

October – 16

TNPSC BITS

- ❖ The India International Silk Fair (IISF-2018) has been inaugurated by Union Textiles Minister Smriti Irani at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi.
- ❖ Priyank Kanoongo has been appointed as the new Chairperson of National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) for a period of 3 years. He replaces Stuti Kacker's, whose tenure ended recently.
 - The NCPCR is a statutory body, which was set up by an Act of Parliament in 2007 under the Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005.
- ❖ India and China have launched their first joint programme for Afghanistan to train its diplomats under the aegis of the Trilateral Cooperation between India, China and Afghanistan.

NATIONAL

Global RTI rating

- ❖ According to the Global RTI rating (Right to Information) by Access Info Europe and the Centre for Law and Democracy, India ranked at 6th position out of 123 countries.

GLOBAL RTI RATINGS

RTI in India	
Total RTI pleas received in 2017: 66.6 LAKH	➤ Only 10 states have updated annual reports
Total number of RTI rejected: 4.8 LAKH (7.2%)	➤ 12 states have no vacancies in state information commissions
Total second appeals (to CIC): 18.5 LAKH	➤ 48 of 156 posts for information commissioners vacant at state and CIC level
Total penalty amount imposed by CIC: ₹1.9 CRORE	

Source: Access Info Europe and Centre for Law and Democracy; Transparency International India

- ❖ India made its debut at the 2nd rank in 2011 and continued to be at the same position till 2013.
- ❖ India performed worst under the section “Sanctions and Protections”, which shows that India doesn’t provide protection for whistle-blowers.
- ❖ The survey was carried by Transparency International India.
- ❖ Afghanistan topped the list followed by Mexico, Serbia, Sri Lanka and Slovenia.
- ❖ While Austria was placed at the bottom with just 33 points.

INTERNATIONAL

Global Hunger Index 2018

- ❖ As per the 2018 Global Hunger Index (GHI), the level of hunger and undernutrition worldwide fell to 20.9, down from 29.2 in the year 2000.
- ❖ The 2018 GHI report was prepared jointly by global NGOs namely – Concern Worldwide (Ireland) and Welthungerhilfe (Germany).
- ❖ The GHI combines 4 component indicators:
 - 1) Proportion of the undernourished as a percentage of the population;
 - 2) Proportion of children under the age of five suffering from wasting;
 - 3) Proportion of children under the age of five suffering from stunting;
 - 4) Mortality rate of children under the age of five.
- ❖ The under-five mortality rate was 4.2% as of 2016, down from 8.1% in 2000.
- ❖ In its findings, it states that,
 - 50 countries will fail to achieve low hunger levels by 2030,
 - 79 countries have already failed to reach the goal.
- ❖ Top 5 countries are - Belarus, Cuba, Estonia, Kuwait, Latvia (all tied to 1st rank).
- ❖ Bottom 5 Countries are - Zambia, Madagascar, Yemen, Chad and Central African Republic/CAR (CAR at last in 119th position).
- ❖ As per the report, around 124 million people suffer acute hunger in the world, a striking increase from 80 million two years ago.

Background

- ❖ Created in 2006, the GHI was initially published by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and Welthungerhilfe.

- ❖ In 2007, the Irish NGO Concern Worldwide also became a co-publisher.
- ❖ In 2018, the GHI was a joint project of Welthungerhilfe and Concern Worldwide, with IFPRI stepping aside from its involvement in the report.

India and Its Neighbours

- ❖ According to the report, India has been ranked at the 103rd position among 119 countries.
- ❖ India is among the 45 countries that have "serious levels of hunger".
- ❖ The GHI, now in its 13th year, ranks countries based on four key indicators - undernourishment, child mortality, child wasting and child stunting.
- ❖ India is ranked below many neighbouring countries, including China (25th spot), Nepal (72), Myanmar (68), Sri Lanka (67) and Bangladesh (86).
- ❖ Pakistan is placed at the 106th position.

