

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – MAY 22, 2022

TAMIL NADU

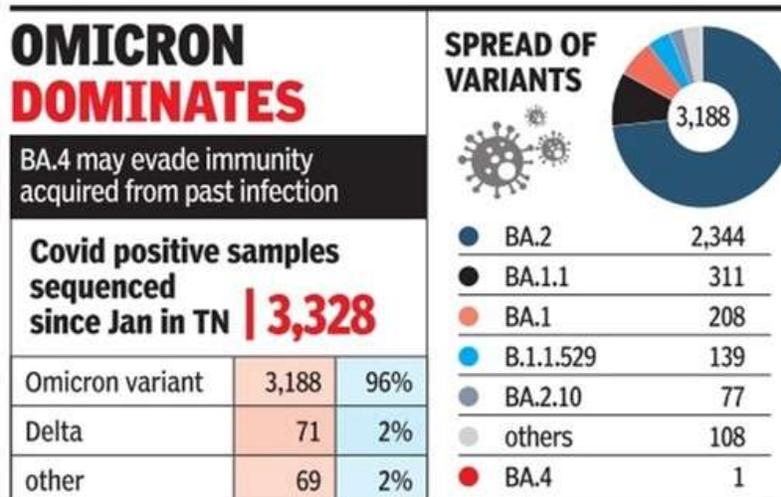
- On May 21, Chief Minister M K Stalin - directed the Public Works Department (PWD) officials to release water from the Stanley Reservoir at Mettur on May 24 for kuruvai cultivation.

IN A GIST

- CM M K Stalin orders release of water from Mettur (Stanley) reservoir on **May 24**
- Customary date of opening of the dam | **June 12**
- Dam level at 8 am on Saturday | **115.4 ft**
- This is the first time in the history of the dam that water is being released in May
- Expected area to be benefited | **4 lakh acres**
- Delta districts | **Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, Nagapattinam and Mayiladuthurai**

- ✓ The opening of the Mettur Dam is considered a significant event in the state's agriculture sector.
- ✓ Traditionally, water is released from the dam on June 12 to facilitate the Cauvery delta farmers to take up Kuruvai paddy cultivation.
- ✓ This is for the first time in the history of the reservoir that a decision is taken to release the water for kuruvai (short term) crop three weeks before the customary date.
- ✓ Also, it would be the second time since Independence that the water will be released for Kuruvai cultivation on the scheduled date (of June 12) or ahead of it for three consecutive years
- ✓ Last year, the water was released on June 12.

- ✓ The move comes after the water level in the dam reached 115.35ft on May 21 due to rains in the catchment areas, against its full storage capacity of 120ft.
 - ✓ According to state government, about four lakh acres of agricultural land in Trichy, Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, Nagapattinam, Mayiladuthurai, Karur, Ariyalur, Perambalur, Pudukkottai and Cuddalore would be benefitted.
 - ✓ The inflow to the dam was recorded at 47,000 cubic feet per second (cusecs) on the day.
 - ✓ It is the first time since 1957 that the dam is receiving above 40,000cusecs of water in May.
 - ✓ The state government has been desilting canals in the delta region since April 23 at a cost of Rs. 80 crore.
 - ✓ This will help water from the Mettur dam reach the tail-end villages of delta districts
 - ✓ Built in 1934, the Mettur reservoir is one of the largest dams in the state located in Salem district.
- **Tamil Nadu - has reported its first case of Omicron BA.4 variant after a woman from Chengalpet district tested Covid-19 positive recently**
- ✓ Tamil Nadu Minister for Health and Family Welfare Ma Subramanian said the 19-year-old woman in a gated community on Navalur, OMR in Chengalpet tested positive on May 9 with the new variant and has recovered since



- ✓ The samples of the patient were sent to the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) on May 15 for whole-genome sequencing.
- ✓ This is the second reported case of the new variant in the country
- ✓ The Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG) has confirmed recently that the first case of BA.4 sub-variant was detected in Hyderabad, Telangana
- ✓ Last week, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) had asked countries to be vigilant about the BA.4 and BA.5 variants, which are classified as variants of concern

