

Weekly Current Affairs

22 June - 28 June, 2020

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NATIONAL NEWS

1. NITI Aayog joins ITF to launch “Decarbonising Transport in India” project on June 24

- NITI Aayog will be launching 'Decarbonising Transport in India' project on June 24, 2020 in collaboration with the International Transport Forum. The main aim of the project will be to develop a pathway towards a low-carbon transport system for India.
- The Decarbonising Transport in India project will be launched by NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant and ITF Secretary-General Young Tae Kim during an online public launch event. The event will see participation from several senior officials of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Ministry of Road, Transport and Highways and ITF.
- India has been a member of the International Transport Forum (ITF) since 2008. The ITF is an intergovernmental organisation for transport policy.

2. India becomes 12th Largest Holder of US Government Securities at April 2020 end

- Despite low returns, the Treasury Securities (are of four types- Bills, Notes, Bonds, Inflation-Protected Securities) backed by the United States Treasury Department is one of the safest assets for any Central Bank around the world. With USD 157.4 billion at the end of April 2020, India has become the 12th largest holder of United States Government Securities.
- India's holding touched an all-time record high of USD 177.5 billion at the end of February 2020 but was reduced to USD 156.5 billion at the end of March 2020. This significant drop was due to the financial impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic. As economic uncertainties increased following lockdowns in most countries across the world, securities were sold by India in the month of March.
- On behalf of the Government of India, India's Central bank- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) invests in foreign assets. These foreign investments are part of prudential liquidity management.

3. Tripura to start ‘Ektu Khelo, Ektu Padho’ scheme for school students from June 25

- With uncertainty prevailing over reopening of schools due to COVID-19 pandemic, the Tripura government has decided to start a scheme called ‘Ektu Khelo, Ektu Padho’ which means ‘Play little, Study little’, from June 25.
- As per the scheme, the students would be getting audio and video contents on learning activities, projects along with fun and gaming activities via SMS or WhatsApp services.
- The Education state headquarters would share the learning contents to different district academic coordinators and they would share the same to headmasters of the schools in their concerned areas.
- The headmasters would give the responsibility to the teachers to share the contents among the students.
- The students would get their daily lessons and activities on their phones every morning and their feedback would be received every afternoon.

4. Patanjali launches Ayurvedic medicine to treat COVID-19, claims 100 pc recovery within 3-7 days

- Patanjali on June 23, 2020 launched 'Coronil and Swasari', its Ayurvedic medicine, which it claims can treat COVID-19. There is no official confirmation on the same by any scientific or government authority.

- Patanjali stated that the medicines showed 100 percent favourable results during clinical trials on the confirmed coronavirus patients. Two clinical trials were conducted, the first clinical controlled study that took place in Delhi and Ahmedabad and many other cities.
- Around 280 COVID patients were included in the trial and as per Patanjali, 100 percent of those recovered.
- However, the efficacy of Patanjali's medicines has not received any backing from any medical body as yet. The World Health Organization (WHO) had recently said that though many drug trials are going on, there is currently no proof that any drug can cure or prevent COVID-19.

5. Rajasthan Government to launch “Indira Rasoi Yojna” to provide meals at very low rates

- To provide pure and nutritious food to the economically weaker sections of the society, the Chief Minister of Rajasthan, Ashok Gehlot on 22nd June 2020 announced ‘Indira Rasoi Yojna (Indira Kitchen Scheme).
- Under the scheme, food will be available at a concessional rate twice a day to make sure no one sleeps hungry in state. For the successful implementation of the scheme, the state government will rope in local Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) in every district of the state. For monitoring and evaluating the progress of the scheme, Information Technology will be used. In every district, a committee headed by the district collector will also be set up for monitoring the scheme.
- For the scheme, Rs 100 crore will be spent every year by the state government. The rate for the meals under the Indira Rasoi Yojna has not been finalized yet.

