

Weekly Current Affairs 2nd Week January 2022



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Important News: State

Prime Minister Modi inaugurates MSME Technology Centre at Puducherry



- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated a Technology Centre of the MSME Ministry, established at Puducherry, on the occasion of National youth day.
- He inaugurated 11 new medical colleges and a new campus of Central Institute of Classical Tamil (CICT) in Tamil Nadu.

Key Points

- This World Class Technology Centre set up with an investment of about Rs. 122 crore is spread across 10 acres, will train 20,000 youth, support 2000 MSMEs and incubate 200 Start Ups, thereby propelling the local economy to great heights.
- The Technology Centres across the country developed under the flagship Technology Centre Systems Program are supporting existing and prospective MSMEs by developing production facilities, manpower, providing consultancy and developing competitive edge through adoption of best practices.

Source: PIB

Kochi becomes India's first city with Water Metro Project



- **Kochi (Kerala)** has become India's first city with a **Water Metro Project** as it launches the first in a series of battery-powered electric boats in the city.
- The new project by the Kochi Metro Rail Ltd will likely have an integrated water transport system with 15 identified routes.
- It will connect 10 islands along a network of routes that span 76 km with a fleet of 78 fast, electrically propelled hybrid ferries plying to 38 jetties.
- The project intended to introduce modern, energy-efficient, environment-friendly and safe boats with low wake and draft characteristics at a high frequency to increase ridership.
- Constructed at Cochin Shipyard Ltd, the fully air-conditioned boats with wide windows offer comfortable travel which would be an exciting experience to passengers and tourists.

Source: India Today

Important News: India

SC to set up high-level committee to inquire into security lapses during PM Modi's visit to Punjab



- The **Supreme Court** will constitute a high-level committee headed by retired Supreme Court judge to investigate lapses in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's security in Punjab.
- A three-judge bench comprising Chief Justice NV Ramana and Justices Surya Kant and Hima Kohli was hearing the plea filed by an organisation, Lawyers Voice.
- The committee will also include DGP Chandigarh, Inspector General of National Investigation Agency (NIA), Registrar General of Punjab and Haryana High Court and Additional DGP Punjab.

Note:

- Recently, the Union Home Ministry has constituted a committee to enquire into the serious lapses in the security arrangements during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Punjab.
- The three-member committee will be led by Sudhir Kumar Saxena, Secretary (Security), Cabinet Secretariat and will comprise Balbir Singh, Joint Director, IB and S. Suresh, IG, SPG.

Source: Indian Express

Startup India Innovation Week



- To commemorate 75th years of progressive India 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', **Ministry of Education (MoE), AICTE and Ministry of Commerce & Industry (DPIIT)** are jointly organising first-ever **Startup India Innovation Week (National Innovation Week)** from 10th – 16th Jan 2022.
- A 2 days long e- Symposium on 'Building Innovation Ecosystem in Educational Institutions' will be held on 11th and 12th January 2022 by the Ministry of Education.
- Startups are the key reason behind India's meteoric rise in **Global Innovation Index from 76 in 2014 to 46 in 2021**.
- This Innovation week will highlight various initiatives undertaken by these agencies to spread awareness to promote innovation and entrepreneurship in India.
- 75 innovative technologies selected from various programs such as National Innovation Contest, Smart India Hackathon, YUKTI2.0 and Toycathon conducted by the Ministry of Education will participate in e-exhibition and demonstrate their innovations.

Source: PIB

EC announces schedule for assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa, Punjab and Manipur



- The **Election Commission** announced the schedule for assembly elections in **Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa, Punjab and Manipur**.
- Uttar Pradesh will go to polls in seven phases from 10th February to 7th March.
- Voting for Punjab, Uttarakhand and Goa will be held on 14th of February in a single phase. Manipur will vote on 27th February and 3rd March in two phases.
- Counting of votes will be held on 10th of March.
- The term of Goa Legislative Assembly is ending on 15th March this year, Manipur Assembly on 19th March, Uttarakhand and Punjab Legislative Assembly on 23rd March and Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly on 14th May this year.

