



On edge: (From left) Municipality workers in Srinagar carrying out a sanitisation drive at the city's Jamia Masjid on Friday; A roadside vendor selling masks, which are in great demand, in New Delhi; Evacuees at the ITBP facility in the capital after they tested negative for COVID-19; Devotees wearing face masks at the Golden Temple in Amritsar. ■ NISSAR AHMAD, SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA, PTI, AFP

Masks, sanitisers now essential commodities

Centre announces the decision following their shortage in the wake of COVID-19 outbreak



The order was notified under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955. ■ PTI

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI
Masks and hand sanitisers have been declared as essential commodities due to their shortage in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak.
On Friday, the Centre notified an order under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 to declare 2 ply and 3 ply surgical masks, N95

masks and hand sanitisers as essential commodities till June 30, 2020. It has also issued an advisory under the Legal Metrology Act, so that States can ensure these items are not sold for more than the Maximum Retail Price (MRP).
It has been noted that these products are "either not available with most of

the vendors in the market or are available with great difficulty at exorbitant prices," said a statement from the Consumer Affairs Department. The decision would empower the States and the Central government to regulate production, quality, distribution and sale of these items, and carry out operations against those involved

in speculation, overpricing and black marketing.
Consumers can register complaints with the National Consumer Helpline 1800-11-4000 or at consumerhelpline.gov.in.
An offender under the Essential Commodities Act can be punished with imprisonment up to seven years, or a fine, or both.

Coronavirus strain isolated, says ICMR

'It will help in developing vaccines'

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN NEW DELHI

India is only the fifth country in the world besides Japan, Thailand, U.S. and China to have successfully isolated the COVID-19 virus strain, helping it take the first step towards expediting the development of drugs, vaccines and rapid diagnostic kits in the country.

Confirming this, Director General of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Balram Bhargava, said on Friday that this was a huge step forward for India.

"The strain that we have is 99.99% similar to the Wuhan strain. You also have to understand that India has managed to isolate the strain from a very small batch of positive cases which is a remarkable achievement," Professor

Bhargava said. The Council, on Friday, also announced that it has expanded its network of labs equipped to test COVID-19 from 51 to 65, and that the secondary tests for reconfirmation of the virus, which was earlier conducted only in National Institute of Virology, have also been expanded to 31 labs.

Labs underutilised
"These steps will enable India to expedite detection of the virus and will help in effective management. Till date, ICMR has tested more than 6,500 samples of 5,900 individuals, of which 81 cases have been tested positive for the virus," he said.

"ICMR is equipped to handle more volumes of samples if the need arises. As of now our labs are being underutilised," he added.

44 Indians brought from Iran

They were stuck in the country after flights were cancelled

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

India on Friday evacuated 44 citizens who were stuck in the Iranian city of Qom after flights were cancelled due to the COVID-19 outbreak in Iran. The evacuation came on a day when an Indian medical team reached Italy to test the citizens who want to return.

"Second batch of 44 Indian pilgrims has arrived today from Iran. Our efforts to bring back the others continue," said External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, announcing the arrival of the latest batch of evacuees who landed in Mumbai in an Iran Air flight.

The first batch comprising 58 nationals were brought back in a C17 military transport aircraft on Tuesday. The Ministry of External Affairs said on Wednesday that the pilgrims and students would be tested before being airlifted, as they



Back home: Indian evacuees brought from Iran at the Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport in Mumbai. ■ AFP

were located in the worst-hit countries.
A few thousand citizens of both countries are stranded in Iran and India as India cancelled flights in February in view of spike in COVID-19 cases in Iran.

But officials say they revised the decision after it became clear that the large number of stranded citizens had to be evacuated.

Indians stuck in Iran were pleading over social media for prompt evacuation. On Thursday, a woman

SC decides to cut hearings

Supreme Court Secretary General Sanjeev S. Kalgaonkar on Friday issued a notification stating that the functioning of the court on reopening on March 16 will be restricted. A circular late on Friday said only six Division Benches would be sitting on March 16 to hear urgent matters. All Special And Constitution Benches stand cancelled.

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

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700 employees under watch

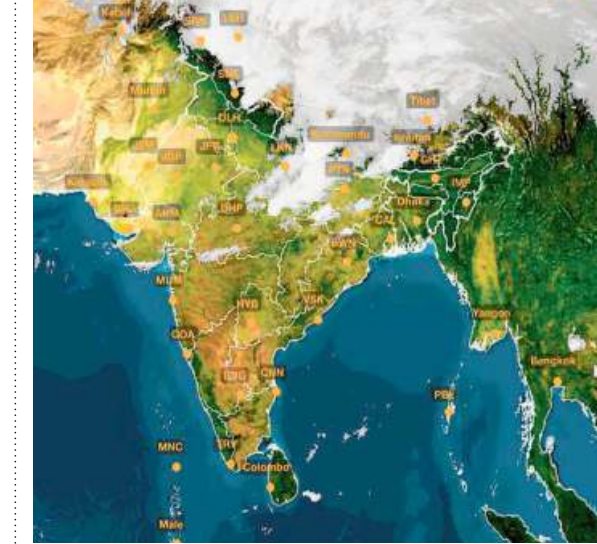
Around 700 employees of a private company in Noida have been asked to work from home after one of its executives tested positive for COVID-19. Anurag Bhargava, Chief Medical Officer, Gautam Buddha Nagar, told *The Hindu* that the employees have been put under "surveillance".

