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1. In 2021, over 1.6 lakh Indians renounced citizenship (July 20, 2022)

According to data from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) over 1.6 lakh Indians renounced their citizenship in 2021, highest in the past five years.

Important facts

- According to statistics, more than 78,000 Indians left Indian citizenship to take US citizenship, which is the highest among all other countries.
- 362 Indians living in China also acquired Chinese citizenship.
- The number of Indians who gave up their citizenship in 2021 is 1,63,370.
- Over 9.24 lakh persons gave up their Indian citizenship in the seven-year period between 2015 and 2021.
- The number of Indians who renounced citizenship in the years 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 stood at 1,33,049, 1,34,561, 1,44,017 and 85,248 respectively.

Top 10 countries where Indians renounced their citizenship in 2021

1. United States (78,284 in 2021 and 30,828 in 2020)
2. Australia (23,533 in 2021 and 13,518 in 2020)
3. Canada (21,597 in 2021 and 17,093 in 2020)
4. United Kingdom (14,637 in 2021 and 6,489 in 2020)
5. Italy (5,986 in 2021 and 2,312 in 2020)
6. New Zealand (2,643 in 2021 and 2,116 in 2020)
7. Singapore (2,516 in 2021 and 2,289 in 2020)
8. Germany (2,381 in 2021 and 2,152 in 2020)
9. The Netherlands (2,187 in 2021 and 1,213 in 2020)
10. Sweden (1,841 in 2021 and 1,046 in 2020)

What is Citizenship?

- Citizenship refers to the relationship between the individual and the state.
- Citizenship is listed in the 'Union List' under the Constitution and is within the jurisdiction of Parliament.
- The details of the various categories of persons eligible for citizenship in the Constitution are given in Part 2 (Articles 5 to 11).

- The Citizenship Act of 1955 specifies five methods of obtaining citizenship, which include
- birth, descent, registration, naturalization and incorporation of territory.

Methods of relinquishing citizenship in India

- An Indian citizen, who is of full age and capacity, may renounce the citizenship of India at will.
- If a person takes citizenship of another country, then his Indian citizenship automatically ends because the Indian Constitution provides for single citizenship.
- If a citizen violates the Constitution, has obtained citizenship by fraudulent means, engages in illegal trade or communication with the enemy during war, has been residing outside India continuously for 7 years, then the Government of India can terminate his citizenship.
- If a citizen has been imprisoned in any country for two years during the five years of the citizenship obtained through registration or naturalization, then his citizenship can also be terminated.

2. Ghana declares first outbreak of deadly Marburg virus (July 19, 2022)

Ghana has officially confirmed two cases of Marburg virus, a highly contagious disease similar to Ebola.

What is Marburg Virus Disease?

- According to the World Health Organization, Marburg is a highly contagious viral disease that leads to hemorrhagic fever, with a mortality rate of up to 88%.
- Marburg is as deadly as Ebola and no suitable drug or vaccine has yet been discovered to treat and prevent the disease.
- Outbreaks of this disease have been reported in many African countries in the past, including Kenya, Congo, Angola, South Africa, and Uganda.
- These outbreaks have also resulted in a large number of deaths, most of which have occurred in southern and eastern Africa.

Symptoms of Disease

- High fever, severe headache, muscle pain, abdominal pain, and cramping.
- Nausea and vomiting may also begin on the third day after infection.

Transmission

- Human infection initially results from prolonged exposure to mines or caves inhabited by Rousettus bat colonies.
- Once a human has been infected with Marburg virus, it can be spread to others through direct contact with their blood, secretions or other bodily fluids.

- Another route of transmission may be through sexual contact.
- This virus is secreted in our body fluids such as saliva, sweat, nasal secretions and semen.

Diagnosis and Treatment

- Antibody enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA),
- Antigen detection tests,
- Serum neutralization tests,
- Reverse-transcriptase polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) assay,
- Virus isolation by cell culture.
- There is no specific treatment for Marburg virus disease yet.

3. Varanasi to be first 'Cultural and Tourism Capital' of SCO (July 19, 2022)

Varanasi, the holy city that showcases India's culture and traditions for centuries, will be declared as the first "Cultural and Tourism Capital" of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Important facts

- Varanasi will become the "Cultural and Tourism Capital" of the SCO for 2022-23 under the eight-member organization's new initiative to promote people-to-people contact and tourism among member states.
- Each year the city of cultural heritage of a member country that takes over the presidency of the organization will be given this title to highlight its prominence.
- The new initiative will come into force after the Samarkand summit after which India will assume the presidency and host the next Heads of State Summit.

What is Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)?

