

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – JUNE 24, 2020

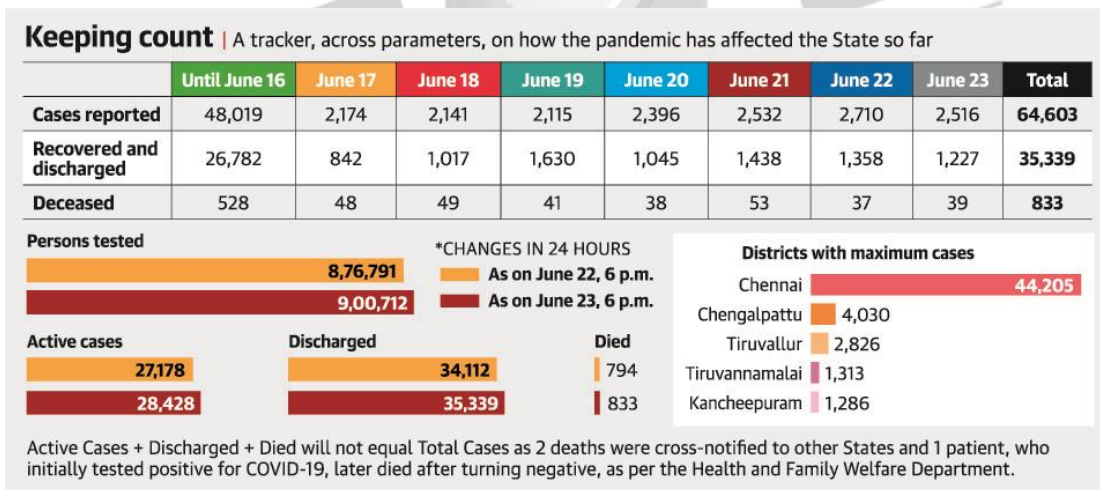
TAMIL NADU

- **Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami and Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Dharmendra Pradhan - inaugurated a compressed biogas plant (CBG) at Namakkal and five CBG fuel stations in Pudhuchattiram and Rasipuram on June 23.**
- ✓ The plant has been set up by IOT Infrastructure and Energy Services, a joint venture between Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. and Germany's Oiltanking GmbH
- ✓ The plant, constructed at a cost of ₹25 crore, is designed to manufacture 15 tonnes of biogas and 20 tonnes of biomanure every day
- ✓ During the occasion, the CM said Tamil Nadu was the leading State in the country in renewable energy with a renewable energy potential of 15,876 MW
- ✓ The CBG produced from the plant can fuel more than 1,000 vehicles a day in Salem–Namakkal region.
- ✓ The biogas plant shall also fuel 2 industries with green alternative fuel
- ✓ Apart from this, the State government has also a proposal to construct a gas-based power station of 1,460 mega watt (MW) in Basin Bridge, Chennai, where a private power station was operating currently.

- **Andhra Pradesh – has already released the assured quota of the Krishna water this year to Tamil Nadu**



- ✓ As on June 23, Chennai has received 8.05 tmcft. of Krishna water from the Kandaleru reservoir in Andhra Pradesh, since September-end last year.
 - ✓ This was one of the highest quantities of the Krishna water received since the launch of the project in 1996, as per the state records.
 - ✓ Earlier, the city received 8.19 tmcft of water in 2011-12.
 - ✓ Andhra Pradesh had assured Tamil Nadu of providing 8 tmcft. from Kandaleru reservoir in August last year to meet the drinking water requirements of Chennai.
 - ✓ On June 23, water flow into the Kandaleru-Poondi canal at the inter-State border dropped to a minimum of 18 cusecs (cubic feet per second).
 - ✓ The combined storage at the four reservoirs, including Poondi and Red Hills, stood at 5.1 tmcft against their capacity of 11.2 tmcft as on date.
 - ✓ As per the agreement signed with Andhra Pradesh in 1996, 12 tmcft of Krishna water needs to be released in two spells — July to October and January to April.
- **On June 23, Tamil Nadu –reported 2,516 fresh cases of Covid-19, taking its case tally to 64,603**
- ✓ The official toll in the state reached 833 with 39 more deaths reported on the day
 - ✓ The number of people tested for the viral infection came down to 23,921 on the day, as against 29,963 on June 21 and 25,234 tested a day later.