6. Mansukh Mandaviya inaugurates India's one of largest & first Virtual Healthcare & Hygiene EXPO 2020

- Union State Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers Mansukh Mandaviya inaugurated one of India's largest and first Virtual Healthcare and Hygiene EXPO 2020.
- The unique exhibition which aims to give a boost to such health and hygiene endeavours has been organised by FICCI.
- This unique exhibition aims to give a boost to such health and hygiene endeavours. This is the first-ever largest virtual exhibition in India making a new beginning.

7. India's GDP to Fall 3.1% in 2020; Geo-Political Tensions Will Increase Risk: Moody's report

- According to the Moody's Global Macro Outlook report for June 2020, there will be a contraction of 3.1 % in India's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2020 & expects a change in geographical conditions in Asia due to tensions at the border between India and China.
- Previously in April 2020, Moody's had forecasted a 0.2 % increase in India's GDP in 2020. The agency has now revised its estimate of the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemic.
- The slight relief for India is that GDP will reach the level of 6.9% in 2021. Till then, there will be a slow recovery in the Indian economy, which will start from the second half (H2) of this year.

8. Commerce and Industry Ministry hailed for 'country of origin' rule

- “Information about Country of Origin” has been mandated for the sellers by the Government e-Marketplace (GeM), a Special Purpose Vehicle under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- The sellers have been advised to mention “Information about Country of Origin” while registering all new products on GeM.
- While those sellers, who had already registered their products before the launch of this new feature on GeM, would be reminded regularly to update the information about Country of Origin.
- If they fail to update the same, their products shall be removed from GeM.

9. Cabinet approves declaration of Kushinagar airport in UP as an international airport

- In a bid to boost domestic and international tourism, the Union Cabinet approved the proposal to declare the Kushinagar airport in Uttar Pradesh as an international airport.
- Kushinagar is regarded as a sacred Buddhist pilgrimage centre and is dotted with several other Buddhist sites in the surrounding areas such as Sravasti (238 km), Kapilvastu (190 km) and Lumbini (195 km).
- It already serves as the presenting site for the Buddhist pilgrimage circuit spanning India and Nepal.

10. Rohini Commission set to get nod for its ninth extension

- The Justice Rohini Commission- set up in October 2017 to recommend sub categorization of the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and ensure that marginalized sub castes get due benefits- is set to get its ninth extension.
- The Rohini Commission was to originally submit its report by March 2018.
- The move to grant yet another extension to the Commission comes at a time when elections are due in Bihar- a state where OBC sub categorization of any kind will have huge political impact.

11. Gujarat, Tripura, and Nagaland Best Performing States in Annual TB Report 2020

- Gujarat, Nagaland and Tripura have been awarded for being the best performing small states under National TB elimination programme in the year 2019. This was declared yesterday during the release of the annual TB Report 2020 by Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan.
- With a focus on eliminating Tuberculosis(TB) from the country by 2025, in January 2020 the Government of India renamed the ‘National Tuberculosis Control Program’ to the ‘National Tuberculosis Elimination Program’.
- In a virtual event, the Annual TB Report 2020 was released on 24th June 2020. The Report was released by Dr. Harsh Vardhan (Union Health Minister).
- States were divided based on their population as larger and smaller states. All states having more than 50 lakh population were under larger states while states with less than 50 lakh population were under smaller states.

12. Haryana govt and Reliance Jio TV enter into agreement to educate 52 lakh students

- Haryana government and Reliance Jio TV have entered an agreement that is expected to benefit around 52 lakh school children in rural areas.
- This new agreement is done under the Chief Minister's Distance Education Programme in order to expand education in rural areas without jeopardizing social distancing during the Covid-19 pandemic.

- Under the agreement, all four channels of Eduset will now be available on the Jio platform free of cost.
- Due to Covid-19 pandemic the state is facing difficulty in imparting education to school children, especially in the rural setup.

