

### NATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL RANKING FRAMEWORK (NIRF) 2022

The Indian Institute of Technology, Madras (IIT-M), is yet again the top higher educational institute in the country followed by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, and IIT Bombay, according to the Ministry of Education's National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2022.

**Report card**  
A look at the top 10 educational institutions in India, according to Ministry of Education's National Institutional Ranking Framework 2022



Rank	Institution	Score
1	Indian Institute of Technology, Madras	87.59
2	Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru	83.57
3	Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay	82.35
4	Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi	82.22
5	Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur	77.83
6	Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur	75.94
7	Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee	71.48
8	Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati	69.75
9	All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi	69.57
10	Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi	67.25

#### About:

- Among the universities, IISc, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Jamia Millia Islamia, Jadavpur University and Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham were among the top five.
- And among the top five colleges in the country are

Miranda House, Hindu College, Presidency College, Loyola College and Lady Shri Ram College for Women.

- The top five medical institutes are All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh, Christian Medical College, Vellore, National Institute of Mental Health & Neuro Sciences, Bengaluru, and Banaras Hindu University.
- The top five management institutes are Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Ahmedabad, IIM Bengaluru, IIM Kolkata, IIT Delhi and IIM Kozhikode.

#### Methodology

- This is the seventh consecutive edition of NIRF.
- It ranks colleges, universities and research institutions and also provides an overall ranking of all of them combined. Institutes are also ranked across seven subject domains, namely engineering, management, pharmacy, law, medical, architecture and dental.
- A total of 4,786 institutions were evaluated on five parameters — teaching, learning and resources (TLR); research and professional practice; graduation outcome; outreach; and inclusivity and perception.

## SRI LANKA POLITICAL CRISIS

Gotabaya Rajapaksa has officially resigned as Sri Lanka's President, the Parliamentary Speaker announced, ending days of uncertainty since the deposed leader fled the island amid monumental public protests over an economic crisis gripping the country.



### About:

- Hours later, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe was sworn in as Acting President as per the Constitution, even as members of Parliament prepare to elect a new President from among themselves through a secret ballot. "I hope to complete the process of electing a new President within seven days."
- According to the Sri Lankan Constitution, if the office of the President falls vacant, a new President must be elected through Parliament within one month.
- In his first statement as Acting President, Mr. Wickremesinghe vowed to "re-implement" the 19th Amendment, referring to a 2015 legislation that clipped the Executive's powers, in turn empowering Parliament.
- The change at the country's helm was sparked by the storming of the President's office and home last weekend by protesters, that forced Mr. Gotabaya to flee for his life, first to the Maldives and later to Singapore, where he is currently located.

## SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANISATION (SCO)

Iran and Belarus are likely to be the two newest additions to the China and Russia-backed Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) grouping.

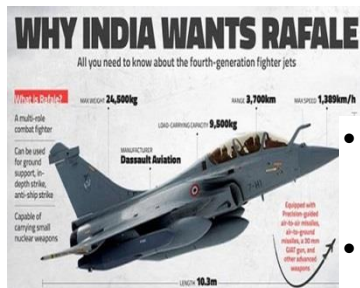
### About:



- Expanding the group is among the issues that leaders of the grouping are likely to discuss at the SCO summit in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, in September.
- China, Russia and four Central Asian states — Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan — were the founding members of the SCO, while India and Pakistan joined the grouping in 2017 in its first round of expansion.
- Last year’s summit in Dushanbe agreed for Iran to join, while Belarus has also begun the membership process. China and Russia are looking to frame the grouping as a counter to the West — particularly after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.
- India will host the SCO summit next year, and Varanasi has been selected as the SCO region’s first “Tourism and Cultural Capital”, a title it will hold next year coinciding with India chairing the grouping.

## RAFALE JETS

France has delivered all 36 Rafale fighter jets to India, said the French Envoy in India, Emmanuel Lenain, speaking on the sidelines of the French National Day celebrations.



### About:

- However, while 35 jets have arrived in India, one jet still remains in France, official sources said.
- One Rafale jet, which is the instrumented aircraft on which the 13 India specific enhancements (ISE) are being tested, is still in France.
- The last batch of three Rafale jets had arrived in India in February, taking the total Rafale jets in inventory of the Indian Air Force to 35. Work on upgrading all the Rafale jets in service to the Indian standard configuration with the 13 ISE is currently underway in India.
- The naval variant of the French jet, Rafale-M, is in the race along with Boeing F-18 Super Hornet for the Indian Navy’s tender for jets to operate from its aircraft carriers.

- In January, the Rafale-M had demonstrated its compatibility by operating from the Navy's shore-based test facility in Goa, while the F-18 carried out demonstration in May.
- India and France had signed a €7.87 billion inter-governmental agreement (IGA) in September 2016 for 36 Rafale multi-role fighter jets in fly-away condition, following the announcement by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in April 2015 citing "critical operational necessity" of the IAF.

## NAMSAI DECLARATION

The boundary line shown on 29 topo-sheets by a high-powered committee in 1960 will be taken as the basis for the realignment of the Arunachal Pradesh-Assam boundary towards resolving decades of dispute.



### About:

- Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and his Arunachal Pradesh counterpart Pema Khandu recently signed the Namsai Declaration for minimising the inter-State boundary dispute involving 123 villages.
- A list of these villages had been placed before a local commission by Arunachal Pradesh on December 26, 2007.
- According to the declaration, all border issues between Assam and Arunachal Pradesh will be confined to those raised before the local commission in 2007.
- Namsai is the headquarters of Namsai district in southern Arunachal Pradesh.

### Background

- Present-day Arunachal Pradesh, which attained Statehood in February 1987, used to be the North East Frontier Tract, administered by the Governor of Assam as an agent of the President of India.
- It was renamed North East Frontier Agency and brought under the Central government's control in 1954.

## UNPARLIAMENTARY EXPRESSIONS

Ahead of the Monsoon session beginning July 18, a major row erupted over a 50-page compilation of words deemed unfit for use in Parliament, released by the Lok Sabha secretariat.



## About:

With opposition terming the unparliamentary words list a “gag order” meant to shield the Narendra Modi government against “criticism”, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla clarified that “no words had been banned”. He said that the decision to expunge words is the prerogative of the Chair.

The new list has words and phrases disallowed not only in the Indian Parliament, but also in various state assemblies, as well as some parliaments of other countries.

## The rules

- While Article 105(2) of the Constitution lays down that “no Member of Parliament shall be liable to any proceedings in any court in respect of anything said or any vote given by him in Parliament or any committee thereof”, MPs do not enjoy the freedom to say whatever they want inside the House.
- Rule 380 (“Expunction”) of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha says: “If the Speaker is of opinion that words have been used in debate which are defamatory or indecent or unparliamentary or undignified, the Speaker may, while exercising discretion order that such words be expunged from the proceedings of the House.”

## FLAG CODE OF INDIA, 2002

The Flag Code of India, 2002 was amended vide Order dated December 30, 2021, and National Flag made of polyester or machine made flag have also been allowed.



## About:

- Now, the National Flag shall be made of hand-spun, hand-woven or machine-made cotton/polyester/wool/silk/khadi bunting, as per the amended flag code.
- The amended flag code will facilitate the availability of flags on such a large scale and also make them affordable for the general public.
- The government will soon launch ‘Har Ghar Tiranga’– a nationwide campaign to encourage people to hoist the Tricolour at their homes to mark the 75th Independence Day.

## Flag Code

- The use, display and hoisting of the National Flag in the country is guided by an overarching set of instructions called the ‘Flag Code of India 2002’. It brings together all laws, conventions, practices, and instructions for the display of the National Flag.
- It governs the display of the National Flag by private, public, and government institutions.
- The Flag Code of India took effect on January 26, 2002.
- As per Clause 2.1 of the Flag Code of India, there shall be no restriction on the display of the National Flag by members of the general public, private organizations, educational institutions etc. consistent with the dignity and honour of the National Flag.

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## US HOUSE VOTES FOR CAATSA SANCTIONS WAIVER TO INDIA OVER S-400 MISSILE DEAL WITH RUSSIA

### In News:

- The US House of Representatives approved legislation recommending an India-specific waiver for the Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA).

### Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA)

- In August 2017, President Donald Trump signed into law which specifically targets Russia, Iran, and North Korea, known as CAATSA.

- The act empowers the US President to impose at least five of 12 listed sanctions — enumerated in Section 235 — on persons engaged in a “**significant transaction**” with the Russian defence and intelligence sectors.
- Basically, this law was meant to punish countries having deep engagements with Russia, North Korea, and Iran using economic sanctions.

### Waivers under CAATSA

- The act said countries having a “**significant transaction**” with Russian intelligence and military agents will be subject to at least five kinds of sanctions.
- Hence, ordinary transactions will not invite sanctions and the imposition of sanctions comes down to the interpretation of significant transaction.
  - This leaves the scope of waiver.
- Other exemptions mentioned include the transaction not affecting US strategic interests, not endangering the alliances it is a part of, etc.

### CAATSA and India

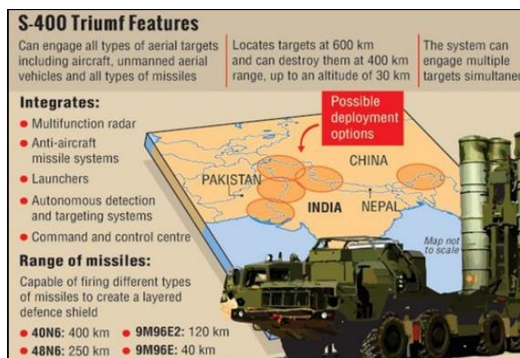
- In 2018, India purchased the S-400 missile system from Russia and in November 2021 the delivery of this missile system began.
  - India had signed a \$5 billion deal with Russia to buy five units of the S-400 defence missile systems.
- In July 2018, the US communicated that it was ready to grant India (along with Indonesia and Vietnam) a waiver on the CAATSA sanctions.
  - Moments after India and Russia signed the deal, the US embassy in India said that the US sanctions were aimed to punish Russia, not to damage military capabilities of 'our allies'.
- However, off late, US seems to have changed its stand as Washington told India it was unlikely to get a waiver from CAATSA.
  - Last year, US sanctions were imposed on Turkey and China over the procurement of S-400 missiles systems.
  - Hence, there were renewed apprehensions that US may impose similar punitive measures on India.
- So far, US had never categorically stated whether CAATSA would apply to India.

