

## EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS –AUGUST 1, 2021

### TAMIL NADU

- Minister for Medical and Family Welfare, Ma Subramanian – released the findings of state-wide third cross-sectional serosurvey in Chennai on July 31
- ✓ The latest serosurvey was conducted by the Tamil Nadu Directorate of Public Health and Preventive Medicine in July in 888 clusters across the state
- ✓ The survey indicated that at least 62.2% of the state's population has developed antibodies against the coronavirus
- ✓ Among the 26,610 samples tested, 17,624 individuals had IgG (Immunoglobulin G) antibodies against SARS-CoV-2 virus.
- ✓ The highest seropositivity was observed in Virudhunagar district, south of Madurai at 84% whereas Erode district near Coimbatore reported the lowest at 37%
- ✓ In the earlier state-wide serosurveys conducted by DPH&PM, the seropositivity was 31% in October/ November 2020, and 29% in the second conducted in April 2021
- ✓ Western districts like Erode, Coimbatore and Tiruppur reported only around 45% seropositivity
- ✓ This outcome was attributed to the consistent reporting of new Covid-19 cases in these regions.
- ✓ Of 3,690 samples from 123 clusters in Chennai district surveyed, seropositivity was found at 82%.
- ✓ While Coimbatore reported 43%, two other major cities — Trichy and Madurai — reported 67% and 79%, respectively.
- ✓ Chengalpattu, Kancheepuram and Tiruvallur districts reported 66%, 65% and 67% seropositivity, respectively.
- ✓ Among other districts which reported above 70% seropositivity are Tenkasi (78%) and Theni (77%), Tirunelveli (76%), Ramanathapuram (75%), Dindigul (73%), Thoothukudi (72%), Kanyakumari (72%), Ranipet (70%), Cuddalore (70%) and Kallakurichi (70%).

- ✓ The serosurvey was successfully completed at the state and district level. Each cluster consisted of 30 participants drawn randomly from a village in a rural area or a street in the case of an urban one.
  - ✓ Blood samples were collected from a total of 26,610 participants and tested for the presence of SARS CoV-2 IgG antibodies using Chemiluminescence based Immuno Assay (CLIA).
  - ✓ All the samples were tested at six referral labs of DPH & PM located in Chennai, Tiruchirappalli, Madurai, Coimbatore, Tirunelveli and Salem for the detection of IgG antibodies.
- **Chief Minister MK Stalin - has exempted private candidates with disabilities from taking up the supplementary Class 12 exams scheduled in August and has declared them as 'all pass.'**
- ✓ The decision was announced after the Disability Welfare Commissioner wrote to the government to exempt persons with disabilities (PwDs) who were to take up the supplementary exams as private candidates given the Covid-19 situation.
  - ✓ According to CM, all candidates with disabilities would be exempted from taking up the supplementary class 12 exams which are to begin from August 6.
  - ✓ The CM's statement quoted section 17(i) of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 which states that suitable modifications can be made in the curriculum and examination system to meet the needs of students with disabilities.
  - ✓ The School Education Department will decide on how marks can be awarded.
  - ✓ The government, however, has also said that candidates with disabilities who wish to go ahead and take up the exams can do so, but that the marks scored in the exams will be treated as final.
  - ✓ The State government had earlier said that supplementary exams would be conducted for private candidates since school students were awarded marks on the basis of their class 10, 11, and 12 performance in public exams and internal assessments.
- **On July 31, Chief Minister M K Stalin - announced that the Tamil Nadu authorities would give priority to first-generation graduates in jobs in authorities sector.**
- ✓ He instructed authorities to develop coaching modules and programs at authorities coaching centres for students to excel in recruitment examinations.
  - ✓ The CM was chairing an overview assembly with officers of the finance and human assets division on the secretariat.
  - ✓ He instructed the officers to take vital measures to assist students from the state to clear the recruitment examinations.
  - ✓ The CM insisted on offering particular coaching for presidency staff to improve their high quality of service to the general public.

- ✓ He directed officers to enhance the standard of coaching at Anna Institute of Management and different authorities establishments that practice the youth for aggressive exams.
- ✓ He requested the senior bureaucrats utilise the prevailing services on the civil service coaching institute in Bhavanisagar to conduct on-line coaching for presidency staff to improve their skills.
- ✓ Minister for finance and human useful resource administration Palanivel Thiagarajan, chief secretary V Irai Anbu, Finance chief secretary S Krishnan and secretary to the division of human useful resource administration Mythili K Rajendran participated in the meeting.

