

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – MAR 12, 2020

TAMIL NADU

- **The Tamil Nadu government – is planning to set up a new solar park project in Kamuthi, 30km from Kadaladi, in Ramanathapuram district**
- ✓ This was announced by the power minister P Thangamani on March 11
- ✓ It has to be recalled that the Centre had recently cancelled the 500MW Kadaladi solar park project in Ramanathapuram district following the state's failure to acquire land for the project
- ✓ Initially, Solar Energy Corporation of India had made an offer for investment and development of the park on the land to be provided by Tangedco on build-own-operate basis
- ✓ Solar Energy Corporation of India is functioning under the Union ministry of new and renewable energy

STATES

- **The Maharashtra government - has approved the implementation of the "happy hour" concept for the autorickshaws in the state.**
- ✓ The proposal was recommended by the Khatua panel, constituted by the state government
- ✓ As per the 'happy hour' concept, the fares of autos will be slashed by 15% between 12 pm to 4 pm.
- ✓ However, the scheme will not apply to local taxis and app-based taxis
- ✓ The concept is intended to turn lean hours to happy hours for citizens, especially housewives and senior citizens.

NATIONAL

- **The government - suspended all visas, except those issued for diplomatic, official, UN-international organisations, employment and projects till April 15**
- ✓ With the rapid spread of Covid-19 across continents, WHO formally declared the disease a 'pandemic'

WHO DECLARES GLOBAL PANDEMIC	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ India suspends all existing visas, except diplomatic, official, UN/international organisations, employment and project visas, till April 15, with effect from March 13➤ Visa-free travel for OCI card holders in abeyance till April 15➤ Any foreign national who intends to travel to India for compelling reason advised to contact nearest Indian mission➤ All incoming travellers, including Indian nationals, arriving from or having visited China, Italy, Iran, South Korea, France, Spain and Germany after Feb 15 will be quarantined	<ul style="list-style-type: none">for minimum period of 14 days➤ International traffic through land borders to be restricted to designated checkpoints with robust screening facilities. These will be notified later by Union home ministry➤ WHO officially declares coronavirus outbreak a pandemic, or an epidemic on a far greater geographic scale that affects a much large number of people➤ Thailand suspends visa on arrival for nationals of 19 countries, including India➤ Air India Milan-Delhi flight arrives without screening



of passengers. 83 on board, including nine foreigners, quarantined for 14 days. Italy reports 196 deaths in 24 hours

SHADOW OVER IPL

- Maharashtra govt considering postponing IPL matches or hosting them without spectators. BCCI learnt to be working on Plan B to push back IPL start from March 29 to April 5

- ✓ However, the suspension will not be applicable to personnel from agencies such as WHO or UN, and those held to be important for Indian firms or government projects
- ✓ Visa-free travel facility to Overseas Citizen of India card holders also stands suspended till April 15
- ✓ Any foreign national seeking to travel to India has to mention a compelling reason to obtain the visa from the country.
- ✓ The decisions were announced after a group of ministers meeting headed by health minister Dr Harsh Vardhan, convened to take stock of the Covid-19 situation domestically and abroad
- ✓ The new regulations will come into effect from 1200 GMT on March 13 at the port of departure
- ✓ As per the new advisory, the number of confirmed coronavirus cases in India touched 60 on Wednesday with 10 new cases — 8 in Kerala, 1 each in Rajasthan and Delhi.
- ✓ On March 10, six new cases were confirmed by the health ministry after 44 positive cases were officially declared on March 9.
- ✓ The major decision to suspend visas aims to protect Indian citizens by avoiding import of infected cases from outside the country, which is identified as the primary source of infection so far.

- ✓ According to the advisory, all incoming travellers, including Indian nationals, arriving from or having visited China, Italy, Iran, South Korea, France, Spain and Germany after February 15 will be quarantined for a minimum 14 days.
 - ✓ Indian nationals are strongly advised to avoid “all non-essential travel abroad” and on their return, they can be subjected to quarantine for a minimum two weeks
 - ✓ Apart from the travel advisory, the GoM also decided that all states and UTs be advised to invoke provisions of Section 2 of Epidemic Disease Act, 1897, so that all advisories being issued by health ministry are enforceable.
 - ✓ Under the Act, any person disobeying any regulation or order shall be deemed to have committed an offence punishable under Section 188 of the Indian Penal Code.
 - ✓ The act has been invoked as the number of infected persons in the country reached 73.
 - ✓ More than 100 countries across the world have reported cases of Covid-19
 - ✓ India has evacuated 948 passengers from Covid-19 affected countries so far.
 - ✓ Out of these, 900 are Indian citizens and 48 belonging to different nationalities including Maldives, Myanmar, Bangladesh, China, US, Madagascar, Sri Lanka, Nepal, South Africa and Peru.
- **The Centre – is planning to issue private driving licences to those with colour blindness**
- ✓ It is also planning to issue the license to drive commercial vehicles to those with “mild or moderate colour vision deficiency” also.
 - ✓ The road transport ministry is preparing the draft norms based on the recommendations of a panel of ophthalmologists from AIIMS on this issue.
 - ✓ The ministry had referred the case to AIIMS to seek its view after receiving several representations
 - ✓ Colour blindness or colour vision deficiency is the inability or decreased ability to perceive colour differences under normal light conditions.
 - ✓ People with colour blindness constitute around 3% population in the country.
 - ✓ In India, prevalence of congenital colour blindness is about 8% in males and 0.4% in females.
 - ✓ The European Union does not consider colour blindness as an impediment to provide driving licence while in United States, licences are not issued to persons with colour blindness for driving commercial vehicles.
 - ✓ Citing international studies, the panel noted that those with colour deficiency can recognise traffic lights and signs based on multiple sources of information apart from the actual ‘colour’.
 - ✓ Other ancillary clues such as luminance, position and pattern can help a colour-deficient driver in recognising traffic lights or signs.

