



EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS –jUNE 17,

TAMIL NADU

- **Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC) - has approached the state environmental impact assessment authority (SEIAA) seeking clearance to drill 10 exploration wells in Ariyalur district**
- ✓ The exploratory wells will give an indication whether there is the likelihood of hydrocarbon reserve in the region.
- ✓ The oil major, ONGC has submitted an environmental clearance application and pre-feasibility report for Cauvery Basin to the state
- ✓ Few days before, chief minister M K Stalin wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi urging the Union government not to allow oil and gas exploration in Cauvery delta districts
- ✓ Earlier, delta districts were declared as special agriculture zone following protests against oil exploration amidst depleting groundwater levels
- ✓ If any natural oil or gas reserve is found, development wells will be established by the Cauvery asset section of ONGC in Karaikal, which oversees exploration in the delta districts.
- ✓ According to ONGC, the application was submitted because the proposed area falls outside the protected zone
- ✓ The development comes following a similar oil exploration proposal at Vadatheru in Pudukottai district raising protests.
- ✓ Last year, the AIADMK government had declared Cauvery delta districts a protected zone for agriculture covering a part of Ariyalur and banned oil exploration activities in the region.

- **The state government – has sought the automatic renewal of leases of Centre-owned salt pans.**
- ✓ In this regard, the Principal secretary of the state industries department, N Muruganandam, has written to the secretary of the Union ministry of commerce and industry

- ✓ In 2013, the Union ministry of commerce and industry announced that leases of its salt pans will not be renewed automatically and that further leases for a period of 20 years would be awarded only after a tender process.
 - ✓ This decision has affected existing small and marginal salt manufacturers who have been working on the leased land for decades and could not compete with big corporate houses in the tender process
 - ✓ The Tamil Nadu government wants the Centre stick to the 1961 resolution, wherein lease period of 20 years was renewed automatically for another 20 years based on terms set by the government.
 - ✓ As per the government, the move against automatic lease renewal has affected salt production in the state badly and also the jobs of salt pan workers.
 - ✓ Tamil Nadu Salt Corporation, which is also the nodal agency to represent the salt industry as a whole in the state, said production this year was majorly hit.
 - ✓ Production was also hit because of unseasonal heavy rain and frequent intermittent rain in manufacturing hubs - Tuticorin, Ramanathapuram and Vedaranyam.
 - ✓ Tamil Nadu is currently the third largest salt producing state in the country.
 - ✓ Salt is produced in around 48,406 acres of land in the state, of which 17,194 acres belongs to the Centre.
 - ✓ There are 3,464 salt producing units in Tamil Nadu, of which 1,195 are recognized and 2,369 unrecognized.
- **Tamil Nadu – has applied for the Geographical Indications (GI) tag to the famous ‘Chedi Putta’ handloom sari, done on artificial silk and cotton mix fabric**
- ✓ The present GI application for Chedi Putta has been submitted to the GI registry on behalf of a group of five weavers’ associations
 - ✓ This was announced by the state intellectual property right (IPR) attorney and GI agent P Sanjai Gandhi.
 - ✓ “Chedi” means “plant” in Tamil and “Putta” means border and pallu (edge of the saree)
 - ✓ Chedi Putta is a traditional handloom sari weaved in Veeravanallur and the neighboring towns like Pudukkudi, Karukurichi and Vellanguli in Ambasamudram taluk of Tirunelveli district



- ✓ The design of a “plant and flower” is the motif and it is woven on the border and pallu with small Puttas distributed all over the saree.
- ✓ They are woven using fine artificial silk and superior quality cotton yarns, making it light weight, easily wearable and convenient to maintain.
- ✓ The Chediputta design is crafted only by hand, and not by the usual jacquard machine or in a power loom/peddle loom
- ✓ The weavers of these sari belong mostly to the Sourashtra community
- ✓ Saurashtras, who are originally from Gujarat, are known for their rich weaving tradition.
- ✓ They first settled in Madurai, and then in almost all districts in Tamil Nadu.
- ✓ Their occupation and expertise have been immortalised by the charter issued by Queen Mangammal of Madurai, and they enjoyed the patronage of the Vijayanagara Empire and the Nayak Dynasty.
- ✓ Tamil Nadu has so far obtained GI tag for about 40 handicraft and agricultural products.
- ✓ Some of the important products that now enjoy the GI tag are Kancheepuram Silk, Thanjavur Veenai, Srivilliputtur milk gova, Dindigul lock, Madurai Chungudi sari, Salem white silk veshti.
- ✓ India has about 320 GI products, with Karnataka topping the list with about 50 products.

