

Testwale Current Affairs PDF

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1. International News (Dec. 19, 2021)

1. G-7 Foreign and Development Ministers Meeting

- The United Kingdom, which is currently the chairman of the Group of 7 countries, hosted the foreign ministers meeting of the member countries at Liverpool in England on 11-12 December 2021.
- The meeting was held in the midst of concern that Russia is going to attack Ukraine which is denied by Russia.
- The Foreign Ministers of India, European Union, Australia, South Korea, along with representatives from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN} will take part in G-7 foreign ministers as guests.

2. India to supply medicines to the Afghan people

- The **Government of India has joined Qatar, the UAE, Turkmenistan and Pakistan** that have sent humanitarian support to Taliban-ruled Afghanistan.
- **India has sent medical relief material to the Indira Gandhi Children Hospital in Kabul.**
- The **medical relief material will be handed to the WHO (World Health Organisation) in Kabul** as the Indian does not recognise the **Taliban government in Kabul led by Habitullah Akhunzada .**
- The **relief material was sent back by special Kam Air flights that had brought 10 Indians and 94 Afghan minority community members** from Afghanistan to India.

3. Saudi Arabia bans Tablighi Jamaat

- Saudi Arabia has stunned the Islamic World by banning the Tablighi Jamaat, the Islamist proselytizing(conversion) movement.
- The Saudi Ministry of Islamic Affairs announced the measure on its social media platform terming the Sunni Islamic organisation as "one of the gates of terrorism" and that Tablighi Jamaat poses "a danger to society".

Saudi Arabia

Capital of Saudi Arabia: **Riyadh**

Currency: **Saudi Riyal**

4. Tigray rebels retake Ethiopian world heritage Lalibela

- **Tigray rebels on 12th December recaptured the north Ethiopian town of Lalibela,** home to a UNESCO world heritage site from the Ethiopian government forces.
- **Ethiopian Civil War**
- The conflict started on 4 November, when the Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed ordered a military offensive against the northern regional forces in Tigray.
- The escalation came after months of feuding between Mr Abiy's government and leaders of Tigray's dominant political party, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) .

5. New Caledonia votes to remain part of France

- Voters in the French island territory of New Caledonia chose overwhelmingly to stay part of France, in a referendum held on 12 December which was boycotted by pro-independence forces.
- Official results showed 96% of those who took part chose to stay in France. However the overall turnout was less than 44%.
- The referendum held on 12 December was the third and last in a decades-long process aimed at settling tensions between native Kanaks seeking independence and those who want the territory to remain part of France.
- Capital of New Caledonia: **Noumea.**
- Currency: **CFP Franc**

6. Israeli PM's historic visit to UAE

- **Israel's Prime Minister Naftali Bennett** arrived in the United Arab Emirates for the first ever official visit by a Prime Minister of Israel to the UAE..
- The UAE last year became the third Arab nation to establish full diplomatic relations with Israel after Egypt and Jordan.
- Bahrain and Morocco then followed as part of a series of deals referred to as Abraham Accords brokered by former U.S. President Donald Trump.
- Sudan also agreed to normalise ties with Israel under the Abraham Accords, but full relations have not yet materialised.

For details of the Abraham accord refer to the 25 November post.

7. "India" 4th Most Powerful Country in Asia

- In the Asia Power Index for 2021 that ranks 26 nations and territories in Asia- Pacific, prepared by the Lowy Institute of Sydney, India has been ranked 4th most powerful Asian country.
- Rank of the powerful countries:
- United States 82.2 points
- China 74.6
- Japan 38.7
- India 37.7
- Russia 33.0

Highlights of the report:

- India lost 2.0 points (-5% change) in overall score in 2021 (compared to 2020).
- India performed better in future resource measures where it finished behind only the United States and China.
- India finishes in 4th place in four other measures, i.e. Economic Capability, Military Capability (+0.5), Resilience (+1.7) and Cultural Influence.
- India remains in the 7th place in its "Defence Networks", reflecting progress in its regional defence diplomacy - notably with the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue which includes: Australia, Japan and the United States.
- On the other hand, India has slipped into 8th position for economic relationships, as it falls further behind in regional trade integration efforts.

8. India votes against UN draft resolution on climate change

- India voted against a draft resolution at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) linking climate to security. This resolution was moved by Niger, which holds the UNSC presidency for December. It was also sponsored by Ireland.
- Niger organized a debate titled 'Maintenance of international peace and security: security in the context of terrorism and climate change'. One of the objectives of the debate was to examine how terrorism and security risks could be linked to climate change.
- The resolution was vetoed by Russia even though 12 countries voted in its favour with China abstaining from the vote and India voting against it.
- **Government of India's views were put forward by India's Permanent Representative and Ambassador to the United Nations, T.S. Tirumurti.**

9. Super Typhoon Rai lashes Philippines

- Super Typhoon Rai, known locally as Odette, continued to wreak havoc across the Philippines, as the storm moved west across the archipelago, bringing with it heavy rain and widespread flooding.
- Rai, the 15th typhoon to hit the Philippines this year, weakened slightly from a Category 5 to a Category 3 storm (as per Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale) after making landfall Thursday on Siargao Island, a popular tourist and surfing destination on the central east coast.

10. 488 journalists jailed, 46 killed across the world in 2021 - Reporters without Borders

Reporters without Borders (RSF)'s the international non-profit organization for safeguarding the right to freedom of information, has released their latest annual roundup of violence and abuse suffered by journalists across the world.

Report Highlights-

- **There are currently 488 media professionals imprisoned around the world.**
- **The number killed this year — 46 —** was the lowest since it began issuing annual tallies.
- **China once again has the highest number of imprisoned journalists at 127.**
- The most dangerous countries were Mexico and Afghanistan, with seven and six journalist deaths respectively, followed by Yemen and India with four deaths each.

