

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS –JUNE 20, 2021

STATES

- **Assam government – has decided to introduce the two-child policy into eligibility norms for select government-run welfare schemes in the state soon**
 - ✓ This was announced by chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on June 19
 - ✓ The CM pointed out that the “Population and Women Empowerment Policy of Assam” that was adopted by the assembly in 2017 officially took effect on January 1, 2021.
 - ✓ The policy prohibits married people with more than two children from contesting municipal and panchayat elections or applying for government jobs and other benefits.
 - ✓ The CM also appealed recently to Assam’s immigrant Muslims to adopt “decent” family-planning methods
 - ✓ According to the CM, people belonging to the tea garden community, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes had been exempted from the purview of the new population norms.
 - ✓ In another development, Assam will freeze all government work from June 21 to put the entire machinery behind an ambitious drive to vaccinate three lakh people against Covid-19 as a pilot project for the next 10 days at a stretch.
 - ✓ If the drive is successful, it will be continued to vaccinate 50% of the state’s population by July-end.
 - ✓ The state has already vaccinated over 50 lakh of its 3.1 crore (2011 census) population.
 - ✓ Assam’s guardian ministers will camp for a week in their respective districts to monitor the drive.

- **Telangana – becomes the first state to lift lockdown completely and remove all restrictions from June 20, following the decline in second wave of Covid-19 pandemic in the state**

- ✓ The state has also decided to open all educational institutions from July 1 and conduct offline classes.
- ✓ These decisions were taken by the state cabinet, chaired by chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, on June 19
- ✓ The estimated loss of revenue in the past two months due to the lockdown in the state was ₹4,000 crore.
- ✓ In 2021, the TRS government had first imposed night curfew from 9pm to 5am on April 20.
- ✓ Later, a complete lockdown with a few hours of relaxation was imposed from May 12, which had been extended by the government subsequently till now.

NATIONAL

- **The Union Cabinet - has recently approved the Inland Vessels Bill, 2021, that seeks to replace Inland Vessels Act, 1917.**
 - ✓ The bill aims to streamline the safety, security and registration of inland vessels running on inland waterways across the country
 - ✓ A total of 4,000 km inland waterways have been operationalized in the country, as per the Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Mansukh Mandaviya.
 - ✓ The bill provides a unified law for the entire country, instead of separate rules and regulations for every state
 - ✓ Accordingly, the certificate of registration granted under the proposed law will be deemed to be valid in all States and Union Territories, and there will be no need to seek separate permissions from the States
 - ✓ The bill aims to create a central data base for recording the details of vessel, vessel registration and crew on an electronic portal.
 - ✓ Further, all mechanically propelled vessels have to be mandatorily registered under the new provisions.
 - ✓ All non-mechanically propelled vessels will also have to be enrolled at district, taluk or panchayat or village level.
 - ✓ The bill will now be sent to the Parliament for approval
 - ✓ India has about 14,500 km of navigable waterways comprising of rivers, canals, backwaters and creeks.
 - ✓ Under National Waterways Act 2016, 111 waterways have been declared as National Waterways.
- **The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister – has recently approved ‘Deep Ocean Mission’ project**
 - ✓ The Mission was proposed by Ministry of Earth Sciences
 - ✓ It seeks to explore deep ocean for resources and develop deep sea technologies for sustainable use of ocean resources.
 - ✓ The estimated cost of the mission will be Rs. 4,077 crore for a period of five years
 - ✓ The mission is to be implemented in a phase-wise manner.



- ✓ The estimated cost for the first phase of the next 3 years (2021-2024) would be Rs.2823.4 crore.
- ✓ The deep ocean mission will be a mission mode project to support the Blue Economy Initiatives of the government
- ✓ The mission consists of various components which includes development of technologies for deep sea mining, and manned submersible, development of ocean climate change advisory services, technological innovations for exploration and conservation of deep-sea biodiversity, deep ocean survey and exploration and energy and freshwater from the ocean.
- ✓ As part of the mission, an advanced marine station for ocean biology and an offshore ocean station to explore thermal energy will also be set up.
- ✓ India will be the sixth country to have the deep sea technologies after US, Russia, France, Japan and China.
- ✓ The United Nations (UN) has declared the decade, 2021-2030 as the 'Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development'
- ✓ The Government of India's 'Vision of New India by 2030' released in February 2019 highlighted the 'Blue Economy' as one of the ten core dimensions of growth.
- **The Centre – has decided to dissolve the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) and replace it with 7 Defence Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs)**
 - ✓ These new PSUs will oversee 41 ordnance factories across the country and will be operationalised by the end of the year
 - ✓ The Union Cabinet has approved the creation of the new entities, which will be 100% owned by the government.
 - ✓ The decision is aimed at providing autonomy to the OFBs as well as to help improve their accountability and efficiency
 - ✓ The restructuring is aimed at transforming the ordnance factories into productive and profitable assets, deepen their specialisation in product range, enhance competitiveness and improve quality and cost-efficiency

