

## PASSENGERS FROM THREE MORE COUNTRIES BANNED

# Third death, Govt allows use of anti-HIV drugs for high-risk patients above the age of 60

63-yr-old dies in Mumbai; ICMR says in talks with 51 private labs

ABANTIKA GHOSH & KARISHMA MEHROTRA  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 17

INDIA REPORTED its third novel coronavirus (COVID-19) death Tuesday — a 63-year-old man in Mumbai with a travel history to Dubai, and had underlying conditions of high blood pressure and heart disease.

With more fresh cases being reported, the total number of confirmed cases has climbed to 137, including 14 people who have recovered.

And after two COVID-positive Italian tourists — a 69-year-old man and his 70-year-old wife — who were administered the Lopinavir/Ritonavir combination, usually a second-line HIV medication, recovered in Jaipur, the Union Health Ministry recommended use of the antiviral drugs on a "case-to-case basis" for "high-risk patients" aged above 60 years with underlying conditions.

Meanwhile, India extended the travel ban to passengers from Afghanistan, Philippines and Malaysia, after barring the entry of those from "the European Union, the European Free Trade Association, Turkey and United Kingdom" on Monday.

"Travel of passengers from Afghanistan, Philippines, Malaysia to India is prohibited with immediate effect. No flight shall take off from these countries to India after 1500 hours Indian Standard Time (IST). The airline shall enforce this at the port of initial departure," the new travel advisory said.

On reports that 254 Indians in Iran had tested positive, MEA Joint Secretary Dammu Ravi said: "All Indian pilgrims in Iran

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CSMT station, Mumbai, at 7.15 pm Tuesday. It's usually packed during rush hour. Prashant Nadkar

## A mad scramble home for students after India bans all flights from UK

SHALINI NAIR & RITIKA CHOPRA  
BRIGHTON, NEW DELHI, MARCH 17

IT WAS at 2 am Tuesday when Wasim Akram finally managed to book a flight back home. He will leave for India on a 11 am British Airways flight on March 18.

Akram, who is pursuing a masters degree in conservation biology at the University of Kent, is among the lucky few to have just managed to evade India's ban on the entry of all passengers from Europe, the United Kingdom (UK) and Turkey starting March 18.

The UK has reported 1,950 confirmed cases till now and 71 deaths. According to the UK government's statement to the House of Commons's Health Committee Tuesday, as many as 55,000 people are estimated to be infected.

Indians make up the third-largest group of international

## ICMR random tests show no community spread, WHO praises Govt

KARISHMA MEHROTRA & ABANTIKA GHOSH  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 17

THE FIRST batch of results for tests done by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in March to check for community transmission of coronavirus are negative.

The ICMR had picked 1,020 random samples of people with severe acute respiratory illness pneumonia and influenza-like symptoms for testing for Covid-19. The results of 500 samples are negative, a sign that community-level transmission of the coronavirus may not be taking place in India still. The results of the remaining 520 samples will be available by Wednesday.

Earlier, another batch of random tests, done upto February 29, had come out negative.

The 1,020 samples tested in



### INSIDE

TWO NEW CASES IN NOIDA, COUNT 3; SECOND CASE IN GURGAON IN 2 DAYS

LADAKHIS IN IRAN CLAIM 250 INDIANS TEST POSITIVE, MEA SAYS SOME CASES  
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students in the UK, with more than 30,000 receiving a Tier 4 (study) visa last year alone. When the government announced the travel ban Monday evening, it led to a mad scramble among them

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## Cellphone operators red-flag 'surveillance' after Govt wants call records of all users

COAI to DoT Secy: Local units asking for CDRs in several states including Delhi with 'numerous VVIP zones'

PRANAV MUKUL & ANIL SASI  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 17

RAISING QUESTIONS of surveillance and alleged violation of user privacy guidelines mandated by the Supreme Court, the government has been seeking call data records (CDRs) of all mobile subscribers across several pockets of the country for specific days over the past few months.

This unusual request has been routed to telecom operators through the local units of the Department of Telecommunications (DoT). Records have been sought for consumers in the circles of Delhi, Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Kerala, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Punjab.

"It has been happening for several months now but during January and February, we started seeing these mass requests," said a senior executive of a telecom operator on the condition that he not be named.

Indeed, on February 12, the Cellular Operators Association of India, which represents all major telecom operators, red-flagged these requests in a complaint to Anshu Prakash, Secretary, Department of Telecommunications.

"CDRs sought for specific

### EXPLAINED

#### Not in line with revised rules

RULES FOR obtaining call records were tightened following a row in 2013 over unauthorised access to CDRs of several politicians. Under the new guidelines, only an officer of the rank of SP and above was authorised to seek details from telecom operators, and inform the DM of CDRs obtained every month. The current request is not in line with these guidelines.

routes/areas may lead to allegations of surveillance, especially in a state like Delhi having numerous VVIP zones having offices and residences of ministers, MPs, Judges, etc," the COAI said in its note to Prakash.

In the Delhi circle, with nearly 53 million subscribers, *The Indian Express* has learnt, CDRs of consumers were sought by the DoT for February 2, 3 and 4 this year. Incidentally, protests

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



## Ex-SC judges say Gogoi in RS clouds judiciary's independence, he says am for nation-building

SEEMA CHISHTI & LIZ MATHEW  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 17

A DAY after former Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi was nominated to Rajya Sabha by the government, retired Supreme Court judges Justices A K Patnaik, Kurian Joseph and J Chelameswar joined Justice Madan B Lokur in both questioning and expressing disappointment on the decision, saying the nomination and its acceptance have "certainly shaken the confidence of the common man" and "will raise a lot of doubt about the independence of the judiciary".

Justice Patnaik, who was appointed by the Supreme Court to inquire whether there was a

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### BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY



### THE EDITORIAL PAGE

MR R GOGOI, MP Supreme Court is larger than one judge but by saying yes to government, former Chief Justice has hurt it PAGE 12

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**RUSSIA**  
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## Crunching data by day, poetry by night, Maharashtra officer has his hands full

**THE CORONA FIGHTERS**  
AN EXPRESS SERIES

FROM TESTING SAMPLES TO TRACKING CONTACTS AND TREATING PATIENTS, MEET THE MEN AND WOMEN, UNSEEN AND UNHEARD, ON THE FRONTLINES OF INDIA'S FIGHT AGAINST CORONAVIRUS

ANURADHA MASCARENHAS  
PUNE, MARCH 17

IT'S 2 PM Monday, the day before Maharashtra recorded its first coronavirus death, and a tense silence grips the surveillance unit at the Health Department office in Pune — a report has come in of another positive case in Yavatmal, and data from Navi Mumbai on a Philippines national.

Dr Pradeep Awate, the state surveillance officer in charge of the epidemiology section, steps out of the small cubicle where he shares space with three health officers who are managing a helpline. Turning away from a bunch of colleagues waiting for a 10-minute lunch break, he heads to the data section.

After a quick check with



Dr Awate compiles data to be sent to the CM. Ashish Kale

manager Shravani Kulkarni and entomologist Dr Mehru Rajee, Awate takes a deep breath, reaches for the phone and dials the Chief Minister's office. The latest data will be sent in 15 minutes, he says.

It's a daily routine, these days — and a challenge. Awate's team of seven has to compile updates

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## Member of panel that picked Jamia V-C changes mind, tells President: Remove her

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

PRITAMPAL SINGH  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 17

A MEMBER of the search committee tasked to look for candidates to be appointed as Vice-Chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia University in Delhi has written to President Ram Nath Kovind to recall the appointment of Dr Najma Akhtar, who currently heads the university.

In his letter to the President

on written on March 8, Ramakrishna Ramaswamy, a member of the search committee formed in 2018, claimed that the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) had denied vigilance clearance to Akhtar in an office memo (OM) dated January 10, 2019.

Ramaswamy quoted newspaper reports to claim that the CVC had recommended not considering Akhtar for any post-retirement assignment or re-employment in any organisation, institution or university under the ambit of the Human Resource Development Ministry.



Najma Akhtar had slammed police action on campus

His letter does not spell out what was the CVC objection or why it denied vigilance clearance to Akhtar.

Three months ago, Akhtar, Jamia's first woman V-C, had criticised the Delhi Police for barging into the Jamia campus following violence during anti-CAA protests in south Delhi.

Soon after police entered the campus, vandalised the library and beat up students on the night of December 15, Akhtar had put out a video message criticising the police, and saying she stood with her students. The next day, she called a press conference where, surrounded by senior officials, she reiterated that police entry and action on

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CORONAVIRUS VS. MISINFORMATION

As the global coronavirus outbreak continues, we look at the efforts announced by major technology companies—from Google to Facebook and Apple—to combat the flood of misinformation around the pandemic.

VIDEO OF THE DAY



YOU NEED TO START SOCIAL DISTANCING
Authorities have introduced measures to reduce gatherings

CORONAVIRUS SELF-QUARANTINE



MAKE YOUR HOME TIME PRODUCTIVE
How much Netflix can you consume without feeling guilty?

EXPRESS AUDIO

Is India testing enough for Covid-19?

NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY

In today's episode of the 3 Things podcast, we look at India's testing strategy for coronavirus and discuss why the country is choosing to do so selectively.

GUJARAT
27-yr-old man gets death for rape, murder of 3-yr-old girl

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE RAJKOT, MARCH 17

A 27-YEAR-OLD autorickshaw driver was sentenced to death for raping and murdering a three-year-old girl, two days after robbing and murdering an elderly woman in 2018, by a designated Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) court in Rajkot on Tuesday.

The designated court of additional district judge DD Thakkar pronounced the man guilty under sections 302 (murder), 363 (kidnapping), 376 (rape) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and section 6 of the POCSO Act. The rape and murder took place on August 9, 2018.

"We demanded capital punishment for the convict. His victim was just three years old and she was raped and murdered. The man had also murdered an elderly woman just 48 hours before the rape and murder of the child," Sanjya Vora, district government pleader of Rajkot told The Indian Express.

Vora added that the court concurred with the prosecution's case that the man kidnapped the child while she was playing near a construction site where her parents were at work, took her to a deserted place on Bhavnagar Road and raped her twice within an hour. After sexually assaulting the child, the man murdered her by smashing her head with stones.

"We cited the judgment of a Surat court that awarded capital punishment to a man for raping a three-and-a-half-year-old girl that was upheld by the Gujarat High Court in two months. The court concurred with our argument that this was a rarest of the rare case as the accused committed two murders within 48 hours and therefore the convict deserved to be hanged," Vora said.

Goa considers shutting borders to fight Covid-19

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE PANJIM, MARCH 17

WITH NEIGHBOURING Karnataka and Maharashtra announcing partial lockdown, with schools and colleges shut, Goa is now contemplating shutting down its borders to fight the coronavirus outbreak. "We need to stop it (inflow of tourists), so a file has been moved to Chief Minister Pramod Sawant for necessary action. We will have to at some point, seal the borders. It is very, very important," said Health Minister Vishwajit Rane.

Rane said official calls have been made to the Union Health Minister to seek a second opinion before a decision is arrived at. "I have sought advice from the government, especially (Union Health Minister) Harsh Vardhan, on how we can block our borders. Because of this 15-day period, people from the bordering areas of Maharashtra and Karnataka are coming to Goa," Rane told reporters.

Karnataka for now has 10 patients who are suspected to have contracted coronavirus, with Maharashtra having over 35 patients. Goa has also invoked Epidemic Act, 1897, with schools and colleges shut. On Tuesday, the government went further and also cancelled examinations for all classes up to Class VIII.

FROM PAGE ONE

Students

to rush back home.

In the last week, many universities in the UK have announced plans to replace classes with video lectures and online seminars, end term early, or to cancel exams.

Many students rescheduled their plans to make an early exit. "We had only 24 hours to make a decision, book a ticket, pack up and leave," said Akram, who had earlier bought a ticket for April 15. "I haven't been able to cancel that. I had to spend another Rs 40,000 for a ticket at such short notice."

Reetika Subramanian (29) had her tickets booked for return to India on March 22. "Our college (Queen's College affiliated to Cambridge University) sent us an email to vacate our accommodation by March 18. I managed to get permission to leave by March 22. But (following the India ban) I had no option," said Subramanian.

The ticket she bought for 300 pounds was selling for over 1,000 pounds (roughly Rs 1 lakh) a few hours later, she said.

Unable to find a direct flight, Madhurima Sanyal (23) is coming to India via Dubai, which means she may be placed under compulsory quarantine for two weeks upon arrival. "By the time I got online to check for tickets, all direct flights were sold out," said Sanyal, who is pursuing a masters in gender and development at the University of Sussex.

The National Indian Students and Alumni Union UK (NISAU, UK) has been fielding calls from students and parents since India announced the ban.

One reason for the panic is the UK government's response to the pandemic, widely seen as an outlier compared to other countries. At his first press conference, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said they were looking at a herd immunity strategy, with the population expected to develop resistance to the virus once a sufficiently large number, i.e. 60 per cent, was infected. Contrary to the WHO's recommendation for expanding testing, the UK has been advising anyone with symptoms to self-isolate. Following severe backlash, on Monday evening, the PM issued an advisory to people to avoid all non-essential social contacts and travel.

NISAU UK chairperson Sanam Arora said many students already planned to leave for India as they felt "the UK government is not doing enough". "After the Indian Ministry orders, there was first a lot of confusion and then panic."

Akram said things in the UK were deteriorating. "There is a shortage of supplies. We also hear that the health system is strained. I haven't been able to find a hand sanitiser or face mask. I tried ordering online, but the delivery will only be in April," he said. Subramanian, who said she reached the Heathrow Airport five hours before her flight Tuesday anticipating stringent checks, said the screening was also lax. "The Indian passengers were mostly students, all wearing masks, all hours before time. However, once the counters opened, the security clearance was over in 20 minutes. There was no special screening or temperature check," she said.

Sanyal, who feared a "mental breakdown" if she stayed on in her deserted university accommodation, added they were worried about attendance. "Students with Tier 4 visa are monitored regularly for this. Our tutors have clarified that it will not be a problem for international students." At Oxford University too, students said some colleges had "encouraged" students to vacate residences and go home. "They said you can stay if you have 'a compelling reason,'" MPhil candidate Shruti Iyer said.

S Ahmed, an MA student at the University of Sussex, with tickets for India for March 27, is stuck

"My course placement requires me to work in a school for infants. Since the UK government has not ordered closure of schools yet, I could not leave," Ahmed said.

Students like Ahmed are banking on support systems like WhatsApp groups, set up to deal with the crisis. Adrija Dey, a post-doctoral student who is part of the India SOAS Society, said they have started a petition to demand better accountability from universities towards students.

The London-based SOAS has among the largest number of South Asian students in the country. "A bunch of students left for India on Tuesday. They were the privileged ones who could afford expensive tickets; those on scholarships and from middle-class families had to stay behind. Many such students live in the university's official residences, which they share with flatmates. If they show symptoms, they will have to just self-isolate. There are no clear instructions as to what to do in such a situation," she said.

ICMR tests

March were collected between the 1st and 15th, and sent to 51 labs. If a positive case turns up in these random samples, the ICMR said, it would indicate community transmission and they would enforce localised quarantine and testing in the areas from where samples were collected.

A day after WHO Director General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said his advice to all countries was "test, test, test", the organisation's country office praised India's efforts in handling Covid-19, that include restricting testing to symptomatic cases that could be traced back to those with history of travel. WHO Country Representative Dr Henk Bekedam also praised the Indian government's hands-on approach.

"The MoHFW (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare) is monitoring the situation daily and India has managed to keep cases low by responding fast and aggressively. There is high-level involvement from the Prime Minister's Office, which translates into intensified state- and field-level action," said Dr Bekedam. Praising the rapid expansion of the testing network and the government's social distancing call, he added, "So far, all the cases in India are linked to index cases traceable through human-to-human transmission."

Asked about the WHO's "test, test, test" advice at a press conference Tuesday, ICMR senior scientist R R Gangakhedkar said, "We are in Stage 2, therefore the WHO does not have country-specific guidelines. We have told the country office that this is not a statement which should have been given for a country like India, because... it creates more fear, more paranoia, and more hype." Gangakhedkar also said that country strategies cannot be compared because it will depend on the stage each country is in.

ICMR Director General (DG) Balram Bhargava said, "It is reassuring that at the moment there is no evidence to indicate community outbreak." However, he added, "It is too early to say we have contained the virus. How we close our borders... should help. We can't say that community transmission will not happen."

The ICMR's community transmission random test is running parallel to the testing and tracking of symptomatic travellers, symptomatic contacts of confirmed cases, and healthcare workers. Non-symptomatic travellers or contacts are not being tested.

Gangakhedkar said, "Do we have evidence to suggest that asymptomatic infections are spreading? If suppose I am getting cases of infection from asymptomatic individuals, and of spreaders, it should mean that I should be able to detect at least a few symptomatic cases."

Third death, HIV drugs approved

are safe, they are in the mission, the mission is taking care of all needs. About the circulating list, I cannot confirm anything." In a related development, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) said it is "in talks" with 51 accredited laboratories for opening up testing to the private sector, with the condition that results be conveyed real-time to local officials of the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP).

"By the end of this week, there will be 72 functional ICMR labs for Covid-19 testing and 49 others in the government system (apart from the 51)," said Dr Balram Bhargava, ICMR Director-General and Secretary, Department of Health Research. "They may need 7-10 days for procurement of reagents... We appeal to them to test for free," he said.

In addition, he said, two laboratories with the capacity to process 1,400 samples each per day were being readied. According to the guidelines

for private laboratories, "Laboratory test should be only offered when prescribed by a qualified physician as per ICMR guidance... ICMR will share the SOPs and provide positive controls for establishing the test as soon as the concerned private laboratory has procured the primers, probes and reagents... Appropriate biosafety and biosecurity precautions should be ensured."

Senior scientist Dr Nivedita Gupta said equipment for the confirmatory test has been distributed to 51 ICMR laboratories across the country.

The testing criteria has been expanded to include health workers caring for Covid-19 patients who show symptoms. Earlier, it was limited to symptomatic people with travel or contact history. The government has also made it mandatory for all hospitals (government and private), medical officers in government institutions and registered medical practitioners to notify coronavirus cases to the district sur-

veillance unit. Doctors must get self-declaration forms signed by patients who have history of travel to affected countries.

According to the revised clinical management guidelines, "There is no current evidence... to recommend any specific treatment for suspected or confirmed patients. No specific anti-virals are recommended due to lack of adequate evidence from literature. The use of Lopinavir/Ritonavir in PEP regimens for HIV (4 weeks) is also associated with significant adverse events which many a times leads to discontinuation of therapy. In light of the above, Lopinavir/Ritonavir should only be used with proper informed expressed consent on a case to case basis for severe cases, within the under-mentioned framework along with supportive treatment as per need."

The drug is to be used in patients who have hypoxia, hypotension, new onset organ dysfunction (one or more) and those in "high risk groups", in-

On questions about the sample size for random surveillance, Gangakhedkar said, "The samples are proportional to the local universe. Twenty per week per lab means 80 in a month who are admitted in intensive care units with severe respiratory illness. Imagine a scenario of how many in an ICU have this, how many ICU beds are there. It is essentially representative for that entire city. Twenty may look like a small size but may not be a small size."

For the weekly random surveillance test, a total of 121 labs will be functional. Each lab, in medical colleges across the country, has a capacity to test 90 samples per day, within six hours. This capacity could be doubled to 180 samples per day, the ICMR said. The current total capacity for more than 70 functioning labs as well and the National Institute of Virology is 8,000 samples per day, but the labs have not been examining more than 500 samples per day. The labs are not even receiving enough influenza-like or severe acute respiratory illness hospitalisations to conduct random sampling on, ICMR Senior Scientist Nivedita Gupta said.

