

## EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – JANUARY 3, 2023

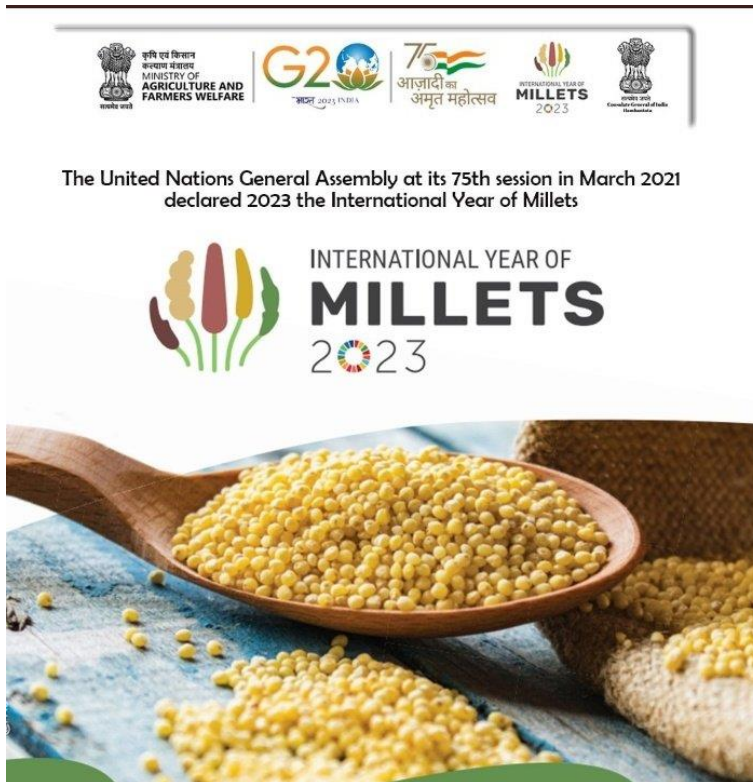
### TAMIL NADU

- **The Chennai metropolitan development authority (CMDA) - has appointed a consultant with the help of the United Nations Environment Programme to study Urban Heat Island hotspots and prepare a map.**
- ✓ Center for Advanced Research in Building Science & Energy (CARBSE) of CEPT University has been chosen as the consultant for the project
- ✓ The consultant will map and assess the UHI (Urban Heat Island) footprint in 1,189sqkm of Chennai Metropolitan Area (CMA)
- ✓ The primary objective of the project is to map the land cover, green space and urban growth, study historical weather data, over Chennai Metropolitan Area and identify the respective changes in them at decadal temporal scale.
- ✓ Based on the outcome, hotspot maps will be developed to indicate the Urban Heat Islands within CMA.
- ✓ The study will also develop draft 'Urban Heat Adaptation Guidelines' in the third master plan for 2026-2046 and in the new area development plans.
- ✓ It will focus on interventions to be made during heat waves and suggest setting up of green spaces and cool sinks in suitable areas in the city.
- ✓ Further, green measures to improve outdoor and indoor thermal comfort and decrease cooling loads in buildings will also be prepared.
- ✓ An Urban Heat Island (UHI) is defined as an urban area containing hotter surface and atmospheric temperatures than nearby rural areas.
- ✓ The study will also focus on identifying the spatial distribution of urban heat islands in Chennai by taking the data of the past 50 years.
- ✓ The study is funded by UNEP and CMDA and will cost Rs.1. 5 crore and will begin in March next year.

