



EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – APRIL 18, 2021

TAMIL NADU

- **Tamil Nadu - launched the second serosurveillance for Covid-19, which aims to cover around 26,000 people in the state**
- ✓ The state public health department has already started collecting random blood (serum and plasma) samples in 888 clusters across the state
- ✓ The survey would go on till the end of April 2021
- ✓ One of the objectives of the serosurvey is to find if the community has developed herd immunity.
- ✓ Preliminary results of the survey could be expected a month after it ends.
- ✓ The sample population is also being asked to answer a questionnaire on occupation, exposure status, age, sex, travel history etc, which would give a more detailed account of the disease.

- **Former Tamil Nadu chief secretary Girija Vaidyanathan - is set to assume charge as expert member of southern bench of National Green Tribunal (NGT)**



- ✓ The Madras high court has vacated an interim stay on her appointment.
- ✓ The first bench of Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee and Justice Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy rejected a PIL filed by an NGO, Poovulagin Nanbargal

- ✓ The bench held that the former chief secretary was 'eligible' to hold the post of an expert member in any of the benches of the NGT.
- ✓ The NGO contended that NGT Act mandated a person to have administrative experience of 15 years and an experience of five years in dealing with environmental matters in the central or a state government or in a reputed national or state-level institution.
- ✓ The Counsel for Girija Vaidyanathan argued that she had experience of more than five years in dealing with issues relating to environment
- ✓ The bureaucrat served tenure as secretary for environment and chairman of the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board for two and a half years and also as health secretary for two and a half years where she took the responsibility to manage the bio-medical waste.
- ✓ The court also took note of the submission that she was involved in restoring the rivers of Chennai during the time she served as chief secretary and in other administrative capacities earlier in her career.

NATIONAL

- **Facebook - has signed a deal to buy renewable energy in India from the wind power project of a local firm Cleanmax**
- ✓ Mumbai-based CleanMax will collaborate with Facebook for the social media giant's first such deal in the country
- ✓ The 32 megawatt wind power project is located in Karnataka
- ✓ CleanMax will own and operate the project, while Facebook will buy the power off the grid using environmental attribute certificates, or carbon credits
- ✓ As such, Facebook doesn't own the power plants but instead signs "long-term" electricity purchasing agreements with the renewable power company.
- ✓ Under the project Facebook and CleanMax will work together to provide renewable energy into the electrical grid of India.
- ✓ Facebook is to use the renewable energy purchased from CleanMax to power its data centre.
- ✓ The Facebook is to start the operations of the data centre in 2022.
- ✓ Facebook had made similar agreements with energy providers in Singapore such as Terrenus Energy, Sunseap Group and Sembcorp industries.
- ✓ These projects are capable of producing 160 MW of solar power.

- **The Ministry of Rural Development - recently conducted the Gender Samvaad event to create awareness on gender related interventions under the DAY-NRLM on April 16, 2021**
- ✓ It is a joint initiative between DAY-NRLM and IWWAGE.
- ✓ DAY-NRLM is 'Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana National Rural Livelihood Mission'.
- ✓ IWWAGE stands for 'Initiative for What Works to Advance Women and Girls in the Economy'.



- ✓ The event was launched by Nagendra Nath Sinha, Secretary, Rural Development as part of the ongoing Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav
 - ✓ The event provided opportunities to understand the best practices of other states to improve women agencies and also to understand Gender Interventions globally.
 - ✓ More than sixty million women are now part of DAY-NRLM, which plays a major role in organising them into Self Help Groups.
 - ✓ These platforms facilitate livelihood support services for women and also facilitate financial opportunities.
 - ✓ The DAY-NRLM is a poverty relief programme, which is partially supported by the World Bank.
 - ✓ It aims to cover seven crore rural poor households through Self Help Groups and support them for livelihoods.
- **The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs - recently launched two new challenges - the EatSmart Cities Challenge and Transport 4 All Challenge.**



- ✓ The main objective of the EatSmart Cities Challenge is to create an environment of right food practices and habits.
- ✓ The Challenge will support the smart cities in developing physical, economic and social infrastructure along with the application of smart solutions.

- ✓ The challenge has been opened in all smart cities with a population of more than five lakh people
 - ✓ The Transport 4 all challenge aims to make public transport safe, comfortable, affordable and reliable.
 - ✓ The challenge was launched in collaboration with the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy, a non-governmental organization
 - ✓ The NGO mainly focuses on developing transit systems and promote walking and biking in the smart cities
 - ✓ The main objective of the challenge is to bring together cities, startups and citizen groups in developing solutions that help improve public transport.
- **The Ministry of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal - recently chaired the first meeting of the National Startup Advisory Council on April 15, 2021.**



- ✓ The National Startup Advisory Council was constituted by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade.
- ✓ The main objective of the council is to advise the government on measures needed to build strong ecosystem to support innovation and startups in the country.
- ✓ This is to drive sustainable economic growth and also to generate large scale employment opportunities.
- ✓ The council consists of both Ex-officio and non-official members nominated by the Government of India.
- ✓ They include members from the central ministries and also founders of successful startups.
- ✓ India now has 38,756 officially recognised startups, with 27 Unicorns.
- ✓ Unicorns are startups that have a market valuation of at least 1 billion USD.
- ✓ The Centre had launched Startup India in 2016 to build a strong ecosystem for the growth of startups in the country.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **The National Aeronautics and Space Administration - is to launch four astronauts to the International Space Station on April 22 in collaboration with SpaceX.**

- ✓ It is the second crewed operational flight of Crew Dragon Spacecraft.
- ✓ The SpaceX Crew Dragon spacecraft and Falcon 9 rocket are set to be launched from Pad 39A at NASA's Kennedy Space Center, Florida on the World Earth Day
- ✓ This will be Crew Dragon's second flight since last year when it had carried NASA astronauts Bob Behnken and Doug Hurley to and from the space station for the Demo-2 test flight
- ✓ The astronauts to travel to the International Space Station are from NASA, JAXA (Japanese Space Agency) and ESA (European Space Agency)
- ✓ Crew Dragon was the first space vehicle to launch humans from American soil in May 2020 after a gap of nine years.
- ✓ It was funded through NASA's commercial Crew Programme.
- ✓ It's design is based on Dragon 1, which was launched more than twenty times on missions to deliver cargo to the International Space Station between 2012 and 2020.

ECONOMY

- **The Reserve Bank of India - recently established the Regulations Review Authority (RRA) 2.0, which is to function for a period of one year.**
- ✓ The RRA will review the regulatory measures internally by seeking suggestions from regulated entities and stakeholders.
- ✓ Deputy Governor Rajeshwar Rao has been appointed as the head of RRA.
- ✓ The authority will work towards simplifying procedures and reducing the compliance burden on regulated entities
- ✓ This has to be done by streamlining the reporting mechanism, removing paper-based submission of returns wherever possible and revoking obsolete instructions.
- ✓ The RRA was set up initially in 1999-2000.

AWARDS

- **Bhagat Singh Koshyari, Governor of Maharashtra and Goa – presented the third edition of Champions of Change Award, 2020 at Panaji, Goa**
- ✓ The award ceremony was graced by several other luminaries including former CJI Justice KG Balakrishnan, former CJI Justice Dipak Misra and former Supreme Court judge Justice Gyan Sudha Mishra through video conference
- ✓ The Jury for Champions of Change Award is headed by Justice K.G. Balakrishnan (Former Chief Justice of India and Former Chairman NHRC).
- ✓ India-based woman entrepreneur Dr Leena S, known popularly as the Nail Tycoon, has also been felicitated with the prestigious award
- ✓ The entrepreneur created her own beauty brand, The Nail Artistry, and turned it into a chain of luxury salons specialising in nail art, manicures, pedicures, and other beauty regimens.



- ✓ Other notable awardees included Pramod Sawant (Chief Minister of Goa), Shripad Naik (Union Minister of State), MK Stalin (politician), Sonu Nigam (singer), Hema Malini (actress) and Sushmita Sen (actress).
- ✓ The award promotes Gandhian values, community service and social development.
- ✓ It was founded in 2011 and currently headed by Nandhan Jha
- ✓ The Champions of Change award is organized by the monthly news and current affairs magazine 'Power Corridors' and the Hindi news portal 'Panchayati Times', under the aegis of 'Interactive Forum on Indian Economy' (IFIE).

