



Confederation of Indian Industry
125 Years: 1895-2020

COVID 19

Updates, Notifications and Advisories

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PMO reviews efforts of eleven Empowered Groups towards tackling COVID-19: Confidence building measures key to ensure seamless supply chain management and last mile outreach through communication in regional languages to remain the focus.

A meeting of the Empowered Groups of Officers, to tackle the challenges emerging as a result of spread of COVID-19, was held today under the Chairmanship of Principal Secretary to Prime Minister. The meeting was the latest in a series of periodic reviews at various levels by the Prime Minister's Office to monitor the ongoing efforts to counter the impact of the pandemic. Principal Secretary reviewed the efforts undertaken by the Empowered Groups. The issues related to supply chain and logistics management for availability of necessary items, efforts undertaken for the benefit of stakeholders involved, steps to assist farmers harvest their produce while maintaining social distancing, further confidence building measures necessary and need to ensure percolation of guidelines of the Ministry of Home Affairs to the ground level were discussed.



[Telephone Conversation between PM and Prime Minister of Nepal](#)

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi had a phone call today with H.E. Shri K P Sharma Oli, Rt. Hon. Prime Minister of Nepal. The two leaders shared views on the ongoing Covid-19 crisis and the challenges it poses to health and safety of citizens of both countries and the region. They discussed the steps taken in their respective countries to tackle the pandemic. Prime Minister Modi appreciated the response and management of crisis by the Government of Nepal under the leadership of PM Oli, and the strong resolve of the people of Nepal in combating this challenge. Prime Minister Oli reiterated his appreciation for Prime Minister's initiative in coordinating the response to the pandemic among SAARC countries. He also expressed his thanks for the bilateral support provided to Nepal by India.

[Telephone Conversation between PM and Prime Minister of Japan](#)

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi spoke on telephone today with H.E. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan. The two leaders discussed the global health and economic challenges emerging out of the COVID-19 pandemic. They also discussed the steps taken in their respective countries to deal with this crisis. Both leaders expressed appreciation for the support and facilitation provided during the present crisis to each other's citizens present in their respective territories and agreed to continue such coordination.

[UN warns of COVID-19 socio – economic threat to women, girls](#)

With the World Health Organisation marking 100 days since the first notification of COVID-19 cases. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres warned of the devastating socio - economic impact of the pandemic on women and girls , possibly reversing the limited progress that has been made in gender equality and women's right.

[WHO warns COVID-19 spreading to Africa amid weak Health Systems](#)

The World Health Organisation sounded alarm over the rapid spread of COVID-19 in rural parts of Africa hence threatening to put a strain on already fragile health care and infrastructure.

[Botswana's entire parliament quarantined after coronavirus Scare](#)

All Botswana's parliamentarians including President Mokgweetsi Masisi will be quarantined for 14 days and tested for the new coronavirus, after a health worker screening lawmaker for the virus herself tested positive.



[Government Grants exemption from Basic Custom duty & Health Cess on import of Ventilators, PPE, COVID Test Kits & Face & Surgical Masks](#)

In the context of Covid-19 situation, considering the immediate requirement of ventilators and other items, the Central Government has granted exemption from Basic Customs Duty and Health cess, on the import of Ventilators, Face masks, surgical Masks, Personal protection equipment (PPE), Covid-19 test kits, inputs for manufacture of the above items with immediate effect. This basic customs duty exemption shall be available up to the 30th September 2020.

[EPFO settles 1.37 Lakh EPF withdrawal claims to fight Covid-19 in less than 10 days](#)

Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), an statutory body under Union Ministry of Labour & Employment has processed about 1.37 lakh claims across the country disbursing an amount of Rs. 279.65 crore under a new provision especially formulated by amending the EPF Scheme to help subscribers fight Covid-19. The remittances of the money have already started taking place. The system as it stands today is processing all applications which are fully KYC compliant within less than 72 hours.

