

Testwale Current Affairs PDF

Current Affairs search results for: "E GOVERNANCE"

1. Record Capital raised by Indian Company through Overseas Bonds in 2021 (Dec. 28, 2021)

- Indian companies has raised a record \$22 billion in 2021 through overseas bonds
- Earlier in 2019 the Indian companies raised \$19 billion through overseas bonds.
- The issuance of ESG compliant bonds by the Indian companies was \$8.29 billion in 2021 as compared to \$ 1.37 billion in 2020.

Overseas bonds

- **It is a debt creating receipt issued by a company in foreign market to raise capital for its business.**
- **It is generally issued in the currency of the country.**
- **It has a fixed time period(maturity period) and the company which has issued the bonds pays interest on it to the person who has bought the bonds till the maturity period of the bond**
- **At the end of the maturity period the company returns the principal amount to the person who has bought the bond.**

ESG

- **It stands for Environment, Society and Governance.**
- **The ESG criteria is used by environmentally and socially conscious investors to judge a company business and its impact on environment and other ethical issues .**
- **Companies which score high on these criteria will be able to attract more funding at an easier interest rate .**

2. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) (Dec. 28, 2021)

Relevance: Recently India has extended its support for the United Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) with freedom of navigation. Time and again India has raised its voice for the same on the many international forums.

Background:

- The law of the sea developed from the struggle between coastal states, who sought to expand their control over marine areas adjacent to their coastlines. By the end of the 18th century, it was understood that states had sovereignty over their territorial sea.
 - The maximum breadth of the territorial sea was generally considered to be three miles - the distance that a shore-based cannon could reach and that a coastal state could therefore control.
- After the **Second World War, the international community requested that the United Nations International law Commission consider codifying the existing laws relating to the oceans.** The commission began working towards this

in 1949 and prepared four draft conventions, which were adopted at the first UN Conference on the Law of the Sea:

- Hence, The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is an international treaty which was **adopted and signed in 1982**. It replaced the four Geneva Conventions of April, 1958.
- Also known as Law of the Sea, it divides marine areas into five main zones namely- Internal Waters, Territorial Sea, Contiguous Zone, Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and the High Seas.
 - **Internal Water: Internal waters are all the waters that fall landward of the baseline, such as lakes, rivers, and tidewaters.** States have the same sovereign jurisdiction over internal waters as they do over other territories.
 - **Territorial sea: It can be defined as the area which extends up to 12 nautical miles(nm) from the baseline of a country's coastal state.** The territorial sea is under the jurisdiction of that particular country; however, foreign ships (both merchant and military) are allowed passage through it.
 - **Contiguous Zone: The contiguous zone extends seaward up to 24 nm from its baselines.** It is an intermediary zone between the territorial sea and the high seas. The coastal state has the right to both prevent and punish infringement of fiscal, immigration, sanitary, and customs laws within its territory and territorial sea.
 - **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)** is an area of the sea in which a sovereign state has special sovereign rights regarding the exploration and use of marine resources, including energy production from water and wind. It stretches from the baseline out to **200 nautical miles (370 kilometres)** from the coast of the sovereign state.
 - **High Seas: It can be defined as the part of the sea that is not included in the exclusive economic zone, in the territorial sea, or in the internal waters of a coastal state or archipelagic waters** of an archipelagic state.

Important Features

- Nations are provided with full **money rights by UNCLOS for a 200-mile zone along the shoreline.**
- The sea and oceanic bed extending to this area are regarded to be the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of a country and that country can use these waters for their economic utilization.
- Another important organization that plays a vital role in UNCLOS operations is the International Maritime Organization (IMO).
- Other important parties involved in **Nautical Law and its functioning are the International Seabed Authority and the International Whaling Commission.**
- The Convention has created **three new institutions** on the international scene :
 - the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea
 - the International Seabed Authority
 - the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf.
- **India is a state party to the UNCLOS.**

