

## Daily News Decode

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### Tasmanian devils born on Australian mainland for first time in 3,000 years



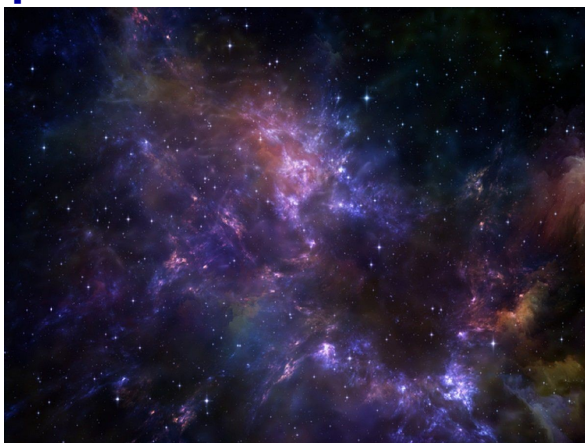
- Tasmanian devils have been born in the wild of Australia's mainland for the first time in more than 3,000 years.
- The world's largest surviving marsupial carnivore, Tasmanian devils were wiped out on the mainland after being hunted by dingoes, a type of wild dog, and have been confined to the island state of Tasmania ever since.

### U.S. and Hong Kong climbers set new records on Mount Everest



- Arthur Muir, 75, became the oldest American to climb the world's highest peak at 8,848.86-metres (29,031 feet) on Sunday, an official from the company that organised the expedition said.
- Separately, Hong Kong's Tsang Yin-Hung, 45, scaled the peak in less than 26 hours, the shortest time taken by any woman after starting from the base camp.
- Usually climbers spend several days in different camps before reaching the peak.

### Largest map of universe's dark matter reveals a new cosmic puzzle



- An international team of scientists mapping dark matter in the universe under the Dark Energy Survey (DES) project have now created a map that has surveyed 5,000 square degrees – nearly one-eighth of the sky.
- The way scientists confirm the existence of dark matter is by studying the pathways of light travelling to Earth from other galaxies

- Having analysed the shapes, structures and locations of matter around the map, scientists then compared this to the measurements that the standard model of cosmology
- While the distribution of matter observed by the DES team was largely consistent with what the standard model predicts, they were off by a few per cent, suggesting that there may be an aspect of the universe that the standard model has not accounted for
- One of the most enigmatic concepts in astrophysics is that of dark matter.
- We've never seen it and we barely have any understanding of its nature, but we are sure it exists.

## What is Saline Gargle RT-PCR method approved by ICMR & what are its advantages?



- Nagpur-based NEERI has developed 'Saline Gargle RT-PCR Method', approved by ICMR, to detect COVID-19. It uses a collection tube filled with saline.
- The person gargles the solution and rinses the mouth for 15 seconds and spits it back inside the tube.
- The sample is then taken to laboratory.
- The process is non-invasive and gives result within three hours.

## No. of smokers reaches all-time high, youngsters worst affected: Study



- A new study published in the medical journal The Lancet revealed that the number of smokers worldwide reached an all-time high of 1.1 billion in 2019.
- Smoking killed nearly eight million people that year, it added.
- The study, which examined trends in 204 countries, also revealed that 89% of new smokers became addicted to tobacco by the age of 25.

## Christine Wormuth confirmed as US' first woman Army Secretary



- The US Senate has confirmed Christine Wormuth as Secretary of the Army, making her the first woman in America's history to hold the position.
- She is the second woman nominee by President Joe Biden to be confirmed to a Pentagon post, after Deputy Defence Secretary Kathleen Hicks.
- Wormuth served as Under Secretary of Defence for Policy during Barack Obama administration.

## 5,000 water bears, 128 glow-in-the-dark squids to be sent to space by NASA



- Some 5,000 tardigrades, also known as water bears, and 128 baby glow-in-the-dark bobtail squids will be sent to space by NASA on June 3 aboard SpaceX's 22nd cargo resupply mission.
- The water bears and squids will be joining the astronaut crew aboard the International Space Station for research purposes.
- The spacecraft will also carry new solar panels.

## Indian Broadcasting and Digital Foundation (IBDF).



- The Indian Broadcasting Foundation (IBF), the apex body of broadcasters, is expanding its purview to cover digital streaming platforms and will be renamed the Indian Broadcasting and Digital Foundation (IBDF).
- The move would bring broadcasters and OTT (over-the-top) platforms, which have seen a substantial jump in their viewership base after the pandemic, under one roof.
- For this, the IBDF was in the process of forming a new wholly-owned subsidiary to handle all matters of digital media.
- The IBDF would also form a self-regulatory body, the Digital Media Content Regulatory Council (DMCRC), for digital OTT platforms.



- The Indian Broadcasting Foundation (IBF) was founded in the year 1999.
- The IBF is the parent organisation of the Broadcasting Content Complaints Council (BCCC) which was set up in the year 2011.
- The BCCC examines content-related complaints relating to all non-news general entertainment channels in India.

## GOLDEN VISA SYSTEM



- Bollywood actor Sanjay Dutt received his golden visa from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) government.
- In 2019, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) implemented a new system for long-term residence visas, thereby enabling foreigners to live, work and study in the UAE without the need of a national sponsor and with 100 per cent ownership of their business.
- The Golden Visa system essentially offers long-term residency (5 and 10 years) to people belonging to the following groups: investors, entrepreneurs, individuals with outstanding talents the likes of researchers, medical professionals and those within the scientific and knowledge fields, and remarkable students.
- The main benefit of the visa will be security as through the issuance of the Golden Visa, the UAE government has made it clear that they are committed to providing expatriates, investors and essentially everyone looking to make the UAE their home an extra reason to feel secure about their future.

## Kerala's new Smart Kitchen Scheme



- Chief Minister of Kerala, Pinarayi Vijayan has announced a secretary-level committee will formulate guidelines and recommendations on implementation of the "Smart Kitchen Scheme" in state to fulfil commitments of the Left Democratic Front (LDF).
- It aims to account and reduce the workload of women's domestic labour. Smart Kitchen Scheme will be launched by July 10, 2021.
- Under the scheme, women of state will be given loan to refurbish their kitchen.
- Loan will be provided with a low-interest rate in instalment schemes.
- Scheme seeks to reduce workload of women's domestic labour.

## Aashritha V Olety is India's 1st woman flight test engineer



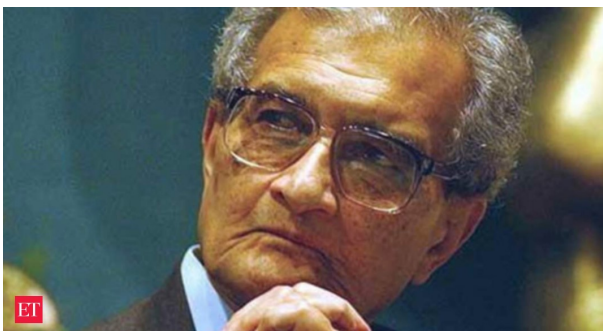
- Squadron Leader, Aashritha V Olety is the first and only woman in the IAF qualified for the role, and as a flight test engineer, she will be responsible for evaluating aircraft and airborne systems before their induction into the armed forces.
- Aashritha V Olety, a native of Karnataka, has graduated as part of the 43rd Flight Test Course.

## International Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories



- The United Nations is observing the International Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories from May 25 to 31, 2021.
- On December 06, 1999, the UN General Assembly called for the annual observance of the Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories.
- In UN Charter, a Non-Self-Governing Territory is defined as a Territory “whose people have not yet attained a full measure of self-government.”
- The observation aims to take effective measures to safeguard and guarantee the inalienable rights of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories to their natural resources, including land, and to establish and maintain control over the future development of those resources and requested the Administering Powers to take all necessary steps to protect the property rights of the peoples of those Territories.
- At present, there are 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories remaining

## Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen conferred with Spain's top award



- Indian economist and Nobel Laureate, Amartya Kumar Sen has been conferred with the ‘ 2021 Princess of Asturias Award’ by Spain in the social sciences category.
- Princess of Asturias Awards is annual prizes awarded by the Princess of Asturias Foundation in Spain to individuals, entities or organizations from around the world who make notable achievements in the sciences, humanities, and public affairs.

- The 87-year-old Sen was selected from 41 candidates of 20 nationalities for “His research on famines and his theory of human development, welfare economics and the underlying mechanisms of poverty have contributed to the fight against injustice, inequality, disease and ignorance”.
- The award comprises a cash prize of 50,000 Euros along with a Joan Miro sculpture representing and symbolising the award, a diploma and insignia.

## International Day of Action for Women’s Health: 28 May



- The International Day of Action for Women’s Health (International Women’s Health Day) is observed every year on May 28 since 1987 to raise awareness on the issues related to women’s health and well being.
- Latin American and Caribbean Women’s Health Network (LACWHN) and Women’s Global Network for Reproductive Rights (WGNRR) launched the day.
- Year after year, women, girls, advocates and allies have continued to take action and stand up for sexual and reproductive rights for what they are: an indivisible and inalienable part of our human rights.

## World Hunger Day observed on 28 May



- World Hunger Day is observed globally on 28 May every year.
- The objective of this day is to raise awareness about more than 820 million people living in chronic hunger worldwide.
- It is observed since 2011 to not only spread awareness about the malaise of chronic hunger but also to solve hunger and poverty through sustainable undertakings.
- The initiative recognizes the dire need to save nearly a quarter of a billion lives from malnourishment and chronic hunger.
- The need to provide outreach globally during the pandemic for the distribution of food is seen as paramount to save those who have been vulnerable even in pre-pandemic times.
- World Hunger Day is an initiative by The Hunger Project, first started in the year 2011.
- This year marks the 11th annual WHD to look at hunger as a whole.
- India ranked 94 among 107 nations in the Global Hunger Index 2020.

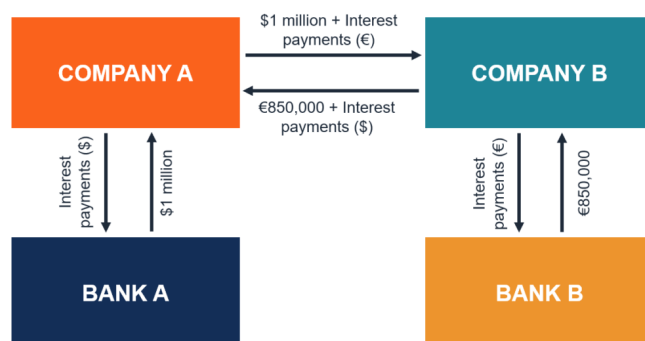


## SWITZERLAND - EUROPEAN UNION TIES



- Switzerland said goodbye to years of negotiations with the European Union over a proposed overarching agreement that would have upgraded its relations with the bloc – which are currently governed by a patchwork of more than 120 bilateral deals.
- The talks failed after the two sides could not agree over issues such as full access for EU citizens to the Swiss labour market, and the collapse is expected to hamper future ties as the multiple existing agreements become outdated or lapse.
- Switzerland is the EU's fourth-largest trading partner, and is surrounded by EU countries.
- Relations between the two partners rest on the foundation of over 120 separate treaties, something which has frustrated the EU for a long time.
- Unlike the UK, Switzerland has access to the EU single market and maintains open borders.
- For years, the EU had been pushing for an “institutional framework agreement” with Switzerland, suggesting that the lack of an overarching agreement could also hamper cooperation in the labour market, the health sector, education and research.
- Switzerland is a landlocked country bordered by Italy to the south, France to the west, Germany to the north, and Austria and Liechtenstein to the east.
- It is a founding member of the European Free Trade Association, but notably not part of the European Union, the European Economic Area or the Eurozone.
- However, it participates in the Schengen Area and the European Single Market through bilateral treaties.

