

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – JUNE 7, 2021

TAMIL NADU

- **Chief Minister M K Stalin - revamped the State Development Policy Council (SDPC) on June 6 by inducting a full-time member and eight part-time members**




- ✓ Economist Professor J Jeyaranjan has been named vice chairman of the council while Chief Minister Stalin will be its chairman.
- ✓ Professor R Srinivasan, department of econometrics, University of Madras, was named as the permanent full time member of the council.
- ✓ The eight part-time members of the council are
 - ✓ M Vijayabaskar, Professor, Madras Institute of Development Studies
 - ✓ K Deenabandu, retired IAS officer
 - ✓ Dr Sultan Ahmed Ismail, Director Ecoscience Research Foundation and former Head of Department of Biotechnology, New College, Chennai
 - ✓ Dr G Sivaraman, Siddha physician
 - ✓ Narthaki Nataraj, Bharatanatyam dancer
 - ✓ Mallika Srinivasan, Managing Director of Tractors and Farm Equipment Limited

- ✓ Dr J Amalorpavanathan, activist and retired professor of Madras Medical College and
- ✓ T R B Raja, DMK MLA of Mannargudi
- ✓ SDPC is a body tasked with guiding the government in policies in sectors like agriculture and industry.
- ✓ A doctorate from Madras Institute of Development Studies, Prof. Jeyaranjan has been a strong supporter of various welfare schemes implemented by the DMK governments over the years.
- ✓ Srinivasan is also Dean - Research of the University of Madras and has also been part of the erstwhile State Planning Commission between 2006 and 2011
- ✓ Narthaki Nataraj was the first transgender to be honoured with a Padma Shri in 2019
- ✓ Mallika Srinivasan, a Padma Shri recipient in 2014, is the Chairman and Managing Director of Tractors and Farm Equipment Limited (TAFE).
- ✓ Rajaa, who recently obtained a doctorate in Counselling Psychology and Management, is a third-term legislator and a former senate member of the University of Madras
- ✓ Among the other part-time members, Vijayabaskar is with Madras Institute of Development Studies, while Ismail, an ecologist, was formerly director of EcoScience Research Foundation.
- ✓ Amalorpavanathan was the former head of vascular surgery, Madras Medical College and also the convenor of the cadaver organ transplant programme in the state
- ✓ During his service as an IAS officer, Deenabandu worked towards housing facilities and educational aid for Sri Lankan refugees living in Tamil Nadu
- ✓ A doctorate from Tamil University in Thanjavur, Dr G Sivaraman has been strongly advocating for the nutrients found in millets.
- ✓ The State Planning Commission was originally established by former chief minister M Karunanidhi on May 25, 1971 as an advisory body to recommend developmental schemes for the state.
- ✓ While presenting the state's budget in 2017, finance minister D Jayakumar had promised to reorganise the Planning Commission as SDPC to suggest ways in achieving higher economic growth for the state
- ✓ His promise was fulfilled three years later, when the previous AIADMK government formed the SDPC on April 23, 2020
- ✓ It had retained former state finance minister C Ponnaiyan as its vice-chairman, a post he was handling for the State Planning Commission.
- **Tamil Nadu – has been ranked 3rd in the Performance Grading Index (PGI) report released by the Union ministry of education on June 6.**
- ✓ As per the composite 70-point grading index, Tamil Nadu got 906 points out of 1,000 points, an increase of more than 100 points compared to 2018-19.
- ✓ Only Punjab (929) and Chandigarh (912) have performed better than Tamil Nadu

- ✓ All the 3 states have moved two grades up from grade II to grade I ++.
- ✓ Among the southern states, however, Tamil Nadu (132) has the lowest score in learning outcome and quality for 2019-20 compared to Karnataka (160), Kerala (154), Andhra Pradesh (154) and Telangana (142).
- ✓ In access to school, only Kerala (79) and Punjab (79) have better scores than Tamil Nadu (77).
- ✓ In infrastructure and facilities too, Tamil Nadu fared well, with only Punjab, Delhi and Chandigarh being ahead of the state.

