

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS –JUNE 19, 2021

TAMIL NADU

- **The University of Madras – announced a high-level expert committee to advise on and review the quality of teaching and research activity in the university.**
- ✓ A resolution to form the committee was passed by the university syndicate, which met after three months on June 18
- ✓ The committee will have former UGC officials, retired vice-chancellors, retired professors from University of Madras and other universities, industrialists and IT experts as its members
- ✓ The University is also planning to engage Indian professors working in foreign universities with the committee.
- ✓ The committee will help enhance quality of teaching, research and placements apart from preparing the University for future learning — education 4.0
- ✓ The university has also decided to form a new syndicate committee for technology and infrastructure development for online education and assessment.
- ✓ **The institute has decided to introduce a new elective paper on ‘Thirukkural’ for all undergraduate students from the coming academic year.**
- ✓ Accordingly, Thirukkural for Professional Ethics, will be introduced as one of the elective courses in all UG programmes in affiliated colleges, as per the syllabus to be decided by the University

NATIONAL

- **The Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and Tata MD Limited, healthcare venture of the Tata Group – are collaborating to improve Covid-19 testing capacity in small towns and rural areas.**
- ✓ The new initiative will utilise CSIR’s network of 37 labs across the country.
- ✓ Tata MD will employ the existing RT-PCR CRISPR test, powered by FELUDA technology

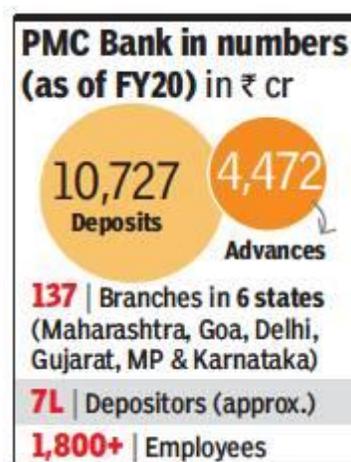
- ✓ Further, it will also deploy its mobile testing labs that can conduct end-to-end, on-site Covid-19 testing.

INTERNATIONAL

- **The Delta variant, first identified in India - is becoming the globally dominant variant of the Covid-19 disease**
- ✓ This was announced by the WHO's chief scientist Soumya Swaminathan on June 18
- ✓ According to WHO, the Delta variant is now being reported in about 80 countries around the world.
- ✓ The variant is causing a huge jump of new cases in the UK, making up 99% of all cases
- ✓ The delta variant, also known as B.1.617.2 strain, has 50% higher transmissibility than the Alpha variant
- ✓ The B.1.617.2 Delta variant was first detected in India around October 2020

ECONOMY

- **On June 18, the Reserve Bank of India - granted an in-principle small finance bank licence to 'Centrum Finance' as part of its resolution for the Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative Bank.**
- ✓ Centrum Finance, upon conversion to a small finance bank, will acquire the business of PMC Bank
- ✓ The PMC Bank has been under a RBI moratorium since September 24, 2019, following its near-collapse
- ✓ A consortium of Mumbai-based NBFC Centrum Finance and fintech Bharat Pe were the bidders of the Bank
- ✓ They have submitted a joint proposal to overtake PMC Bank in February 2021.
- ✓ Earlier, PMC Bank had collapsed dramatically after the management had colluded with Wadhwas of HDIL to provide loans of ₹6,500 crore or 73% of its total loan book size of ₹8,880 crore.



- ✓ The bank registered a net loss of ₹6,835 crore for FY20 and had a negative net worth of ₹5,850 crore.
- ✓ Centrum has been given 120 days to convert its operations into a bank.
- ✓ Once the bank is established, the government can issue a notification under Section 45 of the RBI Act which provides for amalgamation of two banks.
- ✓ A small finance bank is like a regular private commercial bank in most aspects, except that it cannot give large loans to businesses and must focus only on retail.
- ✓ They have far more freedom to get into new activities when compared to cooperative banks which are largely regional in their business.
- ✓ Founded in 1997, Centrum lends to corporates, individuals and small businesses.
- ✓ Centrum is currently led by Jaspal Bindram, former head of Stanchart Asia.
- ✓ BharatPe is a fintech founded by Ashneer Grover and Shasvat Nakrani which focuses on services to small retailers.
- ✓ The company has already facilitated disbursement of loans totalling over ₹1,600 crore to its merchants since launch.
- ✓ BharatPe has raised close to US\$ 300 million in equity and debt, to date.
- ✓ PMC is a co-operative bank that was established in 1983, registered under Cooperative Societies Act.
- ✓ It has 137 branches across India, of which about 100 branches are in Maharashtra.