11. The World Health Organisation has granted emergency approval to Covovax (NVX-CoV2373)

- It is manufactured by the Serum Institute of India under license from the U.S. based Novavax.
- **It will be distributed as part of global vaccine sharing system COVAX(COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access).**
- COVAX is a worldwide initiative **through the alliance of GAVI (Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization), the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), and the World Health Organization (WHO).**

It is the 3rd vaccine from India after **CoviShield and Covaxin** to receive WHO emergency use listing (EUL).

12. President Kovind inaugurates Kalibari Temple in Dhaka

President Ram Nath Kovind **inaugurated the renovated Sri Ramna Kali Mandir** in Dhaka on 17th December 2021.

- The temple was **destroyed by the Pakistani Army's operation codenamed 'Operation Searchlight' in 1971**, targeting the resistance movement in the country.
- The President and First Lady Savita Kovind offered prayers at the renovated temple.

2. International News (Dec. 12, 2021)

1. Mount Semeru erupted in Indonesia

- Mt Semeru (3676 m above sea level) is the biggest mountain on the island of Java.
- Semeru is one of the most active volcanoes in Indonesia and a part of a chain of volcanic mountains stretching from northern Sumatra to the Lesser Sunda Islands.

2. Suu Kyi sentenced to four years in prison

The military junta ruling Myanmar has sentenced the deposed leader Aung San Suu Kyi for four years for incitement against the military and breaching COVID-19 rules,

3. US to diplomatic boycott Beijing winter olympics

The US has announced a diplomatic boycott of the 2022 Winter Olympics in China because of concerns about China's human rights record especially its treatment of Uighur muslim in Xinjinag provinces, a move that has been heavily criticised by Beijing.

- However American sports persons will participate in the winter olympic games.
- Following the US announcement, New Zealand and Australia also announced a diplomatic boycott of the games though their athletes will be participating in the games.
- **Canada will join the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia** in a diplomatic boycott of the Beijing Winter Olympics over human rights concerns, **Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said on December 8.**

4. ADB to provide loan to India

Government of India and Asian Development Bank(ADB) has signed two agreement for loan to projects in India

- ADB will provide a \$125 million loan to improve access to safe and affordable drinking water supply and citywide inclusive sanitation services in Dehradun and Nainital cities in the state of Uttarakhand.
- It will also provide a \$150 million loan to provide access to inclusive, resilient, and sustainable housing for the urban poor in the state of Tamil Nadu.

5. India amongst the most unequal countries in the world

As per the '**World Inequality Report 2022**' by **World Inequality Lab**, which aims to promote research on global inequality dynamics. India is among the most unequal countries in the world, with rising poverty and an 'affluent elite'.

- **Distribution of Wealth:** In India, the top 10% and top 1% hold 57% and 22% of the total national income respectively while the share of the bottom 50% has gone down to 13%.
- **Gender inequality:** The share of female labour income share in India is equal to 18% which is significantly lower than the average in Asia (21%, excluding China) & is among the lowest in the world. Although, the number is slightly higher than the average share in the Middle East (15%).

6. Nicaragua cut its diplomatic relation with Taiwan

- The Central American country Nicaragua has become the latest country to cut diplomatic ties with Taiwan in favour of China.
- The decision was praised by China, which demands that any country that wants diplomatic relations with it must cut existing ties with Taipei.
- However, Taiwan sees itself as a democratically-governed, independent country, though it has never formally declared independence from the mainland.
- Before Nicaragua, the Pacific Island nations of Kiribati and the Solomon Islands were the latest countries to cut ties with Taiwan in favour of China in 2019.

Capital of Nicaragua: **Managua**

President of Nicaragua: **Daniel Ortega**

Capital of Taiwan: **Taipei**

7. UN General Assembly Grants Observer Status To International Solar Alliance

- The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has granted Observer Status to International Solar Alliance (ISA), India's Permanent Ambassador to the United Nations.
- A total of 108 countries participated in the Assembly, including 74 Member Countries and 34 Observer and Prospective Countries, 23 Partner Organizations and 33 Special Invitee Organisations.

3. International News (Dec. 5, 2021)

1. Prime Minister Katrin Jakobsdottir to form the new government in Iceland

- Katrin Jakobsdottir has been chosen by the coalition parties in Iceland to be their leader and the Prime Minister of Iceland.
- She became the Prime minister of Iceland in 2017 for the first time.
- Capital of Iceland: **Reykjavík**

2. Barbados becomes a Republic

The Caribbean island nation of Barbados declared itself a republic on 30 November, a move that coincides with the 55th anniversary of its independence from Britain.

Barbados capital Bridgetown

Currency: Barbados Dollar

Prime Minister: Mia Mottley

3. EU announces BRI alternative

- European Union (EU) plans **300 Billion Euro Infrastructure Fund** to Counter China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) by **2027**.
- **Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission** calls it "**The Global Gateway Plan**" and describes it as "roadmap for major investment in infrastructure development around the world"

4. Sri Lanka Finance Minister Visit to India

India has agreed to help Sri Lanka to deal with its food and energy crisis .

This was agreed by the visiting Sri Lankan Finance Minister Mr. Basil Rajapaksa and the Finance Minister Mrs. Nirmala Sithraman and External Affairs minister Mr. S. Jaishanker.

5. Russia warns US to stop NATO's Eastward Expansion

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told the U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken that Moscow needed "long-term security guarantees" that would halt NATO's eastward expansion.

Mr. Lavrov and Mr. Blinken was in Stockholm for a meeting of the ministerial level meeting of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe.