

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – JULY 6, 2020

TAMIL NADU

- On July 5, Tamil Nadu - reported 4,150 new cases, taking the overall tally to 1,11,151.
- ✓ The state witnessed 60 deaths on the day, taking the cumulative casualties to 1,510
- ✓ The total number of active cases in the state, as on date, stands at 46,860.
- ✓ Chennai reported less than 2000 cases for the second day running by reporting 1,713 cases, taking its overall tally to 68,254.

Keeping count | A tracker, across parameters, on how the pandemic has affected the State so far

	Until June 28	June 29	June 30	July 1	July 2	July 3	July 4	July 5	Total
Cases reported	82,275	3,949	3,943	3,882	4,343	4,329	4,280	4,150	1,11,151
Recovered and discharged	45,537	2,212	2,325	2,852	3,095	2,357	2,214	2,186	62,778
Deceased	1,079	62	60	63	57	64	65	60	1,510

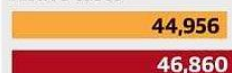
Persons tested



*CHANGES IN 24 HOURS

As on July 4, 6 p.m.
As on July 5, 6 p.m.

Active cases



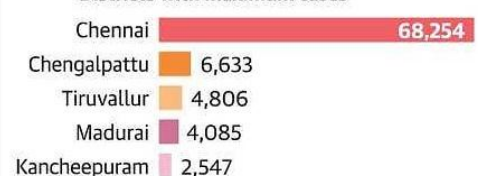
Discharged



Died



Districts with maximum cases



Active Cases + Discharged + Died will not equal Total Cases as 2 deaths were cross-notified to other States and 1 patient, who initially tested positive for COVID-19, later died after turning negative, as per the Health and Family Welfare Department.

- ✓ Apart from Chennai, other districts which reported more cases include -- Madurai (308), Chengalpet (274), Tiruvallur (209), Vellore (179), Kancheepuram (152), Thiruvannamalai (141), Virudhunagar(113) and Villupuram (109).
- ✓ A total of 2,186 patients were discharged from hospitals after treatment, bringing the total so far to 62,778.

- ✓ As many as 34,102 persons were tested for the infection on the day, taking the total tested to 12,83,419 persons till now.
 - ✓ One private lab (SRM Institutes for Medical Sciences, Chennai) has been newly approved for Covid-19 testing
 - ✓ This takes the total number of approved labs in the state to 95, with 49 in the government sector and 46 are in the private sector
 - ✓ Meanwhile, Chennai and its three neighbouring districts — Kancheepuram, Tiruvallur and Chengalpet — will emerge from a 17-day intensive lockdown on July 6 with the relaxation of curbs.
 - ✓ In another development, the Greater Chennai Corporation has launched vehicles for each of the 200 wards to carry residents to Covid-19 screening centres.
 - ✓ The 10-seater vehicle would be available with sanitary inspectors of all the wards to transport residents to 12 screening centres.
- **The Tamil Nadu government - has decided to commence pool testing of Covid-19 samples.**
- ✓ In this regard, the protocols are expected to be announced by the government in a few days.
 - ✓ Pool testing is a method by which multiple samples, up to a total of five, are tested together, in one single RT-PCR test.
 - ✓ Five samples are taken together and analysed, and if the result of a pool is positive, individual samples are tested again.
 - ✓ If the result of a pool is negative, all the samples have deemed to have been negative.
 - ✓ This method can be done only in a population where the positivity is known to be low
 - ✓ According to Health Secretary J. Radhakrishnan, the government had decided to go ahead with the pool testing methodology in areas where it was sure that case positivity rate was under 2%
 - ✓ Pool testing is recommended as a tool to increase the number of tests quickly at a comparatively lesser cost.
 - ✓ In mid-April, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) advised the guidelines for pool testing, recommending the method as the number of positive cases began to rise rapidly.
 - ✓ As per the ICMR advisory, it must be used only in areas with low prevalence of Covid-19.
 - ✓ In areas with positivity of 2-5%, sample pooling for RT-PCR screening may be considered, but only in community survey or surveillance among asymptomatic individuals
 - ✓ As per the advisory, it is preferable that the number of samples to be pooled is five, though more than two samples can be pooled, because of the higher possibility of missing positive samples with a low viral load.

