

## 29 August 2024

### George Kurien Elected Unopposed to Rajya Sabha Seat from Madhya Pradesh

BJP candidate for Rajya Sabha from Madhya Pradesh and Union minister of state for animal husbandry and fisheries George Kurian (64) has been elected unopposed to the Rajya Sabha.



#### Key Points

- ❖ The vacancy for the Rajya Sabha seat was created after the resignation of Scindia from the Upper House after he got elected to the Lok Sabha from his traditional Guna seat, which he lost in 2019 as the Congress candidate.
- ❖ He is now the Union Minister for Communications and Development of North Eastern Region.
- ❖ Of the 11 Rajya Sabha seats in Madhya Pradesh, three were with the opposition Congress, seven with the ruling BJP and one was vacant which now has been filled with Kurian's election.
- ❖ Kurian, a leader from Kerala, is currently the Union Minister of State for Minority Affairs, Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying.

- ❖ In the 230-member state assembly, the BJP has 163 MLAs, the Congress 64 and Bharat Adivasi Party (BAP) one. Two seats are vacant.

#### NDA in Rajya Sabha

- ❖ The tally of NDA in the Rajya Sabha has increased to 115 with the unopposed election of 11 members.
- ❖ The 11 members include 9 from the Bharatiya Janata Party, two from its allies, the Janata Dal United and the NCP (Ajit Pawar). Notably, the alliance also has the support of six nominated members.
- ❖ Of the 12 vacancies that had arisen, the Congress bagged one seat from Telangana.

### 5-year-old Punjab boy youngest Asian to conquer Mt Kilimanjaro

Teghbir Singh, a five-year-old boy from Ropar, Punjab has become the youngest Asian to successfully scale Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest peak, standing at an impressive 5,895 meters above sea level.

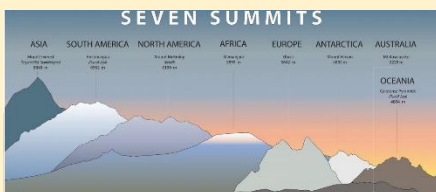


### Key Points

- ❖ Teghbir started the climb on August 18 and reached Uhuru peak, the highest point of the mountain, on August 23.
- ❖ Teghbir's feat equals the world record set by Ognjen Živković, a Serbian boy who conquered Mount Kilimanjaro at the age of five on August 6, 2023.
- ❖ In April 2023, he successfully completed the trek to the Mount Everest Base Camp
- ❖ Upon completing the climb, Teghbir received an official mountain climbing certificate issued by the conservation commissioner of Tanzania National Parks, including Kilimanjaro National Park.

#### About Mount Kilimanjaro:

- ❖ It is Africa's tallest mountain and the world's largest free-standing mountain (which means not part of a mountain range).
- ❖ It is located in northeastern Tanzania, near the Kenya border.
- ❖ Also called a stratovolcano, Kilimanjaro is made up of three cones: **Kibo, Mawenzi, and Shira.**



- ❖ Kibo is the tallest of the three volcanic formations, which is also a dormant volcano, while the other two are extinct volcanoes.
- ❖ Uhuru Peak, the highest free-standing peak in Africa, is located on the volcanic cone Kibo.
- ❖ The Kilimanjaro National Park was named a United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Site in 1987.

#### Bird Flu Outbreak Reported in Pipili Town of Odisha

An outbreak of bird flu, caused by the H5N1 strain of avian influenza, has been reported in Pipili town, Puri district, Odisha. Authorities have culled over 11,700 chickens following the detection of the virus.



#### Key Points

- ❖ The infected chicken carcasses were tested at the National Institute of High-Security Animal Disease, Bhopal, which confirmed the presence of H5N1.
- ❖ The first avian influenza outbreak in India occurred in

February 2006 in Navapur tehsil, Nandurbar district, Maharashtra.

- ❖ The first human case of avian influenza A(H5N1) in India was reported from Haryana in June 2021, resulting in the death of an 18-year-old boy.
- ❖ Avian influenza, or bird flu, is a viral infection that primarily affects birds but can occasionally spread to humans. The most common strain affecting humans is H5N1, though H7N7 and H7N9 have also been reported.
- ❖ The disease was first identified in humans in 1997 in Hong Kong among poultry workers.

### Centre appoints B Srinivasan as new NSG Director General

The Appointment Committee of the Union Cabinet has appointed senior Indian Police Officer (IPS) B Srinivasan as the new Director General of the elite counter-terrorism force National Security Guard.



#### Key Points

- ❖ B Srinivasan will replace CRPF Director General Anish Dayal Singh, who was given the additional charge

of the National Security Guard (NSG), following the appointment of the then NSG Director General Nalin Prabhat's appointment as a special Director General of Police of the Jammu and Kashmir Police.