About ECI (Election Commission of India):

- It is a permanent and independent body established by the Constitution of India directly to ensure free and fair elections in the country.
- **Formed:** 25 January 1950 (Later celebrated as National Voters Day)
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi
- **Commission executives:**
Sushil Chandra, Chief Election Commissioner
Rajeev Kumar, Election Commissioner
Anup Chandra Pandey, Election Commissioner

Source: newsonair

Important News: World

AlikhanSmailov named Kazakhstan's Prime Minister



- Kazakhstan President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev nominated **AlikhanSmailov** as the Prime Minister.

Key Points

- AlikhanSmailov has served as First Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2019.
- This year, he served as the acting Prime Minister after the government resigned due to the fuel protests followed by terrorist uprising.

Source: TOI

Myanmar court sentences Aung San Suu Kyi to 4 more years in prison



- Former State Counsellor of Myanmar **Aung San Suu Kyi** was sentenced to four more years in prison.
- Aung San Suu Kyi was handed over the punishment in a case related to possession of unlicensed Walkie-talkie.
- The court handed over a sentence of 2 years for breaching the export import law for possessing the handheld walkie-talkie and one year for having a set of signal jammers. The two sentences will run concurrently.
- Earlier, she had received a four year jail sentence for inciting people against the military government and breaching the coronavirus rules. The sentence was later reduced by two years.
- Aung San Suu Kyi has been slapped with close to a dozen cases since the army seized power last February, If found guilty of all the charges, she could be sentenced to more than 100 years in prison.
- **Aung San Suu Kyi** is a Burmese politician, diplomat, author, and a 1991 Nobel Peace Prize laureate who served as State Counsellor of Myanmar and Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2016 to 2021.

Source: newsonair

Important News: Economy

India and UK launch Free Trade Agreement Negotiations



- **India and the United Kingdom** have formally launched negotiations for a **Free Trade Agreement (FTA)**.
- This announcement has been made by Indian Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal and UK Trade Secretary, Anne-Marie Trevelyan.
- The India-UK bilateral trading relationship is already significant, and both sides have agreed to double that bilateral trade by 2030, as part of Roadmap 2030 announced by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Boris Johnson in May 2021.
- India and the UK will seek to agree a mutually beneficial agreement supporting jobs, businesses and communities in both countries.
- In parallel to trade negotiations, the India-UK Joint Economic and Trade Committee will continue to work in improving the India-UK trading relationship and addressing market access barriers outside of a trade agreement.

Source: PIB

Indian Government to become single largest shareholder in Vodafone Idea



- **Vodafone Idea's** board has informed the telecom department that it will opt for converting the interest on spectrum and **Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR)** dues into government equity.
- In this case, it would mean that the government will hold 35.8% stake and become the single largest shareholder in the third largest telecom of the country.

Key Points

- The Vodafone had to pay Rs 58,254 crores of Adjusted Gross Revenue to the Government of India. It has already paid around 7,000 crores of rupees.
- The company has converted this pending amount into shares.

Source: ET

India – South Korea Bilateral Trade Talks



- Yeo Han-Koo, Minister for Trade of South Korea held discussions with Piyush Goyal, Minister of Commerce & Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution and Textiles in New Delhi.

Key Points

- Both the Ministers held wide ranging discussions covering the whole gamut of Bilateral Trade and Investment related aspects.

CEPA negotiations:

- The Ministers agreed to impart fresh momentum to the discussions on **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** up-gradation negotiations and also promote extensive **B2B (Business-to-Business)** interactions on trade and investment between the industry leaders of the two countries.

Bilateral Trade:

- India and South Korea set a bilateral trade target of USD50 billion before 2030, which was agreed at the summit meeting in 2018.
- These regular negotiations shall be a forum to discuss the difficulties of the business community from both countries and emerging trade-related issues including supply chain resilience.
- India's total exports to South Korea in FY21 were about \$4.68 billion against imports of \$12.77 billion.

Multilateral Platforms Shared by Both the Countries:

- United Nations
- G20
- World Trade Organization (WTO)
- ASEAN Plus
- East Asia Summit (EAS)

Note:

India's Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA):

- India has signed CEPAs with South Korea and Japan.
- In 2021, India and the United Arab Emirates formally launched negotiations on the India-UAE CEPA.

