

# Weekly Current Affairs

06 July- 12 July, 2020

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## **NATIONAL NEWS**

### **1. Government blocks 40 websites of pro-Khalistan group, stops 'Referendum 2020'**

- The Government on July 5, 2020 blocked forty websites of pro-Khalistan group Sikhs For Justice (SFJ) and foiled its attempt to register voters to support its cause. The Home Ministry had recommended blocking the websites.
- The "Sikhs For Justice" is an unlawful organisation that was set up under the UAPA 1967. The pro-khalistan group was registering supporters for its case. On Home Ministry's recommendation, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology issued orders under Section 69A of the IT Act, 2000 to block the 40 websites.
- The group was registering supporters for 'Referendum 2020' to support its demand for Khalistan, a separate state for Sikhs.

### **2. Madhya Pradesh tourism started campaign 'IntzaarAapKa' to attract tourists**

- In Madhya Pradesh, in order to attract tourists to the tourist places of the state; 'IntzaarAapKa' campaign has started on social media platforms.
- The Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board has been inviting tourists by describing the characteristics of each tourist destination in an attractive way with that tagline on social media platforms.
- Madhya Pradesh Tourism board is inviting tourists for safe outing during the monsoon season at various religious, natural and archaeological tourist places of the state like Mahakaleshwar, Pachmarhi, Kanha, Bandhavgarh, Amarkantak and other tourist places.

### **3. CBSE partners with Facebook to launch free training program for teachers, students**

- The Central Board of Secondary Education-CBSE has partnered with Facebook to launch a free and comprehensive training program for teachers and students of its affiliated schools.
- The program will cover teacher training on augmented reality and student training on digital safety and online well-being.
- The training program will be of three weeks in which 10 thousand teachers will be trained on augmented reality while 10 thousand students will be trained on digital safety and well-being.
- The participants will also receive a joint e- certificate from CBSE and Facebook on successful completion of the course.

### **4. India's Rank 117th in SDG Index 2020, Sweden Tops: Sustainable Development Report 2020**

- In accordance with the "Sustainable Development Report 2020- The Sustainable Development Goals and Covid-19", comprising of SDG index 2020, there will be severe negative impacts on most of the United Nations (UN)-mandated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) due to COVID-19

pandemic. India, which has ranked at 117th position with a score of 61.92 is also facing major challenges in 10 of the 17 SDGs including zero hunger, good health, gender inequality among others.

- The index has been topped by Sweden with a score of 84.72.
- The 2020 report has reviewed the performance of 193 UN Member States out of which 166 were ranked under SDG index 2020.

#### **5. Himachal Pradesh becomes first state to provide LPG connection to everyone**

- Himachal Pradesh has become the first state in the country in which every household has an LPG gas connection. Announcing this while interacting with the beneficiaries of the Himachal Grihini Suvidha Yojana today, Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur said that as many as 2,76,243 families were provided free gas connections under the scheme.
- This scheme, he said, was launched for those households which were not covered under the Centre's Pradhan Mantri Ujjawala Yojana under which connections were provided free to poor women of rural areas. "As many as 1.36 lakh families of the state benefited from the Central Government's scheme," said Thakur, adding that the availability of gas connection was saving women from the ill-effects of smoke and helping in the conservation of environment too.

#### **6. Karur Vysya Bank partners with Star Health Insurance to provide health insurance to its customers**

- The Karur Vysya Bank (KVB) has entered into a tie-up with Star Health and Allied Insurance to provide health insurance products to its customers.
- By the agreement, all the health insurance products of Star Health & Allied Insurance will be made available through all 780 branches of the Tamil Nadu-based bank.
- This agreement helps the bank to provide cost-effective insurance products and quick settlement of claims for its customers.

#### **7. Himalayan Golden Birdwing butterfly named as India's largest butterfly**

- A Himalayan butterfly named Golden Birdwing is India's largest, a record an unknown specimen had held for 88 years.
- With a wingspan of 194 mm, the female of the species is marginally larger than the Southern Birdwing (190 mm) that Brigadier William Harry Evans, a British military officer, had recorded in 1932.
- But the male Golden Birdwing (*Troides aeacus*) is much smaller at 106 mm.
- The female Golden Birdwing with 194 mm wingspan was recorded at Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh district's Didihat town, while the male Golden Birdwing with 106 mm wingspan was recorded at the Wankhar Butterfly Museum (in Shillong).