- ✓ The seven entities will be responsible for different verticals of the products being produced by the ordnance factories
 - ✓ The Ammunition and Explosives group will be responsible for the production of ammunition while a Vehicles group will involve in the production of defence mobility and combat vehicles.
 - ✓ There will be separate Weapons and Equipment group, Troop Comfort Items group, Ancillary group, an Opto-Electronics group and a Parachute group
 - ✓ The decision to corporatise the OFB was taken by the Cabinet Committee on Security in July 2020
 - ✓ In September, the government formed an Empowered Group of Ministers headed by Singh to oversee the process
 - ✓ OFB is a Government agency working under Department of Defence Production (DDP) of Ministry of Defence (MoD).
 - ✓ It is involved in research, development, testing, production, marketing and logistics of the product range across air, land and sea systems.
 - ✓ It consists of 41 ordnance factories, 9 training institutes, 3 regional marketing centres and 4 regional controllerates of safety.
- **India - was recently elected to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for the period 2022-2024 under Asia-Pacific States category.**
 - ✓ Under this category, other elected countries include Oman, Afghanistan and Kazakhstan.
 - ✓ The other countries elected includes Cote d'Ivoire, Eswatini, Mauritius, Tunisia, and United Republic of Tanzania (Africa), Croatia and Czech Republic (Eastern Europe), Belize, Peru and Chile (Latin American and Caribbean states).
 - ✓ Further, New Zealand & Denmark were elected for January to December 2022 term while Israel was elected for January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2023.
 - ✓ ECOSOC is a 54-member block, established in 1954, by a United Nations charter.

INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS

- **India - has extended a \$100 million Line of Credit to Sri Lanka for funding the solar energy projects in the island nation**



- ✓ The funding will be provided by Export-Import Bank of India [Exim Bank], on behalf of Government of India
- ✓ In this regard, an agreement signed between the Sri Lankan government and the Exim Bank was exchanged in the presence of Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa recently
- ✓ The grant will help finance the solar projects in Sri Lanka, including those announced during the Founding Conference of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) held in March 2018
- ✓ The agreement will ensure that 70% of Sri Lanka's national power requirements are fulfilled by renewable energy sources by 2030
- ✓ The Sri Lankan government is planning to install rooftop solar photo-voltaic systems for households and government buildings with India's funding.
- ✓ A total of 89 countries, including Sri Lanka, have signed the Framework Agreement of the ISA
- ✓ The ISA was jointly launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and former French president Francois Hollande
- ✓ Over the past 7 years, solar power generation in India has increased significantly to reach 34.6 GW in 2021 from about 2.6GW in March 2014
- ✓ The National Solar Mission of India aims to increase it further to 100 GW and beyond.

- **India – abstained from a vote on a UNGA resolution seeking to delegitimise the Myanmar military junta and to prevent flow of arms into the country.**
- ✓ The resolution was adopted with 119 votes in favour
- ✓ According to government, India abstained as the voting was introduced hastily and without enough consultations with Myanmar's neighbours and regional countries
- ✓ The UN General Assembly resolution is seen as the strongest condemnation of Myanmar's military commanders since the coup didn't reflect its views
- ✓ It was aimed at assisting the joint efforts towards strengthening the democratic process in Myanmar
- ✓ India's neighbours like Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan were also among the 36 countries to abstain.
- ✓ China and Russia too abstained from the voting on the resolution
- ✓ India has been calling for greater engagement with the objective of peacefully resolving all issues through the ongoing initiative under the aegis of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations).