Source: Indian Express

Important News: Defense

DRDO flight tests final deliverable configuration of MPATGM

- Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) successfully flight tested the final deliverable configuration of **Man Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile (MPATGM)**.

Key Points

- The indigenously developed anti-tank missile is a low weight, fire & forget missile and is launched from a man portable launcher, integrated with thermal sight.
- The Indian Army has been mainly using various imported anti-tank guided missiles in the past, the DRDO has been working on ATGMs to be launched from different platforms as part of the Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme.



Note:

- The indigenously developed MPATGM, ATGM Nag and Helicopter launched ATGM Nag or Helina have been successfully tested in the recent past under various conditions.

Source: Indian Express

Naval variant of BrahMos supersonic missile test-fired from INS Visakhapatnam



- An extended range sea-to-sea variant of the **BrahMos supersonic cruise missile** was successfully test-fired by India from the Indian Navy's newly commissioned INS Visakhapatnam.
- BrahMos, deployed by the Navy on its warships first in 2005, has the capability to hit sea-based targets beyond radar horizon.

- The naval variant was originally tested in October and December 2020 from the Navy's indigenously-built stealth destroyer INS Chennai and Rajput-class destroyer INS Ranvijay, respectively.
- This version of the missile has been designed to launch either in a vertical or a horizontal mode from moving/stationary assets to target both land and sea targets.

Source: Indian Express

Sea Dragon 22 Exercise



- Recently, the **US Sea Dragon 22 Exercise** began along with the navies of **India, Australia, Canada, Japan and South Korea.**
- India, Japan, Australia and America are also part of the Quad, and also participate in the Malabar exercise.
- Sea Dragon is a US-led multi-national exercise designed to practice and discuss Anti-submarine warfare tactics to operate together in response to traditional and non-traditional maritime security challenges in the Indo-Pacific region.

Source: Indian Express

Science and Technology

David Bennett, world first human receives a Pig Heart Transplant



- **David Bennett**, a US man has become the first person in the world to get a heart transplant from a genetically-modified pig.
- The possibility of using animal organs for so-called xenotransplantation to meet the demand has long been considered, and using pig heart valves is already common.
- Pigs are increasingly becoming popular candidates for organ transplantation.
- This is because their organs are anatomically similar to those of humans.

Source: BBC News

Startup Grand Challenge



- The **Department of Fisheries**, Government of India in association with **Startup India**, Ministry of Commerce and Industry inaugurated the “**Fisheries Startup Grand Challenge**”.
- The challenge has been launched with an objective to provide a platform to start-ups within the country to showcase their innovative solutions within the Fisheries and Aquaculture sector.
- The challenge is expected to foster start-up culture within the sector and to establish a strong foundation of the entrepreneurial model, the Department of Fisheries has earmarked funds to the tune of Rs. 3.44 Crore for the challenge.

Note:

- Fisheries sector has tremendous potential for growth and the Government of India is providing all necessary support to achieve the one lakh crore export target from the sector by 2024-25.
- India is the second major producer of fish through aquaculture in the world.
- India is the 4th largest exporter of fish in the world as it contributes 7.7% to the global fish production.

Source: PIB

Awards and Honours

Global Women's Health Tech Awards



- **NIRAMAI Health Analytix Pvt. Ltd. and InnAccel Technologies Pvt. Ltd.**, two start-ups supported by **DBT-BIRAC**, have received the **World Bank Group and the Consumer Technology Association's Global Women's Health Tech Awards**.
- The award recognises innovative startups that leverage tech to improve women's health and safety in emerging markets.

Source: PIB

Actress Harshaali Malhotra receives Bharat Ratna Dr Ambedkar Award 2022



- 'BajrangiBhaijaan' actress **Harshaali Malhotra** received the prestigious 12th Bharat Ratna Dr Ambedkar Award 2022.

