawat and Govind Rajput were given

charge of Water Resources and Cooperatives portfolios, respectively.

Silawat held the Health portfolio in the Kamal Nath government while Rajput was Revenue and Transport minister. Both had resigned as MLAs and will have to win elections to validate their stay in office. Tribal Development Department was allocated to Meena Singh, a tribal leader from Vindhya region. **ENS**

FIR against Arnab Goswami over 'derogatory' remarks against Sonia, 'divisive' comments

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
RAIPUR, NEW DELHI, APRIL 22

THE CHHATTISGARH unit of the Congress on Wednesday lodged a formal complaint against Arnab Goswami, editor-in-chief and founder of Republic TV channel, and accused him of "deliberately making inflammatory statements" and using derogatory language against Congress president Sonia Gandhi in his show.

As of late evening, Raipur police were in the process of registering an FIR, officials said.

In Maharashtra, state Youth Congress (YC) president Satyajit Tambe said he had filed a complaint against Goswami in Sangamner and instructed YC workers to file complaints in all districts. In Nagpur, state Power Minister Nitin Raut's son Kunal, a YC office-bearer, filed a similar complaint.

Maharashtra's MoS (Home) Satej Patil said the state government is weighing legal options

against Goswami for allegedly inciting communal hatred in the Palghar lynching case, as also defaming Sonia Gandhi.

In Raipur, Chhattisgarh Health Minister T S Singh Deo and state Congress president Mohan Markam approached the police with a formal complaint letter against Goswami. The letter stated, "His statements are divisive on the basis of religion. He made defamatory comments on the Congress national president, proof of which is available on YouTube."

Singh Deo later tweeted: "I have just filed a complaint against... Arnab Goswami in Raipur for deliberately making inflammatory statements on his channel to invoke hatred..."

A senior Raipur police officer said, "We have received the complaint and are in the process of registering the FIR under Sections 153 (a) (promoting enmity on grounds of religion, race, etc), 295 (a) (deliberate and malicious acts,

intended to outrage religious feelings) and 505 (statements conducing to public mischief). We are starting investigation."

Congress communications in-charge Randeep Surjewala tweeted a clip of Goswami's purported comments on Sonia on his show.

In the clip tweeted by Surjewala, Goswami ostensibly says: "Aapki party aur aapke party ke Rome se aaye hue Italy wali Sonia Gandhi chup nahin rahti. Aaj woh chup hain, man hi man main mujhe lagta hai woh khush hai... woh khush hai ki santon ko sadkon pe maar gaya, jahan pe unki sarkar hai. Report bhejegi woh, woh Italy main report bhejegi main bol raha hoon, dekhniye jahan pe maine ek sarkar bana li, wahan pe Hindu santon ko main marwa rahi hun. Aur wahan se wah-wahi milegi, wah beta, wah, bohut acha kiya Sonia Gandhi Antonio maino."

Goswami did not respond to a message sent to him late on Wednesday evening seeking his

comment on the FIR. However, Goswami, who hosts the flagship prime-time debate on his channel, began the show addressing the action by some Congress leaders.

Thanking those who stood by him "ever since Sonia Gandhi threw a tantrum telling her few remaining chief ministers that she wants me immediately arrested", Goswami said, "I have no hesitation in saying to Sonia Gandhi, come arrest me".

Addressing the Congress chief, he said, "Nobody is scared of you or your family any more". He said the "thousand FIRs you are filing across India" showed her "nervousness". He called Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh chief ministers as Sonia's "puppets", who, he said, have been asked by the Congress chief to arrest him.

On Twitter, the top five trends on Wednesday evening were either in support of Goswami or asking for his arrest.

With inputs from Mumbai

4 unidentified militants killed in Shopian encounter: police

ADIL AKHZER
SRINAGAR, APRIL 22

FOUR MILITANTS were killed in an encounter in south Kashmir's Shopian district on Wednesday.

Following inputs about presence of militants, security forces launched a cordon and search operation in Melhoora area, police said. Militants fired at the security forces, triggering the encounter.

J&K Police said the militants are "unidentified" and that they will wait for DNA samples to ascertain identities. This is the second consecutive encounter in Shopian where the police have maintained that the slain militants were "unidentified".

IGP Kashmir Vijay Kumar confirmed that four militants have been killed in the operation. He

said police have collected DNA samples of the four militants. "We are conducting burial in presence of the magistrate. So far, the family of one of the militants has come. We will show them (the body). If they identify, then two to three family members will be permitted to participate in the burial. Those who claim the bodies later, their DNA samples will take for further course of action," he said.

On April 17, when two militants were killed in Shopian, police had said the militants were not identified. However, two families said the militants were their sons and alleged the police did not hand over the bodies. The families have now submitted an application to the District Magistrate of Baramulla, where the bodies were buried, demanding the bodies.

On April 8, when a JeM com-

mander was killed in an encounter in Sopore, a large number of people gathered to attend his funeral despite the police saying that "legal heirs had given in writing to adhere to social distancing when the body was handed over to them".

On April 4, four militants were killed in an encounter in Kulgam district. A "good number of people" attended funerals of three militants despite COVID-19 advisory, police sources said.

"We had to register three cases and nearly 100 people were arrested for violating the COVID-19 restrictions. They were bailed out," an officer said. "What was witnessed in the two encounters earlier this month is apparently a reason why handing over the bodies to the families is being delayed."

State can fix sugarcane price higher than Centre, says SC

New Delhi: It was open to both the Centre and states to fix the price of sugarcane, but the latter cannot decide on a price lower than the statutory minimum price fixed by the Centre, the Supreme Court ruled Wednesday.

"By virtue of Entries 33 and 34 List III of seventh Schedule, both the Central Government as well as the State Government have the power to fix the price of sugarcane. The Central Government having exercised the power and fixed the 'minimum price', the state government cannot fix the "minimum price" of sugarcane... At the same time, it is always open for the State Government to fix the 'advised price', always higher than the "minimum price..." a five-judge Constitution bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra said. **ENS**



The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

THE WAY FORWARD

Despite fiscal concerns, more government support is needed to mitigate economic fallout. Centre must spell out a strategy

IT IS DIFFICULT at this stage to accurately assess the cost of the disruption in economic activities due to the lockdown, but it will be severe. As reported in this paper, according to some estimates, the 33-day lockdown in this financial year, April 1 to May 3, which essentially translates to a loss of 23 full working days, will lead to an economic contraction this financial year. To be sure, the government has relaxed the lockdown restrictions on some activities post April 20. But a pick up in these segments is likely to be muted, driven in part by disruptions in supply chains, labour and logistical issues and the fall in end-consumer demand. Even after the lockdown is fully lifted, economic activities are unlikely to return to normal in the near term. The impact of job and income losses, especially those in the informal sector, consumer behaviour — discretionary spending may take a hit — risk aversion by firms and banks, and continuation of social distancing norms, among others, will determine how economic activity shapes up after the lockdown. Much will also depend on the depth and breadth of the policy response.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has undertaken a series of measures aimed at easing the economic and financial fallout. However, the central government's response, so far, has been limited — India has one of the strictest lockdowns in the world with one of the thinnest covers of social protection. The first government package aimed at ensuring a steady supply of food grains and easing of cash woes of vulnerable sections. But with investment activity and exports expected to remain depressed, and the economy likely to be largely reliant on government spending and restricted household consumption, more fiscal support is needed.

There are fiscal concerns. The combination of a sharp slowdown in growth and government tax revenues will itself push up the fiscal deficit beyond what has been pegged to maintain current levels of spending. Add to this the requirement to support the economy and the deficit will widen further. The severity of the slowdown necessitates more government support. In fact, government spending may well have to be front-loaded. Sectors which have been hit the hardest such as MSMEs, airlines, hotels, exports will have to be provided relief. Failure to do so will result in job losses, and a rise in bankruptcies, throttling the financial system, making even a gradual recovery more difficult. The Centre may want to keep the power dry for the "unknowns" that may yet arise, and may favour opting for several rounds of measures, calibrating its response as the situation unfolds. But it is also necessary for it to spell out a broad strategy on how it intends to support the economy.

PAY THE PIPER

Regulators in Australia and France show the way: Dominant digital platforms should not freeloading on media content

DIGITAL PLATFORMS COULD be pushed off the catbird seat if regulatory moves afoot in Australia and France find resonance in other countries. For over a decade, they have leveraged news provided by the media to drive traffic to their search engines and social hubs, and simultaneously leveraged their dominance to avoid paying for the content. They have argued that they send back clicks to the media, which can be monetised, but the inequality is stark. Australian treasurer Josh Frydenberg reports that almost half of the online ad spend in his country goes to Google, about a quarter to Facebook and the rest to all publishers combined. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) had sought a voluntary code to ensure more equity, but the conversation languished, and then the devastating effect of the coronavirus pandemic on ad revenues of the press lent a sense of urgency. Now, the ACCC will submit a draft mandatory code to legislators by July, forcing platforms to share ad revenue, pay for original content, and give publishers access to user data, ranking algorithms and policies for displaying news.

Earlier this month, France became the first nation to invoke an EU copyright reform requiring payment for news snippets reproduced from local publishers, but Google retaliated by threatening to withdraw news services from France. The competition watchdog, which believes that this constitutes misuse of market dominance, has forced it to negotiate with news providers while it investigates further. In 2014, Google had made good a similar threat against Spain, and does not offer its news product in Spain even now.

While the financial crisis in media has brought matters to a head, saving the press is not the principal concern, since the Australian government has already extended support. This is about market morality, and the objective is to erase an old inequality which has allowed platforms to transform themselves into trillion-dollar companies, literally at the expense of the media, whose content drives traffic to them. Generators of news and creators of opinion should be paid for their pains not because they have an absolute right to life, but because if they died, platforms would fall back on content generated on social media by individuals, interest groups and communities, and the problem of fake news would be amplified. While moves to make platforms pay for news are obviously about market morality, they are finally about the health of societies.

OIL SPILL

Oil price crash may wreak economic havoc. But there are ways of making the best of a bad time

MIDAS, KING OF Phrygia, the tale from ancient Greece goes, turned everything he touched into gold. This was no blessing, since Midas starved to death — you can't eat a medium of exchange. And a store of abstract value is of little use in meeting basic biological needs. Till recently, the parable was widely thought to be a cautionary tale about greed and chasing wealth. Turns out, it might have been a prophetic allegory about the coronavirus pandemic, or even the need for a balanced economic diet.

The price of (crude) oil — "black gold", people unoriginally call it — has dropped to below -\$40/barrel on Monday in the US. And the price of Brent crude, the international oil benchmark, traded below \$20/barrel on Tuesday, approximately two-thirds lower than it was in January before the outbreak of COVID-19. In the US, producers are paying consumers to take the slick off their hands. Oil isn't worth the barrel it comes in. This is, of course, an economic disruption, an over-supply problem that could wreak Midas-level havoc on the economy. But, till that happens, for those who can, there are ways to make the best of a bad deal.

Companies and nations with the deep pockets and reservoirs of hope that the "fundamentals of the global economy are strong" could simply get paid to take care of the surplus. Imagine, if you will, the electoral success for the government that hands out free fuel ahead of the first post-corona poll. For individuals, too, hoarding is an option. The downside is that a favourite topic of small talk may be denied to people, who, stuck at home already, have little of interest to report on awkward video chats with long-lost friends. There's no more discussing how expensive petrol has become. But perhaps the money they are saving thanks to a crash in fuel prices could be used to douse the many sorrows of isolation, and invest in a conversational lubricant. It's now cheaper to buy a beer.