"To avoid indiscriminate testing and reducing panic and optimally utilising the resources of the country to scale up facilities... that is what our objective is," Bhargava said. "It's a delicate balance between panic and correct management." On the WHO's clinical trials, Gangakhedkar said India may not have enough patients to send samples to the organisation. "It is better that we try to do our own trials with our own logic."

Cellphone firms

against the Citizenship Amendment Act were on at the time; campaigning for Delhi elections ended on February 6 and polls were held two days later. The Indian Express sent an email and SMS message to Prakash but he did not respond. In its complaint, the COAI has said that in their requests, the DoT units have mentioned neither the intended purpose for requisitioning these CDRs nor the identity of the subscribers which is a violation of privacy norms.

Under Clause No. 39.20 of the licence agreement that the DoT has with the operators, the latter have to preserve records including CDRs and IP detail records (IPDR), for at least one year for scrutiny by the Licensor (DoT) for "security reasons," and the Licensor "may issue directions/instructions from time to time" with respect to these records.

The licence condition also goes on to mandate that CDRs be provided by mobile companies to law-enforcement agencies and to various courts upon their specific requests or directions, for which there is a laid-down protocol.

In 2013, following a furore over unauthorised access to CDRs of several politicians, including the then Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha Arun Jaitley, the UPA government had moved to tighten the guidelines for obtaining the call records. Under the new guidelines, after clearance from the Home Secretary, officers of the rank of Superintendent of Police (SP) and above alone were authorised to seek such details. Further, the SPs had to give a mandatory declaration to District Magistrates (DMs) about the CDRs obtained every month.

However, the current request doesn't conform to any of these guidelines. When contacted, a former chairperson of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) said, "This is most unusual. Once they have a database, they can query specific numbers to ascertain who spoke to whom. There must be a reason (given for asking CDR details)."

"They are not asking for one person's data. They are saying give us everybody's data on this day in this region. That is clearly violative of the SOP," a senior telecom industry executive said.

When asked if the operators were complying, the executive said: "We don't have a choice." Some industry executives alluded to the possibility that the DoT could be asking these details to monitor the call-drop situation, but said that CDRs would not paint a clear picture of the poor quality of service. "If that is the reason they are seeking the CDR details, they should inform the operators," an executive said.

In its note to Prakash, the COAI said that local units of DoT had asked for CDRs on a monthly basis specifying dates: Andhra Pradesh (1st and 5th days of the month), Delhi (18th day), Haryana (21st day), Himachal Pradesh and J&K (last day of the previous month), Kerala and Odisha (15th day), and Madhya Pradesh and Punjab (last day of previous month and first day of current month). In addition to this, the local units of the DoT also sought CDR details on an ad hoc basis like in the case of Delhi circle, on February 2, 3 and 4.

Gogoi in RS

'conspiracy' to frame Justice Gogoi following allegations of sexual harassment against him by a

woman employee, said: "A former CJ or even a judge of the Supreme Court should not accept nomination to Rajya Sabha or even contest for Rajya Sabha. Such nomination or contest will raise a lot of doubt about the independence of judiciary."

"It may have happened earlier, but should be given up now, as political parties are so badly divided. It is imperative for a judge, and the Chief Justice certainly, to be seen as neutral, objective and having impartial views," he said.

"Why would a Chief Justice, at the peak of the judicial system, at all accept such a nomination and why would a government offer this to him? If they want real experts, then nominate experienced lawyers like K Parasaran was, (Fali) Nariman was or K T S Tuli. They could have gone for legal academicians like Upendra Baxi," Justice Patnaik said.

"The Rajya Sabha is doing a great job, but it is a different approach. There is separation of powers and functions, the top of the judicial system cannot go for this and a Chief Justice should not have thought of this way forward," he said.

Justice Kurian Joseph, a former colleague of Justice Gogoi, said he was "surprised" to see how the latter had "compromised... on the independence and impartiality of the judiciary". "According to me, the acceptance of nomination as member of Rajya Sabha by a former Chief Justice of India has certainly shaken the confidence of the common man on the independence of judiciary, which is also one of the basic structures of the Constitution of India," he said.

Justice Chelameswar, also a former colleague, said, "There never was a democracy that did not commit suicide." He was quoting John Adams, second President of the United States, who said: "I do not say that democracy has been more pernicious on the whole, and in the long run, than monarchy or aristocracy. Democracy has never been and never can be so durable as aristocracy or monarchy; but while it lasts, it is more bloody than either... Remember, democracy never lasts long. It soon wastes, exhausts, and murders itself. There never was a democracy yet that did not commit suicide."

In January 2018, Justices Gogoi, Lokur, Joseph and Chelameswar, the most senior judges then in the Supreme Court, had called a press conference to question the conduct of then CJ Dipak Misra, especially on the allocation of important cases. "I am surprised as to how

cluding people with "diabetes mellitus, renal failure, chronic lung disease, immuno-compromised persons or those aged above 60 years".

The government has also issued guidelines for last rites in case of Covid-19 deaths.

Taking precautionary measures, the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) on Tuesday ordered the installation of thermal scanners and hand sanitisers at the entry points of government buildings, advised against official travel, and called for meetings through video conference.

The government also increased the helpline numbers. Thirty officers of the level of joint secretary and above have been drawn from various ministries to coordinate with states.

While a 76-year-old man from Kalaburagi in Karnataka, who had returned from Saudi Arabia, died last Tuesday, a 68-year-old woman died in Delhi on Friday. The Karnataka man's daughter and doctor have also tested positive.

tive until today," Awate reads out. "Ok, this is fine," he adds, and gets the report emailed to the Chief Minister, Health Minister, and state officials.

"There are some changes in the way data reporting is being done since the H1N1 (swine flu) infection. It's been 10 years now, and dealing with Covid-19 is a lot faster, although we follow the same drill," he says.

Maharashtra reported its first two coronavirus cases on March 9 — a couple from Pune who were part of a 40-member group that returned from a Dubai tour on March 1. "Subsequently, another couple from that group tested positive in Mumbai. The travel history of the entire group had to be traced," says Awate.

Such was the urgency in tracing the contacts that the 54-year-old could "barely squeeze in 15 minutes" to check on his ailing mother who is in a hospital barely half-a-kilometre from his office.

Awate is also part of the state team that trains doctors, paramedics, nurses and health workers on containing an epidemic.

Even once he is back home, Awate remains on call. "Last night, I attended a WhatsApp call from a 23-year-old woman in New York on the precautions to be taken for her 72-year-old mother in Mumbai. Once, there was a call from a man in Pune on what he should tell his girlfriend in Beijing who had developed symptoms of the infection," he says.

Wife Madhuri is a social worker in charge of a centre for the mentally ill. "My daughter makes films and son teaches political science," says Awate.

Then, there are days when he gets to do what he likes best — "write and walk". The surveillance specialist is also a poet and author, with three anthologies of Marathi poetry, two collections of stories for children and other books. "One story from my book Footprints is in the state curriculum for Class X students," he says, with a smile.

Jamia V-C

the campus were without permission and condemnable.

The search committee was constituted on October 17, 2018, and held its first meeting on November 6 that year, shortlisting 13 candidates from 107 applicants. "After having personally interacted with the 13 shortlisted candidates on November 28, 2018, a panel of three names was recommended to you (the President), subject, of course, to vigilance clearance," Ramaswamy's letter to the President stated, adding that from this panel, Akhtar was picked.

The President approved her name for the post on April 11, 2019.

The letter stated: "This is a grave matter, since in the process of arriving at a short-list, otherwise meritorious candidates were passed over by the committee on account of even the remotest vigilance clearance issues."

Besides Ramaswamy, Professor D P Singh and Justice (retired) M S A Siddiqui were members of the Search Committee.

Ramaswamy wrote: "In past few months, you have shown exemplary leadership as Visitor of the Central Universities by recalling the Vice Chancellors of two Central Universities when their credentials were in question."

"The OM of the CVC quoted above is very strong in its indictment, and under these circumstances, I am writing to request that the same caution be exercised in the case of the Jamia Millia Islamia and appropriate remedial action be taken," the letter stated.

When contacted, Ramaswamy said he did not wish to discuss the matter. Texts and phone calls to Akhtar for comments elicited no response.

WOMAN, DAUGHTER KILLED

# Accused lured accomplice by promising modelling job

MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 17

A WEEK after a woman and her daughter were stabbed to death at their house in East Delhi's Vasundhara Enclave, police investigation has revealed that main accused Vikrant Nagar (30) allegedly lured his friend Shanky Sharma (30) to commit the murder in exchange for modelling opportunities in Mumbai.

On March 10, Sumita (45) and her daughter Samrita (25) were found dead at their house in Mansara Apartments. The incident came to light when their domestic help found the door of their third-floor flat ajar. On entering, she found the bodies lying in pools of blood in two different rooms. She raised an alarm and informed neighbours, who called police.

Later in the evening, Nagar, a model, was arrested from Jaipur, while Sharma was arrested from East Delhi's Trilokpuri on March 11. Police said that during questioning, he told them he was in a relationship with Samrita but she had started avoiding him of late.

"Nagar was irked to find she was seeing someone else. He allegedly hatched the plan and roped in Sharma, who was in Mumbai looking for a break in the modelling industry. He was working with a Mumbai-based tiffin service in the meantime," claimed an officer.

The officer further claimed: "Nagar assured Sharma he would help him get a modelling contract and asked him to for help. On March 9, Sharma took a flight to Delhi, which landed around 8 pm. Nagar met him at the airport and the duo



The accused Shanky Sharma and Vikrant Nagar. Express

went directly to the victims' house."

The accused told police that on Sunday, Samrita had gone to watch a movie with a friend.

"In the meantime, he and Sharma entered the society and waited for her. Samrita returned around 11 pm. After waiting a few more hours, Nagar called Samrita and asked her to meet him at the society's entry gate — CCTV footage showed her leaving the house at 3 am. Minutes after she went downstairs, the duo entered her house and allegedly killed her mother," claimed the officer.

"When Samrita did not find Nagar downstairs, she headed back upstairs, and the two men allegedly killed her too," the officer claimed.

Police said the accused used a sharp-edged weapon. "As per the post-mortem report, Samrita was stabbed 25 times while her mother received around 10 stab injuries," said the officer.

# Delhi govt gets 7,000 texts to red-flag hate speech

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 17

TWO WEEKS after it launched a WhatsApp number and an email id for people to flag hate speech, the Delhi Assembly's Committee for Peace and Harmony has received 7,732 complaints. On Tuesday, the committee summoned two complainants who had flagged hate speech and heard their submissions.

The Delhi Assembly launched the number and email

id after riots ravaged several parts of Northeast Delhi. According to police officers, several videos from incidents not related to Delhi were shared, especially on WhatsApp, to fuel tension and violence.

The committee aims to get FIRs registered after a preliminary enquiry. If the complaint is found actionable and an FIR is lodged, the complainant can get a reward of Rs 10,000 from the government and the accused can go to jail for three years.

While the committee was

### CASES OF COMPLAINTS

Complaints received:	7,732
Screened:	2,110
Inflammatory:	504
Reward if FIR is filed:	₹10,000
<b>Platforms on which content was shared</b>	
Facebook:	71.2%
WhatsApp:	22.3%
Twitter:	0.64%
Others:	5.86%

earlier headed by AAP Greater Kailash MLA Saurabh Bharadwaj, Rajinder Nagar MLA Raghav Chadha has since replaced him. It was reconstituted on Monday.

Till Tuesday, the committee had scanned 2,110 complaints. "Out of these, 504 were found to be inflammatory, provocative and incriminating in nature. We are examining them on a mission mode," said Chadha.

After hearing the submissions of the two complainants in detail, Chadha said the committee felt that a case for regis-

tration of FIR was made out.

"Both complainants also assured their support during the judicial process. The committee will meet more complainants in due course. Once the committee has examined the complaints in detail, a report will be prepared for each case and will be sent to the Commissioner of Police, recommending that an FIR be lodged. This process will take some time but we are trying to complete this work as soon as possible," said Chadha. Of the messages flagged so

far, most were originally shared on WhatsApp, followed by Facebook. People who come across hate messages can flag the message or video to 8950000946. The messages can also be flagged on dsvscommittee@delhi.gov.in.

Chadha said the nine-member panel, which includes senior leaders such as Atishi, Dilip Pandey and Bharadwaj will seek professional assistance. "We have decided to bring IT experts, fact-checking websites and lawyers to check the content," he said.

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# 4 THE OUTBREAK THE CITY

## Noida on edge after 2 more Covid-19 cases

AMIL BHATNAGAR  
NOIDA, MARCH 17

TWO NOIDA residents tested positive for coronavirus on Tuesday, taking the number of cases in the district to three. While one patient has a travel history to France, the other worked in the same private firm where a staffer had tested positive last week. Medical officials said approximately 4,000 people in the area have been put on surveillance now.

"Two people have been put under isolation at a government hospital; their samples came back positive on Tuesday. One of the patients is a woman, who had gone for a vacation to France and showed symptoms on return. The other person worked in the same firm where a person had tested positive and other employees had been put under quarantine. The condition of both is stable and they are receiving treatment," said Dr Anurag Bhargava, Chief Medical Officer of Gautam Budh Nagar.

According to officials, both patients, in their 20s, were earlier admitted to the Government Institute of Medical Sciences after they exhibited symptoms of the virus.



Other societies within a 5-km radius of the two apartment complexes have restricted entry to delivery persons. Abhinav Saha

As news of the cases spread, panic and confusion broke out at the high-rise societies where the patients live, with residents adopting several measures, including self-quarantine, to protect themselves.

The secretary of the society where one patient lives said: "The resident has been sent to

the isolation ward. Samples of other people have been taken and we are awaiting results. No doubt, people are afraid as this disease spreads through contact. In a housing society, one cannot avoid that. Most residents are avoiding stepping out."

"We have asked residents not to panic and comply with the di-

rectives of the state administration. As a precaution, we have asked domestic staff not to enter the society for the next three-four days. We are also looking to create a common point where delivery persons can drop off food and packages," he added.

Neighbours said the woman is a medical student and lives

with three flatmates. The man shared the flat with another person.

With lack of clarity on how many people the two patients might have come in contact with, 15 other societies within a 5-km radius of the two apartment complexes have restricted entry to delivery persons and domestic helps.

The apartment owner's association at one of the societies, in a statement, said: "The medical team has asked residents to stay in self-quarantine. Floor management shall ensure that floors and lifts are sanitised."

By Tuesday evening, the societies wore a deserted look. "Usually, neighbours gather in the park for an evening stroll. Today, not a single child was seen in the playground. The common areas were virtually empty," said a resident of one of the societies.

According to locals, some families had claimed they would leave the area for fear of exposure but were later convinced by association members to stay back.

"People are afraid since the cases have come so close to home and it's possible there are more carriers. But medical and administrative teams are doing their bit to explain the situation and guide us," said Vijay, who lives in a society nearby.

A team of more than 150 health department officials, including anganwadi workers, are visiting residential societies in the area to inform people of precautionary measures.

The district medical team has set up a 400-bed isolation ward in the new district hospital building in Noida Sector 29.

## Second case in 2 days in Gurgaon: 44-year-old man

SAKSHI DAYAL  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 17

HEALTH OFFICIALS in Haryana said a second resident of Gurgaon has tested positive for coronavirus, after their counterparts in Delhi informed them of the development. The patient, they said, is a 44-year-old man who resides in Sector 50 and had recently returned from London.

"He returned on March 7 and went to RML in Delhi to get himself tested on March 9. Our counterparts there told us he has tested positive, but we are yet to receive the report," said the official, adding that a team from Delhi also visited his residence in Gurgaon Monday to collect samples of his family members for testing.

Haryana had recorded its first positive case on Monday — a 29-year-old woman who resides in Gurgaon Sector 9 and works at an IT company in the city. Officials said she had travelled to Malaysia and Indonesia for a holiday and had returned on March 4. A bulletin issued by the Haryana government Tuesday evening stated the woman was initially "asymptomatic" and in home isolation.

"She developed symptoms on March 12. A sample was taken immediately and she was kept in the

isolation ward in Civil Hospital, Gurgaon. Now she has been shifted to Fortis Healthcare Hospital in Gurgaon on her choice. She is stable," states the bulletin.

Gurgaon health department officials said although the initial confirmation of the result being positive came from National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) in Delhi on Saturday, the final confirmation came from National Institute of Virology, Pune, only on Monday.

The woman has since been moved to the isolation ward at Fortis. Officials said samples of her five family members as well as colleagues have been taken.

"She works at an office in Sector 53, where we believe she may have come in contact with a total of 70 people, of whom 32 are residents of Gurgaon. We are in touch with them and have put them under home quarantine," said the official, adding that the rest of the woman's colleagues are from Delhi (28), Uttar Pradesh (9) and Faridabad (1).

"We have also apprised our counterparts in those areas of the situation, and they are doing the same," he said.

The bulletin stated, "Her office has been disinfected and other contacts have been put on surveillance as per protocol and all of them are asymptomatic."

## Two who returned from Italy test positive at camp

SHIVAM PATEL  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 17

TWO PERSONS have been found positive for Covid-19 out of a group of 218 Indian nationals who were evacuated from Milan in Italy on Sunday, sources said.

Both are said to be male students in the 25-30 age group. They were shifted to the isolation facility at Safdarjung Hospital Monday night, where they would be given further treatment.

Meanwhile, an NRI with a travel history to Singapore in February and to Canada in March, who has left Delhi on March 14, has been tested positive on Tuesday. He was tested at RML Hospital. This takes the number of confirmed Covid-19 cases in Delhi to eight.

The evacuees from Italy had been taken to the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) quarantine facility in Chhawal in Southwest Delhi Sunday afternoon, where they were tested for Covid-19.

While the result of the test



Of the 218 evacuees from Milan in Italy, 211 are students and seven "compassionate cases", including two families

came out Tuesday afternoon, the two who were found to be positive had begun showing symptoms of coronavirus by Monday and were segregated from others.

The remaining 216 people who tested negative would be monitored and shifted to the hospital if they develop symptoms. Of the 218 evacuees, 211 are students and seven "compassionate

cases", including two families.

At Safdarjung, a total of four positive cases were admitted Tuesday, the report by Delhi health department stated.

So far, 186,330 passengers from Covid-19 affected countries have been screened at Delhi Airport and placed under surveillance. A total of 4,458 passengers from affected countries were screened on Tuesday.

ARANYA SHANKAR  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 17

THE INDIAN Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi has asked eight staff members and two guests to self-quarantine after it was found that a guest who tested positive for coronavirus, with a history of travel to Italy, had stayed in one of the institute's guesthouses.

An email in this regard was sent by the Dean (Infra) K C Iyer and Associate Dean (Infra) J T Shahu to all faculty members Tuesday.

"It has come to our notice today that one guest from Milan, declared asymptomatic of Covid-19 at the airport screening on March 6 but advised home isolation for 14 days, had stayed in Gulmohar (Faculty Guest House) from March 7 afternoon to March 8 morning in Room no. 209. As per the newspaper report, he tested positive on March 16 at Bhubaneswar

and is moved to isolation ward there," they said.

"From check-in time to check-out time of this guest, eight staff members had come in direct/indirect contact with this guest. Later, two more guests stayed in this room from March 9 to March 13, but they checked in only after 24 hours of the check-out of the previous guest. The room is vacant since then," they added, clarifying that "till now, no staff or guest of the Gulmohar has reported with any symptoms of Covid-19".

