

**EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – JUNE 15&16, 2019**

**TAMIL NADU**


- Tamil Nadu government - sanctioned ₹499.68 crore to implement the kudimaramath scheme on June 13



- ✓ The traditional restoration of water bodies, with the support of locals, will be implemented in 29 districts
- ✓ This is the third sanction in the last three years by the state government towards kudimaramath.
- ✓ The project intends to strengthen tank bunds and canals, repair and reconstruction of sluices, weirs, shutters, and rehabilitation and desilting of canals.
- ✓ The works are implemented through farmers' organizations/councils/ ayacutdars and 10% of the estimated cost is borne by them either by way of providing labour or material or cash.

- **The Greater Chennai corporation - has received a grant of ₹40 crore from German bank KfW (Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau) for setting up a disaster management control centre in the city**
- ✓ This aid comes after the bank sanctioned the ₹1,230 crore Kovalam basin project at the Indo-German-States Tripartite meeting held in New Delhi on June 13
- ✓ The fund will be used for planning and designing the water-carrying infrastructure along the course of rivers Cooum, Adyar, Kovalam and Kosasthalaiyar
- ✓ This will include studying the network of stormwater drains in Thiruvottiyur, Manali, Madhavaram, Ambattur, Teynampet, Valasaravakkam, Alandur, Perungudi and Sholinganallur zones.
- ✓ The fund will also be used to update the existing Geographic Information System (GIS) — by geotagging drains and creating a map of existing and planned stormwater drains in the city — for better management of the drain network.
- ✓ Greater Chennai Corporation will meet with the KfW bank in July over the ₹1,230 crore loan sanctioned by the bank to improve the 360-km drain network of Kovalam basin
- ✓ After this, the loan agreement is expected to be signed in January 2020.
- ✓ Feasibility study, design and consultancy will be done by KfW.
- ✓ It will also oversee GCC's work with bid documents, tender process and project management.
  
- **Avishkar Hyperloop , the team of Indian Institute of Technology Madras – to unveil an indigenously designed and developed hyperloop pod at the finals of a competition organised by SpaceX, whose founder Elon Musk, first proposed the concept**

C Suresh Kumar



ABOUT THE COMPETITION	ABOUT THE PROTOTYPE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ SpaceX organizes the competition to encourage development of prototype and student innovation</li> <li>➤ Students have to design a pod to achieve a maximum speed on a 1.6km vacuum tube at SpaceX headquarters in California</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The IIT-M team is the only Asian team in the final 21 this year</li> <li>➤ Pod prototype dimension   2.7mX0.5m X 0.5m</li> <li>➤ Outer shell is made of glass fibre reinforced plastic</li> <li>➤ Self-propelled and autonomous with a</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DC motor</li> <li>➤ Powered by batteries like lithium ion</li> <li>➤ Students had earlier achieved a speed of 400kmph</li> <li>➤ The final speed achieved for the competition is a secret</li> </ul>

**ALL THE BEST:** The members of the Avishkar hyperloop team from IIT-M pose with the prototype designed for SpaceX competition

- ✓ They will operate a selfpropelled and autonomous pod prototype in a 1.6km vacuum tube at the International Hyperloop Pod Competition in California in July
- ✓ The city team, which unveiled the final pod prototype at IIT-M campus on June 14, is the only Asian team to compete at the finals along with 20 other teams across the world.
- ✓ With a funding of ₹1 crore, a 30-member team took three months to design and develop the nearly 3-m long and 120kg pod designed to achieve maximum speed to grab the top spot at the competition

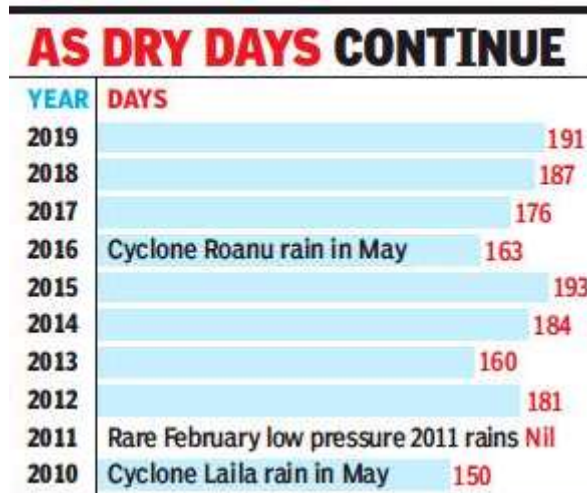
- ✓ But unlike the original hyperloop concept propelled by a linear induction motor and that uses magnetic levitation to float above a track in a low pressure tube, the pod developed by the students works on a DC electric motor, to power and provide the required traction, and uses wheel drive
- ✓ The outer shell is made of glass fibre reinforced plastic and was manufactured in Pune. Assembling of the pod and coding of the system software were done at the IIT-M
- **22 inmates, all life convicts, of the central prison – were roped in by the prisons department to run the newly-opened 24x7 fuel outlet next to Puzhal Central Prison**



