

3rd phase of nationwide lockdown ends today

IT News
Imphal, May 17:

Today is the last day of the third phase of the nationwide lockdown to curb the spread of Covid-19. The dates of the fourth phase of lockdown are yet to be announced. During his address to the Nation on 12th of this month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said that the fourth phase of lockdown will have a completely different form, with new rules.

Mr Modi had said that based on the suggestions from the states, information related to Lockdown 4 will be given to the public before 18th May. The country is under lockdown since 25th March. It has been extended twice, first till 3rd May and then till today. Meanwhile, Punjab Chief Minister Amrinder Singh has announced that the coronavirus lockdown in the state will continue till 31st of this month.

Tamei MLA gifted PPE and hand sanitizers

IT News
Tamei, May 17:

MLA of Tamei Assembly constituency, Awongbow Newmai, distributed PPE and Hand Sanitizers to the Medical Officer of Tamei PHC. He also encouraged and appreciated the efforts put in by the medical team in combating COVID 19.

Meanwhile, Namsinrei Pannei Chairman, ADC Tamenglong gifted Rs. 1000 each to all inmates of Community Quarantine centres at Tamei sub divisional headquarters. Altogether 11 people are stationed at the Tamei headquarters quarantine centre.

COVID-19 recovery rates rises above 35 percent

IT News
Imphal, May 17:

Health and Family Welfare Ministry said that a total 34 thousand 109 patients have been cured of corona virus and the recovery rate has reached 37.51 percent in the country.

During the last 24 hours, 3 thousand 956 patients have recovered and 4 thousand 957 fresh cases of Covid-19 have been reported taking the total number of cases to 90 thousand 927. A total of 120 deaths have been registered in last 24 hours taking the nationwide toll to 2 thousand 872.

Lockdown strengthened in Imphal after confirmation of 5 positive COVID-19 cases

IT News
Imphal, May 17:

Imphal today saw complete lockdown scenario as streets bore deserted look with only one or two vehicle plying on the road today after the confirmation of 5 new positive COVID-19 cases in the state.

Lockdown has already been imposed in the state, but roads and streets were seen crowded till yesterday as people use to come out either with security pass or other excuses. People in the state seem to take lightly about the COVID-19 pandemic after the two positive cases detected on

March 24 and April 1 had recovered after being treated at JNIMS and RIMS.

Even there were criticisms from various corners about the lockdown as it affects the normalcy of the people. The government too had started exempting certain sectors from the total lockdown as the state had no cases of COVID 19. However, after people of the state that were stranded at other parts of the country started arriving, people started to have apprehension as most of them came from red zone area. Besides government machineries failure to

arrange proper guidance to the returnee had provoked criticism from various corners. After 5 of the returnee were found COVID-19 Positive, people as well as the government started taking the matter of COVID -19 with a bit seriousness. Government yesterday cancelled all curfew pass that were issued in bulk and stated that fresh pass will be issued. May be due to the cancellation of the curfew pass or due to the consciousness of the people, roads and streets in Imphal and almost all areas of the state bore a deserted look.

DBT-IBSD and SFE to launch Weekly Webinar series on COVID -19

IT News
Imphal, May 17:

Institute of Bioresources & Sustainable Development (DBT-IBSD), India is all set to organise multidisciplinary research approach for promotion and development of bio resources including natural flora and fauna, ethnopharmacology, traditional medicine and natural products during this COVID-19 pandemic.

Society for Ethnopharmacology (SFE)-India and IBSD has come together to launch a weekly webinar series with the leadership of Prof Pulok K Mukherjee, Director of the IBSD, a institute under Department of Biotechnology, Government of India at Imphal, Mizoram, Sikkim, Meghalaya. He is also the President of the International society for ethnopharmacology (ISE), Switzerland and Secretary of the Society for Ethno

pharmacology, India.

