

## EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – APRIL 1, 2020

### TAMIL NADU

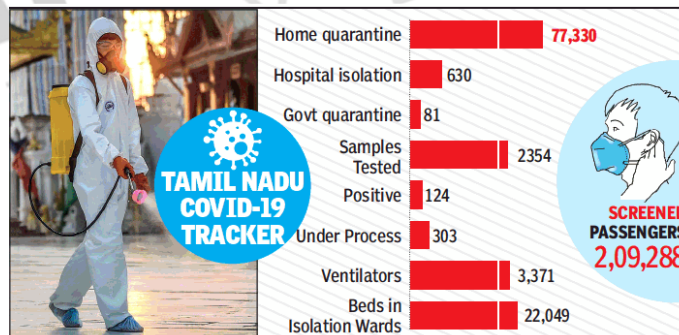
- On March 31, Chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami - announced the extension of payment deadline of crop loan dues of cooperative societies, housing cooperative societies, TN housing board and handloom cooperative societies till June 30
- ✓ These measures would benefit numerous middle and low-income groups, farmers, and entrepreneurs.

COVID RELIEF		
 <p>Major announcements made by the chief minister</p>	<p>➤ Deadline for renewal of licences and fitness certificates for motor vehicles extended up to June 30</p>	<p>➤ Covid Relief and Development Scheme at ₹200 crore, a special loan assistance to extend emergency capital investment for 2,000 MSMEs that availed loan from TIIC</p>
	<p>➤ Deadline for payment of dues towards crop loans extended up to June 30</p>	<p>➤ Industrial establishments given three-month time to pay soft loans taken from SIPCOT</p>

- ✓ The CM also deferred the following payments by a period of three months –
  - ✓ property tax
  - ✓ water charges
  - ✓ loan repayments to Tamil Nadu Industrial Investment Corporation (TIIC)
  - ✓ soft loans availed from State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu Ltd (Sipcot) and
  - ✓ maintenance expenses to units operating in such industrial estates
- ✓ According to the Chief Minister, a special fund of ₹200 crore under a 'COVID Relief and Development Scheme' will be set up for funding the urgent needs of micro, small and medium-sized units.

## Other measures announced by the Government

- ✓ The period of renewal of driving licences and obtaining fitness certificates for vehicles has also been extended till June 30, 2020
  - ✓ The same will be also applicable to licences obtained under the Weights & Measures Act and the Tamil Nadu Shops & Establishments Act that are due for renewal.
  - ✓ The Tamil Nadu government has announced that the maintenance allowance of ₹1,500 per month for persons with disabilities would be paid in advance for two months.
  - ✓ The Tamil Nadu government has authorised Tahsildars across the State to issue passes allowing people to travel within their respective districts to attend 'already fixed' weddings and funerals and in case of health emergencies during the lockdown period.
  - ✓ The beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana in the State, numbering around 30 lakh, will be entitled to get three liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) cylinders free-of-cost for April, May and June, 2020
- **Tamil Nadu - recorded its highest ever single-day rise in the number of persons testing positive for COVID-19 on March 31, 2020**
- ✓ The state's count of coronavirus cases nearly doubled in a single day, going from 67 to 124 on March 31.
  - ✓ With this, the state has reported the third highest number of cases in the entire country, after Maharashtra and Kerala



- ✓ 50 people, all men, who attended a three-day Tablighi Jamaat conference at a mosque in Delhi tested positive for Covid-19 in Tamil Nadu on March 31
- ✓ 22 of them were from Tirunelveli; 18 from Namakkal district (12 from Namakkal, one from Paramathi Velur and five from Rasipuram); 3 from Villupuram; 2 from Madurai; 4 from Kanniyakumari and 1 from Thoothukudi.
- ✓ All patients are currently undergoing treatment in isolation wards of government medical college hospitals.
- ✓ At least eight of those who went to Delhi and attended the conference have died of the infection — six from Telangana, and one each from Tamil Nadu and New Delhi

- ✓ Among the remaining 7 patients, 4 were from Chennai and were admitted to the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital (RGGGH) and private hospitals.
- ✓ The number of persons under hospital isolation went up from 364 on March 30 to 630 on March 31.
- ✓ Meanwhile, the State has got the approval from the Union Health Ministry for establishing 3 more testing facilities —
  - ✓ Government Stanley Medical College Hospital
  - ✓ Microbiology Lab, Veerakeralam Road, Coimbatore
  - ✓ YRG Care, Chennai.
- ✓ With this, the State has 11 testing facilities in the government sector and 6 laboratories in the private sector for coronavirus.