- It is a permanent intergovernmental international organization.
- It was founded in 2001.
- The SCO Charter was signed in 2002, and came into force in 2003.
- It is a Eurasian political, economic and military organization.
- Its aim is to maintain peace, security and stability in the region.
- China, Russia and four Central Asian states – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan – were founding members of the SCO.
- Official Languages - Russian and Chinese

Chairmanship - On the basis of rotation for a year by Member States

4. Consultative Committee of Ministry of Civil Aviation discusses 'DIGI YATRA' project (July 19, 2022)

The Consultative Committee meeting of the Ministry of Civil Aviation was held in New Delhi on 18 July. The topic for discussion was 'DIGI YATRA'.

About 'DIGI YATRA'

- The project is envisioned to achieve contactless, seamless processing of passengers at airports based on Face Recognition System (FRT).
- The basic idea of this project is that any passenger can pass through various checkpoints without any paperwork or contact.
- For this, his facial features will be used, which will establish his identity, which will be directly linked to his boarding pass.
- Privacy issues have been taken care of in this system.
- It provides a decentralized mobile wallet based identity management platform which is also affordable and also addresses the privacy/data security issues in the implementation of Digi Yatra.

Objectives of DIGI YATRA

- Providing a simple and easy experience to all air travellers.
- Achieve better throughput through existing infrastructure using "Digital Framework".
- Result in lower cost operations.
- Digitizing the existing manual process and bringing in better efficiency

First Phase of DIGI YATRA

- In the first phase, Digi Yatra will be launched in August 2022 at two airports in Varanasi and Bengaluru.
- It is proposed to start at five airports of Pune, Vijayawada, Kolkata, Delhi and Hyderabad by March next year.
- AAI will identify the airports where Digi Yatra will be implemented in a phased manner.

5. NITI Aayog & WFP launched Initiative to promote millets in Asia & Africa (July 19, 2022)

On July 19, 2022, NITI Aayog and the World Food Program (WFP), India launched an initiative 'Mapping and Exchange of Good Practices' to mainstream millet in Asia and Africa.

Important facts

- NITI Aayog and WFP will prepare a set of good practices for increasing the production and consumption of millets in India and abroad.
- The Government of India has proposed to the United Nations to declare the year 2023 as the International Year of Millets (IYoM).
- It aims to generate domestic and global demand for millets.

International Year of Millets

- 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. Wildfires and heat wave across Europe (July 19, 2022)

Europe, along with countries such as Spain, Greece and France, is battling fierce wildfires and heat waves and struggling to extinguish fires and prevent damage.

Important facts

- Thousands of hectares of forest land has been burnt to ashes amid the scorching heat.
- The fire has forced thousands to flee their homes and killed many relief workers.

Cause of the wildfires

- As far as Europe is concerned, the region has come under fire for being unusually dry and hot.
- Experts are citing climate change as the reason.
- They say that above-normal temperatures and drought conditions are causing fire incidents in some parts.
- Rising temperatures absorb moisture from plants, producing abundant dry fuel.
- Drought and extreme heat can kill plants and dead grass, and dry forest fires are more likely to occur.
- Lightning from the sky or sparks generated by the carelessness of the local population also causes fire.

Forest fires in India

- About 22 percent of the forest area in India comes under the highly fire prone category.
- Recently, there have been incidents of fire in Sariska Tiger Reserve of Rajasthan, Simlipal Wildlife Sanctuary in Odisha, Ladkui forests and forest areas of Mazhagawan region of Madhya Pradesh.

Impacts of wildfire

- Air pollution caused by forest fires is more intense than other types of air pollution.
- Wildfire smoke can affect the respiratory and cardiovascular systems.
- Forest fires not only destroy flora (trees, herbs, grasslands, meadows, etc.) and their diversity, but also have significant long-term negative effects on fauna, including wild endangered species.
- Forest fires destroy organic matter in the soil and expose the top layer to erosion.
- It can disrupt transportation, communications, electricity and gas services, and water supplies.

7. Centre sets up MSP panel (July 19, 2022)

On July 18, the Centre constituted a committee under the chairmanship of former Union Agriculture Secretary Sanjay Agarwal to look into the issues of Minimum Support Price (MSP) promised to the United Kisan Morcha (SKM) in January 2022.

Important facts

- The government has made a provision to include three members from the United Kisan Morcha (SKM) in the committee, but the agriculture organization is yet to announce any names to be part of the panel.
- Under the umbrella of the United Kisan Morcha, thousands of farmers had agitated on the borders of Delhi for almost a year and forced the government to withdraw farm laws.
- Announcing the repeal of three agriculture laws in November last year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had promised to set up a committee to discuss farmers' demand for a legal guarantee on MSP.

Who will be part of the panel?

- Niti Aayog member Ramesh Chand
- Agri-economists CSC Shekhar from Indian Institute of Economic Development
- Sukhpal Singh from IIM- Ahmedabad
- Senior member of Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) Naveen P Singh

Farmer representatives of the panel

- National award-winning farmer Bharat Bhushan Tyagi
- Three members from SKM
- Five members - from other farmer organisations include Gunwant Patil, Krishnaveer Choudhary, Pramod Kumar Choudhary, Guni Prakash and Sayyed Pasha Patel.
- Kisan Sahakari and two members of the group include IFFCO Chairman Dilip Sanghani and CNRI General Secretary Binod Anand will also be part of the committee.
- Senior members from agricultural universities, five central government secretaries and chief secretaries of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Sikkim and Odisha will also be part of the committee.