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GHAZIABAD

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WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Saturday: Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning likely at isolated places over West Bengal, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Chandigarh, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Sikkim, Odisha, Bihar, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	...	35.0	20.0	Kozhikode	...	36.0	26.0
Ahmedabad	...	31.0	15.0	Kurnool	...	38.0	26.0
Aizawl	...	23.0	11.0	Lucknow	...	24.0	15.0
Allahabad	...	28.0	17.0	Madurai	...	37.0	25.0
Bengaluru	...	34.0	21.0	Mangaluru	...	35.0	24.0
Bhopal	...	31.0	14.0	Mumbai	...	26.0	14.0
Bhubaneswar	...	35.0	23.0	Mysuru	...	34.0	22.0
Chandigarh	...	26.0	11.0	New Delhi	...	28.0	14.0
Chennai	...	32.0	26.0	Patna	...	0.1	24.0
Coimbatore	...	35.0	23.0	Port Blair	...	30.0	22.0
Dehradun	...	16.8	18.0	Puducherry	...	33.0	23.0
Gangtok	...	17.0	9.0	Pune	...	33.0	15.0
Goa	...	32.0	21.0	Raipur	...	30.0	20.0
Guwahati	...	31.0	15.0	Ranchi	...	0.3	25.0
Hubballi	...	34.0	19.0	Shillong	...	20.0	7.0
Hyderabad	...	34.0	21.0	Shimla	...	24.0	20.0
Imphal	...	28.0	11.0	Srinagar	...	14.6	12.0
Jaipur	...	28.0	14.0	Thiruvananthapuram	...	33.0	26.0
Kochi	...	32.0	27.0	Tiruchirappalli	...	36.0	23.0
Kohima	...	23.0	11.0	Vijayawada	...	36.0	23.0
Kolkata	...	34.0	23.0	Visakhapatnam	...	33.0	26.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO ₂	NO ₂	CO	PM _{2.5}	PM ₁₀	CODE
Ahmedabad	48	37	10	97	111	...
Bengaluru	9	73	23	102
Chennai	6	20	64	58
Delhi	21	58	102	211	265	...
Hyderabad	8	29	17	44	81	...
Kolkata	16	63	71	86	98	...
Lucknow	4	39	60	153
Mumbai	3	61	17	36	120	...
Pune	42	15	85	63	63	...
Visakhapatnam	12	25	36	42	55	...

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Jodhpur, Rajasthan recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 294 indicating a severe level of pollution. In contrast, Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh recorded a healthy AQI score of 31.

Sengar, 6 others get 10-year jail

He was held guilty in the death of rape victim's father

DEVESH KUMAR PANDEY NEW DELHI

A special court on Friday sentenced expelled Uttar Pradesh BJP MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar and six others to 10 years imprisonment in two cases linked to the death of the Unnao rape victim's father in 2018.

Sengar and his brother, Jaideep alias Atul Singh, have also been directed to pay ₹10 lakh each as compensation to the family of the deceased. Among those convicted are the then Maki Police Station in-charge Ashok Singh Bhadauria and then Sub-Inspector K. P. Singh.

The court asked the State government to take appropriate action against the



Kuldeep Sengar

doctors whose medical negligence led to the death of the girl's father. On March 4, Sengar was held guilty of culpable homicide not amounting to murder. The two cases registered by the CBI on the request of the State government relate to the death of the victim's father in April 2018 and for possession of illegal arms.

Centre announces Common Eligibility Test

Govt. aims to streamline hiring process

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Applicants for jobs in railways, banks and lower levels of Central government will now write a Common Eligibility Test (CET) from 2021, Minister for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions Jitendra Singh told journalists on Friday.
In a bid to streamline the hiring process for government agencies as well as the 2.5 crore candidates who apply each year, the Centre will set up an autonomous National Recruitment Agency (NRA) to conduct this on-line test, under which, candidates can apply through a common registration portal.
"This is not merely an administrative reform, but a huge socio-economic reform as well. It aims at providing a level playing field for all candidates by removing the obstacles involved in appearing for multiple examinations," said Dr. Singh.
"The exam dates for 2020 have already been announced [for the existing separate exams], so this will be implemented from 2021," he said.
He said the NRA proposal would soon go for Cabinet approval.
The CET will replace the first level tests conducted by the Staff Selection Commission, the Railway Recruitment Board and the Institute of Banking Personnel Selection.

