

Testwale Current Affairs PDF

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1. Punjabi will be taught in Australian schools (Jan. 11, 2023)

Punjabi is all set to be the newest language to be taught in public schools of **Western Australia**. The Australian government has decided to include **Punjabi language in schools**.

An overview of the news

- The number of Punjabi speakers in Australia is continuously increasing. Punjabi language has become the **fastest growing language** in this country.
- According to the 2021 census, **Punjabi** is the fastest growing language in Australia, with more than **239,000 people** using the language at home.
- In comparison to the year 2016, there has been an **increase of 80 percent** in the number of Punjabi speakers in Australia in the year 2021.
- This year the syllabus from **pre-primary to 12th** will be prepared. After including Tamil, Hindi and Korean languages in the curriculum in 2021, it has been decided to teach Punjabi in schools.
- With over **190 languages** spoken in Australia, linguistic diversity is a great strength that provides social, cultural and economic benefits.

About Australia

- Head of State: **British Monarch, King Charles III**
- Prime Minister: **Anthony Albanese**
- Currency: **Australian Dollar**
- Capital: **Canberra**

2. India, Panama sign agreement on cooperation in training diplomats (Jan. 10, 2023)

India, Panama sign agreement on cooperation in training diplomats

External Affairs Minister **Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar** signed an MoU to enhance cooperation in the training of diplomats during his bilateral meeting with Panamanian Foreign Minister **Janaina Tevane Mencomo in Indore**.

An overview of the news

- The agreement was signed during the visit of the Foreign Minister of Panama to participate in the **17th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas** Conference.

- The visit of the Panamanian Foreign Minister to India comes more than a month after the
- two sides held the **2nd Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) in Panama City** on November 23, 2022.
 - During the consultations, both sides comprehensively reviewed their bilateral relations covering issues such as trade and investment, pharmaceuticals, capacity building, space cooperation and consular.
 - Both countries also discussed cooperation in **multilateral fora**.
 - Both countries agreed to hold the next round of consultations at a mutually convenient date in **New Delhi**.

About Panama

- Panama is the southernmost nation in **Central America**.
- The country is known for the Panama Canal, a man-made waterway that opened in 1914. This canal passes through the country, connecting the **Caribbean Sea (Atlantic) with the Pacific Ocean**.
- Capital - **Panama City**
- Currency - **Balboa**
- President - **Laurentino Cortizo**

3. World's first vaccine for honeybees approved for use by United States (Jan. 10, 2023)

The **US Department of Agriculture (USDA)** has approved the **world's first insect vaccine**, which has been developed to protect bees from a devastating bacterial disease.

An overview of the news

- US researchers have developed a vaccine to target a disease called **American foulbrood**.
- The disease is caused by **Paenibacillus larval bacteria** and once it reaches a bee population, it has the potential to completely destroy the colony.
- **Dalil Freitak** of the **University of Helsinki** and his colleagues discovered an important **egg yolk protein** called **vitellogenin**.
- This fundamental discovery laid the groundwork for a new type of insect vaccine, and the team's first target was honey bees.

Effectiveness of vaccine

- The vaccine works by binding to the **vitellogenin protein** in **inactivated bacterial cells** so that when consumed by the **queen bee** it can be transferred directly to her **larvae**.
- This vaccine is given to the queen bees in the form of **royal jelly**. She swallows it, and fragments of the vaccine get deposited in her **ovaries**.
- After exposure to the vaccine, **immunity develops** in the developing larvae.
- A successful clinical trial demonstrated that the vaccine is both **safe and effective**.
- **Progeny** from a vaccinated queen bee are much less likely to contract bacterial disease.

4. New British Indian Army Memorial to be built in Scotland (Jan. 9, 2023)

New British Indian Army Memorial to be built in Scotland

A new **British Indian Army memorial** has been approved to be built in the **Scottish city of Glasgow** to commemorate the **sacrifices of millions of Indian soldiers** who fought alongside the British during the **two world wars**.

An overview of the news

- In this, the contribution of more than **40 lakh Indian soldiers** who fought on behalf of Britain in both the world wars will be shown.
- **Scotland**, the local council of Glasgow has approved plans to build a memorial. **Glaswegian City Council** is now making the final preparations to build the memorial.
- This war memorial will be built near an art gallery and museum named **Kelvingrove**.
- According to **Colourful Heritage**, the organisation that made the memorial, the diversity of India can also be shown through this memorial.
- Therefore, it will give information about the contribution of all the soldiers of **Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Christian** religions.
- The contribution of those Sikh and Muslim soldiers who participated in the **Second World War** will be specially shown in the memorial.

