India in 'Programme for International Student Assessment'

Why in news?

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Indian government has recently decided to take part in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

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What is PISA?

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- The PISA is a competency-based test to assess the quality of education systems across the world.
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- It assesses the learning levels of 15-year-old students in reading, mathematics, science, collaborative problem solving and money literacy.
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- The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) conducts PISA every three years.
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What is the recent decision?

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- India boycotted PISA, blaming "out of context" questions for India's dismal performance in PISA-2009 where it bagged the 72nd rank among 74 participating countries.
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- India cited socio-cultural disconnect between the questions and Indian students' learning.
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- With OECD having agreed to tailor its assessment questions to the Indian context, India is now open to joining it.
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- The Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry of India has signed a pact

with the OECD.
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- PISA in 2021 will be administered across all schools in Chandigarh and all Navodaya Vidyalayas and Kendriya Vidyalayas in the country.
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- Questions in the test will be contextualised according to the Indian setting to help students understand them better.
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- The CBSE and NCERT will be part of the process and activities leading to the actual test.
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What is the significance?

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- As per UNESCO data, India has one of the lowest public expenditure rates on education per student.
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- India spends $264 per student per year compared to $1,800 spent by China.
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- The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2018 report also highlights falling reading and arithmetic learning levels among the secondary school-goers.
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- So India's participation in PISA allows for international comparisons of important learning outcomes.
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- PISA's outcome is considered the gold standard for evaluating the education system.
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- The outcomes of the test will be used to do more teacher training programmes and curricular reforms in India.
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- Learnings from the participation will help introduce competency based examination reforms in the school system and help move away from rote learning.
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Source: Business Standard, Financial Express

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