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**ADJUSTED GROSS REVENUE DUES**

## Govt relief to telecom firms angers SC: all dues must be paid, no one will be spared

Where is the law, says bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra, cites money power, warns action against DoT officer

**AASHISH ARYAN**  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 14

THE SUPREME COURT Friday came down heavily on the Department of (DoT) Telecommunications as well as telecom companies such as Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea for failing to comply with its October 24, 2019 judgment on payment of dues under the adjusted gross revenue (AGR) head and said that the way everyone was behaving suggested there

was "no law left in the country". "What is happening in this country? What is the law? What is the respect for Supreme Court's order? We had dismissed the review. But not even a penny has been deposited so far. And there is a stay passed by the desk officer of your government," a three-judge bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra observed.

The bench also included Justice S Abdul Nazeer and Justice M R Shah.  
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**EXPLAINED**  
**E** Could hit quality of services

THE PAYMENT of Rs 1.47 lakh crore by telcos could lead them to cut investment in operational infrastructure which could hit quality of services for consumers. It could result in further consolidation of a sector that has already been reduced from 10 telecom operators to just three — with Vodafone Idea the most hit.

## DoT scrambles for cover, Bharti says will pay Rs 10,000 cr by Feb 20

**PRANAV MUKUL & AASHISH ARYAN**  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 14

THE DEPARTMENT of Telecommunications (DoT), which had taken a slew of decisions to mitigate the telecom sector's pain emanating from Rs 1.47 lakh crore in AGR-related payments, went on the backfoot after it received a rap on the knuckles

from the Supreme Court. It is learnt that until Thursday, telecom operators were engaged with the DoT to seek relief. Their main argument: the poor financial health of the sector which could be further affected because of the dues.

But soon after the apex court's hearing wrapped up just before noon, top officials of the DoT, including Telecom **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

**VIVAD SE VISHWAS SCHEME**

## I-T is given a target to collect: Rs 2 lakh crore by March end

Bill to be cleared only in March, raises concerns over taxpayer harassment

**KHUSHBOO NARAYAN**  
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 14

TWO DAYS after Prime Minister Narendra Modi raised the issue of too few Indians paying income tax, the government has set a daunting collection target of Rs 2 lakh crore for the Income Tax department through the new amnesty scheme Vivad se Vishwas in the next 45 days ending March 31, 2020 even as the scheme ends only in June 2020, sources told *The Indian Express*.

which is expected to meet once a week to monitor collections under the scheme, sources said.

The Vivad se Vishwas scheme aims to settle as many as 4,83,000 direct tax cases pending in various appellate forums i.e. Commissioner (Appeals), ITAT, High Courts and Supreme Court.

The stress on tax collection through Vivad se Vishwas scheme assumes significance as sources said the tax department is starting at a shortfall in revenue collection of up to Rs 1.25 lakh crore this fiscal despite the Union Budget 2020 revising direct tax collection for 2019-20 to Rs 11.80 lakh crore from the earlier target of Rs 13.35 lakh crore.

The I-T department has so far collected only Rs 7.40 lakh crore in direct taxes, said CBDT chairman Mody last week.

Originally, the Bill proposed that a taxpayer would be required to pay 100 per cent of amount of the disputed taxes and get complete waiver of interest and penalty provided he pays by March 31, 2020. Now, the Cabinet has passed this amendment to **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

## In Muzaffarnagar protest case, ADM is prosecution, jury and judge combined

**KAUNAIN SHERIFF M**  
MUZAFFARNAGAR, FEB 14

IT IS a case of the judge, jury and prosecution rolled into one.

On Wednesday, the Muzaffarnagar Additional District Magistrate (ADM) ordered 53 people to pay a total of Rs 23.41 lakh for damage caused to property during an anti-CAA protest on December 20. ADM Amit Singh issued the orders a month after he had issued notices seeking replies from them.

Of the 53, 50 had responded to the notices but records accessed by *The Indian Express* show glaring gaps in due process.

For one, the ADM did not allow the defence to cross-examine the police on explanations and evidence submitted by



Muzaffarnagar saw protests against CAA on Dec 20. File

those asked to pay up. Neither did he detail the evidence placed on record by the accused. Instead, the ADM's final executive order only states that the accused have refuted all the allegations.

The order does not even give any detail about which accused was involved in the destruction of a particular public property. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**



## PULWAMA, ONE YEAR LATER

CRPF personnel pay tribute to colleagues killed in the Pulwama attack, at a memorial at Lethpora, J&K, Friday. Reuters **PAGE 6**

## Dalit MPs want Indian Judicial Service with quotas, I support demand: Paswan

**HARIKISHAN SHARMA**  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 14

IRKED BY the Supreme Court observations on reservation not being a fundamental right, Dalit MPs across party lines met at Union Food Minister Ram Vilas Paswan's residence recently and favoured the creation of an Indian Judicial Service (IJS) with reservation.

Speaking to *The Indian*

*Express*, Paswan said: "All the MPs who attended the meeting demanded reservation in the judiciary and the creation of an Indian Judicial Service because whenever a matter related to the weaker sections goes to the Court, it gets stuck."

"Article 312 of the Constitution provides for the creation of an all-India Judicial Service. It should be on the lines of Indian Administrative Service and Indian Police Service and the se-



Dalit MPs from across parties met at his house recently

lection process of the Indian Judicial Service should be transparent through a competitive examination with proper reservation", Paswan added.

When asked if he supported

the MPs idea, Paswan said, "I support the creation of Indian Judicial Service on two counts: first, it should have transparency because the present system of collegium lacks it; and, second, it will have representation of all sections of the society."

