

April - 18

TNPSC BITS

- ❖ Thrissur Pooram has been cancelled for the first time on account of the COVID-19 outbreak.
 - It is called the 'mother of all festivals' in Kerala.

NATIONAL

Guidelines for lock down 2.0

- ❖ The Ministry of Home Affairs launched revised guidelines for lock down 2.0.
- ❖ Under the smart lock down the public transport services, cinema halls, shopping complexes, educational institutions are all to remain closed.
- ❖ Not more than 20 shall be allowed to participate in funerals.
- ❖ The guidelines make the use of face masks at work places compulsory.
- ❖ Also, health care measures such as fines for spitting, provisions of sanitizers and thermal screening have been made compulsory.
- ❖ The Ministry of Home Affairs has made spitting in the public offensive under National Disaster Management Act, 2005.
- ❖ The industrial establishments operating in Special Economic Zones and Industrial Estates have been permitted.
- ❖ Coal mining and oil production are permitted.

Color coding

- ❖ The Colour coding of the country (such as Red, Orange, and Green) was done by the Ministry of Health and Family welfare to help for the management of COVID-19 pandemic effectively.
- ❖ It has decided to divide all districts across the country into hotspots (Red Zone), non-hotspots (white zone/orange zone) and green zones.
- ❖ It has identified 170 hotspot districts (Red Zone), 207 non-hotspot districts (White Zone) and 353 other districts (green zone) across the country.
- ❖ Districts witnessing high number of cases or high growth rate of infections are being marked as hotspots; districts where some cases have been found as non-hotspots; and those which have reported no cases as green zones.



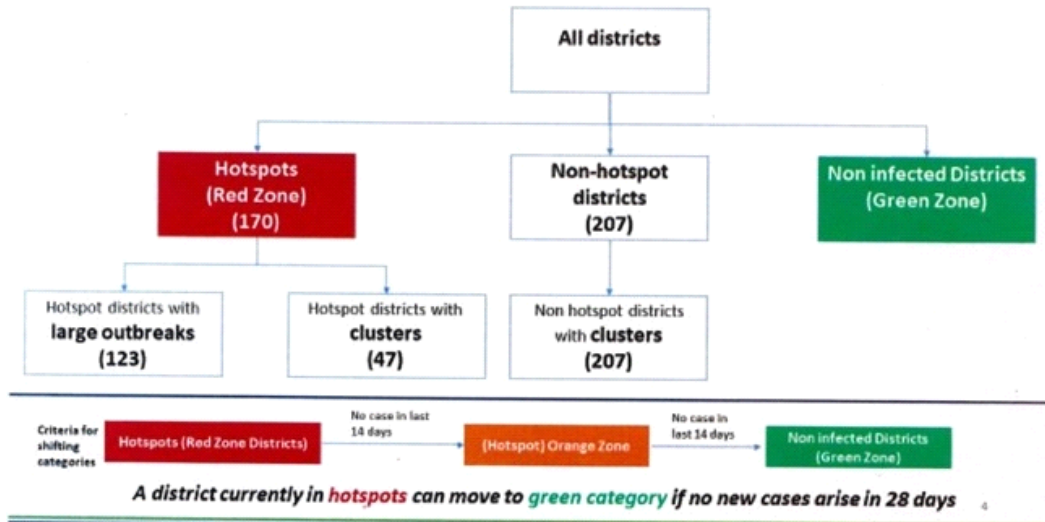
- ❖ The Red Zone districts have been further classified as areas with large outbreaks or with cluster outbreaks.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu, with 22 of its 27 districts, is the state with the highest number of districts designated as hotspots in the country.
- ❖ It is followed by Maharashtra with 14, Uttar Pradesh with 13, Rajasthan with 12, Andhra Pradesh with 11, Delhi with 10.
- ❖ These numbers will increase or decrease based on fresh cases of novel coronavirus infection on a weekly basis.
- ❖ The health ministry used two criteria to classify the districts as hotspots — the absolute number of cases and the speed of growth in cases.
- ❖ The hotspots are those districts where large number of COVID-19 case are being largely reported and the reported cases are growing day by day.
- ❖ Non-hotspots are those districts where the large number of COVID-19 cases and there are no new cases.
- ❖ The green zones are those districts where there are limited or no COVID-19 cases.
- ❖ If no new case is reported from a Red Zone district in 14 days, it would be moved to the Orange Zone and if no new cases are recorded in 28 days, it will be shifted to the Green Zone.
- ❖ The technical definition followed to classify the districts is any district reporting more than six cases would be classified as hotspot district or red zone.
- ❖ Any hotspot district with more than 15 cases would be treated as a district witnessing outbreak.
- ❖ The Hotspots are to be given the highest priority.

Hotspot criteria

- ❖ Highest caseload contributing to over 80% cases in India or
- ❖ Districts contributing to 80% cases for each state or
- ❖ Districts with a doubling rate in less than 4 days
- ❖ For green zones: No new confirmed cases for the last 28 days

Definitions of zones

- ❖ A zone with positive cases or a cluster with positive cases is marked as the epicentre of the containment zone.
- ❖ A buffer zone is marked where people with severe and acute respiratory illnesses (SARI) are checked and monitored.
- ❖ Containment zones are created to map the local transmission of the disease and prevent the contagion from spreading.



INTERNATIONAL

South Korea Elections

- ❖ The ruling democratic party President Moon Jae won the election of South Korea.
- ❖ South Korea was the first country to hold national election among the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ❖ This election was the first time that the 18 year olds were allowed to vote.

ECONOMY

World Economic Outlook 2020

- ❖ The International Monetary Fund has set growth rate of India at 1.9%.
- ❖ IMF also says that the India will recover at the growth rate of 7.4% in 2021-22.
- ❖ The global economy is expected to shrink by 3 per cent during 2020.
- ❖ It will mark the steepest downturn since the Great Depression of the 1929-1932.
- ❖ The IMF has predicted that the countries such as India, China, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines and Vietnam will alone see increasing growth.
- ❖ According to the report, the other major economies of the world, such as USA, France, Germany and Italy, are to face decreasing growth rate.



SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

First State to start Pool Testing

- ❖ The ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research) gave permission for the state of Uttar Pradesh to start pool testing of COVID-19.
- ❖ With this, UP has become the first state to start pool testing.
- ❖ Pool testing is being done in the state to increase the number of testing.
- ❖ Under pool testing, the samples will be mixed and tested.
- ❖ A pooled testing algorithm involves the PCR (polymerase chain reaction) screening of a specimen pool comprising multiple individual patient specimens.
- ❖ It is followed by individual testing only if a pool screens positive.
- ❖ As all individual samples in a negative pool are regarded as negative, it results in substantial cost savings when a large proportion of pools tests negative.

Need of Pool testing

- ❖ This will reduce the total test kits used to examine patients and treat them.
- ❖ It increases the testing capacity of a state.
- ❖ The pooling test samples is cost effective, especially for the countries with limited resources.
- ❖ It can be used to prevent community spread of the disease.



ENVIRONMENT

Bats in India

- ❖ As per a study by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), presence of a different kind of coronavirus has been found in two bat species in India.
- ❖ These two bat species are from Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Puducherry and Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ But there is no evidence or research to claim that these bat coronaviruses can cause disease in humans.
- ❖ Pteropus bat species were earlier found positive for Nipah virus in 2018 and 2019 in Kerala.
- ❖ Bats are considered to be the natural reservoir for many viruses, of which some are potential human pathogens.
- ❖ The study has been published in the Indian Journal of Medical Research.





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