APPOINTMENTS

- **The UN General Assembly - unanimously elected Antonio Guterres to a second term as secretary-general on June 18**

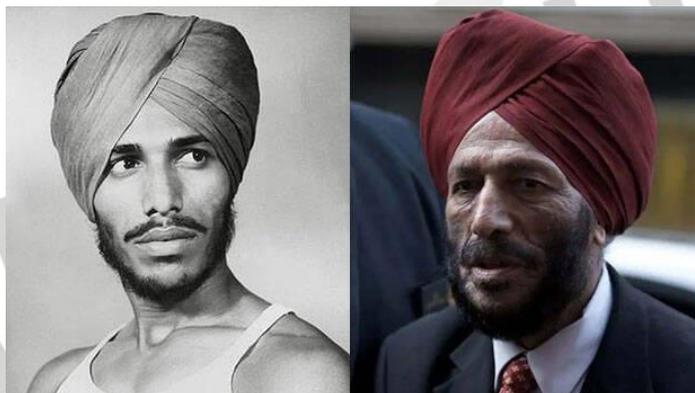


- ✓ He will be in-charge of the 193-member organisation for another five years, beginning January 1, 2022
- ✓ Guterres, nominated by the Government of Portugal, was the only candidate recommended by the 15-nation Security Council for the UN's top post
- ✓ After his re-election, Guterres took the oath of office at the podium of the UN General Assembly hall and delivered an address to all the UN member nations
- ✓ India had expressed its support for re-election of Guterres as UN Chief and welcomed the adoption of the resolution recommending his name.

- ✓ Last month, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar met Guterres at the United Nations headquarters and expressed India's support to him for his second term as the world's top diplomat.
- ✓ As per the UN Charter, the Secretary-General is appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council.
- ✓ Guterres, the ninth Secretary-General of the United Nations, took over on January 1, 2017 and his first term ends on December 31, 2021.
- ✓ Former Prime Minister of Portugal, Guterres served as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees from June 2005 to December 2015.

SPORTS

- **Four-time Asian Games gold medallist, Milkha Singh (90 years) - passed away on June 18 due to post-Covid complications at the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER) hospital in Chandigarh**



- ✓ Milkha Singh had contracted Covid-19 on May 19, and was earlier admitted at the Covid ICU of the same hospital on June 3 before returning negative on June 16
- ✓ The legendary athlete's greatest performance remains the fourth-place finish in the 400m final of the 1960 Rome Olympics.
- ✓ He finished to fourth-place in 45.73 seconds which was an Indian national record for almost 40 years, broken by Paramjeet Singh in 1998.
- ✓ The Flying Sikh also represented India in the 1956 and 1964 Olympics
- ✓ Milkha Singh is the only athlete who won gold in 400 metres race at Asian Games & Commonwealth Games.
- ✓ He had also won four Asian Games gold medals – 200m and 400m in 1958, and 400m and 4x400m relay in 1962
- ✓ Singh was born in Gobindpura located in present day Pakistan
- ✓ He was the first Indian track and field athlete to win gold in the then British Empire and Commonwealth Games in Cardiff in 1958.
- ✓ Discuss thrower Krishna Poonia was the next Commonwealth gold medal winner, after Milkha Singh, at the 2010 CWG in Delhi.

- ✓ Milkha Singh was conferred the Padma Shri, India's fourth-highest civilian honour, in 1959.
- ✓ Milkha Singh's wife Nirmal Kaur, a former national volleyball captain, passed away due to Covid-19 five days earlier

RANKINGS

- **Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) – has released a new report ‘State of India’s Environment 2021’ focusing on state capitals among India’s top 10 most livable cities.**
- ✓ As per the report which was based on Ease of Living Index 2020, only three state capitals are among India’s top 10 most livable cities
- ✓ Bengaluru was ranked as the best city overall, followed by Chennai.
- ✓ The nation’s capital, Delhi was ranked sixth on the list, behind Bengaluru, Chennai, Shimla, Bhubaneswar and Mumbai
- ✓ Delhi was ranked as the worst capital in the perception of citizens contacted for the survey.
- ✓ However, the capital city was ranked as the fourth best city in terms of governance behind Bhopal, Raipur and Mumbai.
- ✓ For the quality of governance rankings of the cities, five parameters were used - services, finance, technology, urban planning and overall governance.
- ✓ To determine the score on the Ease of Living Index, four parameters were used - quality of life, economic ability, sustainability and citizens’ perceptions.
- ✓ The cities were given scores on all four parameters out of 100.