"We have requested the host faculty to instruct the two guests who stayed from March 9 to March 13 to undergo self-quarantine. Also, as advised by CMO (Chief Medical Officer), 10 recently appointed faculty members who are staying in Gulmohar are being asked to self-quarantine," the Dean said.

They said that IIT had "tried our best" to get the right staff members "tested in the hospital today but none of the helpline

numbers were working" and that they were "hopeful that we will be able to get these staff tested tomorrow".

"In the meantime, as a precautionary measure and as advised by the CMO IIT Delhi, these eight staff members have been directed to self-quarantine at home starting from today for 14 days and they have been granted special leave during the quarantine period. Most of these staff are contractual and their employers have also been informed about our decision," they said.

The institute said there were also "indications" that the SDM (South Delhi) "might take over Gulmohar in a day or two for quarantine of general public".

"Due to this, around 10-12 new faculty staying in Gulmohar have been asked to shift to Amaltas (guest house). Hence, we have stopped taking new bookings for both Amaltas and Gulmohar till further instructions. We have also cancelled all bookings," they said in the email.

## IIT-Delhi asks eight staffers, two guests to self-quarantine

## Advisory makes it official: Consider work from home

SAKSHI DAYAL  
GURGAON, MARCH 17

A DAY after Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar appealed to MNCs to allow their employees to work from home, the District Magistrate of Gurgaon Tuesday issued an advisory making the same request to MNCs, IT firms, BPOs and other offices.

"In compliance of the Haryana Epidemic Disease, COVID-19, 2020 dated 11.03.2020 notified under Epidemic Disease Act, 1897, all MNC, IT Firms, Industries, BPOs, Corporate Offices situated in district Gurgaon are advised to allow their officers/employees to work from their home till March 31 with immediate effect to prevent and control the spread of COVID-19 in larger public interest," stated the District Magistrate.

The advisory comes a day after Haryana reported its first confirmed case of coronavirus, and on a day it recorded its second. A total of 70 samples have been sent for testing so far, of which 21 have been sent from Gurgaon.

According to a health bulletin released by the Gurgaon district administration Tuesday evening, of the 21 samples, one has tested positive and results of five are awaited. The remaining samples have tested negative.

Several organisations in Gurgaon claim to be encouraging work from home for their employees as a precautionary measure. At the software and technology consulting company Nagarro, which has an office in Udyog Vihar, officials said employees have been encouraged to work from home since last Monday, and the organisation is operating with a "skeletal staff" in the office.

"We are probably at 15 or 20 per cent attendance and making sure that everyone is distributed

throughout the building. We had really been pushing very hard for everyone to stay at home. We are also pushing for everyone who has come from other cities to self-quarantine," said Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Manas Fuloria.

Commenting on the District Magistrate's advisory issued Tuesday, he said, "We are trying to clarify what it means, because we cannot completely shut down, but we are already on very skeletal staff. We are taking this very seriously".

The health department and municipal teams were meanwhile directed to fan out and "decontaminate" crowded spaces by spraying medicine. Among the places that were decontaminated were the mini secretariat, railway station, district court complex, bus stands, shopping malls, community centres, and the office of the Commissioner of Police.

"To prevent the infection in this manner, 28 teams have been deployed across Gurgaon to visit crowded places and decontaminate them," said Deputy Commissioner Amit Khatri.

Districts adjoining Gurgaon have also been taking similar measures to curb the spread of the virus. In Faridabad, an advisory was issued to police personnel by Commissioner of Police K K Rao Tuesday, suggesting maintaining distance from people while speaking to them.

"He has also directed that hand sanitisers, masks and handwash be provided in all police stations, police posts and to all crime units and traffic police," said Sube Singh, PRO of Faridabad Police.

The Haryana Government had Sunday directed all schools, colleges, halls, gyms, and swimming pools to remain closed until March 31. It has prohibited a gathering of more than 200 people.

## Police intervention fails at Shaheen Bagh, protesters continue to gather

SOMYA LAKHANI  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 17

THE DELHI Police held a meeting with a few Shaheen Bagh protesters and RWA members of Shaheen Bagh and Abul Fazal Enclave Tuesday afternoon in a bid to convince the group to end the anti-CAA protest in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak.

DCP (Southeast) RP Meena said, "We had met some protesters and locals residents at the Shaheen Bagh police station Monday. We decided to meet the protesters at the sit-in on Tuesday to find a way forward."

The local ACP and SHO met the protesters and RWA members at the barricades near the protest site at 2 pm Tuesday. The DCP said, "We requested them to vacate the sit-in but they refused."



Shaheen Bagh protesters and police discuss the opening up of one side of the road at the protest site, Tuesday. Tashi Tobgyal

On Monday night, Shaheen Bagh protesters said they will continue the protest and are in touch with medical and legal experts. On Tuesday morning, Shaheen Bagh volunteers said it was decided that the protesters

will comply with the CM's order and limit the number of people at the sit-in to less than 50. However, by 4 pm Tuesday, there were hundreds of protesters at the site, and a volunteer said the changes will be implemented by

## Stop breath analysis, say Metro staff

NEW DELHI, MARCH 17

Delhi Metro train operators have demanded the suspension of daily breath analyser (BA) tests, fearing it is conducive to the spread of coronavirus.

The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation staff council wrote to the managing director, stating that "remains of breath and droplets will remain in BA test machine".

"...staff cannot be ignored like this. Kindly suspend the BA test... self-declaration of train operator should be taken or issue single-use BA test kits to all train operators," read the email by the staff council. It also demanded gloves and masks for staff at stations who deal with passengers.

DMRC said in a statement, "Every train operator has been issued individual blow pipes for taking the test to ensure that there are no chances of infection." ENS

## 307 CALLS RECEIVED ON TUESDAY, HIGHEST YET

# Phones ring through day at a modest call centre: 'Am I infected?'

ASTHA SAXENA  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 17

IN A 15x20 room on the ground floor of the office of the Director General of Health Services (DGHS), in East Delhi's Karkardooma, lie a computer, notepads and three MTNL landline phones that have been ringing off the hook.

Set up by the Delhi government to cater to medical queries from patients, the 24x7 call cen-

tre is now responding to calls from the general public on the novel coronavirus and spreading awareness about the disease.

The virus has led to the death of over 7,925 people globally, while over 100,000 are undergoing treatment.

Over the last five days, the helpline has seen a surge in the number of calls from worried citizens seeking details about symptoms, testing facilities and home isolation.

On March 11, the helpline an-



swered 49 calls, which rose to 253 calls the next day. Since then, the average number of calls have oscillated between 200 and 300 per day. On Tuesday, the call centre received and responded to 307 calls, the highest till date.

"Around 50% of the total calls are from panicked residents who have flu-like symptoms and are afraid of catching Covid-19.

Praveen Khanna

Many of them have cold, cough and fever. We advise them to take medicines and rest at home," said Drisya Baiju (32), a public health nursing officer (PHNO) who is among the six people managing the helpline.

Other calls are from those wanting to know what their children and family members who have returned from foreign trips should do — if and where they should go for testing, or if they should remain in home quarantine. Queries related to dos and

don'ts and what one needs to do in home isolation are also being answered by the PHNOs.

The officers work in shifts and at least one officer is always present at the centre to answer calls.

Baiju said the role of the centre is modified as per needs. "During the dengue and swine flu outbreak, we took calls related to these diseases and informed people about tests and hospitals. Otherwise, we reply to queries related to availability of ventilators, among other things," she said.

# Long night at IGI airport, confusion lasts till Tuesday

SHIVAM PATEL & SOMYA LAKHANI  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 17

SCENES OF confusion that unfolded at the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) Monday, as authorities scrambled to quarantine more than 400 passengers from Paris and Frankfurt, continued until around 3 am Tuesday. Passengers had to wait for over eight hours as they were being taken in groups to four facilities set up by the Delhi government, officials said, in Narela, Saket, Dwarka and Gurgaon.

This was in line with the Union Health ministry's directive that those arriving from or having visited China, Italy, Iran, South Korea, France, Spain and Germany after February 15 would be quarantined for 14 days, March 13 onwards.

On Monday, several passengers said the Delhi government's facilities were not suitable. Some of those taken to Dwarka and Narela claimed the facilities were unhygienic. A "large number" of people were recommended home quarantine, as per a health ministry official, who estimated that only about 15-20% of the over 400 people would now be at the facilities.

A 23-year-old student from Paris, who was taken for quarantine to Gurgaon's SGT Medical College, said Tuesday that she was the only one from about a 100 people who declared a symptom and decided to stay back.

Another student from Paris who was taken to a facility in Saket said, "There were about 30 of us. At 3 am, authorities took our temperatures at a helpdesk. They then told us that if we wanted them to take our temperatures for the next 14 days, we could stay back, or quarantine ourselves at home." The student, who had a connecting flight to Bengaluru, decided to return with others. Some other passengers also had connecting flights to various Indian cities.

The health ministry is diverting travellers from the seven countries mentioned in its directive into A, B and C categories — high, moderate and low risk.

After an anxiety-ridden flight from Paris to Delhi, a 24-year-old woman reached the airport at 9



At the airport on Monday

am Monday, only to be held up there for 10 hours before being taken to the Narela facility for a night. She told *The Indian Express*, "There was no screening at the Paris airport; there was no screening at IGIA either..."

She said at the airport, passports were taken away and no food or information was provided. "We found a vending machine between the immigration and the space where you de-board. We were given breakfast in the Air India flight early Monday. After that, I got a meal at 10.30 pm at the Narela facility."

On the Narela facility, she said they were DDA flats and she was put in a one-BHK flat that she shared with another passenger. "We were taken to a clinic Monday night; they asked us our travel history and if we have any symptoms. No temperature was taken. On Tuesday, we returned to the clinic, where my temperature was taken; I was told it was normal."

"I was made to sign a form that said I will home quarantine myself. I left for the airport again. I am going to Bhopal, where my parents live," she said.

The Delhi government has also set aside 182 rooms at three premier hotels in Aerocity for a fixed price of Rs 3,100 (plus taxes) per day, including meals. About 107 people from the Dwarka facility were brought to these hotels after they protested, with a passenger claiming it was unhygienic. Some passengers also said things got heated as they were brought to the hotels.

New Delhi District Magistrate Tanvi Garg said, "We carried out their screening. They were a little agitated, had not eaten, so we offered them something to eat. Most passed as category C and were recommended home quarantine. Seven who were in category B were quarantined at the hotel."

# Delhi Police warn of phishing attempts using virus emails

New Delhi: Delhi Police's Cyber Cell is looking into fake websites and malware being used to spread fake information about coronavirus, after cyber security firms reported that cyber criminals are using the coronavirus pandemic to divert the public and hack their systems.

DCP (Cyber Cell) Anyesh Roy, in a post on social media, said criminals are creating fake websites and sending emails. These are being used to launch spear-phishing campaigns and attack business emails. Spear-phishing campaigns are emails sent ostensibly from a known company or user. If the user opens these mails, he/she may lose important IDs and passwords.

Police said several fraudsters are sending emails with a fake hospital's or bank's name to fool people, and advised them to be cautious while opening mails and websites regarding coronavirus as many of these are not secure.

Since a lot of people are researching about the pandemic, several websites with different content about the virus have cropped up. A senior officer said though they haven't received a formal complaint about the matter, police are taking suo-moto cognizance of the offence and checking the spread of malware. He said people must only read verified news and articles/blogs to get information and should send the same to others. **ENS**

## CORONAVIRUS EPIDEMIC

# 9 suspected cases at Lok Nayak, hospital cuts back on OPD timing

ASTHA SAXENA  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 17

NINE SUSPECTED coronavirus patients have been admitted to the isolation ward of Lok Nayak hospital. While three were admitted on Monday, six were brought to the hospital on Tuesday evening. This is the first set of suspected patients admitted to the hospital, one of Delhi government's largest.

Following the admissions, the hospital has swung into action. Starting Wednesday, the hospital has reduced the OPD registration timings and plans to curtail routine surgeries as well. The OPD that caters to 7,000 patients on a daily basis will be operational from 8.30 am to 10 am. Currently it is functional from 8 am to noon.

"This is a medical emergency and keeping in view the present situation, we are taking these measures to put all attention on the Covid-19 patients. Doctors and medical staff need to be directed to the isolation ward. We will also curtail routine surgeries and only critical surgeries will be performed as per the requirements," said Dr Kishore Singh, medical director of the hospital.

The hospital, on an average,



The hospital plans to increase the number of beds in the isolation ward from 50 to 100. Archive

performs 100 routine surgeries a day. At the moment, there are 50 beds in the isolation ward, and the administration plans to increase it to 100. The hospital has stationed four doctors and a team of paramedics and nurses

to provide treatment to the suspected cases. If any of them tests positive, the hospital will also put its staff under quarantine.

"Even the staff on duty will be sent to isolation for 14 days if any of the suspected cases are

# NE Delhi riots: For family of BJP man, an endless wait

SOURAV ROY BARMAN  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 17

THE "ALLEGED human body", says the post-mortem report, was found near Karawal Nagar's Yamuna Pushta road on February 26, right next to an overturned car, burnt, mangled and decomposed. It was not until February 29, when a team of doctors at GTB Hospital performed an autopsy on the charred bones, that one could be sure the remains were of a person.

But since the identity had to be established, samples were sent for a DNA test on March 3. Two weeks on, the report is yet to come out. "Chalo result toh aa jayegi, par itna toh confirm hai ki wo ek insaan hi tha (the results will come out but at least there is no doubt that it was a human being)," said Haider, whose friend Mohsin Ali has been missing since last month.

An office-bearer of the BJP's minority cell in Uttar Pradesh's Hapur, 23-year-old Ali was driving through the area on February 25 where the body was found. On February 24 and 25, Northeast Delhi, including Karawal Nagar, was under the grip of communal riots that left 53 dead and over 300 injured. Ali, the family and



Mohsin Ali has been missing since last month

police fear, came under its sweep. Their fears deepened after the chassis of the car, found next to the remains, turned out to be the one being driven by Ali.

The social media account of the 23-year-old paints the picture of a vibrant young man with a distinct interest in politics, with albums dedicated to his pre-wedding shoot and meetings of the minority cell. His posts speak highly of the BJP and PM Narendra Modi, while also battling for Hindu-Muslim amity.

Ali, ran a diesel generator set business in Noida's Sector 5. He moved to Noida in 2010, as his father, a landless farm labourer, was struggling to make ends meet for the family of seven. His uncle Imran Khan, who also runs a generator set business, said: "I brought him here.

Initially, he worked under me; he branched out around three-four years ago, launching his own business. After getting married last year, he moved to Ghaziabad. His parents stay in Hapur."

On February 25, Ali left his shop around 4.30 pm after he received a call from the manager of a community hall at Sabhapur near Yamuna Pushta. "One of his five DG sets, which was rented to the hall, had to be operated on account of a wedding. So he left after having lunch with me," Haider said. Around 6.45 pm, when Ali's younger brother Wasim tried calling him, his number was switched off. The family did not worry at first but as reports of the violence started coming in, they began to fear the worst.

The next day when the family went to register a missing complaint, police suggested they check the unidentified bodies and those injured first. "We were told about the burnt car. We went there and the chassis matched. One could not make out if the burnt remains were of a human. So, samples were taken from his parents on March 3 for a DNA test. We still await the report. On Tuesday, his father filed an application in the HC for speedy disposal of the DNA report," said Khan.

# Dec 16 case: Court junks convict's plea against death penalty

ANAND MOHAN J  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 17

A DELHI court dismissed December 16 gangrape-murder convict Mukesh Singh's plea seeking quashing of the death penalty, and pulled up his lawyer for wasting the court's time.

The convict's lawyer M L Sharma argued for a stay in the execution of the death warrant by submitting that Mukesh was lifted from Karoli, Rajasthan, in 2012 and it was impossible to commit the crime in Delhi and flee to Karoli. Sharma argued that a prosecution witness statement supported this and if the prosecution would not have withheld the documents, Mukesh would have been held innocent.

Additional Sessions Judge (ASJ) Dharmender Rana said the convict's plea regarding the irregularity in his arrest has already been dealt with by the Delhi High Court and Supreme Court and, therefore, "it is not legally permissible to re-entertain such a plea".

ASJ Rana also said, "It is a well-known fact that courts of this country are overburdened

positive. These are precautionary measures we need to take. The hospital witnesses a large number of patients on a daily basis; we can't miss any step here," said Dr Singh.

On Monday, the Federation of Resident Doctors' Association (FORDA), an umbrella body of resident doctors in the country, wrote to the Union Health Ministry requesting to put certain elective surgeries on hold as doctors are occupied with Covid-19 cases. Resident doctors at the Centre-run Safdarjung hospital also met with the medical superintendent regarding curtailing of routine surgeries. "A final confirmation from the ministry is awaited," said a senior doctor. A total of 129 symptomatic patients have been admitted to the hospital till date, of whom 87 have been discharged. On Tuesday, nine symptomatic patients were admitted.

Meanwhile, Maharaj Agrasen Hospital in Punjabi Bagh also shut down its general OPD from March 20 to March 31.

# Can lethal injections replace hanging: Gambhir

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 17

AMID DELAYS in the hanging of the four death row convicts in the December 16 2012 gangrape-murder case, East Delhi BJP MP Gautam Gambhir asked the government if it has any plans to introduce lethal injections as means of executing the death penalty. The government Tuesday told the Lok Sabha that it had no such plans.

Gambhir had asked "whether the government is considering the use of lethal injections for convicts facing death penalty as death by hanging is perceived to be barbaric". In his reply, MoS Home G Kishan Reddy said, "No such proposal is under consideration of the Government."

Meanwhile, West Delhi MP Parvish Sahib Singh also asked the government "if the Ministry (of Home Affairs) is planning to amend the procedure (of death penalty) so as to expedite the process of execution of death sentences".

In a written reply to the question, Reddy told the Lok Sabha Tuesday, "The Government has filed a miscellaneous application on 22.01.2020 in the Supreme Court in writ petition (criminal) No. 55 of 2013 seeking clarifications/modifications of the guidelines passed by the Supreme Court in the common final judgment and order dated 21.01.2014 in the case of Shatrughan Chauhan and Another vs UOI & Others to curtail delay in execution of death sentence."

He added that capital punishment is awarded by the courts as per provisions contained in various Acts and criminal laws. "The award of capital punishment by trial court requires confirmation by the High Court. It can also be challenged under Section 366 of the Criminal Procedure Code by a convict in the High Court and Supreme Court by way of filing special leave petitions, writ petitions, review petitions and curative petitions. A convict can also file an application under the Code of Criminal Procedure," he said.



The govt replied that "no such proposal was being considered." Archive

## Hangman reports at Tihar for execution

On Tuesday, hangman Pawan Jallad reported at Tihar Jail to perform the dummy as well as the final execution of the four death-row convicts in the case, which will take place at 5.30am on March 20.

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- Photograph of the deceased/ missing Life Assured

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**BRIEFLY**

**Four held for kidnapping infant**

New Delhi: Delhi Police have arrested four persons, including two sisters for allegedly kidnapping a three-month-old baby from South Delhi's Tigr, near Meerut. Police also rescued the child within a week. **ENS**

**Boxing coach held for 'sexual assault'**

New Delhi: A boxing coach was arrested for allegedly sexually assaulting his 19-year-old student when they were in West Bengal for a tournament in February, police said on Tuesday. **PTI**

U. T. Administration of Dadra & Nagar Havel and Daman & Diu, Office of the Chief Engineer, Public Works Department, Moti Daman, Daman. 396 220.  
No. SE/PWD/EST/DB-ND/2019-20/396 Dated: 16.03.2020

**WALK-IN-INTERVIEW (on Contract basis)**  
Public Works Department, UT of Daman & Diu invites application from eligible candidates who fulfil the educational qualifications and other criteria for 01 (one) post of Resident Civil Engineer at Delhi on short term contract basis.

