

IN BRIEF

South body schools earmarked for shelters

NEW DELHI
Up to 91 schools run by the South Delhi Municipal Corporation have been earmarked as shelter homes, the civic body said on Tuesday. Food distribution and shelter facilities have been arranged for homeless people and migrant labourers in these schools. Arrangements have also been made to ensure that proper social distancing is maintained at all food distribution points, the SDMC said.

Healthcare professionals can volunteer: SDMC

NEW DELHI
In order to strengthen the medical facilities, the South Delhi Municipal Corporation on Tuesday gave approval for private healthcare professionals to work at its institutions. "Many retired doctors, fresh doctors and medical students are voluntarily coming forward to serve the nation at this crucial time at free of cost in SDMC's healthcare facilities," the civic body said. They will be employed on a voluntary basis, it said. The approval has been given for a period of three months and may be extended depending on the requirement, it added.

'Take action against those associated with outfit'

NEW DELHI
Delhi Police Special Branch has written to the Delhi government to take immediate action against persons, including foreign nationals, associated with Tablighi Jamaat who are currently staying at various mosques and places in Delhi. A total 157 people, including 94 from Indonesia, 13 from Kyrgyzstan, 9 from Bangladesh, 8 from Malaysia, 7 from Algeria and one each from Tunisia, Belgium and Italy are residing in the city. Remaining are Indian nationals, it said. They are presently staying in south-east Delhi, north-east Delhi and other districts in the city, it added.

Gathering at Nizamuddin a highly irresponsible act, says Kejriwal

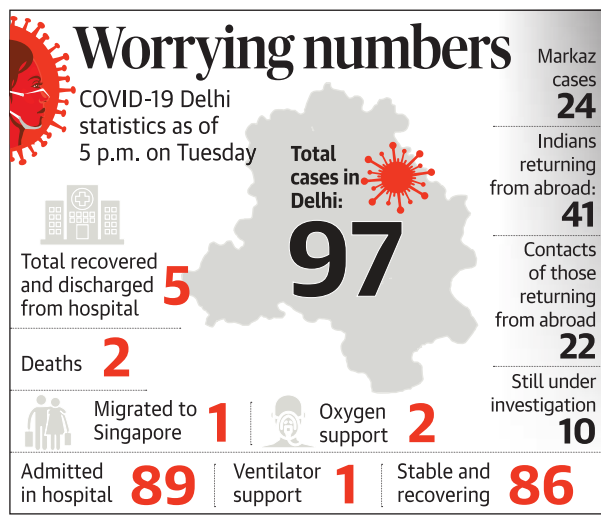
Govt. claims to have written to L-G, asking him to refer the matter to the police

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI
Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday said the gathering at the Nizamuddin Markaz (centre) was a "highly irresponsible act" and the government had written to Lieutenant-Governor Anil Bajjal asking him to refer the matter to the police.

According to a Raj Niwas spokesperson, these directions came on Tuesday evening with Mr. Bajjal directing the police to take "appropriate action as per law" in relation to the case. Of the 97 COVID-19 cases in the city, 24 were from the Nizamuddin centre or the Tablighi Jamaat, Mr. Kejriwal said.

Rise in cases

"There is no denying that there has been a considerable rise in COVID-19 cases in Delhi. Around March 12-13, people from across the nations gathered for a religious congregation. Many of them left for their homes but many stayed back. We are now bringing out the people who



have stayed back and tests are being conducted now, out of which 24 cases have come out to be positive," Mr. Kejriwal said.

He added: "In the last three days, 1,548 people have been brought out of the centre, 441 have been moved to hospitals and 1,447 to quarantine facilities."

The Chief Minister said the world was affected by the disease with even developed

nations under its ambit. Thousands of people had lost their lives in the U.S., Spain, Italy, China and many more, he added.

If religious congregations of different faiths continued, it was going to be "a huge problem", he said, terming the congregation at Nizamuddin "a serious act" and requesting religious leaders across different faiths to ensure that no gatherings are

encouraged.

"Navratri has been going on but we have seen no crowd on the streets and in the temples. Gurudwaras have been shut, people are not going to masjids, Mecca is empty, Vatican City is empty," Mr. Kejriwal said.

"Many people have gone back to other cities after attending this event. I hope not but think about the people that have been already affected by this. With folded hands, I request all the religious leaders and people to cooperate with the government," he added.

