

Important Reports for RBI Grade B Exam June 2023

1. India Justice Report 2022: Karnataka tops among 18 large States in delivery of justice.

- Karnataka ranks at the top of the 18 large and mid-sized Indian states, with a population of over one crore each, in justice delivery --police, judiciary, prisons, and legal aid -- in the country, as per the India Justice Report (IJR) 2022.
- **About India Justice Report (IJR) 2022:**
 - (a) The report has **tracked the performance of states in capacitating their justice delivery structures to effectively deliver mandated services and based on latest official statistics**, from authoritative government sources, it brought together otherwise siloed data on the four pillars of justice delivery - police, judiciary, prisons, and legal aid.
 - (b) **It is considered as first-of-its-kind national periodic reporting that ranked the capacity of states to deliver justice.**
 - (c) The IJR was initiated by **Tata Trusts in 2019**, and this is the **third edition**. Partners include Centre for Social Justice, Common Cause, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, DAKSH, TISS-Prayas, Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy and How India Lives, IJR's data partner.
 - (d) Each pillar was analysed through the prism of **budgets, human resources, workload, diversity, infrastructure, and trends** (intention to improve over a five-year period), against the state's own declared standards and benchmarks.
 - (e) The IJR also **separately assessed** the capacity of the **25 state human rights commissions**.
 - (f) The report stressed that **vacancy is an issue across police, prison staff, legal aid, and the judiciary**.
 - (g) **The report is based on 24-month quantitative research and the IJR 2022**, like the previous two, has tracked the performance of states in capacitating their justice delivery structures to effectively deliver mandated services.
 - (h) The findings of the report have a lot of importance for **governments, civil society and the business community** as well because it provided important stakeholders with objective data around which to fashion their own recommendations.
- **Key highlights of the report:**
 - (a) As of December 2022, **India had 19 judges per million population**, a backlog of **4.8 crore cases**, and **prisons were over-occupied at over 130 per cent**, more than two-thirds of the prisoners (77.1 percent) are undertrials, and vacancy among high court judges is at 30 percent.
 - (b) According to the India Justice Report (IJR) 2022, which ranks states on delivery of justice in the country, **Karnataka is at the top followed by Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Gujarat, and Andhra Pradesh**.
 - (c) **Uttar Pradesh is at rank 18 which is the lowest**, as per the report.
 - (d) In the list of seven **small states**, with a population less than one crore each, **Sikkim is at the top** followed by Arunachal Pradesh, and Tripura is at rank three and Goa is at rank seven.
 - (e) **For 1.4 billion people, India has about 20,076 judges** with about 22 per cent sanctioned posts vacant and vacancy among high court judges is at 30 per cent.

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- (f) The Law Commission had desired, as early as 1987, it should be 50 judges per million in a decade's time from then.
- (g) **In the police, women are only about 11.75 per cent**, despite their numbers doubling in the last decade and about 29 per cent of the officer positions are vacant.
- (h) The **police to population ratio is 152.8 per lakh**, whereas the international standard is **222**.
- (i) According to the report, **most states have not fully utilised funds given to them by the Centre** and their own increase in spending on the police, prisons, and judiciary has not kept pace with overall increase in state expenditure.
- (j) Persisting judge vacancies at both the High Court and district court level, coupled with a court hall shortage, led Rajasthan to slip to from 10th rank in IJR 2 to 15th in IJR 3.
- (k) **It added that the justice system as a whole remains affected by low budgets and India's per capita spend on free legal aid - which 80 per cent of the population is eligible for - is a meagre Rs 3.87 per annum.**
- (l) **Except for two Union Territories, Delhi and Chandigarh**, no state spends more than **1 per cent of its total annual expenditure on the judiciary.**
- (m) In the **small states** category, **Meghalaya improved its per capita spend**, filled up judge vacancies and increased the number of women in district courts, leading to its rise from seventh to fourth position with an overall score of 3.97.
- (n) The IJR 2022 observed that decades of continuing disrepair had intensified the justice delivery system's incapability to deliver timely justice, with the heaviest toll falling on the justice user.

2. Tiger Census 2022: India's tiger population increased by 200 in last four years.

- **The tiger population in India grew by 200 from 2018 to 2022, according to the fifth cycle of the All-India Tiger Estimation (2022) released April 9, 2023.**
- **The number of tigers in India was 3,167 in 2022, up from 2,967 in 2018.**
- The report was released at an event organised to commemorate 50 years of 'Project Tiger' in Karnataka's Mysuru by Prime Minister, who also launched the **International Big Cats Alliance** the same day.
- The **International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)** is a global initiative launched by India **to protect and conserve seven major big cats worldwide, including tigers and lions.**
- The Prime Minister also released a booklet named '**Amrit Kaal Ka Tiger Vision**', which outlines the **vision for tiger conservation in the next 25 years**. The booklet focuses on improving tiger habitats and protecting corridors to facilitate the movement of tigers between different habitats.
- '**Project Tiger**' is a **tiger conservation programme launched in India on April 1, 1973**, to protect and increase the tiger population in the country.
- **The tiger census covered forested habitats in 20 states of India.** Camera traps were set up at 32,588 locations and generated 47,081,881 photographs.

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- The aim of Project Tiger is to **protect and conserve tigers and their habitats while ensuring that local communities benefit from conservation efforts.**
- Initially, the project covered nine tiger reserves spread over 18,278 sq km. **Currently, there are 53 tiger reserves spanning more than 75,000 sq km, which is approximately 2.4 percent of India's geographical area.**
- **Key highlights of the report:**
 - (a) **The tiger population stood at 1,411 in 2006, 1,706 in 2010, 2,226 in 2014, 2,967 in 2018 and 3,167 in 2022.**
 - (b) The growth rate slowed to **6.7 percent** in the four years from 2018 to 2022, from around **33 percent** during 2014-2018.
 - (c) There has been a significant **increase in the tiger population in the Shivalik Hills and Gangetic Plains**, while tiger occupancy in Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, and Telangana showed a decline.
 - (d) **Tiger occupancy in the Western Ghats declined** and significant declines were observed in the Wayanad landscape and in the Biligiriranga Hills.
 - (e) **Madhya Pradesh has the highest tiger population in India with 526 tigers.**
 - (f) New areas in Uttar Pradesh (Suhelwa Wildlife Sanctuary) and northwest of Yamuna in Himachal Pradesh have recorded photographic evidence of tigers in the landscape
 - (g) **The highest number (1,161) of tigers were photographed in the Central Indian Highlands and Eastern Ghats in 2022.**
 - (h) The big cat was found to occupy several territorial areas of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, which were not occupied in 2018, according to the report.
 - (i) Tiger occupancy in Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Telangana showed a decline.
 - (j) A major decline in tiger occupancy was observed in Mookambika-Sharavathi-Sirsi; population remained stable in the Bhadra landscape.
 - (k) **As many as 194 tigers were captured by the camera traps in the North East Hills and Brahmaputra Plains, the report showed.** Although more than half of the landscape has forest cover, according to India State of Forest Report 2021, wildlife richness is limited to very few protected areas.
- **Recommendations of the report:**
 - (a) Despite having habitat connectivity, many of the protected areas and forested areas are devoid of tigers. **Better protection and augmentation of prey in protected areas** like Nameri, Buxa, Namdapha and Kamlang could help in the **increase of the tiger population.**
 - (b) **Conservation planning and execution** is needed to ensure ecologically viable economic development.
 - (c) **Trans-boundary cooperation and knowledge sharing between India and Bangladesh** to maintain ecological integrity of the landscape.

3. Mumbai among 19 cities with the best public transport in the world: Survey by Time Out

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- A survey by Time Out has rated Mumbai with having one of the best public transport systems out of 19 cities worldwide.
- Public transit is a broad term that includes subways, above-ground trains, buses, trams and even ferries.
- The city's Suburban Railways, which was the first passenger railway to be built by the British East India Company, forms the backbone of public transport for a **population of 12.5 million**.
- To identify the cities with the world's greatest public transport, **Time Out surveyed more than 20,000 city-dwellers around the world**.
- To make it onto Time Out's list, **at least 80% of polled residents had to agree that it's easy to get around their city via mass transportation**. There are other factors to consider when traveling by train or bus – namely, aesthetics.
- **Key highlights of the report:**
 - (a) **Berlin in Germany has been named the city with the most exceptional public transport system globally**, according to a survey conducted by Time Out, a London-based media outlet that specializes in the hospitality industry and identifies itself as a global brand committed to urban life.
 - (b) According to Time Out's data, **97 percent of Berliners had positive things to say about their city's mass transit infrastructure**, praising the network for being reliable, comfortable and safe.
 - (c) **Prague**, the capital of the Czech Republic, came in **second** place.
 - (d) **It was Tokyo, in third place, that had the highest showing for the continent**. The city's mass transit was applauded for being well-maintained, efficient and easy to navigate, even for non-Japanese speakers.
 - (e) **Maharashtra's capital city Mumbai featured in the nineteenth rank on the list. The Indian megacity recently introduced Chalo Pay, a new app that makes it easier to book and pay for transit tickets without needing to carry cash**.
 - (f) Mumbai, which is known for its local trains, has last year also introduced **double-decker electric buses**.
 - (g) According to Time Out, which published the list, **81 per cent of Mumbai locals say that they find the city's public transport system convenient to use**. Along with the trains, the list also mentions the buses, rickshaws, metro and taxis servicing the city.
 - (h) Further, **seven of the top 19 cities hailed for their mass transit systems are in Asia**. Most are in east Asia, with Singapore, Shanghai, and Taipei all picking up accolades.
 - (i) **Cities including Melbourne and Bangkok** with their fairytale trams and elevated skytrains failed to make a cut as per the survey which was based on a simple question **"is it easy to get around your city by public transport?"**

4. State Energy Efficiency Index (SEEI) 2021-22

- **About State Energy Efficiency Index:**
 - (a) **State Energy Efficiency Index (SEEI) 2021-22 has been released by the Union Minister of Power and New & Renewable Energy**.