Going back to a new school



AMEETA MULLA WATTAL

Post-pandemic, a shift in mindset will be needed — to teach and learn

"NO MORE PENCILS no more books/ No more teacher's dirty looks/ Out for summer/ Out till fall/ We might not come back at all/ School's out forever.../ School's out with fever".

It seems these lyrics of Alice Cooper have come back to haunt us.

Since the middle of March, millions of students have been out of school, because of the COVID-19 lockdown. This has also affected more than one lakh students, who could not complete their Class 12 board examinations.

Today, even after a month of announcements and extensions, it is difficult to predict when schools will restart. Schooling is supposed to look after the emotional, social and behavioural health of children, which is diametrically opposite to social distancing.

Presently, teachers are trying to engage with online teaching and learning. The technology may vary across schools and states but as educators, we have to look at the implications of these new learning processes for our learners.

From live TV broadcasting of academic subjects, video interactions, online theatre, to working with special needs learners, it is all about embracing learning "anywhere anytime". It is apparent that technological evaluation systems, touchscreen paper corrections, digital books and smart boards have become the new reality.

Going forward, in the new post-pandemic environment, what will be required is a huge shift in mindset — both social and emotional. A new approach is needed to teach in this altered online paradigm.

Unfortunately, as far as the education of the rural poor students is concerned, they inhabit the bottom of a digital abyss. Governments will have to think very seriously about allocating more money in the budget for technical education in schools.

However, wherever students have been involved with online learning, their responses have been very good — this has strengthened the resolve of teachers across the country, and has inspired them to work harder.

But the role of the teacher has not been fully understood during this crisis. Teachers are as important as health workers because they are looking after the mental, emotional and social health of children at home. Although it is too early to judge how the learning trajectory will be affected by online teach-

If school opens in July or even later, 3,000 children cannot simply come back. A post-pandemic school plan is essential and has to be prepared. With a staggered opening, the government and school leaders will have to think of novel methods by which children can be assimilated back into the school setting. And this has to be looked at bearing in mind the normal school calendar. Perhaps the new education policy needs to be revisited quickly and recalibrated.

ing, it is very clear that future transformations will ensure that classroom transactions are complemented with novel technological tools. The new challenge is, how to keep thousands of children out of school if their parents are allowed to return to their work spaces — even if in a staggered manner. And, whenever this happens, who assumes responsibility for a child's safety and learning at home?

Within this new school/learning paradigm, it will have to be seen how best to engage the children not only in education but in socialising with their peers, creating safe zones to play, and, how to also provide meals and support families which are working. In India, home-learning on a large scale will be a challenge, essentially because of non-availability of equipment and network-connectivity issues, and the fact that parents may not be in a position to facilitate home-learning.

We need to ensure that teachers come back to work so that hands-on training can happen — since many of them may not be technologically adept. For many teachers, their entire world has changed: From traditional teaching tools to juggling with gadgets and software, they are relying only on their personal understanding.

If school opens in July or even later, 3,000 children cannot simply come back. A post-pandemic school plan is essential and has to be prepared. With a staggered opening, the government and school leaders will have to think of novel methods by which children can be assimilated back into the school setting. And this has to be looked at bearing in mind the normal school calendar. Perhaps the new education policy needs to be revisited quickly and recalibrated.

Some practical things that can be done are: Cleaning and sanitising the classrooms and areas where children converge regularly; increasing the medical staff and counsellors in schools; planning a new school calendar where any event with large gatherings of students/parents is avoided, that is, sports days, annual days and parent teacher meetings. There can be cancellation of excursions and inter-school events within and outside the city; reworking of school timings and putting in place of student attendance on a rota basis. School walls could have colourful, pictorial depictions and slogans that sensitise students on basic cleanliness and hygiene such

as washing hands, and social distancing — although too many displays of pandemic visuals should be avoided as it creates anxiety in the minds of children. We need to ensure the building of a strong parent-school partnership, if social distancing has to be understood and implemented; conduct periodic workshops by psychologists, medical practitioners and counsellors to help sensitise the students, enabling them to understand the situation.

When students return to school, they will be the least prepared for any form of traditional testing — all such testing measures should be put on hold at all levels and there should be more emphasis on instruction and emotional development. Particularly, the students in pre-primary and primary — in the age group of three to 10 — will find it very difficult to get into a routine because they would have been out of school for over six months. At the primary level, when children return, they should be allowed to have their own learning options — creating personalised portfolios and project-based learning is important.

This will enable the children to find a sense of academic freedom, which they would have missed in the restricted confines of their homes. As far as senior students are concerned, we have already lost 2020 and this situation may stretch to 2021, as far as regular school learning is concerned. Hence, it is imperative that when dealing with senior students, we should help them understand the importance of resilience and mental strength in order to face climatic change, disease, natural and man-made disasters and even rapid technological changes.

The pandemic has truly reiterated the much clichéd skills of the 21st century: Decision making, problem solving, ability to innovate and, most importantly, adaptability.

These are extraordinary times, and we need extraordinary measures. The states and boards will have to, perhaps, look beyond traditional board examinations not only for the current year, but also for 2021. There is no doubt that returning to school after this pandemic will truly be a disruptive learning exercise at all levels.

The writer is principal, Springdales School, Pusa Road, New Delhi



GURU PRAKASH

AS THE COUNTRY faces the coronavirus crisis, there are conversations about the new post-pandemic social order and the circumstances that would shape it. Only a few days ago, we remembered B R Ambedkar on his 129th birth anniversary. Today, it is apt to look again at the dominant social order and the institutions of power, patronage, property and prestige that it has created.

It is sad to see news of caste-related atrocities even during the current crisis, when the society is expected to show social solidarity. The news of a Dalit couple being beaten mercilessly went viral recently. They were assaulted because they refused to sell the land that was rightfully theirs. A video was made of the incident, with caste-related slurs hurled on the couple. Making such a video and spreading hatred requires audacious belligerence on the part of the oppressor. This is the result of a social process, and political intervention alone cannot address this prevailing sentiment.

Social distancing was suggested as one of the precautionary steps to contain the virus. However, in a society like ours, where traditional social prejudices and hierarchies are deeply embedded, discriminatory practices can masquerade as social distancing. Thankfully, voices emerged from the depressed classes from all over the world and

AMBEDKAR, IN OUR CRISIS

Even amid pandemic, caste atrocities continue. Representation is key

the WHO has had to finally replace the phrase "social distancing" with "physical distancing".

This is an opportune moment for scholars, thinkers and activists from the Dalit community to brainstorm on a roadmap for the emerging Dalit narrative. Raising difficult questions is the need of the hour. Ambedkar himself has not become a subject of intellectual inquisitiveness. Restricting his colossal personality merely to a maker of the Constitution or as a leader of the depressed community is a massive dent to his legacy. His scholarship and deeply meaningful interventions in gender studies, anthropology and economics must also be studied and pursued dispassionately. Policymakers and intellectuals from the Dalit community and beyond must together evolve a mechanism to undertake robust research and produce scholarships on the relatively unexplored dimensions of Ambedkar's thought.

On the political front as well, April 14 (Ambedkar's birth anniversary) and December 6 (his death anniversary) must be occasions for more than rhetorical symbolism. The so-called Ambedkarite politics is losing its sheen and traction among the subaltern masses. Parties with a focus on individuals and families like the BSP and LJP have no meaningful contribution left to make.

The future of Dalit assertion needs to be

primarily focused on representation — real-time representation at key decision-making positions, which has not happened despite making affirmative action a constitutional commitment. Justice CS Kaman, a Dalit judge, was reprimanded by the court, after he made accusations of caste discrimination and corruption against fellow judges. On the other hand, no questions were raised when a group of Supreme Court judges came out and held a press conference against the prevailing processes in the apex court. It is the social capital of the upper caste, under the modern euphemism of a "network", that acts as a safety net emerging from caste-based camaraderie. The mainstream media has the same story. It is next to impossible to locate a subaltern voice in the fourth pillar.

There is an urgent need to get over the phenomenon of "behalfism". No one is entitled to speak on someone else's behalf. For effective representation, having a voice is a prerequisite. For many years, the cause of the subaltern communities was under the custodianship of the upper-class elite. Let us resolve, in the month of Ambedkar's birth anniversary, to ensure social diversity at our workplaces.

The writer is assistant professor at Patna University and visiting fellow at the India Foundation



APRIL 23, 1980, FORTY YEARS AGO


MASS PICKETING BEGINS WHILE OFFICIAL WORK and banking operations were paralysed as the five-day picketing of government offices began in Assam, thousands of people thronged the streets in Gauhati to continue their protest against the "repressive measures" taken by the government last Saturday. An official spokesman said hundreds of picketers had been arrested but there were no reports of any untoward incident from anywhere in the state. The call for picketing had been given by the All-Assam Students' Union and the All-Assam Gana Sangram Parishad on April 18 following the failure of negotiations on the issue of foreign nationals in the state.

BJP ON ASSAM THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE of the Bharatiya Janata Party demanded that the army be withdrawn forthwith from Assam and all repressive measures be revoked. The four-page political resolution adopted by the national executive at its first meeting strongly criticised the Congress (I) government's "undemocratic" functioning and said that the "solution to the (Assam) problem should be sought by negotiation and persuasion and not by coercion or repression". "The notorious extra-constitutional sources of power are again in evidence and their operations are even more unashamedly overt. The Prime Minister's son addressing meetings of

high police officials and extending assurances to them as if he is the government in power is only one instance," the resolution said.

IRAN SANCTIONS

COMMON MARKET FOREIGN ministers meeting in Luxembourg have decided to take strong diplomatic and economic measures against Iran but are still unsure of the timetable for implementing them, sources said. The measures include economic sanctions against Iran if a series of lesser diplomatic moves fail to influence Iranian authorities to release American hostages at the US embassy in Teheran.

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SI.No. Tender Ref./Scope of Supplies & Qty. Reqd.

1. UNIT : M.M. COMPLEX : PTE:ENQ / 20-21 / 000027 / MM18 (06) dt. 08-04-2020: Procurement of high strength cartridge type explosives 125 mm dia. Qty.: 4000000 Kilograms. **Due date of opening:** 08-05-2020

2. PTE: ENQ / 2020-21 / 000028 / MM18 (06) dt. 08-04-2020: Procurement of ordinary Portland cement 43 grade in 50 kg HDPE bags conforming to IS 8112 and IS 269/Latest. **Qty.: 3000 Metric Tons.**
Due date of opening: 11-05-2020

3. 20-21 / 000053 / MM10 (01) dt. 13-04-2020: (i) HDPE Pipe 110 mm OD conforming to IS specification (4984/1995 and IS 7328) to withstand a working pressure of 6 kg/sq.cm in length as stated in the technical specification annexure with HDPE long neck, stub ends and M.S slip on flanges, 16 mm thick with epoxy painted both sides and other dimensions as per BS 10, Table-D, with ISI mark on each pipe. Raw material grade PE 63, Wall thickness 7.7 mm to 8.7 mm. **Qty.: 6000 Metres.** (ii) HDPE Pipe 160 mm OD of designation PE80, PN6, DN160 conforming to IS 4984:1995/Latest and to withstand a working pressure of 6 kg/sq.cm in length of 12 meter, with HDPE long neck, stub ends conforming to IS:8008(Part 6) : 2003 / Latest and M.S slip on flanges of thickness 16 mm with epoxy painted both sides and other dimensions as per BS 10, Table-D, with ISI mark in each pipe, Raw material grade PE 80, Wall thickness 9.1 to 10.3 mm. **Qty.: 5000 Metres.** (iii) 160 x 160 x 50 mm (ID) HDPE unequal Tee 6kg/sq.cm with HDPE long neck stub ends on all the three sides and M.S Slip on flanges with epoxy painted on three sides as per IS:8360/PART 1 to III. **Qty.: 200 Numbers.**
Due date of opening: 11-05-2020

FOR e-TENDER DOCUMENTS/DETAILS/CORRGENDUM VISIT: www.nlcindia.com

PUBLIC SECTOR IS YOURS : HELP IT TO HELP YOU

The proposals should be Marked, Packaged and Submitted as under:-

1. Sealed proposals shall be submitted in one outer and two inner envelopes.
2. The first inner envelope shall be marked as 'Technical Proposal', mentioning the RFP Title on top and addressed as follows:-
District Programme Officer ICDS (Member Secretary One Stop Centre)
Old Secretariat Ground Floor ACB Building
3. In case, any technical Bid is found to be incomplete in any respect, the same shall be rejected summarily.
4. The 2nd inner envelope shall be marked as 'Financial Proposal', mentioning the RFP Title on top and addressed in the same manner as 1st envelope.
5. In the Financial proposal, the rates should be indicated clearly, both in figures and in words in Indian Currency. The rates quoted should be inclusive of all taxes. No additional amount will be paid for Taxes, over and above the quoted rates.
6. Both inner envelopes, properly sealed shall be kept in an outer envelope, mentioning the RFP Title on top and addressed in the same manner as the first inner envelope.
7. All the three envelopes, that is two inner and one outer shall indicate Agencies name and address.
8. The rates quoted should remain valid for a period of 24 Months from the date of opening of the tender.
9. Proposal received in any manner other than as outlined will be invalidated.
10. The proposals may be sent within a period of 15 days from the date of publication of this notice in the local dailies.

The interested parties can also have the details with regard to establishment & management of One Stop Centre available/download on website: www.wcd.nic.in .

**District Programme Officer,
ICDS, Srinagar.**

No: DPO/ICDS/Sgr/2020-2021/ 3970-73
Dated: 21.04.2020.

DIPK-NB-102/20

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED



General Public is hereby informed that one girl **Namely: Sahiba, D/o Badshah Hussain, R/o: Sahab Singh ka mahan, VPO Bawana, Delhi** has been missing / kidnapped since **18.03.2020** at 9:00 pm from the area of P.S. Bawana, Delhi. In this regard a case vide **FIR/DD No. 137/2020 dated 19.03.2020** has been lodged at P.S. Bawana, Delhi. The description of the missing girl are as under: **Age:** 14 years, **Height:** 4'5", **Face:** Long, **Complexion:** Fair, **Build:** Thin, **Wearing:** Red colour suit and pajami. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the girl but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this girl kindly inform to the following.

Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>
E-mail Id - cic@cbi.gov.in
Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641
Sho
P.S. Bawana, Delhi
Fax No. 011-24368639
DP/19/01/2020
Ph.: 011- 27752534, 7065036321

**IRRIGATION AND FLOOD
CONTROL DEPARTMENT
GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI**

**NOTICE INVITING
e-TENDERS**

The Executive Engineer, Civil
Division No. XIV, I&FCD invites on
behalf of the President of India, online
tender for the following work:
Item No. EE/CD-XIV/NIT/03/2020-21
NIT Rate

HOA: (Maintenance Flood)
Name of work: Supply of Trunking
Radio sets on hiring basis for the
flood season year 2020. **Estimated
cost Rs. 6,72,582/- & Earnest
Money Rs. 13,45,2/- Period of com-
pletion:** Six (06) Months. **Last date
& time of submission of tender:**
upto 3:00 PM, on 05.05.2020.
(Tender ID number_020_IFC_190269_1).

Tender forms and other details can be
obtained from the website
<https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>
in

DP/Shabdarth/0017/20-21

<u>PRESS NOTICE FOR e-TENDERING</u>					
The Executive Engineer JSV Division Jubbal invites tenders on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh from approved eligible contractors for the following work(s) through e-tendering process :-					
Sr. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (in Rs.)	Earnest Money (in Rs.)	Time	Last date of filing/ uploading the tenders through e-Tendering
1	Engineering, procurement, construction, testing, commissioning, trial run of various components of (Providing FH70 to Left House Hold for Nal Se Jal) under Jal Jeevan Mission under Jubbal & Kotkhal Constituency in Jal Shakti Division Jubbal in Tehsil Jubbal & Kotkhal Distt. Shimla HP) Under Jal Jeevan Mission- Har Ghar Nal Se Jal) in single package on "Turn-key job basis" with completion period 36 Months including all seasons and trial run period of 3 months & defect liability period of 6 months after trial run period 2020_HPIHP_36650_1	₹ 21,80,00,005	₹ 26,80,000	36 Months	Last date of upload- ing the tenders: Up to 11.00 Hrs IST (GMT + 5:30 Hrs) 11/05/2020. Date of opening of tenders : After 11.30 Hrs IST (GMT + 5:30 Hrs) of 11/05/2020.



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If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to explained@indianexpress.com

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

What the Jio deal means for Reliance & Facebook

Facebook's purchase of nearly 10% stake in Jio marks its entry in India, improves Reliance's balance sheet, allows each company to gain from the other's reach

AASHISH ARYAN & PRANAV MUKUL
NEW DELHI, APRIL 22

FACEBOOK'S PURCHASE of a nearly 10% stake in Reliance Industries' digital business unit Jio Platforms brings one of the world's largest Internet companies on the table with India's largest telecom player. The \$5.7-billion deal, which values Reliance's digital operations at around \$66 billion, pushes the Indian conglomerate ahead in its plans of de-leveraging its balance sheet while accelerating the launch of its new commerce business. Further, it not only marks Facebook's long-pending formal entry into India's telecom sector but also catapults it to a place among the biggest foreign investors in India's technology space.

What does the deal mean for Reliance Industries?

Back in August 2019, while addressing the company's shareholders at the annual general meeting, Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani had said the group had prepared a roadmap for becoming a zero net-debt company within 18 months. The Facebook deal significantly contributes to that plan by paring about Rs 43,574 crore from its outstanding debt as of September 2019 of Rs 2.92 lakh crore. The other primary contributors to the debt-reduction plan will be a potential \$15 billion (around Rs 1.05 lakh crore) deal with Saudi Aramco for a 20% stake in Reliance

Industries' refining and petrochemicals business and Rs 7,000 crore from a 49% sale in its fuel retail joint-venture to British firm BP. However, experts believe the Aramco deal to be under threat on account of the oil prices crash caused by the COVID-19 outbreak.

Besides the balance sheet de-leveraging, the timing of the deal with Facebook is significant for another reason: online platforms selling essential goods have suddenly witnessed an upsurge in demand. For example, before the outbreak, just 1% of the Rs 80,000-crore grocery market in India was represented by online players. After the lockdown, online platforms started to account for 50% of the grocery demand in the country by some estimates before it corrected. "We're one of the few industries that has got more than enough business but not enough resources," said Hari Menon, CEO of India's largest online grocer Bigbasket.

Experts have said the arrangement among Reliance Retail, Jio Platforms and Facebook-owned WhatsApp to offer consumers the ability to access the nearest *kiranas*, or grocery stores, which can provide products and services to their homes by transacting with JioMart using WhatsApp, has come at a very opportune time. WhatsApp boasts 400 million users in India. Further, using WhatsApp's base also allows Reliance Retail to promote its services to users of Jio's rival telecom players.

What does the deal mean for Facebook?

Facebook has been trying for years to get its



AP File

Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani and wife Neeta Ambani in Mumbai; (right) Facebook co-founder Mark Zuckerberg during a visit to India.

finger in the Internet pie. In 2015, it had experimented with Free Basics, which provided free access to basic Internet services as a partnership with service providers. However, criticised for being a walled garden, it soon pulled out of the idea after differential pricing was disallowed by the telecom sector regulator.

It had even looked at the possibility of beaming free Internet from the air using a solar-powered drone called Aquila, and enabled low cost high-speed Wi-Fi in some remote parts of India with an initiative called

Express Wi-Fi. But data was expensive in those times, and free access to the Internet was envisioned as the easiest way to bring the next billion users online. Then, Reliance Jio happened. It launched with data rates so low that they became the industry standard in one of the largest online markets in the world. Jio alone helped bring 388 million users online, well over a third of what Facebook had planned.

The partnership with Reliance could also help Facebook navigate the regulatory envi-



Express Archive

ronment in India, where it has had several skirmishes with the authorities, including for its major initiatives such as WhatsApp Pay.

What does it mean for India's Internet ecosystem?

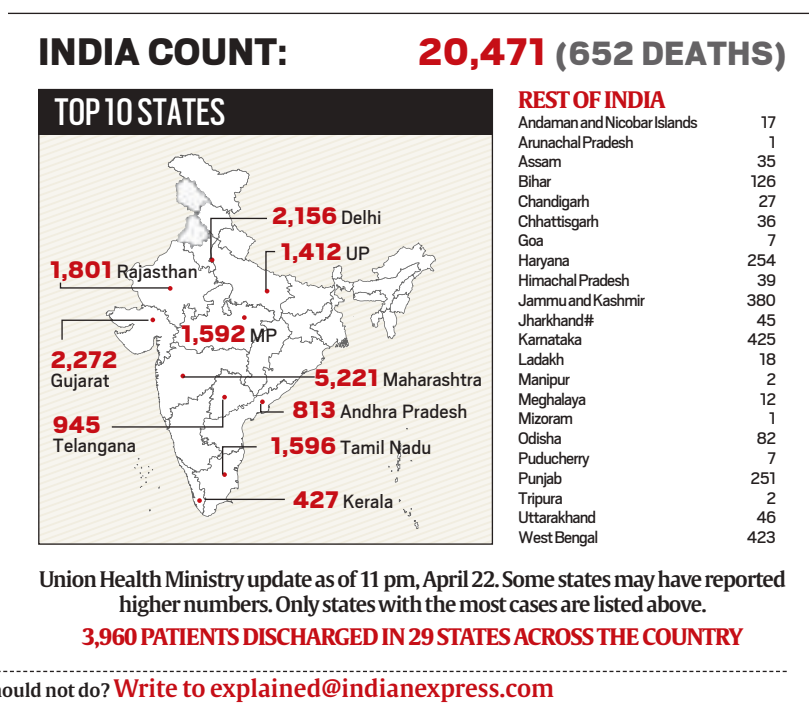
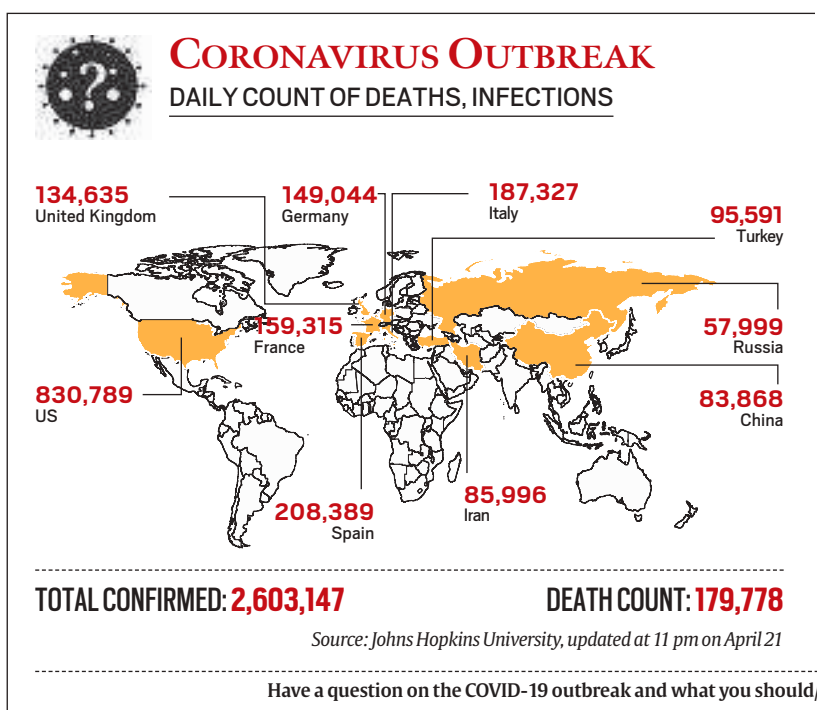
The deal also marks Facebook's entry among elite investors in India's technology space, joining the likes of SoftBank, Amazon and Google that have together poured in billions of dollars in Indian tech startups and their own ventures over the years. Prior to

Jio Platforms, Facebook had invested around \$20-25 million in social commerce platform Meesho in 2019, and participated in a \$110 million funding round for edu-tech company Unacademy earlier this year.

