

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – MAR 17, 2020

TAMIL NADU

- The Tamil Nadu government - has announced a complete shutdown of educational institutions, malls, theatres, bars, amusement parks, swimming pools and museums across the state from March 17 to March 31 in an effort to control the spread of Covid-19 virus.
- ✓ The decision was announced after the conclusion of third review meeting chaired by Chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami, along with the state senior ministers and senior IAS officials.

- Avoid travelling out of the State, gathering in public places for 15 days
- Avoid places of worship, beaches, commercial complexes, markets, weddings and other social functions
- Ensure personal hygiene, wash hands with soap while entering house and at regular intervals, avoid touching face with hands
- Parents urged to ensure children don't play in groups, and to ensure that children wash their hands with soap
- All staff in government and private offices are to carry disinfectants for their personal safety
- In case of cough or fever, avoid going to office and those with COVID-19 symptoms should proceed to government hospital immediately

Stepping up vigil:

A passenger is checked for symptoms of COVID-19 at Egmore railway station on Monday.

▪ B. VELANKANNI RAJ

Control room numbers

The public can contact the Health and Family Welfare Department's 24-hour COVID-19 control room at 104, at landline numbers: **044-2951 0400** and **044-2951 0500**, and at mobile numbers: **94443 40496**, **87544 48477**

Curbs imposed

- Chief Secretary K. Shanmugam has imposed restrictions on Fort St. George campus. Departments in the Secretariat have been requested not to convene meetings unless urgent and not to ask the HoD/directorate officials to come to the Secretariat for routine matters
- No entry for visitors to Assembly

- ✓ Earlier, on March 15, the government announced the closure of primary schools
- ✓ On March 16, the government decided to invoke legal provisions of the Epidemic Act 1897 and Public Health Act 1938.
- ✓ The Government has decided not to grant permission for processions, public meetings, summer courses, sports camps, conferences, expos or cultural events till March 31.

- ✓ However, the board examinations for Classes X and XII, semester examinations in colleges, and other entrance examinations will be held as per schedule with all necessary precautionary measures in place.
 - ✓ The government has allowed private events, including marriages that were planned, but has advised that mass gatherings be avoided.
 - ✓ But, marriage halls are not allowed to make new bookings until month-end
 - ✓ The Anganwadi centres across the state would also be closed in Tamil Nadu till March 31
 - ✓ The state has increased the number of isolation beds in hospitals from 300 to 1,120.
 - ✓ The government also advised public not to travel to other states for next 15 days
 - ✓ To curb fake news on the spread of virus, the state government has decided to take action against people who spread false information under the Indian Penal Code or the Disaster Management Act
- **The State government - has proposed to bring more schemes under the social audit during 2020-21**
- ✓ The new schemes to be included are the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana – Gramin (PMAY-G) and the Dr. Puratchi Thalaivar M.G.R. Nutritious Noon Meal Programme,.
 - ✓ At present, the social audit is being undertaken for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).
 - ✓ The Social Audit Society of Tamil Nadu facilitates the exercise, which is executed by village panchayats to ensure proper implementation of MGNREGS.
 - ✓ The Social Audit Society of Tamil Nadu is a body registered in 2013 under the Tamil Nadu Societies Registration Act
 - ✓ In respect of the NSAP, there are 18.4 lakh beneficiaries in the State, apart from another 11.1 lakh beneficiaries covered under other social security schemes
 - ✓ Regarding PMAY-G, which is meant for providing houses to the poor in rural areas, around 9.11 lakh eligible beneficiaries will be covered.
 - ✓ Around 5.27 lakh houses, costing about ₹8,970 crore, have been constructed since 2016-17.
 - ✓ The Nutritious Noon Meal Programme is benefitting around 49.85 lakh children in the state.

