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### **1. NITI Aayog's India Innovation Index 2021 -Karnataka, Manipur and Chandigarh on Top ( July 21, 2022 )**

NITI Aayog's India Innovation Index (third edition) released on 21 July by NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Suman Bery.

#### **Important facts**

- Karnataka has topped the India Innovation Index.
- Telangana and Haryana are second and third in the ranking, respectively.
- Karnataka has again topped the 'Major States' category.
- Manipur tops the category of 'Northeast and Hill States' followed by Uttarakhand and Meghalaya.
- Chandigarh tops the 'Union Territories' category, followed by Delhi.

#### **Why is Karnataka on top in the ranking?**

- Karnataka tops the list for attracting FDI and having a large number of venture capital deals.
- Karnataka is also the top 'performer' in terms of information and communication technology exports and Geographical Indication registration.

#### **What is the India Innovation Index?**

- The Index is released by NITI Aayog and the Institute for Competitiveness every year.
- It is a comprehensive tool for the evaluation and development of the country's innovation ecosystem.
- The first and second editions were launched in 2019 and 2021 respectively.
- Under this, the states and union territories are ranked on their innovation performance to create healthy competition among them.
- This time 66 indicators have been included as compared to 36 indicators used in the previous edition.

#### **Significance of the Index**

- The latest report is based on the framework of the Global Innovation Index (GII), which strengthens the scope of innovation analysis in the country.
- Innovation is at the forefront of India's 'Make in India' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiatives.
- By emphasizing on innovation, India can increase its manufacturing and develop its export competitiveness.

- It showcases the innovative capabilities of the states, highlights their strengths and weaknesses.

## **2. NE region witness more than 85 pc export growth in last six years ( July 13, 2022 )**

The export of agricultural products to the North-East region has increased by more than 85 percent in the last six years.

### **Important facts**

- According to the Commerce and Industry Ministry the export has reached over 17 million dollars in 2021-22 from 2.52 million dollar in 2016-17.
- The major destinations of exports have been Bangladesh, Bhutan, Middle East, UK and European countries.
- There has been a significant increase in the export of agricultural products from the northeastern states like Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Meghalaya.
- In the last three years, Agricultural and Processed Food Products Development and Authority (APEDA) has conducted 136 capacity building programs on export awareness in different parts of the North Eastern Region.
- APEDA organized a conference on Export Potential of Natural, Organic and Geographical Indications (GI) agricultural products in Guwahati on 24 June.

### **India's North-East region**

- The North Eastern Region (NER) comprises eight States - Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura.
- The North Eastern region of India is a landlocked region with no access to the sea.
- It is geographically isolated from the rest of India and is connected to the mainland by a narrow strip of land called the Siliguri Corridor (Chicken's Neck).
- Sikkim - the 'Brother' of the Seven Sisters
- Assam- World's largest 'Tea Producer'
- Manipur- Jewel of India
- Arunachal Pradesh- Land of Rising Sun
- Meghalaya- Scotland of India
- Tripura- the most 'Literate' in the Northeast around 95% Literacy rate
- Mizoram- Molasses Basin
- Sikkim- Sparsely Populated, the only state having world's largest 'Kanchenjunga Mountain'

Nagaland- famous for Mon's Ethnicity

### **3. Kharchi Puja Festival 2022 ( July 11, 2022 )**

Kharchi Puja or Kharchi Puja is a Hindu festival of Tripura. In this festival, 14 Hindu deities are worshipped, who are considered to be the deities of the Tripuri people.

- **Important facts**

- The festival includes 14 deities- Shiva, Durga, Vishnu, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Kartik, Ganesha, Brahma, Abadhi (god of water), Chandra, Ganga, Agni, Kamadeva and Himadri (Himalaya).
- Kharchi Puja is mainly a tribal festival but its origin is from Hinduism.
- The annual 'Kharchi Puja' and festival is meant to cleanse the sins of mortal souls.
- Kharchi Puja is the biggest festival for the Hindu tribals in the Northeast region.
- Thousands gather from all over the country and neighbouring Bangladesh to attend the 'Kharchi Puja'.
- The temple of 14 deities was built during the reign of Maharaja Krishna Manikya.
- This is an age-old tradition that has been celebrated since around 1760 AD.

- **Major Festivals of North Eastern States**

- Sikkim - Losar, Saga Dawa, Losang
- Nagaland - Hornbill Festival, Motsu Festival
- Assam - Bihu, Ambubachi Fair
- Manipur - Yaoshang, Porag
- Mizoram - Chapcharkut Festival
- Meghalaya - Pomblang Nongkrem, Cherry Blossom Festival

### **4. India elected to UNESCO panel on Intangible Cultural Heritage ( July 8, 2022 )**

India has been selected in the 'Intergovernmental Committee of UNESCO's 2003 Agreement for the Protection Standards of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)' for the period 2022-2026.

- **Important facts**

- India has previously been a member of the ICH committee twice, from 2006 to 2010 and from 2014 to 2018.

