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National Statistics Day 2020 – June 29



India celebrates June 29th as the National Statistics Day to recognise the contribution of statistics in daily life and to educate the general public on the importance of statistics in socio-economic planning and policy formulation. The first National Statistics Day was celebrated on 29th June 2007.

The theme of 2020 National Statistics Day is “**SDG- 3 (Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages) & SDG- 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls)**”.

World Bank Approves \$500 mn Under ‘STARS’ Project to Improve Education Quality in 6 Indian States



The board of executives of the **World Bank (WB)** has approved loan of \$ **500 million (about Rs 3,700 crore)** under ‘Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States Program (**STARS**)’ project to improve the quality and governance of school

education across six states (Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, and Rajasthan) in India. The new project will be executed through flagship central scheme, Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan.

- i. STARS program has been built on the solid foundation of the India-World Bank relationship since 1994 to strengthen education in government schools and make education available to everyone.
- ii. Prior to the STARS program, World Bank had assisted \$3 billion in this direction.

iii. As per WB, India has made better improvement in access to education across the country from 2004-05 to 2018-19, where the number of children going to school hiked from 21.9 crore to 24.8 crore.

World Bank Enhances the financial Support for Ganga rejuvenation with \$400 million through SNGRBP

The **World bank** enhanced the support to India's programme to rejuvenate the Ganga with **\$400 million** through **Second National Ganga River Basin Project (SNGRBP)**, for the development of infrastructure projects Under the National Ganga River Basin Project.



Note – The Namami Gange Programme is an integrated conservation mission, approved by Union Government in 2014 with a budget outlay of Rs 20000 crore.

i. The two parts of the SNGRBP loan consists of USD381 million of loan amount and guarantee upto USD19 million as payment security mechanism.

ii. This is the 1st Indian Project to

get the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) Guarantee in the water sector in India

iii. The loan is for a period of five years upto 2026.

Namami Ganga Programme:

The Vision: to restore the wholesomeness of the Ganga River by ensuring 'Aviral Dhara and 'Nirmal Dhara' and maintaining the geological and ecological integrity of the river.

On 12th August 2011, National Mission for Ganga (NMCG) was registered as a society under the Societies Registration Act 1860.

Till March 2020, 313 projects have been sanctioned under the Namami Gange Programme at Rs 24,966 crores.

Culture Ministry celebrating “Sankalp Parva” to plant trees from 28th June to 12 July 2020



i. To enhance the Herbal Wealth of India and to support the clean and healthy environment, Union Ministry of Culture is celebrating **two week long Sankalp Parva** from 28th June to 12 July 2020 wherein, the Subordinate Offices, Academies, Attached Institutions, Affiliated Institutions of the ministry will plant trees in its campus or at the surroundings wherever it is

possible.

ii. The decision for tree plantation has been taken on the call of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has identified 5 trees representing the herbal heritage of our country. The trees are:

- Bargad (Ficus benghalensis)
- Awla (Phyllanthus emblica)
- Pepal (Ficus religiosa)
- Ashoka (Saraca asoca)
- Bel (Aegle marmelos)

Centre Sanctions Additional Rs 1,691 crore For Road Construction in J&K, Uttarakhand

In a major development, the **central Government** has sanctioned an additional **Rs 1,691 crore** for the construction of highways by the Border Roads Organization (BRO) in **Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) and Uttarakhand** during 2020-21 in the wake of clashes with China in Ladakh. In addition to these, an additional Rs 71 crore has been allocated for road works in Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Sikkim and Tamil Nadu under the State Public Works Department.

-It has been said in the dialogue that the limit of approval for Nagaland under Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) has been increased from 1,081 crore to 1,955 crore.

Uttarakhand Develops India's First Lichen Park to Conserve Jurassic Era Plant in Munsiyar

The Forest Department of Uttarakhand has developed India's First Lichen Park in Munsiyari, Pithoragarh district, Uttarakhand as a research centre with over



150 Lichen species – Jurassic Era plant which was inaugurated on 27th June 2020, The development process of the 1.5 acres park began in 2019.