#### **8. Indian Railways to transform itself as 'Net Zero' Carbon Emission Mass Transportation Network by 2030**

- Indian Railways is taking decisive steps to transform itself as a 'Net Zero' Carbon Emission Mass Transportation Network by 2030.

- It is endeavouring to be self reliant for its energy needs by utilising its vacant land for renewable energy projects.
- Railways is committed to utilize solar energy for meeting its traction power requirements and become a complete 'Green mode of transformation.
- The Railways Ministry has decided to install solar power plants on its vacant unused lands on mega scale.

#### **9. Himachal Pradesh's Nadaun Police Station ranked as one of best Police Stations of India**

- Nadaun Police Station of Hamirpur district in Himachal Pradesh has been ranked as one of the best Police Stations of the country.
- Certificate of Excellence was provided to this Police Station by Union Home Minister Amit Shah.
- The ranking of police stations is carried out by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India and the same was released by the Union Home Minister in a ceremony during DGPs Conference.

#### **10. Tamil Nadu tops market borrowings among States in 2020-21**

- According to data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Tamil Nadu has raised 30,500 crores in the fiscal 2020-21 and has topped market borrowings among States in the country.
- Tamil Nadu, which has accounted for 17% of the borrowings done through the issue of bonds (known as state development loans), has been followed by Maharashtra ₹25,500 crores (14%), Andhra Pradesh ₹17,000 crores (9%) and Rajasthan ₹17,000 crores (9%).
- Tamil Nadu raised ₹1,250 crores at the low-interest rate of 6.63% for the 35-year bonds and ₹1,250 crores at the rate of 4.54% for the three-year bonds in the auction conducted by RBI.
- On July 7, Tamil Nadu borrowed an additional amount of ₹500 crores rather than the ₹2,000 crores originally planned.
- The State had planned to raise ₹2,000 crores through the issue of bonds of ₹1,000 each with tenures of 35 years and 3 years respectively.
- Tamil Nadu had an option to raise a further ₹250 crore in each of these securities, through what is known as the 'greenshoe' option.

#### **11. Skill India launches AI-based ASEEM digital platform for skilled workforce across sectors**

- The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) launched 'Aatmanirbhar Skilled Employee Employer Mapping' (ASEEM) portal to help skilled people find sustainable livelihood opportunities.
- It has been launched to improve the information flow and bridge the demand-supply gap in the skilled workforce market.
- Apart from recruiting a skilled workforce that spurs business competitiveness and economic growth, the Artificial Intelligence- based platform has been envisioned to strengthen their career pathways by hand holding them through their journeys to attain

industry-relevant skills and explore emerging job opportunities especially in the post COVID era.

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## **INTERNATIONAL NEWS & FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

### **1. India and Afghanistan inks 5 MoUs for the development of educational infrastructure**

- India and Afghanistan signed five Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) on July 5, 2020. The MoUs between the two countries have been signed for the development of educational infrastructure in 4 provinces of Afghanistan namely Farah, Nooristan, Kapisa, Badakhshan.
- The five MoUs were signed by Indian Ambassador Vinay Kumar, Higher Education Minister Abdul Tawab Balakarzai, Afghan Economy Minister Mustafa Mastoor, and Deputy Education Minister Abdul Subhan Raouf.
- As per the Indian embassy, the government of India remains committed to taking forward the India-Afghanistan Development Partnership based on the people of Afghanistan and the national priorities of the government.

### **2. India overtakes Russia, records world's 3rd highest COVID-19 cases after US, Brazil**

- India overtook Russia to record the world's third-highest COVID-19 cases on July 5, 2020. India surpassed Russia's coronavirus case count as new infections rose by almost 25000 during the day, which is a record high. India also recorded 425 new deaths, taking the total death toll to 19693.
- India's total coronavirus case tally currently stands at 697413, which is only behind the COVID count of the United States and Brazil, which have recorded 29,32,047 and 16,04,585 coronavirus cases so far.
- In the first five days of July itself, India's COVID-19 case count crossed another lakh with new infections touching record high everyday.