The focal theme of the webinar is on Reimagine Ethno pharmacology, which is being attended by over 1000 participants from all over the world. The first webinar was held on May 09, 2020, from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM. Here a stellar lineup of speakers presented wide ranging perspectives on the pandemic. While Dr JLN Sastry, CEO, National Medicinal Plants Board, Ministry of AYUSH, Govt of India spoke on the "Role of AYUSH in Covid-19", Dr. Marco Leonti, Professor, Università di Cagliari, Cagliari (CA), Italy talked about "the Social Impact of Covid-19: A European perspective". The 2nd webinar, on May 16, 2020, Dr R.K. Ranjan, Member of Parliament representing the Inner Manipur Parliamentary Constituency spoke

on the "intervention of Science and technology to enhance the bio economy of

North East India" while Dr Debrasad Chatopadhyay, Director, ICMR-National Institute of Traditional Medicine (ICMR-NITM) spoke

on the "Covid-19 pandemic: battle between primitive virus Vs most evolved *Homo sapiens*". Eminent personalities around the world will highlights on several aspects on the use of traditional medicine, ethno medicines, Medicinal plants and modern medicine in all aspects.

These webinars are being hosted by Prof. Pulok K. Mukherjee, Director, DBT-IBSD, who in turn has emphasised on the importance to reimagine ethnopharmacology (Ethnopharmacology is a related study of ethnic groups and their use of plant compounds. It is linked to medicinal plant use and ethnobotany, as this is a source of lead compounds for drug discovery). More

3 booked for holding public funeral of COVID-19 patient

IT Correspondent
Mumbai, May 17:

Three members of a family have been booked by the Ulhasnagar police (Thane district, Maharashtra) for organising an elaborate funeral for a 39-year-old suspected patient residing at Khanna Compound, about 43 kms from Mumbai city, in violation of COVID-19 protocol, early this week.

The police have registered an offence against the deceased's two sons and his brother, under section 188 of the IPC (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant) and provisions of the Epidemic Disease Act, 1897. The

offence was registered based on a complaint by Ulhasnagar Municipal Corporation commissioner Dr Sudhakar Deshmukh wrote to the Central Police station.

Of the 70 people who attended the funeral, 9 have now tested positive and the rest have been quarantined. The deceased was admitted to the Central Hospital in Ulhasnagar for suspected coronavirus. His test report came positive after his death. After his death family allegedly pressurised the hospital and even gave in writing that they would follow all norms and adhere to the specified protocols for a COVID-19 patient, if they were handed over the body.

As per the norms, the body is wrapped in a plastic sheet and the final rites are to be performed at the nearest cremation site. The plastic covering on the body should not be removed. Not more than 5 people are allowed at the cremation site. But the family defied this and gave the body a final bath as per their rituals.

The deceased's test report came positive after his death. Of the 70 people who attended the funeral, 9 have now tested positive. The rest have been quarantined. "We have booked three people who gave the undertaking to the municipal corporation," said Senior Inspector Sudhakar Suradkar of the Central Police station said.

"Work and Fight Covid-19"- Lunch pack distributed to COVID-19 warriors

IT News
Thoubal, May 17:

Wangjing Tenth Farmers Development Association (WATEFADEAS) as a part of their campaign under the theme "Work and Fight COVID-19 has distributed lunch pack to security forces deployed at various part of Thoubal and Kachhing districts who are fighting the COVID-19 invasion.

The lunch pack were distributed to security forces deployed at Thoubal Thong, Melaground, Ushoipokpi, Tangei, Wangjing, Khongjom, Sora, Kachhing Lamkhai amasung Kachhing Bazar and various other places.

Talking to media persons, chief functionary of the association,

Moirangthem Hemanta said that the lunch box were distributed as a part of the promotional campaign for the "Work and Fight Covid-19" programme which kick starts yesterday at the office of the Association located at Khongjom. Under the "Work and Fight Covid-19" programme the association has been providing all form of support and assistant to farmers who are working without any fear of COVID -19 and those who are in quarantine centres.

Hemanta further assures to distributes equipments for farmers that they may require while producing food for the people

He urged the government to provide water to the field instead of blaming the rains.

