

## No one to be marked D (doubtful) during NPR... telling you as Home Minister: Shah

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY & KRISHN KAUSHIK  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

ON THE day Tamil Nadu became the newest addition to the list of states opposed to the National Population Register exercise which is due to start weeks from now, Union Home Minister Amit Shah assured Parliament Thursday that no participant in the process will be marked 'doubtful' in case he or she is unable to provide the information sought.

Reaching out to the Opposition saying he is always ready for a discussion on the issue of NPR and the Citizenship Amendment Act, Shah, speaking during a short-duration debate in Rajya Sabha on the Delhi law and order situation, said no document is being sought during the NPR process, and no verification of citizenship is being done. He asked the Opposition to support the government, and said

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IN PARLIAMENT  
PAGE 9

### 14 FIRs TELL ONE STORY

## We hid, we found no witnesses, we were outnumbered: Delhi Police say in riot FIRs

MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL & KAUNAIN SHERIFF M  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

recorded at the time of registration of these FIRs investigated by *The Indian Express*. Starting February 24, violence spread rapidly across northeast Delhi, leading to 53 deaths across the next three days at last count. Since then, police have registered 712 FIRs and arrested over 200 accused.

On Wednesday, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said Delhi Police deserved praise for not letting the violence spill out of the district. An investigation of the FIRs filed in those initial hours, at the Khajuri Khas, Bhajanpura, Dayalpur and Jyoti Nagar stations, shows that the police had seen enough on the night of February 23 to indicate the situation could spiral out of control.

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Amit Shah at Parliament on Thursday. Express

**EXPLAINED**  
Reaches out, NRC still hangs

WITH THE NPR process due to start, Shah sought to blunt opposition to it over apprehensions regarding citizenship. His offer to engage with the Opposition is the first formal outreach following the din over the NPR-NRC process. While he may have sought to clear some of the lingering doubts, the NRC issue still hangs in the air.

## UTTARAKHAND, MANIPUR too shut schools till month-end

# 76-yr-old Karnataka man is India's first corona death, his contacts quarantined

Returned from Saudi Arabia on Feb 29, Govt says attendants didn't follow advice

JOHNSON TA & SREENIVAS JANYALA  
BENGALURU, HYDERABAD, MARCH 12

THE FIRST case of a coronavirus death in the country has been reported in Karnataka with health officials confirming that a 76-year-old man, who died on his way from Hyderabad to his hometown Kalaburagi Tuesday, has tested positive for COVID-19 virus.

Officials said the man, identified as Mohammed Hussein Siddiqui, had returned from a month-long pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia and fallen ill with underlying conditions of asthma and hypertension.

"The 76-year-old man from Kalaburagi, who passed away and was a suspected COVID-19 patient, has been confirmed for COVID-19. The necessary contact tracing, isolation and other measures as per protocol are being carried out. The Telangana government has also been informed since he went to a private hospital there," Karnataka Health Commissioner Pankaj Pandey said Thursday night.

Siddiqui landed in Hyderabad on February 29 and went to his native place Kalaburagi in north Karnataka where he developed "symptoms of fever and cough" on March 6, and was attended to by a doctor at his home.

Officials said the symptoms got aggravated on March 9, when he was moved to a private hospital in Kalaburagi, and "provisionally diagnosed" as a suspected COVID-19 case. On the same day, his sample was collected by the Gulbarga Institute

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Outside the Bombay Stock Exchange building in Mumbai on Thursday. Pradip Das

## Sensex falls 8%, sharpest in a day since 2008; Dow opens with another crash

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU  
MUMBAI, MARCH 12

INDIAN stock markets Thursday suffered their biggest ever one-day plunge of 2,919 points as the coronavirus pandemic triggered a brutal sell-off in global markets.

The benchmark Sensex which plummeted 3,200 points at one stage, registered a huge loss of 2,919 points, or 8.18 per cent (worst single-day fall since the financial crisis on October 24, 2008) to close at 32,778.14, a two-and-a-half year low. The broader NSE Nifty slumped

## 14 NEW COVID CASES, says Union Health Ministry

## 1,500 UNDER OBSERVATION, 1 lakh testing kits available: Govt

## Shutdown: Schools, cinema halls in Delhi closed until March 31

ABANTIKA GHOSH  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

A DAY after the central government suspended all visas, barring select categories, and advised states to invoke provisions of the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, to check the spread of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) cases, the Delhi government on Thursday announced the closure of all schools, colleges and cinema halls in an attempt to enforce social distancing.

The Uttarakhand and Manipur governments also announced closure of schools till the end of the month. Earlier this week, educational institutions were closed in Kerala as well as Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). Cinema halls have also been

closed in Kerala and some districts of J&K.

However, exams will be held as scheduled in all these states.

Meanwhile, the Union Health Ministry said the number of active cases has risen to 74, with 14 fresh cases — nine in Maharashtra, two in Uttar Pradesh, one each in Delhi, Ladakh and Andhra Pradesh. Some of these cases were reported by the state health authorities on Wednesday.

Kerala tops the list with 20 cases so far (three were discharged last month), followed by 14 in Haryana, 11 each in Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, 6 in Delhi, 4 in Karnataka, 3 each in Ladakh and Rajasthan, 1 each in Telangana, Punjab, J&K, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh.

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TRUMP BANS EUROPE TRAVEL, EXEMPTS UK

HOW QUARANTINE AT HOME WORKS

HOW A KERALA DISTRICT CONTAINED SPREAD OF VIRUS

FULL COVERAGE  
PAGES 4, 8, 14, 15, 17

## Say no to panic, says PM; MEA to Indians overseas: Stay put wherever you are

SHUBHAJIT ROY  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

URGING PEOPLE to "say no to panic", Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said "non-essential travel" and large gatherings should be avoided to "break the chain of spread" of coronavirus. He said no central minister would travel abroad for now.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) also advised Indians to "stay put wherever they are", and travel only "under compelling reasons".

Meanwhile, India has re-



No minister will travel abroad for now: Modi

moved Japan from its travel advisory list. The list now includes China, Italy, Iran, South Korea, France, Spain and Germany.

"Say no to panic, say yes to precautions. No minister of the central government will travel abroad in the upcoming days. I urge our countrymen to also

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## Scindia shadow: Rs 25 cr-worth ads for CM Gehlot, 0 for Deputy Pilot

MANOJ CG  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

THE CONGRESS government in Rajasthan spent a little over Rs 25 crore in its first year in office — between December 2018 and November 2019 — on official advertisements in various newspapers and other publications but they carried only photographs of Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and not of Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot, the state's Information and Public Relation Department has admitted.

Coming as it does after the exit of Jyotiraditya Scindia after a power tussle with Chief Minister Kamal Nath and senior leader Digvijaya Singh in Madhya Pradesh, the admission



Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot, Deputy CM Sachin Pilot

shines a spotlight on the ongoing friction between Gehlot and Pilot in Rajasthan. Since the exit of Scindia, parallels have been drawn between Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan — the context being the disharmony between established veteran leaders and ambitious young faces in the party.

Sources close to Scindia main-

tained that he was being deliberately sidelined in state politics while the high command chose to look the other way. While the situation is qualitatively different in Rajasthan, where the high command sought to balance power equations by appointing Pilot as Deputy Chief Minister and allowing him to continue as president of the state Congress, the tension simmers just below the surface. They have sparred on several occasions, recently even on the deaths of over 100 infants at a government hospital in Kota.

Even on Scindia's exit, Gehlot and Pilot spoke differently. While Gehlot attacked Scindia calling him an opportunist and his exit a good riddance, Pilot felt "things could have been resolved

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## Why lethal cough syrup slipped past the law

Rules say maintain prescription register with patients' details but no trace of many bottles from contaminated batch

PAGE 1  
ANCHOR

PRABHA RAGHAVAN & ARUN SHARMA  
NEW DELHI, JAMMU, MARCH 12

NEARLY A month after the first cases came to light, the fate of a majority of customers that bought bottles of Coldbest cough syrup from a contaminated batch is still unknown.

Drug regulators have stopped sales of the syrup, after it allegedly led to the deaths of several children in J&K, but are still trying to recover bottles purchased from this batch. *The Indian Express* has learnt.

"All state drug controllers have been alerted and told to try their best and use all their machinery to retrieve the bottles (of Coldbest) from this batch that have already been sold," said a senior drug regulatory official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Experts suggest that such a recall is difficult due to inadequate enforcement of drug laws, which has provisions that allow regulators to track every patient that purchased a prescription drug. The Drugs and Cosmetics Rules specifically mandate that those with licences to sell prescription products, such as Coldbest, have to maintain a prescription register with details like name and address of the patient.



Susheel Kumar, who lost his three-year-old son, with his two daughters, in Jammu. Express file

Around 3,400-3,450 of these bottles from a batch of over 5,500 had been sold since September. Himachal Pradesh Drug Controller Navneet Marwah had said earlier. "We are

trying our best to track down consumers through sales receipts, but this is an old batch. It's a 60-ml bottle, so if someone took 5-6 ml in each dose, it would finish in 10-12 doses," he had said.

Of the 1,315 bottles distributed in J&K alone, 947 were sold. Sale of the remaining 368 bottles was stopped, according to J&K Drug Controller Lotika Khajuria. At least nine children from Udhampur's Ramnagar, known to have consumed Coldbest from the September batch, died of kidney failure between December-end and January.

J&K, Haryana and Himachal have decided to file FIRs against Digital Vision Pharma, the

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**COVID-19: HOW A DISTRICT BROUGHT NEARLY 900 PEOPLE WITHIN SURVEILLANCE NET**

GPS tracking, spatio-temporal flow maps of movements, CCTV footage, call records and dedicated neighbourhood watch staff are some of the ways in which a district administration in Kerala tracked down over 900 primary and secondary contacts of a family who returned from Italy carrying the Covid-19 infection

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**WEB OPINION**

**RAJINIKANTH TURNS THE TABLES ON TN**

Question is whether Tamil Nadu wants him in politics for real?



**EXPRESS AUDIO**

**How India is tackling the coronavirus pandemic**

NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY

In today's episode of the 3 Things podcast, we talk about measures the government is taking, how the virus is affecting daily lives and is doctors are hopeful for a vaccine

**FROM PAGE ONE**

**Shutdown**

"Delhi gov't has declared coronavirus an epidemic. We need to exercise abundant caution to contain the disease. All cinema halls, schools, colleges in Delhi will be shut until 31st March, but exams will continue as scheduled. People are advised to stay away from public gatherings," Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal tweeted.

Law Agarwal, Joint Secretary, Health Ministry, said about 1,500 people across the country are currently under observation. He said one lakh testing kits are currently available, and more have been ordered. Saying that India has not shown any significant community transmission so far, he said what has been seen instead is "local transmission within the community".

Allaying fears about testing capacity, Dr R R Gangakhedkar, head, division of epidemiology and communicable diseases, Indian Council of Medical Research, said: "At capacity, the National Institute of Virology alone can do 2,500 tests per day. So far, we have done only about 6,000 in the entire country."

He said while the Lopinavir/Ritonavir combination, usually a second line HIV medication, had been used for two patients, it was too early for results. The small sample size would mean that the results would not be scientifically significant, he said. "We would rather look at the results of the 199-person trial in China," he said.

He also advised caution on reports of the virus weakening with rising temperature. "There is no evidence of that. Intuitive thinking tells you that the flu is not common in summer season, but we have no evidence that heat kills this virus. So we should be cautious and not get complacent or hope that the environment will help us tackle the disease," said the senior scientist.

**Amit Shah**

nobody in the country should "fear" the NPR.

On the Opposition charge that citizenship rules have a provision to mark a citizen as "D" or doubtful in the NPR process, Shah told Congress member Kapil Sibal: "Let me say, now that we are sitting face to face... support us now. I say it clearly: First, no document will be asked for NPR. Second, any information that you don't have, you don't have to share that. And third, I say it on the floor of Rajya Sabha as Home Minister, nobody will be marked D."

"No document is being asked. All information is voluntary. Whatever information a participant wants to share will be recorded," he said.

Taking note of the assurance, Leader of Opposition Ghulam Nabi Azad asked Shah: "If I heard correctly, the Home Minister is saying that nobody will have a D against them, is that right?". At this, Shah said: "Yes". He said if any member of the Opposition has any doubt, he will discuss it on priority.

The discussion on NPR began after Shah asked Sibal under which part of the CAA can someone lose citizenship. Sibal said, "Nobody is saying that CAA will snatch anyone's citizenship. We are not saying that." At this, the treasury benches erupted, saying this had always been the line of the Congress.

Sibal then said, "the law says that when NPR will happen, during NPR ten more questions will be asked and the enumerator... he will go and ask, and will put a D against the person, and an inquiry will be initiated." He said it is not just against "Muslims" but also against the "poor" and the Dalits as many will not have documents.

Shah's assurance comes in the backdrop of several state governments opposing the NPR process in its 2020 form — their opposition is over questions seeking de-

tails on the date and place of birth of an individual's parents and last residence, and the fear that failure to answer these questions would make them "deemed doubtful" for the proposed nationwide National Register of Citizens (NRC) process. More so, when Shah himself, in public utterances in the past, has spoken of a nationwide NRC.

While Punjab, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Puducherry, Bihar (where BJP rules with JD-U) and Andhra Pradesh have all passed resolutions against NPR, states such as Odisha and Telangana have reservations on the questions relating to details of parents in the NPR form.

On Thursday, Shah appeared to be putting a stamp of authority on what his junior minister had said indirectly in Parliament last month. On February 4, in reply to a question by Congress leader Manish Tewari on the 'doubtful' issue, MoS Home Nityanand Rai, in a written reply in Lok Sabha, said: "During the updation of National Population Register, no verification is done to find individuals whose citizenship is doubtful."

According to Citizenship Rules, verification of NPR data will begin only when the process for NRC starts. The NPR process will collect data of all "usual residents" of the country in a house-to-house census and then, during the process of NRC, verification of these details would be done and doubtful citizens would be marked. Notably, under Citizenship Rules, 2003, NPR is part of the NRC process.

According to Rule 4 (Preparation of the National Register of Indian Citizens) of the Citizenship Rules, 2003: "For the purposes of preparation and inclusion in the Local Register of Indian Citizens, the particulars collected of every family and individual in the Population Register shall be verified and scrutinized by the Local Registrar... During the verification process, particulars of such individuals, whose Citizenship is doubtful, shall be entered by the Local Registrar with appropriate remark in the Population Register for further enquiry and in case of doubtful Citizenship, the individual or the family shall be informed in a specified proforma immediately after the verification process is over."

The rule says "The Central Government shall, for the purpose of National Register of Indian Citizens, cause to carry throughout the country a house-to-house enumeration for collection of specified particulars relating to each family and individual, residing in a local area including the Citizenship status."

**Don't panic: PM**

avoid non-essential travel. We can break the chain of spread and ensure safety of all by avoiding large gatherings," Modi tweeted. "The government is fully vigilant about the situation due to COVID-19 novel coronavirus. Across ministries & states, multiple steps have been proactively taken to ensure safety of all. These steps are wide-ranging, from suspension of visas to augmenting healthcare capacities," he said.

Modi also discussed the COVID outbreak in phone conversations with British PM Boris Johnson and Israel's PM Benjamin Netanyahu.

The MEA said the government's focus was on containing and controlling the outbreak. "The government's immediate concern is to contain and control coronavirus. There is no need to panic. We advise Indians to stay put wherever they are and only travel under compelling reasons," Dammu Ravi, Additional Secretary, MEA and Coordinator (COVID-19), said at a press conference.

The MEA's official spokesper-

**76-yr-old is India's first corona death**

of Medical Sciences hospital in Kalaburagi and sent to the Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute.

"Without waiting for the test results, the attendees insisted and the patient was discharged against medical advice... the attendees took him to a private hospital in Hyderabad. As per instructions of Deputy Commissioner, Kalaburagi District, the District Health Officer met the attendees to convince them to admit the pa-

tient to GIMS, Kalaburagi, in the isolation ward. But the attendees refused to listen to him. They transferred him to Hyderabad without his knowledge," the Union Health Ministry said in a statement.

"The patient was admitted in a private hospital in Hyderabad and treated. Later he was discharged and while he was being brought back he died on the way to the GIMS, Kalaburagi, on March 10," it said. Following reports

Wednesday that Siddiqui had died, Karnataka Health Minister B Sreeramulu and department officials maintained that test reports had not yet been received to confirm the cause. On Tuesday, however, a letter sent out by the District Health Officer in Kalaburagi had directed local health officials to supervise all measures being carried out for the burial of the 76-year-old "suspected COVID-19 patient".

Also Thursday, Andhra Pradesh confirmed its first case when a person who returned from Italy on March 6 tested positive at the Nellore Government Hospital — the Tirupati virology lab confirmed the test.

"The patient is stable and all his vitals are normal. He is recovering from symptoms and is keeping good health. He will be discharged after 14 days. All persons he was in contact with have been traced and are in quarantine as per protocol," an official said.

**Sensex falls 8%, Dow opens with a crash**

morning, prompting a 15-minute halt in trading within minutes after the markets opened and triggered a circuit-breaker. The markets were reacting to President Donald Trump's travel ban on all Europeans except those from UK to the US for 30 days to slow the spread of coronavirus.

In India, the rupee fell 60 paise to a new 17-month low of 74.28 against the US currency due to strong dollar demand and capital outflows. Foreign portfolio investors have sold stocks worth over Rs 13,500 crore in the last two sessions.

Even as the market witnessed a big sell-off, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Thursday said it "stands ready to take all necessary measures to ensure that the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Indian economy are mitigated, and financial markets and institutions in India continue to function normally". The RBI also decided to undertake a 6-month US dollar sell-buy swaps to provide US\$2 billion liquidity to the foreign exchange market.

Analysts expect more outflows in the coming days as FPIs are keeping away from stocks in the global meltdown.

Mutual fund net asset values (NAVs) and the value of investors stock portfolio have plunged in the market meltdown in the last two weeks. On Thursday, investor wealth worth Rs 11.27 lakh crore was wiped out, taking the total market capitalisation to Rs 125.86 lakh crore.

After the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the coronavirus outbreak as a pandemic and expressed deep concern over the "alarming levels of inaction", global markets crashed further, taking indices to new lows. Travel ban imposed by several countries and soft oil prices added fuel to the market's fire, analysts said.

Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said, "Recession fears increased after WHO declared coronavirus a pandemic which forced investors to sell off risky assets. Fresh travel bans across nations is contributing to the

fears that economic impact will be much larger than earlier estimates. The RBI is expected to cut interest rate and announce additional liquidity before the scheduled meeting which is due next month."

However, several experts said time may be appropriate to build a stock portfolio as prices have fallen considerably. "The equity indices slumped by almost 8 per cent on yet another day of sell-off triggered by the deadly cocktail of the pandemic and the rising fears of a slowdown in global as well as domestic growth. Needless to say, those who have been into their investment plan in a phased manner would also be surprised but relatively less affected due to deferred commitments over longer time span. A time eminently suited for building portfolios for the longer tenure," said Joseph Thomas, Head of Research, Emkay Wealth Management.

"The market direction will continue to be dictated by coronavirus update as WHO has declared the virus as a 'pandemic'

creating panic amongst investors. Further, crude oil price and currency movement will be on investors' radar. Hence, we expect volatility to remain high in the markets given uncertainty across the globe," said Ajit Mishra, VP - Research, Religare Broking. The coronavirus outbreak has left virtually no sector untouched, though travel and tourism have been particularly hard hit as countries institute travel bans and quarantine requirements, said an analyst.

The Dow Jones Index had plunged around 1,465 points, or 5.9 per cent, on Wednesday, in a brutal session that left the index more than 20 per cent below its peak, making it a bear market. Thursday morning, it lost another 7 per cent in the initial few minutes itself, triggering the circuit-breaker.

In India, SBI crashed 13.23 per cent in the selling avalanche. Among sectoral indices, oil and gas plunged 9.82 per cent, followed by realty, metal, bankex, finance, energy and IT. Broader BSE midcap and smallcap indices lost up to 8.72 per cent.

son, Raveesh Kumar, said the Indian ambassadors would decide if the reason was "compelling". While a medical emergency is considered "compelling", the envoys will assess on a "case by case" basis, said sources.

A day after India decided to suspend all visas, barring certain categories, till April 15, Ravi said: "We have not issued any guidelines to airlines to stop or reduce flights. It's a commercial decision, we leave it to them to decide." Officials said that with the government exempting "project visas", projects like the Japanese bullet train would not suffer.

"The number of people coming to India dropped by 40 per cent in the last 20 days, the number will come down further," said Anil Malik, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs. According to him, 63,200 people came on February 20, and the number dropped to 43,900 on March 10.

Responding to questions on sporting events, Ravi said: "(We) think it is for the organisers to decide whether to go ahead with it or not. Our advice would be to not do it at this time, but if they want to go ahead, it is their decision."

**Cough syrup**

company that makes Coldbest, after samples tested from the September batch revealed the syrup contained nearly 35 per cent of diethylene glycol (DEG) — an antifreeze chemical that can cause kidney failure. "An FIR has been lodged against the manufacturing and analytical chemist also. The matter is under investigation," Marwah told *The Indian Express*.

On February 21, *The Indian Express* reported that, besides Himachal and J&K, the syrup had also been sold to distributors and dealers in Uttarakhand, Haryana, UP, Tamil Nadu, Shillong and

Tripura — and that no other case related to its effects had been reported so far, barring the Udhampur deaths.

Section 65 of Part VI of the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945, states that the supply of any drug sold on the prescription of a registered medical practitioner shall be recorded "at the time of supply" in a prescription register "specially maintained" for the purpose. The particulars that shall be recorded include the date of supply, name and address of the prescriber and the "name and address of the patient".

"The degree of enforcement of this provision varies from region to region," said H G Koshia, Commissioner, Food and Drug Control Administration, Gujarat. "Whether a rule is known or not, especially when you are going and procuring a licence for sale, you have to adhere to these conditions," said pharmaceutical lawyer Archana Sahadeva.

"But, when you go buy medicines, how many chemists do you know actually ask for a prescription and note down your details?" she said, adding that the onus is also on regulators to ensure they are monitoring the situation.

Coldbest is to be sold on the prescription of a doctor, according to Koshia. "Previously, I would also struggle with recalls, but now we have a database of all retail pharmacies in Gujarat and an SMS recall system that we used to send out alerts to stop any sale of this particular batch of the product in the state. Fortunately, none of the bottles were being sold here," he said.

Chemists in the state keep a book of prescription medicines sold to patients along with their contact information — a detail that Gujarat drug inspectors check for while inspecting pharmacies there. "Had it been in my state, I could have got details of

each and every patient that bought the syrup and alerted them," Koshia said.

Public health activist Dinesh Thakur says India's non-binding rules for drug recalls, prepared by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), are "silent" on how communication of a recall is made to patients. Regulators are, at times, also unable to ensure companies recall batches of substandard drugs out in the market, despite regulations mandating such recalls.

For instance, *The Indian Express* found that CDSCO had flagged the same batch of a diabetes drug produced by Digital Vision in two separate alerts around three months apart in 2018 and 2019. Queries sent on February 28 to Drug Controller General of India V G Somani about these findings, as well as follow-up emails, did not elicit a response.

Queries sent on March 2 to Digital Vision and Vellinton Healthcare, in which Digital Vision's managing directors hold directorial positions, about the recall process and previous substandard batch alerts on their drugs remained unanswered.

**Delhi Police Warning signs on February 23**

One of these FIRs was registered by ASI Hukam Singh on the protests at Sherpur Chowk at 9 pm on February 23, hours after a speech by BJP's Kapil Mishra, who gave police a three-day deadline to evict anti-CAA protesters from the streets. "I saw a crowd from both communities protesting for and against the CAA near Sherpur Chowk. One community said CAA is against the country and the other raised slogans that it is in the country's interest. I called the SHO and told him to send the force,"

the FIR states.

"They also set Punjab chicken shop on fire. The crowd again assembled at Munga Nagar, near Chand Bagh Pulia and started pelting stones at each other. We reached the Pulia and dispersed the crowd," the FIR states.

Another FIR was registered by ASI Vijayant Kumar on an incident of rioting at 9 pm on February 23 at Wazirabad Road. Identical allegations were made, though both FIRs make no mention of any arrest.

**'Ran away and hid'**

Several FIRs pointed to how police found themselves outnumbered, suggesting a failure to deploy sufficient personnel and an underestimation of how fast the violence was escalating.

An FIR registered on February 25 by constable Sangram Singh, who was on duty with just two officers at E block in Khajuri Khas, refers to a crowd at Sherpur Chowk indulging in arson and stone pelting. "It was impossible to control such a huge crowd... we ran away from the spot to save ourselves. We hid ourselves near Pradeep's parking and downed the shutter," the FIR states.

In the same FIR, Singh claims that while hiding, he saw a "crowd assembled" at the terrace of former AAP councillor Tahir Hussain, who has been named as an accused in the murder of IB staffer Ankit Sharma. "They were throwing stones towards Pradeep's terrace," Singh claims in the FIR, adding that he can "identify some persons from the crowd".

"Three of us tried to control the crowd. It was impossible to control such a huge crowd... We received a lot of PCR calls. Our staff also tried to control the mob, but they outnumbered us," it states.

In another FIR registered at 11.25 pm on February 25 at

Khajuri Khas station, Constable Khalique stated he was on duty with "four officials and the SHO". The FIR states that the SHO tried to disperse a "huge crowd" but in vain. The FIR states that at noon, "CAA-NRC protesters from Chand Bagh indulging in stone pelting", "around 1,200 persons attacked the police", "some persons instigated the crowd", and the mob "set Bhajanpura police booth on fire".

Police arrested four accused in connection with the FIR — Musqueem, Sarfaraz, Aman and Ikram.

**'No witnesses'**

The FIRs also indicate that even though "huge crowds" gathered on the streets and PCR lines kept ringing, police could not find independent witnesses to identify the rioters and make arrests.

An FIR registered by ASI Arvind states that at 2 pm on February 24, he received a message from the duty officer at Bhajanpura police station about "a huge crowd gathering at the petrol pump", and left for the spot with seven personnel.

"Several persons from the crowd had climbed on the petrol pump station and were raising slogans against CAA-NRC. The crowd was getting violent. In the meantime, over hundred youth from Chand Bagh jumped over the divider and set the petrol pump station on fire. The crowd also attacked police," he said in the FIR.

This time, too, the SHO warned protesters to disperse, but the crowd ran towards the Yamuna Vihar service road, "on their way", indulging in arson and rioting. He also claims he can "recognise a few persons from the crowd".

The FIR states that the duty officer received a call that the DCP was injured and extra force was required. "Head constable Manish reached the spot but could not trace the caller; he also could not find an independent witness," it claims, adding that "no witness came forward to record his statement".

Another FIR related to an incident at 9 pm on February 24 near the Noor-e-ilahi petrol pump station, filed on a complaint by ASI Vedpal, states that police received a call that "11 persons have received gunshot injuries". "But when we reached the spot, we could not find the caller; he did not pick up the phone; also no independent witness was present at the spot," it states.

A third FIR, registered by ASI Ashok about an incident at Maujpur, states that at 9 pm in Maujpur, there was "firing" between two sides. "However, when we reached the spot, we could not find the caller; he did not pick up the phone; also no independent witness was present at the spot," the FIR states.

**Fire as a weapon**

The FIRs also detail how rioters used arson as the preferred method of destruction — even in the presence of police. An FIR filed by ASI Vijay Kumar on an incident at 1.13 pm on February 25 at Ashok Nagar states: "The caller informed us that 1,000 person have gathered, who have set the Masjid Maula Baksh on fire. We reached the spot. On the ground floor of the mosque, seven shops and four houses were also set on fire."

The FIR states: "Around 200 persons started raising slogans. Some of them had flammable chemicals, while others had lathis. I warned them to disperse. But they started setting vehicles on fire." ASI Kumar states that the crowd escaped to "gali number 6" and "set more vehicles on fire". Police also claims "no witness has come forward to record their statement".

Another FIR, registered by constable Deepak Singh in connection with "anti-CAA protest" at Brijpuri Pulia, states: "Nearly

1,200 persons had gathered. Many of them carried sticks and rods. The crowd was getting violent and set houses, shops, school and vehicles on fire."

**Scindia shadow**

collaboratively within the party." "The sooner opportunists leave, the better. Congress party gave so much, held various posts for 17-18 years, was made an MP, a Union Minister. Despite all this, what came out was just an opportunist, public would never forgive," Gehlot said yesterday. Pilot, on the other hand, said it was "unfortunate to see Scindia parting ways with the Congress. I wish things could have been resolved collaboratively within the party."

The Information and Public Relation Department, in its reply to an RTI query by one Advocate Sahiram Godara, revealed that the Government has spent Rs 25.08 crore on 62 advertisements in national and regional dailies and other publications, including Congress-backed National Herald and Navjivan, on various occasions between December 17, 2018 and November 11, 2019. The applicant had sought details and the total expenditure on government advertisements carrying the photographs of Gehlot and Pilot during this period.

The Information and Public Relation Department has given details of the advertisements which carried the photographs of the Chief Minister: occasion, publication and size wise with the expenditure incurred but as regarding Pilot, it said nil.

When asked about this discrepancy, Gehlot told *The Indian Express* that his government was merely following the guidelines of the Supreme Court.

"The Government works according to the guidelines of the Supreme Court. If you remember, the Supreme Court had first restricted the use of photographs of even chief ministers in advertisements. Then the Court revised its order permitting the use of photographs of chief ministers... Chief Minister *thodi kahta hain ki photo meri lagao, kisi ke mat lago*. This is a routine government work. Department ke kaam hain. And the department works according to the Supreme Court guidelines," he said.

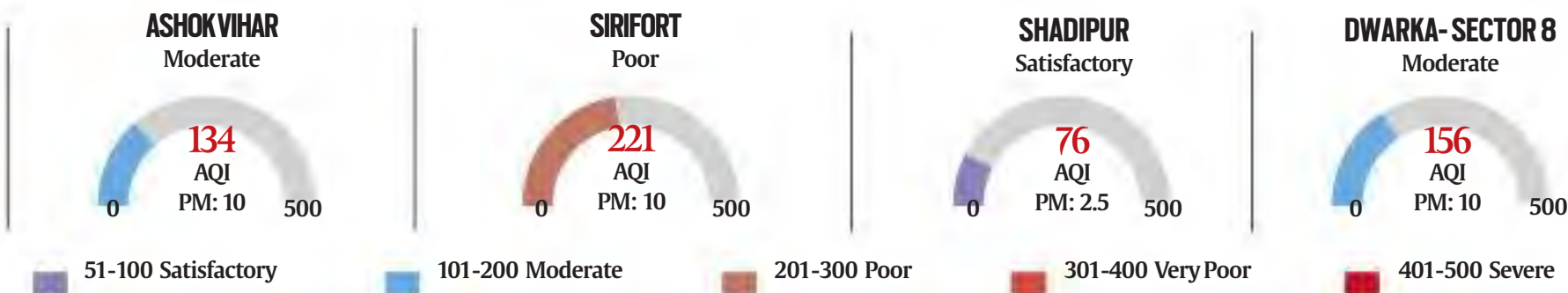
When contacted, Pilot said "I have no comments to offer." Interestingly, the Supreme Court had in March 2016, while modifying its May 2015 judgement, allowed publication of photographs of chief ministers, Governors as well as cabinet and state ministers in public advertisements. It had earlier confined the publication to pictures of President, Prime Minister and Chief Justice of India.

Meanwhile, breaking his silence on Scindia's exit, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi said that Scindia forgot his ideology as he was apprehensive about his political future and that he would not get respect in the BJP.

"This is a battle of ideology. Clear cut. On one side the ideology of the Congress and on the other the ideology of the RSS and BJP. I know Jyotiraditya Scindia's ideology. He was with me in college... I know him very well. *Jyotiraditya Scindiaji ko apna political bhavishya ka dar lag gaya* (Jyotiraditya Scindia became scared of his political future) And he put his ideology in his pocket and went with the RSS. But the reality is that he will neither get respect there nor will he be able to satisfy the truth and emotion in his heart."

"He will realise that I have an old friendship with Jyotiraditya. Let it be. *Scindiaji ke dil mein jo hai aur unke mooh se jo nikal raha hai wo alag alag cheez hain* (There is a difference between what Scindia is saying and what is in his heart)," he said.

# 3 THE CITY



## NE Delhi riots: PFI state president, secy arrested

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

DELHI POLICE Thursday arrested Popular Front of India (PFI) state president Parvez Ahmed and its secretary Mohammad Iliyas for allegedly hatching a conspiracy to incite communal riots in several parts of Delhi.

The arrest comes days after an FIR was registered under IPC sections 147 (rioting), 148 (rioting, armed with deadly weapon) and 120-B (criminal conspiracy) against unknown persons in connection with the riots in Northeast Delhi.

They were later produced before Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Purushottam Pathak, who sent them to seven-day police remand. The PFI, an alleged radical group, has been accused of

funding protests against the new citizenship law.

Earlier, police had arrested an alleged member of PFI, identified as Trilokpuri resident Mohd Danish. Police had told the court that Danish was to be confronted with incriminating material and other people in the case.

On Wednesday, the Enforcement Directorate booked suspended AAP councillor Tahir Hussain, PFI and some others on charges of money laundering and alleged funding of the riots.

Officials said a clutch of FIRs had been filed by Delhi Police's Crime Branch to probe the alleged money laundering and routing of illegal funds by Hussain, PFI and others to "sponsor" the communal riots, which claimed 53 lives and injured over 200, and they had taken cognisance of the same.

(with PTI inputs)

## ON RADAR FOR LINKS TO NORTHEAST DELHI CRIMINAL

# Police intercept call, arrest man for IB staffer's murder

MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

THE DELHI Police Special Cell Thursday arrested a resident of Nand Nagri in connection with the murder of Intelligence Bureau staffer Ankit Sharma last month. According to sources, the accused, Salman alias Haseen, has been on the police radar for his alleged connection with a criminal from Northeast Delhi — and it was while intercepting the latter's calls that police chanced on Salman's alleged link to the murder.

"Salman works as a logistics provider for the alleged criminal... we intercepted their phone calls and put Salman's number under technical surveillance as well. In a phone call to his elder brother and sister-in-law, which was intercepted, Salman allegedly spoke about how he and a mob killed a man," said an offi-



The accused, Salman, in police custody. Tashi Tobgyal

cer on condition of anonymity. During his conversation, sources said, Salman allegedly disclosed that he was at Sadar Bazar on February 23 when he received WhatsApp messages that violence had broken out in Northeast Delhi and one man had been killed.

"Some of the messages asked people to head to Chand Bagh. He and his friend took a bus to Khajuri Khas Chowk and headed

to Chand Bagh where some of his friends live. He stayed the night with them," claimed the officer.

The officer claimed that Salman, during the phone conversations, said he pelted stones from a building on February 24.

"Salman said that on February 25, people of both communities were attacking each other in Chand Bagh," claimed the officer, adding that the phone conversation revealed he and a mob caught hold of Ankit on seeing him, took him to a house, stabbed him to death and dumped his naked body in a drain.

Sources said that after intercepting his calls, police corroborated the sequence of events that led to Sharma's murder. Police are conducting raids to nab his four associates.

Ankit's father Ravinder Sharma, in his complaint to police, had alleged that suspended AAP councillor Tahir Hussain had assembled goons at his residence who fired guns and threw

petrol bombs from the rooftop.

Ankit's body was found dumped in a drain in Chand Bagh on February 26. A day later, based on Ravinder's complaint, Delhi Police filed an FIR against Hussain on charges of murder, destruction of evidence and abduction. Hussain was later arrested.

"On February 25, Ankit came home but left around 5 pm to buy groceries. When he didn't return, we started looking for him at different police stations and hospitals. We couldn't find him and filed a missing report. Later, a neighbour told me he saw Ankit with a friend. We went to his place and asked about Ankit. He told us there were rumours that a man was beaten to death near Chand Bagh bridge and his body dumped in a drain," wrote Ravinder in the complaint.

Police were informed and local divers were deployed to find the body. They pulled out a body that was identified by Ankit's family.

## Head constable death: 7 held on charges of rioting

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

POLICE HAVE arrested seven people on charges of rioting during the Northeast Delhi violence last month, saying that the violence had led to the death of Head Constable Ratan Lal.

Police, in a press conference Thursday, said the accused have been identified as Saleem Malik, Mohd Jalaluddin, Mohd Ayub, Mohd Yunus, Arif, Saleem Khan — all residents of Chand Bagh — and Md Danish from Loni.

DCP (Crime) Rajesh Deo said the men have been arrested on charges of rioting, conspiring to attack police officers and other IPC sections. "Charges of murder will be confirmed after further interrogation," he said.

According to police, a group of protesters had clashed with personnel on February 24 and Lal was allegedly shot dead. Along with Lal, DCP (Shahdara) Amit Sharma and ACP (Gokalpuri) Anuj Kumar were attacked by the crowd. While Lal was declared dead on arrival by doctors, senior officers sustained severe head injuries and had to undergo surgery.

A week before the arrest, police went door to door in the Northeast district to gather videos that could show how they were attacked by a mob on February 24. Police collected five videos, which showed the mob surrounding the team near Chand Bagh. Gunshots could be heard even as the crowd beat up DCP Sharma with sticks and stones. Police were equipped with anti-riot gear but were outnumbered, an officer said.

A senior police officer claimed, "Lal succumbed to bullet injuries during the clash. A case



Head Constable Ratan Lal was allegedly shot dead

had been registered at Dayalpur police station and seven men have been arrested. During investigation, we found that a conspiracy was hatched to attack police."

Police said the accused were identified using 'facial recognition software', which was also mentioned by Home Minister Amit Shah in Parliament Wednesday. A senior police officer said, "We have been using this software for over a year to trace missing children but this is the first time it has been used in a riot. We've identified over 1,000 suspects by running the footage we've received past it and then matching it with the database we have."

Police said that initially, over 15 men were detained in connection with the head constable case. After interrogation, police arrested the seven men who, they said, allegedly attacked Lal with weapons. Police claimed the accused men conspired to attack personnel and were also active rioters in the area.

Meanwhile, Delhi Police spokesperson M S Randhawa said 3,340 people have been detained or arrested in connection with the violence and 712 FIRs have been registered. Out of these, 51 cases have been registered under the Arms Act and 54 people have been arrested under sections of the Act.

## Co-director of firm opens fire at meeting, kills one, shoots self

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NOIDA, MARCH 12

A MEETING at a cable manufacturing company took a violent turn when the co-director allegedly shot dead a senior official and injured another official — before killing himself. The incident took place in Greater Noida's Badalpur on Thursday.

Police said the three directors, Pradeep Agarwal, Naresh Gupta and Rakesh Jain, had gathered at the office to discuss finances. Officials said no one was present in the office besides the three.

Police said an argument over an old transaction broke out around 2.30 pm and Pradeep allegedly pulled out his licensed gun and fired at Naresh multiple times. Rakesh ran towards the door and sustained injuries after a bullet grazed him, an official said. Pradeep then shot himself using the same gun.

While Naresh and Pradeep were declared dead on arrival when rushed to the nearest hospital, Rakesh is under observation in the ICU.

"Police received information that a firing had taken place on the official premises of UP Telelinks Ltd. Senior officers of Badalpur police station reached the spot. Prima-facie, the motive appears to be financial in nature. Further probe is pending," said Harish Chander, DCP (Central) Noida.

The company, founded in 1984, manufactures wires, harness, cable assemblies and battery-operated vehicles. It has two manufacturing plants in Ghaziabad and Rudrapur, and a registered office in Delhi.

The three directors, all in their early fifties, had been working in the same company for several years and had moved up the ranks, sources said.

Police said Naresh and the accused allegedly had a long-standing rivalry following irregular financial transactions.

Rakesh, who is undergoing treatment, claimed: "Naresh and Pradeep had an old enmity regarding some money problems. They had been partners before. The three of us were present in the meeting, and Pradeep had brought the gun."

## 4 held for killing man, dumping body in drain

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

POLICE HAVE arrested four men for allegedly killing a 35-year-old man and dumping his body in the Bhagiathi drain in Gokulpuri. The incident took place on February 25 amidst riots in the area. Police said the victim, Musharraf, was allegedly dragged out of his house and beaten to death.

An FIR of rioting and murder was registered two days later. Police said the accused, Pankaj Sharma, Lokesh, Sumit and Ankit, were arrested based on

video footage and local enquiry. Musharraf worked as a driver in Kardampuri and hailed from UP's Badaun. He is survived by his wife and three children.

Police have also identified three other bodies recovered from the same drain. The bodies of two brothers, Amir Ali (31) and Hashim Ali (19), were found in the drain along with their burnt bike. Police said they were on their way home when rioters killed them. A body recovered on February 27 was later identified at GTB mortuary. The man, Aqil Ahmed, was a mechanic and lived in Loni.

Police also said they have arrested two siblings who allegedly set a house in Bhajanpura on fire on February 25, which led to the death of an 85-year-old woman.

The woman, Akbari was trapped inside her house when the accused allegedly looted it and set it ablaze. Her body was recovered by the fire brigade 10 hours later.

The accused, Arun (26) and Varun (22), who live near the victim's house in Gamri, were arrested Wednesday. Akbari's son, Mohammad Saeed Salmani had filed a complaint against them.

Police recovered videos from locals, including the complainant, and collected statements of eyewitnesses. The accused were then arrested on charges of rioting, dacoity and murder amongst other IPC sections. They were produced in court which remanded them to police custody for two days.

