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1. London home of Dadabhai Naoroji gets Blue Plaque honour (Aug. 17, 2022)

Dadabhai Naoroji's south London home, where he lived for eight years in the late 19th century, has received a commemorative 'blue plaque' award.

Important facts

- Under the 'Blue Plaque' scheme, the English Heritage Charity honours historically significant buildings across London.
- Naoroji made seven trips to England and lived in London for more than three decades.
- Naoroji's plaque was unveiled on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of Indian Independence.

Dadabhai Naoroji

- Dadabhai Naoroji (4 September 1825 – 30 June 1917) was a Parsi intellectual, educationist, cotton merchant and early political and social leader of British India.
- He is also known as 'Grand Old Man of India' and 'Official Ambassador of India'.
- He proposed the principle of economic exit or drain of money.
- Dadabhai Naoroji founded the East India Association in London in 1866.
- Poverty and UnBritish Rule in India is a major book written by him.

2. Italy's Lake Garda shrinks to historically low level due to drought (Aug. 17, 2022)

Italy's worst drought in a long time threatens to shrink the country's largest Lake Garda, pushing its lowest ever recorded.

Important facts

- Northern Italy received very little rainfall for months, and snowfall was also reduced by 70% in 2022, drying up important rivers such as the Po, which flow through Italy's agricultural and industrial region.
- The dry condition of Italy's longest river, the Po, caused billions of euros in damage to farmers who usually depend on the river to irrigate their fields.
- To make up for the loss, the authorities have allowed more and more water from Lake Garda to flow into the local rivers.
- But at the end of July 2022, less money was spent protecting the lake and its associated economically important tourism.

- Due to the diversion of large amounts of lake water into rivers, the lake has the lowest water level ever recorded.

About Garda Lake

- It is best known as the playground lake.
- Location - Veneto, Trentino Alto Adige and Lombardy regions in north-west Italy
- Best - For fun and games for kids of all ages

3. North Korea fires two cruise missiles from west coast town of Onchon (Aug. 17, 2022)

North Korea fired two cruise missiles from the west coast city of Onchon on the morning of August 17.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- The launch comes as South Korea and the United States begin a four-day preliminary joint exercise in preparation for the long-suspended live field training Ulchi Freedom Shield, which takes place from August 22 to September 1.
- South Korean President Yoon Sek-yol said that his country is ready to provide phased economic aid to North Korea if it ends the development of nuclear weapons and begins denuclearization.
- Unlike ballistic missiles, cruise missiles are powered by jet engines and remain close to the ground, making them difficult to detect.
- Most cruise missiles are not designed to carry nuclear warheads.

Recent missile launches by North Korea :

- North Korea has recently conducted a flurry of missile tests, making its 18th launch on August 17 this year.
- North Korea only has four tests in 2020, and eight in 2021.
- The last missile launch was on June 5 with eight short-range ballistic missiles – which were responded to by South Korea and the US firing eight more missiles into the waters off the eastern coast of the Korean peninsula.

About North Korea :

- Capital - Pyongyang
- Official Language - Korean
- President - Kim Jong-un

4. US President signs major climate change and health care legislation (Aug. 17, 2022)

US President Joe Biden has signed a historic climate change and healthcare spending bill into law on August 16.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- This law will go a long way in reducing health care costs and combating climate change.
- According to the White House, the **\$740 billion investment** bill is the largest commitment to combat climate change in the country's history.
- The White House claimed that Biden's **Inflation Reduction Act** would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by nearly a billion tons in 2030.
- This law is ten times bigger than any climate law ever enacted.
- The bill provides for significant investment in renewable energy through wind and solar power projects and heavy tax credits for electric vehicles.
- The law would also stipulate the cost of the drug for Medicare recipients in excess of \$2,000 annually.
- The new law will also help the nearly 13 million Americans pay for their health insurance.

Similar climate packages announced by other countries :

- In May 2022, **Japan** announced an '**Invest in Kisida**' plan.
- 'Invest in Kisida' plan aims for a \$1.1 trillion investment to bolster the Japanese economy.
- Japan aims to transition to clean energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by **46 percent by 2030**.
- In June 2021, the **European Union (EU)** proposed a similar '**Fit for 55**' plan to reduce emissions by 55% by 2030.

5. India contributes USD 400,000 to the United Nations Trust Fund (Aug. 17, 2022)

Reflecting its commitment to global promotion and protection of human rights and support of UN human rights, India has contributed USD 400,000 to four voluntary trust funds.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- As a founding member of the United Nations, India strongly supports the objectives and principles of the United Nations and has made significant contributions to the implementation of the goals of the Charter and the development of specialized programs and agencies of the United Nations.
- India's deep engagement with the United Nations is based on its strong commitment to multilateralism.
- India firmly believes that the United Nations and the standards of international relations that it has promoted are the most effective tools to address today's global challenges.
- These global challenges are poverty eradication, environment, climate change, peace building and peacekeeping, terrorism, disarmament, human rights, migration and health and pandemics.
- The United Nations also has an important role to play in newly emerging areas such as cyber security, space and frontier technologies such as artificial intelligence.

Purpose of the fund :

- The fund is meant to support victimization of atrocities, technical cooperation, implementation of Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and the participation of Least Developed Countries (LDCs)/Small Island Developing States (SIDs).
- Global promotion and protection of human rights.
- In 2007, India became the first country to deploy a women's contingent for a police unit set up for the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in Liberia.

United Nations Human Rights Council :

- It is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system.
- It is responsible for strengthening the spread and protection of human rights around the world.
- It was created by the United Nations General Assembly in 2006.
- It has been created in place of the former United Nations Commission on Human Rights.
- It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

6. UK becomes first nation to approve Omicron vaccine (Aug. 16, 2022)

The UK on 16 August approved a booster dose against COVID-19, which is claimed to be effective against both the original and variant Omicron forms of the coronavirus.

