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1. World's largest International Temple Convention and Expo organized in Varanasi (July 13, 2023)

World's-largest-International-Temple-Convention-and-Expo-organized-in-Varanasi
The world's largest **International Temple Convention and Expo (ITCX)** will be organized from 22 to 24 July 2023 at the **Rudraksh Convention Center in Varanasi.**

An Overview of the news:

- Conceived by **Temple Connect (India)**, it is the world's first event solely dedicated to the management of temples.
- The conference will focus on nurturing and empowering the governance, management and operations of the world and temple ecosystem.

Conference Participation:

- More than 450 temple functionaries from 25 countries are expected to participate in the conference.
- Along with Hindus, office bearers of Math-Temples and Gurudwaras belonging to **Sikh, Buddhist and Jainism** have also been invited.

Launch of the conference:

- The conference will be inaugurated by RSS chief **Mohan Bhagwat** on July 22.
- The event will be held at **Rudraksh Convention Centre.**
- For the first time, the International Temples Convention & Expo is being organized by Temple Connect.

Conference organized under Incredible India:

- The three-day event is being organized as part of the Incredible India campaign in collaboration with the Union Ministry of Tourism.
- In this, development, empowerment of temple management, operation and administration will be discussed.
- According to the founder of Temple Connect, best practices will be created for the teams of the leading places of worship in the world.

Theme of the conference:

- During this conference, the experience of pilgrims visiting temples, monasteries and gurudwaras will be asked, topics like crowd management, solid waste management and what should be improved in basic facilities will also be discussed.
- The conference will serve as a platform to introduce the world to India's rich heritage of places of worship, while learning about the diverse cultures, traditions, arts and crafts of places of worship around the world.

2. Union Ministry of Education releases Performance Grading Index for States (July 10, 2023)

Performance-Grading-Index-for-States
The Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education released
the **Performance Grading Index (PGI)** report for States/UTs, an index for evidence based
comprehensive analysis of school education system in State/UTs.

An Overview of the news:

- According to PGI, even though the states have been successful to a great extent in recent years in connecting most of the children to schools, they are still far behind in the standards of teaching-learning and quality.

PGI 2.0:

- This year's report released by the Ministry of Education has been named **PGI 2.0.**

Punjab and Chandigarh on top in overall ranking:

- No state has been found in the top-5 category of PGI. Punjab and Chandigarh have been placed at the top position with the highest number of points in the overall ranking of PGI.
- While on the parameters of learning outcome and quality, **Rajasthan** has also topped with **Punjab and Chandigarh** with the highest marks.

Six Standards and Ten Categories:

- The Ministry has set **six standards and ten categories** in place of the earlier **five standards and eight categories** to determine the performance of the states in school education, in which the subject of teacher education has been added anew.
- In these indexes, the weightage (marks) given on the basis of government work has been reduced.

Six Standards of PGI 2.0:

- Among the six parameters on the basis of which this grade of states has been prepared,
- Learning Outcome and Quality,
- Access to School
- Infrastructure and Facilities,
- Equality,
- Governance Management and
- Includes teacher education and training.
- States have been given marks on the basis of 73 different parameters of all these.

Ten categories of PGI:

- The ten categories that have been created under PGI, which is based on 1000 marks, include:
- Daksha (941-1000)
- Utkarsh (881-940)
- Ati Uttam(821-880)
- Uttam (761-820)
- Pracheshta-1(701-760)
- Prachesta-2 (641-700)
- Pracheshta-3 (581-640)

- Aspirant-1 (521-580)
- Aspirant- 2 (461-520) and
- Akankshi-3 (401-460).

No state in top five:

- In the PGI-2.0 report for the year 2021-22, there is no state in the top-5 categories in the overall ranking, while **Punjab and Chandigarh** have found place in the sixth category i.e. **Prachesta-2.**
- Gujarat, Kerala, Maharashtra, Delhi, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu were in the seventh category i.e. **Prachesta-3.**
- Thirteen states have made it to the eighth category of overall ranking i.e. **Aspirational-1**, including Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Sikkim, West Bengal, Andaman and Nicobar, Lakshadweep, Daman and Dadar Nagar Haveli is included.
- 12 states including Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand have made it to the ninth category i.e. **Akankshi-2**.

