



EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – MAR 15, 2020

TAMIL NADU

- Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami – has participated in the foundation-laying ceremony of a new government college and hospital in Dindigul on March 14

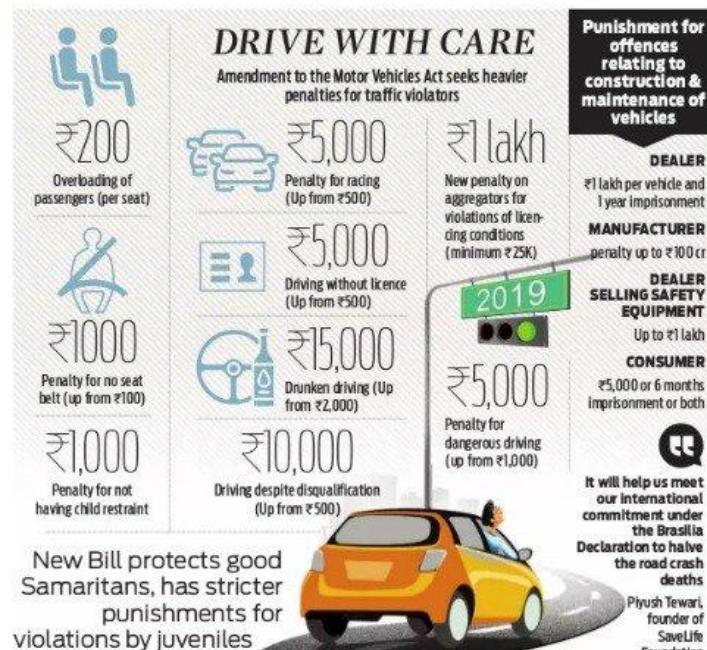


- ✓ The Rs 327 crore new medical college will come up on a vast 20-acre area in the Dindigul district
- ✓ Earlier, the Union government has granted approvals and sanctioned funds for medical colleges in 11 locations in the state, including Dindigul district.
- ✓ The one in Dindigul will become functional from the next academic year (2021-22), and 150 students will be admitted to the institution
- **The State government - has declared COVID-19 a notified disease under the Tamil Nadu Public Health Act, 1939.**
- ✓ The declaration as a notified disease under the Public Health Act will ensure the delegation of more powers to health officials and taking stringent measures to control the infection
- ✓ That means, if a person with symptoms of COVID-19 approaches a private practitioner/hospital, the public health authorities should be immediately notified by the respective hospital/private practitioner.

- ✓ Earlier, the World Health Organisation has declared COVID-19 a pandemic
 - ✓ The state government has also set up another testing laboratory at Tirunelveli for testing the samples of COVID-19.
 - ✓ With this, Tamil Nadu has a total of four testing facilities
 - ✓ The others being King Institute of Preventive Medicine, Guindy, and government medical colleges at Theni and Tiruvarur.
- **The Centre - has notified constitution of a regional bench of the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) in Chennai**
- ✓ It would be the country's first ever regional bench of NCLAT
 - ✓ The appellate tribunal would have jurisdiction over Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and the Union territories of Lakshwadeep and Puducherry.
 - ✓ The notification will come into force on March 18
 - ✓ The NCLAT bench in New Delhi will be the principal bench
 - ✓ The regional bench in Chennai would reduce the time and cost of litigation, as there is no need to travel to New Delhi for cases.

STATES

- **The Delhi government - has notified the amended Motor Vehicles (MV) Act, which will allow police to issue 'hefty' spot fines**
- ✓ The implementation of the Act will commence after the notification is soon published in the Delhi Gazette



- ✓ According to the amended Act, common offence such as jumping a traffic signal will attract a fine of ₹5,000 or a year in prison or both.

- ✓ Similarly, speaking on phone while driving will also attract a fine of Rs 5000 or a year in prison or both
 - ✓ Speeding of the vehicles could incur a penalty of up to ₹2,000 and impounding of the vehicle and licence.
 - ✓ Even obstructing traffic by way of improper parking will also result in a fine of ₹500.
 - ✓ The first offence will invite a one-year jail term or ₹5,000 or both and any subsequent offence will result in imprisonment of up to 2 years and ₹10,000 as fine.
- **The Maharashtra Cabinet - approved the proposal to rename Mumbai Central Station to Nana Shankarsheth recently**



- ✓ The approved proposal is to be sent to Central Railways for its final nod for the name change.
- ✓ Nana Jagannath was a philanthropist and educationalist, who lived between 1803 and 1865.
- ✓ He had high credit among Afghans and Arabs, who preferred him than banks to protect their treasure
- ✓ Along with Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, Nana Jagannath launched Indian Railway Association.
- ✓ He founded Bombay Association, which was the first political organization in Bombay Presidency.