- ✓ The State government has also decided to drop antigen testing, as it has already started extensive RT-PCR testing and now decided to go in for pool testing as well
 - ✓ Antigen tests involve drawing a blood sample and testing it to show if a person has antibodies for Covid-19, indicating that the person, at some point, been positive.
- **The Chennai Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (CPCL) - has recommended investment approval for the construction of the 9 million metric tonnes per annum (MMPTA) refinery at its Cauvery Basin Refinery (CBR) in Nagapattinam.**
 - ✓ Next, the ₹28,980 crore investment proposal awaits the approval of the board of the Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. (IOCL), the holding company of CPCL.
 - ✓ The project would be a joint venture between IOCL and CPCL, where the two companies would hold 25% of shares each.
 - ✓ The balance would be held by financial or strategic or public investors who would be identified later.
 - ✓ The project will help increase the refining capacity in Tamil Nadu and ensure uninterrupted supplies to the southern parts of the State and neighbouring States.
 - ✓ It will also assist in the economic development of these areas.
 - ✓ The environmental clearance for the project is awaited.
 - ✓ The first-stage approval for the project was received from CPCL/IOCL Boards in September 2017.
 - ✓ Subsequently, a detailed feasibility report has also been completed.
 - ✓ CPCL's refinery at Manali has a refining capacity of 10.5 MMPTA.
 - ✓ Its products include fuel, wax, naphtha and LPG.
 - ✓ The CBR was set up in 1993 with a capacity of .5 MMPTA, which was later enhanced to 1 MMPTA.

STATES

- **The 1000-bed Sardar VallabhBhai Patel COVID-19 hospital in Delhi cantonment - has become operational from July 5, 2020.**
 - ✓ It was built by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)
 - ✓ The fully air-conditioned hospital, with 250 specialized ICU beds, is located adjacent to the office of Controller General of Defence Accounts (CGDA) on Ulan Bator Road near Domestic Terminal of Indira Gandhi International Airport
 - ✓ The facility is set up in the land belonging to the Indian Air Force
 - ✓ Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh visited the hospital that is spread over 25 thousand square meters
 - ✓ The wards at the hospital are named after the Indian Army Soldiers who have lost their lives on 15th June 2020 during the violent clash at Galwan Valley with the Chinese PLA.

- ✓ Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and the ventilator ward are named after Indian Armed Forces Commissioned Officer, Colonel Bikkumalla Santosh Babu.
- ✓ The newly built hospital is a temporary structure that has been built in a record time of 12 days by DRDO in association with Tata Sons



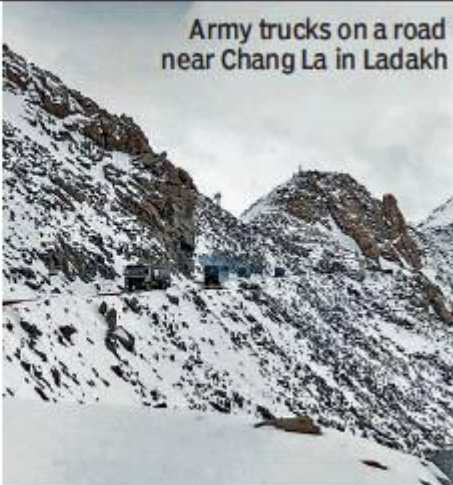
- ✓ The Health Ministry, Home Ministry, Armed Forces and other industry players were also instrumental in the construction of the hospital.
 - ✓ The hospital will be operated with the medical team of doctors, nurses and support staff from the Armed Forces Medical Services
 - ✓ The hospital will be maintained by DRDO.
 - ✓ The Covid-19 patients who are referred by the district administration will be admitted in the hospital and they will be treated free of cost
- **World's largest Covid care treatment centre and hospital with 10,000 beds - was inaugurated in New Delhi on 5th July 2020.**
- ✓ It was inaugurated by Lieutenant Governor of Delhi Anil Baijal.
 - ✓ The hospital is called Sardar Patel COVID Care Centre and hospital (SPCCCH)



- ✓ The centre is 1,700 feet long, 700 feet wide and has 200 enclosures with 50 beds each
- ✓ It is roughly equivalent to the size of 20 football fields
- ✓ The infrastructure for the hospital was created in a record time of 10 days by the South Delhi District Administration, in association with the Union Ministry of Home Affairs
- ✓ SPCCCH is built on the campus of spiritual organization 'Radha Soami Satsang Beas', which is located in South Delhi's Chhatarpur area.
- ✓ The treatment in SPCCCH to COVID-19 positive patients will be provided in two segments
 - ✓ In the first segment, out of 10,000 beds, 1000 beds will have an oxygen facility to treat symptomatic patients and patients who require oxygen support
 - ✓ This segment will be known as Dedicated COVID Health Care (DCHC).
 - ✓ The second segment will be for mild and asymptomatic COVID-19 patients.
- ✓ Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) is chosen as the nodal agency for operating the center.
- ✓ Volunteers from the religious sect of Radha Soami Beas will also help run the centre.
- ✓ For the admission and discharge of patients at SPCCCH, the National Informatics Centre (NIC) has also developed a smartphone-based application that will be used by the hospital authorities.