FM Sitharaman unveils structural reforms for 7 sectors in 5th tranche of Atma Nirbhar Bharat package

New Delhi, May 17:

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman unveiled the final tranche of financial stimulus and policy measures for various sectors to help build a self-reliant India under the Atma Nirbhar Bharat Campaign, today. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had on Tuesday in his address to the nation announced an additional economic package equivalent to 10 per cent of India's GDP, amounting to 20 lakh crore rupees.

Addressing a media briefing in New Delhi, Finance Minister in her announcement of the fifth tranche of measures to address the economic situation in the country amid COVID-19, outlined structural reforms with focus on seven areas of MNREGA, Health and Education, Business during Covid, Decriminalisation of Company Act, Ease of doing business, Policy related to Public Sector Units, State

government and resources related to it.

Announcing the relief measures of fifth tranche, Nirmala Sitharaman said, under the MNREGA scheme, an additional 40 thousand crore rupees will be allocated for employment generation in the rural parts of the country. She said this will help to generate nearly 300 crore person days to provide relief to the migrant workers.

On the Health reforms and initiatives taken to fight the Covid-19 pandemic, she said, public expenditure will be increased and Health and Wellness Centres in rural and urban areas will be ramped up. She said, infectious diseases hospital blocks in all districts and integrated public health labs in all districts and block level will be set up to prepare India for the future pandemic. She said, National Digital Health blueprint will be implemented under the National Digital Health Mission.

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Maharashtra loses 11 policemen, 1154 cops infected with COVID-19; An IG level officer admitted to hospital for coronavirus

By Raju Vernekar
Mumbai, May 17:

The COVID-19 pandemic claimed lives of two more policemen in Mumbai, thus taking number of police personnel becoming victim to the deadly virus to 11, with 1154 police personnel getting infected.

A 32-year-old assistant police inspector (API) Amol Kulkarni, posted at Shahu Nagar police station in Dharavi, a coronavirus disease hotspot, and a 57-year-old police assistant sub-inspector (ASI) from Nagpada Police (Motor transport) died of the killer viral infection.

API Amol Kulkarni was suffering from fever and cough and was sent on

leave. On May 13, his sample was taken for Covid-19 at Sion Hospital, which proved positive, DCP Nyati Thaker said. At around 5 AM on Saturday, he accidentally fell in the bathroom at his Pratiksha Nagar residence in Central Mumbai and lost his consciousness. He was rushed to the nearby Sion Hospital, where he was declared dead even before the doctors could treat him.

While the deceased ASI was working as a driver and was posted in the motor transport (MT) section of the Mumbai Police in Nagpada. He was sent on leave about 15 days ago, as at 57 he belonged to the high-risk group.

Those deceased till now include Amol Kulkarni, ASI Madhukar Mane, ASI Murlidhar Waghmare, Naik Bhagwan Parte, Sunil Kargutkar, and constable Chavan.

On April 27, Mumbai Police commissioner Param Bir Singh had announced that the personnel, who are above 55 years, need not report for work after three policemen died due to Covid-19. Singh also allowed the personnel, who are above 50 years and suffering from medical issues, to proceed on leave.

So far, 1154 policemen have tested positive for Coronavirus, which includes 128 officers and 1026 police constables. While 174 police personnel have successfully recovered from COVID-19.

A large number of policemen have also been put in self-quarantine, which has left a staggering shortage of personnel in the police department. To match present requirements of police personnel, the union government on Saturday sent 9 companies of rapid action force to Maharashtra. The state government had asked to send around 2000 additional policemen from the Central Armed Police Forces to provide some respite to its own fatigued officers.

In the meanwhile the officer of the rank of the Inspector General was admitted to St George's Hospital in South Mumbai following suspicion of COVID-19 infection on Saturday.

P O E M S

When Chassad Blazed Our Hearts Burnt

By: Shongminhang Haokip, UAE

When Chassad blazed our hearts burnt
 All churches, schools and households
 Set aflame by insatiable human's greed
 Firestorm ascend into the air far and high
 Cries and prayers echoed across mountains
 Instincts may urge to revenge but we don't
 As heaven's witnessed is enough for us
 For justice bringing in God's timing
 Mothers weep inconsolable once more
 As memories unfold 90's atrocities upon us
 Heaven protects innocent lives this time
 Merciful is His mighty hand, God of Israel
 Every goods and chattels robbed
 A grievous misdeeds of humanity
 It pains even more to see innocent kids
 Who doesn't deserved aren't spared either
 Children find no more books and bags
 But only tents and torments surrounds
 Hoping to see their classroom and learn
 As they play under the tent hopelessly

When Chassad blazed our hearts burnt
 We mourn, we suffer and we loss
 but we get stronger and find unity afresh
 How good and pleasant it is when
 brothers live together in unity!

