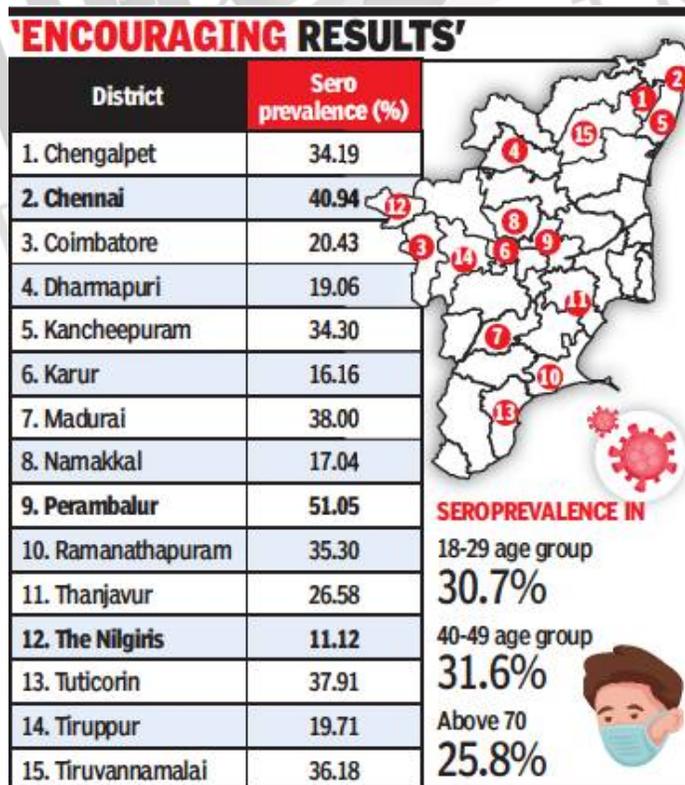


EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS—FEBRUARY 10, 2021

TAMIL NADU

- **The Directorate of Public Health – has announced the findings of the serological study done in Tamil Nadu**
- ✓ Three out of 10 people had tested positive for antibodies to SARS-CoV-2 — the virus that causes Covid-19 — as of November 2020 in the state
- ✓ As per the study, more than 2.3 crore people in the state were infected until last November



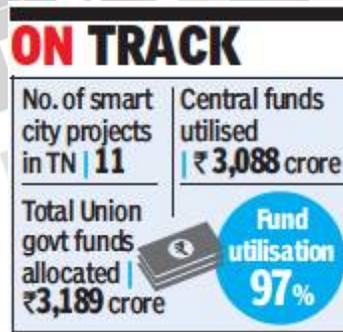
- ✓ This is nearly 36 times the number of people who had officially tested positive for Covid-19 infection.

- ✓ The representative study was done in association with scientists from the US between October and November 2020
 - ✓ **The study showed that the average seroprevalence in Tamil Nadu was 31.5%**
 - ✓ It ranges from the lowest 11.1% in the Nilgiris to the highest 51.05% in Perambalur district.
 - ✓ Chennai, one of the worst affected districts in the state, had 40.9% sero-positivity.
 - ✓ Coimbatore had 20.4%, Trichy 32% and Madurai had recorded 38% sero-positivity.
 - ✓ As is the trend globally, the seroprevalence in urban areas (36.9%) was higher than in rural areas (26.9%).
 - ✓ Further, the working age group — between 40 and 49 years for the purposes of the study — had significantly higher seroprevalence than the youth (18-29 years, 30.7%) and the elderly (70+ years, 25.8%).
- **The State Government – has issued fresh set of standard operating procedures (SOPs) for colleges and polytechnics across the state**
- ✓ On February 8, the government has allowed the reopening of educational institutions for all under graduate and post-graduate students
 - ✓ According to the new guidelines, not more than 50% of the students should be present on the campus at any given point to ensure social distancing
 - ✓ Classes of students of any two years alone should be held on any given day

AT A GLANCE		SOPs to be implemented by colleges and universities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Not more than 50% of students should be present at any point of time ➤ Class size must be reduced and split into multiple sections ➤ In engineering colleges, if social distancing cannot be maintained due to space constraint, students of any two years will attend classes in one day and the rest will attend the next day ➤ In arts and science and polytechnic colleges, students of any 2 years have to attend classes in a day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Online teaching, learning arrangements must for international students ➤ If some students prefer online classes, institutions are to provide online study materials ➤ All extracurricular activities should be avoided where physical distancing is not possible ➤ Covid +ve cases should be monitored and reported to local authorities daily ➤ Task groups should be formed to handle situations related to pandemic 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sharing of rooms should not be allowed ➤ 14-day quarantine must before attending classes ➤ Takeaway option should be available for students and staff ➤ Hostels should specify number of students at dining halls at any point in time. Mess timings should be increased to avoid overcrowding