Salmani's son Asif claimed that a group of 100 people broke into their four-storey house and the family, along with 10 workers, rushed to the roof. Akbari, who was on the second floor, couldn't escape and died of suffocation.

### BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-III, DELHI

4th Floor, Jeevan Tara Building, Parliament Street, New Delhi-110001

Notice under section 19(4) of the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Rule 12 & 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rules) 1993. In the matter of OA 681/2019

STATE BANK OF INDIA Vs APPLICANT MR. ASHUTOSH SHARMA & ANR. DEFENDANTS

To, D-1, Mr. Ashutosh Sharma S/o Sh. Kailash Chand Sharma, 205, Sec-C, Vasundhara, Ghaziabad-201001. Also At: Barista Coffee Co. Ltd., 236, BRC, DLF South Court, Saket, New Delhi-110013

D-2, M/s Amrapali Leisure Valley Developers Pvt. Ltd., Through its Managing Director/Authorized Signatory, Having its Registered Office At: 307, 3rd Floor, Nipun Tower, Plot No. 15, Community Centre, Karkardooma, Delhi-110092

Whereas the above named applicant has instituted a case against you and whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in the Tribunal 27.04.2020 at 10.30 A.M.

Take Notice that in case of your failure to appear on the above mentioned day before this Tribunal, the case will be heard and decided in your absence. Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal on this the 05th day of March, 2020.

By Order of the Tribunal, Assistant Registrar DRT-III, New Delhi

### PARLIAMENT OF INDIA RAJYA SABHA SECRETARIAT NEW DELHI 110001

#### RAJYA SABHA RESERACH AND STUDY (RSRS) SCHEME RAJYA SABHA STUDENT ENGAGEMENT INTERNSHIPS

Applications are invited for Rajya Sabha Student Engagement Internships from students pursuing graduation or post graduation courses in any discipline to provide them an opportunity to acquaint themselves with the working of Indian Parliament, especially Rajya Sabha.

The details of the Rajya Sabha Student Engagement Internships including eligibility, duration etc. and the Application Form are available on the Rajya Sabha website:- <http://rajyasabha.nic.in> under the head 'Rajya Sabha Research and Study (RSRS) Scheme'. Prescribed format of Application Form is available at Annexure V.

Duly filled in application may be sent to Shri S. D. Nautiyal, Joint Secretary, Rajya Sabha Secretariat, Room No. 517, Fifth Floor, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi - 110001 or may be forwarded through e-mail at [rssei.rsrs@sansad.nic.in](mailto:rssei.rsrs@sansad.nic.in) on or before 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2020.

Candidates who had applied before the release of this advertisement need to apply afresh. davp 31202/11/0015/1920

In The High Court of Jiducature at Patna (Civil Appellate Jurisdiction) Notice u/o 5 Rule 20(1-A) of the C.P.C in Misc. Appeal No.514/2011, arising out of order dated 03.11.2010 of the Additional District Judge-Icum-Motor Vehicle Accident Claim Tribunal, Jehanabad in M.A.C Case No.10 of 98/01 of 05. The Divisional Manager, National Insurance Company Ltd. & Ors (Appellant) Vrs. Barhan Devi & ORS----- (Respondent) Notice upon Respondent nos.2 Respondent No.2- Vijay Kumar, Son of Late Yogendra Yadav, Resident of Dharnai, at present residing at Jikiki, P.S.-Makhdumpur, District-Jehanabad.

The Show cause notice of this case could not be served upon you, under ordinary process and Reg. Post. The show cause notice of this case could not be served upon aforesaid Respondents, under ordinary process and Reg. Post.

Hence it is being published now and you are directed to appear either personally or through Advocate before this court within 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice.

If you do not appear in this Court within the aforesaid period, this court may decide the case ex-parte.

Issued under my signature and seal of Hon'ble High Court, Patna, dated 08.11.2017

By the order of Hon'ble High Court, Assistant Registrar

In The High Court of Jiducature at Patna (Civil Appellate Jurisdiction) Notice u/o 5 Rule 20(1-A) of the C.P.C in Misc. Appeal No.514/2011, arising out of order dated 03.11.2010 of the Additional District Judge-Icum-Motor Vehicle Accident Claim Tribunal, Jehanabad in M.A.C Case No.10 of 98/01 of 05. The Divisional Manager, National Insurance Company Ltd. & Ors (Appellant) Vrs. Barhan Devi & ORS----- (Respondent) Notice upon Respondent nos.3 Respondent No.3- Sardar Peyare Singh, Son of Bishu Singh, Resident of Mohalla-Gurdwara Road, P.S.-Kotwalli District-Gaya.

The Show cause notice of this case could not be served upon you, under ordinary process and Reg. Post. The show cause notice of this case could not be served upon aforesaid Respondents, under ordinary process and Reg. Post.

Hence it is being published now and you are directed to appear either personally or through Advocate before this court within 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice.

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Issued under my signature and seal of Hon'ble High Court, Patna, dated 08.11.2017

By the order of Hon'ble High Court, Assistant Registrar

### POST GRADUATE GOVT. COLLEGE FOR GIRLS, SECTOR-11, CHANDIGARH CORRIGENDUM

63rd Annual Convocation of Post Graduate Govt. College for Girls, Sector-11, Chandigarh scheduled for Monday, 16th March 2020 has been postponed due to the COVID-19 outbreak. The new date will be notified on the college website.

Principal, PGGCG-11, Chandigarh

### SML ISUZU LIMITED

Regd. Office : Village Aaron, Distt. Shahid Bhagat Singh Nagar (Nawanshahr) 144 533. Phone: (91)-1881-270255, Fax: (91)1881-270223. CIN : L50101PB1983PLC009516 Website address: www.smlisuzu.com Email : investors@smlisuzu.com

#### NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that share certificate Nos. as per detail given below has been reported lost or misplaced.

Folio no.	Name of shareholder	Share Certificate no.	Distinctive nos.	No. of shares
48104	ARVIND SETHI	61355-56 62436 62449	883806-883905 883806-883905 8894506-8894555	100 50 50
72094	ARUNA MALPANI	31589	7351521-7351570	50
56845	TANNY SHAH BHADRESH SHAH	2579-80	5901021-5901120	100

Any person who has a claim or interest in the above shares and having any objection to the issue of duplicate share certificate in lieu of the above is required to notify the company at its registered office within 15 days from the date of this notice indicating the nature of the claim or lien or interest of his objection to the said issue of duplicate share certificate through an affidavit duly attested. Else the company will proceed to issue duplicate share certificate without entertaining any claim/damage whatsoever it may be. For SML ISUZU LIMITED (PARVESH MADAN) Company Secretary

Place: Chandigarh Date: 12.03.2020

## EXPRESS Careers

Advertisement No. 36/2020  
Government of India  
Public Enterprises Selection Board  
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**CHAIRMAN AND MANAGING DIRECTOR**  
IN  
**BRIDGE AND ROOF COMPANY (INDIA) LIMITED**  
Last date of receipt of applications in  
**PESB is by 15:00 hours on 14th May, 2020**  
For details login to website  
<http://www.pesb.gov.in>

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*Zindagi ke saath bhi, Zindagi ke baad bhi.*



A lone passenger in a DTC bus plying on Lodhi Road, Thursday. Tashi Tobgyal

DELHI GOVT DECLARES CORONAVIRUS AN EPIDEMIC

# Schools, colleges, cinema halls shut till March 31

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

DECLARING THE novel coronavirus (Covid-19) an epidemic, the Delhi government Thursday announced shutting of all schools, colleges and cinema halls till March 31.

The decision was taken at a high-level meeting attended by Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Lt-Governor Anil Bajjal and top government officials. So far, six confirmed cases of the virus have been reported in the capital.

Coming out of the meeting, Kejriwal said, "Today, we are declaring coronavirus an epidemic in the capital. All cinema houses shall remain closed till March 31. All schools and colleges shall also remain closed till March 31, except for the ones where exams have been going on. We have sufficient beds in case people are to be quarantined. We are arranging quarantine facilities for 600 people in DUSIB flats, which have remained unoccupied for long, and for 500 people in rooms at under-construction hospitals of the Delhi government."

As a precautionary measure to prevent and control coronavirus, the Delhi government has already ordered disinfection of DTC and cluster buses as well as the Delhi Metro coaches on a regular basis. All public swimming pools have also been shut till March 31.

## DU to rely on e-resources for classes

New Delhi: Delhi University announced that it will conduct teaching-learning through online resources after the government directed closure of all colleges in the capital till March 31.

In a press note, the registrar said that study material for all undergraduate and postgraduate programmes will be made available in the college or department websites concerned on a weekly basis by teachers.

The university also stated that all teachers will be available during class hours through e-resources. All functions, such as conferences and symposia, have been cancelled and all internal assessments scheduled for the month have been postponed.

GGSIU is conducting examinations, and officials said they are going to install hand sanitiser counters and distribute free masks to students and staff.

IIT-Delhi has suspended all classes and exams for students. The administration has also asked students to refrain from organising any events on campus. **ENS**



CM Arvind Kejriwal, Health Minister Satyendar Jain met top government officials and L-G Anil Bajjal, Thursday. Express

Starting Thursday, disinfecting all public places, including government and private offices and shopping malls, has been made compulsory. The L-G has further directed municipal bodies, DUSIB and the district commissioners of the 11 districts to set up quarantine facilities.

"All public spaces, government and private office premises, malls and shops have been notified to disinfect their premises, which shall remain compulsory for all. Whatever we are doing is to contain the coronavirus outbreak. I hope that everyone will support us. We are noticing how rapid the outbreak has been, but in India, we have successfully been able to contain it with support from the public. We shall remain alert to stop this disease from spreading," said Kejriwal.

According to officials, intensive public awareness campaigns

and sensitisation drives are being carried out on a regular basis. Special awareness drives are being conducted in vulnerable areas such as markets, JJ clusters, unauthorised colonies, ISBTs, railway stations and Metro stations by health officers.

As many as 168 beds have been earmarked in 25 designated hospitals to offer treatment to patients who test positive for the virus.

An additional 250 beds have been set up in Rajiv Gandhi Super Speciality Hospital and 50 beds in Janakpuri Super Specialty Hospital for isolation of suspected and confirmed cases of coronavirus.

The health department has also asked suspected patients not to travel in private cabs to hospitals. Instead, a fleet of CATS ambulances has been earmarked to ferry such patients to designated hospitals.

been asked to come to work tomorrow, but have no details about the days after that."

As the news of the government's announcement began coming in, officials at multiplexes, including Inox, Carnival and Cineplex, said customers who have made advance bookings would get a full refund.

Meanwhile, shopping malls have begun taking steps to sanitise the premises. Staff at DLF Promenade Mall in Vasant Kunj are being provided hand sanitisers and masks, while lifts, railings, counters and washrooms are being cleaned with a strong chemical with high alcohol content, said a spokesperson. Body temperatures of staff are being checked daily, he added.

Similar measures are being taken at Select Citywalk mall at Saket, where hand sanitisers are being provided to staff and visitors. A spokesman from the mall's security said, "We have been given devices to check temperature — one official is at each entry point keeping a watch on customers. If they look ill, we check them, and even provide them masks."

ASTHA SAXENA  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

## One more case as 69-year-old mother of fifth victim tests positive, taken to RML

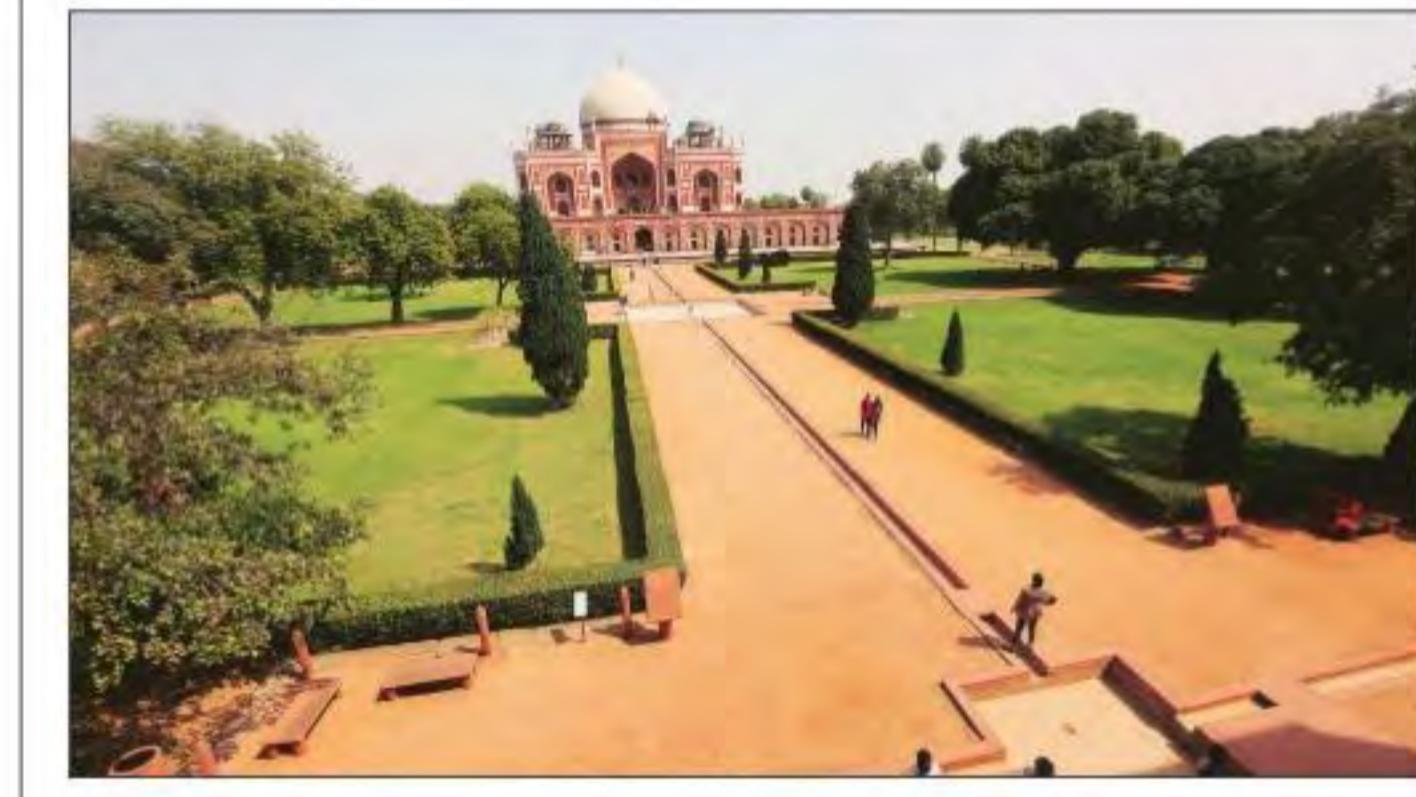
A DAY after a 46-year-old man from Janakpuri was diagnosed with novel coronavirus, his 69-year-old mother tested positive for the disease Thursday. The patient has been admitted to RML Hospital and her condition is not stable, according to officials.

The department has traced nine members of her family who were in contact with her but none of them have shown any symptoms. Delhi has so far reported six confirmed cases of Covid-19. Three patients showing symptoms of the virus were hospitalised on Thursday.

On Thursday, a meeting of all heads of hospitals was called by the Health Secretary to review the status of initiating sample collection and isolation beds in 34 hospitals, and testing facilities in three medical colleges for suspected cases.

The collection facility has been initiated in six hospitals (five Delhi government and one North MCD). The hospitals with the collection facility are Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital, Lal Bahadur Shastri, Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hospital, Chacha Nehru Bal Chikitsalya, Babu Jagjivan Ram and Hindu Rao hospitals.

Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain has written a letter to Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan, requesting him to strengthen the number of testing laboratories in Delhi. "I have written a letter to Union



At Humayun's Tomb, Thursday. According to staff, footfall has dropped by 80% due to coronavirus fears. Tashi Tobgyal

ACROSS THE CAPITAL			
	RML	Safdarjung	Total
Passengers from affected countries under observation	111	97	208
Asymptomatic passengers isolated at home	88	76	164
Symptomatic passengers hospitalised	7	29	36
Positive cases (from Delhi)	2	4	6
Total cases (from across India)	0	10	10

**1,63,835**  
Passengers screened at IGI Airport

**4,952**  
Passengers screened on Thursday

### HELPLINES

- State-level:  
 ■ 011-22307145  
 ■ 011-22300012  
 ■ 011-22300036  
 District-level:  
 ■ 011-27708768 (North)  
 ■ 011-29531277 (South)  
 ■ 011-22050908, 22051234 (East)  
 ■ 011-25195529 (West)  
 ■ 011-23385743 (New Delhi)  
 ■ 011-23270151 (Central)

Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan to increase and strengthen testing facilities. We have also requested to open testing laboratories in four Delhi government hospitals and other private hospitals, along with Lady Hardinge Hospital, where the testing laboratory was to become operational. Private hospitals should also be permitted to conduct tests because it is important for every hospital to have a testing lab. We need more laboratories to conduct quick tests and to also contain the panic," he said.

The government has so far traced 1,410 contacts of the six confirmed cases in Delhi. Till date, 1,63,835 passengers from Covid-19 affected countries have been screened at the Delhi Airport and placed under surveillance. On Thursday, 4,952 passengers were screened at the airport.

Meanwhile, DCP (North) Monika Bhardwaj said that a senior police officer held a meeting with wholesale dealers of medical equipment, such as sanitisers and masks, in Kotwali Thursday.

She said, "We wanted to make sure that no black marketing of masks and sanitisers is done." She said that wholesalers have been asked to inform police if they notice such activities.

Another senior IPS officer said, "Police personnel have been asked to wash their hands regularly and use sanitisers... they have also been asked to sensitise people about coronavirus."

## From virtual lessons to revising academic calendar, schools look for ways to ensure learning doesn't stop

SUKRITA BARUAH  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

SWITCHING TO virtual learning, cancelling exams, revising the academic calendar — schools across the capital are finding ways to ensure learning doesn't suffer as they down shutters till the end of the month. On Thursday, the Delhi government directed all schools to remain closed till March 31 as a precaution against the Covid-19 pandemic. The only exception is in cases where exams are being conducted.

Last week, the government had ordered the closure of all primary schools in the capital till the end of the month.

On Thursday, The British School informed parents that it will commence virtual learning



Primary schools were ordered to shut last week

from Friday till March 31. It has suspended bus services and all services within the campus, in addition to asking its staff to work from home. Students of the primary section had already been introduced to this virtual system when their classes were sus-

ended. This has now been extended to secondary level students as well, who will now be taught through Microsoft Teams — a collaboration software.

At The Indian School, the management has decided to cancel the remaining exams for students from classes VI to VIII. "The students of these classes were just left with one or two exams and in any case, the no-detention policy applies to them so we took the decision to conclude their final examinations and their academic year now itself," said principal Tanja Joshi.

The school has been designing and sending worksheets for different subjects every few days to pre-primary and primary students to keep them in touch with their learning.

Many schools complete class

IX and XI final examinations early so that students can begin their classes for their board years in March. However, these have been put on hold because of the precautionary measures.

"We will lose teaching time due to this. We will have to consider other options, including the possibility of conducting classes during the summer break," said Sanghamitra Ghosh, principal of Mother's International School.

However, some schools such as Springdales, Pusa Road, have decided to complete the remaining exams for classes VI to IX and XI. "In the case of students in primary and pre-primary sections, we have told parents to use this time to build up inter-personal relationships with the children, especially since many parents will also be working from home at

this time," said principal Ameeta Wattal.

While Delhi government schools are still in the midst of their internal exams, the bulk of the primary schools are run by the municipal corporations.

A teacher at a North MCD school said they have not received any direction to keep children engaged. However, the head of an East MCD school said they are keeping students in touch with their studies through WhatsApp groups. "We have told students to study on their own and clarify doubts on the class WhatsApp groups. We have also created a separate group for those students who perform well academically and are sending them practice papers to prepare for class VI entrance exams in the Pratibha Vikas Vidyalayas," said the school head.



# ATTENTION!

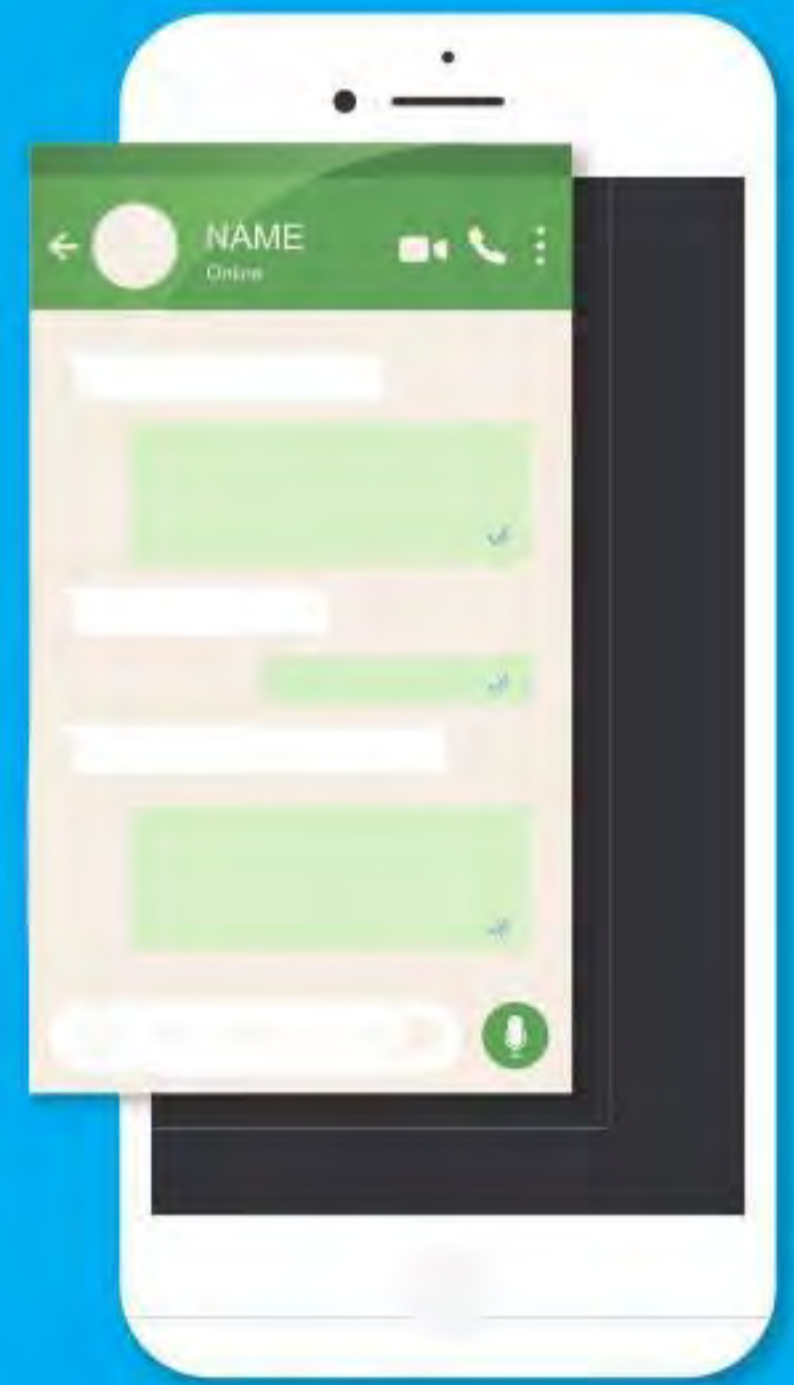
## SHARING INFLAMMATORY MESSAGES ON WHATSAPP CAN LAND YOU IN JAIL FOR 3 YEARS



If any individual shares or forwards messages or videos on WhatsApp or any Social Media Platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc) which are inflammatory in nature or incites communal tensions then the guilty will have to serve jail term upto 3 years.

### HOW CAN YOU HELP?

If you find anyone sharing communally inflammatory messages or video on WhatsApp or any Social Media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc) then immediately send the screenshot or the video to us on the number given below.



### BECOME A PEACE - MAKER

If an F.I.R. is lodged on the basis of your complaint, then **YOU WILL ALSO GET A REWARD OF ₹10,000**

**WhatsApp no.  8950000946**

**Email: [DVSCommittee@delhi.gov.in](mailto:DVSCommittee@delhi.gov.in)**

# Focus will be on rebuilding party, new DPCC chief

**ASTHA SAXENA**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

ADAY after he was appointed the chief of the Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee (DPCC), Anil Chaudhary (44) said his focus will be on rebuilding the party by working in unison with senior leaders and young supporters.

"This will be done only if senior leaders and the youth are there to support me. I cannot do this alone and will need the support of everyone to regain what we have lost during the Assembly elections. I will work rigorously towards bringing the coming generation together for a common goal of the party. Everyone in the party should be respected and given the responsibility of taking it forward," he told *The Indian Express*.

Chaudhary started his political career in 1994 as a member of the National Students' Union of India (NSUI) and was the MLA from Patparganj between 2008 and 2013.

In the 2015 Delhi assembly election, the Congress received



**DPCC chief Anil Chaudhary**

9.65% of the votes polled. This went up to 22.43% in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections — it had come second in five of the seven Lok Sabha seats in Delhi.

In this year's assembly polls, the party's vote-share plummeted to 4.26%, and as many as 63 of its 66 candidates lost their deposits (each got less than a sixth of the votes polled), leading DPCC chief Subash Chopra to submit his resignation on February 11. In 2015, 62 Congress candidates had lost their deposits.

Highlighting the recent riots that took place in Northeast Delhi, Chaudhary said, "You have seen how people of Delhi are living a life of fear over the past few days. People feel unsafe and are now scared to sit together. I want to make sure there is peace and harmony among them."

## SPECIAL SESSION TODAY

# Assembly resolution to discuss NPR-NRC link

**SOURAV ROY BARMAN**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

THE ARVIND Kejriwal government in Delhi is likely to pass a resolution on the National Population Register (NPR), during a day-long special session of the Assembly on March 13, that would describe it as a step towards the proposed country-wide National Register of Citizens (NRC).

It is learnt that the thrust of the resolution will be on the fact that the country's poor and vulnerable do not maintain documents in a way that would enable them to come under the NRC net.

Sources privy to the drafting of the resolution said it is likely to focus on the widespread apprehension that NPR is a step towards the NRC. "Union ministers have made statements to this effect. Also, poor people in this country will suffer the most as they don't maintain documents. (The resolution is) likely to question additional queries pertaining to place of birth, etc. It will ask the Delhi government to not hold NPR as the atmosphere is not conducive," said a source.

Within the AAP, there are voices in favour of drafting a resolution about reverting to NPR's 2010 format. They point out this would be a clear stand against the modified questionnaire which requires an individual to also share the place of birth of their parents, among other things.

However, another section feels that a more clear stand needs to be taken to allay the anxieties of the general public, especially the minorities. Various pockets of Delhi have been witnessing protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act, NRC and NPR since December last year.

The assembly secretariat had not received a copy of the resolution till Thursday evening. In Delhi, the NPR update exercise is supposed to begin on April 1 in the NDMC areas with the house-listing phase of Census 2021. Sources said the Delhi government's resolution

should ideally be sent to the Assembly Secretary at least seven days in advance. However, under Rule 90, the Speaker can allow shorter notice periods.

In the 2018-19 Annual Report of the Home Ministry, the NPR was described as the first step towards implementation of the NRC. Union Minister of State (Home) Kiren Rijju had also made a similar assertion in the Rajya Sabha in 2014, while Union Home Minister Amit Shah had indicated the same in Parliament.

Apart from NPR, the session will also discuss NRC, CAA and the status of coronavirus in the city. The AAP had voted against the citizenship law amendments in both houses of Parliament.

The NPR, data for which was first collected in 2010 and updated in 2015, is a list of "usual residents of the country". According to the Home Ministry, a usual resident of the country is one who has been residing in a local area for at least the last six months or intends to stay in a particular location for the next six months.

# Amit Shah misleading people on riots: AAP's Sanjay Singh

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 12



**AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh was reacting to Home Minister Amit Shah's reply in Parliament on the Delhi riots**

AAP MP Sanjay Singh hit out at Union Home Minister Amit Shah Thursday, accusing him of misleading the people on the communal riots in Northeast Delhi.

Reacting to Shah's reply in the Parliament on the Delhi riots, Singh said: "The Home Minister is giving wrong information. He said the riots stopped after February 25, when in reality it continued on 26, 27 and 28. For three days, no action was taken. Why was the police silent? Why did the same police take action after three days?"

Singh, who is also the party spokesperson, also responded to Shah's statement that Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's demand for the Army to be deployed was pointless as he had asked for it on February 27, when the violence had ended.

Singh said, "The CM asked for the Army to be deployed on February 26. He asked it when you, who controls law and order in Delhi, did nothing... Did you condemn the speeches made by

(BJP leader) Kapil Mishra or (Delhi MP) Parvesh Verma? People from BJP have lit the fire and fanned it."

Singh also said that the conspiracy to vitiate the atmosphere was hatched before the polls and riots were orchestrated after.

The AAP MP also asked why the Home Minister hadn't visited the riot-affected areas till date. "It has been around 20 days since riots broke out. The Home Minister, who lives in Delhi, hasn't visited the affected areas. What are they afraid of?" he asked.

He also suggested that the Centre offer jobs to the kind of those who died in the violence since the Delhi government's

services department falls under the Centre.

Earlier in the day, Singh said: "Delhi was left to burn for three whole days and the home minister was silent. (MoS) Anurag Thakur pushed Delhi into the fires, but Amit Shah said nothing about that. Amit Shah spoke about hate speech. It is your party that indulged in hate speech. People and policemen have died and people have lost their houses and shops. You do not have the courage to visit riot-affected areas."

In the Rajya Sabha, he demanded Shah's resignation saying he had no right to remain in power.

**SAMAGRA SHIKSHA STATE PROJECT OFFICE**  
KBC BOYS HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUS, OPP RAITHU BAZAR, PATAMATA, VIJAYAWADA, ANDHRA PRADESH

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

**e-procurement notice. No.SSA-1602/17/2019-MIS SEC-SSA, dt. 12/03/2020**  
Samagra Shiksha, Andhra Pradesh is inviting Request For Proposal for procurement and (1) a set of Note Books, (2) one pair of Shoe and two pairs of Socks, (3) a Belt and (4) a School Bag under the scheme of "Jagananna Vidya Kankana" to all the students (approximately 40 lakhs in number) studying from classes I to X in Government/MPP/ZPP/Municipal/KGBVs/Model Schools/Residential/Aided Schools in the State of Andhra Pradesh during the year 2020-21. For details please visit <https://tender.approcurement.gov.in> from 14-03-2020. Tender/RFP form can be downloaded from website. Eligible firms shall upload their proposals as per the prescribed formats as per the schedules given in the above said site. For any further information they may contact No.0866-2428599. Sd/- Vadrevu Chinaveerabhadru, I.A.S., State Project Director, Samagra Shiksha  
DIPR No.440PP/CLADVT/11/2019-20 Dt.12.03.2020

**MODERN COACH FACTORY, RAEBARELI**  
E-Tender Notice No.: 36/2019-20 (Open) of Dy.CE/II/MCF/RBL  
Deputy Chief Engineer/II/MCF/RBL for and on behalf of The President of India invites "E-Tenders" for following works:

Tender No. & Name of work	Approx Cost	Earnest Money	Cost of Tender document
54/2019-20 Supplying, installation and commissioning of water flow metre at different location on existing water supply system in factory area of MCF/RBL	24.99,000/-	50,000/-	3,000/-

Date of opening of Tender: 09.04.2020  
Completion period of work: 04 Months

\* Tenderers shall be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed for this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. \* Earnest Money Deposit & Tender Document Cost will be accepted separately only online payment through net banking or 1/6 FA & CAO/MCF/RBL or Gate way Payment through IREPS Portal. Manual payments through Demand Draft, Banker's Cheque, Deposit Receipts & FDR etc. are not allowed. \* For detail please log on Indian Railways IREPS website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)

Deputy Chief Engineer-II  
Serving Customers With a Smile

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, CENTRAL CIRCLE (R&B) NIRMAN SOUDHA, PHASE-II, 2<sup>ND</sup> FLOOR, BHUBANESWAR**  
Mail i.d. secbbsr@gmail.com  
**E-procurement Tender Call Notice No. 10 of 2019-20 No. 762 (Estg.) Bhubaneswar the 7<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

The Superintending Engineer, Central Circle (R&B) Bhubaneswar on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bids for two numbers of road works to be received in online bidding, double cover system for construction work as detailed in: <https://tendersorissa.gov.in>. The details of bid documents will be available in the above website from 5.00 PM of 18.03.2020 to 5.00 PM of 03.04.2020. The bidders must possess compatible Digital Signature Certificate of Class II or III. Bids received online shall be opened at 11:00 AM of 04.04.2020 in the Office of the Superintending Engineer, Central Circle (R&B) Bhubaneswar. Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in). Addendum / Corrigendum, if required, will be available only in the Website.

Sd/-  
Er. G.C. Sahu  
Superintending Engineer  
Central Circle (R&B) Bhubaneswar  
34005/11/0011/1920

**GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM**  
**OFFICE OF THE RESIDENT COMMISSIONER: ASSAM BHAWAN NO.1, S. P. MARG, CHANAKYAPURI: NEW DELHI - 110021**  
Phone : 011-26877111/26116444 Fax: 011-26117059  
Email ID: rcofficeassambhawan@gmail.com  
No.RC/E(Try-Staff)172/2019/1246

**NOTICE**

Subsequent to the advertisement published vide memo no: RC/E(Try-Staff)172/2019/28-29/4250-29 dated 6th November 2019, this is to inform all concerned that written examination for the post of Junior Accounts Assistant for the Sub-Treasurer of the office of the Resident Commissioner, Government of Assam, Assam Bhawan, New Delhi will be held on 15th March, 2020 (Sunday) from 09.00 am to 04.00 pm (reporting time 08.00 am) at the following centres:

(1) Karmashri Hiteswar Saikia Junior College, Six Mile, Panjabari, Guwahati for candidates residing in Assam and NE States  
(2) Atal Adarsh Vidyalaya, Moti Bagh, New Delhi for the candidates residing in Delhi and adjoining States.

Call letters in respect of eligible candidates for the written examination have already been dispatched by Speed Post. The list of eligible candidates for the written examination may be checked in the following website: <https://doatfinance.assam.gov.in>. In case, any eligible candidate has not received the call letter he/she may collect the same from the concerned centre incharge atleast one hour prior to the commencement of written examination.

Sd/- K. C. Samrta, IAS  
Principal Resident Commissioner  
Government of Assam Assam Bhawan, New Delhi  
Janasanyog/D/11400/19

**केनरा बैंक Canara Bank**  
BRANCH OFFICE: GURGAON MAIN  
ESSEY TOWER, OLD RAILWAY ROAD,  
NEAR SHIV MURTI, GURGAON-122001 (HARYANA)

**E-Auction 15 day Sale Notice for Sale of Movable Assets in exercise of the power conferred under Hypothecation agreement.**

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described movable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, with Total liabilities as on **Rs. 7,62,794/- as on 11.03.2020 plus interest & charges (minus recovery if any), will be sold on "As is where is", and Whatever there is** by the Branch Manager of Canara Bank GURGAON MAIN BRANCH.

Branch Name	Name of the Account Holder, Borrower's/Guarantors	Description of the Property Mortgaged and name of the Owner(s)	Reserve Price
GURGAON MAIN BRANCH	M/s Orion Automobiles Private Limited, Address-B 31	'HYUNDAI I20 SPORT CRDI (Diesel) (Mfg Year-Mar-2018), Color- Star Dust, Registration No-HR-26DR149'	Rs. 5.00 Lakhs
32, IDC, Mehrauli Road, Gurgaon;			Rs. 0.50 Lakh

ii) Mr. Rohit Chadha S/o Mr. Gulshan Chadha Address-AM-4, Shalimar Bagh, North West Delhi Delhi-110088  
iii) Mr. Gurcharan Singh S/o Mr. Ram Prakash Address > H-No. - K-711, Ambience Island - NH-8 Nathpuri, Gurgaon

**Terms & Condition -** The Vehicle is seized by Canara Bank under Hypothecation agreement & put for Sale on "AS IS WHERE IS Condition". The Earnest Money Deposit shall be deposit on or before 25.03.2020 before 5 PM & the Date & Time of E-Auction 27.03.2020 between 12.30 AM to 01.00 PM (with unlimited extension of 5 minutes duration each till the conclusion of the sale). For detailed terms and conditions of the sale please refer the link "E-Auction" provided in M/s CANBANK COMPUTER SERVICES LIMITED Contact: Mr Pakhare DD (9480691777/8553643144). Email id: eauction@ccs.co.in through the website [www.indianbankauction.com](http://www.indianbankauction.com). There are Nil encumbrances to the knowledge of the Bank.

Date: - 13.03.2020 Place: Gurgaon Authorised Officer, Canara Bank

**HIMACHAL PRADESH JAL SHAKTI VIBHAG**  
**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**

Sealed item rates tender on form 6 & 8 are hereby invited for the following works from the Firms/Contractors of appropriate classes enlisted with HP Jal Shakti Vibhag on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh, so as to reach in this office on or before 18.03.2020 up to 11.00 A.M. and will be opened on the same day at 11:30 A.M. in the presence of the intending Contractors/ Firms or their authorized representative who may wish to be present at the time of opening of tender. The tenders Documents can be had from this office or can be downloaded from the department website i.e. [www.hpiph.com](http://www.hpiph.com) on or before 17.03.2020 to 4.00 PM. Conditional/Telegraphically tender will not be entertained. The tender cost will be received at the time of application and E/M shall be deposited with the tender form in the shape of NSC/ Time deposit and Bank FDR duly pledged in the name of Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Division Nurpur falling which the tender shall not be opened & liable to be rejected. The undersigned reserves the right to accept or reject all or any tenders without assigning any reason. If it happens to be holiday on the date of opening of tender, then the tenders shall be opened on the next working day.

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost	Earnest Money	Time Limit	Cost of Form
1.	Running and maintenance of LWSS Hatli Ther Danni in Tehsil Nurpur Distt. Kangra H.P. (SH:- Replacement of Centrifugal Pumping Machinery without allied accessories)	495000	9900	6 Months	250/-
2.	Running and maintenance of LWSS Mamoh Gurchal Niar in Tehsil Nurpur Distt. Kangra (SH:- Providing and fixing of Panel Board for 75 HP Centrifugal Pumping Machinery)	371600	7440	6 Months	250/-
3.	Aug. of Lift Irrigation scheme Bhadwar in Tehsil Nurpur Distt. Kangra H.P. (SH:- C/O Toe wall to protect the jack well)	239876	4800	6 Months	250/-
4.	Augmentation of Lift Irrigation Scheme Bhadwar in tehsil Nurpur Distt. Kangra H.P. (SH:- C/O retaining wall to protect the delisting tank) (2013-306-579)	390000	7800	6 Months	250/-

**Terms and Conditions:-**

- The Contractor / Firm are required to be registered with HP Jal Shakti Vibhag Deptt.
- Renewal of enlistment, is required.
- The intending contractor /Firm are requested to see the site of work before Submitting tender/quoting the rate.
- The Tender application without cost of tender form and /E Money will summarily be rejected.
- The Telegraphic/ conditional tenders will not be entertained. The offer of the tender shall be kept open for 120 days.
- The contr. must quote their rates both in words as well as in figures.
- Other terms and conditions as per NIT/tender documents shall be followed.

Executive Engineer,  
Jal Shakti Division, Nurpur  
5438/HP

**ODISHA JOINT ENTRANCE EXAMINATION - 2020 (OJEE - 2020)**

No: OJEE / 091 Date: 12.03.2020

**ATTENTION**

Candidates who wish to take admission in B.Pharm/ MBA / MCA / M.Tech/ M.Tech (Part Time)/ M.Arch/ M Plan/ M.Pharm/ Int. MBA and Lateral Entry to B.Tech/ B.Pharm/ MCA Courses in Government and Private Universities and Colleges of Odisha have to appear

**OJEE - 2020,**  
for which online application filling is going on as per the schedule given below.

Entrance Examination for all the above Course will be Computer Based Test (CBT).

Tentative Dates for OJEE (CBT) : 1<sup>st</sup> Week of May, 2020 (Exact dates shall be notified later)

Fill-up of Online Application through OJEE website started since : 06<sup>th</sup> February, 2020

Last date to fill-up Online Application form : 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2020

Last date of online application fee payment/ Print of Confirmation page : 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2020

Downloading of admit card : 20<sup>th</sup> April, 2020 onwards

For other details, please visit our website: [www.ojee.nic.in/](http://www.ojee.nic.in/) [www.odishajee.com](http://www.odishajee.com).

Sd/-  
CHAIRMAN,  
OJEE, Odisha

**DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-I, DELHI**  
4TH FLOOR, JEEVAN TARA BUILDING, PARLIAMENT STREET, NEW DELHI-110001.  
OA No. /2018  
Yes Bank Ltd. Applicant  
Ajay Pal & Anr. Versus Respondents

**BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-I, DELHI**  
4TH FLOOR, JEEVAN TARA BUILDING, PARLIAMENT STREET, NEW DELHI-110001.  
Notice under Section 18(1) of the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks & Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Rule 18 & 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 1993  
In the matter of O.A. No. 5855/2019  
Ajay Pal & Anr. Applicant  
Versus Respondents  
M/s. Krishna Polymers  
Delhi

**D-1. M/s Krishna Polymers**  
Through its Proprietor, Mr. Gaurav Sharma At - 258, Pocket-K, Sector-3, DSIIDC Bawana, Industrial Area, Bawana, Delhi-110039

Whereas the above named applicant has instituted a case against you & whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance before the Tribunal on 26.03.2020 at 10.30 A.M.

