



Confederation of Indian Industry
125 Years: 1895-2020

UPDATE ON COVID-19 NEWS, ADVISORIES AND NOTIFICATIONS (31 March 2020)

News Updates

Government notifies medical devices as drugs from April 1

The Government on Tuesday notified medical devices as drugs from April 1, 2020. The government is regulating 24 class of medical devices which have been notified/regulated as drugs under Drugs & Cosmetics Act 1940 and Drugs & Cosmetics Rules 1945. According to Government, four medical devices Cardiac Stents, Drug Eluting Stents, Condoms and Intra Uterine Device (Cu-T) are scheduled medical devices for which ceiling prices have been fixed.

Swiss may have to top up coronavirus aid packages amid rush for loans

Switzerland may have to expand its emergency fund for companies hit by coronavirus disruption, after banks loaned out 6.6 billion Swiss francs (\$6.89 billion) in the first four days of the scheme. To support the export-orientated economy in the crisis, the government has so far allocated 42 billion francs, the biggest economic aid package in Swiss history.

Czech Government to finalize economic aid package

The Czech government is expected to finalize the details of an emergency aid package for entrepreneurs and employers to mitigate the impacts of the coronavirus crisis. These include a six month moratorium on mortgage and other loan repayments and the sum of CZ 15,000 a month for all who were forced to close their businesses within the restrictions imposed by the government.

China offers to build makeshift Covid-19 hospitals in India

China has offered to build makeshift hospitals in India on the lines of those it did in Wuhan to treat Covid-19 patients, if any such request is made by the government here, according to a state-run Chinese daily. Chinese companies working on existing projects in India, with sufficient supply networks in place, can take over the construction of makeshift hospitals like those in Wuhan upon India's invitation," the Global Times quoted a China Railway Construction Corporation (CRCC).

CORONAVIRUS- RESEARCH TRACKER: *Update as on 31 March 2020:*

- Grifols has entered a formal collaboration with the US Biomedical Advanced Research Development Authority (BARDA), Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and other Federal public health agencies to develop a plasma-derived COVID-19 therapeutic. Simultaneously, Grifols is working on a clinical trial testing the efficacy and safety of inactivated plasma at treating COVID-19 in Spain. The company is also collaborating with Spanish hospitals to conduct a host of clinical studies on the use of other plasma-derived therapeutics, including intravenous immunoglobulin and

alpha-1 antitrypsin, with the goal of proving their efficacy in the treatment of COVID-19.

- The first patient outside the US has been treated with Kevzara in Sanofi and Regeneron's global clinical trial programme, which is evaluating the drug in severely ill COVID-19 patients.
- Human testing of an experimental coronavirus vaccine by Johnson & Johnson is set to start by September. Johnson & Johnson said on Monday that it and the US government will invest \$1 billion to create enough manufacturing capacity to make more than 1 billion doses of a vaccine it is testing to stop the new coronavirus that has killed more than 35,000 people around the world.
- The Department of Science and Technology (DST) has said that an air purifying technology developed by an incubatee company of the Pune-based Science and Technology Park (STP or Scitech Park) could offer an effective solution to the country's fight against the coronavirus COVID-19 contagion by reducing the viral load of the infected areas.
- India's leading institutions have proposed some technological solutions to the government to help combat Covid-19. Ministry of Human Resources (MHRD) has asked all Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) to submit comprehensive plans within two days to help deal with the outbreak. IITs across the country have joined the fight against Covid-19, activating their incubation centres to develop solutions that could help contain the virus.

COVID-19 to slash Indonesia's growth to 2.8% as millions may slip into poverty: World Bank

The World Bank has estimated that the COVID-19 pandemic will significantly slow Indonesia's economic growth this year and may throw millions of people into poverty. World Bank lead economist for Indonesia Frederico Gil Sander said a precise growth forecast was difficult to make, but the baseline scenario for Indonesia's growth was 2.8 percent in 2020, down from 5.1 percent initially projected, if the situation started to normalize by June.

Covid-19's existential threat to the EU : Global Affairs

The pandemic has not only dealt massive damage to EU's members but also threatens its unity as seen in the fight over 'corona bonds'. All European governments are concentrating their entire firepower on fighting the still virulent coronavirus epidemic. Governments throughout Europe are now pledged not only to cover the salaries of people retrenched as a result of the economic downturn, but also to pouring money into national enterprises in order to save them from collapse, and underwrite the biggest single expansion in state spending on healthcare since World War II.

Dubai Expo 2020 recommends postponing for a year amid virus

Organisers of Expo 2020 have backed a proposal to postpone the event for one year due to coronavirus pandemic . The announcement came on Monday after a meeting between officials from the UAE and foreign countries participating in the nearly six-month long event that was due to begin in October.

HANNOVER MESSE announces cancellation of 2020 event

Comprehensive travel restrictions ban on group gatherings and a prohibition decree in the Hannover region makes it impossible to stage HANNOVER MESSE. "Given the dynamic

development around Covid-19 and the extensive restrictions on public and economic life, HANNOVER MESSE cannot take place this year,” said Dr. Jochen Köckler, Chairman of the Board of Management, Deutsche Messe AG.