Issues Involved

- The **United States of America** has not ratified the UNCLOS because **according** to it the convention violated U.S. sovereignty and gave too much power to Communist

countries like the Soviet Union and even after the end of the cold war it has refused to sign it

- The United States also feels that it might have to surrender its sovereignty to the International Seabed Authority (ISA), which has oversight over deep seabed mining.
- At present 133 States have signed and ratified UNCLOS; **Canada, Israel, Turkey, USA, and Venezuela** are the most prominent among those that have not ratified.
- Many nations have irresponsibly exploited the natural resources in the sea and violated the principle of “good order at sea”.
- Few dominant countries have given new and inappropriate interpretations of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) due to “hegemonic tendencies”, and that this was creating obstacles to a stable maritime order based on rules.
- Challenges such as piracy, terrorism, illegal smuggling of arms and narcotics, human trafficking, illegal fishing, and damage to the environment are equally responsible for affecting the maritime domain.
- Recently China's new maritime law has spiked tension on the south china sea region which will also impact India's maritime security. China's aggressive actions in the **South China Sea and East China Sea**, by its fishing militia have been a source of international concern.
- India's 55 % of trade passes through the Strait of Malacca which opens into the South China Sea. If China controls the region, it will upset the global trade practices and countries like India will directly get affected.
- The freedom of navigation operation (FONOP) conducted by a US warship, the USS John Paul Jones, in India's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) is a reminder that India needs to define its maritime territory.

Sources: [https://www.iucn.org/theme/marine-and-polar/our-work/international-ocean-governance/unclos#:~:text=The%20United%20Nations%20Convention%20on,adopted%20and%](https://www.iucn.org/theme/marine-and-polar/our-work/international-ocean-governance/unclos#:~:text=The%20United%20Nations%20Convention%20on,adopted%20and%20)

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-Written by Rashmi

3. Gujarat tops the Good Governance Index 2021 (Dec. 26, 2021)

- Gujarat has topped the Good Governance Index 2021 followed by Maharashtra and Goa.
- The Good Governance Index 2021 was released by the Union Minister of Home Affairs and Minister of Cooperation, Mr. Amit Shah on 25 December on the occasion of Good Governance Day.
- The Index is prepared by the Department of Administrative Reform and Public Grievances (DARPG) under the Union ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions.

- The first Good Governance Index was released in 2019.
- **The index is released after every two years.**
- Good Governance Index, GGI 2021 Framework covers ten sectors and 58 indicators. The sectors of GGI 2020-21 are 1) Agriculture and Allied Sectors, 2) Commerce & Industries, 3) Human Resource Development, 4) Public Health, 5.) Public Infrastructure & Utilities, 6) Economic Governance, 7) Social Welfare & Development, 8) Judicial & Public Security, 9) Environment, and 10) Citizen-Centric Governance.
- The GGI 2020-21 categorises States and UTs into four categories, i.e., (i) Other States - Group A; (ii) Other States - Group B; (iii) North-East and Hill States; and (iv) Union Territories.

[To know more about Good Governance, Click Here](#)

4. Good Governance Day (Dec. 25, 2021)

December 25 is celebrated in India as Good Governance Day . It was started in 2014 by the Government of India to commemorate the birthday of former Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee.

Government of India celebrates Good Governance Week (20-25 December)

- The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG), Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions in collaboration with Ministry of External Affairs, Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Department of Personnel & Training, Department of Pensions and Pensioners' Welfare and Ministry of Panchayati Raj and Rural Development is **celebrating Good Governance Week on 20-25th December** as part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebration.
- **The theme of Good Governance Week is “Prashasan Gaon Ki Aur”-** a Nationwide campaign for Redressal of Public Grievances and Improving Service Delivery will be held in all Districts, States, and Union Territories of India

5. State News (Dec. 19, 2021)

Punjab

Punjab approach Supreme Court on BSF jurisdiction in the state

- Punjab has filed a suit in the Supreme Court **against the Centre's move to increase the limits of jurisdiction of the Border Security Force (BSF) from 15 km to 50 km along the India-Pakistan International Border.**
- The State has filed an original suit challenging the October 11,2021 notification issued by the Union Home Ministry extending the Central force's area of jurisdiction, calling it a breach of the federal form of governance under the Constitution.