- ✓ Both the BA.4 and BA.5 variants of Omicron have been associated with the fifth Covid wave in South Africa

NATIONAL

- **Railways – to invest Rs.130 crore on capacity enhancement of manufacturing units to increase the production of Vande Bharat trains**
- ✓ The fund allocation will ensure the manufacturing of six such trains every month compared to the current capacity of four trains.
- ✓ Union Minister for railways, Ashwini Vaishnaw visited the Integral Coach Factory in Chennai on May 20
- ✓ According to the Minister, Indian Railways is committed to making 75 Vande Bharat trains by August 2023.
- ✓ The Railways launched India's first indigenous semi-high speed train, Vande Bharat Express on 15 February 2019 on the New Delhi Kanpur-Allahabad-Varanasi route.
- ✓ The second Vande Bharat Express was flagged off on Delhi-Katra route in October 2019.
- **Union Minister for Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi - inaugurated the country's first 'Amrit Sarovar' in Patwai, Rampur, Uttar Pradesh recently on May 13**
- ✓ PM Modi had mentioned Patwai during his monthly Mann Ki Baat programme in April.



- ✓ The first-of-its-kind Amrit Sarovar been constructed under the inspiration of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and guidance of Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Yogi Adityanath.
- ✓ Amrit Sarovar would not only help protect the environment from pollution and conserve ground water, it would also attract people from nearby areas for recreational activities.
- ✓ Along with various entertainment facilities like fountains, boating is also available in this "Amrit Sarovar"

- ✓ The water body, which cost Rs 60 lakh to build, is one of 789 ponds that the state government has planned to develop as 'Amrit Sarovar.'
 - ✓ Prime Minister Narendra Modi had given a call for every district to have 75 ponds (Amrit Sarovar) during the 75th anniversary of India's independence, described as "Azadi Ka Amrit Kaal".
 - ✓ On 24th April 2022, Mission Amrit Sarovar was launched by PM Modi with the broad aim of water conservation for the future and the Mission will be completed by 15th August 2022.
 - ✓ For Mission Amrit Sarovar, the Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Application and Geo-informatics (BISAG-N) has been engaged as the technical partner.
 - ✓ Under this mission, 50,000 water bodies will be created and each of these water bodies will be an Acre or more in size
- **The Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship - launched the pilot project for skilling tribal youth titled 'Rural Tribal Technical Training' at the Centre for Research and Industrial Staff Performance (CRISP), Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh**
- ✓ The project plans to train about 250 beneficiaries in 17 clusters of 17 districts selected from six states– Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Odisha – at Gumla, Jharkhand.



- ✓ The centre will train beneficiaries to start their own businesses in five disciplines – electrical and solar energy, agricultural mechanisation, e-governance, plumbing and masonry, and two-wheeler repair and maintenance
 - ✓ Minister of State, Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Electronics and IT, Rajeev Chandrasekhar launched the project recently on May 13
- **The Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs & Petroleum and Natural Gas, Hardeep Singh Puri - launched the BHARAT TAP initiative at the 'Plumbex India' exhibition**
- ✓ It is an initiative for awareness creation for promotion of BIS certified water efficient plumbing fixtures which comprises of low flow sanitaryware and sanitary fittings, which reduce the water dispensation at source

- ✓ This will in turn result into water saving by minimum 40% and corresponding energy saving, because due to less water requirement, less energy will be required for pumping, transporting and purification.



- ✓ This exhibition is aimed for products and services related to the plumbing, water and sanitation industry.
- ✓ The Minister also launched Naredco Mahi's 'Nirmal Jal Prayas' initiative which will work for saving of 500 crore litres of water per year.
- ✓ Naredco Mahi Nirmal Jal Prayaas will ultimately convince builders to move towards "Net Zero Water".

INTERNATIONAL

- **Anthony Albanese - is set to become Australia's 31st Prime Minister after Labor Party registered victory against Scott Morrison's Liberal-National coalition in Australia's 2022 federal elections**



- ✓ Australia's Prime Minister Scott Morrison has conceded defeat despite millions of votes yet to be counted for the 151-seat parliament.
- ✓ This is because an Australian leader must attend a Quad summit in Tokyo on May 24 with US President Joe Biden, Japan PM Fumio Kishida and Indian PM Modi.