Aim:

To protect, conserve and cultivate the lichen. To provide employment to the locals. To educate the importance of lichens

Lichen:

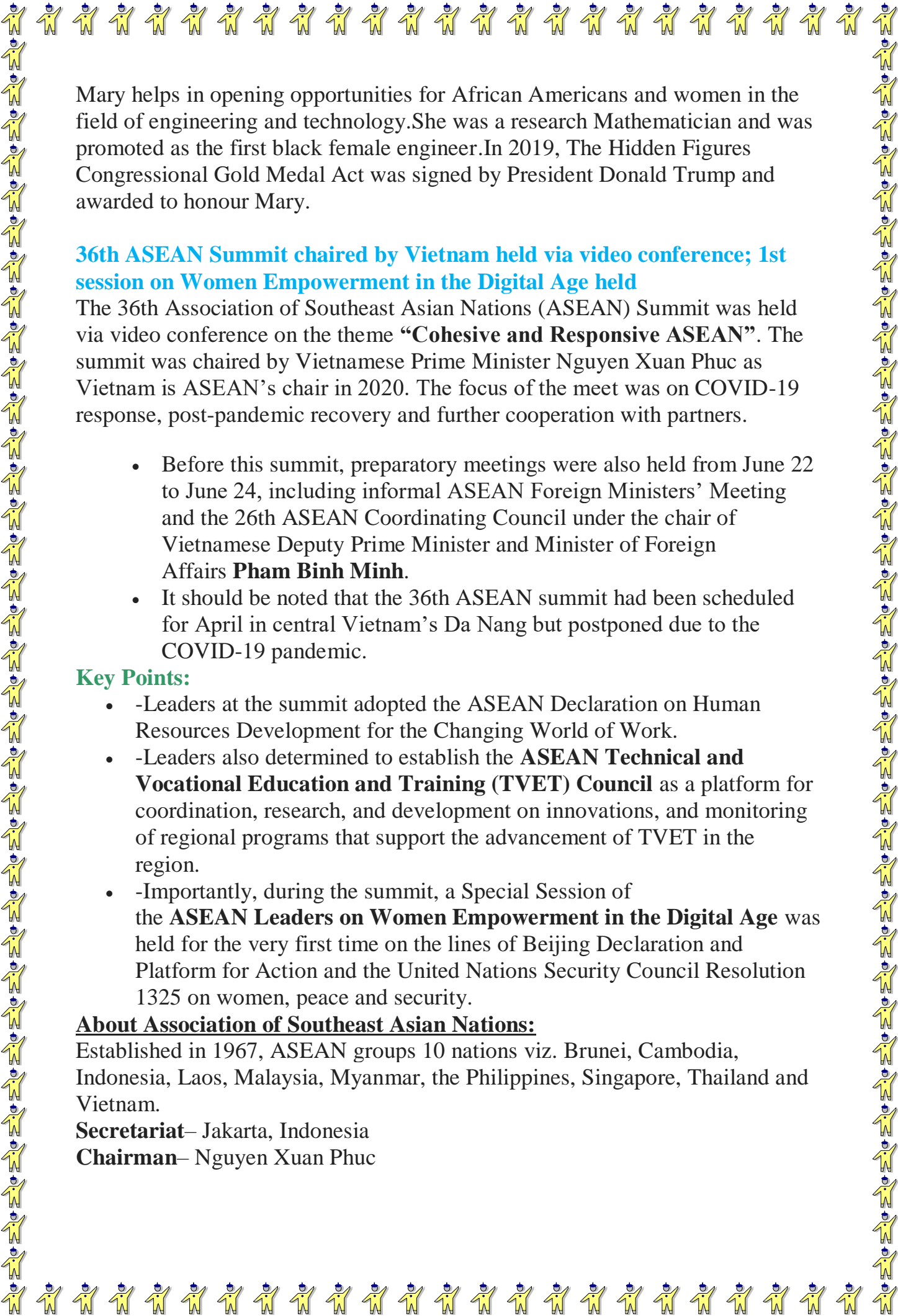
- i. Lichen is a composite organism.
- ii. They grow on the surface of the trees, walls, rocks and soil due to the symbiotic relationship between Algae or Cyanobacteria with fungi species.
- iii. The lichens have the ability to erode rocks and separate the minerals in them.
- iv. They require clean air to grow, which serves as an bio-indicator to scale the air pollution in a particular area.
- v. The species is widely found in the extreme conditions like arctic, tundra, hot dry desert rocky coasts