Important facts

- The agency's decision was based on clinical trial data showing that the booster dose triggered "a strong immune response" against both Omicron and the original 2020 coronavirus.

- With this, Britain has become the first country to have approved such a vaccine.
- The vaccine was found to meet the standards of safety, quality and effectiveness.
- The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency said that half of each dose of the booster vaccine Spike Vax Bivalent Original/Omicron, i.e. 25 micrograms, works against the original form, while the other half targets Omicron.

5 variants of coronavirus are cause of concern

- **Omicron** - Identified in southern Africa in November 2021
- **Delta** - emerged in India in late 2020 and spread around the world
- **Gamma** - Emerged in Brazil in late 2020
- **Beta** - Emerged in South Africa in early 2020
- **Alpha** - Emerged in Britain in late 2020

7. Scotland becomes first in the world to provide free period products (Aug. 16, 2022)

Scotland became the first country in the world from August 15 to ensure universal access to free period products.

Important facts

- The Scottish Parliament voted unanimously in favour of the Period Products Bill, which made the right to free access to sanitary products in public buildings a legal right in November 2020.
- After the enactment of this law, sanitary napkins will be available free of cost in many public places including community buildings, youth clubs and medical stores.
- Even before this, in the year 2018, Scotland has become the first country to provide free sanitary products in government schools.

What is included in the new law?

- Under the law, local authorities and education providers are legally required to provide period sanitary facilities free of charge to those who need them.
- In addition to the provision of free products, the government has funded an educational website for employers, improved menstrual health resources available to schools, and implemented a successful anti-stigma campaign.
- Product seekers can locate their nearest collection point using the PickupMyPeriod mobile app, which was launched by social enterprise “Hey Girls” with the support of the Scottish Government.

About Scotland

- Scotland is a country in the United Kingdom.
- Capital - Edinburgh
- Currency - Pound Sterling
- Prime Minister- Nicola Sturgeon

8. Global Employment Trends for Youth report - 2022 (Aug. 16, 2022)

The Global Employment Trends for Youth 2022 report has been released by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) as part of the global call to action for a "human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic".

Key points of the report

- According to the "Global Employment Trends for Youth 2022" report, rare unemployment among youth aged 15-24 has reached 15.6% worldwide. This is three times the unemployment rate among adults.
- According to the report, the number of unemployed youth population has come down from 75 million in 2021 to 73 million in 2022. However, this number is still 6 million more than the number before the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The unemployment rate in Africa is 12.7%, lower than the global average of 14.9%. This figure highlights that young people have withdrawn from the labour markets.
- Schools were closed in India for 18 months. Of the 240 million school going children, only 8% in rural areas and 23% in urban areas had access to online education. As a result, 92% of children on average have lost a basic ability in language. 82% of children have lost at least one basic ability in maths.
- According to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), the labour force participation rate (LPR) in India fell to 38.8% in June 2022.
- The share of people in the age group of 18-21 in newly created EPF accounts has come down from 37.9% in 2018-19 to 24.1% in 2021-22.

About International Labour Organisation

- It was established in 1919 by the Treaty of Versailles as an affiliated agency of the League of Nations.
- In 1946, it became the first specialised agency affiliated with the United Nations.
- Objective of Establishment: Social justice is essential for global and lasting peace.
- India is a founding member of the ILO and has been a permanent member of the governing body of the ILO since the year 1922.
- The first office of ILO in India was established in 1928.
- Headquarters- Geneva, Switzerland

Director General – Gilbert Hongbo

9. William Ruto declared winner of Kenya presidential election (Aug. 16, 2022)

In Kenya, Deputy President William Ruto has been declared the winner of Kenya's presidential election on 16 August.

Important facts

- He defeated his rival Raila Odinga by a very small margin, securing 50.5 percent of the vote.
- The worst drought in 40 years has ravaged the northern part of the country, leaving 4.1 million people dependent on food aid, while the country's debt levels have risen.
- Ruto was the Vice President of Kenya for the last 9 years.
- Significantly, President Uhuru Kenyatta remained in power for a decade.

History of violence

- In 2017, over 100 people were killed after the Supreme Court quashed preliminary results over irregularities in the electoral process.
- Amid fears that allegations of vote rigging had led to bloody conflicts after the presidential elections in 2007 and 2017, the courts were urged to control any disputes.
- The US Embassy in Kenya urged all parties to work together to peacefully resolve concerns about the election.
- Economic issues such as rising food and fuel prices, government debt, unemployment and widespread corruption were central to the election in the country.
- People here were more worried about fuel prices after the Russia-Ukraine war.

About Kenya

- Capital - Nairobi
- Official Languages - Swahili, English
- Currency - Kenyan Shilling

10. Latvia and Estonia withdraw from cooperation group between China and Central and Eastern European countries (Aug. 12, 2022)

Latvia and Estonia have withdrawn from a cooperation group between China and more than a dozen Central and Eastern European countries.

Important facts

- The move comes amid Western criticism of China over increasing military pressure on Taiwan.
- Relations between Lithuania and China deteriorated after Taiwan was allowed to open a de facto embassy late last year.
- Latvia and Estonia said they would continue to work towards a constructive and pragmatic relationship with China while respecting a rules-based international order and human rights.

China and Central & Eastern European (CEE) 17+1 cooperation group

- It is a China-led format founded in 2012 in Budapest.
- It aims to expand cooperation between Beijing and Central and Eastern European (CEE) member states with investment and trade for the development of the CEE region.
- It also aims at the development of infrastructure projects such as modernization of bridges, motorways, railway lines and ports in the member states.
- It includes twelve EU member states and five Balkan states.
- Name of the countries in 17+1 - Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia.