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1. Vande Bharat 2 : Railways to introduce new avatar of high-speed train (Sept. 10, 2022)

Indian Railways is going to introduce Vande Bharat-2, the new avatar of the high-speed train Vande Bharat.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

Features of Vande Bharat 2 :

- It will be equipped with more advancements and improved features like 0 to **100 Kmpl speed in just 52 seconds**, maximum speed up to **180 Kmph**, lesser **weight of 392 tons** instead of **430 tons**, and WI-FI facility.
- The new Vande Bharat will also have **32-inch LCD TVs** which were 24 inches in the earlier versions.
- The 15 percent more energy efficient AC with the dust free clean air cooling of the traction motor will make travel more comfortable.
- The facility of side recliner seats which is being provided to the executive class passengers will now be made available for all classes.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION -

About Vande Bharat Express :

- The first Vande Bharat Express was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on **15 February 2019**.
- These trains have a self-propelled engine which can save diesel and reduce electricity usage by up to **30%**.
- The first Vande Bharat Express was manufactured by **Integral Coach Factory (ICF), Chennai**.
- It was manufactured under the **'Make in India' programme**, at a cost of about Rs 100 crore.
- Currently, two Vande Bharat Expresses are operational - first between **New Delhi and Varanasi** and the second from **New Delhi to Katra**.
- These trains can achieve a maximum speed of **160 kmph**.
- In the Union Budget for 2022-2023 the government has proposed the development and manufacture of **400 new** Vande Bharat trains in the next three years.

2. NITI Aayog approves 32 beneficiaries under PLI scheme for large-scale electronics manufacturing (Sept. 10, 2022)

The Empowered Committee headed by CEO, NITI Aayog Parameswaran Iyer on 9 September approved the first ever disbursement of incentive for mobile manufacturing under the large-scale electronics manufacturing' sector.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- This is the first time that a **mobile manufacturing unit** has also been selected under the PLI scheme.
- **32 beneficiaries** have been approved under the **PLI scheme** operated for large size electronics manufacturing units.
- Of these, 10 companies are related to mobile manufacturing in which **five are domestic** and **five are foreign companies**.
- **Paget Electronics Pvt Ltd**, a domestic company, is the **first beneficiary** company approved by the Empowered Committee to receive the incentive.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION -

About PLI scheme :

- It is an initiative that provides incentives to domestic industries to promote production at the local level.
- Through this scheme, the government aims to incentivize companies to increase the sales of manufactured products in domestic units.
- The objective of the scheme is to make domestic manufacturing globally competitive and to become a global champion in manufacturing.
- The government has launched this scheme with an outlay of around **Rs 2 lakh crore** for **14 sectors** including Automobiles and Auto Components, White Goods, Pharma, Textiles, Advanced Chemistry Cell and Specialty Steel.

Vice Chairman of NITI Aayog - **Suman Bery**

NITI Aayog CEO - **Parameswaran Iyer**

3. King Charles III, Britain's new monarch (Sept. 10, 2022)

Charles Philip Arthur George, eldest son of Queen Elizabeth II was proclaimed as the King of the United Kingdom in a ceremony at the St James's Palace, London on 10 September 2022. Before becoming the King he was known as the Prince of Wales.

The new monarch of the United Kingdom is proclaimed at St James's Palace in London, in front of a ceremonial body known as the Accession Council.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

Head of the Commonwealth :

- King Charles is now officially the Head of the Commonwealth .Commonwealth is an **association of 56 Independent** countries .
- He is also now the **Head of State of 14 countries** namely; Australia, Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Belize, Canada, Grenada, Jamaica, Papua New Guinea, St Christopher and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, New Zealand, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION -

- **Prince Charles** has now become **Britain's monarch**, and his son **William** has been made **Prince of Wales** and William's wife, **Catherine, Princess of Wales**.
- Charles said he was given the position by his mother, Queen Elizabeth, in 1958 when he was just nine years old.
- Formerly Prince of Wales, Charles is the eldest son of Queen Elizabeth II. He was born in 1948.
- Charles married Lady Diana Spencer on 29 July 1981, they have two sons, William and Harry.
- Princess of Wales Diana was killed in a car accident in Paris in 1997, later Charles married Camilla Parker on 9 April 2005.
- Charles will be succeeded by his eldest son, **Prince William**.

4. Indian origin Devika Bulchandani appointed as the Global CEO of Ogilvy (Sept. 9, 2022)

The leading global advertising and public relations agency Ogilvy has named India-born American citizen Devika Bulchandani as its Global Chief Executive Officer. Ogilvy is part of the London based British multinational company WPP.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- The Amritsar born 53 years old Bulchandani is the latest in a number of Indian origin persons taking leadership positions in multinational companies.
- Last week coffee giant Starbucks appointed **Laxman Narasimhan** as its chief executive.

- The list includes Microsoft CEO **Satya Nadella**, Adobe CEO **Shantanu Narayen**, Alphabet CEO **Sundar Pichai**, Twitter head **Parag Agrawal**, **Leena Nair** from Chanel, IBM Group CEO Arvind Krishna, Bata CEO **Gunjan Shah**, and Novartis CEO **Vasant Narasimhan**.

5. Piyush Goyal attends the first in-person Ministerial meeting of the Indo-Pacific Economic Forum in Los Angeles (Sept. 9, 2022)

Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goel is attending the two day (8-9 September) first in person Ministerial meeting of the Indo-Pacific Economic Forum in Los Angeles, United States.

The meeting is being co- hosted by the U.S. Trade Representative **Katherine Tai** and the US Commerce Secretary **Gina Raimondo**.

The first Virtual meeting was held on **26 June 2022** which was hosted by the United States.

The meeting hopes to work out an agreement on the four pillars of the IPEF.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) :

- The United States of America President **Joe Biden** launched the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) on 23 May 2022 in **Tokyo, Japan**.
- 14 countries **Australia, Brunei, Fiji, Indonesia, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam** along with the **United States** are members of IPEF.
- Together, these countries represent 40% of world GDP.

Aim of the IPEF :

- It is not a trade bloc where tariffs on goods and services amongst the member countries are reduced to boost trade.
- IPEF is an attempt by the US to offer an alternative supply chain to the countries of Asia-Pacific region against China.
- IPEF will focus on improving the supply chain in the economy so that it can withstand disruption as witnessed during covid pandemic and will make the economy stronger and lower the cost of production .
- To reduce over reliance on China and to diversify the supply chain, the United States is promoting IPEF.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION -

There are four pillars of IPEF :

- fair and resilient trade (including digital, labour, environmental and other standards);

- supply chain resilience;
- infrastructure, decarbonisation and clean energy; and
- Tax and anti-corruption.
- The Indian government feels that this initiative of the US will help India become a part of the global supply chain. It hopes to attract a sizable global investment in the manufacturing sector as the world moves away from China.

6. Operation Unicorn for Queen Elizabeth II funeral (Sept. 9, 2022)

The 96 year old [Queen Elizabeth II](#) of United Kingdom died at her remote Highlands residence, Balmoral, in Scotland on 8 September 2022.

The whole of the United Kingdom is in mourning and Buckingham Palace has planned an elaborate funeral for her.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

Operation London Bridge or Operation Unicorn :

- According to Buckingham Palace if the Queen had died in London then the code name of her funeral would have been ‘**London Bridge**’ .
- However as she died in Scotland the funeral has now been code named ‘**Operation Unicorn.**’
- The name was chosen because the unicorn is the national animal of Scotland and forms part of the royal coat of arms, along with the lion of England.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION -

Another Important point to remember :

She was not only the Head of State of United Kingdom but also the Head of State of **14 other commonwealth countries** -Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Belize, Grenada, Jamaica, Papua New Guinea, Saint Lucia, Solomon Islands, St Kitts and Nevis, and St Vincent and the Grenadines.

Buckingham Palace :

Buckingham Palace has served as the official London residence of the United Kingdom's Monarch since 1837 and today is the administrative headquarters of the Monarch.

7. India and Japan announces first joint Air Force exercise (Sept. 9, 2022)

Reflecting the growing security cooperation between the two sides, India and Japan announced plans for their first air force exercise as New Delhi backed Tokyo’s efforts to reinforce its defence capabilities over the next five years.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- This was announced after the meeting of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh with the Japanese Defence Minister Yasukazu **Hamada** held in Tokyo, Japan on 8 September 2022.
- Rajnath Singh arrived in Japan after his visit to [Mongolia](#).
- He also participated in [India-Japan 2+2 dialogue](#) involving the Defence and Foreign ministers of both the countries. India was represented by External Affairs minister **S.Jaishanker** and Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh** while Japan was represented by its Foreign Minister **Yoshimasa Hayashi** and Defence minister **Yasukazu Hamada**.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION -

India -Japan military exercise :

- At present both the countries conduct Dharma Guardian, JIMEX and Malabar exercise. Japan also participated in the MILAN naval exercise 2022 held in Visakhapatnam.
- **DHARMA GUARDIAN-2022**, an annual exercise between Indian Army and Japanese Ground Self Defence Force was held from 27 February -10 March 2022, Belgaum Karnataka.
- The last edition of the India - Japan Maritime Bilateral Exercise, **JIMEX**, between the Indian Navy (*IN*) and the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force (JMSDF), was held in 2021 **Arabian Sea from 06 to 08 October 2021**.
- The last edition of **Malabar exercise** was held in 2021 involving the Australian, United States, Japanese and Indian Navy at sea of Philippines and Bay of Bengal.

