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1. Covid vaccination for 12-14 age years to start from 16 March 2022. (March 15, 2022)

The Government of India will start vaccination of 12 to 14 age groups from 16 March 2022 on the occasion of the National Vaccination Day. The COVID19 vaccine to be administered would be **Corbevax manufactured by Biological E. Limited, Hyderabad.**

- Persons above 60 years of age are now eligible for booster dose from 15 March 2022 as the condition of comorbidity for this age group has been removed. The booster dose is to be administered after 9 months (36 weeks) after the date of second vaccination.
- This follows the decision of the Union Government to start COVID19 vaccination for those between 15 years to 18 years of age from 3 January 2022. **These age groups are administered Covaxin vaccine.**
- The Corbevax vaccine has been developed by Biological E in collaboration with Texas Children's Hospital Centre for Vaccine Development and Baylor College of Medicine, Texas, United States.

Covid Vaccination in India

- The covid-19 case was first detected in Wuhan China on 19 December 2019.
- The first case of covid-19 in India was detected in the Thrissur district of Kerala on 29 January 2020.
- The Covid vaccination in India was started on 16 January 2021.
- So far 7 covid vaccines have been approved by the government of India for emergency use.
- It is currently using only four, Covishield manufactured by Serum Institute of India, Covaxin by Indian firm Bharat Biotech and Russian made Sputnik V and Corbevax manufactured by Biological E. Limited for its vaccination drive.
- In December 2021 the Indian government approved Serum Institute of India's Covovax for emergency use.
- The Government of India also has the world's first DNA vaccine against Covid ZyCoV-D vaccine manufactured by Indian firm Cadilla, but it's not available yet.
- The Indian Government has also approved Johnson & Johnson's single-dose vaccine, which was to be introduced in India through a supply agreement with Biological E, and it has allowed Indian pharma company Cipla to import the Moderna vaccine. These Vaccines are not available in India yet.

2. India is the largest importer of arms in the world :SIPRI (March 15, 2022)

India is the largest importer of arms in the world accounting for over 11% of the world arms import during 2017-21 ,according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute

(SIPRI). These findings were published in the SIPRI'S **“Trends in International Arms Transfers 2021”**

Highlights of the SIPRI report

- India's arms imports have decreased by 21 percent between 2012-16 and 2017-21, but it still remains as the largest importer globally.
- The **five largest arms importers** in the 2017-21 period were India, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Australia, and China.
- These five countries accounted for nearly 38 % of the world's arms import during this period.
- **Russia was India's largest supplier of arms** in both 2012-16 and 2017-21. However, the volume of India's imports from Russia fell by 47 per cent between these two periods.
- **France is the second largest supplier of arms to India after Russia.**
- **The five biggest exporters of arms in the same period were the United States, Russia, France, China, and Germany.**
- They accounted for around 77% of the world arms export during 2017-21.
- As for exports, the US remained the world's biggest weapons supplier accounting for 39 per cent of the total.
- Russia is the second-largest exporter, but their trade has fallen by 26 per cent.
- Meanwhile, the largest arms importers in Europe are the UK, Norway, and the Netherlands.
- In 2017-21, China accounted for 4.6 per cent of global arms exports, a 31 per cent drop from its exports share in 2012-16. However, 47 per cent of China's exports during 2017-21 went to Pakistan.

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)

SIPRI is an independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament. It is funded mainly by the Swedish Government .

Established in 1966,

Headquarters : **Solna, Sweden**

3. Indian embassy shifts to Poland from Ukraine (March 14, 2022)

The Government of India has temporarily shifted its embassy from the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv to Poland. The decision has been taken due to the fear that the Russians will launch a full scale attack on Kyiv after many of the foreigners have left the Ukrainian capital.

- The decision of the government of India also was influenced by the fact that all Indians had been evacuated from Ukraine under operation Ganga.

- The last big group of students from the besieged town of **Sumy in Ukraine** were flown
- back to India on 11 march 2022, after being seen off on trains to Poland by **Indian Ambassador to Ukraine Partha Satpathy**.

The neighbouring countries of Ukraine are Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Moldova, Russia, and Belarus.

Important for Exam

Poland

It is an Eastern European country.

Capital : **Warsaw**

President : **Andrzej Duda**

Currency : **Polish zloty**

- Poland is located in the exact geographical centre of the European continent.
- Poland is the first European country (1791) and second country overall to have written a constitution. The first country in the world to have a written constitution was the United States of America (1789).