13. Chhattisgarh launches “Godhan Nyay Yojana” and becomes first Indian state to buy cow dung from cattle owners

- Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel announced the launch of 'Godhan Nyay Yojana' in the state on June 25, 2020. The scheme aims to make animal husbandry commercially profitable, prevent open grazing by cattle and solve the problem of stray animals on roads and for environment conservation.
- The 'Godhan Nyay Yojana' was launched through an online press conference. According to Chhattisgarh Chief Minister, the scheme was launched to promote animal husbandry and make it a profitable practice.
- As per the Chief Minister, the Godhan Nyay Yojana will be an innovative step forward towards protecting the financial interest of livestock owners in the state. The scheme is expected to boost the efforts made by the state government to strengthen the rural economy.

14. Union minister Prakash Javadekar inaugurated Virtual India Pavilion at “Cannes Film Market 2020”

- Union Minister of Information & Broadcasting, Prakash Javadekar inaugurated the Virtual India Pavilion at Cannes Film Market 2020, commencing India's participation at Cannes Film Festival. During the e-inauguration, the minister invited international film fraternity to come as well as shoot in India, and sell in the international market. This year, India has sent two films for screening during the festival, namely: MaiGhat: Crime No 103/200 (Marathi) and Hellaro (Gujarati).
- The Indian Pavilion at Cannes will enable the Indian film makers and delegates to interact with the international community, and make them experience the colour, flavor and aroma of Indian cinema. It will also enable international film makers to explore the opportunities of working with Indian film makers and to shoot within Incredible India.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

1. China to Establish National Security Bureau in Hong Kong

- On 28th May 2020, Beijing passed legislation that empowered the Chinese Parliament to draft security laws for Hong Kong. Now China continues to tighten its grip on Hong Kong by planning to establish a 'Special Bureau- National Security Office' in Hong Kong that will have the rights to deal with criminal cases and analyze intelligence that is related to the national security.
- Establishing a National Security Bureau in Hong Kong was confirmed after a three day (from 18th June to 20th June) meeting of the Legislative Affairs Commission (Top lawmaking committee in China). On 19th June 2020, it was also reported in Chinese media that all departments under the Hong Kong government will be directly answerable to Beijing once the legislation is implemented.

2. Indonesia's most active volcano Mount Merapi erupts

- Indonesia's most volatile volcano spewed ash and hot gas in a massive column as high as 6km (3.7 miles) into the sky.
- Mount Merapi's clouds of ash, accompanied by a rumbling sound heard kilometres (miles) away.
- The 2,968-metre (9,737-foot) mountain is the most active of 500 Indonesian volcanoes. It has rumbled and generated dark hot clouds since last year.
- Its last major eruption in 2010 killed 353 people.
- Indonesia, an archipelago of 270 million people, is prone to earthquakes and volcanic activity because it sits along the Pacific Ring of Fire, a horseshoe-shaped series of fault lines around the ocean.

3. Saudi Arabia to hold 'very limited' Hajj due to pandemic in 2020

- Saudi Arabia announced that it will hold a "very limited" Hajj this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Only those people already living in the kingdom will be allowed to take part in the pilgrimage that begins in late July.
- The decision comes in the wake of rising COVID-19 cases around the world, the lack of a vaccine and difficulty in maintaining social distancing among large numbers of pilgrims coming from overseas.
- Over two million people perform the annual Hajj pilgrimage in the holy city of Mecca every year, including many pilgrims from abroad. The Hajj is considered a must for Muslims at least once in their lifetime.
- The Union Minister for Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi informed on June 23 that India has honoured Saudi Arabia's decision to ban international pilgrims to perform Haj. The Minister stated that the Muslims from India will not go to Saudi Arabia to perform Haj.