8. India ranks 132nd out of 191 in UNDP's human development index (Sept. 9, 2022)

According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) report released on 8 September, India is ranked 132 out of 191 countries in the Human Development Index (HDI) 2021.

- **Switzerland** tops the rankings, followed by **Norway** at second and **Iceland** at third.
- South Sudan, Chad and Niger are at the bottom of the HDI scale.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- In the **2020 report**, India had ranked **131st** among 189 countries.
- The report said that nearly 90 percent of countries have reported a decline in their HDI rankings in 2020 or 2021.
- Among India's neighbours, Sri Lanka (73rd), China (79th), Bangladesh (129th), and Bhutan (127th) rank above India, while Pakistan (161st), Nepal (143th) and Myanmar (149th) rank worse.
- India's latest HDI value is 0.633 which places the country in the medium human development category, lower than its value of 0.645 in the 2020 report.

- The reason for the decline in the ranking of more than 90 percent of the countries is the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The report raises concerns over growing polarization that is eroding democratic freedoms and human rights in many parts of the world.

Gender Inequality :

- The COVID-19 pandemic has also exacerbated gender inequality, which has risen by 6.7% globally.
- India has shown a slight improvement in its Gender Inequality Index value in the latest report as compared to the 2020 index (0.490 vs 0.493).
- The index measures inequality between women and men in three dimensions - reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION -

About Human Development Index :

- The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) published its first Human Development Report (HDR) in 1990.
- The report attempts to define and measure the level of development of economies.
- Three indicators of Human Development Report (HDR)

1. Health - Measured by the life expectancy at birth
2. Education - Measured by the mean of years of schooling
3. Standard of Living - Measured by GNI (Gross National Income/Product) per capita at 'Purchasing Power Parity

9. Volker Türk appointed new UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (Sept. 9, 2022)

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has appointed Volker Turk of Austria as the next United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, following approval by the General Assembly on 8 September 2022.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- Turk will succeed **Michelle Bachelet of Chile**, who served as High Commissioner from September 1, 2018 through August 31, 2022.
- **United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**
- The High Commissioner for Human Rights is the principal human rights official of the United Nations.

- The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights is accountable to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and is responsible for all the activities of OHCHR, as well as for its administration.

OHCHR :

- The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) also known as the UN Human Rights Office , is mandated to promote and protect all human rights established in the UN Charter and in international human rights laws and treaties.
- The headquarters of the OHCHR: **Geneva, Switzerland.**

10. Housing and Urban Affairs Minister announces results of India Water Pitch-Pilot-Scale start-up challenge (Sept. 9, 2022)

Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri announced the results of India Water Pitch-Pilot-Scale start-up challenge on 9 September which was launched under Amrut 2.0 in March 2022.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- A total of **76 startups** have been selected out of 222 entries that, through their innovative ideas, will help local civic bodies and water supply departments to conserve water and address its scarcity.
- Appreciating the innovative ideas of a select few startups, he highlighted India's journey in setting up startups and unicorns over the last eight years.
- In just eight years the number of unicorns has grown to over 100, making India the second largest number of unicorns in the world after the United States.

About India Water Pitch-Pilot-Scale Start-up Challenge :

- In March 2022 Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs launched the '**India Water Pitch-Pilot-Scale Start-up Challenge**' under Atal mission for **Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) 2.0.**

Aim :

- Empowering startups in the water or used water sector to grow through innovation and design that will drive sustainable economic growth and create employment opportunities.
- The Ministry will select 100 start-ups through this challenge and provide Rs.20 lakh each as funding support.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION -

About AMRUT 2.0 :

- This is the second part of the AMRUT Mission launched in **June 2015** which aimed to provide every household with an assured supply of water and access to a tap with a sewerage connection.
- AMRUT 2.0 aims to provide 100 percent coverage of water supply to all households in around 4,700 ULBs (Urban Local Bodies).
- It seeks to promote self-reliant India by encouraging Startups and Entrepreneurs (Public Private Partnership).