

CURIOS TIMES WEEKLY

Age-Appropriate Content

School Curriculum-Aligned News

Non-Sensational News

Curiosity rover takes selfie before record climb on Mars

Date : Mar 25 , 2020 | Image Credit : [Twitter@MarsCuriosity](#)



NASA's Curiosity rover in Mars, has shared another photo, this time, a selfie marking a record-breaking climb.

It climbed up a hill called **Greenheugh Pediment**. Climbing up this hill created a **31-degree tilt** for the rover which was a record.

- Curiosity took the selfie 11 feet before it reached the top on 6 March. The entire selfie is a 360-degree image combined from 86 images.
- Previously, the only other rover to experience more of a tilt was NASA's Opportunity rover's 32-degree record set in 2016.
- Curiosity's drivers operate from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California, US. They **plan each drive carefully** so that Curiosity doesn't meet with an accident.

Why is it important for Curiosity to take photos?

Apart from showing us what Mars looks like and help us understand it better, the photos that Curiosity sends also helps NASA to know where it is exactly located **and where to go next**.

With many NASA employees also working from home due to COVID-19, Curiosity has been kept busy these days with instructions to drill rock samples and make scientific observations.

Google Doodle honours hand washing pioneer Dr. Semmelweiss

Date : Mar 20 , 2020 | Image Credit : [Twitter, @bensolomon1](#)



Have you noticed today's **Google Doodle**? It's about **hand washing**, and honours the doctor who first discovered the benefits of washing hands.

<https://www.google.com/?mLightbox=1>

Go on, click on that play button and see that little video (again).

- Today, we all know that the best way to avoid infection is to wash our hands regularly with soap and water, and keep them clean.
- But that wasn't always the case. Before the late 1800s, even doctors wouldn't wash their hands between surgeries and patients.
- There used to be a lot of deaths due to the spread of infections through dirty hands, but nobody seemed to realise this.
- Apparently, people didn't know yet that diseases were spread through germs.

Then, in 1847, a Hungarian doctor, **Dr. Ignaz Philipp Semmelweis** proposed that all doctors should wash their hands between patients.

- **He discovered the link** between transmitted germs and the high death rate of new mothers.
- Many new mothers would die right after giving birth to their babies, just because their doctors didn't wash their hands while attending to them.
- After he ordered all doctors at his clinic to wash their hands regularly, the death rate of patients came down drastically.

Dr. Semmelweis came to be known as the '**saviour of mothers**'. Today, he is considered as a pioneer (leader) in antiseptic procedures.

Quote of the week



"No matter what sort of difficulties, how painful experience is, if we lose our hope, that's our real disaster."

Dalai Lama

Word to know



Suffocate
Verb | suhf-uh-keyt

to discomfort by a lack of fresh or cool air.

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Scientists uncover oldest & largest “mammoth house” in Russia

Date: Mar 20, 2020 | Image Credit: [Twitter@Strange_Sounds](#)

A new study says that researchers have discovered a “mammoth house” in Russia – a mysterious circular structure made from the bones of mammoths.

This is the **oldest and largest one** to be discovered till now.

Mammoths are a group of animals, **related to elephants** which used to live on Earth thousands of years ago. They had long curved tusks, were usually huge in size and had hair.

What does this study say?

- This mammoth house is made up of the **bones of around 60 mammoths** and measures 41 feet across.
- Researchers started digging at this site in 2015 and completed the dig in 3 years.
- This mammoth house is located in **Kotenski 11**, near Moscow, where other similar but smaller structures have also been discovered as well.
- All the mammoth structures discovered date back to the Ice Age

What was the purpose of building these “houses” out of mammoth bones?

- It remains a mystery. Scientists think that maybe it could have been used as shelter during the extremely cold winters.
- However, mammoth bones are very heavy which makes them wonder why people would have chosen to use them to build houses instead of wood.
- Additionally, there are very few signs that people lived in these “houses” for very long.
- Some other scientists think that maybe the mammoth houses were used to store food.

What do you think they were used for?

8 countries decide the names of tropical cyclones

Date: Mar 20, 2020 | Image Credit: [Wikimedia Commons](#)

India experienced cyclone **Fani** last year. A cyclone is a powerful spinning storm that contains strong winds and rain.

Just like many other things in the world, even cyclones have their own names!

So, how do cyclones get their names?

- The culture of naming tropical cyclones (which happen towards the northern part of the Indian Ocean) started from September 2004.
- **8 countries located** around the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea suggest names. They are **Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand**.
- The countries’ names are listed in alphabetical order and each country gets the chance to name the cyclone one after the other.
- The **Regional Specialised Meteorological Centre (RSMC)** located in New Delhi then names a tropical cyclone, choosing from that list.