Take notice that in case of your failure to appear on the above mentioned day before this Tribunal, the case will be heard & decided in your absence. Given under my hand and seal of the Tribunal on this 05.03.2020.

BY ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL For Registrar

**NATIONAL FERTILIZERS LIMITED**  
(A Govt. of India Undertaking)  
(CIN : L74990DL1974G0007417)  
A-11, Sector-24, Noida-201381, Phone: 0120-2412294, Extn. 2220

Ref. No. 03-2021-DAP/01E Date: 13.03.2020

**Notice Inviting Global E-Tender**

Bids are invited for SUPPLY OF 40,000 MT ± 10% FERTILIZER GRADE BULK DI-AMMONIUM PHOSPHATE (DAP 18:46:00) at East Coast of India. For details, visit websites: [www.nationalfertilizers.com](http://www.nationalfertilizers.com), [www.eprocure.gov.in](http://www.eprocure.gov.in) and [tenderwizard.com/NFL](http://tenderwizard.com/NFL) (E-Tender No. NFL-2036). Last date for bid submission is 27th March, 2020 (1400 hrs. IST). Corrigendum/Addendum, if any, shall be published only on above websites.

Executive Director (Materials)

**RAJIV GANDHI PROUDYOGIKI VISHWAVIDYALAYA**  
(State Technological University of Madhya Pradesh)  
(Accredited with 'A' grade by NAAC)  
Office of TEQIP-III  
Airport Road, Bhopal - 462033, Ph. No. : 0755-2678805  
E-Mail : [rgpvteqip@rgvu.net](mailto:rgpvteqip@rgvu.net), Website : [www.rgpv.ac.in](http://www.rgpv.ac.in)  
Ref. No. : RGPV/TEQIP-III/2020/04/2140 Bhopal, Date : 12.03.2020

**EOI FOR CONTENT DEVELOPMENT**

- MHRD and the World Bank is implementing a Project, TEQIP-III with the objective of improving the quality of Technical Education in the country. The project is being implemented through NPIU. In this connection, sealed EOI are invited by TEQIP-III, RGPV Bhopal from companies/firms to develop video lectures as per MOOC guidelines by setting up their own studio at RGPV campus, and do the editing, mixing, content digitization, animation, simulation works at RGPV.
- Detailed scope of work can be downloaded from the website- [www.rgpv.ac.in](http://www.rgpv.ac.in) from 13.03.2020 at 15:00 Hrs. (IST) to 26.03.2020 till 17:00 Hrs. (IST).

M.P. Madhyam/97162/2020 COORDINATOR, TEQIP-III

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

This is to inform that Environmental Clearance has been accorded to our company V.M. Techno-Soft Pvt. Ltd. from State Environment Impact Assessment Authority Chhattisgarh, vide Minutes of 87th Meeting held on dated 28/08/2019. This copy is available at the office of Chhattisgarh Environment Conservation Board & is also been placed on the official website of <https://cgocmms.nic.in/>

**V.M. TECHNO-SOFT PVT. LTD.**  
Khasra 243/4 (Part of 243/1), Halka Number 19, Village - Kokodi, Tehsil - Kondagaon, District - Kondagaon, Chhattisgarh.  
Email: [info@vmtspl.com](mailto:info@vmtspl.com) | Ph. No. - 0771-4089634

**The Brihanmumbai Electric Supply & Transport Undertaking**  
(Of The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation)

**TENDER NOTICE**

e-tenders are invited for the supply of following items

(1) 67643 - Appointment of Bank/Cash Management Solution Provider for Doorstep Banking Services, (2) 67704 - 33KV, 3C x 300 sq. mm. Water T.R. XLPE Cu. Cable, (3) Triennial Contract for Clearance & Transportation of Undertaking's Materials.

Re-invited e-tenders

(4) 44795, (5) 45596, (6) 45998, (7) 67285, (8) 44381, (9) 46085.

Note: For more details, at (Sr. Nos. 1 to 7) log on to website <https://mahatenders.gov.in> & (Sr. No. 8 & 9) [www.besttender.com](http://www.besttender.com).

PRO/AAM(M)/164/2020 GENERAL MANAGER

**DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-I, DELHI**  
4TH FLOOR, JEEVAN TARA BUILDING, PARLIAMENT STREET, NEW DELHI-110001.  
OA No. /2018  
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Yes Bank Ltd. Applicant  
Ajay Pal & Anr. Versus Respondents

Whereas the above named applicant has instituted a case for recovery of Rs. 28,67,908/- (Rupees Twenty Eight Lacs Sixty Seven Thousand Nine Hundred Eighty Only) against you and where it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in the ordinary way. Therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance before Ld. Registrar on 26.03.2020 at 10.30 A.M.

Take notice that in case of your failure to appear on the above mentioned day before this Tribunal, the case will be heard & decided in your absence. Given under my hand and seal of the Tribunal on this 22th day of January 2020.

By order of the Tribunal For Registrar 31.01.2020

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER  
DIP/Shabdarth/1453/19-20

# NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) GENERAL ADVISORY FOR PUBLIC



The 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a contagious virus that causes respiratory infection, can transfer from human to human.

## SYMPTOMS

- FEVER
- DIFFICULTY IN BREATHING
- COUGHING
- TIGHTNESS OF CHEST
- RUNNING NOSE
- HEAD ACHE
- FEELING OF BEING UNWELL
- PNEUMONIA
- KIDNEY FAILURE

## MODE OF TRANSMISSION

Human Coronavirus (COVID-19) most commonly spread from an infected person to other through:

- Coughing and sneezing
- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hand
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands

## HOW TO REDUCE RISK OF CORONAVIRUS INFECTION (COVID-19)

- Clean hand with soap and water or alcohol based hand rub
- Cover nose and mouth when coughing & sneezing with tissue or flexed elbow
- Avoid close contact & maintain 1 meter distance with anyone
- Isolation of persons travelling from affected countries for atleast 14 days.

### DO's

- Cover your nose and mouth with disposable tissue or handkerchief while coughing or sneezing
- Throw used tissues into closed bins immediately after use
- Frequently wash your hands with soap and water
- Avoid crowded places/big gatherings
- Person suffering from Influenza like illness must be confined to home
- Stay more than one meter distance from persons sick with flu
- Take adequate sleep and rest
- Drink plenty of water/liquids and eat nutritious food
- See a doctor if feel unwell (fever, difficulty breathing & cough). While visiting doctor, wear a mask/cloth to cover your mouth and nose.

### DON'Ts

- Touching eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands
- Hugging, kissing and shaking hands while greeting
- Spitting in public places
- Taking medicines without consulting doctor
- Disposal of used napkin or tissue paper in open areas
- Touching surfaces usually used by public (Railing, door gates, etc)

## Control Room Numbers at State and District level

State DGHS (HQ)	011-22307145, 22300012, 22300036	South-West	011-25066674
North	011-27708768	South-East	011-26476410
South	011-29531277	North-East	011-22115289
East	011-22050908, 22051234	New Delhi	011-23385743
West	011-25195529	Central	011-23270151
North-West	011-25951182	Shahdara	011-22111077

24\*7 Control Room has been established at DGHS (HQ), may be contacted for any query related to COVID-19 Ph: 011-22307145, 22300012, 22300036



# 8 THE OUTBREAK TRACKING COVID-19



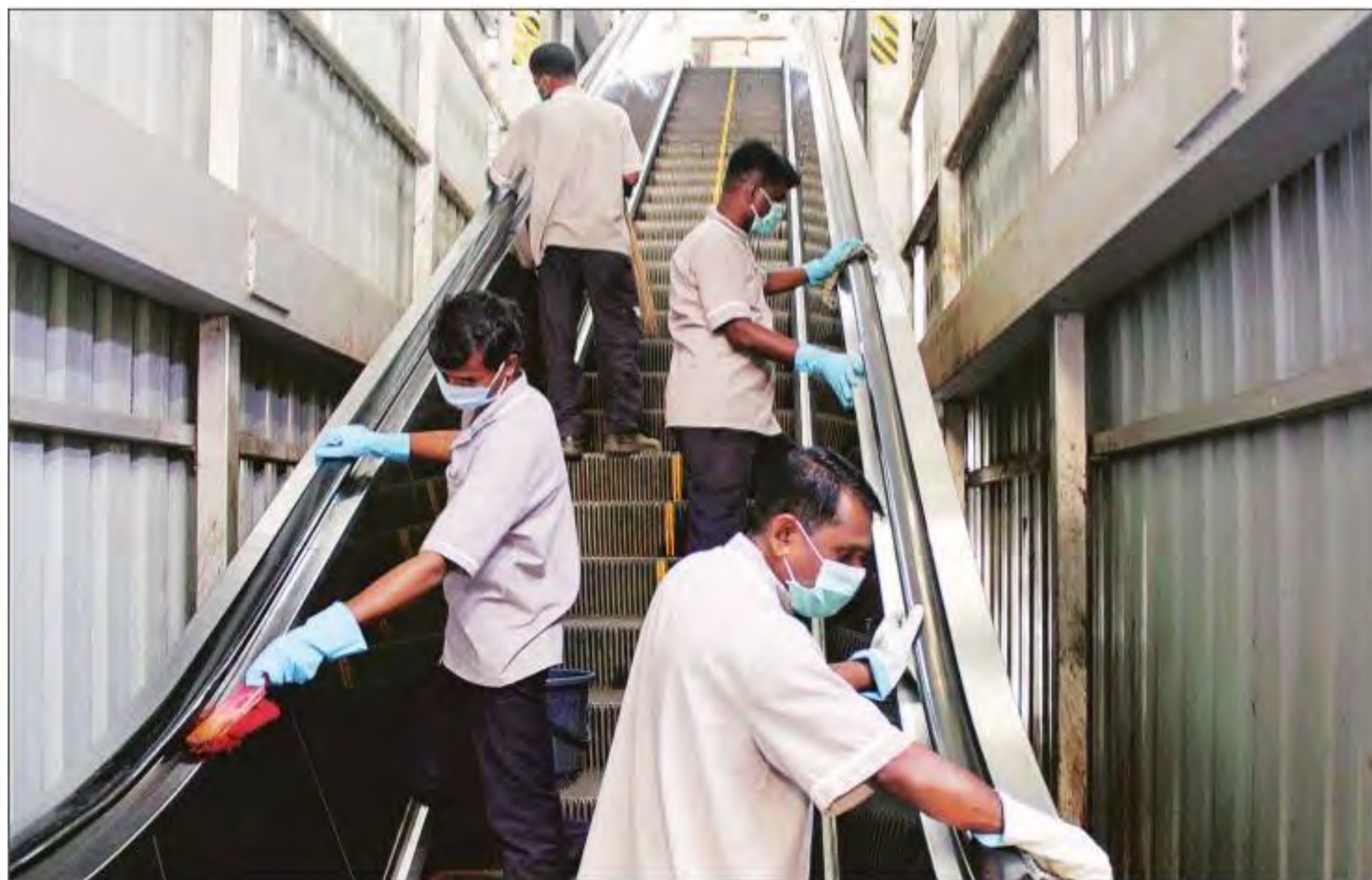
Students during an event in Lucknow. Vishal Srivastava

## UP 2 more cases, count 11 now

Lucknow: With two more confirmed positive cases — Ghaziabad reported its second case, and Lucknow its first — the number of infected people in the state rose to 11 on Thursday. The others who are suffering from the disease are the seven relatives of an infected Delhi resident in Agra, and one person in Noida, according to the State Directorate of Health Services. State Health Minister Jai Pratap Singh said the government might seek the support of the Army, Railways, and the Indian Medical Association to curb the spread of the disease.

## GOA Will write to casinos: Rane

Panaji: Goa Health Minister Vishwajit Rane on Thursday said he will write to the owners and managements of casinos to ensure precautions in the backdrop of the global coronavirus outbreak. "The rules that apply to all will be applicable to them (casinos)," he said. Meanwhile, the Ketevan Sacred Music Festival, an international event held annually in Goa, was postponed on Thursday, a day after the World Health Organisation escalated the global coronavirus outbreak to the status of a pandemic. **ENS**



## STEPPING UP TO THE CHALLENGE

Escalators at Thane railway station are wiped clean every hour as a precautionary measure. Deepak Joshi

### MAHARASHTRA

## 3 more test positive, total 14 now; govt directs all public functions be called off

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE MUMBAI, PUNE, MARCH 12

WITH THREE more persons testing positive for novel coronavirus (Covid-19) in Mumbai, Thane and Pune, the number of positive cases in Maharashtra rose to 14 on Thursday.

This comes on a day when the Uddhav Thackeray government issued an advisory directing that all public functions, tours, drives and administrative programmes be called off in wake of the spread of Covid-19. It also announced that strict action will be taken against those who do not follow the instructions.

State Health Minister Rajesh Tope told mediapersons that of the three cases, the condition of a 64-year-old man who had returned to Mumbai from Dubai on March 8 was serious. Two days later, he was admitted to a private hospital for an existing heart condition. His samples were sent to Kasturba hospital, where they tested positive on Thursday evening.

"He suffers from co-morbidities, that is why his resistance against the virus went

down," said Additional Municipal Commissioner Suresh Kakani.

In Thane, a man who had travelled to France on a solo trip on March 2 and returned on March 8, tested positive. The 35-year-old man, who tested positive in Kasturba hospital — the nodal centre for treating and testing coronavirus — was admitted late Wednesday. He suffered mild symptoms and approached doctors, who referred him to the hospital. While he is stable, his wife and daughter are being admitted to Kasturba hospital for quarantine and tests.

A 33-year-old resident of Pune, who recently returned from the United States, became the ninth person in the city to test positive. Pune District Collector Naval Kishore Ram said the resident had returned from the US on March 1. Health authorities said he did not have any symptoms of the disease at the time of his return, and had stayed at his home after that. He, however, went to Naidu Hospital for a check up, where after coming to know his travel history, his throat swab was sent for tests to National Institute of Virology, Pune on Wednesday.

While 14 have tested positive, 396 samples have been tested for the virus in Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur so far, Tope said. He added that of the 11 cases that came to light on Wednesday, all patients were stable. One person from Nagpur had tested positive on Wednesday.

On Thursday, 1,295 passengers were screened at Pune, Mumbai and Nagpur airports. At least 50 new suspected cases were admitted across Maharashtra. In Pune, 41 suspected cases remain admitted in hospitals while there are 27 in hospitals in Mumbai awaiting test results.

"At a time like this, it would be prudent to avoid large crowds... We have government functions like inaugurations, religious functions or even major political rallies, which should all be avoided. Collectors have been told not to give permission for any public events. Public gatherings should not be allowed to take place at all," said Tope.

CM Uddhav Thackeray also directed the administration to appeal to various organisations to refrain from holding any public or religious gatherings over the next 15 to 20 days.

### BATTLING CORONAVIRUS

## How Kerala district worked to contain spread of disease

VISHNU VARMA KOCHI, MARCH 12

AUTHORITIES IN Kerala's Pathanamthitta district knew that they had a formidable task at hand after a family of three returned from coronavirus-hit Italy on February 29, and proceeded to extensively travel in the region.

The three, along with four of their relatives, have tested positive for Covid-19, and are currently being treated in isolation in hospitals. The government has alleged that the family willfully hid their travel history and did not report at the local hospital for mandatory checks.

However, the authorities, in conjunction with the state Health Department, managed to track around 900 primary and secondary contacts of the family after putting together spatio-temporal flow maps of route movements, assessing CCTV footage and call records, employing dedicated neighbourhood watch staff, and GPS tracking of quarantine locations.

The challenge before the health officials was putting together a flow chart, based on spatio-temporal mapping, of all the places that the family travelled to, as well as the potential contacts they would have made there between February 29 and March 6. Separate medical teams were deputed to carry out field visits and glean information from the infected family.

Based on the information the family gave, top officials got to work, charting a linear narrative of the family's movements in the region. Some of these places included restaurants, banks, post offices and churches.

A doctor who was part of the surveillance meetings said 17 medical teams were deputed on the field to visit these places, identify contacts based on their interactions with the family, and place them under home quarantine. Each team consisted of two community medicine doctors, a doctor from the state health services and a field staff.

"It was extremely challenging. Our field teams had to go and verify the CCTV footage in many of the places. All of our 17 teams have worked very hard to track the movements of the patients. Those who had direct contact with the family were classified as primary contacts. And those who interacted with the primary contacts were classified as secondary contacts. The primary contacts are



A team of 15 engineering students are currently working at the Collectorate office using basic geo-mapping tools.

the high-risk cases," said the doctor. As of March 11, 892 people are under observation in Pathanamthitta, of which 860 people are under home quarantine and the remaining isolated in hospitals. Almost all the people have had primary or secondary contact with the family.

Drawing from experiences learnt during the 2018 floods, the district administration called upon a team of student volunteers to set up GPS tracking of those under quarantine. A team of 15 engineering students are currently working at the Collectorate office in Pathanamthitta using basic geo-mapping tools to plot the addresses of those under observation in homes.

"The advantage is that we can identify the clusters and the high-risk neighbourhoods based on the maps. This can help us strengthen the contact list," said a doctor familiar with the exercise.

An intricate surveillance net has also been cast to ensure compliance of home quarantine measures. This includes daily monitoring of the contacts over the phone as well as keeping a watch on them physically through a neighbourhood watch. As per latest data, home quarantine compliance stands at 85 per cent.

A medical officer said calls are made twice a day to the households from the district control room as well as once in the evening from the local primary health centre. Every quarantined member will have a designated field staff. According to the officer, the contact tracing exercise of the Health Department is in its last phase and the gaps will be plugged by the end of this week.

FULL REPORT ON [www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)

## KERALA Two more test positive, count 19 now

SHAJU PHILIP THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MARCH 12

THE NUMBER of people who tested positive for Covid-19 in Kerala rose to 19 on Thursday, officials said. The two people had returned to India from Dubai and Qatar, they said. The final confirmation of another person, who returned from Italy, is awaited.

This is the first time that people who returned from the Gulf have been tested positive. Earlier, those who tested positive had travel history of China and Italy, or were local contacts of a family of three which returned from Italy.

The person who returned from Dubai is now undergoing treatment at the government medical college in Kannur, while the person from Qatar is under isolation at the government general hospital in Thrissur. The passenger from Italy has been isolated in government medical college in Thiruvananthapuram.

Of the three, the 21-year-old youth currently in Thrissur had travelled from Doha to



An empty classroom at a school in Kochi, on Thursday. Reuters

Kochi on February 29. He was on the same flight as the three-member family from Italy, who tested positive on March 7, and has been under isolation since that day and has been put into high risk category, sources said.

With the two cases reported from Kannur and Thrissur on Thursday, seven out of 14 districts in Kerala have reported Covid-19

positive cases. After a review meeting, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan told the media that things are not fully under control. "The anxiety still persists. Apart from two positive cases reported today, there are reports that two Keralites in Bahrain, both nurses, have tested positive, which calls for extreme alert. On Thursday, 900 persons were brought under observation, taking the total number of persons under observation to 4,880. Of them, 270 have been isolated in hospitals, while others are under home quarantine," he said.

Vijayan said the spread of the virus could be effectively curbed, but there have been stray incidents from those who failed to stick to directions. "As the anxiety persists, there is no change in the decision to suspend all functions until March 31. As infection of aged persons is a matter of concern, visits to old-age homes and aged persons should be restricted," he said.

To intensify preventive steps to tackle Covid-19, the government will conduct district-level meetings of all peoples' representatives on Saturday. Ministers have been given charge of specific districts.

## KARNATAKA Man who returned from Greece tests positive

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE BENGALURU, MARCH 12

A 26-YEAR-OLD man in Bengaluru, who recently travelled to Greece, has tested positive for Covid-19, taking the total number of persons who have tested positive for the virus in Karnataka to five.

The Karnataka Health Department in its daily briefing said, "A 26-year-old male patient who came from Greece has tested positive for Covid-19 today. The patient is admitted and isolated at a hospital and is stable. All primary contacts have been traced and are asymptomatic."

The man, who is from Mumbai, returned to his home city from Greece on March 6, arriving in Bengaluru two days later. He visited his office on March 9 and interacted with four co-workers in the establishment with 154 employees, health officials said. The same day, he complained of illness and was admitted to a hospital and was tested for Covid-19, and his tests returned positive, officials said.

The Health Department is currently tracking the health of his brother, with whom he lived in Bengaluru, as well as his family in Mumbai.

None of the people who have tested positive from the Bengaluru region have developed acute respiratory distress conditions, and are stable and responding to care and treatments, officials said.

In all 18 persons are currently admitted at isolation facilities in Karnataka for observation/treatment. Health officials have issued an advisory to companies in Bengaluru, asking them "to provide lists of all employees who have travelled to Covid-19 affected countries after 21st February 2020".

"Any person who has returned from Covid-19 affected countries, or has been in personal contact with such person, must remain in home isolation for 14 days from arrival in India, irrespective of having any symptoms," the health department stated on Thursday.

### OVER 50 IN ISOLATION WARDS

## In Pune, a hospital at the front line of virus fight

ANURADHA MASCARENHAS PUNE, MARCH 12

AT NAIDU hospital in Pune, the conservancy staff is on alert and stops anyone without a mask from entering. Their alertness is imperative as over 50 suspected patients of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) are admitted in isolation wards in this civic hospital.

"Have you come from a foreign country," the attendant asks while some couples wearing masks look around uncertainly at the Pune Municipal Corporation-run hospital, which has earmarked 90 beds for people with symptoms of COVID-19. So far, 55 people have been admitted in the isolation wards and authorities are awaiting reports on at least 44 of them from National Institute of Virology (NIV). Nine persons have tested positive in Pune so far.

The hospital staff has been sensitised on how to interact with people. At the hospital lobby, a three-member doctor and attendants' team, wearing masks, lis-



A procession to mark Shivaji Maharaj's birth anniversary, in Pune. Ashish Kale

tens to queries from people. A woman who returned from Singapore 10 days ago, but has no symptoms, has been directed by her company to get tested at the hospital. Two youngsters in their late 20s walk up to the desk and say they have come from Goa and have a cough. They want to know if they should get tested.

One of the doctors said the staff has prepared a questionnaire for travellers from affected countries. The checklist includes questions about their travel history, whether they have a history of contact with any ill person in that country, whether their co-worker was ill, and if they have visited any health facility. It

also includes questions about their travel details within India. The form has questions on symptoms they had on arrival, if any. The attendants then direct them to the doctors.

If they are asymptomatic, these people have to fill up a form, where they agree to a self-quarantine at their homes, and follow instructions given by doctors.

Medical Superintendent Dr Sudhir Patsute is engaged in training nurses and doctors on how to handle suspected and positive COVID-19 patients. He dismisses complaints about food and water not being available at the hospital. He says the hospital has "simple" isolation wards and sufficient care is being taken to teach housekeeping staff how to talk to patients.

Ten years after Pune saw the pandemic H1N1, experts at Naidu hospital say there is a higher level of coordination between multiple agencies to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

However, doctors admit that there is a level of anxiety due to easily available information about the fast spread of the virus across countries.

## HC TO CENTRE Contact students stranded in Iran instead of issuing advisories: HC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

THE DELHI High Court Thursday directed the Centre to ensure that the Indian embassy in Iran gets in touch with the Indian students stranded there in wake of the coronavirus outbreak instead of "merely issuing advisories".

Justice Navin Chawla asked the Centre to assure the students of all assistance and to "do a little more" than what it has been doing till now to evacuate over 3,000 Indian nationals, including pilgrims, fishermen and students, presently stranded in Iran. The court also directed the government to come up with a positive plan regarding evacuation and the steps taken so far to provide the students with medical and other assistance.

The court's oral observation came during hearing of a plea by nine parents seeking to airlift their children and urging that the authorities be directed to arrange other modes of transportation in order to provide "humanitarian assistance to the Indian students stranded in different universities of Iran".

Appearing for the ministries, the Centre's standing counsel Anurag Ahluwalia apprised the court that mass evacuation was not possible as Iran has banned all commercial flights connecting to India from February 26 and those stranded there have to be tested for Covid-19 before they can be brought back.

Ahluwalia contended that there was no local support on the ground from Iranian authorities. He said it took several rounds of negotiations before the Iranian authorities allowed Indian scientists to set up a lab there to collect samples from Indian citizens and allowed an IAF plane to evacuate 58 nationals, including 25 women and two children.

He further said that the embassy there was in contact with Indian nationals and advisories have been issued to them following the health protocols issued by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The judge said, "Merely issuing advisories was not going to help. That is no assurance. You know where the students are. You have to contact them. Not doing so will not be tolerated. Get in touch with them and give a report by Tuesday (March 17)."



# 9 IN PARLIAMENT BUDGET SESSION

FROM THE GALLERY

FROM THE CHAIR

**RAJYA SABHA**  
 "I urge all of you to reach out to people asking them to exercise caution about coronavirus without panicking... The Members, in particular, shall also be careful while meeting and greeting with people..."

**M VENKAIAH NAIDU**, Chairman

**LOK SABHA**  
 "The minister is writing every member's name. He will reply to everybody one after another... Here in Parliament, you are saying it, not Stalin ji"

**OM BIRLA**, Speaker to DMK member T R Baalu after he flagged the issue of Kanyakumari fishermen stranded abroad on account of coronavirus.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"India has said that if people from certain countries who are coming here, they have to go through quarantine... and Indian citizens who are coming back will obviously come back to quarantine conditions if that is required."

**S JAISHANKAR**, Minister for External Affairs during Zero Hour in Lok Sabha.

ROLL CALL

**PRIME MINISTER:** Not present  
**SONIA GANDHI:** Not present  
**RAHUL GANDHI:** Not Present

5 QUESTIONS



CONGRESS MEMBER MANISH TEWARI FLAGGED THE ISSUE OF LEVYING OF EXORBITANT CHARGES BY THE AIRPORT ECONOMIC REGULATORY AUTHORITY (AERA) ON AIR PASSENGERS DURING QUESTION HOUR IN LOK SABHA. HE SPOKE TO PRADEEP KAUSHAL.

**You made the point that AERA is making passengers pay exorbitant charges. Can you elaborate?**

These charges are determined under Section 16 of the Airport Economic Regulatory Authority Act, 2008 in the form of the passenger usage tax, airport tax and the user development tax. The basis for this is the annual revenue requirement. The passengers are being ripped off through these charges and they are not being compensated through commensurate facilities by airports.

**What additional facilities can be provided to passengers?**

There are a host of measures which can be taken for making airports more friendly for the physically-challenged... Special lounges can be developed for lactating mothers...

**How does this "rip-off" work?**

These are actually hidden charges - part of what passengers pay for their tickets. They are frozen for five years once they are fixed. At the moment, two duration cycles have lapsed. If charges are in excess of what is due, the money has to be redistributed among passengers...

**How can the passengers force a rationalisation of these charges?**

There are 150 to 200 appeals which have been filed by passengers and various airlines against the decision of the AERA with the appellate forum. The jurisdiction of the appellate forum is continuously being shifted... My information is that out of 150 appeals... only five have been disposed of in the past five years.

**What role does the government have to rectify this situation?**

The government needs to sit with the regulator and the appellate authority. There is a need to settle issues.

RAJYA SABHA DISCUSSES DELHI RIOTS

## Govt: Anti-CAA protest converted into communal riots

**KRISHN KAUSHIK**  
 NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

ALLEGING THAT the riots in Delhi were an outcome of a deep-rooted conspiracy, Home Minister Amit Shah assured Rajya Sabha on Thursday that "the guilty will not be spared, irrespective of their community, religion or party affiliation".

Apparently referring to Congress president Sonia Gandhi's address at the Bharat Bachao rally at Delhi on December 14, he said, "I want to tell everyone what happened before the recent riots. There was Shaheen Bagh before December 14. On December 14, it was said at a rally that 'aar paar ki ladai kariye; nahi niklenge toh kayar kehlaenge'. After that on December 15, Shaheen Bagh protest happened... the protests happened for the first time. They were not communal riots but a tussle between police and protesters." He mentioned speeches by several other people and added, "...starting from here, the anti-CAA protest slowly converted into communal riots."

The Union Home Minister said that since Independence, "my party and ideology are being tried to be linked to riots". He then claimed that "76 per cent of the deaths" in riots took place under Congress governments. He said he was certain that the Congress governments "must have tried to stop" the riots and added that "it was condemnable to link riots to my party and ideology".

Defending the Delhi Police, which has been criticised for its role during the violence, he said, "Accuse me and not Delhi Police". He said 4 per cent of the area and 13 per cent of the population of Delhi were affected by the riots. "In such a charged atmosphere, I want to say that they have restricted the violence to 4 per cent of the area and 13 per cent of the population and that's the success of Delhi Police." He also credited Delhi Police with bringing the violence under control in 36 hours.

Responding to questions raised by the Opposition regarding the transfer of the Delhi High Court judge after he pulled up the Delhi Police over its inaction in filing FIRs against the BJP leaders who made hate speeches, Shah said, "The country should know that the government only gives the order for transfer, it is recommended by the Collegium under the Chief Justice of India." He said the recommendation came by



Home Minister Amit Shah in Rajya Sabha. RSTV/PIT

February 12 and the judge's consent had also been taken. Only the Executive order was issued that day, Shah said.

Rejecting charges that the riots were "state-sponsored", he said, "Why would any government engineer such violence when the world's most powerful person" was being hosted. The government was hosting US President Donald Trump at the that time.

More than 700 FIRs have been registered in connection with the violence and 2,647 people arrested, he said.

The Home Minister also denied that Aadhaar Data was used to identify rioters through facial recognition. This came in response to TMC MP Derek O'Brien remark on the Home Minister's statement in Lok Sabha on Wednesday.

"We understand that police need facial recognition to do their job for national security. But are you using technology to identify people in a crowd? Did you admit yesterday on the floor of the House that people's personal data is being used to identify them?" O'Brien said.

"Avoiding privacy breaches is something I honour. I am saying on the record that Aadhaar data was not used for this. I also want to say, that someone's life was taken, someone's house was lit on fire, and what are you talking about privacy for? Police have the authority that whoever did these riots, they should be taken systematically in front of God. We did not breach any Supreme Court guideline in this. We did not breach any privacy," Shah said in Rajya Sabha. He added that the facial recognition technology used data from driving licence and voter ID to identify the rioters.

QUOTE UNQUOTE



**"Was the bomb factory discovered at Tahir's (suspended AAP councillor Tahir Hussain) house not instigation? Children were made to say they will kill Modi-Shah, was this not instigation? (AIMIM leader) Waris Pathan speaks the language of 15 crore and 100 crore... was this not instigation?"**

**PRAKASH JAVADEKAR**  
 INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING MINISTER



**"The Home Minister has to take the responsibility. There is no other way. The Prime Minister has to be responsible. Assure this House that there will not be a second carnage. So, we don't have to quote 1984 and 2002. Did I say 2002... You freak one number around and it is 2020! It is the same thing. It is blood on the hands. It is the same man. It is the same innocent blood."**

**DEREK O'BRIEN**  
 TRINAMOL CONGRESS MP,  
 WEST BENGAL

## Opposition: Assure House there will not be a second carnage

**KRISHN KAUSHIK**  
 NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

AT A time when the country is tackling the novel coronavirus outbreak, the Opposition on Thursday targeted the government in Rajya Sabha over the Delhi riots and accused it of spreading "communal virus".

Opening the discussion, Congress leader Kapil Sibal said two kinds of viruses are wreaking havoc at this point. "One is spreading at the global level. We don't know its foundations yet. Research is on...another virus is here. This is a communal virus which is spreading very fast," he said.

"If you really want to control this virus, you can. But you won't. Because you want to spread this virus. Let me tell you something...if this virus enters the hearts of the youth, you, us and this democracy will not survive," he said. He also said, "The virus you are spreading, we are the medicine."

Referring to speeches by several BJP leaders, Sibal said there was a "licence to kill". He alleged that the violence was "choreographed" and said that the protection of cows "is more important than the protection of human beings" for this government.

"...while celebrations of (US President Donald) Trump were being choreographed and shown on television channels on half the screen, on the other half of the screen, the choreographed violence was being shown. Both were choreographed..." he said.

Sibal said that when the judiciary questioned the police about the videos of hate speeches, the latter claimed they were unaware. "The entire world knew what was happening in Delhi, but the police personnel did not know, the Commissioner of Police did not know. We don't know if the Home Minister (Amit Shah) knew or not, he will tell us."

Deputy Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha, Anand Sharma, called the violence in Delhi a "blot on our democracy" and said it was the "collective responsibility" of the House to remove the blot. He said that there has to be accountability when such a big incident takes place, and questioned the government's preparedness.

Leader of Trinamool Congress in the House Derek O'Brien quoted party chief and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's description of the Delhi violence



Congress MP Kapil Sibal in Rajya Sabha. RSTV/PIT

as a "planned genocide".

"If you look back at history, genocide did not start with the gas chambers... it started with inciting slogans... Now, the way these slogans were made, the way the bigotry was spread, the way the hate was spread, it is very difficult to believe that this does not have the sanction from the top," he said.

He asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Shah to "lead by example" and stop following social media handles "spreading bigotry and hate".

"Of course, this government has achievements, and as an Opposition party, we must acknowledge these achievements, and they are big achievements: pogroms, lynchings, a completely torn social fabric, a ravaged economy with failing banks, job losses, damaged international standing, subverted institutions and fallen democratic norms," he said.

Referring to the 2002 Gujarat riots, he said, "Assure this House that there will not be a second carnage... It is 2002. You freak one number around and it is 2020! It is the same thing. It is blood on the hands. It is the same man. It is the same innocent blood. It is the same sadness. It is the same trauma and the same cover-up. It is the same model."

Referring to the recently held Delhi elections, AAP leader Sanjay Singh said, "Chunaav ke pehle saazish kariyi gayi, chunava ke baad aag lagayi gayi (There was a conspiracy before the elections, and the fire was lit after the elections)."

He accused the government of inciting the riots and questioned why the Home Minister had not gone to meet the victims' families.

## Amendments to insolvency law passed by Parliament

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
 NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

PARLIAMENT ON Thursday passed amendments to the insolvency law that will help ring-fence successful bidders of insolvent companies from risk of criminal proceedings for offences committed by previous promoters.

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill, 2020 was passed by voice vote in Rajya Sabha. It had been approved by Lok Sabha on March 6.

The Bill is set to replace an ordinance which had brought provisions of the Bill into effect on December 28 after it was referred to the Standing Committee on Finance, when it was first tabled in Lok Sabha. It seeks to remove bottlenecks and streamline the corporate insolvency resolution process. It aims to provide protection to new owners of a loan defaulter company against prosecution for misdeeds of previous owners.

The Bill also requires of a minimum of 10 per cent of allottees or 100 individual allottees in a real estate project to initiate insolvency proceedings for real estate projects. As homebuyers are recognised as financial creditors under the IBC, individual homebuyers could initiate insolvency against a real estate company for delays in possession.

The latest changes pertain to various sections of the IBC as well as introduction of a new section.

The IBC, which came into force in 2016, has already been amended three times.

Replying to a short debate on the Bill, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said amendments are in sync with time and also adhere to a Supreme Court order in "letter and spirit".

The minister said need for amendment in the IBC arose because of "changing requirement" and "requirement of fine tuning" the law, as several MPs wanted to know why the government was bringing in so many amendments to a new law.

Stressing that the government is "very responsive" and has been talking to the industry, she assured the House that amendments to the IBC are not being "unthinkingly done".

Sitharaman said the government was taking care of the interest of home buyers, and the requirement of minimum number of home buyers in the IBC has been included to avoid "frivolous litigation".



## ALL SMILES

DMK MP Kanimozhi (left) and Congress MP Hibi Eden (extreme right) at Parliament House on Thursday. Anil Sharma

## Oppn slams govt over 'privatisation' of Rlys, wants Rail Budget restored

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
 NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

OPPOSITION MPs Thursday warned against privatisation of Indian Railways, with many in Lok Sabha urging the government to revert to the system of a separate Rail Budget for greater scrutiny of the national transporter.

Participating in a discussion on demands for grants of the Ministry of Railways, Congress MP M K Raghavan said the BJP government has shown consistent apathy towards railways in the last five years and the dismal performance is visible in the high operating ratio, which is the worst in last 10 years.

"Railways is a services sector. BJP is unaware of reasons for establishment of railways. Railway is not an engine to be auctioned off to the highest bidder, it is for poor man's service," he said.

Raghavan said the focus on Railways in the Union Budget is cursory and reveals neglect. There is a drive to sell off public assets and a colossal failure in its management, he

said. "This Budget is a call for privatisation and eventual selling off of railways which is the lifeline of Indian people," he said.

DMK member S S Palanimanickam said the BJP government is moving towards privatisation of railways. "Air India is on verge of privatisation. Land and sea transport have already been privatised. I suggest just give up the idea of privatisation of railways," he said.

"Earlier, there was a separate Budget for all zones. The Rail Minister used to hold meeting with MPs to know demands of zones but now no such meetings take place."

TMC member Saugata Roy also demanded a separate Rail Budget. "I think it was a wrong step (Budget merger). That is why the Railways is not getting any primacy even today. I think the government should revert to the old system of having a separate Railway Budget," Roy said.

The Group A cadre-merger issue also invited criticism. "This move is being strongly resented by the railway officers. They cannot say it aloud because the government has got 303 MPs, but if you ask individually, every

railway officer will say that this will destroy the ethos of the Railways. I strongly oppose the merger of the three Railway Services into one," he said.

The government had in 2016 approved the merger of the two Budgets, ending a 92-year-old practice.

Pointing out the escalating operating ratio of the Railways, RSP's NK Premachandran said that the CAG has also commented that it is the worst in years. "We have given many suggestions to improve the operating ratio. If the government does not improve it, it will automatically become a reason for privatisation of Railways," he said. Noting that Railways is now appointing only contractual labourers, Palanimanickam said, "If you have the mindset to privatise, how can you save Railways?"

While Railway Minister Piyush Goyal will reply to the discussion Friday morning, Minister of State for Railways Suresh Angadi intervened in the discussion to say that more has been done in the sector on key parameters in the six years of the Narendra Modi government as compared to the 10 years of UPA rule.

## Initial focus on bringing back pilgrims from Iran: Jaishankar

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
 NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

DESCRIBING THE coronavirus outbreak as a matter of "great concern", External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said in Lok Sabha on Thursday that the government's initial focus was on bringing back Indian pilgrims stranded in Iran.

The minister, who was making a statement on the issue, told the House that over 6,000 Indian nationals were stuck in various provinces of Iran. They included about 1,100 pilgrims from Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh and Maharashtra. There were also around 300 students, primarily from Jammu and Kashmir, around 1,000 fishermen from Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat, and others who were living in Iran to pursue their livelihood and religious studies.

The minister said given the pressure on Iran's own resources, a team of six Indian health officials has been deputed to Iran to set up testing and sampling facilities there. The first batch of 108 samples was received in India on March 7. They tested negative, and these people were brought back to India on March 10.

Jaishankar also informed the House that the 1,000 Indian fishermen who were stranded in Iran were located in a region which was not affected by the virus.

"The House will surely appreciate that few other nations have done what we have with respect to Covid-19," he said.

Besides taking steps to check the spread of the virus in the country, the government had ensured that e-visas and visa on arrival were temporarily suspended in certain cases.

Precautionary measures were also being taken on all land borders as well as air and sea entry points. "As a country whose citizens are spread across the world, this is matter of great concern for us. But we have to act responsibly and soberly to address the situation and not create panic," he said.

Health Minister Harsh Vardhan, speaking on the same issue, called upon MPs to spread awareness about coronavirus in their respective constituencies.

The minister said steps were being taken to track people who were affected. About 35,000 people were engaged in community surveillance. "There should be no misconception that there is a lapse in screening," he said.

# Heartburn in Cong after party names RS poll candidates

MANOJ CGG  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

THE CONGRESS on Thursday announced candidates for Rajya Sabha elections. There were no major surprises, but some omissions were glaring and veterans like Ashok Gehlot, Digvijaya Singh and Bhupinder Singh Hooda had their way. Given the lobbying by several top leaders, party leaders said there is heartburn and predicted that the rumblings may come out in the open in the coming days.

The party has fielded Hooda's son Deepender from Haryana, overlooking Congress communication department head Randeep Surjewala and state Congress president Kumari Selja, who is retiring from the Upper House.

Sources said the high command decided to play safe as it did not want a repeat of the fiasco during the 2016 Rajya Sabha election. In 2016, party candidate R K Anand lost after votes of 14 MLAs, almost all of them Hooda supporters, were mysteriously found invalid. This time, Hooda was opposed to giving a ticket to Selja or Surjewala. Sources said Hooda wanted the seat for himself and had plans to field his son from the vacancy arising out of his resignation as MLA. But the high command did not fully give in.

In Madhya Pradesh, the party renominated sitting MP Digvijaya Singh and fielded former BSP leader Phool Singh Baraiya for the second seat. All eyes will now be on the election in Madhya Pradesh, given the turmoil in state Congress and the rebellion by 22 MLAs after the exit of Jyotiraditya Scindia. The BJP has fielded Scindia and Sumner Singh Solanki. There are three vacancies in Madhya Pradesh. The Congress and the BJP, given their strength in the Assembly, can ensure easy win for one candidate each and a contest is on cards on the third seat.

