

XLRI in News

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Unemployment rate worsens to 6.98% in October

Prashant K. Nanda

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NEW DELHI: Even as the rabi harvest season kicked off, India's rural unemployment rate climbed more than 100 basis points (bps) in October month-on-month with the region seeing a significant fall in the creation of person-days under the national rural employment guarantee scheme.

According to the monthly data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), rural unemployment climbed to 6.9% in October against 5.86% in September. Similarly, the national unemployment rate in October, too, was up 6.98% compared to 6.67% in the previous month. However, urban unemployment was down from 8.45% in September to 7.15% in October, as economic activity including industrial activity, picked up pace.

The weekly unemployment rate which was also published on Monday, showed that both rural and urban, and national unemployment rates, have climbed in the week ended 1 November compared to the previous week.

The CMIE data showed that while national joblessness climbed to 7.15% in the week ended 1 November as against 6.86% in the week ended 25 October, rural unemployment jumped to 7.17% during the same period. This was more

than the October monthly joblessness rate, which was below 7%. Weekly urban unemployment touched 7.1% in the week ended 1 November, as against 6.79% in the previous week.

"The harvest season has started and it will absorb some in the labour market. But harvest season may not have picked up pace in several parts of the country, and surplus labour may be contributing to this trend. Second, lack of decent jobs and skills mismatch among available work and surplus workers in the current environment in rural markets must be impacting the labour participation rate," said Arup Mitra, a professor of economics at the Institute of Economic Growth, New Delhi.

"Along with continued stress in tourism, hospitality and retail sectors, the low person-days creation by the rural employment guarantee scheme must have been behind the fall. After initial spurt in the rural job creation through MGNREGA, it seems to have subdued now," said K.R. Shyam Sundar, another labour economist and professor at XLRI, Jamshedpur.

Reflecting economists' point of view, government data showed that while MGNREGS created around 265 million person days of work in September, it was 173 million in October, declining by over 30% month-on-month.

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Rural joblessness jumps to 6.9% in Oct as NREGS hiring slows

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NEW DELHI

India's rural unemployment rate climbed more than 100 basis points month-on-month (m-o-m) in October with the region seeing a significant fall in the creation of person-days under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), even as the summer crops harvest season kicked off.

Rural unemployment climbed to 6.9% in October against 5.86% in September, according to monthly data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), published on Monday.

The national unemployment rate in October, too, was up at 6.98% compared to 6.67% in the previous month. However, urban unemployment was down from 8.45% in September



MGNREGS created around 265 million person days of work in September against 173 million in October.

PTI

to 7.15% in October, as economic activity, including industrial activity, picked up pace.

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previous week.

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below 7%. Weekly urban unemployment touched 7.1% in the week ended 1 November, as against 6.79% in the previous week.

"The harvest season has started and it will absorb some people in the labour market. However, the harvest season may not have picked up pace in several parts of the country and surplus labour may be contributing to this trend. Second, lack of decent jobs and skills mismatch between available work and surplus workers in the current environment in rural markets must be impacting the labour participation rate," said Arup Mitra, a professor of economics at the Institute of Economic Growth, New Delhi.

"Along with continued stress in tourism, hospitality, and retail sectors, the low creation of person-days by the rural employment guarantee scheme must have been behind the fall. The initial spurt in rural

job creation through MGNREGS seems to be subdued now," said K.R. Shyam Sundar, a labour economist and professor at XLRI, Jamshedpur.

MGNREGS created around 265 million person days of work in September, while the October figure was 173 million, declining by more than 30% m-o-m, government data showed, reflecting the point of view of economists.

The official data showed that creation of person-days in October was higher than what was estimated.

India has been facing a massive jobs crisis and the situation has only exacerbated following the coronavirus outbreak, as businesses were hit hard and the overall economy plum-

meted since the nationwide lockdown was implemented in March.

"Things will gradually look better from now on as urban and industrial activities are picking up. Construction activities have also picked up, the information technology sector has done very well, the urban markets are opening up, and

the festive season demand will contribute to the improving job scenario in urban India. However, decent jobs are still far away," said Sundar.

"The recovery was smart in May

and spectacular in June. It continued well into July. But it stalled in August and September...October shows signs of continued stress," the CMIE said in a post on its website on 19 October.

However, urban unemployment was down from 8.45% in Sep to 7.15% in Oct as economic activity gathers pace

Jobs quota likely to hamper state's investment appeal

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Haryana's proposal to reserve jobs in private companies for locals is a political move but is likely to lower the state's appeal as an investment destination.

A 75% quota for locals would discourage investors and dampen jobs creation in the state, said industry leaders and economists. This will hurt the manufacturing, retail, information technology, and housing sectors. It may also prompt other states to implement similar policies, hurting labour mobility and creating an artificial shortage of talent.

"I don't agree with such a reservation policy," said R.C. Bhargava, chairman of Maruti Suzuki India Ltd, the country's largest carmaker. "The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has made a representation to the state saying that such a move will not make industries competitive and I agree with CII's concerns," Bhargava said in an interview.

"The decision of reserving 75% of new employment in the private sector for locals will

A 75% reservation for locals would dampen jobs creation in the state, say industry leaders and economists

impact businesses, the state's industry-friendly image, slow investments and deteriorate the Ease of Doing Business Ranking," said Sunjay Kapur, chairman, CII Haryana.

"Reservations is not the way to create jobs," said Rituparna Chakraborty, co-founder and executive vice president of staffing, and HR firm Teamlease Services. The move comes even as the October unemployment rate in Haryana was 27.3% against the national average of 6.98%, said Centre for Monitoring India Economy.

"Jobs have become a political issue. The Haryana government is catering to political constituents," said K.R. Shyam Sundar, a labour economist.

The Haryana government on 5 November passed a bill providing 75% reservation for local candidates in all private jobs with a pay ceiling of ₹50,000 per month. This must be done within three months of the bill becoming law or a fine of between ₹25,000 and ₹100,000 may be levied. It applies to all private companies, societies, trusts and partnership firms in the state. *Malyaban Ghosh contributed to the story.*

Startups, Ecomm Cos to Go Big on Campus Hiring Despite Pandemic

Experts said hiring fresh talent is also cost-effective, more so this year

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Mumbai: Despite the widespread business disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, leading ecommerce companies and startups will step up hiring, or hire at the same level as last year, from

engineering and management campuses. Global ecommerce major Amazon said it would hire more from Indian campuses this year than ever before. The company, which has more than a thousand positions open for hiring in India, is likely to fill in a significant chunk of the vacancies from campuses.

"Despite Covid, Amazon continues to hire more from campuses this year than previous years," said Deepti Varma, director — HR, Amazon. It will focus on both tech and non-tech profiles, such as program management, product management, operations and retail, Varma said.

Swiggy, Byju's and Myntra are among the others looking to hire technical and non-technical talent from premier campuses like IITs, NITs, IIMs, ISB, XLRI, to fuel their next wave of expansion.

"With the market opening up post the multiple rounds of unlocks and business coming back up to 80-85% of pre-Covid, we plan to do strategic appointments across technology, new initiatives and expansion of existing offerings for our next wave of growth," Swiggy's HR head Girish Menon said.

TALENT HUNT

Who's looking to hire?

- Amazon
- Swiggy
- Byju's
- Myntra
- Vedantu
- Simplilearn
- PhonePe
- Urban Company

Top roles/functions

- Software engineers
- UX designers
- data scientists
- product managers
- marketing managers
- business analysts
- operations
- retail

Why are freshers in demand?
Startups want fresh minds to churn out new tech, strategies for next wave of growth

Hiring freshers is cost-effective
Allows start-ups to build their own culture, pipeline of leaders



Govt's wage subsidy via EPFO to spur job creation



Any person taking up a job in EPFO-registered establishments between October 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021 on a monthly wage of less than ₹15,000 will be eligible for this subsidy. This will improve the take-home pay of low wage earners in formal jobs as their share of EPF deductions will be paid by the government.

The subsidy will cover new employees who joined work in the low rung of the salary threshold

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NEW DELHI: Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday announced a wage subsidy via the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) to spur job creation in the formal sector through at a low rung of the salary threshold.

The central government will provide EPF subsidy under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana for "new eligible employees" who have joined between October 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021. The EPF subsidy will be given for two years from the date of their employment during the above period. New

employees have been classified as those with a monthly wage of less than ₹15,000 and have not been registered with EPFO earlier.

Workers who lost their jobs between March 1 and September 30 with a salary cap of ₹15,000 per month shall also be eligible for this subsidy.

Any person taking up a job in EPFO-registered establishments between October 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021 on a monthly wage of less than ₹15,000 will be eligible for this subsidy. However, these workers should be first-time entrants into the EPFO system.

"The Atmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana is being launched to incentivise creation of new employment opportunities during the covid recovery phase," Sitharaman said. "This will be applicable for eligible new employees joining EPFO-registered establishments and for those who exited these establishments during the Covid pandemic," she said.

However, the addition of new employees will be above the base of September employee count. Second, if a company has up to 50 workers by end of September, then it needs to create at least two jobs to be eligible for the EPF subsidy and it will be an addition of "five new employees if reference base is more than 50 employees".

EPFO registered establishments with up to 1,000 workers will get 24% EPF subsidy, 12% of the employees' share and 12% of the employers' share. If the company has more than 1,000 employees, the government will reimburse the 12% share of new employees added.

"The subsidy to employers will reduce the human resource cost of companies when they are struggling to recover post the lockdown implemented to contain the spread of coronavirus. The subsidy to employees will improve the take-home pay of low wage earners in formal jobs as their share of EPF deductions will be paid by the

government.

The 24% subsidy will cover more than 95% of establishments, Sitharaman said. "The subsidy support will be credited upfront. In Aadhaar-seeded EPFO accounts of eligible new employees," the minister said, indicating that Aadhaar seeding is a requirement as it will help track the beneficiary better.

The industry and experts welcomed the move but requested the government to raise the salary cap beyond ₹15,000. "The finance minister's relief package will have a positive impact though in a limited way, primarily because the relief is routed through the EPFO rather than a direct wage subsidy, and the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation's coverage notwithstanding the claimed progress is still limited in terms of the existing scheme of coverage of establishments, and also because of the income threshold of ₹15,000," said K.R. ShyamSundar, a labour economist.

"As growth recovers, we shall see employment numbers also picking up. However, even as we wait for the full normalcy to return, the government has laid down a framework for promoting jobs and encouraging companies to consider re-hiring of workers who may have lost their jobs during the lockdown. The contribution to provident fund on behalf of employers and employees is a good incentive mechanism. The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Ficci) would only urge the government consider the ceiling wage level of ₹15,000 for applicability of this as in many parts of the country the average wage levels are higher," Ficci president Sangita Reddy said.