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- (b) SEEI 2021-22 has an updated framework of **50 indicators aligned with national priorities to track outcomes and impacts of state-level energy efficiency initiatives.**
- (c) The index is developed by the **Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE)**, a statutory body under the Ministry of Power, in association with Alliance for an Energy-Efficient Economy (AEEE).
- (d) The Government of India set up the **Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) on 1st March 2002** under the provisions of the **Energy Conservation Act, 2001.**
- (e) The mission of the **Bureau of Energy Efficiency is to assist in developing policies and strategies with a thrust on self-regulation and market principles**, within the overall framework of the Energy Conservation Act, 2001 with the primary objective of reducing the energy intensity of the Indian economy.
- (f) **Programme-specific indicators have been included this year** to track outcomes and impacts of state-level energy efficiency initiatives.
- (g) The **index is designed to help track progress on state goals for energy savings and reduction in emission intensity.**
- (h) The SEEI improves data collection, enables cross-state collaboration, and develops energy efficiency program ideas.
- (i) It helps **states identify areas for improvement, learn from best practices, and adopt an economy-wide approach to energy efficiency implementation.** By prioritizing energy efficiency, it aims at driving decarbonisation efforts and achieve a more sustainable future.
- **Key findings of the report:**
 - (a) **Karnataka topped the State Energy Efficiency Index (SEEI) for the second year running with an overall score of 82.5 points out of 100** on impactful measures taken in improving energy efficiency in the state. The state stood first in the SEEI 2020 scoring 70 points out of 100.
 - (b) **Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Rajasthan, and Telangana follow in the front-runner category (>60 points) while Assam, Haryana, Maharashtra, and Punjab are in the achiever category (50-60 points).**
 - (c) **Chandigarh, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and Uttar Pradesh are in the contender category.**
 - (d) Second in the frontrunner category is **Andhra Pradesh with a score of 77.5**, which was largely driven by state's regulation **Eco Niwas Samhita (ENS) or Energy Conservation Building Codes (ECBC)** for residential buildings, 2022.
 - (e) **Eleven states have transport policies/ guidelines** to improve fuel efficiency. Compared to SEEI 2020, 13 more states have notified state electric mobility policies, bringing the total number of states with such policies to 22.
 - (f) **The 2022 report includes 3 states which have a dedicated budget for energy efficiency activities in the transport sector** while 11 have entities to develop capacity and provide technical expertise in transport.
 - (g) In all, **14 states have policies on electric vehicle (EV) procurement for government use**, up from 11 in SEEI 2020. State-run EV charging infrastructure is available in 9 states, and 27 states have ethanol-blended petrol available.

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- (h) Compared to SEEI 2020, **four new states have introduced policies for integrated water and energy savings in the agriculture sector**, bringing the total number of states with such policies to **nine** in the 2021-22 edition.
- (i) In the latest report, **28 states/ UTs improved their scores compared to SEEI 2020**. Out of these, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Chandigarh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Kerala, and Telangana improved their scores by over 15 points.
- (j) DISCOMs in 26 states have shared the status of feeder metering, whereas only 7 have shared the distribution transformer metering status. Thirteen states reported smart meter installation at the consumer level, and 28 have demand side management programs in place for utility consumers, with Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All being the most common.
- (k) **BEE has constituted a Perform, Achieve and Trade cell in each state having Designated Consumers to develop capacity and provide technical expertise on energy efficiency.**
- (l) Additionally, **6 states have allocated budgets for energy efficiency in industries**. A total of 356 industrial units in 24 states and union territories won energy conservation awards through state/national/industry association awards.

5. Freedom in the World Index 2023: Released by Freedom House.

- Freedom House, a global watchdog of human freedoms around the world released its report titled "**Freedom in the World 2023 Report**".
- In the report, Freedom House ranked **Tibet as the "World's least free country" along with South Sudan and Syria**.
- The report has been successively released for the **third year after Freedom House reports in 2021 and 2022 ranked Tibet at the bottom of a community of nations**.
- **About the report:**
 - (a) Since **1973**, **Freedom House has assessed the condition of political rights and civil liberties around the world**. It is used on a regular basis by policymakers, journalists, academics, activists, and many others.
 - (b) **The 2023 edition of Freedom in the World is the 50th in this series of annual comparative reports**.
 - (c) The Freedom in the World report is composed of numerical ratings and supporting descriptive texts for **195 countries and 15 territories**.
 - (d) **External analysts assess 210 countries and territories**, using a combination of on-the-ground research, consultations with local contacts, and information from news articles, nongovernmental organizations, governments, and a variety of other sources.
 - (e) **For each country and territory, Freedom in the World analyzes the electoral process, political pluralism and participation, the functioning of the government, freedom of expression and of belief, associational and organizational rights, the rule of law, and personal autonomy and individual rights**.
- **Key findings of the report:**
 - (a) In its study, **Freedom House said that Tibet's residents lacked both Chinese and Tibetan basic rights**.

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- (b) According to the report, Freedom House listed Tibet, South Sudan, and Syria as the “world’s least-free countries” in its report. (The UN Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights underlined in its Third Periodic Review report on March 6 that a number of concerns pertaining to the human rights of the Tibetan people require the international community’s serious and immediate attention.)
- (c) **Global freedom declined for the 17th consecutive year.**
- (d) **Moscow’s war of aggression led to devastating human rights atrocities in Ukraine.** New coups and other attempts to undermine representative government destabilized Burkina Faso, Tunisia, Peru, and Brazil.
- (e) The **gap between the number of countries that registered overall improvements in political rights and civil liberties and those that registered overall declines for 2022 was the narrowest** it has ever been through 17 years of global deterioration.
- (f) **Thirty-four countries made improvements**, and the tally of countries with declines, at 35, was the smallest recorded since the negative pattern began.
- (g) **The effects of corruption and a focus on political control at the expense of competence exposed the limits of the authoritarian models offered by Beijing, Moscow, Caracas, or Tehran.** Meanwhile, democratic alliances demonstrated solidarity and vigor.
- (h) **Infringement on freedom of expression** has long been a key driver of global democratic decline.
- (i) When Freedom House issued the first edition of its global survey in 1973, **44 of 148** countries were rated Free. Today, **84 of 195** countries are Free.
- (j) Over the past 50 years, consolidated democracies have not only emerged from deeply repressive environments but also proven to be **remarkably resilient in the face of new challenges.**
- (k) Although democratization has slowed and encountered setbacks, ordinary people around the world, including in Iran, China, and Cuba, continue to defend their rights against authoritarian encroachment.
- (l) In addition to these outright improvements, the year brought fresh evidence of the **limits of authoritarian power. Authoritarian influence at the United Nations and other international organizations faltered as democracies reaffirmed the value of multilateral engagement.**
- (m) **Ukrainians, with material support from many democracies, beat back a vast Russian army that was hampered by decades of corruption.**
- (n) In China, the ruling Communist Party’s onerous and politicized COVID-19 policies were abruptly dismantled in the face of public protests.
- (o) Among the more significant challenges has been a **widespread assault on the civil liberties that can be used to hold governments to account**—most notably, freedom of expression.
- (p) Over the last 17 years, the number of countries and territories that receive a score of 0 out of 4 on the report’s media freedom indicator has ballooned from **14 to 33.**
- (q) **Ongoing protests against repression in Iran, Cuba, China, and other authoritarian countries suggest that people’s desire for freedom is enduring, and that no setback should be regarded as permanent.**

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- (r) Democratic societies' international solidarity, commitment to shared values, and continued support for human rights defenders are crucial to ensuring that the next 50 years bring the world closer to a state of freedom for all.

6. Artificial Intelligence (AI) Index Report 2023: Released by Stanford University.

- **About the report:**

- (a) **The AI Index is an independent initiative at the Stanford Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence (HAI), led by the AI Index Steering Committee, an interdisciplinary group of experts from across academia and industry.**
- (b) **The annual report tracks, collates, distills, and visualizes data relating to artificial intelligence, enabling decision-makers to take meaningful action to advance AI responsibly and ethically with humans in mind.**
- (c) **The AI Index collaborates with many different organizations to track progress in artificial intelligence.**
- (d) **These organizations include: the Center for Security and Emerging Technology at Georgetown University, LinkedIn, NetBase Quid, Lightcast, and McKinsey.**
- (e) **The 2023 report also features more self-collected data and original analysis than ever before.**
- (f) **This year's report included new analysis on foundation models, including their geopolitics and training costs, the environmental impact of AI systems, and public opinion trends in AI.**
- (g) **The AI Index also broadened its tracking of global AI legislation from 25 countries in 2022 to 127 in 2023.**

- **Key findings of the report:**

- (a) **India ranked fifth in terms of investments received by startups offering artificial intelligence (AI)-based products and services last year.**
- (b) **Countries that are ahead of India in the list include the US, China, UK and Israel.**
- (c) **Total investments in AI startups in India stood at \$3.24 billion in 2022, placing it ahead of South Korea, Germany, Canada and Australia, among others.**
- (d) **The report also showed that AI startups in India received total funding of \$7.73 billion during 2013-2022, making it the sixth leading country with the most AI investments during the period.**
- (e) **Among Indian AI startups, Chennai-based conversational AI startup Uniphore raised \$400 million in a Series E funding round last year at a valuation of \$2.5 billion.**
- (f) **54 percent of researchers working on large language models (LLMs) were from American institutions. However, last year researchers from Canada, Germany, and India contributed to the development of LLMs for the first time.**
- (g) **Until 2014, most significant machine learning models were released by academia. Since then, industry has taken over. In 2022, there were 32 significant industry-produced machine learning models compared to just three produced by academia.**
- (h) **AI continued to post state-of-the-art results, but year-over-year improvement on many benchmarks continues to be marginal.**

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- (i) New research suggests that **AI systems can have serious environmental impacts**. According to Luccioni et al., 2022, BLOOM's training run emitted 25 times more carbon than a single air traveler on a one-way trip from New York to San Francisco.
- (j) **AI models are starting to rapidly accelerate scientific progress and in 2022 were used to aid hydrogen fusion, improve the efficiency of matrix manipulation, and generate new antibodies.**
- (k) **Global AI private investment was \$91.9 billion in 2022**, which represented a **26.7% decrease since 2021**. The total number of AI-related funding events as well as the number of newly funded AI companies likewise decreased. Still, **during the last decade as a whole, AI investment has significantly increased**. In 2022 the amount of private investment in AI was 18 times greater than it was in 2013.
- (l) Organizations that have adopted AI report realizing meaningful cost decreases and revenue increases.
- (m) An AI Index analysis of the **legislative records of 127 countries** shows that the number of bills containing **"Artificial intelligence"** that were passed into law grew from just **1 in 2016 to 37 in 2022**.

7. Banking on Climate Chaos report: Released by various environmental organisations.

- The world's **60 largest banks have spent \$5.5 trillion or Rs 4,49,36,265 crore on financing fossil fuel projects since 2016**, when the climate pact called Paris Agreement came into effect, according to a new report.
- The annual Banking on Climate Chaos report was released in April 2023 by environmental organisations like Rainforest Action Network, BankTrack, Indigenous Environmental Network, Oil Change International, Reclaim Finance, Sierra Club and Urgewald.
- The report's findings indirectly **highlight how phasing out fossil fuels integral to the global economy remains an uphill battle for the 190-odd signatories** to the agreement.
- The financing contravenes these banks' pledges to be on a path to Net Zero greenhouse emissions, as the window to avert the worst effects of the climate crisis rapidly closes.
- This report, **Banking on Climate Chaos 2023**, analyzes **fossil fuel financing and policies from the world's 60 largest commercial and investment banks**.
- In the nearly two years since the International Energy Agency announced that developing new oil and gas fields would restrict the chances of limiting global warming below 1.5°C, **most banks have failed to adopt stringent exclusion policies for companies expanding fossil fuels**.
- **Key findings of the report:**
 - (a) **The world's 60 largest banks have spent \$5.5 trillion or Rs 4,49,36,265 crore on financing fossil fuel projects since 2016.**
 - (b) The 10 banks that had the **highest spending on fossil fuels from 2016-2022** include **JPMorgan Chase & Co (\$434.15 billion)**, Citibank NA (\$332.9 billion), Wells Fargo & Company (\$318.2 billion), Bank of America Corporation (\$281.23 billion) and Royal Bank of Canada (\$253.98 billion).

