



Kejriwal announces
₹1 crore for kin of staff
who die fighting virus

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Release advance wages
to MGNREGA workers,
Sonia Gandhi tells PM

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Trump says ready to
help end Saudi-Russian
oil price war

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Wimbledon tennis
championships cancelled
due to pandemic

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NEARBY



Couple tie the knot at a police station in Odisha

BHUBANESWAR
A young couple in Odisha's Bargarh district found no safer place than a police station to solemnise their marriage on Tuesday. Pabitra Sahoo and Lakshmi Meher had been in love for more than a year and did not want to delay their marriage.

NORTH & EAST PAGE 4

Devotees dispersed at Rajasthan dargah

JAIPUR
About 100 devotees, who defied the lockdown and gathered for observing the rituals of 'Urs' (death anniversary) at a dargah in Ajmer district, were dispersed by the police with the use of mild force. The six-day 'Urs' of Sufi mystic Khwaja Fakhruddin Chishti at the dargah ended on Wednesday.

NEWS PAGE 8

Five Delhi doctors test positive for COVID-19

NEW DELHI
At least three doctors of different Delhi hospitals and two doctors from Aam Aadmi Mohalla Clinics have tested positive for COVID-19. While it is alleged that a doctor working at the Safdarjung Hospital contracted the infection while treating COVID-19 patients, the hospital hasn't confirmed it.

NEWS PAGE 9

Tablighi Jamaat headquarters cleared

29 more occupants test positive, taking the total in Delhi alone to 53; contact tracing under way

NIKHIL M. BABU
SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI

All occupants of the Tablighi Jamaat headquarters, at the centre of an extensive net of the novel coronavirus transmission, were evacuated by early Wednesday, even as the authorities scrambled to identify and quarantine visitors who had returned home to various parts of the country.

At least 29 more occupants tested positive on Wednesday, taking the total in Delhi alone to 53.

Of around 310 delegates from Kerala, only 60 have returned to the State, and are under quarantine.

The missionary sect's followers travel extensively, and efforts are on to trace the rest. At least 500 participants from Haryana are in quarantine.

COVID-19

Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba held a videoconference with the Chief Secretaries of all the States.

"Most of them are testing positive. We have so far got only about 15 negative cases. If you put 2,000 people in a closed building, everyone is bound to have it," a Delhi government official told *The Hindu*. The official said they were coordinating with other States and evacuating peo-



Reaching out, for safety: Media personnel maintaining physical distance as they interview health workers sanitising an area near the Nizamuddin mosque in Delhi. PHOTO: PTI

ple from different mosques in the city. "People who have visited the centre are present in other masjids. We have visited at least 15 such mosques in the city," said the official.

2,346 evacuated

The Delhi police Special Branch and the Delhi government shifted 275 foreign nationals to quarantine from various mosques and places in and around the national capital. They were associated with Tablighi Jamaat.

A total of 2,346 people were evacuated from the Markaz (centre), which serves as the international

headquarters of the sect, at Nizamuddin, and 536 of them were sent to hospitals and 1,810 were sent to quarantine facilities, the Delhi government said in a statement in the evening.

The evacuation was completed around 4 a.m. on Wednesday, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said. "The operation lasted for three-and-a-half days, and extensively in the last 36 hours." He said the Delhi government prepared a list of the people evacuated, along with their phone numbers, and the police were looking into it. "The cyber cell will investigate the numbers and

Phones to be tracked

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday announced that the mobile phones of all those who have been asked to home quarantine themselves will be tracked by the Delhi police to keep a check on their movement. Several other countries have used this technology to contain the spread of COVID-19 and it was one way to ensure that people abide by quarantine norms, Mr. Kejriwal said. PAGE 2

'Too early to detect impact'

The impact of the lockdown on arresting the spread of COVID-19 can be gauged only after two weeks, government and independent experts suggest. "The incubation period of the virus is 14 days. Therefore, the cases we are seeing are older cases (from before March 24). So only once these old cases are discounted can we judge the impact of the lockdown," Raman Gangakhedkar, Chief Scientist, ICMR, said. PAGE 9

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FOOD CRISIS PAGE 11

110 new cases from Delhi event in T.N.

No Stage-3 transmission, says govt.



Intensive checks: Coimbatore Corporation workers checking houses in Ukkadam on Wednesday. PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu's tally of confirmed coronavirus disease (COVID-19) cases crossed the 200-mark on Wednesday. With 110 more persons who attended the Tablighi Jamaat conference at Nizamuddin in Delhi testing positive for COVID-19 in 15 districts, the total number of cases in the State increased to 234.