## NATIONAL

- **The Government - announced one of the steepest-ever cuts in small savings rates on March 31**
- ✓ As part of the move, the returns on the popular Public Provident Fund deposits fall by 80 basis points to 7.1%, starting April 1, 2020
  - ✓ The PPF is savings-cum-tax saving scheme introduced in 1968 by the National Savings Institute operating under Ministry of Finance
- ✓ The Senior Citizens Savings Scheme will see the annual interest rate drop by more than a percentage point.

**PPF RATE NOW 7.1%**

PPF	Cut (Bps)
7.1%	80
Sukanya Samriddhi	
7.6%	80
5-Yr Time Deposit	
6.7%	100
NSC	
6.8%	110
Sr Citizen Savings Scheme	
7.4%	120

Bps: Basis points (100 basis points = 1 percentage point)      Source: Govt

- ✓ Similarly, rates on post office term deposits have also been reduced by as much as 140 basis points with one-to-three year deposits now yielding 5.5% instead of 6.9% earlier.
- ✓ The rate on five-year term deposits has been slashed by a percentage point to 6.7%.
- ✓ The interest rates for small savings schemes are notified on a quarterly basis.

- ✓ For Sukanya Samriddhi Scheme, the interest rate for the quarter is now 7.6% from the earlier 8.4%
    - ✓ Sukanya Samriddhi Account Scheme supports the parents to build fund for future education and marriage expenses of their girl child.
  - ✓ The interest rate for National Savings Certificate has been reduced from 7.9% to 6.8%.
    - ✓ National Savings Certificate, a part of the postal savings system, is a savings bond scheme launched for income tax savings and small savings.
  - ✓ The interest rate for Kisan Vikas Patra is also reduced from 7.6% to 6.9%.
    - ✓ Kisan Vikas Patra (KVP) is a saving certificate scheme that was launched by India Post in 1988.
    - ✓ The KVP will mature in 124 months instead of 113 months earlier
  - ✓ At present, the Ministry of Finance offers 9 types of small saving schemes
  - ✓ The revised rates will be applicable for the April-June quarter of the financial year 2020-21
  - ✓ The decision has come after the Reserve Bank of India's recent 75 bps cut in the interest rates following the economic fallout due to coronavirus Pandemic.
- **A total of 315 new coronavirus infections were reported across the country on March 31 — nearly double the number reported the previous day**
- ✓ This takes the total number of cases to 1,618 across the entire country
  - ✓ Maharashtra alone reported 82 cases on March 31
  - ✓ The number of deaths among Covid-19 positive cases too rose by 8 to 51, so far

MAHARASHTRA COUNT CROSSES 300				
Name of State / UT	Cases on Tuesday	Total Cases	Recovered	Deaths
Maharashtra	82	302	35	12
Kerala	7	241	24	2
Tamil Nadu	57	124	6	1
Delhi	23	120	5	2
Uttar Pradesh	7	103	14	
Karnataka	13	101	8	3
Rajasthan	14	93	14	2
Telangana	15	92	14	6
Gujarat	4	74	6	6
Rest of India	93	368	20	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>1,618</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>52</b>

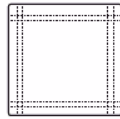
- ✓ With this, 626 new cases have been reported in the past three days, accounting for nearly 40% of all cases.
- ✓ Apart from Tamil Nadu, three more states — Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka — joined Maharashtra and Kerala in registering more than 100 cases so far.

- The Centre - issued a detailed manual on homemade 'reusable' masks, which can be easily produced from household material such as t-shirts, old vests and handkerchiefs

## MASK FROM A HANDKERCHIEF

Making a mask at home without a sewing machine

### Things you will need



100% cotton material or a men's cotton handkerchief



Two rubber bands

#### Step 1



Fold handkerchief from one side to slightly above the middle portion of the cloth

#### Step 2



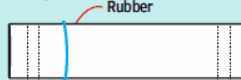
Now fold over the other edge to go above the first fold

#### Step 3



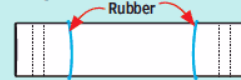
Fold this again evenly from the middle as shown

#### Step 4



Take a rubber band and tie it on the left side of the cloth as shown

#### Step 5



Now tie the other side with another rubber band. Ensure that the area in the middle of the two rubber bands is big enough to cover your mouth and nose

#### Step 6



Take one edge of the cloth on the side of the rubber band and fold over it. Do this for both sides