Govt's wage subsidy via EPFO to spur job creation

The scheme is aimed to benefit new employees with a monthly salary cap of ₹15,000

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NEW DELHI

Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday announced a wage subsidy via the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) to spur job creation in the formal sector, albeit at the lower rung of the salary threshold.

The central government will provide EPF subsidy under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana for "new eligible employees" who have joined or will join between 1 October 2020 and 30 June 2021.

The EPF subsidy will be given for two years from the date of their employment.

New employees have been classified as those with a monthly wage of less than ₹15,000 and have not been registered with the EPFO earlier.

Workers who lost their jobs between 1 March and 30 September with a salary cap of ₹15,000 per month shall also be eligible for the subsidy. Any person taking up a job in EPFO-registered establishments between 1 October and 30 June 2021 on a monthly wage of less than ₹15,000 will also be eligible for it.

"The Atmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana is being launched to incentivise creation of new employment opportunities during the covid recovery phase," Sitharaman said. "This will be applicable for eligible new employees joining EPFO-registered establishments, and for those who exited these establishments during the covid pandemic," she said.



Workers who lost jobs between 1 March and 30 September with a monthly salary cap of ₹15,000 are eligible.

However, the addition of new employees will be above the base of September employee count. Second, if a company has up to 50 workers by end of September, then it needs to create at least two jobs to be eligible for the EPF subsidy and it will be an addition of "five new

1,000 employees, the government will reimburse the 12% share of new employees added.

The subsidy to employers will reduce the human resource cost of companies when they are struggling to recover post the lockdown implemented to contain the spread of coronavirus.

The industry and experts welcomed the move but requested the government to raise the salary cap beyond ₹15,000.

"The finance minister's relief package will have a positive impact though in a limited way, primarily because the relief is routed through the EPFO rather than a direct wage subsidy, and the EPFO's coverage notwithstanding the claimed progress is still limited in terms of the existing scheme of coverage of establishments, and also because of the income threshold of ₹15,000," said K.R. ShyamSundar, a labour economist.

CONDITIONS APPLY

THE subsidy can be availed for new workers who join between 1 Oct 2020 and 30 Jun 2021

IF a company has up to 50 workers by end of Sep, it needs to create at least 2 jobs to get the subsidy

EPFO-registered establishments with up to 1,000 workers will get 24% EPF subsidy

IF a firm has over 1,000 employees, govt will reimburse the 12% share of new employees added

employees if reference base is more than 50 employees"

EPFO-registered establishments with up to 1,000 workers will get 24% EPF subsidy, 12% of the employees' share and 12% of the employers' share.

If the company has more than

onavirus, the subsidy to employees will improve the take-home pay of low wage earners in formal jobs as their share of EPF deductions will be paid by the government.

The 24% subsidy will cover more than 95% of establishments, Sitharaman said. "The subsidy support will

and the EPFO's coverage notwithstanding the claimed progress is still limited in terms of the existing scheme of coverage of establishments, and also because of the income threshold of ₹15,000," said K.R. ShyamSundar, a labour economist.

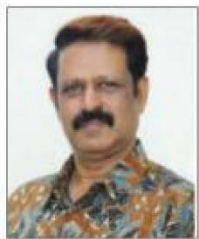
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FM's relief package to make limited positive impact: Prof KR Shyam Sunder



Jamshedpur, Nov 12: "The Finance

Minister's relief package issued today will surely make a positive impact though limited. This is primarily because the relief is routed through the EPF

rather than a direct wage subsidy and the EPFO's coverage notwithstanding the claimed progress is still limited in terms of the existing scheme of coverage of establishments and the income threshold of Rs 15,000," said Prof. K.R. Shyam Sunder, Professor, HRM Area, XLRI, Jamshedpur.

"The EPF subsidy announced today will be distortionary in some senses. The employment creation condition in the package is inequitable in the sense that the establishments are classified into simple two categories, <50 and > 50 and the number of jobs required to be created is a minimum of 2 and 5 respectively. The > 50 category offers huge variation - for example according to the Annual Survey of Industries, 2016-17, 22310 factories employ 50-

99 while 34,981 employ 100+. It is inequitable to ask these two disparate categories to create the same number of jobs for the same amount of subsidy for two years. There must have been finer gradations in a progressive sense. The present arrangement is regressive in this sense," he noted.

Prof. K.R. Shyam Sunder further said, "Why should big firms, i.e. say those employing 100 or 200+ enjoy full subsidy similar to those employing less than 50? Again this is a regressive move. Further the factories employing more than 999 are just 4,258 out of 1.94 lakh registered factories who will get half the subsidy.

The EPF subsidy given its low wage aspect (<15000) will most likely lead to creation of low-skilled jobs and in that sense employment generation will be low skilled and low paying jobs. Again, the FM having covered the COVID-rendered-unemployed could have provided enabled a preferential employment of them for two reasons, they were battered and mostly migrants and they are more likely to be skills-endowed. They are more likely to be job-ready than the freshers."

Professor went to say that, "Also, the

total effect of these jobs and their incomes will have limited multiplier effects and hence less significant impact on the aggregate demand especially in sectors which drive it like the automotive and the high-end industries.

The MNREGA engine of work-generation is seen to have run its major steam as the FM has not replenished its budgetary allocation even though in some states, unemployment levels are still higher and some of them are making job reservations for the locals which means reverse migrants are still around in these states."

"The Schemes may not address fully the issues surrounding employment and wage thefts caused by COVID-19 and the Labour Ministry's intervention as reported in the media shows that it has been incomprehensibly inadequate.

Overall, the government needs to be far more daring and more comprehensive to tackle extraordinary issues of far reaching socio-economic ramifications. Crackers have been banned for Diwali, rightly so, but FM could have made a louder impact which would have been welcome!," he signed off.

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Job Plan may have a Tough Job to Do

ABRY's potential may be reduced by wage ceiling, limitation of PF subsidy

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New Delhi: Job creation possibilities of the Atmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana (ABRY) may be hit by the wage ceiling—because a large number of employers of small enterprises have been excluded from the provident fund subsidy scheme—and by doubts on whether a PF subsidy is the best employment incentive.

Labour market experts and industry associations ET spoke to said while ABRY—which promises a 2-year government subsidisation of the 24% PF contribution for new employees, with a wage ceiling of ₹15,000 per month—may incentivise employers in the formal sector to hire more, the scope of the scheme could have been bigger. “The scheme will benefit employees who lost their jobs during the pandemic

as well those who are eagerly waiting to be hired,” said Rituparna Chakraborty, cofounder Teamlease. She, however, added that such subsidy plans can also be misused. In earlier variants of such schemes, there have been cases where employers have created dummy employee PF accounts and taken the subsidy, labour market experts say.

MORE
REPORTS
➤ PAGE 4

Some Experts Skeptical ➤ 12

Some Experts were More Skeptical

➤ From Page 1

FICCI president Sangita Reddy said she “would urge the government to reconsider the ceiling of Rs 15,000” because “in many parts of the country the average wage levels are higher”.

The ceiling will exclude employers from benefiting from the subsidy for jobs that pay even slightly more than Rs 15,000 but well within wage range for lower-end jobs in manufacturing and service sectors.

Other experts were more skeptical. A general wage subsidy would have given a bigger boost to employment creation rather than linking it to Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), which excludes smaller firms, said labour economist KR Shyam Sundar, a professor at XLRI.

“The scheme is inequitable and not comprehensive. It



will not address employment generation problems being faced by the micro, small and medium enterprises

(MSMEs), a large number of which are out of the purview of EPFO,” Sundar said.

Just around 10% of India's workforce is employed in the organised sector. The rest are in informal employment.

Other observers were unsure whether the PF route is the best incentive. “The assumption that job loss was due to difficulty in payment of provident fund is not

SANGITA REDDY
FICCI President

Would urge the government to reconsider the ceiling of ₹15,000 because in many parts of the country the average wage levels are higher

reality and re-employment will not happen just with taking over PF payments,” said KE Raghunathan, convenor, Consortium of Indian Associations, which described itself as a body that represents all trade associations.

The Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy's data shows employment rate in the country was at a low of 37.8% in October and 0.55 million jobs were lost last month, after a partial recovery in the job market in the preceding months.

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Emphasis on job creation for the low-skilled

FE BUREAU,
New Delhi, November 12

THURSDAY'S STIMULUS PACKAGE was marked by a thrust given to incentivising job creation. Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman sought to earmark an additional ₹16,000 crore to meet this objective — ₹10,000 crore rural-oriented programmes, such as MG-NREGS and ₹6,000 crore for subsidising mandatory contributions by firms and workers towards employees' provident fund (EPF).

The rural employment guarantee scheme's budgetary cost was threatening to far exceed the outlay even after it was hiked by 65% to ₹1,01,500 crore. So far in the year, the government has spent ₹73,500 crore to run the popular scheme to create 251 crore person days of work, close to the level in the whole of last year. The fall in recent months of

the person days generated under the rural employment guarantee scheme has been sharper than the decline in the demand for work.

According to the CMIE, the employment rate that declined by a massive 12.2 percentage points in April, recovered sharply in May-July, but the rate of recovery has since been negligible. The employment rate in October at 37.8% was 1.56 percentage points lower than it was in 2019-20.

Continued on Page 17

Emphasis on job creation for the low-skilled

Under the PM Garib Kalyan Rozgar Yojana (PMGKRY), a scheme that dovetails various rural-centric schemes such as MG-NREGS and launched in June mainly to provide livelihood opportunities to returnee migrant workers in 116 districts, the government will provide an additional ₹10,000 crore this year. Apart from MG-NREGS, the money would be spent on Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY). "This will accelerate the growth of the rural economy," finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said.

Of the ₹50,000 crore allocated under PMGKRY, ₹37,543 crore has already been spent, the FM said. Under PMGSY, ₹19,500 crore was allocated in the Budget for 2020-21.

For encouraging creation of formal employment, the Centre will bear the entire 24% contribution of both the employers and the employees, towards EPF for new employees earning less than ₹15,000 a month in estab-

lishments having less than 1,000 employees and bear the employees' contribution of 12% in establishments with more than 1,000 employees.

The new scheme, Aatmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana, will remain operational till June next year and the subsidy under the scheme can be availed for two years. The estimated subsidy outgo under the scheme for the current fiscal would be around ₹6,000 crore. Overall, it could go up to ₹36,000 crore. "This will encourage formal employment," said former Central Provident Fund commissioner KK Jalan.