The deal with Reliance also gives Facebook access to the latter's bouquet of digital apps. These include in-house apps such as Jio Money, Jio TV, etc in addition to the young startups acquired by Reliance or its subsidiaries across categories such as logistics, e-commerce and artificial intelligence.

What does it mean for Reliance's data localisation principles?

In January last year, speaking at the Vibrant Gujarat Summit, Ambani had stressed that India's data "must be controlled and owned by Indian people - and not by corporates, especially global corporations". "For India to succeed in this data-driven revolution, we will have to migrate the control and ownership of Indian data back to India - in other words, Indian wealth back to every Indian," he had said. While some have raised the red flag over Facebook's track-record on data privacy issues, executives of both companies said Wednesday that data sharing was not a part of the deal. "There will be areas that we will collaborate in but there will be areas where we will potentially not agree with each other," a Jio official said. Facebook, on the other hand, maintained its stance in favour of an open ecosystem for data to flow across boundaries.



Behind containment in Kerala: robust healthcare system, effective strategies

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, APRIL 22

BY JANUARY 30, the day India — and Kerala — reported its first COVID-19 case, a 23-year-old medical student who had returned from Wuhan, as many as 800 persons with China travel history had already been kept under observation in Kerala.

Kerala, which has to date seen 437 cases, 308 recoveries and two deaths, has consistently stayed ahead of the coronavirus curve, with its 70% recovery rate being the highest in the country. Kerala has so far tested 20,821 samples, also the highest for any state.

What sets its containment strategy apart?

Legacy of public health

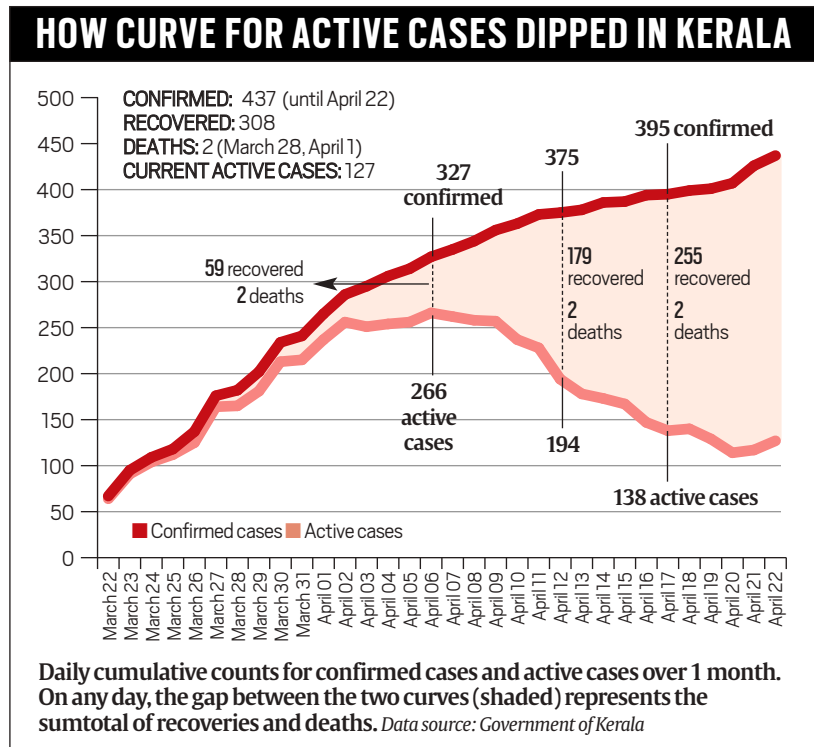
Much before Kerala became a separate state in 1956, the region had seen several pathbreaking public health interventions. In 1879, the erstwhile Travancore rulers made a proclamation making vaccination compulsory for public servants, prisoners and students. In 1928, a parasite survey, done in association with the Rockefeller Foundation, led to the control of hookworm and filariasis.

This community health legacy got a further boost as the state's focus on literacy and women's education helped it attain near 100% vaccination levels and develop a culture of personal hygiene. The World Health Organization, in a survey held in 12 countries in 2005, found that hand-washing with soap after defecation had a prevalence of 34% in Kerala, the highest among the states/countries surveyed. So when the state began its 'Break the Chain' campaign during the COVID-19 outbreak — to promote hand-washing and use of sanitisers — it only served to reiterate some of those best practices.

Health infrastructure

A critical factor in Kerala's COVID-19 battle has been its robust healthcare system, considered on a par with those of many developed countries. In June 2019, Kerala topped all states on the NITI Aayog's annual health index with an overall score of 74.01, more than 2½ times that of the least-performing state, UP (28.61).

Though Kerala has only been investing 5% of its total state plan outlay on healthcare



— which is also roughly the national average spending in the sector — its focus on healthcare at the level of Primary Health Centres and Community Health Centres has stood it in good stead. With the management of these centres in the hands of three-tier local bodies, many of these have modern diagnostic facilities and offer tele-medicine services.

The state's private health sector, once dominated by the Church, has grown rapidly in the last two decades, mainly on the back of investment from NRIs and corporate healthcare groups. At present, Kerala has 142,924 beds in its hospitals, of which the private sector accounts for 93,042.

Focus on the front line

On February 1, the state's coronavirus control cells laid out guidelines on testing, quarantine, hospital admission and discharge criteria — a living document that is regularly updated.

Until late January, the state did not have any testing facility and throat swabs of suspected cases had to be sent to the National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune. But by the first week of February, NIV-Alappuzha got sanction to conduct the tests. Over the last two months, Kerala's COVID-19 testing facilities have grown to 13, ten of those in the government sector.

The state also stepped up its medical facilities, turning defunct hospitals into COVID-19 facilities. So far, 38 government hospitals have been converted into COVID-19 hospitals, and 800 ventilators in public hospitals and 1,578 in the private sector have been identified.

Lessons from Nipah

While broadly sticking to the protocol set up by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Kerala put in place its rigorous surveillance network, one that had been fine-tuned to perfection during the outbreak of

the Nipah virus in 2018 and 2019.

Besides tracing contacts of positive cases, Kerala strictly enforced 28 days of home quarantine although the general incubation period of the virus is 14 days.

From early March, the state screened all international passengers. Even if someone managed to skip airport screening, they would have to deal with village committees, who kept the health department informed about fresh arrivals and ensured they remained indoors. In hotspots of Kasaragod and Kannur districts, some village panchayats even launched call centres, connecting those quarantined with the authorities.

Besides, route maps of positive cases, drawn through GPS data, were released to help people self-report if they suspected they might have come in contact with an infected person. Geo-mapping of those under observation enabled better cluster management.

Once flight operations were suspended, the state focused on inter-state road and rail travellers. Those who reached Kerala from other states since March 8 - and their contacts - were asked to isolate themselves. It's this strategy that helped the state rein in infections from participants of the Tablighi Jamaat event in Delhi. While several other states started acting only when positive cases from among the Tablighis were reported, Kerala had already placed around 217 such persons under observation. Eventually, 20 of them tested positive.

Social, political participation

Despite the largely bipolar nature of Kerala's politics, almost the entire state would stay tuned to watch Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan address his daily press briefings on the state's tackling of the situation. While Health Minister Shailaja holds daily meetings with district medical officers, the Chief Minister's Office coordinates with other departments such as police, revenue, electricity, etc. Every evening, the CM chairs a review meeting attended by, among others, Dr B Ekbal, chairman of the expert committee on COVID-19.

The Kudumbashree Mission, the state's poverty eradication and women empowerment programme, has been at the frontlines with volunteers pitching in to make masks and launching community kitchens.

Why India tightened FDI rules, and why it's China that's upset

PRABHA RAGHAVAN
NEW DELHI, APRIL 22

INDIA RECENTLY revised its Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) policy with the objective of preventing "opportunistic takeovers" of firms hit by the lockdown induced by the COVID-19 outbreak. The move has upset China, which has termed it a violation of international trade principles (*The Indian Express*, April 21). A look at the move, and the implications:

What was the amendment?

On Saturday, the government said firms in neighbouring countries wanting to invest in Indian companies would first need its approval. An entity of a country that shares a land border with India can now invest in firms here "only under the Government route". This also applies to "beneficial" owners — even if the investing company is not located in a neighbouring country, it would still be subject to these conditions if its owner is a citizen or resident of such a country.

While the note did not name any country, analysts see the amendments as aimed at possible Chinese investments. The decision came days after China's central bank, the People's Bank of China (PBoC) had raised its shareholding in HDFC to over 1 per cent. HDFC vice chairman and CEO Keki Mistry had said that PBoC had been an existing shareholder, owning 0.8% as of March 2019.

China's FDI has grown five-fold since 2014 and, as of December 2019, its cumulative investment in India exceeded \$8 billion — "far more" than investments by other countries that share borders with India, according to the Chinese government. A Brookings India paper pegs the total current and planned Chinese investment in India at over \$26 billion.

What was China's response?

China has called for India to revise these "discriminatory practices" and treat investments from different countries equally. "The additional barriers set by Indian side for investors from specific countries violate WTO's (World Trade Organization) principle of non-discrimination, and go against the general trend of liberalization and facilitation of trade and investment. More importantly, they do not conform to the consensus of G20 leaders and trade ministers to realize a free, fair, non-discriminatory, transparent, predictable and stable trade and investment environment, and to keep our markets open," said Ji Rong, spokesperson for the Chinese Embassy in India.

What is India's argument?

India maintains the policy is not aimed at any one country and that the move is aimed at curbing "opportunistic" takeovers of Indian firms, many of which are under strain. "The amendments are not prohibiting investments. (We have) just changed the approval route for these investments. There are many sectors in India that are already subject to this approval route," a senior government official had said, adding that "many" other countries were taking such measures.

What have other countries done?

Before India, the European Union and Australia had initiated similar measures. These, again, were seen as being targeted

at Chinese investments.

On March 25, the European Commission issued guidelines to ensure "a strong EU-wide approach" to foreign investment screening at such a time. The aim was to preserve EU companies and critical assets, notably in areas like health, medical research, biotechnology and infrastructures essential for security and public order, without undermining the EU's general openness to foreign investment.