The walk in interview will be conducted on **03.04.2020** between **11:00 AM to 12:30 PM** in the office of the Deputy Resident Commissioner, Daman Bhawan, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi.

For details and downloading of application format please visit official website **www.daman.nic.in**

(B. C. Warli)  
Chief Engineer, PWD, Daman.

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No. 28/UPRERA/Hearing/Complaints/IT Cell/2020 Date: 17.03.2020

**Public Notice**

In view of the Corona Virus (Covid-19) pandemic, U.P. RERA has decided to adjourn the hearing of all complaints listed between 18.03.2020 and 31.03.2020 both at Lucknow Headquarters and NCR Regional Office. The rescheduled dates will be communicated later on.

The complainants desirous of early hearing on account of urgency of the matter can request for a date by writing to Secretary U.P. RERA on email id **contactuprera@up-rera.in**. The complaint will be listed for hearing after satisfaction of the concerned Bench about the urgency of the matter.

Since the projects/agents registration and extension of registration related process is completely online, the same will continue in a normal fashion.

U.P. RERA will take stock of the prevailing situation again towards the end of the month and revised decision, if any, will be communicated through public notice and publication on the website of U.P. RERA.

This issues with the approval of Hon'ble Chairman U.P. Real Estate Regulatory Authority.

(Abrar Ahmed), Secretary



**CORONA WATCH**



Thermal screening of a patient at a Prayagraj hospital. PTI

### Don't spread rumours: govt to staff

**New Delhi:** The Union government has issued an advisory to all employees, asking them to refrain from spreading rumours about coronavirus. The move comes after a rumour of a DoPT official's roommate having coronavirus made the rounds. It later turned out to be false. "All precautions should be taken to avoid the spread of the coronavirus, but it is also important that no rumour should be spread about Covid-19," a government statement said. **ENS**

### UTTARAKHAND State Cong vice-president quarantined

**Dehradun:** Uttarakhand Congress leader Suryakant Dhasmana has been in quarantine at his residence in Dehradun, a day after he visited Doon Hospital and interacted with two persons who are suspected to have been infected with coronavirus. The state Congress vice-president, who was "inspecting" the hospital to review the BJP government's coronavirus preparedness, also visited the first floor of the building where a patient with a confirmed Covid-19 infection was isolated. **ENS**

### J&K

### Put off visit, says Vaishno Devi shrine

**Jammu:** The Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board Tuesday appealed to pilgrims to postpone their visit to the shrine to prevent the spread of coronavirus. The step came two days after it advised NRIs and foreigners not to visit the shrine for 28 days after arriving in India. Chief executive of the shrine board, Ramesh Kumar, said they have curtailed the number of pilgrims attending the Atka Aarti at the shrine and closed the Garbhjoon cave at Adhkuari. **ENS**



Srinagar Municipal Corporation personnel disinfect vehicles in the city on Tuesday. Shuaib Masoodi

## Shut again in 2 weeks, Kashmir schools put their lessons online

**ADIL AKHZER SRINAGAR, MARCH 17**

WITH SCHOOLS in the Valley closed until March 31 as part of coronavirus precautions, school authorities in the region have started providing study material to students.

Schools in Kashmir remained open only for two weeks after being shut for over 200 days since August 5 last year, when special to the erstwhile state was withdrawn.

Several schools in the Valley are now reaching out to parents so that study material is provided to the students. "We are asking parents to come to school and are distributing the study material for students. Due to the coronavirus infection, we are taking precautions and calling parents in smaller groups," said a management official of a Srinagar-based school.

"We have also kept the study material available on our website," the official said.

Director School Education Kashmir Muhammad Younis Malik told The Indian Express that assignment and material is being provided to the students.

Education Department officials in Srinagar said the process has already started and efforts are being made so that the study material reaches all students.

## Remote education: In Gujarat, lessons to be given via TV channel

**RITU SHARMA AHMEDABAD, MARCH 17**

THE GUJARAT Education Department has decided to start live and recorded lessons for students from classes VI to VIII through a private television channel from Wednesday to compensate for lost teaching hours in more than 33,000 government primary schools in the state after educational institutions were closed for two weeks as a precautionary measure.

For revision before annual examinations, nearly 1.5 lakh government primary teachers will reach out to individual students and hand out worksheets—all 51 weekly tests (periodical assessment tests) and their answer-sheets conducted in the second semester to classes III to VIII students.

During this process of reaching out to students, starting Wednesday, teachers will also publicise and make the beneficiaries aware about the initiative of lessons through TV.

While talks are almost finalised with a Gujarati channel for telecast rights for two hours between 2 and 4 pm every day from March 18 to 29, other im-



A robot spreads awareness in slums in Vadodara on Tuesday. Bhupendra Rana

plementation details are being worked out in meetings by senior Education Department officials. Instructions were passed to all district education officers and administrative officers on Tuesday evening.

Education Secretary Vinod Rao said, "Students cannot sit idle at home during this crucial time of the academic session. This entire alternative is being planned to make up for the lost teaching days, as also to avoid any delay in the next academic session. Further, planning will be chalked out in view of the situation that develops in the coming days."

# Mumbai: 63-year-old dies; kin say goodbye from isolation ward

**TABASSUM BARNAGARWALA & SAGAR RAJPUT MUMBAI, MARCH 17**

A 63-YEAR-old became the third victim of Covid-19 in India, and the first in Maharashtra, six days after he tested positive.

His wife and son, both tested positive for coronavirus and themselves in isolation at Mumbai's Kasturba Hospital, bid their final farewell from the isolation ward, from where the body was taken to Shivaji Park crematorium on Tuesday afternoon.

Before that, six relatives spent the entire morning in the hospital trying to figure out how to go about the cremation of a coronavirus-infected body, and whether it would be allowed by civic authorities.

A 59-year-old Philippine national, diagnosed on March 14, also remains in serious condition at Kasturba Hospital.

The 64-year-old, who ran an import-export business, was in Dubai for business between February 25 and March 5. "Initially (upon arrival), he showed symptoms of coronavirus—he was coughing heavily. He had a cold and his body temperature started rising. For the next three days, he was at home;

his son and wife provided him medication," his son-in-law said in his statement to the police.

On March 8, he was admitted to a private hospital in Mumbai. At the time of admission, he did not disclose his travel history, it is learnt. When he developed respiratory distress, and disclosed his travel history, his nasal swab was taken—he tested positive on March 13.

He was shifted to Kasturba Hospital a day later. He was the first patient in Maharashtra to undergo treatment using two antiviral drugs used to suppress viral load in the body—Ritonavir and Lopinavir. "His health improved in between due to the drugs, and we thought he would recover," a health official said.

But it was short reprieve. He had high blood pressure, pneumonia, inflammation in heart muscles and a high heart rate, and was put on a non-invasive ventilator. The man succumbed at 7.45 am on Tuesday.

The latest Lancet study shows that 8 per cent of all Covid-related deaths in China had an existing history of heart disease.

BMC's additional municipal commissioner Suresh Kakani said, "We decided to take a humanitarian approach, and the body was cremated as per the family's wishes. We wanted the

cremation to take place in an electric or CNG crematorium close to Kasturba Hospital."

An infectious body, as per WHO protocols, does not need an autopsy to prevent doctors from getting exposed to body fluids of the infected person. No autopsy was carried out on the 64-year-old's body.

As they sat near the mortuary in the hospital, a family member, with gloves and mask on, said it took some time for the hospital and the police to decide whether to hand over the body or cremate it themselves.

Finally, the 64-year-old's body was wrapped in a leak-proof plastic bag, zipped till the neck, and encased in a glass coffin so that relatives could see the face but not come in contact with the body. It was taken in a bio-hazard-proof vehicle for cremation at around 3 pm.

Eight family members were screened after he was confirmed; only his wife and son tested positive. Eight doctors, nurses and staffers in private hospital who had come in contact with him tested negative, officials said.

An Agripada police official said initially they were confused whether to record this as an accidental death or natural death, but based on doctor's opinion natural death was registered.

## Victim faced discrimination, got message of his own death

**LAXMAN SINGH MUMBAI, MARCH 17**

RESIDENTS OF the central Mumbai housing society, where the 63-year-old coronavirus victim lived, said he faced social discrimination, including receiving abusive messages on the phone and social media platforms. His wife and son have also tested positive and remain admitted at Kasturba hospital.

The residents alleged that after the man tested positive, people who managed to identify him, sent him hate messages and discriminated against his family members.

"Since the day he tested positive, he started facing criticism

from many people—his close relatives, some society residents and also those who have known him for years. He received messages where people blamed him from spreading the virus. The next day, someone sent him a message stating that the man who had tested positive had died. This caused immense grief to his family. Imagine receiving a message of your own death," a resident said.

Rumour-mongering also led the man's daughter and granddaughter facing discrimination in school and their locality, said residents.

The 63-year-old had been a resident of the society for the last 20 years. After the news of the infection spread, domestic helps

and other service providers were scared to come to the society fearing contamination, said residents. Around six to seven service providers tested negative for the virus.

The BMC surveyed 460 houses in 15 buildings around the man's residence to check for patients with symptoms but found none. Seven of his relatives tested for the virus. At the private hospital, where the man was admitted, eight doctors, staffers and nurses tested negative. At least, 74 hospital staffers were advised home isolation for 14 days.

However, it is not only the deceased and his family who faced social discrimination. Residents said "outsiders" were spreading rumours about the society.

## Rlys gets PM praise for sanitising 'every contact area'

**AVISHEK G DASTIDAR NEW DELHI, MARCH 17**

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi Tuesday praised the Indian Railways for its efforts to sanitise "each seat, each door handle, each railing and virtually every passenger contact area" within its premises to tackle the coronavirus outbreak, sources said.

Modi's words of praise for the national carrier came at the meeting of the BJP parliamentary party.

The Railways is rolling out a series of steps to guard against the outbreak. It has advised people to avoid non-essential travel,



Workers sanitise a local train in Mumbai. Prashant Nadkar

even as major stations continued to show large footfall and perennially popular long-distance trains continued with long waiting lists Tuesday.

Also, all major stations will

now see the temporarily enhanced platform ticket price of Rs 50, up from the current Rs 10, to discourage crowding, as per instructions from Railway Board. Many stations, like Delhi, Mumbai and Ratlam, have already decided to implement the move, and others will follow suit. Thermal scanning of passengers has been started in major stations including in Delhi. Passengers will be advised to disclose symptoms, if any, before boarding trains.

The national transporter cancelled 35 pairs of trains—25 long distance mail/express trains and eight passenger trains—besides 10 special trains due to low occu-

pancy. The Railway Board on Monday had empowered its zones to take a call on these low-occupancy trains in view of the Covid-19 outbreak. By the end of the day, the number had gone up to 85 trains on up and down routes. Officials said it may increase further in the coming days.

Railway Minister Piyush Goyal, who held a review meeting Tuesday, formed a Covid response team.

The Railways has also asked its employees to check their temperature at home before coming in to work.

Further, railway officials confirmed that suburban trains will continue to run in Maharashtra.



A health worker puts up a coronavirus advisory in Kolkata on Tuesday. Partha Paul

## Teen back from UK 1st suspected case in Bengal

**SANTANU CHOWDHURY AND ATRI MITRA KOLKATA, MARCH 17**

WEST BENGAL on Tuesday recorded its first suspected case of novel coronavirus (Covid-19), said the state health department.

The 18-year-old youth returned to Kolkata from the United Kingdom on March 15, said a senior official.

The youth got himself admitted to Beliaghata ID and BG Hospital here on Tuesday morning and his swab sample was sent to National Institute of Cholera and Enteric Diseases (NICED), Kolkata.

"The result, which came in the evening, showed that he had tested positive," said the official. He was immediately shifted to the isolation ward of the hospital and doctors were monitoring his condition. His parents and driver have been sent to the newly

opened quarantine centre at Rajarhat in Kolkata.

He is pursuing higher studies in the UK.

Upon his return, he was checked with a thermal gun at the Kolkata airport but showed no coronavirus symptoms. However, as a standard procedure, he was sent to home quarantine.

After learning that his UK friends were diagnosed with the deadly virus, he got himself admitted to Beliaghata ID and BG Hospital in the morning.

"There is a mild infection but he is under control. All his parameters are stable. However, we are taking no chance. He will be kept in isolation for now and his samples will be sent for tests again," said the government official.

Late in the evening, a bulletin issued by state health department also confirmed the first suspected Covid-19 case.

## 'Time to announce partial to total lockdowns in most towns, cities'

SENIOR CONGRESS leader **P CHIDAMBARAM** speaks to **MANOJ C G** on what he thinks about the government's response to the Covid-19 outbreak.

**Covid 19 is spreading. The government has already notified it as a disaster. It has also suspended visas...how do you see the steps taken by the government? Are they sufficient?**

The steps taken by the government appear to be satisfactory. But based on assessments made by the WHO, ICMR, Dr Devi Shetty and others, it appears that the time has come to take tougher and firmer and maybe even harsher measures. I would think that we are likely to fall behind the curve. It is when the number reaches about 100 plus, then there is the danger of the virus being transmitted through community

transmission. If you look at what happened in Italy and Spain, leave out China, you will find that it's in the third week when the number crossed hundred then it jumped dramatically. Now, I'm sincerely hoping that it won't happen in India. But we must be careful to ensure that it does not happen in India. This is the time I think to announce partial to total lockdowns in most of our towns and cities. And tell the people it will be painful but they have to bear the pain for about two to four weeks. It is much better to do it now rather than worry about it after one week or 10 days. In fact, they should do it today.

**Do you think the government should now take the people into confidence...maybe the Prime Minister should address the nation...**

I think the Prime Minister



THE EXPRESS INTERVIEW

WITH P CHIDAMBARAM SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER

should convene a meeting of the Chief Ministers either in person or through video conference and confer with them and ask them what their feedback is from the ground because they are the persons on the ground. Many of them are ahead of the government. For example, Karnataka, Kerala seem to be a little ahead of the government in imposing lockdowns. Some are behind the government. Therefore, a uniform protocol is to be evolved for the whole country. And if it is necessary to lock down all towns and cities for two to four weeks, we should not hesitate to do so. It is better to be safe than sorry.

**What will be the economic impact?**

Worldwide, everybody has agreed there will be an economic impact. The world economy has slowed down and the

coronavirus will affect the world economy more. India will also suffer but that is inevitable. It's an external factor and we can't blame the government for the impact of coronavirus. Whatever impact it has, we will have to bear the pain.

**There is already a slowdown in India?**

That slowdown is because of internal reasons and internal lack of decision-making. We have addressed it separately. We think that the government is not doing enough to stimulate domestic demand. That is a separate issue. But if coronavirus worldwide has an impact on the Indian economy, because trade will be affected, import-export will be affected, investments will be affected...well, that pain we will have to bear and you can't blame

the government for the external factor.

**On the steps to tackle the spread of coronavirus, the financial burden and other logistical issues...how the burden should be shared between the Centre and states?**

I think these are secondary matters. This is a national crisis. If the states want money, the Centre has to provide the money. I think there are ways in which the Centre can save a lot of money and provide the money. I have already written that every grandiose, every wasteful project must be mercilessly chopped today. And those monies must be immediately sequestered and poured into fighting coronavirus...

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

# 7 THE OUTBREAK NATION

## LADAKH RESIDENTS STUCK IN IRAN

### Pilgrims claim over 200 cases, MEA says 'some' positive

**SHUBHAJIT ROY & ADIL AKHZER**  
NEW DELHI, SRINAGAR, MARCH 17

AMID reports that a large number of Indians in Iran had tested positive for coronavirus, the government Tuesday said it could only confirm "some positive cases".

"It is quite possible that a country which has such a large spread of the virus could have some positive cases among Indian nationals. But I cannot confirm to you if the list which is being circulated on social media is correct. Be

rest assured that our Embassy in Iran is in touch with them and taking necessary steps to ensure their well-being," Ministry of External Affairs Additional Secretary Dammu Ravi said at a media briefing Tuesday.

Last week, Ravi had said they would bring back only those Indians from other countries who test negative for coronavirus. "If Indians test positive elsewhere, we would expect the country they are in to take care of them, like we are doing with the foreign nationals (here)," he said on March 12.

Till Monday, 389 Indians had returned from Iran by special

flights, including 205 pilgrims.

On Tuesday, Iran issued its most dire warning yet about the outbreak, suggesting "millions" could die if the public kept travelling and ignoring advisories. A state television journalist gave the warning hours after people pushed their way into two major shrines that had been closed over fears of the virus. More than 16,000 of the over 18,000 confirmed cases of the virus across the Middle East have been reported in Iran, with the country's death toll rising by 135 on Tuesday to 988. Residents of Ladakh in Iran on pilgrimage told *The Indian*

*Express* that they had been informed by the Indian Embassy that over 250 of them were positive for coronavirus. One travel agent from Kargil, stuck in Iran's city of Qom, said the list had been shared by the Embassy on a WhatsApp group created recently to keep them updated.

Several of them told *The Indian Express* over the phone from Iran that over 800 Indians were currently stranded in Qom. A 44-year-old pilgrim from Leh said he and 18 others in a 53-member group had tested positive, but no effort had been made to segregate them from those who didn't have

the infection. "My sample was taken by an Indian Embassy team a week ago. We have been informed that 19 of us are positive. From day one, we have been demanding that we should be kept in isolation."

The Kargil resident said the Indian Embassy had not been of any help. "There is not a single mask available. When we visit the local hospital, they say you are fine, there are no symptoms."

Another pilgrim in Qom, urging the Indian government to take them back, said, more than 200 "positive" cases had been shifted to a facility provided by Iran.

## STATE EXTENDS SHUTDOWN

### UP to provide financial help to daily wagers

**MAULSHREE SETH**  
LUCKNOW, MARCH 17

AS THE UP government on Tuesday ordered the closure of educational institutes, offices and commercial spaces in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, it announced to provide financial assistance to daily-wage labourers in the state who will be hit by the shutdown.

At a Cabinet meeting, chaired by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, it was decided to form a high-power committee under the chairmanship of Finance Minister Suresh Khanna and comprising agriculture and labour ministers to decide the nature of the assistance to the labourers.

"There is a section of poor people who go out for work daily to eke out a living, but these restrictions could affect their livelihood... In order to ensure that the daily-wage labourers are not affected, a three-member committee has been formed under the chairmanship of the state finance minister. The committee will also have agriculture minister and labour minister. The poor, most of whom earn their livelihood on a daily basis, will get a certain amount in their account through RTGS," Sharma said, adding that the committee will submit its report to the Chief Minister in three days.

The government has also decided to give free treatment to people infected by coronavirus. "Also, if any government employee or private company employee has been infected by coronavirus, he/she will continue to get their salaries, and there will be no pay cut," the minister said.

Adityanath directed that private firm employees can work from home.

While private employees have been asked to ensure as much as possible to work from home, another committee has been formed under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary to decide the line of course for Government employees in the state. "As far as government employees are concerned, a committee has been formed under the state chief secretary, and work-from-home protocol should be allowed where it is possible," Sharma added.

On Tuesday, two more persons reported positive in the state, taking the total count of Covid-19 cases to 15.

#### State shut till April 2

The government on Tuesday extended the closure of all educational institutions, cinemas, multiplexes and tourists places in the state till April 2, and implemented work-from-home protocol to the extent possible.

