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1. Boris Johnson gives Churchill Leadership Award to Ukraine's Zelenskyy (July 28, 2022)

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on July 26 honoured Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky with the 'Sir Winston Churchill Leadership Award' and compared the two leaders in times of crisis.

Important facts

- Zelensky accepted the award through video link during a ceremony at Johnson's London office.
- Johnson recalled how Zelensky had confirmed on February 24 that Russia had invaded Ukraine.
- He said, "In the hour of the greatest crisis, you faced the test of leadership in your own way as Churchill did in 1940."
- Zelensky thanked Johnson and Britain for their cooperation.
- Johnson was the first Western leader to visit Kyiv after Russia's invasion of the northeastern country Ukraine.

Churchill Leadership Award

- It was first introduced in 2006.
- Past recipients of the award include Prince Charles, former British Prime Ministers Margaret Thatcher and John Major and former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

Who was Winston Churchill?

- He was a statesman, writer, orator and leader who led Britain to victory in the Second World War.
- He served as Conservative Prime Minister of Britain twice - from 1940 to 1945 and from 1951 to 1955.
- He was born on 30 November 1874, Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire.
- He died on 24 January 1965, London.

2. UN Rights Panel Calls To Repeal Hong Kong Security Law Imposed By China (July 28, 2022)

Experts from the UN Human Rights Committee said on July 27 that Hong Kong's controversial national security law should be repealed as the law is being used to crack down on free expression and dissent.

Important facts

- Chinese and Hong Kong officials have used the NSL imposed by Beijing in 2020 to restore stability after the city was destabilized by sometimes violent anti-government and anti-China activities in 2019.
- This UN committee, which oversees the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), released its findings on Hong Kong after periodic review.
- The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is a signatory to the ICCPR but China is not.
- This is the first recommendation by an independent UN expert body since 2020.

About Hong Kong

- Hong Kong is an autonomous region, and a former British colony in southeast China.
- It became a colony of the British Empire in 1842 at the end of the First Opium War.
- Sovereignty over the region was returned to China in 1997.
- As a Special Administrative Region (SAR), Hong Kong maintains governing power and economic systems that are separate from those of mainland China.
- The Sino-British Joint Declaration of 1984 guarantees basic law for 50 years.

About Hong Kong Security Law

- Hong Kong was handed back to China by the British government in 1997, but this was done under an agreement.
- This agreement is called the 'Basic Law' and it affirms the principle of 'one country, two systems'.
- This minor constitution is a product of the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration.
- Under this, China promised in 1997 that in the coming 50 years it would respect Hong Kong's liberal policies, governance system, an independent judiciary and individual freedoms that no other part of mainland China has.
- The Basic Law will expire in the year 2047. Under Article 23, Hong Kong can make its own national security law.

3. India contributes \$2.5 million to UN RWA for Palestine refugees (July 27, 2022)

India contributed US \$ 2.5 million for the United Nations Relief for Palestine Refugees and Working Agency (UNRWA).

Important facts

- India is a dedicated donor for UNRWA. Since 2018, it has contributed 20 million USD to support the UNRWA core services to Palestine refugees in the Middle East.

Importance of contribution

- This contribution highlights India's strong performance and unbreakable support for UNRWA's work.
- It also highlights India's commitment to the good of Palestine.
- It supports Palestinian refugees in the Middle East.

Palestinian refugee

- He is a citizen of compulsory Palestine, who was expelled from his country during the 1947–49 Palestine War.
- This phenomenon is known as 1948 Palestinian migration.
- They mostly live in Palestinian refugee camps at Lebanon, Jordan, Gaza Strip, Syria and West Bank.

About the United Nations Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA) for Palestine refugees

- UNRWA was established as a human agency.
- It is funded completely through voluntary contribution and grant from donor countries.
- Establishment- 8 December 1949
- Headquarters- Amman and Gaza
- Commissioner General- Philip Lazarini

4. Russia to quit International Space Station 'after 2024' (July 27, 2022)

Russia has decided to leave the International Space Centre after 2024.

Important facts

- The decision was announced by Yuri Bori Sof, the newly appointed President of Russia's space agency Roscosmos.
- The decision comes at a time when the Kremlin's war with Ukraine has isolated Russia both commercially and economically.
- Russia will focus on building its own space station after 2024.
- Russia will fulfill its obligations to other partners in the International Space Station before leaving the project.

Why does Russia want to leave the International Space Station?

- Russia focuses on building its own space outpost.

- Russian cosmonauts were criticized for using the space station to flag Russian occupation of Ukraine's territory.
- NASA strongly condemned Russia's political use of the ISS.
- The US alleges that Russia has used the station for support in the Ukraine war while the station's original purpose is to use it for scientific and technological development in a peaceful manner.
- Space relations between Russia and the US began to deteriorate even before the Russia-Ukraine war, when NASA announced its Artemis Agreement.
- Russia had disagreed with this agreement and it was clear that Russia and America would not be able to cooperate in space matters for long.