NATIONAL

- **The road transport and highways ministry – has announced a four-fold increase in the allocation for maintenance of NHs in border areas, which are managed by the Border Road Organisation (BRO)**
- ✓ Accordingly, the assistance of the government has been increased from ₹30 crore to ₹120 crore for this year.

<p>₹120cr: Allocation for maintenance of border roads managed by BRO, up from ₹30cr</p> <p>₹589cr: Approved sanction limit for works in Ladakh, against an earlier cap of ₹72 crore</p> <p>₹1,351cr: Revised cap for new national highway work in J&K</p>	<p>Army trucks on a road near Chang La in Ladakh</p> 
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- ✓ The government's renewed focus on boosting the infrastructure in border areas will ensure swifter and smoother movement of troops and military supply chains.
 - ✓ The ministry has also significantly increased the upper limit ceiling for sanction of new national highway works in border states.
 - ✓ In Ladakh, for example, works up to ₹589 crore can be approved against the earlier cap of ₹72 crore
 - ✓ A large share of the increased maintenance fund allocated by the road ministry for the Border Road Development Board under defence ministry will be used for better upkeep of strategic roads in the border areas.
 - ✓ The allocation was revised in less than three months after the first allocation made in April.
- **On July 5, the government – clarified that the vaccines for Covid-19 were unlikely to be available before 2021.**

RELEASE MEANT TO 'SET RECORD STRAIGHT'	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Dept of Science & Tech release is an academic tract explaining various vaccine options being developed around the world & regulatory nod to 2 Indian firms that have entered human trial stage ➤ Release ends with observation that none of the vaccines is likely to be 	<p style="text-align: center;">available before 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It seems to set the record straight when seen in the light of ICMR's clarification that it is not seeking to short-circuit due vaccine processes ➤ But DST's decision to delete 2021 point fuels speculation why the release was edited

- ✓ In a letter on July 2, ICMR director general Balam Bhargava had said the government aimed to launch India's first locally made vaccine against Covid-19 for public health use by August 15
- ✓ In this regard, the letter asked clinical trial sites for Bharat Biotech's Covaxin to fast-track processes to meet the timeline.
- ✓ A day later, ICMR clarified that it was just seeking to reduce bureaucratic delays and not intended to avoid any safety measures and made no reference to the August 15 deadline.
- ✓ Bharat Biotech has got an approval to conduct only the Phase-1 and Phase-2 trials.
- ✓ Further, these trials will be followed by the Phase-3 trial, which tests the efficacy of the vaccine on a large number of participants and takes the longest time to complete
- ✓ China has recently approved the use of one of its Covid-19 vaccines, which has completed Phase-1 and Phase-2 trials, to be used exclusively by the military for one year.
- ✓ The vaccine is not currently being made available for public use.