Asked if he would discuss the demand of the IJS with the Union Law Ministry, he said: "The matter has gone forward. The Centre has given a positive reply about **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

## Can't label anti-CAA protesters traitors...need to protect rights: HC

**SADAF MODAK**  
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 14

SETTING ASIDE an order by the Additional District Magistrate against allowing protests in Maharashtra's Beed, the Aurangabad Bench of the Bombay High Court said that those protesting against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act "cannot be called traitors, anti-nationals only because they want to oppose one law".

The Court said that an agitation cannot be suppressed only on the ground that people are agitating against the government. It also asked the bureaucracy to "keep in mind" that when people believe that a "particular Act is an attack on their rights... they are bound to defend that right". And underlined that it is not for the Court "to ascertain whether the exercise of such

right will create a law and order problem".

Granting relief to petitioners who were seeking permission to sit at a location for an indefinite agitation, the Court noted they had given an undertaking that no slogans would be raised against the country, any religion, or unity and integrity of the nation.

"The submissions made show that there will be no question of disobedience of provisions of CAA by such agitation. This Court is expected to consider the right of such persons to start agitation in a peaceful way. This Court wants to express that such persons cannot be called as traitors, anti-nationals only because they want to oppose one law. It will be an act of protest and only against the government for the reason of CAA," the Division Bench of Justices T V Nalawade and M G Sewlikar said Thursday. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

## Elgaar Parishad case against activists sent to NIA court, Pawar criticises state govt

**CHANDAN HAYGUNDE, AJAY KHAPE & SANDEEP ASHAR**  
PUNE, MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 14

EVEN AS a Pune court on Friday ordered transfer of the Elgaar Parishad case records to a special NIA court in Mumbai, NCP chief Sharad Pawar criticised the state

government for clearing transfer of the case.

Speaking to reporters in Kolhapur, Pawar said: "As per the Constitution, law and order is a state subject. It is wrong to take away the rights of the state... It was not right for the Centre to hand over the investigation into the case to the NIA. But it was **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

**WORLD**



**CORONAVIRUS: THIRD INDIAN TESTS POSITIVE ON SHIP OFF JAPAN COAST**  
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## You didn't act, why blame us: EC sends a letter to ex-CEC over his critical piece

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 14

NEARLY A week after former Chief Election Commissioner SY Quraishi wrote in *The Indian Express* that the Election Commission should have ordered the lodging of FIRs for hate speeches made during the Delhi campaign, the poll panel, in a highly unusual move, has



Quraishi's article in *Express*

written to him pointing out that no legal action was taken during his tenure as CEC under the

Representation of the People Act and the IPC for violation of Model Code of Conduct.

"Election Commission is planning to publish a compilation of actions taken against violators of Model Code of Conduct (MCC) in General Elections of Assembly and Parliament during last 20 years starting back from 11 February, 2020, when the results of General Elections **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

**PAGE 1 ANCHOR**

## For overseas job aspirants, Punjab govt pitches to be an agent too

To curb cases of cheating by recruitment agencies, state wants to be direct link between employers & job seekers

**NAVJEEVAN GOPAL**  
CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 14

WITH THOUSANDS of youngsters getting duped by unscrupulous recruitment agencies, the Punjab government has now decided to act as a direct link between overseas employers and job aspirants.

Rahul Tewari, Employment Generation and Training Department Secretary in Punjab, told *The Indian Express* the state

has applied with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) to register as a 'Recruiting Agent'. It has deposited a bank guarantee of Rs 50 lakh with the Protector General of Emigrants, the registering authority under the MEA.

Tewari said the MEA has already carried out a verification process. "The state government has earmarked office space for the proposed RA cell at Ghar Ghar Rozgar Society in Punjab Mandi Board office at Mohali," he said.

The focus countries, to begin with, will be countries in the Middle East, Tewari said.

Simultaneously, the state is in the process of establishing a Study Visa Foreign Facilitation Cell to assist students planning to go abroad for higher studies. "We are hopeful to send the first batch of students abroad on study visas in around six months. The focus countries would be Canada, followed by Australia and New Zealand. We want the students to go to the



Emigration coaching centres in Ludhiana. Gurmeet Singh

right universities, and not get fleeced," said Tewari.

With little or no expertise in these areas, the state government is also planning to engage experts on contract. "We plan to recruit 10 Foreign Placement Executives with prior experience in the field of providing manpower to foreign employers and assisting students for study visas," said Tewari.

Experts in this area, however, expect high salaries. "We are trying to sort this out," said Tewari.

The main reason for government intervention was felt following many complaints of fraud by youngsters who were

cheated by agents. Over the last three years, 3,200 cases were registered against unscrupulous travel agents and agencies under the Punjab Prevention of Human Smuggling Act, Punjab Professional Regulation Rules 2013, Emigration Act, 1983 and under Section 420 (cheating) of the Indian Penal Code.

While exact numbers are not available with the government, many attempt to enter countries through illegal routes. Just last year, a large number of illegal immigrants were deported by the United States back to Punjab.

Initially, the Punjab government was planning to outsource

the process of RA-cum-Student Visa Facilitation Cell and floated a tender. It never opened the bids. Later, it planned to hire a consultant for a research paper on the subject, but dropped that idea too. Eventually, it decided to register itself as a 'Recruiting Agent'.

As on date, there are 75 certified Recruiting Agents in Punjab, with Jalandhar leading the pack with 26 RAs. Mohali has 14, Hoshiarpur 13, Ludhiana 5, Chandigarh 4, Ropar 3, Bathinda and Gurdaspur two each. Amritsar, Barnala, Kapurthala, Moga, Patiala and Nawanshahr too have a 'Recruiting Agent' each.