

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – JUNE 26, 2020

TAMIL NADU

- **On June 25, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami - laid foundation stone for the Pillur-III drinking water supply augmentation project, which is planned to supply 178 MLD water to Coimbatore city.**
- ✓ Further, a detailed project report (DPR) would be prepared for implementation of metro train project in Coimbatore, as per the CM.
- ✓ According to the CM, Athikadavu -Avinashi ground water recharge project would be completed by December 2021.
 - ✓ In the second phase of the project, Karamadai, Annur, Periyanaickenpalayam and few other areas will be added in the project.
- ✓ The CM also said that the state government will hold talks with the Kerala government soon to implement the Anamalayar-Nallaru project
- **The state archaeology department - unearthed 13 burial urns at Sivagalai in Tuticorin district.**



- ✓ The excavation work that began on March 19 was stopped in between due to the lockdown, and resumed on May 24.
- ✓ Sivagalai was taken up for excavation by the department for the first time this year

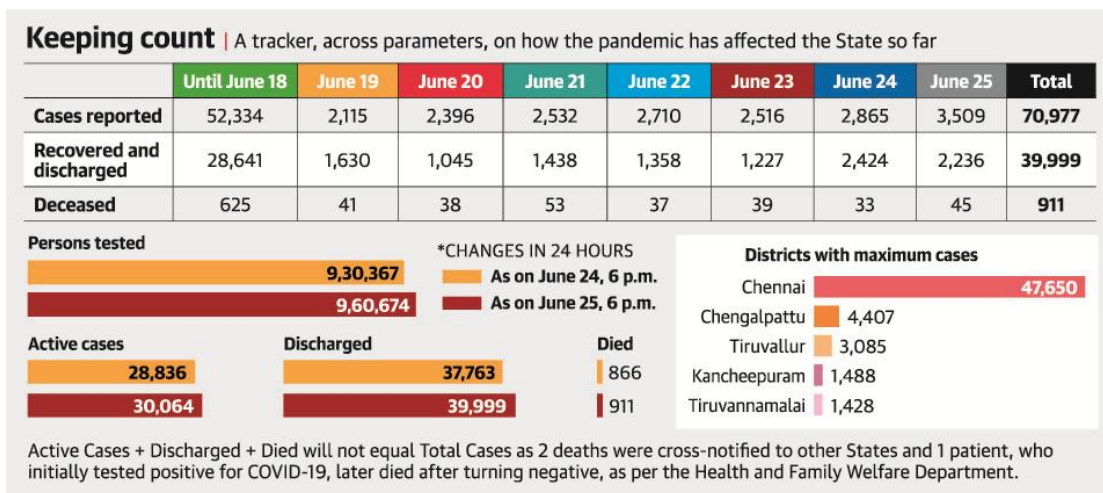
- ✓ The Tamil Nadu government had sanctioned ₹31 lakh for the excavation work in the site.
 - ✓ In 2018, an expert appointed by the commissioner of state archaeology department confirmed that Sivagalai was an ancient site, following the discoveries of ancient burial urns, iron tools and bones among other things there
 - ✓ In the last one month, 13 burial urns of various sizes were discovered, which looked like belonging to the Iron Age
 - ✓ Sivagalai is located in the middle of Korkai, an ancient Pandya Kingdom, on the banks of the Tamirabarini river.
 - ✓ It is situated seven km away from Adhichanallur, which is also a burial site in Tirunelveli district.
 - ✓ The Archaeological Survey of India conducted an excavation at Adhichanallur in 2004 and unearthed 169 urns.
 - ✓ It is believed that Sivagalai would yield more urns than Adhichanallur.
- **Tiruppur district - topped the State in the number of consultations at eSanjeevaniOPD, the National Teleconsultation Service from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.**



- ✓ Since its inception on May 15, Tiruppur district has seen 188 consultations at the website www.esanjeevaniopd.in.
- ✓ The initiative enables patients to get free of cost consultation without visiting hospitals and clinics, thus preventing the spread of Covid-19 infection.
- ✓ Such online consultations largely reduces crowd in the government hospital outpatient departments
- ✓ In case of villages, facilities are made at block-level to enable people connect to the headquarters hospital through the 'initiative'
- ✓ A total of 126 doctors were involved in providing online consultations to patients in Tiruppur
 - ✓ It comprises of 124 doctors in 13 blocks of the district and two additional doctors at the DDHS office in Poluvapatti in Tiruppur Corporation limits.
 - ✓ All the doctors are from the primary health centres (PHC) in the district.