Key Points

- Harshaali Malhotra received the award from Bhagat Singh Koshiyari, Governor of Maharashtra, for her performance in the film and for her contribution to the field of cinema.
- Harshaali featured in BajrangiBhaijaan, released in 2015, directed by Kabir Khan.

Source: HT

Golden Globe Awards (2022)



- The **79th Golden Globe Awards (2022)** honored the best in film and American television of 2021, as chosen by the **Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA)**.
- The nominations were announced on December 13, 2021 by rapper Snoop Dogg and HFPA president Helen Hoehne.
- Two of the films namely The Power of the Dog and the West Side Story, won the most number of awards with 3 each.

List of winners in key categories:

MOVIES:

- BEST DRAMA: "The Power of the Dog"
- BEST COMEDY OR MUSICAL: "West Side Story"
- BEST ACTOR, DRAMA: Will Smith "King Richard"
- BEST ACTRESS, DRAMA: Nicole Kidman, "Being the Ricardos"
- BEST ACTOR, COMEDY OR MUSICAL: Andrew Garfield, "Tick, Tick... Boom!"
- BEST ACTRESS, COMEDY OR MUSICAL: Rachel Zegler, "West Side Story"
- BEST DIRECTOR: Jane Campion, "The Power of the Dog"
- BEST ANIMATED FILM: "Encanto"
- BEST NON-ENGLISH LANGUAGE FILM: "Drive My Car"

TELEVISION:

- BEST TV DRAMA SERIES: "Succession"
- BEST TV COMEDY/MUSICAL SERIES: "Hacks"
- BEST ACTOR, TV DRAMA: Jeremy Strong, "Succession"
- BEST ACTRESS, TV DRAMA: Mj Rodriguez, "Pose"
- BEST ACTOR, TV COMEDY/MUSICAL: Jason Sudeikis, "Ted Lasso"

- BEST ACTRESS, TV COMEDY/MUSICAL: Jean Smart, "Hacks"
- BEST TV MOVIE OR LIMITED SERIES: "The Underground Railroad"

Source: goldenglobes.com

Maharashtra Foundation Award Announced



- The Maharashtra Foundation's 2021 Literature and Social Work Awards have been announced.
- Prematai Purav has received the Lifetime Achievement Award for Social Work and Narendra Chapalgaonkar for Literature. The award consists of Rs 2 lakh and a memento.
- Maharashtra Foundation has announced 11 awards in the field of literature and social service this year.

Other awards:

- Dr. Narendra Dabholkar Smriti Award - Anshul Chhatrapati (Sirsa, Haryana), Work: Raised the atrocities and murders of Baba Ram Rahim.
- Special Award in the field of Digital Journalism - Ram Jagtap
- Literary Award: Santosh Shintre
- Lalit Granth Puraskar - Writer Ramesh Andhare (Dagadimakta's Novel)
- Mukta Bam was given the R S Datar Natya Puraskar, a newcomer to the field of drama. Cecilia Cavarhallo will be honored for her autobiography, Tipani.
- Suresh Sawant and Sunita Bhosale will be honored with activist awards, while Yuvraj Gatkhal will be honored with youth awards.

Source: Loksatta

National Water Awards



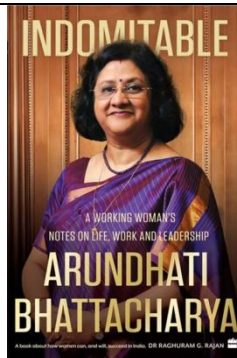
- Union Minister of Jal Shakti Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat announced **3rd National Water Awards-2020**.
- In the Best State category, **Uttar Pradesh** has been awarded first prize, followed by Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu.

- National Water Awards were instituted in attaining the government's vision of a '*Jal Samridh Bharat*'.
- The first National Water Award was launched in 2018.

Source: PIB

Books and Authors

Book: "Indomitable: A Working Woman's Notes on Life, Work and Leadership"



- Former State Bank of India (SBI) Chairperson **Arundhati Bhattacharya** turned author with her autobiography - 'Indomitable - A Working Woman's Notes on Life, Work and Leadership'.
- The book focuses on **Arundhati Bhattacharya**'s personal & professional journey.
- The book is published by HarperCollins India.
- In 2016, Forbes named her the Most-Powerful Woman in the World list, and she held the 25th spot.

