

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Name: COVID-19 in India - Weekly Food Retail Update

Country: India

Post: Mumbai

Report Category: Agricultural Situation, Agriculture in the News, Retail Foods

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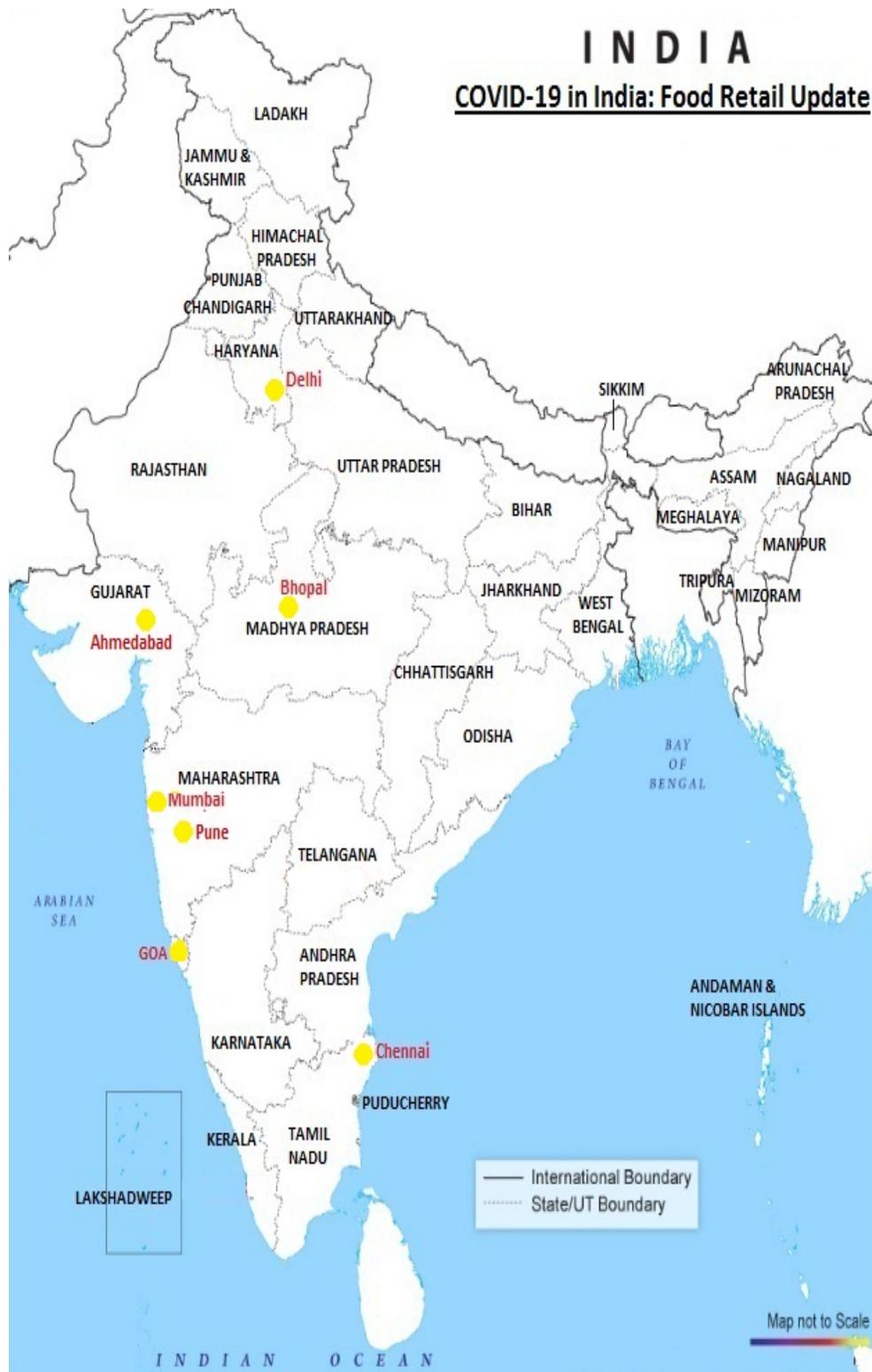
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Report Highlights:

Weekly report as of May 1, 2020, of COVID19 impact on India's food retail sector.

INDIA

COVID-19 in India: Food Retail Update



- Mumbai:** Navi Mumbai residents are concerned about price gouging for certain food items in retail shops. Local residents who found disparity in the wholesale and retail rates of essential food items have raised the issue with municipal authorities.
- New Delhi:** The price of vegetables, fruits and other household staples have increased significantly due to the lack of labor, higher transportation costs, rising demand, and movement restrictions. Delhi's largest wholesale market, Azadpur Mandi, has been hurt by COVID-19 with 11 positive reported cases, forcing many traders to remain at home. A majority of the market's vegetables come from Sonapat, Haryana. However, as the Delhi-Haryana border was recently sealed, the number of trucks carrying onions and potatoes has plummeted from 180 to 65, as per the Potato and Onion Merchants' Association. Many traders won't return to the market until greater social distancing and sanitization measures are in place. Residents also report having to pay an additional 20-30 percent for rice, pulses, flour, and edible oil.
- Pune:** Food prices continue to be elevated due to transportation restrictions, which have also led to limited food delivery slots. In response, numerous NGOs have set up community kitchens to deliver food to low-income residents.
- Ahmedabad:** According to local contacts, grocery stores are open for only a few hours a day, with only 5-7 people allowed into the store at a time. Panic buying has been observed and, while the supply of essential products, fruits and vegetables is sufficient, the supply of imported foods is increasingly limited. On April 30, Pune police issued orders to keep grocery outlets closed in "hotspots" located around the center of the city for three days beginning May 1. This action was taken in response to a spike in COVID-19 cases in these areas.
- Goa:** Contacts reports a better grocery situation now than in the past few weeks with stores and their suppliers benefiting from higher food stocks. There is a steady supply of fruits and vegetables, but prices are higher. Most retailers are partnering with food delivery apps to coordinate home deliveries. There is a shortage of consumer-packaged goods and ready-made frozen foods, as the manufacturers of these products are operating under limited capacity. Procuring imported food items is also a challenge, as local distributors are not receiving enough supplies from Mumbai, Delhi, and other supply hubs.
- Chennai:** A local retailer reported having sufficient supplies of vegetables and other essential groceries, while packaged/processed and imported products were limited. Stores continue to operate with limited staff, which leads to long queues. On April 30, media reported that some parts of the city faced a shortage in essential goods, as local residents engaged in panic buying in response to the assumption that the national lockdown would be extended after May 3. This shortage is also due, in part, to issues suppliers are facing in delivering new supplies to retail stores due to the lack of labor. As such, retailers have had to make their own transportation arrangements to secure new supplies.
- Bhopal:** The city's district administration has allowed 2,800 groceries to remain open and has encouraged greater online ordering. Authorities report that the combination of major supermarkets and neighborhood Kirana stores, facilitated through home deliveries, has ensured residents have easy access to essential groceries.

Attachments:

No Attachments.