Prelim Bits 14-01-2022 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Henley Passport Index 2022

London-based global citizenship and residence advisory firm Henley & Partners has released the Henley Passport Index 2022.

- Created in 2006, the Henley Passport Index ranks the passports of countries according to the number of destinations their holders can visit without a prior visa.
- It ranks passports based on their power and mobility based on the analysis of exclusive data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA).
- [IATA maintains the world's largest and most accurate database of travel information.]
- It assumes only the passport of citizen of country and it is not for diplomatic, emergency or temporary in nature.
- **Score** - The index compares the visa-free access of 199 different passports to 227 travel destinations.
- If no visa is required, then a score with value = 1 is created for that passport.
- The same applies if you can obtain a visa on arrival, a visitor's permit, or an electronic travel authority (ETA) when entering the destination.
- Where a visa is required, or where a passport holder has to obtain a government-approved electronic visa (e-Visa) before departure, a score with value = 0 is assigned.
- **Findings** - Japan and Singapore top the list of being the most powerful passport in the world for 2022, as their citizens can travel to 192 countries visa-free or visa-on-arrival access destinations.
- Afghanistan (Rank 111) and Iraq (Rank 110) continue to be in the 'worst passports to hold' category.
- India has improved it ranks and is currently placed at 83rd position from the earlier 90th position in the most powerful passport report with a visa-free score of 60.
- India now has visa-free access to 60 destinations worldwide with Oman and Armenia being the latest additions.

Reference

1. https://www.livemint.com/news/india/worlds-most-powerful-passports-in-2022-where-india-stands-11641971330034.html
2. https://www.henleyglobal.com/passport-index

Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority

Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA) signs MoU with IGNOU for promoting Investor Education and Financial literacy among youth through Gyan Darshan channel.

- Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA) comes under the aegis of Ministry of Corporate Affairs.
- IEPFA has been established under Section 125 of the Companies Act 2013 for administration of the IEPF fund as per section 125 (3) of Companies Act 2013.
- It was set up with the objective to promote awareness amongst financial investors and educate them about unclaimed benefits of companies transferred to it under the Companies Act 2013 to the rightful claimants.

Reference

1. https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1789346
2. https://iepfclaim.in/investor-education-and-protection-fund-authority/?gclid=Cj0KCQiAuP-OBhDqARIsAD4XHpc9v15_Dcyls2Iz4m0hiC8WGpAtd3JTKvyBULiHqCACzvTzmMtyLZsaAnGfEALw_wcB

Ruminal Acidosis

Veterinarians say that feeding too much sweet Pongal is not good for cows, and causes Subacute Ruminal Acidosis (SARA).

- The sugary foods that reach the cow's stomach get fermented abnormally and cause a health issue in the cows and other ruminant animals called Subacute Ruminal Acidosis (SARA).
- In severe cases, it is called Ruminal Acidosis, which is a **bovine metabolic disease** that affects feedlot as well as dairy cattle.
- Acidosis is usually associated with the ingestion of large amounts of highly fermentable, carbohydrate-rich feeds, which results in the excessive production and accumulation of acids in the rumen.
- If too much acid is produced, it may even turn fatal.
- **Symptoms** - Liver abscesses, variable intake and/or milk production.
- Animals become sick because Ruminal Acidosis destroys millions of

microbes, consisting of a variety of protozoa, bacteria and other microbial organisms that reside in their stomach.
- These microbes help the cattle digest hay, grass and other feed and enable them to produce the tasty milk.
- **Treatment** - Appropriate treatment will be given based on the cow's microbe health in the stomach of the animal.
- But the animal will take days to recover; during the period of recovery, the milk yield will come down drastically.

Festival-related Ruminal Acidosis is mostly found in cattle in urban areas where people cross the limit while feeding the animals with sweet.

Reference

1. https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/too-much-sweet-pongal-not-good-for-cows-say-veterinarians/article38262804.ece
2. https://www.dsm.com/anh/challenges/supporting-animal-health/rumen-acidosis.html#ruminants

South China Sea

The U.S. State Department says that China's claims in the South China Sea is inconsistent with international law as reflected in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982.

- South China Sea is an arm of the western Pacific Ocean that borders the Southeast Asian mainland.
- South China Sea is connected by Taiwan Strait with the East China Sea and by Luzon Strait with the Philippine Sea.
- It is bounded by the Taiwan Strait, Taiwan, the Philippines, Borneo, the Gulf of Thailand, the Malay Peninsula, and the Asian mainland.

South China Sea and East China Sea together form the China Sea.

Dispute in the South China Sea go back decades. They involve Brunei, China, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam, all with contesting claims.

Area	Disputed between
Paracel Islands	China, Taiwan and Vietnam
Spratly Islands	China, Taiwan, Vietnam, Brunei and Philippines
Scarborough Shoal	Philippines, China and Taiwan

Reference

1. https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-international/us-denounces-chinas-maritime-claims/article38269932.ece
2. https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/beijings-south-china-sea-claims-inconsistent-with-international-law-us/articleshow/88888098.cms
3. https://www.britannica.com/place/South-China-Sea
4. https://www.forbes.com/sites/outofasia/2017/08/22/making-sense-of-the-south-china-sea-dispute/?sh=1300c77c1c3b

Advanced Variant of BrahMos

An extended range sea-to-sea variant of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile was test fired from the recently commissioned stealth guided missile destroyer INS Visakhapatnam.

- BRAHMOS is a universal long range supersonic cruise missile system.
- It is a joint collaboration between the DRDO (India) and NPOM (Russia).
- BRAHMOS has been designed with two variants for Anti-Ship and Land-Attack roles.
- The range of the missile was originally capped at 290 km as per obligations of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR).
- Following India's entry into the club in 2016, the range would be extended to 450 km and to 600km at a later stage.
- **Variants** - BRAHMOS Weapon Systems can be launched from land, sea, sub-sea and air (Sukhoi-30s) against surface and sea-based targets beyond RADAR horizons.
- Submarine launched version has capability of being launched from around 50 meters below the water surface.
- BrahMos equipped Sukhoi-30s have a range of 1,500 kms at a stretch without mid-air refuelling.
- The system has been inducted and is operational with the Indian Navy (IN) as well as the Indian Army (IA).
- To know more about the Brahmos Missile, click here.

INS Visakhapatnam is the first of four ingenuously designed and built Project-15B class stealth guided missile destroyers and was commissioned in 2021.

Reference

1. https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/brahmos-advanced-variant-test-fired/article38243965.ece
2. https://www.drdo.gov.in/brahmos-0
3. https://brahmos.com/

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