

13 January, 2022 Current Affairs

1. Henley Passport Index 2022: India Ranks 83rd in Q1



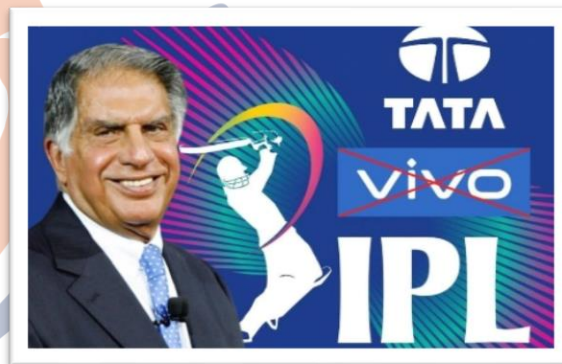
- India has improved its position by seven places to rank at 83rd place among 111 countries in the latest Henley Passport Index, released for Q1 of 2022.
- India ranked at 90th spot among 116 countries in Q4 of 2021 in October.
- The Indian passport has visa-free access to 60 destinations worldwide in Q1 2022, as compared to 58 destinations in Q4 of 2021.
- Oman and Armenia are the latest destinations where Indian passport holders can visit without obtaining a visa.
- Japan and Singapore have retained the joint top position in the Henley Global Mobility Report 2022 Q1.

2. 9th edition of North East Festival concludes



- The 9th edition of the North East Festival concluded in Guwahati, Assam. The main purpose of this festival is to promote and highlight the commercial and tourism potential of the North East region.
- The festival was organised in the format of a carnival with live music and dance performances, engaging the visitors throughout the day in the open area while serious discussions on business, economic, socio-political issues of the region engrossed the intellectuals in the conference halls.
- The festival aimed at integrated marketing of the entire North-East to attract tourists and investments.

3. Tata group replaces Chinese mobile manufacturer Vivo as IPL title sponsor



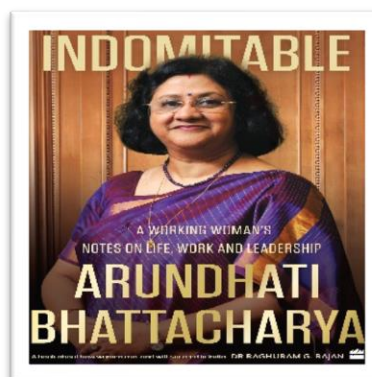
- The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has informed that Tata group has replaced Chinese mobile phone manufacturer Vivo as the title sponsor of the Indian Premier League (IPL) for the 2022 and 2023 seasons.
- The multinational conglomerate will pay Rs. 300 crore per year as the title sponsor of IPL for the next two seasons.
- This is about 60% of what Vivo would have paid.

4. Alikhan Smailov appointed as new Prime Minister of Kazakhstan



- His name was nominated by Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev on January 11, 2022. Prior to this, the 49-year-old Smailov served as the country's finance minister from 2018 to 2020.
- Kazakhstan, a Central Asian country and former Soviet republic, extends from the Caspian Sea in the west to the Altai Mountains at its eastern border with China and Russia. Its largest metropolis, Almaty, is a long-standing trading hub whose landmarks include Ascension Cathedral, a tsarist-era Russian Orthodox church, and the Central State Museum of Kazakhstan.
- **Kazakhstan Capital:** Nur-Sultan
- **Kazakhstan Currency:** Kazakhstani Tenge

5. A book on Arundhati Bhattacharya "Indomitable: A Working Woman's Notes on Life, Work and Leadership" released



- HarperCollins is set to publish “Indomitable: A Working Woman’s Notes on Life, Work and Leadership” the autobiography of Arundhati Bhattacharya, retired Indian banker and former first-ever woman Chairperson of the State Bank of India.
- Indomitable features the story of Arundhati Bhattacharya’s life as a banker and the difficulties she faced in the male-dominated sector.
- She is the chairperson and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of salesforce India, a cloud-based Software as a service (SaaS) company headquartered in San Francisco, California, United States of America.

