



Weekly Current Affairs

27 July - 02 August 2020

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NATIONAL NEWS

1. India begins reconstruction of 300-year-old SreeSree Joy Kali Matar Temple in Bangladesh

- A 300-year-old Kali temple was jointly inaugurated by the Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Riva Ganguly Das and State Minister of ICT Zunaid Ahmed Palak on July 27, 2020.
- The Sree Sree Joykali Matar temple is among the oldest temples in Bangladesh. It was built approximately 300 years back in the early 18th century.
- It has been reconstructed at Natore in Bangladesh with the support of India. The MoU for the reconstruction of the temple was signed in 2016.
- The Indian government provided a grant worth Taka 97 lakh for the reconstruction of the historic temple under its High Impact Community Development Project (HICDP).

2. U.N. report flags Islamic State threat in Karnataka, Kerala

- The United Nations report recently warned that there is significant increase in ISIS terrorists in Kerala and Karnataka. The report was titled “Report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team concerning ISIS”
- The report says that Al-Qaida, that has 150-200 militants from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Myanmar is planning to attack Indian Subcontinent. The Al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) operates under Taliban. It is mainly rooted in the Nimruz, Kandahar and Helmand provinces of Afghanistan.
- The Islamic State is also known as ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) or Daesh. It is Sunni Jihadist group that seized large swathes of territory in eastern Syria since 2014. In 2019, the group claimed to have established a new province in India called the IS Indian affiliate (Hind Wilayah).

3. India amongst biggest suppliers of Tiger body parts in the world

- According to the recently released United Nations World Wildlife Crime Report, India and Thailand are the two main countries which are the suppliers of the illegal tiger products in the world.
- The report said that India and Thailand are the main source countries which were traced in the shipments seized in international trade of tiger parts.
- It also said that the shipments traced to both the countries accounted for 82 percent of the total whole tiger equivalents seized in the world in the same period.
- The most valuable body part of the tigers is their bones which are the most sought after parts of their body. The medicines made of the bones of the tiger are used to heal bone, joint and ligament injuries.

4. Cotton Corporation of India looks to boost cotton exports to Bangladesh, Vietnam

- The Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) is trying to boost exports of the fibre crop. A memorandum of understanding is being worked out to export 1.5-2 million bales (of 170 kilograms each) of cotton to Bangladesh while the state-run CCI will also set up its own warehouse in Vietnam to boost cotton exports.
- The CCI has so far procured 12.1 million bales of cotton. Along with its agent Maharashtra State Cooperative Marketing Federation, CCI was able to sell 900,000 bales of cotton this season.

5. HRD Ministry Renamed as Ministry of Education as Modi Cabinet Reverses Change Made by Rajiv Gandhi

- The Ministry of Human Resource and Development (MHRD) has been renamed as Ministry of Education. The decision was taken during a cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- The Union Cabinet has also approved a new education policy, which will also be announced later.

6. PM Narendra Modi to address grand finale of world's largest online hackathon on August 1

- Prime Minister will address Grand Finale of the world's largest ever online hackathon- Smart India Hackathon 2020- on August 1, 2020. The Human Resource Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank made the announcement on July 28, 2020. The Smart India Hackathon (SIH) is being organised by the Ministry of Human Resources Development and the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).
- The Human Resource Minister had chaired a high-level meeting on Smart India Hackathon (SIH) and discussed achievements of the already conducted hackathons. The grand finale of the Smart-India Hackathon 2020 will be held till August 3, 2020
- The hackathon will see participation from over 10,0000 students this year. The students will be competing to solve 243 problem statements from 37 Central Government departments, 17 State Governments and 20 industries during the online Grand Finale.

7. Nitrogen Dioxide Levels Fell Over 70% During Lockdown In Delhi: UN Report

- The UN policy brief stated that Levels of nitrogen dioxide fell by more than 70% during the lockdown in New Delhi. The environmental gains could be temporary if the cities re-open without policies to prevent air pollution and promote de-carbonization.

- It also stated that nitrogen dioxide fell 40% in urban areas in China, 20% in Belgium and Germany, and 19-40% in different areas of the US.
- The UN's Policy on 'Covid-19 in an Urban World' stated that with an estimated 90% of all reported Covid-19 cases, urban areas have become the epicentre of the pandemic. It also pointed out that several new scientific studies suggest that poor air quality is correlated with higher Covid-19 mortality rates.

8. Govt notifies changes in FDI norms on civil aviation; permits NRIs to own 100% stake of Air India

- The government has notified changes in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) norms on civil aviation. It will permit non-resident Indian nationals to own 100 percent stake of Air India.
- Last month, the government for the third time extended the deadline to bid for Air India. The deadline was extended by two months till August 31st.
- The divestment process for the national carrier was initiated on January 27th.

