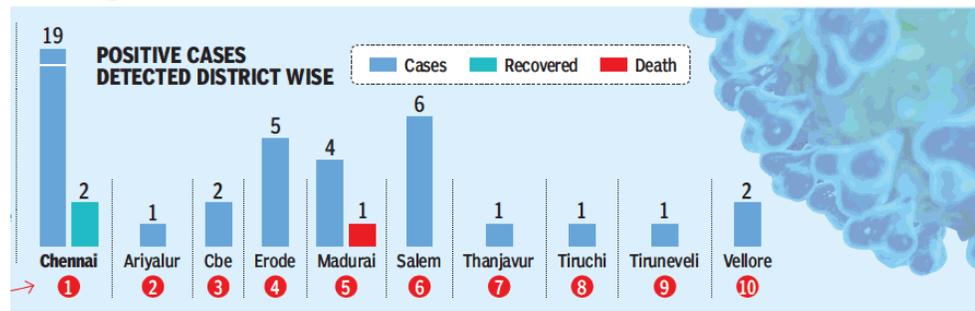


EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS - MAR 29, 2020

TAMIL NADU

- **Tamil Nadu - has stepped up plans to tackle the spread of Covid-19 pandemic with the government declaring that the state is in the second stage of the transmission**
- ✓ Stage 2 is when the infection is transmitted to the first-degree contacts of the COVID-19 positive patient (with travel history)
- ✓ The State Government has proposed to demarcate a 5km radius 'containment zone' around homes of people who tested positive and a further 3km radius buffer zone in 10 districts
- ✓ In this containment zone, the health workers would go house to house to check for people with symptoms of the viral infection
 - ✓ They would be creating a list of high risk patients, including the elderly and those with chronic ailments such as heart and renal conditions.



FIGHTING THE CONTAGION

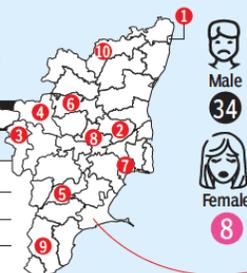


According to statistics tweeted by health minister Dr C Vijayabaskar on Saturday, the state has 13,323 beds in isolation wards and 3,044 ventilators. The state has so far tested 1,500 samples (negative 1,393, positive 42, under process 65)



TOTAL CASES **42**

Death	1
Recovered	2
Indonesians	4
Thailand	2
Locals	33
Active Cases	39



Male **34**
Female **8**

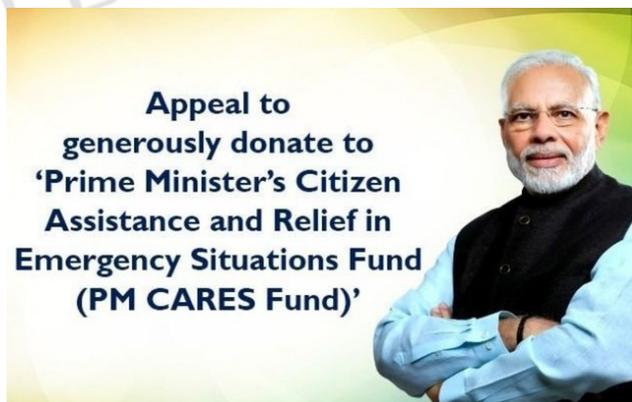
- ✓ These measures were announced by the state as the number of those testing positive reached 42, with four more cases reported
 - ✓ Chennai accounted for the highest number of cases in the State.
 - ✓ Seventeen of the 42 patients were from the city.
- ✓ Of the four people who tested positive on March 29, one was a 42-year-old man who had come from the West Indies and is admitted at the Thanjavur Medical College Hospital.
 - ✓ A 49-year-old man who travelled from UK is admitted at CMC, Vellore, and a 25-year-old man who travelled from US is admitted at Global Hospitals.
 - ✓ Another patient, a 60-year-old man from Rajapalayam, did not have any travel or contact history and was admitted to the Government Rajaji Hospital in Madurai
- ✓ As a part of the plan, district officials will demarcate the containment and buffer zone.
- ✓ The plans have been designed based on the “Micro Plan for Containing Local Transmission of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)” guidelines given by the Union Health Ministry and the real time risk assessment prepared by the state public health officials
- ✓ As of March 28, 43,537 passengers were under home quarantine.
- ✓ The number of persons admitted to hospitals remained the same as on March 27, at 277.
- ✓ The state has also launched a WhatsApp chatbot on 90357 66766
- **The State - has constituted an expert committee comprising 19 members to track the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in the state**
 - ✓ The committee will be tasked to develop treatment protocols for managing patients and formulate guidelines for the State.
 - ✓ The State Appropriate Authority under the Clinical Establishment Act, 1997, has nominated doctors from various government and private hospitals, including those who have retired from service, as members of the expert committee.
 - ✓ The committee’s members include professors of medicine from
 - ✓ Madras Medical College
 - ✓ Stanley Medical College
 - ✓ Kilpauk Medical College.
 - ✓ The experts would continuously monitor the spread of COVID-19 in the State and offer suggestions for intervention, prevention and control of its spread
 - ✓ They would also develop treatment protocols for managing the infected cases in the state
 - ✓ All government and private clinical establishments would take advice from the committee on managing patients in difficult situations.