- India is included in two prestigious committees of UNESCO. Among these are the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2022–2026) and World Heritage (2021–2025) committees.
- This will be another opportunity for India to re-establish the values of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'."
- According to the Union Ministry of Culture, four seats were vacant in the Asia-Pacific grouping and six countries - India, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia and Thailand - had submitted their candidatures.
- According to the statement, India got 110 votes out of 155 countries.
- The Intergovernmental Committee on the 2003 Agreement has 24 members.
- **India's 'Intangible Cultural Heritage' recognized by UNESCO**
- (1) Tradition of Vedic chanting (3) Ramlila, traditional performance of Ramayana (3) Kutiyattam, Sanskrit theatre (4) Ramman, religious festivals and rituals of the Garhwal Himalayas, India (5) Mudi yettu, ritual theatre and dance drama of Kerala (6) Kalbelia Folk Songs and Dances of Rajasthan (7) Chhau Dance (8) Buddhist Chanting of Ladakh: Recitation of Sacred Buddhist Scriptures in the Ladakh Region of the Himalayas, Jammu and Kashmir, India (9) Sankirtana, Traditional Singing, Nagade of Manipur and dance (10) Brass and copper utensils made by Thathers of Punjab (11) Yoga (12) Navroz, (13) Kumbh Mela (14) Durga Puja, Kolkata.
- UNESCO was established in the year 1945 to develop the "intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind" in the form of lasting peacekeeping.
- UNESCO officially recognizes sites of cultural and natural importance as World Heritage.
- India has a total of 40 Tangible Heritage Sites (31 Cultural, 8 Natural and 1 Mixed) and 14 Intangible Cultural Heritages recognized by UNESCO.
- **Abstract culture**
- Intangible culture is the wealth of a community, nation, etc., which continues to prosper over the centuries, overwhelming the subconscious of that community or nation.
- Intangible culture is available in the form of heritage to the present generation by assimilating the characteristics of its contemporary generations over time.

## **5. Hariyali Mahotsav - 2022 ( July 8, 2022 )**

“Hariyali Mahotsav 2022” was organised by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change on July 8, 2022 at Talkatora Stadium, New Delhi in the spirit of “Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav”.

### **• Important facts**

- It was organised with the aim of raising awareness on the importance of trees in sustaining the lives of the present generations as well as in securing the lives of the generations to come.

- This festival was celebrated as an effective tool to generate enthusiasm among the public towards forest conservation and plantation.

- **Hariyali Mahotsav**

- Hariyali Mahotsav is an effective means of generating enthusiasm among the public for the conservation of forests and plantation.
- Hariyali Mahotsav 2020 was organised by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in Delhi in collaboration with the State Government, Police and Schools to carry out a tree plantation drive on the occasion.
- To mark the event, tree plantation drives were organised across India. In the tree plantation drive, 75 police stations across India, 75 city forests, 75 schools in Delhi/NCR and 75 plantation sites across India joined in honouring 75 years of Indian Independence.
- The event complements the government-led initiatives and policies for environmental protection.

- **Major Fairs/Festivals of 2022**

<b>Festival</b>	<b>Venue</b>
<b>40th Hunar Haat Festival</b>	Mumbai
Sarhul Mahotsav 2022	Jharkhand
<b>35th Surajkund International Crafts Mela</b>	Haryana (Partner Nation - Uzbekistan)
<b>National Youth Parliament Festival 2022</b>	New Delhi
<b>Vigyan Sarvatra Pujiyate</b>	New Delhi
<b>Medaram Jatara Festival 2022</b>	Telangana
<b>Hearth Mahotsav 2022</b>	Jammu and Kashmir
<b>Maru Mahotsav 2022</b>	Jaisalmer (Rajasthan)
<b>Kanchoth Mahotsav 2022</b>	Jammu and Kashmir
<b>18th Kachai Lemon Festival</b>	Kanchi, Manipur

## **6. Business Reforms Action Plan (BRAP) Report, 2020 ( July 4, 2022 )**

Recently the Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has released the Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) ranking of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, which is based on the Business Reforms Action Plan (BRAP) Report, 2020.

- The objective of the ranking is to promote ease of doing business to encourage investors and ease of doing business across the country through a healthy competitive environment through a system of assessing states based on their performance in the BRAP.
- The parameters include various areas, such as construction permits, labour regulation, environmental registration, access to information, land availability and single window system.
- **The Business Reforms Action Plan (BRAP) report has classified the states into four categories -**
- **Top Achievers**
- Seven states - Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Punjab, Telangana and Tamil Nadu - were classified as 'Top Achievers' in the Ease of Doing Business ranking of states and union territories.
- **Achievers**
- Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh are the other states classified as achievers in the ranking.
- **Aspirants**
- Seven states - Goa, Assam, Kerala, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Bengal - have been classified as 'aspirational' districts.
- **Emerging Business Ecosystem**
- Six states - Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura, Puducherry and Jammu and Kashmir - were 'emerging trading ecosystems'.
- **About BRAP**
- It was launched in the year 2015.
- It was introduced to encourage a healthy competition among the states.
- This will help in attracting investment and ease of doing business in each state.
- The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade has been assessing the performance of States/UTs since 2014 in implementing the reforms prescribed in the BRAP exercise.
- So far, the estimates of States/UTs for the years 2015, 2016, 2017-18, 2019 and 2022 have been released.

