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1. In 4:1 majority verdict, Supreme Court finds no flaw in demonetisation process (Jan. 2, 2023)

On January 02, 2023, a **Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court by a 4:1 majority** upheld the central government's decision to **demonetise currency notes** of Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 denominations six years ago in 2016.

Judgement of the Court

- Justices **S Abdul Nazeer, BR Gavai, AS Bopanna, V Ramasubramanian** held that the Centre's notification dated November 8, 2016 was valid and satisfied the test of proportionality.
- **Justice BV Nagaratna**, in his **dissenting opinion**, said that though demonetisation was well-intentioned, it should be declared illegal on legal grounds (and not on objective grounds).
- Justice Nagaratna said the decision to demonetise Rs 500 and Rs 100 notes should have been made through legislation and not through notification.
- The Supreme Court **dismissed 58 petitions** challenging demonetisation, saying that this decision related to the economic policy of the government cannot be withdrawn.
- Along with this, the Supreme Court said that there was no flaw in this entire process of decision making.
- The Supreme Court accepted the government's view that there were consultations between the **Center and the RBI** before demonetisation.

About demonetization

- Demonetization refers to the decision of the government to revoke the **legal tender status of a currency note**.
- All the currencies issued by RBI are used as a legal tender because the value they bear is assured by the RBI.
- Once a currency note is demonetised, it **cannot be used**.
- On 8 November 2016, the Government of India announced the demonetisation of all **500 and 1,000 notes**.
- The government also announced the issuance of new **500 and 2,000 banknotes** in exchange for the demonetised notes.

Objective of 2016 demonetisation

- **Curb Corruption** - Corruption can also be controlled by reducing cash circulation.
- **Tackle Terrorism** - High denomination notes like Rs 500 and Rs 1000 are often used in terrorist/naxalite activities, drug and human trafficking.

- **Eliminating Fake Currency** - According to the annual report of RBI, during the year 2016-'17, fake notes worth Rs 41.5 crore were detected in the banking system in the form of old Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes.
- **Eradicate Black Money** - Black money refers to cash that is not accounted for in the banking system or cash for which tax has not been paid to the state.

2. 10th edition of Dhaka Literary Festival (Jan. 2, 2023)

After being cancelled for three consecutive years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the **10th edition of Dhaka Lit Fest (DLF)**, Bangladesh's biggest international literary festival, is all set to take place on **January 5-8, 2023**.

Important facts

- The event will be held on the historic grounds of the **Bangla Academy in Dhaka**.
- More than 500 literary personalities across the globe including Nobel Prize Winner **Abdulrazak Gurnah** will be taking part in the festival.
- The four-day event will feature internationally acclaimed authors including Amitav Ghosh, Hanif Qureshi, Alexandra Pringle, Gitanjali Shree, Daisy Rockwell, Esther Freud, Joy Goswami, Kaiser Haque, among others.
- It will feature over **175 sessions** with discussions on science and technology, activities for children and young adults, film screenings, theatre, music and cultural performances.
- The organisers of DLF have termed it as a '**festival of ideas**'.
- Films, OTT, science and other topics of public interest will also be discussed in this programme.
- There will be performances for children as well as for women. The Dhaka Lit Fest will also host discussions on health, food and cooking, among other topics.

About Dhaka Lit Fest

- **Sadaf Saaz, Ahsan Akbar and Kazi Anis Ahmed** are the directors of the Dhaka Lit Fest (DLF).
- It began in **2011** with the commitment to promote Dhaka, and Bangladeshi literature and culture to the world.
- Dhaka Lit Fest has been a popular annual event in the winter calendar of Bangladesh.
- **About 30,000** people participated in the ninth Dhaka Lit Fest last held in 2019.

3. India, Austria to sign 5 agreements (Jan. 2, 2023)

External Affairs Minister **S Jaishankar** said that **India and Austria** will sign five agreements on January 2, 2023 and two of them are in the interest of the Indian community living in Austria.

Important facts

- The two agreements would be in the **interest of the Indian community**.
- There is an agreement on '**Migration and Mobility**' for people who want to work in Austria and who want to come to India for business, or who come here as students and professionals.
- Another agreement is on the '**Working Holiday**' program that will enable Indian students in Austria to work for 6 months.
- S Jaishankar is on an official visit to Austria where he held a meeting with Austrian Foreign Minister **Alexander Schallenberg**.
- This is the first India-Austria EAM-level visit in the **last 27 years** which is taking place in 2023 against the backdrop of 75 years of diplomatic relations.

