







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 Essential Commodities Act, 1955. ■PTI

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN

India is only the fifth coun-

try in the world besides Ja-

pan, Thailand, U.S. and Chi-

na to have successfully

isolated the COVID-19 virus

strain, helping it take the

first step towards expediting

the development of drugs,

vaccines and rapid diagnos-

General of the Indian Coun-

cil of Medical Research

(ICMR), Balram Bhargava,

said on Friday that this was

a huge step forward for In-

is 99.99% similar to the Wu-

han 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

Professor

achievement,"

"The strain that we have

Confirming this, Director

tic kits in the country.

NEW DELHI

Coronavirus strain

isolated, says ICMR

'It will help in developing vaccines'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

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

Bhargava said. The Council.

on Friday, also announced

that it has expanded its net-

work of labs equipped to

test COVID-19 from 51 to 65,

and that the secondary tests

for reconfirmation of the vi-

rus, which was earlier con-

ducted only in National In-

stitute of Virology, have also

"These steps will enable In-

dia to expedite detection of

the virus and will help in ef-

fective management. Till

date, ICMR has tested more

than 6,500 samples of

5,900 individuals, of which

been expanded to 31 labs.

Labs underutilised

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

# 44 Indians brought from Iran

They were stuck in the country after flights were cancelled

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

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 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 The first batch compris-

ing 58 nationals were 81 cases have been tested positive for the virus," he brought back in a C17 military transport aircraft on "ICMR is equipped to Tuesday. The Ministry of Exhandle more volumes of ternal Affairs said on Wedsamples if the need arises. nesday that the pilgrims and As of now our labs are being students would be tested beunderutilised," he added. fore being airlifted, as they



Back home: Indian evacuees brought from Iran at the Chhatrapati Shivaii International Airport in Mumbai. • AFF

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

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 have been pleading over social media for prompt evacuation. On Thursday, a woman from Qom sent a social media message urging the Government of India to evacuate her. In a message on Twitter, Syeeda Syed said she is alone in Qom.

India also sent a fivemember medical team to Rome on Friday for testing of the citizens for the virus. The Centre on Thursday

clarified that India would not evacuate all citizens and would carry out mandatory tests and quarantine procedure as laid down in the pro-

## 'Social distancing key to containing COVID-19'

Avoid functions, urge health experts

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

With the World Health Organisation declaring CO-VID-19 a global pandemic, the need for social distancing to prevent the spread of infection is being underscored.

IMA Resource Person on COVID-19, Dr. K.K. Aggarwal, recommended a three feet distance between peo-

"If you look at the normal distance between two beds in a hospital ward it will be three feet. Similarly the distance between two seats in the first class on an airline is three feet. Ever wondered why? That's the safe distance to maintain during respiratory illness. This is the distance to be maintained for anyone who has a cold, cough or sneeze, or some form of visible respiratory distress," he said.

It is also important to follow normal Indian etiquette - the namaste- to greet oth-

ers instead of handshakes. Decontamination of surfaces frequently and maintaining hand hygiene are other measures people

must keep up with, he said.

'Declare emergency'

Industrialist and Sundram Fasteners Limited chairman Suresh Krishna has called for COVID-19 to be treated as a national emergency.

"One should understand that several thousands of people are already affected," he said, adding that

authorities must proactively close schools, businesses, cinema halls, concerts and public functions.

"There is no use feeling sorry later," he stressed. He recalled how India faced an epidemic in 1918 of the Spanish Flu where several thousand people died because the country was totally unprepared.

At Sundram Fasteners offices in Chennai, hand sanitisers have been given and employees instructed not to go for lunch in groups, he

"Communication is very important. Government officials in Tamil Nadu should come on television and give frequent updates in Tamil and English on what people should do, what measures the government has taken this kind of assurance is necessary," Mr Krishna said, lauding the Singapore model of handling the CO-VID-19 outbreak.

Tamil Nadu Director of Public Health and Preventive Medicine K. Kolandaswamy, who has been urging the public to avoid mass gatherings, said it is advisable to avoid all non-essential visits to any place.

Dr. Kolandaswamy further said: "Drop all tour plans now. It is better to avoid visiting shopping malls and theatres. We have told both malls and theatres to disinfect surfaces regularly. In fact, theatres have been told to increase the time gap between shows for cleaning."

### SC decides to cut hearings

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

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.

### 700 employees under watch

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

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 Buddh Nagar, told The Hindu that the employees have been put under "surveillance".