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FM Sitharaman unveils.....

Finance Minister said, PM-e Vidya programme for multi mode access to digital online education will be launched immediately and it will consist of e-content and QR coded textbooks for all grades. She said, one TV channel per class from 1 to 12 will be operated and extensive use of Radio and Community Radio will be made. She said, top 100 universities will be permitted to automatically start online courses by 30th May of this month.

She said, an initiative by the name of Manodarpan will be launched immediately for psychological support of students, teachers and their family for mental health and emotional well being. Finance Minister said, minimum threshold to initiate insolvency proceedings has been raised to one crore rupees from one lakh to provide relief to the MSMEs. She said, special insolvency resolution framework for MSMEs code will be notified and no fresh initiation of insolvency proceedings will be done upto next one year.

Speaking over, decriminalization of companies act, she said violation involving minor technical and procedural default will not be accounted which in turn will help to de-clog the criminal courts and NCLT. She said, under the ease of doing reforms, Indian public companies can directly list securities in permissible foreign jurisdiction. Finance Minister said, government will announce new policy related to the Public Sector Enterprises, PSEs. She said, list of strategic sectors requiring presence of PSEs in public interest will be notified. She said, in strategic sector, at least one enterprise will remain in the public sector but private sector will also be allowed. She said to minimise the wasteful administrative cost, number of enterprises in strategic sectors will be limited to four.

On the support extended to the State Government, Finance Minister said, more than 46 thousand crore rupees have been devolved in April and revenue deficit grants of more than 12 thousand crore in April and May have also been given to the states despite centre's stressful resources. **Ms. Sitharaman highlighted government's decision to increase the net borrowing ceiling for the states from 3 percent to 5 percent of the Gross State Domestic Product, which would result in increased resources of 4 lakh 28 thousand crore rupees for them.**

She said, more than 11 thousand crore rupees have been released as advance from State disaster relief fund in the first week of April and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare released another 4 thousand 113 crore rupees for direct anti-covid activities. Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address, Finance Minister said, government is working with the targeted approach to provide the benefits to the people belonging to all strata of the society. She said, under the Prime Minister Garib Kalyan package, free food grains were provided to 80 crore people and under the PM Kisan Yojana more than 16 thousand crore rupees have been given to the 8.19 crore people through direct benefit transfer.

She said, more than 10 thousand crore rupees were released to 20 crore Jan Dhan account of women and construction workers got 3 thousand 950 crore rupees. She said, 6.81 crore beneficiaries got the cylinder under the Ujjala scheme and 12 lakh EPFO holders withdraw the advance amount. She said, Shramik Special trains were operated for the migrant workers and 85 percent of the cost was borne by the Central Government.

Earlier on Wednesday, the Finance Minister announced a slew of measures to help the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, MSMEs sector that employs an estimated 11 crore people. The announcements ranged from Non-Banking Finance Companies (NBFCs), real estate, power distribution sector, to relaxations on contribution to Employees' Provident Fund (EPFO). In her second announcement on Thursday the focus lies on migrant workers, street vendors, small traders, the self-employed and small farmers.

Third announcement saw major relief packages for agriculture and allied activities while yesterday key sectoral reforms were announced in the sector of coal, minerals, defence production, civil aviation, power distribution companies, space sector and atomic energy.

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Comprehensive Economic Package: A transformational moment

By - Abhishek Dayal
 Director, PIB, Imphal

We have witnessed for the last few days the presentation of a comprehensive economic reforms - five days of briefing by the Finance Minister that covered in great detail an economic package covering almost all aspects of national economic life. The 20 lakh crore package is phenomenal - not just in terms of the sheer size of the money it pumps in to boost the economy, but also in terms of laying down a reformist vision for the future. The changes envisaged in economic policies and laws makes this exercise bigger than any usual annual budget. It is the recognition of the fact that it will take an exceptional effort to overcome a crisis of unprecedented global order.

