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Anti-CAA protesters removed from Shaheen Bagh, other places
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Bangladesh says it will release jailed former PM Khaleda Zia
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Albert Uderzo, a creator of French hero Asterix, dies at 92
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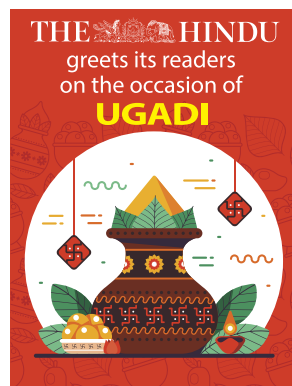


Kejriwal assures regular supply of essential items

NEW DELHI
 Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, in the wake of the 21-day nationwide lockdown announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday evening, sought to assure citizens that the supply of essential items would not be affected. Earlier in the day, he announced that the Delhi government will give ₹5,000 to each construction worker as their livelihood has been affected due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

CITY PAGE 3

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OPPORTUNITIES PAGE 5

PM announces 21-day lockdown as COVID-19 toll touches 10

Govt. allots ₹15,000 crore to beef up infrastructure for treatment of patients

NISTULA HEBBAR
 NEW DELHI

As the death toll from COVID-19 rose to 10, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday announced a 21-day lockdown for the entire country, stating that it was the only way for the country to break the chain of infection. The lockdown will be in effect till April 14.

In a nationwide television broadcast, Mr. Modi said the pandemic was a huge challenge to every country and even countries like the U.S. and Italy, considered to have good health infrastructure, were struggling to control the situation.

"In such a situation we have learnt from the experience of the countries that have managed to get some control over the surge in cases, and these show that a lockdown for a sustained period of time is the only way to break the chain of infection," he said.

India on Tuesday recorded 564 positive cases, with the number of positive patients in Kerala and Maharashtra crossing 100.

Stating that it was the priority of both the Centre and State governments to set up health infrastructure as fast as possible to deal with the pandemic, Mr. Modi said

Staying in

During the "containment" period of 21 days beginning March 25, the following services...

...will remain open

- Shops dealing with food, groceries, fruits and vegetables, dairy products, meat and fish and animal fodder, including ration shops
- Banks, insurance offices & ATMs
- Print and electronic media
- Telecom services (internet, cable, IT enabled services)
- Delivery of food, pharmaceuticals and medical equipment through e-commerce
- Petrol pumps, LPG, petroleum and gas retail and storage outlets
- Power and electricity services

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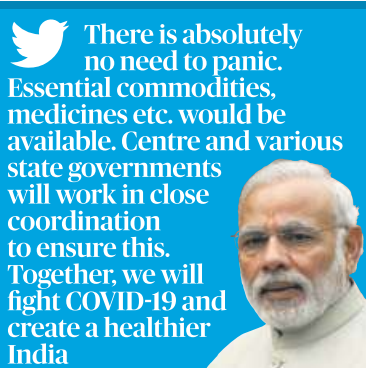
- Cold storage and warehousing
- Private security services

...will be closed

- GOI & State offices, commercial, private establishments, and transport services (exceptions above)
- Educational institutions, places of worship, functions and gatherings without exception
- Funerals - not more than 20 people will be permitted

Violators will be liable for legal action under IPC Sect. 88

Also open are offices of departments such as defence, police, treasury, public utilities, disaster management, power generation & transmission, post offices; State govt. institutions such as police, home guards, fire services, prisons, district administration & treasury, electricity, water sanitation, municipal bodies. All medical establishments will be open. Production units of essential commodities and hotels/lodges which accommodate tourists and stranded persons, emergency staff, air and sea crew will also remain open



Ensure tight surveillance, States told

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
 NEW DELHI

The Centre warned of an "increasing trend" in COVID-19 cases - 519 active ones by Tuesday evening - in the country and called upon State governments to enhance surveillance and contact testing of those who may have been infected.

Meanwhile, complaints of shortage of Personal Protection Equipment for doctors and health workers poured in from across the country, indicating critical gaps in efforts to contain the pandemic.

In a Twitter post that soon went viral, Kamna Kakkar, a government doctor in Haryana's Rohtak, addressing the Prime Minister's Office, said: "Please don't send me to war without weapons @PMOIndia. Please arrange #PersonalProtective Equipment for us doctors ASAP. We need #N95masks #HazmatSuits to defeat #Corona. Sincerely yours, an Indian Doctor". Following the tweet, the Congress attacked the government over the inadequate supply of equipment.