- ✓ On the other hand, Chennai district has seen only 149 consultations till June 25 and ranks fourth in the State
- ✓ The National Health Mission, Tamil Nadu launched this programme across the State in May.
- ✓ Apart from ensuring zero physical contact amid the coronavirus scare, the teleconsultation service will also help patients get the right diagnosis and prescription from 'specialist' doctors
- **A five-member sub-supervisory committee, comprising officials from Tamil Nadu and Kerala - inspected the Mullaperiyar reservoir in Idukki district on June 25.**
 - ✓ At present, the water level in the reservoir stood at 112.25 ft
 - ✓ In 2014, the Supreme Court had set up the supervisory committee to monitor the dam's storage level after it became a major issue between the two States.
 - ✓ Then, the apex court had directed that the storage level of the dam could be raised to 142 feet and instructed the committee to inspect the reservoir at periodic intervals.
 - ✓ To assist the committee, a sub-supervisory committee was formed subsequently.
 - ✓ The sub-supervisory committee had last inspected the reservoir in January when the storage level was 119.40 feet.
 - ✓ It will be sending a report to the committee shortly, based on its observations.
- **The Centre – has rejected a proposal to set up an industrial park in Ottapidaram taluk in Tuticorin**
 - ✓ The setting up of an industrial park was proposed by the State government at a budget of ₹310 crore to cater to petroleum refining industry and petrochemical complexes.
 - ✓ It was proposed at a distance of 8.33km from the eco-sensitive zone of Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park
 - ✓ The proposal was reviewed by an expert appraisal committee of the Union environment ministry, which had denied approval for the project
 - ✓ The committee has cited environmental concerns, including the recent gas leak incident in Visakhapatnam.
 - ✓ The panel said the proposed park was not acceptable in an area that has been already classified as highly polluted.
 - ✓ For long, Tuticorin has been the centre of violent protests against Sterlite's copper smelter that was subsequently shut down by the state government amidst allegations of high pollution by the activists.
 - ✓ The ministry and committee had received several complaints against the project
 - ✓ In its recent meeting, the committee recalled the Visakhapatnam gas leak, an industrial accident which resulted in a cloud of Styrene gas spreading over a radius of about 3km, affecting nearby towns and villages

- **Tamil Nadu - recorded the highest ever surge of 3,509 Covid-19 cases on June 25, taking the caseload past 70,000 to 70,977.**
- ✓ This is the first day when the case count crossed the 3,000-mark in the state
- ✓ Chennai recorded a new high of 1,834 cases, taking its total to 47,650.



- ✓ The number of people under treatment as 'active' cases stands at 30,064.
- ✓ While 18,969 people in Chennai were still in hospitals and covid centres, Chengalpet had 1,986, Kancheepuram 782 and Tiruvallur 1,160 active cases.
- ✓ On the day, the state reported 45 deaths, taking the official toll to 911.
- ✓ Apart from Chennai, its three neighbouring districts, Chengalpet (191), Kancheepuram (98) and Tiruvallur (170), together reported 459 cases.
 - ✓ However, three other districts logged three-digit count of fresh cases — Madurai (203), which also under intense lockdown like Chennai and its neighbours Vellore (168) and Ramanathapuram (140).
- ✓ On June 25, 30,307 people (including nearly 10,000 in Chennai) were tested across the state compared to 25,234 on June 22
 - ✓ With this, the total number of people tested increased to 10,08,974.
- ✓ On the day, the doubling time – period it takes for the total number of cases to double – has come down to 15 days (with a seven-day average) in the state compared to 16 days on June 22
- ✓ A total of 2,236 people were discharged on the day, taking the total recovered to 39,999 people and the recovery rate to 56%.
- ✓ At least 29 personnel who were under quarantine at INS Parundu, an Indian Navy airbase at Uchipuli in Mandapam of Ramanathapuram district, tested positive for Covid-19 on the day
- ✓ In the treatment front, the state has received two consignments of Covifor, a generic version of the experimental Covid-19 drug remdesivir, from Hyderabad-based manufacturer Hetero
- ✓ The vials of the 'injectable' drug have been dispatched to all government hospitals in other districts for treatment of critical Covid-19 patients.