### **3. A New Shipping Service b/w Kolkata Port & Chattogram Begins to Ease Indo-Bangla Trade**

- Amid frequent disruption of cross-border trade via the Petrapole-Benapole land ports, Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port (SMP) [erstwhile Kolkata Port Trust (KoPT)] has started a new shipping service between Kolkata Dock System (KDS) and Chattogram (Bangladesh) through Indo-Bangladesh Protocol Route to transport containers with the aim to increase the Indo-Bangla trade.
- The Container Ship 'M.V Asiatic Moon (Singapore Flag)' is expected to transport 300 containers of Indian exports to Bangladesh.
- The new service was launched by Zim Integrated Services in association with Bengal Tiger Lines and inaugurated by S Balaji Arunkumar, deputy chairman, SPMPT.
- The shipping line is also in consultation with FIEO (Federation of Indian Export Organisations) to make aware of the new service to all exporters.

### **4. United States submits notice to U.N Secretary-General to withdraw from WHO by 6th July 2021**

- The formal notification to the United States Congress was provided on 7th July 2020 by President Donald Trump-led Administration on the decision of ending the United States relations with the World Health Organization (WHO: Specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for public health globally).
- As per the notification, the United States Government has submitted its notice to the Secretary-General of the United Nations to withdraw from the WHO by the 6th of July 2021.
- The withdrawal of membership from the WHO will be a year long process as several factors are likely to come up in between in which the Donald Trump-led administration won't have control. One such factor is the Presidential Elections in November 2020, if Trump loses and Democratic Party candidate Joe Biden is elected as the President of United States then United States will remain as a member of the WHO as Joe Biden has publically announced that he would have the United States rejoin WHO if elected as the President.

### **5. Indian Coast Guard & Indonesia Coast Guard sign MoU to boost maritime relations**

- In order to bolster the comprehensive strategic partnership between India and Indonesia, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and Indonesian Coast Guard on 'Maritime Safety and Security'.
- The MoU was signed through video conferencing amid the global travel restrictions due to COVID-19 pandemic. It was inked by ICG Director General (DG) Krishnaswamy Natarajan and Head of Indonesian Coast Guard Vice Admiral Aan Kurnia in the presence of Ambassador of India to Indonesia Pradeep Kumar Rawat, and Mochammad Rizki Safary, Minister Counsellor of Indonesian Embassy in New Delhi, India and officials from Ministry of Defence (MoD) and Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

### **6. Islamists Blocks Construction of first Hindu Temple in Islamabad, Hatred towards Minorities on the Rise in Pakistan**

- Persecution of Minorities in Pakistan continues as this time the Islamic activists have blocked the construction of Shree Krishna Mandir- the first Hindu Temple in Pakistan's capital Islamabad. Located at the H-9/2 area of Islamabad, the foundation stone for the 1860 sq meter (20,000 sqft) Shree Krishna Mandir was laid on 23rd June 2020.
- Since the formation of Pakistan back in 1947, no Hindu Temple had been constructed in Pakistan's capital Islamabad.

#### **7. Sri Lanka and Maldives becomes the First Two Countries from South-East Asia Region of WHO to Eliminate Both Rubella and Measles**

- Geneva-based World Health Organization (WHO) has announced on 8th July 2020 that Sri Lanka and the Maldives have eliminated Rubella Virus. With this, Sri Lanka and the Maldives became the first two countries from the South East Asia Region of WHO to have successfully eliminated both the Measles and Rubella Virus.
- In 2017-18, Bhutan, Timor-Leste, North Korea and the Maldives were the four countries from the South-East Asia Region of the WHO to successfully eliminate Measles Virus. In July 2019, Sri Lanka became the third nation from the South-East Asia Region of WHO to eliminate Measles.
- The target year set by the WHO for eliminating Measles from the South-East Asia Region is 2023 (earlier was 2020, Revised in September 2019 to 2023).

#### **8. India-EU summit to be held on 15 July through video conference**

- The Fifteenth summit between India and the European Union (EU) will be held via video conference on 15 July 2020. The summit is aimed to deliver concrete benefits for the people in the EU and India.
- The summit will provide a platform to strengthen the EU-India strategic partnership based on shared principles and values of democracy, freedom, and rule of law.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to hold extensive talks with the President of the European Council Charles Michel and President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen on a range of issues in the summit.