5. Kevin McCarthy elected as new speaker of the US House of Representatives (Jan. 7, 2023)

Kevin McCarthy elected as new speaker of the US House of Representatives

Republican leader **Kevin McCarthy** has been elected as the **speaker of the US House of Representatives**.

An overview of the news

- He was serving as the **House Minority Leader** in the House.
- The US Parliament has elected Kevin McCarthy of the Republican Party as the speaker of the House of Representatives after 15 rounds of voting. McCarthy is the **55th speaker of the US House of Representatives.**
- Kevin McCarthy, 57, has replaced **Nancy Pelosi**, 82, the leader of the **Democratic Party** in the House of Representatives.
- After the midterm elections held on November 8, the number of members of former President Donald Trump's Republican Party has increased to **222 in the 435-member House of Representatives.**
- With this, President Joe Biden's Democratic Party has come in the minority in the House of Representatives.
- Kevin McCarthy has become the **third most senior US position** after US President **Joe Biden** and Vice President **Kamala Harris.**

About Kevin McCarthy

- Kevin McCarthy is a member of the Republican Party.
- He was elected as the House Minority Leader from **2019 to 2023.**
- He previously served as the House **Majority Leader from 2014 to 2019** under Speakers **John Boehner and Paul Ryan.**
- McCarthy has been elected as a member of the US Parliament **9 times.** He was born in **Bakersfield, California.**

6. India deploys a platoon of women peacekeepers to the UN Mission in Sudan (Jan. 6, 2023)

India deployed a platoon of **women peacekeepers** in the **Abyei region of Sudan** on 6 January as part of the Indian battalion in the **United Nations Interim Security Force (UNISFA).**

An overview of the news

- It is India's largest single contingent of **women peacekeepers** in a UN mission since it deployed its first all-women contingent to **Liberia in 2007.**
- In 2007, **India became the first country** to deploy an entirely women contingent for a [**UN peacekeeping mission.**](#)
- Police units formed in Liberia provided 24-hour guard duty, night patrols in the capital Monrovia, and helped increase the capacity of the Liberian Police.

- The Indian contingent, comprising **two officers and 25 other ranks**, will form part of an engagement platoon and specialise in community outreach; they will also undertake extensive security work.

United Nations Interim Security Force (UNISFA)

- The United Nations Security Council responded immediately to the deteriorating situation in the **Abyei region of Sudan** by establishing UNISFA by its resolution 1990 of 27 June 2011.
- The UN Security Council was deeply concerned by the violence, rising tensions and population displacement.
- UNISFA was established after the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) reached an agreement in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

About UN Peacekeeping

- UN peacekeeping began in **1948** when the UN Security Council authorised the deployment of UN military observers in the Middle East.
- It helps to bring countries from conflict to a difficult path of peace.
- It deploys soldiers and police from all over the world for peacekeeping.
- India is one of the largest military and police contributors to UN peacekeeping operations.
- There are currently more than **5,700 Indian peacekeepers** deployed in **nine of the 12 UN peacekeeping missions**.

7. Dr. Vinay Prakash Singh takes over as the Secretary General of the Asian Pacific Postal Union (Jan. 3, 2023)

Dr **Vinay Prakash Singh** assumed the charge as the **Secretary General** of the Asian Pacific Postal Union (APPU) on 1 January 2023. . This is the first time that an Indian is leading an international organization in the postal sector. Dr Singh will remain in office for **4 years**.

Former Member (Personnel), Postal Services Board, Department of Post Dr Vinay Prakash Singh was elected as the Secretary General during the 13th APPU Congress held in Bangkok during August- September 2022.

Asian Pacific Postal Union (APPU) is an intergovernmental organization of **32-member countries** of the Asian-Pacific region. APPU is the only Union of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) in the region, which is a specialized agency of the United Nations.

The headquarters of the Asian Pacific Postal Union is in **Bangkok, Thailand**.

The Secretary General leads the activities of the Union and is also the Director of the Asian Pacific Postal College (APPC) which is the largest intergovernmental postal training institute in the region.

