

127 labourers, kids rescued from brick kiln

Anuja Jaiswal @timesgroup.com

Agra: The Aligarh district administration rescued 127 bonded labourers, including 67 children, from a brick kiln at Bansali village after some labourers lodged a complaint with National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). The rescued have been sent home to Bihar's Nawada on Tuesday.

In March, a labourer had lodged an FIR for alleged sexual assault on a minor girl by the brick kiln owner's relative. When the accused was arrested, the labourers said they being abused, said officials. Circle officer Iglas Mohsin Khan said the incident was reported on Holi and police had arrested the 20-year-old man accused for committing the crime.

SDM (Iglas) Kuldev Singh said a 3-member committee was formed by the district magistrate to inquire about the issue, and during inquiry, it was found that the labourers wanted to go back to their homes in Bihar and, hence, a bus was arranged for them.

Implement Patients' Rights Charter To Make Private Healthcare Accountable: Oxfam

New Delhi: The governments, civil society, communities, and medical fraternity across the globe will commemorate April 7 as World Health Day and pledge for building fairer and healthier world for everyone. On this occasion, it is important to highlight that the vision of building fairer and healthier in India is impossible without recognising the rights of patients and making healthcare providers accountable. This World Health Day, Oxfam India is calling for the implementation of Patients' Rights Charter (PRC) and clear mechanisms for grievance redressal for healthier India by state and Union Territories (UTs) governments.

The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted Union and State governments to invest in public health infrastructure and resources. However, 69.9% ailments were treated by the private healthcare sector (NSSO 75th Round 2017-18) making it bigger healthcare provider than the government itself. Calling Indian healthcare system as 'one of the most highly privatised and commercialised in the world', the Oxfam India analysis of Indian private healthcare regulations recommended accountability mechanisms such as PRC for the private healthcare providers.

High reliance on an unregulated private sector pushes millions of Indians into poverty and deprives our rural and urban poor, Dalits, Adivasis, women, specific religious and ethnic minority groups from their right to health. The implementation of PRC which recognises around 17 patients' rights including transparency in treatment rates can be a step in the right direction to make private healthcare more accountable to marginalised communities.

The need for Patients' Rights Charter In August 2018, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) released India's first Patients' Rights Charter (PRC) with the recommendations from National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). Health being the state subject, the MoHFW urged state governments to adopt the PRC through a letter in June 2019. Even after two years, PRC is yet to be adopted by state and union territories in India. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought the issue of patients' rights at the forefront with private hospitals openly violating patients' rights and making healthcare even more inaccessible to the people especially the marginalised communities. Recognising the growing patients' rights violations during the pandemic, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) recommended state governments to implement PRC through an advisory issued in September 2020.

Anjela Taneja, Oxfam India's Lead for Health and Inequality said, "85.9% of India's rural population have no health insurance. In a state like Delhi, even capped COVID rates could financially cripple 80% of the Delhi's citizens. At a time when India is seeing a new COVID surge, it is time to not just cap COVID treatment rates but also notify the Patients' Rights Charter and establish a speedy and effective grievance redressal mechanism in case of violations by hospitals. In the end, India needs a strong universal, free public health system." The lack of transparency in private hospital bills often contributes to overcharging and patients are left helpless in absence of grievance redressal mechanism. In 2011-12, 55 million people were pushed into poverty through out-of-pocket (OOP) expenditure on health. An analysis of bills from four reputed private hospitals in the Delhi and NCR region by the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA), Government of India revealed that the establishments make profit margins from 100 % to 1,737% on drugs, consumables, and diagnostics, and these three components account for about 46% of a patient's bill. During the pandemic state governments actively regulated prices of

COVID-19 treatments through Government Orders (GOs) and circulars. This also prompted several state governments and local bodies to run help desks for patients suffering from overcharging and denial of healthcare. It is time that state governments use learnings from COVID-19 pandemic and incorporate permanent grievance redressal with PRC to improve healthcare access especially for the marginalised communities who are disproportionately affected by these problems. You can access the draft of Patients' Rights Charter here.

