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1. World Happiness Report 2023 (March 24, 2023)

World Happiness Report 2023

Recently the **11th edition of the World Happiness Report, 2023** was released by the **United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)**.

An overview of the news

- The report says that between **2020 and 2022, the world will see a 'significant' increase in resilience.**
- Two significant events affected the world during this period – **the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine.**
- According to the report, during this time of **crisis, global citizens became increasingly philanthropic and built stronger social ties.**
- There are **25 percent more "charitable acts"** worldwide in 2022 than before the pandemic.

Key Highlight of the report

Top Performing Countries

- **Finland continues to be the happiest country** around the world for the **sixth consecutive year.**
- **Denmark is at number two,** followed by **Iceland at number three.**

Worst Performing Countries

- **Afghanistan** is ranked as the **unhappiest nation**, followed by **Lebanon, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe respectively.**

India's Performance

- **India ranks 126 out of 136 countries**, making it one of the least happy countries in the world.
- **In 2022, India was ranked 136 out of 146 countries.**
- India's neighbors ranked **Sri Lanka (63), China (74) and Pakistan (108)**, among others.

About World Happiness Report

- It has been **published annually since 2012** by the **United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network.**

- The ranking uses key factors to measure happiness - **real GDP per capita, social support, healthy life expectancy, generosity and perceptions of corruption.**
- The report ranks global happiness based on survey data from people in **more than 150 countries.**

2. QS World University Rankings : IIT Bombay ranks first in country in Engineering and Technology (March 23, 2023)

Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay has been ranked **1st in India and 47th globally in engineering and technology** by the **QS World University Rankings** for 2023.

India in Ranking

- IIT Bombay **scored 80.4 out of 100.**
- The institute is ranked in **4 out of 5 broad subject areas**, which include **Engineering & Technology, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences & Management and Arts & Humanities.**
- The institute has been ranked (51-100) for Art and Design, 66th for Computer Science & Information Technology, 51-100 for Civil & Structural Engineering, 77th for Chemical Engineering, 54th for Electrical & Electronics Engineering, 68th for Mechanical, Aeronautical & Manufacturing Engineering, and 37th for Minerals & Mining.

Global Ranking

- Globally, **US institutions** lead in **32 disciplines.**
- **Harvard University** is the **best-performing institution, ranking first in 14 subjects**, two more than last year.

3. Women and Men in India 2022 report (March 20, 2023)

The **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation** released the “**Women and Men in India 2022**” report on 15 March.

Findings of the Report

Sex Ratio

- The sex ratio at birth increased by three points from 904 in 2017-19 to 907 in 2018-20.
- India's sex ratio (females per 1,000 males) is expected to be 952 by 2036, up from 943 in 2011.

Population Growth

- Population growth, which fell from 2.2% in 1971 to 1.1% in 2021, is projected to decline to 0.58% in 2036.

Labor force Participation

- India's labor force participation rate for those over the age of 15 has been increasing since 2017-2018. Although women are far behind men.
- In 2021-22, the rate was 77.2 for men and 32.8 for women, with no improvement in this disparity.

Age of Sex Structure

- India's age and sex composition is expected to see a decline in the population under the age of 15 and an increase in the population over the age of 60 by 2036.

Fertility Rate

- The fertility rates for the age groups 20-24 years and 25-29 years declined from 135.4 and 166.0 to 113.6 and 139.6, respectively, between 2016 and 2020.
- This is likely due to economic independence from getting a proper education and securing a job.
- The same indicator for the 35-39 year age group increased from 32.7 in 2016 to 35.6 in 2020.

4. Lowest literacy rate in India found in Bihar, Arunachal Pradesh and Rajasthan: Ministry of Education (March 18, 2023)

Ministry of Education, Bihar has the lowest literacy rate in India at 61.8%, while Kerala has the highest at 94%.

According to the **Ministry of Education**, Bihar has the **lowest literacy rate in India at 61.8%**, while **Kerala has the highest at 94%**.