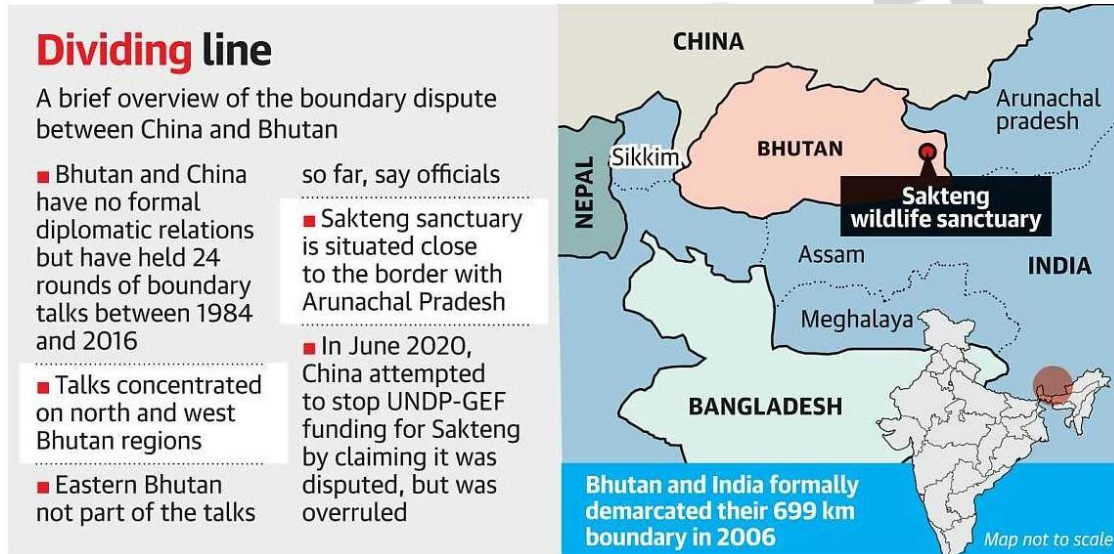
- **The ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) – has blocked 40 websites of the banned outfit Sikhs For Justice (SFJ), under Section 69 A of the I.T. Act**
- ✓ The move follows the instruction of the Home Ministry
- ✓ The SFJ has been involved in illegally propagating the cause of Khalistan and running a global campaign on social media for Sikh Referendum 2020
 - ✓ It had launched a campaign for registering supporters for its Referendum in Punjab through a Russian portal.
- ✓ On July 1, home ministry declared US-based founder of SFJ Gurpatwant Singh Pannun as an “individual terrorist” under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).
- ✓ Last year, the home ministry had declared SFJ as an unlawful association under the UAPA.
- ✓ As per the home ministry notification issued, Pannun had been issuing appeals and propagating through social media to Punjab-based gangsters and youth to fight for the cause of independent state of Khalistan, thus challenging the sovereignty, integrity and security of the country.
 - ✓ His central demand is creation of a separate state of Khalistan
 - ✓ He has also been found instigating and abetting youths to join them in Khalistan Referendum 2020 and providing financial help to youths in region for creating violence or fear to disturb peace in the region
- ✓ The "Sikhs For Justice" is an unlawful organisation that was set up under the UAPA 1967.
 - ✓ The pro-khalistan group launched the campaign on July 4, 2020 in the memory of the Sikhs who were killed during the 1955 attack at Darbar Sahib.
- ✓ On July 1, the Ministry of Home Affairs had declared seven others as terrorists too – which includes Wadhawa Singh Babbar Khalsa International's Babbar, International Sikh Youth Federation's Lakhbir Singh, Germany-based Khalistan Zindabad Force's Bhupinder Singh Bhinda, Ranjit Singh and Gurmit Singh Bagga, Khalistan Commando Force's Paramjit Singh, Khalistan Tiger Force's Hardip Singh Nijjar and UK-based Babbar Khalsa International's Paramjit Singh.

- **On July 5, Union Human Resource Development (HRD) Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal - has announced that the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has entered into a partnership with United States-based social media company Facebook, Inc**
- ✓ Registrations under both the categories have started from 6th July 2020 and will be available until 20th July 2020.
- ✓ The partnership between CBSE and Facebook has two categories.
- ✓ The first category will involve the introduction of Augmented Reality in the CBSE curriculum in India.
 - ✓ For now, it is open only to teachers
 - ✓ The programme under this category will be launched on 10th August 2020.