<https://www.thehansindia.com/news/national/implement-patients-rights-charter-to-make-private-healthcare-accountable-oxfam-680618>

कोरोनाकाकहर: पंजाबमें 30 अप्रैल तक नाइट कर्फ्यू, पाबंदियों के उल्लंघन पर दर्ज होगी मामला

चंडीगढ़। पंजाब में कोरोना के तेजी से बढ़ते मामलों के मद्देनजर 30

अप्रैल तक सियासी सभाओं पर पूरी तरह से रोक लगा देने और रात्रिकर्फ्यू पूरे राज्य में लगाने के आदेश दिए गए हैं। पाबंदियों की उल्लंघना करने वाले सहित सियासी नेताओं के खिलाफ डीएमए तथा महामारी एक्ट के तहत मामला दर्ज किया जाएगा। यह जानकारी बुधवार को मुख्यमंत्री कैप्टन अमरिंदर सिंह ने कोविड मामलों की साप्ताहिक समीक्षा के दौरान दी। पंजाब में रात 9 बजे से लेकर सुबह 5

बजे तक रात्रिकर्फ्यू का दायरा बढ़ाते हुए इसे पूरे राज्य में लागू करने का ऐलान किया है और अंतिम संस्कार या विवाह समारोह में इन डोर जमावड़े के लिए लोगों की संख्या 50 और बाहरी जमावड़े के लिए 100

तक सीमित करने के भी आदेश दिए हैं।

सरकारी कर्मचारियों के लिए कार्यालय के समय मास्क पहनना अनिवार्य कर दिया गया है। ये पाबंदियां 30

अप्रैल तक लागू रहेंगी। मॉलों में स्थित दुकानों के दुकानदारों को कुछ रात दी गई है। हर दुकान में किसी भी समय 10 लोगों के प्रवेश की अनुमति दी गई है। किसी भी समय 20 दुकानों वाले मॉल में 200

व्यक्ति जा सकते हैं। सीएम ने राज्य में कोरोना के पॉजिटिव मामलों और मृत्यु दर में वृद्धि पर चिंता जताते हुए कहा कि सबसे अधिक चिंता की बात यह है कि पंजाब में 85

प्रतिशत से अधिक मामलों के वायरस वाले हैं जो ज्यादा तेजी से फैलता है और खतरनाक है।

मुख्यमंत्री ने कहा कि कोविड मामलों में हो रही वृद्धि को रोकने के लिए अब कड़े कदम उठाने के अलावा अन्य कोई और रास्ता नहीं था। पहले लगाई गई पाबंदियों के कारण बीते कुछ दिनों के दौरान पॉजिटिव मामलों की संख्या में कुछ स्थिरता आई है। राजनीतिक सभाओं पर पाबंदी लगाने के लिए मजबूर होना पड़ा है क्योंकि राजनीतिक दलों को ऐसे जलसे करने के लिए मना किया गया था,

लेकिन उन्होंने सरकार की अपील को नजर अंदाज किया। कांग्रेस पार्टी ने अपने तौर पर पहले ही पिछले महीने इस फैसले का ऐलान कर दिया था कि राजनीतिक दलों की अब कोई भी सार्वजनिक बैठक या रैली नहीं की जाएगी। उनके अनुसार पाबंदियों का उल्लंघन करने वालों में दिल्ली के मुख्यमंत्री अरविंद केजरीवाल और शिरोमणि अकाली दल के प्रधान सुखबीर बादल शामिल हैं।

कैप्टन सिंह ने कहा कि कोरोना संकट में ऐसा व्यवहार करना इन नेताओं को शोभानहीं देता। जब वरिष्ठ नेता ही कोरोना के समय गंभीरता का परिचय नहीं दे रहे तो लोगों से उम्मीद कैसे कर सकते हो। उनकी सरकार को अब पाबंदियों का उल्लंघन करने वालों के प्रति सख्त रुख अपनाना पड़ेगा। मुख्यमंत्री ने पुलिस और जिला प्रशासन को राजनीतिक जलसा करने वालों,

हिस्सालेने वालों और नेताओं के खिलाफ डीएमए और महामारी एक्ट के अंतर्गत मामला दर्ज करने के आदेश देने के साथ टैंटहाऊ समाजिकों को नहीं बख्शने को कहा। उन्होंने कहा कि ऐसे जमावड़ों के लिए स्थान मुहैया करवाने वालों को भी बख्शानहीं जाएगा और उन पर भी मामला दर्ज करते हुए उनके द्वारा मुहैया किए गए स्थान को 3 महीनों के लिए सील कर दिया जाएगा। सिंह ने कहा कि आम लोगों को भी सिर्फ जरूरी सेवाओं के लिए ही सरकारी

फतर्ओंमेंजानेकेलिएकहाजाएगाऔरसंबंधितविभागोंकेद्वारारजिस्ट्रियोंआदिकेरोजमर्केकामोंकेलिएमु
लाकातकासमयसीमितसंख्यामेंहीदियाजाएगा।

<https://www.dainiknavajyoti.net/india/corona-havoc-night-curfew-in-punjab-till-30-april-case-will-be-registered-for-violation-of-restrictions.html>

NHRC closes complaint on arrest of Kerala scribe Siddique Kappan

Bhopal: Predictably, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), has closed the complaint on the arrest of Kerala journalist Siddique Kappan, jailed since October 5, 2020.

Kappan, also the secretary of the Kerala Union of Working Journalists (KUWF), was on his way to Hathras in Uttar Pradesh (UP), to cover the gang-rape and death of a young woman. Kappan, along with three others, were picked up and arrested under the draconian Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, on charges of allegedly inciting caste and communal violence.

In a bland order passed on April 1, 2021, the NHRC said: "The allegations in the complaint cannot be substantiated and investigation in the matter is still pending. The Commission has considered the material placed on record. SP Hathras is directed to get the investigation completed fairly and to its logical conclusion within reasonable time. Also, DM Hathras is directed to provide monetary relief to victim girl M..... in case 136/20 under applicable rules of SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act. With this direction the case is closed.

Also, in a shocking violation of Sec 228A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), the order names the Hathras rape victim and insensitively refers to monetary compensation to be given to the 'victim girl', without any reference to the fact that she died on September 29, 2020, succumbing to the severe injuries she had sustained when she was gang-raped by four upper caste youth on September 14, 2020.

Adv. Ansar Indori filed the complaint before the NHRC on Oct 5, 2020. The NHRC sought an action taken report on December 2, 2020 and, following another complaint filed by Henri Tiphagne, the commission passed an order closing the matter.

The 19-year-old Dalit girl had gone to collect fodder when the four men – Sandip, Ramu, Lavkush and Ravi, who belonged to the Thakur caste, caught her and assaulted her. She sustained a spinal cord injury and her tongue was cut off when the assailants tried to strangle her with her "dupatta". Her mother heard her cries and managed to get her to a hospital. Police initially rejected her testimony and registered a complaint only on September 20. In three separate recorded complaints, she said she had been raped and named all the four perpetrators. Her condition worsened and she died in Safdarjung Hospital in Delhi. Uttar Pradesh police, which took custody of the body, cremated her in a hurried manner without the knowledge of her family.

The case had caused a storm of protests all over the country and intense media attention followed for days thereafter. The UP government tried to ban media coverage and stop all access to the family of the victim, the district administration, including the District Magistrate (DM) was recorded on camera trying to coach the family and told that, while the media would go away after a few days, the DM would remain, clearly suggesting that they would still have to contend with him!

The UP government filed no less than 19 First Information Reports (FIRs) alleging conspiracy against the Yogi Adityanath government. The UP government even hired a public relations firm to spin the story that the girl was not gang-raped and that the reports of the incident had "revealed the conspiracy to push the state into caste turmoil."

In the build-up to this, the UP police arrested the Kerala journalist and three others, Atiqur Rahman, Aalam and Masood, who the police alleged, belonged to the Popular Front of India. The arrest, the KUWJ said, was a clear violation of the journalist's

fundamental right to freedom of expression under Art. 19 as the journalist was on his way to Hathras to fulfil his journalistic duty as a reporter. In a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath, KUWJ said that Kappan is a senior journalist and wrote for azhimukham.com and several other Malayalam media houses.

Several attempts to secure bail for Kappan, including the filing of a habeas corpus petition and a bail application in the Supreme Court, have come to naught. In February, the court allowed Kappan to travel to Kerala for five days to see his ailing mother, with the stringent directive that he only interact with his mother and her doctor.

Kappan's lawyers tried to move the Supreme Court under Art. 32 of the Constitution, to seek constitutional remedy for violation of fundamental rights. In May 2020, the Republic TV owner-editor Arnab Goswami had successfully used Art. 32 to seek quashing of multiple FIRs against him on charges of inflammatory statements and promoting enmity between religious groups (Section 153A of IPC). But when it came to Kappan's case, the Chief Justice of India S. A. Bobde said the court was discouraging citizens from approaching it with Art. 32 petitions.

The NHRC, a statutory body mandated to take up violations of human rights in India, under the Protection of Human Rights Act, (PHRA)1993. Section 2(1) (d) of the PHRA defines Human Rights as the rights relating to life, liberty, equality and dignity of the individual guaranteed by the Constitution or embodied in the International Covenants and enforceable by courts in India. It is headed by a retired Chief Justice or senior judge of the Supreme Court. Justice H. L. Dattu completed his tenure as the seventh Chairperson of the NHRC on 2nd December, 2020. It is currently without a Chairperson.

Given the spate of human rights violations in India, the work of the NHRC has never been more important. In a letter to the retiring Chairperson, Dattu, the All-India Network of NGOs and Individuals working with National and State Human Rights Institutions headed by Tipaghne, said: "We expected the Commission to uphold and assert its powers in cases such as the killing of protestors in Thoothukudi, arrest of human rights defenders in Bhima Koregaon case, incarceration of protestors peacefully opposing CAA, and the plight of migrant workers. We re-assert that the NHRC belongs to the people and it always took the cause of victims of human rights violations. We always believe that it is the NHRC that serves as a model for other human rights institutions."

<https://www.siasat.com/nhrc-closes-complaint-on-arrest-of-kerala-scribe-siddique-kappan-2120964/>

127 bonded labourers rescued from Aligarh brick kiln

Agra: The Aligarh district administration rescued 127 bonded labourers, including 67 children, from a brick kiln located in Bansali village after some labourers lodged a complaint with the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). All the rescued people have been sent home to Bihar's Nawada on Tuesday.

In March, one of the labourers had even lodged an FIR for alleged sexual assault of a minor girl by the brick kiln owner's relative. Though the suspect was arrested and remanded in judicial custody, the labourers were not ready to stay back as they said they were being abused and, hence, were feeling unsafe, said officials. Confirming the sexual assault incident, circle officer Iglas Mohsin Khan told TOI that the incident was reported on the day of Holi and police had arrested the 20-year-old man accused for committing the crime.

Sub-divisional magistrate (Iglas) Kuldev Singh told TOI that a 3-member committee was formed by the district magistrate to inquire about the issue, and during inquiry, it was found that the labourers wanted to go back to their homes in Bihar and, hence, a bus was arranged for them.

According to officials, each labourer was being paid Rs 400 per thousand bricks he/she made, and usually made about 2000 bricks in a day. The committee members told TOI that the labourers had taken an advance of Rs 25,000 each before coming to work here.

Talking to TOI, labour inspector Manoj Kumar, who was also part of the 3-member committee, said that the owner of Sri RadheEit Udyog, Munni Devi, and her son Jitendra Singh have been booked under sections 16, 17 of the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act 1976 and can be punished up to 3 years of imprisonment, along with Rs 2000 fine, by the sub-divisional magistrate.

The owner will also be booked for violation of non-maintenance of records of bonded labourers. In addition, there was also violation of inter-state migrant workmen Act, 1979, under which a licence is required for employing more than five workers from other states.

Kumar added that the labour department of Bihar will be communicated for the rehabilitation of the rescued people after completing the summary trial in the SDM court, so that relief of Rs 1 lakh per man and Rs 2 lakh for each woman rescued can be given.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/agra/127-bonded-labourers-rescued-from-aligarh-brick-kiln/articleshow/81956786.cms>

CSR: Amway hosts national webinar on childhood malnutrition

FMCG direct selling company Amway India celebrated World Health Day with a national webinar on building a better tomorrow with a focus on nutrition in children. Organized in association with its NGO partner SRF Foundation, the virtual platform brought together policy experts, subject-matter experts, and industry leaders to discuss current challenges and opportunities in improving nutrition and health amongst children, especially those under 5.

As per the latest National Family Health Survey (NFHS), 18 of the 22 states and Union Territories (UTs) have recorded an alarming rise in the malnutrition condition of children under five. While each of the surveyed states and UTs reported 22 per cent or more stunted children, at least eight out of 342 surveyed districts registered more than 50 per cent prevalence of child stunting.