HOW THE CAPITALS FARED					
■ 0-30 ■ 31-60 ■ 61-100					
City	 Ease of living index	 Quality of life (out of 100)	 Economic ability (out of 100)	 Sustainability (out of 100)	 Citizen perception survey (out of 100)
Bengaluru	66.7	55.67	78.82	59.97	78
Chennai	62.61	60.84	34.16	57.05	82.6
Shimla	60.9	53.05	23.39	69.16	83.39
Bhubaneswar	59.85	51.79	11.57	57.77	94.8
Mumbai	58.23	51.12	32.12	60.74	77.9
Delhi	57.56	51.22	50.73	56.02	69.4
Bhopal	56.26	57.92	14.01	51.68	78.5
Raipur	56.26	54.74	11.73	63.77	75.3
Gandhinagar	56.25	55.02	15.12	51.99	81.1
Jaipur	55.8	47.66	10.49	57.07	87.1

Note - Index did not rank four capital cities - Dispur, Daman, Amaravati and Kolkata

Criteria weightage %	35	15	20	30
	Quality of life	Economic ability	Sustainability	Citizen perception survey

- ✓ Out of the capital cities, only one state capital (Bengaluru) demonstrated a decent economic ability, scoring 78.8 out of 100
- ✓ Four other state capitals (Chennai, Mumbai, Delhi and Hyderabad) provide reasonable economic opportunities, while the rest have all scored less than 30 out of 100

INTERNATIONAL DAY

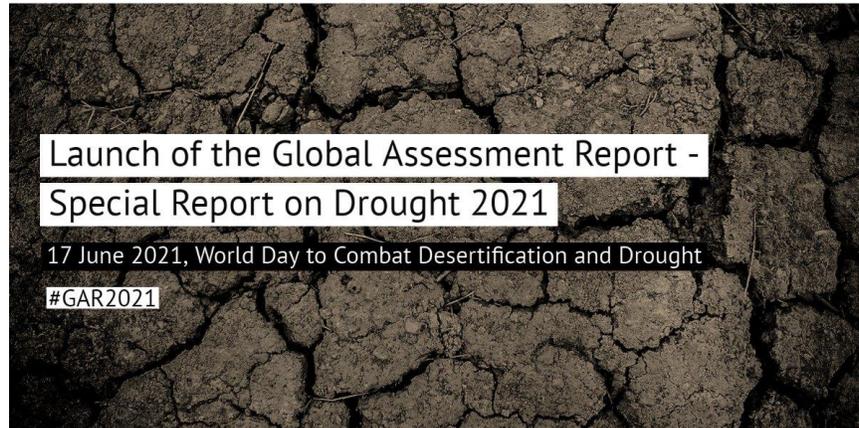
➤ World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought - June 17



- ✓ The Day is observed every year globally to raise awareness on land degradation, desertification and drought.
- ✓ It seeks the restoration of degraded land and prevent desertification of the soil
- ✓ Theme 2021 - “Restoration. Land. Recovery. We build back better with healthy land”.
- ✓ On the occasion, Union Minister for Environment, Forest & Climate Change Prakash Javadekar highlighted that India is on track to achieve target of land degradation neutrality and will restore 26 million hectares of degraded land by 2030.
- ✓ This day was proclaimed by a United Nations General Assembly Resolution on January 30, 1995 following the day when United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification was drafted.
- ✓ As per the United Nations, land degradation negatively impacts the health of a minimum of 3.2 billion people.

REPORT

- **The UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) – has released a special report titled ‘Global Assessment Report (GAR) on Drought 2021’ on June 17**
- ✓ The study focused on the increasing water scarcity across the globe and resulting migration and desertification
- ✓ It will be a part of discussions at the upcoming UN climate talks called COP-26, scheduled to take place in Glasgow in November 2021.



- ✓ The report has estimated the “impact of severe droughts on India’s GDP to be about 2-5% per annum”
- ✓ As per the study, the Deccan plateau is seeing the highest frequency (of more than 6%) of severe droughts in India.
- ✓ The study found “significant drought conditions” once in every three years in the Deccan plateau leading to largescale migration and desertification.
- ✓ The experts, commissioned by UNDRR, conducted case studies in the Deccan plateau, comprising 43% of India’s landmass.
- ✓ The droughts also cause considerable loss to the economy of the country as well
- ✓ Accordingly, the recent major droughts in Tamil Nadu contributed to 20% reduction in the primary sector causing an overall 5% drop in industry and a 3% reduction in the service sector.
- ✓ The GAR report has cited major droughts in India in the last 150 years - in 1876-1878, 1899-1900, 1918-1919, 1965-1967, 2000-2003 and 2015-2018.
- ✓ According to the report, about 1.5 billion people are directly affected by drought this century, whose economic cost was roughly estimated at \$124 billion

