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1. India opens its 16th Visa application center in Bangladesh's Kushtia (April 17, 2023)

India opens its 16th Visa application center in Bangladesh's Kushtia

The **High Commission of India** opened its **16th Visa application center in Kushtia town of Southwestern Bangladesh** on 16th April.

An overview of the news

- The new **Indian Visa Application Center (IVAC)** was inaugurated by **High Commissioner Pranya Verma**.
- **Mahbubul Alam Hanif**, MP from Kushtia-3 was also present on this occasion.
- This will provide greater ease and convenience to residents of **Kushtia and its surrounding areas** seeking visa services to visit India.
- Continuous efforts are being made to improve visa facilities for the people of Bangladesh.
- The new center will further strengthen people-to-people contact.
- It will serve as a new platform to promote tourism, trade and people-to-people exchanges between India and Bangladesh.
- The High Commission of India operates its largest Visa Operations Center in the world in Bangladesh.
- **Bangladesh accounts for the largest number of foreign tourists in India**, including those availing medical, tourism, business and student visa facilities.
- **In the year 2019-20, more than 16 lakh visas were issued in Dhaka.**

People's Republic of Bangladesh

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

2. Piyush Goyal addresses India - France Business Summit (April 15, 2023)

Piyush Goyal addresses India - France Business Summit

Union Minister of Commerce and Industry **Piyush Goyal** addressed the **India-France Business Summit and CEO Roundtable in Paris, France** on 11 April.

An overview of the news

- The Embassy of India, Paris, France, in association with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), the Mouvement des entreprises de France (MEDEF) and the Indo French Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IFCCI), organised the India – France Business Summit.

Sessions were held on the following topics-

- Building a Green Future
- Critical and Emerging Technologies: The New Strategic Frontier
- Defence Cooperation: Securing a Shared Future Through Atmanirbhar Bharat
- France and India: Springboard to Europe and Indo-Pacific
- CEOs Roundtable

Trade between India and France

- Bilateral trade with France has reached **US\$ 10.75 billion** in the last decade and has shown steady growth. Both sides have taken forward the discussions on the **India-EU Trade and Investment Agreement**.
- Agreements worth **about \$16 billion** have been signed at the trade summit.
- Nearly **1,000 French companies** are present in India while over a hundred Indian businesses have established a presence in France.

India, France bilateral relations

- France is the first country with which India started a **strategic dialogue after its 1998 nuclear tests**.
- Both sides recognized the importance of discussing the **India-EU Trade and Investment Agreement**.
- **In 2005**, an agreement was signed to build **six Scorpene submarines** in India with the help of France.
- There has been an agreement between the Government of **France and India for 36 Rafale aircraft**.

About France

- President: **Emmanuel Macron**
- Prime minister: **Élisabeth Borne**
- Capital: **Paris**
- Currency : **euro**

3. Piyush Goyal's two-day visit to Italy (April 14, 2023)

Piyush Goyal's two-day visit to Italy

Union Minister of Commerce and Industry **Piyush Goyal** was visiting **Rome** on 12 April 2023 on a two-day visit to **Italy**.

An Overview of the News:

- Shri Goyal met **Antonio Tajani, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs**, Government of Italy to review all aspects of bilateral trade and economic relations.
- Both the Ministers exchanged views on leveraging the India-Italy trade and economic partnership for development in various sectors.
- After the state visit of Italian **Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni** to India on 2 March 2023, efforts were made to elevate the bilateral relationship to the level of a strategic partnership.

Suggestion for formation of Joint Working Group:

- Tajani suggested setting up of a joint working group in strategic areas such as space, technology, defence, agriculture etc. to keep abreast of important developments in these areas.

Bilateral trade with Italy:

- Bilateral trade between India and Italy to be around **US\$ 16 billion** in 2022.
- Shri Goyal briefed about the progress made in India-EU FTA negotiations. Both the Ministers underlined the importance of a free, balanced and fair **Free Trade Agreement** and hoped that it would be concluded soon.

Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation (JCEC) in Rome:

- The two leaders also agreed to hold the next session of the Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation (JCEC) in Rome in the last week of September 2023.

Italy:

- Capital: **Rome**
- Currency: **Euro**
- President: **Sergio Mattarella**
- Prime Minister: **Giorgia Meloni**

4. Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar launches "Tulsi Ghat Restoration Project" in Kampala (April 13, 2023)

Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar launches "Tulsi Ghat Restoration Project" in Kampala

External Affairs Minister **S Jaishankar** launched **Varanasi's 'Tulsi Ghat Restoration Project'** on 10 April 2023 during his visit to **Kampala, Uganda**.