[In Zimbabwe, lack of tests sparks fear COVID-19 goes undetected; Medics, opposition politicians and activists sound alarm over shortage of test kits and infrastructure challenges.](#)

Health professionals in Zimbabwe have sounded the alarm over the country's limited capacity to test people for the new coronavirus, warning that a lack of critical equipment and infrastructure shortages may result in many cases going undetected. Zimbabwe reported its first case on March 20 and so far, it has tested only 392 people for COVID-19.

[India Brazil partnership is stronger than ever in these challenging times says PM](#)

Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi said that India Brazil partnership is stronger than ever in these challenging times. The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi replied to the tweet from the President of Brazil Jair M. Bolsonaro, who expressed his gratitude for India's decision to supply Hydroxychloroquine to Brazil.

[India is ready to do whatever possible to help our friends to fight the pandemic says PM](#)

Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi said that India is ready to do whatever possible to help its friends to fight against pandemic. Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi replied to the tweet from the Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who expressed his gratitude for India's decision to supply Chloroquine to Israel. In his tweet Prime Minister, Modi said "We have to jointly fight this pandemic. India is ready to do whatever is possible to help our friends. Praying for the well-being and good health of the people of Israel."



[MSMEs Engaged in Production of Medical Items Related to COVID-19 should be facilitated on priority- Shri Nitin Gadkari](#)

Shri Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) held a video conference with the senior officers of the Ministry to review the state of preparedness of the Government machinery in the light of the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic. In a structured discussion of over two and half hours, the Minister took stock of the steps taken in the background of the pandemic that has dealt a huge blow on the sector. The measures announced by the Ministry of Finance and RBI so far were also discussed along with the action taken by Ministry of MSME to minimize the impact of COVID19 on MSME Sector.

[Disinfection Walkway and Road Sanitizer Unit by CSIR-CMERI, Durgapur to fight COVID 19](#)

In the wake of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID 19) wreaking havoc across the World, the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), has been stepping up efforts to deliver S&T solutions. One of the CSIR's premier engineering lab based in Durgapur, CSIR-Central Mechanical Engineering Research Institute (CMERI) has developed **Disinfection Walkways** and **Road Sanitizer Unit** which can help in countering the menacing virus.

[DST supported startup to make natural, alcohol-free sanitizer to combat COVID 19](#)

Green Pyramid Biotech (GPB), a company working on Food, Agriculture, and Biotechnology, located in Pune, Maharashtra, is being funded by the Department of Science & Technology (DST), for manufacturing natural, alcohol-free sanitizer for hands and surfaces with long-lasting antibacterial and antiviral effect. It can be very effective in India's fight against COVID 19

[SCTIMST scientists develop disinfection gateway & facemask disposal bin to fight COVID-19](#)

Scientists at Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST), Trivandrum, Kerala, an autonomous institute under the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India, have designed two technologies to fight COVID-19 pandemic. **Chitra Disinfection Gateway** is one of the two technology designed is a portable system equipped with a system for generating Hydrogen peroxide mist and UV based decontamination facility. The second technology, **Chitra UV Based Facemask Disposal Bin** can be used by health workers in hospitals and in public places where decontamination of used facemask, overhead covers, face shields and so on are required to break the infection chain.



[South Korea President announces additional business stimulus worth KRW 55.9T](#)

Moon Jae-in, President, South Korea announced additional economic stimulus measures at the fourth meeting on the COVID-19 pandemic of the Emergency Economic Council. The first measure was support for export companies hit by the collapse of global supply chains to ensure additional trade financing worth more than KRW 36 trillion.

[Korea: Visas of registered foreign residents extended for 3 months](#)

The Ministry of Justice has extended for three months the visas of about 60,000 registered foreign residents whose periods of stay will soon expire. Authorized by the justice minister, the extension will apply to all foreign residents so that they need not visit an immigration office.

[India, China can collaborate on Covid vaccine, says envoy Misri.](#)

With India looking to jointly fight the Covid-19 spread with China and others, Indian ambassador in Beijing Vikram Misri said there was scope for collaboration between the two countries in scientific and medical research related to the virus and also in developing a vaccine.