On March 30, Australia temporarily tightened rules on foreign takeovers over concerns that strategic assets could be sold off cheaply. This followed warnings that distressed Australian companies in the aviation, freight and health sectors could become vulnerable to buyouts by state-owned enterprises, especially China. All foreign takeover and investment proposals will now be scrutinised by Australia's foreign investment review board.

Spain, Italy and the US too have implemented investment-related restrictions, according to Khaitan & Co partner Atul Pandey.

Is there any ground for the argument that India's move is discriminatory?

Some experts note that the amendments apply only to bordering countries. "Now, there are different sets of procedures for the same set of investments based on which country the company is investing from. This is where the potential issue of discrimination arises," said a trade expert on condition of anonymity. "While India can discriminate in favour of domestic investment, discrimination against certain countries for non-security reasons may not be seen favourably on the global stage."

There could also be a potential violation of non-discriminatory obligations under the General Agreement on Trade in Services, if the sectors concerned involve services, the expert said. "Most of the other countries that have tightened their investment regulations have done so unanimously, which means that it would apply to all countries."

Has India done this before?

The move to impose additional requirements for certain countries is seemingly unprecedented. So far, India has imposed such measures on investments into certain sectors, according to legal experts.

For instance, while FDI in pharmaceuticals had been allowed under the automatic route until 2011, the government had mandated approval for any investment coming into the sector from November that year, said Pandey of Khaitan & Co. "This had happened after the government was alerted to intentions by certain overseas firms to increase investments in India's pharmaceutical industry with an intention to potentially take over these entities. This decision was taken with national health security in mind. After the new government was elected in 2014, the policy was liberalised, but even now investment is only allowed up to 74 per cent under the automatic route," he added.

In 2010, the government banned FDI in cigarette manufacturing following recent announcements by Japan Tobacco that it would increase stake in its Indian subsidiary to 74 per cent from 50 per cent, according to Singh and Associates senior partner Daizy Chawla. In the past, India has also blocked certain FDI investments during bilateral standoffs with China, according to Pandey.

PANDEMIC WATCH



Imran Khan

PAKISTAN
Imran tests negative for coronavirus

Islamabad: Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan was tested negative for the novel coronavirus on Wednesday, his aide said, as the number of the COVID-29 cases crossed 10,000 in the country. Khan, 67, agreed for the test after Faisal Edhi, the son of late philanthropist Abdul Sattar Edhi and chairman of the Edhi Foundation, who met him last week tested positive for the coronavirus. "I am happy to report that his test is NEGATIVE," government's chief spokesperson Firdous Ashiq Awan tweeted. Awan said the family of the Prime Minister had already tested negative.

BUSINESS GROUPS' FURY
over blanket ban led to change of tackNO NEW GREEN CARDS
to be issued by US for 60 daysPRESIDENT LEAVES DOOR OPEN
for more restrictive order in future

Trump backs off broad immigration ban

MICHAEL D SHEAR, ZOLAN KANNO-YOUNGS & CAITLIN DICKERSON
WASHINGTON, APRIL 22

PRESIDENT DONALD Trump said on Tuesday that he would order a temporary halt in issuing green cards to prevent people from immigrating to the United States, but he backed away from plans to suspend guest worker programs after business groups exploded in anger at the threat of losing access to foreign labour.

Trump, whose administration has faced intense criticism in recent months for his handling of the coronavirus crisis, abruptly sought to change the subject Tuesday night by resuming his assault on immigration, which animated his 2016 campaign and became one of the defining issues of his presidency.

He cast his decision to "suspend immigration," which he first announced on Twitter Monday night, as a move to protect American jobs. But it comes as the United States economy sheds its work force at a record rate and when few employers are reaching out for workers at home or abroad. More than 22 million Americans have lost their jobs in the economic devastation caused by the virus and efforts to contain it.



US President Donald Trump at a task force briefing at the White House in Washington. Reuters

Trump said that his order would initially be in effect for 60 days, but that he might extend it "based on economic conditions at the time."

"We can do that at a little bit different time if we want," he said of a second executive order that could further restrict immigration. While numerous studies have concluded that immigration has an overall positive effect on the American work force and wages for workers, Trump ignored that research on Tuesday.

"By pausing immigration, we will help put unemployed Americans first in line for jobs as America reopens. So important," the president said. "It would be wrong and unjust for Americans laid off by the virus to be replaced with new immigrant labour flown in from abroad."

Lawyers at the Justice Department were still studying whether the president had the legal authority to unilaterally suspend the issuance of green cards, an order that caught officials off guard, as per people with knowledge of the announcement. **NYT**

EXPLAINED

Mixed response to the step back

THE DECISION to allow guest worker visas is seen as a concession to business groups, which were up in arms over the prospect of a full immigration ban. A specific refrain was about farm workers, of which immigrants make up a considerable number. Excluding them could add pressure to an already struggling industry, said experts. However, while the concession will please business groups, analysts suggested the move could damage Trump politically, as anti-immigration activists are seen as a significant part of his voter base.

Trump threatens to end trade deal if China does not honour it

LALIT K JHA
WASHINGTON, APRIL 22

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump has threatened to terminate the trade deal with China if Beijing did not honour its provisions in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic that originated in the country.

While China has reported 82,788 novel coronavirus cases, including 4,632 fatalities, the United States registered over 824,600 cases and more than 45,290 deaths — the highest in the world.

China and the US in January signed Phase-1 of the trade deal as the world's two top economic powers move forward to end their bitter tit-for-tat two-year tariff war that had rattled markets and weighed on the global economy.

The deal, which calls on China to buy \$200 billion worth of US products, is set to move ahead as planned. However, the

U.S. STATE SUES CHINA OVER COVID LOSSES

MISSOURI BECAME the first US state to sue the Chinese government over its handling of coronavirus and the economic losses

A CHINESE foreign ministry spokesman dismissed the accusation as 'nothing short of absurdity' and lacking factual or legal basis

THE CIVIL lawsuit, filed in federal court, says Missouri suffered tens of billions of dollars in damages, and seeks cash compensation

A STATEMENT by the Attorney General read, 'The Chinese government lied to the world... silenced whistleblowers...'

US-China Economic and Security Review Commission in a report said China could invoke a clause in the agreement that allows for fresh trade consultations between the two countries "in the event of a natural disaster or other unforeseeable event".

"If that happens, we'll do a termination and we'll do what I can do better than anybody," Trump told reporters on Tuesday during his daily White House

press conference on coronavirus.

The president was responding to a question as to how confident he is that the Chinese are not going to invoke the natural disaster clause mentioned in the trade deal.

"There is nobody ever been tougher on China than me," Trump said, reiterating that China had been ripping the US off for years till he was elected as the president. **PTI**

NEPAL
India gifts 23 tonnes of medicine

Kathmandu: India on Wednesday gifted 23 tonnes of essential medicines to Nepal. Indian ambassador Vinay Mohan Quatra handed over the medicines to Nepal's Minister of Health and population Bhabubhakta Dhakal. A tweet by the Indian embassy said, "The consignment, as a gift from the people of India to the people of Nepal, includes 8.25 lakh dosage of critical medicines". The Nepal army has also initiated purchase of medicines worth Rs 15 million from an Indian public sector undertaking body.

SINGAPORE
Over 1,000 foreign workers test positive

Singapore: Over 1,000 foreign workers, including Indian nationals, tested positive for coronavirus in Singapore on Wednesday, taking the total number of infections to 10,141, as the city-state battles a second wave of contagion. The "vast majority" of the new cases are work permit holders residing in foreign worker dormitories, the Ministry of Health (MOH) said in its preliminary release of figures. More than 1,000 foreign workers, including Indian nationals, are among 1,016 new COVID-19 cases confirmed in Singapore Wednesday noon, according to official figures.

UK PM under fire over handling of virus crisis as deaths cross 18,000

GUY FAULCONBRIDGE & ESTELLE SHIRBON
LONDON, APRIL 22

BRITISH PRIME Minister Boris Johnson on Wednesday faced a call for an inquiry into his government's handling of the coronavirus crisis after failing to fully explain partial death data, limited testing or the lack of equipment for hospitals.

The British government says 759 more people have died in UK hospitals, taking the total to 18,100.

The government has given conflicting explanations of why it failed to join a European Union ventilator scheme and admitted there have been problems getting health workers enough protective equipment.

"Once we are through this crisis, there will of course need to be an independent inquiry to



Boris Johnson

officially review the government's response to the pandemic," Ed Davey, acting leader of the Liberal Democrats, said.

"The inquiry must have the strongest possible powers given the shocking failures on protective equipment for staff and the slow response of the government - to get to the truth and to give Boris Johnson the opportunity to answer the increasingly serious questions." **REUTERS**

Iran launches first military satellite

ASSOCIATED PRESS
TEHRAN, APRIL 22

IRAN'S REVOLUTIONARY Guard said it put the Islamic Republic's first military satellite into orbit, dramatically unveiling what experts described as a secret space program with a surprise launch Wednesday that came amid wider tensions with the United States.

There was no immediate independent confirmation of the launch of the satellite, which the Guard called "Noor," or light. The US State Department and Israeli officials did not immediately respond to requests for comment while the Pentagon said it "will continue to closely monitor Iran's pursuit of viable space

DESTROY GUNBOATS HARASSING U.S. SHIPS: TRUMP

Washington: US President Donald Trump said on Wednesday he had ordered the United States military to attack and destroy any Iranian vessel that harasses US Navy ships.

"I have instructed the United States Navy to shoot down and destroy any and all

Iranian gunboats if they harass our ships at sea," Trump said on Twitter.

The order came one week after 11 small armed Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps speedboats swarmed around US Navy and Coast Guard ships in international waters in the northern Gulf. **AFP**

launch technology."

However, such a launch immediately raised concerns among experts on whether the technology used could help Iran develop intercontinental ballistic missiles. Already, Iran has abandoned

all the limitation of its tattered nuclear deal with world powers that President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew America from in 2018. Trump's decision set off a monthslong series of escalating attacks that culminated



WHEN EARTH DAY MEETS COVID

Members of the Environmental Health Citizens' Association of Korea wear masks representing viruses during an event to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day at Gwanghwamun Square in Seoul, South Korea, on Wednesday. **AP**

Lanka intensifies Covid testing in Colombo slums

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
COLOMBO, APRIL 22

THE HEALTH authorities in Sri Lanka have increased testing for the coronavirus in the densely populated slums here after over 1,000 people were quarantined following one positive case in one of the shanties.

With 12 new cases reported on Wednesday, the total number of COVID-19 infections reached 323 in the country. Seven people have died so far of the disease, while 105 have recovered.

"We have increased conducting PCR tests on people from those areas," Anil Jasinghe, Director of General Health

Services said.

The move comes after over 1,000 people were sent for quarantine following the discovery of one positive case at Bandaranaike Road area in central Colombo.

Jasinghe said that over 500 vendors at the wholesale fish market were also subject to PCR tests due to the threat of community transmission. A fish retailer who is a COVID-19 positive had visited the market recently, Jasinghe said.

Police have issued new guidelines for mobile traders who visit residential areas for services during the lockdown.

They have to be adequately protected, police said.

Disagreements push back EU recovery deal by months

GABRIELA BACZYNSKA
BRUSSELS, APRIL 22

IT MAY take European Union countries until the summer or even longer to agree on how exactly to finance aid to help economies recover from the coronavirus pandemic as major disagreements persist, a bloc official said on Wednesday.

A summit on Thursday is expected to produce only a broad agreement to use the EU's 2021-27 joint budget to help kick-start growth. The bloc's 27 national leaders should also rubber-stamp 500 billion euros of rescue measures effective from June.