New employees would mean both those who will be entering into formal employment for the first time with freshly allotted Aadhaar-seeded universal account number (UAN) by the EPFO as well as those who would be rejoining into formal

From the Front Page

employment (already having been UAN allotted) after losing job during the pandemic period between March and September, 2020, within ₹15,000 monthly salary threshold.

Employers will have to add at least two new employees in their establishments if they have a total workforce of 50 and five, in case they have the strength of more than 50 employees to be eligible to avail the offer. "Around 99.1% of the formal employment will be able to avail benefits under the scheme," the FM said.

"The EPF subsidy given its low wage aspect (< ₹15,000) will most likely lead to creation of low-skilled jobs and in that sense, low skilled and low paying jobs are likely to be created," XLRI professor KR Shyam Sundar said.

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JOB INCENTIVE SCHEME: FOR WORKERS WITH PAY UP TO ₹15,000

Govt to bear 2 years' share of PF for laid-off, new workers

ENSECONOMICBUREAU
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 12

THE GOVERNMENT on Thursday announced an employment incentive scheme, Atmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana, under which it will provide subsidy for provident fund contribution for adding new employees to establishments registered with the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO). The Centre will provide the subsidy for two years for workers who lost jobs between March 1 and September 30, and for new workers employed on or after October 1.

Under the scheme, the central government will pay PF contribution for workers with wages up to Rs 15,000. The contribution of 24 per cent for both employers and employees for establishments employing up to 1,000 employees will be borne by the Centre. For establishments employing more than 1,000 employees, 12 per cent of the employees' share will be contributed by the government.

The additional eligibility condition for the scheme specifies that the subsidy will be provided for employment of two new employees if the establishment has 50 or less employees and will be paid for five new employees if establishments have more than 50 employees. The reference base for employees would be September 2020. The subsidy amount under the scheme, which will be opera-



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman along with MoS Finance Anurag Singh Thakur in New Delhi, on Thursday. PTI

tional till June 30, 2021, will be credited upfront only in Aadhaar-seeded EPFO accounts (UAN) of new employees.

"99.1 per cent of the establishments will be covered under this scheme and 65 per cent of all employees in the formal sector are estimated to be covered in the first category, wherein EPF contributions will be given by the government by way of subsidy support," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said.

Experts said the impact of this scheme will be positive but limited as it is not direct wage support but through the EPF route. "The EPF subsidy announced today will be distortionary in some senses. The employment creation condition in the package is inequitable as the establishments are classified into simple two categories, <50 and > 50 and the number of jobs required to be created is a

minimum of 2 and 5, respectively. The > 50 category offers huge variation — for example according to the Annual Survey of Industries, 2016-17, 22,310 factories employ 50-99, while 34,981 employ 100 plus. It is inequitable to ask these two disparate categories to create the same number of jobs for the same amount of subsidy for two years. There must have been finer gradations in a progressive sense," XLRI professor and labour economist KR Shyam Sundar said.

He added that given the low wage aspect of the EPF subsidy, it will most likely lead to creation of low-skilled and low paying jobs and the total effect of these jobs and their incomes will have limited multiplier effects and, hence, less significant impact on the aggregate demand, especially in sectors that drive it like the automotive and the high-end industries.

The new scheme is similar to

the earlier scheme of Pradhan Mantri Rozgar Protsahan Yojana (PMRPY), which was implemented up to March 2019 to incentivise new employment. PMRPY was announced in August 2016, with the Centre providing for full employers' contribution of 12 per cent (EPF and Employees' Pension Scheme) for three years for new employees registered with the EPFO on or after April 1, 2016 earning up to Rs 15,000 per month. A total amount of Rs 8,300 crore was given to 1,52,899 establishments covering 1,21,69,960 beneficiaries under PMRPY.

The Centre also announced additional outlay for employment under the earlier announced scheme of Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Rozgar Yojana, under which it had earlier identified 116 districts across six states where at least 25,000 workers had returned in each district and employment was to be given for 125 days to migrant workers.

On Thursday, the Centre said Rs 37,543 crore has been spent till date under the scheme, making an additional outlay of Rs 10,000 crore for PM Garib Kalyan Rozgar Yojana. Rural employment guarantee programme MGNREGA was provided with Rs 61,500 crore in the Budget for FY21 and Rs 40,000 crore was additionally provided in Atmanirbhar Bharat 1.0. "As on date, Rs 73,504 crore has been released under MGNREGA and 251 crore person-days of employment have been generated," it said.

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BLOC BOARDROOM CHALLENGE 2020

Prelims close on a high note

OUR BUREAU

Chennai, November 13

Over 750 teams from business schools around the country registered and took the online preliminary test for the *BL on Campus Boardroom Challenge 2020*, which closed on November 11.

B-schoolers across the spectrum have signed up for this novel case challenge, now in its fourth year. Entries poured in from the country's top B-schools, including the IIMs A,B,C as well as from the newer IIMs such as IIM-Nagpur, IIM-Kashipur and IIM-Tiruchi,

among others. A significant number of entries also came in from IIM-Kozhikode. Students from other top ten B-schools such as XLRI, SPJIMR, Great Lakes and NMIMS also registered and took the preliminary 20-question psy-

chometric test to qualify for the next round. Business schools such as IBS, Hyderabad, and SIBM, Pune, are also in the fray.

The winning team at the finals to be held on December 21, will receive ₹1 lakh in prize money while the first and second runners-up will receive ₹75,000 and ₹50,000 respectively.

In its fourth year, the *BLoC Boardroom Challenge* will be held entirely online given the need to be safe amid the pandemic conditions. Four teams from each city will compete for a spot in the finals which will be held in December. One team from each city will go into the finals.

The semi-finals will be webcast on the following days: Chennai (December 1); Coimbatore (December 2), Kochi (December

3); Bengaluru (December 4); Hyderabad (Dec 5); Delhi (December 7); Mumbai (December 8); Kolkata (December 9) and Pune (December 10).

Each team member will have to don the role of a CXO and present to an eminent jury comprising senior corporate sector executives. The case will test the teams' decision-making skills, as well as their knowledge of strategy, marketing and finance. The teams for the semi-finals will be contacted directly by the team from *BusinessLine*.

In the first year of the contest, 2017, LIBA, Chennai, came up trumps to win the title of CXO of the year; in the second year ISB Hyderabad won the contest; in 2019, a team from IIM-Ranchi won while SPJIMR and ISB were the first and second runners-up.

The *BLoC Boardroom Challenge 2020* is presented by Aditya Birla Sun Life Mutual Fund and is powered by Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages (HCCB) in association with Punjab National Bank (PNB) and CasaGrand. The knowledge partners are BrandVectors and Potential Genesis.



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Gig workers have to keep info updated for benefits

Draft rules say companies have to make annual contribution by June 30 for social security of workers

SOMESH JHA

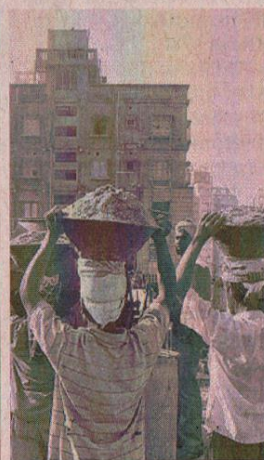
New Delhi, 15 November

Workers in the gig economy will have to constantly update their details on a web portal in a bid to avail social security benefits, even as gig firms will have to submit contribution towards a fund through self-assessment, according to draft labour rules published by the Central government.

The Code on Social Security (Central) Rules, 2020 states that all unorganised sector workers, including gig and platform workers, will have to update their particulars such as current address, present job, period of engagement with gig firms, skills, mobile number, "on the portal specified by the Central Government."

"In the absence of such updation, a gig worker or platform worker may not remain eligible to avail benefits of the social security schemes notified under the Code," the draft rules dated November 13, which is made public for inviting public comments within 45 days, stated.

According to the proposal, gig firms will be required to make an annual contribution by June 30th of every year for social security of gig and platform workers. All such contributions will be done through self-assessment by the gig companies, which will have to submit a



WHAT THE DRAFT RULES STATE

- Rate of interest for delayed payment of cess by construction firms to be reduced from 2% to 1% every month
- Labour assessing officer will no longer have the power to indefinitely halt construction work
- Such assessing officers can visit the construction site only with prior approval from higher authorities
- Registration of gig and unorganised sector workers will be authenticated with their Aadhaar details, following which a unique registration number will be allotted to them
- Gig firms will be required to make an annual contribution by June 30 of every year for social security of workers
- Workers will have to constantly update their details, including residential address, present job, period of engagement with gig firms, etc, on a web portal to remain eligible for social security benefits

form stating the number of gig workers associated with it at the start of every financial year and annual turnover of the aggregators in preceding year.

The contribution towards social security funds, which will be separate for gig workers from other unorganised sector workers, will be to the tune of five per cent of "liability of the aggregator to gig and platform workers."

Gig firms will also have to submit a final return, "detailing the provisional payment of contribution made along with the details

of outstanding contribution", by October 31 every year to the government.

The eligibility of availing any benefits out of social security funds for unorganised and gig workers will be determined separately by the government. However, the registration of such workers will be authenticated with their Aadhaar details, following which a unique registration number will be allotted to them.

Experts pointed out several anomalies in the draft rules, from the Social Security Code, 2020¹ a law passed by the Parliament

last month. For instance, the law had said that all organisations with at least 50 workers will have to provide crèche facilities but the rules state that organisations with at least 50 women workers will be required to do so. The rules also fail to provide clarity on the sources of social security fund for unorganised sector workers, as was required to be done under the new law.

"The rules are complex, confusing and shoddy and leave many matters to the discretionary powers of bureaucrats, rather than providing them explicitly in the rules. The non-negotiable reliance on electronic registration for around 400 million workforce, which constitute the unorganised sector, is an unjust demand," labour economist and XLRI Jamshedpur professor K.R. Shyam Sundar said.

To reduce financial liability of construction sector firms, the rate of interest for delayed payment of cess has been reduced from two per cent to one per cent every month.

"Under the existing rules, the assessing officer has the power to direct that no material or machinery can be removed or disturbed from the construction site. Such power for indefinitely stopping of construction work has been withdrawn in the draft rules," the Union labour and employment ministry said in a statement.