FOCUS ON THE BASICS

TN stood 3rd among 37 states and UTs scoring 906 out of 1,000 points. It also jumped from Grade II in the previous cycle to Grade I++

TN report card	
➤ Learning outcomes and quality: 132/180 (22nd place)	
➤ Access: 77/80 (3rd place)	
➤ Infrastructure and facilities: 142/150 (4th place)	
➤ Equity: 219/230 (11th place)	

- ✓ Tamil Nadu also performed well in other domains of equity and governance processes.
- ✓ The grading index was developed to assess the quality of school education offered by states.
- ✓ The information on the indicators is drawn from data available from the Unified District Information System (UDISE), National Achievement Survey (NAS) of NCERT, Mid Day meal website, Public Financial Management System (PFMS) and Shagun portal.

STATES

- **Chief Minister of Goa, Pramod Sawant - launched solar-based electrification programme for rural households of state, on the occasion of Goa statehood Day recently**
- ✓ This programme aims to provide electricity using renewable energy to rural areas in Goa where grid connectivity is not feasible.
- ✓ Solar PV-based home lighting systems were also inaugurated after a new agreement was signed between Convergence Energy Services Ltd (CESL) and Goa Energy Development Agency (GEDA).
- ✓ The CESL will install and maintain the solar PV systems for five years under Remote Village Electrification (RVE) programme.
- ✓ It will undertake electrification programme across villages and hamlets in coordination with Gram panchayats.

NATIONAL

- **Central Bank of India and Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) - have been recommended for disinvestment by government think tank, NITI Aayog**
- ✓ The Centre may sell its stake in these two banks as part of its mega privatisation initiative unveiled in the Union Budget in February.
- ✓ The proposal from the government think tank is being vetted by the disinvestment and financial services departments.
- ✓ While NITI Aayog has been tasked with recommending the names, it is then reviewed by the interministerial group of officers and subsequently by a group of ministers, before the Union cabinet puts its seal of approval.

COVID WON'T HIT TARGET

<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) and Central Bank are valued at around ₹44,000cr. IOB's mcap is estimated at ₹31,641cr➤ Govt plans to raise around ₹1.75L cr in 2021-22 from the	<p>privatisation drive & LIC's listing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ The selloff plan has been hit by second wave of Covid but the Centre is confident that the target will be met
---	--

- ✓ Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM), which handles the government's asset sales programme, will now examine the proposal with the department of financial services
 - ✓ It will also discuss the legislative changes needed for the privatisation of the state-run banks.
 - ✓ Besides, the issue will have to be discussed in detail with RBI as the law and regulations provide a special dispensation for state-run entities in several areas.
 - ✓ The cabinet recently approved the sale of government stake in IDBI Bank
 - ✓ The government is hoping to conclude the sale of IDBI Bank stake during the current financial year.
 - ✓ Among the dozen state-run lenders, NITI Aayog is targeting Bank of Maharashtra, Punjab & Sind Bank, UCO Bank, Bank of India, IOB and Central Bank for strategic disinvestment
 - ✓ Based on the current share price, the two entities are together valued at around ₹44,000 crore with IOB's market cap estimated at ₹31,641 crore.
- **Punjab, Chandigarh, Tamil Nadu, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Kerala, in the respective order – were rated at the highest grade A++ in 2019-20 in the field of school education**
 - ✓ This was revealed in the Performance Grading Index (PGI) for school education released by the ministry of education on June 6
 - ✓ The PGI analyses the performance of school education in states on 70 parameters

- ✓ Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Rajasthan, Puducherry, Dadra and Nagar Haveli have been ranked in the A+ category.
- ✓ However, in the governance and management domain, 24 states/ UTs have scored less than 80% of the maximum possible score of 360.
- ✓ Infrastructure and facilities is again a big concern with 20 states/ UTs having scored less than 80% of maximum possible score of 150 in this domain.
- ✓ Punjab has scored maximum points for governance and management, while Bihar and Meghalaya have scored the lowest in terms of infrastructure and facilities.