Note- [russia-ukraine](#)

4. Maternal Mortality Ratio declines to 103 in India (March 14, 2022)

According to the latest Sample Registration System (SRS) special bulletin on maternal mortality in India (2017-19), brought out by the office of the Registrar General of India, the Maternal Mortality Ratio(MMR) has declined to **103 per lakh live births**.

- **It was 113 per lakh live births**, according to the special bulletin on maternal mortality(2016-18) in India.
- **The lowest MMR was in Kerala 30 per lakh live births and the highest MMR was in Assam,205 per lakh live births.**
- The MMR for Uttar Pradesh was 167, Bihar 130, Madhya Pradesh 163, Chhatisgarh 163, Odisha 136, Rajasthan 141, Uttarakhand 101.
- The target of the government of India under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) is 70 MMR per lakh live births by 2030.
- The number of states which have achieved the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target has now risen from 5 to 7 . These states are Kerala (30), Maharashtra (38), Telangana (56), Tamil Nadu (58), Andhra Pradesh (58), Jharkhand (61), and Gujarat (70). **The states which have recently achieved this target are Jharkhand and Gujarat.**

- The target of 100 MMR per lakh live birth under the National Health Policy by 2020 is likely to be achieved by the country .
- The number of states which have achieved the National Health Policy target are Kerala, Maharashtra, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh ,Jharkhand ,Gujarat Karnataka (83) and Haryana (96).
- Four states West Bengal, Haryana, Uttarakhand and Chhattisgarh have shown an increase in MMR. **Haryana MMR increased from 91 in 2016-18 to 96 in 2017-19. Similarly in West Bengal it increased from 98 to 109,in Uttarakhand the MMR increased from 99 to 101 and in Chhattisgarh it increased from 159 to 160.**

States in India have been divided into three groups for better monitoring of MMR situation in India .

- Empowered Action Group (EAG) States comprising Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh & Uttarakhand and Assam. These states have high MMR.
- Southern States which include Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu; and
- “Other” States covering the remaining States/UTs(Union Territories).

Concept Clearing

Maternal Mortality Ratio(MMR)

It refers to the death of the mother while delivering a child . It does not include children which are born dead and includes only children which are born alive.

It is a statistical tool which refers to the proportion of maternal deaths per 1,00,000 live births.

5. Government allows self enumeration for Census 2021 (March 14, 2022)

The Government of India has changed the Census Rules 1990 to allow self enumeration and capturing and storing of data in electronic format .

- The 2021 Population census will be held in both digital and through paper modes where respondents are asked a set of questions by the census enumerator and the response of the respondent is recorded.
- The self enumeration means the respondent has to fill the census form and then submit it through mobile phone.
- Census enumerators are those who conduct census . They are mainly government employees and government school teachers.
- The 2021 census will be conducted in two phases . The first phase called “**Houselisting and Housing census**” along with updating the National Population Register (NPP) was scheduled to be held from April 2020 but was postponed due to the corona pandemic .

The second and the main phase “**Population Enumeration** “ was to be concluded by March 2021. However it has been delayed due to the corona pandemic.

Census

- The first population census in India was held in 1872 under Viceroy Lord Mayo but it didn't cover all of India .
- The first proper census was conducted in 1881 under Viceroy Lord Rippon and after that census was conducted every 10 years .
- After Independence the census was conducted under Census act 1948.
- Census is conducted by the Registrar General Population under the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.
- The 16th Census will be held in 2021.

6. Government reduces EPF interest rate to 8.1% for 2021-22 (March 14, 2022)

The Central Board of Trustee, Employment Provident Fund (EPF) under the Union Ministry of Labour and Employment has decided to reduce the interest to be paid on the EPF fund to **8.1%** for the financial year 2021-22.

During the 2020-21 the interest rate was 8.5%.

The meeting of the Central Board of Trustee was held in **Guwahati** ,under the chairmanship of the Union Minister for Labour & Employment and Environment, Forest & Climate Change, **Bhupendra Yadav**.

This is the lowest interest rate since 1977-78 when the EPF interest rate stood at 8%.