Which country suggested the first name in 2004?

- **Bangladesh** was the first country to name one. It suggested ‘**Onil**’ in 2004.
- 64 names have been suggested so far; 57 of them have been used as of now.
- Each cyclone name has its own meaning. For example, last year’s cyclone **Fani** (suggested by **Bangladesh**) means ‘**snake’s hood**’.
- Some cyclone names that India has suggested are **Agni, Jali, Bijli and Akash**.
- The practice of naming storms was **first started in the United States**.

Anyone can suggest a name for a cyclone, but there are selection rules. Additionally, the name has to be communicated to the Director-General of the IMD (India Meteorological Department).

Did You Know



The Asian elephant is the closest living relative of the woolly mammoth. The woolly mammoth was 9 to 11 feet tall and it weighed 5 to 7 tons.



Joke Pokes



Why did the man put his money in the freezer?
He wanted cold hard cash!

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My Expressions

Grounded ... A poem by singhblingking

Date : 25 March 2020 | [Singhblingking](#), 10 , Navrachana International School , Vadodara , Gujarat

We have interesting views of **Hardit Singh Musson**. He is a student, who is at home amidst prevailing coronavirus fear.

Sitting here because of the virus of the corona,
Getting bored by listening to the songs of Madonna.
Our country is in complete lockdown,
Every place has turned into a deserted town.

All the houses have their food stock,
The whole world, including Trump, is in shock.
Everyone is wearing their mask,
Being careful is everybody's task.

People are advised to stay in their homes and
Children are sad, as they aren't getting their ice cream cones.
In our country, studies say that there are over 500 cases
People are so cautious, that they are even tying their shoelaces!

We all should pray to god
And listen to the prime minister and nod.

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Chile is the 'astronomy capital' of the world due to its desert

Date : Mar 24 , 2020 | Image Credit : Wikimedia Commons



While reading articles, have you ever noticed that many of the world's telescopes for studying space are located in the country of Chile?

This is because Chile is considered to be the 'astronomy capital' of the world. Astronomy is the study of the stars, planets and space.

What is the reason for this?

This is because Chile (located in South America), is home to the **Atacama desert**.

This desert has **dry weather** for more than 300 days in a year and **extraordinarily clear skies with very little pollution**, making it the most suitable place for astronomers to look at the stars.

How many telescopes are located in the Atacama desert?

- About 70% of the world's best telescopes for astronomy are located here.
- This includes the **Atacama Large Millimeter Array ALMA**, **Paranal Observatory's Very Large Telescope (VLT)** and more.

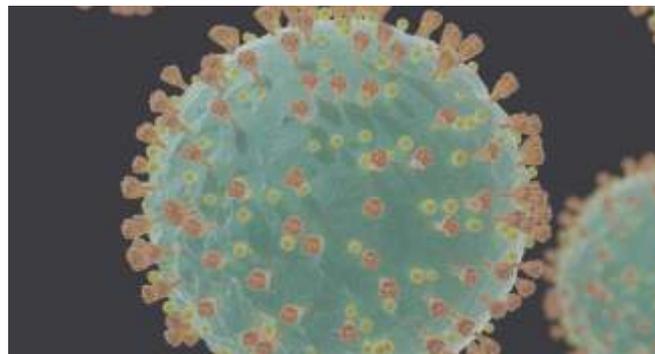
Are they building even more telescopes?

Yes. They are building an **ELT (Extremely Large Telescope)** in the **Paranal Observatory**. This telescope will be the most powerful telescope in the world. It will be the size of a football stadium and can withstand earthquakes.

Due to all this, interest in astronomy is quite high in Chile. It also has many astronomy institutes where people come from all over the world to study.

PM Modi announces 21 days lockdown to fight spread of coronavirus

Date : Mar 24 , 2020 | Image Credit : Wikimedia Commons



The total number of confirmed cases in the country as on 24 March stands at 560.

Today, Prime Minister Modi addressed the nation at 8 pm. In the speech, he announced that the country will be in lockdown for **21 days starting at midnight tonight** as it is the only way to prevent the virus.

He said, "...there is only one way to effectively combat it is social distancing". While the lockdown will be hard, especially on the poor, the government and other organisations will help them overcome hardships.

- **Essential services** such as groceries, healthcare, electricity, water and fire **will remain available**.
- After the Delhi airport ban on international flights yesterday, the central government has also **shut down all domestic flights** in the country.
- The government is also working with news outlets all over the country to ensure that there is no spread of false information.
- Manipur reported its first COVID-19 case, making it the first state in the northeast part of the country to report one.
- The Election Commission of India (ECI) has **postponed the scheduled Rajya Sabha elections**.