### New deadline for health checks

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI The deadline for a mandatory annual health check for Central government servants above the age of 40 years has been extended from March 31 to June 30 in the wake of the COVID-19

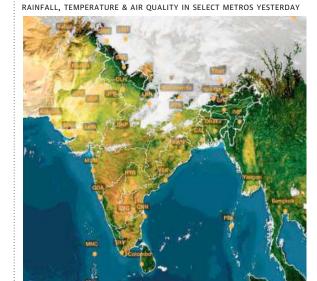
outbreak, said Union

Minister for Personnel,

Public Grievances and

Pensions Jitendra Singh.

### **WEATHER WATCH**



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	MI
Agartala		35.0	20.0	Kozhikode		36.0	26.
Ahmedabad		31.0	15.0	Kurnool		38.0	26.
Aizawl		23.0	11.0	Lucknow		24.0	15.
Allahabad	2.2	28.0	17.0	Madurai		37.0	25.
Bengaluru		34.0	21.0	Mangaluru		35.0	24.
Bhopal	0.4	31.0	14.0	Mumbai		26.0	14.
Bhubaneswar		35.0	23.0	Mysuru		34.0	22.
Chandigarh	9.0	26.0	11.0	New Delhi		28.0	14.
Chennai		32.0	26.0	Patna	0.1	24.0	21.
Coimbatore		35.0	23.0	Port Blair		30.0	22.
Dehradun	16.8	18.0	13.0	Puducherry		33.0	23.
Gangtok		17.0	9.0	Pune		33.0	15.
Goa		32.0	21.0	Raipur		30.0	20.
Guwahati		31.0	15.0	Ranchi	0.3	25.0	17.
Hubballi		34.0	19.0	Shillong			
Hyderabad		34.0	21.0	Shimla			
Imphal				Srinagar	14.6	12.0	1.
Jaipur				Thiruvananthapuram.		33.0	26.
Kochi		32.0	27.0	Tiruchi		36.0	23.
Kohima		23.0	11.0	Vijayawada		36.0	23.
Kolkata		34.0	23.0	Visakhapatnam		33.0	26.
(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)							
Dollutante in	the air	VOII 31	o broa	thing Voct	orday		

Pollutants in the air you are breathing							
CITIES	<b>SO</b> <sub>2</sub>	$NO_2$	co	PM2.5	PM10	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		

Yesterday

### Vistara puts Kunal Kamra on no-fly list

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Vistara on Friday banned comedian Kunal Kamra from

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

## 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 Makhi 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.

The other offences invoked charges under Sections 120-B (criminal conspiracy), 166 (public servant disobeying law, with intent to cause injury to any person), 167 (public servant framing incorrect document to cause injury), 193 (punishment for false evidence), 201 (causing disappearance of evidence), 211 (false charge of offence made with intent to injure), 218 (public servant framing incorrect record to save person from punishment), 323 (voluntarily causing hurt) and 341 (punishment for wrongful restraint) of the IPC.

On December 20, 2019, the court sentenced Sengar to life imprisonment for raping the girl in 2017.

## Centre announces Common Eligibility Test

Govt. aims to streamline hiring process

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

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 online test, under which, candidates can apply through a registration

"This is not merely an ad-

ministrative 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 The CET will replace the first level tests conducted by the Staff Selection Commission, the Railway Recruitment Board and the Insti-

tute of Banking Personnel

Selection.

### DA hiked by 4% for Central govt. staff

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

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.

### जवाहरलाल स्नातकोत्तर आयुर्विज्ञान शिक्षा एवं अनुसंधान संस्थान JAWAHARLAL INSTITUTE OF POSTGRADUATE **MEDICAL EDUCATION AND RESEARCH (JIPMER)**

(स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार के अधीन राष्ट्रीय महत्व का संस्थान), धन्वंतरि 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./1(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.

भारत सरकार/Government of India, अंतरिक्ष विभाग/Department of Space Indian Space Research Organisation अंतरिक्ष उपयोग केंद्र / SPACE APPLICATIONS CENTRE



A ND-NDE

विज्ञापन सं. / Advertisement No. / सैक / SAC-02:2020 दिनांकित/Dated:14.03.2020 अंतरिक्ष उपयोग केंद्र (सैक) पात्र अभ्यर्थियों से निम्नलिखित पदों हेत् 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	भौतिकीशास्त्र, 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			
तकनीशियन 'बी' /	फिटर, मशीनिस्ट, इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स, सूचना प्रौद्योगिकी, प्लंबर, कारपेंटर, इलेक्ट्रीशियन,			
ड्राफ्र्समैन 'बी'	रासायनिक, ड्राफ्ट्समैन यांत्रिकी			
TECHNICIAN 'B' /	Fitter, Machinist, Electronics, Information Technology, Plumber,			
DRAUGHTSMAN 'B'	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 विस्तृत 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.