EDUCATION INDEX

- Punjab, Chandigarh, TN, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, and Kerala got the highest grade, A++, in school edu
- Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Rajasthan, Puducherry, and Dadra & Nagar Haveli got A+
- Punjab scored maximum in governance and management; Bihar and Meghalaya got the lowest in infrastructure and facilities

- ✓ Two states — Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Odisha — have shown marked improvements in the infrastructure domain between 2018-19 and 2019-20
 - ✓ Overall 13 states/ UTs have shown improvement by up to 10 percentage points in the domain of infrastructure and facilities.
 - ✓ Nineteen have shown improvement by 10 percentage points or more in the domain of governance process.
 - ✓ Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Punjab, Rajasthan and West Bengal have shown improvement by at least 20 percentage points.
- **Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting - has launched four new helpline numbers to assist people amidst the second wave of covid-19 pandemic.**
- ✓ The new numbers are 1075, 1098, 14566 and 08046110007
 - ✓ 1075 is the National Helpline number of Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
 - ✓ It is now open for rural India to book vaccination slots.
 - ✓ 1098 is the Child Helpline number of Ministry of Women & Child Development
 - ✓ 14566 is the Senior Citizens Helpline of Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.
 - ✓ It will work in states of Karnataka, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.
 - ✓ 08046110007 is Helpline number of National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) that will provide psychological support.

- ✓ Apart from that, a community support helpline number 14443 was operationalised by Ministry of AYUSH to provide approaches and solutions for challenges raised by Covid-19.
- **Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) - will launch Nitrogen fertilizer-based Nano Urea in market in June 2021**
- ✓ A 500-ml Nano Urea, costing around Rs. 240, is equivalent to 45kg of normal urea.
- ✓ It will reduce input cost of farmers by 15% and cultivation will increase the yield by about 20%.
- ✓ Urea produced from nano-technology to improve the nutrients efficiency of the crops is called as nano urea.
- ✓ Nano urea is prepared from quinhydrone mixed liquor, which is then spread onto calcium cyanamide granules.
- ✓ The commercial use of nano urea was allowed in India in November 2020.
- ✓ India uses 350 lakhs metric tonnes of urea per year.
- ✓ The use of nano-urea will reduce the consumption by half, thereby saving about 600 crore rupees subsidy provided by government.
- ✓ IFFCO is multi-state cooperative society involved in manufacturing and marketing of fertilisers.

PERSONALITIES

- **Kerala-based Thomas Vijayan, who is now settled in Canada - has won the 2021 Nature TTL Photography Awards for his photo of an Orangutan clinging to a tree.**



- ✓ The photograph is titled 'The World is Going Upside Down'.

- ✓ Vijayan's stunning 'mind-bending' photo won him the top prize of 1,500 pounds (Rs.1.5 lakh) from over 8,000 entries and the title of 'Nature TTL Photographer of the Year 2021'
- ✓ Thomas Vijayan's photograph of a group of playful langurs was also "Highly Commended" in the 'Animal Behaviour' category of Nature TTL Photography competition.
- ✓ The picture had earlier been honoured in the Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards 2021
- ✓ Nature TTL is the world's leading online nature photography resource.

DEFENCE

- **The Army – is 'on track' to create new self-contained fighting units called 'integrated battle groups (IBGs)', which can mobilise fast and hit hard**
- ✓ The initial lot of IBGs will have around 5,000 soldiers and a varying mix of infantry, tanks, artillery, air defence, signals, engineers and other units permanently deployed together
- ✓ They will be set up out of existing formations by early-2022.
- ✓ As for the composite IBGs, already war-gamed in exercises, the Army plans to first carve out 8-10 of them from the 9 Corps (Yol), 17 Corps (Panagarh) and 33 Corps (Sukna).
- ✓ To be commanded by Major-Generals, IBGs will be larger than brigades (3,000 soldiers each) but smaller than divisions (12,000 soldiers each).

CORBEVAX – CHEAPEST VACCINE TO BE AVAILABLE IN INDIA – A REPORT

- **Biological E's Corbevax – could soon become the cheapest vaccine available by a fair margin in the country**
- ✓ Corbevax will be made at Hyderabad-based Biological E, but it was developed by Texas Children's Hospital Center for Vaccine Development at Baylor College of Medicine.
- ✓ In 2011, the US-based Center started a coronavirus vaccine programme to develop low-cost vaccines for diseases like SARS, which they thought posed a "pandemic threat".
- ✓ It led to a vaccine called 'CoV RBD219-N1' that was never put to use.
- ✓ But when Covid turned into a pandemic last year, the old vaccine came in handy, as SARS and Covid are related viruses.
- ✓ The vaccine is made on a proven, decades-old technology that has been used to make the hepatitis B vaccine since 1986.
- ✓ Their Covid vaccine is made through "microbial fermentation in yeast."
- ✓ It's not baker's yeast — although that's used to make some types of vaccines — but another type called 'Pichia pastoris'.