4. Foundation Stone Laid for the First Hindu Temple in Pakistan's Capital Islamabad

- On 23rd June 2020, the foundation stone for the first Hindu Temple in Pakistan's capital city Islamabad was laid. The temple is the first to be constructed in Islamabad since the Independence of Pakistan.
- The temple will be devoted to Lord Krishna. The name of the temple will be Shri Krishna Mandir. The name of the temple was decided by the Islamabad Hindu Panchayat.

5. Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic won the controversial Parliamentary election

- Serbia's President Aleksandar Vucic won the controversial parliamentary election. The Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) won over 60% of the vote, which is around 190 seats in the 250-seat Serbian parliament.
- The general election was originally scheduled for 26 April 2020 but was postponed after a state of the emergency was declared to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. The largest block of parties including the Serbian Radical Party (SRP), the Democratic Party, the Party of Freedom and Justice, The Doors (Dveri), the People's Party, and the Let's not drown Belgrade movement boycotted the election.
- Siberia Parliament is also known as the National Assembly of Siberia. It has a unicameral legislature. The PM of Siberia is elected and appointed by the 250 elected members of the National Assembly. The President of Siberia is also empowered to propose the name of an individual to the National Assembly for the post of the Prime Minister.

6. World's first yoga university outside India named after Swami Vivekanand launched in Los Angeles

- As part of the 6th International Yoga Day commemorations, the world's first yoga university outside India has been launched in Los Angeles. It offers programmes that combine scientific principles and modern research approaches to ancient Indian practice.
- Eminent Indian yoga guru Dr H R Nagendra, Chancellor of Swami Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhana Samsthana (SVYASA), is the first Chairman of VaYU. The university will help thousands of yoga teachers in the US whose yoga education was limited to 200 or 500 hours of certificate programmes to progress further into university-based higher education.
- The applications for fall 2020 semester are open with the first day of classes starting on August 24 in a virtual mode.

7. World's First Gold-backed US Digital Gold Currency Launched in India, GCC, Middle East and Africa by IBMC

- IBMC Financial Professionals Group in partnership with US Gold Currency Inc and Blockfills introduced the world's first monetary gold-backed US Gold digital currency in India, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Middle East and Africa. It was launched from Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE) at a specially designed IBMC Hybrid Event in the virtual presence of officials from the US Gold Currency, Asia-Africa Development Council, GSEF and Blockfills USA.
- This digital currency is available to customers ranging from retail and corporate investors, banks, financial institutions and sovereign wealth funds to treasuries and asset management companies.
- It can also support corporates in reducing the cost of business transaction and settle their inter-country company transactions to address business risks.

8. Iran to set up permanent military base in Indian Ocean

- Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) plans to establish a permanent military base in the Indian Ocean by March 2021. This was announced by IRGC Navy Commander Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri.
- The Navy Commander informed that the Islamic Republic's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has given the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps the task of setting up a permanent base in the waters far away from the country.

9. Russia's Energia Space Corporation plans to take first tourist on spacewalk in 2023

- Energia Space Corporation in Russia announced on June 25 that it is planning on taking the first tourist on a spacewalk in 2023, under the terms of a new contract with a United States partner.
- Energia has signed a contract with Space Adventures. The contract promises to take two space tourists to the International Space Station (ISS) in 2023.
- Energia, which is a part of Russia's Space Agency, Roscosmos informed that there is a plan that one of the participants of the expedition will do spacewalk from the Russian segment, together with a Russian cosmonaut.

10. Pakistan remains in Grey list of terror financing watchdog "Financial Action Task Force"

- Financial Action Task Force(FATF) in its 3rd and final plenary meeting under the Chinese Presidency of Xiangmin Liu over a virtual platform, retained Pakistan on the grey list till October 2020, for failing to prosecute and penalise terrorist financing in the country before the deadline fixed by FATF .
- Germany will take over the presidency of the FATF from July, 2020 for a year.
- If Pakistan fails to comply with FATF directive by October 2020 the country will be put under “Black List”.