NATIONAL

- **The Government - announced the Covid-19 viral disease as a 'notified disaster' for the purpose of providing assistance for medical facilities under the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF).**
- ✓ The Centre has also suspended all types of passenger activities on Indo-Pak border from March 16
 - ✓ The two land crossing borders between India and Pakistan, the Attari-Wagah border and the Kartarpur pilgrimage border, were closed indefinitely.

- ✓ On March 13, the government had announced that passenger traffic will be stopped through 18 land check posts of the total 37 check posts.
- ✓ It includes borders across Nepal, Myanmar, Bhutan and Bangladesh.
- ✓ The passenger bus and rail services to Bangladesh have also been suspended for a month till April 15.
- ✓ The Central Government will provide assistance to States for setting up of quarantine facilities with temporary provisions for accommodation, food, clothing and medical care, apart from the sample collection and screening.
- ✓ The assistance will also cover costs of additional government testing labs, consumables for testing and procurement of essential equipments like protection of healthcare, police, fire and municipal personnel.
- ✓ The government has already issued travel restrictions by suspending almost all visas.
- ✓ It has also implemented universal screening of passengers at airports and seaports, self-quarantine measures to effectively prevent, contain and manage Covid-19
- ✓ The funds released by the Centre will be used to purchase thermal scanners, ventilators, air purifiers and consumables for government hospitals.
- ✓ Usually, natural disasters like floods are notified, but this is the first time for a pandemic to be notified as a 'disaster'
- ✓ SDRF is the primary fund available with states to deal with notified disasters like floods and earthquakes.
- ✓ A state government may utilize up to 10% of funds available under SDRF for providing immediate relief to victims of an event considered to be a 'disaster' within local context in the state.
- ✓ With Covid-19 notified as 'disaster', States and UTs can now draw funds from SDRF, in addition to the money made available by state governments and the National Health Mission
- ✓ Of the total 84 positive cases in India so far, 10 have been cured while two with co-morbidities have died.

- **The 39th GST Council meeting, chaired by the Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman – was held in New Delhi on March 14**
- ✓ The Council had announced an increase in the levy on mobile phones to 18% from 12%
- ✓ The increase was aimed at correcting a situation where inputs face higher taxes than the final product, resulting in problems such as delays in refunds.



- ✓ Apart from mobile phones, footwear, fertilisers and textiles too were among the list of items with “inverted duty structure”, but the increase in the levy is recommended only for handsets and some specific parts
- ✓ The Council also decided to reduce the GST structure for maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) services for aircraft from 18% to 5%, along with providing the benefit of full tax credit on inputs
- ✓ A third change was the rationalisation of rates on matches.
- ✓ Instead of a 5% tax on handmade match sticks and 18% on machine-made, a flat GST of 12% will henceforth be applicable to both the categories of match sticks, after Tamil Nadu and Puducherry decided to arrive at a consensus on this issue.
- ✓ The new rates will be applicable from April 1, 2020.
- ✓ The meeting also focused on getting Infosys to fix the filing problems in the GSTN portal that is being encountered by taxpayers for several months.
- ✓ The company was given a deadline of July 31, 2020, to implement the initiatives discussed for the smooth running of the system, instead of the January, 2021 deadline sought by Infosys chairman Nandan Nilekani.

➤ **The Government of India - notified Masks and Hand Sanitizers under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 by June 30, 2020**



- ✓ The government has also issued an advisory under the Legal Metrology Act.
- ✓ It has made this declaration because these items have gone out of stock, following the current outbreak of Covid-19 (Coronavirus) in India.
- ✓ Under the Essential Commodities Act, states can consult with manufacturers and ask them to increase the production capacity of these goods.
- ✓ As per this Act, the powers of the Central Government are given to the States.
- ✓ Therefore, States and UTs can take action against the violators under the Essential Commodities Act and Prevention of Burglary and Supply of Essential Commodities Act.
- ✓ A violator can be punished with imprisonment for 7 years or with fine or both under the Essential Commodities Act.
- ✓ Under the Prevention of Burglary and Supply of Essential Commodities Act, he can be put under house arrest for a maximum period of 6 months.