The government had written to the L-G for filing an FIR against the mosque administration, he said, adding: "Several reports of how the officials did not act on time are also coming up. If the involvement of any official is found out, strict action will be taken against them. Lives of many people present in the centre have been put at risk; six persons died after attending the event and reaching Telangana," he added.

Andaman and Nicobar tribes under heavy security

Measure taken after nine people who visited Delhi tested positive for COVID-19

SAURABH TRIVEDI

NEW DELHI
After nine persons, who visited Delhi from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands earlier this month, tested positive for COVID-19, the authorities have stepped up security near the areas in the islands that are inhabited by indigenous tribes.

An officer said out of the 10 persons who tested positive in the islands, nine of them visited Delhi to attend an event in Nizamuddin and

returned to Port Blair via Kolkata on March 24. The tenth infected person is the wife of one of the patients. The Andaman police and the administration have made arrangements to keep the infected people in quarantine. They were part of a religious gathering in Delhi earlier this month, attended anti-CAA protests and also visited Old Delhi, said officials.

"One of the persons was put under home quarantine but his wife got infected. We

have quarantined the couple. Except for the people who attended the religious congregation in Delhi, no other person has been found infected," the officer added.

Director-General of Police, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Dependra Pathak, said: "All of the suspected persons were screened at the Port Blair airport and shifted to quarantine. We sought help from the health department and later it was found that they went to Delhi for

the religious meeting."

Mr. Pathak added that they are strictly following MHA guidelines and implementing a complete lockdown.

When asked about the safety of isolated tribes, he said tribal habitats are no-go areas and attract severe prosecution. Further, movement of people or vehicles has been stopped even near their habitats. For instance, the ATR passing through the forests has been closed.

Priest had written to police on March 25 to vacate centre

Contents of letter written to authorities have been revealed

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The priest of a Nizamuddin mosque in Delhi, from where 24 COVID-19 positive cases have been reported in Delhi so far, had written to the police on March 25 itself stating that they have vacated 1,500 people and 1,000 people were still at their premises.

"We still have more than 1,000 people of different states in the markaz. As per your direction we contacted respected SDM [Sub-Divisional Magistrate] for vehicle pass so that we can send the remaining people to their respective places. SDM office has given time for meeting at 11 am on 25/3/2020," the letter said.

"You are therefore requested to kindly approach the SDM for early action. We are ready to compliance all your directions," it added.

In the March 25 letter, priest informed the local Station House Officer (SHO) that they were trying to shut down the centre as directed



People being evacuated from Nizamuddin centre in the city on Tuesday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

As per your direction we contacted respected SDM for vehicle pass so that we can send the remaining people to their respective places

LETTER

by the SHO on March 24.

In another letter to the police on March 29, the mosque authorities stated

that further efforts to vacate the premises of the centre were stopped midway due to the lockdown announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Markaz Nizamuddin in a statement on Tuesday said that they had submitted a list of 17 vehicles to ferry people who were "stranded" due to the lockdown at the markaz to the area SDM on March 25, but they were yet to receive permission from the SDM.

AAP leaders attack Delhi Police

Amanatullah questions police for not arranging evacuation

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan on Tuesday attacked Delhi Police over a centre in Nizamuddin from where 24 people have been tested positive for COVID-19.

"Around 12 p.m. on March 23, I had told the DCP [South East] and ACP Nizamuddin that around 1,000 people are trapped in Nizamuddin markaz. After that why did the police not make arrangements to send them," AAP

MLA Amanatullah Khan questioned the police in a tweet in Hindi on Tuesday.

AAP MLA and member of the Political Affairs Committee of the party, Atishi, in a series of tweets sought action against both Delhi Police and the administrators of the centre at Nizamuddin. "Nizamuddin Police Stn shares a boundary wall with the markaz - they obviously knew what was going on! Therefore, strict action needs to be taken against concerned offi-

cials of @DelhiPolice as well [sic]," she said in a tweet.

"It was the job of @DelhiPolice to enforce the order of Delhi Govt. prohibiting gatherings of more than 200 people [sic]!" read another tweet.

She also pointed out that the Tablighi Jamaat had asked for assistance to move people out on March 24, whereas gathering of more than 200 people had been prohibited since March 13 by the Delhi government.

