

Current Affairs search results for tag: national

1. Discovery of high grade lithium in Nigeria (June 29, 2022)

Recently high grade lithium has been discovered in Nigeria.

- **Lithium**

- Lithium is an element and is abundantly concentrated in nature in two minerals, spodumene and lepidolite.
- They are usually found in special rocks called rares and greases.
- The Geological Agency described lithium as high grade because it is found with an oxide content of 1-13%. Exploration usually starts at a low of 0.4%.
- Lithium has an atomic number of 3 and an atomic mass of 6.941.
- It is the lightest known metal.

- **USE**

- Lithium disilicate ($\text{Li}_2\text{Si}_2\text{O}_5$) is a chemical compound from which glass and ceramic objects are made.
- Lithium metal is used to make useful alloys.
- Lithium is used in rechargeable batteries for mobile phones, laptops, digital cameras and electric vehicles.

- **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION -**

- The Greenbush mine in Western Australia is the largest hard-rock lithium mine in the world.
- The largest importers of lithium are South Korea, China, Japan, the United States and Belgium.
- Recent surveys by researchers from the Directorate of Atomic Minerals (under the Atomic Energy Commission of India) have estimated the presence of lithium reserves of 14,100 tonnes in a small stretch of land in southern Karnataka's Mandya district.

2. India approves the draft of the General Statutory Rules (GSR) notification to introduce NCAP (New Car Assessment Programme) (June 29, 2022)

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) approved the draft GSR notification to launch India NCAP (New Car Assessment Programme) to bring safer cars to India.

- The NCAP will be rolled out from April 1, 2023 and will mean that auto manufacturers in India as well as importers will have the option to get the cars within the country star rated.
- The program will work as a consumer-centric platform, and will allow customers to access safer cars based on star-ratings.
- The United States was the first country to start a program to test car safety standards through crash tests.

- **India NCAP**

- It is a new car safety assessment program that proposes a mechanism to give 'star rating' to automobiles based on their performance in crash tests.
- The India NCAP standards are aligned with global benchmarks and are beyond the minimum regulatory requirements.
- The proposed India NCAP assessment will assign a star rating from 1 to 5 stars.
- The vehicles for this program will be tested on the basis of testing agencies with necessary infrastructure.
- This will be applicable to M1 category approved motor vehicles with a gross forest cover of less than 3.5 tonnes, manufactured or imported in the country.

- **Importance of NCAP for India**

- 1. Empowering Consumers to Make Informed Decisions
- 2. Enhances Exportability
- 3. Automobile industries will be self-sufficient

3. Union Education Ministry released performance grading index for districts (June 29, 2022)

According to the Performance Grading Index released by the Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSE&L), Ministry of Education (MoE), three districts of Rajasthan- Sikar, Jhunjhunu and Jaipur have been placed in 'Utkarsh' grade in the year 2019-20.

- A year ago, no district came under the 'Utkarsh' category.
- Rajasthan has the highest number of districts in this grade at 24, followed by Punjab (14), Gujarat (13), and Kerala (13).
- The districts with the lowest score (1 out of 50) in this category in the year 2020 are South Salmara-Mankachar (Assam), Alirajpur (Madhya Pradesh), North Garo Hills and South Garo Hills in Meghalaya, and Khowai (Tripura).

- Bihar, Goa, Jammu and Kashmir, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura and Uttarakhand have not a single district in the very best and best category.

- **Progress**

- As per the report, there has been an increase in the number of districts across all categories.
- The number of districts in the very best grade increased from 49 to 86 during 2018-19 to 2019-20, showing "significant improvement".
- 33 districts improved their scores in the results, but there was no improvement in grade-level.
- **Digital Learning Category:** 20 districts have shown more than 20% improvement as compared to 2018-19, while 43 districts have improved their scores by more than 10% during 2019-20.
- **Infrastructural facilities:** 478 districts improved their score in the year 2019-20 as compared to the year 2018-19.

- **About performance grading index**

- The PGI-D assesses the performance of the school education system at the district level by creating an index for comprehensive analysis.
- The PGI-D structure consists of a total of 600 points across 83 indicators, grouped under six categories.
- These categories are further divided into 12 domains.

- **Assessment Grade:**

- The PGI-D classifies districts into 10 grades. The highest grade is 'Daksh', for districts scoring more than 90% of the aggregate marks in that category or overall.
- This is followed by 'Utkarsh' (81% to 90%), 'Ati Uttam' (71% to 80%), 'Uttam' (61% to 70%), 'Pracheshta-1' (51 % to 60%) and 'Pracheshta-2' (41% to 50%) is ranked.
- The lowest grade in PGI-D is 'Aspirant-3' for a score of up to 10% of the total marks.