How Indian companies are contributing to the war against coronavirus

The relief fund announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to fight the pandemic has got the wholehearted support from people from various quarters of life. Corporate India is helping the government fight the coronavirus outbreak by donating crores of rupees, supplying medical equipment and opening hospitals. Here's a look at some of the Business Groups that have opened their purse strings

COVID-19 impacts across Indonesia's business sectors: A recap

It is only three months into 2020, but businesses across different sectors in the country have been hit hard as the COVID-19 pandemic wreaks havoc on economic activities nationwide. The highly infectious pneumonia-like disease has spared only a few businesses, mostly offering healthcare products and services, while many others, from airlines and hotels to retail and food and beverage industries, have taken a hard hit.

Kuwait Charity Raise USD 30 Million to back Government's Anti-Coronavirus Efforts

Kuwait Ministry of Social Affairs has informed that a campaign launched by 41 Kuwaiti charities has raised a total of KD 9.169 million (about \$30 million) in one day with a view to supporting the Government efforts and help people who were affected by the novel Corona virus outbreak.

Malaysia curbs to hit full-year consumer spending

Malaysia's curbs amid the Covid-19 outbreak may mean slower full-year household spending growth of 4.2 per cent, down from a previous projection of 6.3 per cent, said Fitch Solutions Country Risk and Industry Research in a Mar 27 report. This is also down from the estimated 5.6 per cent growth in 2019. The four-week Movement Control Order from March 18 to April 14 entails the closure of Malaysia's borders, its schools, and all non-essential businesses.

India calls for further enhancing affordable access to medicines and facilitating easier movement of health professionals across national borders

India has called for working towards creating a global framework for further enhancing affordable access to medicines for fighting pandemics and facilitating easier movement of health professionals across national borders. In his Interventions at the meeting of the Trade and Investment Ministers of the G20 countries, Shri Piyush Goyal, Minister of Commerce and Industry stressed on the need to uphold the multilateral commitments and improve upon its effectiveness to meet current challenges.

Naspers commits R1.5bn to fight against coronavirus

Naspers has committed R1.5 billion in emergency funding to aid the government's response to the coronavirus outbreak. It will contribute R500 million to the Solidarity Response Fund, an independent relief fund announced by President Cyril Ramaphosa last week to mitigate the impact of the pandemic.

Tokyo Olympics, deferred over coronavirus

The Tokyo 2020 Olympics were due to open on July 24 this year and run for 16 days, but the coronavirus pandemic forced the first peace-time postponement of the Games. "The Olympics will now be held from July 23 to August 8, 2021.

World economy, except India, China, will go into recession due to Covid-19: UN

According to a latest UN trade report, the world economy will go into recession this year with a predicted loss of trillions of dollars of global income due to the coronavirus pandemic, spelling serious trouble for developing countries with the likely exception of India and China. With two-thirds of the world's population living in developing countries facing unprecedented economic damage from the COVID-19 crisis, the UN is calling for a USD 2.5 trillion rescue package for these nations.

Central Advisories and Notifications

Finance Ministry issues Taxation and other Laws (Relaxation of Certain Provisions) Ordinance, 2020

In order to give effect to the announcements made by the Union Finance Minister *vide* Press Release dated 24.03.2020, regarding several relief measures relating to statutory and regulatory compliance matters across sectors in view of COVID-19 outbreak, the govt has brought in an Ordinance on 31.03.2020 which provides for extension of various time limits under the Taxation and Benami Acts. It also provides for extension of time limits contained in the Rules or Notification which are prescribed/ issued under these Acts.

Ministry of Shipping issues direction to all Major Ports not to levy any penalties/charges/fees on any Port user for any delay caused due to COVID-19

In wake of outbreak of COVID-19 and same being declared as Pandemic, the Government of India has imposed a lockdown for a period of 21 days to contain COVID-19 Pandemic in the country. Ministry of Home Affairs has issued an addendum, specifically giving exceptions to the operations of Seaports for cargo movement and inter-state movement of Goods/cargo for inland and exports to ensure regular supply of goods in the country.

Foreign Trade Policy 2015-2020 extended for one year; Other immediate relief measures also announced

The Union Commerce and Industry Ministry today announced changes in the Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) of Government of India. The present Policy which came into force on 1st April, 2015, is for 5 years and has validity up to 31st March, 2020. In view of the unprecedented current situation arising out of the pandemic Novel COVID-19, the Govt. has decided to continue relief under various export promotion schemes by granting extension of the existing Foreign Trade Policy by another one year i.e. up to 31st March, 2021. Several other relief measures have also been announced to support trade and industry.

Revision of ceiling price of Scheduled formulations

In compliance of the provisions of Drugs (Price Control) Order 2013, NPPA has revised/increased the ceiling price of 883 scheduled formulations. The Authority in its meeting held on 31.03.2020 noted with satisfaction that the supply disruption of APIs caused by COVID-19 outbreak is returning to normalcy and no unusual price fluctuations in price of inputs for

medicines, amid COVID-19 outbreak has been reported. Hence, normal price revisions have been allowed.