- **The main national event on the eve of 6th International Day of Yoga (IDY) - will be held in Leh, capital of Ladakh on June 21, 2020.**



- ✓ The event will be graced by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi
 - ✓ This was announced by AYUSH Minister Shripad Naik on March 11
 - ✓ Around 15,000-20,000 people are expected to join the PM to commemorate the day.
 - ✓ This would be the first instance that such a large number of people will be doing yoga in a high altitude location like Leh
 - ✓ The main highlight of the International Yoga Day is a 45-minute 'yoga asanas' to be performed by the Prime Minister, based on Common Yoga Protocol (CYP)
 - ✓ Last year, the main national event for the International Yoga Day 2019 was held in Ranchi with the participation of Prime Minister.
 - ✓ The first International Day of Yoga was celebrated across the world on June 21, 2015.
 - ✓ During the occasion, the main national event to commemorate the same was held at Rajpath in New Delhi
 - ✓ Around 30,000 people, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, performed yoga asanas during the event.
 - ✓ The first International Day of Yoga had created a world record for the largest yoga class and for the largest number of participating nationalities.
 - ✓ The proposal to establish the day was proposed by PM Modi during his speech at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on September 27, 2014.
 - ✓ The date, June 21, was chosen, as it is the longest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere.
 - ✓ This is also when the earth shifts towards Summer Solstice.
- **The Centre, state government of Himachal Pradesh and the World Bank - signed an \$80 million loan agreement to boost agricultural productivity and improve water management practices in select gram panchayats in the state of Himachal Pradesh.**
 - ✓ The integrated project will be implemented in 428-gram panchayats in 10 districts of Himachal Pradesh.
 - ✓ It is expected to benefit over 400,000 small farmers and pastoral communities.
 - ✓ The project is expected to improve upstream water sources and ensure that sufficient water is available for sustainable agriculture in downstream states including Himachal Pradesh.

INTERNATIONAL

- **World Health Organisation - announced the threat of coronavirus can be characterized as a 'Global Pandemic', as the killer disease has already spread across more than 100 countries**
- ✓ Until now, the WHO had avoided using the term to describe the epidemic as it would give the impression that it was unstoppable.
- ✓ In the past two weeks the number of cases outside China had risen 13-fold, and the number of countries affected had tripled
- ✓ The virus, which emerged in China in December, has spread around the world, crippling economies.
- ✓ It has already spread across six continents with a sustained transmission, and infected 1,17,339 people in 107 countries with 4,251 casualties.
- ✓ More than 90% of the cases were being reported in only 4 countries -China, Italy, Iran and Republic of Korea
- ✓ China remains the hardest-hit overall with more than 80,000 cases and 3,000 deaths
- ✓ Italy is the hardest hit country outside of China.
- ✓ Confirmed cases across Italy rose to 12,462 from a previous 10,149, while toll jumped by 196 in 24 hours to 827.
- ✓ According to the WHO, an epidemic is defined as a regional outbreak of an illness that spreads unexpectedly.
- ✓ The WHO had not declared a pandemic since 2009, after giving that designation to a new strain of H1N1 influenza.
- ✓ Throughout the history of pandemic diseases, Black Death was the deadliest, killing more than 75 to 200 million people in the 14th century.
- ✓ The recent pandemics include 2009 Flu pandemic (H1N1) and 1918 Influenza Pandemic (also known as Spanish Flu).
- ✓ The H1N1 Influenza was a new strain of virus that affected 11% to 21% of global population.
- ✓ It was first identified in the state of Mexico.

SPORTS

- **World bronze-medallist Manish Kaushik (63kg) - became the ninth Indian boxer to book an Olympic berth at the Asian Qualifiers in Amman, Jordan.**



- ✓ This is the country's best-ever qualifying numbers recorded for the quadrennial showpiece.
- ✓ Kaushik defeated Commonwealth Games champion and second seed Harrison Garside to make the cut for Tokyo 2020 Olympics.

- ✓ However, there was no golden finish to Vikas Krishan (69kg) and world bronze-winner Simranjit Kaur (60kg), who have ended with silver medals in their respective finals.
- ✓ The other Indians to have qualified for Tokyo Olympics are M C Mary Kom (51kg), Simranjit Kaur (60kg), Lovlina Borgohain (69kg), Vikas Krishan (69kg), Pooja Rani (75kg), Amit Panghal (52kg), Ashish Kumar (75kg) and Satish Kumar (+91kg).
- ✓ Before this, India's highest qualifying number for an Olympic Games was eight for the 2012 edition in London.