OBITUARY

- **Celebrated Tamil actor Vivekh – passed away in Chennai after being hospitalized due to cardiac arrest on April 17**



- ✓ The 59-year-old actor was admitted to the hospital a day earlier, after suffering a massive cardiac arrest
- ✓ The actor's body was cremated with state police's 24-gun salute.
- ✓ The Tamil Nadu government said the 'police honour' was in recognition of his contribution to the film world and his social service.

- ✓ The Padma Shri awardee in the year 2009 has acted in more than 200 movies along with most of the leading stars in the state
- ✓ Vivekh made his acting debut in legendary director K Balachander's Manathil Urudhi Vendum, in 1987
- ✓ Taking inspiration from the legendary 'Kalaivanar' NS Krishnan, he portrayed his brand of comedy through which he delivered social messages in a humorous way, and came to be addressed as Chinna Kalaivanar
- ✓ He has won 5 state film awards as best comedian for movies such as "Unnaruge Naan Irundhaal" (1999), "Run"(2002), "Parthiban Kanavu"(2003), "Anniyan" (2005) and "Sivaji" (2007)
- ✓ Vivekh bagged 3 filmfare awards for best comedian for the movies, Run (2002), Saamy (2003) and Perazhagan (2004)
- ✓ He also won International Tamil Film award for Run, Saamy, Kuruvi (2008) and Vedi (2011)
- ✓ In the year 2006, Vivekh won Tamil Nadu State Film Honorary Kalaivanar Award for his contribution to Tamil Cinema
- ✓ The actor has been a life-long campaigner for planting trees through 'Green Kalam movement' (later changed to Green Globe), which he launched in 2010 under the guidance of former President APJ Abdul Kalam
- ✓ Under the movement, the actor has planted more than 33,00,000 saplings
- ✓ He was conferred honorary doctorate by Sathyabama University in 2016
- ✓ He has been the state's ambassador for popularizing public health messages, including prevention of dengue.
- ✓ In the year 2018, Vivekh was appointed as an ambassador for the Plastic Pollution-Free Tamil Nadu campaign by the state
- ✓ The following year, when Chennai was reeling under a water crisis, he campaigned for rainwater harvesting.
- ✓ PM and scores of other dignitaries condoled his demise.

SPORTS

- **Indian wrestler Ravi Kumar Dahiya - retained his Asian Championship title at Almaty, Kazhakstan on April 17**



- ✓ World championships bronze medallist Dahiya became the third Indian male wrestler to secure a second Asian championships gold medal in the event
- ✓ Yogeshwar Dutt and Bajrang Punia were the other wrestlers to have claimed two Asian crowns but none had won it in consecutive years.
- ✓ Dahiya won the 57kg freestyle title last year in the Asian championships held at New Delhi
- ✓ However, Bajrang Punia settled for a silver medal after withdrawing from the much-awaited final against Takuto Otoguro due to an elbow injury
- ✓ Earlier, Bajrang lost to Ottoguro in the 2018 World championships final and in the 2020 Asian championships final.
- ✓ Among others with medal wins, Narsingh Pancham Yadav (79kg), Karan (70kg) and Satywart Kadian (97kg) bagged a bronze each

RANKINGS

- **The Economist Intelligence Unit along with Facebook - recently released the 'Inclusive Internet Index, 2021' report.**
- ✓ According to the index, India is ranked at the 49th spot on internet inclusion and gender equality in accessing the internet.
- ✓ India is tied with Thailand in 49th place this year on the scores of internet availability (77th position globally), affordability (20th spot), relevance (49th position) and readiness (29th) categories.
- ✓ There were over 687.6 million internet users in India in 2020, which is expected to touch 1 billion by 2025
- ✓ The Facebook-Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) index ranked 120 countries, representing 98% of global GDP and 96% of global population.
- ✓ Around 77 of the 120 countries showed improvement in internet inclusion.
- ✓ Sweden ranked first in the ranking followed by US and Spain.
- ✓ The fourth place went to Australia, while Hong Kong completed the Top 5 rankings
- ✓ In Inclusive Internet Index, 2020, the US was ranked first followed by Sweden and New Zealand.
- ✓ India was ranked at 52nd on Inclusive Internet Index, 2020.