जवाहरलाल स्नातकोत्तर आयुर्विज्ञान शिक्षा एवं अनुसंधान संस्थान
JAWAHARLAL INSTITUTE OF POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION AND RESEARCH (JIPMER)
(राष्ट्रीय एवं परिवार कल्याण मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार के अधीन राष्ट्रीय महत्व का संस्थान), धन्वन्तरि नगर, पुदुच्चेरी
(An Institution of National Importance under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India), Dhanvantri Nagar, Puducherry - 605 006
Phone: 0413 - 2296022 Website: www.jipmer.edu.in

No. JIP/Admn-I/Dep./11(31)/PDY/2020 Date: 14.03.2020
The Director, JIPMER, Puducherry invites application from eligible officers of Central/ State Government/Autonomous Institutions/Universities/Research Institutions etc., for filling the various Group A, B & C posts on DEPUTATION BASIS given as under:

SL NO.	NAME OF THE POST	LEVEL AS PER 7th CPC	VACANCY
1	Senior Financial Advisor	Level-13	1
2	Registrar	Level-12	1
3	Controller of Examinations	Level-12	1
4	System Analyst	Level-11	2
5	Senior Store Officer	Level-11	1
6	Purchase Officer	Level-10	1
7	Assistant Controller of Examinations	Level-10	1
8	Assistant Registrar	Level-7	2
9	Superintendent CSSD	Level-7	1
10	Manager for Press	Level-7	1
11	Data Processing Assistant Gr. A	Level-7	5
12	Senior Photographer	Level-6	1
13	Audiology-cum-Speech Therapist	Level-6	1
14	Computer Data Processor	Level-5	2
15	Foreman	Level-5	1

The format of the application, other details regarding pay scale, age, qualification, experience and other conditions of eligibility etc., for the posts are available in the JIPMER website "www.jipmer.edu.in"
The last date for receipt of filled-in application is 11.05.2020 (Monday) till 4.30 P.M.
DIRECTOR

Vistara puts Kunal Kamra on no-fly list

travelling with it. "We have placed you in our no-fly list till April 27, 2020," said an e-mail sent to Mr. Kamra.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI
Vistara on Friday banned comedian Kunal Kamra from

DA hiked by 4% for Central govt. staff

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Friday approved an increase of 4% in dearness allowance to Central government employees and dearness relief to pensioners, with effect from April 1, 2020, said Union Minister Prakash Javadekar.

The combined impact on the exchequer on account of both dearness allowance and dearness relief would be ₹12,510.04 crore per annum and ₹14,595.04 crore, respectively, in the financial year 2020-21.
"The move will benefit about 48.34 lakh Central government employees and 65.26 lakh pensioners," an official statement said.

भारत सरकार / Government of India, अंतरिक्ष विभाग / Department of Space
भारतीय अंतरिक्ष अनुसंधान संस्थान / Indian Space Research Organisation
अंतरिक्ष उपयोग केंद्र / SPACE APPLICATIONS CENTRE
अहमदाबाद / Ahmedabad - 380 015

विज्ञान सं. / Advertisement No. / संक. / SAC-02:2020 दिनांकित/Dated: 14.03.2020
अंतरिक्ष उपयोग केंद्र (संक) पात्र अभ्यर्थियों से निम्नलिखित पदों हेतु ऑनलाइन आवेदन आमंत्रित करता है:
Space Applications Centre (SAC) invites on-line applications for the following posts from eligible candidates:

वैज्ञानिक / अभियंता-एसडी	इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स
SCIENTIST/ ENGINEER-SD	Electronics
वैज्ञानिक / अभियंता-एससी	भौतिकी, कंप्यूटर, इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स, यांत्रिकी, संरचना एवं इलेक्ट्रिकल
SCIENTIST/ ENGINEER-SC	Physics, Computer, Electronics, Mechanical, Structural and Electrical
तकनीकी सहायक	इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स, यांत्रिकी, सिविल, इलेक्ट्रिकल
TECHNICAL ASSISTANT	Electronics, Mechanical, Civil, Electrical
तकनीकियन 'बी' / ड्राफ्ट्समैन 'बी'	फिटर, मशीनिस्ट, इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स, सूचना प्रौद्योगिकी, प्लंबर, कारपेंटर, इलेक्ट्रीशियन, रासायनिक, इन्वेंट्रियरी यांत्रिकी
TECHNICIAN 'B' / DRAUGHTSMAN 'B'	Fitter, Machinist, Electronics, Information Technology, Plumber, Carpenter, Electrician, Chemical, Draughtsman Mechanical

आवेदन मात्र ऑनलाइन प्राप्त किए जाएंगे। आवेदन पंजीयन हेतु ऑनलाइन भर्ती पोर्टल 14.03.2020 के 0900 बजे से 03.04.2020 के 1700 बजे तक खुली रहेगी। इच्छुक अभ्यर्थी विज्ञापन व ऑनलाइन फार्म भरने के लिए हमारी वेबसाइट <https://www.sac.gov.in> अथवा <https://recruitment.sac.gov.in/OSAR> देख सकते हैं।
Applications will be received on-line only. The on-line recruitment portal will be available from 0900 hours on 14.03.2020 to 1700 hours on 03.04.2020 for registration of application. Interested candidates may visit our web-site <https://www.sac.gov.in> OR <https://recruitment.sac.gov.in/OSAR> for detailed advertisement and filling-up of online application form.