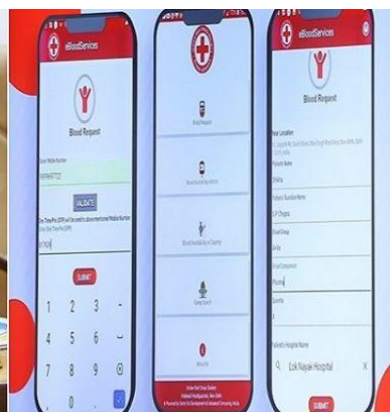
- ✓ It has to be mentioned that Tamil Nadu was the first State to distribute the drug to every district
- **Sundram Fasteners Limited's (SFL) powertrain components division – has been named as the 'GM Supplier of the Year' by General Motors (GM).**
- ✓ The division has been honoured with the award for its performance in 2019.
- ✓ This is the seventh time SFL has received this award.

NATIONAL

- **The Centre - is planning to implement up to 40% customs duty on solar equipment to discourage imports from China**
- ✓ This was announced by power minister R K Singh on June 25
- ✓ Further, the government is planning to impose a combination of penal tariffs and mandatory local testing for conventional power gears to curb Chinese imports
- ✓ It has been proposed that a basic customs duty of up to 25% is imposed on solar modules in the first year, followed by 40% in the second year and so on.
- ✓ For solar cells, the duty would be 15% this year and 30-40% from the next financial year
- ✓ Going forward, the customs duty will replace the graded 'safeguard duty' on solar modules and cells, which expires this year.
 - ✓ The graded 'safeguard duty' was imposed in 2018 for two years on imports from China and Malaysia to protect the domestic industry.
- ✓ The Indian solar market is heavily dependent on Chinese or Malaysian imported parts.
 - ✓ Around 75% of India's solar power capacity is built using equipment imported from mainland China or Chinese-owned firms in Malaysia.
 - ✓ China is the world's largest solar equipment maker and manufacturers offer cheaper rates due to the 'hidden' government subsidy.
- ✓ Meanwhile, US secretary of state Mike Pompeo said in the Brussels Forum that China's "threats to India" and Southeast Asia was among the main reasons for the US to reduce its troops in Europe.
 - ✓ Recently, US has announced to withdraw troops in Germany and move them to other places
 - ✓ According to Pompeo, the actions of the Chinese Communist Party were seen as "threats" to India and other countries like Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and the South China Sea
- **Three major IITs, Bombay, Madras and Delhi — have decided to completely 'stop' face-to-face lectures for the upcoming semester in view of the Covid-19 pandemic.**
- ✓ They have decided to offer all their programmes for the next semester 'purely in online mode' to ensure the safety and well-being of students.

- ✓ Most IITs have decided not to open the institutions to students for the first semester of 2020-21 and will hold classes 'online' or permit even a semester or a year drop.
- ✓ IIT Delhi may only call students to the campus in December.
- ✓ IIT Bombay plans to start all classes, barring the first year of undergraduate and postgraduate courses, online after their scheduled convocation on August 8.
- ✓ These decisions by the IITs are based on a report on post Covid-19 strategy prepared by a sub-committee of six IITs.
 - ✓ The report was submitted to the Standing Committee of IIT Council (SCIC) on June 15
 - ✓ It had suggested that the B.Tech admissions should be as per JEE schedule where the selection process and interviews will be 'online' and all newly-admitted students will start the course in December 2020-January 2021 timeframe.
 - ✓ Further, the report has suggested that all two-year PG programmes to be compressed in 18 months with the flexibility in conducting the program over 3 regular or 4 reduced semesters
 - ✓ Also, MBA and other similar programmes may move to a complete online mode for the first semester and start as per schedule.
 - ✓ Regarding the research scholars, the report suggested to allow only those who require experimental research facilities and institute resources to return to the campus, on a voluntary basis.
- ✓ IITs have been asked to review the situation again in October 2020 and add more measures if required.
- **The CBSE - has decided to cancel the remaining board exams for Class XII and X which were scheduled to be held July 1 to 15.**
 - ✓ The decision was announced by the board to the Supreme Court on June 25, considering the increasing number of Covid-19 infections across the country
 - ✓ However, it said that Class XII students, not happy with the marks given to the pending papers, will have an option of taking the exams again when the atmosphere becomes "conducive"
 - ✓ But, the re-exam option will not be available for Class X students of CBSE and also to the ICSE Board students of both Classes X and XII
 - ✓ As per the new norms prepared by CBSE, marks will be awarded to Class XII students based on combined assessment of marks scored in the practical/ internal assessment and those papers for which a candidate has already appeared in the exams
- **The Union environment ministry - has announced a new draft 'Extended Producers Responsibility' (EPR) framework for the disposal of waste by the plastic products industry**

- ✓ The 'much awaited' uniform framework suggests three different models to be adopted by manufacturers, importers and brand owners of plastic products to handle the 'plastic waste' under supervision of a central authority.
 - ✓ Earlier, in 2016, the government had announced that the manufacturers of plastic products will be held responsible for managing plastic waste in the country
 - ✓ The three models available to producers of plastic products, including FMCG companies, are
 - ✓ Introduction of a system of plastic credit
 - ✓ Establishing Producer Responsibility Organisations (PROs) and
 - ✓ Setting up a fee-based mechanism
 - ✓ The proposed framework also plans to impose penalties on producers if they fail to meet their targeted collection.
 - ✓ This penalty money collected will be used for creating infrastructure for plastic waste management.
 - ✓ Further, the new framework proposes to create a single national registry to enlist all stakeholders such as producers or manufacturers, recyclers and waste processors.
 - ✓ The proposed framework will improve monitoring and help bring transparency in the plastic waste management system in the country
 - ✓ At present, around 40% of the plastic 'daily waste' is not disposed safely, posing a threat to environmental and human health systems.
 - ✓ The monitoring of the entire mechanism of the EPR will be the responsibility of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).
 - ✓ The framework recommends a graded approach for achieving the targets, starting with 30% in the first year and reaching up to 90% in five years.
 - ✓ The various stakeholders are expected to submit their comments on the draft framework by July 31.
 - ✓ The ministry will come out with the final framework after analysing those comments.
- **On June 25, Union health minister Dr Harsh Vardhan - launched 'ebloodservices' App, in partnership with the Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS), for easy access to safe blood for transfusion purposes.**



- ✓ The new App was developed by the E-Raktkosh team of Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC) under the Digital India scheme, which was launched by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2015
 - ✓ Through the App, a person can place request upto four units of blood at a time and blood bank will wait for 12 hours for the person to collect it.
 - ✓ Once the request is placed through the app, the requisite units become visible to IRCS, blood bank in its dashboard and this allows assured delivery within the specified time.
 - ✓ This new App will ensure the easy availability of blood to the required person and also brings the added advantage of complete transparency and single window access to the entire process.
- **Microsoft India - has offered Indian Railways a six-month free trial of its “Microsoft Teams” platform powered by Office 365**
- ✓ The free trial offer will be valid from June 15-December 14, 2020 to connect 15,000 railways employees across the network.
 - ✓ The offer will ensure physical distancing, avoid travelling and facilitate work-from-home in the ongoing Covid-19 outbreak scenario, through Microsoft’s IT applications for collaboration and communication.
 - ✓ The ‘Microsoft Teams’ application would be used by the railways to organise discussions, sharing files in groups, audio/video conferencing, working online together on documents (Word, Excel & PowerPoint) etc.
 - ✓ To enable a collaborative working and seamless communication, the railways will put all its users in a unified domain and further divide them into sub-domains as per the zonal railways, production units etc.,
 - ✓ For every user, unique user identity will be created and Microsoft was formulating a quick start guide for the railway employees.
 - ✓ The other features of “Microsoft Teams” which will be utilized by the railway employees include unlimited chat and search, video calling, team and personal file storage, and real-time collaboration with the head office.
 - ✓ The Railway Board advised its officers to use e-files to the extent possible and avoid physical receipt/issue of documents to avoid infection through touching of papers which have passed through multiple hands.
 - ✓ Further, it was also advised to hold all meetings online.
 - ✓ In this regard, “Microsoft Teams” will provide a one-stop solution to implement these advisories
- **On June 25, India - crossed the tragic milestone of 15,000 Covid casualties with the reporting of 402 deaths, pushing the cumulative death toll to 15,300.**
- ✓ The first Covid death occurred on March 10 in the country
 - ✓ After that, it took 81 days to cross the 5,000-death mark, while just 17 more days was taken to breach the 10,000-mark.

