

Daily Current Affairs 13/09/2021

1. 13th BRICS Summit



Why in News

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired the 13th BRICS Summit on 9 September 2021 virtually.
- The Summit's theme was **BRICS@15: Intra-BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation and Consensus**.
- The Summit saw the participation of all other BRICS Leaders - President Jair Bolsonaro of Brazil, President Xi Jinping of China, President Vladimir Putin of Russia and President Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa.

Key Points:

Prime Minister's Address:

- The Prime Minister expressed his appreciation for the cooperation received from BRICS partners during **India's Chairship this year (2021)**, which allowed the achievement of several new initiatives.
- These included the first BRICS Digital Health Summit; the first BRICS Ministerial Joint Statement on multilateral reforms; a BRICS Counter-Terrorism Action Plan; an Agreement on cooperation in field of remote-sensing satellites; a virtual BRICS vaccine Research & Development Centre; BRICS Alliance on Green Tourism, etc.
- Highlighting the leading role that BRICS countries can play in the post-COVID global recovery, Prime Minister called for enhanced BRICS cooperation under the motto of 'Build-back Resiliently, Innovatively, Credibly and Sustainably'.
- The leaders also adopted the 'New Delhi Declaration'.

About 'New Delhi Declaration': The declaration called for reforms of the principal organs of the United Nations including that of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

Note: It is the third time India hosted the BRICS Summit after 2012 and 2016.

Facts about BRICS:

- **Formation:** 2009
- **Countries:** Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa

It is an important grouping bringing together the major emerging economies from the world, comprising:

- 41% of world population
- Total combined area of 29.3% of the total land surface of the world
- 24% of global GDP
- 16% of world trade

Note: The above data is based on World Bank data (2019).

Source: PIB

2. National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2021



Why in News

• **Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Education Minister** released the **India Rankings 2021** instituted by the **National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF)**.

Key Points

About National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF):

• NIRF, launched in November 2015 by the Ministry of Education,

was used for this edition as well as for the past 5 editions of India Rankings released for the years 2016 to 2021.

- This is the sixth consecutive edition of India Rankings of HEIs in India.
- During its maiden year in 2016, rankings were announced for the University category as well as for three domain-specific rankings, namely Engineering, Management and Pharmacy institutions.
- Over the period of six years, three new categories and five new subject domains were added to bring the total tally to 4 four categories, namely Overall, University, College and Research Institutions and 7 subjects, namely Engineering, Management, Architecture, Medical, Pharmacy, Law and Dental in 2021.
- Research institutions have been ranked for the first time in India Rankings 2021.
- **Parameter:** These are Teaching, Learning & Resources, Research and Professional Practice, Graduation Outcomes, Outreach and Inclusivity, Perception.

Number of Participants: In all, 6272 applications for ranking were made by these 4030 unique applicant institutions under various categories / domains.

Key Highlights of India Rankings 2021:

- **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras** retains 1st Position in **Overall Category** as well as in **Engineering** for the third consecutive year.
- **Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru** tops the **University** as well as **Research Institution** category introduced for the first time in India Rankings 2021.
- **IIM Ahmedabad** tops in **Management subject** and **All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi** occupies the top slot in **Medical** for the fourth consecutive year.
- **Jamia Hamdard** tops the list in **Pharmacy subject** for the third consecutive year.
- **Miranda College** retains 1st position amongst **colleges** for the fifth consecutive year.
- **IIT Roorkee** takes the top slot for the first time in **Architecture subject** displacing IIT Kharagpur.
- **National Law School of India University, Bangalore** retains its first position in **Law** for the fourth consecutive year.
- **Manipal College of Dental Sciences, Manipal**, secures 1st position in “**Dental**” category.

Source: PIB

3. ATL Space Challenge 2021



Why in News

- Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog in collaboration with the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** and **Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)** launched the **ATL Space Challenge 2021**.

Key Points

About ATL Space Challenge 2021:

- It has been designed for all the school students, mentors and teachers across the country who not only are associated with schools having ATL labs but for all the non ATL schools as well.
- This is to ensure that students of classes 6 to 12 are given an open platform where they can innovate and enable themselves to solve digital age space technology problems.
- It aligns with the **World Space Week 2021** which is being observed from 4 to 10 October each year at the global level in order to celebrate the contributions of space science and technology.

About Atal Innovation Mission (AIM):

- AIM is the Government of India's flagship initiative to create and promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship across India.
- AIM's objective is to develop new programs and policies for fostering innovation in different sectors of the economy, provide platforms and collaboration opportunities for different stakeholders, and create an umbrella structure to oversee the innovation & entrepreneurship ecosystem of the country.