The decision was taken at a Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

Competitive and other examinations have also been postponed till April 2, while all tourists spots have been shut. The government has ordered closure of all museums till March 31.

Stating that the coronavirus outbreak is in stage II in the state and efforts are to ensure that it does not escalate to stage III, minister Shrikant Sharma said the district magistrates have been instructed to spread awareness. Gram Panchayats and city development officials have also been ordered to ensure cleanliness. **PTI**



Students sanitise their hands outside a school in Bikaner. **PTI**

## SL to move out Buddhist pilgrims

New Delhi: The Sri Lankan High Commission is facilitating arrangements for the early return of around 1,200 Buddhist pilgrims from the country who are in India. The moves comes in the wake of the restrictions imposed due to the coronavirus outbreak. The Sri Lankan Foreign ministry said they had arrived in India before Colombo suspended pilgrimages on March 9. "The Sri Lanka diplomatic missions are closely in touch with the Buddhist monks at the pilgrimage sites in North India," the Lankan foreign ministry said.

## GOA Govt tracks co-passengers of patient

Panaji: The 67-year-old woman who tested positive for coronavirus in Bengaluru was on a flight that had a stopover in Goa. Now, the state government is trying to contact 26 of her co-passengers who alighted at Dabolim Airport on March 9. "We have got the addresses of 26 people who alighted in Goa. We are trying to reach them. Those with symptoms will be taken to the isolation ward," Health Minister Vishwajeet Rane said Tuesday. The Goa government is tracking their movement. **ENS**

## PUNJAB Ludhiana jail inmate is virus suspect

Ludhiana: A Ludhiana Central Jail inmate—a proclaimed offender arrested in February at the Delhi Airport—was isolated at Ludhiana Civil Hospital Tuesday as health authorities treated it as a suspected case of Covid-19. The man, who came from the US, has fever and cough. Ludhiana Civil Surgeon Dr Rajesh Kumar said he was kept in quarantine for 14 days. He was brought to Ludhiana Central Jail on February 29. **ENS**

## In Karnataka, family doctor of Covid-19 victim now a suspect

**JOHNSON TA**  
BENGALURU, MARCH 17

A FAMILY doctor of a 76-year-old man who died reportedly of coronavirus on March 10 is suspected to have contracted the virus in Karnataka, taking the number suspected patients in the state to 11 by midnight Monday.

Besides the 63-year-old doctor from Kalaburgi district, two women—both returned recently from abroad—are also suspected to have been affected.

The doctor who is suspected to have contracted the virus is the second primary contact of the 76-year-old Kalaburgi victim who have reportedly tested positive for Covid-19—the victim's 46-year-old daughter was the first. The man in Kalaburgi had died before he was diagnosed as carrying the virus; he had returned from a pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia on February 29.

The family doctor was in home quarantine as a primary contact of the 76-year-old victim. "He is now admitted in an isolation facility in Kalaburgi and is stable. There are 50 primary contacts who have been traced, including seven family members. All are asymptomatic and under home quarantine," Karnataka Medical Education Minister Dr K Sudhakar said.

Among the two other new cases in Karnataka, one is a 20-year-old woman who returned from the UK on March 14. Health officials are tracking five primary contacts of the young woman who are in home quarantine. The second case is a 67-year-old woman who returned to Bengaluru from Dubai via Goa

on March 9. "She is a known case of chronic kidney disease. She has been in home quarantine since coming to Bangalore. On March 16, she was admitted in a designated hospital. There are 21 high-risk contacts identified, including five family members," the minister said.

With disease surveillance data not showing infections spreading beyond the primary contacts of people who have travelled abroad, health officials in Karnataka insisted that the virus has not started spreading in the community. "Community spread is stage-3 in the spread of the infection. In Karnataka, the spread is still in stage-2 or close clusters. The doctor was infected due to his close proximity with the patient," a communicable diseases unit official said.

"There is no community spread," minister Sudhakar also stated.

"The disease is not spreading in the community but it seems inevitable," said a senior doctor who is part of a committee of medical experts constituted by the state government last week to advise it on tackling the Covid-19 virus in the state.

One of the suspected patients in Bengaluru, a 32-year-old software engineer who returned from the US via London on March 8, is reported to have been socialising despite advice to be in isolation for 14 days after his return. "This person seems to have gone out to play tennis on three occasions after his return despite instructions to remain in isolation. This kind of behaviour is a source of concern for spread in the community," a health official said.

## MoS quarantines self after visit to Kerala hospital

New Delhi, Thiruvananthapuram: Union Minister V Muralidharan, who visited a Kerala-based medical institute whose hospital later reported a coronavirus case, has placed himself under home quarantine as a precaution even as he tested negative for the infection.

The MoS for external affairs had visited the Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMT) in Thiruvananthapuram on March 14. A doctor from the institute's hospital, who returned from Spain, has tested positive for the coronavirus.

"Last Saturday, I had visited Research Div. of a Medical Institute, whose Hospital later reported a COVID-19+ve case. As a measure of abundant precaution I am in home quarantine since then. Have tested negative for COVID-19," he tweeted.

"No to panic! Yes to precaution!" Muralidharan said.

The infected doctor, who is from the radiology department, had no symptoms and was cleared by the coronavirus cell. He was placed under home quarantine from March 10 or March 11 onwards, SCTIMT director Dr Asha Kishore said. **PTI**



Advocates being screened at the Supreme Court in New Delhi on Tuesday. **Praveen Khanna**

## CM Pinarayi appeals for peace after foreign tourists face public ire

**SHAJU PHILIP**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MARCH 17

WITH THE number of Covid-19 cases shooting up in Kerala, foreign tourists are at the receiving end in the state. In the last two days, incidents of tourists being denied food, accommodation and even forced to alight from public buses following protests by locals have been reported from across the state. So far, 18,000 people in the state are under observation and the total number of confirmed cases stands at 27.

In a bid to pacify the anger, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said on Tuesday that the situation being faced by foreign tourists would dent the state's image. "Nobody should take the law into their hands under the pretext of preventive measures. The foreign tourists... had bitter experiences... Tourists had to wander for two days without food. A Russian family with children was denied accommodation... This is a shameful act... Stringent action would be taken against such persons," he said.

On Monday evening, a French couple, who boarded a bus from Mananthavady in Wayanad to Kannur, had to face the wrath of a mob. Passengers alerted the Health Department as well as the police about the "presence of foreigners". When the bus reached Kannur, it was taken to a police station, where health workers arrived after an hour. The couple was allowed to leave for their resort only after a doctor in the district hospital certified that they

did not show any symptoms of Covid-19.

Kannur District Tourism Promotion Council Secretary Biju Raghavan said passengers in the bus raised an alarm. "At present, seven tourists are in isolation in various resorts. We have asked resorts not to shut the door on foreigners. If any tourist is found stranded, we have made ready 20 rooms in various resorts in the district," he said.

About 340 km away, in Kottayam, two French tourists were forced to get off from a bus on their way to Kochi on Monday. The duo arrived in Kerala on February 17 and were planning to return to their homeland. Although they did not show any symptoms in the medical check-up, the Health Department has put them under observation at the government hospital in Pala, where four other foreigners are under observation.

In Idukki district's Munnar hill station, where a British citizen was tested positive for Covid-19 on March 15, a young couple from the UK was denied accommodation and food by the locals. They were later spotted by police and admitted to hospital.

Confirming the couple had been in Kerala for last one-and-a-half months, Inspector Sibichan Joseph of the district police said, "After the Covid-19 scare spread, they were denied food and accommodation. We were alerted about the incident. We gave them food at our canteen. We took them for test and they did not have any symptoms of Covid-19. On Tuesday, they returned to the UK from Kochi," he said.

## Army postpones all training courses for staff

**MAN AMAN SINGH CHHINA**  
CHANDIGARH, MARCH 17

IN VIEW of the alert sounded for Covid-19, the Army has postponed all courses it conducts for its personnel—ranging from jawans to officers—at all major training institutions.

Directions issued by the Directorate General of Military Training (DGMT) have been circulated to the effect that all courses of instructions scheduled to commence up to April 4 at Category 'A' training establishments for officers, Junior Commissioned Officers (JCOs) and personnel of Other Ranks are to be postponed with immediate effect.

A review of rescheduling will be undertaken at the end of this month, officials said. It is learnt that 90 courses were to commence in the period between March 16 and April 15, which involved movement of 6,000 personnel from various units to the training establishments. When contacted, a senior officer at Army HQs confirmed the development. "All courses which were to commence Monday have been postponed. All non-essential movement of personnel has also been halted," he said.

The Shimla-based Army Training Command is also learnt to have taken a decision that OTA-Chennai should be asked to postpone the Short Service Commission courses which were to commence for technical as well as non-technical entries into the Army. The courses which were to rejoin at the end of the term break will also postpone their rejoining till notified of new date of joining.

All units and formations have been asked to stop movement of trainees with immediate effect.

## Migrant link workers footsoldiers in Kerala's fight

**VISHNU VARMA**  
KOCHI, MARCH 17

In Kerala, a state with a migrant worker population of over 25 lakh, according to some estimates, almost every crisis and opportunity has to factor them in too. And so, when the coronavirus infection knocked on the doors of the state, the administration turned to migrant 'link' workers such as Milon Shaikh, a 24-year-old who left his home in Murshidabad, West Bengal, a decade ago to work in Emakulam.

Shaikh is among the 11 'link' workers in the district who are now at the forefront of the administration's defence against the Covid-19 infection. Their task: take the administration's message to guest workers and build aware-



Shaikh is among the 11 'link' workers in the district chosen as part of the Atithi Devo Bhava project. **Express**

ness about the need for personal hygiene and ways to effectively counter the virus.

Akhil Manuel, nodal officer of 'Atithi Devo Bhava', a project that the Emakulam district administration started two years ago to engage more effectively with mi-

grant workers, said the training of link workers on coronavirus began in December last year. "We wanted to cut down on the communication gap with the migrants. So to train the link workers on coronavirus, camps were held by different government de-

partments such as health, labour, excise, police and law," he said.

Manuel added the administration, in conjunction with the National Health Mission, has given special instructions to link workers to ensure that proper health protocol reaches more migrant workers. Since many lived in cramped spaces, ensuring hygiene was critical.

"We didn't want to create panic. Since many of them don't know how to read and write... we created audio messages in languages such as Bengali, Odia, Assamese, Hindi, Tamil, among others and disseminated them through our link workers. We have been successful in allaying fears to a large extent," Manuel said.

Shaikh admitted that the cramped spaces they live in pose a challenge. "The houses we get

on rent are never good. Many people even live in sheds with no proper bathrooms..." said Shaikh, who cultivates vegetables on a 60 acre piece of leased land at Nedumbassery.

Speaking in fluent Malayalam, a skill he honed from watching movies, Shaikh said that these days, he has been fielding calls from anxious workers, asking if they should be heading for their villages.

"Obviously, there's a sense of fear. Many of them are leaving too because there's little work here at the moment," he said.

The administration, which pays the link workers dearness allowances, have linked them to primary health centres so that guest workers can navigate the public health spaces without hurdles.

## Students stuck in Milan reach out via video on Facebook

**RUCHIKA GOSWAMY**  
PUNE, MILAN, MARCH 17

FACED WITH a 200-300 Euro fine for stepping out of the house and widespread panic all around, an Indian student stuck in Milan took to Facebook on Tuesday to appeal for New Delhi's assistance.

Along with the video, 23-year-old Shakib Ahmed posted a message saying: "Please help us return to India. We are two Indian students stuck in locked down #Milan. Nobody is helping us. There's no information available on any flights to #India."

In the video, Ahmed, a student of Art Direction, and another 24-year-old Indian who did not wish

to be named, spoke about the situation and the steps they have taken to try and fly back to India.

According to a March 16 travel advisory for Covid-19 that was issued by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare: "Travel of passengers from member countries of the European Union, the European Free Trade Association, Turkey and United Kingdom to India is prohibited with effect from 18th March 2020. No airline shall board a passenger from these nations to India with effect from 1200 GMT on 18th March 2020..."

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Ahmed said the entire country he was in was locked

down but the sense of panic was palpable. "I am safe, but for how long? We cannot go out and if we do, we will be fined between 200-300 Euros..."

Any Indian in Italy who wishes to fly back will need a certificate that declares them free of the Covid-19 infection. "I have been filling the registration forms since March 6... On March 13, an official from the MEA stated on Twitter that a lift off is scheduled for people stuck in Milan with a capacity of 250 passengers... I live 50 kilometres away from the airport and I could only leave once it was confirmed. I knew some people from Genoa who boarded the flight, but I could not," he said.

FROM THE GALLERY

FROM THE CHAIR

RAJYA SABHA

“Do you eat lot of ice cream?”

M VENKAI AH NAIDU, Chairman, to Congress MP Husain Dalwai who raised the issue of GST on ice-cream manufacturers during Zero Hour

LOK SABHA

“If one question takes around 15-20 minutes... and then saying supplementary questions are not being allowed after 12 (noon) is not good”

OM BIRLA, Speaker, referring to the Congress's criticism that he did not allow supplementary questions

QUOTE OF THE DAY

“This is my 30th year in politics. I am in the last five years of my political life”

RAJIV PRATAP RUDY, BJP MP, while participating in the discussion on The Aircraft (Amendment) Bill, 2020

ROLL CALL

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

5 QUESTIONS



CONGRESS MP FROM VIRUDHUNAGAR MANICKAM TAGORE SPEAKS TO LIZ MATHEW ON RAISING IN LOK SABHA THE ISSUE OF ATTACKS ON JOURNALISTS IN TAMIL NADU

**What issue did you raise today?**  
A murderous attack on a journalist has taken place and a state minister belonging to the ruling AIADMK is involved. Journalist Karthi was brutally attacked by supporters of the local minister K T Rajenthra Bhalaji in Sivakasi two weeks ago. The state government is not moving properly because of the minister's involvement. The number of attacks against journalists has gone up. We should take it seriously.

**What was your demand?**  
We demanded a CBI inquiry. It (the attacks) is a very serious thing. Attacks on journalists are continuing across Tamil Nadu.

**Why do you think attacks on mediapersons are increasing in the state?**  
The ruling AIADMK, after the death of J Jayalithaa, has gone rogue. They are into corruption in every district and the party's leaders physically attack journalists if they are exposed. Right-wing elements are adding fuel to the fire. They also indulge in attacks against the media, if they do not like the reports.

**There have been reports of attacks on the media from different parts of the country. Is what is happening in Tamil Nadu different?**  
It's different because it has the direct involvement of the state ministers. There have been phone records showing a minister's involvement in this particular case. However, investigating officers are not going to the minister's doorstep. The powerful are not being questioned. Things will come out only if there is an investigation by a central agency.

**So is it an issue of corruption or media freedom that you wanted to highlight?**  
It's about the reaction of the powerful to any media report that does not suit them. In this case, the reporter had written about an internal feud between this minister and another MLA. How can you justify such a reaction to it? If you cannot write on even an internal feud in the ruling party, where does it stand in terms of media freedom?

**Did you approach the Union Home Ministry with this demand?**  
I am writing to Home Minister Amit Shah on this.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with ministers after the BJP Parliamentary Party meeting on Tuesday. Prem Nath Pandey

# House to continue, must pitch in, like doctors: PM to BJP MPs

LIZ MATHEW  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 17

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi told a BJP parliamentary party meeting on Tuesday that Parliament's Budget Session would not be curtailed due to the coronavirus scare, and continue as scheduled till April 3.

Amidst the advice for social distancing to contain the spread of Covid-19, Modi also told his party MPs not to panic but visit their respective constituencies on weekends to create awareness about the pandemic as well as the steps being taken to check it.

Sources said Modi told the MPs right at the beginning that they should be ready to attend the entire session, and that if doctors, media, airport and railway staff and other government employees were carrying out their duties so well, the MPs should also do it.

Several parliamentarians have been keen that the session be curtailed after important business is done given the medical advice to avoid large gatherings. Many states have already adjourned their Assembly sessions in face of the coronavirus scare.

On Tuesday, Union Minister of State for External Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs V Muraleedharan announced that he had self-quarantined himself at his official residence in Delhi after coming to know that a doctor at a medical institute he had visited in Kerala had tested positive for Covid-19. Muraleedharan has tested negative but said he was being extra-cautious.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi told reporters after the meeting, “The Prime Minister urged the MPs to visit their constituencies on Saturday and Sunday in small groups. He advised them to make people aware about the measures they should take to prevent infection.”

Joshi said the PM added, “If media, doctors, pilots, state-owned transportation, airport, policemen, railway stations can work in this (the fight against coronavirus) direction, MPs have to do their job too. They have to keep the House running and simultaneously take care of their people.”

The minister said the 40-minute meeting was focused on coronavirus and the steps taken to contain it, with Modi also listing out the same. “We discussed the do's and don'ts, and the role of MPs. We also talked about those who have been working in fields like railway stations, airports to appreciate their efforts because it is very difficult to contain the infection in a country of 130 crore people.”

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman spoke on the Yes Bank crisis, sources said, telling the MPs that the government was keeping an eye on the developments and things were under control. She said that with the RBI set to lift moratorium on Yes Bank on Wednesday, everything would be back to normal.

“The minister said there is no need to create panic and MPs should convey to people that their deposits were safe and no one would lose a single penny,” said a party MP.

## Cong points at ‘contradiction’

New Delhi: The Congress on Tuesday said there is “some degree of contradiction” in PM Narendra Modi asking people to practise social distancing but letting the Parliament function.

Speaking to the media, party spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi said, “I think coronavirus is a matter of national importance, cutting across the party lines; it should not be a divisive political issue. I think the government is trying its best, I am not at all criticising the government...”

“There is some degree of the contradiction that the Prime Minister, on the one hand, clearly says that you should have social distancing, you should have working from home, you have closed schools, colleges, Courts where I go every day have at all three levels are functioning at 10-20 per cent... I don't know the figures but, Parliament would have, I am sure something like 1,500 people every day, possibly 2,000 all, total. Now, I don't think that there should be one day less functioning of Parliament, but, we have an in-built mechanism to make up,” he said. “...these calibrated, correct, nuanced approaches would be better for Parliament and in line with the Prime Minister's thinking.”

Singhvi clarified that he was not talking about a “closure” of Parliament. “Closure is the wrong word, we are only calibrating,” he said, and added that medical experts of the government have to decide. **ENS**

# For second day in row, supplementary question leads to ruckus, walkout in LS

LIZ MATHEW  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 17

FOR THE second consecutive day, the issue of raising supplementary questions led to disruption in Lok Sabha on Tuesday, with MPs from the Congress, DMK and NCP protesting in the House and eventually staging a walkout.

On Wednesday, Congress MPs staged a walkout after Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla did not allow party leader Rahul Gandhi to ask a second supplementary question during the Question Hour.

Rahul said on Tuesday that MPs from Tamil Nadu were not allowed to ask questions on the regional language issue that is at the “heart of the people” from the state.

The matter came up during Question Hour when BJP's Arvind Kumar Sharma sought that Hindi be made the official language of India. Opposition MPs were on their feet as Minister of State, Home Affairs, Nityanand Rai, was replying to a question related to official language. Rai made it clear that there won't be any step to impose Hindi in states where it is not the



Congress MP Rahul Gandhi at Parliament on Tuesday. Anil Sharma

primary language. When Kumar urged the Home Ministry to take more steps to promote Hindi, Opposition MPs, including those from the DMK, wanted to ask questions. However, the Speaker called for the next question. DMK MPs, led by T R Baalu, protested and insisted that they be allowed to ask questions.

Intervening, Rahul said, “Sir, this is an issue

that is at the heart of the people of Tamil Nadu. I am telling you, do not make the mistake of not allowing a supplementary.”

But the Speaker said he has already given the ruling. The Opposition MPs then walked out. Although Maran and Congress MP Shashi Tharoor tried to persuade TMC Leader Sudip Bandyopadhyay to join the walkout, the TMC MPs did not.

Outside, Rahul told reporters, “The people of Tamil Nadu have every single right to defend their language, to believe in their language and to speak in their language and what is being done is absolutely unacceptable.”

Reiterating that he was not allowed to ask a supplementary question on Monday on a question on 50 biggest willful bank defaulters. “Now it is ok for the Speaker to hurt me, I understand he doesn't want me to speak. But today, the entire Tamil people wanted to ask a supplementary about the Tamil language. This is not about one person, this is not about Rahul Gandhi, this is about the people of Tamil Nadu and their language and even they were not allowed to ask that question, this is absolutely an insult to the people of Tamil Nadu,” he said.

# Minister denies plan to privatise Rlys, says govt to invest Rs 50 lakh cr

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE & PTI  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 17

DISMISSING THE Opposition charge that the government was planning to privatise Indian Railways, Union Minister Piyush Goyal assured the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday that there was no such proposal and that the “Indian Railways belongs to the people of this country”.

Insisting that the NDA government's focus on the Railways has been of an “unprecedented level”, Goyal also announced an investment of Rs 50 lakh crore in the national transporter over the next 12 years.

During the discussion, members of the Opposition had raised concerns about the financial health of the Railways, the alleged delay in execution of projects, besides fears of privatisation.

Replying to a discussion on the working of the Railways Ministry, Goyal said that the government is working to solve all problems being faced by the railway sector. To back the statement, he pointed out that there had been no passenger casualties in accidents last year.

Elaborating on plans for the improvement of Railways, he said the government was aiming for 100 per cent electrification of railway tracks, using clean solar energy, by 2024. Currently, the government has been able to electrify 5,276 km, which, he said, is a significant jump from just 610 km in 2013-14.

Responding to concerns raised over delay in completion of old projects, Goyal sought the assistance of state governments over land acquisition and investment. “I have here with me all the letters I have written to different Chief Ministers on pending projects. Help us get land, if we get land and the state government's share of investment, we will be able to fast-track the projects,” he said. Trinamool Congress MP Derek O'Brien



Railway Minister Piyush Goyal at Parliament on Tuesday. Prem Nath Pandey

and his party colleagues staged a walkout after Goyal's reply, claiming that the minister did not respond to their pointed questions on the decrease in freight growth and revenue receipts and the exact date of launch for the proposed bullet train, among other things.

To the Trinamool's questions on the financial health of the Railways under the Narendra Modi government, Goyal cited various news reports on the performance of the Railways during the tenure of Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee as Railway minister. “I don't want to politicise the issue of losses,” he added.

Responding to the allegation that the NDA government refused to foot the entire cost of completing projects, Goyal said sharing of funds between the Centre and state governments for new railway projects was started during the UPA regime, of which the Trinamool Congress was a part.

## PURI ON KUNAL KAMRA AIRLINES BAN

# ‘Anyone who threatens security of aircraft deserves no consideration’

AVISHEK G DASTIDAR  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 17

CIVIL AVIATION Minister Hardeep Singh Puri Tuesday termed the episode involving stand-up comedian Kunal Kamra and journalist Arnab Goswami on an Indigo aircraft “sui generis”, saying that the matter would not have come to light if Kamra had not posted a video on social media.

Addressing Lok Sabha during a discussion on The Aircraft (Amendment) Bill, 2020, he said he had “zero tolerance” for anything that risks security of aircraft.

After the video became public, Indigo banned Kamra from flying on its aircraft for six months. Several other airlines followed suit.

“I am very proud of the fact that I am a minister who on the issues of security wants to bring zero tolerance. I do not care, who it is — a Member of this House or anyone else; Anyone who threatens the physical security of an aircraft, inside the aircraft, while it is airborne, deserves no consideration,” he told the House. “Let the internal committee of the airline make a determination. They have banned (Kamra) for three months; others have also followed,” he added. He was responding to the issue of Kamra's ban, specifically raised by NCP MP Supriya Sule during the discussion.

Questioning the ban on Kamra, Sule said the media also does what Kamra did to Goswami. “I can give you six examples. I agree that what was done was wrong. But if one airline has banned, suddenly I do not know what happened. The pin started rolling and about six airlines immediately banned him. Was it fair to a customer? I agree he made a mistake, but is there any rule for all this kind of behaviour? Please clarify that,” she said.



Hardeep Singh Puri

## LS clears Bill to provide DGCA statutory status

New Delhi: A Bill to improve India's aviation safety ratings and provide statutory status to regulatory institutions like the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), got the Lok Sabha's nod on Tuesday.

The Aircraft (Amendment) Bill, 2020 provides for statutory backing to the DGCA, Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) and the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB).

Responding to issues raised by members during the discussion on the bill, Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Puri said while air fares needed to remain affordable, it was also necessary that the airline business remains viable.

He said the civil aviation sector has been deregulated and the government does not set air fare. Speaking on the stress the sector is undergoing because of the coronavirus outbreak, Puri said the industry would emerge from these challenges.

On the issue of the disinvestment of Air India, the minister said the national carrier was losing Rs 26 crore per day before the coronavirus outbreak. The figures would be higher as several routes have been shut following the outbreak of the virus globally, he added.

Earlier, moving the Bill for discussion and passage, Puri said there was a need to provide statutory backing to regulatory bodies as they were set up under executive order.

The Bill also provides for keeping aircraft belonging to the country's armed forces outside the purview of the Aircraft Act, 1934.

The Bill proposes to increase the fine for violations of rules from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 1 crore. The Bill would bring regulation regarding air navigation services under its purview. **ENS**

# LS clears Bill to extend upper limit for permitting abortion

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 17

THE LOK SABHA Tuesday passed a Bill to extend the upper limit for permitting abortions from the present 20 weeks to 24 weeks for “special categories of women”, including rape survivors, victims of incest, differently-abled and minors. The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2020 which seeks to amend the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971 was passed by a voice vote.

“When this original Bill was brought in 1971, India was amongst one of the first few countries in the whole world to legalise abortion in order to provide legal and safe abortion services to women who required to terminate

a pregnancy due to certain therapeutic, eugenic or humanitarian grounds,” Health Minister Harsh Vardhan told the House while piloting the Bill.

“However, with the passage of time and advancements of medical technology for safe abortion, there is a scope for increasing upper gestational limit for terminating pregnancies, especially for vulnerable women, like survivors of rape, incest, minor girls or differently-abled women and for pregnancies with substantial foetal abnormalities detected late in the pregnancy,” the minister said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had constituted a Group of Ministers headed by Union Minister Nitin Gadkari to look at his Bill. The Bill was approved by Cabinet and Law Ministry subsequently before being placed in the House for passage.

# FCRA licences of 6,600 NGOs cancelled in past three years: Govt to Lok Sabha

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 17

IN THE past three years, the government has cancelled licences of over 6,600 NGOs in the country for violation of various provisions of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010 (FCRA). More than 69 per cent of these NGOs are educational institutions, the government told Parliament on Tuesday.

It also informed Lok Sabha during the Question Hour that during the same period, it granted new licences to just over 2,000 NGOs. In a written reply to a question on the number of FCRA licences of NGOs cancelled since 2017, Minister of State (Home) Nityanand Rai told Lok Sabha: “For violation of various provisions

of the FCRA, 2010, the Central government has cancelled registration certificates of 6,676 associations.”

Of these, Rai said, 4,614 were educational institutions, 2,531 cultural organisations and 900 religious organisations. Given that the total adds up to more than 7,000, Rai explained: “Many association(s)/NGOs have obtained registration certificate under the FCRA, 2010 for more than one programme, thus, they figure in more than one category in the relevant year. Due to such overlap, the category-wise total number may differ from the actual total.”

On the question of new licences issued, Rai said 2,214 new licences were issued since 2017. He added that the highest number of licences were issued in 2017 — 1,011.

Incidentally, 2017 was also the year in

which cancellations were the highest. According to Rai, as many as 4,866 licences were cancelled that year, of which 3,316 belonged to educational institutions.

Since it came to power, the NDA government at the Centre has mounted a campaign against NGOs that do not strictly follow provisions of FCRA. Several high-profile NGOs — the Ford Foundation, Amnesty International and the Lawyers Collective which is led by senior lawyers Indira Jaising and Anand Grover — have been placed under the scanner.

Last year, in reply to a question by TMC MP Sougata Ray on whether the government and investigating agencies were following a “pick-and-choose policy and targeting organisations which were campaigning against its policies”, Rai had told the Lok Sabha: “No, Sir.”





NIA court grants bail to Akhil Gogoi, still in jail in other case

Guwahati: A Special NIA court in Guwahati on Tuesday granted bail to activist Akhil Gogoi, who was arrested by the agency under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act last December when protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act rocked the state.

Crime Branch. Gogoi-led Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS) was one of the organisations instrumental in organising the protests against the new citizenship law in Assam. Gogoi was accused of working in close coordination with the Maoists. Gogoi's advocate Santanu Borthakur told The Indian Express that the NIA had failed to submit

charges within 90 days and their plea for an extension was rejected by the court. Moreover, the agency had approached the Gauhati High Court and here no stay was granted. In an interview with The Indian Express inside the special court in December, Gogoi had said that charges against him of being a Maoist were "totally false" and he was never with "them". ENS

J&K: Farooq Abdullah meets Mehbooba's family

Srinagar: National Conference president and Srinagar Member of Parliament Farooq Abdullah on Tuesday visited former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti's mother and daughter. According to People's Democratic Party (PDP) functionaries, Abdullah, who was released last week after remaining under detention for 221 days, drove to the Mufti residence late afternoon on Tuesday and spent

more than an hour there. "It was a courtesy call. He met Mehboobaji mother and also her daughter. He spent over an hour there," a senior PDP leader said. He said that Abdullah also inquired about Mehbooba, who has been booked under PSA and is under detention after the government's August 5, 2019, move to abrogate the state's special status and bifurcate it. ENS

UP hoardings: 13 get notice to pay more, or face jail

ASAD REHMAN & MANISH SAHU LUCKNOW, MARCH 17

MORE THAN a dozen people in Lucknow who had been issued recovery notices for damage related to violence during anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act protests in December will now have to pay 10 per cent extra within a week or face jail.



In Kanpur case (above), six of 21 paid dues on Monday

The Lucknow administration on Tuesday issued "recovery certificates" and "demand notice" to the 13, whose cases come under the jurisdiction of the Hasanganj Police Station.

They are among the 57 people, across four police stations of Lucknow, served notices for recovery of overall Rs 1.55 crore for destruction of property and assets during the December 19 protests within 30 days or face attachment of properties.

Recently, the administration had put up their photos, names and addresses on hoardings across the city, earning the ire of the Allahabad High Court. The matter is now in the Supreme Court.

The 13 who got recovery certificates and demand notice Tuesday have been told to pay Rs 21.67 lakh. The 13 include Osama Siddiqui, Mohd Hashim, Dharmveer Singh, Mohd

damages within a week. "Six people visited my office and handed over a bank draft of Rs 80,856 against the recovery order passed by me. Since people have started depositing money... we have decided not to take any action against them," Additional District Magistrate, Kanpur, Vivek Srivastava said.

Earlier, in Firozabad district, people who had received such notices over the anti-CAA protest violence in December had paid damages. Around two weeks back, 26 people, told to deposit Rs 45 lakh, handed over Rs 4 lakh to the district administration.

Apart from Kanpur and Firozabad, the district administrations of Muzaffarnagar, Lucknow, Sambhal and Gorakhpur had sent recovery notices for damages over anti-CAA protest violence. In Lucknow, 57 people were told to pay Rs 1.55 crore; in Muzaffarnagar, 53 to pay Rs 23.41 lakh; in Sambhal, 58 to pay Rs 19.31 lakh; and in Gorakhpur, eight to pay Rs 90,000.

In Bulandshahr, a group of Muslim residents had collected over Rs 6 lakh, the amount estimated as payment for total damage, and handed it over to the district administration within days of the violence, without waiting for recovery notices.

HARYANA GOVERNMENT TENDER NOTICE table with columns for S.No, NAME OF BOARD/CORP./AUTH, NAME OF WORK/NOTICE/TENDER, OPENING DATE, AMOUNT/EMD, WEBSITE OF THE BOARD/CORP./AUTH, and NODAL OFFICER.

STATE BANK OF INDIA Stressed Assets Recovery Branch, 2nd Floor, 2 Tilak Marg, Opposite National P.G. College, Lucknow-226001, Ph.: 0522-4342302, 4342303. POSSESSION NOTICE [for immovable property under Rule 8 (1)]

H.P. STATE HANDICRAFTS & HANDLOOM CORPORATION LIMITED (An H.P. State Govt. Undertaking) D-2, SOA Commercial Complex, Kasumpti, Shimla-171009. ADVERTISEMENT FOR ENGAGEMENT OF DESIGNERS

Table with 4 columns: S.No, Name & Address of the Borrower, Description of The immovable Property mortgaged, Amount O/s (as per u/s 13(2)), Date of Demand Notice / Possession.

UPSIDA कार्यालय वरिष्ठ प्रबंधक, विद्युत खण्ड-दिल्ली. अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना. एकादश सूचित किया जाता है कि ट्रान्स दिल्ली सिन्डिकेट लि. मजिस्ट्रेट के अधीन

JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Shah meets industry representatives

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, MARCH 17

DAYS AFTER Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah held separate meetings with Jammu and Kashmir's newly-formed political outfit Apni Party, Shah on Tuesday held an extensive discussion with representatives of various sectors of the erstwhile state's industry.

Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office, Jitendra Singh, were also present at the meeting.

Sources in the MHA said the meeting was attended by representatives from different sectors of J&K.

The government is keen on kick-starting economic activity in the Union Territory (UT), which has been stymied since a lockdown in the erstwhile state that was put into place of August 5, 2019, officials said.

delegation that soon, an attractive industrial policy will be announced for rapid economic development in the UT.

"He said, for the last 70 years, J&K attracted Rs 13,000 crore in investment and expressed the hope that by 2024, three times more investment will flow into the region as there is a huge potential for the same and investors are also willing to come forward. This will also solve the problem of unemployment, he added," the MHA said in a statement.

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT Trichy (Construction and Maintenance) Circle TENDER NOTICE Tender Notice No.39/2019-20/HDO/Dated: 17.03.2020

GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT Invitation for Pre-qualification International Competitive Bidding with prequalification (UNIT PRICE CONTRACT (ICB) on behalf of Tamil Nadu Urban Health Care Project (Supported by JICA).

E-TENDER PRESS NOTICE The EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, CD-VI, I&FC Department, Govt. of Delhi, Bharat Nagar office Complex, Delhi-110028, invites on behalf of the President of India, online item rate tender from the approved and eligible contractors registered with I&F Department and contractor who are registered with other Deptt. and got their registration verified from I&FC Deptt. UPTO 3.00 P.M. on 19.03.2020 for the following:-

NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE (Single Packets System) Hospital Administrator, Central Hospital, Ganpali Nagar, Hasampur Road, North Western Railway, Jaipur-302 006 for and on behalf of the President of India invites Open E-Tender. Tenderer shall online submit their original/revised offer before the date and time of closing of E-Tender: Not Applicable Approximate cost of work: Rs. 10,59,468.92

GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT Invitation For Pre - Qualification, International Competitive Bidding with PQ (ICB) on behalf of Tamil Nadu Urban Health Care Project (Supported by JICA).

GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT Invitation For Pre-qualification, International Competitive Bidding with PQ (ICB with PQ) on behalf of Tamil Nadu Urban Health Care Project (Supported by JICA).

DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL -1, DELHI. 4TH FLOOR JEEVAN TARA BUILDING PARLIAMENT STREET NEW DELHI-110001. O.A.No. 371/2019 KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD. ....APPLICANT VERSUS PARIVARTAN BUILDTECH PVT.LTD. AND ORS. ....Defendants To, 1. PARIVARTAN SINGH (Defendant No.02) B-106, Tarun Cooperative Society, GH 2 Sector 47 Gurgaon-122001 Haryana. 2. SIDDHANT (Defendant No.03) 23001 Sector 1 Haryana Rohtak-124001

दक्षिणांचल विद्युत वितरण निगम लि कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियंता विद्युत वितरण मंडल, हमीरपुर पत्रांक सं-1278/ वि.मं.ह./पी-1 (प्रकाशन)/निविदा/ 2019-20 दिनांक 16.03.2020 सूचना

Super Speciality Cancer Institute & Hospital C.G. City, Sultanpur Road, Lucknow - 226002 An autonomous institute of the Deptt. of Medical Education, Govt of U.P. E-TENDER NOTICE Bids are invited through e-tendering for Supply, Installation and Maintenance of 100 Mbps (1+1) Dedicated Unshared Internet Leased Bandwidth Requirement over both underground Fiber Optic & RF Link Independently, at SSC&H. Interested bidders are requested to visit e-tender portal https://tender.up.nic.in and https://cancerinstitute.edu.in for references. Email: jdmrns.sscib@gmail.com

CORRIGENDUM NOTICE SUBJECT: Tender No. OP2/14/2019-20- DNIT for the replacement of obsolete and old 11 VCB and allied items at 66 Grid Sub Stn. Industrial Area, Phase-I & II and 33 KV Grid Sub Stn. Industrial Area, Phase-I, Chandigarh. The subject cited tender which was due to be opened on dated i.e. 13.03.2020 at 03.00 P.M. is hereby extended upto 19.03.2020 at 02.00 P.M. with opening date i.e 20.03.2020 at 03.00 P.M. due to some administrative reason. Sd/- Executive Engineer, Electricity (OP) Division No. 2, Chandigarh, U.T.















## COVID-19 AND THE ECONOMY

## Spluttering

Tracking the economic impact of Covid-19 in real time



A near-empty store at a supermarket in Washington. Any short-term economic boost from stockpiling would be cold comfort in the face of lower spending on services Reuters

AS FEARS grow about the impact of the Covid-19 virus, financial markets have slumped. Now there are signs that the virus is moving from traders' screens to the real economy. No one will know the true economic impact for some time, because official statistics are published with a lag: the first estimate of GDP growth in the current quarter, for instance, will not appear until April 29th. Analysts cannot wait that long. So they are turning to "real-time" data, mainly produced by the private sector, on everything from transport use to social-media activity. None of these measures is reliable by itself, but together they give a decent impression of what is going on. It is not all doom and gloom. So far

there are few indications — either from weekly jobless claims or from company announcements — that joblessness is rising. Worries that broken supply chains would stoke inflation also look overdone, for now at least. Data to the beginning of March from State Street PriceStats Indicators, which measures inflation daily, suggest that inflation has been on a steady downward trend since the beginning of the year (though in recent days food prices have inched up, perhaps pointing to the effects of stockpiling). Railway and trucking volumes appear to be holding up. There is some evidence of lower electricity demand, perhaps as people miss work, though the figures are volatile.

Household spending is taking a big hit, however. Analysis by Goldman Sachs, a bank, of Twitter posts suggests that consumer confidence has dropped. People are nervous of crowds — and some 40% of household spending is vulnerable to people shunning gatherings,

according to calculations by *The Economist* using a methodology from an Oxford University research paper. (About 5% of consumer spending goes on dining out, for instance.)

Google searches for "restaurant reservations" are way down. *The Maitre*

**Analysis by Goldman Sachs, a bank, of Twitter posts suggests that consumer confidence has dropped. People are nervous of crowds — and some 40% of household spending is vulnerable to people shunning gatherings, according to calculations by *The Economist* using a methodology from an Oxford University research paper**

d' at San Francisco's best oyster bar was so pleased to see a customer that he offered a free plate of them when your correspondent bought a drink (the bar looked over the bay towards Grand Princess, a virus-stricken ship harboured in Oakland). A report from JPMorgan Chase, another bank, estimates that last weekend the virus reduced cinema-ticket receipts by 20%. Attendance at Broadway shows has also dropped. Data from TomTom, a location-technology firm, reveal unusually low traffic congestion in many American cities since the end of last week. Lower consumer spending points to feeble GDP growth in the first half of this year, though a recession still seems unlikely at this stage.

What happens next depends on whether America gets a handle on the outbreak. If it does not, then over time revenue-starved firms and salary-starved families will struggle. Any short-term economic boost from stockpiling would be cold comfort in the face of lower spending on services. But if America contains the virus, it can look forward to a bounceback of sorts. Real-time data in China, from traffic congestion to energy consumption, remain weak but are fast improving as the number of new infections slows. An acute economic shock does not have to turn chronic.

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## BARTLEBY

## Rethinking sick leave

Attitudes towards employee illness are out of step with the times

THE GLOBAL spread of Covid-19 has led to calls for those who might be infected with the new disease to "self-isolate" at home. That could prove a threat to economic activity. It also represents a terrible dilemma for workers, some of whom could face financial hardship if they don't turn up.

The quandary is all the greater when the disease is unfamiliar, with symptoms that are often mild, at first, and resemble common ailments. And if, like a quarter of all Americans working in the private sector, employees get no paid sick leave at all, they are more likely to take the risk and attend. In 2009 the outbreak of swine flu presented workers with a similar decision. Many American ones decided to turn up for work regardless, further spreading the infection. One study\* estimated that around 7m co-workers were infected as a result.

The most recent global survey\*\* of sick pay by the International Labour Organisation, from 2010, showed that 145 countries provided for paid sick leave at the time. Most mandated replacement pay of around 50-75% of wages. More than 100 allowed employees to be absent for a month or more.

The fear of employers and governments is that generous benefits will be costly and create the temptation for employees to malingering. It is true that Britain and America, which have stingy (if any) benefits, see almost no days of absence, on average. But most countries with generous benefits experience fewer than ten days a year of absence. Based on OECD data from 2017 the gap between annual days lost to sickness in

**The fear of employers and governments is that generous benefits will be costly and create the temptation for employees to malingering. It is true that Britain and America, which have stingy (if any) benefits, see almost no days of absence, on average. But most countries with generous benefits experience fewer than ten days a year of absence. Based on oecd data from 2017 the gap between annual days lost to sickness in France, where 50-100% of income is replaced during sick leave, and in America was a mere 4.4 days**

France, where 50-100% of income is replaced during sick leave, and in America was a mere 4.4 days.

Other evidence does not suggest that more generous sick pay leads to extra skiving. The Earned Sick Time Act became law in New York in 2014. A survey of 352 employers four years ago found that almost 85% had experienced no increase in costs and only 3% had suffered more than a token rise. Connecticut adopted similar legislation in 2011 in the face



The most recent global survey of sick pay by the International Labour Organisation, from 2010, showed that 145 countries provided for paid sick leave at the time. Reuters

of opposition from business lobbies. A study of companies in 2013 found that many noted benefits such as improved morale and fewer infections in the workplace.

The problem may be that sick-pay rules are too strict for employees, not too generous. Given the need to pay the rent, many low-paid workers may feel they have to work unless they are so sick as to be physically incapable of leaving the house. But things may be changing. In America the Democrats have long proposed statutory sick leave. President Donald Trump now talks of emergency relief for sick workers.

British policy has also shifted. Statutory

sick pay will now be payable on the first day of absence, rather than the fourth. In its budget on March 11th the government removed a minimum income requirement that kept many part-time workers from qualifying for sick pay. It will also allow workers to get a sick note online rather than travel to a clinic and risk infecting other patients. Further change may still be needed. The statutory weekly rate, at £94.25 (\$123), is less than 20% of average earnings, and may tempt more workers to turn up when feeling iffy.

At some stage in their careers most people will have turned up to work when they

were feeling under the weather, be it because of a looming deadline or for fear of displeasing their boss. The health of fellow citizens, whether at work or on public transport, tends to be treated as collateral damage.

In a world where global travel is common and easy, and diseases have the scope to spread quickly, social norms may therefore need to change. That means not just washing hands, or indeed forgoing the handshake as a greeting. It could also require a shift in attitudes towards workers who turn up while sick and potentially infectious, from plaudits for their diligence to scorn for their lack of

consideration.

Countering pandemics requires all sorts of public action, from forging new social norms to devising vaccines that authorities have the duty to supply. Ensuring that workers do not have a financial incentive to spread disease is another example. That requires governments to guarantee a decent level of sick pay, and rules on sick leave that do not punish responsible citizens.

\*\* "Paid Sick Leave: Incidence, Patterns and Expenditure in Times of Crises", by Xenia Scheil-Adlung and Lydia Sandner

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SALUTE THE SOLDIER

10.04.1947-18.03.1990

On 18.03.1990, during 10 hrs bandh called by ABSU (All Bodo Student Union), Constable Mukund Narayan Sharma of Lumbding Division of North Frontier Rly was tasked to escort one goods train between New boggaigan to Fakira Gram Railway station.

"Remembered with pride DG and All Ranks of Railway Protection Force personnel"

Notice No. 12 of 2019-20 CORRIGENDUM No. 4
Following rectification is made in Tender Notice No.12 of 2019-20 of Executive Engineer, Ver-II Project Division, Vyara PIN CODE No.394650

Table with 4 columns: Event, Old Date, New Date. Includes details for Online Tender upload date, Submission of Document Date, and Opening of Pre Qualification Bid date.

Assessment of Carbon Stocks of Forests: Further Extension of Date for Request for Proposal

Refer our advertisement for RFP No. 2-M&E/2019-20 for Assessment of Carbon Stocks of Forests. The last date for submission of RFP is further extended to 27th March, 2020.

Chief Project Director Uttarakhand Forest Resource Management Project, 24 I.T. Park, Sahasradhara Road, Dehradun. 248001

U.P.R.V.U.N.L. TENDER NOTICE HARDUAGANJ THERMAL POWER STATION SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE CIRCLE-I, DTPS, HTPS, KASIMPUR
Short Term E-Tender Notice No. T-21/AHD/DTPS/HTPS/2019-20. Name of work: Round the Clock Operation, Routine & Preventive mechanical maintenance and Breakdown mechanical maintenance of Ash Handling Plant of Unit No. 08 & 09.

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDERS

The Executive Engineer, Mechanical Division No. II, Irrigation & Flood Control Department, Govt. of NCT of Delhi, I&FC Wing, Vikas Bhawan-II, Civil Lines, Delhi-110054. Invites on behalf of the president of India, online tender from approved specialized agencies or eligible contractors of I&FC, M.E.S., Railways, CPWD & Deptt. of Central/State Govt.

Estimated Cost: Rs. 21,08,696/- Earnest Money: Rs. 42,174/- Period of completion: (30) Days. Last date & time of submission of tender: upto 3:00 p.m on 24/03/2020. (Tender ID 2020\_IFC\_189639\_1)

DEBITS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL, DEHRADUN
Government of India, Ministry of Finance, (Deptt. of Financial Services) 2nd Floor, Paras Tower, Muzra, Saharanpur Road, Dehradun, U.K.-248171
PUBLICATION NOTICE IN O.A. No. 22 of 2020

DEBITS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL, DEHRADUN
Government of India, Ministry of Finance, Deptt. of Financial Services 2nd Floor, Paras Tower, Muzra, Saharanpur Road, Dehradun, U.K.-248171
PUBLICATION NOTICE IN O.A. No. 387 OF 2019

कार्यालय मुख्य अभियंता
लोक स्वास्थ्य यंत्रिकी विभाग रायपुर परिक्षेत्र रायपुर
ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट निविदा सूचना
एकीकृत पंजीयन प्रणाली अंतर्गत सक्षम श्रेणी में पंजीकृत ठेकेदार से प्रपत्र 'ए' में प्रस्तात दर अनुबंध हेतु निम्नलिखित निर्माण कार्य हेतु ऑन लाईन निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है:- NIT No and Date 29/12-03-2020 System Tender No. 62138

Commissionerate of Rural Development, (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme) RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND PANCHAYAT RAJ DEPARTMENT
2nd Floor, 3rd Gate, M.S. Building, Bangalore-560 001
Phone: 080-22342162 E-Mail: kamregs@gmail.com
TENDER No.: RDP 99 EGS 2019 Date: 04-03-2020

DELHI JAL BOARD : DELHI SARKAR
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (SOUTH)-I
OPPOSITE J-BLOCK MARKET, SAKET : NEW DELHI-110017
NIT No. 83/ (S-I) (2019-20)
S. No. Name of work Estimated cost Date of release of tender in e-procurement solution Last date/ time of receipt of tender through e-procurement solution

MADHYA PRADESH TOURISM BOARD
Lily Tradewing (Old Lily Talkies), 6th Floor Jehangirabad, Bhopal-462008
Tender No. 1878/169/MPTB/IP/Vyayan/2020 Bhopal, dated : 16.03.2020
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board is interested in developing the following Heritage Properties as heritage hotel on DBFOT.

BEFORE DEBITS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL, DELHI 4th Floor, Jaganpura Building, Parliament Street, New Delhi-110001
Notice under Section 19(4) of the Recovery of Debts and Bankruptcy Act, 1993 read with Rule 2A of the Debits Recovery Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 1993 in the matter of O.A. 877/2019 HDFC Bank Ltd. vs. Applicant

NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY
Open E-Tender Notice
For and behalf of the President of India, the Dy. Chief Engineer/Bridge, Line/North Western Railway, Jaipur invites online open E-tendering system (Single packet) for the following works: (Single packet) for the following works: (Single packet) for the following works: (Single packet) for the following works:

JAL SHAKTI VIBRAJ
NOTICE INVITING E-PROCUREMENT TENDER

The Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Division Dharampur Bharari, District Mandi (HP) on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh invite the item rate/lump sum contract bids from the eligible contractors/Firms.

Table with 5 columns: Sr. No., Name of work, Estimated Cost, Earnest Money, Time, Cost of form. Includes Rehabilitation/Rejuvenation of various water supply schemes.

Table with 2 columns: a, b, c, d, e. KEY TENDERS WILL BE AS UNDER:
a Date of Online publication 14.03.2020 at 5.00 P.M.
b Downloading of e-tender Documents From 14.03.2020 at 5.00 P.M. to 28.03.2020 at 12.00 Afternoon

The tender forms and other detailed conditions can be downloaded from the website: www.hpntenders.gov.in or from office above Executive Engineer upto date specified above.

Save Energy for the benefit of self and nation
HIMACHAL PRADESH STATE ELECTRICITY BOARD LTD. (A State Government Undertaking)
Tel: 0177-2656485, Website: www.hpseb.com, Email: set@hpseb.in

NOTICE INVITING TENDER Domestic Competitive Bidding (e-bid)
HPSEBL/ CE(Comm./) SMS Gateway/ Vol-1/2020-1
Estimated Cost Value ₹ 17,000,00/- Earnest Money Deposit ₹ 17,000/-

Table with 2 columns: Description of payment, Through online payment mode. Includes Annual registration charges, Tender processing fee, and Cost of tender documents.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR
SHER-I-KASHMIR INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES, SOURA
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, MECHANICAL
E-mail: mechanicalskims@gmail.com
RC-01
SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING E-TENDERS
Gist of e-NIT No. 55 of 2019-20 Dated. 17.03.2020

Table with 2 columns: Sr. No., Name of the Work, Estimated Cost (Rs. in Lacs). Includes Maintenance/Operation and allied works at Central Air Conditioning System at SKIMS, Soura.

Table with 2 columns: i) Date and Time of Downloading/Sale of Tender Documents (Starting Date) 19.03.2020 at 11.00 Hour, ii) Date & Time of Bidding Queries/Clarification/Pre-bid meet 23.03.2020 at 14.00 Hours, etc.

Commissionerate of Rural Development (MGNREGS) RDPR, invites tender application in 2 cover system through e-procurement from eligible bidders for the Supply of Tower Desktop (i5), 1KVA 30 Minutes Backup UPS and Mono Laser Multi function printer with Network and Duplex for the Use of Taluk Panchayats of the State, Rural Development and Panchayath Raj Department, Karnataka under Mahatma Gandhi NREGA Scheme.
TENDER No.: RDP 99 EGS 2019 Date: 04-03-2020

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR, SHER-I-KASHMIR INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES, SOURA
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, MECHANICAL
Tel.: E-mail: mechanicalskims@gmail.com
SHORT TERM TENDER NOTICE
Gist of e-NIT No. 54 of 2019-20 Dated: 14.03.2020

Table with 2 columns: Sr. No., Name of the Work, Estimated Cost (In Lacs). Includes Providing, Fitting, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Pumping Equipments and Allied Jobs at Central Air Conditioning Plant SKIMS, Soura.

Housing and Urban Development Corporation Ltd. (A Govt. of India Enterprise)
CIN: L74899DL1970GOI005276 GSTIN: 07AAAC0832A1Z
Housing & Urban Development Corporation Limited (HUDCO), a public sector undertaking intends to appoint service provider for supply, installation, testing and commissioning of Standalone Bio-Metric Machines supporting fingerprint impressions along with facial recognition under buyback of old machines at Corporate Office, Regional Offices, HSMI Hostel and HSMI.

Delhi urban shelter improvement board
Govt. of NCT of Delhi
Office of the Executive Engineer, C-10 Inderlok, Delhi-110035
Email ID : eec10.dusib@gmail.com
Cell No.: 9717999192
NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER
Executive Engineer, C-10, DUSIB, Inderlok, Delhi-110035 invites, on behalf of Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board, percentage rate bid (Online) in two bid system for the following work:
NIT No. 143/EEC-10/DUSIB/2019-20, Tender No. 2020\_DUSIB\_189537\_1





CLOSER HOME Even as the box office suffers major setbacks, Universal Pictures announced that its movies will be available for viewing at home on the same day they release in theaters.



SNAPSHOTS



Idris Elba tests positive for Covid-19

BRITISH ACTOR Idris Elba (pictured left) is the latest celebrity to catch the coronavirus, along with Game of Thrones actor Kristofer Hivju.

so far but have been isolated since I found out about my possible exposure to the virus.



Time to Unite

SINGERS BILLIE Eilish (pictured left), Taylor Swift (pictured right), and Ariana Grande have been requesting fans on Instagram to make behavioural changes to stop the spread of coronavirus.

Safety Comes First

IN THE wake of coronavirus, Delhi-based noted restaurateur Priyank Sukhija, who owns popular hangout spaces like Lords of the Drinks.

Not So Far

SINGER CHRIS Martin performed some of Coldplay's iconic hits like Yellow on Instagram Live as part of his little concert from home on Monday.

'The film gives a sense of being real'

Rohena Gera on her debut feature, Is Love Enough? Sir, after its Cannes premiere, the stalled India release, and writing an impossible love story



Rohena Gera (above); a still from Is Love Enough? Sir

ALAKA SAHANI

You have been keen to show your directorial debut feature, Is Love Enough? Sir, to the Indian audience but now its release is postponed.

It's such an incomprehensible situation, and my first thoughts go to the families of people who have been directly impacted by the coronavirus.

As for the release, we are waiting patiently to bring the movie to the audiences whenever the situation allows it.

It is also an impossible love story between a rich man and his domestic help.

This film gives a sense of being real. One can identify with this. If it were a Bollywood fantasy, then it would be easy for people to say such things happen only in movies.

Having spent your formative years in India and then returning after a gap, did that give you this perspective?

I grew up in India. I went away to university (Stanford University). Then, I was living in India again.

Was there a takeaway from commercial projects like Thoda Pyaar Thoda Magic (2008) and Jassi Jaissi Koi Nahin that you



worked on?

I believe in entertainment and its power as we look up to stars to be emotionally moved. It is difficult to entertain the audience.

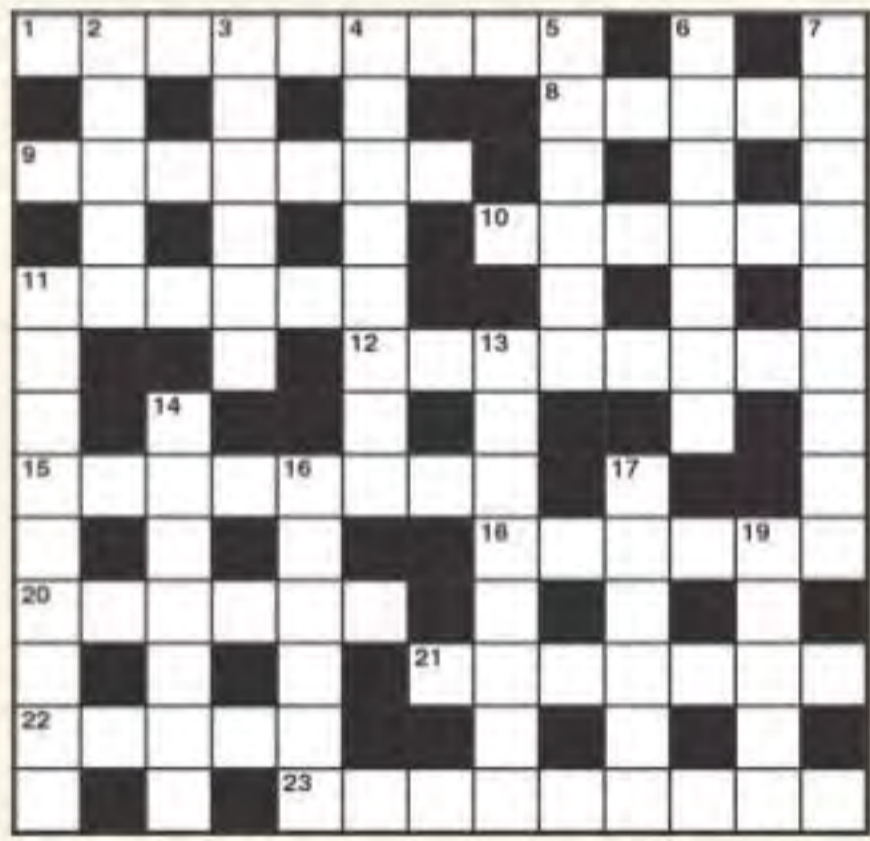
In 2003, you had made a public service campaign, Stop the Hatred, after the Gujarat riots with 16 top Indian celebrities and that's been shared a lot recently.

At that time, I was working for a New York-based non-profit organisation called Breakthrough. The campaign was about pluralism in India.