STATES

- **On March 28, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan - announced that the state will go in for “rapid testing” to assess more quickly and effectively the extent of the virus’s spread within threatened communities.**
- ✓ The rapid testing will involve a blood sample instead of a swab and results will be known in 45 minutes to 2 hours.
- ✓ It will help screen more people in a mass way on a daily basis and is much cheaper than the present RT-PCR testing method.
- ✓ Moreover, the rapid testing can be repeated when a patient is in isolation / quarantine to check IgG AB levels, which can reveal the extent of recovery.
- ✓ The test will initially be conducted in districts which have the highest number of positive cases and where a large number of people, who were carriers of the virus, returned from abroad
- ✓ The tests will be performed on Covid-19 suspects or symptomatic high-risk contacts that were negative by RTPCR (present testing method)
- ✓ It will also be extended to high risk healthcare workers
- ✓ The localities where a cluster of severe acute respiratory infection cases without diagnosis has been reported and who recovered from severe acute respiratory infection will also be subjected to the tests

NATIONAL

- **On March 28, the government - set up ‘Prime Minister’s Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund’ (PM CARES Fund)’ seeking contributions from public to combat situations like Covid-19 pandemic**



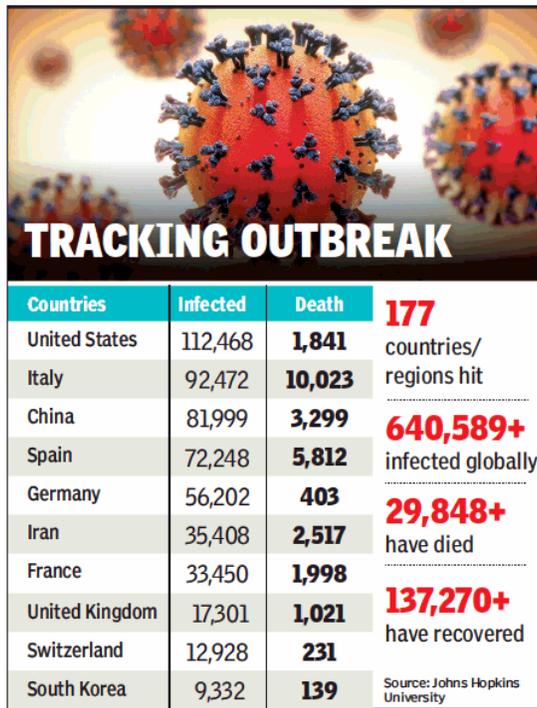
- ✓ Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged people to contribute generously, saying it will strengthen disaster management capacities and encourage research to protect citizens.
- ✓ The donations to this fund will be exempted from income tax under section 80(G).
- ✓ The Prime Minister is the chairman of this trust and its members include ministers of Home, Finance and Defence.

- ✓ The account of the fund is held by the State Bank of India.
 - ✓ The fund was set up keeping in mind the need for having a dedicated national fund with the primary objective of dealing with any kind of emergency or distress situation.
 - ✓ The other funds that are in the hands of the Prime Minister include PM National Relief Fund (PMNRF)
 - ✓ It was raised by the then PM Jawaharlal Nehru in 1948 to assist displaced persons from Pakistan.
 - ✓ The PMNRF is used to support people affected by natural and man-made disasters like floods, cyclones and earthquakes.
 - ✓ The fund is also used to help with medical treatment like kidney transplantation, cancer treatment and acid attack.
 - ✓ So far, the fund was extensively used during 2013 Uttarakhand floods, 2014 Assam Violence, 2015 Tamil Nadu Floods, 2015 Madhya Pradesh explosion.
 - ✓ The House of Tata has announced the contribution of ₹1,500 crore to combat the coronavirus crisis in India.
 - ✓ This is the largest commitment made by a business group in the country so far.
 - ✓ Tata Sons and its controlling shareholder Tata Trusts have committed a support of ₹1,000 crore and ₹500 crore respectively to “protect and empower all affected communities”.
 - ✓ The funds will be used to develop treatment facilities, manufacture respiratory systems & protective health gear, train health workers and supply testing kits.
 - ✓ The BCCI also announced to contribute ₹51 crore to the fund as the government fights against the coronavirus outbreak.
- **The death toll due to Covid-19 in the country - touched 27 on March 28**
- ✓ Maharashtra reported 33 new cases, the highest number of cases in a single day, taking the state’s total Covid-19 cases to 186 – the highest in the country.
 - ✓ After Maharashtra, Kerala (168) reported the highest number of cases so far.
 - ✓ Kerala reported its first casualty with the death of a 69-year-old man who had tested positive for the novel coronavirus at Ernakulam Medical College Hospital.
 - ✓ Maharashtra has reported six Covid-19 deaths, the highest in the country.
 - ✓ Covid-19 cases across India surged to 974 with 109 new cases being confirmed by states on March 28.
 - ✓ The health ministry has confirmed 918 Covid-19 cases
 - ✓ On the brighter side, 94 Covid-19 patients – nearly 10% of the total cases reported so far, have recovered from the disease
- **The Indian Railways - has converted a sleeper coach into a prototype isolation unit for Covid-19 patients.**
- ✓ To start with, nearly 10 coaches will be converted into isolation units by each zonal railway every week