In Maharashtra, the Congress fielded former Youth Congress president and AICC in-charge of

## EXPLAINED List has little for young leaders

AGAINST THE backdrop of Scindia's exit, Congress's candidate list for Rajya Sabha is an effort to balance power equations but does not inspire confidence among the younger lot. The list has only one youngster in Rajiv Satav as the son of Deepender Singh Hooda is seen as the result of arm-twisting by his father. The powerful have managed to get tickets for themselves or their loyalists. This could deepen the discontent in the party.

Gujarat Rajiv Satav. In the race for the ticket were AICC general secretary Mukul Wasnik and former Rajya Sabha MP's Rajani Patil and Rajeev Shukla. In Gujarat, the Congress has fielded AICC in-charge of Bihar Shaktisinh Gohil and former state party president Bharatisinh Solanki.

AICC general secretary K C Venugopal, considered close to Rahul Gandhi, has been fielded from Rajasthan. The other candidate is state Congress general secretary Neeraj Dangi, who is said to be close to Gehlot. "How can you send a person who has lost three assembly polls to Rajya Sabha... people reject him and we reward him," a party leader said.

The surprising name is K T S Tulsani from Chhattisgarh. Tulsani, a former nominated member of Rajya Sabha, is the lawyer of Sonia Gandhi's son-in-law Robert Vadra. The second candidate from Chhattisgarh is Phulo Devi Netam. In Jharkhand, the Congress sprang a surprise by fielding a candidate, Shahzada Anwar, although it does not have the numbers to get one elected. The party hopes to force a contest.

# 'There are consequences when Scindia family is challenged'

MILIND GHATWAI  
BHOPAL, MARCH 12

JYOTIRADITYA SCINDIA, whose entry into the BJP has caused political upheaval in Madhya Pradesh, warned the Kamal Nath government on Thursday that its collapse was imminent.

"Whenever the Scindia family is challenged, there are consequences," he said while speaking at the state BJP headquarters. He recalled how his grandmother, Vijayaraje Scindia, had uninstalled the Congress government in the state in 1967 after she had been slighted. He said even his father, Madhavrao Scindia, was falsely accused of involvement in Hawala scam, an allegation which had equally serious consequences.

"When I spoke about hitting the streets if promises made in the manifesto were not fulfilled, I was told," he said letting BJP workers chant "toh utar jao (step down)", a retort made by Chief Minister Kamal Nath in reply to Scindia.

"What should I do?", the former Union minister asked party workers, only to be told, "wicket gira do" (bring down the government). He reached the party office after a long road show from the airport where he landed with Union Minister Narendra Tomar.

Speaking before Scindia, former Chief Minister and senior BJP leader Shivraj Singh Chouhan likened the state government to Lanka — the kingdom of Ravana in the Ramayana — and said, "Lanka ko agar poori tarah jalana hai, toh Vibhishan ki zaroorat padti hai, Scindiaji hamaare saath hain, (To burn down Lanka completely, one needs Vibhishan. Scindiaji is with us.)"

During his address, Scindia said of Chouhan: "I have not seen a more committed hardworking CM and worker."

"After toiling in the Congress for 20 years, I am handing myself over to you," he told workers.

Meanwhile, a land grab case lodged against Scindia in 2014 and closed by the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) for lack of evidence saw a fresh turn on Thursday as the complainant claimed to have fresh evidence in the case.

The EOW is examining the complaint.



Supporters greet BJP leader Jyotiraditya Scindia at Bhopal airport on Thursday. PTI

# Congress hopeful 7-10 rebel MLAs will return to party fold

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
BENGALURU, MARCH 12

AS MANY as 7-10 of the 19 Madhya Pradesh Congress MLAs, currently residing at a luxury resort on the outskirts of Bengaluru ahead of a possible defection to the BJP, are inclined towards returning to the Congress fold, according to party leaders in Karnataka.

"There are lines of communication with the MLAs residing in the resort. We understand that seven or 10 may return to the Congress fold. There is still a lot of time before a floor test is conducted, so it may take a few more days for clarity to emerge," Congress sources said.

The appointment of D K Shivakumar, the Congress's troubleshooter in Karnataka, as the party chief in the state has bolstered efforts to win back the Madhya Pradesh MLAs, sources said. Meanwhile, a group of Congress leaders from MP on Thursday attempted to access the Prestige Golfshire resort, where the 19 MLAs are holed up, but

were prevented from doing so by police forces at the resort.

Jitu Patwari, a minister who was detained by the police, said that he had gone with the father of Manoj Chaudhary, one of the MLAs holed up at the resort. However, they were prevented from meeting him.

"The MLA was in the swimming pool and his father saw him and approached him, but he was not allowed to meet him by police. Why is a father not being allowed to meet his son?" Patwari said at a press conference later.

Patwari and others who were detained were released following the intervention of Shivakumar, the MP ministers said. Shivakumar said, "I do not want to comment on anything right now. They have come here as my guests and it is my duty to help them in whatever way I can... Time will reveal everything."

The Karnataka Pradesh Congress tweeted, "A team of Madhya Pradesh MLAs who came to meet Congress MLAs from MP who are staying at a resort near Bengaluru were prevented from doing so by the police and were

arrested. This is a condemnable act. The chief minister must apologise for this," accusing the BJP government in the state of "goondaism".

At a press conference in Bhopal, Congress leaders Vivek Tankha and Digvijaya Singh said Chaudhary wanted to come back with his father but police and other authorities did not let them.

Tankha said the party was planning to move the Supreme Court seeking intervention because MLAs from one state had been kept captive in another state, and local authorities were not allowing access even to relatives.

Accusing the BJP of committing a criminal act, Tankha claimed "democracy was in danger". Videos of the altercations between MP ministers and the Karnataka Police were played at the press conference.

Police protection was provided to the rebel Madhya Pradesh MLAs this week after the group of 19 MLAs wrote to Karnataka police chief Praveen Sood seeking security during the duration of their stay in Bengaluru.

# DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



## DELAY IN DISCUSSION

TO ENSURE that the discussion on Delhi riots starts on time, at 2 pm in the afternoon, the Upper House quickly conducted legislative business in the morning session. But as the Indian Mineral Laws (Amendment) Bill was being passed, CPM leader Elamaram Kareem demanded a division vote, which takes longer than voice vote. The demand left the treasury benches and almost all of Opposition surprised and upset, with Leader of Opposition Ghulam Nabi Azad appearing visibly irritated. The Opposition barely had the numbers and the Bill passed with 83 to 12 votes. The voting ended by 2.15 pm and the House was adjourned for 30 minutes and the awaited discussion on the riots was delayed by 45 minutes.

## NEW RESPONSIBILITY

DAMMU RAVI, a 1989-batch Indian Foreign Service officer, has been appointed coordinator for COVID-19 in the Ministry of External Affairs in the rank of additional secretary. Ravi, who was joint secretary in the Commerce ministry, has recently been repatriated to the Ministry of External Affairs. He was earlier joint secretary in charge of Latin America and has earlier served as private secretary to Congress leader Ambika Soni, when she was Tourism minister in the UPA. A speaker of Spanish language, he has served in Mexico, Cuba and Brussels in the past.

## FLAGGING CONCERNS

THE INDIAN Institutes of Technology (IITs) recently made headlines for improving their performance in the QS subject-wise rankings. While their performance in QS Rankings have been consistent, the premier engineering schools haven't been too happy with the outcome of the Times Higher Education Rankings. Last year, many of the old IITs were bested by newer institutions like IIT-Ropar and IIT-Indore. The IITs, it is learnt, have had an opportunity to flag their grievance and concerns with senior representatives of Times Higher Education this year. The institutions have flagged problems with the research impact criterion in which Times Higher Education considers global research projects. The IITs pointed out that these projects/papers have multiple partners and are cited often and eventually end up benefiting smaller institutions who are part of such projects but have little to show for overall research productivity. Times Higher Education is learned to be considering a tweak to this criterion now.

# Will decide on NPR only after Centre clarifies: TN minister

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
CHENNAI, MARCH 12

FACING STRONG criticism from opposition parties and minority communities for supporting the CAA, NPR and NRC, Tamil Nadu Revenue Minister R B Udhayakumar Thursday said the state has decided to stop preparations for the NPR exercise for now as the Centre has not replied to its queries. Kumar was referring to a letter by the state government to the Centre to avoid gathering certain details from people.

Kumar said the government is yet to issue a notification to carry out the NPR process in the state. "We will take a decision on NPR only after we get a clarification from the Centre..." he said. The letter on the NPR questionnaire specified questions on mother tongue, Aadhaar card number, mobile, voter identity card and driving licence besides the date and place of birth of their parents and spouses. The letter came amid fears related to the alleged communal and political motives of the NRC exercise and the new citizenship law.

# MP Speaker issues notice to seven more legislators

Bhopal: With the Kamal Nath government in Madhya Pradesh in crisis, Assembly speaker N P Prajapati on Thursday issued notices to seven more Congress legislators asking them to appear before him to verify if they signed their resignation letters voluntarily or under duress. Resignations of 22 Congress legislators, including six ministers, have

so far reached the Speaker. On Wednesday, he issued notices to six legislators to appear before him on Friday. Those served notices on Thursday will also have to appear on Friday. The remaining nine will be asked to appear before him on Sunday, the day before the crucial Budget Session of the Assembly begins. ENS

**Paschimanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam Ltd.,**  
Victoria Park, Meerut.

**SHORT TERM E-TENDER NOTICE**

Tender are invited through e-tendering for supply of 15 km Copper Control Cable Armoured size 2x2.5 sq. mm, 15 km Copper Control Cable Armoured size 4x2.5 sq. mm & 15 km Copper Control Cable Armoured size 6x2.5 sq. mm against tender specification no. P.V.NL-MT/AM/115/19-20

Date of tender opening on 27.03.2020 Remark - www.etender.up.nic.in

For detailed information please log on www.pvnt.org & E-Tendering website www.etender.up.nic.in till the date of submission of bids. Superintending Engineer (MM-IT) "Help Line Number For Information of Theft of Electricity: \*1800-180-3002 (Meerut) & 9412207451"

Sd/- Superintending Engineer (MM-IT)

पत्रांक: 2721 दिनांक: 12.03.2020

"SAVE ELECTRICITY IN THE INTEREST OF THE NATION"

**बैंक ऑफ इंडिया**  
**Bank of India**

Head Office, Information Technology Department, 5th Floor, C-4, G-Block, Bandra-Kurla Complex, Bandra (E), Mumbai-400051. E-mail: headoffice.it@bankofindia.co.in

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) FOR PROCUREMENT, INSTALLATION AND COMMISSIONING OF 155 MB INTERNET LINK AT BKC, HEAD OFFICE**

The captioned RFP is available on Bank's corporate website www.bankofindia.co.in under "Tender" section since 11.03.2020

Subsequent changes if any, will henceforth be uploaded only on the website. The last date of submission: 17.04.2020

**UJVN Limited** (An Uttarakhand Govt. Enterprises)  
H.O. "UJJAWAL" Maharani Bagh, GMS Road, Dehradun-248006  
Telephone: 0135-2763508, 2763808, Fax: 0135-2763507  
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866, Website: ujvn.com

**E-Tender Notice**

Office of the Executive Engineer (Civil), MB-II Chinyalisaur (Uttarkashi) invites sealed tender from interested parties. Brief summary of tender is given below.

**Tender No.** : 19/EE (Civil)/MB-II/Chinyalisaur/2019-20

**Name of work** : Flood protection work right bank of Bhagirathi River in front of Tail Race Channel from Chainage 270 mtr to 450 mtr of Dharasu Power House, Dharasu, Uttarkashi.

**Estimate Cost** : Rs. 1,68,81,000.00 (excluding GST)

**Earnest Money Deposit** : Rs. 4,35,000.00

**Tender Fee** : Rs. 11,800.00 (Inclusive GST)

**Date & Time of availability of bid document on website** : 05.00 PM of 14.03.2020

**Last date & time of submission of bids on website** : 05.00 PM of 08.04.2020

**Last date, time & Place of submission of hard copies of bids** : 09.04.2020 upto 11.00 AM, in Chinyalisaur.

**Date & time of opening of bids on website** : 09.04.2020 at 03:00 PM

For fuller & further detail, kindly visit e-procurement portal "http://uktenders.gov.in"

पत्र सं. 143, दिनांक: 11.03.2020 E.E. (Civil), MB-II, Chinyalisaur.

"AVOID WASTEFUL USE OF ELECTRICITY"

**TAMIL NADU SLUM CLEARANCE BOARD**  
MADRURAI CIRCLE

NOTICE INVITING SHORT TENDER

FORM OF CONTRACT: "LUMPSUM (TWO COVER SYSTEM)"

For and on behalf of Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board, sealed tenders consisting of two separate sealed covers one for Pre-qualification and EMD to be enclosed in 'A' cover and another for price schedule with name of work duly subscribed to be enclosed in 'B' cover, are invited from the registered contractors under Class-I and above in TNSCB / Government Departments / Government undertakings by the Superintending Engineer, Madurai Circle, Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board, 169 K.K. Nagar Main Road, Madurai - 20 to till 3.00 PM on 27.03.2020 and the same will be opened at 3.15 PM on the same day in the presence of the Tender Scrutiny Committee.

Sl. No.	NAME OF WORK	Tender Value (including GST) Tender of Contract	EMD (in Rs.)
1	Construction of 216 nos tenements (G+2) with internal water supply, sanitary and electrification arrangements with all other development works at Ranganthi Palai in Pudukkottai District under AHP of PMAY. CER.No.74/HFA-2019-20	1771.45 (Lakh) 12 Months	0.96,000/-
2	Construction of 120 nos tenements (G+3) with internal water supply, sanitary and electrification arrangements with all other development works at Aranthangi in Pudukkottai District under AHP of PMAY. CER.No.75/HFA-2019-20	967.32 (Lakh) 15 Months	5.00,000/-
3	Construction of 528 nos tenements (G+2) with internal water supply, sanitary and electrification arrangements with all other development works at Ranganthi Palai in Pudukkottai District under AHP of PMAY. CER.No.76/HFA-2019-20	4132.69 (Lakh) 12 Months	20,86,000/-
4	Construction of 30 nos tenements (G+2) with internal water supply, sanitary and electrification arrangements with all other development works at Mahasagarathirum in Pudukkottai in Thanjavur District under AHP of PMAY. CER.No.80/HFA-2019-20	715.00 (Lakh) 12 Months	3.70,000/-
5	Construction of 788 (G+2) tenements including internal water supply, sanitary and electrification arrangements with all development works at Reddyarpathi Ph-I in Tirunelveli in Tirunelveli District under AHP of PMAY. CER.No.78/HFA-2019-20	8985.06 (Lakh) 18 Months	30,05,000/-
6	Construction of 672 nos of (G+2) tenements with internal water supply, sanitary and electrification arrangements at Uchappali Thampur in Madurai District under AHP of PMAY. CER.No.78/HFA-2019-20	5139.78 (Lakh) 12 Months	25,86,000/-
7	Construction of 840 (G+2) tenements including internal water supply, sanitary and electrification arrangements with all development works at Karadikkal in Thiruvannamalai District under AHP of PMAY. CER.No.79/HFA-2019-20	6003.79 (Lakh) 12 Months	31,65,000/-

The cost of tender schedule, EMD should be drawn as Demand Draft or Banker's Cheque from Nationalised / Scheduled Bank payable in favour of the Executive Engineer Thiruchirappalli Division, TNSCB, payable at Thiruchirappalli for S.No.1 to a and in favour of the Executive Engineer, Tirunelveli Division, TNSCB, payable at Tirunelveli for S.No.5 in favour of the Executive Engineer, Madurai Division, TNSCB payable at Madurai for S.No.6 to 7. The tender documents may be obtained from the office of the Superintending Engineer, Madurai Circle, TNSCB, 169 K.K. Nagar Main Road, Madurai - 20 on written requisition along with cost of the tender document to a value of Rs.17,700. (Non refundable upto 3.00 PM on 28.03.2020)

Conditions for participating in the tenders may be seen from the website www.tenders.tn.gov.in.

The undersigned reserves the right to reject any of all the tenders without assigning any reasons therefor.

169 K.K. Nagar Main Road, Madurai-625 020. DIP/1403/TENDER/2020 SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER MADURAI CIRCLE

**HARYANA GOVERNMENT TENDER NOTICE**

SR. NO.	NAME OF DEPARTMENT	NAME OF WORK/NOTICE/TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE	AMOUNT/EMD (APPROX.) in Rupees	WEBSITE OF THE DEPARTMENT	NODAL OFFICER
1	PWD BAR, CHANDIGARH AT PANCHKULA	ANNUAL MAINTENANCE TO LAND SCAPING WORK OF PLANTATION IN CENTRAL VERGE OF FOUR LANNING IN KM 42.72 TO 47.08 & 0 TO 1.7 (CITY PORTION NARAINGARH) OF S.H.NO.1 DISTT AMBALA - 7 OTHER WORKS	10.03.2020 18.03.2020	81.40 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	0172-2920301
2	PWD BAR, SIRSA	CONSTRUCTION/RENOVATION OF 26 NOS. SUB HEALTH CENTRE/PHCS (HWV) OF PROV. DIVISION NO.11, PWD BAR BR. SIRSA IN SIRSADISTT. (RE-INVITED)	12.03.2020 26.03.2020	207.92 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01866-222959/pwd-sep2-sirsa@hry.nic.in
3	PWD BAR, NUH	S/R FOR SHC AT VILLAGE RAWLI MAHOLI & BADARPUR IN NUH DISTT. * 6 OTHER WORKS	13.03.2020 27.03.2020	138.46 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01267-271237
4	PWD BAR, REWARI	CONSTRUCTION OF IN NEW STADIUM AT SUREHLI IN REWARI DISTT.	12.03.2020 03.04.2020	192.40 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01274-252703/pwd-sep2-rewari@hry.nic.in
5	PWD BAR, BHIVANI	SPECIAL REPAIR OF PRIMARY HEALTH CENTRE AT VILLAGE ALAKHURA IN BHIVANI DISTT.	11.03.2020 25.03.2020	6.89 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01664-242436/pwd-sep2-bhivani@hry.nic.in
6	IRRIGATION AND WATER RESOURCES DEPT., REWARI	REPAIR OF LINING AND WEAK BANK STRENGTHENING OF DEWANA DISTY. FROM K.M. 24.180 TO 24.980 + 3 OTHER WORKS.	CLOSING DATE 19.03.2020	65.82 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	xemredvrr11@gmail.com
7	IRRIGATION AND WATER RESOURCES DEPT., SIRSA	REPAIR OF W.C. OF OIL RD 84888-R BANI DISTY (IN BETWEEN W/C X-ING & CHANNEL IN THE LENGTH 50FT.)	12.03.2020 18.03.2020	1.23 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	Dharampal
8	PANCHAYAT RAJ, REWARI	CONST. OF 10 NOS LINK ROAD AT VARIOUS VILLAGE BLOCK-NAHAR, JATUISANA, KHOL, BAWAL, REWARI, DAHINA & CONST. OF SLWM AT VILLAGE AKERA, IBRAHIMPUR	16.03.2020 30.03.2020	270.18 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01274-222660/9416421261/etenders@hry.nic.in

80354/HRY. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT: www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in or www.etenders.hry.nic.in

**HARYANA GOVERNMENT CORRIGENDUM NOTICE**

SR. NO.	NAME OF BOARD CORP./AUTH	OLD REFERENCE/NIT NO.	NATURE OF CORRIGENDUM	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP./AUTH	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	UHBVN PANCHKULA	NIT-5/2019-20	opening & closing date is extended to 25.03.2020 at 03:30PM	www.uhbvn.org.in	9315132117 venopambnaboc@uhbvn.org.in
2	UHBVN PANCHKULA	NIT-6/2019-20	opening & closing date is extended to 25.03.2020 at 03:30PM	www.uhbvn.org.in	9315132117 venopambnaboc@uhbvn.org.in
3	HVPNL, GURUGRAM	E-TENDER ENQUIRY NO. 14/CWG/2019-20 DATED 13.02.2020 (ONLINE TENDER ID- 2020 HBC 118241 )	Corrigendum No.01 date of bid Submission, 09.04.2020 at 01:00 PM, Opening 15.04.2020 at 01:00 PM	https://www.hvprn.org.in	0172-2583789 pro@hvprn.org.in
4	HVPNL, PANCHKULA	20/CCD-286/VOL-XI/2020-21 DATED 24.02.2020	The last date of online bid submission is extended up to 16.03.2020	https://www.hvprn.org.in	0172-2583789 pro@hvprn.org.in
5	HPGCL, HISAR	2020_HBC_114430_2 NIT NO.118/RGTPP/BMD-1/280 VOL-1 DT. 03.01.2020	Corrigendum -1st Due Date of Closing date 09.03.2020 up to 17:00 Hrs Opening is 12.03.2020 up to 11:00 Hrs. Dismantling, Preparation/Service of defective Primary Air & Induced Draft fans assemblies and replacement of PA Fan & ID Fan assemblies in Unit-1 811, at RGTPP, Khetar, Hisar	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9354516229 rk.gulati@hpgcl.org.in
6	DHBNV, HISAR	NIT NO. 27/EOH-88/2019-20 (TENDER ID NO. 2020_HBC_118220_1)	Date extended up to 16.03.2020	www.dhbnv.org.in	70273-48444 estateofhissar@dhbnv.org.in
7	DHBNV, HISAR	NO.03/CAQ/ABR.DATED 12.02.2020	Extend closing date upto 19.03.2020	www.dhbnv.org.in	98125-56369 cao@dhbnv.org.in
8	HPGCL, HISAR	2020_HBC_116062_1 NIT NO.316/RGTPP/PM-1/TOE-12514 DT. 22.01.2020	Corrigendum -2nd Due Date of Closing date 18.03.2020 up to 15:00 Hrs Opening is 23.03.2020 up to 15:30 Hrs. Supply of Various size of valves at RGTPP, Khetar, Hisar	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9315164637 mm11rgpp@ijgmil.com

80352/HRY. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT: www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in or www.etenders.hry.nic.in

# RJD nominates businessman, ex-MP to RS

Patna: The Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) on Thursday nominated businessman Amrendrahar Singh and former MP Prem Chandra Gupta to the Rajya Sabha. While Gupta's nomination was expected, the choice of Singh came as a surprise to political circles.

Singh is a member of the Bhumihars — an upper caste community. He has business interests in real estate, chemicals and fertilisers. RJD's alliance partner Congress, which was trying to secure at least one nomination, had to back out after with the RJD needing support of two MLAs to get two Rajya Sabha seats.

RJD state president Jagdanand Singh confirmed the nominations. "It was only in wee hours of Thursday that Singh's name was finalised... But he has no political background," said an RJD functionary, adding the decision was taken by the top brass. ENS



Haji Alim

## Son held for killing former BSP MLA

AMIL BHATNAGAR  
NOIDA, MARCH 12

A FORMER Bahujan Samaj Party MLA's son has been arrested for allegedly murdering his father while out on bail in the murder case of his stepmother. Haji Alim's son Anas Alim was arrested by the Crime Branch of the Crime Investigation Department (CB-CID) from Meerut, and produced in Bulandshahr court on Thursday. Haji Alim was found shot dead in his home on October 10, 2018. A forensic report, dated October 22, highlighted the details of his bullet wounds, following which the police said the former legislator had committed suicide. Haji's family, including his son Danish, approached the Allahabad High Court, demanding more detailed investigation into the case. The case was handed over to CB-CID last year. The deceased's driver had been earlier arrested for alleged conspiracy.

"As officials conducted investigation, sufficient evidence was found which alleged that Anas was involved in his father's murder," said Mohini Pathak, the additional superintendent of police of CB-CID Meerut. "The probe was conducted for about a year. The accused was arrested from Kankarkhera in Meerut. Other facts are being ascertained."

Both Anas and Danish were arrested in 2013 in connection with the alleged murder of their stepmother Rehana in 2013 in New Jaffrabad in Delhi. The two were accused of killing Rehana because of a rift in the family following her marriage to Haji. The case was investigated by North East Delhi Police. Danish is still out on bail in the case.

# Told of UK ruling, SC sends UP hoardings matter to larger bench

ANANTHAKRISHNAN G  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

A TWO-JUDGE bench of the Supreme Court on Thursday referred to a larger bench a petition of the UP government which has challenged the Allahabad High Court's order to remove banners and hoardings carrying photographs and details of over 50 people accused of violence during anti-CAA protests in Lucknow.

While it initially observed that there was "no law" to back the action of the UP government, the bench decided to send the matter to a larger bench after it was told about the "persuasive value" of a judgment of the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom.

"Let papers be placed by Registry before the Chief Justice immediately so that a bench of sufficient strength can be constituted by the Chief Justice in coming week to hear controversy involved," the bench of Justices UU Lalit and Aniruddha Bose said after hearing the state's appeal.

The bench initially questioned the state's move and said its action seems to have been without



The Allahabad High Court had ordered the immediate removal of the roadside posters in Lucknow. Express

the force of law. "As of now, there is no law which can back your actions," Justice Lalit told Solicitor General Tushar Mehta.

Mehta contended that the persons whose photographs were on public display were "rioters" and that they had waived their privacy rights after what they had done in public.

He then cited a 2015 judgment of the UK Supreme Court. The appellant in that case, he said, was involved in serious rioting in

Derry in July 2010 when he was only 14 years old. CCTV images taken of him during the course of rioting were later published in two newspapers as part of a police campaign called 'Operation Exposure' designed to identify individuals involved in the riots and also to discourage further sectarian rioting, he said. According to Mehta, the appellant contended that it constituted a violation of his privacy rights under Article 8 of the European Convention on

Human Rights (ECHR) (the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms).

Article 8 of ECHR deals with the right to respect for private and family life. It says in 8.1 that "everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence". It adds in 8.2 that "there shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of other".

The UK court, in its ruling, said the interference was justified, Mehta said.

Taking note, Justice Lalit said "as presently advised, since there is a judgment of the Supreme Court of a country and since it has a persuasive value, we will refer the matter to a bench of three judges to be taken up before a regular bench".

FULL REPORT ON [www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)

## Sengar in court: Hang me, burn my eyes with acid if I did wrong

ANAND MOHAN J  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

EXPELLED BJP MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar, who is currently serving life imprisonment for the rape of a minor from Unnao, told a Delhi court on Thursday that he should be hanged and acid poured into his eyes if he has done anything wrong.

Sengar said this while pleading for a reduced sentence in the case pertaining to the death of the rape victim's father in judicial custody on April 9, 2018. Sengar and six others have been convicted in the case of culpable homicide not amounting to murder and the court is hearing arguments on the quantum of punishment.

Addressing District Judge Dharmesh Sharma, Sengar said, "Please give me justice. Otherwise, hang me, bum my eyes with acid if I did something wrong."

The judge told Sengar, "It is not so simple. There are so many phone calls... After 6 pm the fight had taken place... the father was being beaten... What did you do? Was there no interference on your part?"

The CBI told the court that Sengar and the six others convicted in the case should be



In jail for rape of minor in Unnao

awarded the maximum punishment of life imprisonment. The court will announce the order on the quantum of sentence on Friday. Among those convicted are Sengar, his brother, two policemen and three others.

The CBI prosecutor told the judge that the two convicted policemen deserve a harsh sentence.

While convicting the accused, the court said the sequence of events "establishes clearly, beyond reasonable doubt, that under the patronage of accused Kuldeep Singh Sengar, his foot soldiers — namely Vineet Mishra, Birender Singh and Shashi Pratap Singh (and probably with others who could not be identified) — assaulted the victim with leg and fist blows by intermittently hitting him... with the barrel of the rifle."

The court, however, acquitted the other accused — constable Amir Khan, Shailendra Singh, Ram Sharan Singh and Sharadveer Singh — giving them the benefit of doubt.

## Not in blood to become CM: Rajinikanth

ARUN JANARDHANAN  
CHENNAI, MARCH 12

ACTOR-TURNED-POLITICIAN Rajinikanth on Thursday announced that he will never contest elections to become a Chief Minister. His statement came in the wake of reports that he would be launching his party ahead of the Tamil Nadu Assembly polls, scheduled for May 2021.

Addressing the media in Chennai, Rajinikanth said that it was not in his blood to become the CM, adding that there will be separate leadership for the party and the government in his new outfit. He said his party, with a group of "talented and selfless youngsters", will form a party council under his leadership with a young Chief Minister.

"Let all youngsters who couldn't get deserving posts in other parties join us. The remaining strength in the leadership will be filled by retired judges and IAS officers. I will go and knock on their doors to invite them," he said, adding that he will play the role of a "bridge" to facilitate this process.

He said his own office-bearers opposed him. But, he added, a leader is not someone who would listen to cadres but one who makes his cadres listen. "If I didn't have the thirst for power at the age of 45 (in 1996, when he first announced a possible foray into politics), I should be a lunatic to have the same at this age. What I want is a political change, like what Anna (DMK founder CN Annadurai) brought to Tamil Nadu (in the 1960s). He captured power, gave opportunity to so many talented youngsters to emerge as leaders," Rajinikanth said.

Reiterating his 2017 statement, when he said that the "system is not correct", Rajinikanth said the process for change has to "begin from the people".

Rajinikanth said that a party launched by him would be fighting "two legends" — a reference to DMK and AIADMK, who "enjoy money and muscle power".

## HC lifts suspension of TikTok accounts of 3 booked last year

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
MUMBAI, MARCH 12

THE BOMBAY High Court has lifted the suspension of the TikTok accounts of three men who were booked for an "objectionable" video on the mobile app following a lynching incident in Jharkhand in June last year.

The Cyber Cell of the Mumbai Police in July last year had blocked the TikTok accounts of Hasnain Khan (21), Mudassar Shaikh (23) and Shadan Farooqui (23). The High Court had granted them pre-arrest bail in August the same year, saying that their custodial interrogation was "unwarranted".

The police had alleged that the video uploaded by them could harm peace and harmony in society.

The ban was lifted last week by the division bench of acting Chief Justice B P Dharmadhikari and Justice NR Borkar passed an order on March 5. "Despite granting of the bail, their accounts continued to remain suspended, causing dent to their ability to earn a livelihood," claimed advocates Ranbir Singh and Priyanka Khimani, appearing for petitioners.

The court noted that the procedure under Section 69 (A) of the Information Technology Act and relevant provisions under criminal law, was not followed.

## Gaganyaan: Four IAF pilots complete winter survival training at Russia centre

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
BENGALURU, MARCH 12

FOUR INDIAN trainee astronauts preparing for Gaganyaan — India's first manned space mission — have completed their winter survival training programme as part of a year-long astronaut training course conducted by the Yuri Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Centre in Russia.

The training included survival techniques required in the event of the crew landing in a cold zone and was "successfully overcome by representatives of the Indian

Space Research Organisation," the training centre has reported. The winter survival course was conducted from February 12 to March 6 for trainee and experienced astronauts training for future missions.

The programme involved "theoretical and practical exercises on tactics of behaviour and actions after landing a descent vehicle in extreme conditions using equipment on board a spaceship as well as improvised material," according to the training centre.

The trainees were also put through a two-day practical survival test by a team comprising in-

structors, doctors, psychologists and other specialists. The centre has reported that specialists who conducted the tests found a "high level of motivation and skill among the Indian candidates".

"They did not get the most favourable weather conditions. On their training days, it was raining, there was wet snow, an ice crust that formed was melting underfoot," the centre noted. Despite the difficult situation, they completed all the tasks under the guidance of specialists, it observed.

The training programme involves looking for a safe place to organise a camp, building two

types of shelters, conducting radio exchanges as per regulations, sending out fire signals, tending to injured persons and getting rescued by a helicopter.

The four Indian Air Force test pilots began their basic training for space missions at the centre on February 10.

The four pilots will return to India for mission-specific training after a year at the Gagarin Centre. "Generic astronaut training is happening in Russia. Russian systems are different from that of the Gaganyaan. Mission-specific training will happen in India," officials have said.

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare  
Government of India

Help us to help you

# NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID19)

## Protect yourself and others!

### Follow these Do's and Don'ts

#### Do's

- Practise frequent hand washing. Wash hands with soap and water or use alcohol based hand rub. Wash hands even if they are visibly clean
- Cover your nose and mouth with handkerchief / tissue while sneezing and coughing
- See a doctor if you feel unwell (fever, difficult breathing and cough). While visiting doctor wear a mask/cloth to cover your mouth and nose
- If you have these signs/symptoms, please call State helpline number or Ministry of Health & Family Welfare's 24X7 helpline number 011-23978046

#### Don'ts

- Have a close contact with anyone, if you're experiencing cough and fever
- Touch your eyes, nose and mouth
- Spit in public
- Throw used tissues into closed bins immediately after use
- Avoid participating in large gatherings

Together we can fight Coronavirus

For further information call

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India's 24X7 control room number +91-11-23978046 or email at [ncov2019@gmail.com](mailto:ncov2019@gmail.com)



The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY  
RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

POSITIVE RESPONSE

It is reassuring that Centre and states appear to have closed ranks to face novel coronavirus

ON MARCH 11, as COVID-19 spread rapidly outside China with a 13-fold increase in infections detected and the World Health Organisation declared it a pandemic, Secretary General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus offered hope: "If countries detect, test, treat, isolate, trace, and mobilise their people in the response, those with a handful of cases can prevent those cases becoming clusters, and those clusters becoming community transmission." India, with 70-odd cases, has the advantage, and commendably, the central and state governments have reacted rapidly to the developing pandemic. Equally importantly, they have set aside the acrimony over the CAA-NRC question and pulled together, without the need for external urging, because everyone realises that COVID-19 is everyone's problem. No visas are being issued, screening is in progress, health education messaging is visible, public gatherings are sharply reduced and there is no sign of the wearying political blame game which generally besets such challenges.

The secretary general has also cautioned that while many nations can avoid the pandemic, the operative verb is not "can" but "will". The Indian response has displayed political will, but there is no room for complacency. This is the first coronavirus to reach pandemic levels. For at least 18 months, no vaccine can be market-ready. At least until the summer, there will be insufficient information about the behaviour of the organism in the wild. Wisely, Homo sapiens fears the unknown. Until we learn more about the nature of the beast, abundant caution is the only credible prescription. At present, the focus of the response is isolation (including self-isolation) and the maintenance of sanitation barriers. Schools have been closing down, some workplaces are screening staff, and people are discouraged from leaving home without a compelling reason. However, outside the controlled conditions in homes and hospitals, maintaining the patency of the sanitation barrier requires extraordinary vigilance and self-control.

In the case of breaches — a few oversights or accidents are inevitable — the readiness of healthcare facilities would become a serious factor in controlling mortality. The quality of the states' level of preparedness and the quality of health services varies. While Kerala efficiently controlled the Nipa virus, Uttar Pradesh, the most populous state, has failed to contain annual outbreaks of Acute Encephalitis Syndrome for over a decade. And the capital's initial failure in the face of seasonal waves of lethal mosquito-borne diseases cannot be forgotten. How much less protected would a rural cluster be, serviced by a poorly equipped primary health centre? If community transmission becomes commonplace, it would become a difficult battle. Hence, the sanitation barrier remains the most reliable epidemiological response. If the government has to resurrect primordial provisions from the era of bubonic plagues to keep it patent, so be it.

SERIOUS RECKONING

Home Minister assures action on Delhi riots without fear or favour. Record so far doesn't inspire, Delhi Police will be watched

WHEN UNION HOME Minister Amit Shah rose to speak on the Delhi riots in Lok Sabha on Wednesday, and in Rajya Sabha the next day, he sounded combative and unsparing. He countered the widespread criticism of Delhi Police, which has come under fire for inaction or complicity or both. Delhi Police did its job well, said Shah, in preventing the violence from spreading in a time when "gehri saazish", deep conspiracy, was afoot. It was not this "hate speech", but that one, which was the culprit, he said. Shah was defending the provocative rhetoric of his party colleagues, Kapil Mishra and Anurag Thakur, without taking their names, while casting in the dock speeches made by Sonia Gandhi, whom he didn't name either, and AIMIM's Waris Pathan, whom he did. More than once, he promised that the guilty would have nowhere to hide, "koi baksha nahin jayega". In this, the first discussion in the House, days after the violence in Delhi took a terrible toll, the Home Minister's expressions of sympathy for those who suffered losses seemed too perfunctory and his combativeness too long. And, given the Narendra Modi government's record on treatment of dissent, his promise that the guilty would be booked by using crowdsourced videos, CCTV footage and face recognition software, was disquieting.

The government has turned a deaf ear to the anti-CAA protests which form the backdrop of Delhi's communal violence, when it has not sought to deny protesters agency, or paint them as "anti-national". In Lok Sabha, Home Minister Shah reiterated that the youth and the minorities were being "misled" by spectral others. By refusing to engage with the arguments and insecurities of law-abiding citizens stoked by a law that makes religion a criterion of citizenship, the minister and his government have drawn hardening lines that set the tone for the brutality of the police crackdown in BJP-ruled UP earlier, and now, in Delhi, the apprehensions that innocents could be targeted under guise of pursuing the guilty.

In Rajya Sabha, Minister Shah said that government would impound the property of the rioters, make them pay for the damage. A similar move by the Adityanath government raised serious questions about due process, or its short-circuiting, in UP. The communal violence in Delhi does call for a serious reckoning. But this process must be informed by fairness and compassion of the state on one end, and by the people's trust on the other. The Home Minister has said "the government will not spare anyone from any side". This promise will be tested by the quality of justice to those who have suffered and that depends on how the Delhi Police investigate and prosecute riot cases. That they report to him should make monitoring them easier.

LINES IN THE SAND

Cartoon of UK Home Secretary Priti Patel is accused of racism. Boundaries between satire and bullying are ever shifting

PRITI PATEL, HOME secretary in Boris Johnson's cabinet in the United Kingdom, is certainly not exempt from criticism or caricature. Her patchy record, the multiple accusations against her of harassing colleagues and civil servants, and her headline stance on issues, make her more amenable to satire than most. A cartoon in *The Guardian* — depicting Patel as a cow with a ring in her nose and Johnson as a bull protecting her — has invited the ire of the British-Indian community, among others. Among the various forms of satire, the political cartoon is one that most pushes boundaries. It is based on exaggeration and caricature, an image that can bring the myriad hypocrisies of the powers-that-be into focus. Yet, it would not be wrong to say that basic notions of good taste and decency do apply. Such notions and boundaries, though, are constantly negotiated, and often, the way to find the line between cutting the powerful down to size and relying on prejudice to get a cheap laugh, is by crossing it.

Steve Bell is a celebrated left-wing cartoonist known for being both witty and provocative. The question is whether his depiction of Patel and Johnson is provocative or insensitive and racist. Or, to put it differently, would *The Guardian* publish a cartoon that used the Star of David to make fun of a Jewish member of the government? Or play on the crucifix to lampoon a right-wing religious leader with a martyr complex? These are complex questions, with no simple answers. But it is important, perhaps, to ask them.

No apocalypse now

Threat from coronavirus is real, demands vigilance. But responses to it are bordering on paranoia



SHAH ALAM KHAN

IN *THE PLAGUE*, Albert Camus describes the French town of Oran, which is swept by a plague leading to the death of thousands of inhabitants. Camus's novel is the story of a community struck by a destructive force, to which it refuses to surrender. The outbreak of the COVID-19 Novel Coronavirus epidemic and the response to it from people and countries are not so different from Camus's plot.

In India, there has been an unprecedented response to this brewing pandemic. Conferences and public events have been cancelled, weddings postponed, schools have been closed and even Prime Minister Narendra Modi called off the regular Holi milan programme fearing the spread of the virus. Visas have been cancelled and the country is in a virtual lockdown. The frantic buying of protective masks and hand sanitisers and the surge in prices of these items is a small indicator of the collective paranoia which has swept us. The WHO has declared the disease a pandemic.

In a situation like the current one, there is a thin line between paranoia and logic and the reinforcement of one leads to the natural erosion of the other. Having said this, let me clarify that the threat posed by the COVID-19 Novel Coronavirus pandemic is very real but our paranoid response to it is not. A scientific and historical perspective is thus essential to understand why the fear of the coronavirus in India is exaggerated, if not hyped.

Flu pandemics are among the commonest ones to affect the world. Three influenza pandemics occurred at intervals of several decades during the 20th century, the most severe of which was the Spanish Flu (caused by an A (H1N1) virus), estimated to have caused up to 50 million deaths in 1918-1919. The other two pandemics were the Asian Flu caused by an A(H2N2) virus in 1957-1958 and the Hong Kong Flu caused by an A (H3N2) virus in 1968. Both were estimated to have caused 1-4 million deaths. A deeper analysis of these three pandemics reveals something interesting for the Indian context.

In a World Health Bulletin published in 1959, I G K Menon wrote that even at the peak of the Asian Flu pandemic of 1957, 44,51,785 cases of influenza were reported in India (in a population of 360 million at the time) with a case fatality rate of 242 deaths every million cases. The pandemic saw a total of just 1,098 deaths in the country. These figures are low when compared to the fatality of the pandemic in countries such as Singapore, Malaysia and China. There could be multiple reasons for this phenomenon, of which demographic patterns and the extant immune status of the population probably played an important role.

An analysis of the Hong Kong flu pandemic also reveals a similar picture. The pandemic, which reached India by September 1968, killed around 33,800 people in the US and had affected about 15 per cent of the total population of Hong Kong. Yet, its fatality rate was low in India. The exact number of deaths remains uncertain but multiple papers asserted that among the Asian countries affected, India reported a very low death rate.