NASA Renames Washington HQ after Mary Jackson, first black Engineer at NASA



The headquarter building of National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) located at Washington D.C., has been renamed after Mary Winston Jackson (1921-2005), the first black female engineer at NASA. Administrator Jim Bridestone made the announcement on 24th June.

About Mary W Jackson:-



Mary helps in opening opportunities for African Americans and women in the field of engineering and technology. She was a research Mathematician and was promoted as the first black female engineer. In 2019, The Hidden Figures Congressional Gold Medal Act was signed by President Donald Trump and awarded to honour Mary.

36th ASEAN Summit chaired by Vietnam held via video conference; 1st session on Women Empowerment in the Digital Age held

The 36th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit was held via video conference on the theme “**Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN**”. The summit was chaired by Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc as Vietnam is ASEAN’s chair in 2020. The focus of the meet was on COVID-19 response, post-pandemic recovery and further cooperation with partners.

- Before this summit, preparatory meetings were also held from June 22 to June 24, including informal ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ Meeting and the 26th ASEAN Coordinating Council under the chair of Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs **Pham Binh Minh**.
- It should be noted that the 36th ASEAN summit had been scheduled for April in central Vietnam’s Da Nang but postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key Points:

- -Leaders at the summit adopted the ASEAN Declaration on Human Resources Development for the Changing World of Work.
- -Leaders also determined to establish the **ASEAN Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Council** as a platform for coordination, research, and development on innovations, and monitoring of regional programs that support the advancement of TVET in the region.
- -Importantly, during the summit, a Special Session of the **ASEAN Leaders on Women Empowerment in the Digital Age** was held for the very first time on the lines of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.

About Association of Southeast Asian Nations:

Established in 1967, ASEAN groups 10 nations viz. Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Secretariat– Jakarta, Indonesia

Chairman– Nguyen Xuan Phuc

24-time Grammy winner Popstar Beyonce to receive Humanitarian Award at the virtual 20th edition of BET Awards 2020

i. 24-time Grammy winner **Popstar Beyonce** (38 years old) to receive



the **Humanitarian Award** at **20th edition of annual BET Awards 2020**, for her long standing philanthropic work, including her recent COVID-19 relief efforts.

ii. The event will be held virtually for the 1st time on June 28.

iii. The awards will honor 2 personalities namely, basketball legend Kobe Bryant & Little Richard.

About BET Awards:

The American award show was established in 2001 by the Black Entertainment Television network to celebrate African Americans and other minorities in music, acting, sports and other fields of entertainment over the past year.

Micheál Martin Elected as the New Prime Minister of Ireland; Succeeds Leo Varadkar



On 28th June 2020, the voting at the special meeting of the Irish Parliament (**the Dáil**) at the Convention Centre, Dublin, Fianna Fail leader Micheál Martin was elected as the new (Taoiseach) Prime Minister of Ireland and he will take over the office from Leo Varadkar. The results were announced by the speaker of the lower house, Sean O Fearghail.

i. Due to COVID-19 situations to follow the social distancing rule the vote took place at the

Convention Centre instead of Leinster House.

ii. Micheál Martin, will lead the government for the first two and a half years (until December 2022); the second half of the 5 year team will be led by Leo Varadkar, Indian Origin Leader of Fine Gael.

About Ireland:

Capital– Dublin

President– Michael D. Higgins