Deliberating on such critical issues and the need to address inequities in access to health and nutrition, present at the national webinar were Jyotika Kalra, Member, National Human Rights Commission, Rajbala Kataria, Joint Director, Women and Child Development Department, Haryana, Dr. Sujeet Ranjan, Executive Director, The Coalition for Food and Nutrition Security (CFNS), Ajay Khanna, Chief Marketing Officer, Amway India Enterprises Pvt. Ltd, Dr Sirimavo Nair, Professor in Foods and Nutrition, Faculty of Family and Community Sciences, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Basant Kumar Dube, District Immunization and Child Health Officer, Nuh and Dr. Y. Suresh Reddy, Director, SRF Foundation.

Speaking at the conference, Ajay Khanna, Chief Marketing Officer Amway India said, "The WHO theme of World Health Day 2021 of building a fairer, healthier world is a clarion call to strengthen action in the best possible way to make lives healthier and better for every child in the country. With our vision of helping people live better, healthier lives, Amway endeavours to make a tangible societal impact through multiple social initiatives."

He added: "Aligned with Government of India's National Nutrition Mission, we had introduced the campaign 'Power of 5' aimed to raise awareness on the issue of childhood malnutrition and bring in the much-needed behavioral shift among mothers and communities at large. Leveraging the success of our pilot project in Kirari village, New Delhi, we are launching the second phase of this project with SRF Foundation in Nuh district, Haryana. Under this two-year programme, we intend to benefit over 51,000 people including 15,000 children in the age group of 0-8 years."

Commenting on the 'Power of 5' CSR initiative, Dr. Y. Suresh Reddy, Director, SRF Foundation said, "Despite significant economic growth, India still bears an unacceptably high burden of malnourished children. We are focused on channeling our efforts to support and help as many children as we can. With this collaboration with Amway India, we have initiated the process of spreading awareness at the grassroots level regarding basic nutritional and hygiene practices."

<https://thecsrjournal.in/csr-amway-national-webinar-childhood-malnutrition/>

Manipur probe almost over, allow SIT officers to do other work: CBI to SC

Out of 39 cases registered to investigate alleged fake encounters in Manipur, charge sheets have been filed in 17 cases; 15 cases have been closed while prosecution sanction against army officers or Assam Rifles personnel is awaited in the rest of the cases, the agency has informed the apex court

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has urged the Supreme Court to allow its officers investigating the alleged extra-judicial killings in Manipur as part of a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to do other work as agency's probe in the encounters is almost wrapped up.

The agency has informed the apex court that out of 39 cases registered to investigate alleged fake encounters in Manipur, charge sheets have been filed in 17 cases; 15 cases have been closed while prosecution sanction against army officers or Assam Rifles personnel is awaited in the rest of the cases.

An officer, who didn't want to be named, said the defence ministry has denied prosecution sanction in certain cases citing AFSPA (Armed Forces Special Powers Act) in Manipur, which gives sweeping powers to the security forces in a 'disturbed area'.

The Supreme Court, which was hearing a plea seeking a probe into 1,528 cases of alleged extra-judicial killings in Manipur, had on July 14, 2017, ordered constitution of an SIT, which it said will exclusively probe the encounters. The CBI initially formed a five-member SIT, in which two officers of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) – including senior superintendent of police Mahesh Bhardwaj – were later included as members. The SC released Bhardwaj from SIT last month.

In its application filed in the apex court on January 7 this year, reviewed by HT, CBI said the "SIT has investigated these cases with all sincerity, seriousness and full devotion to unearth the truth".

The anti-corruption probe agency added "these cases have been investigated with full objectivity and comprehensively to investigate all allegations of use of excessive force or retaliatory force by uniformed personnel resulting in the death of any person".

Requesting the SC to allow its officers to do other work in the agency, it said, "In view of the prevailing Covid-19 situation and ever-increasing workload of CBI, the already over-stretched resources of CBI are to be used optimally".

Expressing its helplessness in taking all the cases to conclusion, CBI said these cases are "years/decades old and are of special nature to the extent that these cannot be investigated only on the basis of documents."

"Circumstantial evidence, oral testimony of the eyewitness (if any) and other relevant witnesses, opinion of medico-legal experts, forensic experts and other scientific evidence are very important for proper investigation of such kind of cases," CBI said. It said Covid-19 induced lockdowns and restrictions also affected its work but it is trying to complete the investigation at the earliest.

The agency further said that SIT's superintendent of police LS Padmakumar and deputy SP VPS Mann were superannuated in May 2019 and June 2020 respectively while inspector Amar Saxena has passed away.

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/manipur-probe-almost-over-allow-sit-officers-to-do-other-work-cbi-to-sc-101617768564054.html>