Besides these major pandemics, other influenza outbreaks have also had a minimal effect in India. According to the US's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the 2009 swine flu (H1N1) affected nearly 61 million people in the US. It caused 12,469 deaths in the US and 5,75,400 deaths worldwide. On the other hand, India reported 33,761 cases and 2,035 deaths from swine flu. The lower death and infection rates in India can again be attributed to many socio-demographic and genetic factors. Other global pandemics have also followed a similar pattern. The Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) of 2003 and the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) of 2012 are classical examples.

This historical perspective on influenza pandemics in India notwithstanding, it is imperative to take action against the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. But to believe that we are facing an apocalypse and react accordingly is sheer madness. Yes, we must not

lower our guard but we must also not fall prey to propaganda.

It is interesting to note that there are businesses that do quite well out of disease. During pandemics like the present one, the sales of respiratory masks, hand sanitisers, anti-fever medicines and similar drugs have skyrocketed. According to data from the All Food and Drug License Holders Foundation (AFDLHF), the total market for masks has swelled up to Rs 450 crore over the last two months alone, from about Rs 200 crore annually. Donald Rumsfeld, former US Defence Secretary, has made more than \$5 million in capital gains from selling shares in the biotechnology firm that discovered and developed Tamiflu, the drug which was bought in massive amounts by different governments to treat a possible bird flu pandemic.

It is important to know that we are neither China, Japan nor Italy. In a country like ours, where health struggles to find mention in the common political discourse, it is assuring that the current pandemic has caught the national imagination. But we must remember that the health of a nation is not measured by its response to pandemics. It is determined by the health of its poor, its women and its children. Unfortunately, we have failed them at every level.

Our national consciousness should be equally sensitive to diseases like tuberculosis and malnutrition, which kill more people than all the influenza pandemics put together. We need to be vigilant but not vehement in our response to the coronavirus pandemic. The best option would be to undertake a dynamic risk assessment of the situation using available scientific and historical knowledge and to maintain trust and confidence between the organisations and people who are at the helm of affairs. If we are to avoid the so-called coronavirus apocalypse, we need to be guided by evidence, science and collaboration, not hype, hyperbole and impulse.

The writer is professor of orthopaedics, AIIMS, New Delhi. Views are personal

A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

Privacy law should not disproportionately increase cost of business for start-ups



SUBHASHISH BHADRA AND VARAD PANDE

IF DATA IS the lifeblood of the modern economy, then digital entrepreneurship is its beating heart. This is particularly true in India where public and private institutions have historically struggled to reach the last mile. Start-ups are working towards bridging the gap. Access to high-quality data is enabling them to provide micro-credit to the underbanked, ed-tech solutions to students in the smallest towns, and cheaper forms of medical diagnostics to the most vulnerable.

It is in this context that India's draft Personal Data Protection Bill should be seen. The Bill is meant to protect Indians' rights over their data, and envisions a Data Protection Authority (DPA) that will enforce good data practices by public and private institutions. This is a timely and welcome move, since it will help minimise data-based harm to Indians.

However, India has also set itself a goal of a \$1-trillion digital economy. This ambitious target will require it to develop a thriving start-up ecosystem. It is therefore important that the privacy bill does not lead to an uneven playing field for them. This is not an unfounded risk, as evidence from other countries shows.

We know that in Europe, smaller AdTech firms lost market share to "big tech" players like Google and Facebook after Europe adopted "General Data Protection Regulation" — its privacy law — in 2018. This could be driven by many factors, including big tech's ability to devote more resources to compliance and reduce data access for smaller firms. Investors have responded to

these market signals as well. Researchers from the University of Maryland have shown that venture funding into early-stage technology firms in Europe declined 18 per cent by volume and 40 per cent by value after enforcement of GDPR.

Therefore, India's privacy law should not disproportionately increase the cost of business for start-ups vis-a-vis big tech and other large incumbents. We have four suggestions on how this level playing field can be achieved.

To start with, the DPA could consider the differential impact on small businesses while formulating regulations under the law. This can be achieved by amending Section 94(1) of the Bill to require that the DPA conduct cost-benefit analysis while making rules, and explicitly consider the impact on small businesses, among other factors. The cost-benefit analysis should be put in the public domain as is mandated in other countries.

Second, the penalties under law should be revisited. The draft Bill provides for fines of up to 4 per cent of global revenues of a business. Smaller, newer digital businesses are likely to have lower profit margins and perhaps even losses. Fines based only on revenue will affect them disproportionately. This can be mitigated by specifying that the DPA also consider profits or profit margins while imposing fines.

Third, long legal battles are disproportionately expensive for small businesses. They might also hesitate to go to court against a DPA order for fear of retribution. One way to alleviate these concerns would be to ring-fence the judicial or adjudicatory functions

in a separate body rather than having it housed within the DPA, as envisaged in the current draft. The Supreme Court also recommended such a separation in its observations on the case pertaining to the Competition Commission.

Finally, this is an evolving space where many issues are simply unknown. The DPA would, therefore, benefit from listening to all stakeholders, including start-ups. One way to do this is through board representation. Currently, the board of the DPA consists of five of its senior employees. The board will be more effective if most of its members are independent, and represent civil society, academia, and small businesses.

Another way to do so is through processes that prioritise consultation, transparency, and predictability. South Korea, for example, has sought to achieve it by mandating a publicly-released impact assessment before any regulation is passed. Indian regulators like TRAI also have a track record of a reasonably robust consultation process.

Data protection regulation is at a nascent stage around the world. Just as India is seen as a global leader in the design of its "digital infrastructure", it has an opportunity to be a global leader in data protection, especially for developing countries facing similar challenges and opportunities. To make this happen, the DPA must prove itself able to safeguard the consumer while also creating space for Start Up India to thrive.

The writers work at Omidyar Network India, an investment firm

MARCH 13, 1980, FORTY YEARS AGO



ASSAM TALKS

TALKS BETWEEN THE Union government and All-Assam Students Union and All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad leaders on the complex question of detection and deportation of foreign nationals have broken down. At the last round of discussion, the Centre rejected the AASU-AAGSP plea that 1951 be accepted as the base year for the identification and deportation of foreign nationals in Assam. There was no meeting point between the two sides. The Centre insisted that 1971 should be accepted as the base year.

US AID TO PAK

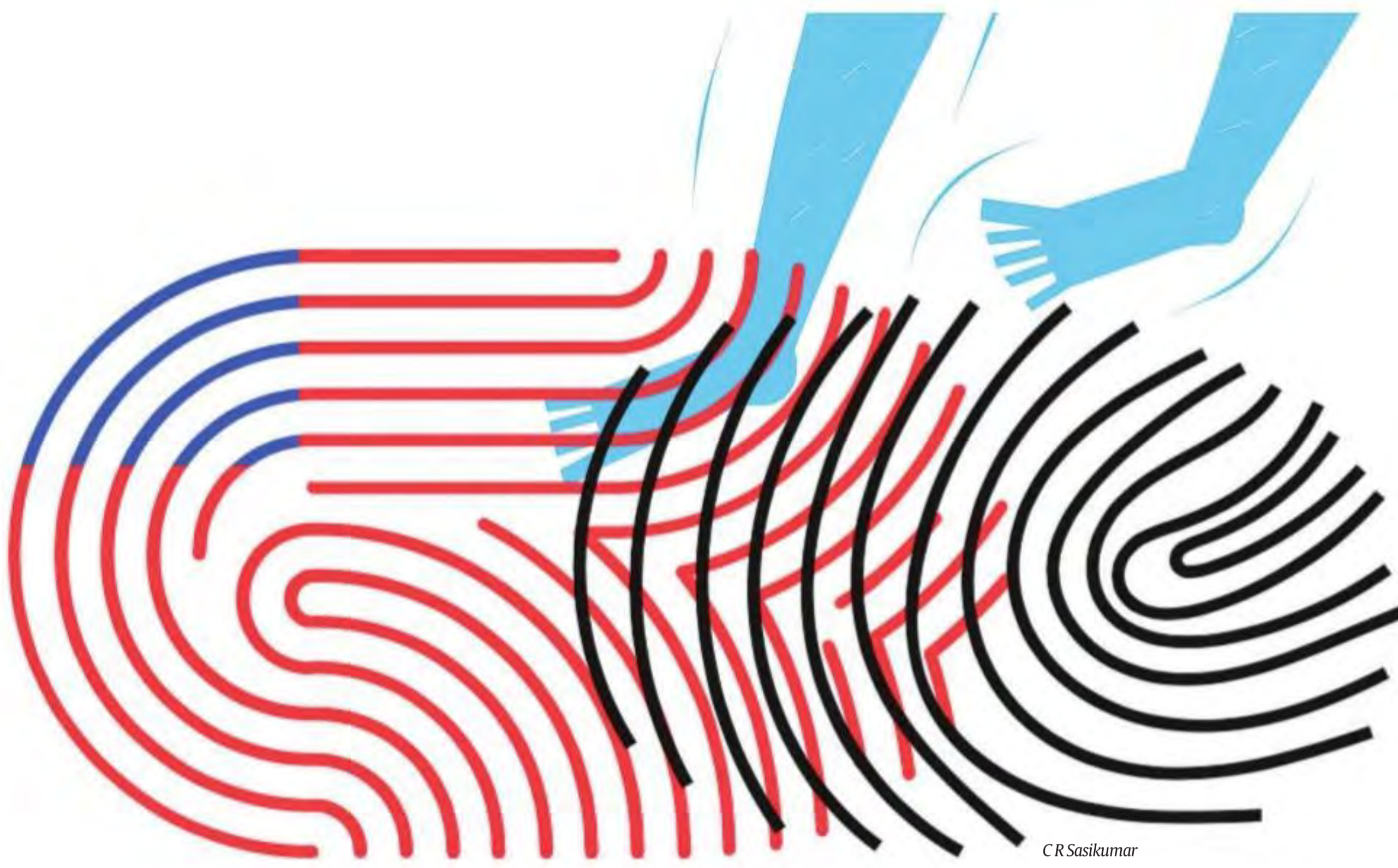
THE UNITED STATES is still determined to

give aid to Pakistan and has suggested an amended formula for it. Under the amended proposal, the United States will present its Congress legislation for economic aid and reiteration of the 1959 security guarantee, leaving military aid in the limbo for the present. Observers in Washington point out it matters little how aid is given to a nation: Pakistan has always been free to buy military equipment from the Americans, as is India. Instead of giving Pakistan 200 million dollars in economic aid and 200 million dollars worth of military equipment, the US can give money to Pakistan in the name of economic aid and reschedule the loans, releasing that portion

of the funds for military purchases.

FARM INPUT COSTS

FAO DIRECTOR GENERAL, Eduardo Saouma, supported Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's suggestions for an international agreement for limitation of costs of strategic farm inputs. Saouma told a press conference that he shared the Indian prime minister's concern over the spiralling prices of inputs, which particularly hit the poorer farmers. Mrs Gandhi had made the suggestion while inaugurating the plenary session of the FAO regional conference in Delhi on Monday. Replying to questions, Saouma said that he would try to bring about such an agreement.



CR Sasikumar

# It's not a peace deal

US-Taliban pact does not end the Afghanistan war. It puts the onus of ending the bloodshed on Asian forces



CHRISTOPHE JAFFRELOT AND VIHANG JUMLE

But why did the Taliban sign the deal? Such a deal, by pushing American troops out of Afghanistan, will make it easier for them to overthrow the government in Kabul. In fact, the Taliban may not show any interest in signing a peace deal because they believe they are winning and it goes against their guiding principle — no foreign forces in Afghanistan. Unsurprisingly, the Taliban described this deal as a “victory” on social media and reportedly told their members that they could break this pact at will.

Finally, is the government in Kabul prepared to negotiate with the Taliban? Its position is fragile. President Ashraf Ghani was recently re-elected with a vote share a point more than 50 per cent. The result was challenged by his rival, Abdullah Abdullah, who gathered around 39 per cent of the votes, but chose to declare himself the victor. Amidst controversies over alleged meddling with democratic systems in Afghanistan, the Taliban rejects the presence of any government in Kabul and claims to be the nation's sole political leader.

The peace deal implies that intra-Afghan dialogues will determine the distribution of power between the Taliban and Afghanistan government. However, the feasibility of such an arrangement is doubtful. First, there is no structure at present to govern a distribution of power between the two entities. Second, the arrangement could turn out for the worse — the greed to grab more power has remained a matter of political debate and fuelled illegitimate practices throughout history. Third, can such a distribution of power even take place if the parties refuse to acknowledge each other? Already, Ghani has denied that his administration had agreed to free 5,000 prisoners.

What does the US withdrawal from Afghanistan mean for India? In the long run, if the Taliban are back in Kabul, India's infrastructure investments in Afghanistan will be at the risk of being seized. Besides, New Delhi will lose a friendly government in Kabul. Worse, Islamabad's close partners may be in office once again. In the short run, India may be forced to get more involved in the Afghan affairs, precisely to preventing such developments. And the Americans may put pressure

on India to intervene. Trump said that it is “time for someone else to do that work (fighting terrorists) and it will be the Taliban and it could be surrounding countries”. The deal does not end a war; it puts the onus of ending the bloodshed on Asian forces. Should the Taliban adopt a radical approach to establish power, militancy may rise on Indian borders, which may be further fuelled by Pakistan. India's access to Central Asian markets may be curtailed and India's infrastructure in Afghanistan may also be compromised. This peace deal also compromises India's priority in Afghanistan — to deny the return of the Taliban to office. Last, Indian assets in Afghanistan's neighbouring countries such as the Chabahar port may become redundant.

While Trump's statements to get neighbouring countries involved in resolving the situation in Afghanistan does have implications for India, what is surprising is New Delhi's silence on the issue. One of the reasons for it — besides India's reluctance to intervene militarily outside its borders — may be the American attitude itself. Trump, a few days after appearing as India's great friend, is making its life more complicated. The US exit from Afghanistan is going to modify the politics of South Asia, especially since the US has used Pakistan as the launchpad to work out the peace deal with Taliban. This may elevate Pakistan's importance within the region in the eyes of Washington, as evident from the US re-initiating the training of Pakistan's military. If a new US-Pakistan rapprochement is taking place in the context of Trump's Afghan policy, the implications would be more than regional for India.

India may remain silent, fully confident that the US will not be able to leave Afghanistan. Indeed, the dialogue of the deaf between Kabul and the Taliban may not go anywhere. That's why President Trump warned: “If bad things happen”, he said, “we'll go back with a force like no one's ever seen.”

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What does the American withdrawal from Afghanistan mean for India? In the long run, if the Taliban are back in Kabul, India's infrastructure investments in Afghanistan will be at the risk of being seized. Besides, New Delhi will lose a friendly government in Kabul. Worse, close partners of Islamabad may be in office once again.

## WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

“The 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, issued by the US Department of State, is like a veil that conceals the US' own human rights wrongdoings.”

— GLOBAL TIMES, CHINA

## Company of strangers

An afternoon in New York, an encounter between a psychic and a non-believer



ECONOMIC GRAFFITI BY KAUSHIK BASU

THERE WAS AN early evening calm and a pale glow of autumn in the sky. This was before the coronavirus outbreak. My wife and I were in mid-town Manhattan, walking back home from somewhere. This is a somewhat run-down part of New York, with old, European-style cafes and shabby nightclubs. There are some grand buildings, with large windows and curtains but through the windows you see chandeliers blemished and dim, reminders of better times.

My mind drifted to the fascinating fact that Swami Vivekananda had lived here for several months, starting in November 1894, in a nondescript, two-room, rented apartment. I had read descriptions of Vivekananda's life here, about his laughing and joking with neighbours and street vendors mystified by his dark-skin and strange attire, his friendship with the mercurial Russian-Jewish art critic, Leon Landsberg, also known as Swami Kripananda, and his many interactions with Josephine Macleod.

As I walked, I visualised New York of that era and marvelled at the sense of romance and adventure that made Vivekananda travel all the way from India and arrive, virtually penniless, in this distant land, set up home, and make friends with people with whom he had, at least superficially, little in common. It was his love of human beings, irrespective of race and religion, that made him travel far and wide. I thought how different he must have been from the militant groups that spread the message of hate and religious bigotry, and chant his name. A feeling of history and mystique enveloped me, and, maybe because of that, my attention was drawn to a dingy apartment on the roadside, with signs saying “Psychic”, “Tarot-card reading”, “Know your future for \$20”.

I have an interest in psychics. It is an anthropologist's interest. I want to know about them, instead of wanting to know something about myself from them. I want to know what goes on in their heads. Do they believe in what they say, or are they just profit-maximisers, as neoclassical economics tells us all human beings are? Do they really manage to make a living out of their psychic practice? Since anthropologists spend so much money to go to far-away societies to study them, spending \$20 to collect information on one data point seemed worth it.

I told Alaka I wanted to consult the psychic and that she should go home. Outside the psychic's door, I added that if I was not back home in an hour, she should call the police. She laughed nervously and left.

It was a dimly-lit room, with blue lace curtains, frayed at the edges. The psychic sat in one corner on a large, old-styled sofa. Dressed like a character in an 18th-century English novel, sinking into the ample sofa, she looked charming in a quaint way. She welcomed me with a broad, sad smile. I got

the impression that I was the first customer of the day.

In one corner of the room some candles flickered, and there were incense sticks, with a grey heap of ash at their base. This must have been the source of the smokiness in the room and the fragrance, which reminded me of Indian evenings. A hint of the mysterious orient is a good idea for this business, I thought to myself.

As I sat down, she peered into my eyes and asked what was troubling me, and assured me that she could solve my problems. This caught me off guard. The truth, namely that nothing was troubling me, would hurt her deeply, and also make me appear a boring person. So I hummed and hawed and muttered some trivia for a while. She was smart enough to see I was trying too hard. So she changed tack. She shut her eyes, as though she was peering through her psychics lens, though I suspect she had seen me with Alaka through her lace-curtained window, and said, “At a personal level you are happy, I can see.” And she added “I predict you will have a long life.”

She went up in my esteem. To predict that I will die in one year is a bad idea. If she got it wrong, I would be there to accost her and tell people she got it wrong. But if I died soon after she predicted a long life, the main witness to her wrong forecast would be gone.

She went on, “but life is complicated. Unfortunately, someone is casting an evil eye on you.” She created terrifying scenarios, and quickly came to the point — for \$120 she could do some special rituals which would negate those forces. I pretended to be scared. It is not that I would not be frightened if those scenarios were a reality, but I do not believe anyone is privy to such psychic information. I politely declined her offer.

She spoke about God and Hinduism and even chanted some Sanskrit. Her accent and my lack of knowledge of Sanskrit meant there was no way of knowing what that was. I told her I was a non-believer. She gave me a lecture on why I was wrong.

I changed the topic by asking her about her life. She hesitated first, but slowly warmed up to it, and talked at length about growing up in the mid-west, in poverty, moving to New York, and her hard life. She added that I was her first customer that day. I gave her some advice as best as I could, aware that our roles were getting reversed. I looked at my watch; I had been there close to an hour. I said I would have to go, paid my fee of \$20 and left.

As I walked out onto the street and made my way home, lights had come on in many windows. Amidst peddlers and pedestrians, a homeless man sat on the roadside with a wan look, and a lonely man, silhouetted against a large window, peered down at him.

I could have been in Cavafy's Alexandria or Auden's Fifty-second Street. Life goes on as it did then. We have no idea why and what tomorrow holds. I thought about my psychic “friend” and felt sad. She was not trying to cheat but struggled to believe she had psychic powers. She needed that not just for her livelihood but for the company of the occasional stranger who would stop by to seek her counsel.

*The writer is C Marks Professor at Cornell University and former chief economist and senior vice president, World Bank*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### POLITICS AND SIN

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, ‘Mr Scindia's exit’, (IE, March 12). By abandoning what he professed for 18 years, Jyotiraditya Scindia has given in to the desire for power. This reminds one of what Mahatma Gandhi once said, “Politicians often wrap truth in a veil of mystery and giving to what is temporary and unimportant, preference over the permanent and deeply important.” **Gangadhar Karalay, Nagpur**

### DESPERATE TIMES

THIS REFERS TO the report, ‘Day after, Scindia joins BJP and gets a Rajya Sabha ticket’ (IE, March 12). Jyotiraditya Scindia's entry in to the BJP exposes the slow poison the Congress has been gulping due to the failure to find a president who can rein in the different groups in the party. Rahul Gandhi's silence and failure to satisfy the disgruntled leaders could result in an ever bigger crisis for the Congress. The rift between the young and older generation within the party is also creating turbulence. A strong and united opposition is needed to take on the BJP. **Vishvijet Singh, Chandigarh**

### FRAMES OF HUBRIS

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, ‘Abuse of power’ (IE, March 12). The Allahabad High Court order will not repair the damage done to the reputation of the anti-CAA protesters whose photographs were plastered with their ad-

### LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

To encourage quality reader intervention, The Indian Express offers the Letter of the Week award. The letter adjudged the best for the week is published every Saturday. Letters may be e-mailed to [editpage@expressindia.com](mailto:editpage@expressindia.com) or sent to The Indian Express, B-1/B, Sector 10, Noida-UP 201301.

dresses and phone numbers. It is inconceivable that the UP government is not aware of “due processes”. **LR Murmu, Delhi**

### VALLEY'S CHALLENGE

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, ‘Deja vu party’ (IE, March 10). The formation of the Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party is in consonance with the government's claim that the scrapping of Article 370 will be followed by the transformation of the Valley. Although this is not for the first time that a political outfit has taken birth in Kashmir, such maneuvers have usually been undertaken at the behest of the Centre. This time round, however, the development was sans any overt central intervention. **Ravi Mathur, Noida**

Compiled by Seema Chishtii

## THE Urdu PRESS

### CAA-NRC-NPR

THE TRINITY OF CAA-NPR-NRC continues to elicit strong editorial response. *Munsif's* editorial on March 5 has a question as its title: “Is this also a trick by the Opposition?” It speaks of the US's Freedom of Religion Commission and points out that “many countries have criticised the laws that discriminate against the Muslims.” It also says that “many countries have expressed concern over the violence in Delhi, the latest being Iran against whom the Indian government has hit out”. The paper speaks of the UN Human Rights Commissioner's statement and talks of the possibility of India attracting similar criticism from other quarters.

The *Urdu Times* on March 1 has an editorial which cites an RTI application about PM Modi's citizenship. According to the paper, “The PMO has made it clear that the PM has no proof of his citizenship because he is a citizen by birth as per Section 3 of the Citizenship Act 1955.” The editorial says that Amit Shah accuses the Opposition of fomenting trouble, but asks if “Indians are so foolish as to get instigated on giving up peace (sukoon) and protest on the streets for months?” The editorial concludes by saying “it is the duty of each citizen to save

the Constitution”.

*Siasat* on March 1 speaks of “No NPR in Telangana”. The paper's editorial says that the CAA-NPR-NRC “have created a sense of restlessness... protests against the law by a section of people should be a cause for concern. But PM Modi has done nothing to assure people and reduce the climate of hate.” The paper believes that “the SC should have either struck this law down or stayed it but it has given the Centre respite by asking for a ‘reply’...if the Court plays by the Constitution, there is a possibility of people getting some respite.”

### US-TALIBAN DETENTE

AVADHNAMA'S EDITORIAL ON March 3 on the US-Taliban pact describes the agreement as a sign of “new hope.” It says that “permanent peace is in the region would be a blessing for its people and for a country which for so long has been full of violence.” It also avers that the peace in Afghanistan would be a blessing for India, which is involved in several developmental projects in the region.

*Munsif's* editorial on March 3 says it is now “incumbent on the people of Afghanistan to arrive at an agreement over how the country is governed, the main players in the country must resolve their differences. Otherwise, the

country would be the biggest loser.” It contends that the next fortnight will be very important “because there will be discussions on the constitution of Afghanistan.”

### DELHI VIOLENCE

INQUILAB ON FEBRUARY 29 has a strong editorial: ‘Gujarat model or the Delhi model?’ It says “life has started coming back on the tracks in Delhi”. But the wounds inflicted by three days of horror will take time to heal. It is good that the LG appears interested in restoring peace and amity. This is something the administration should have done earlier.” The paper criticises the Union home minister for not visiting the violence-hit place. “No riot can last beyond 24 hours, if the police and the administration don't want it to,” the editorial contends. The paper has another editorial on March 10 asking for “an impartial inquiry into the Delhi riots.”

*Etemaad's* editorial on March 2 is titled, “In the name of peace, rousing violence”. The editorial points out that “not just Kapil Mishra but many other leaders of the BJP have issued inflammatory statements against peaceful protesters. These include Union minister Anurag Thakur and the UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.” The edito-

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

# How home quarantine works

Govt has issued guidelines on home quarantine for people who have been exposed to novel coronavirus. What are these guidelines, and how is this regime different from being quarantined in an Army facility?

ABANTIKA GHOSH  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

IN INDIA'S fight against the novel coronavirus disease (COVID 2019), the Union Health Ministry has issued elaborate guidelines on how to enforce "home quarantine" for a fortnight. While less stringent than being quarantined in an Army or paramilitary facility, home quarantine comes with its own set of restrictions. Here is all you need to know about such a regime, and why it is important.

**What is home quarantine?**

Quarantine, like isolation, separates some people from others during the outbreak of a contagious disease. While isolation separates sick people from people who are not sick, quarantine separates those who were exposed to a contagious disease, and who are then observed to see if they too become sick. Home quarantine means being quarantined at home.

**How is home quarantine to be done?**

Home quarantine means that a person is confined to a well-ventilated single-room, preferably with an attached/separate toilet, in his or her own home. If another family member needs to stay in the same room, the two need to maintain a distance of at least 1 metre between each other.

Given the enhanced risks for some people, the person needs to stay away from elderly people, pregnant women, children and persons with co-morbidities within the household. In the coronavirus outbreak, children have so far been less affected than others — in China only 2% of the patients have been below age 20. However, given the fact that this virus is essentially an unknown organism, the government's home quarantine guidelines highlight the need for a contact to stay away from children as well.

All social or religious gatherings have to be avoided during the 14-day period. The person should not share any items such as dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, etc with other people at home and should wear a mask at all times. "Masks used by patients/ care givers/ close contacts during home care should be disinfected using ordinary bleach solution (5%) or sodium hypochlorite solution (1%) and then



Home quarantine is less restrictive than quarantine in an Army facility such as the one in Manesar (above), where a number of Indian nationals back from Wuhan were quarantined and eventually tested negative for coronavirus. Gajendra Yadav/File photo

disposed of either by burning or deep burial," read the guidelines prepared by the directorate general of health services.

**Is home quarantine known to control spread of a disease?**

Officials associated with the detection and surveillance of COVID-19 say that home quarantine has so far turned out to be a very effective means of infection control. "To tell a person that the consequences of any laxity in observation of the quarantine protocol would mean his or her being the means of infection of a family member is usually the most effective means of ensuring compliance. People are extra careful," an official said.

However, here's the catch. If a person has successfully completes the 14-day quarantine without contracting the disease, resumes normal life and comes in contact once more with a COVID-2019 patient, there will then arise the need to follow another fortnight of home quarantine, said Dr R R Gangakhedkar, head of the division of epidemiology and communicable diseases, Indian Council of Medical Research.

**Who needs to be in home quarantine?**

Every person who has come in contact with a suspected or confirmed case of

COVID-2019 needs to be in home quarantine. This is not only because the disease is highly contagious but also because the virus has an incubation period of 14 days during which a person may stay asymptomatic and yet be capable of spreading the virus.

A contact of a COVID-2019 patient is defined as a person who is:

- A person living in the same household as a COVID-19 case;
- A person having had direct physical contact with a COVID-19 case or his/her infectious secretions without recommended personal protective equipment (PPE) or with a possible breach of PPE
- A person who was in a closed environment or had face to face contact with a COVID-19 case at a distance of within 1 metre including air travel.

**What precautions are necessary for family members of a person in home quarantine?**

To minimise the number of people in a family who come in contact with a person with possible-COVID 2019 exposure, only one designated family member, who needs to wear a mask and gloves at all times, should be the caregiver. All physical contact should be scrupulously avoided, including sharing

of linen. Visitors are not to be allowed. "In case the person being quarantined becomes symptomatic, all his/her close contacts will be home quarantined (for 14 days) and followed up for an additional 14 days or till the report of such case turns out negative on lab testing," say the guidelines.

A very important aspect of the process of home quarantine is disinfection and cleaning of all surfaces possibly contacted by the person with 1% sodium hypochlorite solution. Toilet surfaces have to be cleaned with phenolic disinfectants or other household bleaching solutions. Clothes have to be washed separately.

**How is all this less restrictive than being put in quarantine in an Army facility?**

Being quarantined in one's own home is always better than staying with strangers at an Army or paramilitary facility. Besides the daily medical examinations, there are also other restrictions. Apart from playing games, watching TV and having meals together within a barrack, no one is allowed to interact with the members of another barrack and definitely not another sector for fear of infection. As one person who had come out of one of the facilities had said, it is like being in the Big Boss House.

THIS WORD MEANS: PANDEMIC

# How WHO classifies a disease outbreak

TABASSUM BARNAGARWALA  
MUMBAI, MARCH 12

ON WEDNESDAY, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic.

**What is a pandemic?**

Simply put, a pandemic is a measure of the spread of a disease. When a new disease spreads over a vast geographical area covering several countries and continents, and most people do not have immunity against it, the outbreak is termed a pandemic. It implies a higher level of concern than an epidemic, which the US Centers of Disease and Control Prevention (CDC) defines as the spread of a disease in a localised area or country.

There is no fixed number of cases or deaths that determine when an outbreak becomes a pandemic. The Ebola virus, which killed thousands in West Africa, is an epidemic as it is yet to mark its presence on other continents. Other outbreaks caused by coronaviruses such as MERS (2012) and SARS (2002), which spread to 27 and 26 countries respectively, were not labelled pandemics because they were eventually contained.

**Which outbreaks have been declared pandemics in the past?**

A major example is the Spanish flu outbreak of 1918, which killed between 20-50 million. Cholera pandemics have been declared multiple times between 1817 and 1975. In 1968, an pandemic was declared for H3N2 that caused about a million deaths. The

last pandemic declared by the WHO was in 2009, for H1N1.

**Why has WHO declared a pandemic for COVID-19?**

China announced the outbreak on December 31 and declared a public health emergency on January 30. The WHO waited for 72 days before declaring it a pandemic. The outbreak was so far mostly limited to China, which has taken stringent countermeasures.

In the last two weeks, cases outside China increased thirteen-fold and countries infected have tripled. Italy, for instance, had 888 cases on February 29 which rose to 4,636 in a week. "We expect to see number of affected countries, number of cases and number of deaths go higher in coming days," WHO director general Tedros Adhanom said.

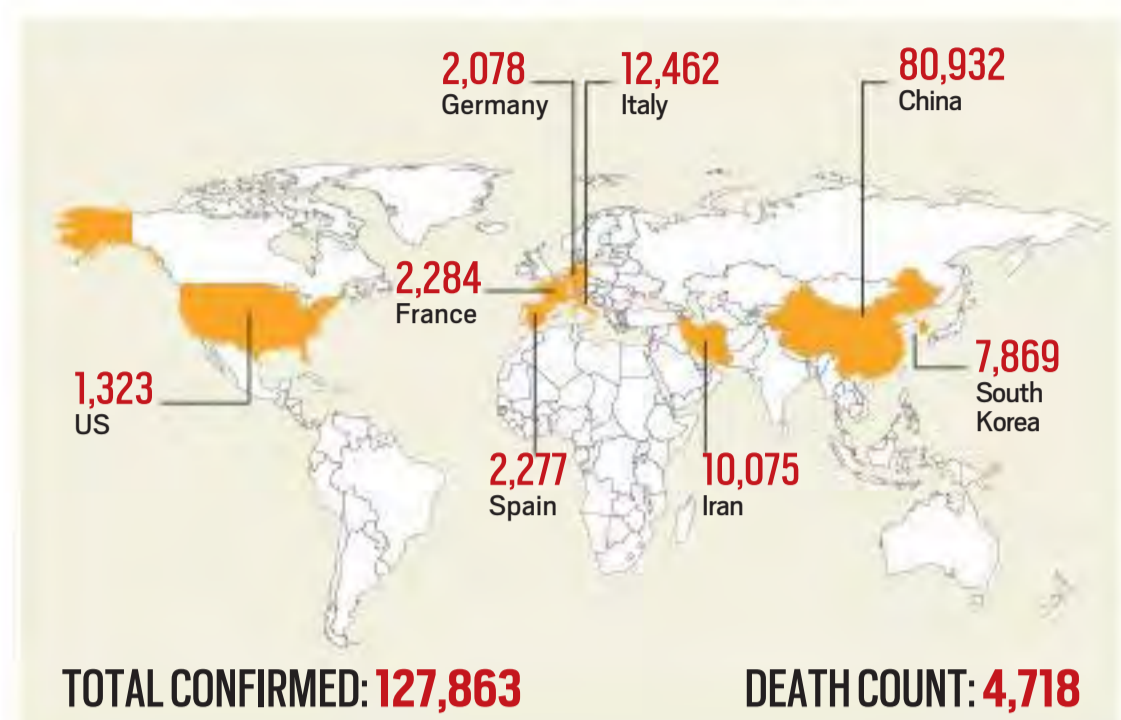
**Does the declaration change the approach to the disease?**

"Describing the situation as pandemic does not change WHO's assessment of the death risk posed by the virus, it does not change what WHO is doing, and it doesn't change what countries do," WHO said.

There is a view among many experts, however, that the categorisation as a pandemic can lead to more government attention. "The categorisation by WHO indicates the risk of disease for countries to take preventive measures. It will help improve funding by international organisations to combat coronavirus. In India, we are already doing all that is possible and more government funding is not needed at this point," said Dr Balram Bhargava, director of Indian Council of Medical Research.

## CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED DAILY



TOTAL CONFIRMED: 127,863 DEATH COUNT: 4,718

Source: Johns Hopkins University; map updated at 11 pm, March 12

## Can you tell coronavirus infection from common flu?

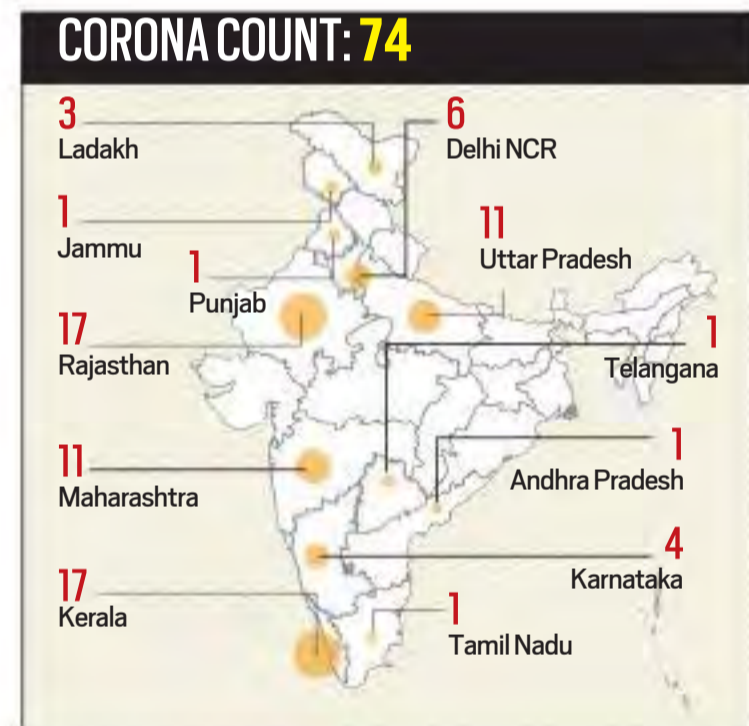
ABANTIKA GHOSH

THE SHORT answer is that there is no way to tell a coronavirus infection apart from the common flu. In both circumstances the symptoms that the patient shows would be cough, cold, fever, body ache etc. That is why in public health parlance the term influenza-like illnesses is used. Both common flu and coronavirus infection would come in that spectrum.

Dr P Ravindran, director, Emergency Medical Response at the Health Ministry who has dealt with many outbreaks including swine flu, bird flu and Nipah, said, "In initial presentation there is no difference in influenza or coronavirus or adenovirus. All of them qualify as influenza-like diseases. It is the surveillance case definition — in this case given that most cases have come from outside, it would mean answers to

questions like what symptoms do you have and where have you travelled — that can guide a surveillance person to the right conclusions. That is why different protocols are put in place for different stages of transmission. Even in the advanced stages of the disease, symptomatically you cannot tell between the different diseases."

There are, however, crucial differences in both the prevention and the prognosis of the two diseases. For one, there is a seasonal flu vaccine that can be annually taken. A vaccine for coronavirus is still in the works, with the most promising one being an mRNA vaccine being developed by Moderna Biotech whose phase I trials will be carried out by the National Institutes of Health in the USA soon. While the mortality rate of coronavirus infection, at a little over 3%, is far lower than that for, say, swine flu, it is way higher than seasonal influenza or common flu — a mere 0.1%.



The map is based on the Union Health Ministry update at 6 pm on March 12. Some state governments may have reported higher counts.

The 17 cases in Kerala include three persons who were discharged.

Have a question on the COVID-19 outbreak and what you should/should not do? Write to explained@indianexpress.com

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# The Gwalior dynasty: A short history of the Scindias in Indian politics

SHYAMLAL YADAV  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

THE ENTRY of Jyotiraditya Scindia into the BJP after 18 years in the Congress is a "coming together for the whole Scindia family", which has "the ideology of the BJP in its blood", according to Yashodhara Rajee, Jyotiraditya's aunt and the BJP MLA from Shivpuri in Madhya Pradesh.

Members of the erstwhile royal family of Gwalior have been in politics for over six decades, and are among the most influential political dynasties of independent India. This is the first time in many years that all politically active Scindias are with the BJP.

**The beginning: Vijaya Rajee**

The Hindu Mahasabha has traditionally been popular in the Gwalior-Guna area. In the 1950s, Jivajirao, Jyotiraditya's grandfather, was believed to have a soft corner for the party — and this annoyed Jawaharlal Nehru. In 1956, when the Maharaja was in Bombay, the royal consort, Vijaya Rajee Scindia, travelled to Delhi to meet with the Prime Minister and his daughter Indira. She assured them that Jivajirao had no interest in politics, and did not support or finance the Hindu Mahasabha.

Nehru asked Vijaya Rajee to meet Govind

Ballabh Pant and Lal Bahadur Shastri, who asked her to contest the Lok Sabha election on a Congress ticket. Vijaya Rajee thus became the Congress MP from Guna in 1957, and from Gwalior in 1962. Meanwhile, the Maharaja passed away in 1961.

**The break with Congress**

On March 25, 1966, at a time when Madhya Pradesh was reeling under drought, Pravir Chandra Bhanj Dev, the popular maharaja of Bastar, was shot dead along with 11 of his associates at the palace in Jagdalpur. In her autobiography, *Rajpath se Lokpath par* (1997), Vijaya Rajee wrote about the Maharaja's killing: "Perhaps the truth will never be known. But it is true that he was killed by people who managed to force their way into the palace. The killer was someone from the police, who had fired to disperse the crowd that had assembled outside."

That September, police fired on and killed two protesting students in Gwalior. The Chief Minister at the time was Dwarika Prasad Mishra, a man with a reputation for arrogance and a dislike of royal families. As the increasingly upset Rajmata, who had by then come to be called "Naraj-mata", decided to leave the Congress, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) saw its opportunity.

RSS pracharaks Kushabbau Thakre and



Madhavrao Scindia with mother Vijaya Rajee Scindia at a time when they were still one happy family. Express Archive

Pyarelal Khandelwal, who were at the time deputed as *sangathan mantris* (Secretary, Organisation) of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS), persuaded Vijaya Rajee to join the party. During the state and national elections of 1967, she contested the Karera Assembly segment of Gwalior on a BJS ticket, and the Guna Lok Sabha seat as a candidate of the Swatantra Party.

After she won both elections, Vijaya Rajee resigned her seat in Parliament to become

Leader of Opposition in the Madhya Pradesh Assembly. Soon afterward, Congress MLAs led by Govind Narayan Singh rebelled against D P Mishra, and the BJS propped up the new government with Singh as Chief Minister. The Congress managed to woo Singh back, but not Vijaya Rajee. She won the 1971 Lok Sabha election from Bhind on a BJS ticket, leaving Guna for her 26-year-old son, Madhavrao Scindia, who won as an Independent backed by the BJS.

The Gwalior seat was won by another BJS stalwart, Atal Bihari Vajpayee. When the BJS was re-born as the BJP in 1980, Vijaya Rajee was one of its founder members.

**Mother, son go separate ways**

Vijaya Rajee was put in jail during the Emergency. She was later released on parole, and Madhavrao Scindia returned to India from Nepal after the government assured him he would not be arrested. "Bhaiya (Madhavrao) told me that if he refused to join the Congress, I would be put back in jail," Vijaya Rajee wrote. When elections were announced after the Emergency in 1977, Madhavrao told her and her associate Bal Angre: "I will now take my own decisions. I don't need your advice," Vijaya Rajee recorded.

Madhavrao contested as an Independent candidate from Gwalior, and was able to overcome the Janata wave sweeping the country after the Rajmata appealed to people to vote for him. In the years that followed, however, their relations worsened. Madhavrao had grown close to Indira Gandhi and Sanjay Gandhi, and was particularly upset after Vijaya Rajee decided to take on Indira at the Rae Bareilly seat in the 1980 elections. She lost, while Madhavrao was elected from Guna on a Congress ticket.