Tamil Nadu

Tamil Thai Vaazhthu declared Tamil Nadu State song

- The M.K.Stalin led government of Tamilnadu has declared Tamil **Thai Vaazhthu song as the State song.**

- **The song is from the Tamil drama 'Manonmaniam' penned by P Sundaram Pillai.**
- **The song is composed in Mullaipaani Ragam also known as Mohana Raagam by M.S Viswanathan.**

Uttar Pradesh

North India's first Centre of Entrepreneurship in Medi Electronics and Health Informatics start operations in Lucknow

- North India's first Centre of Entrepreneurship - "MedTech" was inaugurated by the Union Minister of State, Ministry of Electronics and IT, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Rajeesh Chandrasekhar at the Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute, Lucknow.
- It has been built in partnership with Software Technology Park of India, Ministry of Electronics and IT and Government of Uttar Pradesh.
- The centre of entrepreneurship shall provide state of the art facilities to Startups in the field of Medi electronics and health informatics providing impetus to the startup culture in the state.
- Medi electronics sector is currently estimated to be at \$10 billion and is expected to grow to \$50 bn by 2025.
- India imports around 75-80% of its Medi electronic and health informatics requirements.
- Health Informatics (HI) is a relatively new, interdisciplinary field in the healthcare industry that uses information technology to organize and analyze health records to improve healthcare outcomes.

Uttar Pradesh

All India Mayor Conference

- Prime Minister Modi inaugurated the All India Mayor Conference via video conferencing on 17 December 2021.
- The conference was organised by the Urban Development Authority, Uttar Pradesh Government.
- It is being held at Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.
- The theme of the Conference is "New Urban India".

Uttar Pradesh

The longest Expressway of Uttar Pradesh

Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of the Ganga Expressway in Uttar Pradesh's Shahjahanpur on 18th December 2021.

- Length of the Ganga Expressway: 594 kilometers.
 - It will connect **Bijauli village near Kharkhanda on NH-334 in Meerut district with Judapur Dandu village near Soraon on NH-19 in Prayagraj district.**
 - It will **pass through 12 districts of Uttar Pradesh** namely (from west to east), Meerut, Hapur, Bulandshahr, Amroha, Sambhal, Budaun, Shahjahanpur, Hardoi, Unnao, Raebareli, Pratapgarh and Prayagraj.
- The estimated cost of the six lane expressway: **Rs. 36,230 crores.**
- It will be constructed by: **Adani Group and IRB Infrastructure.**
- Expected to be completed by: **year 2025.**

There will be a **3.5km long airstrip** on the Ganga Expressway, which will **assist in emergency take-off and landing of Indian Air Force (IAF) planes.**

6. National News from 12 Dec to 18 Dec (Dec. 19, 2021)

1. Prime Minister inaugurates Saryu Nahar National Project

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the **₹9,800 crore Saryu Nahar National Project in Balrampur district of Uttar Pradesh.**
- The 6,623-kilometre-long canal system will provide assured water for irrigation of over 14 lakh hectares of land to the benefit of about 29 lakh farmers of nine districts in the region – Bahraich, Shravasti, Gonda, Balrampur, Siddharthnagar, Basti, Sant Kabir Nagar, Gorakhpur, and Maharajganj.
- Five rivers—Ghagra, Saryu, Rapti, Banganga, and Rohini—have been interlinked under the project to ensure optimum usage of water resources of the region.

2. Vice President Inaugurates exhibition on `Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat` in Hyderabad

- The **Vice President of India Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu** inaugurated an exhibition on **‘Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat’ (EBSB) in Hyderabad city on 12 December 2021.**
- Exhibition has been **organised by the Regional Outreach Bureau, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.**
- This exhibition would highlight the various interesting aspects of the paired states of Haryana and Telangana like art forms, cuisine, festivals, monuments, tourism spots etc,
- The Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat (EBSB) programme was launched by the Prime Minister on 31st October, 2015 on the occasion of the 140th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, is a unique initiative by the Government to promote the spirit of national integration and to strengthen the fabric of emotional bonds between the people of our country.