- ✓ Opposition leader and one of Australia's longest-serving politicians, Anthony Albanese will be sworn in as prime minister after his Labor party secured its first electoral win since 2007.
 - ✓ Albanese has spent much of his 26 years in politics since 1996 in the opposition and only six in government.
 - ✓ Earlier, Albanese had briefly served as Deputy PM in 2013 in the Labor government led by two-time Prime Minister Kevin Rudd.
 - ✓ The result declared on May 21 marks an end to the Liberal-National coalition's nearly nine year hold on power and Morrison's tenure as Prime Minister since 2018
 - ✓ Morrison fell short of an absolute majority in the 2019 election but he managed to form the government together with smaller parties.
 - ✓ According to the Australian Broadcasting Commission, Labor Party won at least 72 seats while Morrison's Liberal-National Coalition went on to secure 52 seats.
 - ✓ There are two houses in Australia - Upper House with a term of 6 years and lower house with a term of three years
- **Canada – has planned to ban the use of China's Huawei and ZTE Corp 5G gear to protect national security**
 - ✓ With this, the country joins the rest of the so-called Five Eyes intelligence-sharing network.
 - ✓ The rest of the Five Eyes network — which consists of Canada, the US, UK, Australia and New Zealand — has already banned the equipment.
 - ✓ In September 2018, Canada first announced it would review the possible threats to national security in adopting Huawei equipment.
 - ✓ In December 2018, Huawei CFO Meng Wanzhou was arrested in Canada on a US warrant, creating a long-running dispute with China that finally ended last September with Meng's release.
- **The world's longest suspension footbridge 'Sky Bridge 721' - has been opened up in the Czech Republic for tourists**



- ✓ The bridge was under construction for nearly two years and was officially opened recently on May 13.
- ✓ The Sky Bridge is located in the Dolní Morava resort in East Bohemia, Czech Republic
- ✓ Dolni Morava, which is situated on the Czech border with Poland, is a vacation spot known for its ski slopes and a curved structure with a wooden walkway named Sky Walk, 1,116 meters above sea level.
- ✓ The 721-metre bridge joined two mountain ridges the Slaměnka & the Chlum and hangs 95 meters above a valley.
- ✓ The bridge also includes an educational trail titled the 'Bridge of Time' - a two kilometre, 90-minute-long walk which takes visitors through the area's history from 1938 to 2021 and includes games and bits of augmented reality
- ✓ The current Guinness World Record holder for the longest suspension bridge is the Baglung Parbat Footbridge in Gandaki Province, Nepal
- ✓ The \$8.4 million 'Sky Bridge 721' is 154 meters longer than the Baglung Parbat footbridge

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- **President Ram Nath Kovind – completed his seven-day state visit to Jamaica, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines in the Caribbean region on May 21**
- ✓ The visit was significant as this was the first state visit by an Indian President to these Caribbean nations.
- ✓ During the visit, president addressed the parliaments of the two nations and also witnessed the signing of MoUs with the two island states.
- ✓ During the visit, President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated an 'India-Jamaica Friendship Garden' at the Hope Gardens, Jamaica and planted a sapling along with the First Lady Savita Kovind on May 17
- ✓ The creation of the India-Jamaica Friendship Garden was facilitated under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the Indian High Commission in Jamaica and the Nature Preservation Foundation (NPF) in November 2021
- ✓ Earlier President Kovind inaugurated 'Dr BR Ambedkar Avenue', a road named after the architect of India's Constitution, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in Downtown Kingston
- ✓ Further, the President highlighted India's assistance to Jamaica in capacity building and skill development through various courses under the India Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme.
 - ✓ Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR) and the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) played a crucial role in facilitating ITEC assistance.
 - ✓ Around \$2 billion has been spent by the Indian government under the program till now

- ✓ Along with the Special Commonwealth Assistance for Africa Programme, ITEC covers around 158 countries across Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe, and Caribbean nations
- ✓ The assistance covers providing training for civil and defense personnel, activities such as consultancy services, study tours, donation of equipment, etc.
- ✓ The President was on the first leg of his two-nation visit in Jamaica from May 15 to May 18 and then travelled to St Vincent and Grenadines till May 21