- ✓ Under the Legal Metrology Act, states can ensure the sale of the items at the maximum retail price (MRP).
 - ✓ So far, items such as pulses, cereals, drugs, fertilizers, petroleum, edible oil, certain crops and petroleum products were included under essential commodities schedule
 - ✓ The act prevents stocking of essential commodities.
 - ✓ The prices and supply of these commodities shall be intervened by the government, thereby preventing the profiteering of these products during demand situations.
 - ✓ The State Governments have no rights to add any commodities to the list.
 - ✓ However, they are empowered to conduct raids to ensure the functioning under the Act.
- **On March 13, 2020, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways – announced that its “Bhoomi Rashi Portal” provides transparent, error free and automated land acquisition process.**



- ✓ In 2018, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways had designed a single point platform for land acquisition named ‘Bhoomi Rashi’ to accelerate infrastructure development projects
 - ✓ The portal aims to provide linkages between several authorities like National Highway Authority of India (NHAI), State PWDs and NHIDCL (National Highway and Infrastructure Development Company Limited)
 - ✓ The portal improves efficiency of land acquisition processes and provides quicker process completion
 - ✓ After launching the portal, the processing time of land acquisition has been reduced to 2 weeks from the earlier period of few months.
- **The Central government – proposed to scrap scholarship schemes catering exclusively to students belonging to communities such as Scheduled Castes (SC) and Other Backward Classes (OBC) and club them into one single scheme.**

A comparative study of scholarship schemes

From 2020-21, there will be only one scheme called Pradhan Mantri Young Achievers Scholarship Award Scheme for Vibrant India (PM-YASAVI). This will be for SCs as well as for other communities such as other backward classes, de-notified and nomadic tribes and economically backward classes. This will replace scholarship schemes in operation for each of them

■ Existing schemes are, generally, open-ended whereas the proposed scheme will be close-ended

■ In respect of SC students alone in T.N., every year the present schemes benefit approximately 2.56 lakh students (1.4 lakh fresh students) at the pre-matric level, 2.33 lakh higher secondary (1.3 lakh) and 4.63 lakh students (1.57 lakh) doing higher studies

■ Under the proposed scheme, no State-wise allocation has been indicated as yet. At the all-India level, the plan is to cover 62 lakh students of all communities, of which 42 lakhs will be from SCs

■ Students are now selected based on the ceiling on parental annual income (not exceeding ₹1.5 lakh or ₹2.5 lakh, as the case may be). Hereafter, means-cum-merit criteria will be adopted. Every July, an all-India test may be held to select beneficiaries

■ Existing schemes have several components such as maintenance allowance, compulsory non-refundable fee and book allowance for students of distance-learning courses. For example, an engineering student, studying under management quota in an accredited private college, gets ₹87,000 a year towards compulsory non-refundable fee, apart from other allowances.

■ In the new scheme, there will be two components – academic allowance and tuition fee. A student of higher education will get a maximum of ₹30,000 every year, regardless of whether he or she is doing engineering or medicine or humanities



- ✓ The new scheme is called Pradhan Mantri Young Achievers Scholarship Award Scheme for Vibrant India (PM-YASAVI)
- ✓ It is expected to be in place in the next few months.

PERSONALITIES

- Bill Gates – has announced his decision to step down from the board of Microsoft and Berkshire Hathaway on March 13



- ✓ The board of Berkshire Hathaway, the conglomerate, was run by Warren Buffett.
- ✓ The decision of Bill Gates to step down is aimed at dedicating more time to his philanthropic priorities including global health and development, education, and increased engagement in tackling climate change
- ✓ Being the face of Microsoft for decades, Gates has helped to establish Microsoft's Windows software as the primary system for the personal computer.
- ✓ According to Microsoft, Gates would remain a technical adviser to the company.
- ✓ Gates has slowly been stepping back from Microsoft in recent years.