### **New Appointments and Person in News**

#### **1. Airtel's AjaiPuri to chair COAI, Jio's PK Mittal appointed vice-chairman**

- Telecom industry body COAI (Cellular Operators Association of India) announced the appointment of Bharti Airtel chief operating officer for India and South Asia, AjaiPuri, as its new chairman and Reliance Jio president P K Mittal as vice-chairman for 2020-21.
- Puri has replaced Vodafone Idea CEO RavinderTakkar as the chairman of the COAI on rotation basis. Puri has been with BhartiAirtel since 2004.
- Mittal was senior Deputy Director General in the Department of Telecommunications previously.
- This is the first time Reliance Jio has got a leadership position in the industry body.

#### **2. SijoKuruvilla George Appointed to Centre's Committee on Science and Tech Policy**

- Sijo Kuruvilla George, the CEO of startup village and founder of Re-think Foundation has been selected as a member of Central Government's Expert Committee on Science and Technology Policy led by Harkesh Mittal (also heads the department of Science and Technology).
- Sijo Kuruvilla holds International recognitions like the US State Department's International Visitors Leadership program. He is in the advisory board of some of the Countries top start-up companies.
- The Start-up village is India's First Public Private Partnership Technology Business Incubator.

### **3. Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro tests positive for Coronavirus**

- Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro tested positive for COVID-19 on July 7 2020. Bolsonaro had earlier played down the severity of the virus calling it a little flu. He had taken the test on July 6 after developing the symptoms.
- Bolsonaro took the test, his fourth after getting a high fever. Currently, he is in good health despite running a fever. He had begun feeling unwell on July 5.
- The Brazilian President had been taking hydroxychloroquine, the anti-malarial drug, the effectiveness of which is yet unknown against COVID-19.

### **4. Dwayne Johnson named as Instagram's highest-paid celebrity**

- Wrestler-turned-actor Dwayne Johnson has been named Instagram's highest-paid celebrity, the title which was earlier held by Kylie Jenner and Selena Gomez.
- The 48-year-old star charges approximately USD 1,015,000 (Rs 7,59,93,050) for a sponsored post.
- According to a BBC report, Kylie Jenner, who earlier held the position, used to charge USD 1.2 million (Rs 8,98,44,000) for a sponsored post last year.
- As of now, while Kylie has 184 million followers, and Johnson has 189 million followers.
- Before this, Dwayne Johnson was also named Hollywood's highest-paid actor of 2019 by Forbes.

### **5. Luxury Ride Signs Singer Sukhbir Singh as its Brand Ambassador**

- Luxury Ride has signed singer Sukhbir Singh as its brand ambassador. He will soon be seen in a full-fledged marketing campaign besides being leveraged across its upcoming brand and product communication initiatives.
- Sukhbir Singh was born on November 9, 1969 in Jalandhar, Punjab. He is nicknamed as Prince of Bhangra. His 1st album is New Stylee, which won the 1996 Channel V Awards in three categories namely, Best Debut Album, Best Male Vocalist and Best Music Video (for "Punjabi Munde")
- Other albums include, Gal Ban Gayi and High Energy. He has sung the song 'Dillaga' from Dhoom 2 with Canadian band Josh.
- He made a guest appearance in Pata Nahi Rabb Kehdeyan Rangan Ch Raazi (2012), Punjabi Film as himself.



## **6. Indian-American scientist Dr. Parag Chitnis appointed as Acting Director of top US agriculture firm NIFA**

- Indian American scientist, Dr Parag Chitnis has been appointed as the Acting Director of top US agriculture research firm, the prestigious National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). The NIFA is the main driver of all federally funded agricultural research in the United States.
- Parag Chitnis was named Associate Director for Programmes earlier this year. He leads the implementation of many of NIFA's approximately USD 1.7 billion worth research projects.
- In his new position, Parag Chitnis will replace Dr Scott Angle, who has accepted the position of Vice President of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Florida in Gainesville.

## **BANKING**

### **1. World Bank provides \$400 million to enhance support for rejuvenating the Ganga**

- The World Bank and the Government of India today signed a loan agreement to enhance support for the Namami Gange programme that seeks to rejuvenate the Ganga river. The Second National Ganga River Basin Project will help stem pollution in the iconic river and strengthen the management of the river basin which is home to more than 500 million people.
- The \$400 million operation comprises a loan of \$381 million and a proposed Guarantee of up to \$19 million. The agreement for the \$381 million loan was signed today by Shri Sameer Kumar Khare, Additional Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance on behalf of the Government of India and Mr Qaiser Khan, Acting Country Director (India), on behalf of the World Bank. The Guarantee instrument will be processed separately.
- Shri Khare said that the Ganga is India's most important cultural, economic and environmental resource, and the government's Namami Gange program seeks to ensure that the river returns to a pollution-free, ecologically healthy state. The new project will extend the Government of India and World Bank's engagement in this critical national programme to make the Ganga a clean, healthy river.

