

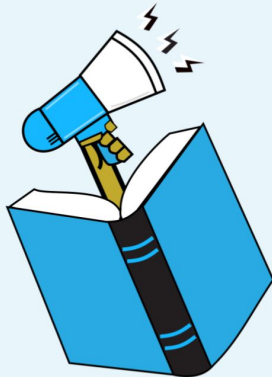
29<sup>th</sup> August 2020

# SUMMACHAR

## CURIOPEDIA NEWSLETTER

#8

# BLOOMSBURY AND CENSORSHIP IN INDIA



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# MAIL-IN BALLOT AND THE TRUMP PROBLEM



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## In This Newsletter

# IIT-B HOLDS VIRTUAL CONVOCATION VIA DIGITAL AVATARS



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# FIRESTORMS ON A RISE IN CALIFORNIA



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# WORLD'S FIRST WHITE TIGER SANCTUARY IN INDIA



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## Curious Question of the Week

"Yeh avtaar nahi hai..." is a snippet from which Superhero's theme song?

Email us your answer at

[communications@summachar.in](mailto:communications@summachar.in)

*(The **fastest fingers first** will be featured in next week's newsletter and will get an **exclusive certificate**.)*

DC and Marvel fans should definitely check out the [SuperQuiz on Superheroes](#), happening this **Sunday**, 30 Aug 2020 at 12 noon on our **Instagram** stories.

### Winner announcement!

*Last week we asked,*

Q: The red panda can be found on the logo of?

A: The web browser, **Mozilla Firefox** has a red panda that encircles a blue globe representing the earth.

Congratulations **Mr. Vrutpal Patel**, for being the fastest fingers first.

## 1

# Can you imagine a world that outlaws books?

Surely a bleak, **dystopian world**.

That's what acclaimed American writer, Ray Bradbury showed us in his 1953 novel "**Fahrenheit 451**", whose name signifies the ignition point of paper.

- Often regarded as one of his best works, it presents a future society where books are outlawed.
- "**Firemen**" like the central character, **Guy Montag** have the job to destroy the most illegal of commodities, a printed book, along with the houses in which they are hidden.
- He begins to question everything when his eccentric neighbor, **Clarisse**, introduces him to a past where people expressed and explored ideas by reading and didn't rely on the 'idiot box'.

Back in the present day, **cancellation of a book by the Bloomsbury publishing house**, has initiated a debate on freedom of speech and censoring.

- The cancelled book named **Delhi Riots 2020: The Untold Story**, is written by Monica Arora, Sonali Chitalkar, and Perna Malhotra.
- Bloomsbury has claimed in its statement that the book was cancelled after the authors held a “pre-publication launch” without informing them.
- Now Garuda Prakashan has agreed to publish the book within 15 days.
- Other popular infamous book bans include: **The Satanic Verses by Salman Rushdie** (1988), **The Myth of the Holy Cow by Dwijendra Narayan Jha** (2002) & **The Da Vinci Code by Dan Brown** (2003).

## 2 How were ancient Indian voting systems eco-friendly?

Yes, they were **paperless** and consisted of **palm leaves** with candidate names, that were put inside a **mud pot** for counting.

Introduced by the Cholas Dynasty in 920 AD in Tamil Nadu, it was called the **Kudavolai system** for organizing village assembly elections.

- Now in 2020, the US House of Representatives has approved **\$25 billion funding** for the US Postal Service (**USPS**).
- The decision came amidst the November elections looming close and an increased focus put on social distancing due to the ongoing **COVID-19 pandemic**.

# SUMMARY

- In the **Mail-in voting**, ballot papers for voting are received and sent back (after choosing the vote) via postal service or put in a dropbox.
- Earlier, only **Absentee type** of voting could be requested by sick people and soldiers on duty.
- Currently **8 States** like California, Nevada, etc have implemented an Universal mail ballot, where all registered voters would be sent mail ballots without requesting and “no specific reason”.
- President Trump called this mail-in voting a hoax but failed to convince the republicans to vote against it.
- In the **2016** US Presidential elections, **33 million (~25%) votes** were cast by mail. This year, **76%** American voters are reportedly eligible to “receive a ballot in the mail”.

[INFOGRAPHIC STORY](#)

[DEEP DIVE STORY](#)

### 3 Firestorm caused because it was lunchtime?

It's bizarre but true. The **Great Kantō earthquake** struck the main Japanese island of **Honshū** in **1923**.

As it struck at **lunchtime** when people were cooking meals over fire, many died as a result of the numerous large fires that broke out.

It resulted in firestorms and eventually, a fire tornado.

- A **firestorm** is a large and destructive bushfire/wildfire that attains such a great intensity that it creates and sustains its own storm-like wind system.
- The rising air in such storms can be so speedy, that it creates a circular movement of air that forms an air whirlpool, also known as the **fire “devil”** or **fire tornado**.



# SUMMARY

- Composed of flame and ash, they can reach temperatures of up to **2000°F** and be hundreds of feet tall.
- The firestorm havoc started this month in the San Francisco **Bay Area** and Northern **California**, destroying **2000+ structures** and causing thousands to evacuate their homes in the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic.
- As per climate scientists, **11,000+ lightning strikes** in the area are the main culprits behind the firestorm outbreak.
- Temperature records were broken as well, with Woodland Hills in California hitting **44.4°C**, last experienced in **1949** there.
- **Google** plans to **update Maps and Search** to help local and federal officials with real-time information about the size, boundaries, and locations of fires in the U.S.

**INFOGRAPHIC STORY**

**DEEP DIVE STORY**

## 4 Animals can be charismatic too! 🐯

**Charismatic megafauna** are animal species with a symbolic value or widespread popular appeal and are used by environmental activists to gain public support for environmentalist goals.

Eg: White Tiger, Royal Bengal Tiger, Humpback Whale, Giant Panda, Bald Eagle, Harp Seal, and Penguin.

**World's first white tiger sanctuary** was opened in **Mukundpur**, Rewa, MP in 2016 to protect their natural habitat.

It was also a tribute to Maharaja of Rewa, who in 1951, discovered a beautiful white tiger. He named him **Mohan** & encouraged breeding him to produce more white tigers.

Wondering how they are born white?

- It's due to **Albinism**. Albinism is an inborn disease that causes a partial or complete loss of melanin, the pigment responsible for the development of skin and eye color in mammals (human beings) & animals alike.
- Though albino tigers may be exotic for zoo visitors, due to their lack of camouflage, they are **easier targets** for natural **predators** and **poachers** in the wild.

Do black beauties also exist in nature?

- Yes, like the black panther! Derived from a Greek word "**melanomorpha**" (black pigment), Melanism causes an undue development of dark-colored pigment in the skin.
- Since they are properly camouflaged, they become fitter to survive and reproduce more in this environment. This makes them less prone to predators and more **adaptive to night hunting**.

**INFOGRAPHIC STORY**

**DEEP DIVE STORY**

# 5 Bet you haven't been to this kind of convocation before

Due to the ongoing pandemic, **IIT Bombay** authorities thought it best to arrange a **VR-based** (Virtual Reality) **convocation** for the graduating students. How did they do it?

The **digital avatar** of each **graduate** was personalized to receive their degree certificate and medal from the avatars of the Director and Chief Guest.

Students were allowed to 'roam' around on the **virtual campus**, 'visit' their hostels and departments and meet their friends & faculty there.

An avatar can either be 2D personas i.e **Bitmojis** (android) & **Memojis** (apple) or 3D for use in VR online games like **Facebook Venues** & **Second life**.

Helpful in Virtual Meetings with headsets like the **Jio Glass**, that allow enhanced discussions via participants' 3D holograms.

[INFOGRAPHIC STORY](#)

[DEEP DIVE STORY](#)

Hope you enjoyed reading!

Feedback? Write to us at  
[communications@summachar.in](mailto:communications@summachar.in)