3. International Day of Parliamentarism - 30 June (June 30, 2023)

International-Day-of-Parliamentarism---30-June
June 30 is recognized as the **International Day of Parliamentarism**, which commemorates the founding of the **Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in 1889.**

An overview of the news

- This day holds significance as it provides an opportunity to acknowledge and appreciate the progress made by parliaments worldwide in achieving their predetermined goals.

- This year's theme is '**Parliaments for the Planet**', which urges parliaments around the world to lead by example in building a greener and more sustainable future.

Purpose of the day

- The goals of the International Day of Parliamentarism encompass several key aspects, including self-assessment and evaluation of parliamentary performance.

- Another focus is on promoting the participation of **women and young Members of Parliament (MPs)** to ensure diverse representation and inclusivity within parliamentary institutions.

Background of the day

- The **United Nations General Assembly** adopted a resolution in **2018** to establish the International Day of Parliamentarism, emphasizing the importance of parliamentary institutions in democratic governance.

- The **Inter-Parliamentary Union** was **founded in 1889,** and the inaugural celebration of the UN International Day of Parliamentarism took place **in 1899** to mark its establishment.

- The day serves as a platform to reflect on the achievements and challenges faced by parliaments globally and to foster dialogue and cooperation among parliamentary bodies.

4. UN chief appoints Xu Haoliang of China as deputy head of UNDP (June 29, 2023)

UN-chief-appoints-Xu-Haoliang-of-China-as-deputy-head-of-UNDP
UN Secretary-General **Antonio Guterres** has announced the appointment of **Xu Haoliang from China** as the new **Undersecretary-General and Associate Administrator of the UN Development Programme (UNDP).**

An overview of the news

- Xu Haoliang will succeed **Usha Rao-Monari** from India in this role.

- Xu has been serving as the **UN Assistant Secretary-General and Director of the Bureau for Policy and Programme** Support at the UNDP since 2019.

- Prior to that, from 2013 to 2019, he held the position of **UNDP Assistant Administrator** and **Director of the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific.**

- He has worked in various capacities within the United Nations, undertaking assignments both in the field and at headquarters in regions such as **Asia-Pacific, Europe, and Central Asia.**

- Before joining the United Nations, Xu worked in the field of **civil engineering** in China and the United States.

- His academic qualifications include a bachelor's degree in engineering from Tongji University in China, a master's degree in management science from the Stevens Institute of Technology in the United States, and a master's degree in international affairs from Columbia University.

- Xu is proficient in **Chinese, English, and Russian.**

About The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

- It is the leading agency of the **United Nations.**

- It works to **eradicate poverty and reduce inequality in 170 countries** and territories.

- It helps countries to develop **policies, leadership skills, partnering abilities, institutional capabilities**, and to build resilience to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

- Its work is concentrated in three focus areas; s**ustainable development, democratic governance and peace building, and climate and disaster resilience.**

5. Parshottam Rupala launched NANDI Portal (June 27, 2023)

Union Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Minister Parshottam Rupala on 26th June at **Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi launched NANDI** (NOC Approvals for New Drugs & Inoculation System).

An overview of the news

- The **NANDI portal** has been developed to digitize and streamline the regulatory approval process in I**ndia's Animal Health Sector.**

- The development of the NANDI portal was carried out in collaboration with the **Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) and the Center for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC).**

- The portal aligns with the vision of **Digital India** and embodies the principles of **Minimum Government and Maximum Governance** by leveraging IT systems.

- The primary objective of the portal is to **expedite the assessment and examination of veterinary product proposals**, ensuring their safety, efficacy, and essentiality.

- The Minister emphasized the transformative impact of the portal and the government's decision to launch **Mobile Veterinary Units**, which will contribute to vaccinating all livestock in the country.

- The NANDI portal is expected to support the development of India as a **global manufacturing hub for veterinary products** and encourage research and development efforts to enhance animal health.

6. Global Gender Gap Index 2023 (June 24, 2023)

Global-Gender-Gap-Index-2023
India ranks 127 out of 146 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index 2023.

An Overview of the News

- The Global Gender Gap Index was **established in 2006** and this is **its 17th edition.**

- It is published annually by the **World Economic Forum (WEF).**

- It measures gender equality in **146 countries** and enables cross-country analysis.