- Also, citing the strategic defence partnership between the two countries, India is confident of getting a waiver from CAATSA.

## S-400 Triumph

- The Russian-built S-400 Triumph is the world's most dangerous operationally deployed modern long-range surface-to-air missile system.
- A missile defence system is intended to act as a shield against incoming ballistic missiles.
- It is considered much more effective than the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) system developed by the US.
- The S-400 was made operational in 2007, and is responsible for defending Moscow. It was deployed in Syria in 2015 to guard Russian and Syrian naval and air assets.

## Features



- The S-400 is a mobile system that integrates a multifunction radar,
- autonomous detection and targeting systems,
- anti-aircraft missile systems,
- launchers, and
- a command-and-control centre.
- It can be deployed within five minutes, and is capable of firing four types of missiles to create a layered defence.
- It can engage all types of aerial targets including aircraft, unmanned aerial vehicles, and ballistic and cruise missiles within a range of 400 km, at an altitude up to 30 km.
- It can simultaneously track 100 airborne targets, including super fighters such as the US-built F-35, and engage six of them at the same time.

## Why India Need this?

- India must have the capability to thwart missile attacks from the two likeliest quarters, Pakistan and China.
- Beijing signed a deal with Moscow in 2015 to buy six battalions of the S-400 system, and deliveries began in January 2018.



- While the Chinese acquisition has been seen as a “gamechanger” in the region, the concern for India is limited because of the system’s range.
  - However, the S-400 can play a crucial role in case of a two-front war.
  - While the 36 Rafales armed with Meteor and Scalp missiles being inducted by IAF are primarily meant for an offensive role, the S-400 systems are defensive in nature.
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## WITH NEW LAW, GOVT SET TO BRING DIGITAL MEDIA UNDER ITS PURVIEW

### In News:

- The Press and Registration of Periodic Bill 2022 which seeks to replace the Press and Registration of Books (PRB) Act 1867 is likely to be introduced in the upcoming monsoon session of the Parliament.

### Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867:

- The PRB Act, 1867 is a result of many previous draconian laws being repealed and or being merged into one. It has been in existence for 155 years.
- The Act was originally aimed at curbing what the British Government thought was the role of the press in the revolt of 1857.
- A direct consequence of the PRB Act and its continuance post-independence is that reputed global publishers don’t have a meaningful publishing program in India.

### Press and Registration of Periodic Bill 2022:

- The Central government had first released the draft Press and Registration of Periodicals Bill in 2019 which sought to ease the process of registration of newspapers and dispense with the penal provisions under the PRB Act, 1867.
- **Salient features of the draft Bill include –**
  - The Bill proposes to remove the existing provisions relating to registration of Books and matters connected thereto.
  - The Bill proposes to do away with the existing procedure of furnishing of declaration by publishers/ printers before the District Magistrate and its subsequent authentication.

- The process of title and registration of periodicals including newspapers is proposed to be effected centrally by the Press Registrar General as a simultaneous process.
- The Bill enables the Central Government and the State Government to frame appropriate rules/ regulations to regulate the criteria/conditions for issuing Government advertisements in newspapers, accreditation of newspapers and such other facilities for newspapers.
- The Bill proposes to have a simple system of registration of e-papers.
- It proposes to do away with the earlier provision under the PRB Act, 1867 of prosecution of publishers.
  - Currently, in the PRB Act offences are punishable with an imprisonment term of up to six months as part of the penalties clause for improper disclosure of information.

### **Need for the Bill:**

- The Central government wanted to replace the colonial era PRB Act, 1867 with the proposed Press and Registration of Periodicals (PRP) Bill in order to bring digital news media under its purview.
- At present, while traditional media and electronic media are governed by various laws, digital news platforms are not covered by any registration process.
- Industry associations have also pointed out there was a need to replace the outdated PRB Act, 1867.
- To fix this, in 2021, the Central government introduced the **Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021**.
  - Under these Rules, it was made mandatory for digital news platforms to register themselves with the government.
  - The PRP Bill will serve as an extension of the same rules and will make it mandatory for digital news platforms to do a “one-time registration” in order to operate.
  - This will also help in weeding out apps, websites and social media accounts which have sprouted in recent months, serving as purveyors of fake news.