11. US Senate passes bill to impose sanctions on China over Hong Kong security law

- The US Senate on June 25, 2020 passed a bill that seeks to impose sanctions on China for its decision to implement the controversial national security law in Hong Kong. The bill was passed with unanimous consent.
- The bill comprises two measures, one of which- the Hong Kong Autonomy Act, aims to impose sanctions on individuals and businesses that help China restrict the autonomy of Hong Kong. The measure was jointly introduced by Republican Senator Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania and Democratic Senator Chris Van Hollen of Maryland.
- The second measure was pushed by Republican Senator Josh Hawley of Missouri. It is a resolution that condemns China for violating the Sino-British Joint Declaration signed in 1984 to guarantee autonomy for Hong Kong.
- This is done by U.S because recently China created Special Administrative region by which Hongkong became answerable directly to Beijing which is threat to Hongkong's international status.

12. NCPOR warns about the decline in the Arctic sea ice

- The National Centre of Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR) has warned about the decline in the Arctic sea ice. The dramatic decline in the Arctic sea ice is due to global warming. The loss of sea ice led to a localized increase in evaporation, air humidity, cloud cover, and rainfall.
- It is well known that Arctic sea ice is a sensitive indicator of climate change and has strong retaliatory effects on other components of the climate system. NCPOR observed that the largest decline in Arctic sea ice in the past 41 years happened in July 2019.
- It stated that, in the last 40 years (1979-2018), the sea ice has been declining at a rate of -4.7% per decade, while its rate was found to be -13% in July 2019. It warned that, if this trend continues, there would be no ice left in the Arctic sea by 2050, which would be dangerous for humanity and the entire environment.

New Appointments and Person in News

1. IFTAS announces the appointment of Shri T. Rabi Sankar as chairman

- Indian Financial Technology & Allied Services (IFTAS) has announced the appointment of T Rabi Sankar as the Chairman of the organization. IFTAS is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Reserve Bank of India.
- T Rabi Sankar, currently serving as Executive Director, Reserve Bank of India for Payment Systems, Information Technology, Risk Management and Fintech has taken over concurrent charge, ex officio, as the Chairman of IFTAS.
- Agency also appoints Dr. N Rajendran as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the organization.

2. Priyanka Chopra & Anurag Kashyap named Among 50 Ambassadors for 45th Edition of TIFF 2020

- Actress Priyanka Chopra and Filmmaker Anurag Kashyap named among the 50 ambassadors for the 45th edition of Toronto International Film Festival(TIFF) 2020, which is to be held virtually. The festival will take place from September 10-19 with physical screenings and drive-ins, digital screenings, virtual red carpets, press conferences and industry talks.
- This is the 1st time TIFF will launch a digital platform for the festival, offering new opportunities to connect with audiences beyond Toronto.
- TIFF has partnered with Shift72 to develop the online platform.



BANKING

1.RBI Doubles Withdrawal Limit To Rs 1 Lakh For PMC Bank Depositors; Restrictions extended for six months

- In a relief to the depositors of fraud-hit PMC Bank, the Reserve Bank of India enhanced the withdrawal limit to Rs 1 lakh while extending the regulatory restriction on the cooperative bank by another six months till Dec. 22.
- The earlier withdrawal limit was Rs 50,000 per depositor.
- The RBI had placed regulatory curbs on the Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative Bank Limited, Mumbai, on Sept. 23, 2019, after finding out certain financial irregularities, hiding and misreporting of loans given to real estate developer HDIL.
- With the latest relaxation on withdrawal, more than 84% of the depositors of the bank will be able to withdraw their entire account balance.
- The withdrawal limit was last enhanced to Rs 50,000 per depositor on Nov. 5, 2019, and the restrictions extended up to June 22, 2020.

