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1. 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) Muanpui 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**

2. 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**

3. 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.

4. 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**

5. 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**

6. Russia suspends UN backed Black sea grain deal with Ukraine (Oct. 30, 2022)

Russia suspends

Russia on 29 October 2022 announced that it was suspending participation in the United Nations and Turkiye brokered black sea grain deal. The Russian move has been condemned by the United States President Joe Biden saying it will increase starvation in the world.

More than 9 million tonnes of corn, wheat, sunflower products, barley, rapeseed and soya have been exported under the deal, signed on 22July 2022.

Why Russian pulled out of the deal

According to the Russian Defence ministry, Ukraine attacked the Russian Black Sea Fleet near Sevastopol on the Russian-annexed Crimean peninsula with 16 drones early on 29 October 2022, and that British navy "specialists" had helped coordinate the "terrorist" attack. It also accused British navy personnel of blowing up the Nord Stream gas pipelines last month.

It said that Russia is no longer able to guarantee the safety of the civilian ship under the agreement.

Black Sea grain deal

- President Vladimir Putin ordered Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 in an offensive he said was aimed at "demilitarising" and "denazifying" Ukraine. The Russian Naval fleet later blockaded the Black sea port of Ukraine which was a major grain shipment port for Ukraine.
- The blockade halted the shipment of grains from one of the biggest exporters of grains in the world where 5 million tonnes of grains used to be shipped per month.
- This precipitated a sharp increase in food prices across the world, sparking fear of famine in parts of Africa.
- Ukraine, Russia, Turkiye and the United Nation signed an agreement on 22 July 2022 **in Istanbul** ,Turkiye to unblock Ukraine's Black Sea grain exports.
- **When the agreement was signed, the U.N. World Food Programme said some 47 million people had moved into "acute hunger" as the war halted Ukrainian shipments.**
- The agreement which is set to expire on 19 November 2022 established a safe corridor for the Ukrainian grain ships and Russia guaranteed the safety of the civilian ship.

7. China's total trade surplus with India 'surpasses \$1 trillion' (Oct. 21, 2022)

Since the boom in bilateral trade in the early 2000s, China has taken advantage of a favourable trade balance with India that now exceeds **\$1 trillion**.

India-China bilateral trade

- Bilateral annual trade between India and China crossed \$100 billion for the first time in 2021 to reach \$125.6 billion, of which India's imports were \$97.5 billion.

Important facts

- Trade ties between both countries began to boom in the early 2000s.
- This was largely driven by the import of Chinese machinery and other equipment by India.
- It increased from \$3 billion in 2000 to \$42 billion in 2008 and China became India's largest trading partner in 2008.
- One-third of the machinery and about two-fifths of organic chemicals that India buys from the world come from China.
- Automotive parts and fertilizers are other items where China accounts for more than 25 per cent of India's imports.
- India procures nearly 90 percent of the parts for some mobile phones from China.

India's export to China

- China is also a major partner of India in terms of export market.

- China is the third largest destination for Indian shipments.
- According to the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO), India's share in China's total exports is only a little over two per cent.

8. S Jaishankar inaugurates new Indian High Commission Chancery at Wellington in New Zealand (Oct. 10, 2022)

External Affairs Minister **S Jaishankar** on 9 October inaugurated the new **Indian High Commission Chancery in Wellington, New Zealand.**

Important facts

- He said that coordinating each other's potentials is a more prudent way to further deepen the vital ties between India and New Zealand.
- S. Jaishankar, who is on his **first visit to New Zealand** as External Affairs Minister, also said that there is a need to take the ties between the two countries afresh.
- He also said that there is massive potential for partnership between India and New Zealand in the field of agri-business.
- Strong cooperation between India and New Zealand will ensure peace, prosperity and progress in the shared region, he said.
- There is huge potential in business, digital, agriculture, education, skills, traditional medicine and maritime security domains, he said.

About New Zealand

- It is a remote, mountainous group of islands located off the **southeast coast of Australia.**
- Prime Minister - **Jacinda Ardern**
- Capital - **Wellington**
- Currency - **New Zealand dollar**
- New Zealand was the first country to allow **women to vote in 1893.**
- New Zealand's **wetapunga** is one of the **heaviest insects** in the world.
- Major rivers - **Waikato, Clurtha, Rangitaiki, Wanganui, Manawatu, Buller, Rakaia, Waitaki, Waiau**
- Major Mountain Ranges - **Southern Alps, Kaikoura Ranges**
- New Zealand's two main islands - **North and South Islands**, are separated by the **Cook Strait.**

9. S Jaishankar meets US Secretary of Defense Lloyd J Austin in Washington (Sept. 27, 2022)

External Affairs Minister **Dr. S Jaishankar** met US Secretary of Defense **Lloyd J Austin** in **Washington** on 26 September.

Important facts

- Jaishankar said defence and security cooperation is a key pillar of the contemporary **India-US partnership**.
- The two leaders noted continued progress in policy exchange, interoperability, defence trade, services and military-industrial cooperation.
- They also exchanged their perspectives on the **Ukraine conflict, Indo-Pacific development, maritime challenges and regional issues**.
- Jaishankar also met US Commerce Secretary **Gina Raimondo**.
- The main topics of interaction were - **Resilient Supply Chain, Indo-Pacific Economic Framework, High Technology Cooperation, Semiconductors and Trade Promotion**.
- The External Affairs Minister began his Washington DC program with a round table organized by the **National Science Foundation (NSF)**.
- The session covered technical security, credible research and talent development.
- S Jaishankar is in the US on a **10-day visit** to hold bilateral consultations with several US cabinet ministers.

10. Significant positive impact on India-UAE trade from India-UAE CEPA (Sept. 26, 2022)

The **India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** that came into force on 1 May 2022 is creating a significant positive impact on India-UAE trade.

Important facts

- Indian exports to the UAE, **excluding petroleum products**, grew from US\$ 5.17 billion during June-August 2021 to US\$ 5.92 billion during June-August 2022.
- It denotes an increase of **14%** of Indian exports.
- India's global non-petroleum exports during the same period (**Jun-Aug 2022**) grew by **3%** on an annual basis.
- This implies that the growth rate of India's non-petroleum exports to UAE is about 5 times that of India's non-petroleum exports to the world.
- According to the Commerce and Industry Ministry Indian imports from the UAE during the same period also grew from 5.56 billion dollar to 5.61 billion dollar.

India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)

- It was signed on **18 February 2022**, during the India-UAE Virtual Summit.
- It came into force on **1 May 2022**.
- It provides for an institutional mechanism to encourage and improve trade between the two countries.
- CEPA is a type of free trade agreement that covers trade in services and investment and negotiations on other areas of economic partnership.