- ✓ Hostels students should be under a 14-day quarantine even if they test negative for Covid-19

- ✓ Institutions have also been asked to break each class into multiple sections, with one in every three seats kept vacant
 - ✓ Further, the teaching hours can be extended as per the requirements.
 - ✓ While advising institutions to generally avoid holding cultural and sports activities, the government said such events could be conducted if physical distancing could be ensured.
 - ✓ The SOP also mandated institutions to maintain air-conditioning in the 24°C to 30°C range.
 - ✓ Sharing of rooms will not be allowed in hostels, meals should be served in small batches and takeaway options made available for students and staff.
 - ✓ The state government also permitted teacher training institutes to function with up to 25 students per classroom.
 - ✓ The authorities have also been allowed to conduct typewriting exams in March and April by following Covid-19 protocols.
- **Tamil Nadu - is ranked as the best performer among bigger states with respect to the utilisation of Union government funds for smart cities**
- ✓ According to a data tabled in Parliament, Tamil Nadu had utilised 97% of the ₹3,189 crore allotted to it by the Centre.
 - ✓ In comparison, Gujarat has used 95% of allotted funds, while Rajasthan has utilised 94%, Karnataka 91%, Uttar Pradesh 87% and Maharashtra 87%.



- ✓ Smart city projects are underway in Chennai, Coimbatore, Erode, Madurai, Salem, Thanjavur, Tuticorin, Trichy, Tirunelveli, Tiruppur and Vellore.
- ✓ Tamil Nadu has completed 167 projects totalling to ₹2,873 crore, while work orders for 310 projects worth ₹12,986 crore have been issued.
- ✓ Tenders have been floated for 20 schemes worth ₹488.3 crore.

NATIONAL

- **On February 9, Prime Minister Narendra Modi - bid farewell to senior Congress leader and Leader of Opposition, Ghulam Nabi Azad and three other Rajya Sabha members, whose terms are expiring on February 15.**
- ✓ Besides Azad, the other three retiring Rajya Sabha MPs are Shamsheer Singh Manhas of PM Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Peoples Democratic Party's (PDP's) Fayaz Ahmad Mir and Nazir Ahmad.

- ✓ All the retiring MPs are from Jammu and Kashmir
- ✓ Azad has been a member of the upper house for 28 years.

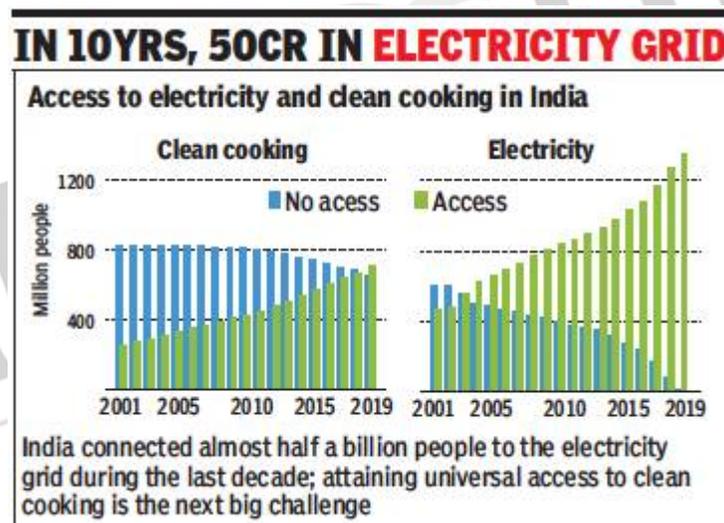


- ✓ He was a member of Lok Sabha for 10 years and was Chief Minister of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir for three years.
 - ✓ Azad started his career in Congress back in 1973
 - ✓ He served as the Parliamentary Affairs Minister in the government of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh until October 27, 2005
 - ✓ On November 2, 2005, he became the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir.
 - ✓ Azad was elected to the eighth Lok Sabha in 1984 and was a member in Rajya Sabha from 1990 to 1996 from Maharashtra.
 - ✓ He was elected to the Upper House from Jammu and Kashmir during the term of November 30, 1996 to November 29, 2002 and November 30, 2002 to November 29, 2008.
 - ✓ In June 2014, after the NDA won a majority in the Lok Sabha and formed the Union government, Azad was appointed as the leader of opposition in the Rajya Sabha, where Congress still held the majority
 - ✓ In 2015, Azad got re-elected to the Rajya Sabha from Jammu and Kashmir
- **The fossil of world's oldest animal – was discovered in the Bhimbetka rock shelters, located about 40km from Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh**



