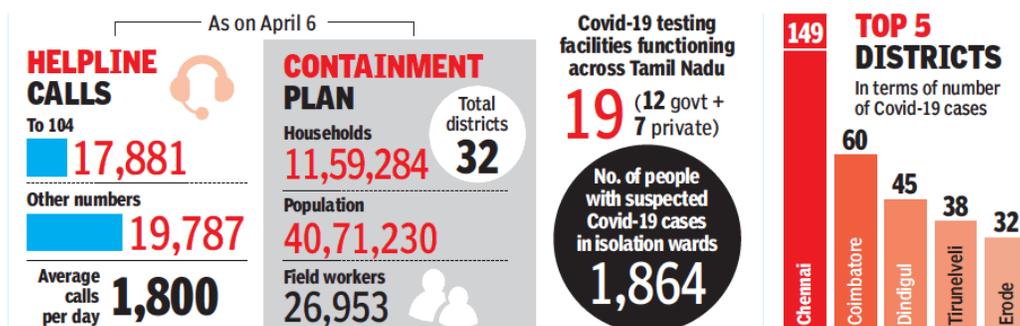
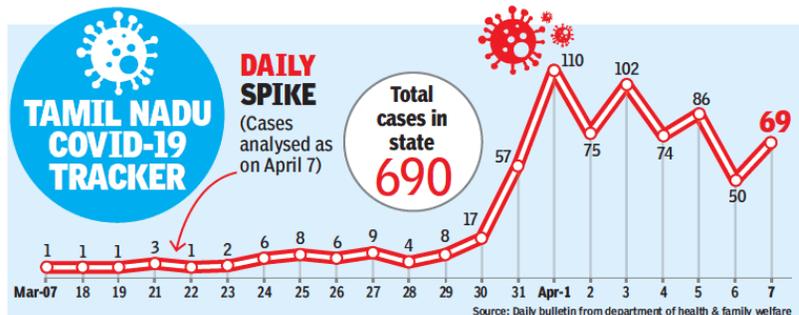


EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS - APRIL 8, 2020

TAMIL NADU

- On April 7, two more people died - taking the state's coronavirus toll to eight, while the number of positive cases rose by another 69 to 690 cases.
- ✓ Of the 690 infected cases, 637 belong to the "single source event"
- ✓ Of the 69 new cases, 63 were linked to the Tablighi Jamaat cluster
 - ✓ This included those who attended the event as well as their contacts.
- ✓ The state health department is yet to determine the travel or contact history of the two casualties - a 64-year-old woman in Chennai and a 45-year-old man in Vellore.



- ✓ The woman from Royapuram had died on April 6 at the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital, even though the announcement was made on the next day after her samples tested positive.

- ✓ In the evening on April 6, another person, a seller outside the Christian Medical College, who had been hospitalized for symptoms caused by Covid-19, passed away.
 - ✓ The 45-year-old patient was admitted to the intensive care unit of CMC Vellore and was put on ventilator on April 6
 - ✓ In the last two days, three patients admitted to hospitals —two in RGGH and one in Vellore — with severe acute respiratory syndrome have died within a few hours of admission.
 - ✓ Chennai witnessed another surge in the number of cases.
 - ✓ With 39 more persons testing positive on a single day on April 7, the city's tally of positive cases increased to 149.
 - ✓ Coimbatore was second with 60 cases, followed by Dindigul with 45, while Tirunelveli had 38 and Erode had 32 cases.
 - ✓ As on date, a total of 66,430 persons were under home quarantine in the State, and another 253 in government quarantine facilities.
 - ✓ A total of 27,416 persons had completed the 28-day home quarantine.
 - ✓ Meanwhile, the State has added two more testing centres including the state-run medical college hospital in IRT, Perundurai, Erode and a private laboratory.
 - ✓ With this, the state now has 19 testing centres including 12 in government sector
- **For the first time in its history, the Koovagam Koothandavar temple festival - has been cancelled, to ensure the practising of social distancing amidst the Covid-19 breakout.**
- ✓ The largest transsexual festival draws transsexuals from across the country and even abroad, with about five lakh devotees attending it in the past few years
 - ✓ This year, about three lakh visitors were expected to attend the festival
 - ✓ The festival was supposed to begin on April 21 this year.
 - ✓ The Koovagam festival holds a special significance for members of the transsexual community
 - ✓ The community consider Koothandavar, the principal deity of the temple in Koovagam, as their husband