- ✓ It will be of two phases.
- ✓ In the first phase, a three weeks training will be conducted by Facebook for 10,000 CBSE teachers in India.
- ✓ These teachers will further teach 30,000 students in the second phase.
- ✓ The training will focus on providing the Augmented Reality experience to the school children
- ✓ In this aspect, the fundamentals of Augmented Reality, including Spark Augmented Reality Studio, will be covered along with ways for proper utilization of various softwares of Facebook
- ✓ Under the second category of the partnership, a new curriculum titled 'Facebook for Education' has been introduced by CBSE
 - ✓ The curriculum is available on the official website of CBSE.
 - ✓ In this category, concepts related to online well being (such as building Health Digital Habits- Instagram's Guide) and digital safety (such as privacy, safety, report threats, cyberbullying, fake news, identify misinformation, etc) will be covered.
 - ✓ Under this category, Facebook will be providing training through two sets of courses
 - ✓ First will be for digital safety called Digital Safety and Well-Being, and Instagram Toolkit for Teens: Building Healthy Digital Habits
 - ✓ The programme under this category will be launched on 6th August 2020.
- **On July 5, India - has overtaken Russia and has the third highest Covid-19 caseload in the world with 6,97,887 cases**
 - ✓ Russia's current caseload stands at 6,81,251, while only the US and Brazil are ranked above India now in terms of the total infections.
 - ✓ India also recorded 421 new deaths from the virus on the day.
 - ✓ United States and Brazil have recorded 29,32,047 and 16,04,585 coronavirus cases so far.
 - ✓ As many as 24,912 new cases were detected in India on the day
 - ✓ The month of June, which was so far the worst month of the pandemic in the country, had witnessed a little over 4 lakh cases.
 - ✓ With the daily tally of infections in Assam (1,202 new cases) and Uttar Pradesh (1,155) crossing 1,000 for the first time, a record seven states reported over 1000 cases on the day
 - ✓ As usual, Maharashtra had the highest count of 6,555, its second-highest tally after new cases on July 4 had crossed 7,000.
 - ✓ Apart from Assam and UP, Karnataka (1,925 fresh cases), Andhra Pradesh (998), Bengal (895), Gujarat (725) and Rajasthan (632) were among the states that recorded their highest single-day jump in cases.
 - ✓ The Covid-19 recovery rate in 21 states and Union territories (UTs), including Delhi, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh, was higher than the national average of 60.77%, according to the health ministry

INTERNATIONAL

- **On July 4, China – claimed the Sakteng wildlife sanctuary in Bhutan as ‘disputed’ territory**
- ✓ According to the Chinese foreign ministry, the China-Bhutan boundary has never been delimited and there “have been disputes over the eastern, central and western sections for a long time”
- ✓ The announcement also cautioned “third party” (read India) to refrain from stepping into the breach.
- ✓ This was the first instance of the Chinese making border claims on eastern Bhutan.
- ✓ On June 29, China objected to Bhutan’s application for a grant from the UN Global Environment Facility (GEF) Council for the Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary situated in eastern Bhutan



- ✓ However, Bhutan got the funds but China’s objection was seen as an attempt to intimidate.
- ✓ In response, Bhutan gave a strongly-worded counter to the Chinese embassy in New Delhi, saying, “Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary is an integral and sovereign territory of Bhutan.
- ✓ In 2017, the PLA had intruded into Doklam plateau which is Bhutanese territory, leading Indian forces to gather to prevent China from building a road up to the Jhampheri ridge.
 - ✓ The stand-off went on for 72 days before the troops went back.
- ✓ The Sakteng sanctuary has in the past, too, received such grants, including in 2018-2019 for a project on preventing soil erosion, without any objection from China.

- **The US – has reported under 50,000 new daily infections for the first time in four days on July 4**
- ✓ It had added 45,300 new coronavirus infections after three days in which the daily count reached as high as 54,500 new cases.
- ✓ The US has the most infections and virus-related deaths in the world, with 2.8 million cases and nearly 130,000 dead, according to the Sir Johns Hopkins university.
- ✓ Worldwide, nearly 11.3 million people have been infected and over 531,000 have died, with outbreaks surging in India, South Africa, Pakistan, and Latin American countries.
- ✓ Mexico reported 523 more coronavirus deaths on the day, pushing its tally to 30,366, overtaking France to become the fifth-highest in the world.

- **On July 5, authorities in the city of Bayan Nur in the Chinese region of Inner Mongolia - issued a warning on a case of suspected bubonic plague.**
- ✓ The health committee of the city issued the third-level alert, the second lowest in a four-level system.
- ✓ The alert forbids the hunting and eating of animals that could carry plague and asks the public to report any suspected cases of plague or fever with no clear causes, and to report any sick or dead marmots.
- ✓ The warning follows four reported cases of plague in people from Inner Mongolia last November, including two of pneumonic plague, a deadlier variant.
- ✓ Plague cases have been reported in China earlier too.
- ✓ From 2009 to 2018, China reported 26 cases and 11 deaths
- ✓ The Bubonic plague also known as '**Black death**' is a rare but serious bacterial infection that is transmitted by a bacteria called 'Yersinia pestis'.
- ✓ The bubonic form of plague occurs when the bacteria enters the skin through a flea bite and travels through the lymphatic vessels to a lymph node, causing it to swell.
 - ✓ In advanced stages, the lymph node could break open with pus.
 - ✓ Bubonic plague symptoms include flu-like symptoms such as fever, chills, headache, muscle ache, fatigue and vomiting.
 - ✓ The other symptoms include swollen and painful lymph nodes in the area closest to where the bacteria entered the skin like the armpit or neck area
 - ✓ Bubonic plague, which is airborne, usually spreads from fleas that have fed upon infected animals such as rats, rabbits, marmots, squirrels and mice.
- ✓ A Bubonic plague pandemic is reported to have claimed millions of lives in the 14th century.
 - ✓ The plague had reportedly originated somewhere in Asia, and spread through China and India, killing an estimated two-thirds of the European population in the 1340s and 1350s.
 - ✓ However, now with the availability of antibiotics, the plague is largely treatable