### **2. YES Bank Launches a Digital Solution, 'Loan in Seconds' for Instant Disbursement of Retail Loans**

- YES Bank launched a digital solution, 'Loan in Seconds' for instant disbursement of retail loans. It is available for the bank's pre-approved liability account holders. The algorithm evaluates the loan application in real-time and eliminates the need for documentation.
- The solution aims to provide customers, hassle-free loans to help them meet their immediate financial needs.
- All the eligible customers under the solution will receive communication from the bank with the link to apply for the loan.
- Those customers have to verify and accept the final offer.

### 3. RBI cut repo rate by 250 basis points till onset of COVID-19: RBI Governor

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cut the repo rate by 135 basis points since February 2019 till the onset of COVID-19. This was shared RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das while delivering his keynote address at the 7th SBI Banking & Economics Conclave on July 11, 2020.
- The RBI Governor said that repo rate was cut overall by 250 basis points since February 2019 to alleviate liquidity stress and provide financial stability in the economy. The main aim behind the move was to tackle the slowdown in economic growth.
- Das stated that they had elaborately touched upon issues concerning economic growth during the meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC). The MPC has decided to cumulatively, cut the policy repo rate by 115 basis points.

### 4. MoU Signed By CBDT And SEBI For Data Exchange

- A formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) and the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) for data exchange between the two organizations.
- The MoU will facilitate the sharing of data and information between SEBI and CBDT on an automatic and regular basis.
- In addition to regular exchange of data, SEBI and CBDT will also exchange with each other, on request and suo moto basis, any information available in their respective databases, for the purpose of carrying out their functions under various laws.
- The MoU comes into force from the date it was signed and is an ongoing initiative of CBDT and SEBI, who are already collaborating through various existing mechanisms.
- The MoU marks the beginning of a new era of cooperation and synergy between SEBI and CBDT.

## Books and Awards

### 1. Former RBI Governor Urjit Patel's Book on Indian Banking's NPA Crisis to release soon

- Urjit Patel, who resigned as governor of the Reserve Bank of India in December 2018, will release a book later in July.
- Titled 'Overdraft: Saving the Indian Saver', Patel's book focuses on Indian banking's bad loans crisis, its causes and how he dealt with it as the RBI governor.
- Patel, under whose governorship demonetisation was carried out, resigned from the RBI in December 2018.
- The resignation came at a time when relations between the government and the central bank had soured, with the former threatening to invoke a never-before used clause to give directions to the monetary authority.

### 2. A Book Titled 'Mahaveer: The Soldier Who Never Died' Authored by A.K. Srikumar & Rupa Srikumar

- The book, titled 'Mahaveer: The Soldier who never died' is authored by award winning author A.K. Srikumar and his wife, Rupa Srikumar. The book is a patriotic story about the courage and selfless love of Jaswant Singh Rawat who is one of the legendary

Garhwali soldiers fought in Indo-Chinese battle of Nuranang in 1962. The book is published by Rupa Publications and represented by The Book Bakers.

- The book portrays also a love story about two Monpa girls (Sela and Noora), and their devotion to the Indian soldier, whose devotion in turn is for the motherland.

### 3. IOC receives Green Building Leadership Award 2020 for its new headquarters

- The International Olympic Committee (IOC) announced that its new headquarters in Lausanne has been awarded the European 2020 US Green Building Council (USGBC) Leadership Award.
- Olympic House, which also holds the rigorous LEED Platinum certification, is one of the most sustainable buildings in the world.
- The award recognises "those advancing the development of sustainable, healthy and resilient buildings, cities and communities in regions around the world".
- The building is powered by renewable energy, part of which is produced on-site.
- Ninety-five per cent of Olympic House construction waste was recycled, and more than 95 per cent of the former IOC building was recycled or reused.