- ✓ The prisons department along with the Indian Oil Corporation Ltd has established the outlet as part of the rehabilitation and reformation programme
- ✓ Already, four such outlets were established outside the central prisons in Palayamkottai, Coimbatore, Vellore and Pudukottai on February 22 this year.
- ✓ The IOC has also created facilities for an ATM kiosk, Aavin parlour, and a stall to sell freedom bazaar products in each of the petrol bunk
- ✓ The authorities have also deputed personnel in the rank of assistant jailor or chief head warden to supervise the inmates in the out gang duty, besides installing CCTVs to keep a look on the inmates
- ✓ The prisoners, who try to escape, would jeopardize their chance for premature release and also denied other benefits such as interviews (meeting with family members), ordinary and emergency leaves that they are entitled for under the Prisons Rules
- **Tamil Nadu - is planning to reduce the number of subjects for Class XII state board students from six to five.**
- ✓ While those aspiring to pursue engineering may not have to study biology, MBBS aspirants may skip mathematics at the higher secondary level
- ✓ The government is also planning to merge language papers for Class X
- ✓ All these proposals were still in a discussion stage and the cabinet would take a final call on them once finalized



- ✓ Once the new system comes into place, the total marks will be reduced further from 600 to 500 on the lines of Central Board for Secondary Education (CBSE)
- **Chennai - has gone without rain for 191 days since the northeast monsoon last year, as on June 15, which is a record by itself**



- ✓ Dry spell was between last day of northeast monsoon in the previous year and the first day of the southwest monsoon of the current year.
- ✓ Ironically, the highest number of rainless days was recorded before the 2015 flood — from December 29, 2014 to July 10, 2015 (193 days)

## NATIONAL

- **The Centre - plans to launch a smart card that can be used across all Metro rail networks for limited number of trips.**
- ✓ The card will be helpful for those who are visiting a city or the country for limited period.
- ✓ The cards can be taken by showing passport for foreign visitors, and Aadhaar card or any other proof for Indians.
- ✓ The cards will have to be charged at counter since states have different fare rules.
- ✓ Currently, smart cards issued by metrorail can only be used on the specific network
- ✓ The government has recently launched the “One Nation One Card” which can be used for any mode of transport and even for retail purchases
- **The Centre - has sanctioned the release of ₹1,496 crore to 30 central universities (CUs) for implementation of the 10% quota for the economically weaker section in the general category from the 2019-20 academic session**
- ✓ Of which ₹230 crores have been sanctioned for maintenance, an additional grant of ₹249 crores for salaries and ₹957 crores for construction and infrastructure

- ✓ Implementing the quota for “poor among the forwards” without impacting the share of seats for the other categories like SC/ ST/OBC would essentially increase the total intake by 25% for each university/ institution.
- ✓ A majority of the CUs will implement the 25% increased intake in two phases — 10% in the 2019-20 academic session and 15% in the 2020-21 session
- ✓ Jawaharlal Nehru University is the only university which will implement the EWS quota in a single phase this year

## INTERNATIONAL

- **The Chinese government – had proposed to cover the salaries of teachers in Nepal who teach Mandarin**
- ✓ The move has prompted many private schools in the Himalayan nation to make it mandatory for students to learn the language
- ✓ It has come at a time when the Chinese involvement in Nepal is surging, largely on the back of Beijing’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).
- ✓ Schools in Nepal are allowed to teach foreign languages, but they can’t make those subjects mandatory for students

## INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- **The government – had finally decided to impose additional customs duty of \$235 million on 29 products, including almonds, walnut and pulses, imported from the United States**

### 'RETALIATION' AFTER 8 WARNINGS

On June 20, 2018, India had announced tariff hike on 29 US products it imports, in retaliation to the steel and aluminium tariff hikes by the US on March 9. The deadline for imposing higher tariff was extended at least eight times:

<b>1st deadline</b>	<b>5th</b>   Jan 31,
<b>Aug 4, 2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
<b>2nd</b>   Sep 18	<b>6th</b>   Mar 2
<b>3rd</b>   Nov 2	<b>7th</b>   Apr 1
<b>4th</b>   Dec 17	<b>8th</b>   May 2

Finally, tariff hike to come into effect from June 16, '19

- ✓ The move came nearly a year after India had decided to retaliate against Washington’s move to raise import duties on some steel and aluminium products
- ✓ The increase in import duties will be effective from June 16.
- ✓ Earlier this month, the White House had announced that it was terminating India’s special market access to the United States under the Generalised System of Preferences programme from June 5.