PM's Vision

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi gave a call for *Atmanirbhar Bharat* or Self-Reliant India with five pillars - Economy, Infrastructure, System, Vibrant Demography and Demand. He announced that the government will bring a Special Economic Package of Rs 20 lakh crores - equivalent to 10% of India's GDP - to cater to the needs of various sections including industry, MSMEs, labourers, middle class, industries and infrastructure. He said that it is time to become vocal for our local products and make them global.

Helping the poor first

On the first day of her presentation of details of the economic package, Finance Minister announced Rs. 1.70 Lakh Crore relief package under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan

Yojana for the poor to help them fight the battle against Corona Virus. The package includes insurance cover of Rs 50 Lakh per health worker, and for the next 3 months, 80 crore poor people will be given benefit of 5 kg wheat or rice per person per month, 1 kg pulses for each household for free every month, 20 crore women Jan Dhan account holders will get Rs 500 per month and Gas cylinders, free of cost will be provided to 8 crore poor families.

The Central government increased MNREGA wage to Rs 202 a day from Rs 182 and increased budgetary support to the programme. It announced ex-gratia of Rs 1,000 to 3 crore poor senior citizen, poor widows and poor Divyang Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package. Government front-loaded Rs 2,000 to farmers under existing PM-KISAN, benefitting 8.7 crore farmers.

A slew of measures were announced to support the vibrant but vulnerable MSMEs. This included emergency Credit Line to Businesses/MSMEs from Banks and NBFCs up to 20% of entire outstanding credit and also revision of definition of MSMEs by upward revision of investment limit. Manipur, which has the highest number of MSMEs in the North East, will be hugely benefited from this push.

For Migrants and Urban Poor Government of India permitted State Governments to utilise State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) for setting up shelter for migrants and providing them food and water and released Rs 11,002 crore of its contribution in advance to all States to augment funds in their SDRF. Hygienically prepared

three meals a day is being provided for the residents of Shelters for Urban Homeless (SUH) during the lockdown w.e.f March 28, 2020. Labour Codes will be modified to benefits workers. This includes universalization of right of minimum wages and timely payment of wages to all workers including unorganized workers (presently minimum wage is applicable to only 30% of workers).

Agriculture

The next set of announcements were meant to strengthen Agriculture Infrastructure, Logistics, Capacity Building, Governance and Administrative Reforms for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Processing Sectors. This included Rs 1 lakh crore Agri Infrastructure Fund for farm-gate infrastructure for farmers, Rs 10,000 crore scheme for formalisation of Micro Food Enterprises, Rs 20,000 crore for Fishermen through Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), National Animal Disease Control Programme and setting up of Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund of Rs. 15,000 crore. Government also announced that there will be Amendments to Essential Commodities Act to enable better price realisation for farmers and Agriculture Marketing Reforms to provide marketing choices to farmers. Majority of Indians are directly or indirectly dependent on agriculture sector and a revolutionary change here is sure to transform the country and raise the quality of life for all its citizens.

Structural Reforms

Finance Minister next

announced structural reforms in the eight sectors - Coal, Minerals, Defence production, Civil Aviation, Power Sector, Social Infrastructure, Space and Atomic Energy. This is to ensure competition, transparency and private sector participation to enable the achievement of PM's vision of self-reliant India. The changes announced here are structural and will transform the entire sectors to give long lasting benefits to the nation.

Under 'Make in India' for Self-Reliance in Defence Production, government will notify a list of weapons/platforms for ban on import with year wise timelines; indigenisation of imported spares and there will be a separate budget provisioning for domestic capital procurement. FDI limit in the defence manufacturing under automatic route will be raised from 49% to 74%. For efficient Airspace Management for Civil Aviation restrictions on utilisation of the Indian Air Space will be eased so that civilian flying becomes more efficient. This will bring a total benefit of about Rs 1000 crores per year for the aviation sector. Government also announced 13 more World-class Airports through PPP and there is a push to make India a global repairing hub for aircrafts.