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## **SCIENCE TECH & DEFENCE**

### 1. PM Modi Inaugurated Asia's Largest Solar Plant in Madhya Pradesh on 10<sup>th</sup> July

- Through video conferencing, Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi will be inaugurating the 750 MW Rewa Ultra Mega Solar Plant on 10th July 2020. This was informed on 5th July 2020 by the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Shivraj Singh Chouhan. To date, the 750 MW Rewa Ultra Mega Solar Power Project is the largest single-site solar power projects in India and also in Asia.
- The Rewa Ultra Mega Solar Power Project is located in Gurh Tehsil of Madhya Pradesh's Rewa district. It is spread over 1,590 acres of land. For the successful implementation of the Power Project, a Joint Venture Company between Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) and Madhya Pradesh Urja Vikash Nigam Limited (MPUVNL) was set up. The name of the Joint Venture Company is Rewa Ultra Mega Solar Limited (RUMSL).

**2. UK imposes sanctions on Myanmar's Army Chief and Deputy Army Chief**

- The United Kingdom has announced sanctions against the Commander in Chief of Myanmar Army General Min Aung Hlaing and his Deputy Soe Win for their alleged involvement in human rights violations against the Rohingyas and other ethnic communities. The sanctions freezes all the assets of the two top Army Generals. It also prohibits them from obtaining visas for the country.
- The announcement was made in the British Parliament by the UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab on Monday. He said that this was the UK's first autonomous human right's sanctions regime that allows the government to impose sanctions on those involved in human rights abuses around the world.

**3. Asia's Largest Tier-IV Data Centre With 210MW Overall Capacity Inaugurated Near Mumbai**

- Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Tuesday e-inaugurated Asia's largest certified tier IV data centre near Mumbai. Located in Panvel, the Yotta NM1 data centre building, is the largest of its kind in India, as well as the second largest in the world. Speaking about it at the launch event, CM Thackeray said that state-of-the-art data centres such as Yotta can be key to the economy of Maharashtra, as they are projected to boost investment in the area.
- The private facility is owned by the Hiranandani Group, via its fully owned subsidiary, the Yotta Infrastructure Group. The Yotta data centre is aimed at catering for engineering and real estate businesses. Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad was also present for the virtual inauguration.

**4. DRDO To Establish Research Cell At IIT Hyderabad To Meet Future Defence Technological Needs**

- Defence Research and Development Organisation(DRDO) will establish a research cell at Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad(IIT-H), 'DRDO – IIT-H Research Cell' to meet the future defence technological requirements of the country.
- The research cell is established as an extension of the DRDO Research and Innovation Centre (RIC), Chennai.
- AnMoU was signed during a virtual event organized at the DRDO DG-Missiles and Strategic Systems (MSS) Office in Hyderabad on July 3 to establish the research cell.

**5. IIT Roorkee researchers develop "Unisaviour" disinfection box to fight COVID-19 virus**

- The Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee(IIT-R) announced that the IIT-R researchers team led by Prof. SoumitraSatapathi, Laboratory of Integrated Nanophotonics and Biomaterials, have developed the disinfection box – "Unisaviour" box, which can be used to sterilise various personal belongings to minimise the COVID-19 transmission.
- The research team led by Prof. SoumitraSatapathi includes, Ph.D scholars PrathulNath, Naveen Kumar Tailor, Tejasvini Sharma, Anushu Kumar of Department of Physics and Neeladri Singh Das and Prof. Partha Roy from the Department of Biotechnology.
- The device consist of a specially designed highly reflective geometry, which allows the UVC light to pass through the calibrated passage and disinfect the items.

- In addition to the UVC lights, the inside of the device has a coating of developed metal oxide along with herbal antibacterial and antiviral layers to prevent the growth of microorganisms when the UVC light is not in use.
- The device is equipped with an Arduino programmed system which regulates the time, intensity and amount of UVC exposure required for the sterilization process.

## **6. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh e-Inaugurated Six Strategic Bridges in Jammu & Kashmir**

- On 9th July 2020, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has e-Inaugurated 6 strategic bridges in sensitive border areas of Jammu & Kashmir. All the six bridges with strategic importance along the International Border and Line of Control were constructed in record time by working in extremely difficult weather conditions and terrains by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO).
- The Former and First Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru is credited as the founder of the Border Roads Organisation (BRO). It is headquartered in New Delhi and was founded on 7th May 1960.
- At present, BRO operates under 18 projects in the country. It maintains across 32,885 Kilometers of road and more than 12,200 meters of permanent bridges across the country. In the last two years, BRO has constructed around 5,800 metres of permanent bridges across the country.

## **7. Indian army bans 89 apps including Facebook, PUBG, Insta, Zoom, Tinder**

- Indian Army has asked its personnel to delete 89 mobile applications including Facebook, Instagram, PUBG, Zoom, POPXO, TikTok, Snapchat, ShareIt and dating apps like Tinder and Bumble. The decision has been taken to curtail leakage of information, as per Indian Army sources.
- Some of the 89 banned apps are among those banned by the centre for being engaged in activities prejudicial to the integrity and sovereignty of India and defence security of the state and public order.
- The list of apps banned in Indian Army has been divided into different categories including messaging platforms, video hosting apps, content sharing apps, web browsers, video streaming apps, utility apps, gaming apps, e-commerce apps, dating apps, music apps, microblogging apps, news apps, lifestyle apps and antivirus apps.

## **8. India to invite Australia to Malabar naval exercise**

- India plans to invite Australia to join the annual Malabar naval exercise that has so far included just Japan and the U.S.
- The exercise will bring together the navies of India, Japan, Australia and the U.S. in the Bay of Bengal at the end of the year.
- Malabar is an annual exercise between the navies of India, Japan, and the U.S. held alternately in the Indian and Pacific Oceans.
- It began in 1992 as a bilateral exercise between India and the U.S.
- Then it got permanently expanded into a trilateral format with the inclusion of Japan in 2015.



**9. Google relaunches Google Plus as Currents due to low usage and security bugs**

- Internet search giant Google has relaunched its social networking platform Google+ as Currents.
- The company has rebranded the app to Google Currents on both Google Play Store and Apple App Store. The Google Play Store listing describes the app as a place where people can connect with their colleagues, exchange documents, interact with like-minded people who have similar interests.
- In April 2019, a Google spokesperson announced that the official process for the shutdown of Google+ has started. The reason stated was low usage and some security bugs that were recently discovered.

**10. UAE to become first Arab nation send probe to Mars**

- The United Arab Emirates has decided to send a probe to Mars, in a first for the Arab world. The UAE's Mars probe aims to provide a comprehensive image of the weather dynamics in Mars' atmosphere and pave the way for scientific breakthroughs.
- The Mars probe will serve as a foundation for a much bigger goal of building a human settlement on Mars within the next 100 years.
- Speaking on the probe, the mission's deputy project manager and UAE Minister of State for Advanced Sciences, Sarah al-Amiri said that the Mars probe will be a message of hope for the region to set an example of what is possible if we take the talent of the youth and use them positively.

**SPORTS****1. Valtteri Bottas wins F1 Austrian Grand Prix**

- Valtteri Bottas took the win for Mercedes at the Austrian Grand Prix as teammate Lewis Hamilton suffered a dramatic late-racing demotion from second to fourth. Ferrari's Charles Leclerc took second place and McLaren's Lando Norris third.
- The race was interrupted three times by a safety car and nine of 20 drivers abandoned, including both Red Bulls of Max Verstappen and Alexander Albon — who tried to overtake Hamilton on the outside with 10 laps left, touched wheels and flew off track.
- Hamilton was given a five-second time penalty for causing the collision, having earlier been hit with a three-place grid penalty after an incident in Saturday's qualifying was reviewed by stewards.

**2. Foreign and Indian coaches will now have a four-year contract**

- Foreign and Indian coaches for training Indian Athletes will now have a four-year contract in alignment with the Olympic cycle.
- Speaking about the decision, Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju said that by ensuring the right coaching for the country's elite athletes, India's chances in all major international tournaments, including the Olympics will be improved.
- The contract of all foreign coaches have been extended till 30th September of next year, in light of Tokyo Olympics-2020 being postponed till next year.

### **3. India's Joshna Chinappa Breaks back Into World's Top-10 Squash Rankings After Raneem El Welily Retires**

- India's squash star Joshna Chinappa has broken back into the top-10 of the PSA world rankings following the shock retirement of Egyptian world number one Raneem El Welily.
- Joshna, who has not played since March due to the COVID-19 pandemic, moved up a spot to be in 10th position.
- The 33-year-old had entered the top-10 for the first time in 2016.
- Dipika Pallikal is the other Indian female player who has achieved the feat.
- Egypt's Nouran Gohar is the new world number one following Raneem's retirement.
- Raneem had held the top spot for 19 months before announcing a sudden retirement.
- India's top male player Saurav Ghosal remains 13th in the latest rankings.