- ✓ On the penultimate day of the festival, temple priests tie 'thalis' around the necks of transexuals, signifying their marriage to Aravan.
- ✓ The next day, they rip them off, wailing in grief.

- **On April 7, Chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami - made announcements to ensure uninterrupted supply of essential commodities, including additional 500 mobile vegetable/ fruit vans in urban areas.**
- ✓ The scheme will be implemented by the state horticulture department.
- ✓ In a statement, the chief minister announced that the government will not collect user fee from the farmers who avail its cold storage units until April 30
- ✓ As per the announcement, farmer producer organisations identified to procure the produce directly from the farmers can avail maximum loan amount of ₹10 lakh.
- ✓ Traders, who procure the produce from the farmers, need not pay the 1% market fee until April 30
- ✓ The market fee is collected based on the value of the produce
- ✓ The present capacity of 194 cold storage facilities in the state is 17,527MT, as per the Government estimates.

- **Greater Chennai Corporation's new mobile application 'GCC Corona Monitoring' - has registered 30,000 downloads.**



- ✓ The application, 'GCC Corona Monitoring', was launched last week by corporation commissioner G Prakash.
- ✓ It has been created by MP Azhagu Pandia Raja, a research fellow in the ministry of housing and urban affairs, and Greater Chennai Corporation.
- ✓ It has been primarily used to geo tag fever cases in Chennai
- ✓ The residents in Chennai can download the application, click a photograph of their house and send it through the application, if they have fever symptoms.
- ✓ There will be an option -- 'general fever symptoms' -- in the application for use.

- ✓ The location will automatically get geo-tagged on a map at the Corporation's command and control centre
- ✓ In case the number of fever cases is high, a team of doctors will be sent to the location to check on the residents
- ✓ The application also has an option to alert the corporation about a particular shop where people crowd in violation of the lockdown.

STATES

- **The Delhi Government – has announced to launch a five-point programme to fight the novel coronavirus.**
- ✓ The plan was shared by Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal through a live television address on April 7, 2020.
- ✓ According to the CM, the objectives of the new programme in terms of five Ts - testing, tracing, treatment, team work and tracking and monitoring.
- ✓ The state also announced that some hotels and banquet halls will be converted into temporary hospitals to accommodate Covid-19 patients, if the number of cases crosses the 30,000 mark.
- ✓ As of now, there are just over 500 cases in the capital though thousands have been placed under self-quarantine.

NATIONAL

- **The number of Covid-19 cases in India - crossed 5,000 on April 7**
- ✓ It has doubled in the past five days, as per the reports from states.
- ✓ Also, the death toll from the virus went past 150 to end at 165 as on April 7
- ✓ The total count of coronavirus cases stood at 5,330 on April 7, with 573 fresh ones reported during the day.
- ✓ The infected cases have more than doubled since April 2, when the countrywide count was 2,580.
- ✓ Maharashtra alone recorded 150 new cases — the highest single day count for any state — and its total number of infections crossed 1,000.
- ✓ After Maharashtra, states reporting a high number of fresh infections on April 7 were Tamil Nadu (69), Madhya Pradesh (63), Delhi (51), Rajasthan (42), Telangana (40) and Haryana (33).
- ✓ As many as 25 deaths were also reported on the day.
- ✓ With 12 deaths accounted for on April 7, Maharashtra's coronavirus toll rose to 64 — nearly 40% of all deaths from the virus in the country.
- ✓ Among them was a 14-month-old boy, possibly the youngest Indian victim of the virus who died at the state-run hospital in Jamnagar, Gujarat.
- ✓ The average age of 125 people who have died in India from Covid-19 till April 6 was 60 years

