

## Testwale Current Affairs PDF

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### **1. Border Haat between India and Bangladesh inaugurated at Bholaganj in Sylhet ( May 7, 2023 )**

Border Haat between India and Bangladesh inaugurated at Bholaganj in Sylhet

On 6 May a new **border-haat** was inaugurated between **India and Bangladesh at Bholaganj under Companyganj Upazila of Sylhet.**

#### **An overview of the news**

- Bangladesh's Minister for Migrant Welfare and Overseas Employment **Imran Ahmed** and India's Assistant High Commissioner **Neeraj Kumar Jaiswal** jointly inaugurated the border-haat.
- The opening of the border haat at Bholaganj on the **border between Sylhet in Bangladesh and the East Khasi Hills of Meghalaya** was greeted with great enthusiasm by people on both sides of the border.
- This is the **fourth border haat in Sylhet division**, out of which **three are currently functioning**. There are plans to open three more border haats in Sylhet division.
- The Border Haat will open from **10 am to 4 pm on Wednesdays and Saturdays.**
- The Bholaganj Border Haat will have 26 stalls from India and 24 stalls from Bangladesh, where traditional items from both the countries will be sold duty free.
- The **first border haats were inaugurated in 2011 at Kalaichar in West Garo Hills district of Meghalaya and Kurigram in Bangladesh.**

### **2. 21st meeting of Bangladesh-India Joint Steering Committee on Cooperation in Power Sector ( May 5, 2023 )**

21st meeting of Bangladesh-India Joint Steering Committee on Cooperation in Power Sector

The **21st meeting of the Bangladesh-India Joint Steering Committee (BIJSC)** on the power sector was held on 4th May at **Khulna, Bangladesh.**

#### **An overview of the news**

- Bangladesh's Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Secretary **Habibur Rahman** and his Indian counterpart **Alok Kumar** led their respective sides at the meeting.
- The meeting reviewed the progress of ongoing activities related to **mutual cooperation in the power sector** between Bangladesh and India.
- The meeting also examined the **possibility of power generation projects** in India through **BIFPCL** including power export from Bangladesh to India and setting up of solar power projects.

- The delegation also discussed the signing of an agreement to **import 500 MW of hydro power from Nepal by GMR to Bangladesh** through India.
- The progress in the management of the first unit and the implementation of the second unit of the **1320 MW Maitri Super Thermal Power Project** construction project was also reviewed.

### **People's Republic of Bangladesh**

- Capital: **Dhaka**
- Prime Minister: **Sheikh Hasina Wazed**
- President: **Mohammad Shahabuddin**
- Currency: **Taka**

### **3. India and Israel sign MoU for cooperation on industrial research and development ( May 5, 2023 )**

India and Israel sign MoU for cooperation on industrial research and development

India and Israel signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** to enhance **industrial research and development cooperation** in high-tech areas such as **AI, quantum, semiconductors, healthcare, aerospace, sustainable energy and agriculture.**

#### **An Overview of the News**

- The partnership aims to facilitate **collaborative initiatives for industrial research and development** in a diverse range of high-tech domains, including **artificial intelligence, quantum computing, semiconductor technology, synthetic biology, healthcare, aerospace, sustainable energy and agriculture.**
- The MoU will focus on specific projects and will be monitored by a **Joint Steering Committee** to ensure effective implementation.

#### **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU):**

- It is a type of agreement between two or more parties that expresses a shared intention to take a **common line of action.**
- Memoranda of Understanding can be used in situations where the **parties do not intend a legal commitment or cannot form a legally enforceable agreement.**
- MOUs are often used by many companies and government agencies to **define relationships between departments, agencies, or closely related companies.**

#### **About Israel**

Israel is a **Middle Eastern country** on the **Mediterranean Sea**.

It is considered the **Holy Land of the Bible by Jews**, Christians and Muslims.

Tel Aviv is the financial centre of the country and is known for its **beaches and Bauhaus architecture**.

Capital and largest city - **Jerusalem**

Official language - **Hebrew**

Recognized Language - **Arabic**

Government - **Unitary parliamentary republic**

President - **Isaac Herzog**

Prime Minister - **Benjamin Netanyahu**

Chief Justice - **Esther Hayut**

#### **4. India to build Harbour for Maldivian Coast Guard ( May 4, 2023 )**

India to build Harbour for Maldivian Coast Guard

**India and Maldives** launched construction of '**Ekatha Harbour**' for the Coast Guard of the **Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF)**.

##### **An overview of the news**

- The foundation stone for the Coast Guard '**Ekatha Harbour**' was laid by Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh** and his Maldivian counterpart, **Mariya Didi**, at **Sifavaru in Uthuru Thila Falhu (UTF) atoll**, where India is assisting in construction of a **naval dockyard**.
- This is the **biggest grant-in-aid project of India in Maldives**.