गिग वर्कर्स के लाभ संबंधी जानकारीयों करनी होंगी अद्यतन

सोमेश झा

नई दिल्ली, 16 नवंबर

केंद्र सरकार की ओर से प्रकाशित मसौदा श्रम नियमों के मुताबिक गिग अर्थव्यवस्था में शामिल कामगारों को सामाजिक सुरक्षा का लाभ लेते रहने के लिए निरंतर अपनी जानकारीयों को वेब पोर्टल पर अद्यतन करना होगा। वहीं गिग कंपनियों को भी स्व आकलन के जरिये एक कोष में अपना योगदान देना होगा।

सामाजिक सुरक्षा (केंद्रीय) नियम, 2020 संहिता में कहा गया है कि गिग और प्लेटफॉर्म कामगारों सहित असंगठित क्षेत्र के सभी कर्मियों को अपना मौजूदा पता, मौजूदा नौकरी, गिग कंपनी के साथ करार की अवधि, कौशल, मोबाइल नंबर जैसी जानकारीयों को केंद्र सरकार की ओर से सुझाए गए पोर्टल पर अद्यतन करना होगा।

13 नवंबर को जारी मसौदा नियमों में कहा गया है, 'इन जानकारीयों के अभाव में गिग कामगार या प्लेटफॉर्म पर काम करने वाले कर्मचारी संहिता के तहत अधिसूचित सामाजिक सुरक्षा योजनाओं का लाभ उठाने के पात्र नहीं रह जाएंगे।' इस मसौदे पर 45 दिनों के भीतर सार्वजनिक टिप्पणी आमंत्रित की गई है।

प्रस्ताव के मुताबिक गिग कर्मचारियों और प्लेटफॉर्म पर काम करने वाले कर्मचारियों की सामाजिक सुरक्षा के लिए गिग कंपनियों को प्रत्येक वर्ष 30 जून तक अपना योगदान देना होगा। ये योगदान गिग कंपनियों द्वारा स्व आकलन के माध्यम से

किया जाएगा। उन्हें प्रत्येक वित्त वर्ष के आरंभ में अपने साथ जुड़े गिग कर्मचारियों की संख्या और पिछले वर्ष में एग्रीगेटरों के सालाना कारोबार का उल्लेख करते हुए एक फॉर्म जमा कराना होगा।

सामाजिक सुरक्षा कोष में किया जाने वाला योगदान गिग और प्लेटफॉर्म कर्मियों के प्रति एग्रीगेटर की देनदारी का पांच फीसदी होगा। यह कोष गिग कर्मियों के लिए असंगठित क्षेत्र के दूसरे कामगारों से अलग होगा।

गिग कंपनियों को हर साल 31 अक्टूबर तक सरकार के पास एक अंतिम रिटर्न जमा कराना होगा जिसमें योगदान के तात्कालिक भुगतान के साथ इस मद में बकाया भुगतान की जानकारी देनी होगी।

असंगठित और गिग कर्मचारियों के लिए सामाजिक सुरक्षा से इतर किसी लाभ की पात्रता का निर्धारण सरकार अलग से करेगी। हालांकि, इन कामगारों के पंजीयन का सत्यापन उनके आधार की जानकारीयों से किया जाएगा जिसके बाद उन्हें एक विशिष्ट पंजीयन संख्या आवंटित की जाएगी।

विशेषज्ञों ने सामाजिक सुरक्षा संहिता, 2020 से मसौदा नियमों में कई खामियों की ओर इशारा किया है। इसे पिछले महीने संसद में पारित किया गया है। विशेषज्ञों ने इंगित किया है कि कानून में कहा गया है कि कम से कम 50 महिला कर्मियों वाले सभी संगठनों को क्रेच (पालना घर) की सुविधा मुहैया करानी होगी लेकिन नियम में कहा गया है कि कम से कम 50 महिला कर्मियों वाले संगठनों को ऐसा करने की आवश्यकता है। इन नियमों में असंगठित

क्षेत्र के कर्मचारियों के लिए सामाजिक सुरक्षा कोष के स्रोतों पर भी स्पष्टता से प्रकाश नहीं डाला गया है जैसा कि नए कानून में ऐसा करने की आवश्यकता बताई गई है।

श्रम अर्थशास्त्री और एक्सप्लोररआई जमशेदपुर में प्रोफेसर के आर श्याम सुंदर ने कहा, 'ये नियम जटिल, भ्रामक और बिना काम के हैं और बहुत से मामलों को अफसरों के विवेकाधीन शक्तियों पर छोड़ दिया गया है जबकि उन्हें स्पष्ट तौर पर नियमों में उल्लिखित किया जाना चाहिए था। असंगठित क्षेत्र से आने वाले करीब 40 करोड़ कार्यबल के लिए इलेक्ट्रॉनिक पंजीकरण पर अनिवार्य भरोसा एक अन्यायपूर्ण मांग है।'।

निर्माण क्षेत्र की कंपनियों की वित्तीय देनदारी घटाने के लिए उपकर के भुगतान में देरी होने पर लगने वाले ब्याज की दर को 2 फीसदी से घटाकर 1 फीसदी मासिक कर दी गई है।

केंद्रीय श्रम और रोजगार मंत्रालय ने एक वक्तव्य में कहा, 'मौजूदा नियमों के तहत आकलन अधिकारी यह निर्देश दे सकता है कि निर्माण स्थल से किसी सामग्री या मशीन को नहीं हटाया जा सकता है। मसौदा नियमों में अनिश्चित काल तक काम पर रोक लगाने की उसकी शक्ति को वापस ले लिया गया है।'।

मंत्रालय ने कहा कि इसके अलावा मसौदा नियमों के तहत आकलन अधिकारी केवल इमारत के सचिव और अन्य निर्माण कर्मचारी बोर्ड की पूर्व अनुमति के बाद निर्माण स्थल का दौरा कर सकता है।

मसौदा नियम

- गिग कंपनियों को अपने कामगारों की सामाजिक सुरक्षा के लिए हर वर्ष 30 जून तक अपना सालाना योगदान करना होगा
- निर्माण कंपनियों की ओर से उपकर के भुगतान में देरी होने पर ब्याज की दर को 2 फीसदी से घटाकर 1 फीसदी मासिक कर दिया गया है
- श्रम आकलन अधिकारी के पास निर्माण कार्य को अनिश्चित काल तक के लिए रोक कर रखने की शक्ति नहीं रह गई है
- ये अधिकारी उच्च प्राधिकारी से मंजूरी मिलने के बाद ही निर्माण स्थल का दौरा कर सकते हैं
- अंशकालिक और असंगठित क्षेत्र के कामगारों का सत्यापन उनके आधार की जानकारीयों से किया जाएगा। उसके बाद उन्हें एक विशिष्ट पंजीकरण संख्या आवंटित होगी
- कामगारों को सामाजिक सुरक्षा के लाभों का पात्र बने रहने के लिए निरंतर अपना आवासीय पता, मौजूदा नौकरी, गिग कंपनी के साथ करार की अवधि आदि वेब पोर्टल पर अद्यतन करनी होगी

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Wage subsidy via EPFO may drive creation of a million jobs

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NEW DELHI

The wage subsidy through the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) is likely to cost the Centre ₹6,000 crore, and may help create more than one million jobs over the next two years.

The job creation target is aimed at the lower rung of the salary pyramid, but will push formalization, said two government officials, seeking anonymity. However, monitoring the number of new jobs against the claims by some firms will be tough, they said.

"Creating a million jobs is not difficult to achieve with the initiative. At least 500,000 establishments with 20 or more workers are registered with EPFO and if they add just two employees each in their payroll, then the one million



Experts believe while it is a welcome initiative, the move may incentivise low-wage work and might not affect market demand.

number can be achieved easily," said one of the officials mentioned above.

"Remember, the economy is expected to bounce back gradually from the first quarter's dismal performance. Demand in construction, real estate and cement and auto sectors are reviving. The Atmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana (ABRY)

makes provision that firms taking back employees who lost their jobs during the lockdown will enjoy EPF subsidy of up to 24%. This will be a big driver. Old employees are already being taken back and as we recover, things will change for good," the other official said.

The Centre will provide

subsidy for two years for workers who lost jobs between 1 March and 30 September, but are now joining back, as well as for new workers employed between 1 October and 30 June 2021 under ABRY. Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said last week. For both categories, the salary was capped at ₹15,000 per month.

The partial EPF subsidy scheme, PM Rojgar Protsahan Yojana, announced in 2016 with a shelf life of three years led to a cost of more than ₹8,300 crore, said the first official. The ABRY is more comprehensive but for two years. "A formal calculation is not yet done but roughly the expenditure won't be less than ₹5,500-6,000 crore," the first official said.

Last time, 153,000 companies had availed the benefit, while this time the number will be more as "we expect a lot of welcoming back of workers,

especially those who had lost jobs because of business loss during the lockdown", said the second official.

On 12 November, FM had said the addition of new employees will be above the September employee count and, if a company had up to 50 workers by end of September, it needs to create at least two

jobs to be eligible for the EPF subsidy. Companies with more than 50 employees are required to add five new employees to get the benefits. Establishments registered with EPFO that

have up to 1,000 workers will get 24% EPF subsidy, 12% of the employers' share and 12% of the employees' share. If the company has more than 1,000 employees, the government will reimburse the 12% share of

the new employees added.

"The scheme has reduced the human cost for companies. Some will argue that the salary cap of just ₹15,000 is not enough, but the potential answer is that the government aims to incentivise employment creation for the lower strata, who were worst hit by covid-19. It will also pull out a

The job creation target is likely to benefit the lower rung of the salary pyramid, but will also push formalization

good number of workers who had lost formal jobs in recent months," said the second official.

Experts, however, said while this is a welcome step, it is incentivising low-

wage, low-productive work. "The outcome of these jobs will have limited multiplier effects and may not influence the demand in the market," said K.R. Shyam Sundar, a labour economist.