- ✓ It took even a shorter period — nine days now — to cross the 15,000-mark.
- ✓ Overall, just five states account for 82.6% of India's fatalities
 - ✓ Maharashtra leads the casualty list with 6,931 deaths, followed by Delhi (2,429 deaths), Gujarat (1,754), Tamil Nadu (911) and Uttar Pradesh (611).
- ✓ India also recorded the highest single-day spike for third straight day with 17,835 patients testing positive for the virus across the country, taking the country's caseload close to the five-lakh mark at 4,90,964.
- ✓ Maharashtra recorded the highest single-day spike for the second consecutive day
 - ✓ The state had crossed the 4,000-mark for the first time with 4,841 cases, taking the state's caseload to 1,47,741
 - ✓ The earliest peak was 3,890 cases reported on June 24
- ✓ A day after Delhi, Mumbai became the second city in the country to cross the 70,000-mark with 70,878 cases.
 - ✓ Delhi recorded 3,390 fresh cases, lower than 3,788 cases recorded the previous day, taking the total Covid count to 73,780.
- ✓ Meanwhile, the Railway board had announced that all regular mail, express and passenger services as well as suburban trains have been cancelled till August 12
 - ✓ However, all special trains — 12 pairs running on the Rajdhani routes since May 12 and 100 pairs operating since June 1 — will continue to run as usual.
 - ✓ The Railways had earlier cancelled all trains till June 30, keeping in mind the increasing number of coronavirus cases in the country.
- **The fourth round of the Vande Bharat mission – was scheduled to begin from July 3.**
- ✓ The mission has been undertaken by the country for the repatriation of Indians from around the world
- ✓ The fourth round of the mission will focus on bringing back Indians from the Gulf countries, Malaysia and Singapore, among others.
- ✓ Last week, Minister for Civil Aviation Hardeep Puri said nearly 1,050 flights will be planned in the fourth phase.
- ✓ Private Indian airlines will handle 750 of them, while Air India will operate the rest.
- ✓ Since the commencement of the mission on May 8, nearly 700 flights have repatriated 1,50,000 Indians.

INTERNATIONAL

- **The United States - reached its highest daily total count of new coronavirus cases on June 24, with 36,880 positive cases recorded, including record highs in Florida, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Texas**
- ✓ The previous nationwide record for fresh daily Covid-19 cases was reported on April 25, with 34,203 cases

- ✓ The US is now the world's top Covid hotspot, with more than 2.3 million Covid-19 cases and nearing 1,25,000 deaths.
 - ✓ France reopened the Eiffel Tower to tourists on June 25 after three months of closure because of the coronavirus
 - ✓ Meanwhile, the WHO warned the disease was resurgent in Europe after around 30 European countries have seen increases in the past two weeks
 - ✓ The European Medicines Agency said its human medicines committee recommended conditionally approving remdesivir for adults and adolescents from 12 years of age who are suffering from pneumonia and require oxygen support.
 - ✓ Over 2.6 million cases and 1,95,000 deaths have been reported in Europe.
 - ✓ Meanwhile Australia is planning door-to-door testing as the country recorded biggest daily rise in cases of 33 in two months
 - ✓ Iran announced 134 new deaths from the novel coronavirus on June 24, taking the overall toll in the country past 10,000
 - ✓ In the medicines front, Gilead Sciences Inc's antiviral 'remdesivir' could be priced up to \$5,080 per course based on benefits shown in Covid-19 patients
 - ✓ Remdesivir reduced hospital stays by 31%, compared to a placebo, in a clinical trial released in late April.
 - ✓ Gilead has signed licensing agreements with Indian drugmakers including Cipla Ltd and Hetero Labs Ltd.
 - ✓ Cipla's version is priced at less than ₹5,000, while Hetero Lab's version is priced at ₹5,400 in the Indian market.
 - ✓ Globally, over 9.4 million people have been infected and nearly 5,00,000 have died due to the Covid-19 viral disease.
- **On June 24, Nasa announced that it would name its Washington, DC, headquarters after Mary W Jackson, the organisation's first black female engineer.**