##### **UTF project**

- The UTF project, announced during External Affairs Minister **S Jaishankar's visit in February 2021**, has been at the centre of a political controversy in the Maldives.
- Allegations that the project was meant for Indian military presence in the Indian Ocean nation were part of an "India Out" campaign, which was supported by the country's opposition leader, **Abdulla Yameen**.
- Last April, Maldivian President Ibrahim Solih **banned anti-India protests** as a threat to national security.
- Anti-India campaigners allege that Indian troops were stationed in a fast patrol vessel India recently gifted to Maldives Coast Guard.

##### **Recent gifts of India to Maldives**

- India gifted a **Dornier aircraft** to Maldives in 2020 and a patrol ship in 2019.
- In 2022, India had also given **Coastal Radar System to Male**.
- Last year, Modi had announced that India would provide **24 vehicles** and a naval boat and build police facilities on the country's **61 islands**.

## **5. India to hand-over fast Patrol Vessel ship & landing Craft to Maldives ( May 2, 2023 )**

Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh** will hand over a **fast patrol vessel and a landing craft to the Maldives** as India's "**gift**" during his visit to the island nation from May 1 to 3.

An overview of the news

- It will be an "**important landmark**" in building "**strong bonds**" of friendship between the two countries.
- Maldives is one of India's major maritime neighbors **in the Indian Ocean region and overall bilateral relations** between the two countries, including in the areas of **defense and security**, have been on the rise over the years.
- Singh will also review the implementation of various **India-aided projects in the Maldives** and interact with the Indian expatriate.
- India and Maldives are working together to effectively address common challenges including **maritime security, terrorism, radicalism, piracy, smuggling**, organized crime and natural disasters.

### **About Maldives**

- It is also called **Maldives Islands**, an independent island country in the **north-central Indian Ocean**.
- It extends more than **510 miles (820 km)** from north to **south and 80 miles (130 km)** from east to west.
- Basis of economy -**fisheries, tourism**
- Industries - **handicraft or cottage including the making of coir (coconut-husk fibre) and coir products, fish canning, and boatbuilding**.
- Capital -**Male**
- President -**Ibrahim Mohamed Solih**
- Official Language - **Dhivehi (Maldivian)**
- Official Religion - **Islam**
- Currency -**Rufiyaa**

## **6. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to visit Maldives ( April 30, 2023 )**

Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh** is set to embark on a **three-day official visit to Maldives** on 30th April.

### **An overview of the news**

- During the visit, Rajnath Singh will hold **bilateral talks** with Maldivian Defense Minister **Ms. Maria Ahmed Didi** and Foreign Minister **Abdulla Shahid**.
- All aspects of defense relations between the two countries will be reviewed during the consultations.
- Rajnath Singh will also meet Maldivian President **Ibrahim Mohamed Solih**.
- In line with India's commitment to capacity building of friendly countries and partners in the region, Rajnath Singh will gift a **Fast Patrol Vessel ship and a landing craft to the Maldivian National Defense Forces**.
- India and Maldives are working together to effectively address common challenges including **maritime security, terrorism, radicalism, piracy, smuggling, organized crime and natural disasters**.
- India's vision of **SAGAR** (Security and Growth for All in the Region) along with its '**Neighbourhood First**' policy as well as Maldives' '**India First**' policy seek to work together to jointly develop the capabilities within the Indian Ocean Region.

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## **7. 4th India-Mozambique Joint Defence Working Group meeting ( April 26, 2023 )**

The **fourth meeting of the India-Mozambique Joint Defense Working Group** was held in **New Delhi** on 25 April.

### **An overview of the news**

- The meeting was co-chaired by **Amitabh Prasad**, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Defense and **Casimiro Augusto Muio**, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of National Defense of Mozambique.
- Both sides discussed a wide range of issues including **military training, exercises, medicine and capacity building with a view to deepening defense ties.**
- The Indian side highlighted the country's **growing capabilities in the field of defense production** and discussed ways to further strengthen bilateral military ties.
- The Mozambican side held separate talks with representatives of the defense industry.
- The Indian side assured Mozambique of India's continued support and commitment to a strong bilateral defense relationship.

### **About Mozambique**

- Mozambique is a **central African nation.**
- India has sent food and defence equipment to under **Mission Sagar.**
- It was delivered at Port Maputo of Mozambique.
- Capital: **Maputo**
- President: **Philippe Nyusi**
- Prime Minister: **Carlos Agostinho do Rosário**
- Currency: **Mozambican metical (MZN)**
- Joint Maritime Exercise among the Indian, Mozambique and Tanzanian navies - **India-Mozambique-Tanzania Trilateral Exercise (IMT TRILAT).**

## **8. India, Guyana sign Air Services Agreement ( April 24, 2023 )**

**India and Guyana signed an Air Services Agreement (ASA)** on 22nd April to **facilitate easier travel between the two nations.**

### **An overview of the news**

- The agreement was signed between Public Works Minister **Bishop Juan Edghill** and India's High Commissioner to Guyana **KJ Srinivas** in the presence of External Affairs Minister **S Jaishankar**, who is on a 3-day visit to Guyana.

- The agreement's signing is consistent with the government's objective to **establish ties between Guyana and the rest of the world.**
- It will also complement the more than 50 air service agreements Guyana has negotiated with other **ICAO governments for the advancement of interstate air travel.**
- The **agreement encourages the development of international air services between the two countries** and the global airline market.

### **What is an Air Services Agreement?**

- Air Services Agreement (ASA) provides the **legal framework for air operations between two countries.**
- It is based on the sovereignty of the nations, the nationality of the carriers and the commercial opportunity for each side's designated airlines.
- **Prior to this there was no Air Services Agreement** between the Government of India and the Government of Guyana.
- **About Guyana**
  - Prime Minister: **Mark Phillips**
  - President: **Mohamed Irfaan Ali**
  - Capital: **Georgetown**
  - Currency : **Guyanese dollar (G\$)**

### **9. 8th India-Thailand Defence Dialogue ( April 20, 2023 )**

8th India-Thailand Defence Dialogue

The **8th India-Thailand Defence Dialogue** was held in **Bangkok on 20th April.**

#### **An overview of the news**

- The meeting was co-chaired by **Nivedita Shukla**, Special Secretary in the Ministry of Defense and **General Nuchit Sribunsong**, Deputy Permanent Secretary of Defense of Thailand.
- They reviewed defence cooperation between the two countries and explored **new initiatives to further strengthen bilateral ties.**
- The two sides also exchanged views on regional and global issues of common interest.
- India and Thailand share a **strategic partnership and defense** is a major pillar of this cooperation.

#### **India-Thailand relations**

- India and Thailand share a maritime boundary in the **Andaman Sea.**

- Thailand was one of the first countries to establish **diplomatic relations with India in 1947.**
- Since 2001, **India-Thailand economic and commercial relations** have grown significantly.
- India and Thailand have been cooperating in various multilateral fora such as **ASEAN and BIMSTEC**, a sub-regional grouping consisting of Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar, Nepal and Bhutan.
- India is a member of the **Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD)** initiated by Thailand in 2002 and the **Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC)** grouping of six countries.
- The **India-AESAN Agreement on Trade in Goods** was implemented in January 2010.
- Since 2015, India has been participating in the largest Asia Pacific military exercise **X-Cobra Gold.**
- Exercise **MAITREE (Army)** and exercise **SIAM BHARAT (Air Force)** are Bilateral exercises between both countries.

### **About Thailand**

- Prime minister - **Prayuth Chan-ocha**
- Capital - **Bangkok**
- Head of State - **King Vajiralongkorn**
- Official Language - **Thai**
- Official Name - **Ratcha Anachak Thai (Kingdom of Thailand)**

## **10. India-Russia Business Dialogue 2023 ( April 18, 2023 )**

India-Russia Business Dialogue 2023

External Affairs Minister **S Jaishankar** and Russian Deputy Prime Minister **Denis Manturov** on 17th April attended the inaugural session of "**India-Russia Business Dialogue**" 2023 in New Delhi.

### **An overview of the news**

- They met representatives of Russian and Indian businesses.
- The participants in the business forum discussed issues of further enhancing Russian-Indian practical cooperation, including the **Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC).**
- The External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said that **India and Russia have crossed the bilateral trade target of 30 billion dollars before the target year of 2025.**



- S Jaishankar talked about the importance of connectivity initiatives.
- The **International North-South Transport Corridor** as well as the Eastern Maritime Corridor, which is the Chennai-Vladivostok Corridor, are being given due consideration.
- He said that the issue of payment needs to be worked out clearly.
- He also referred to the expansion of the network under the scheme of settlement of international trade in Indian Rupees through the Special Rupee Vostro Account System.
- India and Russia are paying special attention to the issues of mutual access of products to the markets of both the countries.
- Russia and the **Eurasian Economic Commission** are trying to speed up negotiations on a free trade agreement with India.

### **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)**

- It is a multi-modal transport established by **Iran, Russia and India on 12 September 2000 in St Petersburg.**
- It is a **7,200 kilometre long multi-mode network** of shipping, rail and road transport for freight.
- **India, Iran, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Russia, Central Asia and Europe** are involved in the corridor.
- Its main purpose is to **promote transportation cooperation among the Member States.**
- It connects the Indian Ocean to the Caspian Sea via the **Persian Gulf to Russia** and northern Europe.

### **Significance of INSTC**

- It aims to reduce the **cost of movement of goods between India and Russia by about 30 percent** and reduce transit time by more than half.
- It will provide an **alternative connectivity initiative to countries** in the Eurasian region.
- It has the potential to transform countries' **economies into specialized manufacturing, logistics and transit hubs.**
- It opens a sustainable alternative route for India to trade with Afghanistan and Central Asia.

### **About Russia**

- Prime Minister: **Mikhail Mishustin**
- Capital: **Moscow**

- Currency: **Russian ruble**
- President: **Vladimir Putin**
- Official Language: **Russian**