Source: ET

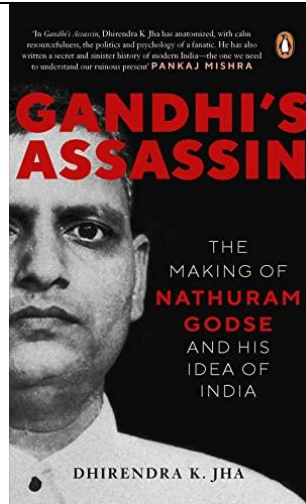
Ratan Tata's authorized biography to come in November 2022



- **Industrialist and philanthropist Ratan Tata's** authorized biography titled '**Ratan N. Tata: The Authorized Biography**' is all set to hit the stands globally in November 2022.
- It will be published globally by HarperCollins in all formats in November 2022.
- The biography will be penned by former senior bureaucrat and retired IAS officer Dr. Thomas Matthew.
- The biography chronicles the 84-year-old Ratan Tata's childhood, college years, and early influences.

Source: TOI

Book : “Gandhi’s Assassin: The Making of Nathuram Godse and His Idea of India”



- **Dhirendra K Jha** has authored a new book titled “**Gandhi’s Assassin: The Making of Nathuram Godse and His Idea of India**”
- Dhirendra K Jha is a Delhi-based journalist.
- The book explores Godse’s relationship with the organizations that influenced his view and gave him a sense of purpose and draws out the gradual hardening of Godse’s resolve that led to Mahatma Gandhi’s assassination.

Important Days

National Youth Day

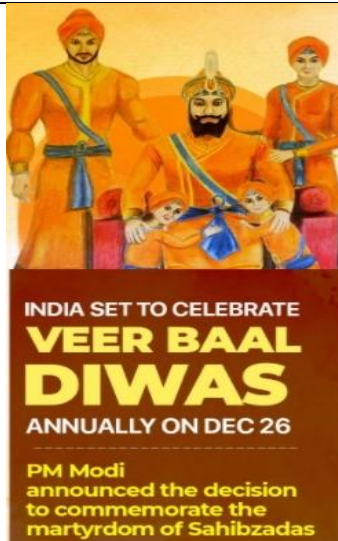


- **National Youth Day** is celebrated on January 12, every year in India to honor the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda.
- In 1984 the Government of India declared this day as National Youth Day and since 1985 the event is celebrated in India every year.
- Swami Vivekananda was born on January 12, 1863, in Kolkata.

Note: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the **25th National Youth Festival** on 12th January, 2022 in Puducherry.

Source: IndiaToday

PM Modi announces 26th December as 'Veer Baal Diwas'



- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the auspicious occasion of the Parkash Purab of Sri Guru Gobind Singh has announced that starting this year, **26th December** shall be observed as '**Veer Baal Diwas**'.
- The Government of India has decided to commemorate 26th December as "Veer Baal Diwas" in the honour of the supreme sacrifice made by Sahibzada Zorawar Singh and Sahibzada Fateh Singh, the younger sons of the 10th Sikh Guru Govind Singh, for their supreme and unparalleled sacrifice on 26th December, 1705 at the tender age of 9 and 6 years respectively to defend the dignity and honour of Sikhism.

Source: PIB

World Hindi Day



- **World Hindi Day** is celebrated every year on January 10.
- Hindi is not only the country's most-spoken language, but it is the third most-spoken language in the world with 615 million speakers after English, Mandarin, according to the UN.
- Every year on January 10, World Hindi Day is marked to commemorate the anniversary of the first World Hindi Conference that took place in 1975 in Nagpur, Maharashtra. The then Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi, had inaugurated the conference.
- World Hindi Day was observed for the first time in 2006.
- National Hindi Divas is celebrated annually on September 14.

Source: India Today

Sports

Bharath Subramaniyam becomes India's 73rd Chess Grandmaster



- 14-year-old **Bharath Subramaniyam** has become the 73rd **Chess Grandmaster (GM)** of India.
- The Chennai-based teenager **Bharath Subramaniyam** completed his final GM Norm and crossed the requisite 2500 rating at Vergani Cup Open in Italy.