- **India and Bhutan - have signed an MoU recently to develop cooperation in the areas of environment**
- ✓ The MoU was signed virtually by Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Prakash Javadekar

- ✓ The MoU will be applicable for bilateral co-operation in the areas of prevention of Air Pollution, Waste Management, Chemical Management, Climate Change, etc
- ✓ It also provides the possibility of doing joint projects in areas of mutual interest.
- ✓ The agreement aims to strengthen technological, scientific and management capabilities of both the countries in the field of environment

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **Tajikistan – to host a meeting of the SCO National Security Advisors in Dushanbe on June 22-23, 2021**
- ✓ During the meeting, India's National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and his Pakistan counterpart Moeed Yusuf are expected to meet each other.
- ✓ Yusuf was recently elevated to the rank of NSA by Pakistan.
- ✓ Foreign minister S Jaishankar was in Dushanbe earlier this year with his counterpart Shah Mahmood Qureshi for a 'Heart of Asia' meeting but there was no bilateral meeting between them.
- ✓ The NSA meeting of the SCO member-states is held every year
- ✓ To allow their respective missions to function smoothly, India and Pakistan had this week also approved all pending visas for diplomats and other staff members after two years of hesitancy over the issue.
- ✓ Tajikistan will host the NSA meeting as the current chair of SCO.
- ✓ Last year, Doval had walked out of the virtual meeting of SCO NSAs after Yusuf displayed a fictitious map of J&K in the background.
- ✓ India has repeatedly accused Pakistan of violating the SCO Charter by raising bilateral issues.

DEFENCE

- **Indian Navy and European Union Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) – held the first ever joint exercise in Gulf of Aden**



- ✓ A total of five warships from four national navies were participating in the two-day exercise, that was held on June 18-19, 2021
- ✓ Concurrently, a virtual “Information sharing Exercise” was conducted between the Indian Navy’s Information Fusion Centre for Indian Ocean Region and Maritime Security Centre-Horn of Africa on June 18
- ✓ Stealth frigate INS Trikand, already deployed for anti-piracy operations in the region, is participating in the exercise.
- ✓ Other warships include Italy’s ITS Carabinere, the Spanish Navy’s ESPS Navarra, and FS Tonnerre and FS Surcouf of France.
- ✓ The joint exercise will conduct high tempo-naval operations at sea, including advanced air defence and anti-submarine exercises, cross deck helicopter operations, tactical manoeuvres, boarding operations, underway replenishment, Search & Rescue, Man Overboard drills, and other maritime security operations
- ✓ The other countries participating in the exercise are Italy, Spain and France.
- ✓ The EUNAVFOR and the Indian Navy are already involved on multiple issues, including counter-piracy operations and protection of vessels deployed under the charter of World Food Programme
- ✓ According to the Indian Navy, the two sides also have regular interaction through SHADE (Shared Awareness and De-confliction) meetings held annually in Bahrain

RANKINGS

- **The 15th edition of Global Peace Index (GPI) - was released recently by Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), Sydney**
- ✓ The annual report ranks independent states and territories according to their level of peacefulness and is the world’s leading measure of global peacefulness.
- ✓ As per the report, the average level of global peacefulness deteriorated by 0.07% this year, which was the ninth deterioration in peacefulness in the last thirteen years.
- ✓ In 2020, the world witnessed almost 15,000 violent protests and riots, causing an economic loss of \$15 trillion or 11.6% of the world’s gross domestic product (GDP).
- ✓ Among those, more than 5,000 were pandemic-related and were recorded between January 2020 and April 2021.
- ✓ India, Eastern Europe and the United States showed the most deterioration during this period on that level
- ✓ Iceland remains the most peaceful country in the world, a position it has held since 2008.
- ✓ It was followed by New Zealand, Denmark, Portugal, and Slovenia at the top of index
- ✓ **India has been ranked at 135th place out of 163 countries and rated under the category of ‘Low State of Peace’**

- ✓ In the GPI 2020, India was ranked at 139th place, indicating a jump of 4 places at this year's rankings
 - ✓ Among its neighbours, Bangladesh was ranked at 91st place, Srilanka at 95th place, while Pakistan is placed at 150th place.
 - ✓ Afghanistan is the least peaceful country in the world for the fourth consecutive year, followed by Yemen, Syria, South Sudan, and Iraq
 - ✓ Eight of the ten most peaceful countries are from the European continent
 - ✓ In terms of region, Europe emerged as the most peaceful region in the world, while the Middle East and North Africa featured as the least peaceful region
 - ✓ The index ranks countries based on 23 indicators across 3 main topics – societal safety and security, ongoing domestic and international conflict and the degree of militarisation
- **India – was ranked at the 43rd spot among 64 countries in the World Competitiveness Index, released recently by the Institute for Management Development (IMD).**
- ✓ The country has maintained the same rank for the past three years
 - ✓ The rankings were led by Switzerland and followed by Sweden, Denmark, Netherlands and Singapore
 - ✓ The UAE and the USA remain in their same spots as last year (9th and 10th, respectively).
 - ✓ Taiwan was ranked at 8th position, reaching the top-10 for the first time in 33 years.
 - ✓ The top-performing Asian economies include Singapore (fifth), Hong Kong (seventh), Taiwan (eighth) and China (16th).
 - ✓ The index ranks countries based on the prosperity of its people, by measuring economic well-being through related data and survey responses
 - ✓ The rankings are based on four indicators - economic performance, government efficiency, business efficiency, and infrastructure.
 - ✓ Among the BRICS nations, India is ranked second after China (16), followed by Russia (45th), Brazil (57th) and South Africa (62th)