#### ❖ About National Security Guard

- ❖ The Government of India decided to set up an elite counter terrorism force in 1984. The National Security Act was enacted in 1986 and the National Security Guard came into existence on 22 September 1986.
- ❖ The NSG is one of the seven Central Armed Police Forces of the government of India.
- ❖ It is under the administrative control of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.
- ❖ **Operational Headquarters:** Manesar, Haryana
- ❖ **Motto:** Sarvatra Sarvottam Suraksha

### Disputed Sabina Shoal

Chinese and Philippine vessels collided during a confrontation near a disputed Sabina Shoal in the South China Sea.



- ❖ **Sabina Shoal:** It is an oceanic coral atoll that developed on top of a

seamount in the eastern part of the Spratlys.

- ❖ **Location:** It is located in west of the Philippine island of Palawan.
- ❖ The closest shallow geographic feature is Boxall Reef
- ❖ **China- Philippines Dispute:** China refers to Sabina Shoal as Xianbin Reef, while the Philippines calls it Escoda Shoal.
- ❖ China claims the Sabina Shoal. It is more than 1,000 km from China's nearest major landmass, Hainan island.
- ❖ Manila and Beijing have stationed coast guard vessels around the shoal in recent months, with the Philippines fearing China is about to build an artificial island there.

### Unrest in the Balochistan region

In the past few weeks, Balochistan region of Pakistan has been witnessing large-scale protests.



### Key Points

- ❖ The Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC) has organized the "Baloch Raaji Muchi" (Baloch National Gathering) in

Gwadar, to draw attention to several issues, including:

- ❖ Protesters are highlighting abuses like enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings by security forces.
- ❖ Despite Balochistan's wealth in resources, the local population sees little benefit, leading to frustration and poverty.
- ❖ The provincial government's failure to provide essential services like healthcare and education is a key concern.
- ❖ **Geography**
- ❖ **Borders:** It is bordered by Iran in the West, Afghanistan in the Northwest, Sindh in the Southeast and Arabian Sea in the South.
- ❖ **Terrain:** The Sulaiman and Kirthar ranges are prominent geographical features.
- ❖ **Economic Resources:**
- ❖ Balochistan is rich in mineral resources, including copper, gold, coal, and natural gas.
- ❖ Balochistan accounts for 44% of Pakistan's landmass but has one of the lowest economic indicators, including poor infrastructure and social services.
- ❖ Under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a Chinese firm manages Gwadar port on a 40-year

lease, leading to fears about loss of local access and job displacement.

### History

- ❖ In 1947, the Khan of Kalat declared Balochistan an independent state. However, Pakistan's leadership forced its federation in 1948.
- ❖ Gwadar, initially part of Oman, was purchased by Pakistan in 1958.
- ❖ In 1955, Balochistan was merged into a single province under the One Unit scheme, centralizing power and reducing provincial autonomy.
- ❖ This scheme was abolished in 1970, but local governance remained weak.
- ❖ Despite Balochistan's rich mineral deposits, the region remains economically backward.

### ❖ News Shorts

- ❖ The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation has granted approval to Siemens Healthineers for the manufacture of RT-PCR testing kits for detection of Mpox.
- ❖ Bharti Airtel has unveiled a new content partnership with Apple, set

to offer exclusive Apple Music and Apple TV+ deals to customers in India.

- ❖ Gwalior will host the third Regional Industry Conclave (RIC), aiming to attract investment to Madhya Pradesh.
- ❖ The Institute of Advanced Study in Science and Technology (IASST) developed the new smartphone-based sensor for managing Parkinson's Disease.
- ❖ India ranked 31st in JLL's Global Real Estate Transparency Index 2024.
- ❖ Harmanpreet Kaur has been named the captain of the Indian women's cricket team for the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024.
- ❖ The Virupaksha Temple in Hampi, Karnataka, made news after the collapse of a temple pavilion during heavy rains in 2024.
- ❖ The Union Cabinet approved the BioE3 (Biotechnology for Economy, Environment and Employment) Policy to boost biotechnology for the economy, environment, and employment.

Important Daily Current Affairs Question

1. Recently, Who among the following was elected unopposed to the Rajya Sabha from Madhya Pradesh in 2024?

- (a) George Kurian
- (b) Preeti Sudan
- (c) Smriti Irani
- (d) Narendra Singh Tomar

Answer- (a)

2. Who became the youngest Asian to successfully scale Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest peak, in 2024?

- (a) Teghbir Singh
- (b) Arjun Vajpai
- (c) Malavath Purna
- (d) Tashi Malik

Answer- (a)



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