[About 250 Indians Infected by Coronavirus in Singapore, Says Indian High Commission](#)

About 250 Indians, with nearly half of them staying in close contact in the dormitories for foreign workers, have tested positive for the coronavirus in Singapore, the Indian High Commission here said on Friday. Of the infected Indians, nearly 50 per cent are from dormitories for foreign workers, which have emerged as the disease spreading points in the country.

[COVID-19 Update on Latvia and Sweden:](#)

- **Latvia:** The Riga International Airport is to lay off around 500 employees due to the crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The airport currently employs 1,200 people. The carriers operating at the airport have already informed the airport that they are planning to cancel most of their flights in the following months until June.
- **Sweden:** In contrast to sharp rise in new confirmed cases and deaths in Sweden, the State Epidemiologist, Anders Tegnell highlighted that the corona curve is starting to flatten off in the Stockholm region, although there is a gradual rise in infections across the rest of the country. Stockholm University's Department for Computer and System



Sciences has partnered up with the Public Health Agency to use AI to simulate and study pandemic outbreaks, such as covid-19.

Central Advisories and Notifications

Action taken by Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare during lockdown

Department of Agriculture Cooperation and Farmers Welfare, Government of India is taking several measures to facilitate the farmers and farming activities at field level during the lockdown period. The Department has circulated the SOP related to crop harvesting & threshing during Kharif 2020 to the States to protect health of farmers and farm workers and to contain the spread of Corona Virus.

MHA directs all States/UTs to ensure strict compliance of lockdown measures to fight COVID—19 and not allow any social/religious gathering/procession

In view of the ensuing festivals in the month of April 2020, Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has directed all States/UTs to ensure strict compliance of lockdown measures to fight COVID—19 and not allow any social/religious gathering/procession. It has been communicated to inform District authorities and field agencies on the specific prohibitions as mentioned in the Consolidated Guidelines on Lockdown Measures and that they should take all required preventive measures for maintenance of law and order, peace and public tranquility.

Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR): Guidance on the use of Truenat beta CoV

Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Department of Health Research, has validated Truenat beta CoV test on Truelab workstation and has recommended it as a screening test in its recent guidelines.

State Advisories and Notifications

Government of Kerala: Exemptions for essential Industries

Department of Industries, Government of Kerala has written to District Collectors informing them of the exempted industrial houses/ units from various sectors such as Food Processing, Manufacturers of Masks, Supplier of essential items, etc to be allowed to function smoothly during the lock down period, considering their role in maintenance of supply of essential items.



[Government of Andhra Pradesh: Modification Orders issued on appointment of Special Officers for containment, control and Surveillance of COVID-19](#)

The State Government has issued modification Orders on appointment of Special Officers for containment, control and Surveillance of COVID-19.

International Advisories and Notifications

[South Africa updates:](#)

- **France to reallocate Africa aid money for fight against coronavirus**

France will reallocate almost €1.2bn of African development aid to the fight against coronavirus as part of President Emmanuel Macron's effort to focus international attention on the health and economic impact of the pandemic on the continent.

- **Lockdown extended by two weeks as SA's Covid-19 cases increase to 1934**

President Cyril Ramaphosa has extended the lockdown period by two weeks as the number of confirmed Covid-19 cases increased to 1934 on Thursday.

- **South African leaders take pay cuts for COVID-19 fund**

South Africa's president and his cabinet will take a 33% pay cut for the next three months to contribute to a fund to help the nation cope with the novel coronavirus pandemic.

[Covid-19: Botswana Parliament endorses 6-month state of emergency](#)

The threat of being infected with the Covid-19 coronavirus did little to deter Botswana's Members of Parliament – all of whom were quarantined – as the House endorsed a six-month state of emergency declaration. The state of emergency could see the landlocked diamond-rich country facing an extended and much stricter lockdown and preventative measures against the spread of the deadly virus. This comes after a 28 day "extreme lockdown" which kicked in last Friday.

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