

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – JANUARY 7, 2022

TAMIL NADU

- **The Tamil Nadu government - has decided to amend the Tamil Nadu Town and Country Planning Act, 1971, to extend the validity of planning permissions from five years to eight years**
- ✓ A bill to this effect was tabled in the Assembly by housing and urban development minister S Muthusamy on January 6.
- ✓ The extension is necessitated as developers find it difficult to obtain fresh permission on expiry of the five-year period, in cases where construction projects are not completed.
- ✓ Further, Covid-19 had impacted activity in the real estate sector in the state.
- ✓ The interdependence of supply chains, migration of labour, cost overruns and liquidity constraints makes it difficult to complete projects within five years.
- ✓ Earlier, on March 24, 2017, the AIADMK government has proposed to extend the validity period of building planning permissions, from three years, to five years

NATIONAL

- **On January 6, the Election Commission of India (ECI) - announced the raising of maximum poll expenditure for candidates in case of both assembly and parliamentary constituencies.**
- ✓ For assembly constituencies, the ceiling has been increased from ₹20 lakh to ₹28 lakh, and ₹28 lakh to ₹40 lakh, in respective states and Union territories.
- ✓ Meanwhile, for parliamentary constituencies, the ceiling has been raised from ₹54 lakh to ₹75 lakh, and ₹70 lakh to ₹95 lakh
- ✓ This hike in maximum expenditure was decided by the law ministry on the recommendation of the Election Commission.
- ✓ The new expenditure limits for assembly polls will be applicable to the upcoming elections in UP, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Goa and Manipur, likely to be announced soon.

- ✓ The limit was revised in view of the rise in cost inflation index and the size of the electorate between the last major revision in 2014 and 2021
- ✓ The last major revision in the election expenditure limit for candidates was carried out in 2014, which was further increased by 10% in 2020 for polls held during the pandemic
- ✓ The new expenditure limits will help the candidates meet the higher expenses on digital and mass-media campaigns in view of stricter Covid-related curbs as well as the additional spend on Covid safety material like sanitisers and masks.
- ✓ The expenditure revision for the Lok Sabha elections for bigger states has been raised from ₹70 lakh to ₹90 lakh.
- ✓ On the other hand, for small states, the revised expenditure limit increased from ₹54 lakh to ₹65 lakh
- ✓ In the case of states assembly election, the revised poll expenditure limit for candidates will now be ₹40 lakh for the larger states from ₹28 lakh.
- ✓ Candidates in smaller states will henceforth be able to spend a maximum of ₹28 lakh than the previous limit of ₹20 lakh.
- ✓ EC had set up a committee in 2020 to review the expenditure limits in view of the 12.23% rise in cost inflation index from 240 in 2014-15 to 317 in 2021-22 and 32% increase in the number of electors from 834 million in 2014 to 936 million in 2021.
- ✓ The committee comprised retired IRS officer Harish Kumar, EC secretary general Umesh Sinha and senior deputy election commissioner Chandra Bhushan Kumar
- ✓ The committee heard political parties, chief electoral officers and election observers before making its recommendations that were accepted by EC.
- ✓ The law ministry notified the increased poll spending limits on January 6.

INTERNATIONAL

- **Pakistan - has confirmed the appointment of the first female Supreme Court judge - Justice Ayesha Malik of the Lahore High Court - in the 75 years since the country's independence.**

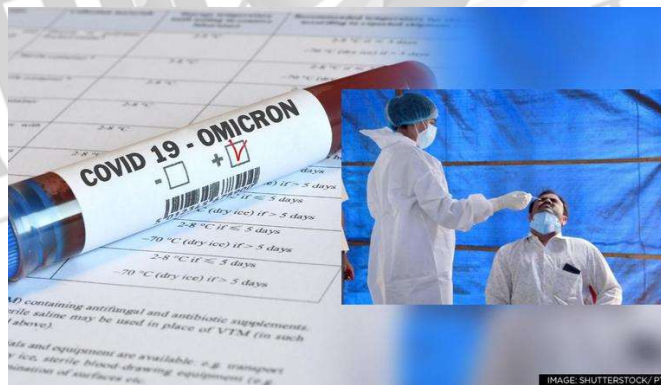


- ✓ The Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) headed by Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed approved the elevation of Justice Ayesha Malik by a majority of five votes against four

- ✓ This was the second time the JCP held a meeting to decide on Justice Ayesha Malik's elevation.
- ✓ Her name was first taken up for discussion on September 9 last year but later rejected owing to a tie of four votes against four
- ✓ An LL.M graduate from Harvard Law School, Justice Ayesha Malik was a partner at a leading corporate and commercial law firm before her elevation to the Lahore High Court as a judge in 2012.
- ✓ She is currently the fourth senior-most judge in the Lahore High Court
- ✓ If elevated to Pakistan's Supreme Court, Justice Ayesha Malik will serve as an Apex court judge until June 2031.
- ✓ Before retiring at the age of 65 in 2031, Justice Ayesha Malik will be the senior-most serving judge on Pakistan's Supreme Court and could even become the first woman Chief Justice of Pakistan
- ✓ Justice Ayesha Malik has decided on a number of key constitutional issues, including the declaration of assets in elections, payments to sugarcane growers, and the enforcement of international arbitration in Pakistan.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **‘OmiSure’ - becomes the first RT-PCR Kit approved by the Drugs Controller of India to detect Omicron variant of Covid-19**