6. Centre will hold 35.8% stakes of Vodafone Idea in the form of equity



- The Central Government of India is set to become the largest shareholder in Vodafone Idea. The company’s board approved the conversion of Rs 16,000 crores in interest into equity. India’s third-largest network Vi or Vodafone Idea Limited (VIL) has approved the interest on the spectrum and Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) dues into government equity.
- VIL accepted a four-year moratorium as well as accepted the equity conversion, which means the Indian government will own almost 35.8% of VIL’s stake followed by Vodafone Group which owns 28.5% and 17.8% by Aditya Birla Group.

7. Eminent rocket scientist S Somanath appointed new chairman of ISRO



- Eminent rocket scientist S Somanath has been appointed the new chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) as well as the Space Secretary.
- Mr. Somanath has succeeded K Sivan who completed his extended tenure as ISRO chief 14 January 2022.
- His appointment as the Space Secretary and the Space Commission Chairman is for a combined tenure of three years from the date of joining of the post.
- The post of the ISRO chairman, the Space Secretary and the Space Commission chief is usually held by one person only.
- Mr Somanath will be the 10th chairman of ISRO. He is at present Director of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC).
- Mr Somanath took charge as the VSSC's head on January 22, 2018, after a two and a half years stint as the Director of Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC), Valiamala, Thiruvananthapuram.
- Previously, he served as the Associate Director (Projects) of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre and also as the Project Director of GSLV Mk-III launch vehicle.
- Mr Somanath is an expert in the area of system engineering of launch vehicles.

8. Union Minister Subhas Sarkar launches Swachh Vidyalaya Puraskar 2021-22



- Minister of State for Education Subhas Sarkar on 12 January 2022 virtually launched "Swachh Vidyalaya Puraskar" 2021-2022.
- While launching the awards, Mr. Sarkar stressed on the importance of water, sanitation and hygiene in schools saying that these play a significant role in determining the health of students.
- These awards recognise and inspire those schools which have undertaken exemplary work in the field of water, sanitation and hygiene.
- At the National level, 40 schools has selected for awards "Swachh Vidyalaya Puraskar" 2021-2022.
- The award money for the schools has been enhanced this year from 50,000 to 60,000 per school under Samagra Shiksha scheme.

9. ISRO successfully conducts qualification tests of Cryogenic Engine for Gaganyaan



- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has successfully conducted qualification tests of the Cryogenic Engine for Gaganyaan human space programme.
- The ISRO Propulsion Complex in Tamil Nadu conducted the test for 720 seconds duration yesterday and met the test objectives. A release by ISRO said, the engine parameters were closely matching with the predictions during the entire duration of the test.
- This successful long duration test is a major milestone for the Human Space programme Gaganyaan.
- The successful test has ensured the reliability and robustness of the cryogenic engine for induction into the human rated launch vehicle for Gaganyaan.
- The engine will further undergo four more tests for a cumulative duration of 1810 seconds.
- Thereafter one more engine will undergo two short duration tests and one long duration test to complete the cryogenic engine qualification for the Gaganyaan programme.
- The Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) Mark III launch vehicle to be used for the Gaganyaan programme will use two cryogenic engines.

- This engine developed by ISRO is named as Vikas. The success of Vikas engine signals a great breakthrough in the Indian manned mission to outer space.

10. Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav releases India State of Forest Report 2021



- Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav on **13 January 2022** released "India State of Forest Report" 2021.
- In 2021, the total forest and tree cover in India is 80.9 million hectares.
- This is over 24.60 percent of the geographical area of the country.
- It is encouraging to note that 17 states and union territories have above 33 percent of the geographical area under forest cover.
- He congratulated the ministry and Forest Survey of India for bringing out this biennial report despite the COVID pandemic.