9. Chhattisgarh's Bijapur Tops Niti Aayog's Aspirational Districts Ranking for Feb-June

- In accordance with the delta rankings for aspirational districts by government think-tank Niti (National Institution for Transforming India) Aayog, Bijapur district in Chhattisgarh has topped the list of aspirational districts in Overall Delta Ranking for the February-June 2020 period.
- Bijapur has been followed by Ri-Bhoi (Meghalaya) and Bahraich (Uttar Pradesh) at 2nd and 3rd positions respectively.
- The delta rankings for aspirational districts considers an incremental progress in five developmental areas viz. Health and Nutrition, Education, Agriculture and Water Resources, Financial Inclusion & Skill Development and Basic Infrastructure .

10. Pawan Hans launches first UDAN-RCS heli service in Uttarakhand

- Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, MoS, Civil Aviation flagged off the first helicopter service by Pawan Hans in Uttarakhand under the UDAN-RCS scheme on 29 July. So far, 274 UDAN routes have been operationalized to connect 45 airports and 3 heliports since the launch of the first UDAN flight in April 2017. The opening of these new routes and heli service are expected to bring people of the Uttarkhand closer and support tourism in the region.
- The new heli service will enable connectivity between Dehradun, New Tehri, Srinagar and Gauchar. It will enhance the aerial connectivity between hilly regions in Uttarakhand. It will reduce the average travel time to 20-25 minutes. The move will assist the Chaar Dhaam Yatra pilgrims.

11. Vande Bharat Mission Phase 5 to start from August 1

- Air India on Sunday (July 26) said that phase 5 of Vande Bharat Mission will begin from 1 August to bring back more stranded Indians.
- As the Vande Bharat Mission enters its fifth phase, it will connect India with the USA, Canada, Qatar, Oman, UAE, Singapore, UK, Frankfurt, Paris, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, New Zealand, Philippines, and more.
- "These flights are operated by the Air India group, IndiGo, SpiceJet and GoAir. They cover 29 countries. They will be reaching 34 airports in India," he added.

12. Atal Innovation Mission launches 'AIM-iCREST', in partnership with Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Wadhvani Foundation

- In a major initiative to encourage and enable holistic progress in the incubator ecosystem across the country, NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), has launched AIM iCREST – an Incubator Capabilities enhancement program for a Robust Ecosystem focused on creating high performing Start-ups. This is a first of its kind initiative for advancing innovation at scale in India.
- AIM has joined hands with Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Wadhvani Foundation - organizations that can lend credible support and expertise in the entrepreneurship and innovation space. These partnerships will provide global expertise and showcase proven best practices to the AIM's incubator network.
- AIM iCREST, as the name suggests, has been designed to enable the incubation ecosystem and act as a growth hack for AIM's Atal and Established incubators across the country. Under the initiative, the AIM's incubators are set to be upscaled and provided requisite support to foster the incubation enterprise economy, that will help them to significantly enhance their performance. This will be complemented by providing training to entrepreneurs, through technology driven processes and platforms.

13. Times Square to display Lord Ram's images on August 5 to celebrate Ram Temple's groundbreaking ceremony

- Images of Lord Ram and 3D portraits of the grand Ram Temple in Ayodhya will be beamed across the giant billboards in the iconic
- Times Square in New York on August 5 to celebrate the temple's groundbreaking ceremony, with organisers describing the commemoration as a one-of-a-kind and a historic event.
- Beginning from 8 AM on August 5 till 10 PM, images of the words 'Jai Shri Ram' in Hindi and English, Lord Ram's portraits and videos, 3D portraits of the temple's design and architecture as well as pictures of the laying of the foundation stone by Modi will be displayed across several billboards on Times Square.

14. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister of Mauritius jointly inaugurate the new Supreme Court Building

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister of Mauritius Mr. Pravin Jugnauth jointly inaugurated the new Supreme Court building in Mauritius through video conference on 30 July. New Supreme Court building is first India assisted infrastructure project in Mauritius to be inaugurated after the Covid-19 pandemic. The Supreme Court will remain as a symbol of cooperation and shared values of India and Mauritius. It is in line with India's vision of SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region).
- The landmark project was completed with grant assistance of \$28.12 million from the Government of India. The project highlighted the importance of the human-centric approach of India's development cooperation and cemented the close ties between India and Mauritius.
- The new Supreme Court building with modern design and state-of-the-art facilities will be a fitting seat for the Mauritius judiciary. The project has been completed on schedule and at a cost below initial estimates.