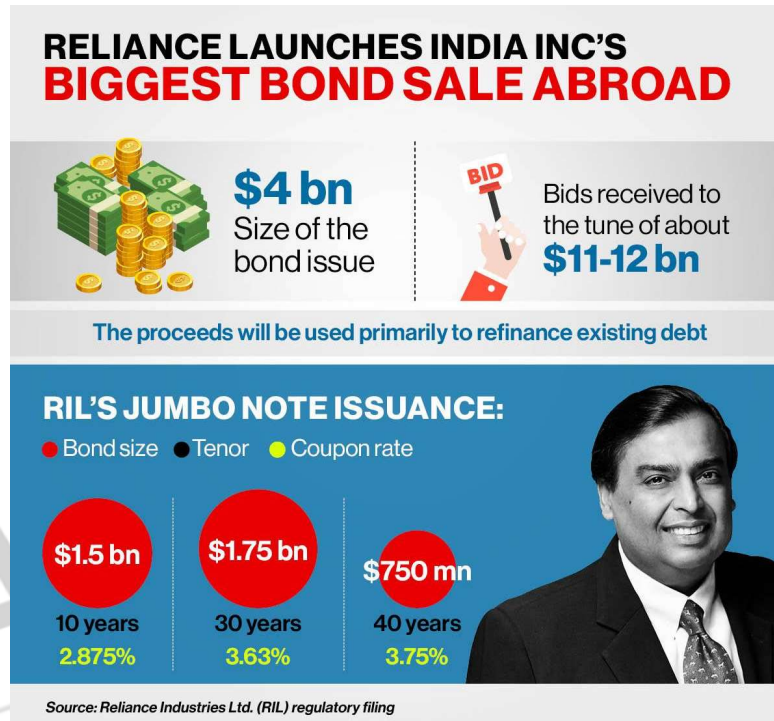


- ✓ The kit is manufactured by Tata Medical and Diagnostics in association with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)
- ✓ The test kit, having a test run time of 85 minutes, is compatible with all standard Real-Time PCR Machines
- ✓ The kit is now the only one used to confirm the Omicron variant in patients in India with its S-Gene Target Failure strategy
- ✓ The first target is based on S-gene dropout or S-gene target failure (SGTF), and the second target is based on S-gene mutation amplification (SGMA)
- ✓ The company has applied for a license with the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO).
- ✓ Once the license is approved by the CDSCO, the kit will be manufactured by TATA MD at its Sriperumbudur facility in Tamil Nadu.

- ✓ Currently the kit that is being used to detect the Omicron variant in India is developed by US-based scientific instrumentation company 'Thermo Fisher'
- ✓ It uses the S Gene Target Failure (SGTF) strategy to detect the variant.
- ✓ While government agencies procure standard RT-PCR kits for Rs 20-30 each, a SGTF-based Thermo Fisher kit costs them at least Rs 240

ECONOMY

- **Reliance Industries (RIL) - has raised \$4 billion in the biggest foreign currency bond sale by an Indian corporate.**



- ✓ It had recently received board approval to raise up to \$5 billion in foreign bonds considering the low interest rate environment and to refinance existing borrowings.
- ✓ The bond issue was subscribed nearly three times with peak order book aggregating \$11.5 billion.
- ✓ The bonds were bought by investors from Asia (53%), America (33%) and Europe (14%).
- ✓ It was the largest foreign currency bond issuance from India, overtaking the earlier record set by energy major ONGC Videsh when it raised \$2.2 billion in dollars notes in 2014.
- ✓ Bharti Airtel had raised \$1.25 billion in 2021, which was the biggest debt issue last year.
- ✓ RIL did not divulge the name of the subscribers of the bonds.
- ✓ The bonds will be listed on the Singapore Stock Exchange.

INTERNATIONAL DAY

➤ World Day of War Orphans – January 6



- ✓ The day aims to raise awareness about children who have been orphaned due to wars and highlight the emotional, social, and physical challenges faced by them
- ✓ According to unicef.org, there were nearly 140 million orphans globally in the year 2015
- ✓ This includes 61 million in Asia, 52 million in Africa, 10 million in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 7.3 million in Eastern Europe and Central Asia
- ✓ The World Day of War Orphans was initiated by the French organization, SOS Enfants en Detresses.
- ✓ In India, there are nearly 9,00,000 children in the Northeast, all of whom have been seriously affected by the war, according to UNICEF estimates