- ✓ Jackson started working at Nasa's predecessor, the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, in 1951.
- ✓ Later, she went on to work with Nasa's 4x4 supersonic pressure tunnel and became the agency's first black female engineer in 1958.

- ✓ Her contributions, along with the work of Nasa mathematicians Katherine Johnson and Dorothy Vaughan, were highlighted in the film “Hidden Figures.”

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **IN-SPACE, a new entity of the Department of Space - will have its own chairperson and Board, as announced by K. Sivan, Secretary, Department of Space, and ISRO Chairman**
- ✓ It will involve in the regulation and development of routine satellites, rockets and commercial launch services with the help of Indian industry and start-ups.
- ✓ These activities had been under the control of the 50-year-old Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) until now
- ✓ The entity was approved by the Union Cabinet on June 24 and was unveiled by Minister of State for Space Jitendra Singh in Delhi.
- ✓ IN-SPACE, or Indian Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre, will act as a body that will ensure a level playing field for Indian industry in a fast-growing global space sector.
 - ✓ It will function autonomously and parallel to ISRO
 - ✓ IN-SPACE will have its own directorates for technical, legal, safety and security, monitoring and activities promotion.
- ✓ The NewSpace India Ltd, established in 2019, will be strengthened and empowered with a larger role in the new “open and inclusive” space sector.
 - ✓ It will work with IN-SPACE and enable more industries performing some of the activities of ISRO.
 - ✓ These include launch vehicles and satellite production, launch services and space-based services.
- ✓ This restructuring will allow ISRO to allocate more time and resources for Research and Development (R&D) activities.
- ✓ Further, ISRO will continue to carry out its present activities with greater focus on development of advanced technology, human space flight missions and capacity building besides supporting private endeavours in the space sector
- ✓ A new satellite navigation policy, which has a strategic military element to it, is being proposed.
- ✓ The older ones, namely Remote Sensing Data Policy and the SatCom Policy of 2000, are being under revision.
- ✓ The new entity, IN-SPACE is expected to be in operation in the next three to six months.

SPORTS

- **Following an order of the Delhi High Court, the Sports Ministry - withdrew the annual recognition of 54 Nationals Sports Federations (NSFs), leading to an unprecedented situation in Indian sports.**

- ✓ This means, these NSFs – including nine belonging to the ‘high priority’ category – will now be ineligible for the government’s financial grant and assistance for training and competition.
- ✓ This list includes the Indian Golf Union (IGU), School Games Federation of India (SGFI) and Rowing Federation of India (RFI) among others.
- ✓ The ministry had granted recognition to NSFs on two separate occasions earlier.
- ✓ Some of the prominent disciplines affected by the decision are - chess, football, tennis, carrom, baseball, kabaddi, athletics, badminton, basketball, billiards and snooker, boxing, cycling, equestrian, hockey, polo, rugby, triathlon, weightlifting, kho-kho, shooting, squash, swimming, table tennis, ten-pin bowling, volleyball, wrestling, and motor sports.

INTERNATIONAL DAY

➤ International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking – June 26



- ✓ The day is observed to create awareness among societies across the world about drug abuse and illicit trafficking of drugs
- ✓ The observance of the day was announced on 7th December 1987, by adopting resolution 42/112 in the United Nations General Assembly
- ✓ Theme 2020 - Better Knowledge for Better Care
- ✓ As per the World Drug Report 2020, there has been a 30% increase in the number of drug consumers across the globe in 2018 when compared with 2009.
- ✓ A total of around 269 million people have used drugs in 2018, as per the report
- ✓ The drug abuse mostly impacts the financially weaker sections of society, who fall prey to various drug or trafficking networks for monetary stability in life
- ✓ This heinous crime further hinders the overall development of many developing countries

