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1. Bjarni Benediktsson Becomes Iceland's Prime Minister, Replacing Katrín Jakobsdóttir (April 14, 2024)

Benediktsson took office as Prime Minister of Iceland on April 9, 2024, succeeding Katrín Jakobsdóttir.

An Overview of the News

- Before his appointment as PM, Benediktsson served as Minister for Foreign Affairs from October 2023.
- He previously held the position of Prime Minister from January to November 2017.
- Benediktsson's career began as a District Court attorney in 1998, followed by his election to the Icelandic parliament, Althingi, representing Southwest Iceland in 2003.
- Since 2009, he has led the Independence Party.
- Benediktsson also served as Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs from 2013 to 2017 and resumed the position from November 30, 2017, until October 14, 2023.

Katrín Jakobsdóttir's Contributions:

- Katrín Jakobsdóttir, the second woman to hold the position of PM in Iceland after Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir, served as PM since 2017.
- She resigned to pursue the presidency and also stepped down as Chairperson of the Left-Green Movement.
- Jakobsdóttir has been a Member of Althingi for the Reykjavík North Constituency since 2007.
- Her previous ministerial roles include Minister of Education, Science, and Culture, as well as Minister of Nordic Cooperation, from 2009 to 2013.

Iceland's Current Landscape:

- Iceland's current President is Guðni Th. Jóhannesson.
- Reykjavík serves as the capital.
- The currency used is the Icelandic Króna (ISK).

2. Famous Physicist Peter Higgs Passes Away at the Age of 94 (April 11, 2024)

Peter Higgs commenced his teaching journey as a Temporary Lecturer in Mathematics at University College London, UK.

An Overview of the News

- In 1960, he relocated to Edinburgh and assumed the role of a Lecturer in Mathematical Physics at the Tait Institute.
- Progressing steadily, he ascended through the academic ranks, culminating in his appointment to a Personal Chair of Theoretical Physics in 1980.
- Upon retirement in 1996, he was granted the title of Professor Emeritus at the University of Edinburgh.

Awards and Honours:

- 2015: Royal Society's Copley Medal for his contributions to the theory of the Higgs boson.
- 2013: Nobel Prize in Physics, jointly with François Englert, for their theoretical discovery explaining the mass of subatomic particles.
- 2013: Appointed as Companion of Honour in the New Year Honours List for scientific achievements.
- 2013: Edinburgh Medal from the Edinburgh International Science Festival and the Nonino 'Man of Our Time' Prize.
- 2004: Wolf Prize in Physics shared with Robert Brout and François Englert.
- 1997: High Energy and Particle Physics Prize from the European Physical Society shared with Robert Brout and François Englert.

3. India's Jagjit Pavadia appointed Chairman of INCB (April 11, 2024)

1979 batch Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer Jagjit Pavadia won re-election to the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) for his third term from 2025 to 2030.

An Overview of the News

- Pavadia previously served two terms on the INCB: 2015–2020 and 2020–2025. Notably, she held the position of President of INCB from 2021 to 2022.
- Prior to his tenure at the INCB, Pavadia held several senior positions within the Government of India, including roles in the Central Narcotics Bureau as Narcotics Commissioner of India (2006–2012), Commissioner of Legal Affairs (2001–2005), and . Chief Vigilance Officer at Power Finance Corporation (1996–2001).

About INCB:

- The INCB, established in 1968 in accordance with the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961, acts as an independent and quasi-judicial monitoring body for the implementation of the United Nations (UN) international drug control conventions.
- Collaborating with governments around the world, INCB ensures adequate drug supplies for medical and scientific purposes while monitoring governments' control over chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of drugs. Additionally, it helps prevent these chemicals from being trafficked.

About the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

- ECOSOC is a primary organ of the United Nations.
- It addresses economic, social, cultural and health issues as well as human rights.
- ECOSOC monitors the UN's subsidiary bodies and ensures follow-up on major UN conventions.
- Paula Narvaez is the current president.
- Its membership includes 54 countries including India.
- Established in 1945

4. Simon Harris becomes the youngest new Prime Minister of Ireland (April 11, 2024)

Simon Harris, aged 37 and leader of the Fine Gael party, elected as the new Taoiseach (Prime Minister) of the Republic of Ireland by members of the Dáil (Irish parliament).

An Overview of the News

- Officially installed as Taoiseach on 9th April 2024 after receiving the seal of office from President Michael D. Higgins.
- Succeeds Leo Varadkar, who resigned as Fine Gael leader and Taoiseach in March 2024.

Key Points:

- Harris becomes the youngest Prime Minister in the history of the Republic of Ireland.
- His tenure will extend until the general election scheduled for March 2025.
- Members of the Dáil voted 88 to 69 in favor of Harris as Taoiseach.
- The 3-party coalition government (Fine Gael, Fianna Fáil, and the Green Party) has been in power since 2020.
- This marks the third change in Taoiseach within less than four years for the coalition government.

About Simon Harris:

- Elected as the youngest Teachta Dála (TD), a member of Dáil Éireann, in 2011 at the age of 24.
- Held ministerial positions in the Irish government since 2016.

5. Manoj Panda Appointed as Full-Time Member of India's 16th Finance Commission (April 10, 2024)

Manoj Panda, former Director of the Institute of Economic Growth (IEG), appointed as a full-time member of the 16th Finance Commission (FC) by the Government of India (Gol).

An Overview of the News

- His term begins from the date he assumes office until the submission of the Report or 31st October 2025.
- Panda replaces Niranjana Rajadhyaksha, Executive Director at Artha Global, who was previously appointed as a full-time member of the 16th FC in January 2024.

Background of Manoj Panda:

- Economist and Senior Economist at the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) from 1982 to 1992.
- Professor and Associate Professor at the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research (IGIDR), Mumbai, Maharashtra from 1992 to 2008.
- Served as the Director of Centre for Economic and Social Studies (CESS), Hyderabad, Telangana.
- Director of the IEG, New Delhi, Delhi from 2012 to 2019.

Constitution of the 16th Finance Commission:

- Constituted by the Gol in December 2023 with Arvind Panagariya, former Vice-Chairman of NITI Aayog, as its Chairman.
- In January 2024, three full-time members and one part-time member were appointed.

Current Members of the 16th FC:

• Full-time members:

- **Ajay Narayan Jha**, former member of the 15th Finance Commission and former Secretary, Expenditure.
- **Annie George Mathew**, former Special Secretary, Expenditure.
- **Manoj Panda**, newly appointed full-time member.

• Part-time member:

- **Dr. Soumya Kanti Ghosh**, Group Chief Economic Advisor, State Bank of India.

Secretary of the 16th FC:

- **Ritvik Ranjanam Pandey**, a 1998-batch IAS officer, holds the position of Secretary.

6. Ingmar De Vos Elected President of ASOIF (April 12, 2024)

On April 9, 2024, during the 48th ASOIF General Assembly at the SportAccord World Sport & Business Summit 2024 in Birmingham, UK, Ingmar De Vos of Belgium was unanimously elected as the President of the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (ASOIF).

An Overview of the News

- He will assume office for a four-year term starting on January 1, 2025.
- De Vos will succeed Francesco Ricci Bitti of Italy, whose third term as ASOIF President is scheduled to conclude on December 31, 2024.

Background of Ingmar De Vos

- Ingmar De Vos began his career as a Belgian Senate Advisor in 1989.
- He served as the Director General (DG) of the Belgian Equestrian Federation from 1990 to 1997.
- From 1997 to 2011, De Vos held the position of Secretary General of the Belgian Equestrian Federation.
- In 2011, he joined the International Equestrian Federation (FEI) as Secretary General, a position he held until 2014.
- De Vos was elected President of the FEI on December 14, 2014. He was re-elected for a second four-year term in 2018 and subsequently for a final third term in 2022.
- Since 2017, he has been a Member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), and he has served as an ASOIF Council member since 2019.

7. Justice Aniruddha Bose, retired from the Supreme Court, appointed director of the National Judicial Academy (April 12, 2024)

On 10 April 2024, Justice Aniruddha Bose retired from the Supreme Court of India (SC) and he was serving as an SC judge since 2019.

An Overview of the News

- Justice Bose was appointed as the Director of the National Judicial Academy (NJA).
- The NJA provides training programs to judges to assist them in their judicial roles and court administration functions.

Career Highlights:

- Enrolled with the Bar Council of West Bengal as an advocate in October 1985.
- Worked as a lawyer in Calcutta High Court (HC) for about 19 years.
- Elevated to the High Court bench as a permanent judge in 2004.
- Appointed as Chief Justice (CJ) of Jharkhand HC in 2018.
- Appointed as SC judge in May 2019.