Health Secretary Beela Rajesh said of the 110, one person was from Myanmar and another from Indonesia. "Till yesterday, 80 people who attended the Delhi conference tested positive for COVID-19. With today's count, a total of 190 who attended the conference have tested positive in the State," she told reporters. However, it was not clear if the count

of 80 included the contacts of these travellers.

The 110 persons were in the following districts – 28 in Coimbatore, 20 in Theni, 17 in Dindigul, nine in Madurai, seven each in Tirupattur and Chengalpattu, six in Tirunelveli, five in Sivaganga, two each in Kancheepuram, Tiruvannamalai and Thoothukudi and one each in Karur, Tiruvannamalai and Chennai. Till Tuesday, the Health department had tracked 515 persons, who had returned to various parts of the State after attending the conference.

Ms. Rajesh added that Tamil Nadu had not progressed to Stage-3 transmission as all these cases belonged to one particular group.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

India sees a sharp spike in infections

376 new cases registered in past 24 hours

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India reported three deaths and 376 new cases on Wednesday – the highest-ever single-day increase in its COVID-19 tally.

This brought the total confirmed cases to 1,637 and took the death toll to 38. One hundred and thirty-two persons have been cured/discharged from hospitals after recovery, the Union Health Ministry said at its daily press briefing, which was the shortest in a month as questions were restricted to a couple of media outlets.

Reports from the State Health Departments put the number of positive cases at 1,897, with 1,702 active ones. The number of deaths stood at 55.

An official of the Indian Council of Medical Research



Hunger pangs: Workers waiting for meals being distributed at the Koyambedu Market in Chennai. PHOTO: B. VELANKANNI RAJ

(ICMR) said 47,951 tests had been conducted so far, including 861 by private laboratories, and 126 ICMR laboratories were involved in testing.

Days after the lockdown began on March 24, several migrant workers were out on the streets of Delhi and other cities, trying to return home to Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and West Ben-

gal. The Home Ministry ordered the States to prevent their travel and provide them with food and shelter. "The situation is under control," a Home Ministry official said. "21,486 relief camps have been set up and 6,75,133 persons are being sheltered."

The Health Ministry issued an advisory for proper quarantine and "psycho-so-

cial measures" for migrants on Tuesday. Under this, trained counsellors and/or community group leaders of all religions would visit them in relief camps and provide support.

The measure followed a directive from the Supreme Court to deal with the migrants in a "humane manner".

The Railways are modifying coaches to accommodate 80,000 isolation beds.

Twenty-four categories of medical devices would be regulated as "drugs", according to a decision by the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority. This would prevent suppliers from hiking rates to more than 10% of their prices.

The Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy also recommended measures for self-care in preventive healthcare to boost immunity, especially for respiratory health.

Centre defines J&K domicile rules

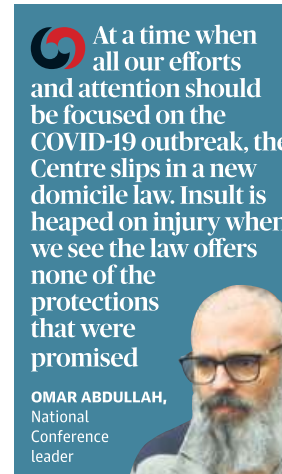
Move aimed at protecting jobs in Group D category

VIJAITA SINGH
NISTULA HEBBAR
NEW DELHI

The Union government has issued a notification defining "domiciles" in the new Union Territory (UT) of Jammu and Kashmir for protecting jobs in the Group D category and entry-level non-gazetted posts for the domiciles. On August 6 last, the Centre withdrew J&K's special status under Article 370 and Article 35A of the Constitution and bifurcated it into the UTs of J&K and Ladakh.

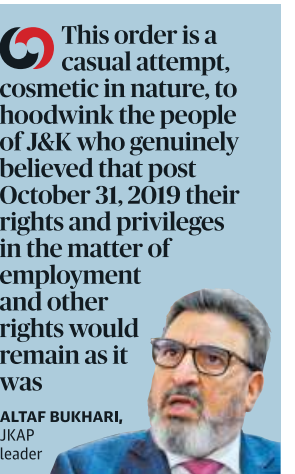
Changes in PSA

Tuesday's notification of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) makes changes to the Public Safety Act (PSA) by removing a clause that prohibited J&K residents booked under the Act to be lodged in jails outside.