4. NITI Aayog releases report on "India's booming gig and platform economy" (June 29, 2022)

Recently NITI Aayog released a report titled 'India's Booming Gig and Platform Economy'.

- According to the report the Indian gig workforce is expected to expand to 23.5 million workers by 2029-30, a 200% jump from the current 7.7 million.
- The report estimates that gig workers will constitute 4.1% of the total workforce in India by 2029-2030, up from 1.5% now.

- In the year 2020-21, 77 lakh (7.7 million) workers were engaged in the gig economy.
- Which constituted 2.6% of the non-farm workforce or 1.5% of the total workforce in India.

- **Major issues raised in the report**

- Job and income insecurity: Gig workers do not benefit from labour regulations relating to wages, hours, working conditions and the right to collective bargaining.
- Occupational safety and health risks: Workers engaged in employment with digital platforms, especially women workers in app-based taxi and delivery sectors, face various occupational safety and health risks.

- **Gig economy**

- The gig economy is a free market system in which there are simple temporary positions and organisations contract with independent workers for short-term engagements.
- According to a report by Boston Consulting Group, India's gig workforce employs 15 million employees in industries such as software, shared and professional services.
- According to the 2019 India Staffing Federation report, India is the fifth largest country in flexi-staffing globally after the US, China, Brazil and Japan.
- **Gig worker:** A person who works or participates in work arrangements and earns income from such activities outside the traditional employer-employee relationship".

- **India's gig sector potential**

- An estimated 56% of new jobs in India are being generated by gig economy companies in both blue-collar and white-collar workforce.
- The gig economy can provide 90 million jobs in the non-farm sectors in India, with the potential to increase GDP by a further 1.25% in the "long term".

5. India and Britain to launch joint Commonwealth Diplomatic Academy program (June 28, 2022)

Recently a joint India-UK Commonwealth Diplomatic Academy program was announced by the Foreign Ministers of UK and India.

- It aims to equip diplomats from all Commonwealth member states with the expertise and skills required to deal with emerging challenges that have a global impact.
- This Academy event will be held in New Delhi.
- This was announced during the 26th Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) held in Rwanda, East Africa from 24 to 25 June.
- The academy will be meant to jointly promote the values of the Commonwealth.
- **About the United Kingdom or Britain -**

- The United Kingdom is a constitutional monarchy and unitary state consisting of four countries: England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.
- It is governed by a parliamentary system whose government sits in the capital, London.
- It was the first industrialised country in the world.
- The United Kingdom is one of three countries in the world that do not have a well-organised constitution.
- The United Kingdom is today the sixth largest economy in the world based on market exchange rates and the third in Europe after Germany and France.
- Queen Elizabeth II
- Prime Minister - Boris Johnson
- Currency - Pound Sterling

6. G7 announces \$600 billion global infrastructure programs (June 28, 2022)

The G7 group has announced USD 600 billion global infrastructure programs for poor countries.

- Under the program, the US government and its allies will try to touch the USD 600 billion mark during the years 2022 and 2027.
- The move is intended to compete with China's Belt and Road Initiative.
- The proposed G7 funding would rely largely on private companies, in contrast to the Chinese government-run Belt and Road Initiative.
- The partnership has been unveiled by US President Joe Biden and G7 allies from Germany, Canada, Japan, Italy and the European Union.
- **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**
 - The Belt and Road Initiative is formally known as the One Belt One Road initiative.
 - It is a global infrastructure development strategy, launched by China in 2013.
 - Under this, China had planned to invest in about 70 countries and international organisations.
 - The project is the centrepiece of Chinese leader Xi Jinping's foreign policy.
 - As of March 2022, 146 countries have signed the BRI.
 - The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank is dedicated to providing loans for infrastructure projects.
- **About the G7**
 - The G7 or Group of Seven is a grouping of the seven most advanced economies.

- The seven countries are Canada, USA, UK, France, Germany, Japan and Italy.
- It was formed in 1975.
- The G7 countries meet annually to discuss issues of common interest such as global economic governance, international security and energy policy.
- All G7 countries and India are part of the G20.
- The G7 has no fixed headquarters.