### NATIONAL

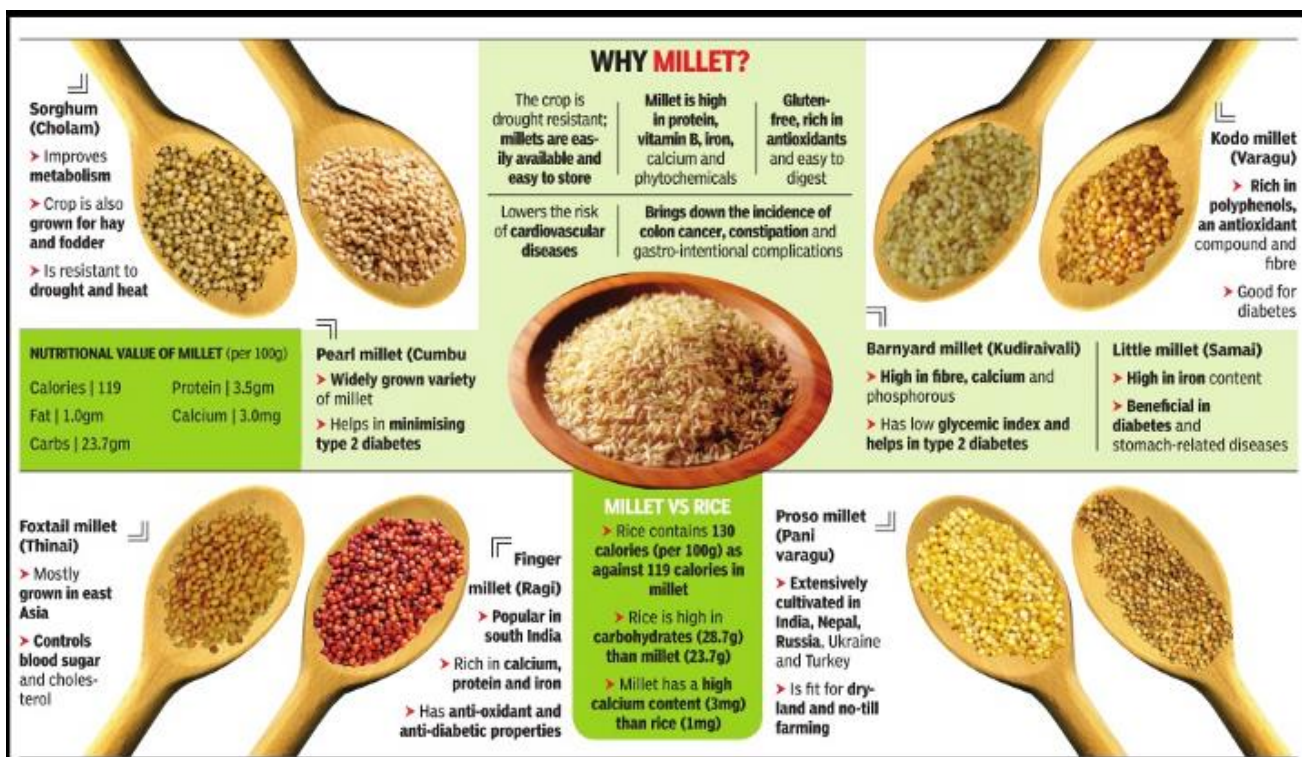
- **The United Nations - has declared the year 2023 as the International Year of Millets (IYM)**

- ✓ PM Narendra Modi has also shared his vision to make IYM 2023 a 'People's Movement' alongside positioning India as the 'Global Hub for Millets'.



- ✓ The government of India under Prime Minister Narendra Modi spearheaded the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolution for declaring the year 2023 as the International Year of Millets and the proposal of India was supported by 72 countries.
- ✓ UNGA declared 2023 as the International Year of Millets in March 2021.
- ✓ January 2023 is the focus month for the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs, and the States of Chhattisgarh, Mizoram, and Rajasthan for conducting events and activities related to the millets year.
- ✓ The Ministry has planned 15 activities over 15 days during the month which include engaging sports persons, nutritionists and fitness experts through video messages, and conducting webinars on millets with leading nutritionists, dieticians and elite athletes.
- ✓ The Ministry of Food Processing Industries will hold Millet Fair-cum-exhibitions in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, and Madhya Pradesh, while the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) will organize Eat Right Melas in Punjab, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu.
- ✓ The IYM 2023 will also involve international collaboration, with the Embassy of India in Rome, Italy organizing the "India-Italy Millet Festival" in January.
- ✓ The embassy will also hold a "Millet Cooking Competition" in partnership with the Indian Women's Association in Rome.

- ✓ In January, the Embassy of India in Azerbaijan and in Belarus will be conducting activities such as meeting with the participation of local chambers, food bloggers, importers of food items and local restaurants.
- ✓ The High Commission of India in Abuja and Consulate General of India in Lagos, as part of promotion of IYM, have planned a Millets Food Festival and a Millets food preparation competition in January 2023.
- ✓ During January 2023, Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) and the Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare will be participating in the Trade Show in Belgium
- ✓ They will also partner with state governments to organize “Global Millet Meet” in various states, including Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Telangana



- ✓ Millet is a common term for categorizing small-seeded grasses that are often called Nutri-cereals.
- ✓ Some of them are sorghum (jowar), pearl millet (bajra), finger millet (ragi), little millet (kutki), foxtail millet (kakun), proso millet (cheena), barnyard millet (sawa), and kodo millet (kodon).
- ✓ In India, millets are primarily a kharif crop, requiring less water and agricultural inputs than other similar staples.
- ✓ Millets are nutritionally superior to wheat and rice owing to their higher protein levels and a more balanced amino acid profile.
- ✓ They also contain various phytochemicals which exert therapeutic properties owing to their anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidative properties.