Madhavrao served as minister in the

governments of Rajiv Gandhi and P V Narasimha Rao, but resigned ahead of the 1996 elections after his name surfaced in the Jain *hawala* diaries. He quit the Congress after being denied a ticket, and formed the Madhya Pradesh Vikas Congress. He backed the United Front governments led by H D Deve Gowda and I K Gujral, but returned to the Congress in 1998, where he stayed until his death in an air crash in 2001.

**The other Scindias in politics**

Vijaya Rajee, who passed away in 2001, also had four daughters, two of whom entered politics. Vasundhara Rajee, 67, was elected to the Rajasthan Assembly from Dholpur in 1985, and to Lok Sabha from Jhalawar in 1989. She remained an MP until 2003, when she returned to Rajasthan, and became Chief Minister. She has been an MLA ever since, and served another term as CM during 2013-18. Yashodhara Rajee, 65, returned from the United States in the early 1990, and started to look after her mother's Lok Sabha constituency, Guna. She was elected to the Madhya Pradesh Assembly in 1998, 2003, 2013, and 2018, and served as a Minister in Shivraj Singh Chouhan's government. Vasundhara Rajee's son Dushyant Singh is Lok Sabha member from Jhalawar-Baran.



CHILE  
VIOLENCE MARKS PINERA'S 2 YRS IN POWER

Students clashed with riot police in Chile's capital Santiago during protests that marked the second anniversary of conservative President Sebastian Pinera taking office on Wednesday. The protests coincided with the 30th anniversary of Chile's return to democracy after Augusto Pinochet's 1973-1990 dictatorship.

CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

US bans arrivals from Europe for a month

Brazilian official who met Trump tests positive, President says not concerned

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON, ROME, MARCH 12

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump on Wednesday night blocked most visitors from continental Europe to the United States and vowed emergency aid to workers and small businesses as the World Health Organisation declared the coronavirus a global pandemic and millions of people cut themselves off from their regular lives. In an address from the Oval Office, Trump outlined a series of measures intended to tackle the virus and its economic effect as he sought to reassure Americans that he was taking the crisis seriously after previously playing down the scope of the outbreak. He said he would halt travellers from Europe other than Britain for 30 days and asked Congress to support measures like a payroll tax cut. "The virus will not have a chance against us," Trump declared in his speech. After weeks of quarrelling with rivals over his response, even calling their criticisms a "hoax," he called on them to stand down. "We must put politics aside, stop the partisanship and unify together as one nation and one family."



**This is the most aggressive and comprehensive effort to confront a foreign virus in modern history."**

—DONALD TRUMP  
U.S. PRESIDENT

IN WEST ASIA

IRAN SEEKS \$5 Bn

IRAN'S HEALTH Ministry said the new coronavirus has killed 75 more people, raising the death toll to 429 amid over 10,000 cases as the Islamic Republic revealed it had asked for a \$5-billion loan from the International Monetary fund to fight the virus.

SAUDI WIDENS CURBS

SAUDI ARABIA, which had locked down its eastern Qatif region earlier this week, announced 24 new cases overnight, bringing its total to 45. It halted flights to the EU and 12 other countries, extending an earlier ban on 19 countries.

KUWAIT HOLIDAY

KUWAIT ON Thursday reported eight new coronavirus infections, taking its total to 80, as the country started a two-week public holiday announced by the government as part of measures to contain the spread of infections.

macies and outdoor markets were allowed to operate, as were newspaper stands.

Ireland, Denmark, Norway, Lithuania Algeria and Slovakia joined the growing list of countries shutting down their school systems, and Europe's most successful soccer team, Real Madrid, put all its players into quarantine after one tested positive.



Closed bars and restaurants near Piazza Navona amid an unprecedented lockdown across of all of Italy, in Rome Thursday. Reuters

China senior adviser says coronavirus pandemic over by June if countries act

STELLA QIU & KEVIN YAO  
BEIJING, MARCH 12

THE GLOBAL coronavirus pandemic could be over by June if countries mobilize to fight it, a senior Chinese medical adviser said on Thursday, as China declared the peak had passed there and new cases in Hubei fell to single digits for the first time.

Around two-thirds of global cases of the coronavirus have been recorded in China's central Hubei province, where the virus first emerged in December. But in recent weeks the majority of new cases have been outside China.

Zhong Nanshan, the Chinese government's senior medical adviser, said at a news conference on Thursday that as long as countries take the outbreak seriously and are prepared to take firm measures, it could be over worldwide in a matter of months.



Soldiers march past the closed gates to the Forbidden City, usually crowded with tourists, in Beijing Thursday. AP

"My advice is calling for all countries to follow WHO instructions and intervene on a national scale," he said. "If all countries could get mobilised, it could be over by June."

Zhong, an 83-year-old epidemiologist renowned for helping combat the SARS outbreak in 2003, said viruses in the same

family typically become less active in warm months, which could help slow the spread.

"My estimate of June is based on scenarios that all countries take positive measures. But if some countries do not treat the infectiousness and harmfulness seriously, and intervene strongly, it would last longer." AP

EXPLAINED  
China shifts focus to outside world

COVID-19, which originated in China's Hubei province, looks to have peaked in the country with the number of new cases going down each day. On Wednesday, only 15 new cases were recorded, down from 24 the day before. Seven of these cases were outside Hubei, a province that has been under lockdown. Six of these seven cases came from abroad. The growing number of such cases — 85 so far — has prompted China to curb arrivals from foreign countries and to quarantine for 14 days anyone coming from abroad.

China spokesman says US military may have brought virus to Wuhan

GABRIEL CROSSLEY  
BEIJING, MARCH 12

A SPOKESMAN for China's Foreign Ministry suggested on Thursday the US military might have brought the coronavirus to the Chinese city of Wuhan, which has been hardest hit by the outbreak, doubling down on a war of words with Washington.

China has taken great offence at comments by US officials accusing it of being slow to react to the virus, first detected in Wuhan late last year, and of not being insufficiently transparent.

On Wednesday, US National Security Adviser Robert O'Brien said the speed of China's reaction to the emergence of the coronavirus had probably cost the world two months when it could have been preparing for the outbreak.

In a strongly worded tweet, written in English on his verified Twitter account, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said it was the United States that lacked transparency.

"When did patient zero begin in US? How many people are infected? What are the names of the hospitals? It might be US army who brought the epidemic to Wuhan. Be transparent! Make public your data! US owe us an explanation!" Zhao wrote.

Zhao, an avid and often combative Twitter user, did not offer any evidence for his suggestion that the US military might be to blame for the outbreak in China. REUTERS



UN chief urges all govts to scale up virus fight

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
UNITED NATIONS, MARCH 12

UN CHIEF Antonio Guterres on Wednesday urged world governments to urgently scale up their response to the novel coronavirus if they are to stand a chance of stemming its spread.

"Today's declaration of a pandemic is a call to action - for everyone, everywhere," the secretary general said in a statement.

"We can still change the course of this pandemic — but that means addressing inaction," he said. "I call on every government to step up and scale up their efforts — now."

"The best science tells us, if countries detect, test, treat, isolate, trace and mobilize their people in the response, we can go a long way to mitigating transmission," Guterres said.

PANDEMIC WATCH



EUROPE  
Spain minister tests positive for coronavirus

Madrid: Spain's equality minister has tested positive for coronavirus and has been quarantined with her partner, deputy prime minister and Podemos leader Pablo Iglesias, a government statement said on Thursday. "The minister (Irene Montero) is in a good condition and second deputy prime minister Pablo Iglesias is also in quarantine due to the situation," the statement said. "This morning, all members of the government will undergo testing," it added, indicating the results would be published later in the day.

ASIA  
Sri Lanka shuts down all schools amid virus scare

Colombo: Sri Lanka on Thursday announced the closure of all schools across the country to combat the spread of the coronavirus. The Education Ministry announced that all schools will remain shut down till April 20, as second person in Sri Lanka tested positive for the virus. The second patient, identified as a 44-year-old man, is said to have had close contact with the first patient detected with the virus in the country, Director-General of Health Services Anil Jasinghe said. The first patient was identified as a 56-year-old who had been on tour with a group of Italians.

ASIA  
China cancels Everest permits

Kathmandu: China has cancelled permits for Mount Everest because of the coronavirus, expedition organisers said Thursday, ahead of the spring climbing season on the world's highest peak. Last year's traffic-clogged spring window saw a record 885 people summit Everest, 644 of them from Nepal and 241 from the northern flank in Tibet. The Nepal side remains open for now although some expedition operators have seen cancellations and climbers have been asked to submit a 14-day travel history.

Italy, South Korea outbreaks reveal disparity in deaths, tactics

EMILIO PARODI, STEPHEN JEWKES, SANGMI CHA & JU-MIN PARK  
MILAN, SEOUL, MARCH 12

IN ITALY, millions are locked down and more than 1,000 people have died from the coronavirus. In South Korea, hit by the disease at about the same time, only a few thousand are quarantined and 67 people have died. As the virus courses through the world, the story of two outbreaks illustrates a coming problem for countries now grappling with an explosion in cases. It's impractical to test every potential patient, but unless the



Workers spray disinfectant at a subway station in Seoul. AP

OUTBREAK IN NUMBERS

	DEATHS		INFECTIONS	
	New	Total	New	Total
Italy	189	1,016	2,651	15,113
South Korea	6	67	114	7,869

authorities can find a way to see how widespread infection is, their best answer is lockdown.

Italy started out testing widely, then narrowed the focus so that now, the authorities don't have to process hundreds of thousands of tests. But there's a trade-off: They can't see what's coming and are trying to curb

the movements of the country's entire population of 60 million people to contain the disease.

Thousands of miles away in South Korea, authorities have a different response to a similar-sized outbreak. They are testing hundreds of thousands of people for infections and tracking potential carriers like detectives,

Turkey says it has largely agreed details of Idlib ceasefire with Russia

REUTERS  
ANKARA, MARCH 12

TURKISH AND Russian officials have largely agreed details of a ceasefire deal in Syria's Idlib region, Turkish Defence Minister Hulusi Akar said on Thursday, the third day of discussions between the two countries.

Last week Turkey and Russia, which back opposing sides in Syria's war, agreed on the ceasefire to halt an escalation of violence in Idlib that displaced nearly a million people and brought the two countries close to direct confrontation.

Under the agreement, Turkish and Russian forces will carry out joint patrols along the M4 highway linking Syria's east

and west, and establish a security corridor either side of it. A Russian delegation arrived in Ankara this week to discuss the details of the agreement.

Russia supports Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, while Turkey backs rebels who have fought him for nearly nine years.

"We have largely reached an agreement. At the moment, the attacks have stopped, the ceasefire is holding," Akar was cited as saying by his office. "The joint patrols will start along the M4 on March 15. Our colleagues are discussing the details of that," he said.

A senior Turkish official told Reuters that concrete results were expected from the discussions in Ankara. Turkey was prepared to retaliate against violations by the Syrian government, he added.

2 Americans, 1 Briton killed in rocket attack on US coalition base in Iraq

ALISSA J RUBIN & ERIC SCHMITT  
BAGHDAD, MARCH 12

A VOLLEY of rockets struck a sprawling military base north of Baghdad on Wednesday evening, killing three service members, two of them Americans and one British, according to a United States official and an Iraqi military officer, both in Iraq.

The attack came less than three months after a similar rocket attack killed an American contractor in Iraq, setting off a spiral of attacks that nearly led to war between the United States and Iran.

The two Americans killed Wednesday were active-duty troops with the Army and Air Force, an American military of-



Twelve members of the US-led military coalition in Iraq of various nationalities were wounded in the attack on the base, Camp Taji. AP file

ficial said. The official said that 12 members of the US-led military coalition in Iraq of various nationalities were wounded in the attack on the base, Camp Taji.

The White House and Pentagon had no immediate comment on the rocket attacks.

A senior Trump administration official said that senior na-

tional security aides were closely following the situation but declined to comment further until a more detailed assessment of what happened and who was responsible was available.

A British defence spokesman confirmed "an incident involving UK service personnel" but declined to comment further.

The American military official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the attack was under investigation, said that 30 107-mm Katyusha rockets were fired at the base from improvised truck launchers. Of those, 18 landed on Camp Taji.

There were no immediate claims of responsibility and American officials said Wednesday night that they were still assessing who carried out the attack. NYT

Lawyers: Chelsea Manning attempts suicide in US jail

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WASHINGTON, MARCH 12

CHELSEA MANNING'S legal team said Wednesday that the former intelligence analyst tried to take her own life Wednesday, but was transported to a hospital where she is recovering.

Manning has been in jail since May 2019 for refusing to testify before a grand jury investigating WikiLeaks. She was scheduled to appear in federal court in Alexandria, Virginia, on Friday for a hearing on a motion to terminate the civil contempt sanctions stemming from that refusal.

In the motion filed last month, Manning's lawyers argued that Manning has shown during her incarceration that she can't be coerced into testifying before a grand jury.

Manning served seven years



in a military prison for leaking a trove of documents to WikiLeaks before President Barack Obama commuted the remainder of her 35-year sentence in 2017.

Alexandria Sheriff Dana Lawhorne said Wednesday: "There was an incident at approximately 12.11 pm today at the Alexandria Adult Detention Center involving inmate Chelsea Manning. It was handled appropriately by our professional staff and Ms Manning is safe."

# 16 CLASSIFIEDS & TENDERS

## Classifieds

### PERSONAL

**We Santosh Kumar Srivastava & Jyotsna Srivastava R/O Flat no.12A, Tower no.09, Central Park 2, Gurgaon, Sohna Road, Sector-48, Haryana - 122001 Has Changed Our Minor Daughter Name From Kashish Srivastava To Pehal Srivastava As Per Documents.** 0070702545-1

**My correct name is Sunil Dutt instead of Sunil Dutt Sharma. My wife's correct name is Meenakshi Sharma instead of Meenakshi, both parents of Harshika Sharma (DOB:24-10-2005), R/O-D-48, Karam Pura, New Delhi-110015.** 0040535302-10

**It is for general information that I, BHASKAR PANDEY S/O BUDHAKAR PANDEY residing at B-671, Type-D,Pocket-3, Dwarka, Bindapur, New Delhi-110059 have changed my old name in all document from Bhaskar Pandey to BHASKAR PANDEY,For all future purposes.** 0040535313-8

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**I, Ravinder Sethi S/O Balwant Singh Sethi H.No.15, II-Floor, Kohat Enclave, Pitampura, Delhi-110034, Changed My Name To Ravinder Singh.** 0040535302-7

**I, Raj Bala D/O Mam Chand W/O TJS254F, Sub. Subhash Chand R/O-H.No.109, Manglupuri, Phase-I, Palam-Colony Dabri, Palam-Village, N.Delhi-45, have changed my name to Raj Bala Yadav. And My d.o.b. is wrongly published in Army documents as-01.01.1976 instead of my correct d.o.b. is-10.01.1977.** 0040535348-3

**I, RAJESHWAR S/O Late Shri Hari Lal R/O 1/4006, Ram Nagar Extension, Street No.6, Shahdara Delhi-110032, is also known by the name of RAJESHWAR GAUTAM and both the names are used by me.** 0050163733-1

**I, Pradeep Dubey S/O Sh.Siya Ram R/O-L-1,1604, Gali No-8, Near-MCD School, Sangam Vihar, South/Delhi, Delhi-110062, have changed my name to Pradeep Kumar.** 0040535337-5

**I, Prabhnoor Singh S/O Ravinder Singh H.No.15, II-Floor, Kohat Enclave, Pitampura, Delhi-110034, Changed My Name To Prabhnoor Singh Sethi.** 0040535302-5

**I, Pooja D/O Om Pal R/O-87, D-Block Begum Vihar Begumpur Delhi-110086 have changed my name to Sapna for all purposes.** 0040535348-1

**I, Naresh Kumar S/O C.L.Thakkar R/O-4A/47, 1st-Floor, Old Rajender Nagar, N.Delhi-110060 have changed my name to Naresh Kumar Thakkar.** 0040535313-1

**I, Naresh Kumar Khurana S/O Mani Lal Khurana R/O A-21, Second Floor, Shankar Garden, Vikas Puri, New Delhi-110018 have changed my name to Naresh Khurana for all future purposes.** 0040535285-1

**I, Mohammed Amir S/O Esa Amir Perwaz, Holder of Indian Passport No. Z2519609 issued at Kuwait R/O 16-3-528/B, Chanchalguda Hyderabad -24 have changed my name to "Mohammed Amir Perwaz" for all future purposes.** 0040535299-1

**I, Meena Jacob W/O Late Mr. Anand Jacob W/O B-192, 1st Floor, Ashok Vihar, Phase-1, Delhi-110052 have changed the name of my minor daughter from Maira Jacob to Myra Jacob for all purposes.** 0040535246-1

**I, Manita Yadav spouse of Sgt Dinesh Kumar, resident of B-3, 132/2 Rajkoti (New Delhi)-38, have changed my name from Manita Yadav to Manita vide Affidavit Dated-11-03-2020 before Badli Court.** 0040535313-10

**I, Lal Bahadur Chhetri son of Shri Dal Bahadur Chhetri Resident of Gaiandkot Municipality Ward No.14, Village-Valentadi, PO-Amarapuri, PS-Kawasoti, District-Nawalparasi, Lumbini Zone, Nepal-33003 have changed my name from Lal Bahadur Chhetri to Hira Lal Kandel for all intents & Purposes. Inform that Lal Bahadur Chhetri & Hira Lal Kandel both are one & same Person Name.** 0040535257-1

**I, Karamjeet Singh Baweja S/O Gurucharan Singh Baweja residing Flat No. 1003, Tower-2, Takshila Heights, Sector-37-C, Gurgaon Haryana have changed my name to Karamjeet Singh for all purposes.** 0040535254-1

**I, Itherto known as Gaurah Sultana alias Gohar Sultana alias Gaurah Sultana D/O Mazhar Hasan W/O Tariq Jamal R/O 1578, St. 16, 25 Futa Rd have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Gaurah Jamal.** 0070702562-1

**I, Vijender Kumar S/O Jagan Nath Sharma, Flat.No-101, Vardan Apartment, Plot No-64, I.P.Ext. Delhi-110092, Changed My Name To Vijender Kumar Sharma.** 0040535300-9

**I, Umair Jung S/O, Jahangir Jung R/O 300/7 Okhla Village, Jamia Nagar, New Delhi-110025 have changed my name to Umer Jung for all purposes.** 0040535296-1

**I, Seema W/o.Sh.Sanjay Singh Chauhan R/O E-601, Pavitra Apartment, Vasundhara Enclave, Delhi-110096 have changed my name to Seema Singh Chauhan.** 0040535308-1

**I, Saramma Anil Athias Saramma Thomas W/o Anil Thomas, R/O A-887, Sai Nagar, Meethapur Extn. Badarpur New Delhi-110044 Have Changed My Name To Saramma Thomas** 0070702556-1

**I, Tanmeet Singh S/O Sh.Harpreet Singh Bhatia R/O F-103, Kirti Nagar, New Delhi-110015 have changed my name to Tanmeet Singh Bhatia for all purposes.** 0040535239-1

**I, Jasmeet Kaur Girun D/O Jagjit Singh Girun H.No-46, Vishwakarma Park, Laxminagar Delhi-110092, Changed My Name To Jasmeet Kaur.** 0040535348-2

**I, Jaishree W/O Raj Kumar Kamra R/O- 20b/80A, Tilak Nagar Delhi-110018. Have Changed My Name To Jai Shree Kamra.** 0040535300-8

**I, Insha Shahzad W/o Subhan Qureshi R/O 6456, Gali Ishwari Prasad, Bara Hindu Rao, Delhi-110006 have changed my name to Insha Subhan.** 0040535291-1

**I, Hema D/O Ram Chand Balani R/O-M-8/D-7, Jhuleal Apartment, Pitampura, Delhi-110034. Have Changed My Name To Hema Balani.** 0040535302-4

**I, Harvinder Kumar S/O Late.Krishan Lal Nagpal R/O-17/A Shastri-Park, Near Chander Nagar, Krishna-Nagar, Delhi-110051, have changed my name to Harvinder Nagpal.** 0040535300-3

**I, Haji Israr Qureshi S/O Aziz R/O-4/3, Sector-2, Rajendra-Nagar, Sahibabad, Ghaziabad have changed my name to Israr Mohd.** 0040535308-2

**I, Gyaneshwar S/O-Diwan Chand Arora employed as Medical Record-Officer in The Maharishi Valmiki Hospital, GNCT of Delhi residing at I-3/151, Sector-16, Rohini, Delhi-110089, have changed my name to Gyaneshwar Arora.** 0040535313-6

**I, Champa Chamyal/Champa Devi, W/O Shri Govind Singh, R/O E-106A & 107, UG-1, Nawada Housing Complex, Near Tarak Hospital, Dwarka Mor, Delhi-110059, inform that both are one and same person.** 0050163707-1

**I, Binny Bhatia W/O Harneet Singh R/O-12/604, 1st-Floor, Friends-Sahkari Awas Samiti, Vasundhara, Ghaziabad, have changed my name to Binni Bhatia.** 0040535337-3

**I, Baljit Singh S/O Kartar Singh R/O WZ-46/2, Krishnapuri, Street No.12, Tilak Nagar, New Delhi-110018 have changed my minor daughter's name Jasmine Kaur Thapar to Jasmine Kaur.** 0040535247-1

**I, Baby Simran D/O Rajiv Kumar R/O H.No.11115-A, 1st Floor, Naseem Building Doriwalan, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005. Have changed my name to "Mohammed Amir Perwaz" for all future purposes.** 0040535297-1

**I, Avineet Kaur D/O Ravinder Singh R/O-H.No.15, II-Floor, Kohat Enclave, Pitampura, Delhi-110034. Changed My Name To Avineet Kaur Sethi.** 0040535302-6

**I, Asseni W/O Akhtar Hussain R/O.Village-Aterna, Ballabhgarh, Faridabad, Haryana-121004 have changed my name to Aashini.** 0040535313-3

**I, Ankita Mishr D/O Shashi Nath Mishra R/O-739 Bakhtawarpur Tanda Delhi-110036, have changed my name to Ankita for all purposes.** 0040535379-9

**I, Anisuddin Siddiqui S/O Late Moinuddin R/O-H.No.-308, Double Storey, Near D.C.P. Office Welcome, Seelampur-3 Delhi-110053, have changed my name to Anisuddin for all purposes.** 0040535305-3

**I, Anil Kumar Alias Anil Thomas, S/O Attal Singh, R/O A-887, Sai Nagar, Meethapur Extn. Badarpur New Delhi-110044 Have Changed My Name To Anil Thomas And Have Changed My Religion From Hinduism To Christianity.** 0070702557-1

**I, Amrita Saini D/O Sandeep Singh R/O-C-92, Shakti Nagar Extn. Delhi-110052, have changed my name to Amrita Kaur Saini.** 0040535300-1

**I, Abhishek S/O Rakesh Kumar Jain R/O-House.No/12486, street.no.-3, Moti Ram Road, Near-Nutan Shiksha Sadan, Delhi-110032, have Changed To Abhishek Jain, For All Future Purposes.** 0040535337-1

**I, Akhtar Hussain S/O-Rahman R/O.Village-Aterna, Ballabhgarh, Faridabad, Haryana-121004 inform that my father and mother name was wrongly mentioned in my passport as Rehman and Nazzo that their actual name is Rahman and Najjo.** 0040535300-5

**I Rashleen Suri W/O Simerdeep Singh Ghai, R/O-Wz-15b, First-Floor, Bindra-Market Santapura, Tilak Nagar N.Delhi-110019, Changed My Name To Rashleen Kaur Ghai.** 0040535337-7

**I Prakash Jain S/O, Pokar Mal Sand R/O 107, Third Floor, Vivekanand Puri, Delhi-110007 declare that Prakash Jain and Prakash Chand Sand both names belongs to same person** 0040535291-1

**I Patel Mohanlal Hansraj S/O Hansrajahai Gopalbhai Panjwari R/O 408-E, Takshshila Housing Society, Dahad, Solusamba, Valsad, Gujarat-396165, have changed my name to Mohanbhai Hansraj Panjwari** 0070702560-1

**I Pappu Kumar S/O Sanjay Chaudhary R/O 491, Gali No-3, Ambedkar Nagar, Haider Pur, Shalimar Bagh, Delhi-110088, have changed my name to Aman Chaudhary** 0070702558-1

**I Mohit S/O Somnath, H.No-11/1165 Geeta Colony Delhi-110031, Changed My Name To Mohit Tandan.** 0040535308-8

**I Mohd Sajid Qureshi S/O Shahabuddin H.No-T-253, Idgah-Road, Al-Quresh School Sadar-Bazaar, Delhi-110006. Changed My Name To Mohammad Sajid.** 0040535308-5

**I Meenu Gandhi W/o harjinder Add-1011A/24 Jagdish colony Rohtak Haryana-124001, changed my name to meenu.** 0040535308-4

**I Marut Khan S/O Shaakeel Ahmed R/O-J-44 Gali-No-8 J-Exn Part-1 Laxminagar Delhi-110092 Have Changed My Name To Maroof Khan.** 0040535300-6

**I Manish Vij S/O Madan Lal Vij R/O 8/90, Third Floor, Ramesh Nagar, Delhi-110015 have changed my name from Munish Kumar Vij to Manish Vij.** 0040535248-1

**I Mala Chouhan W/O Satish Chand Chauhan R/O-838, Sector-5, R.K.Puram, N.Delhi-110022 Have Changed my Name to Mala Chauhan.** 0040535302-9

**I Km.Jyoti/JYOTI D/O Harendra Kushwaha R/O 4726C, Sector-23a, Rudra Bhawan Gurgaon-122017, Haryana Have Changed My Name To Jyoti Singh.** 0040535337-8

**I Jyoti D/O Suresh Kumar H.No.J-176, PREM Nagar-2, Kirari Suleman Nagar, Sultanpuri, C-Block North/West Delhi-110086, Changed My Name To Jyoti Kumari.** 0040535308-7

**I Inder Jeet Singh Miglani S/O Pritam Singh Miglani H.No-1, Patparganj, East Delhi-110091 Changed My Name To Inder Jeet Singh.** 0040535308-9

**I Harshvardhan S/O Dinesh Kumar Add-C-1380, JJ-Colony, Tigr, Ambedkar-Nagar, N.Delhi-110062, Changed my Name to Harsh Vardhan Kumar.** 0040535302-2

**I Harsh Srivastava S/O. Santosh Kumar Srivastava, R/O. Flat No.12 A, Tower No.09, Central Park 2, Gurgaon, Haryana -122001 Have Changed My Name From Harsh Srivastava To Akshat Srivastava For All Purposes** 0070702548-1

**I Harpreet Singh S/O Late Sh.Harbans Singh R/O F-103, Kirti Nagar, New Delhi-110015 have changed my name to Harpreet Singh Bhatia for all purposes.** 0040535239-2

**I Farzana Begum W/O Mohammad Sajid H.No-T-253, Idgah-Road, Al-Quresh School Sadar-Bazaar, Delhi-110006, Changed My Name To Farzana.** 0040535308-6

**I Aruna Shiwa W/O Buddha Rai R/O-195, Masjid-Mo., South-Extension Part-II, N.Delhi-110049 have Changed my Name to Aruna Rai.** 0040535302-1

**I Anil Sachdeva S/O Tilak Raj Sachdeva, R/O GH-14/292, Paschim Vihar, New Delhi shall henceforth be known as Anil Kumar.** 0040535256-1

**It is to inform to the general public that our client Mr. Mukesh Bhardwaj S/o Sh. L.S. Bhardwaj, that the Property bearing No.767, Top Floor, Chirag Delhi New Delhi is disputed property between Mukesh Bhardwaj Vs Uday Dass and the case is pending at Police Station Malviya Nagar, New Delhi. If anybody is having any objection & query for the above mentioned property, kindly contact Mr. Mukesh Bhardwaj at 9718520100.**

**SACHIN KAUSHIK ADVOCATE M-52A, BASEMENT FLOOR, MALVIYA NAGAR NEW DELHI-110017 9911363700 / 9858150000**

**It is to inform to the general public that my client Sh. Babu Lal both R/O D-345, JI Colony, Tigr, South Delhi, Delhi-110088 has severed all social and financial relations with their son namely Govind as he is continuously misbehaving with my client, hence my client shall not be responsible and liable for any kind of liability arising out of his acts. That he is disowned and shall have no claim of any kind over the property of my client either movable or immovable.**

**RAJENDER KUMAR (Advocate) Ch.No. 684, Western Wing, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi-54**

**On behalf of my clients Sh. Parmeshwar and Smt. Amrita. Both residents of R2B 267 Nihal Vihar, Nangla Dabi-110041 caused a notice to the General Public that my above named clients have obtained and disowned their son namely Sh. Sandeep Kumar in all respects and immovable properties because of his non-concord and non-judging towards my clients due to his separate accommodation for last couple of months. Now my above named clients and his own family have severed all social relations with said Sh. Sandeep Kumar and would have no concern with said Sandeep Kumar in any manner whatsoever. If any person deals with the said Sh. Lakshman in any way or in any manner, he would be doing so at their own risk and consequences.**

**DEEPAK CHANDRYA Advocate En. No. 28217 Ch. No. 123, Patiala House Courts New Delhi-110001**

**To be known to all that my client Chandra Prabha Gupta W/o Late Suraj Parkash Gupta Resident of DDA Freehold Flat No. 229, Street-C, Category III, Ground Floor G-8, Area, Rajouri Garden, (now known as Valika Apartments) New Delhi-110064, (Public documents in his possession, Letters, NOC for Electric and Water connection and possession Slip of the above flat have been lost. In pursuance to this effect has been lodged with Crime Branch, New Delhi. Any person's claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents may writecontact with above named person at above address/ Phone No. 9811389940 S.B. B. N. DEVI, ADVOCATE S.R.B Campus, Anand, New Delhi-110028**

**It is to inform to the public at large that Mrs. Devi Bai acquired the property i.e. Entire First Floor without right of jointure of property bearing U.P. No. 5-463, Plot No. 45-B, part of Khirasa No. 23/29/205, Suburban Park, New Delhi, vide a court order dated 18/03/2019 issued by Mrs. Gangaa Devi after Mrs. Devi Bai died intestate leaving behind Mrs. Gangaa Devi as her LT and there is no dispute regarding said property. If date of publication of this notice period, the claims, if any of such person shall be treated null and void and also shall be waived and not binding on our client.**

**Ajay Kumar Giri - Advocate H.No. 236/165, Basement, Vardaan Vihar, Sector-48, New Delhi-110092**

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**Ajay Kumar Giri - Advocate H.No. 236/165, Basement, Vardaan Vihar, Sector-48, New Delhi-110092**

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# 17 ECONOMY

THE INDIAN EXPRESS, FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 2020

**GOLD** ₹44,490  
**RUPEE** ₹74.28  
**OIL** \$34.70  
**SILVER** ₹46,868

Indian basket as on March 11, 2020

SENSEX: 32,778.14 ▼ 2919.26 NIFTY: 9,590.15 ▼ 868.25 NIKKEI: 18,559.63 ▼ 856.43 HANG SENG: 24,309.07 ▼ 922.54 FTSE: 5,541.26 ▼ 335.26 DAX: 9,763.78 ▼ 674.90

\*International market data till 1900 IST

## CORONAVIRUS EFFECT ON AVIATION INDUSTRY

# Visa curbs may hit up to 70% load, force foreign airlines to truncate India services

**PRANAVMUKUL**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

FOREIGN AIRLINES, which hand nearly two-thirds of India's international air traffic every year, are expected to reduce their services over the next one month in the aftermath of the Centre cancelling all valid visas, except certain categories, effective Friday till April 15. According to an official at a West Asian airline, foreign nationals account for 50-70 per cent of passenger traffic for overseas carriers operating to India. Even though airlines will be the first ones to suffer the blow of this lockdown, the Indian Association of Tour Operators has estimated that the cascading effect will cause a direct loss of over Rs 8,500 crore to aviation, travel and hotels segments.



People wait to check in to a flight to Chicago at the United Airlines counter in Brussels airport on Thursday. Meanwhile, American Airlines Inc and Delta Air Lines said they will cap airfares on flights from Europe to the US that are impacted by new travel restrictions as Americans flock to European airports trying to return home. AP

A spokesperson for Emirates, the largest foreign carrier flying to India, said: "The situation continues to evolve and remains dynamic. India is an important market for us, and we are currently operating our services as scheduled across our nine destinations - Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Kochi, Mumbai, and Thiruvananthapuram". As per the latest data, Emirates carried 1.51 million passengers to and from Indian airports during the three-month period ended June 30, 2019.

Doha-based Qatar Airways, which operates to 13 cities in India, has reduced its services to some airports such as Kozhikode, Thiruvananthapuram and Kochi. All Indian carriers flying to Doha have already cancelled their flights to the airport due to Qatari government restricting entry of Indian nationals into Doha.

The Indian Express reached out to British Airways, Virgin Atlantic,

Lufthansa, Etihad, Air France and Singapore Airlines. Air France, which flies to four cities in India, did not respond to e-mail queries. Rest of the airlines said they were assessing the situation and did not comment on whether they were reducing capacities.

A senior Oman Air executive posted in India said the airline, which has already witnessed a decline in bookings to its Indian stations over the past few weeks, was considering reducing frequencies and operating smaller aircraft after studying passenger loads.

"A big share of our travellers are Indians, and the move is applicable on foreigners, but we will see some impact. We are yet to really gauge the impact. Overall, we have seen a drop in bookings over the last few weeks. But now that

the advisory (of visa cancellation) has gone out, people will cancel their bookings immediately," the executive said.

"We have quite a few people coming in from Oman as well for tourism, medical purposes, education, etc, which will definitely stop during this period. A lot of other tourists that come on Oman Air from our other European stations will also be impacted. We operate to 11 cities and to many of these cities we have triple daily flights and double daily flights. We are studying the flight loads and the plan is to see whether we can combine some flights if the loads are not high. To some airports, we operate wide-bodied aircraft and after looking at loads, we will operate with smaller aircraft," he added.

In addition to foreign carriers, domestic airlines, which also have a significant exposure to international routes, are considering curtailing their operations.

"The latest update on suspension of visas from all countries to India is expected to have a substantial impact on the foreign tourist arrival in the country which was already witnessing a drop due to the prevailing situation. We have received close to 35 per cent cancellation queries from travellers planning their trip to foreign destinations. With few Indian airlines having suspended flight operations to destinations with high Coronavirus risk, airfares have dropped by 40 per cent to affected destinations. There has been an about 18 per cent drop in hotel rates and we are receiving cancel-

lation requests from various travellers who are wary of taking up trips domestically as well," said Sabina Chopra, co-founder and COO, corporate travel & head-industry relations, Yatra.com

An Air India official said the airline, which has already suspended its flights to Rome and Milan, was further looking to truncate its international flights in light of weak passenger demand.

A spokesperson for Vistara, which took delivery of its first wide-bodied aircraft earlier this month, said: "Business on some of our international and domestic routes has been impacted as COVID-19 continues to spread world over. At Vistara, we are reviewing the situation everyday and remain nimble in our approach". The firm did not respond to specific queries about its plan to further induct wide-bodied planes given the current scenario.

IndiGo did not respond to e-mail queries. A senior executive at the airline, however, noted that the carrier was "considering all possible options to deal with the crisis". Another executive at a low-cost carrier said while it was necessary to restrict global travel, the move will have implications in the long term. "Right now, a number of companies have reduced travel and have implemented work from home policies. This will make business managers realise the potential to achieve similar outputs on curtailed cost-structures. This mindset is something that will be the pain-point for airlines and the travel industry as a whole going ahead," the executive pointed out.

Air Tanzania has suspended its flights to Mumbai between March 13 and April 15 citing India's visa restrictions. Also, RwandaAir said it was temporarily suspending flights to Mumbai till April 30.

# In search for the bottom line: Sell, hold or invest?

**SANDEEP SINGH**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

THE BSE SENSEX witnessed the second-biggest single-day fall in its history on Thursday, as it fell by 8.2 per cent, just lower than the 11 per cent fall seen on October 24, 2008. The fall began in January when China reported a sharp rise in cases of the coronavirus infection. This has resulted in a 21.8 per cent fall in the Sensex since January 17, when it closed at 41,945. As the virus spread in Europe, the US and India widened in March, the Sensex lost 14.4 per cent this month, to date.

At a time when investors are witnessing sharp erosion in their wealth on account of fall in equity valuations, market participants say the bottom line is not known. The question that arises is what should the investor do - exit the market, stay put or keep investing?

**Why are the markets falling?** The scare is primarily driven by the spread of coronavirus around the world, loss of lives across countries and its economic impact.

As countries are restricting entry by virtually locking their borders, the scare is only mounting by the day. The sharp fall in equity markets worldwide and crash in the crude oil prices (trading at \$33.76 per barrel as of 1:05 PM EDT) has forced investors worldwide to look for safe havens and safer asset classes.

In India, in just eight trading days of March, foreign portfolio investors have sold equities worth a net of Rs 26,449 crore. Market participants say the fall in India is primarily driven by the panic button pressed by the FPIs and they are in a sell mode.

On the quantum of fall fund managers say since the selling intensity is very high among FPIs, buyers are quoting lower levels and that is pulling down the markets sharply.

**How much can it fall?** This is one question for which no one has an answer. "It will depend on if and when the world finds a medical solution to contain the virus," said Nilesh Shah, MD of Kotak Mahindra AMC. So, while, there is no bottom line to the market under the current circumstances, many feel that the markets will start recovering once a medical solution is available. However, that may be a week, a month or six months away.

**How are domestic investors behaving?** It is important to note that even as the markets are falling and there is a scare, investors are behaving in a much mature manner. Fund managers say the behaviour is in sharp contrast to what was seen in 2008-09 during the financial crisis, when investors rushed to sell their equity holdings.

In fact, even as FPIs have rushed to sell their holdings worth Rs 26,449 crore, over the last eight trading sessions, domestic institutional investors have put in a net of Rs 21,817 crore, thereby making up for almost 82 per cent of FPIs' outflow.

Mutual funds players say they have not seen redemption by investors. "As of Wednesday, data shows that there have been positive inflows and investors

are not selling," said Nimesh Shah, MD & CEO of ICICI Prudential AMC.

Even Nilesh said his fund house has seen continuous inflow through systematic investment plans and also through the non-SIP mode.

**What should investors do?** With the markets already down over 20 per cent in the last one month, investors should avoid selling their stocks or mutual fund holding under panic as they would book losses in a hurry. It is best to stay put and wait for the event to play out.

"I don't know what the bottom line is and when the market will hit that. It may take 2-3 months or more. But, the valuations are attractive and if one enters the market with a 3 year view, I think it will be a good experience," said Nimesh Shah.

Kotak's Nilesh said once the medical solution is found, India will benefit on various accounts - lower crude oil prices, reduction in trade deficit with China, lower interest rates and companies looking to diversify away from China. "Bear the current pain, but once the solution is found to the virus, things will start improving."

It is important to note that during the global financial crisis in 2008, while the Sensex lost 36 per cent in the one-month period between September 24, 2008 and October 24, 2008, it regained its lost ground and reached the levels seen on September 24, 2008 seven months later in May 2009.



## NY Fed to offer \$1.5 tn in cash this week

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE**  
WASHINGTON, MARCH 12

THE US central bank announced on Thursday a massive increase to its cash injections into American financial markets to quell the growing uncertainty caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

The New York Fed, which has ramped up short-term funding to markets in recent days, said it will offer \$500 billion in three-month funds called repurchase agreements or "repos" on Thursday and Friday, and \$500 billion in one-month repos on Friday. Over the coming month, it will provide \$500 billion a week of one- and three-month repos. That is on top of the at least \$175 billion daily in overnight funding, and twice-weekly offers of at least \$45 billion in two-week repos.

"These changes are being made to address highly unusual disruptions in Treasury financing markets associated with the coronavirus outbreak," the New York Fed said in a statement.

## ECB ramps up stimulus in virus fight but stops short of a rate cut

**REUTERS**  
FRANKFURT/SYDNEY, MAR 12

THE EUROPEAN Central Bank approved fresh stimulus measures on Thursday to help the bloc cope with the "major shock" of coronavirus but left interest rates on hold, disarming markets, and said euro zone governments must lead the pandemic response.

ECB President Christine Lagarde said the virus would have a "significant impact on economic activity" even if it is ultimately temporary in nature and called for "an ambitious and coordinated fiscal policy response".

Meanwhile, Australia said it would pump A\$176 billion (\$11.4 billion) into the economy to try to stop the outbreak triggering a recession, as it weighed an extension of travel restrictions.

## Markets catch COVID-19: How various scenarios hit global gains

The spread of the novel coronavirus, the slow pace of normalisation in China, and the collapse in oil prices and its additional disruption will affect global economic growth as well as major asset classes, according to UBS

**2.3%:** BASELINE GLOBAL GROWTH PROJECTION IN 2020, FROM 2.9% EARLIER

**8** NATIONS ARE EXPECTED TO ENTER RECESSION

**PRESSURE ON CENTRAL BANKS** THE FED IS EXPECTED TO GO TO THE ZERO LOWER BOUND. ALL CENTRAL BANKS ARE ESTIMATED TO CUT RATES TO THE WEIGHTED AVERAGE POLICY RATE

**US dollar mixed in intermediate, strong in pandemic scenario:** Covering of EUR shorts against carry has been the main axis of movement in currencies, and this will likely extend if the virus gets worse. If the pandemic worsens, worries of extended spell of global growth weakness will once again see the EUR weaken, and several EM currencies could see distress.