An Overview of the News

- Apart from Bihar, other states with low literacy rates are **Arunachal Pradesh at 65.3% and Rajasthan at 66.1%, while Lakshadweep with 91.85% and Mizoram with 91.33% follow Kerala.**
- The **literacy rate in rural India is 67.77%**, while the **literacy rate in urban areas is 84.11%**.

About Saakshar Bharat Scheme

- **Saakshar Bharat Yojana** was implemented in **rural areas of 404 districts of 26 states** and one union territory to improve the adult literacy rate. The program targets areas with a **female literacy rate of 50% or less as per the 2001 census.**

- The objective of the plan was **to raise the country's overall literacy rate to 80%** and reduce the **gender gap to 10% by the end of the Twelfth Five Year Plan**. The program was extended till March 31, 2018.
- The objective of the **Samagra Shiksha scheme** is to provide universal access and retention in education, bridge gender and social category gaps, and enhance learning levels from pre-school to senior secondary level.
- The Central Government assists the States and Union Territories in implementing the **Samagra Shiksha Yojana as a programme**.

5. World's eighth most polluted country according to Swiss firm IQAir report: India (March 16, 2023)

Swiss firm IQAir Report has released its 'World Air Quality Report'

Swiss firm IQAir Report has released its '**World Air Quality Report**', according to which India has moved up to the eighth position in the list of world's most polluted countries in 2022 as compared to **fifth position last year**.

An Overview of the News

- According to this report, **39 of the world's 50 most polluted cities are in India**.
- The top **10 most polluted countries** include **Chad, Iraq, Pakistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Kuwait, India, Egypt and Tajikistan**.
- According to it, the **transport sector is responsible for 20-35% of PM 2.5 pollution in India**.
- **Lahore in Pakistan and Hotan in China** are the **two most polluted cities in the world**, followed by **Bhiwadi in Rajasthan at the third place and Delhi at the fourth place**.
- **India** has been placed at the **eighth position** in the latest report with **PM2.5 level at 53.3**.
- According to this report, **India and Pakistan have the worst air quality in the Central and South Asian region**. About 60% of the population lives in areas where the concentration of PM2.5 particles is seven times higher than the WHO recommended levels.
- The report concludes that globally, one in 10 people live in an area where air pollution is a health risk.

About Air Pollution

- Air pollution can have significant impacts on both human health and the environment.
- The effects of air pollution vary depending on the type and concentration of pollutants, as well as the duration and frequency of exposure.

- On human health, air pollution can cause respiratory problems, such as asthma, chronic bronchitis, and lung cancer.
- It can also lead to cardiovascular diseases, stroke, and premature death.
- The elderly, children, and people with pre-existing medical conditions are particularly vulnerable to the health effects of air pollution.
- Air pollution also affects the environment, contributing to climate change and damaging ecosystems.
- Acid rain, for example, can harm forests, lakes, and aquatic life. Ground-level ozone, which is formed by the reaction of pollutants in the atmosphere, can damage crops and reduce agricultural yields.
- Air pollution can also contribute to global warming by trapping heat in the atmosphere and contributing to the greenhouse effect.

6. India world's largest arms importer: SIPRI report 2023 (March 15, 2023)

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According to the **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's (SIPRI) 2023 report, India will become the world's leading arms importer in 2022.**

News Overview

- According to this report, between the years 2013-17 and 2018-22, **India's arms imports have decreased by 11 percent.**
- According to the report's findings, over the past five years, the **US had the world's largest military expenditure**, accounting for **40%** of the global share, followed by **Russia (16%), and France (11%).**

About SIPRI

- The **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)** is a global non-profit research institute.
- SIPRI focuses on **resolving conflicts, controlling arms and promoting disarmament.**
- The institute provides data, analysis and advice regarding armed conflicts, military expenditure and the arms trade.
- Establishment - **6 May 1966**
- Founders - **Tage Erlander, Alva Myrdal**
- Chairman - **Stefan Lofven**
- Director - **Dan Smith**

Headquarter - **Solna**

7. Globally, just 1 in 4 children covered by social protection: UN report (March 6, 2023)

According to the **United Nations (UN) report**, only **26.4 percent** of children aged **0-15 years** are protected by social protection, the remaining **73.6 percent** have to live in **poverty, exclusion and multidimensional deprivation**.