3. India International Science Festival 2021

- **Theme of the 7th IISF : "Celebrating Creativity, Science, Technology and Innovation for a prosperous India .**
- The Festival is being held at **Panaji, Goa from 10-13 December 2021.**
- IISF 2021 is being organised jointly by the Ministry of Earth Science, Department of Science and Technology, Department of Biotechnology, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, in collaboration with Vijnana Bharati.

4. PM Inaugurates Kashi Vishwanath Corridor

- The Prime Minister inaugurated the **400 metre long Kashi Vishwanath Corridor in Varanasi** connecting the ancient temple to the western banks of the Ganges on 13 December.
- **The ₹800-crore project started with Mr. Modi laying the foundation stone on March 8, 2019**
- The **project cost is Rs 339 Crores** and is spread over a massive area of about 5 lakh square feet.

- The **architect** of the project is **Mr. Bimal Patel**.

5. Swarnim Vijay Parv

- Inaugurated by the Defence Minister Mr. Rajnath Singh, it is a 2-day event commemorating the valor & professionalism of the Armed Forces and their contribution to the liberation of Bangladesh in the Indo-Pak 1971 war, at India Gate Lawns in New Delhi. It marks 50 years of India's victory in the war.
- It will also mark the culmination of the year-long journey of the Victory Flame, the Swarnim Vijay Mashal which, having traversed the length and breadth of the country and collected soil samples from the villages of the gallant soldiers of the war.

6. India's Harnaaz Sandhu crowned Miss Universe 2021

- **Punjab's Harnaaz Sandhu (21) won the Miss Universe 2021 pageant on 12 December 2021**, beating contestants from 79 countries to bring the title back to India after 21 years.
- **Nadia Ferreira** of Paraguay was the first Runners Up.
- The 70th edition of the event was **held in Israel's resort town of Eilat**.

7. Chola Sarva Shakti Policy launched by Equitas Bank for women

- Equitas Small Finance Bank Ltd. has partnered with Cholamandalam MS General Insurance to introduce the Chola Sarva Shakti Policy, a women-specific health insurance policy.
- Any Employed /Self Employed/ Unemployed Woman in the age group of 18 -65 years who is a resident of India can buy the policy.
- The policy is of Cholamandalam General Insurance which will also be sold through the Equitas branch to the bank account holder of the Equitas bank.
- **Equitas Small Finance bank was founded in 2016 with its headquarters at Chennai.**

8. PM addresses depositors in "Depositors First" programme

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi addressed a function on **"Depositors First: Guaranteed Time-bound Deposit Insurance Payment up to Rs. 5 Lakh"** in New Delhi on 12th December 2021. Union Finance Minister Mrs Nirmala Sitharaman , and **RBI Governor Mr. Shakti Kanta Das** were among those present on the occasion.

Highlights:

- Deposit insurance covers all deposits such as savings, fixed, current, recurring deposits, etc. in all commercial banks, functioning in India. Deposits in State, Central and Primary cooperative banks, functioning in States/Union Territories are also covered. In a path breaking reform, Bank deposit insurance cover was enhanced from Rs. 1 lakh to Rs. 5 lakh.
- Earlier where there was no time limit for refund, now the government has made it mandatory within 90 days i.e. 3 months. That is, even in the event of a bank failing , the depositors will get their money back within 90 days.
- With deposit insurance coverage of Rs. 5 lakh per depositor per bank, the number of fully protected accounts at end of previous financial year constituted 98.1% of the total number of accounts, as against the international benchmark of 80%.