An Overview of the News:

- The **Tulsi Ghat Renovation Project** is an initiative aimed at enhancing the aesthetic appeal of **Varanasi**, the oldest inhabited city in the world.
- Uganda was supported to chair the Non-Aligned Movement from Africa for the period from 2022 to 2025. The position of chair of NAM rotates every three years during the summits.

Mozambique Visit:

- The External Affairs Minister will visit **Mozambique** from 13 to 15 April. This will be the first visit by an External Affairs Minister of India to Mozambique.
- The fifth meeting of the India-Mozambique Joint Commission will be chaired by the Foreign Ministers of both the countries.
- During the visit, various types of assistance will be announced from the Indian side to both these countries. There will also be talk on defense cooperation with these two countries.
- In March 2023, India conducted military exercises with nine countries in Africa, as well as a separate meeting with the military chiefs of African countries.
- In March 2023, **Cyclone Freddy** caused havoc in **Malawi, Mozambique and Madagascar**.

Uganda:

- Capital: **Kampala**
- President: **Yoweri Museveni**
- Prime Minister: **Robinhood Nabanza**
- Currency: **Uganda Shilling**

Mozambique:

- Capital: **Maputo**
- President: **Philippe Nyusi**
- Prime Minister: **Carlos Agostinho do Rosário**
- Currency: **Mozambican metical (MZN)**

5. 4-day visit of Ukrainian Deputy Foreign Minister Emin Zhaparova to India (April 10, 2023)

4-day visit of Ukrainian Deputy Foreign Minister Emin Zhaparova to India

Ukraine's Deputy Foreign Minister **Emin Zhaparova** arrived in India on 9 April 2023 on a four-day visit, the first official visit to the Eastern European country since the Russian aggression began in February 2022.

An overview of the news

- According to the information given by the Ministry, the First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine **Emin Zhaparova** will be on an official visit to India from 9 to 12 April.
- Jhaparova held talks with **Sanjay Verma**, Secretary (West) in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). In which the two sides are expected to discuss bilateral relations, exchange views on the current situation in Ukraine and global issues of mutual interest.
- In India, Jhaparova will also meet Minister of State for External Affairs and Culture **Meenakshi Lekhi** and Deputy National Security Advisor **Vikram Misri**.
- In the context of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, India has urged both sides to find a peaceful solution to the disputes.

Ukraine:

- Capital: **Kyiv**
- President: **Volodymyr Zelensky**
- Currency: **Ukrainian hryvnia**

6. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's visit to Uganda and Mozambique (April 10, 2023)

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's visit to Uganda and Mozambique

The Union External Affairs Minister **S Jaishankar** is on a visit of two **African** countries **Uganda and Mozambique** from April 10 to 15, 2023.

An overview of the news:

- According to the Union Ministry of External Affairs, the External Affairs Minister will be on a visit to Uganda from 10 to 12 April. During this he will hold delegation level talks with Ugandan Foreign Minister General JJ Odongo.
- S Jaishankar is also expected to meet prominent leaders of the country Uganda and other ministers.
- He is also likely to meet the country's leadership and other ministers.
- The External Affairs Minister will inaugurate the transit campus of the **National Forensic Science University (NFSU)** to be set up in collaboration with India.
 - This will be the first campus of this university outside India. Jaishankar will also address a group of Ugandan businessmen and industrialists.
- During this, MoU is also expected to be signed between India and Uganda for setting up the first campus of NFSU outside India.

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Mozambique:

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7. 7th India-Japan Defense Policy Dialogue held in New Delhi (April 5, 2023)

7th India-Japan Defense Policy Dialogue held in New Delhi

The dialogue on April 05, 2023 was **co-chaired by Mr. Giridhar Armane, Defense Secretary of India** and **Mr. Oka Masami**, Defense Minister of International Affairs of Japan.

An Overview of the News

- The two countries discussed a wide range of issues, including **service-level exercises and engagements, regional security issues and cooperation in defence equipment and technology**.
- Defense Secretary **Shri Giridhar Armane** stressed the need for both the countries to deepen cooperation between their respective defence industries.
- He also invited Japanese defence industries to **explore investment opportunities in India** under the '**Make in India**' initiative.
- Both sides agreed to diversify cooperation in new and emerging domains such as the **defence sector and cyber**.
- India and Japan reiterated their commitment to a strong defence partnership and agreed to explore opportunities to further enhance bilateral cooperation.
- **Defense Policy Dialogue is an institutional mechanism** between India and Japan to discuss bilateral defence cooperation.

