Prelim Bits 23-08-2019

Henley Passport Index

- Henley and Partners, a London-based global citizenship and residence advisory firm, prepares the Henley Passport Index.
- It ranks passports based on their power and mobility.
- The index gathers data from the International Air Transport Association (**IATA**) that manages inter-airline cooperation globally.
- It is updated in real time according to countries' visa policy changes and it covers 227 destinations and 199 passports.
- It ranked India at 86, down 5 places from 81 in 2018.
- Last year, an Indian passport holder had visa-free access to 60 countries. this year, it is down to 58.
- A value of 1 is attributed to the score,

1. Based on the sum of number of countries accessible by that passport holder without requiring pre-departure government approval for visa-types.
2. It includes a visitor's permit, visa on arrival or an electronic travel authority (ETA).
3. For instance in 2019, India's score is 58, which means an Indian passport holder has a visa-free access to 58 countries.
4. India ranks 86 in the list.

- A value of 0 is attributed to a score when,

1. A passport holder has to seek pre-departure government approval for visa-types including e-visa.

- Japan and Singapore, are ranked **1** and have a score of 189.
- Afghanistan holds the weakest passport, with a score and ranking of 25 and 109, respectively.
- Syria and Pakistan follow with rankings of 107 and 106 and scores of 29 and 30, respectively.
- The index assumes only the passport of citizen of country and it is not for diplomatic, emergency or temporary in nature.

Other Passport Index

- **Arton Passport Index**, which ranks United Arab Emirates's passport at

rank **1**.

- As per this index,

1. India has a mobility score (MS) of 67
2. Visa required for 131 destinations,
3. visa on arrival required for 41 destinations and
4. 26 visa free destinations.

- It uses UNDP HDI 2018 in its methodology to rank passports.
- It is powered by Arton Capital, a global financial advisory.

Adratiklit Boulahfa

- Scientists have described a new species of “Stegosaurus”, it dated back to 168 million years ago.
- It makes it the oldest known member of that group of dinosaurs ever known and it is named “Adratiklit boulahfa”.
- It is also the first “Stegosaurus” to be found in North Africa.
- Its remains were discovered in the Middle Atlas mountains of Morocco, London’s Natural History Museum (NHM).



- The name is derived from the words used by the ‘Berber’ (an ethnic group indigenous to North Africa) for,

  - Mountains (Adras),
  - Lizard (tiklit) and
  - the area where the specimen was found, (Boulahfa).

- It was armoured and herbivorous, and lived on the ancient supercontinent of Gondwana.
- Later it split into Africa, South America, Australia and Antarctica.
- Most Stegosaurus remains so far have been found in the northern hemisphere.
- Most known stegosaurs date from far later in the Jurassic period.
- It helps to increase our understanding of the evolution of this group of dinosaurs.
- When stegosaurs were alive, the world was divided into two supercontinents: Laurasia and Gondwana.
- Laurasia included the land masses that today make up most of the northern hemisphere’s continents.
- Gondwana eventually split into land masses including Africa, South America, Australia and Antarctica.
- ‘Stegosaurs’ were diverse and abundant in Laurasia. In contrast, their

remains are extremely rare in Gondwana.
- This, however may not mean that stegosaurs were not so common in Gondwana
- It may be due to the fact that Gondwana rock formations have been subject to far fewer excavations and detailed studies.

One Nation, One Ration Card scheme (ONORC)

- Recently, the government launched the pilot project for the inter-state portability of ration cards.

1. It was launched between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, and between Maharashtra and Gujarat.

- It is a part of 'One Nation, One Ration Card' scheme launched by Ministry for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.
- A ration card is issued to the head of the family depending on the number of members in a family and its financial status.
- It is used by households to get essential food grains at subsidised prices from designated ration shops under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS).
- Over the years, different types of ration cards were issued depending on the level of deprivation.
- In 2013, when the National Food Security Bill was passed, different ration cards were compressed to just 2,

1. "Priority" and "Antyodaya" (for the most poor).
2. The responsibility of identifying eligible families and issuing ration cards to them rests with the state/UT government.

- **Ration shops**

1. It can be privately owned or owned by cooperative societies or by the government.
2. Ownership licenses are issued by the concerned state government.
3. Presently, commodities including wheat, sugar, rice and kerosene are being allocated as part of the TPDS.
4. State governments have the discretion to provide additional commodities.

- Since ration cards are issued by state governments, the beneficiaries could procure food grains only from the designated ration shops within the concerned state.
- If a beneficiary were to shift to another state, he/she would need to apply for a new ration card in the second state.
- The ONORC scheme attempts to address this gap in TPDS delivery.

- The scheme has been launched keeping in mind the internal migration of our country.
- As per Census 2011, 4.1 crore people were inter-state migrants and 1.4crore people migrated (inter and intra-state) for employment.
- The government hopes to implement the scheme across India by June 2020.

Composite Water Management Index 2.0 (CWMI 2.0)

- NITI Aayog is set to release the second Round CWMI 2.0.
- 'Jal Shakti Ministry' launched the 'Jal Shakti Abhiyaan' a campaign for water conservation and water security.
- To supplement the efforts of Jal Shakti Ministry, NITI Aayog has prepared the Second Round of CWMI 2.0.
- The CWMI is an important tool to assess and improve the performance of States and Union Territories in efficient management of water resources.
- This has been done through a first of its kind water data collection exercise in partnership with,

1. Ministry of Jal Shakti,
2. Ministry of Rural Development and
3. all the States/ Union Territories.

- The index would provide useful information for the States and to Central Ministries to formulate and implement suitable strategies for better management of water resources.
- CWMI 2.0 ranks various states for the reference year 2017-18 as against the base year 2016-17.
- The Index and this associated report are expected to,

1. Establish a clear baseline and benchmark for state-level performance on key water indicators.
2. To uncover and explain how states have progressed on water issues over time.
3. To identify areas for deeper engagement and investment on the part of the states.

- The Index comprises 9 themes with 28 different indicators covering,

1. Groundwater and surface water restoration,
2. major and medium irrigation,
3. watershed development,
4. Participatory irrigation management,
5. On-farm water use,
6. Rural and urban water supply, and

7. Policy and governance.



- The earlier report was widely acknowledged and provided actionable guidance to States on where they were doing well and what they needed to focus on to secure their water future.

Source: PIB, The Indian Express

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