Key findings of the report

- **2.4 billion** children in the world need adequate **social protection**.
- **About 1.77 billion children** aged 0-18 years do not have access to household cash benefits, a fundamental pillar of the social protection system.
- **One billion children** live in **multidimensional poverty** without access to **education, health, housing, nutrition, sanitation or clean water**.
- Children with disabilities or children living with a family member with disabilities are more **vulnerable to poverty**.
- Social protection policies are powerful tools for reducing poverty for children and their families.
- Social protection can also protect children from other greater risks such as **child labor and forced labor**.

India in the report

- The report states that **31 states in India** have implemented the national '**PM Cares for Children**' scheme.
- So far **only 4,302 children** have received assistance from the scheme.

8. Mumbai's famous "vada pav" ranked 13th in the list of best sandwiches in the world (March 5, 2023)

Mumbai's famous street food "**vada pav**" has been **ranked number 13** on a list of the **top 50 best rated sandwiches in the world**.

An overview of the news

- The list is published by **TasteAtlas**, a Croatian-based food travel guide website.
- **Turkey's tombik sandwich tops the list**. Second is **Peru's Butifara Sandwich** and **Argentina's De Lomo Sandwich is third**.

About 'Vada Pav'

- Vada pav street food is said to have originated from a street vendor named **Ashok Vaidya**, who operated near Dadar railway station in the **1960s and 1970s**.
- Ashoka thought of a way to satisfy the hunger of the starving workers, and concluded that the ideal dish should be portable, inexpensive, and easy to prepare.
- Ashok made Vada Pav and its popularity skyrocketed.
- Traditionally vada pav is made of spiced mashed potatoes, deep fried in chickpea batter and pav, which is also known as white bread roll.

9. Global Quality Infrastructure Index (GQII) 2021 (Feb. 11, 2023)

India's overall QI system ranking stood at 10th position in the recently released **Global Quality Infrastructure Index (GQII) 2021**.

An overview of the news:

- **India's national accreditation system** under the Quality Council of India (QCI) has been **ranked 5th**.
- While it has been **ranked 9th in the standardisation system** and **21st in the world in the metrology system (under NPL-CSIR)**.
- The GQII lists 184 countries in the world based on the Quality of Infrastructure (QI).

Ranking of other countries:

- **Germany has topped the list**.
- It was followed by China, USA, UK, Japan and France at the second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth places respectively.

Quality Council of India (QCI):

- The Quality Council of India (QCI) was established in 1996 as a national body for accreditation.
- QCI is a non-profit organisation registered under the Societies Registration Act XXI of the year 1860.
- Headquarters - New Delhi
- Chairman - Jakshay Shah
- General Secretary - Dr. Ravi P. Singh

10. PM Modi emerges as world's most popular leader, with approval rating of 78% (Feb. 4, 2023)

PM Modi emerges as world's most popular leader, with approval rating of 78%

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has been rated as the **world's most popular leader** with an approval rating of **78 per cent**, according to a survey by US-based consulting firm '**Morning Consult**'.

An overview of the news

- According to the rating, PM Modi's rating is ahead of other leaders including **US President Joe Biden, French President Emmanuel Macron and UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak**.
- The poll surveyed **22 global leaders** for the ratings.
- Of the 22 leaders surveyed by the research firm, Prime Minister Narendra Modi topped with **78 per cent**.
- Mexican President **Andrés Manuel López Obrador** is in **second** place with a **68 percent** approval rating, and Swiss President **Alain Berset** is **third** with a **62 percent** approval rating.
- US President **Joe Biden and Canada's Justin Trudeau** received an approval rating of 40 percent and ranked **seventh and ninth**, respectively.
- UK Prime Minister **Rishi Sunak** ranked **13th** on the list with a 30 percent approval rating.
- PM Modi's approval rating had reached an all-time high of 84 percent on **May 2, 2020**.

Morning Consult

- US based Morning Consult's "**Global Leader Approval**" survey is based on data collected from January 26-31 this year.
- Surveys are weighted in each country by age, gender, region, and in some countries by official government sources and education.