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- (c) These were followed by Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group (\$219.64 billion), Barclays (\$190.58 billion), Mizuho Bank Ltd (\$189.61 billion), the Bank of Nova Scotia or Scotiabank (\$182.31 billion) and TD Bank NA (\$173.20 billion).
- (d) Furthermore, **banks in six countries dominate global financial spending on the fossil fuel sector**, including the United States, Canada, China, Japan, France and Great Britain. For example, **banks from the US provided 28 per cent of the total financing in 2022**.
- (e) Of the **\$673 billion spent on fossil fuel financing in just 2022**, the **Royal Bank of Canada provided \$42.1 billion and JPMorgan Chase provided \$39 billion in 2022**.
- (f) Among the **Asian Banks, Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group ranked high in terms of the financing** provided and lent \$29.5 billion in 2022. On the other hand, French bank BNP Paribas lent the highest amount in Europe, financing \$20.8 billion worth of fossil fuel entities in 2022.
- (g) **The world's top 100 oil, gas and coal energy companies received \$150 billion last year**. This included \$10.1 billion to TotalEnergies, \$12.8 billion to TC Energy, \$8.4 billion to ConocoPhillips and \$8.9 billion to Saudi Aramco, four of the world's most aggressive fossil fuel expanders.
- (h) **Energy companies like Occidental Petroleum Corp, Pioneer Natural Resources CO, Equinor Asa, Exxon Mobil Corp, Suncor Energy Inc and Shell PLC took nil financing from banks in 2022** despite taking massive loans the previous years.
- (i) This was primarily because fossil fuel companies raked in profits worth \$4 trillion in 2022 due to Russia's war against Ukraine.
- (j) **Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 upended global energy markets and set the stage for an unusual year in fossil fuel finance**. Fears of energy shortages, especially in Europe, drove up global oil and gas prices, a boon for companies otherwise facing long-term decline and stagnant profits.
- (k) **Of the 60 banks studied in the report, 47 have coal exclusion policies with weak commitments and 13 do not have coal exclusion policies at all**.
- (l) In 2023, Denmark's largest bank, **Danske Bank**, decided to **end fossil fuel refinancing of old oil and gas exploration and production projects and new long-term financing** for the same, particularly for companies that do not have a credible transition plan according to the Paris Agreement.
- (m) The hegemony of a few countries over the fossil fuel industry was also addressed by a new briefing by a research and advocacy organisation, Oil Change International.
- (n) **Group of seven (G7) public finance for fossil fuels was \$73 billion from 2020-2022** — equivalent to 2.6 times the clean energy financing at US **\$28.6 billion**, data showed. Canada and Japan were the top financiers during the same period.
- (o) **The G7 countries are the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy and Japan, which holds this year's presidency**.
- (p) The G7's **clean energy finance** is largely going to **wealthy countries instead of countries in the Global South**. **No low-income countries were in the top 15 recipients of clean finance** and only four were lower-middle-income countries.

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- (q) Clean energy finance has been largely stagnant, increasing only slightly from an annual average of \$7.3 billion from 2017-2019 to \$9.5 billion from 2020-2022.

8. State of the Global Climate 2022: Released by World Meteorological Organization.

- **About the report:**

- (a) The State of the Global Climate report is an annual publication from the **World Meteorological Organization (WMO)** that presents the **latest findings on the state of climate change worldwide**.
- (b) The report combines **observations from global networks of weather and climate stations, ocean buoys, and satellites, as well as modeling studies**, to provide a comprehensive assessment of the Earth's climate system.
- (c) The most recent report, released ahead of Earth Day 2023, reveals several **alarming trends that highlight the urgent need for climate action**.
- (d) The WMO State of the Global Climate report 2022 focuses on key climate indicators – **greenhouse gases, temperatures, sea level rise, ocean heat and acidification, sea ice and glaciers**.
- (e) The report shows the **planetary scale changes on land, in the ocean and in the atmosphere caused by record levels of heat-trapping greenhouse gases**.
- (f) For global temperature, **2015-2022 were the eight warmest on record** despite the cooling impact of a La Niña event for the past three years.

- **Key findings of the report:**

- (a) As greenhouse gas concentrations rise, so does global mean surface temperature (GMST). **GMST is measured using a combination of air temperature over land, and sea surface temperature in ocean areas, typically expressed as a difference from a baseline period**.
- (b) Rising global temperatures in 2022 contributed to more frequent and intense extreme weather events all around the world, according to the State of the Global Climate 2022 report.
- (c) These extreme weather events included **heatwaves, droughts, wildfires, cold extremes, heavy rain, flooding, tropical cyclones and other extreme storms such as tornadoes in the United States**.
- (d) In 2022, **the planet was 1.15 ± 0.13 °C warmer than the pre-industrial (1850-1900) average**, making the last 8 years the warmest on record.
- (e) Despite cooling La Niña conditions, **2022 was the 5th or 6th warmest year on record**, depending on the dataset used.
- (f) In 2022, large areas with above normal precipitation included large parts of **Asia and the south-west Pacific, areas of northern South America and the Caribbean, the eastern Sahel region, parts of southern Africa, Sudan, and eastern Europe**.
- (g) Meanwhile, **regions with rainfall deficits** included **western and central Europe, northwest Africa, parts of the Middle East, Central Asia and the Himalayas, Eastern Africa and Madagascar, central and southern South America, and central and western North America**.

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- (h) **Around 90% of the excess energy that accumulates in the earth system due to increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases, goes into the ocean.**
- (i) Ocean Heat Content measures how this energy warms the ocean at various depths down to 2000m deep.
- (j) It is expected that the **ocean will continue to warm well into the future** – a change which is irreversible on centennial to millennial time scales.
- (k) As water warms, it expands. Therefore, **rising ocean temperatures are a key contributor to rising sea levels around the globe.**
- (l) The **sea has risen approximately 3.4 ± 0.3 mm per year over the past 30 years** of the satellite altimeter record.
- (m) The **ocean absorbs around 25% of the annual emissions of anthropogenic CO₂** to the atmosphere, helping to alleviate the impacts of climate change but at a high ecological cost to the ocean.
- (n) Global mean ocean **pH has been steadily declining** at rates not seen for at least the past 26,000 years.
- (o) **Glaciers around the world are melting at an alarming rate**, with reference glaciers showing an average decrease in thickness of over 1.3 meters between October 2021 and October 2022.
- (p) **East Africa has been suffering from drought**, with below-average rainfall in five consecutive wet seasons, resulting in over 20 million people facing acute food insecurity in the region as of January 2023.
- (q) **Pakistan experienced extensive flooding in July and August**, with over 1,700 deaths, 33 million people affected, and almost 8 million people displaced, causing damage and economic losses of US\$ 30 billion.
- (r) **Food insecurity affected 2.3 billion people in 2021, with 924 million facing severe food insecurity, and projections estimated that 767.9 million people would face undernourishment in 2021.**
- (s) **Heatwaves in India and Pakistan in 2022 led to a decline in crop yields and threatened the availability and stability of staple foods.**
- (t) **China suffered from its most extensive and long-lasting heatwave on record**, which extended from mid-June to the end of August, according to the report.
- (u) **Tunisia recorded its hottest June, while a new temperature record of 49.1°C was set at Smara (Morocco) on July 10.**
- (v) All these extreme weather events have happened in a world that was 1.15°C warmer than the pre-industrial average. **As the greenhouse gas emissions keep rising and with the looming El Niño in the coming summer, more such events will become likely.**

9. The State of the World's Children 2023: "For Every Child, Vaccination".

- **About the report:**
 - (a) UNICEF's global flagship report "The State of the World's Children 2023: For Every Child, Vaccination" emphasizes the **significance of childhood immunisation.**
 - (b) **India is recognized as one of the countries with the highest vaccine confidence in the world, as per the report.**

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- (c) The world is facing a red alert for children's health: Routine vaccination coverage dropped sharply during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- (d) UNICEF's latest report, The State of the World's Children 2023: For every child, vaccination, **explores the reasons behind this red alert and the steps must be taken to make sure that no child is left behind.**
- (e) Immunization is one of humanity's most remarkable success stories, allowing children to live healthy lives and contribute to society. Reaching the last child with immunization is a key marker of equity that benefits not only the child but also the whole community.
- **Key highlights of the report:**
- (a) **China, India, and Mexico were among the countries that saw an improvement in vaccine perception**, according to the report. This positive trend indicates the success of political and social commitment to vaccination drives.
- (b) **One in five children worldwide are now zero-dose or under-vaccinated**, meaning they've missed out entirely or partially on routine immunization. Those are levels we've not seen since 2008.
- (c) **The pandemic interrupted childhood vaccination almost everywhere, resulting in the largest sustained backslide in childhood immunization in 30 years.** Factors such as access to misleading information and declining trust in vaccine efficacy have contributed to the growing threat of vaccine hesitancy.
- (d) **While the vaccine confidence marks a decline in over a third of the studied countries, e.g., in the Republic of Korea, Papua New Guinea, Ghana, Senegal and Japan after the start of the pandemic. The report warns of the growing threat of vaccine hesitancy due to factors such as access to misleading information and declining trust in vaccine efficacy.**
- (e) The decline in vaccine confidence globally comes amid the largest sustained backslide in childhood immunization in 30 years, fuelled by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- (f) **The pandemic interrupted childhood vaccination almost everywhere**, especially due to intense demands on health systems, the diversion of immunization resources to COVID-19 vaccination, health worker shortages and stay-at-home measures.
- (g) **The Report warns a total of 67 million children missed out on vaccinations between 2019 and 2021, with vaccination coverage levels decreasing in 112 countries.**
- (h) In 2022, for example, the number of measles cases was more than double the total in the previous year.
- (i) **The number of children paralysed by polio was up 16 per cent year-on-year in 2022.**
- (j) When comparing the 2019 to 2021 period with the previous three-year period, there was an eight-fold increase in the number of children paralysed by polio, highlighting the need to ensure vaccination efforts are sustained.
- (k) **Despite an increase in the number of zero-dose (unreached or missed out) children to three million – between 2020 and 2021 – during the pandemic, India was able to arrest the backslide and bring down the number to 2.7 million, which represents a smaller proportion of the India's under -5 child population given its size and the world's largest birth cohort.**

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- (l) This achievement can be attributed to sustained evidence-based catch-up campaigns initiated by the government, including the **Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI), continued provision of comprehensive Primary Health Care services, a strong Routine Immunization programme and dedicated health workers.**
- (m) New data produced for the report by the International Center for Equity in Health found that in the poorest households, **1 in 5 children are zero-dose while in the wealthiest, it is just 1 in 20.**
- (n) **It found unvaccinated children often live in hard-to-reach communities such as rural areas or urban slums.** They often have mothers who have not been able to go to school and who are given little say in family decisions.
- **Key recommendations of the report:**
 - (a) **Catch-up on the vaccination of children missed during the pandemic.**
 - (b) **67 million children missed out entirely or partially on routine immunization during the pandemic. These children are moving past the age when they would normally be vaccinated.**
 - (c) **Urgent action and tailored immunization campaigns are needed to reach them,** backed by sufficient financial support for the countries most affected. These **catch-up campaigns** are necessary in addition to strengthening existing routine immunization programmes that are embedded in primary health care.
 - (d) **Identify zero-dose and under-vaccinated children** and understand their needs.
 - (e) **Identify children in urban areas and access children in rural areas** who aren't being reached.
 - (f) Meet the challenges in **emergency and conflict settings.**
 - (g) **Innovative approaches** must be adopted to inform and educate caregivers, especially mothers. Services must be tailored to meet the needs of time-pressed caregivers.

10. 2023 Index of Economic Freedom: Released by the Heritage Foundation.

- **About the Index of Economic Freedom:**
 - (a) An index of economic freedom compares the jurisdictions against each other for various aspects, such as **trade freedom, judicial effectiveness, and tax burden.**
 - (b) **An index of economic freedom measures and ranks countries according to relevant standards judged by the creators of the index.**
 - (c) These factors may be weighed for their influence on economic freedom and collated into a single score for ranking.
 - (d) **The ranking can be assigned based on a country or can contract to smaller sub-national units like states.**
 - (e) The Index covers **12 freedoms – from property rights to financial freedom – in 184 countries.**
 - (f) **Each of the twelve economic freedoms within these categories is graded on a scale of 0 to 100.** A country's overall score is derived by averaging these twelve economic freedoms, with equal weight being given to each.
 - (g) Indices of economic freedom consider free-market economies at the high-end of the spectrum for analysis. There is a firm correlation between both the earnings a country's citizens enjoy and the index of economic freedom ranking of such country.

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- **The 2023 Index — the 29th edition — includes:**
 - Updated economic freedom scores and macroeconomic data for 184 economies.
 - Easy-to-read cross-country comparisons that highlight why economic freedom matters.
- **Key findings of the report:**
 - (a) The 2023 Index, which considers economic policies and conditions in 184 sovereign countries from July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022, reveals **a world economy that, taken as a whole, is “mostly unfree.”**
 - (b) **Singapore maintained its status as the world’s freest economy**, but both New Zealand and Australia lost their top-tier economic freedom status, with the latter no longer among the world’s 10 freest economies.
 - (c) **Switzerland is now the world’s second freest economy**, followed by Ireland, and Taiwan has moved up to the fifth slot.
 - (d) **The 2023 Index of Economic Freedom gave India a total score of 59.8 out of 100, which translates to a 59.8% performance on the index.** India’s total score on the 2023 Index is its lowest in six years.
 - (e) In the Index, **India is placed at the 121st spot out of 184 nations.**
 - (f) India is categorized as **“Mostly Unfree”** in terms of the economic freedom its inhabitants enjoy.
 - (g) Regrettably, **the global average economic freedom score has fallen from the previous year’s 60.0 to 59.3—the lowest it has been over the past two decades.**
 - (h) Globally, **fiscal soundness has deteriorated significantly.** Rising deficits and mounting public debt in many countries have undermined and will likely further undercut their overall productivity growth and ultimately slow economic vitality.
 - (i) Despite the notable downturn in global economic freedom, there continues to be a clear relationship between improving economic freedom and achieving higher economic dynamism as well as greater overall well-being.
 - (j) **The standard of living, measured by incomes per capita, is much higher in economically freer countries.**
 - (k) **Countries rated “free,” “mostly free,” or “moderately free” in the 2023 Index generate incomes that are more than double the average levels in other countries and more than three times higher than the incomes of people living in economically “repressed” countries.**
 - (l) **Only four countries** (down from seven in the previous year) recorded economic freedom scores of **80 or more**, putting them in the ranks of the economically “free”.
 - (m) **23 countries earned a designation of “mostly free” by recording scores of 70.0 to 79.9;** and an additional 56 countries were considered at least “moderately free” with scores of 60.0 to 69.9.
 - (n) A total of **83 countries**, or slightly less than half of the 176 countries graded in the 2023 Index, have institutional environments in which individuals and private enterprises benefit from at least a **moderate degree of economic freedom** in the pursuit of greater economic development and prosperity.
 - (o) **More than 50 percent of the countries graded in the 2023 Index (93 economies) have registered economic freedom scores below 60.** Of those, 65 economies are considered “mostly unfree” (Scores of 50.0 to 59.9), and 28 countries, including China and Iran, are in the economically “repressed” category.

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- (p) Especially notable is the continuing decline within the “mostly free” category of the United States, whose score plummeted to 70.6, its lowest level ever in the 29-year history of the Index.
- (q) The U.S. is now the world’s 25th freest economy. The major causative factor in the erosion of America’s economic freedom is excessive government spending, which has resulted in mounting deficit and debt burdens.
- (r) All in all, the economy remains uneven and uncertain with strikingly different outcomes across countries, sectors, and demographic groups. Output and employment gaps remain in many countries, particularly in emerging markets and developing economies, suggesting that countries face vastly different policy challenges in recovery and beyond.

11. First ever census on water bodies in India: Released by the Ministry of Jal Shakti.

- For the first time in the history of the country, the Ministry of Jal Shakti has conducted the first-ever census of water bodies across the nation.
- The census provides a comprehensive inventory of India’s water resources, including natural and man-made water bodies like ponds, tanks, lakes, and more, and to collect data on the encroachment of water bodies.
- The census also highlighted disparities between rural and urban areas and varying levels of encroachment and revealed crucial insights into the country’s water resources.
- The census was launched under the centrally sponsored scheme, “Irrigation Census” in convergence with the 6th minor Irrigation Census in order to have a comprehensive national database of all water bodies.
- The information on all important aspects of the water bodies including their type, condition, status of encroachments, use, storage capacity, status of filling up of storage, etc was collected.
- It covered all the water bodies located in rural as well as urban areas that are in-use or not in-use.
- The census also took into account all type of uses of water bodies like irrigation, industry, pisciculture, domestic/drinking, recreation, religious, ground water recharge etc.
- The census was conducted in 2018-19, and enumerated more than 2.4 million water bodies across all states and Union Territories.
- Census has been successfully completed and the All India and State-wise reports have been published.
- In this census, water bodies are defined as follows.
 - All natural or man-made units bounded on all sides with some or no masonry work used for storing water for irrigation or other purposes (e.g., industrial, pisciculture, domestic/drinking, recreation, religious, ground water recharge etc.) will be treated as water bodies in this Census.
 - These are usually of various types known by different names like tank, reservoirs, ponds etc.
 - A structure where water from ice-melt, streams, springs, rain or drainage of water from residential or other areas is accumulated or water is stored by diversion from a stream, nala or river will also be treated as water body.

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- The objective of the census of water bodies is to **develop a national database for all water bodies by collecting information on all important aspects** of the subject including their size, condition, status of encroachments, use, storage capacity, status of filling up of storage etc.
- **The key findings of the census are:**
 - (a) **24,24,540 water bodies have been enumerated in the country, out of which 97.1 percent (23,55,055) are in rural areas and only 2.9 percent (69,485) are in urban areas.**
 - (b) **Top 05 States in terms of number of water bodies are West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Assam which constitute around 63 percent of the total water bodies in the country.**
 - (c) **Top 05 States in terms of number of water bodies in urban areas are West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh and Tripura, whereas in rural areas, top 05 States are West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Assam.**
 - (d) **Maharashtra is the leading state in implementing water conservation schemes, according to the census.**
 - (e) **59.5 percent of water bodies are ponds, followed by tanks (15.7 percent), reservoirs (12.1 percent), Water conservation schemes/percolation tanks/check dams (9.3 percent), lakes (0.9 percent) and others (2.5 percent).**
 - (f) **55.2 percent of water bodies are owned by private entities whereas 44.8 percent of water bodies are in the domain of public ownership.**
 - (g) **Out of all public owned water bodies, maximum water bodies are owned by Panchayats, followed by State Irrigation.**
 - (h) **Out of all privately owned water bodies, maximum water bodies are in hands of Individual owner/farmer followed by group of individuals and other private bodies.**
 - (i) **Top 05 States which lead in the private owned water bodies are West Bengal, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Jharkhand.**
 - (j) **Out of all 'in use' water bodies, major water bodies are reported to be used in pisciculture followed by Irrigation.**
 - (k) **Top 05 States wherein major use of water bodies is in pisciculture are West Bengal, Assam, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh.**
 - (l) **Top 05 States wherein major use of water bodies is in irrigation are Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, West Bengal and Gujarat.**
 - (m) **78 percent water bodies are man-made water bodies whereas 22 percent are natural water bodies. 1.6 percent (38,496) water bodies out of all the enumerated water bodies are reported to be encroached out of which 95.4 percent are in rural areas and remaining 4.6 percent in urban areas.**
 - (n) **The information on water spread area was reported in respect of 23,37,638 water bodies. Out of these water bodies, 72.4 percent have water spread area less than 0.5 hectare, 13.4 percent have water spread area between 0.5-1 hectare, 11.1 percent have water spread area between 1-5 hectares and remaining 3.1 percent of water bodies have water spread area more than 5 hectares.**

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12. The Status of Women in Agrifood Systems Report: Released by the Food and Agriculture Organization.

- **About the report:**

- (a) The **Status of Women in Agrifood Systems** report provides the latest data, lessons learned and recommendations for policy and decision makers about gender in agrifood systems.
- (b) It reviews and analyzes women's opportunities and constraints in economic and social processes, while taking stock and assessing progress made in closing a series of gender gaps.
- (c) It provides compelling examples of policies and programmes with a review of what has worked, and specific recommendations about how to do more, and better.
- (d) The report shows **how increasing women's empowerment and gender equality in agrifood systems enhances women's well-being and the well-being of their households**, creating opportunities for economic growth, greater incomes, productivity and resilience.
- (e) The report comes more than a decade after the publication of the State of food and agriculture (SOFA) 2010–11: Women in agriculture – Closing the gender gap for development.
- (f) The status of women in agrifood systems reflects not only on how gender equality and women's empowerment are central to the transition towards sustainable and resilient agrifood systems but also on how the transformation of agrifood systems can contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment.

- **Key findings of the report:**

- (a) **Agrifood systems are a major employer of women globally** and constitute a more important source of livelihood for women than for men in many countries.
- (b) Agricultural and food systems provide significant employment opportunities for both men and women worldwide, with **36 percent of working women and 38 percent of working men being employed in this sector**.
- (c) Despite the importance of agrifood systems for women's livelihoods and the welfare of their families, women's roles tend to be marginalized and their working conditions are likely to be worse than men's – irregular, informal, part-time, low-skilled, labour-intensive and thus vulnerable.
- (d) **Women's access to land, inputs, services, finance and digital technology** – which is key to working in agrifood systems – **continues to lag behind men**.
- (e) Women make up a significant proportion of the agricultural workforce, **accounting for around 40 percent of the global agricultural labor force**.
- (f) Women are more likely to work part-time or in vulnerable positions in this sector, and **there is a 24 percent gender gap in land productivity between farms managed by men and women of the same size**.
- (g) In sub-Saharan Africa, **66 percent of women's employment is in agrifood systems**, compared with 60 percent of men's.
- (h) In southern Asia, **women overwhelmingly work in agrifood systems** (71 percent of women, versus 47 percent of men), although fewer women than men are in the labour force.

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- (i) **Agrifood systems are a key source of employment for young women, especially those aged 15–24.**
- (j) Women make up well over 50 percent of the agricultural labour force in many sub-Saharan African countries. About half of the labour force in agriculture is female in several countries in Southeast Asia, including Cambodia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Viet Nam.
- (k) On average, **women earn 18.4 percent less than men in wage employment in agriculture**; this means that women receive 82 cents for every dollar earned by men.
- (l) Women in agricultural households remain significantly disadvantaged in landownership compared with men; **half the countries reporting on Sustainable Development Goal Indicator 5 have weak legal protections for women’s land rights.**
- (m) The percentage of men who have ownership or secure tenure rights over agricultural land is twice that of women in more than 40 percent of the countries that have reported on women’s landownership.
- (n) **The gender gap in access to mobile internet in low- and middle-income countries fell from 25 percent to 16 percent between 2017 and 2021**, and the gender gap in access to bank accounts narrowed from 9 to 6 percentage points.
- (o) **Women are as likely as men to adopt new technologies** when the necessary enabling factors are put in place and they have equal access to complementary resources.
- (p) In the **fisheries and aquaculture primary sector, 21 percent of all workers are women**, and almost half of all workers in the entire aquatic value chain are women.
- **Key recommendations of the report:**
 - (a) Significant advances in measuring women’s empowerment in agrifood systems over the past decade show that **women’s empowerment has a positive impact on agricultural production, food security, diets and child nutrition.**
 - (b) Increasing attention has been placed on addressing constraints created by discriminatory social norms and gender-blind policies and laws in agrifood systems. **To do this effectively, men, boys and community leaders must all be engaged in gender-transformative processes.**
 - (c) **Reducing gender inequalities in livelihoods, access to resources and resilience in agrifood systems** is a critical pathway towards gender equality and women’s empowerment and towards more just and sustainable agrifood systems.
 - (d) It is also critical to **improve productivity and close gaps related to access to assets and resources.**
 - (e) **Closing the gender gaps** in landownership and secure tenure is particularly important as secure land rights have multiple positive impacts.
 - (f) **Localized interventions which address multiple inequalities that have been proven to close gender gaps and empower women in agrifood systems should be carefully scaled up**, taking into consideration the local context.

13. Global Unicorn Index 2023: Released by Hurun Research Institute.

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- **About the index:**

- The Hurun Global Unicorn Index 2023 showcases insights into the economy of the future by featuring unicorns from around the world that have remained on the path of innovation and thereby bolstered the economy.**
- The report also provides an analysis of the startup landscape of the countries these unicorns are based in.
- It brings to the fore trends and opportunities in the startup world, identifying broad spaces that are attracting the world's top talent.
- The Global Unicorn Index 2023 is a ranking of the world's start-ups founded in the 2000s, worth at least a billion dollars and not yet listed on a public exchange.**
- The cut-off was **31 December 2022**, with significant changes in valuation updated up to the date of release. **Hurun Research has been tracking unicorns since 2017.**
- This report includes the Most Successful Unicorn Investors in the World 2023, a ranking of the 100 most successful unicorn investors, based on the number of unicorns they have invested in.**

- **Key findings of the report:**

- Hurun Research found **1,361 unicorns in the world, based in 48 countries and 271 cities.**
- 508 new entrants and 133 were 'demoted' as their valuation no longer made US \$1 bn. 72 were 'promoted', of which 57 went IPO and 15 were acquired.**
- The world's unicorns are disrupting financial services, business management solutions and healthcare.
- The **total value of all known unicorns in the world is US \$4.3 trillion**, more than the GDP of Germany, double that of unicorns pre-Covid.
- 79 percent sell software and services, such as FinTech, SaaS, E-commerce and AI**, whilst 21 percent have a physical product, led by New Energy, Biotech, F&B and Semiconductors.
- Since the pandemic, **the number of unicorns has surged from 494 pre-Covid to 1361 today**, and the total value has risen from **US \$1.7 trillion to US \$4.3 trillion.**
- The number of countries with at least one unicorn has doubled from 24 to 48**, whilst the number of cities with at least one unicorn has grown from 118 to 271.
- Unicorns were founded nine years ago in 2014 on average.**
- Unicorn founders are 43 years-old on average**, meaning that they founded their unicorn when they were 34.
- Computer Science and Business Studies** were the most common degrees pursued by the founders.
- One in five unicorns have at least one co-founder from outside the country of origin of the unicorn.**
- The USA, especially Silicon Valley, attracted the most unicorn founders from abroad**, followed by Europe.
- India led the way for emigrant unicorn founders**, followed by China, Israel and Russia
- Of this year's Top 10, 5 are from China, 3 from the USA, and 1 each from the UK and UAE.

- **India specific findings:**

- India continues to be the world's third-largest country with the highest number of unicorns, following the US and China.**

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- (b) **BYJU'S is also one of the top 10 unicorn startups worldwide** that experienced a significant increase in valuation since the pre-COVID-19 era, with a valuation of \$22 billion.
- (c) Meanwhile, **Swiggy and Dream11 are both valued at \$8 billion each**, according to the list.
- (d) The report mentioned that the number of **Indian unicorns established outside of India is higher than those located within India**.
- (e) The list further disclosed that **India has a total of 138 unicorns**, out of which 70 were established by Indian co-founders but have their headquarters located outside India, while 68 are based in India.
- (f) Hurun's report also revealed that **India ranks third in terms of the number of gazelles**, which are startups established in the 2000s and valued at over \$500 million, not yet listed, and likely to become unicorns within three years.
- (g) However, when it comes to the **Hurun Global 500 companies**, which is a list of the most valuable non-state-controlled businesses globally, **India ranks fifth**.
- (h) According to the report, **China and India have a higher proportion of gazelles and unicorns**, which is expected to result in a higher number of Hurun Global 500 companies over the next five years.
- (i) Conversely, **countries such as France, Canada, and Australia, with a lower proportion, are likely to lose their positions on the Hurun Global 500 list**.
- (j) In terms of unicorn investors, **Sequoia Capital, Tiger Global Management, and SoftBank are the top three, having invested in 238, 179, and 168 unicorn startups**, respectively.

14. Chennai ranks among top 5 in digital payment transactions in 2022: Worldline India report.

- **Key highlights of the report:**
 - (a) **Chennai has emerged as one of the top digital payment transactions cities in 2022 in the country**, a report by payment services firm Worldline India.
 - (b) **Chennai would be one of the leading cities in the country for digital payment transactions in 2022**.
 - (c) The city in terms of volume has made **14.3 million transactions with a value of USD 35.5 billion**, Worldline India said in its report.
 - (d) **Bengaluru emerged on top with 29 million transactions worth USD 65 billion followed by New Delhi 19.6 million transactions worth USD 50 billion, Mumbai (18.7 million transactions worth USD 49.5 billion), Pune (15 million transactions valued at USD 32.8 billion)**.
 - (e) According to the report, in 2022, **frequently visited physical merchant categories like grocery stores, restaurants, clothing and apparel, pharmacy, household appliances together accounted for over 43 per cent in terms of volume and about 40 per cent in terms of value**, across the country.
 - (f) E-commerce space, gaming, utility and financial services contributed to **over 85 per cent of transaction and 25 per cent in terms of value**.

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- (g) **Education, travel and hospitality sector accounted to 15 per cent in volume and 75 per cent in terms of value.**
- (h) The adoption of multiple payment solutions has been beneficial in realising the dream of a less-cash India.
- (i) **UPI continues to be the dominant channels for digital payments.** The number of transactions in 2022 touched 74 billion transactions, a **70 percent increase in the year**. The value of transactions was **INR 126 trillion**, a 54 percent increase.
- (j) In 2022, **payment modes like UPI, Debit and Credit cards, Prepaid Payment Instruments – Mobile and Prepaid cards processed 87.92 billion transactions worth ₹ 149.5 trillion.**
- (k) As of December 2022, the total number of POS terminals deployed by merchant acquiring banks breached the 7.55 million mark, a 37 percent YoY growth.
- **What is a Digital Payment System?**
 - A digital payment is sometimes called an electronic payment.
 - It is the transfer of value from one payment account to another using a digital device such as a mobile phone, POS (Point of Sales) or computer.
- **Modes of Digital Payments in India:**
 - Unified Payments Interface (UPI)
 - Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM)
 - UPI Lite
 - Cards (RuPay Debit Cards)
 - Immediate Payment Services (IMPS)
 - Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AePS)
 - UPI 123PAY

15. The top 10 wealthiest cities in the world: Released by Henley and Partners.

- **About the report:**
 - (a) **The high-net-worth-individual population data in the World's Wealthiest Cities Report 2023 covers 97 cities across nine regions worldwide (Africa, Australasia, CIS, East Asia, Europe, the Middle East, North America, South Asia, and Southeast Asia) and includes most of the world's top wealth hubs.**
 - (b) **The data is supplied by wealth intelligence firm, New World Wealth, which is currently the only known independent wealth research firm systematically tracking global wealth migration trends between countries and between cities.**
 - (c) **The firm tracks the movements and spending habits of over 150,000 high-net-worth individuals in their in-house database (with a special emphasis on individuals with over USD 10 million in investable assets).**
 - (d) It also considered the number of expensive homes in each city.
 - (e) New World Wealth's database is focused on high-net-worth individuals with the work titles: Founder, Chairperson, CEO, and Director.