"My hope is to make progress in June, July," said the EU official, who is involved in preparing the leaders' summit.

But a final deal might take even longer: "Political lines are moving ... but it will take time," the official stressed.

Wealthy, fiscally conservative countries like Germany, Austria, Denmark, Sweden, Finland and the Netherlands have rejected calls by ailing southern economies — led by Italy, France and Spain — to sell joint "coronabonds" to raise funds to restart growth.

The official said there was still "real reluctance" in some member states to back the Commission's recovery fund proposal. **REUTERS**



EU Commission president Ursula von der Leyen

'I THINK IT BRINGS PEOPLE SOME HOPE, A LITTLE BIT OF LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS'

Closed border can't stop elderly couple: 'Love is the best thing in the world'

PATRICK KINGSLEY
MOLLEHUSVEJ BORDER CROSSING, APRIL 22

SHE DRIVES from the Danish side, in her Toyota Yaris.

He cycles from the German side, on his electric bike.

She brings the coffee and the table, he the chairs and the schnapps. Then they sit down on either side of the border, a yard or two apart.

And that is how two octogenarian lovers have kept their romance alive despite the closure

of the border that falls between his home in the very north of Germany and hers in the very south of Denmark.

Every day since the police shut the border, Karsten Tüchsen Hansen, an 89-year-old retired farmer, and Inga Rasmussen, an 85-year-old former caterer, have met at the Møllehusvej border crossing to chat, joke and drink, while maintaining a modicum of social distance.

"We're here because of love," said Tüchsen Hansen, when I visited them last week. "Love is the best thing in the world."

Then he poured another glass of schnapps.

The couple's unlikely romance began in Denmark two summers ago, in slightly less sentimental fashion.

Tüchsen Hansen, carrying a grand bouquet of flowers, was on his way to drop in unannounced on another elderly Danish widow he'd known for decades. But before he reached her house, he met Rasmussen.

Rather taken, he decided against visiting the first woman. Instead, Tüchsen Hansen impulsively gave the flowers to



Karsten Tüchsen Hansen (89) and Inga Rasmussen (85). **NYT**

Rasmussen. He invited her to dinner in Germany and the pair soon grew close, much to the surprise of Rasmussen's three daughters.

Their happy routine came to an abrupt halt on March 13, when the Danish government announced it would close its borders the next day to all but people travelling for work. Frightened she would be locked out of her homeland, Rasmussen hurried back to her house in Denmark, a 15-minute drive away.

Neither knew when they'd next hold the other's hand.

But then they hatched a plan.

On a quiet lane that winds through the flat farmland between their two homes, a few hundred meters from where Tüchsen Hansen was born, the police blocked the road only with a flimsy plastic barrier. It's about halfway between their two homes, so Rasmussen and Tüchsen Hansen have met there for a picnic every afternoon since the shutdown, usually at 3 pm.

Ingentle deference to medical advice, they try to avoid physical contact. "The worst thing is we can't embrace each other," Tüchsen Hansen said. "We can't

kiss. We can't make love."

The Danish mayor of a nearby town, Henrik Frandsen, first noticed the couple's routine.

Cycling along the border 10 days after it was closed, Frandsen struck up a conversation with them. Touched by their story, he later posted a picture of them on Facebook.

Within days, they had become regional celebrities, the focus of several reports in local newspapers and radio stations. "I think it brings people some hope, a little bit of light in the darkness," said Frandsen. **NYT**

13 ECONOMY

SENSEX: 31,379.55 ▲ 742.84 NIFTY: 9,187.30 ▲ 205.85 NIKKEI: 19,137.95 ▼ 142.83 HANG SENG: 23,893.36 ▲ 99.81 FTSE: 5,758.77 ▲ 117.74 DAX: 10,376.19 ▲ 126.34

International market data till 1900 ISTs

NET DEBT MORE THAN DOUBLED BETWEEN MAR 2015 AND SEPT 2019

After FB's Jio investment booster, RIL in talks with other investors to pare debt

SANDEEP SINGH & PRANAV MUKUL
NEW DELHI, APRIL 22

EVEN AS its profits and cash reserves have been growing over the years, a big overhang for Reliance Industries (RIL) has been a sharp rise in its gross and net debt. The group saw its net debt more than double from Rs 76,388 crore in March 2015 to Rs 1,57,236 crore by the end of September 2019.

While the proposed deal with Saudi Aramco to sell 20 per cent stake in RIL and the agreement with Brookfield to divest stake in its telecom towers are in the works, Wednesday's announcement of sale of 9.99 per cent stake in Jio Platforms Ltd to Facebook for a consideration of \$5.7 billion (over Rs 43,000 crore) came as a shot in the arm for the group that has been looking to reduce its debt.

DEBT SITUATION OF RELIANCE INDUSTRIES

	Gross debt	Cash & cash equitable	Net debt
FY15	1,60,860	84,472	76,388
FY16	1,81,079	86,033	95,046
FY17	1,96,599	77,226	1,19,373
FY18	2,18,763	78,063	1,40,700
FY19	2,87,505	1,33,027	1,54,478
FY20*	2,91,982	1,34,746	1,57,236

All figures in Rs crore; *As of September 2019

Source: Company annual report and communication

Share price of RIL jumped by 12 per cent on Wednesday, before closing at Rs 1,363 per share, with a gain of 10.3 per cent.

A report by Morgan Stanley, which acted as the financial advisor to RIL and Jio Platforms Ltd in relation to the investment by Facebook Inc, said that the stake sale will "lower RIL's net debt by

12 per cent and be 1.5 per cent earnings accretive. It could also drive a multiple re-rating as RIL multiples have previously re-rated 30 per cent during balance sheet deleveraging cycles."

It also said that if all asset monetisation plans including holdings in energy, telecom and content businesses were to be consum-

mated, "we estimate potential to lower RIL's net debt and liabilities by 80 per cent, i.e. by \$39 billion".

Edelweiss, in its report on the Jio Platforms-Facebook deal, said, "The transaction allays the Street's concern on RIL's leverage and instils confidence in management's target to achieve zero net debt by FY21. Synergies due to RIL's partnership with Facebook are a known unknown and can drive a significant re-rating for the stock."

There are some who say that RIL chairman Mukesh Ambani has been working towards a strategy that will not only bring down the group level debt significantly but will also insulate his enterprises from a number of perceived risks. While Facebook's stake purchase in Jio Platforms has been announced, sources say that Saudi Aramco is currently doing its due diligence to pick up 20 per cent stake in RIL's refining and petro-

chemicals business.

There are some who say that RIL group is also working on bringing a large strategic investor in its retail business too. An investment banker, who did not wish to be named, said that RIL group seems to be working towards safeguarding Ambani's enterprise's interest against any risk going forward by bringing in large strategic players into his businesses.

"Once you have built a big enterprise and the business reaches its maturity, it is good to encash a bit and also see that the business continues without any hassle going forward by roping in a large strategic investor. The deal with Aramco will just ensure that along with providing it with cash to retire some debt," The banker said the deal will be a win-win for both partners and at this time Aramco needs RIL much more and it won't find a better partner around.

INTERVIEW WITH VIKRAM S MEHTA, CHAIRMAN, BROOKINGS INDIA

'It's the death knell for the oil industry ... will also damage budgets of oil exporting nations'



GOENKA: Vikram, it's certainly something that is going to happen just once in our lifetime, isn't it?

MEHTA: Yeah, what happened is a technical issue ... related to the May Futures contract from WTI (crude oil) and basically, you know, all the traders who were holding on to that derivative paper, needed to offload it. They couldn't find anyone to roll it over because of the shortage or constraint on storage. So rather than taking the delivery of the product in May, they just bid low the price, desperate to get rid of that paper. And as you know, normally these sort of contracts get rolled over pretty easily because the differential between, let's say the May Futures and the June Futures, is not that great. But this time around, June Futures was trading at \$20 a barrel and May Futures crashed to -\$37. So the differential was such that no one was actually able to roll it over.

But this technicality reflects a fundamental reality of the market. And the reality is that it's a hugely oversupplied market.

GOENKA: Is it correct that there are certain type of oil producers who are producing at around \$10 a barrel; others, like shale producers, at around \$30 a barrel; and there are some who are producing at less than \$5 a barrel?

MEHTA: You're absolutely right. Some of the fields, the giant fields that have been producing for the last God knows how many years, you can produce at a few cents a barrel. But I think one has to go one step beyond the marginal cost of production and ask what is the budget requirements of the oil producers. I am going to take a slightly macro view. What is the oil price that oil producers need to break even, to balance their budget?

You'll be amazed, Saudi Arabia needs a price of \$82 a barrel, and the lowest, the most robust of the oil producers, Qatar, requires a price of around \$40 a barrel and, Algeria, at the other end, over \$100 a barrel. So the Saudi oil company Aramco might still be generating a profit. On a stand-alone basis, its balance sheet is

The fundamentals of the oil industry are not just determined by demand and supply, they are also determined by geopolitics, by the paper trader — yesterday was all about paper trading. They are also determined to some extent by the exchange rate. Demand has fallen by such an extraordinary level — this quarter, some estimates say it will fall by 30 million barrels a day, which is the entire production of OPEC. Now against that kind of a demand destruction, a 10 million barrels a day supply cut, which is what Saudi and Russia have agreed to, is not making any difference.

VIKRAM S MEHTA

not going to go under. But since Saudi Aramco contributes 80 per cent of the revenues to the Saudi exchequer, the fact is that Saudi Arabia will have to very quickly draw down from its sovereign reserves if it wants to meet its social and economic commitments, and that's the big issue.

At the industry level, you have the NOCs, the National Oil Companies and then the private companies, and if you were to order the oil companies by size and indeed profitability, you'd find that, probably of the top 20, 16 are NOCs. And then the four like, Exxon and Shell and Chevron and maybe Total; the rest have dropped off that list. Occidental, for example. Its share prices are below value and that's unique. That I think is the reason for saying, you might well have sounded the death knell of the oil industry.

Goenka: Am I wrong in my understanding that nobody is producing less because of the fear that if they do they will be forced to not produce at all, or will never be able to go back to the original volumes?

MEHTA: The fundamentals of the oil industry are not just

determined by demand and supply, they are also determined by geopolitics, by the paper trader — yesterday was all about paper trading. They are also determined to some extent by the exchange rate.

Demand has fallen by such an extraordinary level — this quarter, some estimates say it will fall by 30 million barrels a day, which is the entire production of OPEC. Now against that kind of a demand destruction, a 10 million barrels a day supply cut, which is what Saudi and Russia have agreed to, is not making any difference.

Point number two is that, if you do reduce supplies, some fields, some reservoirs could get permanently damaged.

Goenka: So are we (India) going to see a major reduction in our annual oil bill?

MEHTA: Oh yeah, I haven't done the numbers, but there will definitely be a significant reduction. But on a per unit basis obviously, because the price has fallen. But our demand has fallen as well. The big question is: What are you going to do when the economy starts to pick up again?

Misra: As oil prices fall, should the government raise taxes and boost its revenues, or pass on the lower prices to consumers to boost consumption?

MEHTA: I would do the latter, I would actually look to reducing the prices. And I am not saying that initially it will boost demand because that depends very much on economic resurgence. But I think it will be politically foolish, frankly, for the government to continue to charge all of us the same price when the world price has collapsed.

Goenka: Is the whole cause of renewable energy, especially in India, a hopeless cause, at these prices of oil?

MEHTA: It's not a hopeless cause because it cannot be and must not be a hopeless cause. So let's hope that no one in government says that. It's going to be complicated by the price of oil, of course, but more by supply chain issues.

