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1. OPEC Plus member countries cut oil production, US stockpiles fall (Oct. 6, 2022)

Representatives of **OPEC Plus member** countries met in Vienna on 5 October after two and a half years in which the member countries agreed to cut the amount of oil production by **two million barrels per day**.

Important facts

- This decision to cut production will come into effect from **November**.
- The US has criticized the cut in oil production quotas by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and its allies.
- This move of OPEC will have the most negative impact on low and middle income countries.
- Earlier, OPEC countries had made a symbolic cut in production last month.

Why is OPEC Plus slashing production?

- Oil prices skyrocketed after Russia's invasion of Ukraine.
- The recent cut is the biggest since 2020 when OPEC Plus members cut production by 10 million bpd during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- This cut will boost oil prices and will be extremely beneficial for Middle Eastern member states.
- This will reduce oil demand in a faltering global economy and the cuts will increase profits.

About OPEC

- It is a permanent, intergovernmental organisation that was established in 1960 at the Baghdad Conference by Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela.
- The purpose of this organisation is to coordinate and integrate the petroleum policies of its member countries and to ensure the stabilisation of oil markets to ensure efficient, economic and regular supply of petroleum to the consumer.
- Headquarters - **Vienna (Austria)**
- OPEC has **14 member states** (Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Libya, Nigeria, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Republic of the Congo, Angola, Ecuador and Venezuela).

OPEC plus

- It is a coalition of OPEC members and the world's **10 major non-OPEC oil exporting countries**.

- Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Brunei, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mexico, Oman, Russia, South Sudan and Sudan.

2. India emerges as the world's largest producer and consumer of sugar (Oct. 6, 2022)

As per Ministry of Consumer Affairs, **India** emerges as the **world's largest producer and consumer of sugar** and world's **2nd largest exporter of sugar**.

Important facts

- India has produced more than **5000 Lakh Metric Tonnes (LMT)** of sugarcane during the sugar season (October-September) 2021-22.
- Out of this, about **3574 LMT** of sugarcane has been processed by sugar mills to produce about **394 lakh metric tonnes** of sugar (sucrose).
- Of this, **35 lakh metric tonnes** of sugar was used to prepare **ethanol** and **359 lakh metric tonnes of sugar** was produced by sugar mills.
- All the records of sugarcane production, sugar production, sugar export, sugarcane procurement, cane arrears payment and ethanol production were set during the same season.
- Another centre of attraction in the current season is the record **highest sugar export of around 109.8 lakh metric tonnes**.
- The policies of the Government of India and supportive international prices have played a major role in the achievement of the Indian sugar industry.
- About **Rs 40,000 crore foreign exchange** has been earned for the country from exports.

The largest producer of sugarcane in the world

- **Brazil** is the largest producer of sugarcane in the world.
- **India is the second largest** producer of sugarcane.
- Brazil produced about 32 million ton of sugar in 2021-22.

Major sugarcane-producing states in India

- **Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Karnataka** account for nearly 80 percent of the total sugar production in the country.
- The other major sugarcane-producing states are Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Haryana, and Punjab.
- Since 2010-11, India has consistently produced surplus sugar, comfortably exceeding the domestic requirements.

3. Former German Chancellor Angela Merkel wins UN refugee award (Oct. 5, 2022)

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on 4 October honoured former **German Chancellor Angela Merkel** with the **UNHCR 'Nansen' Refugee Award for the year 2022** for her '**moral and political courage**' during the refugee crisis in Syria.

Important facts

- The award selection committee said she was chosen for her leadership, courage and compassion, which helped ensure the protection of millions of desperate asylum seekers.
- Merkel will be honoured with the award on **October 10 in Geneva.**

Merkel's efforts for refugee protection

- Under the leadership of former German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Germany gave asylum to more than **1.2 million refugees** and asylum seekers in **2015 and 2016.**
- These refugees had reached **Germany** to save lives from violent conflict in **Syria and other places.**
- UN Refugee Agency High Commissioner **Filippo Grandi** praised the former chancellor's resolve to stand up for the protection of refugees, human rights and international law.

About UNHCR Nansen Refugee Award

- This award was established in **1954.**
- This award is given every year in memory of **Fridjof Nansen**, devoted to Norway's scientific, diplomatic and human welfare work.
- This award is awarded to an individual, group or organisation that has made efforts to protect refugees, displaced and homeless people.