Global Gender Gap Score:

- The global gender gap score for **2023 is 68.4%**, showing an improvement of **0.3 percentage** points from **last year.**

- None of the countries included in the index have achieved full gender equality.

- The top 9 **countries including Iceland, Norway, Finland and New Zealand have reduced the gender gap by 80%.**

Iceland: The most gender-equal country:

- Iceland has been ranked first as the most gender-equal country in the world for the 1**4th consecutive year with a score of 91.2%.**

- Iceland is the only country that has reduced the gender gap by **more than 90%.**

Progress of South Asia:

- In South Asia, the gender gap score has increased by 1.1 percentage points since the last edition.

- Among India's neighbouring countries, **Pakistan is at 142, Bangladesh at 59, China at 107, Nepal at 116, Sri Lanka at 115 and Bhutan at 103.**

India's ranking and progress:

- India has moved up 8 places to rank **127 out of 146 countries in the 2023 Global Gender Gap Index.**

- India has shown an improvement of 1**.4 percentage points from the 2022 figures.**

- **Education and Economic Participation:**

  - India has achieved parity in enrollment at all levels of education, reducing the overall gender gap by 64.3%.

  - However, India has reached only 36.7% equality in economic participation.

  - India was ranked 135 in the 2022 edition.

- **Representation in senior positions and technical roles:**

  - Despite increases in pay and income equality, the representation of women in senior positions and technical roles in India has decreased slightly since the last edition.

- **Political Empowerment:**

  - India recorded 25.3% equality in terms of political empowerment.

  - Women represent 15.1% of parliamentarians, the highest figure for the country since 2006.

- **Women's representation in local government:**

  - Of the 117 countries with available data from 2017, 18 have achieved more than 40% female representation in local governance, including Bolivia, India and France.

- **Improvement in sex ratio at birth:**

  - The report highlights India's progress with an improvement in the sex ratio at birth by 1.9 percentage points, bringing equality after a decade of slow progress.

Global Gender Gap Index 2023 Ranking

1. Iceland - 0.912

2. Norway - 0.879

3. Finland - 0.863

4. New Zealand - 0.856

5. Sweden - 0.815

6. Germany - 0.815

7. Nicaragua - 0.811

8. Namibia - 0.802

9. Lithuania - 0.800

10. Belgium - 0.796

7. UNDP partners with DAY-NULM towards empowering women entrepreneurs (June 21, 2023)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
The **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** and the **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM**) recently have joined forces in a collaborative partnership.

An overview of the news

- The objective of this partnership is **to empower women to make career choices** in the field of entrepreneurship.

- The partnership aims to provide support to women who are interested in starting or expanding their own enterprises.

- It focuses on sectors such as the care **economy, digital economy, electric mobility, waste management, food packaging**, and more.

Entrepreneurship Development and Enterprise Growth

- The project, which spans three years and is **extendable beyond 2025**, is centered around fostering entrepreneurship development and accelerating enterprise growth.

- In the initial phase, it will cover **eight cities.**

On-Ground Mobilization and Business Development Services

- UNDP and DAY-NULM will work together to engage in on-ground mobilization activities.

- This includes identifying areas of urban poverty and potential entrepreneurs.

About The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

- It is the leading agency of the **United Nations.**

- It works to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality in **170 countries and territories.**

- It helps countries to develop policies, leadership skills, partnering abilities, institutional capabilities, and to build resilience to achieve the **Sustainable Development Goals.**

- Its work is concentrated in three focus areas; **sustainable development, democratic governance and peace building, and climate and disaster resilience.**

8. Kerala launched the Kerala Fibre Optical Network (KFON) (June 9, 2023)

Kerala-Fibre-Optic-Network-(KFON)
The **Kerala government** June 5 officially launched the **Kerala Fibre Optical Network (KFON)**, one of its flagship projects envisaged during the first term of Chief Minister **Pinarayi Vijayan.**

An overview of the news

- Through KFON, Kerala, which is the first state to declare the right to internet as a **fundamental right,** aims to bridge the digital divide by ensuring high-speed broadband internet access to all households and government offices.

- It also aims to promote e-governance and accelerate **Kerala's journey towards becoming a knowledge-based economy.**

What is Kerala Fibre Optic Network (KFON)?

- In the first phase of KFON, the government will provide connectivity to **30,000 government offices and 14,000 BPL households** in the state.