NATIONAL

- **The Centre – has announced the setting up of the first-of-its-kind single-window facility for the rehabilitation of children with disabilities**
- ✓ The government is planning to launch cross disability early intervention centres (EICs) for these children
- ✓ These centres will provide guidance and professional help to children, especially those up to 6 years of age with risk of disability, delayed development and to those with disabilities.
- ✓ They will be managed by the department of empowerment of persons with disabilities under the ministry of social justice and empowerment
- ✓ These EICs seek to eliminate or reduce the severity of disabilities at an early stage so that children can achieve their full potential.
- ✓ Initially, EICs will be set-up in seven national institutes working on different disabilities and in seven composite regional centres across states as a pilot project.
- ✓ The EICs in each of the NIs/CRCs will be equipped to screen and intervene in respect of all categories of disabilities covered under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.
- ✓ Then, the ministry plans to set up EICs at the remaining 13 composite regional centres by next year.
- ✓ The seven EICs at NIs are located in Kolkata, Cuttack, Mumbai, Dehradun, Delhi, Secunderabad and Chennai.

- ✓ The seven centres at Composite Regional Centres are at Lucknow, Kozhikode, Sundernagar, Nellore, Patna, Rajnandgaon and Bhopal.
- **On June 16, the Union Cabinet - approved increased subsidies of ₹14,775 crore for di-ammonium phosphate (DAP) and some other non-urea fertilisers**
- ✓ The subsidies were meant to keep the price of fertilisers 'low' despite the rising costs of raw materials.
- ✓ DAP is the most widely used soil nutrient after urea.
- ✓ Last month, the Centre had decided to increase the subsidy on DAP fertiliser by 140% at a high-level meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- ✓ Accordingly, farmers will continue to get DAP at the old rate of ₹1,200 per bag, which has 50 kilograms of the fertiliser.
- ✓ The subsidy for DAP fertiliser has been increased to ₹1,200 per bag from ₹500 per bag to provide relief to farmers.

INTERNATIONAL

- **The United States Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) – have classified the Delta variant, first identified in India, as a “variant of concern”**
- ✓ The variant now accounts for 10% of Covid-19 cases in America and it may become the dominant strain if it is not contained.
- ✓ The CDC guidance said all authorised vaccines are highly effective against the variant.
- ✓ Various studies have concluded that a two-shot regimen was effective in preventing hospitalisation and showed almost no deaths.
- ✓ As of June 16, 44% of the US population (146 million people) are fully vaccinated.
- ✓ According to experts, the variant is 50% more transmissible than the original strain, causes four times more hospitalisation risk, and can evade the first vaccine dose.
- **United Kingdom and Australia - have signed a free trade deal recently, eliminating tariffs on wide range of goods.**



- ✓ It is the first major trade deal negotiated by the UK, since it left the European Union last year, under the Brexit plan

- ✓ The agreement between both the economies will provide for tariff-free imports for a period of 15 years
- ✓ The deal will remove Australia's 5% tariff on Scotch whisky exports and tariffs on cars, while Australian wine and its lamb will be able to enter Britain duty-free.
- ✓ The agreement will also allow Britons under the age of 35 to travel and work in Australia more easily
- ✓ The free-trade agreement has been negotiated since Britain formally left the European Union in January 2020.
- ✓ The deal was agreed on June 14 in a meeting between Australia's prime minister, Scott Morrison, and Boris Johnson, the British prime minister, in London
- ✓ In 2019, Britain exported about £4.5 billion of goods to Australia and imported £3.9 billion
- ✓ The deal will also help Britain to join "Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)"
- ✓ The CPTPP is a trade pact signed by 11 countries after President Donald J. Trump pulled the United States out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership.
- ✓ Australia is a founding member of that agreement, and Britain's process for joining began in early June
- ✓ U.K. is already having free trade deals with other CPTPP members such as Chile, Japan, Canada, Mexico, Singapore and Vietnam.
- ✓ CPTPP, also known as TPP11 or TPP-11, is a trade agreement among Australia, Brunei, Chile, Malaysia, Canada, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Singapore, Peru and Vietnam.