About Japan

- It is also called **Nihon or Nippon** and is an archipelago in the **western Pacific Ocean in East Asia**.
- It is made up of four main islands **Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu** and **Honshu** is the largest island of Japan.
- Its highest mountain is **Mount Fuji**.
- It is the **third largest economy in the world after the United States and China**.

Capital - **Tokyo**

currency - **Yen**

Prime Minister - **Fumio Kishida**

8. India, Netherlands hold first Ministerial-level meeting of Joint Working Group (April 4, 2023)

1st Ministerial-level meeting of the Joint Working Group between India and the Netherlands
The **1st Ministerial-level meeting of the Joint Working Group** between **India and the Netherlands** was held on 3 April in New Delhi.

An overview of the news

- The meeting was held in the presence of Union Jal Shakti Minister **Gajendra Singh Shekhawat** and Minister for Infrastructure and Water Management, Government of the Netherlands, **Mark Harbours**.
- The '**Strategic Water Partnership**' was launched during a virtual meeting between the Prime Ministers of India and the Netherlands in April 2021.
- The partnership provides the necessary impetus to expand bilateral water cooperation.
- The Netherlands is associated with various states and municipalities, including **Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Gujarat, Punjab, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Maharashtra**, in various water resources projects.
- River-city alliance between the two countries for river-sensitive cities and technologically driven nature-based solutions for river rejuvenation.

India-Netherlands Relations

- **India and the Netherlands** enjoy long-standing warm and friendly relations based on shared values of democracy, rule of law, human rights and historical bonds of friendship.
- Both countries share **common ideals of democracy, pluralism and rule of law**.

- Bilateral relations have been marked by strong economic and commercial ties.
- The Netherlands signed the **Framework Agreement of the International Solar Alliance (ISA)** and became the **64th signatory member** country.
- There are over **200 Indian companies** operating in the Netherlands.
- The total bilateral trade stood at **US\$ 6.28 billion in the financial year 2018-2019.**
- The Netherlands was India's fourth largest trading partner in the European Union after Britain, Germany and Belgium.

About Netherlands

- The Netherlands, also known as **Holland**, is a country located in northwestern Europe.
- Monarch: **King Willem-Alexander**
- Prime Minister: **Mark Rutte**
- Capital: **Amsterdam**
- Currency: **euro**

9. India summons Canadian High Commissioner over actions of separatist elements (March 27, 2023)

India summons Canadian High Commissioner over actions of separatist elements

The Government of India summoned the High Commissioner of Canada on 26 March 2023 and the purpose of the summons was to express strong concern over the actions of separatist and extremist elements against India's diplomatic missions and consulates in Canada.

An Overview of the News

- The Government of India sought an explanation on how such elements were able to breach the security of diplomatic missions and consulates despite the presence of the police.
- The Government of India requested that the Government of Canada arrest and prosecute individuals who have already been identified as having been involved in such acts.
- India's Ministry of External Affairs expects the Government of Canada to take all necessary steps to ensure the safety of diplomats and the security of diplomatic premises.

About Canada

Geography: Canada is the second largest country in the world by land area. It shares a border with the United States to the south.

Government: Canada is a parliamentary democracy with a constitutional monarchy. The current monarch is Queen Elizabeth II.

Languages: Canada has two official languages, English and French. French is primarily spoken in the province of Quebec, while English is the most widely spoken language in the rest of the country.

Culture: Hockey is considered the national sport of Canada, and the country is also known for its winter sports such as skiing and snowboarding.

Nature: Some of the country's most famous natural sites include Niagara Falls, Banff National Park, and the Canadian Rockies.

Capital - **Ottawa**

Prime Minister - **Justin Trudeau**

Currency - **Canadian Dollar**

10. India invited to attend G7 Hiroshima summit in Japan (March 21, 2023)

Narendra Modi and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida

After a meeting between Indian Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** and Japanese Prime Minister **Fumio Kishida**, Japan was **invited to attend the G7 Hiroshima summit**.

An Overview of the News

- Indian Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** and Japanese Prime Minister **Fumio Kishida** signed two agreements during their bilateral talks: the renewal of the **Memorandum of Cooperation in Japanese and the exchange of notes on the JICA loan for 300 billion yen** for the **Mumbai-Ahmedabad high-speed railway project**.
- The objective of the meeting is **to strengthen India-Japan relations** and provide a voice for the Global South.
- Foreign Secretary **Vinay Mohan Kwatra**

About the G7

- The **G7 is a group of seven major industrialised countries**, including **Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States**.
- The G7 holds annual meetings to discuss various global issues, but these meetings are usually held in different locations each year.
- The **48th G7 summit was hosted by Germany in 2022**.