Major Initiatives:

- Atal Incubation Centers
- Atal Tinkering Labs
- Atal Research and Innovation for Small Enterprises
- Atal New India Challenges
- Atal Community Innovation Center

Source: PIB

4. India's first Indigenously Designed High Ash Coal Gasification Based Methanol Production Plant



Why in News

- **BHEL, Hyderabad** demonstrated India's first Indigenously Designed High Ash Coal Gasification Based Methanol Production Plant.

Key Points

Methanol:

- It is utilized as a motor fuel, to power ship engines, and to generate clean power all over the world.
- Methanol is also used to generate di-methyl ether (DME), a liquid fuel that is very similar to diesel — existing diesel engines simply need to be minimally changed to use DME instead of diesel.

Reason:

- The majority of worldwide methanol production is derived from natural gas.

- Since India doesn't have much of the natural gas reserves, producing methanol from imported natural gas leads to outflow of foreign exchange and sometimes uneconomical due to excessive prices of natural gas.
- The next best option is to utilise India's abundant coal.
- To address this issue, BHEL R&D centre at Hyderabad began working on Indian high ash coal gasification in 2016 with support from the NITI Aayog to produce 0.25 ton per day methanol.
- With 4 years of hard work BHEL demonstrated a facility to create 0.25 TPD Methanol from high ash Indian coal using a 1.2 TPD Fluidized bed gasifier.
- The methanol purity of the crude methanol produced is between 98 and 99.5 percent.

Note: This is part of NITI Aayog's 'Methanol Economy' programme.

Source: PIB

5. Transport and Marketing Assistance (TMA) Scheme



सत्यमेव जयते

Department of Commerce
Ministry of Commerce and Industry
Government of India

Why in News

- The Ministry of Commerce & Industry has revised the "Transport and Marketing Assistance" (TMA) scheme for Specified Agriculture Products'.

Key Points

About Transport and Marketing Assistance (TMA) Scheme:

- In February 2019, the Department of Commerce had introduced 'Transport and Marketing Assistance (TMA) for Specified Agriculture Products Scheme' to provide assistance for the international component of freight, to mitigate the disadvantage of higher freight costs faced by the Indian exporters of agriculture products.
- In the year **2018**, the government approved an **Agriculture Export Policy** with an aim to double the shipments to USD 60 billion by 2022.
- **APEDA** works towards expanding the export potential of Indian agricultural and food products.
- The scheme was initially applicable for exports affected during the period from 01.03.2019 to 31.03.2020 and was later extended for exports affected up to 31.03.2021.

- Now the Department has notified **Revised Transport and Marketing Assistance (TMA) for Specified Agriculture Products Scheme** for exports affected **on or after 01.04.2021 up to 31.03.2022**.
- Enhanced assistance under the revised scheme is expected to help Indian exporters of agricultural products to meet rising freight and logistics costs.

About APEDA (Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority):

- It was established by the Government of India under the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority Act passed by the Parliament in December, 1985.

About Agri Export Policy (AEP):

- AEP was launched in 2018 with an emphasis on agricultural export-oriented production, export promotion, improved price realization to farmers, and synchronization with Government's different policies and programmes.
- The policy focuses on a "Farmers' Centric Approach" to increase revenue.

Source: PIB

6. New Governors appointed for Uttarakhand, Punjab, Nagaland & Tamil Nadu



Why in News

- President Ram Nath Kovind has appointed new governors in four states, namely, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Nagaland & Tamil Nadu.

Key Points

Uttarakhand:

- **Lt. Gen. Gurmit Singh** (retd), former deputy chief of Army, has been appointed Governor of Uttarakhand.

- **Note:** Recently, the President of India had accepted the resignation of Baby Rani Maurya as Governor of Uttarakhand.

Punjab:

- **Banwarilal Purohit**, Governor of Tamil Nadu holding additional charge of the Governor of Punjab is appointed as regular Governor of Punjab.

Nagaland:

- **Jagdish Mukhi**, who is presently the governor of Assam, has been appointed to discharge the functions of the governor of Nagaland in addition to his charge till a fresh appointment is made.

Tamil Nadu:

- The incumbent Governor of Nagaland, **R N Ravi** is shifted to Tamil Nadu.

Source: TOI

7. Sardar Iqbal Singh Lalpura takes charge as the Chairman, National Commission for Minorities



Why in News

- Sardar Iqbal Singh Lalpura took charge as the Chairman of the National Commission for Minorities (NCM).

Key Points

- Sardar Iqbal Singh Lalpura was the former IPS officer from Punjab.

About National Commission for Minorities (NCM):

- The Union Government had set up the NCM under the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992.
- Initially five religious communities, namely, **Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists and Zoroastrians (Parsis)** were notified as minority communities by the Union Government. Further, on January 27, 2014, **Jains** were also notified as another minority community.

Source: PIB