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- **India – has exported the first commercial consignment of GI certified Jardalu mangoes and Jalgaon Banana recently**



- ✓ Jardalu mangoes were exported from Bhagalpur in Bihar to the United Kingdom.
- ✓ The export process was coordinated by Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority, (APEDA) in collaboration with Bihar government, Indian High Commission & Invest India

- ✓ The first consignment of fibre and mineral rich “Jalgaon Banana” was exported to Dubai recently.
- ✓ Jalgaon Banana is GI-certified agricultural produce from Jalgaon district of Maharashtra.
- ✓ Jalgaon District is an identified banana cluster under Agri Export Policy and is called as “Banana city” of Maharashtra.
- ✓ Jardalu mangoes from Bhagalpur district were given ‘GI’ certification in 2018, while the Jalgaon Banana got GI certification in 2016.

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi – delivered keynote address at the 5th edition of VivaTech on June 16, 2021.**



- ✓ The Prime Minister was invited as a Guest of Honour for VivaTech, one of the largest digital and startup events in Europe, held in Paris every year since 2016
- ✓ During his speech, the PM said that India and France have been working closely on a wide range of subjects, with technology and digital being the foremost
- ✓ He mentioned Infosys providing tech support for the French Open tournament and collaboration involving French companies like Atos, Capgemini and India’s TCS and Wipro as examples of IT talent of the two countries serving all over the world.
- ✓ The PM also mentioned about the country’s universal and unique bio-metric digital identity system – Aadhaar and two public digital education programmes - Swayam and Diksha, which have been of immense help during the pandemic
- ✓ He invited the world to invest in India based on the five pillars - Talent, Market, Capital, Eco-system and, Culture of openness
- ✓ The Prime minister also mentioned that indigenous IT platform, Arogya-Setu enabled effective contact tracing during the pandemic in the country.
- ✓ Other prominent speakers in the event include President of France Emmanuel Macron, Prime Minister of Spain Pedro Sanchez and ministers and MPs from various European countries.

- ✓ The event will also witness the participation of corporate leaders including Apple CEO Tim Cook, Chairman and CEO, Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg and President, Microsoft Brad Smith.
 - ✓ It is jointly organised by Publicis Groupe - a prominent advertising and marketing conglomerate and Les Echos - a leading French media group.
 - ✓ The event brought together stakeholders in technology innovation and the startup ecosystem and included exhibitions, awards, panel discussions and startup contests.
 - ✓ The 5th edition of VivaTech is scheduled to be held between June 16 and 19.
- **Defence minister Rajnath Singh – addressed virtually at the Asean defence ministers-plus meeting held on June 16, 2021**



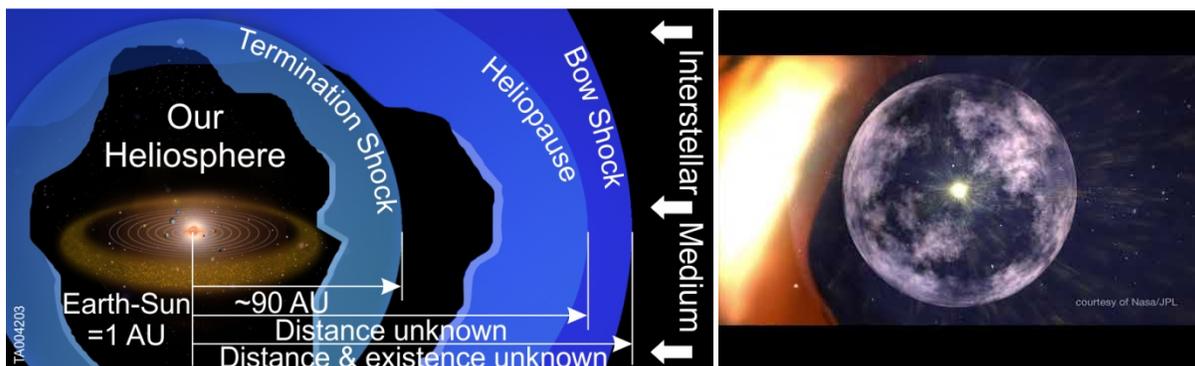
- ✓ According to the Minister, India stands for a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific and supports freedom of navigation in the South China Sea
- ✓ The multilateral forum was being attended by his Chinese counterpart General Wei Fenghe
- ✓ India hopes the member nations to follow the ‘code of conduct’ negotiations in keeping with international law, including the UNCLOS, as per the Minister
- ✓ China has been showing aggressive behaviour in territorial disputes in the South China Sea over the last few years, creating tensions with its neighbours as well as the US.
- ✓ US secretary of defence Llyod Austin was also part of the Asean virtual meet,
- ✓ India, Australia, China, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Russia and the US are the eight dialogue partners of the meet.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **World’s first wooden satellite, called ‘WISA Woodsat’ – to be launched from New Zealand by the end of 2021**