- ✓ Carriage Works and Loco Works in Chennai and Golden Rock Workshop in Trichy commenced work on prototype models on March 28.
- ✓ The Indian Railways, which operates over 13,000 trains across the country, has suspended passenger train operations till April 14 to control the spread of COVID-19.
- ✓ The Integral Coach Factory in Chennai, which is making hand sanitisers and face masks, has been approached by the Tamil Nadu government for supply of the consumables in large quantities.
- ✓ The Golden Rock Workshop in Trichy is fabricating steel cots and bedside lockers for COVID-19 patients
- ✓ In a related incident, on March 28, 2020, the Union Agriculture Minister announced that agriculture and farming related activities have been exempted from Lock Down.
- ✓ The move is intended to ensure supply of essential commodities to common people during the lock down.
- **The Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar (IITGN) - has launched 'Project Isaac' to engage students in creative projects during the COVID-19 lockdown.**
- ✓ The project aims to develop the student's skills while they are confined in their homes.
- ✓ The project is inspired by Sir Isaac Newton, who was similarly sent home due to the Great Plague of London in 1665.
- ✓ During that period, Newton had developed some of his most significant discoveries including early calculus and his theories of gravity and optics.

INTERNATIONAL

- **The number of confirmed coronavirus infections worldwide – has topped 6,00,000 on March 28 as new cases reported quickly in Europe and the United States**
- ✓ It showed more than 640,000 infected cases and over 29,000 deaths.
- ✓ However, on a good note, more than 130,000 people were said to have recovered.
- ✓ It has to be noted that within two days, around one lakh cases have been reported across the globe, indicating the fast spread of the pandemic
- ✓ While the US now leads the world in reported infections — with more than 104,000 cases — five countries exceed its roughly 1,800 deaths - Italy, Spain, China, Iran and France.



- ✓ President Trump invoked the Defence Production Act on March 27, ordering General Motors to begin manufacturing ventilators.
 - ✓ Trump signed a \$2.2 trillion stimulus package, after the House approved the sweeping measure.
 - ✓ It will send cheques to millions of Americans, boost unemployment benefits, help businesses and toss a life preserver to an overwhelmed health care system
- ✓ The US on March 27 announced \$174 million financial aid to 64 countries including \$2.9 million to India to help them fight the pandemic.
 - ✓ It is providing \$1.3 million to Sri Lanka, \$ 1.8 million to Nepal and \$3.4 million to Bangladesh
- ✓ Spain, where stay-at-home restrictions have been in place for nearly two weeks, reported 832 more deaths on March 28, its highest daily count yet, bringing its total to 5,690.
- ✓ Another 8,000 confirmed infections pushed that count above 72,000 in the country.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **Abbott Laboratories – has developed a coronavirus test that can identify the infection in as little as five minutes, and is so small and portable it can be used in almost any healthcare setting.**
 - ✓ The medical-device maker plans to supply 50,000 tests a day starting April 1
 - ✓ The molecular test searches for fragments of the coronavirus genome, which can quickly be detected when present at high levels.

- ✓ A thorough search to definitively rule out an infection can take up to 13 minutes
 - ✓ Abbott has received emergency 'use authorisation' from the US Food and Drug Administration "for use by authorised laboratories and patient care settings"
 - ✓ The test starts with taking a swab from the nose or the back of the throat, then mixing it with a chemical solution that breaks open the virus and releases its RNA.
 - ✓ The mixture is inserted into an 'ID Now' system, a small box that has the technology to identify and amplify select sequences of the virus genome and ignore contamination from other viruses.
- **India – has decided to conduct antibody tests to confirm whether a person had previously been infected with the COVID-19 virus.**
- ✓ The Serological tests will determine whether a person had the coronavirus infection previously based on the presence of antibodies in their body
 - ✓ This, in turn, will help understand the spread of coronavirus in the nation.
 - ✓ The test is different from the current COVID-19 diagnostic tests that are being conducted to detect active infections through the testing of the throat or nasal swabs.
 - ✓ The serological tests will help identify if people had the virus even if they were asymptomatic.
 - ✓ The test is important for investigational purposes.
 - ✓ The ICMR invited bids for the antibody kit on March 25, 2020
 - ✓ As per the current evaluation, the ICMR has estimated that around 1 million test kits will be required for the country.