The China supply chain is broken. That's back to my earlier point that we will have to take a slightly longer-term view of all these issues. If you take a short-term view, you are going to say, yeah, okay, "forget about renewables".

But you'll wake up, two years, five years, from now and you'll find yourself living in a hell-hole once again.

(Edited excerpts. Transcribed by Mehr Gill)

Aarogya Setu mandatory for delivery partners of Zomato, Urban Company

AASHISH ARYAN
NEW DELHI, APRIL 22

BRUSHING ASIDE privacy concerns, food delivery app Zomato founder Deepinder Goyal on Wednesday said his company was making it mandatory for its delivery partners to install the government's contact tracing app Aarogya Setu and keep it running in the background before allowing them to log into their own profiles.

"We have made sure that they (delivery partners) can only login to their Zomato Delivery Partner app if their phone has the Aarogya Setu app installed, and is running as a background process on their phone," Goyal said on Twitter.

On April 15, a delivery partner of the company had tested positive for COVID-19, following which Zomato issued a statement saying that all the houses which the person had visited with food and grocery orders in the past few days were being kept under observation by the authorities.

Zomato's decision to make the installation of Aarogya Setu mandatory for its delivery partners comes even as experts have raised several questions on the app's privacy policy and efficacy. While legal experts are of the view that there is need for further clarity on how the data collected by the app is stored and used by the government, cybersecurity experts doubted the efficacy of the application itself.

Some experts also said the app would be useful in true sense only if India conducts enough COVID-19 tests.

"For the app to work effi-

The decision by the two companies comes even as experts have raised several questions on the app's privacy policy and efficacy

ciently, certain conditions are to be fulfilled. The first one is that a good number of tests have to be performed across the country. And these patients ought to have a smartphone with the app, only then can a cluster be formed for bigger inter-mobile communication," a Chennai-based independent cybersecurity expert had told *The Indian Express*.

Apart from its delivery partners, Zomato also urged its users to download the app, which it said would "go a long way in containing the spread of COVID-19". "We also encourage our users to download the Aarogya Setu app. I am aware of the alleged privacy concerns that some of us have against using the app. But even if these concerns were well-founded, it is a small cost to pay for the sake of the collective long term," a press statement sent by the company, and attributed to Goyal, said.

Household services firm UrbanClap, now rechristened Urban Company, also said that all its partners such as air conditioner repairmen, electricians, plumbers, among others, would now have to mandatorily install the app on their phones and show it to the user that they were COVID-19 free when they went to their homes for providing any service.

'Migrant wages sent home set to drop \$142 bn in 2020'

Global remittances are set to tumble by \$142 billion in 2020, the sharpest fall in recent history, a report by the World Bank estimates

-20%: Fall in money that migrant workers send home, which would largely be due to a fall in their wages and employment overseas

\$714 BILLION: Remittances in 2019, which increased after a dip in 2016 mainly due to low oil prices

\$572 BILLION: Expected fall in remittances in 2020, a decline of \$142 billion

-1 BILLION: Number of migrants who help feed, clothe and shelter up to three people "back home". Of these: ■ 270 million work outside their home countries ■ 760 million are internal migrants

19.7%: Expected fall in remittances for low- and middle-income nations, from a record \$554 billion in 2019 to \$445 billion in 2020



28%: Fall in remittances that Europe and Central Asia will see, the biggest among all regions, due to combined effect of the pandemic and the oil price slump

Overtaking FDI inflows: Last year, remittances overtook foreign direct investment (FDI) flows as the main source of foreign exchange for low- and middle-income countries

Source: World Bank/PTI

Sensex, rupee rise; US crude jumps over 26% after Monday's record low

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, APRIL 22

THE BENCHMARK Sensex on Wednesday rallied by 2.42 per cent, aided by the 10.3 per cent rally in Reliance Industries (RIL) which signed a deal with Facebook for the sale of 9.99 per cent stake in RIL's subsidiary Jio Platforms for Rs 43,547 crore (\$5.7 billion).

The 30-share Sensex rose 742.84 points to 31,379.55, while the NSE Nifty jumped 205.85 points, or 2.29 per cent, to 9,187.30. The rupee, meanwhile, hit 76.91 at day's low before closing 15 paise

up at 76.68 against the US dollar. Meanwhile, Brent crude oil rebounded from two days of losses and US futures surged on Wednesday, bolstered by tentative discussions of additional supply cuts from OPEC producers and US inventory builds that were less dire than some anticipated. As of 1720 GMT, Brent was up \$1.54, or 8 per cent, at \$20.87 a barrel. Intraday, it had fallen to \$15.98, its low since June 1999. US WTI crude futures for June delivery rose \$3.09, or 26.7 per cent, to \$14.66 a barrel. On Monday, US futures had closed at a record minus \$37.63 a barrel. **WITH REUTERS**

EXPLAINED **RIL-FB deal helps surge**

TUESDAY'S SURGE was largely in response to the Reliance-Facebook deal — with RIL's shares rising 10.3 per cent on the BSE — and selling pressure may re-emerge at higher levels. Eventually, COVID-19 updates and signals from the earnings front would dictate the market trend.

COVID-19: EPFO settles 6.06 lakh claims, pays out ₹1.9K cr in last 15 days

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, APRIL 22

THE EMPLOYEES' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has processed 6.06 lakh claims and disbursed an amount of Rs 1,954 crore in last 15 days in the online facility to allow withdrawal not exceeding the basic wages and dearness allowances for three months or up to 75 per cent of the amount standing to a member's credit in the EPF account, whichever is less, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Including settlement of claims, the total disbursement in last 15 days is Rs 3,600.85 crore by processing 10.02 lakh claims, a Labour Ministry statement said, adding that 90 per cent of claims have been settled in three working days.

In addition, Rs 481.63 crore have been distributed by the exempted PF trusts to 40,826 subscribers under this scheme, it said. The scheme allowing advance withdrawal was notified on March 27 and the online facility was launched on March 29.

with reference to tax arrears, the taxpayer has a choice to compound the offence and opt for Vivad se Vishwas. However, the scheme will not cover cases where prosecution has already been instituted and is pending in the court.

"This circular clarifies that where notice for initiation of prosecution has been issued without prosecution proceedings being instituted, the assessee would be eligible to file declaration under Vivad se Vishwas," Nangia Andersen LLP director Sandeep Jhunjhunwala said. Consulting firm AKM Global tax partner Amit Maheshwari said that earlier, there was a lack of clarity on applying for Vivad se Vishwas scheme when prosecution proceedings had been initiated and instituted.

In the Union Budget 2020-21, the Centre had announced the Vivad se Vishwas. In cases where a taxpayer's appeals are pending before appellate forums, high courts and the Supreme Court, he will have the option to settle the dispute on payment of 100 per cent tax (125 per cent in search cases) and get complete waiver of interest and penalty if he pays by June 30.

VIVAD SE VISHWAS SCHEME

Declarations can be filed even where prosecution notice has been issued

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, APRIL 22

IN ANOTHER set of FAQs on the Vivad se Vishwas dispute resolution scheme, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) on Wednesday clarified that entities against whom notice has been issued without prosecution being instituted can avail the scheme. In cases where prosecution has been instituted for an assessment year, the prosecution will have to be compounded before filing declaration under the scheme, it said.

The CBDT had, on March 4, issued a detailed FAQs on the scheme. In its Wednesday circular, the department has modified the answer to a question pertaining to prosecution cases with a view to "reflect the correct intent of law". "It has now been clarified that where only notice for initiation of prosecution has been issued without prosecution being instituted, the assessee is eligible to file declaration under Vivad se Vishwas," the CBDT said.

In the March 4 FAQs, the CBDT said that where notice for initiation of prosecution has been issued

BRIEFLY

IGST refunds: Exporters get extension

New Delhi: The government has extended the alternate mechanism facility for exporters to claim IGST refunds in cases of mismatch in invoice number in GST returns and shipping bill filed with customs till December 31, 2019, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) said in a circular. **PTI**

Air Mauritius in voluntary administration

Nairobi: Air Mauritius has entered voluntary administration after coronavirus-related disruptions made it impossible for it to meet its financial obligations in the foreseeable future, its board said on Wednesday. Notably, state-owned airline Air India holds a 10 per cent stake in Air Mauritius with the former's chairman and managing director representing the airline on Air Mauritius' board. **REUTERS**

More relaxation in fundraising norms of stressed firms proposed

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, APRIL 22

AT A time when many corporates are facing fund crunch and defaults in the wake of the lockdown and closure of units, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has proposed exemption from making an open offer for the allottees, along with liberal pricing norms for preferential share issues of stressed companies.

The markets regulator has proposed exemption from making an open offer for allottees of preferential issue in stressed companies if the acquisition is beyond the limit prescribed. To avail this exemption, listed companies need to ensure that preference issue is made to persons/entities that are not part of the promoter or promoter group on the date of the board meeting to consider the preferential issue, according to a Sebi draft paper. India Inc has closed down units across the country and sales have plummeted amid the lockdown.

Sebi has proposed that pricing should not be less than the average of the weekly high and low of the volume weighted average

Sebi assures of more steps amid lockdown

New Delhi: Sebi will look into issues being faced by corporates due to COVID-19 and consider more steps to help them tide over the challenges as part of its continuing efforts to make it easier to do business even in such difficult times, the regulatory body's chairman Ajay Tyagi told representatives of India Inc on Wednesday. **PTI**

prices of the related equity shares on a recognised stock exchange during the two weeks preceding the relevant date. Currently, the determination of the pricing covers a period of 26 weeks or more for frequently traded shares.

It said, "Listed companies that are facing financial stress are generally in need of fund infusion to tide over the stress situation and thereby avoid insolvency or bankruptcy. Such listed companies face certain difficulties in raising capital through conventional means."

14 SPORT

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THOSE MONTHS,
THOSE MINUTES

Forced into an unprecedented lockdown, sport is staring at unfathomable despair. Indian athletes, though, have given the country reasons to rejoice in the past. *The Indian Express* looks back at a bunch of these memories.



In a chat with TUSHAR BHADURI, **HARBINDER SINGH** recalls the story when India reclaimed the hockey gold the last time Olympics were held in Tokyo

READ THE STORY ON
[indianexpress.com](https://www.indianexpress.com)

Olympic-bound athletes told to train within India till year-end

NEW DELHI: The Indian Olympic Association decided to ask the Sports Ministry to allow national campers to undergo outdoor training inside major sports centres in the country by following necessary precautions. At the moment, the athletes have been barred from any training even inside the Sports Authority of India facilities. The meeting, held via video conference under the chairmanship of Lalit Bhanot, was attended by IOA President Narinder Batra, Secretary General Rajiv Mehta and Tokyo Olympics Indian contingent Chef De Mission BP Baisya, apart from 62 representatives from various National Sports Federations. It was also decided that Olympic-bound athletes should train within the country till end of the year in order to avoid any risk. The IOA also agreed that the "decisions on extension of contracts for High Performance Directors, chief/head coaches, coaches and other support staff till 2021 or 2024 needs to be done on priority by SAI and the ministry for smooth handling of training for 2021 and thereafter". **PTI**

Lower rung gets a helping hand

Governing bodies in tennis get together to set up fund for those struggling due to tour suspension

SHAHID JUDGE
MUMBAI, APRIL 22

THE GLOBAL lockdown to control the coronavirus pandemic has kept tennis players, particularly the lower-ranked ones, on tenterhooks. The tour – essentially, their livelihood – has been suspended since March, and updates from the world of tennis have been all about the cancellation of tournament after tournament.