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DATE: 19 November 2020

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एक्सएलआरआई... अब पीजीडीएम कोर्स के लिए जीआई स्कोर भी मान्य

जमशेदपुर | एक्सएलआरआई ने फ्लैगशिप कोर्स पोस्ट ग्रेजुएट डिप्लोमा इन जनरल मैनेजमेंट में दाखिला के लिए ग्रेजुएट रिकॉर्ड एक्जामिनेशन स्कोर मान्य करार दिया है। पहले जैट-जीमैट स्कोर के आधार पर ही दाखिला होता था। संस्थान के पीजीडीएम के 15 माह के कोर्स के लिए आवेदन की अंतिम तिथि 30 नवंबर है।

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DATE: 19 November 2020

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जीआरई व जीमैट का स्कोर भी स्वीकार

एक्सएलआरआई

जमशेदपुर | संवाददाता

एक्सएलआरआई में इस वर्ष से एग्जीक्यूटिव पीजीडीएम (जनरल) में प्रवेश के लिए जीमैट (ग्रेजुएट मैनेजमेंट एडमिशन टेस्ट) और एक्सएटी (जैट) स्कोर के अलावा जीआरई (ग्रेजुएट रिकार्ड एग्जामिनेशन) का स्कोर भी

स्वीकार होगा। प्रवेश पंद्रह महीने के पूर्णकालिक आवासीय सामान्य प्रबंधन कार्यक्रम एग्जीक्यूटिव पीजीडीएम (जनरल) के लिए खुले हैं।

रजिस्ट्रेशन की अंतिम तिथि 30 नवंबर है। छात्रों को 31 मार्च 2021 तक कम से कम पांच साल के प्रबंधकीय या पर्यवेक्षीय अनुभव के साथ किसी भी विषय में न्यूनतम तीन साल की मान्यता प्राप्त स्नातक की डिग्री

होनी चाहिए। पीजीडीएम (जीएमपी) के उम्मीदवार एक्सएटी 2021 या जीमैट के माध्यम से आवेदन करने का विकल्प चुन सकते हैं। एक्सएलआरआई के फादर सह निदेशक पी क्रिस्टी एसजे ने कहा कि संस्थान ने पंद्रह महीने का समेकित कोर्स विकसित किया है, जो प्रबंधन में सैद्धांतिक नींव के साथ समग्र परिप्रेक्ष्य प्रदान करने को तैयार किया गया है।

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PAGE: 2

XLRI accepts GRE scores for admission in PGDM Programme

MI NEWS SERVICE

JAMSHEDPUR: XLRI (Xavier School of Management), has announced acceptance of GRE scores apart from GMAT and XAT scores for admission to its flagship programme- Executive PGDM [General] from this year onwards. Also, the GMAT scores acceptance period has been extended to five years (GMAT score validity from December 1, 2015 to December 31, 2020).

The admissions open for the fifteen-month full-time residential General Management Programme Executive PGDM (General). The last date for registration is 30th November 2020. The programme has received various prestigious accreditations, including AMBA, AICTE.

Candidates must hold a recognized bachelor's degree of minimum three years duration in any discipline with at least 5 years of managerial/supervisory experience by March 31, 2021. PGDM (GMP) candidates may

choose to apply through XAT 2021 or GMAT.

Executive PGDM (GENERAL) aims to augment the skill-sets and competencies of practicing managers and accelerate their career paths. Exposing them to recent trends, tools, and techniques in management. The program consists of Core and Optional/Elective courses specially designed for fast track executives with work experience. They provide the essentials of management

education with the flexibility of individual exploration in their chosen area of interest. It also includes a 3-month field-based training in a functional area.

Father P. Christie, director, XLRI - Xavier School of Management said, "Knowledge and continuous learning is the mainstay amongst progressive organizations of today. To satisfy this thirst for knowledge and to become a learning organization, XLRI has evolved a fif-

teen-month consolidated program in general management with the objectives of providing the practising managers a substantial exposure to theoretical foundations in management as well as to provide them a holistic perspective of business in such a way that they are not only equipped with tools and techniques to perform their task effectively but also to shoulder greater responsibilities in the future as they move up the organizational hierarchy."



जीमैट स्कोर की स्वीकृति अवधि 5 वर्ष बढ़ी

मुख्य संवाददाता, जमशेदपुर

बिष्टपुर एक्सएलआरआई ने इस वर्ष के बाद से अपने प्रमुख प्रोग्राम एक्जीक्यूटिव पीजीडीएम (सामान्य) में प्रवेश के लिए जीमैट और जैट स्कोर के अलावा जीआरआई स्कोर की स्वीकृति की भी घोषणा की है. जीमैट स्कोर की स्वीकृति अवधि को पांच वर्ष तक बढ़ा दिया है. इस तरह जीमैट स्कोर की बाध्यता पहली दिसंबर 2015 से 31 दिसंबर 2020 तक रहेगी. संस्थान की ओर जारी विज्ञप्ति में बताया गया कि इस

एक्सएलआरआई

➔ **जीमैट और जैट स्कोर के अलावा जीआरआई स्कोर की स्वीकृति की हुई घोषणा**

15 माह के पूर्णकालिक आवासीय सामान्य प्रबंधन प्रोग्राम एक्जीक्यूटिव प्रोग्राम (सामान्य) के लिए एडमिशन की प्रक्रिया प्रारंभ हो रही है. इसके लिए पंजीयन की अंतिम तिथि 30 नवंबर

2020 है. कुल मिलाकर प्रोग्राम में विभिन्न प्रतिष्ठित मान्यताएं प्राप्त हुई है, इसमें एएमबीए व एआईसीटीई शामिल है. प्रोग्राम में एडमिशन के लिए उम्मीदवारों को आगामी 31 मार्च 2021 तक कम से कम 5 साल के मैनेजेरियल या सुपरवाइजरी अनुभव के साथ किसी विषय में न्यूनतम तीन साल की मान्यता प्राप्त स्नातक की डिग्री की अनिवार्यता रखी गयी है. जबकि पीजीडीएम (जीएमपी) के उम्मीदवार जैट 2021 या जीमैट के माध्यम से आवेदन कर सकते हैं.

PUBLICATION: Morning India

DATE: 19 November 2020

EDITION: Jamshedpur

PAGE: 12

XLRI to accept GRE scores for admission in PGDM Programme

Mail News Service

Jamshedpur, Nov 18 : XLRI (Xavier School of Management), has announced acceptance of GRE scores apart from GMAT and XAT scores for admission to its flagship program - Executive PGDM [General] from this year onwards. Also, the GMAT scores acceptance period has been extended to five years (GMAT score validity from December 1, 2015 to December 31, 2020).

The admissions open for the fifteen-month full-time residential General Management Programme Executive PGDM (General). The

last date for registration is 30th November 2020. The program has received various prestigious accreditations, including AMBA, AICTE.

Candidates must hold a recognized bachelor's degree of minimum three years duration in any discipline with at least 5 years of managerial/supervisory experience by March 31, 2021. PGDM (GMP) candidates may choose to apply through XAT 2021 or GMAT.

Executive PGDM (GENERAL) aims to augment the skill-sets and competencies of practicing managers and accelerate their



career paths. Exposing them to

recent trends, tools, and techniques in management. The program consists of Core and Optional/Elective courses specially designed for fast track executives with work experience. They provide the essentials of management education with the flexibility of individual exploration in their chosen area of interest. It also includes a 3-month field-based training in a functional area.

Father P. Christie, director, XLRI - Xavier School of Management said, "Knowledge and continuous learning is the mainstay amongst progressive

organizations of today. To satisfy this thirst for knowledge and to become a learning organization, XLRI has evolved a fifteen-month consolidated program in general management with the objectives of providing the practising managers a substantial exposure to theoretical foundations in management as well as to provide them a holistic perspective of business in such a way that they are not only equipped with tools and techniques to perform their task effectively but also to shoulder greater responsibilities in the future as they move up the organizational hierarchy."

PUBLICATION: The Financial Express
DATE: 19 November 2020
EDITION: Kolkata (All Editions)
PAGE: 3

Social security code: Draft high on promises, silent on funding

FE BUREAU
New Delhi, November 18

ALTHOUGH THE CODE on Social Security, 2020, envisages a corpus to facilitate extension of such benefits to large sections of Indian workforce, including those in the unorganised sector and even the self-employed, the draft rules released recently haven't provided any clarity on how the necessary resources would be mobilised.

As per the rules, "The central government shall identify the source(s) for initial funding/ replenishing the Social Security Fund from time to time. The fund shall be administered by the central government through an agency designated by the central government in the manner, as notified by the central government."

The self-employed form more than half of the country's workforce, whose count was 47.12 crore in 2017-18 as per government data. The government had earlier said that it would roll out schemes to extend social security to all workers in phases. The self-employed include own-account workers, employers and unpaid family workers.

For the platform and gig workers, who work outside the

The government had earlier said that it would roll out schemes to extend social security to all workers in phases

ambit of employer-employee relationship, the Code provides for contribution towards the social security fund — aggregators will have to contribute 1-2% of their turnover or 5% of the payments to the workers, whichever is lower.

The Centre had earlier said the social security fund could be financed either through its sole contribution or jointly by both the Centre and the states. There was also a plan to get contributions from employers or employees. It could also be funded from the contribution of companies through their corporate social responsibility fund.

A senior labour ministry official said that the self-employed would be treated as part of unorganised sector workforce and the social security fund which would be financed via a variety of sources. The funds received will be credited into the corpus and all expenses towards the schemes for the unorganised sector workers, gig and platform workers would be met out from this fund, he added.

Labour expert and XLRI professor KR Shyam Sundar said, "the draft rules do not inspire confidence because the main aspect of funds for the social security for the 4 crore unorganised sector workers have not been clearly spelt out. The failure of the Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008 was primarily due to this reason."

"Since the Code and the Rules talk of electronic labour administration, one expected that the Rules would provide for linkage of bank accounts with the URN and Aadhar for safe and quick transfer of benefit funds. But this is absent in the regulations. Further, there is no mention of issuance of physical identify cards in both, which will make transactions under the Code difficult if not impossible," he said.

Rituparna Chakraborty, co-founder and executive vice president, Teamlease, said, "Through the rule-making process, it is important to ascertain how the social security fund for self-employed and unorganised sector shall be funded, what is the process of disbursement of such social security and how it actually helps those it intends to support. Any ambiguity around these would lead to a novel idea in really not taking off."

PUBLICATION: The Telegraph
DATE: 19 November 2020
EDITION: Kolkata (All Editions)
PAGE: 3

XLRI to accept GRE scores

ANIMESH BISOOE

Jamshedpur: India's oldest B-school, XLRI-Xavier School of Management, will accept the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) scores apart from the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) and Xavier Aptitude Test (XAT) scores for its flagship executive post-graduate diploma in management (general) programme from the forthcoming session.

The move by XLRI, set up in 1949, is aimed at attracting working managers who were planning to take admission in overseas institutions.

"With the restriction on flights and general tendency to avoid overseas visit, the XLRI board decided to widen the ambit of selection by accepting the GRE scores to benefit working managers who had been planning to study abroad and opted for the exam," said a senior faculty in the Jamshedpur-based institution.

GRE is a standardised test for admission in graduate schools in several countries, especially the US and Canada.

