

GOVERNANCE**QS World University Rankings 2022**

QS World University Rankings 2022 shows that India's tally in the top 200 universities hasn't changed for the fifth straight year.

QS World University Rankings

- Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) is a leading global career and education network for ambitious professionals looking to further their personal and professional development.
- QS develops and successfully implements methods of comparative data collection and analysis used to highlight institutions' strengths.
- The 'QS World University Rankings' is an annual publication of university rankings which comprises the global overall and subject rankings.
- **Six parameters and their weightage for the evaluation:**
 1. Academic Reputation (40%)
 2. Employer Reputation (10%)
 3. Faculty/Student Ratio (20%)
 4. Citations per faculty (20%)
 5. International Faculty Ratio (5%)
 6. International Student Ratio (5%)

Key Points**Global Rankings:**

- **Top Ranks:**
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) of the US is the top university for the 10th consecutive year.
- The University of Oxford (UK) has risen to second rank for the first time since 2006, while Stanford University (US) and the University of Cambridge (UK) share third spot.
- **Asian Institutions:** Singapore's National University of Singapore and Nanyang Technological University, and China's Tsinghua University and Peking University, are the only Asian universities in the global top 20.

Indian Institutions:

- Overall, there are 22 Indian institutions in the top 1,000 list compared to 21 in the 2021 Rankings, with the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) in Guwahati, Kanpur, Kharagpur and Madras making major strides in rankings.
- Jawaharlal Nehru University has entered the top 1,000 of the rankings for the first time, as its new undergraduate engineering programme now makes it eligible for the rating.
- IIT Bombay maintained its position as the top Indian institution for the fourth consecutive year, although it fell five places in the global rankings to the joint 177th position.
- IIT Delhi (185 rank) overtook the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore (186 rank), giving India three institutions in the world's top 200. IISc was also declared the world's top research university by the indicator of most citations per faculty member, when adjusted for faculty size.

India's Performance:

- Indian universities have improved their performance on academic reputation metric and research impact, but continue to struggle on the teaching capacity metric.
- No Indian university ranks among the top 250 for faculty-student ratio.
- Poor performance on teaching capacity is not because of any drop in hiring, but rather an increased student intake mandated by the government to implement reservations for economically weaker sections.

Concerns:

- **No Objective Methodology:** The rankings do not accurately reflect the quality of education in India, as they are largely dependent on international perception factors. Half of the score comes from reputation indicators which are based on perception, rather than any objective methodology.
- **Manipulation:** It is being blamed that this year's improvement in scores was simply a manipulation of numbers by the rankings agency, driven by commercial pressures.

Related Indian Initiatives:

- **Institutions of Eminence (IoE) Scheme:** It is a government's scheme to provide the regulatory architecture for setting up or upgrading of 20 Institutions (10 from public sector and 10 from the private sector) as world-class teaching and research institutions called 'Institutions of Eminence'.

- **National Education Policy, 2020:**It aims to introduce several changes in the Indian education system - from the school to college level and make India a global knowledge superpower.
- **Impacting Research Innovation and Technology (IMPRINT):**It is a first-of-its-kind Pan-IIT and IISc joint initiative to develop a new education policy and a roadmap for research to solve major engineering and technology challenges that India must address and champion to enable, empower and embolden the nation for inclusive growth and self-reliance.
- **Uchhatar Avishkar Yojana (UAY):**It was announced with a view to promote innovation of a higher order that directly impacts the needs of the Industry and thereby improves the competitive edge of Indian manufacturing.

2.Surakshit Hum Surakshit Tum Abhiyan: Aspirational Districts

Recently, NITI Aayog and Piramal Foundation launched 'Surakshit Hum Surakshit Tum Abhiyan' in 112 aspirational districts.

Key Points

About:

- The campaign is under a special initiative – Aspirational Districts Collaborative – in which local leaders, civil societies and volunteers will work with the district administrations to address emerging issues across key focus areas of the Aspirational Districts Programme.
- It will be led by district magistrates in partnership with over 1000 local NGOs, which will enlist and train over 1 lakh volunteers to connect with patients through inbound/outbound calls.
- Volunteers will be trained to support 20 affected families each by educating caretakers to follow protocols, provide psycho-social support and timely updates about patients to the administration.

Objective:

- It is aimed to reach every affected person in these 112 districts.
- The campaign is expected to play a key role in district preparedness for managing nearly 70% of Covid-19 cases at home, reducing pressure on the health system, and stemming the spread of fear amongst the people.
- It will provide long-term support to India's poorest communities in the Aspirational Districts by addressing the lasting impact of Covid-19.

