

## INDIA COVID-19 LATEST UPDATES

<b>CONFIRMED CASES</b>	<b>101,385</b>
<b>ACTIVE CASES</b>	<b>58,987</b>
<b>CURED</b>	<b>39,234</b>
<b>DEATHS</b>	<b>3,158</b>

Data from 19 May, 12:00 PM IST

India's coronavirus cases have increased by more than 25,000 from the previous week. For the first time since the pandemic began, the average doubling rate in India is every 12 days. The recovery rate is at 38%, according to the Health Ministry. [Link](#).

Maharashtra remained the worst-hit state of positive cases rising to 23,401 confirmed cases (up by around 10,000 from last week), followed by Gujarat at 8,542 cases and Tamil Nadu at 8,002 cases.

### India Enters Lockdown 4.0 with New Guidelines

India has entered its fourth lockdown period which is now set to end on 31 May 2020. The official announcement was made by the Indian government through a notification dated 17 May 2020 and included new guidelines which build upon the previously published guidelines with the incorporation of some relaxation on certain restrictions. [Link1](#). [Link2](#). Despite the relaxations, the Indian government still grounded all domestic and international passenger flights until 31 May.

On a separate notification, the Ministry of Home Affairs have also reiterated the importance of strict compliance of the lockdown guidelines, with special focus on parameters set to identify and manage containment zones. [Link](#).

### Indian States Relax Labour, Industrial and Welfare Laws

Certain Indian states including Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Himachal Pradesh have relaxed labour related laws. According to a new report, the suspension of labour law has affected several labour acts in India. Indian states have highlighted that the suspension has been pursued to create greater flexibility for businesses and employers in order to help curb the effects of the COVID-19 lockdown, while many believed these suspensions represent an encroachment on the rights and welfare of workers in India. [Link1](#), [Link 2](#)

### Precarious Situation of Migrant Workers in India

Shramik special trains announced by the Indian government on 1 May to transport migrant workers across Indian states continue its operations. According to the Indian Railways data, a total of 1,414 'Shramik Special' trains have operated since 1 May, with a majority of the trains originating from

Gujarat and Maharashtra. [Link](#). The special trains are arranged between state governments and the Indian Railways.

There remain some uncertainties in the funding model of these special trains. While some state governments have declared these trains to be free of cost for migrant workers, many workers have been asked to pay to board the train. The state of Karnataka, for example, charges workers Rs. 1050 to board the trains, at a time when most workers have little money due to a lack of job opportunities. [Link1](#). [Link2](#).

The price attached to these trains has also prompted many migrant workers to continue their journey home on foot, while others have opted to hire trucks to get home because trains only carry them until the state border. [Link](#). The hardships of the migrant workers have also made them unable to practice social distancing which has led to a high positive cases rate (26%) among them. [Link](#).

### Highlights of India's Economic Stimulus Package

On 13 May, the Indian Finance Minister, Ms. Nirmala Sitharaman, started to provide a detailed breakdown of the 20 Lakh Crore (approx. EUR 245 billion) economic stimulus package announced by Prime Minister Modi. Details were announced in five tranches with each announcement focusing on different socio-economic factors. The detailed breakdown of the announcements are shown below:

#### First Tranche

**Date:** 13 May 2020

**Focus Areas:** MSMEs Stimulus and Increase Liquidity and Cash Flow

**Measures:**

1. Revised definition of MSME which include higher investment and turnover cap
2. USD 60 billion credit line for MSMEs
3. Statutory EPF contribution reduced from 12 to 10% for the next three months.

[Link1](#), [Link2](#).

#### Second Tranche

**Date:** 14 May 2020

**Focus Areas:** Migrant Workers, Small Farmers, and Street Vendors

**Measures:**

1. Free food grain supply to migrants for two months
2. Incentives for providing rental accommodation for migrant workers
3. Migrant workers will now get work in their own states under the Mahatma Gandhi Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA)
4. Increase in minimum wage rate from Rs 182 to Rs 202
5. Special credit facility of Rs 5,000 crore for street vendors

[Link1](#), [Link2](#)

# News

## Highlights

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### Third Tranche

Date: 15 May 2020

Focus Areas: Infrastructure, Food Processing, Animal Husbandry & Fisheries and Governance

Measures:

1. Rs 5,000 Cr additional liquidity has been transferred to dairy farmers
2. Rs. 1 lakh crore fund for develop the farm gate infrastructure (e.g. cold chains)
3. Rs 10,000 crore fund for micro food scheme will be executed with a cluster-based approach. Will benefit 2 lakh Micro Food Enterprises
4. Increase in minimum wage rate from Rs 182 to Rs 202
5. Propose amendment to Essential Commodities Act to enable better price realisation for farmers

[Link1](#)

### Fourth Tranche

Date: 16 May 2020

Focus Areas: Energy, Aviation, Policy Reforms

Measures:

1. Tax regime for the MRO ecosystem worth EUR 243 million over three-year period
2. 12 new airports to be developed through PPP model
3. Fast-track investment clearances through Empowered Group of Secretaries
4. Rs. 50,000 crores for Coal India Limited with a target of one billion tons of coal production by 2023-24

[Link1.](#)

### Fifth Tranche

Date: 17 May 2020

Focus Areas: Health, Education, Ease of Doing Business

Measures:

1. Additional Rs 40,000 crore funding to Mahatma Gandhi Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) to generate jobs in rural sectors
2. Increased funding in healthcare and education sector
3. Plans in place for next phase of 'ease of doing business' reforms

[Link1.](#)

## **India Objects to Permanent Tariff Cuts at WTO**

India opposes permanent tariff reductions on health and farm products proposed by some countries at the recent WTO's General Council Meeting as a measure to counter trade disruptions due to COVID-19. New Delhi opposes the move in order to continue protecting their domestic industries. The move was made shortly after India promoted its economic stimulus based on the "Self-Reliant India" motto.

[Link.](#)

## High Unemployment and Labour Participation Reported by CMIE

The Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) has reported unemployment rate of over 23% in India and low participation rate at 41.9% in India due to the coronavirus-induced lockdown. The lockdown is also estimated to have a long-term costs due to unavailability of jobs. Restrictions on mobility may also restrict labour supply going forward. [Link1](#). [Link2](#).

## SRI LANKA COVID-19 LATEST UPDATES

CONFIRMED CASES	992
CURED	551
DEATHS	9

Data from 19 May, 12 PM IST

## Sri Lanka Reopens Several Villages

Sri Lanka has reopened several villages kept under isolation to prevent the COVID-19 spread as no case was reported over the last two weeks. Sri Lanka lifted their COVID-19 lockdown on 11 May. [Link](#).

## Apparel Companies Unable to Pay Salaries in Sri Lanka

52 apparel companies have expressed their inability to pay salaries to their employees as banks do not have funds to provide loans, according to Joint Apparel Sector Forum (JAF). [Link](#).