STATES

- **The Telangana legislative assembly - adopted a resolution against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) National Population Register (NPR) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) on March 16**
- ✓ The state urged the Centre to amend CAA “in order to remove all references to any religion, or to any foreign country” following the concern among a large section of people in India

- ✓ On NPR, the state said there are apprehensions among people that they will be required to show documentary proof of citizenship as well as of their parents.
- ✓ The state contended that, besides violating the principles of equality, non-discrimination, secularism, the attempt would also endanger the lives of vulnerable groups who do not possess adequate documentary proof of citizenship.
- ✓ The process of NPR is set to be rolled out from April 1, 2020 till September 30, 2020

NATIONAL

- The government - extended the travel ban beyond affected countries and prohibited entry of all passengers, including Indian nationals, from the European Union, European Free Trade Association, Turkey and the UK to India with effect from March 18.

GOVT TO PVT FIRMS: LET STAFF WORK FROM HOME

Health ministry proposes following measures in advisory to states:

- Close schools, universities, gyms, museums, cultural and social centres, pools and theatres
- Students advised to stay at home, online education to be promoted
- Explore possibility of postponing exams. In ongoing exams, ensure physical distance of one metre among students
- Pvt sector to allow employees to work from home wherever feasible. Meetings to be avoided, conducted through video conference



Photo: S. Shambh Kumar

Siddhivinayak among several temples in Mumbai closed for devotees. Centre announced all ASI-protected monuments, including Taj Mahal and Ajanta-Ellora, and central museums shut till March 31. Several states, including Maharashtra and Assam, also shut wildlife sanctuaries

131 CASES TILL NOW, 40 IN MAHA; ODISHA JOINS LIST

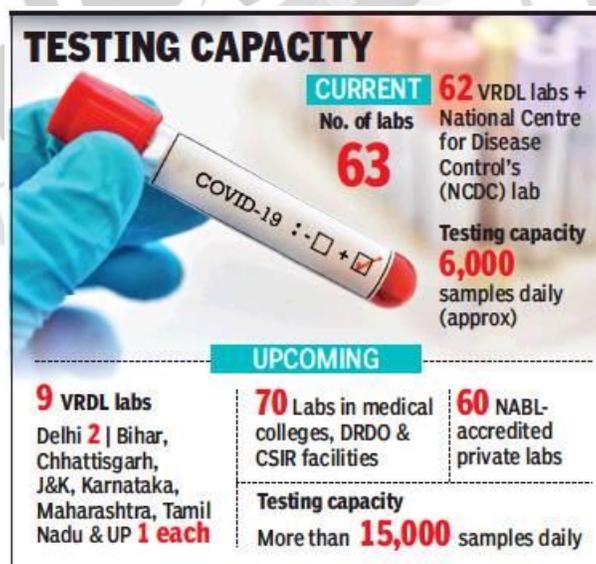
➤ 131 positive cases in India so far, as per state reports, including 1 more in Gurgaon. Maharashtra count 40, with 6 new cases. Health ministry says 114 cases till now



➤ Odisha becomes 15th state/UT to report positive case

- ✓ The government also expanded compulsory quarantine for minimum 14 days for passengers coming from or transiting through the UAE, Qatar, Oman and Kuwait.
- ✓ On March 16, the health ministry reported 114 confirmed positive cases of Covid-19.
- ✓ Of these, 13 people have recovered, while two patients with co-morbidities died.
- ✓ The 114 positive cases include 97 Indians and 17 foreigners.
- ✓ Last week, the government suspended almost all visas and discontinued passenger traffic on several border check-posts to protect further spread of infected cases from abroad.
- ✓ The move came following the rising Covid-19 cases globally and the World Health Organization declaring it a global pandemic.