Note: To achieve the Grandmaster (GM) title, a player has to secure three GM norms and cross the live rating of 2,500 Elo points.

Source: HT

Reports and Indexes

India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2021



- Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Bhupender Yadav, released the '**India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2021**' prepared by the **Forest Survey of India (FSI)**.
- The **ISFR 2021** provides information on forest cover, tree cover, mangrove cover, growing stock, carbon stock in India's forests, forest fire monitoring, forest cover in tiger reserve areas, above ground estimates of biomass using SAR data & climate change hotspots in Indian forests.

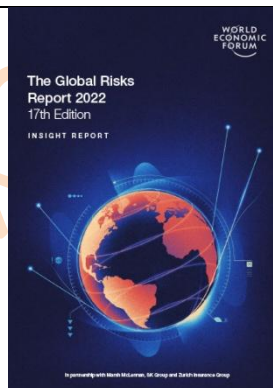
Major Findings:

- The total forest and tree cover of the country is **80.9 million hectares** which is 24.62 percent of the geographical area of the country. As compared to the assessment of 2019, there is an increase of **2,261 sq km** in the total forest and tree cover of the country. Out of this, the increase in the forest cover has been observed as 1,540 sq km and that in tree cover is 721 sq km.
- Increase in forest cover has been observed in open forest followed by very dense forest. Top three states showing increase in forest cover are **Andhra Pradesh (647 sq km)** followed by **Telangana (632 sq km)** and **Odisha (537 sq km)**.

- Area-wise **Madhya Pradesh** has the largest forest cover in the country followed by Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Maharashtra. In terms of forest cover as percentage of total geographical area, the top five States are **Mizoram (84.53%), Arunachal Pradesh (79.33%), Meghalaya (76.00%), Manipur (74.34%) and Nagaland (73.90%)**.
- 17 states/UT's have above 33 percent of the geographical area under forest cover. Out of these states and UT's, five states/UTs namely Lakshadweep, Mizoram, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya have more than 75 percent forest cover while 12 states/UTs namely Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura, Goa, Kerala, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Assam, Odisha, have forest cover between 33 percent to 75 percent.
- Total mangrove cover in the country is 4,992 sq km. An increase of 17 sq Km in mangrove cover has been observed as compared to the previous assessment of 2019. Top three states showing mangrove cover increase are **Odisha (8 sq km) followed by Maharashtra (4 sq km) and Karnataka (3 sq km)**.
- Total carbon stock in the country's forest is estimated to be 7,204 million tonnes and there is an increase of 79.4 million tonnes in the carbon stock of the country as compared to the last assessment of 2019. The annual increase in the carbon stock is 39.7 million tonnes.

Source: PIB

Global Risks Report 2022



- The **Global Risks Report 2022**, 17th Edition, is published by the **World Economic Forum (WEF)**.
- Cyber security, pandemic, climate change and space advancements are the emerging risks to the global economy.
- It stated that climate change was the number one danger, while erosion of social cohesion, livelihood crises and mental health deterioration were identified as risks which had increased the most since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The global economy is to shrink by 2.3% by 2024.
- According to Report released ahead of the Davos Agenda, a “global risk is the possibility of the occurrence of an event or condition that, if it occurs, could cause significant negative impact for several countries or industries”.

Facts about World Economic Forum: It is an international NGO.

- **Headquarters:** Coligny, Switzerland
- **Founded:** January 1971
- **Founder:** Klaus Schwab

Source: Business Today

Report of second quarter of Quarterly Employment Survey (QES)

- Union Minister for Labour & Employment, Bhupender Yadav released the report of second quarter of **Quarterly Employment Survey (QES)** part of **All-India Quarterly Establishment-based Employment Survey (AQEES)**.
- The estimated total employment in the nine selected sectors in this round of QES (July-September 2021) came out as 3.10 crore approximately, which is 2 lakhs higher than the estimated employment (3.08 crore) from the first round of QES (April-June 2021).
- It is worthwhile to mention here that the total employment for these nine sectors taken collectively was reported as 2.37 crore in the sixth EC (2013-14).