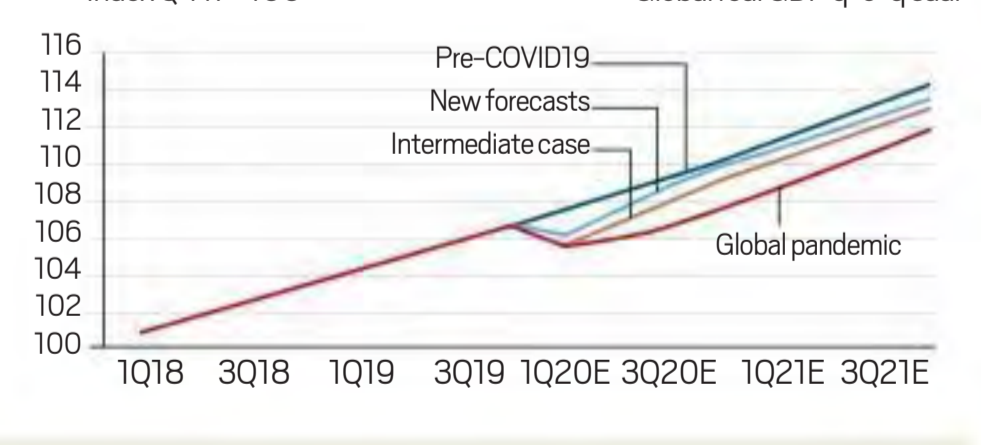
Source: UBS



**EQUITIES: -5% AND -20% IN INTERMEDIATE AND PANDEMIC SCENARIOS:**

- If the virus can be contained, global equities should make new stimulus-powered highs by end-2020
- In the intermediate scenario, we still see a recovery in H2, but not enough to keep returns positive for the year
- The pandemic scenario sees a major step lower in returns as growth slips with little additional stimulus at policymakers' disposal

## COVID-19 TO GENERATE SOME PERMANENT OUTPUT LOSS



## Post market rout: RBI to go for \$2-bn dollar swaps for liquidity

**ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU**  
MUMBAI, MARCH 12

EVEN AS the Sensex crashed 2,919 points and the rupee fell below the 74 level, the Reserve Bank of India on Thursday decided to undertake six-month \$2 billion US dollar sell/buy swaps to provide liquidity to the foreign exchange market, following "a review of current financial market conditions and taking into consideration the requirement of US dollars in the market".

The move comes at a time foreign investors have pulled out Rs 13,500 crore from the markets in the last three sessions.

The RBI also said it is closely and continuously monitoring the rapidly evolving global situation and spillovers. "It stands ready to take all necessary measures to ensure that the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Indian economy are mitigated, and financial markets and institutions in India continue to function normally. The level of forex reserves at \$487.24 billion as on March 6, 2020 remains comfortable to meet any exigency," the RBI said.

As per RBI, financial markets worldwide are facing intense selling pressures on extreme risk aversion due to the spread of COVID-19 infections, com-

**HOW WILL THE SWAPS WORK**

- Minimum bid size: \$10 mn
- Multiples of \$1 mn thereafter
- Eligible participants can also submit multiple bids
- Aggregate amount of bids submitted by a single entity shouldn't exceed the notified amount

pounded by the slump in international crude prices and a decline in bond yields in advanced economies. "Flight to safety has led to spike in volatility across asset classes, with several emerging market currencies experiencing downside pressures. Mismatches in US dollar liquidity have become accentuated across the world," it said.

"The swaps will be conducted through the auction route in multiple tranches. The auctions will be multiple price based, i.e., successful bids will be accepted at their respective quoted premiums. To begin with, an amount of \$2 billion would be offered on March 16, 2020," the RBI said.

"The swap will be in the nature of a simple sell/buy foreign exchange swap from the RBI's side. A bank shall buy US dollars from the RBI and simultaneously agree to sell the same amount of dollars at the end of swap period," it said.

The auction cut-off will be based on the premium amount in paisa terms up to two decimal points. The market participants will be required to place their bids with the premium that they are willing to receive from the Reserve Bank for the tenor of the swap, expressed in paisa terms up to two decimal places, it said. The minimum bid size will be \$10 million and in multiples of \$1 million thereafter. The eligible participants can also submit multiple bids.

However, the aggregate amount of bids submitted by a single eligible entity should not exceed the notified amount of auction, it said.

"The settlement of the first leg of the swap will take place on spot basis from the date of transaction and RBI will debit the rupee funds from the current account of the successful bidder and the bidder will receive US dollars into its nostro account. In the reverse leg of the swap transaction, US dollars will have to be returned to the RBI, to get the rupee funds back including the swap premium," it said.

## Wall Street enters bear market, oil falls 6% on US travel restrictions

**REUTERS**  
BENGALURU/LONDON, MAR 12

THE S&P 500 and the Nasdaq cratered into a bear market on Thursday as a shock move by US President Donald Trump to suspend travel from Europe rattled investors already shaken by fears of a global recession on the back of a coronavirus pandemic.

At 03:08 pm ET, the Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 1,995.83 points, or 8.47 per cent, at 21,557.39, while the S&P 500 was down 212.76 points, or 7.76 per cent, at 2,528.62. The Nasdaq Composite was down 590.42 points, or 7.42 per cent, at 7,361.63. Trading on Wall Street was

halted minutes after the opening bell as the S&P 500 slid 7 per cent and triggered a 15-minute circuit. The indices are now over 24 per cent below their intra-day record highs hit in February.

Meanwhile, oil prices fell more than 6 per cent after Trump's announcement. The slump in oil is being compounded by the threat of a flood of cheap supply after Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates said they would raise output in a stand-off with Russia. Brent crude was down \$2.33, or 6.5 per cent, at \$33.46 a barrel by 1359 GMT. US crude was down \$1.79, or 5.4 per cent, at \$31.19.

The S&P 1500 airlines index was down 10.1 per cent with cruise liners Carnival Corp and

## Global markets take a beating, too

London/New York: European shares were on track for a record loss on Thursday, hitting a near seven-year low after the ECB held off on a rate cut, further upsetting markets reeling from US travel restrictions. The benchmark STOXX 600 index fell around 10 per cent, extending declines to a sixth straight day.

MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan lost 4.1 per cent to its lowest level since early 2019, respectively. Investors were also unnerved by the absence of tar-

Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd shedding 17 per cent and 24 per cent,

## ACROSS THE WORLD

### SoftBank's Son offers to donate face masks

Tokyo: SoftBank founder Masayoshi Son on Thursday tweeted an offer to donate a million free face masks to help fight the coronavirus outbreak a day after twitter users criticised his proposal to give away test kits.

### Kuroda meets with PM Abe, vows response

Tokyo: The Bank of Japan is ready to take further steps to support the economy in the face of the coronavirus epidemic, Governor Haruhiko Kuroda said after a meeting with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Thursday. REUTERS

### ADB to give \$200 mn to cos fighting virus

New Delhi: The Asian Development Bank has said it will provide \$200 million to companies manufacturing and distributing medicines, and other items needed to combat the novel coronavirus. PTI

geted stimulus measures and the lack of details on a public health response after Trump made no mention of widely expected payroll tax cuts.

Online travel agents Expedia Group Inc and Booking Holdings Inc, as well as hotel operator Marriott International and casino operator Wynn Resorts shed more than 10 per cent.

Wall Street's fear gauge jumped about 15 points to its highest since November 2008 at 68.76, as the death toll from the virus rose to over 4,600 worldwide, according to a Reuters tally. Declining issues outnumbered advances for a 29.70-to-1 ratio on the NYSE and a 24.79-to-1 ratio on the Nasdaq. The S&P index

recorded no new 52-week high and 301 new lows, while the Nasdaq recorded one new high and 1,264 new lows. The 10-year US Treasuries yield fell 8.7 basis points to 0.737 per cent, though it is still more than 40 basis points above a record low of 0.318 per cent touched on Monday.

On the crude front, the US Energy Information Administration and the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries have cut forecasts for demand. "We estimate a production surplus could reach between 5 million and 6 million barrels per day in April," said Kirill Tachennikov, director and senior oil analyst at BCS Global Markets in Moscow.

## Nasscom urges govt to ease restrictions on work from home

New Delhi: Nasscom has urged the government to relax restrictions regarding allowing employees to work from home, amid the coronavirus outbreak.

Currently, there are restrictions on WFH (work from home) under the OSP (other service providers) regime. Companies are continuing to struggle in operationalising WFH for their staff, owing to compliance issues. These requirements include establishing PPVPN connectivity, sharing pre-defined locations of extended agents (employees), and providing high monetary security deposits. PTI

RBI asks states not to move deposits out of pvt banks, says money is safe

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

THE RESERVE Bank of India (RBI) has asked state governments not to transfer their deposits out of private sector banks, saying apprehensions about the safety of deposits in private lenders are highly misplaced.

In a letter written to chief secretaries of all states, the central bank said moving deposits out of private sector banks could have implications for banking and financial sector stability.

The letter came after reports suggested that some state governments have advised government bodies and other entities under their jurisdiction to transfer their funds held with private sector banks to public sector lenders. This follows the crisis at Yes Bank where the Reserve Bank has superseded the bank's board and placed restrictions on withdrawals.

"We strongly believe that such a move can have banking and financial sector stability implications," the central bank wrote in its letter.

MCA exempts Yes Bank restructuring plan from CCI review

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

ANY POTENTIAL restructuring or merger of beleaguered lender Yes Bank will not be subject to scrutiny by the competition regulator, according to a notification by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA). The Centre imposed a moratorium on all of Yes Bank's operation and superseded the board of the bank on March 5, while also setting a withdrawal limit of Rs 50,000 for all depositors of the bank. This move could prevent regulatory hurdles from the Competition Commission of India (CCI) from interrupting a quick restructuring of the bank.

"The central government hereby exempts a Banking Company in respect of which the Central Government has issued a notification under Section 45 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 (10 of 49), from the application of the provisions of Sections 5 and 6 of the Competition Act, 2002, in public interest for a period of five years," said an MCA notification.

Ordinarily, combinations in which the participants have a combined asset value of Rs 1,000 crore or turnover of Rs 3,000 crore

are required to submit details of the proposed combination to the CCI and seek its approval. The regulator evaluates whether any combination would have an appreciable adverse effect on competition before granting approval.

"These are exceptional circumstances when the government invokes Section 45. These are not ordinary circumstances," said a government official, adding that a similar notification had been issued in 2013 but had lapsed in 2018. The official said that the move would allow any banking company notified under Section 45 of the Banking Regulation Act to go through reconstruction, which may include merger and amalgamation, without having to seek approval of the CCI. Under the Competition Act, the CCI has 210 days to either approve or reject a proposed combination.

"This is a welcome move as exempting combinations involving such banking companies which are on the brink of exiting the market from scrutiny by the CCI will not have an appreciable adverse impact on competition. This is accepted universally under the 'failing firm defence' in competition law," said MM Sharma of Vaish Associates.

BAILOUT FOR TROUBLED PRIVATE LENDER SBI to buy shares worth ₹7,250 crore in Yes Bank

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU MUMBAI, MARCH 12

STATE BANK of India (SBI), which is working out a bailout package for troubled Yes Bank, on Wednesday said it will buy shares worth Rs 7,250 crore in the troubled private sector lender. According to the state-owned bank, the executive committee of the Central Board of SBI on Wednesday accorded approval for purchase of 725 crore shares in Yes Bank at a price of Rs10 per share subject to all regulatory approvals.

"Our shareholding in Yes Bank Ltd. will remain within 49 per cent of the paid-up capital of Yes Bank," SBI said in a regulatory filing.

On May 5, the Reserve Bank of India superseded the board of directors of troubled Yes Bank for a period of 30 days "owing to serious deterioration in the financial position" of the bank and capped the deposit withdrawals at Rs 50,000 per depositor. The RBI said this was "done to quickly restore depositors' confidence in the bank, including by putting in place a scheme for reconstruction or



SBI Chairman Rajnish Kumar had indicated if there are other investors, capital infusion in Yes Bank can cross ₹20,000 crore. Express file photo

amalgamation. On March 6, the central bank unveiled a reconstruction scheme indicating the possibility of SBI, India's largest bank, acquiring a 49 per cent equity stake in the private lender.

In the 'Yes Bank Reconstruction Scheme', released less than 24 hours after superseding the private bank's board and appointing an administrator, RBI had said "State Bank of India has expressed its willingness to make investment in Yes Bank and participate in its reconstruction scheme".

Jan factory output grows 2% on pickup in mining, electricity; Feb retail inflation eases to 6.58%

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

FACTORY OUTPUT grew by 2 per cent in January from 1.6 per cent a year ago due to a pickup in mining and electricity output, even as manufacturing output growth remained subdued.

Retail inflation eased to a three-month low of 6.58 per cent in February with the food inflation moderating to 10.81 per cent from 13.63 per cent a month ago, data released by National Statistical Office (NSO) on Thursday showed.

Though the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) for January came in higher than estimates, despite the low base, industrial recovery looks out of sight with the cumulative factory output growth for the ten months of April-January growing at just 0.5 per cent against 4.4 per cent growth in the year-ago period and the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak expected to further hit industrial growth in the coming months. Stimulus measures for boosting demand are the need of the hour, economists said, and even though space for fiscal and monetary policy is limited, a lower inflation print has raised expectations of a rate cut by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

Manufacturing sector - which carries a weight of 77.63 per cent in the IIP - grew 1.5 per cent in January, only marginally higher than 1.3 per cent in the corresponding period last year, the data showed. For April-January, manufacturing sector has grown 0.3 per cent against 4.4 per cent growth last year. As per use-based classification, four out of six sectors - capital goods, infrastructure/construction goods, consumer durables and consumer non-durables - stayed in the negative in January.

Capital goods output, a measure of investment demand, has contracted in each of the ten months this fiscal, declining 4.3 per cent in January compared with 3.6 per cent contraction last year. Cumulatively, capital goods output has contracted by 11.5 per cent in April-January from 5.7 per cent growth last year.

"Weakness in factory output growth is visible both at the broad and use based classifica-

Though IIP for January came in higher than estimates, industrial recovery looks out of sight due to impact of the COVID-19 outbreak

tion. Manufacturing, which is the largest component of IIP having 77.6 per cent weight continues to be down and out... India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) believes a sustained weakness in factory output month after month means that recovery on the industrial front is unlikely in the near term and now with the adverse impact of COVID-19 looming large it will get more prolonged," said Sunil Kumar Sinha, principal economist, Ind-Ra.

After rising for six months, retail inflation based on Consumer Price Index (CPI) moderated for the first time, but remained above the medium-term target RBI. Inflation in vegetable prices eased to 31.61 per cent from a high of 50.19 per cent in January, while inflation for the fuel and light segment almost doubled to 6.36 per cent in February.

Fall in global crude prices are likely to aid a further easing of inflation going ahead. "We expect the inflation trajectory to continue to moderate going ahead led by deflationary trends from falling crude oil prices, lower food prices and weak demand. With domestic and global growth expected to face downside risks from the spread of COVID-19 and deflationary forces emerging, we see room for up to 50 basis points of rate cut by the MPC, with any further easing contingent on the evolving growth environment," Upasna Bhardwaj, economist, Kotak Mahindra Bank, said.

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank had last month left policy rates unchanged for the second time. The RBI had slashed policy rates by 135 basis points in 2019. The MPC had sharply raised consumer price inflation projection to 6.5 per cent for the fourth quarter of FY20 from 5.1-4.7 per cent earlier. The panel pegged CPI inflation for the first half of FY21 at 5.4-5.0 per cent compared with 4-3.8 per cent earlier.

Flipkart-Walmart deal: NCLAT dismisses CAIT plea against fair trade regulator's nod

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

THE NATIONAL Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) on Thursday dismissed an appeal by the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) against the CCI's approval to the Flipkart-Walmart merger and said that the combination is likely to boost the "financial strength" of the platform.

A two-member Bench, led by Justice S J Mukhopadhyaya, said that the Competition Commission of India (CCI) had "specifically and rightly" come to the conclusion that the proposed combination of Flipkart and Walmart would not result in the elimination of any major player from the domestic market.

The combination, thus, the NCLAT observed, would not result in any abuse of dominant position in market. The CAIT had last year approached the appellate tribunal with a plea that the fair trade regulator had, while granting its consent to the Flipkart-Walmart deal, not considered that the transaction would result in further accentuation of an anti-competitive environment. Apart from that, Walmart would also get access to the "web of preferential sellers" of Flipkart, which would further deny market access to non-preferential sellers on these platforms.

'ANTI-COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT'

CAIT had approached NCLAT with a plea that CCI had, while granting its consent to the Flipkart-Walmart deal, not considered that the transaction would result in further accentuation of an anti-competitive environment

However, the CCI had ruled that the combination would not adversely affect competition

The CCI had - after considering the submissions made by CAIT - said that since the proposed merger between Flipkart and Walmart would operate in the business-to-business (B2B) market space, which had ample number of online and offline retailers, the combination would not adversely affect competition. The issue of preferential selling, if any, by Flipkart, the fair trade regulator had then said, had nothing to do with the proposed combination of the online retailer with Walmart, and thus the same could not be a reason for denying the said merger.

NCLAT clears new distribution plan, directs completion of IL&FS resolution in 90 days

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

THE NATIONAL Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) Thursday accepted a fresh distribution framework for Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services (IL&FS) suggested by the central government and SBI, which had proposed that there should be "fair and equitable" distribution of funds to all creditors.

This plan was opposed by other creditors who had suggested that Section 53 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), which gives preference to financial creditors over operational and all other kinds of creditors, be used for the resolution.

Rejecting the objections raised by creditors who wanted the NCLAT to follow Section 53 for distribution of funds, the appellate

PLAN WAS OPPOSED BY CREDITORS

The distribution plan suggested by the Centre and SBI was opposed by other creditors who had suggested that Section 53 of IBC be used for resolution

tribunal said it would be against the public interest as the money invested by public funds, in fact, belonged to the share and unit holders. The NCLAT also said that the resolution plan, according to the revised framework suggested by the central government and SBI, be completed within 90 days from Thursday.

In the revised distribution framework, the Centre had suggested that all the public fund creditors - such as pension and provident funds, army welfare,

employee provident, gratuity and superannuation funds - be repaid at least a part of their dues. If these public funds were not paid their hard earned dues, the Centre had said in the revised distribution framework, it could result in a "debt contagion" from which the financial markets of the nation would not be able to recover. Further, for the lenders of IL&FS holding companies, the resolution plan should consider paying the interest component.

State Bank of India (SBI) had,

on the other hand, suggested a resolution framework for companies under the 'Red' and 'Amber' category, which has also been accepted by the NCLAT. The bank had suggested that in companies where no Committee of Creditors (CoC) had been formed until now, a CoC be immediately formed.

For companies in these categories where a CoC had been formed, the resolution consultant should contact the committee with latest fair market and liquidation value reports, the audit reports obtained, the bids received, as well as the recommendations of the consultant. "A central coordinating team under the supervision of a former judge or senior advocate comprising 7 to 8 representative of IL&FS, senior lender banks, resolution consultant may further be constituted for monitoring and supervising the developments," SBI had suggested.

CAD narrows sharply to \$1.4 bn in December quarter

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU MUMBAI, MARCH 12

INDIA'S CURRENT account deficit (CAD) narrowed sharply to US\$1.4 billion (0.2 per cent of GDP) in the December quarter of FY20 from \$17.7 billion (2.7 per cent of GDP) in Q3 of 2018-19 and \$6.5 billion (0.9 per cent of GDP) in the preceding quarter - Q2 of 2019-20.

According to data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the contraction in the CAD was primarily on account of a lower trade deficit at \$34.6 billion along with



financial services," the RBI said. Private transfer receipts, mainly representing remittances by Indians employed overseas, rose to \$20.6 billion, up by 9 per cent from their level a year ago. In the financial account, net foreign direct investment (FDI) at \$10 billion was higher than \$7.3 billion in Q3 of 2018-19, the RBI said.

Foreign portfolio investment recorded net inflow of \$7.8 billion, as against an outflow of \$2.1 billion in Q3 of 2018-19 on account of net purchases in both the debt and equity market. "Net inflow on account of external commercial bor-

rowings to India was \$3.2 billion as compared with \$2 billion in Q3 of 2018-19. There was an accretion of \$21.6 billion to the foreign exchange reserves (on BoP basis) as against a depletion of \$4.3 billion in Q3 of 2018-19," the banking regulator said.

Meanwhile, the CAD narrowed to 1.0 per cent of GDP in April-December of 2019-20 from 2.6 per cent in April-December of 2018-19, on the back of a reduction in the trade deficit which shrank to \$118.9 billion in April-December 2019-20 from \$145.1 billion in April-December of 2018-

19. Net invisible receipts were higher in April-December of 2019-20, mainly due to increase in net services earnings and private transfer receipts.

Net FDI inflows at \$32.1 billion in April-December of 2019-20 were higher than \$24.3 billion in April-December of 2018-19. Portfolio investment recorded a net inflow of \$15.1 billion in April-December of 2019-20 as against an outflow of \$11.9 billion a year ago. In April-December 2019-20, there was an accretion of \$40.7 billion of the foreign exchange reserves (on a BoP basis).

BRIEFLY

Plea to replace 63 Moons board set aside

New Delhi: The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) Thursday set aside the Centre's plea to supersede the board of 63 Moons Technologies. It also dismissed the plea of the company's three directors, which include Jignesh Shah and Divang Narela, challenging their disqualification. PTI

US weekly jobless claims fall by 4,000

Washington: The number of Americans filing for unemployment benefit unexpectedly fell last week, but could rise in the coming weeks as the coronavirus pandemic causes companies to layoff workers. Initial claims for state unemployment benefits fell 4,000 to a seasonally adjusted 211,000 for week ended March 7, the Labor Department said. REUTERS

DFSSecy is govt nominee to RBI board

Mumbai: The RBI Thursday said Department of Financial Services Secretary Debashish Panda has been nominated by the government on its central board. PTI

Bitcoin dives as cryptos suffer in market turmoil

London: Bitcoin plunged on Thursday, last down 22 per cent at \$6,206, amid wild volatility in cryptocurrency markets, with traders citing a sell-off across assets amid coronavirus fears. REUTERS

Bank of Maharashtra Tender Notice. Head Office: Lokmangal, 1501, Shivaji Nagar, Pune - 411005. Bank of Maharashtra invites Bids (both Technical and Financial) from eligible bidders for Printing of AGM Notices & Annual Report 2019-20.

Bank of India RFP for Corporate Agency Arrangement for Life Insurance Business. Head Office: Star House, C-5, G-Block, Bandra - Kuria Complex, Bandra East, Mumbai - 51.

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'Merged PSBs to ensure no disruption to credit flow'. New Delhi: The merged public sector banks (PSBs) will ensure there is no disruption to credit flow and customer experience is enhanced, the Finance Ministry said Thursday. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is holding meetings

NLC India Limited 'Navratna' - Government of India Enterprise. Regd. Office: First Floor, No.8, Mayor Sathygaurthy Road, FSD, Egmara Complex of Food Corporation of India, Ghatampur, Distt., Meerut (UP), India. Bid documents sale period: 13.03.2020 to 14.04.2020 Upto 17.30 Hrs. Last date and time for receipt of Bid: 15.04.2020 Upto 14.30 Hrs. (IST).

## MILITARY TECHNOLOGY

## The rise of the ray gun

Laser weapons are almost ready for the battlefield



A 60kW system will be fitted on USS Preble, a destroyer, later this year. And an even more potent 150kW weapon is undergoing tests on larger ships. AP

WHEN MARTIANS descend on England in H.G. Wells's novel *The War of the Worlds*, published in 1898, they incinerate troublesome humans and lay waste to suburban towns with heat-rays that turn all before them into a "a smoky dance of lurid flames". Such ray guns have been a recurrent feature of science-fiction ever since.

Despite the efforts of military types, though, reality has lagged far behind sci-fi. In 1934, to no avail, Britain's Air Ministry offered £1,000 to anyone who could use rays of some sort to kill a sheep at a distance of 180 metres. A decade later a Japanese device that generated microwaves managed to snuff out a rabbit that was 30 metres away. But it took ten minutes to do so. Even the invention of lasers, in 1960, failed to usher in the age of the directed-energy weapon, as ray guns are known in the jargon. Ronald Reagan's effort to weaponise lasers in the "Star Wars" programme of the 1980s was spectacularly unsuccessful.

This time, however, it's different, according to Kelly Hammett, who joined America's Air Force Research Laboratory 27 years ago, and now runs its Directed Energy Directorate. "For my entire career," he says, "we have been working on directed energy. We're finally at the point at which we're going to see systems that will make a more substantive

difference on the battlefield."

**Zap!**

If true, that will change the cost of war. At the moment, shooting an object out of the sky generally means firing something expensive at it. If the object is an enemy plane or sophisticated ballistic missile, that is probably worthwhile. But Israel, for example, routinely expends \$50,000 interceptors on home-made rockets that cost about \$1,000. Disparities like this make it easy and affordable to attempt to overwhelm defences with missile salvos or drone swarms. Lasers, by contrast, are cheap to fire and never run out of ammunition.

Lasers come in many varieties, but two, in particular, have been the subject of weaponisation. These are solid-state lasers and chemical lasers. A solid-state laser works by stimulating the emergence of a laser beam from a crystal or a piece of glass by pumping energy into that solid. (The first laser used a ruby as the crystal and a flashlamp as the pump.) The power to do this is provided by an electric current. A chemical laser, meanwhile, draws its energy from reactions between two or more substances and uses that energy to pump yet another substance to emit the beam.

In the first decade of the current century America came close to developing

a chemical-laser weapon. This was a hangover from Star Wars, a megawatt device intended to destroy intercontinental ballistic missiles just after they took off. Tests conducted in 2009 were successful. But the system weighed 17 tonnes, and was so large that it required a Boeing 747 to carry it. Also, the pumping reaction involved chlorine, hydrogen peroxide and potassium hydroxide, all of which are corrosive—as was the substance being pumped, iodine. This is not an ideal mixture to have on board a plane. Having burned through \$5bn over 16 years, the programme was therefore cancelled in 2011.

Today's laser weapons have, by contrast, gone down the solid-state route. As Thomas Karr, who heads the Pentagon's work on directed energy, explains, they use a laser to pump a laser. The main laser's core—the equivalent of the ruby—is doped with an element such as niobium, to give it suitable properties. Instead of a flashlamp, this laser is

stimulated by a laser-emitting diode.

By picking the right combination of ingredients for the main laser, its output can be tuned to an optimum wavelength—about one micron—that results in a narrow, far-reaching beam resistant to absorption by water vapour in the atmosphere. Today's solid-state lasers are also much more efficient than their predecessors. A third of the electricity driving them is converted into laser light, compared with just a few percent in earlier generations. Dispensing with gases, moreover, means less plumbing and a more compact design.

The breakthrough for solid-state lasers came in 2014, with the testing by America's navy of one that had a power of 30 kilowatts (kW)—the output of an average home boiler. When fitted to a small vessel called *USS Ponce* it proved able to fry the components and motors of nearby drones and boats. Ponce's captain was then given permission to use it for real, if he needed to.

In light of this success a 60kW system, similarly intended for use, will be fitted on *USS Preble*, a destroyer, later this year. And an even more potent 150kW weapon is undergoing tests on larger ships. Nor are such devices exclusively naval. In February the American army said it planned to field its first "combat relevant" laser, a 50kW weapon that would sit atop Stryker armoured vehicles and defend them against aerial threats, by 2022.

**Mirrors, but no smoke**

Military lasers have also benefited from progress in materials science. The heat-rays employed by Wells's *Martians* relied on "a polished parabolic mirror of unknown composition". Their real-world successors similarly use mirrors to combine and bounce light within the weapon, before sending it out through a window on its way to its target. Since lasers concentrate huge amounts of power into small areas, these mirrors have to be coated with reflective materials that absorb as little energy as possible. Similarly, the coatings of the windows require high-transmission materials that permit as much energy as possible to pass. Both types of coating have come along greatly in the past 20 years, because of their use in optical gyroscopes, which are fitted widely in aeroplanes and ships, says Mr Karr.

Another advance has been adaptive optics—a set of techniques that use special sensors and deformable mirrors to compensate, in real-time, for distortions caused by Earth's atmosphere (think of the twinkling of stars). This technology, which enables military lasers to be aimed accurately, was pioneered in secret laboratories in the 1980s and then declassified in the 1990s, to the considerable delight of astronomers, who use it to adjust their telescopes. Last year the American air force's Starfire Optical Range in New Mexico approached industry to develop a new and powerful sodium laser (one that energises the sodium atoms in a layer of the atmosphere called the mesosphere, to create artificial "guide stars"). This would refine adaptive optics for both astronomical and military purposes.

The next challenge is to soup lasers up still further, so they can take aim at large missiles, as well as the small ones that the Preble and Stryker weapons will be aimed at. The goal, according to Mr Karr, is to achieve 300kW by 2022 and 500kW by 2024. These will be demonstration devices, rather than battlefield-ready. But, a century and a quarter after Wells's vision, it looks as though the ray gun is at last a reality.

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## POLITICIANS AND CIVIL SERVANTS

## Priti difficult

A bullying row reveals a lot about Boris Johnson's government

"THE HOME SECRETARY is doing an outstanding job," according to Boris Johnson, defending Priti Patel during prime minister's questions in the House of Commons on March 4th, as she sat beside him. Sir Philip Rutnam, who on February 29th resigned as permanent secretary to the Home Office after a 33-year career, begs to differ. He claims Ms Patel bullies her staff and was involved in a vicious briefing campaign against him. He is suing the department for constructive dismissal. Mr Johnson has asked the Cabinet Office to conduct an investigation, which may become a running sore for the government.

Several combustible factors have come together to create this bust-up. The first is Ms Patel's personality. A hardliner on Europe and crime, she has a chequered history in government. Theresa May sacked her from a job as a foreign office minister because she had unauthorised meetings with Israeli government officials that she had failed to reveal.

The Home Office is not the only department in which colleagues have had problems with her. Complaints of rough treatment were made at her former ministries of welfare and international development. "Anybody who has gone into a department as a minister where Priti has been is greeted with open arms, because she is a such a high-tempered person," says an ex-colleague. An acquaintance from her days as a lobbyist says

**A hardliner on Europe and crime, she has a chequered history in government. Theresa May sacked her from a job as a foreign office minister because she had unauthorised meetings with Israeli government officials that she had failed to reveal. The Home Office is not the only department in which colleagues have had problems with her.**

she refused to take no for an answer and often left underlings in tears. "She would appear to enjoy that."

Ms Patel denies any wrongdoing. Her allies say "dark forces" are at work, and that she's an iron lady, guilty of nothing more than delivering the people's will.

That points to the second factor—ideology. New cabinet ministers and their permanent secretaries often start out on a frosty footing, but the current level of mistrust is unusual. Many of Mr Johnson's ministers regard the civil service as idle, know-it-all and hostile to Brexit. Dominic Cummings, the prime minister's top aide, thinks bureaucrats

use legal advice to bamboozle ministers, and argues that the likes of Sir Philip should be replaced by political appointees. Top officials at the Foreign Office and Treasury are on a Downing Street "shit list" and face being culled, according to reports.

The third factor at work is the peculiarity of the Home Office, where danger lurks around every corner for ministers. Unlike those in areas such as health and education, where operational decisions are devolved to arms-length bodies, Home Office ministers find themselves on the hook for individual immigration cases or terrorist probes. Ministers get ambushed by things that have gone on in the machinery way out of their line of sight. The heavy pressure to drive down immigration in recent years has increased the likelihood of foul-ups. "The Home Office exists in an atmosphere of permanent, heightened tension," says a former minister. Survival, says Will Tanner, an aide to Theresa May when she was home secretary, "requires absolute attention to detail, cast-iron self-belief and a team of people to watch your shadow."

Ms Patel is said to have been particularly incensed by a judge's decision on February 10th to halt the deportation of criminals to Jamaica, on the grounds that their legal rights had been denied. Laws that bind ministers' hands on security and immigration make the department particularly unsuited



British Prime Minister Boris Johnson with Home Secretary Priti Patel in Southampton, in December last year. Reuters

to an assault on the liberal "blob". "It's a conflict between a saloon bar fantasist in the form of Priti Patel, versus a hard-core realist" in the form of Sir Philip, according to Charles Clarke, a Labour former home secretary.

Brexit adds to the pressure. Mr Johnson has ordered the Home Office to recruit an additional 20,000 police officers to reverse a

trend of rising crime. The department is trying to get several complex new computer systems up and running. Coronavirus may stretch the cops further.

In addition, a new immigration system needs to be ready at the end of the year, when Britain's departure from the EU is complete. The department must also complete the registration of 3.6m EU citizens already living in

Britain, and work out how to mitigate the loss of EU information-sharing systems used by police and border guards. All these elements are crucial to a smooth Brexit; getting them working in the tight timetable that the government has set would tax the patience of even the easiest of ministers.

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HEADING HOME

Emmy-winning series *Queer Eye* will have a sixth season on Netflix. The unscripted show will feature the five make-over experts — Antoni Porowski, Bobby Berk, Jonathan Van Ness, Karamo Brown, and Tan France — head to their home base in Austin, Texas.

SNAP SHOTS



Positive Tests

AMERICAN ACTOR Tom Hanks and his wife and actor Rita Wilson (pictured) have tested positive for the novel coronavirus. The couple is currently in Australia to shoot for the preproduction of Baz Luhrmann's untitled film on Elvis Presley. They decided to get tested after they felt "a bit tired". "Hey folks Rita and I are down here in Australia. We felt a bit tired, like we had colds, and some body aches. Rita had some chills that came and went. Slight fevers too. To play things right, as is needed in the world right now, we were tested for the coronavirus, and were found to be positive," said Hanks in a tweet. The Academy Award-winning actor said that the medical team has already taken over. "The medical officials have protocols that must be followed. We Hanks will be tested, observed and isolated for as long as public health and safety requires," he said. Warner Bros has put the preproduction of the film on hold after a "company member" on the production had tested positive. Later, Hanks and Wilson's son Chet also took to social media to give an update on their health. In an Instagram video, he said that his parents were "fine" and taking necessary health precautions.



In Two Minds

ASSERTING THAT the team of Cannes Film Festival was "not oblivious" to the coronavirus pandemic, Pierre Lescure, the president of the festival, said that the 2020 edition will be cancelled if the outbreak worsens. The 73rd annual festival is scheduled to take place from May 12 to 23. "We remain reasonably optimistic in the hope that the peak of the epidemic will be reached at the end of March and that we will breathe a little better in April," Lescure said. "But we are not oblivious. If not, we will cancel," he added. On Sunday, the French government banned gatherings of more than 1,000 people in an effort to curb the spread of the virus. The festival is expected to attract about 40,000 attendees, including delegates to the film market that operates alongside the screening schedule. Oscar-winning filmmaker Spike Lee is the jury head of the festival, becoming the first African-American to lead the distinguished panel. If the festival is cancelled, it will be for the third time that it is called off. The movie gala did not take place in 1948 and 1950 due to budgetary constraints.



Ripple Effect

LATE-NIGHT television shows in New York have announced that they will tape without audiences. NBC is suspending live audience for Jimmy Fallon's *The Tonight Show* and *Late Night with Seth Meyers* starting Monday, citing the safety of the guests and employees as the "top priority". CBS announced that *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert* will also tape without an in-studio audience, as will Comedy Central's *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah* and HBO's *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver*. "For the past several weeks, *The Late Show* producers have consulted daily to share information with other New York-based late night shows, who will also be moving forward without an audience," a statement by CBS said. The production on the 41st edition of *Survivor* has also been postponed. Filming was scheduled to begin later this month in Fiji, but CBS has now said that the production will start on May 19, depending on events.

'Salinger wanted success as a writer but he didn't want celebrityhood'

Joana Rakoff on director Philippe Falardeu's new film on her book *My Salinger Year*, working at the literary agency that represented JD Salinger, and how she discovered the reclusive writer

SHUBHRA GUPTA

JOANNA RAKOFF, author of *My Salinger Year* (Bloomsbury, 2014) is all a whirl. Her book, on which the film of the same name is based and which opened the Berlin Film Festival, came out of her experience of being that girl who comes to New York. To reinvent, to begin writing herself, and to become a published author.

She was also that girl who had no idea of the importance of JD Salinger, the storied author who wrote such contemporary classics as *Catcher In The Rye*, *Franny And Zooey*, and *Raise High The Roof Beam, Carpenters*. It's only when she stepped into the hallowed portals of Harold Ober Associates, a famous New York literary agency, that represented Salinger, that she discovered the myth and the man. In the shape of that very elusive 'Jerry', who shows up in the movie, as he does in the book, only in flashes.

Rakoff, 48, still can't quite believe her life right now, a non-stop whirl of red-carpet appearances, flash-bulbs, and interviews. "I'm just not used to so much make up," she says with a smile, with just a hint of tiredness in her voice. She speaks of her journey till now, from a youthful, wide-eyed ingénue to a popular public speaker, and what it felt like being someone who actually has had interactions with that famously reclusive author, whose fan mail she was tasked to answer. It was part of her job description while at the agency, and she found her own voice while doing so, which she uses to advantage in her coming-of-age novel, which was published in 2014.

Her book was optioned to be a movie while still at a proposal stage, and she had that highly unusual but thrilling experience of knowing that her words would find themselves on screen. It's taken six years, a couple of botched attempts by interested parties, and a lot of learning for the movie — directed by Philippe Falardeu, and starring Sigourney Weaver, as the formidable boss of the agency, and Margaret Qualley as Rakoff herself — to materialise. "The first time I had signed all rights away," she says, "this time I was involved right from the beginning, all the way till the end". Excerpts from an interview:

You heard about 'Jerry' on your first day at the agency, right?

Yes. On my first day, my boss calls me in, and says, 'Listen we need to talk about Jerry'. And I had no idea what she was talking about till I left the office, and saw the wall with his books.



(Clockwise from above) Joana Rakoff, David Ignaszewski; a still from *My Salinger Year* Photo: micro\_scope; the cover of Rakoff's 2014 book



And the bulb went off?

Yes, it was a lightbulb moment. I said wait, that's Jerome (Salinger), oh my god, that's who Jerry is.

Before you joined the agency, you hadn't read him at all?

No, I hadn't. I had not been a teenager obsessed with Salinger. In fact, I was actively opposed to reading Salinger because I thought that he was kind of a lightweight. Both my parents loved him and we had all of his books, in hardback. But I thought of these as comedic novels, like relics from a different era, and I didn't care. Also, I thought if he's so popular, how good can he be. In retrospect I realised, I think that part of the reason why my boss hired me was because I was so clueless. I didn't mention Salinger at all, so I think she knew I would be a safe person to hire, because I would respect Salinger's privacy, which is what he wanted.

Did you ever get a handle on why he was so reclusive?

I had inklings of it while I worked at the agency. People there talked constantly about Salinger, and the feeling that I got was that he was traumatised by his own fame. That he was this very private person who was not necessarily eccentric, but a person who really prioritised his own thoughts and inclinations, and kind of wanted to follow his own path as a thinker and an artist. What I was told at the agency is that he wanted success as a writer but he didn't want celebrityhood.

And then there he was, on the cover of *Time* magazine, it is hard to even imagine just how big he was... I have known people who handled their celebrity status with such grace. That was not the case with Salinger.

He handled it as if it were a curse.

But what I found out when I was researching the book was that there was a spin on the story we had been told about Salinger. Which is to say that when he was working on those stories, on *Catcher In The Rye*, he actively wanted to be famous. It wasn't that he was scribbling away in obscurity; he was actively trying to write a *New Yorker* story. His goal was to get into *The New Yorker*.

And he did.

Yes, he did.

So when you actually set eyes on Salinger, at the agency, what was it like? He appears just as a flash, both in the book (and the film).

Oh I was, like, having a heart attack. The way it worked was when Salinger visited the agency — he came in every four or five years...and in this case he came in the year I was there because he had a deal in the works for a new book and he wanted to talk it over with my boss.

So there was a protocol of him coming in which involved my boss telling no one because there had been terrible experiences where the employees of the agency told their friends and they showed up trying to meet him, trying to give him their manuscripts, trying to get his autograph, and pictures. So it was veiled in secrecy.

I was just sitting on my desk typing and I saw this figure enter the room adjacent to my boss's, and he looked so elderly. I had only seen photos of him as a young man, but I could tell by his ears that it was him, and by his figure, tall and slender. My heart started beating very very fast and I thought that can't be him, that can't be him. And it was.

TALK CHECKS OUT

Back to the Past

Ophelia, a new hangout in Delhi's The Ashok, harks back to the Shakespearean era

DIVYAA

OPHELIA — IN William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* — is a young noblewoman from Denmark, the potential wife of Prince Hamlet, who, due to Hamlet's actions, ends up in a state of madness that ultimately leads to her drowning. But there's no such drama at Ophelia, the new tapas bar at The Ashok in the heart of Lutyen's Delhi.

The iconic building commissioned by the first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, in the '50s to host a UNESCO conference, The Ashok now draws people, sometimes for nostalgia and sometimes for government events. Whether three-month-old Ophelia will change any of that remains to be seen.

As one enters the hotel's lobby and asks the staff for directions to the new restaurant, they appear clueless to its existence. After some walking around in the premises, one finds it tucked in a secluded corner outside the main building. It's a standalone restaurant located in a large and leafy spot, where music plays till past midnight. Restaurateur Akshay Anand of Toy Room fame has opened the opulent place, which harks back to the Shakespearean era in bits and pieces. Once you get past the bouncers, you find yourself in a garden area, with gazebos, open flames and mood lighting. This deck is loud, replete with the young and old, busy nursing cocktails and sheeshas. In contrast to the deck's playful vibe, the indoor reeks elegance and opulence — crystal chandeliers, wooden panelling, artwork, mirror displays, Victorian-style ceiling and marble flooring.