"Registration for the 15-

month executive PGDM (general) full-time residential programme will continue till November 30. Candidates must hold a recognised bachelor's degree of minimum three years in any discipline with at least five years of managerial or supervisory experience by March 31, 2021. The GMAT scores will be valid from December 1, 2015, to December 31, 2020," said the senior faculty.

XLRI director Father P. Christie said, "Knowledge and continuous learning is the mainstay amongst progressive organisations. To satisfy this thirst for knowledge, the XLRI has evolved the consolidated programme in general management with the objective of providing the practising managers a substantial exposure to theoretical foundations in management... The decision on GRE scores and the extension of validity of GMAT scores has been taken in view of new developments."

PUBLICATION: Udit Vani

DATE: 19 November 2020

EDITION: Jamshedpur

PAGE: 5

एक्सएलआरआई में एडमिशन अब जीआरई व जीमैट स्कोर से भी

जमशेदपुर : एक्सएलआरआई (जेवियर स्कूल ऑफ मैनेजमेंट) देश के प्रमुख बी-स्कूलों में से एक है. संस्थान ने इस वर्ष के बाद से अपने प्रमुख प्रोग्राम एक्जीक्यूटिव पीजीडीएम (सामान्य) में प्रवेश के लिए जीमैट और जैट स्कोर के अलावा जीआरई स्कोर की स्वीकृति की भी घोषणा की है. इसके अलावा जीमैट स्कोर स्वीकृति अवधि को पांच वर्ष तक बढ़ा दिया है. यानी जीमैट स्कोर की वैधता 1 दिसंबर 2015 से 31 दिसंबर 2020 तक रहेगी. संस्थान की ओर से बताया गया है कि इस 15 महीने के पूर्णकालिक आवासीय सामान्य प्रबंधन प्रोग्राम एक्जीक्यूटिव पीजीडीएम (जेनरल) के लिए एडमिशन की प्रक्रिया आरंभ हो रही है. इसके लिए पंजीकरण की अंतिम तिथि 30 नवंबर 2020 है.

PUBLICATION: The Pioneer

DATE: 23 November 2020

EDITION: Jamshedpur

PAGE: 2

XLRI to accept GRE scores for admission in PGDM Programme

PNS ■ JAMSHEDPUR

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minimum three years duration in any discipline with at least 5 years of managerial/supervisory experience by March 31, 2021. PGDM (GMP) candidates may choose to apply through XAT 2021 or GMAT.

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PUBLICATION: Ananda Bazar Patrika

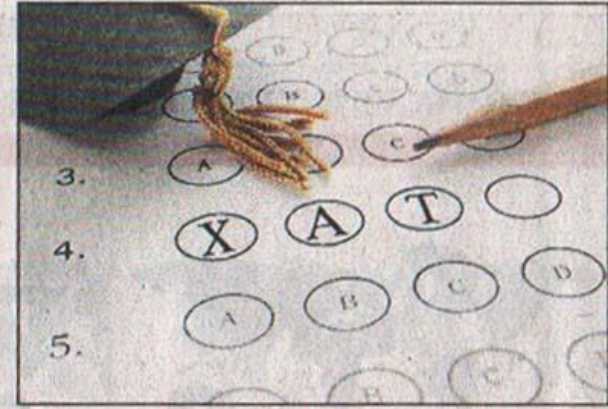
DATE: 24 November 2020

EDITION: Kolkata

PAGE: 10

ঘোষণা: জ্যাট-এর রেজিস্ট্রেশনের শেষ তারিখ ৩০ নভেম্বর

কী হবে: এক্সএলআরআই পরিচালিত ম্যানেজমেন্ট পরীক্ষা
জেভিয়ার অ্যাপ্টিটিউড টেস্ট (জ্যাট) ২০২১ অনলাইনে হবে
আগামী ৩ জানুয়ারি। সময় ৩ ঘণ্টা। <https://xatonline.in/>
ওয়েবসাইটে করা যাবে রেজিস্ট্রেশন



PUBLICATION: Morning India

DATE: 24 November 2020

EDITION: Kolkata

PAGE: 2

XLRI celebrates theme launch of annual fest

MI NEWS SERVICE

JAMSHEDPUR: Ensemble Valhalla, XLRI's annual cultural, sports, and management festival, organised its theme launch event, IGNITO virtually at the B-school campus.

The event witnessed massive participation from students, faculty and staff members. The theme of the fest for this year is Escapade- A New Journey Awaits. It encourages people to overcome the monotony of life and daringly take off on a journey of adventure and thrill.

The event commenced with a musical night with Bhuwin Khursija, which saw

a footfall of more than 550 and was also attended by dean of academics, Dr. Ashis K Pani. This was followed by First Impressions, the event designed to facilitate batch interaction and communication. Day 2 began with an event conducted to enhance batch unity and competitiveness. All the sections collectively solved a crossword based on XL life and culture. Next event in line was a team event held on Dare2Compete. Here, all the student committees organised different activities. The event concluded with a surprise round, where the winners were chosen through voting by all the students. Ensemble-Valhalla is the annual cultural, sports,



and management fest of XLRI. XLRI's flagship fest Ensemble-Valhalla has witnessed participation from

various B-schools across the country and performances by renowned artists like Amit Trivedi, Lucky Ali, Nikhil

D'Souza, The Local Train, Vipul Goyal, Sorabh Pant, Biswa Kalyan Rath, Zakir Khan, Akash Gupta, and Karunesh Talwar. The multifaceted fest is expected to be a grand celebration of spirit and character encompassing the values and integrity of India's oldest business management school.

XLRI-Xavier School of Management, Jamshedpur is a premier, private management institute in India founded in 1949 by Fr Quinn Enright, S.J. in the 'steel city' of Jamshedpur (www.xlri.ac.in). Over the last six decades, the institute has grown into a top-ranking business management school of international repute with

an extensive portfolio of management programs and research publications. Its alumni are spread around the globe and have demonstrated responsible business leadership in their organisations. XLRI continually strives to contribute its mite to the professional growth and management of numerous organisations and institutions across industry sectors. XLRI has been awarded two prestigious International Accreditations, viz., AACSB - The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business and AMBA - Association of MBAs. XLRI has also earned the National Board of Accreditation (NBA) accreditation.

PUBLICATION: The Avenue Mail

DATE: 24 November 2020

EDITION: Jamshedpur

PAGE: 12

'Ensemble Valhalla' fest theme launched at XLRI

Mail News Service

Jamshedpur, Nov 23: Ensemble Valhalla, XLRI's annual cultural, sports, and management festival, organised its theme launch event, IGNITO virtually on 20th-21st November 2020. The event witnessed massive participation from students, faculty and staff members. The theme of the fest for this year is "Escapade" - A New Journey Awaits. It encourages people to overcome the monotony of life and daringly take off on a jour-

ney of adventure and thrill. The event commenced with a musical night with Bhuwin Khursija, which saw a footfall of 550+ and was also attended by Dean of Academics, Dr. Ashis K Pani. This was followed by First Impressions, the event designed to facilitate batch interaction and communication. Day 2 began with an event conducted to enhance batch unity and competitiveness. All the sections collectively solved a crossword based on XL life and culture. Next event in line was a team event held on Dare2Compete. Here, all



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chosen through voting by all the students.

Ensemble-Valhalla is the annual cultural, sports, and management fest of XLRI.

XLRI's flagship fest Ensemble-Valhalla has witnessed participation from various B-schools across the country and performances by renowned artists like Amit Trivedi, Lucky Ali, Nikhil D'Souza, The Local Train, Vipul Goyal, Sorabh Pant, Biswa Kalyan Rath, Zakir Khan, Akash Gupta, and Karunesh Talwar. The multifaceted fest is expected to be a grand celebration of spirit and character encompassing the values and integrity of India's oldest business management school. (W-MB)

PUBLICATION: The Avenue Mail

DATE: 25 November 2020

EDITION: Jamshedpur

PAGE: 12

XLRI co-hosts Asia Meet 2020 on virtual platform

Mail News Service

Jamshedpur, Nov 24 : The Social Initiative Group for Managerial Assistance (SIGMA) committee of XLRI organised Asia Meet 2020 on a virtual platform this time, owing to the COVID 19 pandemic.

The meet witnessed attendees from oikos chapters in Hong Kong, Suzhou, Bangalore, and Kolkata. The sessions were very informative and witnessed members of these chapters exchange ideas and share updates on recent activities and events carried out by them. It also saw several representatives from oikos international participate in discussions and engage in conversations with members of the Asian chapters.



Aditi Deodhar, external vice president, oikos Hong Kong and the brain behind 'Planeteers' took the floor to explain the motivation behind co-founding the company which adopts a vegan and biodegradable

edible route towards the fight against single-use practice.

Planeteers look at edible cutlery that is also rich in nutrition as a healthy and eco-friendly substitute to single-use plastic cutlery.

Wilma Rodriguez, the founder of "Saahas Zero Waste" then spoke about the challenges to waste management and how the millennial generation is doing a great job to find solutions to this grave problem. She also threw some light on how people need to take the onus for responsible waste management.

This was followed by a brief talk on corporate sustainability by Dr. Tata L Raghuram, Associate Professor of Strategic Management, XLRI and Chairperson of Father Arrupe Centre for Ecology and Sustainability. He emphasised on how sustainability is the new mother of innovation and how the economic, environment and social aspect

of a business must move in tandem with each other in order to achieve sustainability.

This interactive session saw exchanges of ideas on how the current curriculum of corporate sustainability in B-Schools can be improved to ensure it is up to date with the current challenges faced in the journey towards sustainability.