## **7. 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%), 'Pracheshtha-1' (51 % to 60%) and 'Pracheshtha-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.

**8. Defence Ministry approves 'BRO cafes' in border areas ( June 23, 2022 )**

The Defence Ministry has approved setting up of facilities under the brand 'BRO Cafe' at 75 locations on various roads with Border Roads Organization (BRO) in 12 states and union territories.

- Its purpose is to provide basic amenities to tourists and to encourage economic activities in the border areas.
- These roadside establishments will be known as 'BRO Cafe'.
- It is proposed to provide parking for vehicles, food plazas, restaurants, separate public facilities for women, men and differently abled, first aid facilities etc. in these cafes.
- For this, the agreement will be for 15 years which can be extended for five more years later.
- This scheme will be done in collaboration with agencies on a licence basis.
- The agencies will build and operate BRO Cafe as per the guidelines given by the BRO.
- This will speed up the development of tourism as well as traffic in the border areas.
- For this, approval has been given in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Manipur, Nagaland, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Uttarakhand and West Bengal.
- **Border Roads Organization (BRO)**
  - It functions under the control of the Ministry of Defence since 2015.
  - The Organisation was established on May 7, 1960.
  - It is responsible for maintaining the road networks in the border areas of India.
  - This organization plays an important role in the infrastructure development of the border areas of the country.
  - One of the biggest infrastructural achievements of BRO is the construction of the longest highway tunnel, The Atal Tunnel in Himachal Pradesh.
  - Director General Border Roads Organisation - Lt Gen Rajeev Chaudhry

**9. Amazon India signs MoU with Manipur govt to sell Panthoibi Emporium products ( June 8, 2022 )**

E-commerce Amazon and the Manipur government inaugurated Panthoibi Emporium, an online platform for the display and sale of handlooms and handicrafts from the state.

- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was also signed for this online store between e-commerce Amazon and the Manipur government.

- The initiative will benefit about 300,000 artisans, weavers and members of tribal communities in the state.
- Operated under the aegis of the Directorate of Handlooms and Textiles, Panthoibi Emporium is a part of Manipur Handloom and Handicrafts Development Corporation Limited (MHHDCL), a government enterprise for the development of local artisans.
- Panthoibi Emporium on Amazon.in includes hand woven clothing, handcrafted hats and bags, terracotta products as well as kauna crafts – a unique handicraft of Manipur in which kauna wood is used to make baskets, purses, bags etc.
- The Manipuri queen Phi, a hand-woven shawl made of silk, can also be found on the website.
- In addition, food items typical of Manipur, including black rice, tea, GI tagged chillies, lemons and oranges, will also be available for sale.

- **About Manipur**

- Manipur is also called the 'Orchid Basket' of the country. 500 species of orchid flowers are found here.
- This northeastern state is described as Swarna Bhoomi or 'Suvarnabhu'.
- The major population here is Manipuri people known as Meiti.
- Loktak Lake is an important lake here.
- The language of the people here is Manipuri, which was added to the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India in 1992.
- Capital- Imphal
- Governor- L A Ganesan
- Chief Minister- N Biren Singh

## **10. Tamil Nadu tops food safety index ( June 8, 2022 )**

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) under the Union Health Ministry has released the State Food Safety Index 2021-2022.

Tamil Nadu topped the State Food Safety Index this year.

- **Top three big states in the index**

1. Tamil Nadu
2. Gujarat
3. Maharashtra

- **Top three smaller states in the index**

1. Goa
2. Manipur
3. Sikkim

• **Top three UTs in the index**

1. Jammu and Kashmir
2. Delhi
3. Chandigarh

• **New Eat Right India initiatives launched**

- Health Minister Dr Mansukh Mandaviya launched various innovative initiatives by FSSAI including Eat Right Research Awards and Grants Phase II, Eat Right Creativity Challenge Phase III, a competition at school level.
- He unveiled the logo for the Ayurveda diet, which includes the initials of Ayurveda and Ahara, with 5 leaves symbolizing the five elements of nature.

• **About State Food Safety Index**

- The index is developed by FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India).
- It was started in 2018-19.
- Its aim is to create a competitive and positive change in India's food safety ecosystem.
- It measures the performance of states on five significant parameters of Food Safety.
- These parameters are - Human Resources and Institutional Data, Compliance, Food Testing - Infrastructure and Surveillance, Training & Capacity Building and Consumer Empowerment.

**[For more information please visit 7th June 2022 news.](#)**