Key Points

- The AQEES has been taken up to provide frequent (quarterly) updates about the employment and related variables of establishments in both organized and unorganized segments of nine selected sectors which account for a great majority of the total employment in the non-farm establishments.
- The nine selected sectors are Manufacturing, Construction, Trade, Transport, Education, Health, Accommodation & Restaurant, IT/BPO and Financial Services.
- The report on Quarterly Employment Survey being a demand side survey along with supply side survey i.e., Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) will bridge data gaps on employment in the country.

Source: PIB

India's passport rank improves to 83 from 90: Henley Passport Index 2022



- India's passport power has improved this quarter compared to 2021. It now ranks at 83rd position in the Henley Passport Index 2022, climbing seven places from 90th rank last year (2021).
- The current rankings are for the first quarter of 2022.

Key Points

- India shares the position with Sao Tome and Principe in Central Africa, behind Rwanda and Uganda.

- India now has visa-free access to 60 destinations worldwide with Oman and Armenia being the latest additions. India has added 35 more destinations since 2006.

Best Passports:

- Japan and Singapore have been ranked 1st, with passport holders having access to 192 destinations visa-free.

Worst Passports:

- Afghanistan with access to just 26 countries, emerged as the worst performer.

Henley Passport Index:

- Since 2005, Henley Passport Index ranks world's passports according to the number of destinations their holders can access without prior visa and is based on data from International Air Transport Association (IATA).

Source: The Hindu

New Appointments

Eminent rocket scientist S Somanath appointed new chairman of ISRO



- Eminent rocket scientist **S Somanath** has been appointed the new chairman of the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** as well as the Space Secretary.
- S Somanath will succeed K Sivan who completes his extended tenure as ISRO chief.
- He will be the 10th chairman of ISRO.
- He is currently Director of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC).
- The post of the ISRO chairman, the Space Secretary and the Space Commission chief is usually held by one person only.

Source: newsonair

IMF names Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas as next chief economist



- The **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** said that it has appointed French-born University of California-Berkeley economist Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas as the IMF's next chief economist.
- He will succeed Gita Gopinath, who as previously announced will join the IMF's management team as First Deputy Managing Director.

Key Points

- Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas will start part-time on January 24, 2022, and transition to full-time Fund work on April 1, 2022.

Facts about IMF (International Monetary Fund):

- **Headquarters:** Washington, D.C., U.S
- **Formation:** December 1945
- **Membership:** 190 countries
- **Managing Director:** Kristalina Georgieva

Source: The Hindu

Former RBI Governor Urjit Patel appointed vice-president of AIIB



- Former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor **Urjit Patel** has been appointed as a vice-president of the **Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)**.
- Urjit Patel will succeed outgoing Vice President D J Pandian.
- Urjit Patel is currently the chairman of the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy.
- He had taken over as the 24th Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) succeeding Raghuram Rajan in September 2016 and was with RBI till December 2018.
- India has emerged as AIIB's biggest beneficiary by obtaining \$6.8 billion funding for 29 projects.

Facts about Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB):

- It is a multilateral development bank that aims to improve economic and social outcomes in Asia.
- **Headquarters:** Beijing, China
- **Membership:** 104 Members
- **Formation:** 16 January 2016

Source: newsonair

Chinese diplomat Zhang Ming takes over as new Secretary-General of SCO



- Veteran Chinese diplomat, **Zhang Ming**, has taken over as the new Secretary-General of the **Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)**.
- Zhang Ming took over from Vladimir Norov, a former diplomat from Uzbekistan.
- Before joining SCO, Zhang served for four years as the head of the Chinese mission to the European Union.

About Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO):

- SCO or Shanghai Pact is a Eurasian political, economic and security alliance.
- **Formed:** 15 June 2001
- **Members:** China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India & Pakistan.
- **Headquarter:** Beijing, China
- India became a full member of the SCO in 2017. Prior to that, India had an observer status, which was granted to it in 2005.

