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1. India, Poland hold 10th round of Foreign Office Consultations in Warsaw (Dec. 13, 2022)

India, Poland hold 10th round of Foreign Office Consultations

India and Poland held the **10th round of Foreign Office Consultations in Warsaw** on December 12.

Important facts

- During the meeting, the two sides discussed regional and international issues, including developments in the Indo-Pacific, India's neighbourhood, the Ukraine conflict, cooperation in multilateral fora including the United Nations, and United Nations Security Council reforms.
- During the meeting, India and Poland identified agriculture, food processing, information technology and green transformation as areas of interest to further enhance bilateral ties.
- Both sides expressed satisfaction at the discussions at the **sixth round of the India-Poland Joint Commission Meeting on Economic Cooperation** to be held in October 2022.
- The Indian side in the meeting was led by **Sanjay Verma**, Secretary (West), Ministry of External Affairs.
- Both countries agreed to hold the next round of Foreign Office Consultations on mutually convenient dates in **New Delhi**.

Bilateral Trade

- The two nations noted the potential of bilateral trade and investment ties.
- According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the bilateral trade between India and Poland has witnessed steady growth in recent years and it stood at **USD 4.3 billion in 2021**.
- Indian companies have invested over **USD 3 billion** in Poland while Polish investments in India stand at USD 700 million.

About Poland

- Prime Minister - **Mateusz Morawiecki**
- President - **Andrzej Duda**
- Capital - **Warsaw**
- Currency - **Polish zloty**

2. 18th Joint Working Group meet between India, Bangladesh on security, border management (Dec. 6, 2022)

18th Joint Working Group meet between India, Bangladesh on security

A two-day **18th Joint Working Group (JWG)** meeting on security and border management between **India and Bangladesh** started on 5 December in **Delhi**.

Important facts

- Both sides will discuss strengthening the bilateral mechanism to deal with the menace of terrorism and extremism in all its forms.
- Both sides will also discuss issues to develop mechanisms to further hasten the process of verification of nationality, and status of prisoners lodged in jails of either country.
- The Indian delegation for the JWG meeting is being led by **Piyush Goyal**, Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).
- An Additional Secretary level officer is also heading the group of eight-member Bangladeshi delegation which will discuss the issues of common concern of the two neighbouring countries that **share a 4,096 km border**.
- This Additional Secretary level meeting is related to the preparation in advance for the Home Secretary level talks between India and Bangladesh.
- The **17th Home Secretary level talks** between India and Bangladesh and the meeting of the Joint Working Group between the two countries were held in **Dhaka on November 16-17, 2015** to discuss the security and border management-related issues.
- The Indian delegation was led by the then Union Home Secretary **Rajiv Mehrishi** and the Bangladesh delegation was led by the then Senior Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, **Dr Md. Mozammel Haque Khan**.

3. Dr Jitendra Singh led the Indian delegation at the Abu Dhabi Space Debate (Dec. 5, 2022)

Dr Jitendra Singh led the Indian delegation at the Abu Dhabi Space Debate

Dr Jitendra Singh, Minister of State for Atomic Energy and Space, led the Indian delegation to the **Abu Dhabi Space Debate**, which began in the United Arab Emirates on 5 December. He addressed the inaugural session along with Israeli **President Isaac Herzog**.

Important facts

- In this two-day international meeting, Dr. Jitendra Singh participated in the Ministerial level meeting on '**Role of Foreign Policy in Enabling Space Diplomacy and International Cooperation**'.

- He also discussed ways to strengthen bilateral space cooperation with **Sarah Al Amiri**, UAE Minister of State for Advanced Technology and Chairperson of the UAE Space Agency.
- During the conversation, Dr. Singh also discussed the **joint startup venture** between India and UAE on cutting edge and emerging space technology.
- The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) and the UAE Space Agency (UAESA) signed an MoU in 2016 regarding cooperation in the exploration and **uses of outer space for peaceful purposes**.
- UAE's first nanosatellite- 'Nayif-1' was launched by PSLV from Sriharikota to collect environmental space data.

UAE's achievements in the space sector

- The UAE is an emerging space power and has made rapid progress in the last 25 years of its space journey.
- In July 2020, the UAE sent its **Mars mission** into space named '**Hope Probe**', which entered Mars orbit in February 2021.
- The UAE is the **first Arab country** and the **sixth country in the world** to achieve this feat.
- UAE is planning to launch **Rasheed Rover or Emirates Lunar Mission** soon.
- In September 2019, **Hanzala Al Mansoori** from the United Arab Emirates became the **first astronaut** to go into space when he went to the International Space Station (ISS) for eight days via a Russian spacecraft from **Kazakhstan**.
- This year, another astronaut from the United Arab Emirates was selected to travel to the ISS aboard NASA's crew rotation flight, **SpaceX Crew-6**, for a period of six months.

