

## EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – JANUARY 4, 2022

### TAMIL NADU

- **The Tamil Nadu government - has decided to discontinue the Amma mini clinics, citing lack of performance.**
- ✓ Former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami launched the scheme on December 14, 2020 in Chennai
- ✓ Under the scheme, a total of 1,950 mini clinics, including 200 in Chennai, were set up across the state to provide essential health services for poor.
- ✓ Each mini clinic would have a doctor, a nurse and an assistant to help with public consultation along with facilities for checking body temperature, blood pressure, blood oxygen, haemoglobin, blood sugar, urine samples, etc.
- ✓ According to the DMK government, the objective of providing easy healthcare access to people has been achieved with the launch of new schemes like 'Makkalai thedi maruthuvam' and 'Varumun kappom thittam'
- ✓ As per the G.O. issued by the Government, it was decided not to extend the scheme beyond 31.12.2021 after careful consideration of the report by the Directorate of Public Health
- ✓ However, the government has decided to extend the contract of the doctors recruited for the mini clinics until March 31.
- ✓ Corporation heads have been told to redeploy the contract staff working in the mini clinics to fever camps and Covid-19 care centres
- ✓ With the closure of the mini clinics, the government is expected to save ₹26.71 crore a month.
- ✓ The corporation is planning to convert all the 196 mini clinic buildings into urban health and wellness centres.
- ✓ The centres will be set up at a cost of ₹88 crore, under the Centre's Ayushman Bharat comprehensive primary healthcare scheme.
- ✓ They would provide diagnosis and treatment for non-communicable diseases, childbirth and neonatal issues.

- ✓ Besides, 4,448 health sub-centres have been converted to health and wellness centres under the universal health coverage programme.
- **On January 3, the Tamil Nadu government - revised the Covid-19 protocol based on recommendations from the Directorate of Medical Education**
- ✓ Earlier, on December 30, the expert medical committee gave suggestions for the management of Covid-19 cases in the state amidst increasing cases
- ✓ As per the new protocol, unvaccinated Covid-19 patients who have co-morbid conditions will have to be admitted to Covid care centres for at least five days regardless of symptoms
- ✓ Along with them, pregnant women, lactating mothers, and patients above 60 years should be referred to Covid hospitals.
- ✓ All patients with a history of severe Covid or death must be in higher centres.
- ✓ If the Covid-19 patient has a mild infection with minor or no symptoms, home isolation is advised.
- ✓ Patients with moderate disease (oxygen saturation between 90 and 93 and respiratory rate between 24 and 30 per min) must be admitted to a hospital with an oxygen facility.
  - ✓ The hospital should have separate wards for patients and “suspected patients”.
  - ✓ Hospitals will have to do various tests including complete blood count, random blood sugar, CRP and X-ray of the chest besides monitoring blood sugar and plasma levels.
- ✓ The patients will be prescribed oxygen therapy with steroids, antibiotics, and other Covid-19 medications.
- ✓ If complications – including an increase in blood sugar, fall in oxygen saturation – develop, patients must be referred to higher centres of care.
- ✓ Patients with severe disease (oxygen saturation less than 90 or respiratory rate higher than 30) will require admission in medical college hospitals, dedicated covid hospitals or health centres with oxygen supplementation for further management.
- ✓ Once patients stabilize, the hospital can send them to Covid health centres or care centres with oxygen facilities.
- ✓ Patients can be discharged from higher centres of care and CCCs only when their oxygen saturation is maintained at 92% in room air for at least two days

## **PERSONALITIES**

- **Captain Harpreet Chandi, a British-born Indian Sikh woman - has made history by becoming the first woman of colour to complete a solo expedition to the South Pole.**



- ✓ Captain Harpreet Chandi, a 32-year-old Indian-origin British Sikh Army officer from Derby and physiotherapist also known as Polar Preet, reached the South Pole on January 3 at the end of Day 40 after travelling 700 miles (1,127 kilometres)
- ✓ As part of a Medical Regiment in the northwest of England, Chandi's primary role is to organise and validate training for medics in the Army as Clinical Training Officer
- ✓ Currently based in London, Chandi is completing her Masters degree in Sports and Exercise Medicine, in part-time mode, at Queen Mary's University in London
- ✓ As an Army officer, Chandi completed large-scale exercises and deployments in Nepal, Kenya and most recently a six-month United Nations peacekeeping tour to South Sudan.