9. Over half of UAPA detainees are under 30 age

The Union Home Minister Mr. Amit Shah informed the Lok Sabha that:

- Nearly **53% of persons arrested under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) 1967**, in 2018, 2019, and 2020 **were below the age of 30**.
- In 2020, the maximum number of arrests under UAPA of persons below 30 years of age was made in Uttar Pradesh (205) followed by Jammu and Kashmir (166), Manipur (113), and Jharkhand (35).

10. Border disputes between States and Union Territory

The Union Home Ministry has informed the Lok Sabha that **11 States and one Union Territory have boundary disputes between them** arising out of demarcation of boundaries and claims and counterclaims over territories.

The following states and UT's are involved in border disputes-

- **Andhra Pradesh-Odisha,**
- **Haryana-Himachal Pradesh,**
- **Union Territories of Ladakh-Himachal Pradesh,**
- **Maharashtra-Karnataka,**
- **Assam-Arunachal Pradesh,**
- **Assam-Nagaland,**
- **Assam-Meghalaya,**
- **Assam-Mizoram**

Union Home Minister - Amit Shah

Union Home Secretary - Ajay Kumar Bhalla

11. Supreme Court directed all States and UT's to issue ration cards to sex workers

- The **Supreme Court directed States and Union Territories** to immediately start the process of issuing voter ID cards, Aadhaar and ration cards to sex workers across the country.
- The Supreme Court observed that **every person is guaranteed their fundamental rights irrespective of vocation (type of work or a way of life of an individual)**. Depriving any individual of availing the same is an abridgment of their fundamental rights guaranteed by the Indian Constitution.
- The court directed that **authorities can take assistance from the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) and State AIDS control societies**, which would, in turn, prepare a list of sex workers after verifying the information provided to them by community-based organizations.

12. World famous Durga Puja of Bengal Included in the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list

- The **UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage** has included **'Durga Puja in Kolkata'** on the

Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity during its 16th session, held virtually from 13 to 18 December 2021.

- Durga Puja is an annual festival celebrated in September or October, most notably in Kolkata, in West Bengal of India, but also in other parts of India and amongst the Bengali diaspora. It marks the ten-day worship of the Hindu mother-goddess Durga from Mahalaya to Vijaya Dashami.

13. President Ramnath Kovind on a 3-day State Visit to Bangladesh

Indian President Ramnath Kovind was on a **3-day State visit to Bangladesh from December 15 to 17, 2021.**

- **Bangladesh is observing the golden jubilee celebrations of its independence from Pakistan in 1971. Notably, President Kovind is the only foreign head of state invited to join the celebrations.**
- He visited the National Martyrs' Memorial and paid tributes to the martyrs of the Liberation War of Bangladesh. The Indian President also planted an 'Ashoka' sapling at the memorial garden.
- Subsequently, he visited the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum, Dhaka where he paid homage to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Father of the nation of Bangladesh.
- The President will also witness the Victory Day parade and attend the Victory Day reception hosted by the President of Bangladesh to mark the conclusion of the "Mujib Borsho (March 17, 2020, to December 16, 2021)" celebrations.

"Swarnim Vijay Varsh Special" Train

- Indian railway has launched a special **"Swarnim Vijay Varsh train"** for the visiting Bangladeshi freedom fighters (Mukti Jodha) and Armed Force personnel.
- The train which will start from Safdarjung station, Delhi will take the guests to Agra and Ajmer.
- The Bangladeshi are visiting India to take part in the events as part of the "Swarnim Vijay Varsh" celebrations organised to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of victory over Pakistan in the 1971 war.

14. Supreme Court approves Bullock Cart Race in Maharashtra

- The Supreme Court has allowed the resumption of the **traditional rural bull racing sport popular as 'bailgada', 'sharyat', 'chakkadi' and 'shankar path'.**
- **A 2-judge Supreme Court (SC) Bench of Justice A.M. Khanwilkar and Justice C.T.Ravikumar** gave the nod to resume bullock cart races in Maharashtra that were prohibited since 2017, in response to an application filed by the Maharashtra government.
- SC said the amended rules notified by the Maharashtra State under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act, 1960 would apply to the conduct of the races until a final decision of SC's constitutional bench on the 2018 Jallikattu case arrives.