## **OBITUARIES**

### **1. Ennio Morricone, Oscar-winning Italian film composer, dies aged 91**

- Ennio Morricone, the Italian composer whose symphonic scores backed everything from spaghetti westerns to romance, horror and sci-fi films, has died aged 91. Born in Rome in 1928, Morricone took up the trumpet and wrote his first composition aged six.
- Morricone went on to work in almost all film genres, and some of his melodies are perhaps more famous than the films for which he wrote them. Morricone's Chi Mai, is his most loved composition, and reached at No 2 in the UK Top 40 following its reuse in the BBC drama series The Life and Times of David Lloyd George.
- He won his Oscar for his work on Quentin Tarantino's The Hateful Eight (2015) and also was nominated for his original scores for Terrence Malick's Days of Heaven (1978), Roland Joffe's The Mission (1986), Brian De Palma's The Untouchables (1987), Barry Levinson's Bugsy (1991) and Giuseppe Tornatore's Malena (2000).

### **2. Veteran actor Jagdeep, Sholay's Soorma Bhopali, dies at 81**

- Veteran Bollywood actor Jagdeep, known for his work in films such as Sholay, Andaz Apna Apna and Purana Mandir, has died.
- In his first film, BR Chopra's Afsana, he was a face in the crowd who later got a speaking part because he could say the dialogues in chaste Urdu.
- In 1988, Jagdeep also directed the film Soorma Bhopali based on his character from Sholay. In a career spanning over six decades, he acted in over 400 films.

### **3. Goa's former health minister Dr. Suresh Amonkar dies from COVID-19**

- Former health minister of Goa, Dr Suresh Amonkar, died due to Covid-19 infection.
- Dr Amonkar, 68, was found positive on June 22 and admitted to the state's dedicated Covid-19 hospital but his condition deteriorated in the following days.
- Dr Amonkar was a two-term MLA, being elected to the Goa Assembly in 1999 and 2002, as well as served as minister in the first Manohar Parrikar cabinet in 2000 as a minister of health.
- He was also the ex-president of the Goa unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

### **4. Ivory Coast's Prime Minister Amadou Gon Coulibaly dies**

- Amadou Gon Coulibaly, Ivory Coast's Prime Minister and the governing party's candidate for an October presidential election, died.
- He died just days after returning from two months of medical treatment in France.
- The 61-year-old, who had heart surgery in 2012, became unwell during a weekly cabinet meeting and was taken to a hospital where he passed away.
- Coulibaly's death creates huge uncertainty over the election in Ivory Coast, the world's top cocoa grower, which has returned to normalcy after years of political turbulence and a brief civil war that killed 3,000 people.

## **IMPORTANT DAYS**

### **1. National fish farmers day: 10th July**

- The Government of India back in 2001 declared 10th July to be celebrated every year as 'National Fish Farmers Day'.
- The initiative of celebrating the Day was first taken by Mumbai's Central Institute of Fisheries Education. As per the data by the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization's GLOBEFISH, in December 2019 India is the 2nd Largest Aquaculture Producer in the world. Also, India is the third-largest fish producing country in the world.
- In Odisha, on 10th July 1957- the first success in induced breeding of fish (by Hypophysation method) was achieved by the two scientists Prof (Dr.) Hiralal Chaudhuri and Dr. K.H. Alikunhi. They further demonstrated the process in the three Indian major carps (Catla, Rohu and Mrigal species of fish). Hence the induced breeding technology in fishes was a momentous breakthrough in the entire Fish Culture Sector of India. In remembrance of the contribution of Dr. H.L Chaudhury and Dr. K.H Alikunhi, 10th July is marked as National Fish Farmers Day in India.

### **2. World Population Day is an annual event observed every year on July 11 every year.**

- The day is observed in order to spread and raise awareness of the rising global population issues. The event was established by the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme in 1989.
- This Day aims to increase people's awareness on various population issues such as the importance of family planning, gender equality, poverty, maternal health and human rights.
- As per reports, there were an estimated 7.8 billion people living on Earth as of March 2020.

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