- ✓ If diagnosed and treated on time, it has just 10% fatality rate.
- ✓ Though as per WHO, human-to-human transmission of bubonic plague is rare, those with the pneumonic form of plague can transmit the infection to other people through droplets.
- ✓ According to WHO, bubonic plague is the most common form of the plague.
- ✓ The plague is, however, a rare disease now.
 - ✓ From 2010 to 2015, there were 3,248 cases of Bubonic plague reported worldwide, including 584 deaths.
 - ✓ It is now mostly endemic in Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar and Peru.

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- **The legal and legislative committee of the Kuwait's National Assembly – gave its approval and deemed 'constitutional' to a draft bill for reducing the number of foreign workers in Kuwait**
 - ✓ Further, the bill will be vetted by another committee, before being operationalised.
 - ✓ The bill proposes quotas for various nationalities, including Indians.
 - ✓ Once the bill is enacted into a law, around 7-8 lakh Indians could be forced out of Kuwait
 - ✓ Indians form the largest expatriate community in Kuwait with the presence of around 1.4 million.
 - ✓ The bill proposes that the number of Indians be reduced to 15% of the country's 4.8 million population
 - ✓ It means that around 7 lakh Indians will be rendered jobless and have to leave the country.
 - ✓ The bill, however, proposes similar quotas for other nationalities too.
 - ✓ It calls for reducing the number of Egyptians, who form the second largest expatriate community, to 10% of Kuwait's total population.
 - ✓ Kuwait is also a top source of remittances for India.
 - ✓ In 2018, India received close to \$4.8 billion from Kuwait as remittances.
 - ✓ The move to reduce the dependence on expats indicates that Kuwait wants to focus on its own citizens not becoming a minority.
 - ✓ Covid-19 and the slump in oil prices have also been contributing factors.
 - ✓ In general, Kuwait's PM Sheikh Sabah Al Khalid Al Sabah proposed reduction in the number of expats from 70% to 30% of the total population.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **On the occasion of Guru Purnima, Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu - launched 'Elyments', considered as India first social media super app, on July 5**

- ✓ The App was indigenously designed by 1,000 IT professionals who are all volunteers of Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's Art of Living.



- ✓ The application is developed by Sumeru Software Solutions Private Limited.
- ✓ Through the app, the users can communicate through free video/audio calls, vibrant feed, and private/group chats.
- ✓ Further, it combines the features most social media apps and will soon be added with secure payment modes, audio/video conference calls, curated commerce platforms to promote Indian brands, and regional voice commands.
- ✓ The app launch came a day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat Innovative App challenge'
- ✓ In a virtual ceremony, the Vice President said the "Atmanirbhar Bharat" campaign is aimed at encouraging India's economic potential by strengthening infrastructure, using modern technologies, enriching human resource, and creating robust supply chains.
- ✓ According to the developers of Elyments, the app will allow people to "connect globally and shop locally".
- ✓ The app is available in eight languages which include, Telugu, Tamil, English, and Kannada
- ✓ The Elyments app already has over two lakh downloads and has been available on both Android Platforms and IOS.

SPORTS

- **Chennai-based Akash Ganesan - has become India's 66th Chess Grandmaster.**



- ✓ Akash becomes the 24th player from Tamil Nadu to become a GM.
- ✓ He was awarded the title during the FIDE Council meet held recently
- ✓ Akash attained his final GM norm in Bad Worishofen (Germany) in March.
- ✓ Akash's maiden GM norm came during the National championships held in Kolkata back in 2012.
 - ✓ The event saw Akash become the youngest ever to win the senior Nationals at the age of 16 years and 14 days.
- ✓ He got his second GM norm in Hungary last year.
- ✓ The National championships at Sikkim in December 2019 gave Akash his third GM norm
- ✓ Later, he obtained his fourth GM norm at the Prague chess festival in February.