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- **Key highlights of the report:**

- (a) By 2050, **70 percent of the global population will live in cities, and governments will compete to attract and retain highly skilled, entrepreneurial, and affluent residents** to their urban centers to ensure they thrive in the volatile 21st century and beyond.
- (b) Of the world's Top 10 wealthiest cities, **seven are in countries actively welcoming foreign direct investment in return for residence or citizenship rights.**
- (c) **Rising numbers of global investors are benefiting from this mechanism**, securing location optionality for their families, enabling them to live and conduct their businesses across a range of jurisdictions.
- (d) **Although no Indian city could make it to the top 10 list, Bengaluru has emerged as one of the fastest-growing cities in the world in terms of wealth.**
- (e) **The list is dominated by cities from two countries- the United States and China.**
- (f) **New York City came in at no. 1 on the list.** The report found that from 2012 to 2022, the city had a 40 percent growth in its population of high-net-worth individuals. There are 724 centimillionaires, 58 billionaires, and 3.4 lakh millionaires living there.
- (g) **City of the biggest banks, stock exchanges, financial service providers, startups, and more, New York serves as the financial capital of the world with several big tech companies using the city as their headquarters.**
- (h) **Tokyo, the capital of Japan, is the second city on the list and is home to 290,300 millionaires, 250 centimillionaires, and 14 billionaires.** It is the richest nation in Asia.
- (i) **The Bay Area in the third spot is known for its technology industry, with major tech companies like Apple, Google and Meta headquarters in the region.** The city also has a skilled workforce, a diverse economy and high standards of living.
- (j) **London, the capital of the United Kingdom, is still the wealthiest city in Europe and comes in at number four on the list.**
- (k) **Sydney, the capital of New South Wales, Australia, is the wealthiest city on the Australian continent.** There are 184 centimillionaires, 15 billionaires, and 126,900 millionaires living there. It is listed as the tenth wealthiest city in the world.
- (l) **Bengaluru is the third most populated city in India and has been given a special mention as one of the fastest-growing cities in the Asia Pacific region.** The Silicon Valley of India has several big tech companies like Microsoft, Amazon, and Flipkart as their headquarters.

16. Joint Malnutrition Estimates Report: Released by UNICEF, WHO, and the World Bank.

- **About the report:**

- (a) **UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), WHO (World Health Organization), World Bank Group have released a report titled- "Levels and trends in child malnutrition: Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates (JME)", representing the most recent global and regional figures.**

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- (b) These estimates are presented by various regional and income group country classifications used by various agencies including the **United Nations, UNICEF, WHO and the World Bank Group**.
- (c) The UNICEF, WHO and the World Bank inter-agency team update the joint global and regional estimates of **malnutrition among children under 5 years every other year**.
- (d) The key dissemination materials for the 2023 edition includes **global, regional and country trends from 2000-2022 for stunting and overweight**.
- (e) For wasting and severe wasting, country estimates are based on available primary data sources (e.g., household surveys), global trends are presented for 2000-2022 and the regional estimates show the latest estimates (2022).
- (f) **The JME group was created in 2011 to address the call for harmonized child malnutrition estimates.**
- **Key findings of the report:**
- (a) **The prevalence of stunting in India dropped from 41.6 percent in 2012 to 31.7 percent in 2022, with 1.6 crore fewer stunted children recorded.**
- (b) India's share of the global burden of stunting declined from **30 percent to 25 percent in the past decade**.
- (c) Child stunting refers to a child who is too short for his or her age and is the result of chronic or recurrent malnutrition.
- (d) Globally, **stunting declined from a prevalence rate of 26.3 percent in 2012 to 22.3 percent in 2022.**
- (e) **Wasting remains a concern in India, with an overall prevalence of 18.7 percent in 2022.**
- (f) In 2022, an estimated **45 million children under five (6.8 percent) were affected by wasting globally**, of which 13.6 million were suffering from severe wasting.
- (g) **India contributes 49 percent to the global burden of wasting**, reflecting the severity of this malnutrition indicator.
- (h) **Two-thirds of wasting cases in India may be attributed to maternal malnutrition**, leading to low birth weight for height.
- (i) The prevalence of obesity in India increased marginally from **2.2 percent in 2012 to 2.8 percent in 2022.**
- (j) **Obesity contributes to 8.8 percent of the global burden**, with 31.8 lakh obese children in India.
- (k) **Only about one third of all countries are 'on track' to halve the number of children affected by stunting by 2030**, and assessment of progress to date not being possible for about one quarter of countries.
- (l) Even fewer countries are expected to achieve the 2030 target of **3 per cent prevalence for overweight, with just 1 in 6 countries currently 'on track'**.
- (m) Further, an assessment of progress towards the **wasting target is not possible for nearly half of countries.**
- **Key recommendations of the report:**
- (a) **More intensive efforts are required** if the world is to achieve the global target of reducing the number of children with stunting to 89 million by 2030.
- (b) With current progress, **the 2030 target will be missed by 39.6 million children**, with more than 80 per cent of these 'missed' children in Africa.

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- (c) Gaps in the availability of data in some regions make it challenging to accurately assess progress towards global targets. **Regular data collection is therefore critical for monitoring and reporting on country, regional and global progress on child malnutrition.**

17. World Health Statistics 2023: World Health Organisation (WHO).

- **About the report:**

- (a) **WHO's annual World Health Statistics reports present the most recent health statistics for the WHO Member States.**
- (b) The World Health Statistics 2023 report is the World Health Organization's (WHO) annual compilation of the latest available data on health and health-related indicators. **Published since 2005.**
- (c) The report summarises the **trends in life expectancy and causes of death, and reports on progress towards the health-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and associated targets.**
- (d) The 2023 edition reviews more than **50 health-related indicators from the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and WHO's Thirteenth General Programme of Work (GPW 13).**
- (e) The report discusses key trends and issues in global health across maternal and child mortality, noncommunicable diseases, and climate change and health.

- **Key highlights of the report:**

- (a) The report with data up to 2022 underscores a **stagnation of health progress on key health indicators in recent years compared with trends seen during 2000-2015.**
- (b) It also alerts us to the **growing threat of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and climate change**, and calls for a coordinated and strengthened response.
- (c) During 2020-2021, **COVID-19 resulted in a staggering 336.8 million years of life lost globally.**
- (d) **This equates to an average of 22 years of life lost for every excess death, abruptly and tragically cutting short the lives of millions of people.**
- (e) Since 2000, **there were significant improvements in maternal and child health with deaths falling by one-third and one-half**, respectively.
- (f) The **incidence of infectious diseases such as HIV, tuberculosis (TB) and malaria also declined**, along with a lowered risk of premature deaths from NCDs and injuries.
- (g) Together, **these contributed to an increase in global life expectancy from 67 years in 2000 to 73 years in 2019.**
- (h) The pandemic has put many **health-related indicators further off-track and contributed to inequalities in access to high-quality health care**, routine immunizations and financial protection.
- (i) As a result, **improving trends in malaria and TB have been reversed**, and fewer people were treated for neglected tropical diseases (NTDs).
- (j) Despite overall health progress, **the share of deaths caused annually by NCDs has grown consistently and is now claiming nearly three quarters of all lives lost each year.**

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- (k) If this trend continues, **NCDs are projected to account for about 86 percent of the 90 million annual deaths by mid-century**; consequently, 77 million of these will be due to NCDs -- a nearly 90 percent increase in absolute numbers since 2019.
- (l) The **global maternal mortality ratio needs to decline by 11.6 percent per year between 2021 and 2030 to meet the SDG target**.
- (m) The net reduction in TB incidence from 2015 to 2021 was only one-fifth of the way to the 2025 milestone of WHO's End TB Strategy.
- (n) **Despite a reduction in exposure to many health risks** -- such as tobacco use, alcohol consumption, violence, unsafe water and sanitation, and child stunting -- **progress was inadequate and exposure to some risks such as air pollution remains high**.
- (o) The prevalence of **obesity is rising** with no immediate sign of reversal.
- (p) **This year's report includes for the first time a dedicated section on climate change and health**.

18. Regional Economic Outlook: Released by the International Monetary Fund.

- **About the report:**

- (a) **These reports discuss recent economic developments and prospects for countries in various regions.**
- (b) They also address **economic policy developments** that have affected economic performance in the regions, and discuss key challenges faced by policymakers.
- (c) They address **regional policy developments and challenges, and provide country-specific data and analysis**, including through analytical pieces on issues of interest to a particular region.

- **Key findings of the report:**

- (a) **Despite weakening external demand and monetary tightening, domestic demand has so far remained strong, with China's reopening providing fresh impetus.**
- (b) **Asia and the Pacific remains a dynamic region** despite the somber backdrop of what looks to be shaping up as a challenging year for the world economy.
- (c) **Global growth is poised to decelerate as rising interest rates and Russia's war in Ukraine weigh on activity.** Inflation remains stubbornly high, and banking strains in the United States and Europe have injected greater uncertainty into an already complex economic landscape.
- (d) Asia's domestic demand has so far remained strong despite monetary tightening, while external appetite for technology products and other exports is weakening.
- (e) **In India, growth momentum will begin to slow as softening domestic demand offsets strong external services demand; growth is expected to moderate slightly from 6.8 percent in 2022 to 5.9 percent this year.**
- (f) **Asia's dynamism will be driven primarily by the recovery in China and resilient growth in India**, while growth in the rest of Asia is expected to bottom out in 2023, in line with other regions.

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- (g) We project **the region will contribute around 70 percent of global growth this year as its expansion accelerates to 4.6 percent from 3.8 percent in last year.**
- (h) China's reopening will provide fresh momentum. Normally the strongest effect would be from demand for investment goods in China, but this time the biggest effect is from demand for consumption.
- (i) Other emerging economies in the region are on track to enjoy solid growth, though in some cases at slightly lower rates than seen last year.
- (j) **The pressures from diminished global demand will weigh on the outlook.** Headline inflation has been easing, but remains above targets in most countries, while core inflation has proven to be sticky.
- (k) Although spillovers from turmoil in the European and US banking sectors have been limited thus far, **vulnerabilities to global financial tightening and volatile market conditions, especially in the corporate and household sectors, remain elevated.**
- (l) **Growth is expected to fall to 3.9 percent five years out—the lowest medium-term forecast in recent history—**thus contributing to one of the lowest medium-term global growth forecasts since 1990.
- (m) **Elevated public debt and rising interest costs call for continued—and, in some cases, accelerated—fiscal consolidation,** which can also support the battle against inflation, while protecting the vulnerable through targeted measures.
- (n) **Asia and Pacific will be the most dynamic of the world's major regions in 2023, predominantly driven by the buoyant outlook for China and India. The two largest emerging market economies of the region are expected to contribute around half of global growth this year, with the rest of Asia and Pacific contributing an additional fifth.**

19. Chief Economists Outlook: Released by the World Economic Forum.

- **About the report:**

- (a) **The report was organised by World Economic Forum's Centre for the New Economy and Society.**
- (b) According to a significant majority of the chief economists surveyed, **recent turbulence in the financial sector is not a sign of systemic vulnerability, but further disruption is considered likely this year.**
- (c) The report builds on the **latest policy development research as well as consultations and surveys with leading chief economists from both the public and private sectors,** organized by the World Economic Forum's Centre for the New Economy and Society.
- (d) It aims to **summarize the emerging contours of the current economic environment and identify priorities for further action by policymakers and business leaders** in response to the compounding shocks to the global economy from geoeconomic and geopolitical events.