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT CORBEVAX

> Developed by Texas Children's Hospital Center for Vaccine Development (TCHCVD) at Baylor College of Medicine

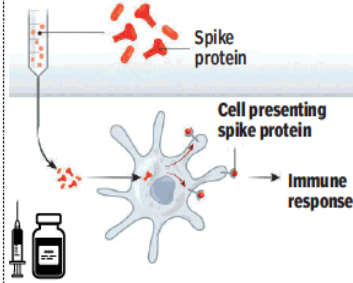
> Made by Hyderabad-based Biological E

Vaccine type: 'Recombinant protein subunit', also known as a 'receptor-binding domain' (RBD) vaccine

Schedule: 2 doses administered via intramuscular injection 28 days apart

Storage: Ordinary refrigerator

Recombinant: In the 1980s, scientists figured out how to combine DNA from two or more sources. This is called recombinant DNA technology. When a virus's genetic code is inserted into a yeast cell, the yeast starts making virus proteins. Vaccine makers use this process to produce protein subunit vaccines



RBD vaccine: The coronavirus uses its spikes to attach to human cells. Within a spike, a part called 'receptor binding domain' or RBD lets it dock with and infect cells. An RBD subunit vaccine like Corbevax contains only the virus's RBD proteins. Different protein subunit vaccines may use different parts of the virus

ADVANTAGES OF PROTEIN SUBUNIT VACCINES

> Instead of the whole virus, they contain only the components that best stimulate the immune system

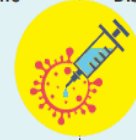
> Including only some specific parts of a virus minimises side effects, and the vaccines are easier to make

> "These vaccines are similarly effective as whole-cell vaccines but much less likely to cause adverse

reactions," says America's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases

> As these vaccines cannot cause disease themselves, they are also suitable for people with compromised immune systems

> Another big advantage of using specific virus proteins is that these vaccines can be more stable than those containing whole viruses



DISADVANTAGES

> Because the immune system is exposed to only a few virus parts, it may not respond strongly to the vaccine

> Also, the resulting immunity may be limited to antibodies that wane with time

> To overcome this weakness, protein subunit vaccines usually contain another substance, called adjuvant, to stimulate the immune system strongly. Corbevax uses the adjuvant 'CpG 1018' made by US-based Dynavax



4 MAIN TYPES OF VIRUS VACCINES

1 **Whole virus:** Contains disease-causing virus, whether weakened or killed. Eg. Covaxin

2 **Viral vector:** Contains unrelated virus that delivers genetic code to make specific parts of disease-causing virus. Eg. Covishield

3 **Protein subunit:** Contains specific parts of disease-causing virus for immune system to recognise it. Eg. Corbevax

4 **mRNA:** Contains only genetic material with instructions for making specific parts of disease-causing virus. Eg. Pfizer vaccine

THE LONG ROAD TO A NEW VACCINE



2011: Baylor College of Medicine starts work on coronavirus vaccines. Develops vaccine 'CoV RBD219-N1' for SARS and MERS that's never put to use

2020: Resumes work on coronavirus vaccines, with focus on Covid

August 2020: Licensed by Indian pharma company Biological E

November 2020: Phase I/II combined trial

April 2021: Biological E starts Phase III trial at 15 sites in India

June 2021: Indian government places an advance order of Rs 1,500 crore for 30 crore doses. Biological E says it plans to manufacture and stockpile these doses from August to December, with the first 7.5 crore to be available by September. It plans to make another 120 crore doses in 2022

- ✓ The yeast produces the protein that the Covid virus uses to attach itself to human cells, in huge quantities, and the vaccine is made using the purified protein.
- ✓ It's not only cheap and easy to make but can be stored in an ordinary refrigerator.
- ✓ And since other vaccines of this type – called recombinant protein vaccines – have proven safe for kids over the years, they could fill the gap for a children's Covid vaccine.