2. EXIM Bank Extends Line of Credit of USD 20.10 Million to Nicaragua Govt

- Export-Import(EXIM) Bank on behalf of the Indian Government, extended a Line of Credit(LOC) of USD 20.10 million to the Government of the Republic of Nicaragua for the reconstruction of Aldo Chavarria Hospital.
- The agreement was signed by Tarun Sharma, General Manager, EXIM bank & José Adrián Chavarria, General Vice minister, Ministry of Finance and Public Credit, Government of Nicaragua.

3. Yes Bank partners with Affordplan to launch Co-Branded Healthcare Card Called “Swasth Card”

- Yes Bank Limited, an Indian public bank, has joined hands with Delhi-based fintech startup Affordplan, to launch co-branded healthcare card called ‘Swasth Card’ under

Swasth program with the aim to enable families plan and manage their finances for their healthcare needs.

- Besides, Yes bank's wallet has also been integrated on Affordplan Swasth to pave the way for wallet QR (Quick Response) scan for making payments to merchant partners enlisted on the app.

4. Cabinet Approves Ordinance to bring UCBs and MSCBs under RBI supervision

- The decision to bring Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs) and Multi-State Cooperative Banks (MSCBs) under the supervision of India's Central Bank- the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) was taken on 24th June 2020 during a meeting of the Union Cabinet.
- The ordinance will immediately come into effect from the date of signature of the President of India. The decision was taken by the Government following the financial irregularities of the Punjab & Maharashtra Cooperative (PMC) Bank that was unearthed in the month of September 2019.
- RBI's supervision means that the 8.6 crore depositors of these 1482 UCBs and 58 MSCBs around the country will be able to get the added protection and comfort that are at present applicable for the scheduled commercial banks in the country, such as Bank Deposit Insurance to per depositor of up to Rs 5 lakh, etc.

5. Karnataka Bank launches 'KBL Micro Mitra' for MSMEs

- Karnataka Bank launched a new product 'KBL Micro Mitra' for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). This product will provide financial assistance up to Rs 10 lakhs to the Micro manufacturing and service enterprises for working capital or for investment purposes.
- The facility has simplified procedure and competitive rate of interest. The product will be available across all branches of the bank & will be soon available in digital version.

Books and Awards

1. Golden Globe awards postponed to February 2021 due to coronavirus

- The Golden Globes on Monday (June 22) postponed its 2021 ceremony for film and television, after a two-month delay to the Oscars, in Hollywood's latest awards calendar shuffle caused by the coronavirus epidemic.
- The Golden Globes ceremony, which kicks off Hollywood's awards season, will take place on Feb 28 instead of its usual slot on the first Sunday in January, the Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA), which hands out the trophies, said in a statement.
- Last week the Oscars, the highest honours in the film industry, were postponed to April 25 from Feb 28.

2. Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen wins 2020 Peace Prize of the German Book Trade

- Indian economist, philosopher and Nobel Laureate Amartya Kumar Sen (86) has been selected for 2020 Peace Prize by the Board of Trustees of the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade for his decades-long work around issues of global justice.
- He will be presented with the award by German Publishers' and Booksellers' Association, Borsenverein in a ceremony that will take place on October 18, 2020, in Paulskirche (Germany) & will be broadcast live on German public television.

3. Folk artist Gulabbai Sangamnerkar & Madhuvanti Dandekar to get Lifetime Achievement Award.

- Maharashtra Culture Minister Amit Deshmukh announced that Vithabai Narayangaokar lifetime achievement award 2018-19 will be conferred upon the senior tamasha (folk art) artist, Gulabbai Sangamnerkar and Sangeetacharya Annasaheb Kirloskar musical theatre lifetime achievement award 2019-20 will be given to Veteran theatre actress-singer Madhuvanti Dandekar.
- Both the awards carry a cash prize of Rs 5 lakhs, a citation & a memento.