The menu here is an interplay of offerings by Indian chef Amit Singh and Turkish chef Ahmet Algan. Starting with warm soups like Tomato Consomme and Chicken Veloute to fresh salads like Prawn Avocado Grape Salad and Crusty Mushroom Caps with spinach stuffing & enoki salad, the European offerings are at par with most Med-European fine-diners in the city. The mains include Beetroot Risotto (with confit beetroot, mascarpone and crackers) and Classic Vegetarian Pizza (tomato sauce, fresh mozzarella, fresh basil with extra virgin olive oil).



Beetroot Risotto (above); Interiors of the restaurant

The must try in the Turkish menu are the popular mezze platters. The vegetarian one has falafel, paneer shashlik and grilled broccoli, while the latter has parsley and garlic fish, lamb adana, and chicken and cheese adana. Both can be shared by two/ three people. However, what makes Ophelia stand out is its rich use of ingredients and lavish portion sizes. But it's the cocktails that put an end to all Hamletian dilemmas — to be or not to be. Flowery Ophelia is chamomile-infused tequila with maple syrup and lime, while The Gold Lust is gold rum infused with elderflower syrup and kaffir lime. The ode to Shakespeare is also evident in the jasmine gin cocktail, The Hamlet, served in a flask, and buried between a leatherbound copy of its namesake book.

Ophelia may not be a place where one will go back for the food, but it is likely to cement its place as the new hangout in the heart of Delhi. MEAL FOR TWO: Rs 2,500 ADDRESS: The Ashok, Chanakyapuri CONTACT: 7303517007



A still from *Aika to the Baika: Police Complaint Lavani*

Law and Lavani

In a new video by Agents of Ishq, lavani artistes urge the police to respond to women complainants better

BENITA FERNANDO

FROM BAJIRAO Singham to Simmba Bhalerao, Bollywood's cops can outdo sickle-wielding goons, topple black vans and serenade a love interest, with a motorcycle and a pair of aviators always at reach. But do they know what to do when a woman complainant wants to register a case of sexual harassment? There aren't enough role models among Bollywood's mainstream cops sadly, but they can take a cue from a new video by Agents of Ishq.

The eight-minute long *Aika to the Baika: Police Complaint Lavani* was released online on International Women's Day (March 8) and is finding much attention on social media. It is the second lavani video by multimedia project Agents of Ishq, which focuses on topics around sex, love and desire, mainly in an Indian context. The first such video was released in 2016. Titled *The Amorous Adventures of Shakku and Megha in the Valley of Consent*, it highlights that a person may be saying 'no' through their body language, even if they don't necessar-

Frequently the victim/complainant finds herself in the position of being treated as the wrongdoer, responsible for her own problems, rather than someone who can seek the protection of the police

PAROMITA VOHRA

ily verbalise it.

In the latest video, three women get a dashing police *saab* to take their complaints of domestic violence or sexual harassment seriously. The policeman insists on being the moral police. He advises them to think about their families and to guard their honour.

The video is directed by filmmaker Paromita Vohra, founder and creative director of Agents of Ishq. She explains that there is enough research and anecdotal evidence to show that a woman who goes outside family boundaries is viewed as deserving

her troubles, especially when it comes to sexuality, harassment, love marriage and elopement. Vohra adds, "Gender biases strongly inform how cases and complaints are viewed and recorded. Frequently the victim/complainant finds herself in the position of being treated as the wrongdoer, responsible for her own problems, rather than someone who can seek the protection of the police." The video has been made in collaboration with legal centre Majlis, which aims to evolve feminist legal approaches.

When translated, *Aika to the Baika* means "listen to the women" and the video conveys that listening is the first step to addressing gender-based violence. Despite the gravity of the subject, the video makes its point through humour and lightheartedness, thanks to Shakuntala Nagarkar, Megha Ghatge and Akansha Kadam, the lavani performers who play the roles of the woman complainants. A traditional Maharashtrian song and dance performance, lavani is most often associated with the erotic. The performers, dressed in finery and jewels, bring the mischief and sensuousness of lavani into the police station. Ghatge says, "If you tell people on a serious note, then they don't get it. But if you use comedy, it is more effective."

The performers are part of Sangeet Bari, a project by Savitri Medhatul and Bhushan Korgaonkar that has presented lavani to more urban audiences across Mumbai. Korgaonkar says that lavani has often been used to address social issues, as long as it retains the form's rhyme and meter. "Traditionally, lavani uses a lot of eroticism in the form of *shringar ras*, which naturally has to be toned down here," says Korgaonkar. Sangeet Bari has been a big part of the original Marathi lyrics and the composition for the video, which runs with English subtitles.

While the policeman unleashes his unsolicited opinions on the complainants, surrounding him are portraits of his Bollywood heroes in khaki uniforms. The depiction of the cop in films, says Vohra, is that of a maverick, one who defends justice extrajudicially, using physical force. She adds, "Crime films and series — like the Netflix show *Unbelievable* — can also be used to talk about so many complexities, but here they are often used to endorse a vigilante cop idea. And even when there are women cops, they simply play out the same role. The cop is therefore set up as an unquestionable figure rather than a partner in the endeavour of social justice."



"Maybe they postpone it (Tokyo Olympics) for a year. It's a shame but I like that better than I like having empty stadiums."

DONALD TRUMP

## TRACKING THE VIRUS

From the season-opening Australian GP to NBA, multiple tournaments were called off or postponed owing to the coronavirus outbreak while several others will take place without spectators



Spain's top two divisions postponed for two weeks along with Italy's Serie A.



Champions League matches between Man City-Real and Juventus-Lyon.



Australian GP called off after positive cases in team McLaren, BBC reported.



The ATP has cancelled all tennis tournaments for six weeks.



NBA suspended the season after two Utah Jazz players tested positive.



Last day of Ranji final to be played without spectators along with Ind-SA ODIs.



Sunday's ISL final and all I-League games, including the Kolkata derby.



Last three rounds of the Players C'ship after it began Thursday with fans.



Four out of the six Europa League matches played on Thursday night.



The Tokyo Olympics torch relay, which began in Ancient Olympia, Greece.

# Spectator sport

ODIs against South Africa, last day of Ranji Trophy final, ISL final and Kolkata derby to be played in front of empty stands

## BCCI adamant; ODIs, IPL to be played behind closed doors

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
LUCKNOW, MARCH 12

Despite the Uttar Pradesh government advising the BCCI not to go ahead with the second ODI against South Africa in Lucknow on Sunday, the fixture will be played, albeit behind closed doors. The advice from the Lucknow district administration comes after a patient in the state capital tested positive for Coronavirus tested on Thursday.

With the cricket board intent on going ahead with the Lucknow ODI without spectators, the same formula could be applied for the third ODI in Kolkata (March 18) and the Indian Premier League, starting March 29, even as the Ministry of External Affairs saying the central government's advice would be "not do it (IPL) at this time but if the organisers want to go ahead, it is their decision".

An advisory on Coronavirus received by the central government was on Thursday forwarded to the BCCI suggesting that all sport events should be either postponed or held without allowing any spectators.

Lucknow Divisional Commissioner Mukesh Meshram put the ball in BCCI's court as far as Sunday's ODI is concerned.

"The decision on the cricket match is to be taken by the BCCI as they are the one organising the match. We have received an advisory by the Government of India, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, and that is what we have forwarded to the BCCI, which is a private organisation. We have not written anything to the BCCI and have just passed on the advisory," Meshram told *The Indian Express*.

The External Affairs Ministry said the IPL was one of several big events which the government had to consider.

"We are assessing a lot of requests of this nature of sports events that have been held in India and something related to mega events already being planned. It is for the organisers to decide if they want to go ahead with it or not," MEA Additional Secretary Dammu Ravi, appointed as the nodal officer to coordinate efforts to deal with the coronavirus outbreak, said during a press briefing.

Earlier in the day, Uttar Pradesh minister of Medical, Health and Family Welfare Jai Pratap Singh said that the health department had advised Lucknow District Magistrate Abhishek Prakash to write to the BCCI asking for the postponement of the match.

The advisory by the Centre has asked state governments to take appropriate action under the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 and adhere to advisories issued by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.

"You are advised to ensure that no public gathering takes place in any sporting event. In the event the sporting event cannot be avoided, the same could be done without al-

### Shorter, delayed IPL on cards

**Kolkata:** Keen on the participation of foreign players, the BCCI is considering a delayed and shorter IPL. By pushing the start of the tournament to April, the Indian board hopes that the Coronavirus threat would have subsided and this would pave the way for players from abroad to travel. A shorter IPL would mean a change in the tournament format — the eight-team round robin league might be replaced with a competition of two groups of four teams each. There would also be a number of double headers.

### VISA SWITCH

On the face of it, the government's decision to suspend all existing visas — except Diplomatic, UN/ International organisations, Officials, Project and Employment — debars the overseas players in the IPL. Since the first season, foreign players have come here on Business visas and thus they aren't in the exempted category. According to some franchise officials, however, business visas could also be classified as Employment visas, as players come here to honour professional contracts. Franchises pay their remunerations after tax deduction.

SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY

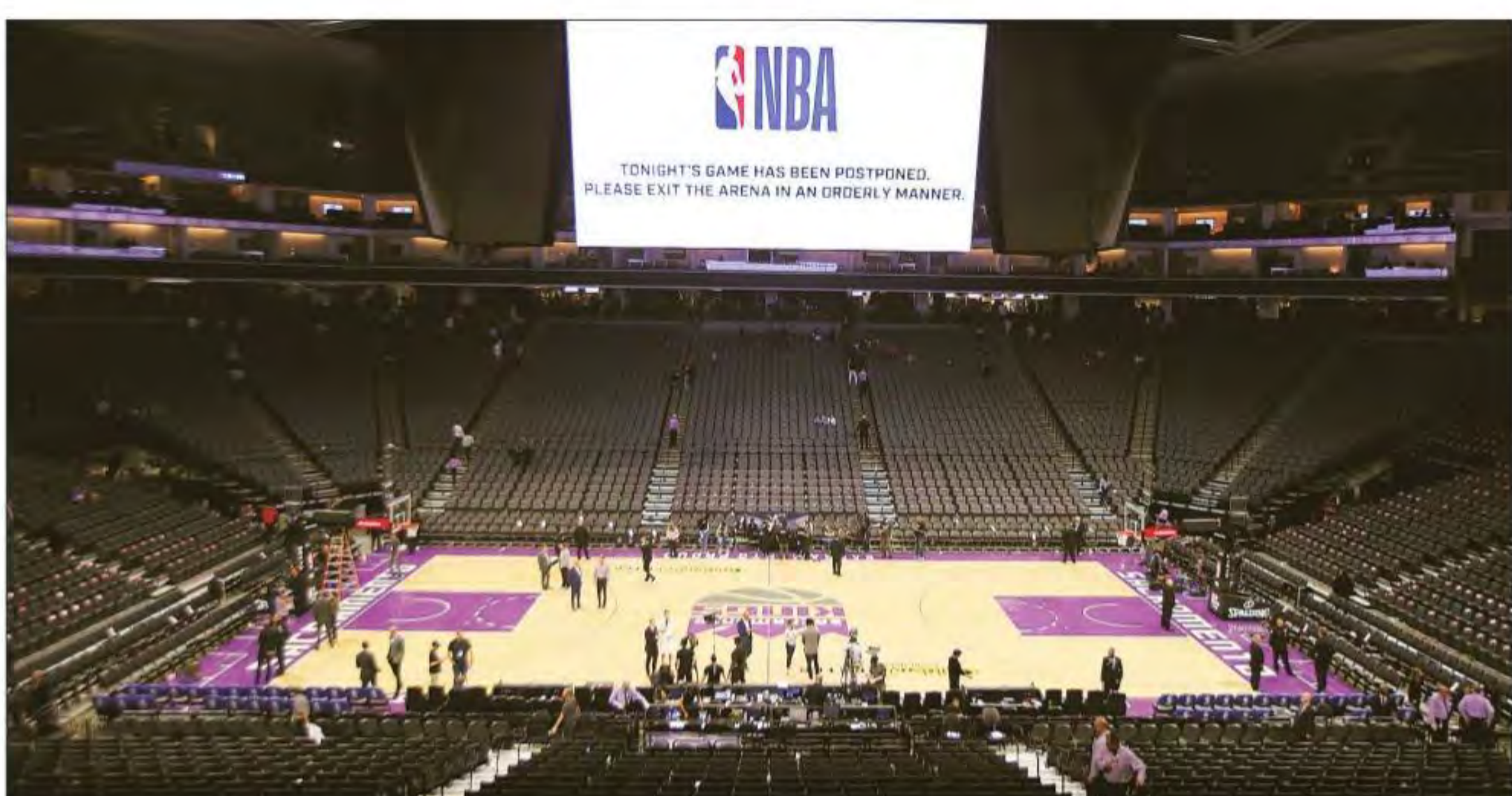
lowing gathering of people, including spectators," mentioned the advisory.

An earlier office memorandum by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare dated March 5 mentioned that experts across the world have advised to prevent mass gatherings to avoid the spread of the virus, till the spread of the disease is contained.

The IPL will have to be played behind closed doors if the BCCI wants to go ahead with the tournament as per schedule. Following the sports ministry's advisory issued on Thursday, this is the best the BCCI can hope for, as the government has banned public gathering "in any sporting event" to combat the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19).

The IPL governing council meeting on Saturday will take a call on the future of this year's tournament. The franchises want the IPL to go ahead, empty stands notwithstanding, while admitting that public health is paramount.

"We have every confidence in the powers—that-be to take the right decision. Whatever decision is taken, we will appreciate that," Kolkata Knight Riders CEO Venky Mysore told *The Indian Express*.



### THAT EMPTY FEELING

Golden 1 Center empties out after the NBA basketball game between the New Orleans Pelicans and Sacramento Kings was postponed at the last minute. AP

## Player tests positive; NBA suspends season

SCOTT CACCIOLA & SOPAN DEB  
OKLAHOMA CITY, MARCH 12

THE N.B.A. abruptly suspended its season on Wednesday after a Utah Jazz player was found to have tested positive for coronavirus moments before a game began in Oklahoma City. The league announced that the suspension would begin on Thursday, but the final game of Wednesday's slate, between the Sacramento Kings and New Orleans Pelicans, was canceled soon after the announcement.

It was a surreal day for the N.B.A. — starting with the news that one team, the Golden State Warriors, was barring fans from home games, and ending with the season in peril for the entire league. "The N.B.A. will use this hiatus to determine next steps for moving forward in regard to the coronavirus pandemic," the league said in its statement Wednesday night.

The Jazz were seconds from tipping off against the Thunder at Oklahoma City's Chesapeake Energy Arena on Wednesday night when the game was delayed for about

30 minutes, then called off. It was not immediately clear what was happening; in a bizarre scene, a member of the Thunder's medical staff sprinted onto the court and spoke to the referees. Players from both teams then left for their locker rooms.

In a statement, the Jazz said that an unidentified player had been tested for the coronavirus after tests for influenza, strep throat and an upper respiratory infection came back negative.

"The individual's symptoms diminished over the course of today, however in a precautionary measure, and in consultation and cooperation with N.B.A. medical staff and Oklahoma health officials, the decision was made to test for Covid-19," the Jazz said in the statement, using the term for the disease caused by the virus.

Although the team did not name the infected player, a person familiar with the situation identified him as Utah Jazz center Rudy Gobert. Gobert had recently made light of fears about the coronavirus outbreak when he spoke to reporters.

As the news of the season's suspension broke, Mark Cuban, the owner of the Dallas

Mavericks, was shown on ESPN appearing shocked during a game between the Mavericks and the Denver Nuggets.

"This is crazy. This can't be true," Cuban said later during an interview with ESPN. He added, "This seems like more out of a movie than reality." This is not the first time an N.B.A. season has been shortened — the 2011 lockout, for example, limited the season to 66 games. The ripple effect of this suspension could be significant, with potentially substantial financial repercussions for the league if the hiatus is extended.

The N.B.A. has already lost untold millions in revenue because of an ongoing dispute with the Chinese government.

Weeks without any sort of ticket sales would affect future salary caps, which are based on revenue streams like television rights and jersey sales. In addition, the playoffs are slated to start next month — a time when television ratings typically go up and more eyes are on the league.

The N.B.A. had been under increasing pressure from public officials to stop filling its arenas with thousands of fans amid the coronavirus pandemic. After San Francisco

moved on Wednesday morning to ban gatherings of more than 1,000 people for at least two weeks, the Warriors became the first team to announce plans to play home games without fans in attendance — through at least March 21. Other teams had been debating whether they should do the same.

Their calculus was instantly upended by the news of Gobert's test result, and the N.B.A. was left reeling — again — amid a season that has been full of challenges.

In October, the league became embroiled in controversy after an executive for the Houston Rockets tweeted a message supportive of Hong Kong's pro-democracy protests, just as the Lakers and the Nets were staging exhibitions in China. In January, David Stern, the former commissioner of the N.B.A. and one of its most influential figures, died several weeks after having a brain hemorrhage. Then, more tragedy: Kobe Bryant, the iconic player Lakers guard, was among nine people killed in a helicopter crash outside Los Angeles on Jan. 26. Bryant's 13-year-old daughter, Gianna, a budding basketball star in her own right, was among the victims.

NEW YORK TIMES

## Being careless in the locker room comes at a price

Nobody is happy with a careless basketball player, a clash of legends has been called and fans find ways to be at the stadium despite closed gates.

### HOW TO CATCH THE VIRUS

When it comes to the Covid-19 virus and a disclaimer on what not to do, look no further than Utah Jazz's 7'1" French centre Rudy Gobert. After the NBA imposed a rule that media members were barred from the locker room, Gobert decided to mock the situation in a light-hearted manner and touched all the mics and recorders placed by reporters in a press conference. Two days later, right before Jazz's league game at Oklahoma, Gobert was diagnosed with Coronavirus. Gobert's teammate Donovan Mitchell was also diagnosed last night with the coronavirus. ESPN NBA journalist Adrian Wojnarowski said that Jazz players were privately miffed at Gobert being careless in the locker room and for touching other players' belongings.

### KIPCHOGE-BEKELE CLASH OFF

The London Marathon organisers had pumped in seven figures to market the famed meeting of Kenya's Eliud Kipchoge and Kenenisa Bekele of

Ethiopia in a battle to decide who would be the fastest man on the planet over a distance of 42.195 kms. But Athletics Kenya sent a letter to all representatives of their athletes and announced that international travel has been suspended and have effectively clamped down on that pipe-dream. According to *The Times*, the organisers of the marathon are still confident that Kipchoge, whose fame skyrocketed after running an unsanctioned marathon in under two-hours, will still show up in London on April 26 for the long-distance run.

### HEATED MARQUEES FOR TRAINING

Nottinghamshire have decided to refrain from playing a pre-season match against Northamptonshire starting March 21 owing to the fact that Northamptonshire are currently in Singapore on a pre-season tour. Nottinghamshire cancelled their pre-season trip to Dubai on the back of the pandemic and instead used a heated marquee for training.



Paris Saint Germain fans at the gates of the Parc de Princes.

### RONALDO PLAYS IT SAFE

Juventus centre-back Daniele Rugani became the first high-profile football player to be affected by the Covid-19 strain. While Rugani is the first Italian player to test positive for the strain, his teammate Cristiano Ronaldo has decided to stay away from Turin. Juventus in a statement said "Ronaldo has not trained and remains in Madeira." Ronaldo was already in his hometown of Madeira after his mother suffered a cardiac arrest last week. The Italian Football Association is

### FOR FANS, CLOSED GATES DON'T MATTER

Flares, drums, chants — whether inside the stadium or outside, it didn't matter to Paris Saint Germain fans at the gates of the Parc de Princes on Thursday as supporters made sure their team heard them loud and clear — despite authorities closing the stadium to the general public. Videos showing red flares being lit outside the stadium with throngs of fans in close proximity to each other, loudly chanting while the Champions League Round-of-16 tie went ahead between PSG and Borussia Dortmund, was being circulated across social media platforms.

mulling one of three options. According to ESPN's Gabriele Marcotti, the options would be to either declare the title as vacant and assign European spots based on current standings. The other option would be to stick to the league table as it is, thus the title and relegation being decided on the basis of the table on the day the league is officially called off. The last option would be to have a playoff for the title and for relegation.

SHASHANK NAIR

## Mary, other boxers to be in self-quarantine

MIHIR VASAVDA  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

Thirteen Indian boxers, including MC Mary Kom, who competed in the Asia-Oceania Olympic qualifiers in Amman, Jordan, will be sent into self isolation for at least 10 days upon their return in the wee hours of Friday. The boxing contingent, who will also go through the formal screening process at the Delhi airport, will be the first bunch of Indian athletes to go into quarantine in the aftermath of the Coronavirus outbreak.

The decision was taken as a 'preventive measure' by the Boxing Federation of India (BFI) on the advice of the Sports Authority of India (SAI) since the Indian team travelled to Italy and Jordan, two countries with a high number of Coronavirus cases, in the last three weeks. A travel advisory issued by the government on Wednesday, stated that incoming travellers, including Indian nationals can be quarantined for a minimum of 14 days on their arrival in India.

A source said the boxers will be asked to go straight to their homes after leaving the airport terminal and stay in isolation for at least 10 days. They have also been told not to visit any SAI centre during this period. "We are following the government's advisory. It is

a precautionary measure since they have been to Italy and Jordan. The boxers will be told to stay in isolation at their homes. There are other trainees and Olympic prospects at SAI centres, so the intention is to not expose any of them to any risk," the source said.

Only the coaches, including the two foreigners — Sweden's Santiago Nieva and Raffaele Bergamasco of Italy — will be allowed to stay inside the SAI campus since that is their official residence in India. There were concerns over the status of the foreign coaches, since the government suspended all existing visas till April 15. However, a BFI source said since the coaches have been issued employment visas, they will get an exemption from the government.

### Vinesh to cut short training

TOKYO-BOUND wrestler Vinesh Phogat is likely to cut short her training in Norway and return home, owing to the prevailing situation in Europe. Phogat, who was training in Norway as a part of her preparation for the Olympics, is likely to return next week, and could be asked to go into self-isolation for 10 days. The Greco-Roman team, too, is set to shorten their training camp in Baku and return on March 21. The Wrestling Federation of India had earlier cancelled training camps in Russia and Ukraine.

# Saina battles the uncontrollables after All England ouster

SHIVANI NAIK  
MUMBAI, MARCH 12

THERE HAVE BEEN a few Olympic heartbreaks that Saina Nehwal has dished out to some iconic names of the game over the last 12 years. In 2008, she went up against fourth seed Wang Chen of Hong Kong, then 31 - who had the most excellent crosscourt half smash - and dashed her Olympic hopes with an upset that shook up the badminton world. In 2012, she summarily dismissed Danish Tine Baun, 32 then, in the London quarterfinals. The young bouncing upstart of earlier was making the senior pros aware of the wear and tear of the body after punishing years on a badminton court.

Late on Wednesday, playing the first round of the All England where she reached the finals at her peak in 2015, Japanese Akane Yamaguchi dismantled Saina with the same disdain. It was 21-11, 21-8 in 28 minutes - and it pushed the Indian to battle uncontrollables like the Covid-19 outbreak, forced cancellations of tournaments and the creaking of her own bones. "The way she's been performing in training I certainly expected a good match," said husband P Kashyap who's doubling up as her coach.

Though Health Minister Harshvardhan is personally looking into the matter, Saina faces the likelihood of being quarantined on her return home having travelled to Spain after February 15.

"There's no clarity this moment. Just waiting for a day to get a clearer picture. We want to play and fight for our chance but it's very stressful and confusing. If quarantined for two weeks, then anyway we can't play India Open and Malaysia Open so not understanding our situation," Kashyap explains, staying put in Birmingham, with an eye on the Swiss Open next week, and another on the quarantine rules that the government needs to strictly enforce.

Saina has the Swiss, India, Malaysia and Singapore Opens—and needs around 12,000 points from those four tournaments, after the crazyball Yamaguchi swatted her out. "Cancellations and quarantine have been on her mind for a few days... all players' minds for that matter, but the performance (against Yamaguchi) wasn't for that reason for sure," Kashyap says.

Going for the fourth Olympics in a terribly abrasive sport like badminton would be considered exceptional, though given its Saina with her single-minded focus, she'd want to be in a position to fight for a medal, not just turn up to play.

"She has been in good shape for the last 3-4 weeks but few niggles are troubling her all the time and she's not able to find solutions for them... and then it's hurting her mentally too," Kashyap says, pointing to the extremities that clearly impeded her movement against Yamaguchi. "Shins and ankle got a little aggravated after arriving here," he informs.

For someone whose game is built on fitness, not being able to push herself in training has added to her frustration. "It's tough, considering the situation now. It's been tough for her for over a year... every time she wanted to push a little bit, something has been stopping her," Kashyap explains of the physical toll injuries take.

## Volley of criticisms

Saina's also been bombarded from many sides with criticism, each of which gets nastier and more personal when she loses on court. "The comments by her fans and all the people, it all hurts... no one knows the issues, so it's very tough to cope," he says trying to walk her through this phase of tentative body and vulnerable mind which Saina tends to hide behind



Akane Yamaguchi beat Saina Nehwal 21-11, 21-8 in only 28 minutes. File

**There's no clarity this moment. Just waiting for a day to get a clearer picture. We want to play and fight for our chance but it's very stressful and confusing. If quarantined for two weeks, then anyway we can't play India Open and Malaysia Open so not understanding our situation."**

P KASHYAP  
ON THE REASON SAINA IS STAYING BACK IN BIRMINGHAM

her devil-may-care combative facade.

"When injuries were piling up in my career, I thought of quitting," Kashyap says. Saina though will have to go through a very public downward slide - complete with unsolicited advice from trolls and a bizarre shaming of her injuries.

There are Twitter pleadings and visa kerfuffles with her fate in the hands of ministers. And then there's the limbs that want to dominate opponents like before but don't move like the glory days.

Brimming with hope in Beijing, medalling at London, over-training and re-treating in tears at Rio, Saina would want to add Tokyo to her epilogue. It might start with being quarantined at home in India, because she travelled to Spain to desperately collect ranking points. Or start with reading the unwritten words on the sanitised walls of an isolation ward.

## PTI adds: Sindhu in quarters, Lakshya bows out

Star Indian shuttler PV Sindhu cruised into the quarterfinals of the All England Championships women's singles with a straight-game win over Sung Ji Hyun of Korea here on Thursday. The sixth-seeded Indian Olympic silver medallist won 21-19 21-15 in a round of 16 match that lasted 49 minutes. Sindhu next meets the winner of the round of 16 match between fourth-seeded Nozomi Okuhara of Japan and Line Hojmark Kjaersfeldt of Denmark.

Rising shuttler Lakshya Sen, however, was knocked out of tournament after losing in straight games to Victor Axelsen in the men's singles. Lakshya went down to the world number seven Dane 17-21 18-21 in a hard fought second round battle which lasted 45 minutes. The 18-year old Indian, who won five titles last season, had defeated Hong Kong's Cheuk Yiu Lee 17-21 21-8 21-17 in the opening round.

In the men's singles, Parupalli Kashyap retired from his first-round contest against Shesha Hiren Rhustavito while B Sai Praneeth lost his match on Wednesday. Kashyap's match lasted just one minute. He was trailing 0-3 when he decided to call it quits. The mixed doubles pair of Pranaav Jerry Chopra and N Sikki Reddy advanced to the second round.



## DRENCHED START

Relentless rain forced the abandonment of the first ODI between India and South Africa in Dharamsala. Vishal Menon

■ Persistent rain and a wet outfield led to the first ODI between India and South Africa at Dharamsala getting abandoned without a ball being bowled.

■ This is the second consecutive match to be called off at this venue — the last match a T20I fixture — incidentally featuring these two teams.

■ Despite the grim weather forecast and the health advisory being put in place, spectators wearing masks, flocked the HPCA Stadium.

■ South Africa batsman Rassie van der Dussen, in a lighter vein, reckoned the washout gave his team a couple of days more to acclimatise to the conditions.

# Slow-burner turns thriller

Bengal's grim resistance on the fourth day keeps the Ranji Trophy final on a knife's edge

DEVENDRA PANDEY  
RAJKOT, MARCH 12

THE TUG of war at Rajkot for the Ranji Trophy continues to slow boil ever so fascinatingly. The arena simmered with gritty fightback from Bengal, Saurashtra stirred up three wickets in the afternoon, and the pressure cooked in the final session but Bengal not only held on, but didn't lose any wickets. Just 72 runs more for the first-innings lead for Bengal. Only four wickets more for Saurashtra. Sudip Chatterjee and Wriddhiman Saha dug in first before Anustup Majumdar, who hit hundreds in quarter-finals and semifinals, trenched in with Arnab Nandi.

Heart-warming stories about the men still with a chance to seize the game. Majumdar, 35 years, had to switch to Railways Ranji team in 2014 to keep his job at Railways but didn't get to play many matches for two years. He returned to play for Bengal but had to take a tough decision to quit his job last year as he was asked to return to Railways; he chose cricket and has now dragged Bengal towards a dreamy finale. Nandi only played this game because of his skill to bowl off-breaks, else would have been replaced by a specialist batsman.

Heart-aching stories, too. Jaydev Unadkat had a mindboggling 65 wickets in the tournament leading up to the game but has been unable to take one more in 30 overs. Saha was dropped off his bowling once and the limited DRS plausibly denied him the lbw wicket of India's wicketkeeper another time.

He has tried everything, explored all angles from over to round the stumps, from different points at the crease, and has even got it to reverse but no reward yet. He would hope to end on a high. Spare some thought to Harvik Desai, who dropped Majumdar on 10 at first slip off the spinner



Anustup Majumdar (left) and Arnab Nandi strung an unbeaten 91-run partnership to revive Bengal's hopes of winning the Ranji Trophy.

Dharmendrasinh Jadeja with Bengal still needing 176 runs for the lead.

Unadkat and his men kept poking and probing but were met with grim resistance on the fourth day. Unadkat could have plausibly had Saha, on 6, but the limited DRS led to a debatable call from third umpire - he overruled the on-field umpire's lbw decision as he felt he heard two sounds. When Saha was on 46, Vishwarajsinh Jadeja couldn't get down quickly at gully to pouch a sharp catch. Only near the half-way mark of the day, Bengal lost their first wicket of Chatterjee who fell for a valiant 81 after a 101-run stand with Saha, wearing down Saurashtra for nearly 50 overs.

Then two more fell in the same, second, session as Saha and Shahbaz Ahmed were

dismissed to leave Bengal at 263 for 6. Chatterjee fell to bat-pad-catch at short-leg off Dharmendrasinh, and Saha's attempted cut had the ball run off the inside edge and brush the stumps and it took a replay to confirm that he was bowled by Prerak Mankad. Chetan Sakariya got one to straighten around the off stump to clean up Ahmed.

When play resumed after tea, Bengal were 264 for 6 with Majumdar on 17 and Nandi yet to score. This was the session where conditions have really helped the bowling in all the three previous days.

The ball has reversed, kept low more than anytime else in the day and Bengal didn't score a run off the bat in the last 59 minutes on third day. But on this fourth evening, they scored 91 runs and haven't lost a wicket as

Majumdar and Nandi pressed on.

A few things went wrong for Saurashtra. Like their decision to have the wicketkeeper Avi Barot stand up to the stumps this session. The rationale was understandable: with the batsmen trying to stand outside the crease to tackle reverse swing and low bounce, it made sense for Barot to stand up. But they leaked 16 runs off byes, and Bengal even got five penalty runs as the ball once hit the fielding helmet parked on the ground. In a tight game, Saurashtra have leaked 37 extras.

## Clarity of thought

Majumdar's clarity of thought shone through. He didn't try extending himself too much. Only when the seamers slipped in lines and lengths, did he score of them. He used his feet to spinners smartly but never rushed out too early.

When the left-arm spinner Dharmendrasinh bowled on the restricting line outside leg for a while, he and Nandi kept padding them away. Majumdar also used the sweep shot smartly, collecting couple of boundaries off Dharmendrasinh.

Five of his eight fours came off the left-arm spinner. It was a lot of team work, too. When Majumdar was new to the crease, Saha had pointed a spot to him from where the ball was likely to turn sharp. Around 100 people had turned up on the fourth day and the final day would be played without the fans as per directives from ministry of health due to the Covid-19 threat. Catch it on the telly, though, as it promises to be a grueling fight to finish.

**BRIEF SCORES:** Saurashtra 425 in 171.5 (Arpit Vasavda 106, Cheteshwar Pujara 66, Dharmendrasinh Jadeja 33; Akash Deep 4/98; Shahbaz Ahmed 3/103) lead Bengal 354/6 in 147 overs (Sudip Chatterjee 81, Wriddhiman Saha 64, Anustup Majumdar 58 batting) by 71 runs.

## [SPORTS BAR]



## WGP: Harika draws, remains in 7th place

Indian Grandmaster Dronavalli Harika drew her ninth-round game against Alina Kashlinskaya of Russia to remain seventh on the points table of the FIDE Women's Grand Prix chess tournament here. Harika has 4.5 points. The Indian No.2 had to share a point after the Russian International Master, with a lower Elo rating (2485) to hers (2517), managed to hold her own. The duo signed peace in 31 moves in a French defence game late on Wednesday. Harika, the world No.9, faces Ukraine's Anna Muzychuk in the 10th and penultimate round later on Thursday.

Georgian Nana Dzagnidze jumped into sole lead with a superb win over world champion Ju Wenjun. She now has seven points and leads her nearest rival Alexandra Goryachkina, who has 5.5 points.

## Reed blames media for focus on rule violation

Patrick Reed blames the media for the ongoing attention to the rules violation that continues to follow him three months after the incident, but such deflection does not sit well with former European Ryder Cup captain Paul McGinley. Reed is still being heckled by spectators, but the man dubbed by retired player turned commentator David Feherty as "Captain Oblivious" said on Wednesday that the players have "moved on". This might be news to recent world number one Brooks Koepka, who in a recent interview criticised his former team mate for a rules breach at the World Challenge in the Bahamas in December.

## Russian federation fined \$10 million

The Russian athletics federation has been fined \$10 million for breaching anti-doping rules and a maximum of 10 Russian track and field athletes will be allowed to compete at the Tokyo Olympics as neutrals, World Athletics said on Thursday. Russia's athletics federation was suspended in 2015 after a report commissioned by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) found evidence of mass doping among track and field athletes in the country. Yet some of its officials and senior coaches have since then been involved in doping scandals, undermining the country's efforts to have the ban lifted.



Team India desperately missed Hardik Pandya in New Zealand.

## Felt mental pressure during rehab: Pandya

Flamboyant India all-rounder Hardik Pandya has revealed that he felt a lot of "mental pressure" when his efforts to recover fast from his back injury did not fructify. The 26-year-old had undergone a successful surgery in October last year to treat an acute lower-back injury, which kept him out of action for six months. He last played an ODI against New Zealand in the World Cup semi-final in Manchester and his last international game was a T20 against the Proteas in Bengaluru in September last year. "I missed this atmosphere in these past six months, playing for India and the feeling that you get wearing the team's colours. That had become mental challenge and there were a lot of setbacks," Pandya said during his appearance on 'Chahal TV' ahead of the series-opener. "I was trying to get back to full fitness quickly but that did not work out and there was a lot of mental pressure at that time. But everything went fine, the rehabilitation went well and a lot of people helped me," he added.

## Players hide logo during anthem in protest

The increasingly bitter dispute between American women's national soccer team and the U.S. Soccer Federation spilled onto the field Wednesday night when players wore their warm-up jerseys inside out in a protest before their 3-1 victory over Japan. Players filed a gender discrimination suit against the USSF last year, a case scheduled for trial starting May 5 in federal court in Los Angeles. The USSF submitted legal papers this week claiming that the women are less skilled and have less-demanding roles than the men on its national team. By wearing their jerseys inside out for the national anthems and team photo, players hid the USSF crest on the jerseys but allowed the four stars—one for each World Cup title—to be visible.



## Jones to equal record for test caps

Wales captain Alun Wyn Jones will equal the record for most test appearances when he leads his side out against Scotland in the Six Nations on Saturday, drawing level with All Blacks great Richie McCaw on 148 appearances. Jones, who also has nine caps with the British & Irish Lions, will make his 139th appearance for Wales in their final match of the campaign. "Alun Wyn is one of the most iconic figures in the game," Wales coach Wayne Pivac said about his 34-year-old lock. "He is our leader and I'm delighted for him as he continues to set the bar across the game. Saturday is a great opportunity for us to wrap up the campaign with a big performance at home in Cardiff. We want to finish with the performance we know we can deliver and we have been working hard to get there."

## Hornets top Heat 109-98 to win playoff spot

Charlotte coach James Borrego thought it would be a rallying cry of sorts for the Hornets to not let the Miami Heat clinch a playoff spot on their watch. He was apparently right. And by night's end, that hardly seemed to matter. Devonte' Graham scored 30 points, Caleb Martin scored 19 and the Hornets shook off an early 20-point deficit to beat the Heat 109-98 on Wednesday night, keeping Miami's magic number for clinching a postseason berth at one. That is, if there even is a postseason.

# Reds turn sore losers

Atletico score three in extra-time to knock out holders Liverpool; Klopp lashes out at Simeone's tactics

REUTERS  
LIVERPOOL, MARCH 12

HOLDERS LIVERPOOL crashed out of the Champions League in the last 16 after Atletico Madrid scored three goals in extra time to earn a shock 3-2 victory at Anfield on Wednesday that sent them through 4-2 on aggregate.

After falling 2-0 down on the night, substitute Marcos Llorente struck twice in extra time and Alvaro Morata added a late third to ensure a famous victory for Diego Simeone's side against a Liverpool team unbeaten in their last 25 home games in European competition.

Premier League leaders Liverpool enjoyed the greater possession, created more chances, drew a series of saves from Atletico keeper Jan Oblak and scored through Georginio Wijnaldum and Roberto Firmino.

Yet after last season's memorable comeback by Liverpool against Barcelona in the semi-finals, it was the Spaniards who turned the tables this time.

Simeone's Atletico are famed for their defensive solidity and their superb organisation and those qualities were on full display, but it was their clinical finishing and remarkable spirit that proved the key elements.

"We don't know where our limit is," said Llorente who had only scored once for Atletico before this game.

"We all defended until the death and when a team all digs in like this, things like this happen. I cannot describe this feeling," he said. Liverpool manager Juergen Klopp was not impressed with Atletico's approach, however.

"I don't understand with the quality they have the football they play. They could play proper football but they stand deep and have counter attacks," said the German.

"We accept it of course but it doesn't feel right tonight," he said. After allowing an early chance

**I don't understand with the quality they have the football they play. They could play proper football but they stand deep and have counter attacks. We accept it of course but it doesn't feel right tonight."**

**JUERGEN KLOPP**  
ON ATLETICO'S TACTICS

for Diego Costa, which the former Chelsea forward drove into the side-netting, Liverpool, trailing 1-0 from the first leg, laid siege to the Atletico goal.

They powered forward in waves of attacks but Atletico were resilient with central defenders Stefan Savic and Felipe foiling everything Klopp's side threw at them.

The home team broke through two minutes before halftime when Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain burst to the byline and pulled a cross to Wijnaldum who powered an angled header into the bottom corner.

### Little change

There was little change to the pattern of the game after the interval with Liverpool peppering Oblak's goal but the Slovenian proved himself up to the task, denying efforts from Mohamed Salah, Firmino and Sadio Mane while Andy Robertson headed against the bar.

Atletico thought they had grabbed a stoppage-time winner when Saul Niguez headed in a Renan Lodi cross but the effort was rightly flagged for offside, ensuring the game went to extra time.

It took just four minutes for Liverpool to take the lead in the tie with Firmino heading against the post and driving home the loose ball as Anfield got ready for a night of celebration.



Liverpool manager Juergen Klopp has an animated discussion with Virgil van Dijk and Joe Gomez during half-time. Reuters

## PSG sink Dortmund in empty stadium

REUTERS  
PARIS, MARCH 12

PARIS ST Germain beat Borussia Dortmund 2-0 in an empty stadium due to coronavirus fears on Wednesday to reach the Champions League quarter-finals 3-2 on aggregate.

Neymar and Juan Bernat scored before halftime to overturn a 2-1 first-leg deficit and send the French champions into the last eight for the first time since 2016 as Dortmund finished with 10 men after Emre Can was sent off in the dying minutes.

PSG made it past the last 16 after painful exits at the same stage in the last two years. They let slip a 4-0 advantage in a 6-5 aggregate defeat by Barcelona in 2017 and lost to Manchester United on away goals after beating the English side 2-0 at Old Trafford 12 months ago.

Over 3,000 ultra fans gathered near the Parc des Princes before kickoff after being granted authorisation by the police - demonstrations being considered an exemption to the ban of gatherings of more than 1,000 as French authorities try to contain the coronavirus,

which has infected 2,281 people and killed 48. They lit fireworks and their chants could be overheard in the stadium. "Our only virus is Paris SG," a banner in the empty arena read.

PSG were without captain Thiago Silva, who had not fully recovered from a hamstring injury, while Kylian Mbappe started on the bench after suffering from a sore throat.

PSG dominated possession and had the first clear chance when Edinson Cavani's cross shot from Di Maria's through ball was deflected by keeper Roman Buerki.

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