- **Key findings of the report:**

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- (a) **The May 2023 Chief Economists Outlook launches amid continuing uncertainty for policy-makers, businesses and households as persistent headwinds buffet the global economy.** While there are signs of nascent optimism, the banking disruption of March 2023 has caused tremors in the global outlook.
- (b) According to a significant majority of the chief economists surveyed, recent turbulence in the financial sector is not a sign of systemic vulnerability, but further disruption is considered likely this year.
- (c) **The expectations around a potential global recession in 2023 are a case in point: 45 percent of chief economists say a recession is likely, but the same proportion considers it unlikely.**
- (d) Regionally, there has been a notable strengthening of expectations for most economies since the January 2023 Chief Economists Outlook.
- (e) **The most buoyant economic activity is expected in Asia, with China's reopening projected to bolster activity across the continent. For China itself, chief economists are near unanimous in expecting a significant rebound this year.**
- (f) At the other end of the spectrum, **75 percent of chief economists still expect weak or very weak growth this year in Europe, while for the US, views are divergent as the country's growth prospects are clouded by heightened uncertainty around financial stability and the pace and extent of monetary tightening.**
- (g) The chief economists expect **equally divergent regional inflation outlooks for 2023.** Headline rates have begun to ease, but core inflation is stickier than anticipated and shows signs of picking up.
- (h) The **pressure on many households remains acute**, and more than three-quarters of respondents expect the cost of living to stay at crisis levels in numerous countries throughout 2023.
- (i) **The recent banking instability has complicated efforts to deal with runaway prices. Almost 80 percent of chief economists think central banks now face a trade-off between managing inflation and maintaining financial sector stability.**
- (j) A similar proportion expects central banks to struggle to reach their inflation target.
- (k) **Although the chief economists are broadly sanguine about the systemic implications of the recent financial disruption – 69 percent characterize it as isolated episodes rather than signs of systemic vulnerability – they point to potentially damaging knock-on effects.**
- (l) These include a **squeeze on the flow of credit to businesses** and the prospect of significant disruption in property markets in particular.
- (m) **Labour markets are proving resilient for now, but growth remains sluggish, global tensions are deepening, and the cost of living remains acute in many countries.** These results confirm the urgent need for both short-term global policy coordination as well as longer-term cooperation around a new framework for growth that will hardwire inclusion, sustainability and resilience into economic policy.

20. World Press Freedom Index 2023: Released by Reporters Without Borders (RSF).

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- (a) On the **World Press Freedom Day (3rd May)**, the World Press Freedom Index 2023 was published by Reporters Without Borders (RSF).
- (b) **Reporters Without Borders or Reporters Sans Frontiers (in French)** is a global media watchdog headquartered in Paris, France, and it publishes a yearly report on press freedom in countries across the world.
- (c) Founded in **1985**, RSF is at the forefront of the defence and promotion of freedom of information. Recognised as a public interest organisation in France since 1995, **RSF has consultative status with the United Nations, UNESCO, the Council of Europe and the International Organization of Francophonie (OIF).**
- (d) The **World Press Freedom Index is based on five different factors** that are used to calculate scores and rank countries.
- (e) These five sub-indicators include the **Political indicator, Economic indicator, Legislative indicator, social indicator, and Security indicator.**
- (f) Scores are calculated for each of these indicators and used to determine the overall ranking of countries in terms of press freedom.
- **What is 'press freedom'?**
 - **Press freedom is defined as the ability of journalists as individuals and collectives to select, produce, and disseminate news in the public interest independent of political, economic, legal, and social interference and in the absence of threats to their physical and mental safety.**
 - **It develops a score between 0 (for the worst possible performance in terms of securing press freedom) and 100 (the best possible score).**
 - **Key findings of the report:**
 - (a) The environment for journalism is **'bad' in seven out of ten countries**, and satisfactory in only three out of ten.
 - (b) **India's rank in the Security indicator category is particularly concerning, as it has fallen to 172 out of 180 countries in the 2023 World Press Freedom Index.** This means that only eight countries have a worse ranking than India when it comes to ensuring the safety and security of journalists.
 - (c) **It also highlighted concerns of propaganda fake news, further heightened given the rise of artificial intelligence technology.** Programmes like Midourney, which can create lifelike images based on a simple text prompt, were mentioned in this context.
 - (d) **North Korea (180th), China (179th), Vietnam (178th), Myanmar (173rd)** – Asia's one-party regimes and dictatorships are the ones that constrict journalism the most, with leaders tightening their totalitarian stranglehold on the public discourse.
 - (e) Nordic countries like **Norway, Ireland, and Denmark ranked top three respectively** while **Vietnam, China, and North Korea were the bottom three countries** on the index.
 - (f) **Sri Lanka also made significant improvement on the index, ranking 135th this year as against 146th in 2022.**
 - (g) **The situation has gone from 'problematic' to 'very bad' in three other countries: Tajikistan (down 1 at 153rd), India (down 11 at 161st) and Turkey (down 16 at 165th).**

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- (h) The other phenomenon that dangerously restricts the free flow of information is the **acquisition of media outlets by oligarchs who maintain close ties with political leaders.**
- (i) The indices of press freedom have worsened in several countries, including India.
- (j) For **developing democracies in the Global South where deep pockets of inequities exist, the media's role cannot be understated.** Likewise, the constraints on press freedom due to hostile working conditions like contractorization have to also be challenged. Insecure working conditions can never contribute to a free press.
- (k) **Russia, where the government has largely completed its quelling of independent media, fell nine places to 164.**

21. NITI Aayog's Annual Health Index 2020-21

- **About the index:**

- (a) The annual health index, which measures the performance of states and UTs on a **“weighted composite score incorporating 24 health performance indicators”**, was launched by the NITI Aayog in 2017.
- (b) The index measures the performance of states and UTs on a weighted composite score incorporating 24 health performance indicators clubbed under three domains: **‘health outcomes,’ ‘governance and information,’ and ‘key inputs/processes.’**
- (c) The **‘health outcomes’** domain comprises indicators such as **neonatal mortality rate, total fertility rate, sex ratio at birth, immunization coverage, proportion of institutional deliveries, total case notification rate of tuberculosis, and proportion of people living with HIV on antiretroviral therapy.**
- (d) The **‘key inputs/ processes’** is a measure of health infrastructure available, including proportion of **functional 24X7 primary healthcare centres, districts with functional cardiac care units, and vacancies in healthcare provider positions.**
- (e) The **‘governance and information’** domain includes indicators like **proportion of institutional deliveries, average occupancy (in months) of three key posts at state level, average occupancy (in months) of the chief medical officer, and days taken for fund transfer.**
- (f) The NITI Aayog brings out the index (annually) in collaboration with the **Union Health Ministry and World Bank.**
- (g) The index encourages healthy competition and cross-learning among States and UTs and nudges states/UTs towards building robust health systems and improving service delivery through their policymaking and resource allocation.
- (h) The health index evaluates the performance of states and UTs based on two factors: **year-on-year progress and overall performance.** The states and UTs are categorized as **‘larger states’, ‘smaller states’, and UTs,** and then ranked according to their scores.
- (i) Each domain is assigned a weight based on its importance, with greater emphasis on outcome indicators.
- (j) As a result, **the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare had linked the index to incentives under the National Health Mission.**

- **Key findings of the report:**

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- (a) Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Telangana emerged as the top-performing states among the 'large states', Tripura performed well in the smaller states category while Delhi ranked at the bottom among the Union Territories in NITI Aayog's annual 'Health Index' for Covid-19 pandemic year of 2020-21.
- (b) Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh occupy the bottom three positions, ranking 19th, 18th, and 17th, respectively.
- (c) Regarding incremental performance from 2019-20 to 2020-21, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, and Odisha have emerged as the top three performers among the larger states.
- (d) In the category of smaller states, Tripura has demonstrated the best overall performance, with Sikkim and Goa following closely. On the other hand, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Manipur occupy the bottom three positions.
- (e) Among the union territories, Lakshadweep has secured the top position in terms of overall performance, while Delhi has been placed at the bottom.
- (f) In the fourth Health Index released by NITI Aayog in 2019-20, Kerala had emerged as the top performer among larger states in terms of overall health performance. Uttar Pradesh, on the other hand, ranked as the worst performer. Tamil Nadu and Telangana secured the second and third positions, respectively, in terms of health parameters.
- (g) Despite being ranked the worst, Uttar Pradesh achieved the highest incremental change from the base year (2018-19) to the reference year (2019-20), making it the top performer in terms of incremental performance.
- (h) In terms of overall performance, Mizoram, Tripura, and Sikkim ranked as the top three states among smaller states, while Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, and Nagaland were at the bottom in the year 2019-20.

22. Report on Currency and Finance 2022-23: Released by the Reserve Bank of India

- **About the report:**
 - (a) Report on Currency & Finance 2022-23 was recently published by the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Department of Economic and Policy Research.
 - (b) The report, titled "Towards a Greener, Cleaner India," is based on the findings and conclusions of contributors from the Department of Economic and Policy Research and does not represent the RBI's views.
 - (c) In order to evaluate the upcoming obstacles to India's sustainable high growth, it takes into account four major dimensions of climate change.
 - (d) The areas are the climate change's unprecedented scale and speed; its macroeconomic impacts; suggestions for monetary strength; furthermore, strategy choices to moderate environmental gambles.
 - (e) The theme of the report is 'Towards a Greener Cleaner India'.
 - (f) The report covers four major dimensions of climate change to assess future challenges to sustainable high growth in India, viz., the unprecedented scale and pace of climate change; its macroeconomic effects; implications for financial stability; and policy options to mitigate climate risks.

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- **Key highlights of the report:**

- (a) **India requires a minimum of 2.5 percent of Gross Domestic Product annually until 2030 for green financing.** India has taken significant steps towards achieving its climate targets and has been ranked the best among G-20 countries in the Climate Change Performance Index for 2023.
- (b) **India aims to achieve net-zero emissions by 2070, which would require a reduction of around 5 percent annually in the energy intensity of Gross Domestic Product and an 80 percent improvement in the energy mix in favor of renewables by 2070-71.**
- (c) **Public sector banks may be more vulnerable than private sector banks** in India on the basis of Climate stress tests.
- (d) India could lose anywhere around **3 to 10 percent of its Gross Domestic Product annually by 2100** due to climate change.
- (e) **Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) can be more environment-friendly compared to alternative cashless methods.** Payments effected through CBDC would be instantaneous and final, and reduced reliance on clearing corporations and other settlement infrastructure could cut down energy consumption.
- (f) The report highlighted that **there is a need for a balanced policy intervention with progress ensured across all policy levers for India to achieve its green transition targets by 2030** and later make the net zero goal by 2070 attainable.