INTERNATIONAL DAY

- **World Sickle Cell Awareness Day – June 19**



- ✓ The day aims to raise awareness about the Sickle Cell disease
- ✓ The United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution to recognise sickle cell disease as a public health problem on December 22, 2008.
- ✓ The UNGA also recognised Sickle disease as one of the first genetic diseases.
- ✓ SCD is an inherited genetic red blood cell disorder, which affects the molecule in red blood cells and haemoglobin
- ✓ Sickle cell disease causes patients to have sickle-shaped red blood cells that can stick together and block blood flow and oxygen from reaching all parts of the body.
- ✓ It is prevalent predominantly amongst many tribal population groups in India, especially in Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, western Odisha, eastern Gujarat and Nilgiri Hills of north Tamil Nadu & Kerala.
- ✓ There's no cure for most people with the disease, but treatments can relieve pain and help prevent complications.
- ✓ Minister of Tribal Affairs, Arjun Munda inaugurated the second national Sickle Cell Conclave on the occasion of World Sickle Cell Awareness Day on June 19.
- ✓ This conclave is being organised by Ministry of Tribal Affairs in association with Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), Apollo Hospitals, Novartis, Piramal Foundation etc.

‘FLYING SIKH’ MILKHA SINGH - TIMELINE

- **Ace sprinter ‘Flying Sikh’ Milkha Singh – passed away at age 91 on June 18 at Chandigarh’s PGIMER hospital due to covid complications**
- ✓ The title ‘Flying Sikh’ was bestowed on Milkha Singh by Pakistan in 1960
- ✓ In 1960 after the 0.1 seconds heartbreak at the Rome Olympics, Milkha was invited to take part in the 200m event at an International Athletic competition in Lahore, Pakistan
- ✓ Milkha won the race comfortably, defeating Abdul Khaliq of Pakistan
- ✓ The felicitation ceremony was headed by Pakistan’s president Gen Ayub Khan



- ✓ The iconic picture shown above portrays Milkha Singh (second from left) narrowly beaten to fourth place by South Africa’s Malcolm Spence (Bib No 109) in the 400m final at the Rome Olympics on Sept 6, 1960.
- ✓ In the one of the strongest and most open fields in 400m history, Otis Davis of the US was declared the winner

MILKHA TIMELINE

- 1929** Born on November 20 at Govindpura, Punjab province (now in Pakistan)
- 1947** Moves to India post-Partition amid bloodshed in which he lost his parents
- 1951** Joins EME, Secunderabad
- 1953** Joins the Army after receiving training at EME centre
- 1956** Represents India in the Melbourne Olympics
- 1958** Wins 200m and 400m gold medals in the Tokyo Asian Games (Beats favourite Abdul Khaliq of Pakistan to win the 200m sprint in the Tokyo Asiad)
Becomes first Indian to win an athletics gold medal by winning the 400m event in the Commonwealth Games at Cardiff (Wales).
Wins Gold medals in 200m & 400m at National Games in Cuttack
- 1959** Awarded Padma Shri, India's fourth highest civilian award, for his outstanding track achievements
- 1960** Becomes the first Indian to reach the final of an athletics event in the Olympics as he finished 4th in the 400m race.
Earns the title 'Flying Sikh' bestowed on him by Pakistan's President General Ayub Khan in December 1960 when he defeated Abdul Khaliq in a special 200m race at Lahore.
- 1962** Wins the 400m & 4 X 400m relay gold medals in the Jakarta Asian Games
- 1963** Marries Nirmal Saini, former captain of Indian volleyball team
- 1964** Finishes fourth in heat stages of 4 X 400m relay in Tokyo Games;
Wins 400m Silver medal at Calcutta (now Kolkata) National Games
- 2001** Refuses to accept the Arjuna Award, highest award for sports in India, for lifetime contribution, saying he was clubbed with the awardees who were nowhere near the level he had achieved
- 2013** Autobiography (co-authored by daughter Sonia Sanwalka) The Race of My Life published;
Based on the book, a biopic named Bhaag Milkha Bhaag was released the same year
- 2021** Tests positive for Covid-19, battles valiantly for a month and returns negative before succumbing to post-Covid complications