World's Most Powerful Passport

- ❖ According to 2018 Henley Index, Japan surpassed Singapore to have the most powerful passport.

rank	passport	no. of countries that can be accessed
1	Japan	189
2	Germany, Singapore	188
3	Finland, France, Italy, Sweden, Spain, South Korea	187
4	Norway, United Kingdom, Austria, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, United States	186
5	Denmark, Belgium, Switzerland, Ireland, Canada	185
6	Australia, Greece	183
7	New Zealand, Czech Republic, Malta	182
8	Iceland	181
9	Hungary, Slovenia, Malaysia	180
10	Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania	179

- ❖ This index has been compiled by advisory firm Henley & Partners.

- ❖ The index is based on exclusive data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA).
- ❖ Japan passport holders now enjoy visa-free access to 190 destinations, compared with Singapore's 189.
- ❖ Germany has fallen to 3rd place, tied with South Korea and France with 188 visa-free destinations.
- ❖ Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Spain, Italy tied at the 4th place and United States and the United Kingdom tied at No. 5.
- ❖ Iraq and Afghanistan are at the bottom (No.106) with just 30 destinations.
- ❖ Russia is at 47th place, China at 71st, India at 81st (with 60 country accesses).

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

India's first portal for Agri-Business learning

- ❖ The SRiX Agri-Business Academy, an Indo-UK collaborative initiative, has been launched at SR Innovation Exchange (SRiX) Campus in Warangal of Telangana.
- ❖ It is India's first agri and food business online learning platform focussed on start-ups of agriculture, cleantech and IoT.
- ❖ SRiX is a technology business incubator under the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India.

Microsoft AI-enabled 'Power Bat'

- ❖ Former India captain Anil Kumble's technology start-up Spektacom Technologies launched the "Power Bat",
- ❖ The bat comes with a lightweight sticker with a sensor stuck on its shoulder.
- ❖ The Power Bat has been powered by Microsoft's Azure Cloud platform and its Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Internet of Things (IoT) services.
- ❖ It is processed by Microsoft's Azure Sphere operating system.
- ❖ It can provide real-time data on a player's performance based on factors including bat speed and quality of the shot.

PERSONALITIES, AWARDS AND EVENTS

New Academy Prize in Literature

- ❖ Guadeloupean author Maryse Conde (81) was awarded New Academy Prize in Literature.
- ❖ Conde is author of some 20 novels, including Desirada, Segou and Crossing the Mangrove.
- ❖ Her writings mostly describe the ravages of colonialism and post-colonial chaos.
- ❖ New Academy Prize in Literature was formed by New Academy and it is an alternative award formed in protest to Nobel Literature Prize.

SPORTS

2019 IAAF World Relays

- ❖ The 4th edition of International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) World Relays 2019 will be hosted by Japan Association of Athletics Federations near Tokyo from May 11-12, 2019.
- ❖ The 2019 edition of IAAF World Relays will serve as a qualifier for
 - The 2019 IAAF World Athletics Championships in Doha and
 - The 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo.

2018 Sultan Johor Cup Junior Hockey

- ❖ Great Britain lifted the 8th edition of Sultan Johor Cup Junior Hockey tournament in Johor Bahru, Malaysia.
- ❖ India suffered a loss to Great Britain in the final and settled for the silver medal.
- ❖ The other teams in the tournament were Japan, Australia, Malaysia and New Zealand.

2018 Shanghai Masters Tennis tournament

- ❖ Novak Djokovic (Serbia) has recently won the 2018 Shanghai Masters Tennis tournament in Shanghai, China.

- ❖ He beat Croatia's Borna Coric and claimed his 4th Shanghai title and 2nd Masters title of the year.
- ❖ Djokovic now has 18 consecutive wins.

IMPORTANT DAYS

Rashtriya Mahila Kisan Diwas – 15 October

- ❖ Rashtriya Mahila Kisan Diwas is celebrated every year on 15th October to increase active participation of women in agriculture & allied sectors.
- ❖ In 2016, the Ministry had decided to observe 15th of October as Rashtriya Mahila Kisan Diwas.

International Day of Rural Women – 15 October

- ❖ The International Day of Rural Women is observed every year on October 15 to recognize the crucial role and contribution of rural women.
 - ❖ The theme for the year 2018 is “Sustainable infrastructure, services and social protection for gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls”.
 - ❖ The International Day of Rural Women was instituted by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) by passing resolution in December 2007.
 - ❖ It was first observed on 15 October 2008.
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