

THE EDITORIAL PAGE

**DOMESTIC DEMAND ROLE HOLDS KEY**  
BY JAHANGIR AZIZ  
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BUSINESS AS USUAL



**On the heels of Vadra, I-T raids premises of his former aide**

JAY MAZOOMDAAR  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 4

THE INCOME Tax Department Wednesday searched multiple premises in possession of former Congress MLA Lalit Nagar and his brother Mahesh Nagar, a former aide of Congress chief Sonia Gandhi's son-in-law Robert Vadra. Following the searches, I-T officials claimed they now have evidence of a money trail linked to the purchase of sizable tracts of land in Rajasthan's Bikaner district.

The searches, I-T officials said, were conducted in the morning in connection with alleged money laundering and benami landholdings in Bikaner. Earlier, properties belonging to the Nagar brothers were searched by the Enforcement Directorate and

## COVID-19: PM, PRESIDENT TO SKIP HOLI

# 23 new cases, Govt to screen all international passengers on arrival

Six relatives of Delhi patient in Agra test positive

ABANTIKA GHOSH, HARIKISHAN SHARMA & PRANAV MUKUL  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 4

ON A day which saw the highest single day surge so far — 23 new cases of novel coronavirus (COVID-19), including 15 Italian tourists — the government announced Wednesday that all passengers arriving in India would have to undergo thermal screening at international airports and sea-ports.

The total number of cases detected across the country has now risen to 29, including three in Kerala who were discharged last month.

Two days after a 45-year-old man from East Delhi tested positive, six of his relatives from Agra have also tested positive. They are all being treated at the Safdarjung Hospital in Delhi.

In Jaipur, where a 69-year-old Italian tourist was found to have contracted the infection, his wife and 14 other members of his tour group as well as their Indian driver have tested positive.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

**IRDAI ASKS INSURERS TO DESIGN COVID-19 POLICIES FULL COVERAGE, PAGES 6, 9, 13, 16, 19**



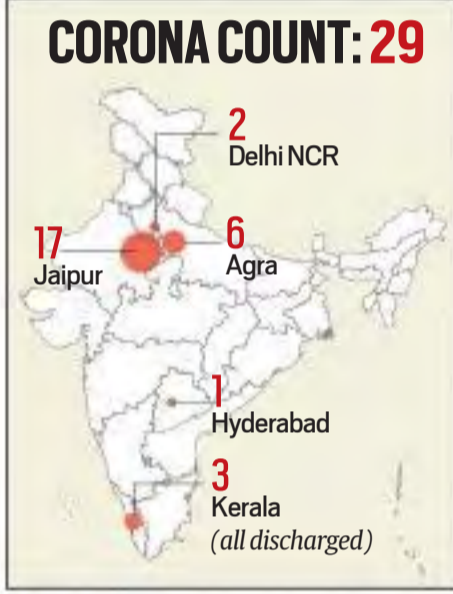
Some of the Italian tourists at the ITBP quarantine facility in Chhawla, Delhi, on Wednesday. Reuters

## Team of 16 Italian tourists tests positive, Rajasthan traces 200 who interacted

HAMZA KHAN & ASTHA SAXENA  
JAIPUR, NEW DELHI, MARCH 4

THE GROUP of 23 Italian tourists — 16 of them and their Indian driver have now tested positive for coronavirus — came in contact with at least 215 people across six districts of Rajasthan, State Health Minister Raghu Sharma told the Assembly on Wednesday.

He said samples of 93 people have been collected; 51 have tested negative, while the remaining test reports are awaited. The group, including the 69-



year-old Italian man who first tested positive, had arrived in

## 7 months later, Internet back in J&K, slow but much more sure

NAVEED IQBAL & ARUN SHARMA  
SRINAGAR, JAMMU, MARCH 4

SEVEN MONTHS after Internet restrictions were imposed in the then state of Jammu and Kashmir on the eve of the abrogation of Article 370, the J&K administration Wednesday removed curbs on use of social media across the Union Territory. Mobile Internet will, however, remain restricted to 2G speed. A review is scheduled for March 17.

By late evening, Internet was restored on majority mobile phone networks across Kashmir.

## SC tells HC to hear hate FIR plea, objects to Mander remarks

ANANTHAKRISHNANG  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 4

DESCRIBING AS "unjustified" the "long" adjournment of a petition seeking registration of FIRs against some BJP leaders over alleged hate speeches made in the days preceding the communal violence in Delhi, the Supreme Court Wednesday sent the plea to the Delhi High Court with the direction that it be listed for March 6 along with other petitions on the matter.

The bench of Chief Justice of India S A Bobde and Justices B R Gavai and Surya Kant, hearing a plea by ten riot-affected people,

People rushed to pay bills and recover WhatsApp accounts rendered inactive after four months due to lack of connectivity.

The restrictions were removed following a review by the J&K Home Department early Wednesday. For fixed line services, there will not be any speed restriction although Internet services will be made available with Mac-IP binding (ensuring a client machine works from a particular IP address and Mac address).

Government sources told *The Indian Express* that after the review, "it was decided to lift

**EXPLAINED**  
**E** Dip in violence key

ONE REASON for the lifting of social media curbs could be the decline in violence in the Valley. Officials say February saw only two violent incidents involving militants. Following the end of Article 370 in August last year, the Valley saw 76 terror incidents till January.

## SC quashes RBI ban, clears way for virtual currency operations

Says central bank has powers but order didn't pass 'proportionality' test

AASHISH ARYAN  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 4

THE SUPREME Court Wednesday set aside an April 2018 circular of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) which had said that all entities regulated by it "shall not deal in virtual currencies (VCs) or provide services for facilitating any person or entity in dealing with or settling VCs".

A three-judge bench of Justices Rohinton Fali Nariman, Aniruddha Bose, and V Ramasubramanian, ruled that the RBI's blanket ban prohibiting banks dealing with VC holders or exchanges did not pass the test of "proportionality".

In its 180-page judgment, the

bench held that while RBI had very wide "preventive as well as curative" powers to regulate entities under its ambit, "the availability of power is different from the manner and extent to which it can be exercised".

This is the second major circular issued by the RBI that has been set aside by the SC.

The court has not explicitly mentioned whether lenders will henceforth be able to trade in VCs or not. Experts, however, hoped that the ruling will make the banking regulator reconsider its approach on VC and come up with a new, calibrated framework or regulation for the same.

In April 2019, the apex court had set aside the banking

## QS UNIV RANKINGS

### Global subject rankings: Central campuses get 26 in top-100

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 4

AS MANY as 26 departments of higher education institutions in India rank among the top 100 in the world in their respective subject category, according to the latest edition of the QS World University Rankings by Subject.

Last year, this number stood at 21.

Incidentally, all 26 departments are in institutions run by the Union government — IITs, IIMs, IISc and Delhi University.

Of these, IIT Bombay has cornered more top 100 positions than any other Indian institution.

Nine of its programmes (art and design; chemistry; computer science and information systems; chemical engineering; civil and structural engineering; electrical and electronic engineering; mechanical, aeronautical and manufacturing engineering; mineral and mining engineering; and materials

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WORLD



**BIDEN REVIVES CAMPAIGN, WINNING NINE STATES ON SUPER TUESDAY**

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ALSO AVAILABLE

\* Inclusive of all taxes