What will the panel do?

- Will suggest measures to make MSP available to farmers by making them effective and transparent.
- To give more autonomy to the Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP).
- Strategise to turn Krishi Vigyan Kendras and other research institutes into knowledge centres for natural farming.
- Suggesting setting up of laboratory chain for organic certification

- To suggest a system that ensures remunerative prices to farmers for the sale of the new crop.
- Mapping of existing cropping patterns of producer and consumer states.

What is Minimum Support Price (MSP)?

- MSP is the rate at which the government buys food grains from farmers.
- This is based on the calculation of at least one and a half times the cost of production incurred by the farmers.
- The Government of India fixes the MSP for 24 items twice a year.
- When the market price falls below the declared MSP, the government buys food grains from the farmers at the MSP rate.

8. Microblogging platform Twitter launched an "Unmentioning feature" (July 18, 2022)

Microblogging platform Twitter has launched an "Unmentioning feature". This feature will allow users to remove themselves from any conversation.

Important facts

- This feature will allow users to disengage themselves from conversations they no longer wish to be a part of.
- It will help protect the peace of the people by removing themselves from unwanted conversations.
- Twitter was testing the unmanaging feature on a limited number of users so far. Now it has been launched for everyone.
- The feature has been launched amid the ongoing stir over the walkout of Elon Musk's USD 44 billion deal to buy Twitter.

Elon Musk's walkout

- In premarket trading, Twitter shares fell nearly 6 percent amid Elon Musk's recent walkout.
- Musk recently cancelled his \$44 billion deal to buy Twitter.
- After this Twitter announced the prosecution of Elon Musk.

About Twitter

- Twitter was founded in March 2006 by Jack Dorsey, Biz Stone, Noah Glass and Evan Williams.
- It is an American communications company headquartered in San Francisco, California.

- Twitter is a microblogging and social networking service on which users post and interact with messages called "tweets".
- CEO - Parag Agarwal

9. International Nelson Mandela Day (July 18, 2022)

International Nelson Mandela Day is celebrated across the world on 18 July every year to mark the birth anniversary of Nelson Mandela, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate and former President of South Africa.

Important facts

- The observance of this day seeks to celebrate the idea that every individual has the power to change the world, the ability to make an impact.
- It aims to inspire individuals to take action to help change the world for the better.
- In November 2009, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) officially declared 18 July as "International Nelson Mandela Day" in honour of the former President of South Africa's contribution to a culture of peace and freedom.
- It also reflects the anti-apartheid icon's commitment to promoting the values of democracy, racial justice and human rights in the field of racial relations, and his dedication to serving humanity.

About Nelson Mandela

- Nelson Mandela was born on 18 July 1918 in Mvezo, Eastern Cape, South Africa.
- On 5 August 1962, he was arrested for inciting the workers to strike and leaving the country without permission.
- He was tried and sentenced to life imprisonment on 12 July 1964.
- He was released on 11 February 1990 after spending 27 years in prison.
- On 10 May 1994, Mandela became the first black president of South Africa.
- Nelson Mandela is called the Gandhi of South Africa.

Prize

- Nobel Peace Prize in 1993 jointly with Frederick Willem de Klerk, former President of South Africa
- order of lenin
- Bharat Ratna (1990)
- Nishan-e-Pakistan
- Gandhi Peace Prize (2008)

10. Naval Innovation and Indigenisation Organisation Seminar in New Delhi (July 18, 2022)

Two-day Naval Innovation and Indigenisation Organisation (NIIO) Seminar -Swavlamban held in New Delhi on 18-19 July.

Important facts

- The seminar was organised at Dr Ambedkar International Centre in New Delhi.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the seminar.
- The Prime Minister unveiled the 'Sprint Challenge', which aims to promote the use of indigenous technology in the Indian Navy.
- As a part of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', NIIO in association with Defence Innovation Organization (DIO) aims to induct at least 75 new indigenous technologies/products into the Indian Navy.
- The name of this collaborative project is SPRINT (Supporting Pole-Vaulting in R&D through iDEX, NIIO and TDAC).
- Sessions dedicated to innovation, indigenization, armament and aviation will be organized in the symposium.
- The second day of the symposium will witness access to the Indian Ocean region in line with the government's vision of SAGAR (Security and Development for All in the Region).
- As a part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, NIIO, in association with Defense Innovation Organisation, aims to induct at least 75 new indigenous technologies and products into the Indian Navy.

Aim of the seminar

- The seminar aims to engage Indian industry and academia towards achieving self-reliance in the Defence sector.
- The seminar will provide a platform for leaders from industry, academia, services and government to come together on a common platform with ideas and recommendations for the defence sector.