## **SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT**

- **On January 3, the antiviral drug, Molnupiravir - was launched at ₹1,399 for the full five-day course**
- ✓ This makes it one of the cheapest antiviral coronavirus therapies during the pandemic
- ✓ Molnupiravir recently got emergency use approval for treatment of mild to moderate Covid-19 in India
- ✓ Over a dozen companies including Hetero, Sun Pharma, Natco, Dr Reddy's are in the process of rolling out the oral therapy
- ✓ The drug was developed by Merck and its partner, Ridgeback Biotherapeutics
- ✓ The oral antiviral is being considered a potential gamechanger globally in Covid-19 treatment as remdesivir used till now is administered intravenously, and in hospital settings.
- ✓ The recommended dose of molnupiravir is 800 mg twice a day for five days.
- ✓ Molnupiravir, is also the first oral anti-Covid pill approved by UK's drug regulator
- ✓ Recently US Food and Drug Administration cleared it for the treatment of mild-to-moderate Covid-19 in adults, and for those who are at high risk for progression to severe Covid-19, including hospitalization or death.

- ✓ Post the USFDA nod, Drugs Controller General of India granted permission for restricted use of Molnupiravir for treatment of adult patients with SpO2 93%, and who have high risk of progression of the disease.
- ✓ Earlier in June, MSD signed licensing agreements with five generic companies including Sun Pharma, Cipla, Torrent, Emcure and Dr Reddy's to manufacture and supply molnupiravir in India, and to over 100 low and middle-income countries.

## APPOINTMENTS

- **Alka Mittal - has been appointed interim chairman and managing director of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC)**



- ✓ With this elevation, Mittal becomes the first woman to lead the country's largest oil and gas exploration and production company
- ✓ She replaces Subhash Kumar, another interim head who retired after reaching superannuation age on December 31
  - ✓ Subhash Kumar held the charge since February 2021 in addition to his regular job as director (finance)
- ✓ Mittal also became the second woman in the country to helm an oil company
- ✓ Earlier, Nishi Vadudeva was the first woman to head an oil company when she took over the reins of oil refiner and fuel marketing company Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) in 2014.
- ✓ Mittal, currently director (HR), has been appointed for six months or till a regular chairperson is appointed, whichever is earlier.
- ✓ A post graduate in economics and a doctorate in commerce, Mittal became the first woman to join the company's board on November 27, 2018.
- ✓ She played a leading role in ensuring a safe working environment for 27,000-strong employees and thousands of contract workers, notably women employees and engineers deployed on offshore platforms and remote locations.
- ✓ Earlier, Mittal was in charge of ONGC's Chief Skill Development (CSD) and implemented the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS) in ONGC, which engaged over 5,000 apprentices across its network.

- ✓ Prior to that, Mittal held the post of Head - CSR at the ONGC corporate office.
- ✓ Apart from ONGC, Mittal is also an executive committee member of the National Institute of Personnel Management (NIPM).
- ✓ She also held the post of president of Forum for Women in Public Sector (WIPs) northern region
- ✓ ONGC will now have two full-time woman directors after the Public Enterprise Selection Board (PSEB) selected Pomila Jaspal for the post of Director (Finance)
- ✓ At present, Jaspal is working as director (finance) of ONGC's subsidiary, Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd.

## **INTERNATIONAL DAY**

### ➤ **World Braille Day – January 4**



- ✓ World Braille Day is observed every year to highlight the importance of Braille, which serves as a communication medium for blind and partially sighted people
- ✓ This day marks the birth anniversary of Louis Braille, who was the inventor of Braille, born on January 04, 1809, in France.
- ✓ Having lost his eyesight at the age of three due to an incident, Louis was a blind scholar who pursued his studies and got into France's Royal Institute for Blind Youth.
- ✓ He developed curiosity for a writing system using dots called 'night writing' developed by Charles Barbier
- ✓ The day was first initiated by the United Nations General Assembly, which observed Braille Literacy month in the year 2019
- ✓ Braille is a tactile writing system that is used by visually impaired people who are blind or deaf-blind or have low vision.
- ✓ Before the existence of the system, the blind and visually impaired people used the Hauy system, which was a Latin system that was designed on thick paper or leather.
- ✓ The Braille language is a tactical method of representing alphabetic and numerical symbols using six dots. (3 rows x 2 columns)
- ✓ The Braille system is included in the Convention on the Rights of Persons and Disabilities.

- ✓ There are Braille codes in 133 languages, as per the third edition of World Braille Usage.

