



Confederation of Indian Industry
125 Years: 1895-2020

**UPDATE ON COVID-19
NEWS, ADVISORIES AND NOTIFICATIONS
(28 March 2020)**

News Updates

RBI cuts rate by 75 bps, steepest in over 10 years; can defer EMIs by 3 months

As the ripples of Covid-19 pandemic are felt across the economy, the Reserve Bank of India spelt out a host of measures to deal with the crisis. Significant amongst them was the moratorium on term loans on payment of instalments and deferment of interest on working capital facilities for a period of three months. RBI also cut interest rates by 75 basis points (bps)—the sharpest in over a decade. It also made available Rs 3.74 lakh crore of additional liquidity to banks and allowed almost all borrowers to defer loan repayments by three months. The measures are aimed at buying time for the government to deal with the coronavirus crisis by preventing stressed borrowers from being ejected from the banking system and avoiding bond markets going into a freeze due to the sudden cessation caused by the lockdown.

PM Modi announces new COVID-19 fund

Shri Narendra Modi, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India announced a new COVID-19 fund. The project has been named the Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Funds or PM CARES.

Farming and allied activities exempted from lockdown

Government has granted in the nationwide relaxation for activities related to agriculture-farming and allied activities with a view to address problems being face by the farming community.

India's response to COVID-19 has been pre-emptive, pro-active and graded

India has already put in place a comprehensive response system at its border much before WHO declared it as Public health emergency of International concern.

CORONAVIRUS- RESEARCH TRACKER : UPDATE AS ON 28 MARCH 2020

- US FDA has granted emergency authorization to a portable test developed by Abbott Laboratories, to detect COVID-19 in as little as five minutes. The portable test, which is the size of a small toaster and uses molecular technology also shows negative results within 13 minutes.
- India has volunteered to participate in the World Health Organization's (WHO) ongoing solidarity trial for developing vaccines for Covid-19.
- University of Oxford researchers working in vaccine development effort to prevent Covid-19 have started screening healthy volunteers
- Sanofi announced a new effort to develop a vaccine to prevent the novel coronavirus, Covid-19.
- The Health ministry had asked a "PSU to make 10,000 ventilators and another 30,000 will come from Bharat Electricals, a PSU under the Defence Ministry.

- The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has brought together a consortium of life sciences companies to accelerate development, production and delivery of Covid-19 treatments, tests and vaccines.
- 16 companies set to sell COVID-19 test kits in India: Two South Korean firms, Seegene and SD Biosensor have received government approval to supply RT-PCR based Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) diagnostic kits in India. The government also approved 12 rapid antibody test kits for COVID-19 diagnosis.

Major Asian Economies dealing with COVID-19 pandemic

The coronavirus is affecting Asian countries differently, with governments in each country choosing their own remedies to prevent further spread of infections. India, China, Japan, Indonesia, South Korea and other Asian countries have toughened their measures in order to control spread of COVID-19.

Bahrain takes precautionary measures to combat coronavirus.

As a part of the precautionary measures to combat the coronavirus, His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, issued an order which prohibits the gatherings of more than five individuals on roads, yards, beaches, parks and other public places. It also imposes a penalty of up to three years jail term or/and up to BD5000.

China to make new fiscal push to fight coronavirus slowdown

To boost the global economy affected by coronavirus pandemic, China charts fiscal policy and plans which includes increase in fiscal deficit from 2.8 % of GDP in 2019, issue special treasury bonds, issue special purpose bonds to fund infrastructure projects, like roads and airports. These measures will be finalised at the National People's Congress which could be held next month.

India-UAE review global fight against COVID-19

His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces discussed with the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, the latest developments of the COVID-19 pandemic and international efforts being made to contain its repercussions.

USA, France, Germany and other countries efforts to evacuate close to 14,000 of their nationals stranded in India

There are nearly 2,000 French tourists, hundreds of American travellers, close to 8000 Russian tourists, stranded in country and waiting to fly out. Japan, Malaysia and Ukraine have also operated special flights to fly out hundreds of their nationals. About 1,500 Israeli nationals have been evacuated in six flights from New Delhi, Mumbai and Goa since March 21.

Kenya Government's Interventions to Cushion citizens against COVID-19

On 25 March 2020, the President of the Republic of Kenya outlined the tax interventions the government intends to make to cushion the country against the economic effects of the COVID-19.

Palestine demands medical supplies to fight COVID-19

Mr Hussein al-Sheikh, head of the General Authority of Civil Affairs of the Palestinian Authority has submitted a request to several countries for medical supplies, including diagnostic test kits, as it is struggling to cope with the rising cases of COVID-19 with its limited resources and weak healthcare system.

US Pledges \$2.9 Million Aid For India To Fight COVID-19

The United States on Friday announced \$174 million financial assistance to 64 countries including \$2.9 million to India to help them fight the coronavirus pandemic. This is in addition to the \$100 million aid announced by the US in February.

South Africa Billionaire Motsepe Pledges \$57 Million for Virus

Patrice Tlhopane Motsepe, South African mining businessman has pledged to spend 1 billion rand (\$57 million) on fighting the Covid-19 pandemic in South Africa.

Moody's strips South Africa of its investment grade rating

The ratings agency Moody's has stripped South Africa of its investment grade rating, This means investors across the world will be forced to sell billions of rands of South African government bonds. The ballooning government debt and its inability to curb its spending will worsen amid the coronavirus crisis.

Central Advisories and Notifications

Reimbursement of OPD medicines: Special sanction in view of COVID-19 by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

MoHFW in its office memorandum stated that CGHS beneficiaries getting medicines for chronic diseases, may purchase medicines based on the prescription held till 30 April 2020 irrespective of Non-Availability certificate from CGHS or otherwise.

Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) issues list of Government Laboratories approved

ICMR issues a list of 122 Government laboratories approved. Out of this the operational laboratories for COVID19 Testing are 111 and 11 laboratories are in the process of operationalization.

Ministry of Coal working to ensure maintenance of critical coal supplies during the COVID-19 lockdown period

Union Minister of Coal, Mines and Parliamentary Affairs Shri Prahalad Joshi has ensured that Coal supplies are declared as an Essential Service and directed all the officials to work harder to ensure that critical coal supplies are maintained.

State Advisories and Notifications

Government of Kerala issues "The Kerala Epidemic Diseases Ordinance, 2020"

To unify and consolidate the laws relating to the regulation and prevention of epidemic diseases and for related matters, Government of Kerala has issued the "The Kerala Epidemic Diseases Ordinance, 2020".

Chhattisgarh Government issues order on inclusion of Essential Services

Department of Home, Government of Chhattisgarh has issued an order listing out various services under the Essential Services Maintenance Act.

Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Department, Haryana's guidelines for harvesting with reference to curb the transmission of COVID-19

As the harvesting of various crops is about to commence, Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Department, Government of Haryana has issued guidelines to prevent transmission of coronavirus amongst the people engaged in harvesting and also hassle free movement of the harvesters

Collectorate, District Indore notification on "Gokuldas Hospital", Indore as treatment-cum-isolation facility for COVID-19 patients.

Gokuldas Hospital, Indore has been designated as treatment-cum-isolation facility for COVID-19 patients.

Collectorate, District Indore, notification on "New Vishesh", Indore as treatment-cum-isolation facility for COVID-19 patients.

New Vishesh Hospital, Indore has been designated as treatment-cum-isolation facility for COVID-19 patients.

Relief in electricity bill to consumers : Government of Gujarat

To address the difficulties faced by consumers in remitting the electricity bill due to lockdown, State Government of Gujarat has extended due date of remitting the bill to 15 May 2020. During this period neither the electricity connection will be cut nor late fee would be levied.

International Advisories and Notifications

Iraq Cabinet discusses measures to contain COVID-19

In its review meeting on impact of restrictions to contain COVID-19, Iraqi Cabinet decided to extend the curfew to 11 April 2020 in all regions, authorized the Minister of Health to allow Health professionals, who are at their age of retirement, to continue their posts and directed all Ministries, public bodies, local authorities to use their financials and other resources to support the Crisis Cell and Ministry of Health.

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