The Asia Pacific region generates around half of the global mail volume and has around one-third of the global postal human resource.

8. China becomes the first country in Asia and second in the world to launch Hydrogen powered Train (Jan. 3, 2023)

China becomes the first country in Asia and second in the world to launch Hydrogen powered Train

China became the **first country** in Asia and **second** in the world to launch Hydrogen powered urban trains. Germany was the first country to introduce hydrogen powered trains in September 2022.

Chinese company CRRC Corporations ltd built a train that has a top speed of 160 KM per hour and can run without refuelling for 600 Km . The German Coradia iLint serial train developed by French **company Alstom** has set a record 1175 Km range without refuelling.

According to the Chinese officials, the operation of the train will reduce CO2 emissions compared to diesel traction by 10 tons per year.

Hydrogen powered Trains

Hydrogen is considered to be the green fuel of the future. The Hydrogen fuel cell is environment friendly and it does not emit any greenhouse gasses. The hydrogen fuel cell uses hydrogen and air to generate electricity. The combination of air and hydrogen will produce water as a by-product which will be released by the Train.

India is committed to achieve **zero net carbon emission by 2070.**

Hydrogen Train in India

As per Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, India will most likely get its first-ever indigenous Hydrogen trains by December 2023. As per the minister, like Vande Bharat Express, the Indian Railways is working on the new environment-friendly trains and the engineers are designing it. "The design process is already going on and we should be able to roll out the first hydrogen train in the country by December 2023," he added.

9. Croatia adopts Euro currency, also included in Europe's free passport club (Jan. 3, 2023)

Croatia adopts Euro currency, also included in Europe's free passport club

On January 1, 2023, **Croatia** adopted the **euro currency** and also joined **Europe's free passport club (Schengen area)**, nearly a decade after joining the European Union.

Important facts

- On January 1, 2023, Croatia with a population of about 4 million said goodbye to its **Kuna currency** and became the **20th member of the Eurozone.**

- It will be the **27th country in the world's largest passport-free Schengen zone**, which enables more than 400 million people to move freely within its member states.
- Adoption of the euro will help Croatia's economy at a time when **global inflation** has been rising since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, which has pushed up **fuel and food prices**.
- It will also boost Croatia's major **tourism industry**, which accounts for **20 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP)**.
- The Eurozone consists of **19 members of the European Union (EU)**, which uses the Euro as their official currency.

What is the Schengen Zone?

- The border-free Schengen Area guarantees **visa-free movement** for over 400 million EU citizens, as well as tourists, students living in the EU and visiting the EU.
- Free movement of persons enables every EU citizen to travel, work and live in an EU country without special formalities.
- The Schengen provision eliminates checking at the EU's internal borders, while providing a set of rules for controls at external borders.

About Croatia

- Croatia is a country located in the northwestern part of the **Balkan Peninsula**.
- Prime Minister: **Andrej Plenković**
- President: **Zoran Milanović**
- Capital: **Zagreb**
- Currency : **euro**

10. Elon Musk becomes first person ever to lose \$200 billion (Jan. 2, 2023)

According to **Bloomberg Billionaires Index** Tesla Chief **Elon Musk** became the only person in history to lose **\$200 billion** from their net worth.

Important facts

- Musk, who recently acquired the micro-blogging platform **Twitter for \$44 billion**, was the second person to amass over **\$200 billion after Jeff Bezos**.
- After the acquisition, Musk had a takeover of Twitter, resulting in a **loss of Tesla shares**.

- According to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index, **Musk's wealth declined to \$137 billion**. Musk also sold several Tesla shares throughout the year.
- Currently, Musk's stake in his **Space Exploration Technologies Corp.** is valued at **\$44.8 billion**, which is higher than his roughly \$44 billion position in Tesla stock (he still has options worth an estimated \$27.8 billion).
- Elon Musk became the richest person in the world when his wealth reached **\$340 billion** on November 4, 2021.
- He lost the title to French fashion and cosmetics magnate **Bernard Arnault in early December 2022**.

Who is Elon Musk?

- He is the charismatic **chief executive officer (CEO) of electric car maker Tesla** and rocket manufacturer **SpaceX**.
- Musk completed the deal to buy **Twitter** in October 2022, becoming the owner of the social media company.
- Born and raised in **South Africa**, Musk spent time in Canada before moving to the United States.