7. The idea of shifting Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances from the Ministry of Finance to the Ministry of Home Affairs (June 27, 2022)

The Government of India is considering transferring the administration of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985, and the Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1988 from the Ministry of Finance to the Ministry of Home Affairs.

- This step is being taken to bring all the cases related to narcotics under one department.
- Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) ACT 1985 and Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances ACT 1988 both are currently administered by the Department of Revenue (DOR) in the Ministry of Finance.
- The Narcotics Control Bureau is under the Ministry of Home Affairs, and is controlled by the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- Under the terms of the NDPS Act, the Narcotics Control Bureau is the premier law enforcement and intelligence organisation entrusted with the responsibility of preventing the use and trafficking of illegal substances.
- **Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act 1985**
 - The NDPS was enacted in 1985 to fulfil the United Nations Convention on Narcotic Drug Policy.
 - In this act, some important amendments were made in 1989 to confiscate the property acquired from illegal drug trade and to control the substances used in the manufacture of chemicals and drugs.
 - In 2001, the punishment provisions of the NDPS Act were amended.

8. World Bank approves \$245 million loan for railway logistics project (June 27, 2022)

The World Bank has approved a loan of USD 245 million to support the Railway Logistics Project.

- The loan will support India's efforts to modernise rail freight and logistics infrastructure.

- Railways are losing market share to trucks over time. The market share was 32 per cent in 2017-18, compared to 52 per cent a decade ago.

- **Railway Logistics Project**

- The Railway Logistics Project will help India move more traffic from road to rail.
- This will make freight and passenger transport more efficient.
- It will also reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) by millions of tonnes every year.
- The project will also focus on harnessing commercial financing by developing a customer-oriented approach and involving the private sector.
- This will help strengthen the institutional capacity of the Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Limited (DFCCIL).

- **Freight transport through railways**

- Indian Railways is the fourth largest rail network in the world.
- It has transported 1.2 billion tonnes of freight in the financial year 2019-2020.
- 71 percent of India's goods are transported by road, while 17 percent is transported by rail.

- **About World Bank**

- The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Monetary Fund were established together in 1944 during the Bretton Woods Conference in New Hampshire, USA.
- The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development is also called the World Bank.
- At present, 189 countries are members of the World Bank.
- Its headquarter is in Washington DC, the capital of America.
- President- David Malpass
- CEO- Anshula Kant

9. ICICI Bank introduces 'Campus Power' digital platform for higher education (June 27, 2022)

ICICI Bank unveiled a digital platform named "Campus Power" to assist students seeking higher education in India and abroad.

- This digital platform will help in meeting the needs of the students as well as their parents and different colleges and universities.
- With this platform, children studying abroad will get the benefit of many facilities like education loan, foreign currency exchange, credit and debit card facility, etc., along with transferring money.

- Campus Power Platform provides information on various value added services related to higher education in Canada, UK, Germany, USA apart from India.
- Through this platform, students will be able to get information about colleges and universities of many countries like America, Canada, Germany, UK etc. for higher education.
- It will give all the information about the way of admission, fees, travelling expenses etc. to the children in the college.
- Apart from the customers of ICICI Bank, customers of other banks will also get the benefit of this campus power platform of ICICI Bank.
- **About ICICI Bank -**
- ICICI Bank is India's leading banking and financial services institution.
- Its full name is Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India.
- It is the third largest bank in India. It is the largest private sector bank in India in terms of market capitalization.
- Established - 5 January 1994
- MD & CEO- Sandeep Bakshi

10. "Global Liveability Index" 2022 (June 27, 2022)

Austria's capital Vienna has been ranked first as the world's most livable city in the annual Global Liveability Index released by The Economist magazine.

- 140 cities of the world have been assessed in this index.
- The cities in this list have been ranked on the basis of many factors including political and social stability, crime, access to education and healthcare.
- Delhi (112) topped the 6 South Asian cities followed by Mumbai (117).
- Pakistan's financial capital Karachi and Bangladesh's capital Dhaka were ranked among the least livable cities in the world.
- The Chinese capital Beijing is at number 71.
- Damascus, the capital of Syria, is ranked at the bottom of the list.
- **Top 10 Cities -**
- 1. Vienna (Austria)
- 2. Copenhagen (Denmark)
- 3. Calgary (Canada)
- 4. Zurich (Switzerland)

- 5. Vancouver (Canada)
- 6. Geneva (Switzerland)
- 7. Frankfurt (Germany)
- 8. Toronto (Canada)
- 9. Amsterdam (Netherlands)
- 10. Osaka (Japan)