4. Centre designates 10 members of Hizb- Ul- Mujahideen, LeT outfits as terrorists under UAPA (Oct. 5, 2022)

The Union Home Ministry on October **5** designated a total of **10 members** of **Hizbul Mujahideen (HM), Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)** and other banned organizations as terrorists under the **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).**

Important facts

- Five of these terrorists are associated with **Hizb-ul-Mujahideen**, two from **Tehreek-ul-Mujahideen** and one each from **Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jammu and Kashmir Islamic Front** and **Harkat-ul-Jihad-e-Islami.**

- The names of the five declared terrorists of Pakistan are **Shaukat Ahmed Sheikh**, who is currently a resident of Pakistan and serving as the Chief Launching Commander of Hizb-ul-I Mujahideen. Apart from this, the names of Habibullah Malik alias Sajid Jatt, Basit Ahmed Reshi and Imtiaz Ahmed Kandu alias Sajjad are included.
- The Home Ministry has claimed that Malik has created a network of hardline terrorists and is the mastermind of several terrorist attacks in the Valley.

Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA)

- This Act was passed in **1967**.
- The Act provides for special procedures for dealing with terrorist activities.
- Illegal activities are those actions which promote activities by any individual/organization which violates the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country.
- This Act imposes reasonable restrictions on the freedom of speech and expression, the right to assemble without arms and to form associations provided by **Article 19** of the Constitution.

5. MoU signed between Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare and NAFED (Oct. 5, 2022)

The **Department of Agriculture Farmers Welfare** and the **National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED)** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (**MoU**) on October 4 to celebrate and promote millet as the **International Year of Millet 2023**.

Important facts

- Keeping in view the initiative of **International Year of Millet (IYOM)-2023**, both the organizations will work together for promotion and marketing of millet based products.
- India is preparing to put nutritious cereals back on the world map.
- Under the MoU, maximum value creation and support for coarse grain based products, organized promotion, market and effective market linkages will be established across the country.

International Year of Millet (IYOM)-2023

- The United Nations General Assembly (**UNGA**) adopted India's resolution and declared **2023** as the **International Year of millets** in March 2021.
- India's proposal received the support of **72 countries**.
- **In 2021, NITI Aayog** signed a letter of intent with the United Nations World Food Program (WFP).
- The partnership focuses on mainstreaming millets and helping India take a global lead in promoting its health benefits.

- The objective of this partnership is to build resilient livelihoods for smallholder farmers
- and to build adaptability to climate change and changing food systems.

Why is millet called a superfood?

- India is the **5th largest exporter** of Millets globally.
- Millets are one of the oldest food items in the country.
- Known as a superfood, Millets can address issues related to **nutritional security, food system security and farmers' welfare.**
- These are a **rich source of protein, fibre, minerals, iron, calcium** and have a **low glycemic index.**
- They are known for their nutrient rich content and certain characteristics like drought tolerance, photo-insensitivity, resilience to climate change etc.
- They can be cultivated with **less water and less cost.**
- It can also grow well in dry areas or on land with low fertility.

What are Millets?

- They include jowar (sorghum), ragi (finger millet), korra (foxtail millet), arke (kodo millet), sama (little millet), bajra (pearl millet), chena/barr (proso millet) and sanwa (barnyard millet).

6. NPCI to launch Rupay Debit Card in Oman (Oct. 4, 2022)

Oman has become the latest country in the world where National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI) will launch its RuPay Debit card.

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed on 4 October 2022 between the Central Bank of Oman and National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) for cooperation in digital payment systems.

The agreement was signed during the visit of the Minister of State for External Affairs **V Muraleedharan** to Oman. He was on a two day (3-4 October) visit to Oman.

This was his second visit to Oman and he met Oman's foreign minister Sayyid Badr bin Hamad bin Hamood Albusaidi .

Rupay Card

RuPay is an Indian payment gateway like Visa or MasterCard and is increasingly being expanded to India's neighbouring countries or nations with a huge Indian diaspora.

Rupay card was officially launched for public in **India on 8 May 2014**

Singapore was the **first foreign country** where it was launched in May 2018, followed by Bhutan and the Maldives.

In West Asia, **UAE was the first country** where RuPay was launched during PM Modi's August 2019 visit.

Agreement has also been signed with Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, France and Nepal for its launch in the respective countries.

National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)

- NPCI, an umbrella organization for operating retail payment and settlement systems in India, has been initiated by the 'RBI' and the 'Indian Banks' Association' (IBA) under the 'Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007'.
- It is a 'not-for-profit' company established under the provisions of Section 25 of the Companies Act 1956 (as amended in 2013), with the objective of providing physical and electronic payment infrastructure to the entire banking system in India.

7. Indian American Vivek Lal gets Lifetime Achievement award in US (Oct. 4, 2022)

Indian-origin General Atomics CEO **Vivek Lal** has been honoured with the Lifetime Achievement Award by **US President Joe Biden** with a citation for '**With Grateful Recognition**'.