- ✓ Trump has complained repeatedly that India is a “very very high tariff nation,” highlighting New Delhi’s taxes against Harley Davidson motorcycles.
- ✓ India and US have sparred on trade issues and New Delhi has dragged US to the World Trade Organisation’s dispute settlement body over the US duties on steel and aluminium.
- **India and Sri Lanka - began an unusual diplomatic exercise, organizing heritage tours for their armed personnel and family members on June 15**
- ✓ A 162-member Sri Lankan delegation of armed forces personnel with their family members arrived in India, while a 159-strong Indian tri-force delegation with spouses reached Colombo.
- ✓ The diplomatic pilgrimage, a novel initiative of the Lankan Army, is seen as an effort to cement a bond between the two countries, besides allaying tourists’ apprehensions about security threats
- ✓ This is the biggest-ever tri-service Indian delegation with their family members undertaking a visit of this nature
- ✓ During its stay from June 15 to 18, the Indian delegation, comprising army (95), navy (32) and the air force (32), would visit places of tourist interest in the hill capital Kandy and the South
- ✓ Similarly, the Sri Lankan delegation, in the wake of ‘Poson’ Full Moon Day, is expected to pay homage at Bodhgaya on June 16

## DEFENCE

- **India - has finalised the plan to acquire 30 weaponised Sea Guardian (or Predator-B) drones from United States**

### SEA GUARDIANS

Wing span	<b>24 metre</b>
Payload	<b>2,155 kg</b> across 9 hardpoints to carry missiles, bombs etc
Max takeoff weight	<b>5,670 kg</b>
Max altitude	<b>40,000 feet</b>
Max endurance	<b>35 hours</b>
Max range	<b>5,500 nautical miles</b>

Length  
11.7  
metres

### ADDING ARSENAL

US IS PUSHING FOR

- F/A-18 or F-21 fighter production line in India to supply 114 jets for IAF for **\$20 billion**
- Supplying 57 multi-role fighters to operate from aircraft carriers
- Strategic partnership project to manufacture 111 armed naval light utility helicopters (**₹21,738 cr** project)
- ‘Make in India’ project to manufacture 123 naval multi-role helicopters

US HAS BAGGED DEALS WORTH \$17 BILLION SINCE 2007

- They include 11 C-17 Globemaster-III strategic aircraft, 13 C-130J Super Hercules planes, 12 P-8I maritime patrol aircraft, 145 M-777 ultralight howitzers, 22 Apache attack & 15 Chinook heavy-lift helicopters

DEALS IN PIPELINE		
6 more Apache attack helicopters <b>(\$930 m)</b>	24 naval multi-role MH-60 ‘Romeo’ helicopters <b>(\$2.6 bn)</b>	National Advanced Surface to Air Missile System-II for missile shield over Delhi <b>(almost \$1 bn)</b>

- ✓ The triservice procurement proposal for the Sea Guardian remotely piloted aircraft — with 10 drones each for the Navy, IAF and Army was meant to hunt and destroy targets on land and sea
- ✓ India is already in an advanced stage to acquire 24 naval multirole MH-60 “Romeo” helicopters for \$2.6 billion and the National Advanced Surface-to Air-Missile System-II for almost \$1 billion under the FMS programme of the US, with the contract for the former set to be signed by September- October
- ✓ The acquisition of the “hunter-killer” Sea Guardians, with advanced ground control stations, launch and recovery elements, air-to-ground missiles, smart bombs and the like, will be a huge capability upgrade for the Indian armed forces

## ECONOMY

- **New-age non-life company, Go Digit General Insurance - has introduced a policy for used mobile phones that will compensate the user if there is any screen damage**



- ✓ This low-value cover has been made feasible by a small software that enables the company to remotely assess the condition of the phone — both for underwriting and claim settlement
- ✓ The software is similar to what is being used by e-commerce companies in evaluating used phones offered under their exchange scheme.
- ✓ However, it only checks the phone for the working of the screen
- ✓ The software will detect the phone’s make, model and IMEI number in minutes.
- ✓ Digit has been offering the policy for new phones on e-commerce sites, but has now decided to extend this to used phones as well
- ✓ The cost of the insurance cover would be around ₹ 1,700 for a mobile phone screen that costs ₹ 12,000 to replace



## SPORTS

- **India's Jyothi Vennam - claimed a 'double' winning bronze in the women's team and individual compound events in the World Archery Championships in 'S-Hertogenbosch on June 15**



- ✓ The Andhra girl picked up her maiden world championship individual medal by getting past the defending silver medallist in the event Yesim Bostan of Turkey
  - ✓ This was India's only second individual medal at the world championships after Rajat Chauhan's silver medal in men's compound event in 2015 at Copenhagen
  - ✓ Earlier Jyothi led a great fightback in the women's team event to script a 229-226 win against Turkey to fetch India's first medal in the tournament.
- **Tamil Nadu Grandmasters --- Karthikeyan Murali and SP Sethuraman --- finished with a silver and bronze respectively at the Asian Continental Championships which concluded at Xingtai, China on June 15**





- ✓ The splendid finish saw the two make the cut for the chess World Cup which will take place in Khanty-Mansiysk, Russia from September 9 to October 2
  - ✓ Apart from Karthikeyan and Sethuraman, SL Narayanan and Abhijeet Gupta were the other Indians to qualify for the World Cup from this competition.
  - ✓ 14-year-old GM Nihal Sarin clinched the Asian blitz event with 8 points from 9 rounds
- **The Toronto Raptors - delivered Canada its first NBA title with a 114-110 victory over the two-time defending champion Golden State Warriors on June 13**



- ✓ Canada's only NBA team put the finishing touches to a remarkable 4-2 series upset that denied the Warriors a fourth championship in five years
- ✓ Toronto forward Kawhi Leonard, was named the NBA Finals Most Valuable Player after averaging 28.5 points during the series

