

4th November 2024

China announces new measures for couples to have more Children



Key Points:

- ❖ China has announced a slew of policies, including a childbirth subsidy system and tax cuts for parents, aimed at motivating couples to have more children to halt the falling birth-rates in order to deal with the looming demographic crisis.
- ❖ A directive issued by the State Council or the central cabinet on Monday outlined 13 targeted measures designed to enhance childbirth support services; expand childcare systems; strengthen support in education, housing and employment, and cultivate a birth-friendly social atmosphere.
- ❖ The falling birth rates resulted in China losing the most populous nation in the world to India last year.
- ❖ The latest initiative also includes improvements to the childbirth subsidy system and personal income tax relief related to childbirth, official media reported. Key provisions include extending the maternity insurance scheme to individuals in flexible employment and rural migrant workers who have already participated in the basic medical insurance scheme.
- ❖ This move aims to ensure that new parents feel more secure taking time off work, as local authorities are urged to enforce policies regarding maternity, paternity and childcare leave, official media reported.
- ❖ China's total fertility rate (TFR) in 2024 is estimated to be 1.707 births per woman, a 0.12% increase from 2023.
- ❖ TFR is the average number of children a woman gives birth to during her reproductive years. China's TFR is well below the 2.1 replacement rate, which is the average number of children a woman needs to have to replace herself in a generation.
- ❖ China's TFR is also the second lowest among the world's major economies.
- ❖ Notably, suitable labour pain relief and assisted reproductive technology services will be added to the list of medical services eligible for insurance reimbursement, state-run CGTN reported.
- ❖ The new measures appear to have drawn a lukewarm response from the public with a user on microblogging platform Weibo commenting that the measures were like if "you're buying a Ferrari, and the government is giving you a coupon worth 100 Yuan", the Hong Kong based South China Morning Post reported.
- ❖ China, with its 1.4 billion population, is grappling with a rapidly ageing population with people above 65 years now comprising over 14 per cent of the population.
- ❖ China's population aged 60 years and above approached 300 million by the end of 2023. Projections suggest it will exceed 400 million by 2035 and reach 500 million by 2050, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported earlier this month.
- ❖ Recent reports said thousands of kindergarten schools are being closed all over China as the children's recruitment declined rapidly.
- ❖ The schools are being converted to run old age homes with staff trained to manage geriatric care. China's serious demographic crisis is blamed on the decades-old one-child policy followed by the ruling Communist Party.

- ❖ Amid warnings that the demographic crisis will seriously impact the economy, China scrapped the one child policy in 2016 and permitted all couples to have two children. As it failed to make an impact, China revised the population policy in 2021, allowing people to have three children in an attempt to address the reluctance of couples to have more kids due to mounting costs.
- ❖ As the costs of pensions and geriatric care mounted, China last month raised the retirement age of men from 60 to 63 and for female office workers from 55 to 58 years.

Mobile App for Hassle-Free Birth and Death Registration Launched



Key Points:

- ❖ Union Home Minister Amit Shah launched the Civil Registration System (CRS) mobile app on October 29, 2024.
- ❖ This app simplifies birth and death registrations, allowing users to register anytime, anywhere, in their local language, significantly reducing registration time.
- ❖ On October 29, 2024, Union Home Minister Amit Shah launched the Civil Registration System (CRS) mobile application, aimed at integrating technology into governance and simplifying the registration of births and deaths.
- ❖ This initiative aligns with the government's Digital India vision, designed to provide citizens with a seamless and efficient way to register vital events at any time, from any location, and in their state's official language.

- ❖ The app is expected to significantly reduce the time required for registrations, reflecting the government's commitment to improving public services.

User-Friendly Registration Process:

Registrars can easily download the CRS app from the Google Play Store. After logging in with their user ID and password, they must verify their identity through a captcha and an OTP sent to their registered mobile number.

Comprehensive Menu Options: The app's home screen prominently displays options for registering births and deaths. A hamburger menu offers additional features such as Still Birth, Adoption, Profile management, and Payment Details.

Digital Certificates: After completing the registration process and payment, users can download the birth and death certificates directly from the app, enabling efficient access to crucial documents.

Justice KS Puttaswamy, Key Figure in Right to Privacy Case, Passes Away at 98

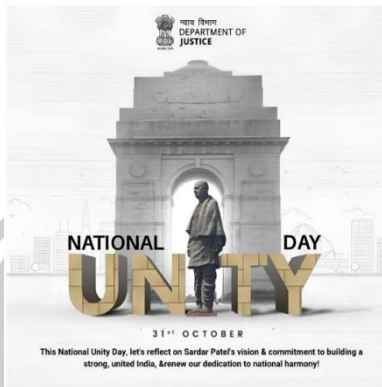


Key Points:

- ❖ The Right to Privacy case established privacy as a fundamental right under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution
- ❖ Originating from a challenge to the Aadhaar scheme, the Supreme Court's unanimous ruling emphasized the need for robust privacy protections in the face of technological.
- ❖ Justice K.S. Puttaswamy, the pivotal petitioner in the landmark right to privacy case, passed away at the age of 98 on Monday.

- ❖ His passing comes over seven years after the Supreme Court ruled that privacy is a fundamental right.
- ❖ Born in February 1926 in Kolar, Karnataka, he had a distinguished legal career that included serving as a judge at the Karnataka High Court and later as the first vice chairperson of the Central Administrative Tribunal in Bengaluru.
- ❖ His significant contributions to Indian law, particularly regarding the right to privacy, will be remembered as a cornerstone in the protection of individual rights in India.

National Unity Day 2024



Key Points:

- ❖ October 31st, India celebrates National Unity Day to honor the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, a key figure in the nation's independence movement and its first Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister.
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- ❖ Known as the "Iron Man of India," Patel was instrumental in uniting the country's diverse princely states into a single, independent nation.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's Legacy

- ❖ Born: October 31, 1875, in Nadiad, Gujarat.

- ❖ A prominent leader in India's freedom movement and close ally of Mahatma Gandhi. Known as the "Iron Man of India" for his strong resolve and dedication to unification.
- ❖ Served as India's first Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister from 1947 to 1950.
- ❖ Instrumental in uniting 562 princely states to form a cohesive and independent India.
- ❖ His work ensured the preservation of India's sovereignty and laid the foundation for a unified nation.

International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists 2024



Key Points:

- ❖ The International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists (IDEI) is observed each year on November 2. Recognized by the United Nations, this day highlights the urgent need to protect journalists and address the widespread impunity for crimes committed against them.
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Guinness Records Set in Ayodhya Over 25 lakhs Diyas on Deepotsav 2024



Key Points:

- ❖ During the grand 'Deepotsav 2024' celebrations, Ayodhya made history by setting two Guinness World Records on 30th October evening.
- ❖ In a dazzling spectacle, the Uttar Pradesh Tourism Department, alongside the district administration, illuminated the banks of the Saryu River with over 25 lakh diyas.
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- ❖ In a dazzling spectacle, the Uttar Pradesh Tourism Department, alongside the district administration, illuminated the banks of the Saryu River with over 25 lakh diyas (earthen lamps), creating the world's largest display of oil lamps.

Occasion

- ❖ Celebrated in Ayodhya, the five-day Deepotsav festival honors Lord Ram's return to Ayodhya after his 14-year exile.
- ❖ This year's festival holds special importance as it is the first since the 'Pran Pratishtha' (consecration) ceremony of Ram Lala at the Ayodhya temple

Record-Breaking Achievements

World's Largest Display of Oil Lamps: A total of 2,512,585 diyas were lit along the banks of the Saryu River.

- ❖ Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath received the Guinness World Record certificates, with Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and Deputy CM Brajesh Pathak in attendance.

Durgesh Aranya Zoological Park Set to Achieve India's First IGBC Certification



Key Points:

- ❖ Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu announced on 30th October that the Durgesh Aranya Zoological Park, located in the Bankhandi area of Kangra's Dehra assembly constituency, will be the first zoo in India to receive certification from the Indian Green Building Council (IGBC).

About Indian Green Building Council

- ❖ The Indian Green Building Council (IGBC) is part of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) which was formed in the year 2001.
- ❖ It is India's Premier certification body.
- ❖ The council offers a wide array of services which include developing new green building rating programmes, certification services and green building training programmes.
- ❖ The rating is based on six environmental categories which include sustainable station facility, health, hygiene and sanitation, energy efficiency, water efficiency, smart and green initiatives and innovation and development.
- ❖ Headquarter: Hyderabad.

Typhoon Kong-rey Unleashes Fury on Taiwan with Strong Winds



Key Points:

- ❖ Typhoon Kong-rey made landfall in Taiwan on 31st October 2024, prompting a swift response from authorities as they took extensive precautions to ensure public safety.
- ❖ Schools, offices, and financial markets were closed, and thousands of residents were evacuated from high-risk areas.
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RBI secretly brought home 102 tonnes of gold this Dhanteras**Key Points:**

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- ❖ This strategic move was part of the RBI's meticulous planning to ensure the safe and discreet transfer of such a significant quantity of gold, reinforcing the nation's reserves while aligning with the festive spirit of the occasion.
- ❖ On Dhanteras (October 29, 2024), the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) disclosed the transportation of 102 tonnes of gold from the Bank of England to secure facilities in India.
- ❖ This transfer aimed to reinforce India's gold reserves and ensure the safety of the nation's financial assets amid global geopolitical tensions.