Appointment Process:

- The Director of the NJA was appointed by the Chief Justice of India (CJI) and Chairman of the NJA, Dhananjay Yashwant Chandrachud.

Role of CJI:

- The CJI serves as the Chairman of the General Body, Governing Council, Executive Committee, and Academic Council of NJA.

About National Judicial Academy (NJA):

- Established in 1993, NJA functions as an independent society under the Societies Registration Act of 1860.
- It operates with full funding from the Government of India (Government of India) and functions under the guidance of the Supreme Court of India.
- Located in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.

8. Love Kumar appointed as Special Protection Group (SPG) Inspector General (April 9, 2024)

Indian Police Service (IPS) officer Love Kumar has been appointed as the Special Protection Group (SPG) Inspector General (IG).

An Overview of the News

- The appointment is for a two-year term, as confirmed by an official notification from the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT).
- The recommendation for Love Kumar's appointment came from the Cabinet Secretariat's Office of the Secretary (Security) and was approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC).
- Love Kumar, currently serving as a Deputy Inspector General (DIG) in the SPG, will temporarily hold the position of IG through an upgrade of his rank.

Background and Profile of Love Kumar:

- Love Kumar is an Indian Police Service (IPS) officer belonging to the Uttar Pradesh cadre.
- He was born in 2004, indicating his tenure and experience within the police force.
- Prior to his appointment as SPG Inspector General, he held the position of Deputy Inspector General (DIG) in the SPG.

Appointment of Umesh Chander Datta as Inspector General of Police:

- Alongside Love Kumar's appointment, Umesh Chander Datta, also an IPS officer, has been named as the Inspector General of Police.

- Datta's term is also for two years from the date he assumes office or until further directives are issued, whichever comes first.
- This appointment was also made based on a statement from the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT).

9. Delhi High Court appoints Justice Najmi Waziri as chairman of Forest Conservation Committee (April 6, 2024)

The Delhi High Court appointed retired high court judge Justice Najmi Waziri to chair the internal departmental committee for forest conservation.

An Overview of the News

- The objective of this decision is to ensure serious cooperation from various departments in collecting documents, maps and records required for effective forest conservation.

Background:

- The Delhi High Court had earlier issued an order on December 21, 2023, emphasizing the need to protect deemed and protected forest areas in the national capital.
- A petition was filed seeking amendment to the order nominating a retired High Court judge to chair the internal departmental committee responsible for forest conservation.

Responsibilities and Expectations:

- The Court expects full cooperation from all concerned departments with the Committee headed by Justice Waziri.
- The Delhi Government has been entrusted with the task of immediately providing all necessary secretarial facilities and assistance to Justice Waziri.
- The amendment to the order dated December 21, 2023, includes appointing Justice Waziri to head the committee.

Purpose of Appointment:

- The purpose of the nomination of the retired High Court judge is to bring greater seriousness and efficiency in the collaborative efforts of various departments.
- The aim is to protect forest and deemed forest areas from further encroachment and denudation.

Composition and responsibilities of the committee:

- The committee consists of officers like the Chief Conservator of Forests, Conservator of Forests, and Deputy Conservator of Forests.
- Its primary responsibility is to ensure that concrete measures are taken for the conservation, reclamation, and enhancement of both protected and deemed forests.

10. Dr. Meenesh Shah appointed as the new Chairman of NCDFI (April 6, 2024)

Dr. Meenesh Shah, Chairman, of NDDB, has been unanimously elected as the Chairman of the National Cooperative Dairy Federation of India Limited (NCDFI) during the recent board elections on April 5, 2024.

An Overview of the News

- Ensuring transparency and fairness, the election process was monitored by Praveen Chaudhary, IAS, District Collector/Magistrate of Anand.
- Dr. Shah succeeds Mangal Jeet Rai, who served two terms as NCDFI President.
- Mangal Jeet Rai was re-elected as Director, he will remain on the Governing Council of NCUI.

Board Elections and Appointments:

- In the General Body meeting held in April 2024, eight directors including Dr. Shah were elected unopposed.
- Executive Director of NDDB Shri S. Regupathy was named as director.

About NCDFI:

- NCDFI was established on December 7, 1970, as a national-level apex dairy cooperative institution.
- Governed under the Multi-State Cooperative Societies (Amendment) Act, 2023.
- It consists of 20 regular members, 14 associate members and NDDB as institutional members.
- MD of NCDFI: Shri Srinivas Sajja