Apollo hospital is also **offering a quick self-assessment test online** to know one's current risk level. It is available on Apollo's website.

What is the situation globally?

- The number of cases worldwide has increased to more than 390,000.
- The 2020 Olympics in Tokyo has been postponed for about a year. The Japan government says it will be held latest by July 2021.
- China has lifted its lockdown on the province of Hubei. Now only the city of Wuhan where the outbreak started remains under lockdown.

Tongue Twister!



Mommy made me eat my M&Ms.

Joke Pokes



What dinosaur had the best vocabulary?
The thesaurus.

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Chess boxing is a hybrid sport inspired by a novel

Date: Mar 24, 2020 | Image Credit: WCBO



You have probably heard of sports that test your mental fitness and sports that test your physical expertise on the ground. But have you heard of hybrid (mixed) sport that combines the two? One such sport is chess boxing.

What's the history of this game?

The idea was started in 1992 by cartoonist, **Enki Bilal**. He included a match of chess boxing in his graphic novel, **Froid Equateur**. Inspired by it, **lepe Robingh** invented the sport named "Chess Boxing". As the name sounds, its a combination of chess and boxing! It came around in early 2003 and then the World Chess Boxing Organisation (WCBO) was formed. The first world championship was held in Amsterdam in 2003. It was won by lepe Rubingh, the starter of the sport.

What are the rules of this game?

- A match between two players is made up of up to 11 rounds of boxing and chess.
- Alternate rounds of chess and boxing take place.
- Speed chess is played. Each player gets 12 minutes for his turn in the chess game.

A person has to be an expert at both chess and boxing to win the game, as either game can decide the winner.

Do you love both chess and boxing? Will you try this with your friend?

Teen organises coronavirus sanitation kits' donations

Date: Mar 23, 2020 | Image Credit: unicef.org



As the coronavirus outbreak is affecting the world, it is heartening to come across stories of **people helping one another**.

Shaivi Shah, a 15-year-old girl in California, US is setting a wonderful example for us all.

Shaivi has **organised a drive** among her fellow students to **donate coronavirus sanitation** (cleanliness) kits to the homeless.

- Each kit contains hand sanitiser, lotion, antibacterial soap, and handmade reusable face masks to **help homeless people stay safe** during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Till now, they have donated more than 150 kits to 3 homeless shelters in the area.
- Shaivi has also started a GoFundMe (donation) page. Through this page, she can help donate such kits to more homeless people in other states all over the country.

She hopes that **her actions will encourage others to step in to help** in their own ways during the pandemic.

While we should all be concerned about our own well being, it is also important to remember to help others, especially those in need.

Tongue Twister!



I see a sea down by the seashore.
But which sea do you see down by the seashore?

Joke Pokes



Why did Johnny throw the clock out of the window?
Because he wanted to see time fly.

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My Expressions

Poem – Legendary!

Date : 21 March 2020 | Navdha, 11, DL DAV Model School, Shalimar Bagh, New Delhi, Delhi



On World Poetry Day, our young and super talented, Navdha pens a beautiful poem. Enjoy this one!

Hard work's always faceless,
Shouldn't matter what your gender or race is;

Tell me someone who's better,
And we can watch them crumble under pressure.

Girl, you got a story:
No guts–no glory

This is something for the whole wide world
That there is strength in every girl!

All I'm asking is you open your mind,
Do the right thing.

Don't give up the fight,
Cause we didn't come here to cheer,

We came to lead and we're right here

So open your eyes and see,
You can be legendary!

Yeah, yeah
You can be legendary!

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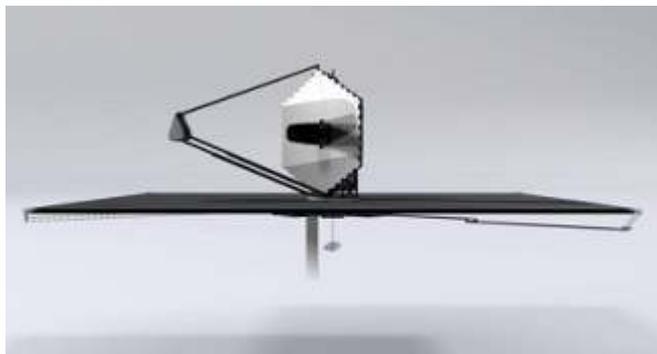
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LUVOIR – NASA’s next potential big space telescope

Date: Mar 22, 2020 | Image Credit: Twitter, @Bottest75162951



In our space news, we keep reading about the big telescopes, like Spitzer, Hubble etc that have helped discover exoplanets and explore deep space further than possible earlier.