- ✓ International travellers with symptoms associated with Covid-19 who have so far entered India have also been advised 'home quarantine' where they are monitored for more serious indications.
 - ✓ Travellers from affected countries named by the government are quarantined at an official facility.
 - ✓ Depending on norms and protocols, travellers are either quarantined at Army facilities or advised home isolation.
 - ✓ The government advisory with respect to travel-related instructions will be in force till March 31 and will be reviewed subsequently
 - ✓ Besides travel-related instructions, the government also proposed 'social distancing measures' as a preventive strategy.
 - ✓ This includes closure of all educational institutions, gyms, museums, cultural and social centres, swimming pools and theatres
 - ✓ The private sector is requested to allow employees to work from home wherever feasible and meetings to be done through video-conferences to avoid people gathering, unless necessary.
- **The Centre - has decided to allow accredited private labs to test for Covid-19 to meet out the rising demand of testing the samples.**
- ✓ This was announced by Dr Balram Bhargava, Director general of Indian Council of Medical Research, the country's apex body for health research



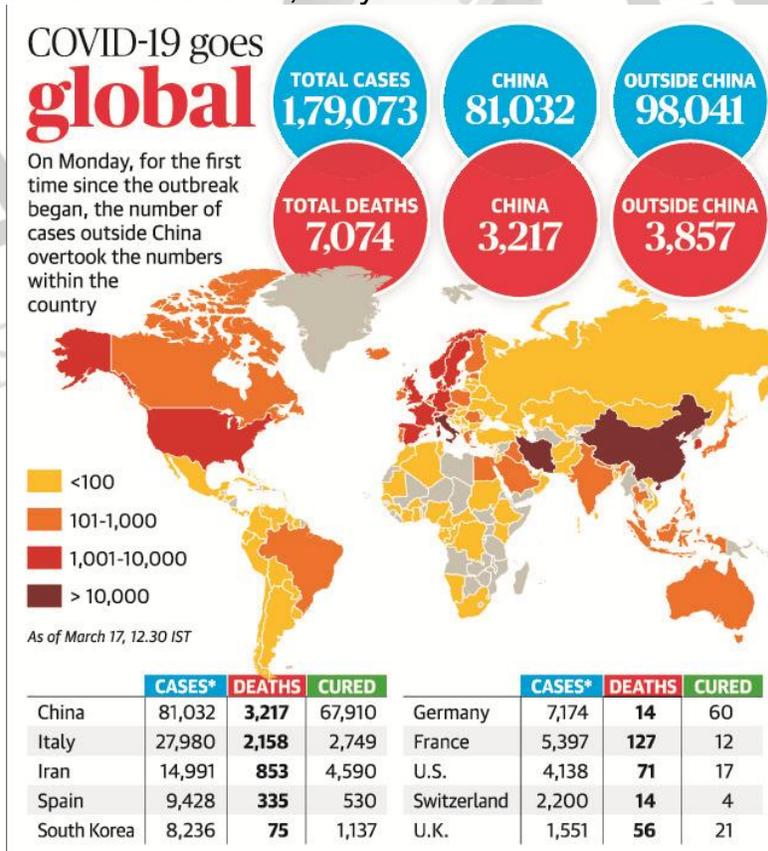
- ✓ There are 50 to 60 private labs, accredited by the National Accreditation Board for Laboratories, that are capable of doing the test
- ✓ At present, only government labs are permitted to do the test.
- ✓ Though their capacity is around 5,000 samples per day, only 60 to 70 samples are being processed daily.

- ✓ This is because of the current guidelines, which allow testing only the individuals with travel history to affected countries or those in direct contact with an infected individual.
 - ✓ The ICMR has a network of 106 Virus Research and Diagnostic Laboratories (VRDLs) across the country.
 - ✓ These labs are equipped to test samples of influenza like illnesses (ILIs) and severe acute respiratory infection (SARI) regularly.
 - ✓ Since March 16, the random testing of ILI and SARI samples – those exhibiting same symptoms as Covid-19 – has been expanded to 51 labs to look for the next stage of ‘community transmission’ of the novel coronavirus.
 - ✓ This means, testing people outside the current regulations — that is, those who may not have travel history to an affected country or who may not have come in contact with an infected individual.
 - ✓ Community transmission refers to a stage when the disease starts spreading in the community in general.
 - ✓ The tests done are real time polymerase chain reaction tests (RT-PCR) that can, within a day — sometimes in hours — confirm the presence of SARS-CoV-2, the virus responsible for the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.
 - ✓ All of these tests are proprietary products of multinational pharma companies and Indian laboratories must complete respective licensing deals, order kits and appropriate chemicals, and train staff to use them.
- **The Lok Sabha - passed the Appropriation Bill 2020-21 on March 16**
- ✓ The bill empowers the government to draw over ₹110 lakh crore from the Consolidated Fund of India for its working and for the implementation of its programmes and schemes.
 - ✓ The Appropriation Bill was passed by a voice vote
 - ✓ It provides for the spending of ₹110.4 lakh crore during the Financial Year 2020-21 by the Government.
- **A new Bill to grant the status of Central universities to three deemed Sanskrit universities - was passed by the Rajya Sabha on March 16**
- ✓ It was supported by all the members, including the Opposition, in the upper house.
 - ✓ The Central Sanskrit Universities Bill, 2020, was passed by the Lok Sabha in December 2019.
 - ✓ It was introduced in the Rajya Sabha by HRD Minister, Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' on March 02, 2020.
 - ✓ The title of the bill was amended in the Rajya Sabha to change the year from 2019 to 2020.
 - ✓ The amended Bill will now be sent back to the Lok Sabha for the final change.

- ✓ The new bill gives Central status to the Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan and Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth in Delhi and the Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth in Tirupati.
- ✓ During the tabling of the bill, the HRD minister Ramesh Pokhriyal announced that the Centre had spent ₹640 crore to make Sanskrit popular, while ₹24 crore was spent on Tamil and ₹3 crore each on Telugu and Kannada

INTERNATIONAL

- **For the very first time, the infections outside China - crossed 87,000, while the infected cases in China stand at 81,032.**
- ✓ Spain officially became the fourth-most infected country in the world, surpassing South Korea.
- ✓ Only China, Italy and Iran have more confirmed cases of Covid-19 than Spain
- ✓ In Spain, the number of infections increased overnight by roughly 20%, to 9,428, and the number of fatalities rose to 309
- ✓ Italy also reported its biggest day-to-day increase in infections — 3,590 more cases — for a total of 24,747.
- ✓ With 1,809 virus-related deaths, Italy has more than 25% of the global death toll.



- ✓ Switzerland declared a state of emergency on March 16 and the Swiss city, state of Geneva banned gatherings of more than five people
- ✓ In the US, California, Illinois and Ohio told all restaurants to close.

- ✓ New York City will shutter the nation's largest public school system as early as Tuesday, sending over 1.1 million children home
- ✓ Pakistan confirmed 130 new Covid-19 cases on March 16, recording the highest number of Covid-19 cases in a day and taking the tally in the nation to 183 from 53 on March 15
- ✓ The business and travel hub of Dubai announced the closing all bars and lounges until the end of March
- ✓ Globally, over 175,000 people have been infected, 7,007 have died and over 77,000 have recovered, most of them in China

INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS

- **India – has announced to provide 107.01 million Nepali Rupees for the construction of three new school buildings.**



- ✓ These schools will be built in the districts of Darchula, Dhanusha and Kapilvastu.
- ✓ The MoU was signed on March 16, 2020 in Kathmandu between India, Nepal and allied districts.
- ✓ India-Nepal Development Partnership program is constructing these schools for the mutual benefit of both countries
- ✓ Indo-Nepal relations began with the 1950 Treaty of Friendship and Peace.

APPOINTMENTS

- **Justice Ranjan Gogoi - was nominated as a member of Rajya Sabha by the President for his outstanding contribution in the field of law.**
- ✓ The nomination has been made to fill the vacancy created due to the retirement of senior lawyer KTS Tulsi.
- ✓ Thus, Justice Gogoi becomes the first Supreme Court justice and ex-CJI to receive a nomination to the upper house
- ✓ He will be the third SC Justice to enter Rajya Sabha, after ex-CJI Ranganath Mishra and Baharul Islam, who were elected members from the Congress party.