4. Cleared of Doping Charges , K. Sanjita Chanu to receive Arjuna Award

- Secretary of Indian Weightlifting Federation (IWLFF) has informed on 25th June 2020 that K. Sanjita Chanu will receive the Arjuna Award for 2018. The two time Commonwealth Games Gold medalist was cleared of doping charges earlier this month by the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF).
- The International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) dropped the doping charge against Chanu due to "non-conformities" in the handling of her sample last month. The Manipuri plans to seek compensation from the IWF for the "trauma" she endured.

SCIENCE TECH & DEFENCE

1.ISRO receives patent for protective garment for human spaceflight

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) has received a patent for its Liquid Cooling and Heating Garment (LCHG).
- It is made of biocompatible fabrics and components to provide a comfortable temperature and removal of sweat for astronauts, for use in space for protection from hot and cold environments.
- LCHGs are used in space, military applications, fire fighting and also for personal cooling and heating purposes for protection from hot and cold environments of industrial areas or in extreme temperature and humidity conditions that may exist in work environments.
- These garments have a system for circulating temperature controlling fluid into and out of the garments, for instance, through tubes inside the garment.

2. India becomes World's First Country to Use Drone Mounted ULV Sprayer for Locust Control

- Under the Make in India initiative the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers' Welfare (DAC&FW) has initiated to develop a vehicle mounted ultra-low volume (ULV) sprayer for locust control to reduce the limitations of importing equipment.
- This initiative is led by the Mechanization and Technology Division of DAC&FW with a sprayer prototype developed by Indian manufacturer. The initial trial of the sprayer has been conducted in Ajmer and Bikaner districts of Rajasthan and is awaiting approval for commercial launch.

3. China successfully launches its Last Satellite of BeiDou Satellite System 3 (BDS-3)

- In an effort to compete with the United States Government's NAVSTAR Global Positioning System (GPS), Russia's GLONASS, and the Galileo Systems of the

European Union, China completed the launch of its final satellite on 23rd June 2020. The satellite was launched as a carrier with Long March 3 rocket from the Xichang Satellite Launch Centre. BeiDou means 'Big Dipper' in Mandarin.

- The satellite launched is a part of the third generation of the BeiDou Navigation Satellite System (BDS-3) and was the 55th satellite of the Beidou system.

SPORTS

1. National champion Niki Poonacha elected to ITF Men's player panel

- National champion Niki Poonacha has been elected to the International Tennis Federation (ITF) men's player panel and will represent the Asia-Oceania zone along with Ti Chen of Chinese Taipei.
- Aldin Setkic and Francesco Vilardo were elected from Europe, while Juan Pablo Paz and Jose Bendeck were elected to represent South America.
- The ITF also has a women's player panel with Akgul Amanmuradova of Uzbekistan from Asia.
- The men's and women's panels will be headed by Mark Woodforde and Mary Pierce, respectively, who are already athlete representatives on the ITF board of directors.
- A coach will also be included into the player panels.

2. World's No.1 Tennis Player Novak Djokovic tests positive for COVID-19

- Novak Djokovic, the world's no.1 tennis player, has tested positive for COVID-19. A statement was issued confirming the news. Djokovic recently took part in an exhibition tennis tournament in the Balkans.
- As per the statement, he has tested positive for a virus COVID-19 although he is not showing any symptoms. Novak Djokovic was tested along with his family members with whom he was in Belgrade and Zadar.
- He confirmed that his wife, Jelena Djokovic has also tested positive while the results of their children remain negative. Djokovic is a Serbian professional tennis player who is currently the world's No. 1 in men's singles tennis.

3. Wasim Jaffer appointed head coach of Uttarakhand cricket team

- Former India opener Wasim Jaffer has been appointed head coach of the Uttarakhand cricket team for the upcoming domestic season.
- The highest run-getter in Ranji Trophy, Jaffer had announced retirement in March this year after playing for over two decades, primarily for domestic giants Mumbai and Vidarbha.
- This will be his first stint as a head coach with a team. Uttarakhand had reached the quarterfinals in their debut Ranji Trophy season in 2018-19, where they lost to Vidarbha, by an innings and 115 runs.