The oikos chapters that attended the meet then explained the latest developments in the activities and events. Ideas on how different chapters can collaborate on projects in the future were discussed before Sophie Charrois, President of oikos concluded the event with a closing note. (W-PB)

PUBLICATION: Udit Vani

DATE: 25 November 2020

EDITION: Jamshedpur

PAGE: 5

एक्सएलआरआई : वर्चुअल प्लेटफॉर्म पर एशिया मीट का आयोजन सिंगल यूज प्लास्टिक की जगह जैविक जिंदगी अपनाने पर दिया गया जोर

■ मीट में हांगकांग, सूज़ौ, बेंगलुरु और कोलकाता चैप्टर ने लिया भाग

जमशेदपुर : एक्सएलआरआई जमशेदपुर के सिग्मा ओइकोस चैप्टर की ओर से मंगलवार को वर्चुअल प्लेटफॉर्म पर ओइकोस एशिया मीट का आयोजन किया गया। इस मीट में हांगकांग, सूज़ौ, बेंगलुरु और कोलकाता चैप्टर ने भाग लिया। इस मीट में विभिन्न चैप्टर के प्रतिभागियों ने अपने विचार एक दूसरे के संग शेयर किया। इस मीट में ओइकोस इंटरनेशनल के कई प्रतिनिधियों ने भाग लिया और एशियाई अध्यायों के सदस्यों के साथ बातचीत की। अदिति देवधर, एक्सटर्नल वाइस



प्रेसीडेंट, ओइकोस हांगकांग ने अपनी कंपनी प्लानेटर्स के पीछे की प्रेरणा बताई और बताया कि इस कंपनी को शुरू करने का आइडिया कैसे दिमाग में आया। उन्होंने एकल उपयोग अभ्यास (सिंगल यूज प्रैक्टिस) की लड़ाई के लिए एक शाकाहारी और बायो डिग्रेडेबल भोजन पर जोर दिया। देवधर ने बताया कि सिंगल यूज प्लास्टिक की जगह प्लानेटर्स खाद्य कटलरी न

केवल सेहतमंद है बल्कि इको फ्रेंडली भी है। विल्मा रोड्रिज, 'साहो जीरो वेस्ट' के संस्थापक ने वेस्ट मैनेजमेंट के बारे में बताया। उन्होंने अपशिष्ट प्रबंधन की चुनौतियां बताई और कहा कि इस समस्या के समधान में मिलेनियल्स की भूमिका काफी अग्रणी रही है। उन्होंने यह भी बताया कि कैसे लोगों को वेस्ट मैनेजमेंट को लेकर जिम्मेदार बनाया जा सकता है।

PUBLICATION: Morning India

DATE: 26 November 2020

EDITION: Kolkata

PAGE: 4

SIGMA committee of XLRI organises Asia Meet 2020

MI NEWS SERVICE

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This interactive session saw exchanges of ideas on how the current curriculum of corporate

sustainability in B-Schools can be improved to ensure it is up to date with the current challenges faced in the journey towards sustainability.

The oikos chapters that attended the meet then explained the latest developments in the activities and events. Ideas on how different chapters can collaborate on projects in the future were discussed before Sophie Charrois, President of oikos concluded the event with a closing note.

Refining trade union strategies to strike a chord

With labour law reforms set to change industrial relations, trade union responses must include social dialogue too



K.R. SHYAM SUNDAR

Ten central trade unions (CTUs) have called for a nation-wide strike on November 26, 2020 to condemn what they consider to be the anti-people, and anti-labour economic policies of the government. This follows strikes in the coal and defence sectors protesting privatisation and the corporatisation policies of the government. It is essential to understand as to why the central trade unions have decided to go on strike today.

Codes and flaws

With the introduction of economic reforms concretely since 1991, employers and the global financial institutions have been lobbying for labour market and structural reforms. The reform processes gained momentum since 2015 and the National Democratic Alliance government has enacted four Labour Codes in the last two years. The details of the labour law reforms have been described and critically analysed in the columns of this daily. The Codes are based on the fundamental unproven premise that labour laws and inspection system are obstacles in attracting investment, and hence the government must promote a cheaper and flexible labour market.

The Codes do extend some labour rights such as universal mini-

mum wage, statutory recognition of trade unions, formalisation of employment contracts, and social security to gig and platform economy workers. However, they also afford substantial flexibility to the employers in terms of easy hire and fire, freedom to hire contract labour and unregulated fixed-term employment, etc. The Codes have also considerably redefined the concept and practice of labour inspection system by diluting it. The Codes and state retrenchment in the industrial sector and fiscal conservatism – especially in the context of higher levels of unemployment – along with stubborn inflation have created tremendous insecurity among workers. Migrant and informal workers underwent woeful experiences during the COVID-19 period, and trade unions as well as commentators perceive that the state has not provided adequate relief to workers.

Crisis and reforms

The central government and several State governments had chosen the COVID-19 crisis-ridden period as an “opportune time” to enact labour law reforms having far-reaching adverse consequences for labour rights and structural reforms. It is galling to note that the COVID-19 period has witnessed perhaps a maximum amount of legal and extra-legal measures issued by the state.

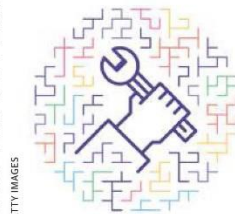
In such a context, trade unions have six options to confront or soften these measures – viz. social dialogue, political lobbying, political confrontation through Opposition parties, legal action by approaching the judiciary, seek the International Labour Organiza-

tion's intervention, and direct industrial action.

The central government, as per trade unions, did not conduct an effective and sustaining social dialogue, though it held a few symbolic parleys with them. At the State level, social dialogue institutions are largely absent or weak. The last Indian Labour Conference, a tripartite social dialogue body, was held in 2015 (<https://bit.ly/39f01eT>). The government has dismissed social dialogue as being ineffectual and even frustrating.

The Central trade unions, including the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh-affiliated trade union, the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, have made numerous representations to the government on their demands and suggestions not only relating to labour market reforms but also on tackling of COVID-19 crises. Who else is better suited to advise the government than the workers' organisations on these issues? Trade unions contend that many of their suggestions have not been incorporated in the Codes and the COVID-19 relief measures.

The whole political exercise of the passage of the Farm Bills and the three Labour Codes during the



GETTY IMAGES

COVID-19 period smacks of “undemocracy” as Parliament did not witness “healthy discussions”. The boycott by the Opposition parties ended up serving the cause of reforms, and they wittingly or otherwise became partners in the reform exercises. At any rate, the Opposition parties are waging their own battles of their relevance and incurably divided and pathetically irrelevant as a significant political force.

Seeking assistance

The judiciary seems to be the only source of hope in these times of “institutional corrosion”, aided and abetted by right-wing politics. Though the Supreme Court of India did not respond quickly to provide relief to migrant workers, it has struck down the Gujarat government's amendment of the Factories Act. Unions must shed their judicio-phobia and approach it provided they have strong legal grounds to challenge reforms introduced by Central or State governments.

Trade unions, out of their patriotic mindset, do not use extensively the complaints mechanism created by the International Labour Organization for fear of washing dirty linen in the global spaces; but they did seek ILO intervention recently. But the ILO's intervention in May 2020 only provided a temporary respite to trade unions as the government did what it has been doing.

So, trade unions are left with the only option – of demonstrative “industrial action” followed by sustained protest actions. It is in this context, that the central trade unions (except the BMS and its al-

lies) have these demands (<https://bit.ly/3pYZq6Q>): direct cash transfer of ₹7,500 per month for all non-income tax-paying families; 10 kg free ration per person per month to all the needy; expansion of MGNREGA to provide 200 days of work in a year in rural areas at enhanced wages; extension of employment guarantee to urban areas; withdrawal of all anti-farmer laws and anti-worker labour codes; a halt to privatisation; protection of government employment; restoration of old pension schemes, etc.

The demands reflect disappointment and even hurt and anger experienced by the working class not only during the time of COVID-19 but also for events of the last three decades.

The Codes are set to rule the industrial relations system for long unless the government changes. This strike, as an individual event alone, is a signal to the larger society of the concerns of workers. Hence, it is legitimate but such action alone will not change the Codes. Trade unions must explore other avenues such as seeking the ILO's intervention, judicial action and social dialogue. There is no alternative to social dialogue in a pluralistic democracy which all the parties in the industrial relations system must make effective use of and make suitable amendments to the Codes to aid both ease of doing business and promote labour rights. This strike is a reminder of this potential, positive reconstruction of laws.

K.R. Shyam Sundar is Professor, HRM Area, XLRI, Xavier School of Management, Jamshedpur

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BIDADI IMPASSE ENTERS DAY 16

Toyota's rolling out less than 100 vehicles a day

SHALLY SETH MOHILE
Bengaluru, 26 November

The stalemate between the workmen and management of Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) entered Day 16, showing no signs of let-up.

While the agitating workmen blamed workload, the company said it was the recalcitrant worker's suspension which was the trigger. The spokesperson for the company said a dialogue was feasible, albeit in a "conductive environment". TKM's main production unit at Bidadi near Bengaluru has been operating with skeleton staff, rolling out less than 100 units a day, compared to the customary 450-500 units a day.

TKM maintained it was able to fulfil market demand with the available stock, both at the factory as well as at the dealer's end. "The representative elected by the workers was suspended because he questioned the workload. The management is calling it misconduct. But they (management) has not filed a charge sheet yet," said Gangadhar M.N, joint secretary, TKM Employees Union (TKMEU). After announcing the lockout, 39 more members were suspended, he added.

On Thursday, TKMEU submitted a memorandum to the deputy commissioner of Ram Nagar district.

The company, however, has its version. "One of TKM's employees with a systematic record of misconduct was again involved in breach of discipline and unacceptable behaviour in violation of company rules and service policy. Accordingly, he was placed under suspension, pending enquiry. In line with the company rules and applicable laws," said the spokesperson. The current stand-off comes at a time when the local arm of the Japanese car-maker is looking at ramping up production to take advantage of the surge in demand.

Battered by the Covid-19 pandemic, the maker of the Fortuner and Innova models is staring at a steep loss in the ongoing



financial year. It has initiated a clutch of measures to rein in costs at different stages. K.R. Shyam Sundar, professor of human resource management at XLRI and Xavier Institute of Management, said the company management was well within its rights to impose a lockout.

"The larger industrial relations issue, which is a concern, is the shopfloor work intensification model that restricts workers non-work hours (lunch time, tea time, restroom time)," said Sundar.

"It would not lead to increase in productivity or profit maximisation," he said, adding, "This kind of flawed management thinking is characteristic of automobile and textile companies." Close to 1,200 of workers at the Bidadi factory went on a sit-in strike from November 9, which the company claimed was illegal. "The conveyor's speed was increased. With lesser workforce, it was tough. They should discuss with the union and the workers if there are any major changes being made to pro-

duction," said Gangadhar M.N. After the pandemic struck, TKM laid off half its 1,000 contract workforce it had, further stressing the production line.

Vijay Bhaskar, state general secretary, All India Trade Union Congress, who is advising the union, says, "Instead of settling the issue amicably or recruiting some contract workers, the management suspended the union member. As a result, the workers had to resort to a sit-in strike."

TKM's spokesperson said the company was "always open to a meeting and discussions with the union. However, a conducive environment would always make such meetings more productive and conclusive. As a policy, we do not negotiate on disciplinary matters."

Oddly enough, the unit has had a history of labour strife. Production crippled the facility for over a month in 2014 when workers and management had a face-off over wages till the Karnataka government intervened.