- **Key recommendations of the report:**

- (a) India must **implement a carbon tax and a broad-based carbon pricing system** in accordance with emerging global best practices in order to accelerate and drive green finance in the country and meet climate goals.
- (b) The report also suggested **establishing an Emissions Trading System based on a green taxonomy that would cover all economic sectors** and could partially strike a balance between tax and subsidy.
- (c) It is necessary to **record public spending on climate change** and related issues and include it in a climate budget report.
- (d) **India should intensify efforts to address the fluctuation in wind and solar power supply** by utilizing smart grids with appropriate energy storage technology and demand management mechanisms.
- (e) A framework after **incorporating recommendations from all the stakeholders including relevant ministries, industry associations, environmental policy advocacy groups, and other regulators including the Reserve Bank will help address the major issues plaguing environmental, social, and governance ratings.**

23. Data Governance Quality Index: Released by the Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office, NITI Aayog.

- **About the index:**

- (a) Conducted by the **Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO), NITI Aayog**, the Data Governance Quality Index (DGQI) survey aims **to measure the maturity level of administrative data systems and their use in**

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- decision-making of various ministries and departments on the implementation of central sector schemes and centrally-sponsored schemes.
- (b) It also identifies reforms to reach the frontier of seamless data exchange and its synergistic use within the ministry, while defining clear pathways to achieve these goals.
- (c) **The DGQI assessment encompasses six pivotal themes:**
1. Data Generation
 2. Data Quality
 3. Use of Technology
 4. Data Analysis
 5. Use and Dissemination
 6. Data Security and HR Capacity, and Case Studies.
- (d) **Several existing data maturity models were studied to develop DGQI's methodology. Three key steps of data preparedness were identified:**
- a. **Data Strategy to lay down systemic guidelines.**
 - b. **Data Systems to ensure smooth processes of data generation, management and its use.**
 - c. **Data driven Outcomes where data is utilized and widely shared by institutions to drive decision making.**
- (e) This Programme is being managed by **National e-Governance Division (NeGD)**. NeGD provides project development and programme management support to e-governance related measures taken by Ministries.
- (f) Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO), an attached office of NITI Aayog, has developed **DGQI toolkit to enable a comprehensive self-assessment of data preparedness levels to come up with Data Governance Quality Index (DGQI)** for the government agencies at the central and state level.
- **Key findings of the report:**
- (a) **The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW)** has been ranked at the second position in the influential assessment known as the Data Governance Quality Index (DGQI).
- (b) **The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) has been ranked second among 66 ministries in the Data Governance Quality Index (DGQI) assessment for the December quarter (Q3) of financial year 2023.**
- (c) With an impressive score of **4.7 out of 5**, MoPSW has demonstrated its commitment to excellence in data governance.
- (d) **MoPSW's success in the DGQI assessment is assisted by the concerted efforts of the National Technology Centre for Ports, Waterways, and Coasts at IIT Madras**, which was tasked with improving MoPSW's Management Information System (MIS) in compliance with DGQI standards.
- (e) The DGQI has assessed the MIS portals for five schemes of MoPSW - **Sagarmala, Research and Development, Shipping, ALHW (Andaman, Lakshadweep Harbour Works), IWAI (Inland Waterways Authority of India) & IWT (Inland Water Transport)** - to enhance data flow, increase data quality and by incorporating emerging technologies such as AI/ ML.

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- (f) The impact of data-driven decision-making has been significant for MoPSW, as it has enabled the ministry to **identify reforms and achieve its desired goals and objectives to improve the implementation framework of government policies, schemes, and programmes.**
- (g) It will immensely help **improve the implementation framework of government policies, schemes, and programs to achieve the desired goals.**
- (h) **Data-driven approach enables policymakers to identify trends, opportunities, and areas for improvement accurately.**
- (i) With reliable data, **the ministries can make informed decisions that lead to better outcomes for citizens.**
- (j) Moreover, **data-driven decision-making is cost-effective and enhances transparency,** making it easier to track the progress of schemes and policies.
- (k) **By leveraging data and technology, MoPSW has set a high standard for other ministries and departments to emulate.**

24. National Manufacturing Innovation Survey (NMIS) 2021-22

- **About the survey:**

- (a) **Department of Science and Technology released the "National Manufacturing Innovation Survey (NMIS) 2021-22: Summary for Policymakers" in April 2023.**
- (b) The survey findings offer **wide-ranging insights into the enabling activities and barriers to innovation by firms and has closely evaluated how states and sectors have performed** with respect to the manufacturing firms' ability to produce new products, services and business processes.
- (c) The **National Manufacturing Innovation Survey (NMIS) 2021-22 is a joint study by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)** to evaluate the innovation performance of manufacturing firms in the India.
- (d) The NMIS 2021-22 study was conducted as a **2-pronged survey that examined the innovation processes, outcomes, and barriers in manufacturing firms** and also studied the innovation ecosystem that affects innovation outcomes in these firms.
- (e) This study is a follow-up of DST's **first National Innovation Survey held in 2011.**
- (f) The collaborative study by DST-UNIDO allowed a **360-degree approach to measuring manufacturing innovation outcomes, processes, and barriers at the firm level, mapping the contributing processes and interactions** and thereby assessing the performance of states, sectors, and firm sizes.
- (g) The NMIS 2021-22 survey had two specific components: **the firm-level survey and the sectorial systems of innovation (SSI) survey.**
 - a. The **Firm-level survey captured data related to types of innovations and innovative measures taken by firms, including the process of innovation, access to finance, resources, and information for innovation,** besides also recording the factors impacting the innovation activities in a firm.

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- b. The **Sectorial System of Innovation** survey mapped the manufacturing innovation system and its enabling role in achieving innovations in firms.
- (h) **A total of 8,087 firms participated in the firm-level survey, while 5,488 firms and non-firms participated in the SSI survey.**
- (i) The system of innovation on **survey focused on 5 key sectors** for finding innovation barriers and opportunities to enhance the linkages between system actors.
- **Key findings of the report:**
- (a) A survey on the degree of innovation among manufacturing firms found that **Karnataka, overall, is the most “innovative” State, followed by Telangana, and Tamil Nadu.**
- (b) The state of Karnataka is not **only the most innovative in its manufacturing sector but also has the highest number of companies in manufacturing that carry out innovations.**
- (c) The National Manufacturing Innovation Survey 2021-22, released earlier this month, also found that **innovation in manufacturing is the lowest in the Northeastern states** (excluding Assam), followed by Bihar.
- (d) The **Northeastern states have been identified as low-performing states.**
- (e) The **Eastern region is weaker in innovation in manufacturing while the Southern and Western parts of the country are stringer.**
- (f) This is because manufacturing is centered around major cities, Karnataka because of Bangalore, Telangana because of Hyderabad, Maharashtra because of Mumbai etc.
- (g) **Over 80% of firms that successfully implemented an innovation in the observation period reported significant benefits in expanding markets and production and reducing costs.**
- (h) According to the report, which has carried out its survey across over **8,000 firms in 28 states and 6 Union Territories (UTs)**, covering manufacturing and related service sector and MSMEs, found that there is a **need to increase innovation in manufacturing.** It stated that an increase in innovation carried out by firms has resulted in higher sales for them.
- (i) **Uttarakhand has the highest score among the hill states**, while Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu has the highest score among the UTs.
- (j) Apart from Northeastern states, **low-performing states include Jharkhand, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh.**
- (k) The report states that only **25.01 per cent of the 8,074 firms surveyed were considered innovative.** They have successfully implemented either new or significantly improved products or processes. The majority of the firms, **73.76 per cent, did not introduce product or business process innovations in this period.**
- (l) **Telangana, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu had the highest share of innovative firms at 46.18 per cent, 39.10 per cent and 31.90 per cent**, respectively, among the total manufacturing firms surveyed from the respective states, according to the report.
- (m) **Odisha, Bihar, and Jharkhand reported the least share of innovative firms at 12.78 per cent, 13.47 per cent and 13.71 per cent, respectively.**

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- (n) **The Indian government first conducted the National Innovation Survey in 2011** which found that the role of innovations in creating a competitive advantage for firms was rather underdeveloped.

25. Prime Global Cities Index: Knight Frank

- **About the index:**

- (a) **The Prime Global Cities Index is an index that monitors and tracks the changes in prime residential prices in 46 cities worldwide.**
- (b) It uses **valuation-based methods and records the nominal prices in the local currency of each city.**

- **Key findings of the report:**

- (a) **Three major cities in India, Mumbai, Bengaluru, and New Delhi, witnessed a growth in average annual prices of prime residential properties during quarter 1, 2023.**
- (b) **The growth pushed the ranking of these Indian metros in Knight Frank India's 'Prime Global Cities Index Q1 2023.**
- (c) **Mumbai's ranking significantly improved from 38th in Q1 2022 to sixth in Q1 2023 for high-end properties.**
- (d) **Mumbai's sharp rise in the international index can be attributed primarily to the increased demand in the city.** While the demand has been robust across all segments, there has been a notable surge in the sale of prime residential properties.
- (e) **Bengaluru and New Delhi also saw an upward shift in their rankings, reaching 16th and 22nd positions respectively,** compared to their previous ranks of 37th and 39th, as per the report.
- (f) **Globally, Dubai secured the top position with a substantial 44.2 percent surge in the value of prime residential properties.**
- (g) **The Indian economy stood out with steady performance despite concerns around global growth and inflation that marked most of 2022.**
- (h) **However, the Indian real estate markets displayed continued momentum in demand,** amid concerns of an inflationary environment, and weathered a steep rise in home loan rates over the past 12 months.
- (i) **In terms of year-on-year increase, Mumbai experienced a 5.5 percent rise in average prices, Bengaluru saw a 3% increase, and New Delhi recorded a 1.2 percent increase,** all compared to Q1 2022.
- (j) **The index experienced a decline of 0.4 percent in the 12-month period ending in March of this year, which is the first decrease since 2009.**
- (k) **This is a significant turnaround from the peak growth of 10.1 percent observed in the fourth quarter of 2021.**
- (l) **Dubai witnessed the most rapid increase in prime prices, with a year-on-year growth of 44.2 percent between Q1 2022 and Q1 2023.**
- (m) **Despite the Federal Reserve and other central banks approaching peak interest rates, it is expected that even prime housing markets will continue to face downward pressure on prices in the coming quarters.**

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- (n) Early indications suggest that **some markets have shown signs of improvement**, as **46 percent of markets experienced quarterly price declines in the second half of 2022**, which decreased to 28 percent in the first quarter of this year, the lowest number since Q1 2021.