Steep hike in positive cases in Jaipur worries health experts

Walled City area sealed to stop any movement of people

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

JAIPUR

The steep hike in the number of COVID-19 positive cases in the Ramganj area of the Walled City of Jaipur has left the administration and health experts worried amid the measures to prevent community spread of the virus. Twelve persons, including a man who returned from Oman recently, have been diagnosed with the infection in the locality.

The Rajasthan government on Tuesday ordered sealing of the Walled City, which was earlier placed under curfew, to completely stop the movement of people. Additional Chief Secretary, Home Rajeev Swarup asked all residents of the Walled City to return home and said no outsider would be allowed into the sealed area.

Of the 12 infected persons,

11 belong to a single family residing in a multi-storey building in Ramganj. The 45-year-old man, who first tested positive several days after he returned from Oman via Dubai on March 12, came in contact with a large number of people before he developed the symptoms of the disease and went for diagnosis.

'Panic in the area'

Suraiya Parveen, a retired government school teacher residing in the Walled City's Zileadarji Ka Chowk, said though there was panic in the area, strict actions being taken by the administration would instil confidence among the people. "We will be helping the healthcare authorities by staying at home... My son has imposed a ban on all family members from venturing out."

With the total number of

21 COVID-19 positive cases - including those of an Italian tourist couple - detected in the city, Jaipur is just behind the worst-affected Bhillwara town which has so far reported 26 cases. Medical & Health Minister Raghu Sharma said active surveillance and house-to-house survey were under way to find out the people who may be carrying the virus.

Meanwhile, about 3,000 pilgrims stranded in the localities near Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti's dargah in Ajmer have appealed to the authorities to make arrangements for sending them to their native States. The Dargah Committee, which is a statutory body, has written letters to the Prime Minister's Office and Chief Ministers of States such as Telangana, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, seeking their intervention in the matter.

Factory of fire safety firm sealed

Held responsible for more than 29 COVID-19 cases in four districts of U.P.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GHAZIABAD

The newly appointed District Magistrate of Noida, Suhans L.Y., sealed the Cease Fire Private Limited on Tuesday. The fire safety firm is directly or indirectly responsible for 29 COVID-19 infected persons in Gautam Buddha Nagar, Ghaziabad, Bulandshahr, and Bareilly. On Tuesday, another employee of the factory tested positive in Duhai village of Ghaziabad. Sanjeevani Hospital of Greater Noida was also sealed after a person was found infected with the virus in the hospital.

After transferring the District Magistrate, the State government named A.K. Chaturvedi, the State Immunisation Officer, as the nodal officer of Gautam Buddha Nagar and Ghaziabad. He has superseded the Chief Medical Officers of the two districts.

In Ghaziabad, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inspected the preparations at Santosh Medical College before



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inspects the isolation ward of a hospital in Greater Noida. ■ FILE PHOTO: PTI

changing his programme. He was expected to visit Meerut and Agra as well, but as the news of COVID-19 in the centre of Tablighi Jamaat in Delhi's Nizamuddin spread, he flew back to Lucknow.

Isolation wards

Ramping up its efforts to deal with the virus, the Ghaziabad administration has acquired sections of five major hospitals, including four private ones, in the city for the creation of 405 isolations

beds, an official release said. District Magistrate Ajay Shankar Pandey has acquired these hospitals under the Disaster Management Act and the Essential Services (Maintenance) Act.

The hospitals are ESI Hospitals in Sahibabad (30 beds), New Sarvodaya Hospital (100) in Kavi Nagar, Flores Hospital (75) in Vijay Nagar, Narinder Mohan Hospital (100) in Mohan Nagar and Max Hospital (100) in Vaishali.

He said the other two persons who have been isolated are from Assam. Their connection with the centre in Nizamuddin is being ascertained. In a related development, Darul Uloom Deoband has offered one of its buildings for the development of isolation ward for COVID-19 cases. In a letter written to the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, Darul Uloom Mohatimim (Vice-Chancellor) has offered the seminary's building near the state highway for the purpose.

The district administration is also planning to acquire three hotels in the city for developing quarantine facilities.

14 quarantined

Meanwhile, in Deoband, 14 members of Tablighi Jamaat, including 12 Indonesians, have been quarantined in Jamia Tibbia isolation centre in the town. "They were living in a mosque in Rajapur village since March 6," said Kamlesh Kumar, Tehsildar, Deoband.

