

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS –JUNE 23, 2021

STATES

- **Odisha - becomes the only state in the country to have all three species of crocodiles**
- ✓ The state has freshwater gharials (*Gavialis gangeticus*) at Satkosia range in Mahanadi, mugger crocodiles (*Crocodylus palustris*) in Similipal and saltwater crocodiles in Bhitarkanika National Park.
- ✓ For the first time since they were introduced in its rivers back in 1975, Odisha has now seen the natural nesting of Gharials, a critically endangered species.
- ✓ All the original Gharials introduced over the years in Odisha are dead now.
- ✓ Gharials have been listed in Schedule 1 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and categorized as critically endangered in IUCN Red List since 2007.

NATIONAL

- **On June 22, the Covid-19 Subject Expert Committee (SEC) of the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) - has reviewed and accepted the phase-3 trial data of Bharat Biotech's Covid-19 vaccine Covaxin**
- ✓ According to the data submitted, the indigenously developed vaccine has shown 77.8% efficacy in the trial conducted on 25,800 subjects.
- ✓ The Hyderabad-based firm had submitted the results of its phase-3 trial efficacy data of Covaxin to the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI)
- ✓ The recommendations of SEC have been sent to the DCGI now.
- ✓ Bharat Biotech is also expected to attend a “pre-submission” meeting on July 23 with the World Health Organisation (WHO)
- ✓ This will take the vaccine-maker closer to a WHO Emergency Use Listing (EUL).
- ✓ During the meeting, the vaccine-maker will have an opportunity to submit a summary on the overall quality of the jab, according to the WHO.
- ✓ Covaxin is one of the three vaccines approved by the DCGI for emergency use and is being deployed in India's Covid-19 vaccination programme.

➤ **The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) – has approved the resolution plan for the defunct Jet Airways on June 22**

- ✓ The revival plan for the Jet Airways was submitted by a consortium of UK-based Kalrock Capital Partners and Murari Lal Jalan.
- ✓ While London-based Kalrock is an alternative investment advisor, UAE-based entrepreneur Jalan has a Calcutta background
- ✓ The resolution plan was approved with a condition that the new owners have to approach the directorate-general of civil aviation (DGCA) within 90 days for the restoration of the airline slots.
- ✓ The Mumbai bench of NCLT, presided by Janab Mohammed Ajmal and V Nallasenapathy, allowed the resolution plan
- ✓ It had directed the applicant to get the required approval and licences from relevant authorities within 90 days.

TAKE-OFF BY YEAR-END?

GROUNDING FOR OVER 2 YEARS

April 2019 | Jet Airways, once India's biggest private carrier, falls into bankruptcy under mounting debts after being airborne for over 25 years

June 2021 | NCLT approves the bid by Jalan-Kalrock consortium. Jet's resolution professional says airline could fly by Dec 2021

Oct 2020 | Jet says creditors, led by SBI, had approved a resolution plan submitted by a consortium of Dubai-based businessman Murari Lal Jalan and UK's Kalrock Capital Management

₹5.8k cr | Jet's dues to local banks

90 days | Validity of NCLT's nod during which Jet must apply for relevant licences and permits



- ✓ The airline is targeting to start with 20 aircraft with domestic slots for the winter session.
- ✓ The airline owed ₹7,453 crore to financial creditors, of which ₹5,770 crore was to local banks.
- ✓ In addition, it faced ₹6,658-crore claims from operational creditors, ₹360 crore from employees, and ₹894 crore from workmen's representatives.
- ✓ However, the successful bidders propose to invest only ₹600 crore to repay creditors to acquire about 90% stake in the carrier.
- ✓ Jet Airways is the first airline to get approval to restart operations under India's Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code
- ✓ After it suspended operations in April 2019, Jet Airways' lenders led by the State Bank of India initiated the insolvency proceedings in June 2019
- ✓ In October 2020, the committee of creditors (CoC) approved the resolution plan submitted by the consortium.

- **ICAR-Central Tuber Crops Research Institute (CTCRI) – have identified ‘Tapioca’ or ‘Cassava’ as a source of raw material for bioethanol production**



- ✓ This provides an advantageous option over sugarcane, which is the current source of bioethanol production
 - ✓ The discovery will help the country to produce more bioethanol to meet the government’s ambitious Ethanol Blending Petrol (EBP) programme, targetted by 2025
 - ✓ Cassava has high starch content and finds extensive applications in food and industrial sectors.
 - ✓ Agricultural residues of cassava like peels, stems and leaves are the potential feedstock for 2G bioethanol production.
 - ✓ India produces 4.98 million tonnes of Tapioca every year, with Tamil Nadu and Kerala producing the maximum quantity
 - ✓ India has a target to produce 1,016 crore litres of ethanol every year for its targeted blending programmes
- **German agrochemicals major, Bayer – introduces the first-ever ‘yellow watermelon’ variety called ‘Yellow Gold 48’ in India**



- ✓ Bayer plans to launch five varieties of watermelons in the country under the Seminis brand.
- ✓ This yellow watermelon has been developed from superior germplasm as part of Bayer's global research and development efforts
- ✓ It has been commercially introduced now, following two years of local trials in the country
- ✓ The new variety provides enhanced yield potential, better disease and pest tolerance, and higher returns to the farmers
- ✓ Yellow Gold 48 variety is best suited for cultivation from October to February and for harvest from April onwards
- ✓ It will be available in the market until mid-July

INTERNATIONAL

- **The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) committee – proposed to list the Great Barrier Reef under ‘in danger’ category, due to climate change**



- ✓ However, Australia is planning to strongly oppose the downgrade of Great Barrier Reef in the draft report of the committee under the UNESCO
- ✓ According to Australia, the action is politically motivated, pointing at China, which chairs the UNESCO committee
- ✓ The committee recommended the downgrade of the Reef’s World Heritage status because of its dramatic coral decline.
- ✓ Australia's own government had already downgraded the reef's long-term outlook to "very poor" after back-to-back mass bleaching events in 2016 and 2017.
- ✓ The 2,300-kilometre-long (1,400-mile-long) reef contributes estimated tourism revenue of \$4.8 billion per year to the Australian economy before the pandemic.
- ✓ The world’s largest coral reef system comprises of about 2,900 individual reefs and 900 islands over an area of 344,400 square kilometres.
- ✓ It was selected as World Heritage Site in 1981.
- ✓ The Great Barrier Reef has now suffered three mass coral bleaching events in the past five years, losing half its corals since 1995 as ocean temperatures have climbed.

- ✓ Further, the UNESCO has recommended that a total of seven sites be added to the endangered list and that two sites - Liverpool's waterfront and Selous game reserve in Tanzania - be removed from their World Heritage status altogether.
- **Israeli military - has successfully tested an airborne high-power laser that can shoot down drones, mid-air.**



- ✓ Israel already has a large and sophisticated air defense system, which had intercepted about 90% of rockets fired from Gaza during last month's 11-day war.
- ✓ The new laser prototype was developed with Elbit Systems and was tested over the Mediterranean Sea on a civilian plane
- ✓ In the recent test, the system shot down drones from within a range of about 1 kilometer (0.6 mile).
- ✓ Israel is among the first countries to use such capabilities.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **Researchers from Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati – have proposed better water management policies using the concept of ‘Virtual Water analysis’.**
- ✓ Virtual Water (VW) is the water involved in the production and trade of food and non-food commodities and services
- ✓ It is the "invisible" water that has been consumed throughout the lifecycle of the product or service
- ✓ The concept of VW was first conceived in the 1990s to understand how water-stressed countries could provide their people with essential water-intensive products
- ✓ As per this concept, a country with limited water resources would rather import water-intensive cotton than use their precious water in cultivating it
- ✓ The study is also linked to UN’s Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12 on ensuring sustainable production patterns and to SDG 6 that aims to increase water-use efficiency across all sectors to substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity by 2030.
- **The throat gargle test - can be used to detect Covid-19 in children aged 6-14.**

- ✓ This was recommended in an interim report submitted by a 13-member expert committee, headed by cardiologist Devi Prasad Shetty
- ✓ The committee was set up by the Karnataka government for assistance in controlling an imminent third wave in the state
- ✓ The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has already proposed that throat gargle lavage may be a feasible alternative to swabs for sample collection for the detection of SARS-CoV-2
- ✓ Earlier, the ICMR has approved the 'Saline Gargle RT-PCR Method' for coronavirus detection
- ✓ The method was developed by the scientists of Nagpur-based National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) under the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)
- ✓ The 'Saline Gargle RT-PCR' method can give the result within 3 hours and it requires no skilled healthcare worker
- ✓ This method involves faster self-sampling without necessitating any RNA extraction kit
- ✓ The Nagpur Municipal Corporation has given a go-ahead to this test.

SPORTS

- **Ace Indian golfer Anirban Lahiri – qualified for his second successive Olympic Games by grabbing the 60th and last available spot in the final Olympic golf rankings list, as announced by the International Golf Federation on June 22**



- ✓ Lahiri, a former Asia No. 1 and two-time winner on the European Tour, had represented India along with SSP Chawrasia at the 2016 Rio Olympics.
- ✓ The men's golf event in Tokyo will feature 60 players and will be played at the Kasumigaseki Country Club from July 29 to August 1.
- ✓ Lahiri, who's current world ranking is 340, was on the reserve list till the rankings were published
- ✓ Thereafter, with a number of withdrawals, Anirban, who has appeared at 16 Majors, managed to make the cut-off for the Olympics

- ✓ The fifth-place finish at the Texas Open in April probably helped him clinch the final Tokyo berth.
 - ✓ India's other best-ranked golfer, Udayan Mane is now a first reserve for several players and he could qualify in case of any further withdrawals by other players
 - ✓ The extended three-year qualification process for the men's golf competition at the Olympic Games was completed on June 22
 - ✓ The final list will be out on July 6.
 - ✓ Among the women, Aditi Ashok should comfortably make the grade for the Games as she currently 44th on the list.
 - ✓ The deadline for women's final is June 29.
 - ✓ Golf was brought back into the Olympics during the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games for the first time since the 1904 edition.
- **Organisers of the Tokyo Olympics – to allow a maximum of 10,000 domestic fans or 50% of venue capacity for every event**
- ✓ Spectators from overseas have already been banned.
 - ✓ The spectator limit for the Games could be further reduced after July 12, based on the provisions of any state of emergency
 - ✓ Japan's public remains opposed to holding the Games this summer, with 65% of respondents for a poll saying they wanted the event postponed again or cancelled.
 - ✓ The sporting extravaganza is scheduled to begin on July 23 and will conclude on August 8 in Tokyo, Japan
 - ✓ Earlier, it was scheduled to start from July 24 to August 9, 2020.
 - ✓ But it was postponed in March 2020 because of Covid-19 pandemic.
 - ✓ This was the first time that Olympic Games have been postponed and rescheduled.
 - ✓ Japan had earlier hosted its first summer Olympics in 1964 in Tokyo and winter Olympics twice in 1972 at Sapporo and in 1998 at Nagano