#### Step 7



Now take one fold and insert into the other fold



Your mask is now ready



Please ensure that the mask fits around your mouth and nose and there is no gap between your face and the mask



To wear this mask, just wrap each rubber band around your ears

- ✓ On March 31, the central government's principal scientific advisor informed that these masks are 70% effective in containing the spread of COVID-19
- ✓ In framing the guidelines, the government referred to a research that claims once 80% of the population wears a mask, the coronavirus outbreak "can be stopped immediately"

- ✓ The manual, issued by the PSA office, will help people to develop such masks at home with the help of simple household materials such as cotton cloth, scissors and sewing machine.
  - ✓ The manual has recommended people to wear masks, especially those who are living in densely populated areas.
  - ✓ As per the analysis of the US-based National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI), masks can minimise the risk of the Covid-19 spread
  - ✓ The double layer masks made from 100% cotton cloth can protect against particles that are almost five times smaller than coronavirus.
  - ✓ The 100% cotton material is breathable and can be sourced easily in homes from used t-shirts and vests.
  - ✓ The fabric, however, should be washed well and boiled for around 5 minutes before being used for making masks.
  - ✓ The manual instructs that the homemade masks must be washed daily and exposed to heat.
- **The Central Government - has approved a hike in the wages of manual labourers under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).**
- ✓ According to the proposed hike, the workers will get an increase ranging from Rs. 13 to Rs. 34.
  - ✓ The average hike will be by Rs. 20 to Rs. 201 in FY21 as compared to FY20.
  - ✓ This new wage hike for manual workers will come in effect from April 1, 2020, in all the States and Union Territories (UTs).
  - ✓ The central government has increased MGNREGA allocation in the current financial year from Rs. 60,000 crore to 71,001 crore.
  - ✓ For FY21-22, Rs. 61,500 crore has been allocated by the government.
  - ✓ Maharashtra and Dadra and Nagar Haveli will see the highest wage hikes.
  - ✓ Dadra and Nagar Haveli will get a hike of Rs. 34 (from Rs. 224 earlier to Rs. 258 now) while Maharashtra will see a hike of Rs. 32 (from Rs. 206 earlier to Rs. 238).
  - ✓ West Bengal (Rs. 191 to Rs. 204), Sikkim, Tripura, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh (Rs. 192 to Rs. 205) are seeing the lowest hikes of Rs. 13.
  - ✓ Puducherry and Tamil Nadu will see an average hike of Rs. 27

## **INTERNATIONAL**

- **The United States death toll from the coronavirus - rose to 3,400 on March 31 overtaking China's official count of 3,308**
- ✓ The US has reported over 1,74,000 cases so far
  - ✓ Worldwide, more than 800,000 people have been infected and over 40,000 people have died
  - ✓ New York was the nation's deadliest hot spot, with about 1,550 deaths statewide, the majority of them in New York City.

TRACKING OUTBREAK			
Countries	Infected	Death	
United States	1,74,467	3,400	179 countries/ regions hit
Italy	1,05,792	12,428	
Spain	94,417	8,269	8,26,222+ infected globally
China	82,278	3,308	
Germany	68,180	682	40,708+ have died
France	45,232	3,523	
Iran	44,605	2,898	1,74,115+ have recovered
United Kingdom	25,474	1,789	
Switzerland	16,186	395	
Turkey	13,531	214	Source: Johns Hopkins University

- ✓ USNS Comfort, a Navy hospital ship with 1,000 beds that docked in New York on March 30, was expected to receive non-coronavirus patients on March 31.
- ✓ Spain hit a new record with 849 COVID-19 deaths in 24 hours on March 31, pushing the toll over 8,000
- ✓ The death toll from coronavirus in Italy on Tuesday climbed by 837 to 12,428, with the daily tally rising for a second day running.
- ✓ The number of new cases was broadly steady, growing by 4,053 against 4,050 on March 30, and bringing total infections to 1,05,792.
- ✓ The UK and France, too, registered their biggest single-day virus deaths.
  - ✓ While Britain registered 381 deaths taking its toll to 1,789, France reported that 499 more people had died.
  - ✓ France toll now stands at 3,523
- ✓ Indonesia on March 31 declared a state of emergency as COVID-19 deaths in the world's fourth most populous country jumped again.
  - ✓ On March 31, 136 people died after contracting the virus, with 1,528 confirmed cases of infection.
- ✓ On March 31, Iran reported 141 more people have died from the novel coronavirus, raising the official toll in one of the world's worst-affected countries to 2,898.
  - ✓ In Iran, 3,111 new infections have been confirmed over the past 24 hours, bringing the total to 44,606.
  - ✓ 3,703 of those hospitalised are in a critical condition and 14,656 have recovered.

## COMMITTEES

- The Government – has constituted a 'Science and Technology Empowered Committee' for coronavirus response in the country

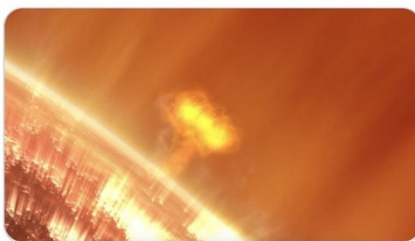
- ✓ It will be chaired by Prof. Vinod Paul, member, NITI Aayog and Prof. K. Vijay Raghavan, Principal Scientific Adviser to the government
- ✓ This was announced by the Health Ministry on March 31.
- ✓ This committee would coordinate among science agencies, scientists, industries and regulatory bodies
- ✓ It will primarily work with the Department of Science & Technology, Department of Biotechnology, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, Defence Research and Development Organisation and Indian Institute for Science to take speedy decisions on research

## SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **The Union Health Ministry - has allowed the use of 'Hydroxychloroquine in combination with Azithromycin' under close monitoring for patients with severe disease and requiring ICU management as per the revised Guidelines on Clinical Management of COVID-19.**
  - ✓ The drug 'Hydroxychloroquine' was previously under testing
    - ✓ It was allowed to be administered only to doctors and caregivers in direct contact with COVID-19 positive cases.
  - ✓ The Health Ministry has noted that no specific antiviral to coronavirus have been proven to be effective as per currently available data
  - ✓ It has, however, cautioned that the medication is presently not recommended for children less than 12 years, pregnant and lactating women
- **The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) - announced a new mission, 'SunRISE' on March 30, 2020 to study the creation and release of giant solar particle storms by the Sun.**

 **NASA** @NASA · Mar 30  
Hello, SunRISE. This new @NASASun mission will study the causes of solar particle storms — giant surges of solar particles that erupt off the Sun.

Understanding such storms can help protect astronauts traveling to the Moon & Mars.  
About the mission: [go.nasa.gov/2JoyBoz](https://www.nasa.gov/2JoyBoz)



- ✓ The Sun Radio Interferometer Space Experiment (SunRISE) mission aims to help scientists understand the workings of the Solar System.
- ✓ The mission is expected to be launched on July 1, 2023

## **Purpose of SunRISE**

- ✓ It aims to help protect astronauts going to the Moon and Mars in the future from the solar storms.
- ✓ It intends to provide critical information on how the Sun's radiation affects the space environment.
- ✓ It will study a part of the sun's spectrum that can't be seen on earth due to the ionosphere.
- ✓ It will also work on information that the other solar probes- Parker Solar Probe, Solar Orbiter, and the ground-based Daniel K. Inouye Solar Telescope - couldn't get.

## **SunRISE mission – Working principle**

- ✓ The SunRISE mission will have six CubeSats - flying at a distance of at least 10 km from each other- deployed as one very large radio telescope in a Geosynchronous earth orbit (GEO)
- ✓ These CubeSats will simultaneously observe the radio images of the low-frequency emission from solar activity and share them through NASA's Deep Space Network
- ✓ They will fly above the Earth's atmosphere, which otherwise blocks the radio signals SunRISE will observe.
- ✓ This SunRISE mission is conceived following the success of the Mars Cube One (MarCO) and the DARPA High-Frequency Research (DHFR).

## **Background of SunRISE mission**

- ✓ Earlier, NASA had chosen two missions in August 2017 for its Mission of Opportunity program, a part of its Explorers Program, to conduct an 11-month concept study.
- ✓ The SunRISE mission was one of the two missions announced as part of the program.
- ✓ It is managed by NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) in Pasadena, California.
- ✓ NASA's Missions of Opportunity connects relatively 'inexpensive' missions with 'high budget' launches on spacecraft that have prior approval
- ✓ The SunRISE mission has been designed to be launched as a rideshare mission, on a commercial satellite provided by Maxar and built with a Payload Orbital Delivery System, or PODS.
- ✓ NASA's oldest continuous programme - Explorer's Program - aims to provide frequent, low-cost access to space.
- ✓ The Explorer's Program had its initial launch in January 1958 with US's first satellite.