- Till June 5, connectivity has been provided to 17,412 government offices and 2,105 households and a cable network has been laid to provide connections to 9,000 households.

- Kerala Vision Broadband, an initiative of cable TV operators, is providing internet service in many districts of Kerala.

- Private service providers will also benefit from KFON's infrastructure as they can use its cable network.

- Internet connectivity to the households will be provided by the local ISP/TSP/Cable TV providers.

Stakeholders of KFON

- The Rs 1,611-crore KFON project is a joint venture between the **Kerala State Electricity Board (KSEB)** and the **Kerala State IIT Infrastructure Limited.**

- The project was announced in 2017 but work **started in 2019.**

- The project implementation was done by a consortium led by **Central PSU Bharat Electronics Limited.**

- **PricewaterhouseCoopers** is the advisor to the project.

- **Kerala State Information Technology Infrastructure Ltd (KSITIL**) would be responsible for the operations and maintenance of the project.

- **Bharat Electronics (BEL**) is the system integrator for the KFON project.

- The project is fully funded by **Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB).**

9. 1st India-Namibia Joint Commission of Cooperation (June 6, 2023)

External Affairs Minister **S. Jaishankar** recently **co-chaired** the **first India-Namibia Joint Commission** with Namibian Foreign Minister **Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah** in **Windhoek.**

An overview of the news

- In his opening remarks, Dr. Jaishankar highlighted the special place Namibia holds in the hearts of Indians.

- He emphasized that India supports Namibian independence and expressed happiness at Namibia's rightful place in the international community.

- Dr. Jaishankar underlined the **strong bond between India and Namibia**, which is characterized by developmental cooperation, capacity building programs and political solidarity.

- The Joint Commission will assess the progress of India-Namibia relations. In addition, high-level visits and ongoing interactions will strengthen the **India-Namibia partnership** in the future.

- During his visit, the External Affairs Minister inaugurated the **India-Namibia Center of Excellence in Information Technology** in Windhoek. The center will contribute to research, cyber security and good governance.

About Namibia

- Namibia is a country located in **southwestern Africa**, bordering the **Atlantic Ocean** to the west.

- It shares borders with **Angola, Zambia, Botswana and South Africa.**

- The country's diverse geography includes the **Namib Desert** along the **Atlantic coast**, the **Kalahari Desert** to the east, and the **central plateau.**

- Namibia gained independence from South Africa on **March 21, 1990**, becoming the last African country to gain independence from colonial rule.

- **Windhoek is the capital and largest city of Namibia.**

-
  Namibia is known for its stunning **natural landscapes and diverse wildlife.**
- **Etosha National Park**, located in the north of the country, is a popular destination for wildlife enthusiasts, offering the chance to see **elephants, lions, giraffes, rhinos** and various bird species.

10. BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Cape Town (June 3, 2023)

brics Nations
BRICS countries kicked off its **foreign ministers meeting on 1st June in Cape Town**, the legislative capital of South Africa.

An overview of the news

- External Affairs Minister **S Jaishankar** participated in the meeting of foreign ministers of **BRICS countries.**

- **South Africa**, which currently holds the **chair of the bloc,** hosted the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Cape Town on 1-2 June.

- The foreign ministers' meeting will finalise the agenda for the **15th BRICS summit scheduled to be held in South Africa in August.**

- It is believed that 19 countries are in line to join BRICS.

Joint Agreement

- The BRICS foreign ministers agreed BRICS cooperation should be strengthened to promote unity among developing countries.

- Advance the global governance system reform.

- Accelerate the realization of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

- Contribute to world peace and development.

About BRICS

- The full form of BRICS is **Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.**

- Goldman Sachs economist **Jim O'Neill** coined the term **BRIC (without South Africa) in 2001.**

- He claimed that by 2050, the four BRIC economies would dominate the **global economy by 2050.**

- **South Africa** was included in the list in **2010.**

- The presidency of the Forum is rotated annually among the members.

- BRICS accounts for about **40% of the world's population.**

- It accounts for **30% of the world's GDP** (Gross Domestic Product).

- In the year 2014, during the 6th BRICS Summit in Fortaleza, Brazil, the BRICS leaders signed an agreement to establish a **New Development Bank (NDB).**