Important facts

- The award is given to him by **AmeriCorps** and by the Office of the President.
- AmeriCorps operates as part of the US government, which aims to promote activities that inspire Americans to "serve communities".
- Indian-American Vivek Lal is currently the Chief Executive Officer of General Atomics Global Corporation.
- Lal was born on 05 March 1969 in Jakarta, Indonesia.
- Lal completed his PhD in Aerospace Engineering from Wichita State University in Kansas.
- He has also been the CEO and Chairman of Reliance New Ventures Reliance Industries Limited.

8. Alain Aspect, John Clauser, Anton Zeilinger chosen for the Nobel Prize for Physics 2022 (Oct. 4, 2022)

The Royal Swedish Academy of Science has announced the winners of the [2022 Nobel Prize](#) in Physics on 4 October 2022. Three scientists; **Alain Aspect of France, John Clauser of USA** and **Anton Zeilinger of Austria** were honoured for their work in Quantum physics.

According to the Academy the awards were given for their "experiments with entangled photons, and pioneering quantum information science",

Quantum physics is a field of science that aims to study matter and energy at the most fundamental level. Each of the three winners conducted ground breaking experiments using

entangled quantum states, where two particles behave like a single unit even when they are separated.

The Academy said that as a result of their work, development was underway to use the "special properties of individual particle systems to construct quantum computers, improve measurements, build quantum networks and establish secure quantum encrypted communication."

On 3 October 2022, **Svante Paabo of Sweden** was announced the winner of the Nobel Prize for Medicine.

The Nobel Prize will be conferred on 10 December 2022 in Stockholm, Sweden.

List of Nobel Prize winners from India -

- Rabindranath Tagore (1913) - Literature. First **Asian to get a Nobel Prize.**
- CV Raman (1930) - Physics
- Har Gobind Khurana (1968) - Medicine. He was an Indian born American citizen.
- Mother Teresa (1979) - Peace
- Subhramanyan Chandrashekar (1983) - Physics. He was an Indian born American citizen.
- Amartya Sen (1998) - Economics.
- Venkatraman Ramakrishnan (2009) - Chemistry. He is an Indian born British and American citizen.
- Kailash Satyarthi (2014) - Peace
- Abhijit Banerjee (2019) - Economics. He is an Indian born American citizen.

9. Indian Ambassador to France Jawed Ashraf attends Paris Infra Week (Oct. 4, 2022)

Indian Ambassador to France **Jawed Ashraf** attended the **Paris Infra Week** inaugural on October 3.

Important facts

- In this event, he highlighted India's infrastructure, digitization, logistics support growth, inclusion, sustainability, sovereignty, strategic autonomy and resilience.
- The event was attended by various dignitaries.

India - France relations

- India and France have always had traditionally close and friendly relations.
- In 1998, the two countries entered into a **Strategic Partnership**, which marks the convergence of their views on a number of international issues, apart from the close and growing bilateral ties.
- There are more than **1000 French businesses in India** in diverse sectors like Defence, ITeS, Consultancy, Engineering Services, Heavy Industries etc.

- France is the **7th largest foreign investor in India** with a cumulative **FDI stock of USD 9 billion** from 2 April 2000 to December 2020, representing 2% of the total FDI inflows into India.
- During the second wave of COVID-19 in India, France supported India with a massive **solidarity mission**.
- The mission was implemented by the Embassy of France in India led along with IFCCI and Team France.
- During this mission, 29 state-of-the-art **French-built oxygen-generating plants** were set up in Indian hospitals across the country and 55 crores (6.1 million Euros) were raised from 55 French and Indian groups.

About France

- Prime minister - **Élisabeth Borne**
- Capital - **Paris**
- President - **Emmanuel Macron**
- Currency - **euro**
- Official Language - **French**
- Official Name - **French Republic**

10. Indian Railways converts 500 Mail Express trains to Superfast category (Oct. 4, 2022)

Indian Railways converted **500 Mail Express trains** to the **Superfast category** on 4 October.

Important facts

- In addition, **130 services (65 pairs)** have been converted into **superfast category**.
- The speed of trains has been increased from **10 minutes to 70 minutes**.
- Overall the average speed of all trains has increased by about 5 per cent, leaving about 5 per cent additional routes available for operation of more trains.
- Indian Railways has released its new All India Railway Time Table known as '**TRAINS AT A GLANCE**'.
- This new timetable is effective from **October 1, 2022**.

Punctuality of Indian Railways during the year 2022-23

- The punctuality of Indian Railways for Mail Express trains during the **year 2022-23** is **around 84%**.

- This is about **9 percent** more than the nearly **75 percent** punctuality achieved during the **year 2019-20**.
- In addition, around **3,000 passenger trains and 5,660 suburban** trains also operate on the Indian Railways network.
- **About 2.23 crore** people travel by trains every day.