- ✓ Further, besides being climate resilient, millet grains are rich sources of nutrients like carbohydrates, protein, dietary fibre, and good-quality fat; minerals like calcium, potassium, magnesium, iron, manganese, zinc and B complex vitamins.
  - ✓ India produces more than 170 lakh tonnes of millet, which is 80% of Asia's and 20% of global production.
  - ✓ India produces all the nine commonly known millets and is the largest producer and fifth-largest exporter of millets in the world
  - ✓ Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana are the major millets producing states.
  - ✓ India's major millet exporting countries are UAE, Nepal, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Oman, Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, the UK, and the US.
  - ✓ The major millet-importing countries in the world are Indonesia, Belgium, Japan, Germany, Mexico, Italy, the US, the UK, Brazil, and the Netherlands.
  - ✓ In April 2018, Millets were rebranded as "Nutri Cereals", followed by the year 2018 being declared as the National Year of Millets, aiming at larger promotion and demand generation.
- **On January 3, PM Narendra Modi - will inaugurate the 108th Indian Science Congress (ISC) in Nagpur through video-conferencing.**



- ✓ The key event of India's science calendar will be held after a two-year gap due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- ✓ The previous edition of the ISC was held in Bengaluru in January 2020.
- ✓ This is perhaps the first time since 2004 when the Prime Minister will not be physically present at the Congress
- ✓ In 2004, then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee had to skip the inauguration of the ISC in Chandigarh due to bad weather and his proposed travel to Islamabad the next day to attend the Saarc Summit.
- ✓ The theme of the five-day event is 'Science and Technology for Sustainable Development with Women Empowerment'.

- ✓ It is being hosted this year by Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj Nagpur University (RTMNU) at its Amravati Road Campus, Nagpur
- ✓ The university is celebrating its centenary this year.
- **On January 2, Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud - launched the electronic Supreme Court Reports (e-SCR) project**



- ✓ The project aims to provide over 34,000 judgments pronounced by the Supreme Court in the last 72 years free of cost to all
- ✓ It will be helpful especially to young lawyers, who are unable to spend lakhs of rupees to buy the Supreme Court Report volumes since 1950.
- ✓ CJI Chandrachud announced that the e-SCR link is available on the SC website, mobile app, and on the National Judicial Data Grid's judgment portal.
- ✓ With the launch of the e-SCR project, all judgments of the Supreme Court will be made available online within 24 hours.
- ✓ The Supreme Court has developed a search engine with the help of the National Informatics Centre (NIC), which uses search techniques in the database of e-SCR.
- ✓ In addition to the e-SCR project, the CJI also announced that neutral citations will be introduced in the Supreme Court.
  - ✓ Neutral citations are standardized legal citations that do not identify the publisher of a legal document, allowing for impartial and objective referencing.
- ✓ Delhi and Kerala High Courts already use neutral citations. Further, the CJI has set a deadline of February 15th for the head-noted judgments of 2022 to be made available online.
  - ✓ Head-noted judgments are those that have been selected for publication in the official law report, the Supreme Court Reports.

## **SUPREME COURT VERDICT**

- **On January 2, the Supreme Court - upheld the decision of the Central government taken in 2016 to demonetise the currency notes of Rs.500 and Rs.1000 denominations.**

- In a 5 judge bench, 4 judges voted in favour of upholding note ban whereas one judge dissented
- ✓ A five-judge Constitution bench headed by Justice S A Nazeer, who will retire on January 4, pronounced its verdict on the matter.
- ✓ The bench dismissed a batch of petitions challenging the Centre's controversial demonetisation and said the decision, being Executive's economic policy, cannot be reversed.
- ✓ It held that the decision to scrap the high-value currency notes, cannot be said to be unreasonable and cannot be struck down on the ground of decision-making process

<b>'NOT RELEVANT WHETHER OBJECTIVES ACHIEVED OR NOT'</b>	
<p><b>MAJORITY VERDICT OF JUSTICES SA NAZEER, BR GAVAI, AS BOPANNA &amp; V RAMASUBRAMANIAN</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Majority verdict says demonetisation had a <b>"reasonable nexus with its objectives"</b> such as eradicating black money and terror funding and it is not relevant whether those objectives were achieved or not</li> <li>➤ Says <b>government was in consultation with RBI for six months</b> and it is empowered to take such a decision</li> <li>➤ No fresh window to exchange notes, <b>52 days' time given earlier not unreasonable</b></li> </ul> <p>“ There has to be great restraint in matters of economic policy. Court cannot supplant the wisdom of executive with its wisdom...”</p>	<p><b>MINORITY VERDICT OF JUSTICE BV NAGARATHNA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Demonetisation move 'exercise of power' by Union government, <b>contrary to law and vitiated</b> under the RBI Act</li> <li>➤ Carried out in <b>24 hours</b>, so central bank had no time to consider it</li> <li>➤ <b>Parliament</b>, which is "at the centre of our democracy <b>cannot be left aloof</b> in a matter of such importance"</li> <li>➤ Around 98% of value of banned currency reported to have been exchanged, so <b>measure may not have been as effective as it was hoped to be</b></li> </ul> <p>“ This (use of phrases such as 'as desired' by the Centre in notification) demonstrates that there was no independent application of mind by the Bank (RBI)</p>

- ✓ During the day, two separate judgments were given by the bench of Justices S Abdul Nazeer, BR Gavai, AS Bopanna, V Ramasubramanian and BV Nagarathna
- ✓ The bench, comprising justices B R Gavai, A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian, said the Centre's decision-making process could not have been flawed as there was consultation between the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Union government.
  - ✓ The majority judgment, authored by Justice B R Gavai, said the hardships faced by citizens six years ago cannot be a ground to reverse the decision.
  - ✓ It has further held that the period for the exchange of notes, which was 52 days, cannot be said to be unreasonable.
- ✓ Justice Nagarathna, however, differed from the majority judgment on the point of the Centre's powers under section 26(2) of the RBI Act.
  - ✓ According to the dissenting judgment, the process adopted by the Centre was illegal, though the objective was noble.
- ✓ On December 7, the apex court directed the Centre and the RBI to put on record the relevant records relating to the demonetisation of 86% of money in circulation and reserved its verdict.



## 'MOVE AIMED TO COUNTER FAKE NOTES, BLACK MONEY'

### Highlights of the 5-judge Constitution bench's demonetisation judgment

➤ Majority judgment authored by Justice B R Gavai on behalf of self and Justices S Abdul Nazeer, A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian. Justice B V Nagarathna gives lone dissent, but agrees that after six years no relief can be given to petitioners

➤ Majority judgment validates November 8, 2016, demonetisation decision valid; Merely because earlier exercises in 1946 and 1978 were carried out through legislation, does not mean Centre had no power to do so through Ordinance

➤ 'Any series of banknotes' provided under Section 26(2) of RBI Act can mean all series of currency notes of any denomination

➤ Nov 8, 2016, notification does



not suffer from any flaw in the decision-making process

➤ Judiciary cannot substitute its views with those of legislature or executive in matters relating to policy decisions, drafted in consultation with ex-

perts, unless these are palpably arbitrary

➤ The hardship caused to citizens after demonetisation cannot be a ground to quash demonetisation as the decision-making process was found valid by the court

➤ No fresh window for those who could not exchange the demonetised currency notes by December 30, 2016, deadline, which was a period of 52 days. SC says in 1978 demonetisation exercise a window of only 8 days was given

➤ Secrecy and speed are a must for demonetisation exercises. The object of 2016 demonetisation exercise was to counter fake currency notes, black money, and terror funding, which is undeniably noble

### Dissenting Judgment

➤ Justice Nagarathna says the process was flawed as the Centre initiated it in 2016, which is contrary to the legal provision warranting initiation of process by RBI through a recommendation

➤ 'Any series' would mean a particular series and

not all series of banknotes of particular denomination

➤ Centre cannot issue demonetisation notification through RBI Act but can do so by legislative route

➤ Demonetisation Ordinance of 2016 and the 2017 Act are unlawful; but no

relief can be granted to petitioners

➤ She agrees that the object of demonetisation was noble and well-intentioned and meant to maintain the economic health and security of the nation. But the process was illegal

- ✓ On November 8, 2016, the Government of India announced the demonetisation of all banknotes of Rs 500 and Rs 1,000, as a step against accumulation and circulation of domestic black money.
- ✓ Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his televised address to the nation on November 8, 2016, said that the two banknotes will be "just worthless piece of paper," with immediate effect, and went on to introduce new notes of Rs 2,000 and Rs 500 for public circulation.
- ✓ According to the Reserve Bank of India, almost the entire amount of currency withdrawn was turned in.
- ✓ The total value of notes returned by the public was Rs 15.3 lakh crore or 99.3% of the total of Rs 15.4 lakh crore of notes in circulation on November 8, 2016.
- ✓ The note ban did not have any discernible impact on currency in circulation in India, which has risen almost 83% since, shows RBI data.
- ✓ It went from Rs.17.7 lakh crore on November 4, 2016 to Rs.32.4 lakh crore on December 23, 2022.

## INTERNATIONAL

- **Canada – has announced a ban on foreigners buying residential property with effect from January 1**
- ✓ The decision has been taken to make more homes available to locals facing a housing crunch
- ✓ However, individuals such as refugees and permanent residents who are not citizens are exempted from the ban and allowed to buy homes.
- ✓ In late December, Canada has clarified that the ban would apply only to city dwellings and not to recreational properties such as summer cottages.
- ✓ The temporary two-year measure was proposed by PM Justin Trudeau during the 2021 election campaign when rising real estate prices put home ownership beyond the reach of many Canadians.
- ✓ Following their 2021 election victory, the Liberals quietly introduced the Prohibition on the Purchase of Residential Property by Non-Canadians Act.
- ✓ Major markets such as Vancouver and Toronto have also introduced taxes on non-residents and empty homes.

## INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS

- **On January 2, India - signed a 'Comprehensive Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement' (MMPA) with Austria for migration and mobility of Indian students and professionals.**



- ✓ The agreement was signed by the Austrian foreign minister Alexander Schallenberg and Indian external affairs minister S. Jaishankar in Vienna
- ✓ This is the first visit of an Indian foreign minister to Austria in 27 years.
- ✓ As per the agreement, India will take back the illegal migrants who have entered Austria, while Austria will make mobility and migration "more easy".
- ✓ India recently signed a similar agreement with Germany, and before that with a host of other European countries, including the UK, France, Portugal and Denmark



- ✓ Serbia, which is adjacent to Austria, is the only European country that has allowed visa-free entry for Indian citizens since 2017
- ✓ Jaishankar, who is on his three-day maiden visit to Austria, signed a total of five agreements, including an agreement on a working holiday programme
  - ✓ The Working Holiday Programme agreement will enable Indian students in Austria to work for six months.
  - ✓ Under the programme, Indians will get Austria's Red Card-White-Card that allows its holders to stay and work in the country for a period of upto two years.
  - ✓ A Red-White-Red Card is a work permit and residence permit that is issued for a period of 24 months to highly-skilled individuals from other countries who wish to work in Austria.
- ✓ The other agreements signed includes visa exemption for holders of diplomatic passports, a memorandum of understanding for cooperation in culture and arts during 2022-26 and an arrangement allowing family members of diplomatic missions to take up gainful occupation.

## PERSONALITIES

- **Three Indian-American Democrats - Juli A Mathew, KP George, and Surendran K Pattel - have taken oath as Fort Bend County Judges in the United States on January 1**



- ✓ Juli A Mathew, the first Indian-American woman to be elected to a judge's bench in the US four years ago, was re-elected for a second term.
- ✓ Mathew, a native of Thiruvalla in Kerala, was sworn in via video-conferencing and will continue to serve as presiding judge for a period of four years.
- ✓ She was voted the administrative judge for the county courts by her peers and also heads the first Juvenile Intervention and Mental Health Court.
- ✓ George, the first Indian-American to hold an office in Fort Bend County, won a second term as the county's judge in the November elections.
- ✓ He hails from Kerala's Kakkodu city.

- ✓ The county also welcomed district court judge Pattel as the 240th judicial district in November.
- ✓ The 52-year-old, a native of Kerala, has an experience of over 25 years and has been a Texas attorney since 2009
- ✓ Prior to this, he was a lawyer in India, where he earned his law degree in 1995 from the University of Calicut.
- ✓ In 2015, Pattel was elected as the president of the Malayalee Association of Greater Houston, a 2,500-member non-profit organisation that serves over 12,000 Indian families.

