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THURSDAY, MARCH 29, 2018



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Leaks force CBSE retests

STUDENTS BEAR BRUNT Class 10 math, Class 12 eco exams to be held again; internal inquiry, police probe ordered

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NEW DELHI: All 1.7 million students of Class 10 who took the mathematics exam conducted by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) on March 28, and all 500,000 students of Class 12 who took the economics exam of the same board on March 26, will have to take them again, after the board admitted on Wednesday that the question papers had leaked before the exams.

The board said it would announce the dates for the retest within a week, but a senior board official speaking on condition of anonymity said they would happen after April 13, when the Class 10 and Class 12 exams end.

This is perhaps the first time in the board's history that such wholesale retests are happening. There have been retests in the past, but these have been restricted to a few centres.

The leak of the economics paper came to light while the exam was going on, officials said, while a handwritten mathematics paper with the same questions as the CBSE question paper has been in circulation on social media outlets since Monday. Both the cases are under investi-

TESTING TIMES FOR STUDENTS

REASON FOR CANCELLATION

A handwritten note with the same questions as the CBSE question papers was found circulating on WhatsApp before the exams. HRD minister Prakash Javadekar said the issue was reported from few schools in Delhi.

GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE

The minister said a gang was responsible for the leaks. An internal probe and a Delhi Police investigation have been launched, he said. "We are devising a new system from Monday which will be leak-proof."

NOT THE FIRST TIME

A similar incident occurred on March 15 when some students said they purportedly received copies of the CBSE Accountancy paper on WhatsApp hours before the exam. There was no confirmation of leaks.

1,700,000
Class 10 students who took the math exam

500,000
Class 12 students who took the economics exam

WHAT NOW?

Dates for the re-examination of the two papers will be posted on the CBSE website within a week. Javadekar said the Cabinet had approved for the National Testing Agency to come into effect from next year and it will ensure leak-proof examinations

gation, CBSE officials said. "The board has taken cognisance of certain happenings in the conduct of certain examinations as are being reported. With the view to upholding the sanctity of the Board examinations and in the interest of the fairness to the students, the board has decided to reconduct the examinations," CBSE said in a statement.

At a press conference later in the day, Union human resource development (HRD) minister

Prakash Javadekar said the matter of paper leaks is being "seriously" looked into. The ministry has initiated an internal investigation into the matter. To ensure there is no "leakage" of papers, the sanctity of the question papers will be protected with the use of technology across the country, the minister promised. "Seems some organised gangs are doing it [leak] deliberately. We are sure whosever is doing it will be identified and nabbed soon. We

have also decided to tighten security for the time when papers are being distributed."

The minister said Prime Minister Narendra Modi had called him after the reports emerged.

The Delhi police crime branch on Tuesday and Wednesday registered two FIRs to probe the leaks; the one on Tuesday concerned the leak of the economics paper, and the one on Wednesday the mathematics paper.

CONTINUED ON P9

SSC: REMOTE ACCESS USED FOR CHEATING

Shiv Sunny and Peeyush Khandelwal
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NEW DELHI/GHAZIABAD:

Four men were arrested from north Delhi on Tuesday for helping job-seekers cheat the government's Staff Selection Commission (SSC) examinations this year, according to police who said the suspects used remote access software to answer questions on behalf of candidates during the test.

More than 63 lakh people applied this year for the SSC, which is used to carry out recruitment of non-gazetted staff for central ministries and subordinate departments.

FULL REPORT >>P3

GOVT ASKS FB IF DATA OF INDIANS WAS MISUSED

Jatin Gandhi and Vidhi Choudhary
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NEW DELHI: The government on Wednesday asked Facebook Inc to clarify whether the company or any of its associates or partners that has access to user data had engaged in the manipulation of elections, according to a statement issued by the ministry of electronics and IT.

The government release said the ministry sent a letter to the company asking what "proactive measures are being taken to ensure the safety, security and privacy of such large user data and to prevent its misuse by any third party?" and whether the personal data of Indian voters was "compromised by Cambridge Analytica" or any other entity. Facebook has been asked to respond to the questions by April 7.

The query comes against the backdrop of revelations by a whistleblower that CA had accessed data of millions of users.

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more stories

Zuckerberg set to testify as Facebook overhauls privacy settings >>P19

SC/ST Act order: Centre will seek top court review

Smriti Kak Ramchandran, Aurangzeb Naqshbandi and Jatin Gandhi
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NEW DELHI: The law ministry on Wednesday cleared the ground for the government to file a review petition in the Supreme Court against the apex court's decision to ban automatic arrests and registration of criminal cases for suspected offences against underprivileged communities.

The law ministry's advice came hours after Prime Minister Narendra Modi met a delegation of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and National Democratic Alliance (NDA) ministers and members of Parliament who said after the meeting that they had been assured that the BJP-led NDA government would stay at the vanguard of efforts to uplift the Dalits. Opposition members led by Congress president Rahul Gandhi met President Ram Nath Kovind on the same issue.

Earlier this month, the Supreme Court banned automatic arrests and registration of criminal cases under the Sched-

NDA MINISTERS AND MPs, INCLUDING THOSE FROM THE BJP, MET PM WHILE RAHUL GANDHI LED A DELEGATION TO MEET PRESIDENT KOVIND ON THE ISSUE

uled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989, a legislation meant to protect the marginalised communities from abuse and discrimination.

