

Ambulance driver, sanitation staff: Delhi govt to honour frontline workers

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THE DELHI government will honour Covid frontline workers — doctors, sanitation workers, civil defence volunteers, government officials — during Independence Day celebrations Saturday. *The Indian Express* spoke to five of them on the challenges they faced in the past few months:

Dr Hirdesh Kumar (56), Physician, Acharya Shree Bhikshu Hospital

Kumar has been posted at Rajiv Gandhi Super Speciality Hospital since June. "It is all about taking the right amount of precautions and using PPE. I wore my N95 mask throughout my 8-hour



Dr Hirdesh Kumar (left) and Tej Bahadur

shift... I did not remove it even to drink water or tea-coffee," he said.

Dina Nath Yadav (42), Civil defence volunteer instructor, in-charge of East Delhi district

Yadav has been on duty since the lockdown — aiding in distribution of food and other supplies



to migrants leaving the city and ensuring social distancing was maintained. Yadav, who tested positive for Covid on June 3, said: "We all worked 8-12 hours daily, standing in the hot sun... That's why I thought I had fever." He remained in quarantine at home till June 25 and resumed work.

Ashok Kumar (38), SDMC sanitation worker

Kumar, who was tasked with sanitising homes of patients, said: "I used to ensure that people did not discriminate against the families. I would advise them to keep talking to the patients at home or over the phone if they were admitted so that they don't get too anxious or worried."

Rajeev Singh Parihar (45),

Additional district magistrate, Central district

Parihar was the nodal officer tasked with managing shelter and travel arrangements for migrants during the lockdown. "Around 4-5 lakh migrants left the city. From arranging their stay at relief camps, schools or night shelters, to arranging buses to take them to railway stations — it was a challenging task," he said.

Tej Bahadur (43), CATS ambulance driver

Bahadur transported Covid patients to and from hospitals. "From 8 am to 8 pm, and sometimes till midnight, I was on call. In June, when the situation was the worst, I used to only manage to eat just breakfast and skip other meals," he said.