- ✓ For the seventh consecutive day, the state recorded 2,000-plus cases.
- ✓ Chennai and the districts of Tiruvallur, Madurai, Tiruvannamalai and Chengalpattu accounted for 76% of the new cases.
 - ✓ While Chennai added 1,380 positive cases, Chengalpet reported 146 cases, Tiruvallur 156 and Kancheepuram 59 cases.
 - ✓ Further, Madurai reported 137 cases, while Theni reported 48 cases, Dindigul 44, Sivaganga 20, Tiruvannamalai 110 cases and Cuddalore 29 cases.
- ✓ So far 2,643 people who returned to Tamil Nadu by air, sea, road and rail have tested positive, which includes 28 returnees in the last 24 hours.
- ✓ As many as 1,227 patients were discharged, taking the total recovered to 35,339.

- ✓ The State currently has 28,428 active cases in the State.
- ✓ Within two weeks, Greater Chennai Corporation will add around 4,000 beds for treating mildly symptomatic patients who are sent to Covid care centres (CCC).
 - ✓ This will take the total number of beds at such care centres across Chennai to around 17,500.
 - ✓ Of the available beds, only around 3,500 are occupied till date.
- ✓ On June 23, the Health Department transferred and posted E. Theranirajan, dean and special officer of the Government Perambalur Medical College, as dean of the Madras Medical College (MMC), in place of R. Jayanthi, who is on medical leave.
 - ✓ Dr. Theranirajan, a paediatrician, was on deputation at the Government Karur Medical College.
- ✓ **Meanwhile the Government announced that a Siddha-based Covid-19 Care Centre will start functioning at Vyasarpadi from June 23.**
 - ✓ This was announced by Minister for Tamil Official Language and Tamil Culture Ma Foi K. Pandiarajan
 - ✓ The Minister oversees Covid-19 works in Zone 4 (Tondiarpet) of Greater Chennai Corporation
 - ✓ According to the Minister, the centre will have capacity to treat 224 patients.
 - ✓ It will have facilities for sattvic food, herbal bath and yoga.

NATIONAL

- **On June 23, the Centre - announced allocating ₹3,000 crore from the PM CARES fund for supply of ventilators to fight Covid-19 and for welfare of guest workers who returned to their home state after lockdown due to the pandemic.**
- ✓ Worst-affected Maharashtra and Delhi have got the maximum ventilators from the Centre till now, which are being procured from the PM CARES fund
- ✓ Of the total ₹3,000 crore allocated from the fund, ₹2,000 crore will be set aside for the supply of 50,000 'Made-in-India' ventilators to government-run hospitals in states and UTs while the remaining ₹1,000 crore will be used for the welfare of guest workers
- ✓ So far, 2,923 ventilators have been manufactured, out of which 1,340 ventilators have already been delivered to states and UTs.
 - ✓ The States/UTs which received the maximum ventilators include Maharashtra (275), Delhi (275), Gujarat (175), Bihar (100), Karnataka (90) and Rajasthan (75).
 - ✓ Maharashtra, Delhi, and Gujarat are worst-affected states due to Covid-19 with the highest number of cases and deaths reported.
 - ✓ While Tamil Nadu has also reported high number of cases, deaths are comparatively less.
- ✓ Out of the 50,000 ventilators, 30,000 are being manufactured by Bharat Electronics Ltd (BEL) alone and remaining 20,000 by four companies, AgVa

Healthcare (10,000), AMTZ Basic (5,650), AMTZ High End (4,000) and Allied Medical (350)

- ✓ The main recipients of the ₹1,000 crore grant allotted for the welfare of guest workers include Maharashtra (₹181 crore), Uttar Pradesh (₹103 crore), Tamil Nadu (₹83 crore), Gujarat (₹66 crore), Delhi (₹55 crore), West Bengal (₹53 crore), Bihar (₹51 crore), Madhya Pradesh (₹50 crore), Rajasthan (₹50 crore) and Karnataka (₹34 crore).
- ✓ Prime Ministers Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations (PM CARE) Fund is a dedicated national fund that was created on 28th March 2020
 - ✓ The fund was created to mobilize money for providing help to the affected during any distress situation or emergency arising out of the pandemics in the country
- **On June 23, Yoga guru Baba Ramdev's Patanjali Ayurved - launched two ayurvedic medicines, Coronil and Swasari, claiming that it is the world's first ayurvedic treatment for Covid-19.**



- ✓ Ramdev also claimed all clinical trials for the product have been conducted.
- ✓ However, the Ayush ministry directed the firm to stop advertising and publicising its claims about Covid-19 treatment drug until it is fully examined.
 - ✓ The government also asked the company to provide details of the composition of the ayurvedic medicines being claimed for Covid-19 treatment along with its particulars of its clinical trials.
- ✓ The firm claimed that the two Ayurved-based drugs – developed by Patanjali Research Institute (PRI), Haridwar, and privately-owned National Institute of Medical Science (NIMS), Jaipur – have shown 100% results during the clinical trials on the infected patients, except those on life support systems.
- ✓ As per the company, the clinical trials on 100 patients showed 100% results, as 69% corona positive cases became negative in three days while the rest tested negative after seven days
- ✓ The medicine regime involved are the Tablet Swasari Ras (500 mg), Tablet Pure Ashwagandha Extract (500 mg), Tablet Pure Giloy Extract (500 mg), Tablet Pure

Tulsi Extract (500 mg) and Anu Taila (nasal drop), according to information on the clinical trial website.

- **On June 23, the annual Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath - was held in Puri without the usual gathering of devotees**



- ✓ The traditional servitors of Shree Jagannath Temple, who tested negative for COVID-19, performed the rituals associated with the Rath Yatra
 - ✓ Earlier, the rath yatra was allowed by the Supreme Court with stringent conditions.
 - ✓ During the procession, the chariots of the deities Balabhadra, Jagannath and Subhadra will be taken out in the streets
 - ✓ As per scriptures, deities step out from their abode once a year to give darshan to all devotees.
 - ✓ Every year, more than a million people come to Puri to witness the grand festival
 - ✓ However, in view of the current situation arising due to the pandemic, the Supreme Court directed the State government not to allow devotees to gather for the festival.
 - ✓ The State government imposed a 41-hour 'curfew' in Puri during the Rath Yatra.
 - ✓ As ordered by the Supreme Court, the Puri district administration conducted a Covid-19 test on 1,143 servitors, in which one of them was found to be positive.
 - ✓ The festival has been happening every year, except for some years in the 16th, 17th centuries during attacks by Muslim kings.
 - ✓ Earlier during 1733-1735, the Yatra could not be held as the then deputy governor of Odisha, Mohammed Taqi Khan attacked the Jagannath temple.
 - ✓ The festival is celebrated every year to commemorate Lord Jagannath's annual visit to the Gundicha Temple in Puri
- **On June 23, India - touched another record high of over 15,600 fresh infections, while the day's death toll too rose to a high of 466**
 - ✓ With this, the country recorded more than 1 lakh new Covid-19 cases in the past seven days
 - ✓ India's Covid-19 caseload surged from 3.53 lakh a week ago (June 16) to over 4.55 lakh on June 23

- ✓ It indicates that more than 1.02 lakh cases were added in this period at a daily average of over 14,600 cases.
- ✓ Cumulatively, 15,689 fresh Covid cases were reported on the day — the sixth time that the single-day count had touched a new high in the past seven days.
- ✓ In the last one week, 2,541 deaths were reported, accounting for around 18% of all fatalities from the virus, which stands now at 14,455
- ✓ On the day, Delhi reported 3,947 new cases, the highest single-day count in any state so far.
- ✓ This was also the first time since the end of March that any state had recorded a higher number of infections in a day than Maharashtra, which reported 3,214 cases on June 23.
- ✓ On the day, Maharashtra reported 248 deaths (including some pre-dated deaths), it's highest so far in a day, taking the overall toll to 6,531 in the state.
- ✓ The previous highest toll in a day was 186 reported on June 21.
- ✓ **India has one death per lakh population due to Covid-19 while the global average is more than six times at 6.04, as per the health ministry**
- ✓ This is one of the lowest deaths per lakh population in the world, which was made possible due to timely detection of cases, extensive contact tracing and effective clinical management.
- ✓ The corresponding Covid-related fatalities per lakh population in the UK stands at 63.13, while it was 60.60 in Spain, 57.19 in Italy, 36.30 in the US, 27.32 in Germany, 23.68 in Brazil and 5.62 in Russia, as per WHO's estimates
- ✓ A total of 2,48,189 patients have recovered from the disease, taking the recovery rate to 56.38%, while there were 1,78,014 active cases, as on date.
- ✓ **Meanwhile, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) expanded the network of laboratories across the country to 1,000 to test for Covid-19.**
- ✓ This includes 730 government labs and 270 in the private sector.

INTERNATIONAL

- **U.S. President Donald Trump - signed an executive order (EO) temporarily stopping new H-1B visas, effective June 24 till the end of the year.**
- ✓ As per the order, H4 visas (H-1B dependents), L visas (intra-company transfers), as well as H-2B (non-agricultural workers) and J visas will be on pause through the year-end.
- ✓ Trump's order was aimed at protecting American jobs during the ongoing Covid-19 crisis situation
- ✓ Further, the order also extended to year-end, the April 22 order suspending new immigrant visas issued to those outside the U.S.
- ✓ However, the order does not apply to existing green card holders, spouses and children of U.S. citizens, those already in the U.S. on temporary work visas (such as H-1Bs) or their derivative visas.

- ✓ It has also exempted those outside the U.S. who have valid non-immigrant visas issued before June 24.
 - ✓ The order is expected to impact both IT firms like TCS, Cognizant and Infosys as well as big tech companies like Google, Apple, Amazon and Facebook, who use the H-1B programme for their staffing needs.
 - ✓ Each year, the U.S. issues 85,000 new H-1Bs, most of which go to Indians.
 - ✓ The order's impact would save 5,25,000 American jobs by the end of this year
- **The World Health Organization (WHO) - warned the Covid-19 pandemic was accelerating, as the global coronavirus infections topped nine million**
- ✓ Many parts of the world, including Latin America and South Asia, are beginning to feel the full force of the pandemic, while other regions are being hit with second waves.
 - ✓ Officially, more than 50,000 people have been confirmed to have died from the virus in Brazil
 - ✓ It's official death toll is second only to the U.S., which has recorded 120,000 fatalities,
 - ✓ Europe has steadily eased its travel lockdowns in recent weeks, and on June 22, France took its biggest step back to normality by allowing millions of children to return to school.
 - ✓ **Meanwhile, on June 23, Saudi Arabia said only around 1,000 pilgrims of various nationalities already in the kingdom will be allowed to perform a dramatically scaled-down Haj, scheduled for the end of July**
 - ✓ The reduced number is far less than the estimated 2.5 million who attended the five-day ritual last year

INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS

- **On June 23, India and China - have arrived at a "mutual consensus" to disengage on their 50-day massive military build-up in disputed eastern Ladakh boundary and along the 3,488km Line of Actual Control, after detailed talks between Corps Commanders on June 22.**
- ✓ The breakthrough was achieved during the 11-hour meeting between 14 Corps commander Lt-Gen Harinder Singh and South Xinjiang Military District chief Major General Liu Lin, which finally ended on June 22.
 - ✓ The disengagement comes eight days after 20 Indian soldiers were killed by Chinese troops in the Galwan Valley of Ladakh
 - ✓ Earlier, in the first Corps Commander talks on June 6, both sides identified five locations of conflict — Patrolling Point (PP) 14, 15, 17A, North bank of Pangong Tso and Chushul — and agreed on limited "disengagement" in some of the places.
 - ✓ But that agreement ended with the Galwan clash on June 15



The Economist

- ✓ Indian Army chief General Naravane, meanwhile, is on a two-day visit to review operational preparedness on the ground in Ladakh
- ✓ The step-by-step disengagement will start from the Galwan Valley region and Gogra-Hot Springs area, where the rival troops are more or less on their own sides of the LAC.
- ✓ The proposed de-escalation at Pangong Tso still remains a major area of concern, with uncertainty about China's intentions there.
- **On June 23, India - asked Pakistan to reduce its staff at the high commission by 50%**
- ✓ The move follows the recent expulsion of Pakistani officials for espionage and the subsequent abduction and release of Indian diplomatic-consular officials at the hands of the ISI in Islamabad.
- ✓ The last time India asked for a similar reduction of staff was on December 27, 2001, exactly two weeks after the Jaish-e-Mohammad staged an attack on the Indian Parliament.

PAK OFFICIALS' TERROR TIES CITED

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Following Modi govt's decision to reduce mission staff by 50%, India & Pakistan will cut their mission strength to 55 in 7 days. Mutually agreed strength until now was 110 ➤ The last time India asked for a similar reduction of staff was on Dec 27, 2001, two weeks after JeM staged a terror attack on Parliament ➤ As was the case in 2001, govt says, in a statement, that 	<p>Pakistani mission officials in India maintained contacts with terrorist organisations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Bilateral ties were already downgraded with Pakistan having asked Indian high commissioner Ajay Bisaria to return after India's decision to revoke J&K's special status ➤ Sources say situation became untenable after ISI harassed & intimidated Indian mission officials in Pak recently
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- ✓ The attack on the Indian Parliament had led to a nine month-long military mobilisation on the border with Pakistan
- ✓ Similar to 2001 incidents, the government said that Pakistani officials here maintained contacts with terrorist organizations and engaged in acts of espionage, despite India's repeated concerns about their activities.
 - ✓ The government recalled activities of the two Pakistan High Commission staff "caught red-handed" in acts of espionage and expelled on May 31 as one example in that regard.
 - ✓ The two Indian High Commission staff returned to India on 22nd June
- ✓ Following the government's decision, India and Pakistan will both reduce the strength of their respective missions to 55 in the next 7 days.
- ✓ The mutually agreed strength until now has been 110
- ✓ In August last year, Pakistan expelled the Indian High Commissioner Ajay Bisaria, and both missions have functioned without a High Commissioner since then.
 - ✓ This happened after India's decision to revoke the special status of Jammu and Kashmir.
- ✓ On June 17, the Pakistan government has abducted two Indian high Commission staff at gunpoint and subjected them to barbaric treatment at Islamabad

SPORTS

- **Novak Djokovic, the ATP Tour's world No. 1 - became tennis' highest profile player to return a positive test for Covid-19 on June 23.**
- ✓ Novak Djokovic tested positive for the coronavirus after taking part in a tennis exhibition series — the Adria Tour— which he organised in Serbia and Croatia.
- ✓ Djokovic has been criticised for organising the tournament and bringing in players from other countries amid the pandemic.
- ✓ There were no social distancing measures observed at the matches in both Serbia and Croatia.



- ✓ The 33-year-old Serbian flew from Croatia to Belgrade where he finally took the test

- ✓ Djokovic is the fourth player from his wholly mismanaged Adria Tour to test 'positive' for the dreaded virus — after world No. 19 Grigor Dimitrov, No. 33 Borna Coric and No. 184 Viktor Troicki.
- ✓ The Adria tour was meant to raise money to help those affected by the pandemic
- ✓ However, the stands were packed with around 4,000 spectators in attendance in Belgrade
 - ✓ The players casually interacted with fans and each other on the court, without adhering to any physical distancing norms
 - ✓ Djokovic and other players were seen hugging and partying with each other.
- ✓ Djokovic's wife Jelena and Troicki's spouse Aleksandra, who is pregnant, also tested positive.
- ✓ In another incident, seven more Pakistani cricketers, apart from a member of the support staff, have tested positive for the coronavirus, taking the total of positive cases in the Pakistan cricket team to 10
 - ✓ According to Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), 35 cricketers and support-staff members had been tested in Karachi, Lahore and Peshawar, which means a third of the 29-member squad for England has now tested positive
 - ✓ However, the team's plans to depart for England on June 28 for the three-Test, three-T20I series would not be altered.