4. Australia, New Zealand to jointly host FIFA Women's World Cup 2023

- FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 will be hosted by Australia and New Zealand. The announcement was made by the Federation of International Football Associations on June 25, 2020.
- FIFA's official statement said that the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 will be staged in Australia and New Zealand. This was decided following a vote taken by the FIFA Council during its meeting held via video conference, the result of which was announced by FIFA President Gianni Infantino.

OBITUARIES

1. Maj Gen Lachhman Singh Lehl, renowned veteran of 1948, 1971 wars, dies at 97

- Major General (Retd) Lachhman Singh Lehl, who commanded the 20 Mountain Division of the Army that exhibited massive courage and valour during the 1971 Indo-Pak war, has died aged 97 in Delhi.
- Major General (Retd) Lehl had assumed command of the 20 Mountain Division on November 13, 1970.
- The famous battles of "Hilli" and "Bogra" were fought in 1971 operations, which were decisive battles in the Eastern Theatre," the official said.
- The Instrument of Surrender taken by the officer against Pakistan's 16 Infantry Division speaks of the valour of the 20 Mountain Division on the eastern front under his command.

2. Former India shooter Pournima Zanane passes away after two-year battle with cancer

- Former India shooter Pournima Zanane has passed away aged 42. An International Shooting Sport Federation-licenced coach, Zanane had been suffering from cancer for the past two years and also underwent extensive treatment for the same.
- She has represented India at multiple ISSF World Cups, Asian Championships, Commonwealth Championships, among others.
- Zanane, who was a national record holder in 10m air rifle event, took to coaching and was honoured with the Shiv Chhatrapati Sports award by the Maharashtra government.

3. 'Batman' movie director Joel Schumacher passes away at 80 after battling cancer

- Costume designer-turned director Joel Schumacher, known for helming films including 'St Elmo's Fire', 'Falling Down' as well as two 'Batman' movies, has passed away. Schumacher started off as a costume designer for 1970s films.
- Joel Schumacher's first movie was Batman Forever which starred Val Kilmer, Tommy Lee Jones, Jim Carrey and Nicole Kidman.
- He also directed the movie titled "The Phantom of the Opera" which received three Oscar nominations.

IMPORTANT DAYS

1. International Olympic Day: 23 June

- International Olympic Day is celebrated across the world on June 23 every year.
- The Olympic Day was celebrated for the first time ever on 23 June 1948.

- The day is observed every year to mark the importance of games and sports in our lives and to promote participation in games and sports across the world, irrespective of age, gender, cast or religion.

2. International Day of the Seafarer observed on 25 June

- The Day of the Seafarer is celebrated each year on June 25. On this day, people pay respect to Seafarers and sailors who help the entire world function by conducting sea transport.
- Even now, global trade still depends on ocean transport, which is why Seafarers and sailors are essential to the functioning of the world.
- Day of the Seafarer celebration was first started in 2010 by the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

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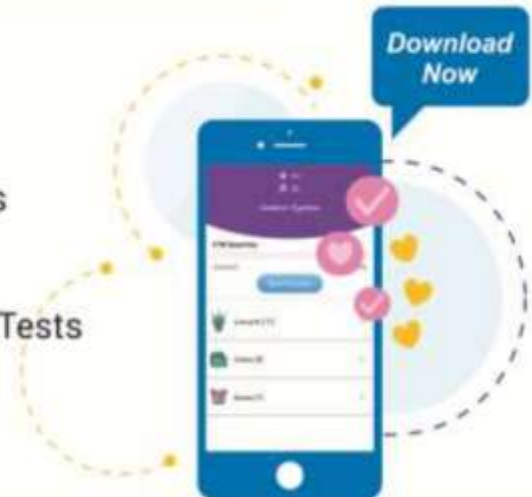
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