- ✓ This year is the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Jamaica.
- ✓ India and Jamaica are also celebrating the 75th and 60th anniversaries of their independence respectively

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **The 15th Conference of Parties (COP15) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), concluded on May 20, 2022 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, a west African country**



- ✓ The two-week meeting on the future of land management saw nearly 7,000 participants, including Heads of State, ministers, delegates from the UNCCD's

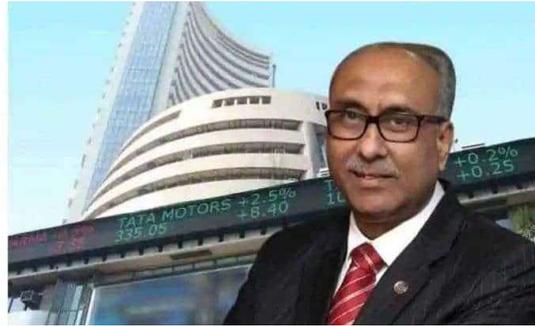
196 Parties and the European Union, as well as members of the private sector, civil society, women and youth leaders

- ✓ The UNCCD COP15 adopted 38 decisions, including on tenure, migration and gender, that highlight the role of land in addressing multiple crises
- ✓ The global leaders representing UN member states, including India, agreed to establish an Intergovernmental Working Group on Drought for 2022-2024 to look into possible options to ensure proactive drought management
- ✓ During the COP15, a pledge to raise \$2.5 billion for the Abidjan Legacy Programme launched by Côte d'Ivoire President Alassane Ouattara was taken at the Heads of State Summit on May 9
- ✓ The UN members also agreed and committed to accelerate the restoration of one billion hectares of degraded land by 2030.
- ✓ The COP15 was held against the backdrop of the latest UN findings which noted that 40% of all ice-free land globally is degraded and the world has already seen a 29% rise in droughts since 2000.
 - ✓ This will directly affect half of humanity and is a threat to about 50% of global GDP or around \$44 trillion
 - ✓ It projected that three-quarters of the world's population will be affected by drought by 2050 unless urgent action is taken.
- ✓ The "Drought in Numbers, 2022" report released on May 12 at the COP15 had called upon the world to prioritise drought preparedness and resilience.
 - ✓ As per the report, 23 countries including Afghanistan, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, Pakistan, and the USA faced drought emergencies between 2020 and 2022
 - ✓ Between 1998 and 2017, droughts caused economic losses of around \$124 billion globally, while causing a decline of 2% to 5% in India's GDP
- ✓ The COP 15 included three major declarations –
 - ✓ Abidjan Call to boost long-term environmental sustainability,
 - ✓ Abidjan Declaration on achieving gender equality for successful land restoration and
 - ✓ The COP15 "Land, Life and Legacy" Declaration, which responds to the findings of the UNCCD's flagship report, Global Land Outlook 2
- ✓ India, on its part, has pledged to restore 26 million hectares of its degraded land by 2030 as part of ongoing efforts to achieve its 'land degradation neutrality' (LDN) targets.
- ✓ Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Bhupender Yadav represented the nation in the Conference
- ✓ UNCCD's COP15 is the first Conference of the Parties of the three Rio Conventions taking place in 2022, ahead of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change COP27 and the UN Convention on Biological Diversity COP15.
- ✓ The future meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD and its subsidiary bodies will be held in Saudi Arabia (COP16 in 2024), Mongolia (COP17

in 2026), and Uzbekistan (Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention in 2023)

APPOINTMENTS

- **Leading stock exchange BSE - said its board has appointed S.S. Mundra, a public interest director, as the chairman of the Exchange.**
- ✓ Mundra will replace the current chairman, Justice Vikramajit Sen.