About UAE

- Capital : **Abu Dhabi**
- Currency: **Emirati Dirham**
- President : **Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan**

4. India and Gulf Cooperation Council to resume FTA talks (Nov. 25, 2022)

resume FTA talks

India's Industry and Trade Minister **Piyush Goyal** said on 24 November that India and the **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)** have agreed to resume talks on a **free trade agreement**.

Important facts

- Both sides have agreed to expedite the necessary legal and technical requirements for the formal resumption of FTA negotiations.
- The FTA will be a comprehensive economic partnership that will cover different aspects of trade.
- Goyal said the GCC is currently **India's largest trading partner bloc** with bilateral trade expected to exceed USD 154 billion in the financial year 2021-22.
- bilateral trade in services between India and the GCC was worth 14 billion US dollars in the last financial year.
- GCC countries contribute almost 35 per cent of the country's oil imports and 70 per cent of gas imports.

About Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) :

- It is a political and economic alliance of six Middle Eastern countries—**Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman.**
- It was established in **Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**, in May 1981.
- Its aim is to achieve coordination, cooperation and integration and Arab regional unity among these countries.
- The GCC member states have a total GDP of over USD 3.464 trillion and a total population of 54 million.

5. Army Chief General Manoj Pandey received guard of honour at Les Invalides in Paris (Nov. 18, 2022)

Army Chief General Manoj Pandey received

Army Chief **General Manoj Pande** who is on a four-day visit to **France**, received a **Guard of Honour** at the **Les Invalides in Paris** on 17 November, 2022.

Important facts

- General Manoj Pande held talks with his French counterpart **General Pierre Schille** and discussed issues of mutual interest during his visit to the European country.
- The Chief of Army Staff is on a visit to France from 14 to 17 November.
- Gen Pande left for France on November 14 on a four-day visit with an aim to further strengthen the "**bond of trust**" between the Indian and French armies amid the rapidly evolving security matrix and geopolitical situation.
- General Pande held extensive talks with the top military brass of France including the Chief of the Defence Staff, the Chief of the Army Staff and the Commander of the Land Combat Forces.

About France

- France is located on the **western edge of Europe**
- Prime minister: **Élisabeth Borne**
- President: **Emmanuel Macron**
- Capital: **Paris**
- Currency: **euro**

6. India, Australia convene fifth bilateral Cyber Policy Dialogue in New Delhi (Nov. 18, 2022)

Australia-India Cyber and Critical Technology Partnership.

India and Australia held their **fifth bilateral cyber policy dialogue** on November 17, 2022 in **New Delhi**.

Important facts

- The Cyber Policy Dialogue was held under the aegis of the **India-Australia Framework on Cyber and Cyber-Enabled Critical Technology Cooperation and Action Plan 2020-2025** for Comprehensive and Deepening Cyber Cooperation.
- The dialogue was co-chaired by **Joint Secretary (Cyber Diplomacy Division) Muanpuui Saiawi** from the Ministry of External Affairs.
- The Indian delegation consisted of senior officials from the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS), the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), the Ministry of Electronics and Information technology (MEITY), the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) and CERT-In.
- The Australian delegation included senior officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Department of Home Affairs, the Department of Industry, Science and Resources and the Australian Federal Police.
- Both sides agreed to explore opportunities for collaboration with the private sector and academia, including the **Australia-India Cyber and Critical Technology Partnership**.
- In addition, India and Australia will jointly organise a **Cyber Bootcamp and Cyber and Tech Policy Exchange** in collaboration with Indo-Pacific partners and the **6th India-Australia Cyber Policy Dialogue** will be held in 2023.

Agenda of Dialogue

- The Cyber Policy Dialogue provides a bilateral forum to discuss high-profile issues of mutual interest.

- It discussed strategic priorities, cyber threat assessment, capacity building for next generation telecommunications (including 5G technology) and cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region, and the latest developments in cyber at the United Nations.

About Australia

- Prime Minister: **Anthony Albanese**
- Governor-**General: David Hurley**
- Capital: **Canberra**
- Currency: **Australian dollar**

7. Britain approves three thousand work visas for young Indian professionals (Nov. 16, 2022)

Britain approves three thousand work visas

On November 16, 2022, the **United Kingdom government** approved **three thousand visas** for young professionals **from India** to work in the country every year.

Important facts

- This visa is done under the **UK-India Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement** which was signed in 2021.
- India is the first country to benefit from such a scheme.
- The UK government has approved the UK-India Young Professionals Scheme which offers **3,000 visas to Indian graduates** aged 18-30 years to live and work in the UK for up to two years.
- The announcement was made hours after British Prime Minister **Rishi Sunak** met Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** on the sidelines of the **17th edition** of the G20 Summit in Bali.

UK-India Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement

- The Union Cabinet approved the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (**MoU**) on Migration and Mobility Partnership in 2021 between India and the United Kingdom.
- The objective of the agreement is to liberalize the issuance of visas promoting the mobility of students, researchers and skilled professionals and to strengthen cooperation between the two sides on issues related to irregular migration and human trafficking.

About United Kingdom

- It is an island country located off the northwestern coast of **mainland Europe**.