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15. Cabinet approves MoU between India & Zimbabwe on cooperation in traditional medicine and homeopathy

- The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi has given ex-post facto approval to Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between India and Zimbabwe on Cooperation in the field of Traditional Systems of Medicine and Homeopathy, which was signed on November 3rd, 2018.
- The objective of the MoU is to promote traditional systems of medicine and homeopathy between two nations on the basis of equality and mutual benefit.
- On March 4, 2020, The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) Chaired by the Prime Minister (PM) Shri Narendra Modi has approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Ministry of Health and

Family Welfare of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Health and Public Hygiene of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire on Cooperation in the field of Health.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

1. India extends medical assistance worth about USD 1 million to North Korea

- The Government of India recently extended 1 million USD of medical assistance to North Korea on the request of World Health Organization. The medical assistance is provided as part of WHO anti-Tuberculosis programme.
- It is to be noted that North Korea is under sanctions from United Nations Security Council. However, India's medical assistance is under the aegis of WHO anti-Tuberculosis programme and therefore exempted from sanctions.
- Several Countries have imposed sanctions against North Korea. This includes Australia, China, Japan, Russia, South Korea, Taiwan, and the United States. The first sanction against North Korea was passed by the United Nations in 2006.

2. China takes over closed U.S. Consulate in Chengdu days after ordering its closure

- On July 27, 2020, the United States Consulate in Chengdu city of China was closed in response to the closure of Chinese consulate in Houston.
- The Chengdu consulate was an important outpost for the US as it covered a large swath of the country including controversial autonomous region of Tibet. The consulate was opened by the then Vice President George Bush in 1985.
- The ongoing trade war between US and China has strained the tensions between US and China. The relations have deteriorated further recently after guilty plea of Singaporean national who admitted spying in the US for China.

3. Somalia's Deputy PM Mahdi Mohammed Gulaid appointed as acting Prime Minister

- President of Somalia, Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed appointed Deputy Prime Minister Mahdi Mohammed Gulaid as the interim Prime Minister of Somalia following the impeachment of Hassan Ali Khaire, the previous Prime Minister of Somalia.
- Mahdi Mohammed Gulaid practiced law in Somaliland and served as the legal advisor for the Second Electoral Commission.

- He worked with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as the national program office for the Rule of Law, Security and Governance programs. He took office as the Deputy Prime Minister in March 2017.

4. Ivory Coast's Defence Minister Hamed Bakayoko appointed as Prime Minister

- Hamed Bakayoko appointed as Prime Minister after acting as an interim PM since the sudden death of Amadou Gon Coulibaly on July 8, 2020. Hamed Bakayoko will also hold his position as defence Minister.
- Hamed Bakayoko became acting Prime Minister on May 2, 2020 due to the absence of Amadou Gon Coulibaly. Bakayoko, 55, has a reputation as a populist and showman who holds rowdy campaign rallies. He will retain his position as defence minister in his new post.

New Appointments and Person in News

1. Mukesh Ambani's Reliance overtakes Exxon to become world's no. 2 energy firm

- Reliance Industries Ltd, controlled by Asia's richest man, toppled ExxonMobil Corp to become the world's largest energy company after Saudi Aramco.
- Reliance, which manages the biggest refinery complex, gained 4.3% in Mumbai adding \$8 billion to take its market value to \$189 billion, while Exxon Mobil erased about \$1 billion.
- Aramco with a market capitalization of \$1.76 trillion is the world's biggest energy company.

2. Young Indian Activist Archana Soreng Becomes Part of UN Advisory Group on Climate Change

- The United Nations Secretary -General António Guterres named Indian climate activist Archana Soreng among 7 members to his new Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change. The members will advise him regularly on accelerating global action and also provide solutions to tackle the worsening climate crisis. This is to mobilize climate action as part of the COVID-19 recovery efforts.
- The members are between the ages of 18 and 28 years old. The members of the Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change represent the diverse voices of young people from all regions as well as small island states. They will offer perspectives and solutions on climate change, from science to community mobilization, from entrepreneurship to politics, and from industry to conservation.

3. Haryana govt appoints Babita Phogat, Kavita Devi as deputy directors in Sports and Youth Affairs Department

- Commonwealth Games medallist Babita Phogat and Kabaddi player Kavita Devi have been appointed as deputy directors in the Sports and Youth Affairs Department of Haryana. The announcement was through two separate orders issued on July 29 by the principal secretary of the Haryana Government's Sports and Youth Affairs Department.
- Babita Phogat and Kavita Devi will have to join their department within a month. They had applied for these posts under the state government.
- The two sportspersons have been appointed as deputy director (Sports) under the Haryana Outstanding Sportspersons (Recruitment and Conditions of Service) rules, 2018.

4. Great Eastern Shipping appoints former RBI Governor Urjit Patel as additional director

- Great Eastern Shipping Company Ltd announced that its board has appointed former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Urjit Patel as an additional and independent director for a term of 5 years, effective from August 01, 2020.
- He was born in Nairobi, Kenya on 28 October 1963. He was appointed as the Chairman of the Governing Body of the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP) for a 4 year term on June 22, 2020.
- Prior to this he took charge as the 24th Governor of the RBI on September 5, 2016. He resigned in December 2018 before completing his three-year term in September 2019. He has been a consultant to the Ministry of Finance, Government of India.
- He has also authored a book titled 'Overdraft: Saving the Indian Saver'. The book will be published by HarperCollins India.

5. Gujrat IAS Officer Hardik Satishchandra Shah appointed personal secretary to PM Modi

- Hardik Satishchandra Shah was appointed Private Secretary to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- Shah is a 2010-batch IAS officer of Gujarat cadre and is currently serving as a Deputy Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).
- According to the order, Shah has been appointed on co-terminus basis.

BANKING

1. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman attends the 5th Annual Meeting of Board of Governors of AIIB

- The Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on July 28 took part in the 5th Annual Board of Governors Meeting of AIIB- Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank through a video conference.
- During the meet, the discussions were focused on official business, including a roundtable discussion on the theme ‘AIIB 2030- Supporting Asia’s Development over the Next Decade’ and election of AIIB President.

2. Bharti AXA general insurance launches ‘bohot zaroori hai’ campaign for farmers in Maharashtra and Karnataka

- Bharti AXA General Insurance has launched its crop insurance campaign, ‘Bohot Zaroori Hai’ for farmers in Maharashtra and Karnataka to encourage them about their yield protection and financial security. It aims to create awareness to farming communities about the relevance and significance of crop insurance, which can alleviate rural distress caused by crop failure or damage due to unseasonal rains, monsoon failure among others.
- The awareness drive describes that buying crop insurance as a very important aspect of farming and also signifies that the protection of crops will eventually secure the aspirations of farmers.

3. IRCTC, SBI Card launch new Co-branded Contactless Credit Card on RuPay Platform

- Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Limited (IRCTC) and SBI Card launched a co-branded contactless credit card, IRCTC -SBI Platinum Card on RuPay Platform to reward the frequent railway (train) travellers. The card is equipped with Near Field Communication (NFC) technology by which users can facilitate their transactions at the point of sale (POS) machines by Tap and Pay option. This enables consumers to transact safely and securely online.
- The card offers exclusive benefits for rail passengers on retail, dining, entertainment besides transaction fee waivers. It also offers maximum savings proposition on their travel. Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Limited (IRCTC) and SBI Card launched a co-branded contactless credit card, IRCTC -SBI Platinum Card on RuPay Platform to reward the frequent railway (train) travellers. The card is equipped with Near Field Communication (NFC) technology by which users can facilitate their transactions at the point of sale (POS) machines by Tap and Pay Option. This enables consumers to transact safely and securely online.
- The card offers exclusive benefits for rail passengers on retail, dining, entertainment besides transaction fee waivers. It also offers maximum savings proposition on their travel.

4. ADB approves 3 million US Dollar to India to fight against COVID-19

- Asian Development Bank has approved USD 3 million (equivalent to Rs 22 crore) grant to India from the Asia Pacific Disaster Response Fund to support India's battle against COVID-19.
- The grant is financed by the Japanese government. It will be used to seek thermal scanners, enhancement of disease surveillance and early detection, contact tracing, and treatment.

5. Dr. Harsh Vardhan launched "Mausam" app for weather forecasts

- On 27th July 2020, in the event of 14th Foundation day of the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Earth Sciences launched the mobile app "Mausam" designed and developed by the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)'s Digital Agriculture & Youth (DAY) team, the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune and the India Meteorological Department (IMD).
- India has the best weather service in the world for disaster management with accurate warnings on tropical cyclones, heat waves and floods.



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Books and Awards

1. Dr. S Jaishankar authored book named "The India Way: Strategies for an Uncertain World"

- The India Way: Strategies for an Uncertain World, a book authored by External Affairs Minister Dr. S Jaishankar, argues about the standards of India in the global order. The book was published under the HarperCollins India publications. The book centers about the three burdens that India's foreign policy carries.
- He insisted that India should not only visualise its interest but also try to communicate effectively.
- The e-version of the book is available on Amazon.

2. “Quest for Restoring Financial Stability in India” authored by Viral V.Acharya

- The book titled “Quest for Restoring Financial Stability in India” authored by former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) deputy governor Viral V.Acharya.
- The book is published by SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd. The book portrays his quest to restore financial stability in India and offers a concrete plan for sustained improvement.

3. India’s first solar ferry Aditya, Wins Gustave Trouve Award

- Aditya, India’s first solar-powered ferry that commenced operations in 2017 in Kerala’s Vembanad backwaters, has won the prestigious Gustave Trouve Award for Excellence in Electric Boats and Boating.
- The ferry was adjudged the world’s best electric boat in the category of ferries designed for paid passenger service.
- The Aditya, from Navalt Boats, is a sun-powered commuter ferry. Every day it makes 22 trips with 75 people on board, that’s 580,000 people a year. The awards, handed out for the first time, is the world’s only such honour given to individuals and companies building and innovating in state-of-the-art electric boats.

4. Indian-origin author Avni Doshi’s debut novel among 2020 Booker Prize longlist

- A debut novel ‘Burnt Sugar’ authored by Avni Doshi has been published in the United Kingdom (UK) and it was one among the 13 authors longlisted for the prestigious 2020 Booker Prize. A version of the same novel has been published in India under the title Girl in White Cotton.
- The Book narrates the story about a woman, Tara who abandoned her loveless marriage to join ashram and ended as a beggar. She passes her years as a homeless artist with her daughter Antara. The daughter tends to care for her mother who least cared for her in her childhood.
- Avni Doshi is on the 2020 Booker Prize longlist for her debut novel ‘Burnt Sugar’. The Book, ‘Burnt Sugar’ was also shortlisted for the Tata First Book Prize in 2019.

5. Earth Sciences Ministry announces National Awards for excellence in Earth System Science

- Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) National Awards for excellence in Earth System Science have been announced. This year the Life Time Excellence Award is being awarded to Professor Ashok Sahni for his significant contribution in the field of Geology, Vertebrate Paleontology and Biostratigraphy.

- The National Award for Ocean Science and technology is being awarded to Dr. V. V. S. S. Sarma, Senior Principal Scientist, CSIR-National Institute of Oceanography, Vishakapatnam and Dr. M. Ravichandran, Director, National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research, Goa. The National Award for Atmospheric Science and technology will be presented to Dr. S. Suresh Babu.
- The Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) is mandated to provide the nation with the best possible services for weather, climate, ocean, coastal and natural hazards, for the Public Safety and socio-economic benefits. The Ministry also deals with exploration and sustainable harnessing of ocean resources - living and non-living. The Ministry also plays a nodal role for Antarctic, Arctic, Himalayas and Southern Ocean research.

SCIENCE TECH & DEFENCE

1. IIM-Kozhikode start-up develops wearable gadget 'Veli Band' for ensuring social distancing

- Indian Institute of Management, Kozhikode (IIMK)-based incubated startup has come up with a unique user-friendly wearable device that alarms proximity which helps in implementing social distancing norms.
- Known as the 'Veli Band', the wrist band has been developed by Qual5 India Pvt Ltd, a startup co-founded by a woman entrepreneur and mentored and funded by IIMK's business LIVE, incubator, and entrepreneurship development centre.
- Veli Band helps in implementing social distancing and contact tracing which will help organizations in complying with social distancing norms during the pandemic.
- It momentarily vibrates, sounds buzzer, and flashes LED lights simultaneously to notify wearers that another band is within 3 feet, reminding them of the need to maintain social distance.

2. DRDO launches 'Dare to Dream 2.0' contest to promote innovators on 5th death anniversary of Kalam

- The Defence Research Development Organization launched an innovative contest "Dare to Dream". The contest was launched on the death anniversary of Dr APJ Abdul Kalam.
- The Dare to Dream is an open challenge that promotes innovators and start ups in the country. It is launched to boost emerging technologies. The challenge promotes individuals and start ups for innovation in aerospace technologies.
- The award money for the winners is up to Rs 10 lakhs. The contest was launched by Defence Minister Raj Nath Singh.

3. Vice Admiral MA Hampiholi assumes Charge as commandant of INA

- Vice Admiral MA Hampiholi, AVSM, NM assumed charge as the Commandant, Indian Naval Academy (INA).
- Vice Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi, AVSM, NM handed over charge as the Commandant, Indian Naval Academy (INA) after a successful tenure of over 13 months.
- Under the Flag Officer's leadership, on 12 November 2019, INA was bestowed with the President's Colour for rendering 50 years of yeoman service in shaping Naval leaders for Indian Navy, Coast Guard and Friendly Foreign Countries.
- Vice Admiral MA Hampiholi is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla, Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, the erstwhile College of Naval warfare, Karanja and the prestigious National Defence College, New Delhi.
- He served as the Commandant, Naval Academy, and Commanding Officer, INS Mandovi, Goa during 2007-2009.

4. First batch of five Rafale jets touched down at Ambala Air Base on July 29

- In historic moments for the Indian Air Force, the first batch of five Rafale combat jets on Wednesday entered the Indian air space on its way to Ambala airbase from France. The aircraft were welcomed in India with a water cannon salute. The pilots of the much-awaited first batch of Rafale aircraft from France will be received by Air Force Chief Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria.
- The Union Defence Minister confirmed the same through a series of tweets, the first of which read that the birds have landed safely at Ambala.
- The five Rafale combat jets had entered the Indian air space, escorted by 02 SU30 MKIs. This was confirmed by both the Indian Air Force and the Defence Minister. The Indian Air Force had tweeted saying, "Welcome home 'Golden Arrows'. Blue skies always." The IAF tweet further read that the arrow formation of Rafales was given a ceremonial welcome by SU-30s.

5. Bombay Flying Club Becomes Country's First DGCA-approved Drone Training School

- The Bombay Flying Club has become the first DGCA-approved drone training school of the country. The DGCA approved the club's application "for conducting remote pilot training for remotely piloted aircraft systems".
- The ministry has started the registration process from June 8 for non-compliant drones which were not registered with the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and have not been granted drone acknowledgment numbers (DANs).
- On June 5, the ministry had issued draft rules for manufacturing and use of drones in the country wherein it has proposed that an authorised drone

manufacturer or importer can sell its devices only to an individual or entity approved by the DGCA.

6. ISRO to allow private sector to set up own launchpad at Sriharikota

- Indian Space of Research Organisation (ISRO) is all set to allow the private sector to set up their own launchpad at the Sriharikota Launch Centre (SHAR). The step will kickstart the process of unlocking the space sector for the private sector.
- As per ISRO Chairman, K Sivan, the space agency has already started the process of involving the private sector in space activities. Currently, ISRO has 2 launchpads and 2 rocket assembly buildings at Sriharikota.
- ISRO has also been gearing up to share its expertise with the private sector for free in areas such as technical support where monetary support is not involved like providing technical support.

7. SABIC chemical plant to become world's first of its kind to operate on 100% renewable power

- The Polycarbonate facility of SABIC in Spain, is set to become the World's first large scale industry to completely run on renewable power on signing a major agreement with Iberdrola, an electricity utility company to secure power from solar power projects.
- The Facility is expected to become fully operational by 2024 and support SABIC to achieve its clean energy target by 2025.
- This new plant will contribute 80,000 tonne annual reduction in the indirect emission of carbon dioxide supporting the climate change initiatives like EU 2030.

8. Apple surpasses Saudi Aramco to become world's most valuable company

- After reporting its blockbuster Quarterly result stock of Apple Inc increased 10% to a record high making Apple world's most valuable publicly listed company. The company has shown a great recovery from its low-point in March during the pandemic.
- As per the share count provided by Apple Inc. Its stock closed at \$425.04 putting company's market capitalization at \$1.82 trillion. Even Saudi Arabia's State-owned Saudi Aramco which had been the most valuable publicly listed company since the time it went public last year had a market capitalization of \$1.760 trillion. This unprecedented event which added \$172 billion was Apple's largest one-day percentage gain since March 13. It was even greater than the entire stock market value of Oracle group.

9. Nasa's Mars rover "Perseverance" launches from Florida to seek signs of past life on Mars

- NASA's next-generation Mars rover Perseverance took off from Florida's Cape Canaveral atop an Atlas 5 rocket. The next-generation robotic rover is scheduled to deploy a mini helicopter on Mars and test out equipment for future human missions to the fourth planet from the sun.
- After covering a huge distance of 300 million miles the Mars Perseverance Rover is expected to land on 18th February 2021.
- Perseverance Rover wheeled robot is very similar in design to NASA's previous Mars rover, Curiosity, which landed in 2012.

SPORTS

1. Emirates Cricket Board receives 'Letter of Intent' from BCCI to host IPL 2020 in UAE

- The Emirates Cricket Board (ECB) confirmed on July 27 that it has received the official Letter of Intent from the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to host Indian Premier League's 2020 edition.
- The IPL Governing Council Chairman Brijesh Patel had confirmed on July 26 that the BCCI has sent an acceptance letter to the Emirates Cricket Board. He had stated that both the boards will now work together to stage the tournament.
- The ECB had reportedly sent a proposal to the BCCI in April to host the 2020 edition of the IPL, which was originally supposed to begin on March 29 in India. However, the tournament was postponed indefinitely due to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic.
- Patel further stated that the eight IPL franchises- Mumbai Indians, Royal Challengers Bangalore, Chennai Super Kings, Rajasthan Royals, Delhi Capitals, Sunrisers Hyderabad, Kolkata Knight Riders and Kings XI Punjab-will hold their respective pre-tournament training camps in the UAE.

2. India's mixed relay team silver at 2018 Asian Games upgraded to gold

- The silver medal that the Indian 4×400 mixed relay quartet of Mohammed Anas, M.R. Poovamma, Hima Das and Arokia Rajiv won at the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta has been upgraded to gold.
- This after the Bahrain squad, which finished first in the 4×400 mixed relay final, was disqualified with Kemi Adekoya of Bahrain being handed a four-year ban by the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) for failing a dope test.
- Also, Indian runner Anu Raghavan has moved from fourth place to bronze medal position in the women's 400 m hurdles following the disqualification of Kemi Adekoya of Bahrain.

3. Pakistani batsman Umar Akmal's three-year ban reduced to 18 months

- Pakistani cricketer, Umar Akmal's ban has been halved to 18 months and will run from February 2020 to August 2021. The cricketer stated that he will appeal for more reprieve.
- The 30-year-old's sentence was reduced by independent adjudicator Faqir Mohammad Khokhar on “compassionate” grounds. The batsman was initially slapped with a three-year ban after the PCB charged him for two breaches of Article 2.4.4 of its Anti-Corruption Code in two unrelated incidents on March 17. The incidents were related to failing to report corrupt approaches.
- However, the cricketer is not satisfied with the reprieve and will fight for a complete lifting of the suspension. He expressed dissatisfaction with the ruling on his appeal.

4. Indian Grandmaster Harikrishna wins Chess 960 event at Biel Festival

- Indian Grandmaster P. Harikrishna finished overall second spot in the Grandmaster Triathlon Tournament at 53rd Biel International Chess Festival which took place in Biel/Bienne, Switzerland. Poland’s Radoslaw Watjaszek finished first in the Biel Chess Festival.
- Biel International Chess Festival 2020 is the first major event to be played over board, adhering to all the health protocols laid down due to COVID-19.
- The Grandmaster Triathlon Tournament consists of three rounds of chess competition – Classical, Rapid & Blitz and it is part of Biel Chess Festival.

OBITUARIES

1. Tanzania’s former President Benjamin Mkapa died while being treated for an undisclosed illness.

- Tanzania’s former President Benjamin Mkapa, who worked to end conflict in East Africa during and after his decade in power from 1995.
- Mkapa won the country’s first multi-party elections in 1995 and was re-elected for a second five-year term in 2000.
- He led several regional peace mediation initiatives and afterwards continued to seek reconciliation in Burundi, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo and the Great Lakes region.

2. Nation remembers ‘People’s President’ Bharat Ratna Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam on his death anniversary

- The Nation remembers former president Dr A P J Abdul Kalam on his death anniversary on 27 July.
- Popularly known as People's President and Missile Man of India, Dr. Kalam passed away in Shillong on 27th July 2015, while delivering a lecture to students.

- He was an Indian aerospace scientist and politician who served as the 11th President of India from 2002 to 2007.
- He was intimately involved in India's civilian space programme and military missile development efforts.
- He also played a pivotal organisational, technical, and political role in India's Pokhran-II nuclear tests in 1998, the first since the original nuclear test by India in 1974.

3. Two-Time Oscar Winner, Olivia de Havilland passed away at the age of 104

- She was born on 1st July 1916, in Tokyo, Japan. On March 13, 1946, Olivia won an Oscar award for the movie 'To Each His Own' under the category Best supporting actress.
- Again in the year 1949, she won the second Oscar award for the movie "The Heiress".
- In the year 2008, Olivia was honoured with, National Medal of Arts and France's Legion of Honor (Légion d'honneur) award after two years.

4. Veteran Bollywood Actor Kumkum Passed Away at 86 in Mumbai

- Veteran Bollywood Actor Kumkum due to age related ailments passed away at the age of 86 in her residence in Bandra, Mumbai, Maharashtra. She was born as Zaibunnissa on 22nd April 1934 in Sheikhpura district, Bihar.
- She was casted for an uncredited role in 'Aar Paar' and featured in small roles in films like 'Pyaasa'. She was popularly known for the songs featuring her like 'Madhuban Mein Radhika Nache Re' from Kohinoor (1960) and "Kabhi Aar Kabhi Paar" from Aar Paar(1954).

5. Padma Shri awardee Sonam Tshering Lepcha dies at 92

- Padma Shri awardee Sonam Tshering Lepcha passed away on 30 July. He was 92 years old. The Folk musician died due to the old age ailments and suffered a cardiac arrest. He is a multi-faceted personality and made outstanding efforts to popularise the great Lepcha culture.
- Lepcha was born in 1928 in Kalimpong, West Bengal. He began his career as a soldier. He travelled to various parts of Sikkim. He compiled a wide range of Indian folk and traditional Lepcha songs and played folk music on All India Radio (AIR) in 1960. Lepcha was highly revered in Sikkim. He played a vital role in reviving Lepcha culture and outstanding efforts to popularise the great Lepcha culture. It is an indigenous culture in Sikkim. In 2007, he was awarded the Padma Shri for his contribution in the field of folk music.

6. Rajya Sabha MP and former SP leader Amar Singh passes away at the age of 64

- Rajya Sabha MP Amar Singh passed away on Saturday at the age of 64. The veteran politician had been at ill health for a while now and was undergoing treatment at a hospital in Singapore over the last couple of months.
- Reports indicate that he was undergoing medical treatment at a hospital based in Singapore for several past months.

IMPORTANT DAYS

1. CRPF Celebrates 82nd Raising Day on 27 July

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has greeted all CRPF personnel on the 82nd Raising Day of the force. The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) is India's largest Central Armed Police Force.
- It functions under the authority of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) of the Government of India. The CRPF's primary role lies in assisting the State/Union Territories in police operations to maintain law and order and counter insurgency.
- It came into existence as the Crown Representative's Police on 27 July 1939.

2. The World Health Organization observed 28th July every year as “World Hepatitis Day”.

- The day is celebrated to enhance awareness of viral hepatitis, an inflammation of the liver that causes a range of health problems, including liver cancer.
- This year's theme is “Hepatitis-free future,” with a strong focus on preventing hepatitis B among mothers and newborns.
- The date of 28 July was chosen because it is the birthday of Nobel-prize winning scientist Dr Baruch Blumberg, who discovered the hepatitis B virus (HBV) and developed a diagnostic test and vaccine for the virus. There are five main strains of the hepatitis virus – A, B, C, D and E. Together, hepatitis B and C are the most common cause of deaths, with 1.3 million lives lost each year.

3. Every year July 29 is celebrated as Global Tiger Day

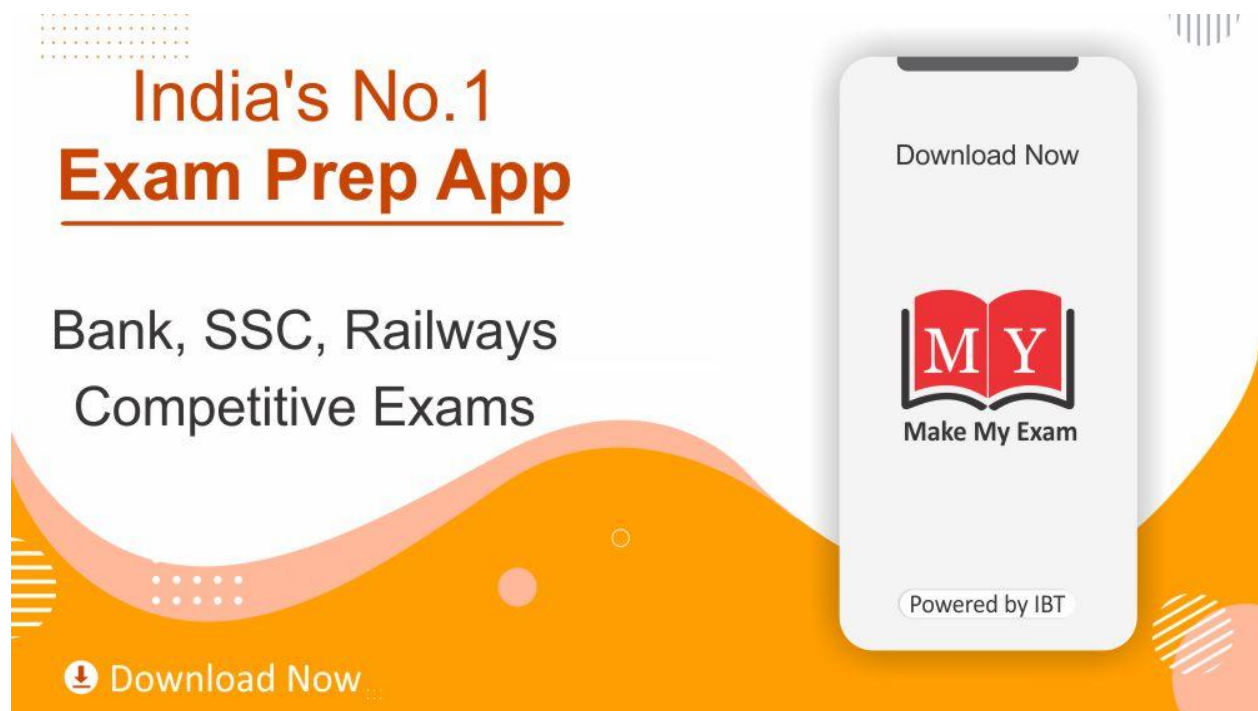
- Every year July 29 is celebrated as Global Tiger Day. The decision to celebrate the day was taken at the Saint Petersburg Declaration on Tiger conservation that was signed in 2010.
- India has 70% of total tiger population in the world. To commemorate Global Tiger Day, the Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar

released the All India Tiger Estimation-2018 report. Also, the Union Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan is to release a report on Tiger Census to commemorate Global Tiger Day. The day is also called International Tiger Day.

- The day is celebrated to create awareness for tiger conservation. It promotes a system to protect natural habitats of tigers and raise public awareness. This year, the Global Tiger Day is celebrated with the slogan, “Their Survival is in our hands”.

4. 1st August celebrated as the Muslim Women’s Rights Day

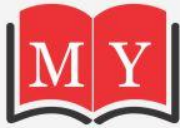
- On the occasion of the first anniversary of law-making Triple Talaq a criminal offence which got Presidential nod last year after getting approval from the Parliament, the day is declared as the Muslim Women’s Rights Day across the country. Triple Talaq Bill was passed in the Lok Sabha on 25th July 2019 with 79% of MP voting in favour and 21% voting against it. Further, it was passed by the Rajya Sabha on 30th July 2019 with 54% votes in favour and 46% voting against it. Finally, after getting the Presidential nod it became a law in the country.
- The bill makes any such act of divorce a legal offence and makes it void and illegal. The act further states that any man whosoever practices Triple Talaq mode of divorce shall be punished with an imprisonment of three years or fine or both. The offence is non-bailable and entitles the married woman to take custody of her minor children.



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