- While **Spitzer** was decommissioned (shut down) on 30 Jan 2020 after 16 years of service, the **James Webb Space Telescope**, is scheduled to launch in March 2021.
- Planning ahead, **NASA** will now choose its **next big space telescope**, the instrument that will shape scientists’ research in the 2040s.
- NASA has funded detailed analyses of **four potential projects** so the agency can better understand the possible risks and opportunities of each proposal.
- One of those mission concepts is called the **Large UV/Optical/IR Surveyor (LUVOIR)**.
- If it’s built, the telescope could tackle a host of science topics, but its speciality would be giving scientists the most realistic view yet of **exoplanets** that are superficially “like Earth” but actually like – well, nobody knows.
- **LUVOIR** would zoom in on such small, rocky worlds and tell scientists what proportion of superficially Earth-like planets are actually like Earth, with surface water, an atmosphere and growing organisms.

However, in order to be selected, studying exoplanets won’t be enough; the LUVOIR team also need to make the telescope’s design relevant to many different subfields of **astrophysics**.

This could range from studying **dark matter**, to showing how **galaxies** work, to monitoring icy moons in the outer solar system for plumes of water gushing out through their frozen shells.

Penguins go on ‘field trips’ in aquarium shut down due to coronavirus

Date: Mar 19, 2020 | Image Credit: Twitter@shedd_aquarium



We are all aware of the impact of the coronavirus infection – schools, malls, cinemas have all been shut down. Similarly, the **Shedd Aquarium in Chicago, US** has also been shut down to the public.

Taking advantage of the lack of visitors, the penguins have been **out and about on ‘field trips’** around the aquarium.

- The penguins’ caretakers are taking this time to introduce new experiences, activities, food, etc to the penguins.
- These activities will also **keep the penguins active, encourage them to explore**, problem-solve and express natural behaviours.

Shedd Aquarium (formally the John G. Shedd Aquarium) is an **indoor public aquarium** in Chicago, Illinois, in the United States. It opened on 30 May 1930. Today it holds some 32,000 animals.

The penguins’ caretakers have been posting the **penguins’ videos online**.

Did You Know



The Hubble space telescope is the size of a school bus. It orbits the Earth at a cruising speed of 17,000 miles per hour, and takes 15 minutes to rotate 90 degrees.



Word to know



Talon
Noun | tal-uh n

a claw, especially of a bird of prey

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What's in a word – Planet

Date : Mar 22 , 2020 | Image Credit : Wikimedia Commons



We read about planets often – whether it's about our Earth or other planets like Mercury, Jupiter and Neptune.

What is the history of the word 'planet'?

- The word 'planet' entered the English language through the French word *planet* (same meaning as in English) which again came from Latin word *planeta* (same meaning).
- However, ultimately the word came from the Greek words *planetes asteres* meaning 'wandering stars' or simply *planetai* (wanderers).
- In ancient times, people believed that the Earth was the centre of the universe while space bodies circled around it. So, the Sun and Moon were also called "planets" until the astronomer **Nicolaus Copernicus** proved this theory to be wrong.
- After it was proved that the Earth circles the Sun too, it was also considered a 'planet'.

What is a planet exactly?

- As more and more celestial bodies were discovered, there was a lot of confusion as to which of them qualified to be a "planet".
- So, in 2006 the **International Astronomical Union (IAU)** created **3 rules for classification of a planet**. This led to Pluto no longer being considered one.

What are these 3 features a 'planet' should have in our solar system?

- It must orbit the Sun.
- It should have a round shape or similar.
- It should have cleared its neighbourhood of other objects (meaning there should be no other objects similar in size nearby except for its moon).

Did you miss these news? Find them on [Curioustimes.in](https://www.curious-times.in)

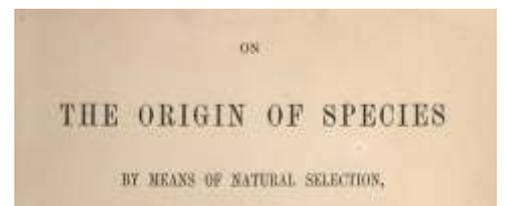
Astronomer uses huge balloon to help capture images of exoplanets



Ancient clams show that Earth days were shorter in the past



Cambridge student proves one of Darwin's theories of evolution



Fossil shows fish sprouted fingers before they came onto land



Asterix co-creator Albert Uderzo passes away



Amidst coronavirus travel bans, one flight makes a record