At a time when all our efforts and attention should be focused on the COVID-19 outbreak, the Centre slips in a new domicile law. Insult is heaped on injury when we see the law offers none of the protections that were promised

OMAR ABDULLAH, National Conference leader



This order is a casual attempt, cosmetic in nature, to hoodwink the people of J&K who genuinely believed that post October 31, 2019 their rights and privileges in the matter of employment and other rights would remain as it was

ALTAF BUKHARI, JKAP leader

"This is according to the norms in other UTs and States. Recruitment by the UPSC expands the search for talent across the country," the official said.

Vacancies in posts

According to the MHA's reply to a parliamentary panel on February 18, there are more than 84,000 vacancies in J&K, of which 22,078 pertain to Class IV employees, 54,375 to non-gazetted and 7,552 at the gazetted level.

The order defines a domicile as one "who has resided for a period of 15 years in the UT of J&K or has studied for a period of seven years and appeared in Class 10th /12th examination in an educational institution located in the UT of J&K or who is registered as a migrant by the Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner (Migrants)."

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KASHMIR PARTIES OPPOSE NEW DOMICILE RULES PAGE 8

Facility for migrants in U.P. district awaits first occupant

Jaypee Sports Complex, which can accommodate 2,000 people, is lying vacant 2 days since it was opened

JATIN ANAND
GREATER NOIDA

The Jaypee Sports Complex on the Yamuna Expressway, the largest facility created by the Uttar Pradesh government in Gautam Buddha Nagar to provide shelter to stranded migrant workers, with a capacity to accommodate 2,000 people, has zero inmates so far, *The Hindu* found during a visit here on Wednesday.

Spread over approximately 12 acres, the facility consists of an estimated 57 large tin sheds – some of which have been designated 'family sheds' – lined with wooden panelling to keep a check on the ambient temperature as summer progresses, mats with visibly clean white sheets, sanitation and potable water supply, in addition to separate toilets for men and women.



Staff checking the facilities at the Jaypee Sports Complex on the Yamuna Expressway on Wednesday. PHOTO: R.V. MOORTHY

The only thing seemingly missing at the camp over the last two days since it was set up, according to officials associated with its creation and upkeep, is the people for whom it exists.

"Before the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA)

took over this property in February, this facility was utilised to house up to 10,000 construction workers engaged in different projects by the builder concerned. Now, given the necessity to practise social distancing to check the community spread of COVID-19, it has been de-

clared that it will accommodate no more than 2,000 individuals," an official present at the site said.

"We have been here for the last two and a half days and not even a single migrant worker has turned up. We suspect most of them went to Agra along the banks of the Yamuna on foot or via the currently unused railway lines that criss-cross the area," said another official.

Former DM's plan

The former District Magistrate of Gautam Buddha Nagar, B.N. Singh – who was transferred earlier this week following a rebuke by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath over the high number of COVID-19 cases in the district comprising Noida and Greater Noida – had issued an order last Sunday under the Epidemic Diseases

Act, 1897, designating the area as a shelter home for migrants in the midst of their exodus to their respective hometowns.

After the order, arrangements for as many as 6,050 migrant workers were made at 28 shelters spread across 60-odd kilometres between Noida and Jewar. Most of these, according to sources familiar with the developments in this regard, are either vacant or have "very thin occupancy".

"YEIDA has made all the necessary arrangements for migrant workers, who were not able to travel to their respective hometowns, at this facility. We look forward to receiving anyone in need of shelter here," said Navneet Goyal, Officer on Special Duty, Land, YEIDA.

MORE REPORTS PAGES 2, 3, 4

India welcomes foreign contributions to PM-CARES

Individuals and organisations can pitch in, says official

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India welcomes foreign contributions to the PM-CARES fund to fight the threat posed by the novel coronavirus, a source said here on Wednesday.

The official highlighted the shortage of ventilators and personal protective equipment for medical professionals, which needs to be addressed urgently.

"The pandemic is unprecedented. In view of this, India has taken a decision to accept foreign contributions to the PM-CARES fund," said a source.

The PM-CARES fund, a public charitable trust, was set up in response to the emerging requirement for



Narendra Modi

resources. "Contributions can be made by individuals and organisations, both in India and abroad," said the source familiar with India's plans to deal with the crisis.

The official described the shortage of ventilators and personal protective equipment as "acute", which

prompted Indian diplomatic teams to look for reliable supplies from different parts of the world. "We are working with our ambassadors to deal with the huge shortage of ventilators and other equipment," the official said. The issue also featured during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's video discussion with 130 Indian envoys on March 30.

The official said the bulk of the equipment and relief materials were flowing in through independent organisations as special contributions, while the government was purchasing the items that were in short supply in the health sector.

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