15. Foundation Literacy and Numeracy Index

The report on the **State of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy** in India which highlights the importance of early education years in the overall development of a child was released by the **Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM).**

- **Foundation Literacy and Numeracy refers to basic reading, writing, and mathematics skills of children aged below ten years in India.**
- The index includes these five pillars:

- (a) Educational Infrastructure,
- (b) Access to Education
- (c) Basic Health
- (d) Learning Outcomes
- (e) Governance.

States and UT (Union Territory) were grouped into four categories, i.e. Large States, Small States, Union Territories and North Eastern States.

- Among the Large State Category , **West Bengal (58.95)** topped the ranking followed by **Tamil Nadu (55.49)** and **Maharashtra (53.11)** and Bihar was at the bottom.
- Among the Small States category, the top ranked state was **Kerala (67.95)** followed by **Himachal Pradesh (57.36)** and **Punjab (56.17)**.
- Among the Union Territories category, the top ranked UT was **Lakshadweep (52.69)** followed by **Delhi (50.74)** and **Puducherry (50.08)**.
- **Mizoram (51.64) is the top North-Eastern State.**
- The **poor performing** states in the overall index were **Jharkhand (45.58), Odisha (45.28), Madhya Pradesh (38.69), Uttar Pradesh (38.49), Bihar (36.81)**.

16. National Conference on Women winning against Tuberculosis (TB)

- It was organised by the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development in New Delhi and Vice President Venkaiah Naidu was the chief guest.
- Speaking on the occasion Vice President, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu, called for making people 'key partners' in the campaign for 'TB Mukta Bharat' by 2025.
- Union Minister for Women and Child Development, Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani stated that in India, women account for nearly 36% of the total TB cases. TB among women often goes unreported as women do not come forward to seek medical care due to societal stigma & lack of awareness.

17. Installed Nuclear Power capacity in India

- The Government of India has informed the Parliament about the status of the Nuclear Power Plant in India.
- The **present nuclear power capacity of 6780 MW is planned to be increased to 22480 MW by 2031.**
- At present the share of nuclear power in the **total electricity generation in the country is about 3.1% in the year 2020-21.**
- Government has given **approval** to the setting up of **six nuclear power reactors of 1650 MW each in technical cooperation with France** which would make it the largest nuclear power generating site with a total **capacity of 9900 MW at Jaitapur in Maharashtra.**

18. CCI revoked Amazon deal with Future group

- The Competition commission of India has revoked its earlier approval to Amazon's 2019 deal with Future Coupons, a subsidiary of Kishore Biyani-led Future Group.
- In 2019, Amazon.com NV Investment Holdings, a direct subsidiary of Amazon.com Inc, signed an agreement with the Future Coupons Private Limited (FCPL) for buying 49 percent of its shares for Rs 1431 crore .
- Later ,Future Coupon Private Limited (FCPL) and the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) complained to the CCI to cancel the approval for the 2019 deal between Amazon and Future Coupons on the grounds that Amazon had “concealed facts” at the time of seeking approval for its investment.
- The CCI held Amazon guilty of concealing the facts and imposed a penalty of Rs. 200 crore on Amazon and cancel the deal
- Future Group is the owner of the popular departmental stores like Big Bazar Central etc.

19. ICMR Approved CoviDelta Diagnostic Kit

- The **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has approved the CoviDelta diagnostic kit**, developed indigenously by **Pune based GenePath Diagnostics**.
- The kit detects all current variants of COVID19 and detects Delta and Omicron variants in a single test.
- **It was used to detect the presence of the first Omicron case in Pune.**

20. Bill to raise women’s legal age of marriage to 21

- The Union Government next week is going to introduce “**The Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2021**”.
- The bill will **amend The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006**.
- The bill seeks to **raise the legal age of marriage for women from 18 to 21 years** and bring it at par with men.

7. Foundation Literacy and Numeracy Index (Dec. 17, 2021)

The report on the State of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy in India which highlights the importance of early education years in the overall development of a child was released by **the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM)**.

- **Foundation Literacy and Numeracy refers to basic reading, writing, and mathematics skills of children aged below ten years in India.**

Key Highlights of the report:

- The report was prepared by “Institute of Competitiveness” and released by the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM).
- The index includes five pillars:

(a) Educational Infrastructure,

(b) Access to Education

(c) Basic Health**(d) Learning Outcomes****(e) Governance.**

States and UT (Union Territory) were grouped into four categories, i.e. Large States, Small States, Union Territories and North Eastern States.

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- The poor performing states in the overall index were **Jharkhand (45.28), Odisha (45.58), Madhya Pradesh (38.69), Uttar Pradesh (38.49), Bihar (36.81).**

About EAC-PM

The Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) is a non-constitutional, non-statutory , independent body constituted to give economic advice to the Government of India, specifically the Prime Minister.

- The council serves to highlight key economic issues facing the country to the government of India from a neutral viewpoint.
- It advises the Prime Minister on economic issues like inflation, microfinance, and industrial output.
- It was first constituted in 2017.

The main functions of PMEAC are as follows:

- Analyzing any issue, economic or otherwise, referred to it by the Prime Minister and advising him thereon;
- Addressing issues of macro-economic importance and presenting views there on to the Prime Minister. This could be either suo-moto or on a reference from the Prime Minister or anyone else;
- Submitting periodic reports to the Prime Minister on macroeconomic developments and issues with implications for economic policy;
- Attending to any other task as may be desired by the Prime Minister from time to time.
- **The current Chairman of the EAC-PM is Bibek Debroy.**

8. Punjab approach Supreme Court on BSF jurisdiction in the state (Dec. 12, 2021)

- Punjab has filed a suit in the Supreme Court against the Centre's move to increase the limits of jurisdiction of the Border Security Force (BSF) from 15 km to 50 km along the India-Pakistan International Border.

- The State has filed an original suit challenging the October 11,2021 notification issued by the Union Home Ministry extending the Central force's area of jurisdiction, calling it a breach of the federal form of governance under the Constitution.
- **The border area with Pakistan and Bangladesh is guarded by Border Security Forces(BSF)**

Background to the Issue

- October 11 ,2021, the Centre invoked section 139(1) (i) of the BSF Act, 1968 to authorise the force to undertake search, seizure and arrest within a larger 50 km stretch, instead of the existing 15 kms, from the international border in Punjab, West Bengal and Assam.
- In Gujarat, which shares a border with Pakistan, the same limit was reduced from 80 km to 50 km, and in Rajasthan, it was kept unchanged at 50 km.
- Section 139 (1) (i) of the BSF Act, 1968 empowers the Central Government to confer powers and duties on members of the force in respect of any Central Acts for the purposes specified therein.
- According to the Central government it was done for better and more effective control on trans-border crimes in conjunction and co-operation with the State Police.
- Later the BSF chief Pankaj Kumar said that the jurisdiction of the BSF was increased in these states to curb illegal infiltration from Bangladesh which was causing a demographic change in the border district of these States creating a security threat to these states and to India.
- However, Punjab and West Bengal governments have opposed the move and said that it was an encroachment on state rights by the central government.
- The Punjab legislative Assembly passed a resolution against this move of the center .

Supreme Court's Original Jurisdiction

There are certain type of cases which only the Supreme Court of India can hear ,which is called the original jurisdiction of the Supreme Court

Article 131 of the Indian Constitution provides for the original jurisdiction of the Supreme Court

Only the Supreme Court shall hear the following cases :

- (a) any dispute between the Government of India and one or more States; or
- (b) dispute between the Government of India and any State or States on one side and one or more other States on the other; or
- (c) dispute between two or more States, if the dispute involves any question of law or fact.

9. PM Modi Addresses Democracy Summit (Dec. 11, 2021)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in a virtual address on 10th December 2021 at the Summit for Democracy, hosted by U.S. President Joe Biden, that Democracies should jointly deal with social media and cryptocurrencies.

The PM further added that, we all need to constantly improve our democratic practices and systems. And, we all need to continuously enhance inclusion, transparency, human dignity, responsive grievance redressal and decentralization of power.

In this context, today's assembly provides a timely platform for furthering cooperation among democracies. India would be happy to share its expertise in holding free and fair elections, and in enhancing transparency in all areas of governance through innovative digital solutions. We must also jointly shape global norms for emerging technologies like social media and cryptocurrencies, so that they are used to empower democracy, not to undermine it.

For more information about the Democracy Summit, see news of 10th December.

10. Allahabad High Court Decision on Uniform Civil Code: (Nov. 20, 2021)

Why in the news?

Recently, the Allahabad High Court has called upon the Central government to initiate the process for implementation of **Uniform Civil Code**.

Key highlights:

- The court has announced that the Uniform Civil Code “is a necessity and mandatorily required today.
- It would promote gender parity in Indian society.
- UCC would accommodate the aspirations of the young population who imbibe liberal ideology.
- The UCC aims to provide protection to vulnerable sections as envisaged by Ambedkar including women and religious minorities.
- Secularism is the objective enshrined in the Preamble, a secular republic needs a common law for all citizens rather than differentiated rules based on religious practices.
- Its implementation would thus support national integration.

What is UCC?

- A Uniform Civil Code is one that would provide for one law for the entire country, applicable to all religious communities in their personal matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, adoption etc.
- **Article 44** of the Constitution lays down that the state shall endeavour to secure a UCC for the citizens throughout the territory of India.
- **Article 44** is one of the Directive Principles of State Policy. These, as defined in Article 37, are not justiciable (not enforceable by any court) but the principles laid down therein are fundamental in governance.
- **In 1941, BN Rau Committee** recommended a codified Hindu law, which would give equal rights to women in keeping with the modern trends of society.

- Tracts of the Constituent Assembly debates reveal that there was no consensus in the Constituent Assembly about what a potential uniform civil code would entail.

Why does India need Uniform Civil Code?

- **For Gender Parity:** The rights of women are generally restricted under religious law, be it Hindu or Muslim. Triple talaq, priority given to men in terms of succession and inheritance are some examples.
- Many practices governed by religious tradition are contrary to the fundamental rights guaranteed in the Indian constitution.
- **National Integration:** UCC would make the dream of “One Nation, One Law” come true. India believes in one nation and hence no community shall claim separate religious laws. In this way, it'll promote national integration.
- **Violation of religious freedom:** UCC is considered by religious minorities as an encroachment on their rights to religious freedom. They fear that their traditional religious practices will be replaced by the rules and diktats of majority religious communities.
- **Nature of India:** A secular republic like India needs a common law for all citizens rather than differentiated rules based on religious practices
- **Freedom of Choice:** A religion neutral personal law would encourage protection of couples in case of inter-caste and inter-religious marriages.
- Even Acts like the **Special Marriage Act, 1954** permits any citizen to have a civil marriage outside the realm of any specific religious personal law.

What are the hurdles with UCC?

- The UCC is often perceived by the minorities as an encroachment on religious freedom.
- Article 25 of Indian constitution, that seeks to preserve the freedom to practise and propagate any religion
- There are practical difficulties due to religious and cultural diversity in India.
- Affects Majority as well: For example, even Hindus themselves have separate Hindu laws for themselves. Thus, it is not merely a question for minorities but it also affects the majority.

Does India not already have a uniform code in civil matters?

- Indian laws do follow a uniform code in most civil matters — Indian Contract Act, Civil Procedure Code, Sale of Goods Act, Transfer of Property Act, Partnership Act, Evidence Act, etc. States, however, have made hundreds of amendments and, therefore, in certain matters, there is diversity even under these secular civil laws. Recently, several states refused to be governed by the uniform Motor Vehicles Act, 2019.