Enforcing stringent curbs, cases were booked against several people for violating prohibitory orders.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman along with MoS for Finance Anurag Thakur addressing the media on Tuesday. •PTI

Government extends tax deadlines to June 30

ATM withdrawal charges waived

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
 NEW DELHI

Deadlines for filing income tax and GST returns have been extended to June 30, as part of a slew of relaxations of financial year-end compliance announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday.

The changes had been prompted by the shutdown of large parts of the country in a bid to control the spread of the COVID-19 viral infection, so that taxpayers were not forced to endanger their health in a bid to meet compliance requirements, she said.

Bank account holders would not be charged extra for using a debit card to withdraw money from the ATMs of other banks for the next three months, and charges for not meeting minimum balance requirements would also be waived. Bank charges for digital transactions were al-

so being reduced.

Income tax returns for the financial year 2018-19 can now be filed until June 30, with the interest rate on delayed payments reduced to 9% from 12%. The last date for linking Aadhaar with PAN has also been extended from March 31 to June 30. Other taxpayer compliance deadlines, including for investment in savings instruments or for roll-over benefit of capital gains, under the Income Tax Act and other laws have also been extended.

The deadline for filing GST returns for March, April and May, as well as for opting for the composition scheme, has been extended to June 30 for smaller companies - with less than ₹5 crore aggregate annual turnover - without any interest, late fee or penalty being charged.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

Made in India testing kits

In a major development in the fight against novel coronavirus, Pune-based MyLab has become the first indigenous manufacturer to be approved for deploying its kits for COVID-19 testing. •PAGE 9

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Omar Abdullah released after 232 days in detention

PEERZADA ASHIQ
 SRINAGAR

Former Chief Minister and National Conference (NC) vice-president Omar Abdullah, who was released on Tuesday from a Srinagar sub-jail after 232 days, demanded the release of other detainees in Jammu and Kashmir and

called for a joint fight against COVID-19.

"We face the fight of our lives over the next few weeks and months as we come to terms and work to defeat COVID-19. I will do everything in my individual capacity to help the authorities overcome this challenge and I ap-

peal to all of you to do the same," he said.

Mr. Abdullah was detained on August 5 last ahead of the Centre's decision to revoke J&K's special status and later booked under the Public Safety Act (PSA) and kept in the Hari Niwas sub-jail. Earlier on Tuesday, J&K spokesman Ro-

hit Kansal announced that Mr. Abdullah's detention order had been revoked.

Sporting a long flowing white beard, Mr. Abdullah, who turned 50 in the jail on March 10, called for the release of other detained persons.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

Shri Narendra Modi
Hon'ble Prime Minister

Shri B. S. Yediyurappa
Hon'ble Chief Minister

Warm Ugadi Greetings to the people of Karnataka!

I pray before the almighty that the beginning of Sharvari Samvatsara will bring peace and prosperity to the people of Karnataka.

Let the people of Karnataka leave the bitterness behind and carry only sweet memories with them into the New Year.

Karnataka is the land of Sharanas, Santhas, Dasas and hence, the power of evil will not succeed in this land. Thus, I believe that people of the State would overcome the evil COVID-19 and the virus would be wiped out from the state soon.

In the name of the festival, let the people not go for any outdoor celebrations together.

Once again I wish the people of the State a happy Chandramana Ugadi.

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Tokyo Olympics moved to 2021 over virus scare

REUTERS
 TOKYO

The 2020 Tokyo Olympics, originally scheduled to be held from July 24 to August 9, has been postponed to 2021, the first such delay in the Games' 124-year modern history, as the COVID-19 crisis wrecked the last international sporting showpiece meant for this year.

Though a huge blow to Japan, which invested \$12 billion in the run-up, the decision was a relief to thousands of athletes fretting over how to train.

Pressure had been building on the International Olympic Committee and its president Thomas Bach, with some athletes and sporting bodies critical of the time taken to make a seemingly inevitable decision.

MORE REPORTS ON PAGE 17

Medical staff told to vacate their homes

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN
 NEW DELHI

Medical staff from across India working with COVID-19 patients appealed to the Union Health Ministry for help on Tuesday stating that they are being harassed, with several of them told to immediately vacate their rented accommodation by landlords because of the fear that they could spread the virus.

DETAILS ON PAGE 2



Locked down: Policemen checking IDs of motorists at a barricade put up at INA as restrictions are in place in the Capital till April 15; a man buying vegetables from a vendor; air passengers walking from the IGI Airport. ■ V.V. KRISHNAN/SANDEEP SAXENA



Medical staff treating COVID-19 patients told to vacate homes

AIIMS doctors issue appeal to Health Ministry over harassment by landlords

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN
NEW DELHI

Medical staff from across India working with COVID-19 patients appealed to the Union Health Ministry for help on Tuesday stating that they are being harassed, with several of them told to immediately vacate their rented accommodation by landlords because of the fear that they could spread the virus.