- Prime Minister - **Rishi Sunak**
- Capital - **London**
- Currency - **British pound**
- Head of State - **King Charles III**

8. India, Cambodia sign 4 MOUs in the areas of culture, wildlife & health (Nov. 12, 2022)

India, Cambodia sign 4 MOUs

On November 12 **India and Cambodia** signed **4 MoUs** in areas of health, technology, biodiversity conservation and preservation of ancient buildings.

Important facts

- Vice President **Jagdeep Dhankhar** holds a bilateral meeting with Cambodian Prime Minister **Hun Sen** on the sidelines of the ongoing **ASEAN Summit** in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on November 12.
- The two had extensive discussions on bilateral relations including human resources, mining and development projects.
- Cambodia also stressed on enhancing cooperation on mine clearance to help Cambodia reach the goal of "**a mine-free Cambodia by 2025**".

Four memorandum of understanding (MoU)

- MoU between the Institute of Technology of Cambodia and the Indian Institute of Technology, Jodhpur for digitalisation of Cambodian heritage sites.
- MoU regarding reintroduction of tigers in Cambodia between the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, India and Ministry of Environment, Cambodia for Cooperation in Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Wildlife Management.
- MoU between the Ministry of Health and the Indian Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on cooperation in the fields of health and medicine.
- MoU on Financing Agreement on the Preservation of Wat Raja Bo Pagoda Paintings in Siem Reap, Cambodia.

9. S Jaishankar holds bilateral talks with Foreign Minister of Belarus, Vladimir Makei (Nov. 10, 2022)

S Jaishankar holds bilateral talks with Foreign Minister of Belarus, Vladimir Makei

External Affairs Minister **Dr. S Jaishankar** held bilateral talks with his **Belarus counterpart Vladimir Makei** in New Delhi on 9 November, 2022.

Important facts

- The Foreign Minister of Belarus, Vladimir Makei arrives in New Delhi on November 9, 2022 for a two-day visit to India.
- Both leaders held talks on a range of issues including bilateral economic ties, Ukraine conflict and multilateral cooperation.

India - Belarus Relations

- India's relations with Belarus have been traditionally warm and cordial.
- India was one of the first countries to recognize Belarus as an independent country in 1991.
- After formal diplomatic relations were established, the Indian diplomatic mission was opened in Minsk in 1992 and Belarus opened its mission in New Delhi in 1998.
- Cooperation between the two countries is reflected in several multilateral fora such as the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).
- Belarus helped consolidate India's candidature for a temporary seat at the UNSC in July 2020.
- India has supported Belarus in various international fora such as membership of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and other international and multilateral groups such as the IPU (Inter-Parliamentary Union).
- The two countries have established mechanisms for the exchange of views on bilateral, regional and multilateral issues through the Foreign Office Consultations (FOC), the Intergovernmental Commission (IGC), and the Joint Commission on Military Technical Cooperation.
- The two countries signed several MoUs on various subjects including defence and technical cooperation, trade and economic cooperation, culture, education, media and sports, tourism, science and technology, agriculture, textiles, avoidance of double taxation, promotion of investment.
- In the economic sphere, the annual bilateral trade turnover in 2019 is USD 569.6 million.

About Belarus

- President - **Alexander Lukashenko**
- Prime Minister - **Roman Golovchenko**
- Capital - **Minsk**
- Currency - **Belarusian ruble**

10. Indian Foreign minister S.Jaishankar visits Moscow to strengthen bilateral relations with Russia (Nov. 7, 2022)

S.Jaishankar visits Moscow to strengthen bilateral relations with Russia

The Indian External Affairs Minister S.Jaishankar arrived in the Russian capital **Moscow** on 7 November 2022. He is on a 2 day (7 and 8 November) official visit to Russia. During his visit he will meet his Russian counterpart **Sergei Lavrov**.

Importance of the visit

India and Russia share a very strong political, strategic and defence relationship. Russia is a major supplier of defence equipment to India.

Also India and Russia hold an annual bilateral summit meeting between the Russian President and the Indian Prime minister.

The **21st India- Russia** summit meeting was held in New Delhi on December 2021. Vladimir Putin came to India to attend this meeting.

The next **22nd Annual India- Russia Summit** meeting will be held in Russia in 2022. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Russia to participate in the summit meeting.

The visit of the External Affairs Minister is seen as preparing the ground for the forthcoming Prime Minister Modi's visit to Russia.

Russian Federation

It is the world's **largest country** area wise.

It lies in both Asia and Europe but is considered as a European country.

It has **11 time zones**, the highest in the world.

Russia contains Europe's longest river, the **Volga**, and Europe's largest lake, **Ladoga**. Russia also is home to the world's deepest lake, **Baikal**.

Leo Tolstoy, author of the War and Peace book is considered to be the **spiritual guru of Gandhiji** was a Russian.

Capital: Moscow. It lies on the bank of the **Moskva River**.

Currency: **Ruble**

President: **Vladimir Putin**