MORTALITY RISK RISES WITH AGE

	Cases	Deaths	Fatality rate
Below 40	1,911	8	0.4
40 to 60	1,383	33	2.4
Above 60	773	69	8.9
Male	3,091	80	2.6
Female	976	29	3.0
Total	4067	109	2.7

Source: Calculated from health ministry data released on Apr 6

- ✓ While this is significantly lower than in other countries like Italy, where the average is closer to 80, this can be attributed to a younger population in India when compared to most Western countries
- **The government - has classified the hospitals catering to coronavirus treatment into three categories, to streamline the treatment of patients**
- ✓ The 3 categories include –
 - ✓ **Covid Care Centres** - to treat very mild, mild and suspect cases
 - ✓ **Covid Health Centres** - for clinically moderate level serious patients
 - ✓ **Dedicated Covid Hospitals** - to provide comprehensive care to severe and critical patients.
- ✓ On April 7, the health ministry issued detailed guidelines to states as well as district administrations for establishing the three 'exclusive and dedicated' facilities for providing appropriate care to Covid-19 patients
- ✓ The guidelines are applicable to central, state government as well private hospitals
- ✓ The move is part of the government's preparedness measures against the backdrop of surging Covid-19 cases in the country
- ✓ The guidelines also provide details of requirements for each category
- ✓ A **Covid Care Centre** can be a makeshift arrangement or a hostel or school premises
- ✓ A **Covid Health Centre** has to be a hospital or a dedicated block with proper triaging and separate entry and exit to avoid a risk of infection.
 - ✓ These facilities, which will monitor Covid confirmed cases with moderate level of illness, should have beds with assured oxygen support.
- ✓ A **dedicated Covid Hospital** — which will treat only critically ill patients — will also be a full hospital or a block fully equipped with ICU, ventilators and beds with oxygen support.
 - ✓ These hospitals will have separate areas for suspect and confirmed cases.
 - ✓ Suspect and confirmed cases must not be allowed to mix under any circumstances
 - ✓ These hospitals would also be referral centres for the other two categories - Covid Health Centres and Covid Care Centres.

- ✓ All the three 'exclusive' facilities will follow strict infection prevention and control practices
- **The Union ministry of science and technology - has approved the design and development of 'Fumigation chambers' that use hydrogen peroxide to disinfect a person's body and clothes.**
- ✓ It has also given its approval to '**Special booths**' equipped with ultraviolet light which minimize contact between doctors and patients while also decontaminating surfaces.
- ✓ The 'fumigation chambers' are designed to be installed at the door of the offices
 - ✓ It is basically a gateway through which a person just has to walk
 - ✓ They are designed to be placed in educational institutions, shopping malls, government offices and even apartments
- ✓ The booth is meant for use in hospital settings to ensure safety for the doctors and patients.
- ✓ The prototypes for both were developed by Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST), Thiruvananthapuram.
- ✓ For commercial use, fumigation chambers are being developed by HLL Infratech Services Limited (HITES), a government of India undertaking
- ✓ The booths will be manufactured by Hindustan Machine Tools in Kerala.
- ✓ The cost of making both the set ups will be less than ₹25,000 for each unit
- ✓ Around 50 units of the fumigation chamber were already under development.
 - ✓ The hydrogen peroxide fumigation chamber is five feet-wide and measures seven feet in height.
 - ✓ It takes just five seconds to decontaminate a person inside the chamber
 - ✓ According to the Department of science and technology (DST), this was the safest prototype of a fumigation chamber.
 - ✓ Inside the chamber, an individual will be exposed to only 1/50th of the upper limit of hydrogen peroxide, as prescribed by the World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines



- ✓ Their other design — a special booth — could help doctors minimise contact with patients.
 - ✓ The booth has an entry tunnel on the side so a doctor can use a stethoscope to examine a patient who sits in the chamber.
 - ✓ They can see each other through a glass wall.
 - ✓ After examination is complete, the patient leaves and the UV light is turned on for three minutes to decontaminate it for the next patient
- **India - announced that it had lifted its earlier ban on the export of malaria drug 'hydroxychloroquine' (HCQ) on April 7**
 - ✓ The drug is now being used in countries such as the U.S. as a possible line of treatment for COVID-19.
 - ✓ The government has opened up export of HCQ, depending upon availability and domestic requirements, not just to the US and other “badly affected countries” and neighbors, who are dependent on India.
 - ✓ The other countries that are demanding India to remove the export ban include Brazil, Germany, France, UK, Australia, Israel and Gulf countries
 - ✓ The DGFT had notified lifting restrictions on 14 drugs on April 6.

In focus

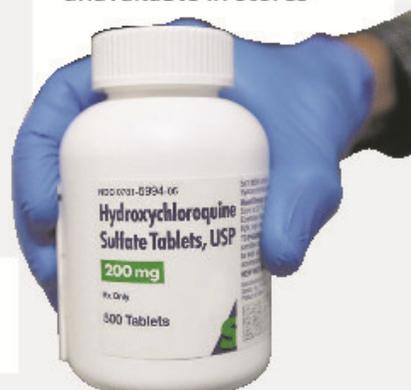
- An anti-malarial drug, hydroxychloroquine is an interferon blocker, and works by diminishing the immune system's response to a viral infection. A hyperactive response by the immune system is said to be primarily responsible for pneumonia, also a fallout of a severe COVID-19 infection

- A study in France showed that hydroxychloroquine alone or in combination with azithromycin appeared to reduce virus levels quicker prompting drug regulators in several countries including in India to approve the drug in restricted settings

- However, several scientists fault the design of these trials

- These dosages are also linked to instances of cardiac arrhythmia and liver damage. Wide usage may actually handicap people's ability to fight the infection

- Indian drug manufacturers say they have sufficient stockpiles and enough to export. But there are reports of stock running out and rheumatoid arthritis patients finding them unavailable in stores



- ✓ On paracetamol and hydroxychloroquine, the government has decided to keep these in a licensed category and to continuously monitor their demand position.
- ✓ India is among the largest producers of the drug and the government announced that it has enough stock for domestic use.
- ✓ In a notification on March 25, the government placed HCQ on a restricted items list, and then put a blanket ban on any export of the drug on April 4.
- ✓ US President Donald Trump placed his request for hydroxychloroquine, which he claimed could help treat Covid-19, in a conversation with PM Narendra Modi on April 4
- ✓ The Indian Council for Medical Research has also cleared HCQ to be used as a prophylaxis, or preventive medication, by doctors, nurses and other health staff.
- ✓ In a related development, the United States has announced a donation of USD 2.9 million for India in the battle against COVID-19.
- ✓ The announcement was made on March 28, 2020, by the US government through the US Agency for International Development.
- ✓ The announced aid is a part of the American Global Response Package, under which the United States will provide financial assistance worth USD 174 million to 64 countries.
- ✓ Apart from the 64 countries, the US has also provided approximately \$18.3 million assistance package to ASEAN countries.
- ✓ The funding will also support organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) with the amount of \$500,000
- **The ICMR – has announced that a person infected with coronavirus can possibly infect 406 others in just 30 days in the absence of a lockdown and social distancing measures**
- ✓ However, the count can dramatically come down to 2.5 people with a 75% reduction in social exposure, as per a recent study by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).
- ✓ At present, the mathematical component that represents the number of persons to whom an infected person can spread the disease is between 1.5 to 4 for Covid-19
- **The popular messaging platform, WhatsApp – announced that it has now put new restrictions to forward messages to just one person or group in the midst of rising cases of misinformation around coronavirus.**
- ✓ The Facebook-owned messaging platform announced that frequently forwarded messages - those which have been previously forwarded five times or more - will henceforth only be forwarded to one chat at a time.
- ✓ The company had in 2018 started testing the forwarding limit of five chats at once in India
- ✓ The limit was later introduced around the world in 2019.
- ✓ WhatsApp has 400 million users in India, being its largest market