The list of reforms and interventions that have been announced this week is long, but the message is clear. The economic system is being overhauled to meet the vision of a vibrant, self-reliant country even as the government is doing its best to convert the present crisis into an opportunity.

First train for migrant workers from Bihar, West Bengal leaves Mumbai

IT Correspondent
 Mumbai, May 17:

The first trains carrying migrant workers to Bihar and West Bengal, which had so far disallowed labourers to come back, departed on Saturday from Mumbai, after Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and NCP president Sharad Pawar spoke to respective CMs to resolve the dispute.

The migrant workers from Bihar and West Bengal were stranded in Mumbai and other parts of Maharashtra since these states had not given clearance for their return. "We could not send trains to Bihar and West Bengal since these states did not allow

it. As such Pawar and Thackeray spoke to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, to resolve the dispute, Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh said.

Notably, Union Railway Minister Piyush Goyal had on Thursday hit out at West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for not allowing migrants to return and had appealed to all the states to give railways approval to run more trains.

On Saturday, a train carrying migrant workers to West Bengal and Bihar was flagged off. Pawar has also expressed the need to operate at least 10 trains daily

each to West Bengal and Bihar. Thackeray has sanctioned Rs 55 crore from the chief minister's relief fund for sending these workers ad the ticket fare is not being sought from any worker," Deshmukh added.

He said the Maharashtra government has so far transported about 2.45 lakh migrant workers

to their respective home states, by running 191 special trains services till now, amidst the coronavirus-induced lockdown" Deshmukh said in a video message.

The trains are being run from parts of Maharashtra to Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha,

Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand and Andhra Pradesh. As of now 3,71,310 migrant workers have been camped in 3,884 shelters in Maharashtra and the state government has been arranging for their food.

In the meanwhile additional 1.21 lakh migrant workers from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh have sought permission from Pune collector to return to their native places and required clearance has been sought from both the states. Pune Collector Naval Kishore Ram informed officers during a video conference on Saturday. No sooner the clearance is received, arrangement will be made for special trains, in coordination with railways, he added.

Undaunted by Covid 19, India plays big reforms card for investment: ASSOCHAM

IT News
 New Delhi, May 17:

Major policy decisions across the most critical and strategic sectors like Defence production, space, atomic energy, civil aviation and commercial coal mining unveiled by Finance Minister Mrs Nirmala Sitharaman today clearly demonstrates the Narendra Modi Government's resolve to stay on course of bold economic reforms, undaunted by the Covid-19 global health crisis, ASSOCHAM Secretary General Mr Deepak Sood said.

"You need grit of the Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi to

announce far-reaching reforms like increasing FDI limit in Defence production from 49 per cent to 74 per cent, allowing commercial coal mining for private sector, privatising Discoms in the Union Territories and above all reposing confidence in India's private sector to commercially use the country's space capabilities," the ASSOCHAM Secretary General said.

He said, today's announcements on major policy reforms, combined with the previous three tranches of the Rs 20 lakh crore economic package of the Prime Minister to deal with the human and economic costs of the Covid-19 lend a confidence

to 130 crore Indians, that with a strong and cohesive leadership both at the Centre and states, any crisis can be dealt with courage.

"It is somehow within us that as a nation, we respond very well when faced with a crisis. The Covid-19 pandemic is once-in-living memory crisis for the entire world. So, within the economic and social infrastructure constraint of a developing country, India has shown a rare degree of leadership. Cutting across the political spectrum, the way the states have responded to the national call must also be applauded," Mr Sood said, adding credit must also be given to the common men and women

for standing behind the government.

He said, decisions like corporatisation of Ordnance Factories with the stock listing option and a positive list for the domestic companies for Defence production would go a long way in making India self-reliant in arms and ammunition of modern vantage.

"What is most admirable is that the government, while grappling with one of the most difficult challenges, is thinking and taking bold decisions with a firm belief that investments will happen if we, as a nation, continue to remain steadfast on the path of reforms".