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1. Prime Minister Modi launches Karmayogi Prarambh module for new government employees at the Rozgar Mela (Nov. 22, 2022)

Karmayogi Prarambh module

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 22 November 2022 virtually launched an online orientation course '**Karmayogi Prarambh module**' for all new appointees at Rozgar Mela via video conference. The module was launched at the Rozgar mela where **71,000 appointment** letters were issued to newly inducted recruits by the Prime Minister online.

The module will include a code of conduct for Government servants, workplace ethics and integrity, human resource policies and other benefits and allowances that will help them to get acclimatized to the policies and transition smoothly into the new roles. It will also help to enhance their knowledge, skills and competencies.

The Central government launched Rozgar mela on **22 October 2022** as part of the central government commitment to provide **10 lakh new jobs** in the various central government departments and public sector undertakings.

Earlier in October, appointment letters were handed over to **75,000** newly inducted appointees under Rozgar Mela.

2. Australian Parliament approves trade deal with India (Nov. 22, 2022)

Australian Parliament approves trade deal with India

Australian Prime Minister **Anthony Albanese** on 22 November 2022 announced that the country's Free Trade Agreement with India has been passed by the Australian Parliament.

India and Australia signed an historic trade agreement on 2 April 2022 to give a boost to trade and investment between the two countries. The **India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement ("IndAus ECTA")** was signed virtually in the presence of the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the then Australian Prime Minister Scott Morison .

The agreement was to be implemented after the Parliament of Australia passed it. However a parliamentary election was held in Australia on 21 May 2022 in which Scott Morison lost the election and Anthony Albanese was sworn in as the new Prime Minister of Australia on 24 May 2022.

Trade deal

It is an interim trade deal which will be gradually converted into a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CEPA). This is the second such agreement signed by India with a foreign country after a similar agreement was signed with the **United Arab Emirates in March 2022.**

Highlights of the trade deal

- More than 95% of roughly 12,000 Indian goods will get duty-free access to the Australian market.
- In the next five years the agreement will be expanded to cover 100% Indian goods.

- About 70% of Australian products will get duty-free and concessional access to the Indian market. This will be increased to cover 85% of goods in 10 years.
- Indian exporters in critical sectors, especially labour-intensive ones like agriculture, textiles & garments and pharmaceuticals will get duty-free access to the Australian market.
- The deal also ensures freer movement of skilled professionals from India.
- India has allowed import of premium Australian wine at a concessional rate.
- India has kept the dairy sector out of the trade deal.

India Australia Trade

- India had a merchandise trade deficit of \$7.2 billion with Australia in the first ten months of 2021-22. Its exports were \$6.3 billion, while its imports from Australia stood at \$13.5 billion.
- The major items imported by India from Australia are coals, **pearls, precious stones, woods and its products.**
- Major exports by India to Australia include **petroleum products, gems and jewellery, textiles and apparels, engineering goods, leather, chemicals.**
- Australia is the **17th largest trading partner of India** and India is Australia's **9th largest partner.**
- Bilateral trade in goods and services stood at USD 27.5 billion in 2021.

3. Over 60 people dead in the Indonesian earthquake (Nov. 21, 2022)

A 5.6-magnitude earthquake killed more than 60 people and injured hundreds in Indonesia's West Java province on 21 November 2022. However the death toll is likely to rise further as many are still trapped under the rubbles.

The **epicentre** was near the town of Cianjur in West Java, about 75 km (45 miles) southeast of the capital, Jakarta.

Indonesia lies across the "Pacific Ring of Fire", a highly seismically active zone, where different plates on the Earth's crust meet and create a large number of earthquakes and volcanoes.

In 2004, a 9.1 magnitude quake off Sumatra Island in northern Indonesia triggered a **tsunami** that struck 14 countries, killing 226,000 people along the Indian Ocean coastline, more than half of them in Indonesia.

Earthquake

Earthquakes happen when the plates of the earth collide with each other. The earth's lithosphere consists of **7 major plates** and they float over the molten surface of the upper mantle. When they collide energy waves are released which causes vibration on the surface of the Earth known as Earthquake.

The location below the earth's surface where the earthquake starts is called the **hypocenter**, and the location directly above it on the surface of the earth is called the **epicenter**.

Earthquakes are recorded by instruments called **seismographs**. The recording they make is called a seismogram.

The scale for measuring earthquakes is called the **Richter scale**. It is a mathematical scale used to measure the **intensity of earthquake waves**. It ranges from 0 to 9. However it can be more than 9.

4. India and European Union sign agreement for cooperation in high-performance computing (Nov. 21, 2022)

cooperation in high-performance computing

India and the European Union (EU) have signed an agreement on cooperation in hi-tech areas such as climate modelling and quantum technologies on 21 November 2022. This agreement seeks to implement the provision of the **India-EU TTC (Trade and Technology Council)** agreement signed during the visit of the European Union Commission **President Ursula von der Leyen** on 25 April 2022 at New Delhi.

The agreement named '**Intent of Cooperation on High Performance Computing (HPC), Weather Extremes and Climate Modelling and Quantum Technologies**' was signed by the ministry of electronics and IT (MeitY) and the European Commission's Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology (DG CONNECT) during a virtual ceremony. The agreement was signed by MeitY secretary **Alkesh Kumar Sharma** and DG CONNECT director general Roberto Viola.

The agreement aims to facilitate collaboration on high performance computing applications using Indian and European supercomputers in areas such as bio-molecular medicines, Covid-19 therapeutics, mitigating climate change, predicting natural disasters and quantum computing.

India-EU TTC (Trade and Technology Council)

The India-EU TTC (Trade and Technology Council) was established between India and the European Union during the visit of the European Union Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on 25 April 2022 at New Delhi.

The India-EU TTC (Trade and Technology Council) is a strategic mechanism that gives New Delhi access to advanced technologies and allows the two sides to set standards in crucial areas such as 5G and artificial intelligence.

This is the **first such trade and technology council** set up by India with any of its partners.

India is the **second country** after the United States of America with which the European Union has signed such an agreement.

European Union

The European Union is a group of **27 European countries**.

The United Kingdom which was the founding member of the European Union has left the organisation.

It was founded on 1 November 1993

Headquarters: **Brussels**, Belgium

5. Government to hold the 25th National e-Governance Conference in Jammu (Nov. 21, 2022)

Government to hold the 25th

The 25th National e-Governance conference will be held at the **Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University at Kakryal in Katra town of Reasi district in Jammu region** on 25 and 26 November 2022. The 24th National e-Governance conference 2021 was held on 7 & 8th January 2021 at Hyderabad, Telangana.

The conference will be inaugurated by **Dr. Jitendra Singh**, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office, Minister of State of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Department of Atomic Energy and Department of Space, Government of India.

26th November is celebrated as the **Constitution Day** in the country to commemorate the adoption of the Constitution of India. As part of the celebrations Union Minister, Dr. Jitendra Singh will administer reading of the Preamble to the Constitution with all participants on 26th November 2022.

Who is organising the Conference

The **Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG)** and **Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY)**, in association with the Union Territory **Government of Jammu and Kashmir** is organizing the conference.

Nearly 2000 officers from across the country are likely to attend the two-day long conference.

Theme of the Conference

The theme of the 25th National e-Governance conference is "**Bringing Citizens, Industry and Government Closer**".

The application and use of Information technology and communication (ICT) in governance is known as **e-governance**. It makes governance transparent and efficient. Some of the examples of e-governance are Digital India, Aadhaar, and National Portal of India etc.

6. New Zealand Supreme Court rules voting age of 18 is discriminatory in the country (Nov. 21, 2022)

New Zealand Supreme Court rules

The Supreme Court of New Zealand has in a decision delivered on 21 November 2022 ruled that the country's current voting age of 18 was discriminatory. The Supreme Court found that the current voting age of 18 was inconsistent with the country's Bill of Rights, which gives people a right to be free from age discrimination when they have reached **16**.

The case which was filed by the advocacy group Make It 16 in 2020 welcomed the ruling of the court and termed it historic.

New Zealand Prime Minister **Jacinda Ardern** said the government would draft legislation to reduce the age to 16, which could then be put to a vote in parliament.

Voting age in the world

Maximum country in the world allow voting rights to citizens after completion of 18 years. However there are certain countries in the world which allows 16 years to vote. They are: **Brazil, Ecuador, Austria, Cuba, Guernsey, Isle of Man, Jersey, Malta, Nicaragua and Scotland.**

Voting age in India

The voting age in India was 21 years since the promulgation of the constituting in 1950. However by **61st constitution amendment act 1988** the voting age was reduced to 18 years.

New Zealand

It is an island country in South Pacific Ocean. The indigenous people of New Zealand are called **Maoris**.

The island was discovered by Dutch explorer **Abel Janszoon Tasman** in 1642.

New Zealand is famous for its flightless bird **Kiwi**.

Its economy is dominated by agriculture (sheep raising).

It is a constitutional monarchy with the King of Britain being its Head of the State.

Prime Minister: **Jacinda Ardern**

Currency: **New Zealand Dollar**

Capital: **Wellington**

7. India emerges as a top investment destination for Sovereign investors (Nov. 21, 2022)

India emerges as a top investment

According to a report of the American Asset Management company **Invesco**, India has emerged as the **second most preferred** investment market after the United States for sovereign wealth funds and public pension's funds in 2022.

The Invesco **Global Sovereign Asset Management Study** is based on the opinion of 139 Chief investment officers of the sovereign wealth funds and public pension's funds.

According to Invesco, the **United States remained the top destination** for the sovereign wealth funds and public pension's funds but to balance the risk many fund manager wants to invest in the emerging markets. The most beneficiaries of this shift to the emerging market is India.

Among emerging markets India has overtaken China as the most **popular emerging market**. This year China has been ranked at 6th place.

One main reason has been that many funds are reducing their exposure in China and they are attracted to India due to its positive economic reforms and strong demographic profile.

According to the report Sovereign investors manage some \$33 trillion in assets. Average annual returns for sovereign investors over the past decade stood at 6.5%. However, 2022 could prove to be a turning point with higher inflation and tighter monetary policy hitting long-term expected returns.

Sovereign Wealth Fund (SWF)

Sovereign means Government of a country. Thus sovereign wealth fund (SWF) is a fund owned by a Government of a country. It is normally a surplus money which a government has and it is used to invest in the stock or debt market of other countries for a better return on investment.

It is managed either by a company set up by the government or it is managed by the central bank of the country.

There has been proposal to set up an SWF in India but till date no such fund has been set up.

SWF are considered as long term investors.

Some of the famous and largest SWF are:

Norway Government Pension Fund Global, China Investment Corporation, Abu Dhabi Investment Authority.

8. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev of Kazakhstan re-elected as President (Nov. 21, 2022)

Kassym-Jomart Tokayev of Kazakhstan re-elected

President **Kassym-Jomart Tokayev** of [Kazakhstan](#) has been re-elected as the President of Kazakhstan. According to the Kazakhstan Election Commission he has won 81.31% of the votes polled in the Presidential election held on 20 November 2022.

Kassym-Jomart Tokayev became the President of Kazakhstan on 29 March 2019 after the resignation of the first President of Kazakhstan **Nur Sultan Nazarbayev**.

On 6 September 2022 the Kazakhstan constitution was amended and the term of the President was extended to 7 years from 5 years and a person can become the president of Kazakhstan only once. Since the constitutional amendment is being considered a new constitution, Tokayev became eligible to contest the Presidential election held on 20 November 2022. His earlier term as President is not being counted.

Kazakhstan was part of the Soviet Union which gained Independence on 16 December 1991, after the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

It lies in Central Asia. It is the largest country in central Asia and 9th largest country in the world.

Capital: **Astana**

Currency : **Tenge**

9. India moves up 6 place to be ranked 61st on the Network Readiness Index 2022 (Nov. 20, 2022)

India moves up 6 place to be ranked 61st

India has improved its rank by **6 places** to be ranked at **61 place** in the recently released Network Readiness Index 2022 (NRI 2022). The report prepared by the US-based non-profit body **Portulans Institute** compliments India and says that “India has a greater network readiness than would be expected given its income level”.

The Network Readiness Index ranks the **131 countries** on 58 variables across four pillars of four different pillars: Technology, People, Governance, and Impact.

India’s Performance

- India improved its score from 49.74 in 2021 to **51.19** in 2022.
- India has secured 1st rank in “**AI talent concentration**”,
- 2nd rank in “**Mobile broadband internet traffic within the country**” and “International Internet bandwidth”,
- 3rd rank in “**Annual investment in telecommunication services**” and “**Domestic market size**”, 4th rank in “**ICT Services exports**” and
- 5th rank in “**FTTH/Building Internet subscriptions**” and “**AI scientific publications**”.
- India is ranked **3rd** out of 36 in the group of **lower-middle-income countries** after Ukraine (50) and Indonesia (59).

Top three countries on the Network Readiness Index

The **United States** topped the list with an overall score of 80.3. It was followed by **Singapore** with a score of 79.35 and **Sweden** with a score of 78.91.

In the **Asia Pacific region**, the list was led by **Singapore**, followed by **South Korea** and **Japan**.

Full Forms

FTTH: Fiber to the Home

ICT: Information Communication Technology

AI: Artificial Intelligence

10. Government withdraws export duty on steel (Nov. 19, 2022)

Government withdraws export duty on steel

Government has withdrawn **export duty on steel** with effect from 19 November, 2022.

Important facts

- According to the notification of the **Ministry of Finance**, the export duty on iron ore and various steel products has been reduced to zero, which means that now there will be no duty on the export of steel products.
- The Central Government has restored the status quo ante before May 22, 2022.
- Apart from this, export duty on low iron ore lumps and fines (having iron content less than 58 per cent) has also been made zero.
- **The following rules will be effective from November 19, 2022 -**
- Zero export duty on export of iron ore lumps and fines (58 percent iron content).
- Export of iron ore lumps and fines (58 percent iron content) will attract 30 per cent lower export duty.
- Export duty on export of iron ore pellets will be zero.
- Export duty on export of pig iron and steel products classified under HS 7201, 7208, 7209, 7210, 7213, 7214, 7219, 7222 and 7227 shall be zero.
- Anthracite/PCI and coking coal and ferronickel will attract an import duty of 2.5 per cent.
- Coke and semi coke will attract 5 percent import duty.

What is Export Duty?

- Export duty is a type of indirect tax levied on goods imported into India as well as goods exported from India.
- Export means taking goods out of India to other countries.