## STATES

- **Nagaland and Assam Government - has signed an agreement for withdrawal of forces with a view to de-escalate tension along the Assam-Nagaland border.**

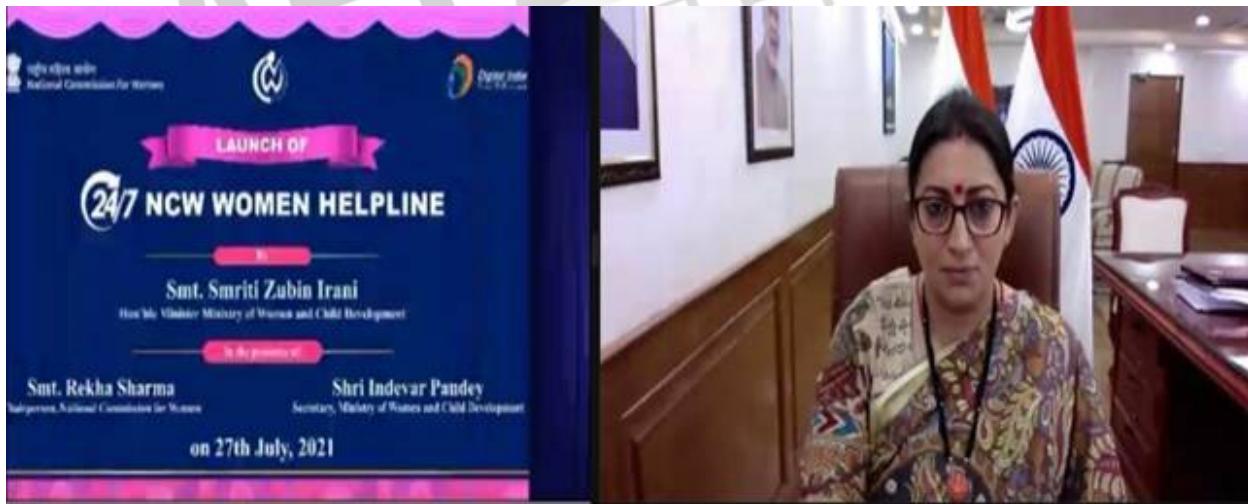


- ✓ The agreement was signed by the Chief Secretary of Nagaland J Alam and Assam Chief Secretary Jishnu Barua on July 31 in Dimapur in the presence of Nagaland Deputy Chief Minister Y Patton and Assam Education Minister Ranoj Pegu.
- ✓ The pact seeks to de-escalate tension prevailing at two locations in the Desso valley forest/Tsurangkong valley by simultaneously withdrawing security forces within the next 24-hours.
- ✓ Both sides agreed that to maintain peace and tranquility in the areas around Ao Senden Village and Vikuto Village as they are known in Nagaland and known as Jankhona Nala, Nagajankha and Compartment No.12 respectively in Assam
- ✓ Both sides decided that security personnel of both states will simultaneously move back from their present locations to their respective base camps in the next 24 hours as far as possible.
- ✓ Further, it was agreed that Nagaland and Assam will monitor the area by surveillance using UAV and satellite imagery with a view to maintaining status quo.

- ✓ Regarding travelers from Nagaland facing problems while crossing into the neighbouring state, Assam government has agreed not to stop or check commuters from Nagaland.
- ✓ Assam's longest border dispute is with Nagaland, which began since the creation of the state in 1963.
- ✓ The Nagaland State Act of 1962 had defined its borders according to the 1925 notification when Naga Hills and Tuensang Area (NHTA) were integrated into a new administrative unit and made an autonomous area.
- ✓ Nagaland, however, did not accept the boundary delineation
- ✓ It demanded that the new state should comprise the Naga Hills and all Naga-dominated area in North Cachar and Nagaon districts, which were part of Naga territory, created by the British according to the 1866 notification.
- ✓ Due to this, tensions between Assam and Nagaland soon flared up resulting in the first border clashes in 1965 and this was followed by major clashes between the two states along the border in 1968, 1979, 1985, 2007 and 2014.
- ✓ The Assam government had filed a case in the Supreme Court for identification of boundary and resolving border disputes which is still pending.

## NATIONAL

- **Union Minister for Women and Child Development, Smriti Zubin Irani - inaugurated the National Commission for Women's 24/7 helpline number – 7827170170 recently**



- ✓ The helpline aims to provide 24/7 online support to women affected by violence by linking them with appropriate authorities such as police, hospitals, District Legal Service Authority, psychological services etc.
- ✓ Any girl or woman aged 18 years and above can seek help by calling on this Helpline which will be operated from the premises of the National Commission for Women, New Delhi.
- ✓ The helpline will function with a team of trained experts.

- ✓ This helpline service has been developed in collaboration with Digital India Corporation, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
- ✓ It has been launched with the aim of further improving the security and safety of all women across the country.