Aspirational Districts Programme

➤ **About:**

- It was launched in January 2018, the 'Transformation of Aspirational Districts' Programme (TADP).
- Aspirational Districts are those districts in India that are affected by poor socio-economic indicators.
- These are aspirational in the context, that improvement in these districts can lead to the overall improvement in human development in India.

- **Ministry:**At the Government of India level, the programme is anchored by NITI Aayog. In addition, individual Ministries have assumed responsibility to drive the progress of districts.

- **Objective:**To monitor the real-time progress of aspirational districts.

➤ **Focus Areas:**

- ADP is based on 49 indicators from the 5 identified thematic areas, which focuses closely on improving people's Health & Nutrition, Education, Agriculture & Water Resources, Financial Inclusion & Skill Development, and Basic Infrastructure.
- With States as the main drivers, ADP seeks to focus on the strength of each district, identify low-hanging fruits for immediate improvement, measure progress, and rank districts.

➤ **Broad Contours of the Programme (Triple-C):**

- Convergence (of Central & State Schemes) which brings together the horizontal and vertical tiers of the government.
- Collaboration (of Central, State level 'Prabhari' Officers & District Collectors) which enables impactful partnerships between government, market and civil society.
- Competition among districts driven by a spirit of the mass movement fosters accountability on district governments.

INTERNATIONAL RELATION

Joint Statement on Multilateralism: BRICS

The BRICS Foreign Ministers, in a recent meet, put out a joint statement on multilateralism. BRICS is an acronym for the grouping of the world's leading emerging economies, namely Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

Key Points

Multilateralism:

➤ **Meaning:**

- It is the process of organizing relations between groups of three or more states.
- It generally comprises certain qualitative elements or principles that shape the character of the arrangement or institution. These principles are:
 1. Indivisibility of interests among participants.
 2. Commitment to diffuse reciprocity, i.e. mutual exchange.
 3. System of dispute settlement intended to enforce a particular mode of behaviour.
- **Significance:** Multilateral institutions have played a significant role in post-war global governance and are arguably more stable than other forms of organization because the principles underlying them appear to be more durable and more able to adapt to external changes.

Need:

➤ **Increasing Incidences of Lawfare:**

1. It means the misuse of existing International and national laws by several countries (via forced technology requirements, intellectual property rights violations, and subsidies), to gain an unfair advantage over other countries. The imposition of extraterritorial sanction (under CAATSA) by the US has affected development in developing economies like India and China. Paralysis of the World Trade Organization (WTO), due to the tussle between the developed and developing world.

➤ **Dual Use of Global Supply Chain:**

1. Some of the developed countries have jurisdiction and control over global supply chains. Due to growing convergence between commercial interests and strategic goals, these supply chains enable them to have vast extraterritorial influence and have created new power asymmetries. China through BRI (Belt and Road Initiative) is enhancing its role in global economic governance. There are fears pertaining to dual-use (commercial viability and military application) of Industrial Revolution 4.0.

Lack of Global Framework:

1. The global community has not been able to come on a single platform or frame a Global Agenda on issues related to terrorism, Climate Change, cybersecurity etc.
2. Also, due to the lack of any global public health framework, Covid-19 has spread into a pandemic.

Six Principles laid out by BRICS for the task of Strengthening and Reforming the Multilateral System:

- First, it should make global governance more inclusive, representative and participatory to facilitate greater and more meaningful participation of developing and least developed countries.
- Second, it should be based on inclusive consultation and collaboration for the benefit of all.
- Third, it should make multilateral organisations more responsive, action-oriented and solution-oriented based on the norms and principles of international law and the spirit of mutual respect, justice, equality, and mutually beneficial cooperation.
- Fourth, it should use innovative and inclusive solutions, including digital and technological tools.
- Fifth, it should strengthen the capacities of individual States and international organizations.
- Sixth, it should promote people-centered international cooperation at the core. .

BRICS

- BRICS is an acronym for the grouping of the world's leading emerging economies, namely Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.
- In 2001, the British Economist Jim O'Neill coined the term BRIC to describe the four emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India, and China.
- The grouping was formalised during the first meeting of BRIC Foreign Ministers' in 2006.
- South Africa was invited to join BRIC in December 2010, after which the group adopted the acronym BRICS.
- India has assumed the BRICS Presidency from January 2021.
- **Structure**
- BRICS does not exist in the form of organization, but it is an annual summit between the supreme leaders of five nations.

- The Chairmanship of the forum is rotated annually among the members, in accordance with the acronym B-R-I-C-S.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**Supersonic Commercial Plane**

The US airline United has announced plans to buy 15 new supersonic airliners and "return supersonic speeds to aviation" in the year 2029. The Airline has agreed to purchase the Overture aircraft from Boom Supersonic (a Denver-based start-up), with the planes able to fly at Mach 1.7 faster than the speed of sound.

Key Points**Background:**

- Concorde, the British-French turbojet-powered commercial airliner, was the first aircraft to carry passengers at supersonic speed. Supersonic planes flew passengers from 1976 until 2003.
- But eventually had to discontinue, due to cost and other concerns.

Supersonic Plane:

- Supersonic aircraft are planes that can fly faster than the speed of sound. Usually, supersonic planes can travel at the speed of around 900 kmph, twice the speed of normal aircraft.
- The technology for supersonic flights is actually over 70 years old, but only recently has been used for commercial flying. Before 1976, when the first commercial supersonic flight took off, the planes were used entirely for military purposes.

Boom's Overture Supersonic Aircraft:

- The Overture aircraft would travel at the speed of Mach 1.7 or 1,805 kmph with a range of 4,250 nautical miles.
- In a single flight, it could carry 65 to 88 passengers and reach an altitude of 60,000 ft.
- Trial flights are scheduled to begin in 2026, with commercial use coming three years later.
- It will build upon Concorde's legacy through faster, more efficient and sustainable technology.
- The company has claimed to produce an eco-friendly aircraft with "net-zero carbon emissions", set to fly with 100% sustainable aviation fuel (SAF). Sustainable aviation fuels include biofuels and synthetic kerosene that are manufactured using renewable and sustainable materials.
- It aims for "zero overland noise."
 1. This essentially means that it will cruise at supersonic speeds only over water, ensuring that no sonic boom or excessive noise reaches the surfaces where people live.
 2. It will be equipped with advanced aerodynamics and carbon composite materials.
 3. This will be able to cut significant development and maintenance costs in ways which the Concorde planes could not.

Challenges with Supersonic Planes:

- **High Manufacturing Cost:** The costs of making "sustainable" supersonic planes are extremely high.
- **Environmental Cost:** The very nature of its flying using excessive amounts of fuel and energy is likely to have high environmental costs. Despite the use of sustainable fuels, the greenhouse gas emissions are not nullified. The plane consumes high amounts of fuel in order to take off, that too in a market where sustainable fuels aren't readily available.
- **Excessive Noise Pollution:** The speed of the planes result in producing excessive amounts of noise pollution in the environment. The "Sonic Boom" created by these planes feels like an explosion to the human ear. This, thus, limits where and when the supersonic planes can fly. They can only reach their actual speed until they are far enough from people and completely over the ocean.
- **Regulatory Approvals:** To fly such planes can be unsuccessful, especially for transatlantic flights. Getting clearance from regulators around the world would be a challenging task, since the supersonic planes in the past have already been flagged for these hurdles.
- **Too Costly:** It would not be economically feasible for everyone. Only the very rich can afford supersonic planes, as a ticket is likely to be way more costlier than a first class ticket of a regular plane.

IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM**CEO Water Mandate**

NTPC Ltd. has become a signatory to the United Nations' Global Compact's CEO Water Mandate. NTPC Ltd is India's largest power utility under the Ministry of Power.

Key Points**About:**

- It is a special initiative of the UN Secretary-General and the UN Global Compact, implemented in partnership with the Pacific Institute. It was established in 2007.
- It aims to demonstrate commitment and efforts of companies to better their water and sanitation agendas as part of long term Sustainable Development Goals.
- It is a global commitment platform for corporate water stewardship. Water stewardship is the use of water in ways that are socially equitable, environmentally sustainable, and economically beneficial.
- **It has six commitment areas:**
 1. Direct operations (i.e. Measuring and Reducing water use).
 2. Supply chain and watershed management.
 3. Collective action.
 4. Public policy.
 5. Community engagement.
 6. Transparency.

UN Global Compact:

- The United Nations Global Compact is a non-binding United Nations pact to encourage businesses worldwide to adopt sustainable and socially responsible policies, and to report on their implementation.
- It is a principle-based framework for businesses, stating ten principles in the areas of human rights, labor, the environment and anti-corruption.
- Under the Global Compact, companies are brought together with UN agencies, labor groups and civil society. Cities can join the Global Compact through the Cities Programme.
- India is also a part of the UN Global Compact.

Other Initiatives which make companies a part of Environmental Conservation:

- **Industrial Deep Decarbonization Initiative (IDDI):**
 - It is a global coalition of public and private organisations who are working to stimulate demand for low carbon industrial materials.
 - Coordinated by UNIDO (United Nations Development Industrial organisation), the IDDI is co-led by the UK and India.
- **Race to Zero Campaign:**
 - Race to Zero is the UN-backed global campaign rallying non-state actors – including companies, cities, regions, financial and educational institutions – to take rigorous and immediate action to halve global emissions by 2030 and deliver a healthier, fairer, zero-carbon world in time.

2. YUVA Scheme for Young Writers

Recently, the Indian Prime Minister announced the ‘Young, Upcoming and Versatile Authors’ (YUVA) scheme - a mentorship programme to train young authors.

Key Points**About:**

- The scheme is aimed at training 75 aspiring writers below 30 years, who are ready to express themselves and project India and its culture and literature globally.
- A total of 75 authors will be selected through an All India Contest at MyGov (Government of India’s Citizen Engagement Platform).
- A consolidated scholarship of Rs. 50,000 per month for a period of six months per author will be paid under the mentorship scheme.

Aim:

- To bring reading and authorship as a preferred profession at par with other job options.
- To impart a positive psychological push to the young minds amidst the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the mental health of children.

Implementation & Execution:

- **Implementing Agency:** The National Book Trust (under Ministry of Education) will ensure phase-wise execution of the Scheme.
- **Phase-I (Training):** NBT will organise training for three months for the selected candidates.
- **Phase-II (Promotion):**

1. The selected candidates will get to expand their understanding and hone their skills through interaction at various international events such as literary festivals, book fairs, virtual book fairs, cultural exchange programmes, etc.
2. A book or a series of books written by these young authors will be published by NBT and a royalty of 10% will be paid to the authors.
3. Their published books will also be translated into other Indian languages to ensure the exchange of culture and literature between different states, thereby promoting Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. Harnessing demographic dividend for country's growth would require rural-centric policies. Discuss.

Ans:

Introduction

India is one of the youngest countries in the world, where the proportion of the rural youth population forms the majority share in India's youth population. However, in recent years unemployment rates have been on the rise. Moreover, agriculture and allied activities constitute the bulk of the rural economy, its dominance has been dwindling over the years. Therefore, engaging rural youth in productive agricultural activities will help India to reap the benefits of the demographic dividend.

Body

Rural-Centric Policies to Harness Demographic Dividend

- **Promoting Agri-Tech:** There is a need to promote emerging Agri-technologies that have a huge potential for job creation. For example, agri-based e-commerce, information technology (IT)-linked agri-extension, seed technology, biotechnology, farm monitoring, Agri/rural fin-tech
- **Promoting Allied Agriculture Activities:** Horticultural, dairy production, and food processing (related to these sectors) offer much more opportunities for employment generation in rural areas.
- **Harvesting Solar Energy:** The idea of harvesting solar energy as the third crop on the farmer's field is also a viable option for increasing employability and profits for them.
- **Skilling Rural Youth:** There is a need for transition from agriculture-centric jobs towards manufacturing and service-sectors related jobs. In this context, the quality of training at industrial training institutes (ITIs)/polytechnics needs to be strengthened by redesigning the curriculum and upgrading them through appropriate budgetary allocations under the National Skill Development Fund.
- **Promoting Rural Tourism:** Rural tourism in India is still in the developing stage but once tapped to its full potential, it can open great vistas of mutual benefit for both the tourists as well as the rural people alike
- **Conclusion**
- In order to leverage this demographic dividend, there is a need to have a systematic approach to creating a suitable environment to develop opportunities for gainful employment of the rural youth.

DAILY QUIZ

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Electoral Bonds:

1. The electoral bonds were introduced with the Finance Bill, 2016.
2. The bonds are interest-free bearer instruments used to donate money anonymously to political parties.
3. The State Bank of India (SBI) is the only bank authorised to sell them.
4. SBI deposits bonds that a political party hasn't encashed within 15 days into the Prime Minister's CARES Fund.

Which of the given above statements is/are incorrect?

- a. 1, 2 and 3 only
- b. 2 and 3 only
- c. 2, 3 and 4 only
- d. 1 and 4 only

Q2. A report on long working hours and its impact were recently published by the

1. World Health Organization
2. International Labour Organization
3. World Economic Forum

Select the correct answer using the code below:

- a. 1 and 3 only
- b. 1 and 2 only**
- c. 2 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

Q3. The 'Gaza Strip' is located between Israel and:

- a. Jordan
- b. Syria
- c. Egypt**
- d. LebanonNeither 1 nor 2

Q4. The 'Oslo Accords' was in news recently, which is related to:

- a. Israel-Syria Conflict
- b. Israel-Palestine Conflict**
- c. Saudi Arabia- Iran Conflict
- d. China- Afghanistan Conflict

Q5. Which one of the following has released a report titled "Over 100 Years of Snow Leopard Research — a spatially explicit review of the state of knowledge in the snow leopard range"?

- a. International Union for Conservation of Nature.
- b. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.
- c. World Wildlife Fund for Nature.**
- d. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals



VANIK-IAS
Exclusive Coaching for UPSC/OPSC