- ✓ He left his day-to-day role at the company in 2008 and served as the board's chairman until 2014.
- ✓ Gates intends to devote more of his time to his philanthropy at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- ✓ Gates remains one of the largest individual shareholders of Microsoft.
- ✓ As of December, he held more than 100 million shares of Microsoft, roughly 1.3% of the firm's shares.
- ✓ His stock is worth about \$16 billion in the company.
- ✓ Gates founded Microsoft in 1975, dropping out of Harvard and joining Paul Allen, his school friend and a technology collaborator
- ✓ In 1975, they relocated to Albuquerque, New Mexico, where a tiny microcomputer company, MITS, made the Altair 8800, a primitive machine often credited as the first personal computer

SPORTS

- ATK defeated Chennaiyin FC - to become the first team to win the Indian Super League (ISL) trophy for the third time in just six years.



- ✓ Both finalists had won the trophy twice in the past seasons.
- ✓ In the match played behind closed doors for fear of Covid-19, ATK ended Chennaiyin FC's dreams with a deserving 3-1 victory at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Fatorda
- ✓ Nerijus Valskis of Chennaiyin FC took the Golden Boot while Bengaluru's Gurpreet Singh Sandhu won the Golden Glove
- ✓ Sumit Rathi of ATK took away the emerging player award

RANKINGS

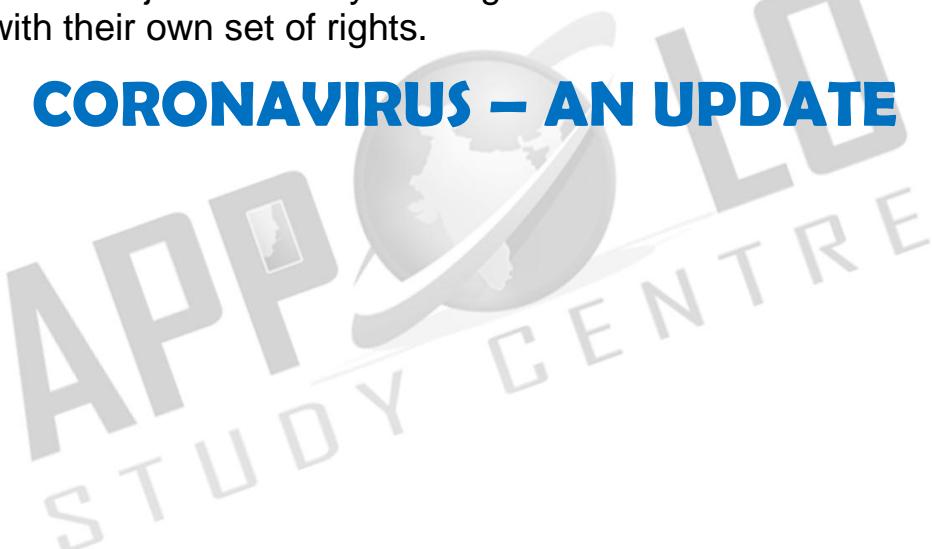
- India - has scored 'C' ranking in the Animal Protection Index 2020, released by World Animal Protection, an international animal welfare charity.



- ✓ The Animal Protection Index 2020 ranks various countries from A (highest score) to G (lowest score) as per their policies and constitutional system.

- ✓ The objective of the Animal Protection Index (API) is to highlight the various countries across the world in terms of their treatment to animals.
- ✓ The report highlighted that India is improving in the area of animal protection
- ✓ India was ranked along with Spain, Mexico, France and New Zealand at a superior scale with respect to the treatment to animals.
- ✓ India has made considerable progress in protecting animals used in scientific research.
- ✓ In 2013 itself, India has banned the use of cosmetic products on animals.
- ✓ Later in 2014, it has become the first country in Asia to ban the import of cosmetic products that were tested on animals.
- ✓ Earlier in March 2017, Uttarakhand High Court accorded the status of the 'first living entity of India' to the river Ganga.
- ✓ Also, in July 2018, the Uttarakhand High Court granted the status of legal persons or entities to animals in the Northern state.
- ✓ Similarly, the Punjab and Haryana High Court declared that animals are living persons with their own set of rights.