- ✓ Justice Gogoi retired on November 18
- ✓ During his tenure, he headed a five-judge constitution bench that delivered the landmark judgment deciding the 70-year-old litigation on ownership of the disputed Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid land in Ayodhya in favour of Hindus.
- ✓ The SC had allotted five acres of land to Muslims at an alternative site for construction of a mosque.
- ✓ He was also a part of the bench that had mandated the centre in December 2014 to complete the process of updating the final Assam NRC by January 2016.
- ✓ In November 2019, Justice Gogoi also headed the bench which approved the Rafale fighter jet deal between India and France.
- ✓ Justice Gogoi is the fourth among legal experts to get nominated by the President to Rajya Sabha after Fali S Nariman, K Parasaran and K T S Tulsi.
- ✓ Retired Justice Ranjan Gogoi was the 46th Chief Justice of India
- ✓ He had been appointed to the post on October 3, 2018, upon the retirement of the then CJI Dipak Misra.
- ✓ Under Clause (3) of article 80, the President has powers to nominate persons with special knowledge to the council of states
- ✓ In total, the President can appoint 12 members to the upper house of the Parliament.

Following is the current list of nominated Rajya Sabha Members:

S.no.	Name	Field	Date of Appointment	Date of Retirement
1	Raghunath Mohapatra	Art	14-Jul-2018	13-Jul-2024
2	Sonal Mansingh	Art	14-Jul-2018	13-Jul-2024
3	Rakesh Sinha	Literature	14-Jul-2018	13-Jul-2024
4	Ram Shakal	Social work	14-Jul-2018	13-Jul-2024
5	Sambhaji Raje	Social work	13-Jun-2016	03-May-2022
6	Roopa Ganguly	Art	04-Oct-2016	24-Apr-2022
7	Suresh Gopi	Art	25-Apr-2016	24-Apr-2022
8	Subramanian Swamy	Economics	25-Apr-2016	24-Apr-2022

S.no.	Name	Field	Date of Appointment	Date of Retirement
9	Narendra Jadhav	Economics	25-Apr-2016	24-Apr-2022
10	Mary Kom	Sport	25-Apr-2016	24-Apr-2022
11	Swapan Dasgupta	Journalism	25-Apr-2016	24-Apr-2022
12	Ranjan Gogoi	Law	16-Mar-2020	15-Mar-2026

- ✓ The Rajya Sabha or the council of states is the upper house of the bicameral Parliament of India.
- ✓ The Council of states is defined by Article 80 of the constitution.
- ✓ It currently has a maximum membership of 245 members.
- ✓ Among them, 233 are elected by the legislatures of the states and union territories through the open ballot and 12 are appointed by the President for their outstanding contribution to literature, science, art and social sciences
- ✓ The Chairman of Rajya Sabha is Vice President of India, M Venkaiah Naidu.
- ✓ The Deputy Chairman of the house is elected from amongst the members.
- ✓ The Rajya Sabha had held its first sitting on May 13, 1952.

SPORTS

- **The Manipur government - has announced two new schemes to provide benefits to the exemplary sportspersons and artistes in the state**
- ✓ The announcement was made by the state's Chief Minister N Biren Singh on March 15, 2020.
- ✓ The state government announced the launch of two new schemes- CMAST scheme and CMAT scheme.
- ✓ These schemes are expected to be implemented at a cost of Rs 7.36 crore and Rs 5.70 crore respectively.
- ✓ CMAST scheme: Chief Ministers Akhannaba Sanaroisingi Tengbang
 - ✓ Under the scheme, employment will be provided in government services to the sportspersons winning medals in international events
 - ✓ The scheme also includes cash rewards for those who win medals for the country in the Olympics.
 - ✓ It would also include a lifetime pension scheme for the unemployed sportspersons and coaches aged 50 years and above, who have represented the state or the country in national or international tournaments.
 - ✓ The scheme will also extend support to the sportspersons in the purchase of costly sporting kits and items.
- ✓ CMAT scheme: Chief Ministers Artiste Singgi Tengbang
 - ✓ The scheme has been formed to encourage artists in literary arts, visual arts and performing arts.
 - ✓ It is targeted to benefit around 4000 artists in a year.

- ✓ Under the scheme, the pension will be extended to around 1000 artists in the state who are aged 60 years or above.
- ✓ They will include gurus, awardees and non-awardees who have contributed to preserving the culture, tradition and art forms of the state.
- ✓ The scheme will also provide financial assistance to those artists who have won awards in national competitions and festivals.

COVID 19 IN INDIA - REPORT

With confirmed cases of Covid-2019 crossing 100 in India, we seem to have entered the most crucial phase in the spread of the virus. Analysis of week-wise data of confirmed cases in other countries that are struggling to contain this outbreak shows that confirmed cases spike after the number crosses 100

In France, for instance, the first case was reported on January 25; five weeks later, the number rose to 57, but in the sixth week, there were 613 cases, which went up to 3,640 and 4,469 in the next two weeks

Similarly, in Italy, till the third week after the first confirmed case, the number was only 3. The cases then shot up to 650, 3,858, 15,113 in the subsequent weeks

Iran appears to be an exception as the cases increased several times each week. Various newspapers have criticised Iranian authorities for being dismissive of the virus in the initial days of the outbreak

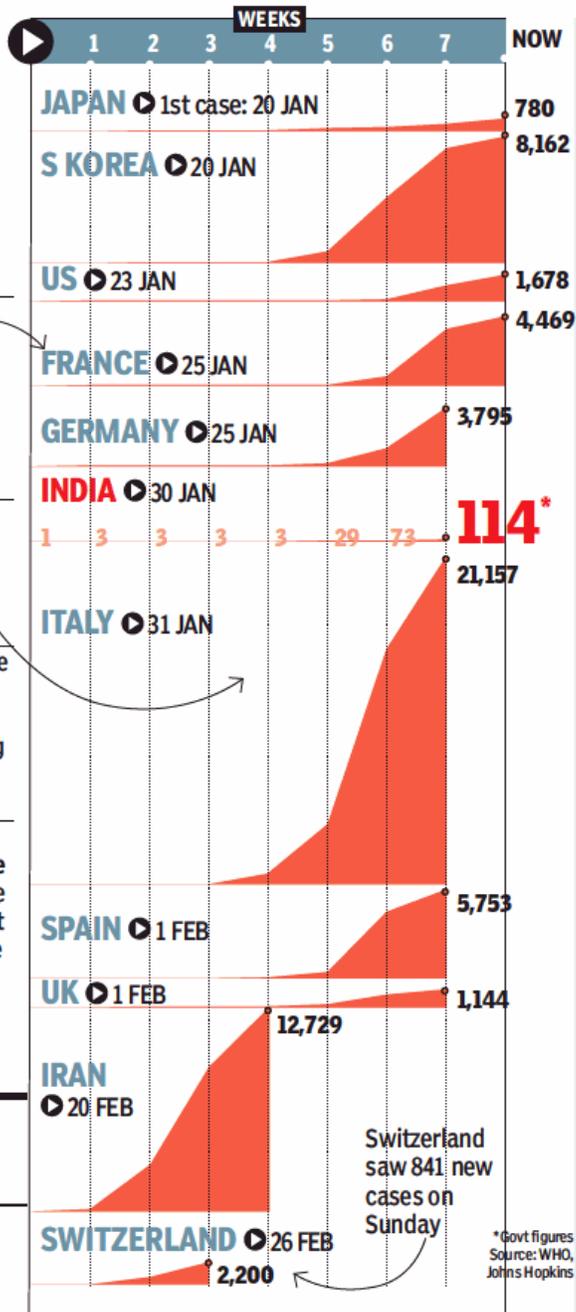
India has so far done well – into its seventh week now since the first case was detected on January 30, there are 114 confirmed cases. The government quarantined India from the rest of the world with travel restrictions. But the next few weeks are crucial

Compiled by Atul Thakur, Kenneth Mohanty
Graphic: Sajeev Kumarapuram

TOTAL CASES
174,995

DEATHS
6,706

RECOVERED
77,658



Corona in 12 states, 3 UTs