The Resident Doctors' Association of All India Institute of Medical Sciences has written to the Ministry seeking urgent intervention.

"Doctors, nurses and other hospital staff involved in COVID-19 care are being asked to vacate their rented homes for the fear that they may spread the virus. Many doctors are now stranded on the road with their luggage with nowhere to go. This is happening across the country and we condemn such attitude and seek urgent intervention. Also with the lockdown in place, not

Many doctors are now stranded on the road with their luggage with nowhere to go

LETTER

enough public transport is available for hospital staff to travel from their residence to various hospitals," said the letter.

Ministers react quickly

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan tweeted expressing deep anguish, saying he noticed such reports pouring in from Delhi, Noida, Warangal, Chennai, etc., and asked people not to panic. He said all precautions are being taken by doctors and staff on COVID-19 duty to ensure they are not carriers of infection in any way.

"Any harsh steps will demoralise them, derail the system. On Sunday, the nation applauded their selfless service. It's our duty to keep their morale high," Mr. Vard-

han said.

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh also tweeted in support of the doctors. "The Centre must immediately step in to ensure protection of doctors and paramedics, who are putting their lives on the line for our sake, from such harassment. Necessary protective gear should also be provided for their safety," he said.

AIIMS RDA general secretary Srinivas Rajkumar said Home Minister Amit Shah has assured that any such issue of ostracisation will be taken seriously and action taken immediately.

Help pours in

After AIIMS doctors issued an appeal for help in procuring personal protection gear for medical staff and released a list of equipment immediately required, help started pouring in on Tuesday itself.

"After our communication with the Health Ministry, several people and companies

have offered support through various possible means," noted a statement issued by the RDA.

It added that to help the AIIMS administration fast-track COVID-19 preparedness, public sector unit Bharat Dynamics has come forward to help with manufacturing, funds and logistics. "We have secured the AIIMS administration a sum of Rs. 60 lakh from the CSR corpus of Bharat Dynamics (Rs.50 lakh) and POSCO India Pvt Ltd. (Rs.10 lakh). We also asked the chairman of Preventive Wear Manufacturers' Association of India to show the samples and enable easy availability," said Dr. Rajkumar. "We are extremely thankful to all those who extended support to battle the pandemic," the AIIMS RDA general secretary added.

The Delhi Health Department has said that legal action will be taken against those obstructing essential work.

'The protest ends, but movement lives on'

Twitter handle 'Shaheen Bagh Official' vows to keep the movement going

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

"The Shaheen Bagh Protest May have ended, but our movement lives on." So goes the title of a two-page statement issued by the Twitter handle Shaheen Bagh Official.

While protesters had refused to stop demonstrations, they said they had taken various precautions keeping in mind the pandemic outbreak. They also observed the 'people's curfew' announced by the Prime Minister earlier and were continuing the protest only symbolically with about three to five women at the site, they said.

Police personnel had allegedly arrived at the site on the intervening night of March 23 and 24, when they said they were going to evacuate the site but were met with a large gathering of locals who stopped them, the statement read. The situation was resolved at the time but a large police contingent cleared out the site on Tuesday morning.

Although we understand the need for a stricter imposition of curfew, the ruthless dismantling and thoughtless destruction of the markers of our physical protest reeks of strong vendetta...

STATEMENT

"Although we understand the need for a stricter imposition of curfew and enforcement of pertinent restrictions, the ruthless dismantling and thoughtless destruction of the markers of our physical protest [especially the structures whose placement is in question is a matter that is sub-judice in the SC] reeks of strong vendetta and ill-feelings towards our innocent protesters, locals and sympathisers," it read.

With regard to the future of the protest, the statement read, "While we acknow-

ledge the need to tackle the looming threat of the transmission of COVID-19, it is important to ensure that all reasonable costs that the spirit and intent behind the Shaheen Bagh is not lost in the race against this pandemic."

The twitter handle put out a charter of rights and demands, which it would present to the interlocutors appointed by the Supreme Court. Among the demands, the protesters sought protection from the courts through increased patrolling and additional deployment of police around the area, that no further retaliatory or coercive action be taken against the protesters, locals or sympathisers of the protest. It also called for withdrawing cases against Jamia Millia Islamia students and for a court-monitored inquiry into the crackdown at the university on December 15, besides requesting the court to take cognisance of alleged hate speech over social media directed at protesters, and which "contributed to the conflagra-

tion" in north-east Delhi. The statement also highlighted the impracticality of ensuring 'social distancing' in the poorer localities of the country and urged the government to take measures to ensure the safety of citizens in such localities.

