

Current Affairs search results for tag: international-relations

1. 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 22 July 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.**

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 20th Meeting of Prosecutors General of SCO Member States takes place in Kazakhstan (Sept. 24, 2022)

The 20th Meeting of Prosecutors General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Member States was held in Astana, Kazakhstan on September 23.

The next (21st) meeting of the Prosecutor Generals of the SCO member states will be held in **China in 2023**.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- From India's side, learned Solicitor General of India **Tushar Mehta** and Additional Secretary, Department of Legal Affairs **Dr. Anju Rathi Rana** participated in the meeting.
- Mehta highlighted the initiatives taken by the Government of India to address international economic offences at the international level by ratification of two United Nations Conventions.
- These two UN Conventions are - **the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC)** and its three protocols and the **United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC)**.
- He said, in order to curb the threat of international economic crimes at the national level, India has implemented a number of legislative measures to prevent, detect and punish money laundering by special legislation.
- **A Protocol** incorporating the deliberations of the 20th meeting of the Prosecutor General of the SCO Member States was signed and adopted by the SCO Member States.

Salient features of the Protocol :

- Strengthening cooperation in relation to recovery of proceeds made through money laundering.
- Cooperation on issues relating to dealing with economic offences such as money laundering, search, confiscation and recovery of proceeds of crime from the States.
- Using the forums of bilateral and multilateral gatherings to discuss ways to strengthen the system to deal with economic offences.
- Continuing to exchange information on domestic laws governing the recovery of proceeds of each seizure and offence.
- To develop cooperation between the General Offices of Prosecutors of the SCO Member States in the field of advanced training of prosecutors.
- To conduct and participate in bilateral and multilateral programs to combat economic crimes.

7. 10th IBSA Trilateral Ministerial Commission meeting held in New York (Sept. 22, 2022)

The 10th India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum (IBSA) Trilateral Ministerial Commission meeting was held in New York on 21 September.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- The meeting was chaired by External Affairs Minister **Dr S Jaishankar**.

- Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brazil Carlos Alberto Franco França and Minister of Health of South Africa Dr Joe Phaahla were also present during the meeting.
- The Ministers reviewed the entire gamut of **IBSA cooperation**.
- The aspirations of African countries to have a permanent presence on the UN Security Council were endorsed by the ministers.
- They also supported the efforts of India and Brazil to obtain permanent membership in the Security Council.
- India will host the sixth IBSA summit on the sidelines of the G20 summit in November this year.

Agenda of the meeting :

- The agenda of the meeting was on mutual interests including cooperation in multilateral organizations, South-South cooperation, UNSC reform, 2030 agenda, Sustainable Development Goals, climate change, countering terrorism, and financing for developmental activities.
- They held discussions on regional issues like the African Union, the Middle East peace process, and the situation in Ukraine.

About IBSA Trilateral Ministerial Commission :

- It is a trilateral, developmental initiative between India, Brazil and South Africa to promote South-South cooperation and exchange.
- This grouping was formally renamed the IBSA Dialogue Forum when the foreign ministers of the three countries met in Brasilia (Brazil) on 6 June 2003 and issued the Brasilia Declaration.

8. Rajnath Singh signs MoU with Egypt on Defence Cooperation (Sept. 20, 2022)

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, who is on a three-day visit to Egypt, met the Egyptian Defence Minister, General Mohamed Zaki in Cairo on 20 September and signed a MoU on Defence Cooperation to further expand the bilateral defence ties between the two countries.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- During the meeting, both sides discussed steps to strengthen defense ties and a consensus was reached for **joint military exercises and training**, especially in the area of counter-terrorism.
- In addition, they also exchanged views on regional security and acknowledged the contribution of India and Egypt to peace and stability in the world.

- Egyptian President **Abdel Fattah el-Sisi** agreed to focus on enhancing bilateral cooperation and security aspects.
- Singh has also invited his Egyptian counterpart to the **India-Africa Defence Dialogue and the IOR Defence Ministers' Conference**, which is scheduled to be held in Gujarat from **October 18-22** this year as part of the **12th DefExpo**.
- Egypt is one of the largest investment destinations for India in the region with an existing Indian investment of USD 3.15 billion.

India - Egypt defence cooperation :

- To boost defence cooperation between the two countries, an Indian Air Force team arrived in Egypt on **22 June** to participate in a bilateral 'Strategic Leadership Program' with the Egyptian Air Force.
- The year 2022 has special significance as it marks the **75th anniversary** of diplomatic relations between India and Egypt.
- There was close cooperation between the Air Forces of both countries, with efforts at jointly developing a fighter aircraft in the **1960s**.
- Indian Air Force pilots had also trained **Egyptian pilots from the 1960s until 1984**.
- In recent times, since 2015, there have been a number of high-level exchanges of visits by defense delegations.

9. India Overtakes China To Become Sri Lanka's Largest Lender (Sept. 19, 2022)

According to a media report, India has emerged as the largest bilateral lender to Sri Lanka, overtaking China in the process, with a total loan of USD 968 million in the four months of 2022.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- In the last five years from 2017-2021, China has been the largest bilateral lender to Sri Lanka.
- **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** has been the largest multilateral lender in the past five years and disbursed funds amounting to **610 million dollars** in year 2021.
- India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations **Ruchira Kamboj** had said that India has provided food and financial assistance of about **\$ 4 billion to Sri Lanka**.
- On 22 August, India provided 21,000 tonnes of fertilizers to the beleaguered Sri Lanka.
- India has been at the forefront of providing financial assistance to Sri Lanka as per requirements of this country and is one of the countries which has provided maximum assistance in times of need.

Since the beginning of 2022, Sri Lanka has been grappling with an economic crisis.

10. Defence Minister reaches Cairo on two-day official visit to Egypt (Sept. 19, 2022)

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh reached Cairo on 19 September on a two-day official visit to Egypt.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- During the visit, Rajnath Singh will hold bilateral talks with the Minister of Defence and Defence Production, General Mohammad Zaki.
- Rajnath Singh's visit aims to further strengthen defence cooperation and friendship between **India and Egypt**.
- The two ministers will review bilateral defence ties, explore new initiatives to intensify military ties and focus on deepening cooperation between the defence industries of the two countries.
- An MoU will also be signed to promote defence cooperation between India and Egypt.
- Singh will also meet Egyptian **President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi**.

India - Egypt Relations :

- Egypt is one of the largest investment destinations for India with the current Indian investment of **USD 3.15 billion**.
- Indian companies are working on several projects in Egypt.
- To strengthen defence cooperation between the two countries, an Indian Air Force team arrived in Egypt on 22 June to participate in a bilateral '**Strategic Leadership Program**' with the Egyptian Air Force.
- Earlier in November last year, Chief of **Air Staff Chief Marshal VR Chowdhury** had gone to Egypt for his five-day visit to attend the Air Power Symposium and **Defence Exhibition (EDEX) in Cairo**.
- The year 2022 has special significance as it marks the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between India and Egypt.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION -

About Egypt :

- Capital - **Cairo**
- President - **Abdel Fattah al-Sisi**

- Official Language - **Arabic**
- Official Religion - **Islam**
- Currency - **Egyptian pound**