Employees provident Fund (EPF)

- Employee Provident Fund (EPF) is a retirement benefits scheme framed under the Employees Provident Fund & Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952.
- The Act is applicable to every factory or industry mentioned in Schedule 1 of the Act, **wherein 20 or more persons** are employed or to any other establishment which the Central Government specifies by notification in the official Gazette, even when the number of employees is less than 20.
- It includes any worker having salary(basic salary and Dearness allowances) of **Rs 15,000 or less per month** .
- The Employee has to contribute 12% of its salary and a similar contribution is made by the Employer. The Government of India pays interest on the amount every year.
- On retirement, the employee receives a lump sum corpus of EPF, including the employee's contribution, employer's contribution and the interest amount credited every year.
- **The fund is managed by Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) under the Union Ministry of Labour**

7. Third National Youth Parliament Festival held at New Delhi (March 12, 2022)

The third National Youth Parliament Festival was held **in New Delhi on 10th and 11th March 2022**. The festival was inaugurated by Union Minister for Youth Affairs & Sports **Mr. Anurag Thakur** and the valedictory address was given by the Lok Sabha Speaker **Mr. Om Birla**.

- **Ms. Rageshwari Anjana** from Bhopal won the first position, **Shri Siddharth Joshi** from Dungarpur, Rajasthan got the second position and **Ms. Amarpreet Kaur** from Bathinda received the third position in National Youth Parliament 2022 national round competition.

National Youth Festival

- The objectives of the National Youth Parliament are to provide a platform for the youth to voice **their thoughts, opinions and dreams** for the country and enable the youth to voice their concerns and local problems on a platform to be heard.
- The 1st edition of National Youth Parliament was organised from 12th January to 27th February, 2019 with the theme **“Be the Voice of New India and Find solutions and Contribute to Policy”**.
- 2nd edition of National Youth Parliament was organised from 23rd December, 2020 to 12th January, 2022 with the theme **“YUVAAH- Utsah Naye Bharat Ka”** through virtual mode.

8. India ranked 4th on the Global firepower Index (March 12, 2022)

The Global Firepower report 2022 has ranked India as the 4th most powerful military in the world in 2021. The Global Firepower ranks the countries on its potential war making capabilities across land, air and sea fought by conventional means. It means it does not take into account the country's nuclear capability.

- The most powerful country in the world was the United States followed by Russia, China, India and Japan.
- Iceland was ranked at 142 and was considered as the least military powerful country in the world,
- The report has been released by Global Firepower since 2006.

9. NTPC to set up a solar plant in Sri Lanka (March 12, 2022)

NTPC which was earlier called National Thermal Power Corporation has signed an agreement with **Ceylon Electricity board of Sri Lanka** to jointly set up a 100 MW solar power plant in Sampur, in the Trincomalee district of Sri Lanka .

NTPC

- The National Thermal Power Corporation of India is owned by the Government of India. It was set up in **1975**.
- The company was mainly in the business of coal based power generation and transmission of electricity. Later it diversified into non renewable power generation business.
- The total installed capacity of the company is 68,567.18 MW (including JVs) own stations include 24 coal based, 7 gas based, 1 Hydro 1 Wind 13 Solar and 1 Small hydro plant.
- As on 31.03.2020 the company had 16.78% of the total national capacity and it contributes 20.96% of total power generation.
- It operates India's largest power plant in India, Vindhyachal Thermal Power Station, Madhya Pradesh.
- The Vindhyachal Thermal Power Station in the Singrauli district of Madhya Pradesh, with an installed capacity of 4,760MW, is currently the biggest thermal power plant in India. It is a coal-based power plant owned and operated by NTPC.

Headquarters : New Delhi

Source of Data : NTPC website .

10. OECD suspends Russia and Belarus (March 11, 2022)

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Economic development (OECD) has suspended Russia and Belarus from participating in any activities of the OECD due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

- Neither Russia nor Belarus is a member of the OECD.
- Russia's application to join the OECD was postponed after the country annexed Crimea in 2014 and was cancelled in February 2022 as a result of Russian aggression against Ukraine.
- Belarus has been punished for its role in supporting Russia in its invasion of Ukraine
- The exclusion of Russia and Belarus will mean they're barred from participating in negotiations on issues including taxation, international business regulation and trade.

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Economic development (OECD)

- It is a group of the world's most developed and rich countries. It discusses a wide range of global issues like trade, taxation, money laundering, international business regulation etc and sets the agenda for the world .
- It was founded in 1961.
- Headquarters : Paris, France
- Total member countries 38
- Costa Rica was the 38th country to join the OECD.

• **Russia, China, and India are not members of OECD .**

Full Form for exam

OECD: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Economic development

Belarus

- Belarus or also called Byelorussia is a landlocked country in Eastern Europe.
- It was once part of the Soviet Union and became independent after the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991.
- Capital : **Minsk**
- Currency : **Belarusian ruble**
- President : **Alexander Lukashenko**