About International Space Station (ISS)

- The ISS was commissioned in the year 1998 and has been operating at its full capacity since 2011.
- The first astronauts were sent to this space station in the year 2000.
- The ISS is being operated by 16 countries led by the NASA space agency of America.
- These countries include America, Russia, Japan, Brazil, Canada and 11 countries in Europe.
- The ISS is the most complex international scientific and engineering project in history and the largest manned spaceflight structure.
- The space station flies at an average altitude of 400 kilometres from Earth, orbiting the globe every 90 minutes at a speed of about 28,000 kilometres per hour.
- The space station appears as a bright moving light in the night sky, similar to the bright planet Venus.

ISS program joint project of five space agencies

1. NASA (United States)
2. Roscosmos (Russia)
3. JAXA (Japan)
4. ESA (Europe)
5. CSA (Canada)

5. Zimbabwe launches gold coins as legal tender to tackle inflation (July 26, 2022)

Zimbabwe has launched new gold coins to be sold to the public to combat extreme hyperinflation.

Important facts

- The country's central bank, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, announced this unprecedented move on July 25 to boost confidence in the local currency.
- According to the IMF, confidence in Zimbabwe's currency is low after people's savings from hyperinflation reached 5 billion in 2008.
- Confidence in Zimbabwean currency is already so low that many retailers do not accept it.
- The central bank has distributed 2,000 coins to commercial banks.
- Coins can be used for purchases in stores, depending on whether there is substantial change in the store.
- Any individual or company can buy coins from authorized banks outlets.

About Gold Coins

- The gold coins are called Mosi-oa-Tunya.
- In the local Tonga language it refers to Victoria Falls.
- The coins would have liquid asset status, meaning they would be able to be easily converted into cash and would be tradable both locally and internationally.
- The coin may also be used for transactional purposes.
- People can trade for cash only after holding the coins for at least 180 days.

About Zimbabwe

- President - Emmerson Mnangagwa
- Capital - Harare
- Official Name - Republic of Zimbabwe

6. Sheikh Ahmed Nawaf Al-Sabah Becomes New Kuwait PM (July 26, 2022)

Sheikh Ahmed Nawaf Al Ahmed Al Sabah was appointed as the new Prime Minister of Kuwait on 25 July.

Important facts

- He replaced Sheikh Sabah Al Khalid, who stepped down in April 2022.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has conveyed his congratulations and best wishes on his appointment as the Prime Minister of Kuwait.

- In April 2022, Kuwait's government resigned just months after its formation, creating new uncertainty as it grappled with a worsening political crisis and stalled important economic and social reforms.
- Sheikh Sabah Al-Khalid Al Hamad Al Sabah, former Prime Minister of Kuwait, submitted the resignation of the cabinet to the Crown Prince ahead of a no-confidence motion in parliament.

India-Kuwait Relations

- India and Kuwait have traditionally enjoyed friendly relations that have stood the test of time.
- India has consistently been one of Kuwait's top trading partners. Kuwait has been a reliable supplier of crude oil to India.
- India is the world's third-biggest oil importer and consumer.
- Major items exported by India to Kuwait include food items, textiles, electrical and engineering equipment, ceramics, automobiles, chemicals, jewellery, metal products etc.
- Kuwait is one of the top sources of remittances for India.
- The Indian community in Kuwait has been growing at 5-6% per annum.
- Indians are the largest expatriate community in Kuwait while Egypt ranks second.

7. WHO declares monkeypox a global emergency (July 25, 2022)

The World Health Organisation has declared the global monkeypox outbreak a 'Public Health Emergency of International Concern' (PHEIC), one step below the 'pandemic'.

Important facts

- According to WHO, PHEIC constitutes an exceptional event, which constitutes a public health risk to other countries through international spread, and which potentially requires a coordinated international response.
- On January 30, 2020, WHO had categorised COVID-19 as a PHEIC, when about 7,500 cases of novel coronavirus were reported.
- On 11 March that year, the WHO declared it a 'pandemic'.
- At present, more than 16 thousand cases of monkeypox have been registered in 75 countries and five deaths have been confirmed.
- The WHO estimates that the risk of monkeypox is moderate in the world and in all regions, but the risk is highest in Europe.
- According to the WHO, 99 percent of monkeypox cases found outside Africa are related to men, in which 98 percent of the patients are men who are gay.

Criteria on the basis of which WHO declares PHEIC

- It is declared in the event of certain "serious public health events" that could endanger international public health.
- The responsibility of declaring an event as an emergency rests with the Director-General of the WHO and requires the convening of a committee of members.
- Declaring a PHEIC may result in restrictions on travel and trade.

What Is Monkeypox?

- It is a viral zoonotic disease that is transmitted from animals to humans.
- Monkeypox virus is an orthopoxvirus similar to smallpox.
- It has been identified as a smallpox-like disease in monkeys, hence it is called monkeypox.
- It was first observed in 1958, in monkeys in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and in humans in 1970.
- The disease outbreak in Nigeria in 2017 was the largest ever.
- The monkeypox virus mutates at a high rate but is treatable once symptoms appear.