He said the other two persons who have been isolated are from Assam. Their connection with the centre in Nizamuddin is being ascertained. In a related development, Darul Uloom Deoband has offered one of its buildings for the development of isolation ward for COVID-19 cases. In a letter written to the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, Darul Uloom Mohatimim (Vice-Chancellor) has offered the seminary's building near the state highway for the purpose.

Third virus death in West Bengal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA

West Bengal on Tuesday recorded its third COVID-19 death.

A 48-year-old woman from Howrah district who was admitted to the Howrah State General Hospital died late on Monday evening before her test reports were received by the hospital authorities.

"We got the samples by 12 noon (on Monday) and by late evening we confirmed that the patient from Howrah was suffering from COVID-19 infection," a doctor at the Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research, a State run testing facility in Kolkata told *The Hindu*.

The nurses at the State-run hospital in Howrah district, where the patient passed away, alleged that she was admitted to the general ward on Sunday and they were not provided with any personal protective equipment, while treating the patient.

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY CORRIGENDUM
E-Tender no. 01-2020-03-01, 01-2020-03-02 & 01-2020-03-03 dated 12-03-2020 opening date 03-04-2020 at 15:00 hours has been extended to 18-05-2020 at 15:00 hours with the approval of competent Authority. Other conditions will remain unchanged and full details can be seen on the website of Indian railways at www.reps.gov.in
Divisional Engineer/MWS/Gorakhpur CPRO/Mech.-207
About any passenger amenity complain SMS on Mobile No. 09794845955
"Never ravel on roof and foot boards"

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT #OFFICE ORDER#
The tender notice as called for vide this office letter No. PW-SD-CB-Tender/NIT/2019-20-8668-72 dated 13/03/2020 with its sale date on 28/03/2020 and to be opened on 30/03/2020 at 3:00 PM is hereby cancelled due to lockdown in Himachal Pradesh as well as all over India
Executive Engineer, Spiti B&R Division, H.P.P.W.D., Kaza.
HP/5706/19-20

Pay deferred

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha government on Tuesday ordered deferment of part of salaries of the Chief Minister and Ministers in view of the economic impact due to COVID-19.

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COVID-19: When 'GOA' dodges lockdown norms in Guwahati

Riders pasting notes on vehicles to get past police; action being taken if no valid reason found

RAHUL KARMARKAR

GUWAHATI

'GOA' is dodging the police in locked down Guwahati.

The police have been cracking down on people across Assam who ventured out of their homes "unnecessarily" after the lockdown began.

₹5.64 lakh in fines

Till Monday afternoon, the police collected ₹5.64 lakh in fines from traffic violators and detained 1,626 vehicles besides 425 people.

This made many vehicle users, specially two-wheel vehicle riders, glue handwritten notes on the front

and rear of their motorcycles and scooters. A few of them read: "On GOA duty".

'GOA' expands to Government of Assam. Other such notes read "On GOI duty", "On medical duty", "Request patient attendant service" and so on.

Some have managed to get past the police, some not. "The documents of such people are being checked and action is taken if they do not have a valid reason to drive or ride. Some people have taken passes from the authorities while those in essential services and exempted from restrictions are not disturbed," Guwahati Com-

missioner of Police Munna Prasad Gupta told *The Hindu*.

Those who know the lanes and bylanes of the city often give the police the slip. The lanes are where grocery shops - some selling vegetables too - attract mostly masked people for discussing conspiracy theories and their chances of surviving the "killer flu".

Many adhere to social distancing but some forget in a bid to be the first to take the foodstuff home. "Please stand apart for your own good and mine," Tarunagar resident Krishna Das requested a middle-aged man.

But the Fancybazar and adjoining Machhkhowa areas remain a cause of concern for the local residents. These two areas are the commercial hub of the North-east, and had witnessed a near-stampedede when the administration relaxed the lockdown restrictions temporarily on March 28.

"Vegetable vendors, buyers and wholesalers and their vehicles crowd the street where my house is located. The police arrive only after the business is done. We live in such dread that we have double-locked our gate," said Musaddar Husain, who lives on Payaz

Ahmed Road in Machhkhowa.

Mr. Gupta denied the police were allowing vegetable trucks into the city and claimed they were ensuring the shops allowed to operate were following the social distancing norms.

The near-empty roads, however, have not been insurance against accidents. On Monday night, a web portal reporter, Dimpy Kashyap, died when the two-wheeler she was on hit an electric pole. Hours later, a car hit and injured a barking deer that came out of its habitat to explore the Noonmati area of the city.