Current Gold Holdings

- ❖ The RBI's total gold reserves amounted to 854.73 metric tonnes as of the 43rd Half-Yearly Report on Management of Foreign Exchange Reserves (April-September 2024).
- ❖ 510.46 metric tonnes held domestically.
- ❖ 324.01 metric tonnes stored with the Bank of England and the Bank for International Settlements (BIS).
- ❖ 20.26 metric tonnes held as gold deposits.
- ❖ Since September 2022, approximately 214 tonnes of gold have been repatriated to India, with 100 tonnes returned in May 2024.

Reason for Storing Gold in England

- ❖ The RBI utilizes the Bank of England for gold storage primarily due to its immediate access to the London bullion market, where it remains the world's second-largest gold custodian, following the New York Federal Reserve.
- ❖ **Financial Security and Stability:** The Bank of England has a longstanding reputation as a secure, reliable storage facility for gold. For many countries, storing gold in England is a way to protect it against geopolitical risks or instability at home.
- ❖ **Liquidity and Accessibility:** Gold stored in England is in a highly liquid form, making it easy for countries to trade or access for international financial transactions. England's role as a global financial hub makes it convenient to use gold as collateral or to settle international debts.
- ❖ **Cost Efficiency:** Building and maintaining secure facilities for gold storage can be costly. By storing gold in England, countries leverage the security and infrastructure of an established institution, saving on costs and resources.
- ❖ **Foreign Reserves Diversification:** Holding gold outside their own borders

helps countries diversify their foreign reserves. This diversification acts as a buffer in times of domestic or global economic uncertainty.

- ❖ **International Trust and Traditions:** Historically, England has been trusted as a neutral and stable location for central banks to store gold. This tradition continues, with many countries still opting to hold part of their gold reserves there.

Rajesh Kumar Singh Takes Charge as New Defence Secretary in South Block



Key Points:

- ❖ Rajesh Kumar Singh, a distinguished 1989-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of the Kerala cadre, officially took charge as the Defence Secretary at South Block, New Delhi.
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- ❖ Mr. Singh succeeds Giridhar Aramane, the 1988-batch IAS officer from the Andhra Pradesh cadre, who retired from his service on October 31, 2024, after serving a notable two-year term in this crucial role.

Lahore Declared the Most Polluted City in the World Again



Key Points:

- ❖ Lahore has once again become the world's most polluted city, with an alarming AQI of 708. This crisis, driven by vehicular emissions and industrial pollution, has led to severe health risks.
- ❖ The Punjab government has initiated measures to combat smog, including farmer education and climate diplomacy.
- ❖ Lahore has once again claimed the title of the most polluted city globally, with the Air Quality Index (AQI) soaring to alarming levels.
- ❖ Recently recorded at a staggering 708, the PM2.5 levels reached an unprecedented 431 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, significantly exceeding the World Health Organization's recommended annual limit by 86 times.
- ❖ This crisis, attributed to unchecked vehicular emissions, outdated industrial practices, and ineffective environmental policies, creates a hazardous smog that engulfs the city year-round, posing severe health risks to its residents.

Ravindra Jadeja Climbs to 5th Spot in India's Test Wicket List



Key Points:

- ❖ Ravindra Jadeja achieved a significant milestone by becoming the fifth-highest wicket-taker for India in Test cricket.
- ❖ This feat was accomplished on the first day of the third Test match against New Zealand in Mumbai, where Jadeja surpassed Ishant Sharma's wicket tally.
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9th Edition of India-Indonesia Joint Special Forces Exercise GARUD SHAKTI 24**Key Points:**

- ❖ The Indian Army contingent, consisting of 25 skilled personnel from The Parachute Regiment (Special Forces), recently embarked on a journey to Cijantung, Jakarta, Indonesia to participate in the 9th edition of the India-Indonesia Joint Special Forces Exercise, GARUD SHAKTI 24.
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- ❖ Scheduled to take place from November 1 to November 12, 2024, this exercise is a testament to the strong military cooperation and shared strategic interests between India and Indonesia.

15th Edition of Joint Special Forces Exercise VAJRA PRAHAR with US Army**Key Points:**

- ❖ Indian Army contingent embarked on a journey to participate in the 15th edition of the India-US joint Special Forces Exercise, VAJRA PRAHAR, set to be conducted from November 2 to November 22, 2024.
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Fashion Icon Rohit Bal Passes Away at 63, Remembering a Legend's Creative Legacy**Key Points:**

- ❖ The fashion world mourns the loss of Rohit Bal, an iconic Indian designer known for his mastery of textile, design, and intricate craftsmanship, who passed away on November 1, 2024, at the age of 63.
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