Symptom of disease

- Fever, intense headache, muscle aches, back pain, low energy, swollen lymph nodes and a skin rash or lesions.
- Infected people develop a rash resembling smallpox.
- In the early stages of the disease, monkeypox and smallpox can be differentiated because the monkeypox lymph gland enlarges.

Transmission of disease

- It spreads through close face to face, skin to skin and direct contact.
- The disease can be spread through contact with bodily fluids, sores on the skin or internal mucous surfaces, such as the mouth or throat, respiratory droplets and contaminated objects.
- Treatment and Vaccine
- There is no specific treatment or vaccine available for monkeypox infection.
- The anti-smallpox vaccine has been shown to be 85% effective in preventing monkeypox.
- A newer vaccine MVA-BN, developed for Smallpox was approved in 2019 for use in preventing Monkeypox but is not yet widely available.

8. Wasifa Nazreen becomes first Bangladeshi to scale world's second highest peak K2 (July 25, 2022)

Wasfia Nazreen has become the first Bangladeshi to scale Pakistan's K2, which is the second highest mountain in the world.

Important facts

- She climbed the 8611 metres or 28,251 feet high K2 mountain peak and returned to the base camp on 22 July.
- A summit is technically complete when the climber returns from the summit to the base camp.
- After completing this historic task, 39-year-old mountaineer Wasifa paid tribute to all known and unknown martyrs of Bangladesh from language movement to liberation struggle.
- On 26 May 2012, she became the second woman from Bangladesh to scale Mount Everest.
- She has previously conquered Aconcagua in South America and Kilimanjaro in Africa.

About K2 mountain

- K2 or Mount Godwin Austen with an elevation of 8,611 metres is the second highest mountain in the world after Mount Everest above sea level.
- It is located on the Sino-Pakistan border between Baltistan and Dafdar Township of Xinjiang, China, in the Gilgit-Baltistan region of northern Pakistan.
- It is the highest point of the Karakoram mountain range and the highest point in both Pakistan and Xinjiang.

Major Mountain peaks in Indian subcontinent

• Kangchenjunga

Length - 8586 metres

The third highest summit in the World

It is also known as the 'five treasures of snow

it lies in Himalayan Mountain Range

• Nanda Devi

Length - 7816 metres

Ranked the 23rd highest peak in the world

It is a part of Himalayan mountain ranges (Garhwal)

Nanda Devi National Park situated around the peak has the best high altitude flora and fauna.

- **Kamet Mountain**

Length - 7756 metres

Location - near the Tibetan Plateau

It is located in the Garhwal region

- **SaltoroKangri**

Length - 7742 metres

Location - near the Siachen Region

It is ranked the 31st highest independent peak in the world

It lies in Saltoro range (which is a part of Karakoram Mountain range)

9. China launches 2nd space station module (July 25, 2022)

China launched the second of three modules needed to complete its new space station on July 24 as part of the latest step in the ambitious space program.

Important facts

- According to the China Manned Space Agency (CMSA), the giant Long March-5B Y3 carrier rocket, Wentian, was successfully launched from the Wenchang spacecraft launch site off the coast of the southern island province of Hainan.
- The new module will serve as a backup to the core module, Tianhe, and as a powerful scientific experiment platform in the space station currently being built by China.
- In the coming weeks, the Wentian will be transformed by a robotic device from a forward docking port to a lateral port, where it will remain and be ready for long-term operation.
- The construction of China's Tiangong space station is expected to be completed by the end of this year.
- This will complete the construction of Tiangong, the space station taking shape in China's space.
- With the establishment of this space station, China will be the third country in the world to have its own space station.

Tianhe module

- It was launched in April 2021, and the Mengtian module is set to be launched in October this year.

- About 18 meters (60 ft) long and weighing 22 tons (48,500 lb), the new module has three sleeping areas and space for scientific experiments.
- It will combine with Tiangong's already dispatched modules to shape the space station.

Tiangong Space Station

- This is a Chinese space station being built in low Earth orbit between 340 and 450 kilometres above the earth.
- It is part of China's manned space program and is the country's first long-term space station.

10. Henley Passport Index 2022 (July 23, 2022)

India has been ranked 87 out of the world's 199 most powerful passports in 2022 in the Henley Passport Index 2022 published by immigration consultancy Henley & Partners.

Important facts

- The ranking was based on the number of destinations that passport holders can reach without prior visas.

Countries' performance in the index

- Japan ranks first among 199 countries. It is followed by Singapore and South Korea.
- Japan's passport allows entry to 193 countries without a prior visa. Singapore and South Korea, on the other hand, allow seamless entry into 192 countries.
- in Asian countries; India, Mauritius and Tajikistan are ranked 87th with hassle-free entry to 67 countries without prior visas.
- China and Bolivia are ranked 69th with their passports allowing access to 80 destinations.
- Bangladesh is ranked 104th.
- With access to 32 destinations, Pakistan has the fourth worst passport in the world.
- Afghan passport holders have access to only 27 countries. Iraqi passport, on the other hand, provides hassle-free entry to 29 countries. These two countries have been placed at the bottom.
- The top 10 countries on the list of the most powerful passports in the world include Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Germany, Spain, Finland, Italy, Luxembourg, Austria and Denmark (in order).