## CURRENCY SWAP



- Bangladesh's central bank has approved a \$200 million currency swap facility to Sri Lanka, which will help Colombo tide over its foreign exchange crisis.
- A currency swap is effectively a loan that Bangladesh will give to Sri Lanka in dollars, with an agreement that the debt will be repaid with interest in Sri Lankan rupees.
- For Sri Lanka, this is cheaper than borrowing from the market, and a lifeline as it struggles to maintain adequate forex reserves even as repayment of its external debts looms. The period of the currency swap will be specified in the agreement.
- This may be the first time that Bangladesh is extending a helping hand to another country, so this is a landmark of sorts.

- It is also the first time that Sri Lanka is borrowing from a SAARC country other than India.
- India-Sri Lanka relations have been tense over Colombo's decision to cancel a valued container terminal project at Colombo Port.
- Last July, the Reserve Bank of India did extend a \$400 million credit swap facility to Sri Lanka, which Central Bank of Sri Lanka settled in February.
- The arrangement was not extended.
- RBI has a framework under which it can offer credit swap facilities to SAARC countries within an overall corpus of \$2 billion. the SAARC currency swap facility came into operation in November 2012.

## INTERNATIONAL ENI AWARD 2020



- Bharat Ratna Professor C.N.R. Rao has received the International Eni Award 2020 for research into renewable energy sources and energy storage, also called the Energy Frontier award.
- The Energy Frontiers award has been conferred for his work on metal oxides, carbon nanotubes, and other materials and two-dimensional systems, including graphene, boron-nitrogen-carbon hybrid materials, and molybdenum sulfide (Molybdenite - MoS<sub>2</sub>) for energy applications and green hydrogen production.
- The Eni Awards 2020 will be presented on 14 October 2021, during an official ceremony held at the Quirinal Palace in Rome, attended by the President of the Italian Republic, Sergio Mattarella.
- The award, which has become internationally recognized over the years in the field of energy and environmental research, aims to promote better use of energy sources and encourage new generations of researchers in their work.
- This is considered to be the Nobel Prize in Energy Research.
- It includes a cash prize and a specially minted gold medal.

## SeHAT OPD portal



- Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh launched 'Services e-Health Assistance & Tele-consultation (SeHAT) OPD portal through video conferencing on May 27, 2021.
- The portal provides tele-medicine services to the serving Armed Forces personnel, veterans and their families.
- The services can be availed by registering on the website <https://sehatopd.in/>.



- This is the final version of the SeHAT OPD portal with advanced safety features. The trial version was made functional in August 2020.
- Department of Military Affairs (DMA), Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS), Integrated Defence Staff (IDS) and Centre for Development of Artificial Computing (C-DAC) Mohali are involved in the development of the portal.
- The portal will help reduce the load on hospitals and patients will be able to get contactless consultations in an easy and effective manner.

## **Draft Lakshadweep Development Authority Regulation 2021 (LDAR) : New Rules by Praful Khoda Patel**



- Residents of Lakshadweep have been protesting against some new regulations that have been introduced by their new administrator Praful Khoda Patel.
- At the heart of the problem is the draft Lakshadweep Development Authority Regulation 2021 (LDAR), which gives the administrator powers to remove or relocate islanders from their property, for town planning or any developmental activity.
- The citizens are even saying that the administrator is not working for the island.
- The Draft Lakshadweep Development Authority Regulation, 2021 or LDAR 2021 was notified on the official website of the administration.
- It proposes to change the existing land ownership on the island and provide for the development of towns in Lakshadweep.

### **Constitution of Lakshadweep Development Authority (LDA):**

- It empowers the government, identified as the administrator, to constitute Planning and Development Authorities under it to plan the development of any area identified as having “bad layout or obsolete development”.

### **Delineates Powers of LDA:**

- Planning and Development Authorities are to prepare land use maps, carry out zonation for type of land use and indicate areas for proposed national highways, arterial roads, ring roads, major streets, railways, tramways, airports, theatres, museums etc.
- Only cantonment areas are exempted from this.

### **Defines ‘Development’:**

- It defines development as the carrying out of building, engineering, mining, quarrying or other operations in, on, over or under land, the cutting of a hill or any portion thereof or the making of any material change in any building or land or in the use of any building or land.

#### Legal Immunity and Penalties:

- As per the regulation the development plan would not, (either before or after being approved), be questioned by anyone, be it in any legal proceedings too.
- It allows the administrator authority to forcibly remove or relocate residents from their property for any developmental activity
- It establishes penalties such as imprisonment for obstructing the development plan's work or workers.

#### Proposes Fees for Changing Zones:

- It stipulates that islanders must pay a processing fee for zone changes.
- It implies that localities would be required to pay fees to gain approval to alter zones as per the development plan, as well as fees for permission to develop their own land.

#### Article 240:

- LDAR is to be enacted by exercising powers conferred by Article 240 of the Constitution, under which the President has the power to make regulations for the peace, progress, and good government of the Union territory of Lakshadweep.
- The power of the President to legislate under Article 240 is so immense that, any regulation made thereunder may repeal or amend any Act made by Parliament which is for the time being applicable to the Union territory.
- Therefore, the President may by a regulation made under Article 240 repeal or amend any Act made by Parliament which is for the time being applicable to the Union territory.
- When promulgated by the President, the regulations shall have the same force and effect as an Act of Parliament which applies to that territory.

#### Lakshadweep:

- India's smallest Union Territory, Lakshadweep is an archipelago consisting of 36 islands with an area of 32 sq km.
- It is directly under the control of the Centre through an administrator.
- There are three main groups of islands: Amindivi Islands, Laccadive Islands, and Minicoy Island.
- Amindivi Islands are the northernmost while Minicoy island is the southernmost.
- All are tiny islands of coral origin (Atoll) and are surrounded by fringing reefs.
- The Capital is Kavaratti and it is also the principal town of the UT.
- Pitti island, which is uninhabited, has a bird sanctuary.

## Van Gujjar community



- Uttarakhand High court recently slammed the state government for forcing families of Van Gujjars tribe to survive in conditions “below animal existence”.
- A PIL was filed by a Delhi based NGO, Think Act Rise Foundation in 2019 to highlight the plight of Van Gujjars.
- The PIL has pleaded for the community to be made a beneficiary under the Forest Right Act, giving them land rights and quashing petty cases against them.
- The High court noted that some migrating Van Gujjars were forced to live under open skies in tough conditions after they were denied entry to Govind Pashu Vihar National Park in Uttarkashi by the deputy director of the park.
- The HC order noted that since these families cannot sell the milk produced by their cattle due to the Covid-induced lockdown, their life was reduced to “below animal existence” for they have neither shelter, nor economic means to survive.
- It directed that steps should be taken to allow their entry into the park to eke out a living if they test negative for COVID-19 and have the required legal documents with them.
- It directed the Uttarkashi district magistrate and the deputy director of the park to accommodate the families in “pucca houses” and provide them with food, water and medicines besides fodder to their cattle.
- Van Gujjars are transhumant pastoralists inhabiting the foothills of Himalayan States such as Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir.
- They usually migrate to grasslands in the upper Himalayas during summers to feed their buffaloes, their primary source of livelihood and subsistence.
- These Van Gujjars are said to have migrated from Northwest India about 300 years ago and during the period of king Aurangzeb rule they have been converted to Muslims.
- Buffalo grazing is adapted by seasonal movements in keeping with climatic variations prevailing between different altitudes of the mountain region of the Himalayas.
- The Van Gujjars spend autumn (October – April) in the lower ranges of Chhillarveli in the Shiwaliks and then move up in the summer and rainy season to the higher alpine regions of the Himalayas.
- Such grazing provides Van Gujjars with a livelihood by the sale of milk from buffaloes which yield about 2-3 litres of milk per day.
- Van Gujjars also make milk products such as butter, ghee for sale.
- This highly ecologically sensitized movement is disturbed by the deliberate eviction of Van Gujjar families by the forest department which enclosed the forest area by declaring it as the Rajaji National Park during the year 1983.



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