Late on Tuesday, however, there was finally one piece of news that sent a wave of optimism among the lower-ranked players. The seven governing bodies of the sport – the International Tennis Federation (ITF), Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP), Women's Tennis Association (WTA) and the four Grand Slams – have decided to set up a fund to financially assist players during this period. "Tennis' seven international governing bodies are working together to create a Player Relief Programme to provide assistance to the players who are particularly affected during the COVID-19 crisis. These discussions are progressing well and details are being finalised," read a letter sent to the players by the ITF.

The details of the financial aid are yet to be finalised, but based on a report by *The New York Times*, a pool of over US\$6 million is expected to be formed by the governing bodies. "This is going to be very helpful for the lower-ranked players," says world no. 443 Rutuja Bhosale. "At the moment we are all at home, so the expenses aren't as much because we are not travelling, but you still need to pay for essentials. And there is no income. Basically, we've all been just surviving right now. So, this will definitely help."

In addition to the sum proposed by the governing bodies, the ATP Players' Council, headed by world no. 1 Novak Djokovic and also including Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal, has proposed further funds to be contributed by players ranked in the top 100 in singles and the top 20 in doubles, based on their rankings. The 20 doubles players are to contribute US\$ 5,000 each, the top five in singles are to chip in with US\$ 30,000 each, ranks 6-10 with US\$ 20,000, 11-20 with US\$ 15,000, 21-50 with US\$ 10,000 and 51 to 100 with US\$ 5000. All donations to this fund are



India's Rutuja Bhosale, ranked 443 in the world, could benefit from the relief fund being worked out by the sport's governing bodies.

At the moment we are all at home, so the expenses aren't as much because we are not travelling, but you still need to pay for essentials. And there is no income. Basically, we've all been just surviving right now. So, this will definitely help."

RUTUJA BHOSALE
WORLD NUMBER 443

voluntary, and should all players accept the proposal, it would amount to US\$ 1,050,000. Furthermore, Djokovic is said to be pushing for support to be given to players ranked 250 to 700, with a sum of US\$ 10,000 each. "Outside of 250 is where the real financial struggle is," Djokovic said in a message to a group of players, according to the *New York Times*. "We feel that we all need to get together and help these guys out. Many of them

are thinking to leave pro tennis because they just can't survive financially. Unfortunately, there is a very large amount of players in the group between 250 and 700 that is not supported by federations or don't have sponsors."

While the news has been well received, there is concern that some of the players overlooked for this fund may struggle once the tour restarts. "This is definitely helpful and really something that will uplift players who are suffering, but I hope things are made fair to a greater set of players," says 26-year-old Sidharth Rawat, ranked 438. "At the moment the help will go for 250 to 700, but the person ranked 249 may be struggling just as badly. I'd say the players ranked 200 and above struggle because the ones higher than that mark can earn some money by just making it to the Grand Slam qualifiers."

There's been a lot of speculation that lower-ranked players are struggling to survive the lockdown and have decided to move on from the sport. Since the tour was

Federer suggests a merger of ATP, WTA

Roger Federer called for a merger between the men's ATP Tour and the WTA, which runs the women's circuit, as tennis wades through a lengthy coronavirus shutdown. "Just wondering... am I the only one thinking that now is the time for men's and women's tennis to be united and come together as one?" the winner of 20 Grand Slam singles titles said on Twitter. "I am not talking about merging competition on the court, but merging the 2 governing bodies (ATP and WTA) that oversee the men's and women's professional tours..." Rafa Nadal also voiced his support. "They @rogerfederer as you know per our discussions I completely agree that it would be great to get out of this world crisis with the union of men's and women's tennis in one only organisation," said Nadal. **REUTERS**

suspended in March and till July 13 at least, there has been a sum of approximately US\$ 56,834,845 on the men's circuit, and US\$ 34,224,127 on the WTA tour that could have been earned by players in prize money. These events however, are only for higher-ranked players. The ones who play in the lower tiers are playing for much smaller prize money, which means their savings are just as low.

"If it weren't for my parents, I'd be out (financially) by now. I'm blessed to have parents to support me, but I can't do this forever," says world no. 655 Arjun Kadhe, who at 26, has earned a total of US\$ 94,117 in prize money so far. The thought of financial aid coming in, though, has kept him upbeat.

"That money can be used to invest in tennis, be it training or travel. It'll help getting things started again."

As of now, it's not confirmed who will be getting how much. But for the players, just the beginning of the process gives them hope.

DDCA secretary in jail, colleagues thought he had COVID-19

PRESSTrust OF INDIA
NEW DELHI/MEERUT, APRIL 22

CONTROVERSIAL DELHI and Districts Cricket Association (DDCA) general secretary Vinod Tihara is currently in jail for allegedly failing to "comply with GST norms" after going "incommunicado" amid speculation that he was self-isolating with symptoms of COVID-19. "A Delhi resident named Vinod Tihara was arrested by Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) wing of Noida on March 17 on allegations of violations of GST norms and is currently in Meerut jail," SSP Meerut, Ajay Sahni, told PTI.

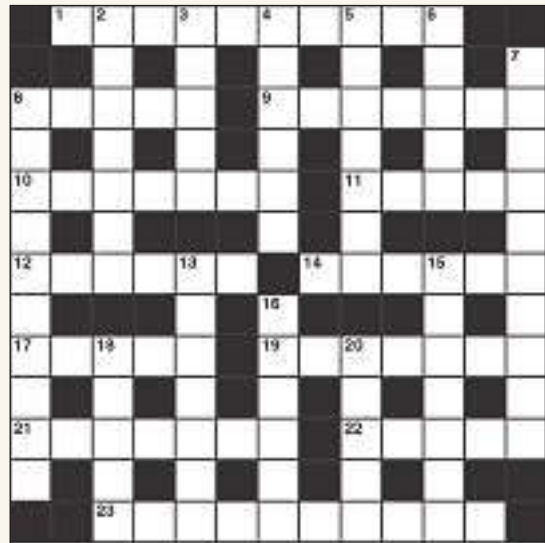
There was no immediate clarity on the exact nature of the violation he has been accused of committing. Tihara is Delhi cricket's representative at the BCCI and an influential figure in state's cricket body. Tihara had been "unreachable" since mid-March leaving DDCA officials, including members of his faction, flummoxed. "For the longest time, we were under the impression that Vinod ji has tested positive for COVID-19. One or two people who contacted his family members were told that he is under isolation. His phone is switched off for the past one month," a senior DDCA office-bearer told PTI.

During a recent online hearing in a matter of financial misappropriation of funds, organised by DDCA ombudsman Justice (Retd) Deepak Verma via Skype, one of the body's lawyers, known for his proximity to Tihara, told the apex council members that he had tested positive for novel coronavirus.

"We all freaked out as we had met Tihara till March 15 at various places. We told him that why weren't we informed as we all needed to quarantine ourselves. He then changed track and said that if you people would have been COVID-19 positive, then you would have known by now. It was very suspicious," the Apex Council member who was suspended that day, said.

In fact, some of the members are now wondering how did a letter signed by Tihara in support of one of the lawyers, whose service was being terminated, get submitted to Ombudsman, when all this while he had been in jail.

CROSSWORD 4099



ACROSS

- Recognises and arrests (10)
- Warning! This woman is dangerous (5)
- A welder renovating the sheltered side of a ship (7)
- One needs pluck to play it (7)
- Daily woman, perhaps (5)
- Confirm it if a try is made correctly (6)
- Odd stance for a climb (6)
- Emir's off to see Scrooge (5)
- The art of eating out (7)
- Studio that is later converted (7)
- Puce-coloured jumpers (5)
- Priest very disposed to obstinacy (10)

DOWN

- The job of a debt-collector? (7)
- Wash resin out (5)
- He has a title within his grasp (6)
- Do they have piercing eyes? Just the opposite (7)
- Pulls up the grass (5)
- Sat and gave new privileges for some people (10)
- Yet it's enough food to go round (6,4)
- Skin specialist (7)
- I'd fill in the result – it's obvious (7)
- Educational measure? (6)
- People count on them to send them to sleep (5)
- Those on the wrists are preferable to those on the ears (5)

Solutions Crossword 4098: Across: 1 Valise, 4 Easter, 9 Shearer, 10 Strip, 11 Resent, 12 Eyecore, 13 Nothing left, 18 Notable, 22 Cairo, 23 Sardine, 24 Steady, 25 Fluent. Down: 1 Vestry, 2 Leeks, 3 Scratch, 5 Aisle, 6 Turn off, 7 Ripped, 8 Free-and-easy, 14 Outlive, 15 Liberal, 16 Knocks, 17 Honest, 19 Brood, 21 Abide.

JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given quip.

1 __, therefore I __ - Rene Descartes (5,2)

ETVAI



EHINT



ELTYHM



NUDNK



SOLUTION: VITAE, THINE, MITHYL, LINKIND
Answer: I think, therefore I am - Rene Descartes

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



SUDOKU 4188

Difficulty Level 3s

Instructions
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Difficulty Level

1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy;
3s = Medium; 4s = Hard;
5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius



SOLUTION SUDOKU 4187



DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

Mars' intriguing relationship with Neptune is pretty near perfect as far as all work and professional ambitions are concerned, but only if you are able to recognise the difference between the way the world is on the one hand, and the way you'd like it to be on the other.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

Like most people, you are blessed with a planetary alignment which confers inspiration and imagination. What is more impressive in your chart is the manner in which your creative powers and spiritual aspirations are triggered. You should always try to see the best in people.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

Continued close attention to a financial matter is desirable, although not essential. When other people abandon their responsibilities, you will be the one who knows where to turn, for you have an amazing wealth of experience to draw on from the past.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

Your daily planets reveal this to be a special day if you have proposals to put forward and arguments to win. However, the long-term perspective evokes deep memories and could cause you to reflect on all those things which happened so long ago. Hopefully certain recollections are no longer as painful as they were.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

Secrecy is not one of your better-known characteristics, but today you really have to keep something to yourself. Don't worry about deceiving partners as long as there is no self-interest involved. It may be, for example, that you keep something from them for their own good.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

If you are beginning to feel as if you're walking up the down escalator, then you're probably pretty much in tune with the stars. The secret is to change direction now, before you end up in the wrong place. You won't lose the thread completely, even if other people think you have.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

Carry on with all-important professional moves, regardless of associates' potentially time-wasting or disruptive actions. If you give charitable activities a high priority you will do what the mystical philosophers call 'making merit', with many good results in the future.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)

Pluto has played a profound role in your chart for many years, so emotional intensity is nothing new. On the other hand, occasionally a new pitch of excitement is reached and, right now, under the Moon's powerful sway, you may demand a new level of commitment.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)

Your material and business interests may have to come first, no matter how much you have to spend or invest. If you have any uncertainties at work, or in any major public ambition, you may put important developments on hold until the picture is clearer.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

Sober Saturn and jovial Jupiter are once again being activated, reminding everyone that you are much more than the materialistic stereotype of an astrological cliché. Don't be afraid to speak your mind, or break out of the rut in which you have buried yourself.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

Spare a little time for your physical well-being, and use the opportunity provided by today's lunar position to clean up your diet and check out a new fitness regime. Don't be perturbed by a financial delay, but keep an eye on other people, just to make sure that they're doing what they said they'd do.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

The Sun is sailing along in a sensitive region of your solar chart, which is astrological short-hand for saying that although colleagues may seem to be quite happy, someone, somewhere, is about to hit the roof. Keep your psychic antennae buzzing and try to spot problems before they arise.