It also held that a court can grant anticipatory bail if, prima facie (at first sight), finds the complaint is an abuse of the law, false, motivated and intended to blackmail or harass a person.

The law ministry has advised the ministry of social justice and empowerment, the nodal ministry for executing development measures to benefit marginalised communities, to file the review petition, a law ministry official said on condition of anonymity.

CONTINUED ON P8

Deadline to link Aadhaar to welfare schemes extended

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NEW DELHI: The government on Wednesday extended till June 30 the deadline for linking Aadhaar numbers with welfare schemes in which benefits are transferred to citizens from the Consolidated Fund of India.

An office memorandum of the ministry of electronics and information technology, issued on December 7 last year, said the linking must be done by March 31. The fresh memorandum on Wednesday referred to the earlier order and said the deadline now may be read as June 30.

FULL REPORT >>P10

Bridge course off, exit test stays in NMC bill

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NEW DELHI: The Union cabinet dropped a controversial clause but retained another from the national medical commission bill, which was sent back to the government after protests across the country earlier this year.

The provision that was deleted related to a bridge course that would have allowed practitioners of alternative medicine to pursue basic allopath. What has been retained is the plan for a new exit test — the National Licentiate Exam (NLE) — that will be mandatory for graduate students before they are quali-

fied to see patients.

"We have kept it the way students wanted; there was no problem with the exit exam only that students wanted it to be clubbed with the final MBBS exam. Since people had a problem with the bridge course, it has been removed," said Preeti Sudan, health secretary.

Among other things, the Cabinet also approved fee regulation for 50% seats in private medical colleges and deemed universities. The number of nominees from states and UTs in the National Medical Commission has also increased from three to six.

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KEY AMENDMENTS >>P13

Cong could lose three-decade grip over RS deputy chairperson post

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NEW DELHI: When Rajya Sabha deputy chairperson PJ Kurien retires in July this year, the Congress may lose the prestigious post after 41 years.

Since 1977, when Congress leader Ram Niwas Mirdha occupied the position, all deputy chairpersons have been nominees from the Congress. The trend continued even after the Bharatiya Janata Party's Bhairon Singh Shekhawat in 2002 became the first BJP politician to be elected vice president, according to parliamentary records. The vice president also serves as Rajya Sabha chairperson.

"The Speaker and the Deputy Speaker in Lok Sabha and the post of the Chairperson is already out of the Congress hands. There is a distinct possibility that after July, the deputy chairperson in Rajya Sabha will also see a non-Congress MP. For the first time in the history of Parliament, the top four positions in the House may not have a Congress nominee," said a senior BJP leader on condition of anonymity.

The nomination for Kurien's successor, however, can be a tricky process as the ruling National Democratic Alliance doesn't have the numbers to push its nominee for that position.

CONTINUED ON P8

Electricity to get cheaper for households consuming more

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NEW DELHI: Residents of the national Capital could find a dip in their electricity bills from April 1 as the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC) on Wednesday restructured its tariff order for 2018-19 with three changes, making it more consumption driven.

But those with low consumption are unlikely to see any changes in their bills.

The power regulator increased fixed charges for every consumer, but brought down the energy cost or charge. It also revised the surcharge from 3.7% to 3.8%, which goes towards paying pension to former employees of power utilities. The reduction in energy charge is likely to reduce a consumer's power bill, especially during the summer when electricity demand peaks.

Delhi power minister Satyendar Jain promised that no consumer will have to pay extra for

power. "The new tariff will reduce electricity bills of every consumer by 7% to 8% on an average," he said.

Fixed charge, a part of the bill, is the cost a consumer has to pay even if the person does not use any unit of power. DERC increased this significantly in the range of ₹105 to ₹150. For instance, those who used to pay only ₹20 a month for one kilowatt (kW) of power for a sanctioned load of up to 2kW will have to pay ₹125.

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EVERY SECOND COUNTS

Indian time to soon be truly standardised

KEEPING TIME

The National Physical Laboratory in Delhi has two types of precise atomic clocks — five Caesium clocks and one Active Hydrogen Maser Clock from Russia

An atomic clock, unlike conventional clocks, doesn't rely on quartz crystal vibrations. Instead, it uses the transition of a Caesium atom from one energy level to the next.

There is an ensemble of over 400 Caesium clocks across the world, including the five at NPL

The International Bureau of Weights and Measures is responsible for averaging the time spread across these clocks and determining the Universal Coordinated Time to ensure the start of each second is the same across the world

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NEW DELHI: India is seeking to legalise "Indian Standard Time," which means all service providers across the country will have to take time from the National Physical Laboratory (NPL), the official timekeeper of the nation, as India becomes more serious about security and cautious about cyber-attacks (both areas where a fraction of a second could be critical).

Currently, for hundreds of millions of Indians using Mic-

rosoft software or iPhones, the time on their devices is likely sourced from Network Time Protocol servers based in the US.

"It (the time) differs by one to several seconds for users, depending on where it is sourced from. In most cases, this is from the US-based servers or GPS, which is also a US-owned technology," said Dinesh K Aswal, director, NPL.

Once IST becomes legal, users will not be allowed to use any other time other than the time generated by NPL.

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