- ✓ Bhimbetka Rock Shelters are a Unesco World Heritage Site for Paleolithic and Mesolithic cave art
- ✓ The discovery may have been the first ever fossil in India of a Dickinsonia - the Earth's 'oldest animal' - dating back 570 million years

- ✓ In general, Dickinsonia fossils could exceed four feet in length but the one found in Bhimbetka is 17 inches long.
 - ✓ Rock shelters of Bhimbetka were found by V S Wakankar 64 yrs ago
 - ✓ The Dickinsonia are believed to be one of the key links between the early, simple organisms and the explosion of life in the Cambrian Period, about 541 million years ago.
 - ✓ The 36th International Geological Congress was scheduled to be held in Bhimbetka during March 2020 but was postponed twice due to the pandemic
- **India - will overtake the European Union as the world's third-largest energy consumer by 2030**
- ✓ This was revealed in the International Energy Agency's second 'India Energy Outlook' released on February 9.
 - ✓ By 2040, India's electricity system will be larger than the EU in terms of generation capacity and the country will have more renewable capacity than the US.



- ✓ The country will contribute 25% of the global growth in energy demand through 2040, posting the largest increase for any country
 - ✓ As per the report, India is expected to achieve a rate of GDP growth that adds the equivalent of another Japan by 2040.
- **The Centre - has launched a new Central Sector Scheme called the “Formation and Promotion of 10,000 Farmer Produce Organizations (FPOs)”**
- ✓ A budget of Rs 6865 crore has been allocated for the scheme that seeks to form and promote 10,000 new FPOs across India.
 - ✓ In the FPOs, agricultural and horticultural produces will be grown and cultivated to leverage the economies of scale.
 - ✓ Further, “One District One Product” cluster will be created to promote specialization of products.

- ✓ Under this scheme, the formation & Promotion of FPOs will be done with the help of 9 Implementing Agencies (IAs), which includes NABARD, NAFED, NCDC etc.,
- ✓ These IAs will engage the Cluster Based Business Organizations (CBBOs) to aggregate, registered and provide the handholding support to each FPOs.
- ✓ The support will be provided for a period of 5 years.

INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS

- **On February 9, India and Afghanistan - signed an MoU for construction of the proposed Shatoot dam in Afghanistan**



- ✓ India will build the dam to provide safe drinking and irrigation water to the residents of Kabul.
- ✓ PM Narendra Modi presided over the virtual ceremony with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani
- ✓ The MoU for Shatoot dam was signed by foreign minister S Jaishankar and his counterpart Hanif Atmar.
- ✓ The government said that the project was a part of the New Development Partnership between India and Afghanistan.
- ✓ The proposed Lalandar (Shatoot) Dam would also rehabilitate the existing irrigation and drainage network, aid in flood protection and management efforts in the area, and also provide electricity to the region

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **The 18th edition of BioAsia event - will be held on February 22-23, 2021 under the theme - 'Move the Needle'**



- ✓ This year, the event will focus on Covid-19, pharma, medtech and global health.
- ✓ The event will witness the participation of various experts in the field to discuss topics of importance for the life sciences industry.
- ✓ One of the sessions of the event will be focusing on the prospects of the emerging scenario in Medical Technologies.
- ✓ The event will also have analysis on the supply chain resilience, access to innovative medicines and innovation & research.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **IIT-Madras incubated space startup Agnikul Cosmos - said that it has successfully test fired its semi-cryogenic rocket engine Agnilet**



- ✓ The Agnilet rocket engine is completely 3D printed as a single component in a single run of a 3D printer without any assembled parts
- ✓ Agnikul is building India's first private small satellite launch vehicle called Agnibaan
- ✓ Agnilet will power Agnikul's orbital class vehicle Agnibaan into the space
- ✓ It was made in India at roughly one-tenth of the cost of conventionally assembling a rocket engine and could be made in less than four days
- ✓ Agnibaan will be capable of carrying up to 100 kg of payload to low Earth orbits up to 700 km with a plug-and-play engine configuration.
- ✓ Typically, rocket engines have numerous parts that are made separately and assembled.
- ✓ Agnikul said this is the first time the startup has demonstrated firing of a fully 3D printed rocket engine.
- ✓ Agnikul was the first space tech company to sign an agreement with the Department of Space under INSPACe recently, thus benefiting from the government and ISRO's guidance and support.