For full interview, visit www.indianexpress.com

CALENDAR

CROSSWORD 4068



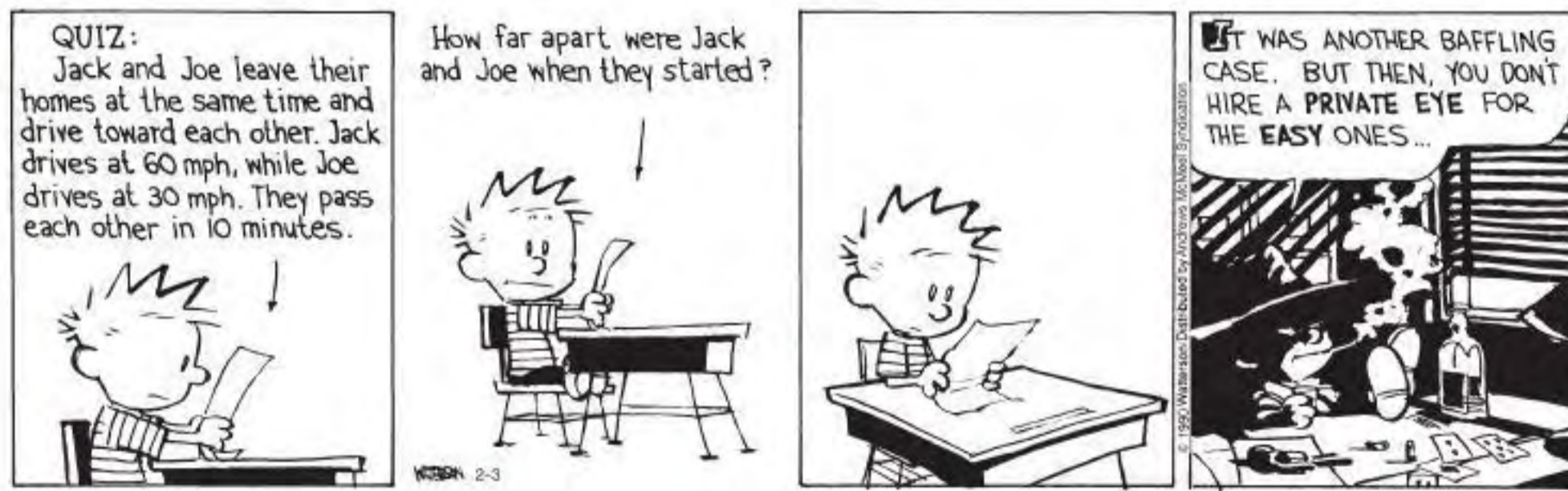
- ACROSS 1 Not smart new lines in underwear (9) 8 A paid informer in the private sector? (5) 9 Hurtful piece clipped out of the newspaper (7) 10 Distinguishing title to open my translation (6) 11 Note the world shortage (6) 12 The plane might be a jumbo (8) 15 Strangely, in matter of discipline he's strict (8) 18 Toss a coin with me for profit (6) 20 A grease paint allowance in part (6) 21 Higher than everyone in the exam? (7) 22 Perceive the meaning (5) 23 Protect a worker who is accused (9)

Solutions Crossword 4067: Across: 1 Oration, 4 Adieu, 7 Eels, 8 War paint, 10 Avalanches, 12 Decode, 13 Canard, 15 Adventures, 18 Amputate, 19 Earl, 20 Ernes, 21 Sponsor. Down: 1 Opera, 2 Alliance, 3 Nuance, 4 Apple carts, 5 Iris, 6 Untried, 9 Candidates, 11 Airways, 12 Disease, 14 Depths, 16 Solar, 17 Span.

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

It's always good to consider your options. Events towards the end of last week, or at the weekend, may have made you think twice about a particular relationship.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21) You could easily overstep the mark this week, encouraged now by Moon's emotional alignments.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21) If you are still licking your wounds you are likely to completely miss fresh warning signals alerting you to new irritations.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23) You may be preoccupied with personal affairs. It would be very much wiser to face up to challenges at work, but it may not be possible to make a clean sweep.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23) It's time to make up your mind. Decisions that are finalised or agreed now, should encourage you to stop prevaricating over a domestic upheaval.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23) The Sun is related to that decisive planet Uranus, providing an interesting sub-plot for today's planetary sermon.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23) The spread of positive planets in your horoscope, suggests that the only important considerations at the moment are purely personal.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

The spread of positive planets in your horoscope, suggests that the only important considerations at the moment are purely personal.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23) You may be in the right, and more than entitled to challenge others' statements and opinions.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22) What comes to light in a roundabout manner should at last enable you to issue the odd ultimatum - or three!

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20) You probably feel like taking a sabbatical from several important tasks, challenges or responsibilities.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19) Other people can be so maddening at times. If you are to ensure that team and group activities turn out in your favour.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20) You will do well to concentrate either on knowing your rights, or on pursuing an ethical course of action.

JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below.

- DWYEE AEFILS DEWER OOPWCX

SUDOKU 4152

Difficulty Level 2s Instructions To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

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



SOLUTION SUDOKU 4151





# IOC says no need for drastic decisions...

Olympic body amends qualifying competitions, says it is committed to the event being staged in four months' time despite the coronavirus outbreak

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE  
LAUSANNE, MARCH 17

THE INTERNATIONAL Olympic Committee (IOC) said on Tuesday it was not the time for "drastic decisions" over the staging of the Tokyo Olympics, which has not yet been postponed because of the deadly coronavirus pandemic.

"The IOC remains fully committed to the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020, and with more than four months to go before the Games there is no need for any drastic decisions at this stage; and any speculation at this moment would be counter-productive," the IOC said in a statement after its executive board met in Lausanne.

The Tokyo Olympics are scheduled to run between July 24-August 9, but the year's biggest sporting event is as yet one of the sole sporting competitions to have survived a postponement in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak that has caused more than 7,400 deaths and infected more than 180,000 around the world.

The IOC statement fell shortly after both this summer's Euro 2020 and Copa America tournaments were postponed by one year to 2021. US President Donald Trump has suggested the Japanese capital also postpone the Olympics for 12 months, although Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe responded by pledging his country would host the Games as planned and saying he had no immediate intention to declare a state of emergency over the virus outbreak.

"This is an unprecedented situation for the whole world, and our thoughts are with all those affected by this crisis," the IOC said. IOC president Thomas Bach added: "The health and well-being of all those involved in the preparations for the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 is our number-one concern."

"All measures are being taken to safeguard the safety and interests of athletes, coaches and support teams. We are an Olympic community; we support one another in good times and in difficult times. This Olympic solidarity defines us as a community." The IOC acknowledged preparations for the Tokyo Games had been impacted, and encouraged all athletes to continue training "as best they can". "The IOC has confidence that the many measures being taken by many authorities around the world will help contain the situation of the COVID-19 virus."

## Practical adaptations

One of the results of the virus outbreak has been the cancellation of qualifiers, in a number of sports, for the Tokyo Olympics. But the IOC insisted it would work to surmount any difficulties that threw up.

"To date, 57 percent of the athletes are already qualified for the Games," it said. "For the remaining 43 percent of places, the IOC will work with the IFs (international federations) to make any necessary and practical



The European football championship was due to take place from June 12 to July 12 this year at 12 venues across Europe. NYT

adaptations to their respective qualification systems for Tokyo 2020."

The IOC vowed to "continue to act in a responsible way and have agreed the following overriding principles about the staging of the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020: "1. To protect the health of everyone involved and to support the containment of the virus. 2. To safeguard the interests of the athletes and of Olympic sport." The IOC will continue to monitor the situation 24/7. Already in mid-February, a task force was set up.

The body added any decision it takes on the staging of the Games "will not be determined by financial interests, because thanks to its risk management policies and insurance it will in any case be able to continue its operations and accomplish its mission to organise the Olympic Games."

A taskforce (consisting of the IOC, the World Health Organisation, the Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee, the Japanese authorities and the Tokyo Metropolitan Government) was created in mid-February to ensure "coordinated actions by all stakeholders" and offer guidance the IOC said it would follow. Already, the format of all the test events in March and April in Japan has been "altered to allow for the testing of essential Games elements".

"The lighting of the Olympic torch in

## What are the changes to qualifying system

ACCORDING TO the International Olympic Committee, 57 percent of the athletes have already qualified for the Games so far. For the remaining 43 percent of places, the IOC will work with the international sports federations to "make any necessary and practical adaptations to their respective qualification systems".

The world governing said they will not make any changes to the quota places already allocated to the countries and athletes. However, the IOC added they might make changes to the qualification system based on, "on-field results (e.g. IF (international) ranking or historical results)" and use the results of continental or region-specific events.

Greece and subsequent elements of the Torch Relay in Japan are being adapted, the entire Games preparation supply chain has been analysed, and alternative plans are in place in the event of anticipated disruption," the IOC added.

## Olympic torch events downscaled

Tokyo 2020 organisers said Tuesday they had taken the "heartbreaking" decision to scale back parts of the Olympic torch relay due to the coronavirus, but stressed that spectators would still be allowed to watch from the roadside. Chief executive Toshiro Muto told reporters that the "grand start" of the torch relay from the disaster-hit Fukushima province would take place without spectators "in order to prevent the spread of infections".

Any spectators who are feeling unwell will be asked not to watch from the roadside and torch-bearers with high temperatures will be barred from taking part, Tokyo 2020 said. "Please be careful to avoid forming crowds," organisers urged, saying the programme could be changed in the event of "excessive congestion". The moves come as doubts increase whether the Games can open as planned on July 24, with the coronavirus decimating the global sports calendar, including Olympic qualifying events, and curtailing international travel.

Muto reiterated the Olympics would go ahead "as planned", although he acknowledged that "situations are changing from hour to hour".

# ...but French Open, Copa America and Euros get postponed

AFP & REUTERS  
LAUSANNE, MARCH 17

UEFA HAS proposed postponing this year's European Championship until 2021, a source close to European football's governing body told AFP on Tuesday, as the continent battles with the coronavirus pandemic.

The source's confirmation of the proposal came after the Norwegian FA tweeted that the new plan is for the tournament to take place from June 11 to July 11 next year, turning Euro 2020 into Euro 2021.

The proposal was made as UEFA held crisis talks with its national associations as well as clubs and players bodies via video-conference on Tuesday. The proposal is likely to be ratified at a UEFA Executive Committee meeting in the afternoon. The move comes with most of Europe's domestic leagues having ground to a halt over the last week as football confronts its biggest issue in modern times.

The UEFA Champions League and Europa League competitions for clubs have also been suspended, with both still in the last-16 stage, but postponing the European Championship for national sides means they, along with national leagues, will have the chance to be completed, assuming travel restrictions are lifted in time.

Euro 2020 was due to be held in 12 different cities across the continent, from as far apart as Dublin and Bilbao, to Saint Petersburg and Baku. The semi-finals and final were due to be played in London and there would be considerable knock-on effects to postponing the competition — the women's European Championship is scheduled to run from July 7 to August 1 next year in England, with the final at Wembley. UEFA have also planned to stage an Under-21 Euros in Hungary and Slovenia in June next year.

Twenty of the 24 teams set to take part in the Euro have already qualified, but play-offs to determine the final four participants, due to be played later this month, will have to take place at a later date.

The Copa America due to kick off in June in Argentina and Colombia was on Tuesday postponed by a year to 2021 because of the coronavirus pandemic, organisers CONMEBOL said. The announcement came shortly after UEFA's similar decision to also push back Euro 2020 by 12 months.

The Copa is South America's premier

## EXPLAINED How this creates logistical hurdles

THE EUROS have been postponed to clear the month this summer to finish the club competitions. Leagues across Europe, including the Champions and Europa League, have currently been suspended. However, postponing the tournament will have a massive ripple effect. The expanded Club World Cup, organised by FIFA and scheduled for the summer of 2021, now looks unlikely to take place as planned. The women's European Championship, which is to take place from July 7 to August 1 next year, Nations League finals and European Under-21 Championship are also scheduled for those months.

continental competition between national sides and had been scheduled to run between June 12-July 12. The competition was being staged for the first time in two countries rather than one. The finals featuring 12 teams, for this edition included invitees Australia and Qatar. "It's an extraordinary measure due to an unexpected situation, and therefore responds to the fundamental need to avoid an exponential evolution of the virus," said CONMEBOL. The tournament is now rescheduled to run from June 11-July 11 2021. The decision was taken in conjunction with UEFA's decision to postpone Euro 2020 to 2021.

## Roland Garros delayed

The French Open tennis tournament has been postponed until September 20-October 4 amid the coronavirus outbreak, the organisers of the Grand Slam event said on Tuesday. The first major tournament to be hit by the spread of the coronavirus was initially scheduled to be played from May 24-June 7.

"In order to guarantee the health and safety of all those involved in the preparation of the tournament, the French Tennis Federation decided to organise the 2020 edition of Roland-Garros from 20 September to 4 October 2020," the French tennis federation said in a statement.

## Resolving Disputes by Instilling Trust

### VIVAD SE VISHWAS SCHEME 2020

**Settle your Income Tax disputes by 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2020 to avail higher benefits**

SALIENT FEATURES... PAYMENT TERMS		
Payment made on or before	Appeal relates to disputed tax or interest or fee	Appeal relates only to disputed penalty
31st March, 2020	100% of the disputed tax (125% in search cases)	25% of the disputed penalty or interest or fee
End date (30th June 2020)	110% of the disputed tax (135% in search cases) such that it does not increase total demand	30% of the disputed penalty or interest or fee

If an issue in taxpayer's pending appeal already decided in his favour by appellate forum or if Department has filed appeal on an issue, amount payable is 50% of aforesaid amount

**ELIGIBILITY**

- Appeals/writs filed on or before 31.01.2020 and pending
- Orders for which time for filing appeal has not expired on 31.01.2020
- Cases pending before Dispute Resolution Panel (DRP) on 31.01.2020
- Cases where DRP issued direction on or before 31.01.2020 but no order has been passed
- Cases where assessee filed revision (Section 264) on or before 31.01.2020
- Search case if the disputed tax is less than Rs. 5 Crore in a year

- The appeals/writs filed by taxpayers or the department
- Disputes where the payment has already been made shall also be eligible
- Cases in arbitration in India or Abroad

**DISPUTES COVERED**

- All disputes, subject to some exclusion, in relation to the-
  - Disputed tax
  - Disputed penalty
  - Disputed interest
  - Disputed fee
  - Disputed tax deducted at source (TDS) or tax collected at source (TCS)

**Income Tax Department**  
Central Board of Direct Taxes

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# Russia

## 6th Anniversary of Crimea's unification with the Russian Federation

M E S S A G E

**H.E. NIKOLAY KUDASHEV, AMBASSADOR OF RUSSIA TO INDIA**



Dear readers,

March 18 is a unique date in the modern history of the Russian Federation: on this day six years ago the people of Crimea exercised their right to self-determination guaranteed by the UN Charter and convincingly voted in favour of homecoming – reuniting with Russia. The change in Crimea's political and legal status was introduced in strict compliance with international law.

Today, Crimea is fully integrated into the political, social and economic space of Russia, with its legislation put in conformity with federal laws and legal practices.

Despite the initial shortages of power and water resources, external economic restrictions associated with groundless international boycott, the Republic of Crimea demonstrates significant achievements in key sectors and is an effective investment destination.

In recent years, its economy has made great progress. New transport and energy infrastructure formed a strong base for resolving

social and economic problems and improving the investment climate. Such unique projects as Krymsky Bridge, a new terminal at the Simferopol International Airport and the Tavrida highway have already become the visiting card of the Peninsula.

Full-scale modernization was initiated in the areas of manufacturing, agriculture, tourism, etc. The Republic of Crimea created and is developing free economic and customs zones throughout its territory, providing investors with unprecedentedly favourable conditions.

Crimea is one of the most beautiful locations in Eastern Europe. The rich heritage left from the Greek and Roman periods and from Imperial Russia and the Soviet era together with its natural wonders offer memorable experience.

We welcome everyone to visit Crimea to benefit from vast economic opportunities, to immerse in the natural beauty of the peninsula and to learn about its colourful history.

# A plethora of destinations await the traveller to Crimea



Livadia Palace, the summer residence of Russian emperors, was built in the late 19th century to the design of architect Nikolai Krasnov. The palace had a museum devoted to the royal family for five years after the 1917 revolution. Later it was converted into a health resort. In 1945, the Livadia Palace hosted the Yalta Conference. In 1993, the palace received a museum status. At present, the palace is a world famous landmark of history and culture and hosts international conferences and forums.



The Swallow's Nest, a palace and museum, is a symbol of Crimea. It was built in 1912 on a 40-metre-high cliff by the Russian oil industrialist Pavel von Steingel.

<https://en.travelcrimea.com>

**CRIMEA TOURISM PORTAL**

- 26,100 Sq. Km
- 1.9 Mln People
- 2500 Km Coastline Length

**There are more than 50 tourist trails to explore...**

The Golden Ring of the Bosphorus Kingdom tourist route is a unique project which combines a reference to the famous Golden Ring of Russia route and to the ancient state that emerged on this land in 480 BC. The route links several regions of Russia by one historical thread and telling facts unknown about them before.

The first in Russia and the largest in Europe cultural and historical centre dedicated to the Viking era of the VIII-XI centuries, is located in the valley of the Red Caves. The infrastructure of the park reproduces the air of that period: the objects and structures on its territory are made in the style of early medieval architecture. There is a variety of entertainments, including historical tours and quests, theatrical performances of warriors with elements of horse riding stunt shows, master classes and much more. Everyone can also shoot arrows from a bow and try their hand at knife throwing and tug-of-war, among other things.

75 years ago, on February 4-11, 1945, Livadia Palace in the Crimean city Yalta, hosted a meeting of the anti-Hitler coalition country leaders which made crucial decisions on post-war cooperation between states as well as the decision to establish the United Nations.

**FOR MORE INFO VISIT**

- [CRIMEA TOURISM PORTAL](https://en.travelcrimea.com)
- [SOUTHERN REGIONAL EXPORT SUPPORT CENTER](https://exporteram.com)
- [INVESTMENT PORTAL OF THE REPUBLIC OF CRIMEA](https://invest-in-crimea.ru/en/)

**“** The Yalta Conference is a very important date in the diplomatic history of World War II. This is where the pivotal decisions on the key issues of the postwar international order were made, including the establishment of the United Nations.”

— H.E. MR SERGEY LAVROV  
RUSSIAN FOREIGN MINISTER.

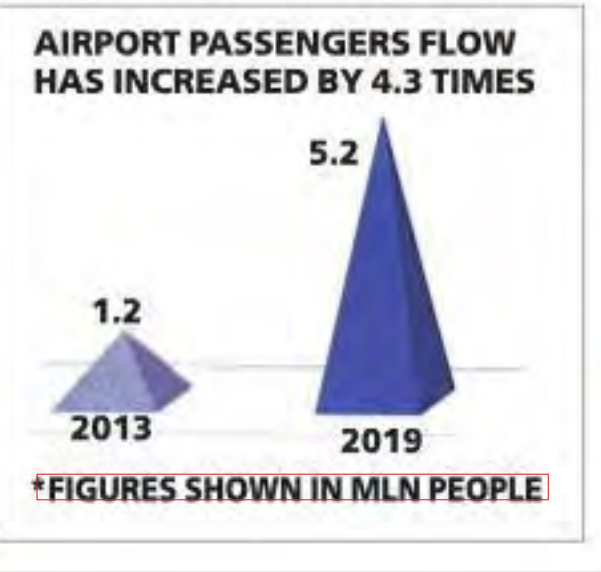
**SIMFEROPOL AIRPORT**

- TOP 8TH PLACE IN RUSSIA
- 3650 PASSENGERS/HOUR
- 200 FLIGHTS/DAY.

**TAVRIDA HIGHWAY**

- 237.5 KM
- 4 LANES
- 40K CARS/DAY

Since The Beginning of 2019, more than 7 Million Tourists Have Visited Crimea, Which is 10% more than in 2018.



**CRIMEAN BRIDGE**

- 4 LANES
- 2 RAILWAY TRACKS
- 40K CARS/DAY
- 47 TRAINS/DAY

\* RED ( READ. ENGAGE. DELIVER. ) IS THE MARKETING SOLUTIONS TEAM OF THE INDIAN EXPRESS GROUP