CORONAVIRUS – AN UPDATE



148,306
CONFIRMED CASES

5,550
DEATHS

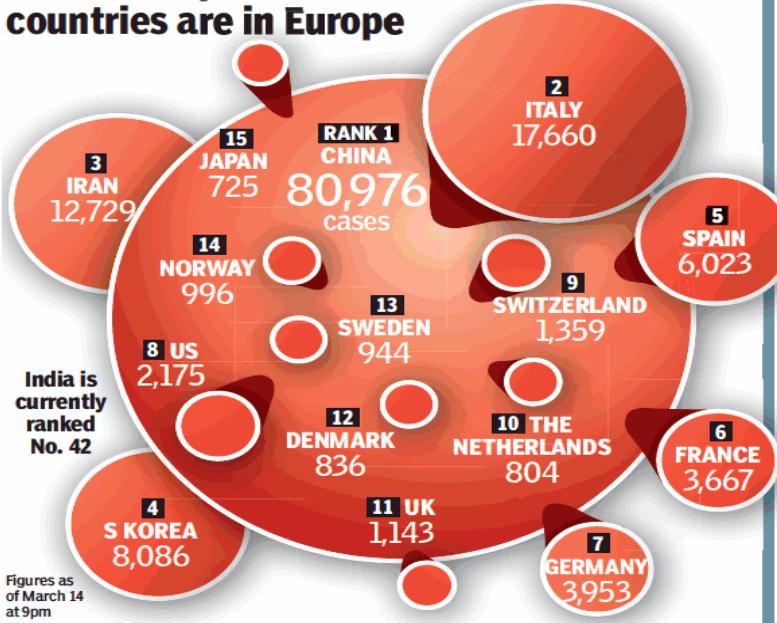
72,042
RECOVERED

147
COUNTRIES

84
CASES IN INDIA

10
RECOVERED

10 of the top 15 affected countries are in Europe



Fortunately, in India, community spread remains limited

In almost 90% of cases in India, the infected person has contracted the disease while abroad. There have been only a few cases of local transmission, which means India is still in Stage II of an epidemic

STAGE I Early cases are primarily imported from affected countries

STAGE II Local transmission begins from positive cases. Transmission is limited to people who have come in direct contact with an infected individual with travel history

STAGE III There is large-scale spread in community. Transmission is occurring in patients who have had no direct contact with Covid-19 patients with travel history. It is spreading in community and affecting larger clusters

STAGE IV The disease takes shape of a nationwide epidemic with no clear endpoint. Italy, for example, is in this stage

When you wash hands, make sure all these areas are covered



● MOST OFTEN MISSED AREAS
○ OFTEN MISSED AREAS
○ LESS OFTEN MISSED AREAS
Source: Taylor U, Nursing Times

HOW TO KEEP YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY SAFE

- Maintain a six-foot distance from people who cough
- This is because droplets carry the virus and could land in the mouths or noses of passersby
- Don't touch your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Stay home when sick
- Use a tissue to cover your mouth while coughing. Throw



- the tissue in the trash
- Disinfect frequently touched objects (lift buttons, door knobs, restaurant tables) with household cleaning spray or wipes
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Use alcohol-based sanitisers

Source: CDC Atlanta & Bloomberg

HOW THE VIRUS SPREADS

- People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest)
- But even those without symptoms could spread the virus
- Infection is possible if a person touches a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touches his or her mouth, nose, or eyes
- The virus is supposedly heavier than common ones, so it can't travel more than three feet or so

SNEEZING IS NOT A SYMPTOM OF COVID-19

SYMPTOM	COVID-19	COMMON COLD	FLU	ALLERGIES
Fever	COMMON	RARE	COMMON	SOMETIMES
Dry cough	COMMON	MILD	COMMON	SOMETIMES
Shortness of breath	COMMON	NO	NO	COMMON
Headaches	SOMETIMES	RARE	COMMON	SOMETIMES
Pain	SOMETIMES	COMMON	COMMON	NO
Sore throat	SOMETIMES	COMMON	COMMON	NO
Fatigue	SOMETIMES	SOMETIMES	COMMON	SOMETIMES
Diarrhoea	RARE	NO	SOMETIMES	NO
Runny nose	RARE	COMMON	SOMETIMES	COMMON
Sneezing	NO	COMMON	NO	COMMON

Source: CDC, WHO, American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology