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has issued following Advisory for harvesting and threshing of Rabi crops and post-harvest, storage and Marketing of farm produce in the wake of COVID-19 threat:

Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) Writes to State Commissioners for PwDs for Implementation of Comprehensive Disability Inclusive Guidelines for Protection and Safety of Divyangjan During Emergency Health Situations due to Covid 19

The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has written to the State Commissioners for Persons with Disabilities of all States/UTs for the implementation of comprehensive disability inclusive guidelines issued by the DEPwD on 26th March, 2020 for protection and safety of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) (Divyangjan) during the emergency health situations due to Pandemic COVID 19 including issues of passes to Care Givers, NGOs/PwDs.

Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers: PSUs to release their CSR funds for fighting COVID-19 Pandemic.

In view of the urgent need to fight COVID-19 pandemic, Union Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers has urged all the profit making PSUs under his Ministry to donate part of their CSR funds to Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund (PM CARES)

Ministry of Rural Development releases Rs.4,431 crore to States/UTs this week towards MGNREGS wages & material arrears

Department of Rural Development has revised wages of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee (NREGs) with effect from 1 April 2020. Ministry of Rural Development has released an amount of Rs. 4,431 crores to various States/UTs to liquidate these liabilities of current fiscal year and the remaining such liabilities along with 1 tranche for the year 2020-21 will be released before 15 April 2020.

Office of Principal Scientific Adviser issues manual on homemade masks: Masks for Curbing the Spread of SARS-CoV-2 Coronavirus

The Office of the Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India has issued a detailed manual on homemade masks: "Masks for Curbing the Spread of SARS-CoV-2 Coronavirus".

Ministry of Civil Aviation: Cargo flights carry medical supplies to eastern and southern parts of the country; private airlines also carry out critical supply operations

In continuation to the Cargo flights being operated to carry medical supplies to Southern, Eastern and North Eastern regions, private airlines such as Indigo, SpiceJet and Blue Dart are also operating flights on commercial basis. Cargo Hubs have been created at Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Kolkata. Hubs feed to spokes at Guwahati, Dibrugarh, Agartala, Aizwal, Imphal, Coimbatore, Thiruvananthapuram.

Ministry of Commerce & Industry: More than 280 units in Special Economic Zones (SEZs) manufacturing essential items like pharmaceuticals and hospital devices, are operational.

SEZs units engaged in manufacturing of essential items like drugs, pharmaceuticals or hospital equipment are operational to ensure these critical supplies are not disrupted. More than 280

units, engaged in manufacturing of essential items like pharmaceuticals and hospital devices, are operational.

“Stranded in India” portal to help foreign tourists.

To extend support to stranded foreign tourists, Ministry of Tourism has come up with a portal to disseminate information regarding the services that can be availed by foreign tourists. The portal is titled ‘Stranded in India’ and aims to act as a support network for foreign tourists stuck in various parts of the country.

State Advisories and Notifications

Government of Manipur: Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for supply of essential commodities.

State Government of Manipur has released SOPs for supply of essential commodities to Public during the lockdown period. This covers timings for retail shops, market, doorstep delivery and role of Police for Entry to State.

Government of Puducherry: e-Pass (COVID-19)- features, advantages and issuance

Government of Puducherry has come out with a brief presentation on e-Pass, being issued to ensure uninterrupted supply of essential goods and services, with its salient features and issuance procedure to ease out the information.

North Goa issues orders on e-passes for Pharmaceutical Units

Office of the District Magistrate of North Goa issues orders on issuance of e-passes for all pharmaceutical units operating during lockdown, stating that there is no ceiling of issuance of passes and they are authorised to use permits to the bonafide employees of their ancillaries’ units.

Government of Karnataka issues order on monitoring supply chain management of food items and agri.

A State Supply Chain Management Cell (SSCMC) is set up within Agriculture Secretariat for supervision of supply chain management and handling various issues and obtaining feedbacks from various departments involved in ensuring supply chain management of various essential commodities and agriculture inputs.

International Advisories and Notifications

European Commission: Guidelines concerning the exercise of free movement of workers during COVID-19 outbreak

To address the situation of the cross-border and seasonal workers performing essential services, EU Commission has issued guidelines for free movement of workers who need to cross borders in order to reach their place of work.

Morocco Government announces allocation of monthly stipend for workers forced to suspend their income – generating activities due to national lockdown.

The Government announced allocation of a monthly stipend, as of March 15, for workers forced to suspend their income-generating activities due to the national lockdown. A guarantee program was also launched to protect companies with a deteriorated cash flow from bankruptcy amid the novel coronavirus crisis.

Viet Nam to go into 15-day nationwide social distancing to curb COVID-19

Viet Nam will begin nationwide social distancing from April 1, with the principle of going into self-isolation, as per the latest directive signed by PM Nguyen Xuan Phuc. Citizens are told to stay at home to go out in case of extreme necessity, such as buying food, medicine; emergencies; working at factories / production establishments in essential services and goods that are not subject to provisional closure; and other emergency cases.

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