Source: newsonair

Justice Ayesha Malik to be Pakistan's first woman Supreme Court judge

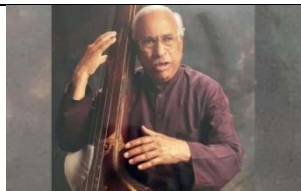


- Pakistan has moved closer to appoint the first woman judge of the Supreme Court, after a high-power panel approved the elevation of Lahore High Court judge **Ayesha Malik** to the apex court.
- The Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) – headed by Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed – approved Malik's elevation by a majority of five votes against four.
- Justice Malik became a high court judge in March 2012, and currently she is number four on the Lahore High Court (LHC) judge seniority list.

Source: Indian Express

Obituaries

Death of Pandit Ramdas Kamat



- Veteran singer-actor Pandit Ramdas Kamat died of old age at his residence in Vile Parle.
- He was 90 years old.
- He started his musical career with the play Sangeet Sanshay Kallol.

- He then acted in eighteen musicals such as 'Sangeet Sharda', 'Sangeet Saubhadra', 'Sangeet Manapman', 'Sangeet MadanachiManjiri', 'Sangeet EkchPyala', 'Sangeet Mandarmala', 'Sangeet HonajiBala'.
- 'Sangeet Matsyagandha' is his most famous play. Many of his plays like 'GuntataHridaya He', 'NakoVisruSanketMilnacha', 'Tam NirashechaSarla' were sung.
- He also sang lyric and film songs along with drama music. Many of his songs like 'Jana VijanZhale', 'Amber's Blue Cube Oath to You', 'Sriranga Kamala Kanta', 'Purvechya Deva Tuje', 'Deva Tuja Me Sonar' are still popular today.
- Ramdas Kamat was honored with 'Sangeet NatakAkademi Award' in 2015.
- He was also the President of the All India Marathi NatyaSammelan held in 2009.

Source: AIR News

Miscellaneous

Kevadia railway station renamed as Ekta Nagar railway station



- The Ministry of Railways has approved the renaming of the **Kevadiya railway station** as **Ekta Nagar railway station**.
- The Statue of Unity's Kevadiya railway station falls under the Vadodara division.
- Facing the Narmada River, it is 7 kilometers away from the small town of Kevadiya.
- The construction of the station aims to make the **Statue of Unity** more accessible to tourists.

Source: Financial Express

IndiaSkills 2021



- 270 winners of **IndiaSkills 2021 National Competition** felicitated with 61 gold, 77 silver, 53 bronze and 79 medallions of excellence.
- **Odisha** topped the chart with 51 winners, followed by Maharashtra, 30 and Kerala, 25 winners.
- The competition, organised by **National Skill Development Corporation** under the guidance of **Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE)**, Government of India, witnessed participation in 54 skills such as concrete construction

work, beauty therapy, car painting, health and social care, visual merchandising, graphic design technology, wall & floor tiling, welding, among others.

- IndiaSkills Competition, which raises the profile and recognition of the youth, brought together over 500 participants from 26 states/ union territories this year.
- The winners of IndiaSkills 2021 Nationals will get a chance to represent the country at **WorldSkills International Competition** to be held in Shanghai, China in October 2022.

Source: PIB

Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA)



- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) did not notify the **Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA)** rules, the third extended deadline after the Act was passed.
- January 9, 2022 was the last day of an extension sought from the two parliamentary committees in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha to frame the rules.
- Without rules, the CAA cannot be implemented.
- Earlier, it had sought time till April 9, 2021 and then July 9, 2021 from the committees to notify the rules which are to be published in the Gazette of India.
- On November 30 last, Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai informed the Lok Sabha: "The persons covered under the CAA may apply for citizenship after the rules are notified under the CAA."

About CAA:

- The CAA was passed by Parliament on December 11, 2019 and the Act was notified on December 12.
- In January 2020, the Ministry notified that the Act will come into force from January 10, 2020.
- The CAA provides citizenship on the basis of religion to six undocumented non-Muslim communities (Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians) from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh who entered India on or before December 31, 2014.

Source: The Hindu

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