## INTERNATIONAL

- **The United Kingdom – has reported around 150 cases of norovirus recently**
- ✓ This outbreak is a three-fold increase in cases over the same time period during the previous five years.
- ✓ The increase in norovirus cases has been reported in educational settings, particularly in nursery and childcare facilities.
- ✓ According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), norovirus is a very contagious virus that causes vomiting and diarrhea.
- ✓ According to CDC, a person can contract norovirus by coming in direct contact of an infected person, consuming contaminated food or water and touching contaminated surfaces and then putting your unwashed hands in your mouth.
- ✓ Diarrhea, vomiting, nausea and stomach pain are the common symptoms of norovirus
- ✓ It can cause inflammation of stomach or intestines - called acute gastroenteritis.
- ✓ Most people develop the symptoms within 12 to 48 hours of contracting the norovirus, and they can last upto 1 to 3 days.
- ✓ The spread of norovirus can be checked by practicing proper hand hygiene and the disease has no specific medicine

## SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **Philippines - has become the world's first country to approve the commercial production of genetically modified "golden rice".**



- ✓ Golden Rice was developed by the Department of Agriculture-Philippine Rice Research Institute in partnership with the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) to contain additional levels of beta-carotene, which the body converts into vitamin A
- ✓ It is the first genetically modified rice approved for commercial propagation in South and Southeast Asia

- ✓ Around one in five children from the poorest communities in the Philippines suffer from vitamin A deficiency (VAD), which affects an estimated 190 million children worldwide
- ✓ Filipino farmers will become the first in the world to be able to cultivate a variety of rice enriched with nutrients to help reduce childhood malnutrition
- ✓ Golden Rice is genetically engineered to provide up to 50% of the estimated average requirement for vitamin A of young children, the age group most susceptible to VAD in the Philippines.
- ✓ This new variety has already received food safety approvals from regulators in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States of America but the Philippines is the first country to approve commercial cultivation.
- ✓ Golden Rice is also currently undergoing final regulatory review in Bangladesh.
- ✓ Golden Rice, named for its bright yellow colour, was first conceived by Professors Ingo Potrykus and Peter Beyer in the late 1980s.
- ✓ IRRI became the first licensee of the scientists' work in 2001.
- ✓ The Healthier Rice Program at IRRI is currently developing high iron and zinc rice (HIZR), with the end goal of releasing a stacked variety containing beta-carotene, iron and zinc that can help address multiple micronutrient deficiencies affecting over two billion people worldwide.
- ✓ Golden rice has faced strong resistance from environmental groups opposed to genetically altered food plants
- ✓ Ordinary rice, a staple for hundreds of millions of people particularly in Asia, produces beta-carotene in the plant, but it is not found in the grain

## APPOINTMENTS

- **US President Joe Biden - has nominated Indian-American attorney Rashad Hussain as the Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom**



- ✓ Hussain, 41, is currently Director for Partnerships and Global Engagement at the National Security Council.
- ✓ Hussain is the first Muslim to be nominated to serve as the Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom
- ✓ He previously served as Senior Counsel at the Department of Justice's National Security Division.

- ✓ During the Obama administration, he served as US Special Envoy to the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), US Special Envoy for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications and Deputy Associate White House Counsel.
- ✓ Prior to joining the Obama administration, Hussain worked on the House Judiciary Committee, serving as a judicial law clerk.
- ✓ Hussain received his Juris Doctor from Yale Law School where he served as an editor of the Yale Law Journal, and Master's degrees in Public Administration (Kennedy School of Government) and Arabic and Islamic Studies from Harvard University.
- ✓ He has also taught as Adjunct Professor of Law at Georgetown Law Center and the Georgetown School of Foreign Service.
- ✓ He speaks Urdu, Arabic and Spanish.

## SPORTS

- **Delhi's Vantika Agarwal – has won the National women online chess title recently**
- ✓ Ninth seed Vantika scored 9.5 round from 11 rounds to emerge as the winner



- ✓ West Bengal's Arpita Mukherjee, seeded 18, took the second spot with nine points.
- ✓ Tamil Nadu's Sreeja Seshadri topped a three-way tie at 8.5 points to take the third spot
- ✓ Maharashtra's Soumya Swaminathan and Tamil Nadu's R Vaishali finished fourth and fifth respectively.
- ✓ In the junior section, winner V. S. Raahul (9.5 points) led Tamil Nadu's sweep of the top four spots.
- ✓ International Master Bharath Subrahmaniam finished second with 9 points and Grandmaster P Iniyan who had recently represented the country at the World Cup finished third.
- ✓ All India Chess Federation has decided to consider the performance of this online event for selection of players for the Asian individual championship and other events.