"We have come a long way in our fight against injustice. Our efforts have brought practical and tangible sources of dissent in the system itself. When we began, only four States had passed a resolution against CAA-NRC-NPR. Today, the number stands at 12. Although, the sit-in by the women of Shaheen Bagh was the fundamental form of the protest, its essence, however, far transcends its physical form. Shaheen Bagh is no longer just a physical space, but an idea, a warm sentiment, a symbol of indefatigable spirit and democratic force. When we return on the other side of this pandemic, we hope to emerge stronger, braver wiser, and even more resilient," it said.

Chaos and confusion outside DCP office for travel passes

Exemption seekers complain of complicated procedures

HEMANI BHANDARI
NEW DELHI

Hundreds of people gathered outside the Deputy Commissioner of Police (West) office to procure passes for movement in the Capital. They were a complaining lot, criticising everything from a lack of clarity of procedures and measures in the wake of COVID-19 outbreak to blasting the police for not having a system in place.

Moreover, they stood close to each other outside the office, apparently for several hours, unsure of whether they would get a pass or not. First, they had to register their names to officials who were sitting with a register kept on a desk outside the office, before they were called inside the office. By 2.30 p.m., nearly 300 people had registered and allegedly about 40-odd were called inside to submit documents.

Charan Singh, a 41-year-old resident of Patiala, who stood with Hari Nagar resident Gurpreet Singh, said he



People complained of absence of hand sanitisers and unruly queues. ■ HEMANI BHANDARI

was returning from Nasik on Monday to his residence in Patiala but stopped in Delhi last evening because there were no transport services. "I don't have any relatives in Delhi. I went to the Gurudwara Bangla Sahib but that was closed for people to stay. I met Gurpreet there who offered to help me and bring me to his house," he said.

Mr. Gurpreet, a complete stranger for Mr. Charan, went to Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital to get the COVID-19 test done before they returned to Mr. Gurpreet's house.

"I need a pass to go home. I'll take Gurpreet's private vehicle with his driver. But we have been standing here for four hours and haven't been called inside," he complained.

Crowd outside office

People complained of absence of hand sanitisers and systematic queues.

Police, on the other hand, complained that people are crowding outside despite officials asking them to stand away from each other and displaying the list of people and services allowed on the road outside the office.

Delhiites take to police's Twitter for queries

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Queries related to issuance of "curfew passes", problems faced by delivery boys, and documents required for commuting were some of concerns raised by people on Twitter after Delhi Police on Tuesday said it will be responding to queries regarding the curbs in the Capital through social media.

"Hi! Delhi. If you have any question on the #Lockdown, tweet your query with the hashtag #LockdownQuery between 5-6 PM today and we will answer it for you. #StayAtHome-SaveLives," the Delhi Police tweeted using its official handle earlier in the day.

Following this, several people posted their queries on Twitter. When people asked Delhi Police about food and medicine delivery boys being thrashed by policemen at barricades, a senior police officer said that any such issue will be taken care of in future and fresh instructions will be issued regarding it.

Nosy neighbours track 'infected persons'

Delhi Police claims they received more than a thousand calls in the last two days

SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI

Sushant Sharma (name changed), who lives on the fifth floor of a society in south-west Delhi, was shocked to see health department officials and policemen at his door on Sunday. When asked what they were doing at his home, Mr. Sharma was told that they got a call from the housing society about "COVID-19 infected persons" in the building.

"My son had come back from London a few days ago and my neighbour knew

about it. But he was allowed to come out of the airport only after the screening process and was declared fit. But some neighbours made the call. We showed the documents to the team and they went back," said Mr. Sharma.

On Tuesday, Delhi Police said they have received more than a thousand calls giving "information" about "COVID-19 infected persons" living in their vicinity in the last two days. "We transfer all such calls to the health department for action. A police team is also sent to the location for any assistance. But

most of these calls were found fake and made by some nosy neighbours," said a senior police officer.

Several residents and resident welfare associations have taken on a vigilante role after the outbreak of the pandemic with reports on social media suggesting that doctors and airline staff are special targets in many areas.

Entry banned

"We have banned the entry of newspaper vendors, food-delivery boys, courier boys and any other person except

the residents. It has been kind of a self-imposed family quarantine to prevent residents from getting infected. We communicate through WhatsApp groups and keep residents well informed about any new safety provision," said Munna Kumar, an RWA member in east Delhi. Another RWA member said they are keeping watch on houses marked "home under quarantine" by the health department. Security guards have been ordered to keep watch if any person of the marked house comes out.

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