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CAT on Nov 29, to be held in three shifts

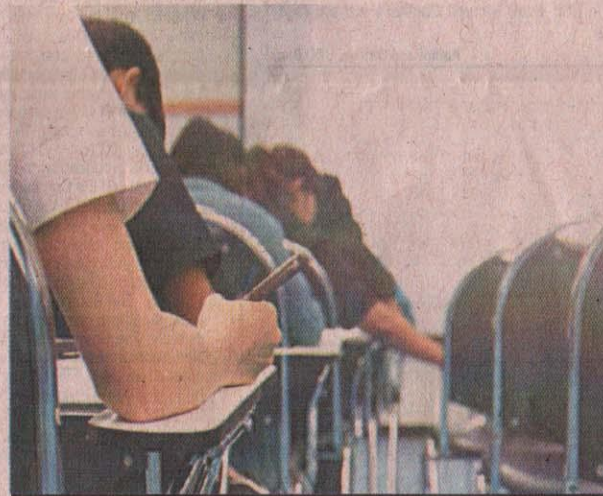
VINAY UMARJI

Ahmedabad, 27 November

The Common Admission Test (CAT) 2020 will be held in three shifts, instead of two, and across more centres and cities on November 29, Sunday, to ensure the safety of the candidates.

The test, which is the gateway to the 20 premier Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) and over 110 non-IIM B-schools, will be held at 430 centres in 159 cities — up from 376 centres in 156 cities last year. The computerised entrance exam will be conducted in three shifts: 8:30 am to 10:30 am; 12:30 pm to 2:30 pm; and 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm.

"Additional measures have been taken to minimise the travel needs of the candidates by increasing the centres for examination to 430 across the country," stated IIM Indore, which is conducting the exam this year on behalf of the IIMs. The institute and its delivery partner, Tata Consulting Services (TCS), have taken these measures to ensure



that the government's advisory on social distancing and other preventive/protective measures at the examination centres are implemented.

The number of candidates who have registered for CAT 2020 is, however, down by over 15,000 as compared to last year. Over 244,000 candidates had registered for CAT 2019 and eventually 209,926 took the test.

This year, just about 228,000 have applied.

The CAT convenor has approached the chief secretaries and DGPs of various states and UTs to allow candidates to travel using their admit cards as curfew pass in case of lockdowns or curfews. The local authorities have also been requested to provide necessary facilities and security so that the exam is con-

CAT CALLS

- Exam for admission to 20 IIMs and over 110 non-IIM B-schools
- Exam to be held in three shifts (instead of two): 8:30 am to 10:30 am; 12:30 pm to 2:30 pm; and 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm
- Number of centres: 430 (last year there were 376)
- To be held across 159 cities — three more from last year
- Number of candidates who have registered: 228,000 (this is 15,000 less than last year)

ducted smoothly.

The 180-minute computer-based entrance test is usually divided into three sections: Verbal Ability and Reading Comprehension; Data Interpretation and Logical Reasoning; and Quantitative Ability. Last year, the paper was relatively easy compared to previous years, CAT takers and experts had observed.

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CAT's out of the bag: It's shorter yet tougher

VINAY UMARJI

Ahmedabad, 29 November

A truncated Common Admission Test (CAT) 2020 turned out to be a tad more difficult for aspirants in varying degree across the three slots conducted on Sunday.

Gateway to the 20 premier Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) and over 110 non-IIM B-schools, the computer-based entrance test is usually divided into three sections, including Verbal Ability and Reading Comprehension (VARC), Data Interpretation and Logical Reasoning (DILR), and Quantitative Ability (QA). Of these, aspirants and CAT experts

found VARC and DILR to be tougher than the previous year across slots.

While CAT aspirant Gavin Wagh found the paper "overall moderate, with QA being difficult in the second slot", Sarthak Mehta found DILR somewhat tougher and lengthier than before. Each of the three sections were allotted 40 minutes, with 26 questions in VARC, 24 in DILR, and 26 in QA.

According to CAT experts, the level of difficulty varied from slot to slot. "VARC this year was slightly more difficult than that of the previous year in the morning slot and grew even more difficult in the afternoon slot. This

is because of two factors: level of difficulty of the questions and reduced time for answering them. The DILR was of a higher difficulty level, compared to that of CAT 2019. While there were at least two easy-moderate sets last year, this year provided only one such set. All the other sets were challenging and there were no low-hanging fruit among these sets," said Ramnath Kanakadandi, national CAT course director, T.I.M.E.

On the other hand, Vijitha

Kamath, product head-Verbal Ability, Endeavor Careers, found that not only were the arrangements smooth with Covid-19 regulations being strictly observed, the test did not throw up major surprises in terms of the number of questions and their types.

Unlike the DILR and VARC, the QA section was a relief after two heavy sections this year, added Kanakadandi.

This year, CAT 2020 was held at 430 centres in 159 cities, up

from 376 centres in 156 cities in two sessions last year.

In an attempt to maintain social distancing norms amid the Covid-19 pandemic, the entrance paper was held in three sessions, starting from 8.30 am to 10.30 am, followed by 12.30 pm to 2.30 pm, and 4.30 pm to 6.30 pm unlike the three-hour test across two sessions in the previous years. As a result, the number of questions were also reduced from 100 to 76 this year.

Meanwhile, barring a few stray cases of social distancing norms being reportedly violated, aspirants found the test being conducted with safety measures in place.

To maintain social distancing norms, the entrance exam was held in three sessions. The number of questions were reduced from 100 to 76 this year

● **INTERVIEW: RAMESH BHAT**, Dean, SBM, NMIMS, and provost, Management Education, NMIMS

‘B-schools must have a digital-first approach’

“Today, no enterprise can function without a robust digital infrastructure,” says Ramesh Bhat, dean of the School of Business Management (SBM) at NMIMS, Mumbai. Prior to joining NMIMS, Bhat was professor at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, where he served from 1986 to 2009 and then from 2014 to 2016.

“We have just witnessed how the Covid-19 pandemic forced businesses to adopt a ‘digital first’ approach when existing conventional business processes proved inadequate,” he says. In an interview with FE’s Vikram Chaudhary, he adds that similar is the case with B-schools, where the lockdown did bring with it a lot of challenges, but then the academia also created a unique learning set. Excerpts:

Was the transition to the online dissemination of learning difficult when the lockdown started?

The lockdown took the entire education sector—in fact, every sector in general—by surprise, and business schools were no exception. At NMIMS, during that time, we were in the final stages of completing our academic programmes. Under the guidance of the chancellor, we started looking at how to ensure the continuity of academic activities. For any risk, there is usually a kind of textbook approach, but for this (complete lockdown) there was no prior experience. We put our faculty under a capacity strengthening programme to handle the online situation and we discovered tools such as Zoom and Microsoft



Teams. Hats off to the faculty, they were able to quickly transition to online classes. Particularly at a B-school we’ve found that it is easy to conduct exams online.

I think we were in the first in the industry to conduct the online exam for 25,000 students for admissions for the new academic programme.

Were placements for the batch that was

then graduating impacted in any way?

While there were apprehensions (about placements), things went smoothly. In fact, most of our placements had happened in January itself (before the lockdown). Of the 500-odd placements we did of the previous batch, 10 got cancelled (after the lockdown started), perhaps due to complexities on the corporate side. We re-run the placement cycle for those 10 students and were

able to place them eventually.

The corporate world has completely changed. How will this change the future of management programmes?

We constantly evaluate our programmes to keep them in sync with the demands of the industry. About two years ago we did a comprehensive review of our MBA programmes. Because of Covid-19, keeping in mind the kind of requirements that are coming up—for example, the ability to work from anywhere, the ability to manage teams remotely, the ability to use data analytics more effectively, and so on—we are putting more focus on such areas, and next year we might introduce new courses as well that try to address the upcoming needs of the industry.

Are current students worried that they may not be able to secure the right job in the next placement cycle, because the economy has still not picked up?

There is definitely some anxiety on how the entire situation will play out, but the positive news is that a lot of students who got summer placements have already got pre-placement offers (based on their

summer placement work) from the same companies they spent time with recently.

How do you foresee the job scenario in the corporate world in general next year?

Certain industries will definitely require more people—for example, retail, e-commerce, companies that are heavily dependent on technology will require new kind of competencies and skill-sets.

At the same time, those in the direct sales, for example, will face some challenges. But I don’t foresee a significant difference in the overall number of jobs next year.

Do you think online classes still work in progress?

We are still trying to figure out how to effectively use technology to make students more

engaged in the entire learning process; that is an area everyone, I think, is currently working on. As we continue online classes, there are certainly some constraints. There are some areas such as ‘simulation’ that are very effective in online education, but others such as ‘case discussion’ are relatively less effective; we are trying to develop mechanisms that make teaching of all areas as effective online as it is on-campus in a physical classroom.

Because of Covid-19, keeping in mind future requirements of the corporate world—for example, the ability to work from anywhere, the ability to manage teams remotely, the ability to use data analytics more effectively, and so on—we might introduce new courses that try to address these specific needs

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BLOC BOARDROOM CHALLENGE

Nine city semi-final kicks off from tomorrow

OUR BUREAU

Chennai, November 29

The BLoC Boardroom Challenge semi-finals will begin on December 1. It will happen



across nine cities, one every day, till December 10. The

semi-finals will be on the Zoom platform from 10.30 am every day. Viewers can either scan the QR code or click this link for all semi-finals: <https://bit.ly/3q61NF4>.

The first semi-finals will

be the Chennai round. The participating teams are: MOP Vaishnav; DoMS of IIT Madras; XIME; and Great Lakes Institute of Management. On December 2 will be the Coimbatore semi-finals (two teams of IIM-Trichy, BIMS, Bannariamman Institute of Technology); December 3, Kochi (three teams of IIM-Kozhikode and CUSAT); December 4, Bengaluru (two teams of IIM-B, IBS Bangalore and CMRIT); and December 5, Hyderabad (IPE and three teams of ISB).

The Delhi semi-finals will be on December 7 (teams are only two from IIM-Ka-

shipur as two teams pulled out); December 8, Mumbai (two teams each from IIM-A and SPJIMR); December 9, Kolkata (two teams from IIM-Ranchi, XLRI and IIM-Shillong), and the last semi-finals will be from Pune (three teams from SIBM and IIM-Nagpur)

Associate sponsors

The fourth edition of the BLoC Boardroom Challenge 2020 has been presented by Aditya Birla Sun Life AMC and powered by Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages.

The associate sponsors are Punjab National Bank and Casa Grand. The knowledge



partners for the event are BrandVectors and Potential Genesis.