- ✓ It will be launched in orbit by a US-based rocket called 'Electron' from the Mahia Peninsula launch complex in New Zealand
 - ✓ The satellite was designed and built by Arctic Astronautics, a Finland company
 - ✓ It will be placed in orbit at around 500-600 km altitude in a roughly polar Sun-synchronous orbit.
 - ✓ WISA Woodsat is a 10x10x10 cm nano cube-satellite built up from standardised boxes and panels made from birch plywood with the sensors being provided by European Space Agency (ESA)
 - ✓ The mission of the satellite is to test the applicability of wooden materials like plywood in spacecraft structures
 - ✓ The satellite will be exposed to extreme space conditions, such as heat, cold, vacuum and radiation, for an extended period of time to test the adaptability.
 - ✓ WISA Woodsat's wood has been vacuum-dried by placing in a separate chamber to eliminate humidity and keep it dry
 - ✓ Its' only non-wooden external parts are corner aluminium rails used for its deployment into space and a metal selfie stick to take pictures
- **For the first time ever, scientists at the Los Alamos National Laboratory in the US - have created a 3D map of the boundary between our solar system and interstellar space called 'heliosphere'**

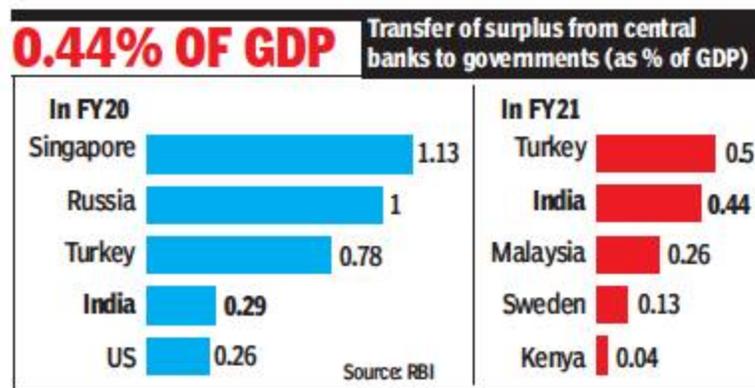


- ✓ The heliosphere is a protective bubble created by the solar wind, which is a constant stream of magnetic field and particles released by the sun

- ✓ It exists around our solar system and protects us from harmful interstellar radiation
- ✓ The 3D-mapping has been done using data from NASA's Interstellar Boundary Explorer, an earth-orbiting satellite
- ✓ Using the data, astronomers were able to map the edge of our heliosphere, called the heliopause.
- ✓ The heliopause is the area where there is a fierce interaction between interstellar space radiation and the solar wind

ECONOMY

- **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) - was second only to Turkey in terms of reserves transferred to the government as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) for the fiscal 2020-21.**
- ✓ In FY20, the RBI stood fourth when ranked by the ratio of surplus as a percentage of GDP.



- ✓ Last month, the RBI transferred a ₹99,122-crore surplus to the government — 73% higher than the ₹57,128 crore paid out in 2019-20.
- ✓ The State of the Economy report published by the RBI said that the surplus transfer ratio was low enough (just 0.44% of GDP) to enable the central bank to conduct monetary policy free of fiscal dominance.

RANKINGS

- **Finland – has topped the annual Sustainable Development Report 2021**
- ✓ This is the first time the Nordic country has been ranked at the top of the SDG Index.
- ✓ The SDG Index and dashboards were prepared by experts from the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) and the Bertelsmann Stiftung
- ✓ It compares how countries implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- ✓ The Sustainable Development Report looks at the actions and initiatives of 193 countries.

- ✓ Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Belgium, Austria, Norway, France, Slovenia and Estonia were ranked among the Top-10 countries in the annual rankings
- ✓ As per the Index, Bangladesh, Côte d'Ivoire and Afghanistan are the top three countries that have progressed most on the SDG Index score since 2015, when all the 193 UN member states agreed the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.
- ✓ By contrast, the three countries that have declined the most are Venezuela, Tuvalu, and Brazil.
- ✓ Interestingly, Finland also took the top spot as the happiest country in the world according to the World Happiness Report, released during March 2021