- **SpiceJet - operated India's first cargo-on-seat flight on April 7, 2020 from Delhi to Chennai.**



INDIA'S FIRST CARGO ON SEAT FLIGHT BY SPICEJET

- ✓ The SpiceJet flight- B737 passenger aircraft airlifted 11 tons of vital supplies in the passenger cabin and in belly space.
- ✓ The aircraft will be undertaking five such trips carrying supplies for the delivery of essential items.

INTERNATIONAL

- **The State of New York - reported 731 new deaths in the state, leading to a total of 5,489 fatalities, on April 7**
- ✓ The death count for April 6 marked an increase from the prior day's 599 new deaths.
 - ✓ The previous single-day record was 630, set on April 3.
 - ✓ The New York City's toll of 3,202 had already eclipsed the number of those killed on 9/11.
 - ✓ The overall death toll in the US though is nearing 12,000, with the projected peak per day deaths of about 3000 still some 10 days away.
- ✓ In UK, British PM Boris Johnson is still in intensive care with a coronavirus infection
 - ✓ Johnson, 55, was admitted to St Thomas' Hospital, late on April 5 after suffering symptoms, including a fever and a cough, for more than 10 days.
 - ✓ The April 7 daily death toll of 786 was the biggest to date in the deadliest phase of its coronavirus epidemic in UK, which has already killed at least 6,200 people
- ✓ In Japan, PM Shinzo Abe declared a month-long state of emergency in Tokyo and six other prefectures, that will extend till May 6
- ✓ The move is done because of a surge of infections in the country with the world's oldest population.

TRACKING OUTBREAK			
Countries	Infected	Death	
United States	3,80,749	11,931	184 countries/ regions hit
Spain	1,40,511	13,897	
Italy	1,35,586	17,127	1,390,511+ infected globally
Germany	1,05,604	1,905	
France	98,984	8,911	79,091+ have died
China	82,718	3,335	
Iran	62,589	3,872	295,696+ have recovered
United Kingdom	55,940	6,159	
Turkey	34,109	725	
Switzerland	22,253	821	Source: Johns Hopkins University

- ✓ In Spain, new deaths on April 7 rose to 743 and infections climbed by 5,400 after five days of declines,
- ✓ In Italy, the hardest-hit country of all, has over 16,500 deaths as on April 7
- ✓ The total virus cases in Iran has risen to over 62,000 and the toll is nearing 4,000
- ✓ Meanwhile from April 8, China has decided to end its lockdown of Wuhan after 76 days, the city where the coronavirus first emerged and killed tens of thousands of people
 - ✓ Wuhan is the capital city of Hubei province and was the epicenter of the coronavirus outbreak.
 - ✓ The reopening of the City came after only three new virus cases were reported in the previous three weeks, and a day after China reported no new deaths for the first time since January.
 - ✓ The Chinese authorities sealed off Wuhan, an industrial hub of 11 million people, in late January, in a desperate attempt to limit the outbreak's spread.
- ✓ Meanwhile, the Israeli government issued orders on April 7 making the wearing of masks in public compulsory to try to check the spread of the coronavirus.
- ✓ Globally, nearly 1.4 million people have been infected and nearly 80,000 have died.

INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS

- **India - dispatched a 10-tonne consignment of medicines to Sri Lanka, following a request from the strategically located Indian Ocean country in times of need**
 - ✓ The consignment was brought to Colombo by an Air India special flight on April 7.
 - ✓ Earlier, at the initiative of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a SAARC leaders' video conference was held on March 15 to discuss ways to combat the Covid-19 pandemic.
 - ✓ India also pledged US\$ 10 million to the SAARC Covid-19 Emergency Fund.

- ✓ Subsequently, a video conference of health professionals in SAARC countries was held on March 26.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **The researchers from the Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB), New Delhi and Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad -have started working on novel coronavirus genome sequencing.**
 - ✓ The mentioned institutes belong to the Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).
 - ✓ The purpose of the research is to figure out the different aspects of the virus.
 - ✓ The study will help in understanding the evolution of the virus and how fast it can imitate.
 - ✓ As on April 7, India has shared nine whole genome sequences of the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) with the Global Initiative on Sharing All Influenza Data (GISAID)
 - ✓ The GISAID is a public platform started by the WHO in 2008 for countries to share genome sequences.
 - ✓ All these have been shared by the Pune-based, National Institute of Virology.
 - ✓ On April 2, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) allowed all national research laboratories including those under the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) to conduct testing for the novel coronavirus.
 - ✓ The genome sequencing method that determines the complete DNA sequencing of the organism's genome.
 - ✓ The research will help in understanding the evolution and establishing the family tree of the virus.
- **The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) – announced the plans for its ‘Artemis Program’, which aims at landing humans on the moon by 2024.**
 - ✓ The Artemis base camp will act as a lunar foundation surface habitat
 - ✓ It will host four astronauts at the moon's South Pole for a week's expedition.
 - ✓ The base camp will become a site for testing new techniques, which includes the long and cold lunar nights, lunar dust, turning local material into resources such as water and to develop a new power and construction technologies.
 - ✓ As per NASA's report, Artemis base Camp will successfully demonstrate the US's long-established leadership in space and also help in humanity's first mission to Mars.
- **A Super Pink Moon, the biggest supermoon of the year 2020 - was visible in the skies on April 7, 2020.**



- ✓ On this day, the moon was at its closest distance from Earth, which is 356,907 km away.
- ✓ The Earth, Moon and the Sun aligned together on the day, making the Moon look larger and brighter than usual
- ✓ This particular moon was named 'Super Pink Moon'
- ✓ The moon appeared in the Indian sky from the evening on April 7 and was fully visible till 8 am on April 8.

AWARDS

- **A team of three students from Manipal Institute of Technology, along with the support of three professionals - has won the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) COVID-19 Challenge event.**
- ✓ The team was declared as winner of its track — 'Who to test and when?' under 'How to protect vulnerable populations from the effects of COVID-19?'
- ✓ There were a total of ten tracks.
- ✓ The 'Beat the Pandemic' was a 48-hour virtual event to help sort out the most critical needs caused by COVID-19.
- ✓ The hackathon started on April 4, where participants formed teams to shortlist the problems and pitched in their solutions.
- ✓ The three students of Manipal Institute of Technology — Akshatha Kamath (third year CSE), Shubham Rateria (CCE Batch of 2019) and Adri Rajaraman (ECE Batch of 2019) — emerged victorious in the event.
- ✓ They teamed up with Melia Watson, Washington DC (respiratory therapist, MBA), Hsiang Wei Hu, Taiwan (co-founder of Acusense Biomed), and Mariane Melo, U.K. (M.D.).
- ✓ They narrowed down to the problem of overcrowded hospitals with inappropriate admissions, whereas less than 5% of the population under 50 years needs hospitalisation.
- ✓ Their solution was to build a 'Tele-health platform' for non-contact monitoring of vital signs such as heart rate, respiratory rate and blood oxygen concentration – by using a phone camera or webcam at home
- ✓ The event saw 1,500 participants from over 75 countries and over 250 mentors.