- ✓ Mundra retired as Deputy Governor of Reserve Bank of India in July 2017 after a stint of three years.
- ✓ Prior to that, he served as the Chairman and Managing Director of Bank of Baroda from where he superannuated in July 2014.
- ✓ In the past, Mundra has held several important positions, including Executive Director of Union Bank of India, Chief Executive of Bank of Baroda (European Operations), amongst others.
- ✓ He also served as RBI's nominee on the Financial Stability Board (G20 Forum) and its various committees.
- ✓ He was also the Vice-chair of OECD's International Network on Financial Education.
- ✓ Prior to joining RBI, he was on boards of several multi-dimensional companies, including Clearing Corporation of India Ltd and Central Depository Services (India) Ltd (CDSL).

AWARDS

- **Nobel Prize-winning theoretical physicist Frank Wilczek - has been honored with this year's Templeton Prize.**
- ✓ The award recognizes individuals whose life's work brings together science and spirituality.
- ✓ Wilczek's achievements in physics, include establishing the theoretical description of one of the four fundamental forces in nature and proposing a leading explanation for dark matter
- ✓ His investigations into the fundamental laws of nature have transformed the understanding of the forces that govern universe.

- ✓ Wilczek won the Nobel Prize in 2004 for his early-career work establishing the fundamental theory of the strong nuclear force.



- ✓ He has written several popular books, including "A Beautiful Question" (2015) and "The Lightness of Being" (2008).
- ✓ Other physicists who have won the prize include Marcelo Gleiser (2019), Martin Rees (2011), John Barrow (2006), George Ellis (2004), Freeman Dyson (2000), and Paul Davies (1995).
- ✓ He became the sixth Nobel laureate to receive the Templeton Prize since its inception in 1972.
- ✓ Wilczek is currently a physics professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Arizona State University and Stockholm University.
- ✓ He is also the founding director of Shanghai Jiao Tong University's T.D. Lee Institute
- ✓ Established by investor Sir John Templeton, the Templeton Prize is one of the world's most lucrative individual awards, currently valued at \$1.3 million.
- ✓ The first recipient of the Templeton Prize was Mother Teresa in the year 1973.
- ✓ Other laureates to the win the award included physicists such as Martin Rees, Freeman Dyson, and Paul Davies, religious leaders such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Dalai Lama, and philosophers or theologians such as S. Radhakrishnan, Charles Taylor, and Alvin Plantinga.

SPORTS

- **Five-time former world champion Viswanathan Anand - won the rapid event of the Superbet Rapid and Blitz tournament in Poland on May 21 with a round to spare.**



- ✓ Indian GM Anand scored six wins and two draws to seal the rapid title with 11 points
- ✓ Playing as a wildcard in the tournament, the Indian chess legend defeated Radoslaw Wojtaszek of Poland in the first round, before outplaying American Wesley So and Anton Korobov (Ukraine)
- ✓ The event, which is part of the 2022 Grand Chess Tour, included strong players such as Fabiano Caruana (USA), Aronian, So and Rapport apart from Anand.
- **The Indian archery team of Rajat Chauhan, Aman Saini and Abhishek Verma celebrate - bagged the gold medal after defeating France at the Archery World Cup 2022 stage 2 on May 21 in Gwangju, South Korea**



- ✓ The fourth seeded India came back from behind to outscore the sixth seeded French team of Quentin Baraer, Jean Phillippe Boulch and Adrien Gontier for the gold medal
- ✓ This was the Indian trio's second straight World Cup gold after clinching the top spot in Stage 1 in Antalya, Turkey last month
- ✓ Meanwhile, former Asian champion Abhishek Verma also won the compound mixed team bronze with Avneet Kaur.
- ✓ The Indian pair beat Turkey's Emircan Haney and Ayse Suzer in the third-place play-off.
- ✓ India appeared in four of the five compound finals in Gwangju, winning one gold, two bronze and a silver
- ✓ India's Mohan Bhardwaj lost to top seed Mike Schloesser to bag the silver medal in the individual men's compound final
- ✓ The three medals took India's final tally at the stage 2 of the Archery World Cup 2022 to five.
- ✓ Earlier, women's compound team comprising Avneet Kaur, Muskan Kirar and Priya Gurjar and the women's recurve team of Ridhi, Komalika Bari and Ankita Bhakat had won a bronze each.