About Austria

- It is a largely mountainous landlocked country of **south-central Europe**.
- Chancellor: **Karl Nehammer**
- President: **Alexander Van der Bellen**
- Capital: **Vienna**
- Currency : **euro**
- Official Language : **German**

4. Inacio Lula da Silva sworn in as the President of Brazil for the 3rd time (Jan. 1, 2023)

Inacio Lula da Silva sworn in as the President of Brazil for the 3rd time

The veteran left wing Brazilian leader **Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva** was sworn in as the President of Brazil for the third time on 1 January 2023 for a four year term. The oath taking ceremony was held in the Brazilian capital city of **Brasilia**. **Geraldo Alckmin** was sworn in as the Vice President of Brazil.

Lula, who belongs to the **Worker Party**, led the country from 2003 to 2010 ,defeated the incumbent president Jair Bolsonaro in the bitterly contested [runoff Presidential election](#) held in October 2022.

His victory has politically divided the country. The supporters of f Jair Bolsonaro have protested for over two months, alleging that the election was stolen and called for a military coup to stop Lula from returning to office in a climate of vandalism and violence.

Jair Bolsonaro has already left Brazil for the United States. He has repeatedly said he does not wish to attend the inauguration of his successor, where he would be expected to hand over the presidential sash in a sign of a stable transfer of power.

Brazil

It is the fifth largest country in the world area wise after Russia, Canada, China, and the United States.

It covers almost half of the South American Continent.

60% of the Amazon rainforest which is considered the lung of the earth lies in Brazil.

Capital: **Brasilia**

Currency: **Brazilian Real**

5. India assume the charge of the Wassenaar Arrangement (Jan. 1, 2023)

India assume the charge of the Wassenaar Arrangement Tags: International News

India has assumed the chairmanship of the plenary of the **Wassenaar Arrangement** on 1 January 2023 for one year. At the 26th annual Plenary of the WA held in **Vienna, Austria** on 30 November-01 December 2022, Ambassador Eoin O'Leary of Ireland handed over the Chairmanship to Ambassador Jaideep Mazumdar, Ambassador and Permanent Representative to UN and International Organizations in Vienna.

India joined the Wassenaar Arrangement (WA) on 08 December 2017 as its **42nd Participating State**.

Wassenaar Arrangement

The Wassenaar Arrangement was established in July 1996 at **Wassenaar, Netherlands**. It is a voluntary export control regime of **42 member countries**. The member countries exchange information on transfers of conventional weapons and dual-use goods and technologies.

The main aim of the Wassenaar agreement is to discourage its member countries from exporting conventional weapons and dual-use goods and technologies to countries which are a threat to global peace.

The WA Plenary is the decision-making and governing body of the Arrangement that operates on consensus. It is composed of representatives of all Participating States who normally meet once a year at **Vienna, Austria**.

6. 1668 Journalists killed in the last 20 years: Reporters without Borders. (Dec. 31, 2022)

1668 Journalists killed in the last 20 years: Reporters without Borders

According to the yearend report of the **Reporters without Borders (RSF)** which was published on 31 December 2022, a total of **1,668 journalists** have been killed worldwide in connection with their work of journalism over the past two decades (2003-2022), due to murders, contract killings, ambushes, war zone deaths, and fatal injuries.

The report says that on an average every year 80 journalists lost their lives.

Due to the war in Syria over 144 journalists lost their lives in **2012** and 142 journalists died in 2013.

According to the RSF, in the last two decades, 80% of the deaths of journalists have happened in 15 countries. **Syria** and **Iraq** have the highest death rates, with a total of 578 journalists killed there over the past twenty years. This is about 1/3 of the world's death rate.

After these dangerous countries the most unsafe countries for journalists were Afghanistan, Yemen, and Palestine.

Reporters without Borders (RSF)

Reporters without Borders (RWB) is an international non-profit organisation.

- It was founded by four journalists in 1985 in Montpellier, France.
- RSF works to safeguard and promote the freedom of information.
- Headquarters: **Paris, France**
- It has 7 offices in London, Brussels, Tunis, Washington DC, Rio de Janeiro, Dakar, and Taipei.

7. Former Pope Benedict XVI dies aged 95 (Dec. 31, 2022)

Former Pope Benedict XVI dies aged 95

According to a statement released by the Vatican the former Pope **Benedict XVI** died on 31 December 2022 in the Mater Ecclesiae Monastery in the Vatican. He was 95 years old.

The head of the Catholic Church, former Pope Benedict, was the first pope in 600 years to resign. He resigned in 2013 and was replaced by the **present pope Francis**.

Pope Benedict was the first German to become pope in 1000 years. He was the head of the Vatican City from 19 April 2005 until his resignation on 28 February 2013.

He was born as Joseph Aloisius Ratzinger on April 16, 1927, in the southern German village of Marktl, close to Austria.

Pope and Vatican City

Pope is a title which is given to the Bishop of Rome who is the head of the Roman Catholic Church. He is also the **head of the sovereign country of Vatican City**.

Roman Catholics are the largest of the three major branches of Christianity. The other branches of Christianity are Protestants and orthodox (Eastern).

Vatican City is the world's **smallest country** which is located within the Italian capital city of Rome.

It is also the **least populated country** in the world.

The **Holy See** is the name given to the government of the Roman Catholic Church, which is led by the pope as the bishop of Rome.

St. Peter, disciple of Jesus Christ, was the first Pope. Jesus Christ is the founder of Christianity.

8. MoU signed for commercial production of indigenously developed vaccine 'Lumpi-ProVac' (Dec. 31, 2022)

An MoU for the production of **Goat Pox Vaccine** and "**Lumpi-Provac**" vaccine was signed in **Nagpur** on December 29, 2022 in the presence of Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, **Parshottam Rupala** and Chief Minister of Maharashtra **Eknath Shinde**.

Important facts

- Rupala praised the commendable effort put forth by ICAR in developing indigenous vaccine **Lumpi-ProVac for LSD**.
- Lumpi-ProVaccine is used for the prophylactic immunization of animals against **Lumpy Skin Disease**.
- The vaccine technology will meet the standard of the market and significantly provide a defence mechanism to control the devastating lumpy skin disease.
- **Goat pox vaccine** is currently used to control lumpy Skin Disease in livestock and has been shown to be effective against lumpy.
- Union Minister Rupala further highlighted the relevance of the technology and requested the **IVBP, Pune** to start manufacturing the vaccine at a large scale without any delay.
- National Centre for Veterinary Type Culture, ICAR-National Research Centre on Equines (ICAR-NRCE), Hisar (Haryana), in collaboration with ICAR-Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI), Izatnagar (UP) developed a homologous live-attenuated LSD vaccine, named Lumpi-ProVacInd.
- **Agrinnovate India Limited (AgIn)**, the commercial arm of DARE, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, granted "Non-Exclusive Rights" for Commercial production of "Lumpi-ProVac", to Institute of Veterinary Biological Products (IVBP) , Pune.

Lumpy Skin Disease

- It is caused by infection of cattle or buffalo with the poxvirus Lumpy skin disease virus (LSDV).
- The virus is one of three closely related species of the genus Capripoxavirus.
- The other two species are Sheeppox virus and Goatpox virus.
- Due to its infectious nature and its impact on the economy, the World Organization for Animal Health (WOIE) has declared it a notable disease.

9. All manufacturing activities of Marion Biotech's Noida unit stopped after inspection (Dec. 30, 2022)

All manufacturing activities of Marion Biotech's Noida unit stopped after inspection

All manufacturing activities at **Marion Biotech's Noida unit** have been halted by the Union health ministry as India launches a probe into [deaths linked to cough syrup in Uzbekistan](#).

Important facts

- Further investigations are underway into the deaths of **18 children in Uzbekistan** allegedly linked to cough syrup.
- Samples of the cough syrup have been taken from the manufacturing premises in Noida and sent to the **Regional Drugs Testing Laboratory (RDTL)** in Chandigarh for testing.
- The **Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO)** is in regular touch with the national drug regulator of Uzbekistan regarding the matter which happened on 27 December.
- Marion Biotech does not sell **Dok-1 Max** in India and its only export has been to **Uzbekistan**.

About Marion Biotech

- Marion Biotech is a licensed manufacturer and holds the licence for manufacturing **Dok-1 Max syrup** and **tablets** for export purposes granted by the **Drugs Controller**.
- So far, 18 out of 21 children with **acute respiratory illness** have died after taking Dok-1 Max Syrup.
- **Ethylene glycol** was found in the tested series of Doc-1 Max syrup.
- Prior to the incident in Uzbekistan, the **death of 70 children in Gambia** earlier this year was linked to cough syrup manufactured by Haryana-based **Maiden Pharmaceuticals**.

10. NHA release beta version of lightweight, robust, and ABDM-compliant HMIS (Dec. 30, 2022)

NHA release beta version of lightweight, robust, and ABDM-compliant HMIS

The **National Health Authority (NHA)** released a **beta version** of the lightweight, robust, and [Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission](#)-compliant **Hospital Management Information System (HMIS)** on 29th December.

Important facts

- It envisions to provide a digital platform for healthcare service providers, especially focusing on **private clinics and small healthcare facilities**.
- This beta version will allow doctors to create and receive Ayushman Bharat health accounts for patients as well as manage their calendar, appointments and patient details in a single window.
- It will also facilitate e-prescription services and view past health records and prescriptions for registered patients and offer video consultations.
- It will digitise small clinics and improve the searchability of healthcare providers in India.

Features of the beta version of HMIS

1. **ABDM Compliance:** Allows doctors to create and obtain ABHA (Ayushman Bharat Health Account) for their patients.
2. **Facility Management:** Allows doctors to manage their calendars, appointments and patient details in a single window.
3. **Digital Services:** Allows doctors to view past health records and prescriptions of registered patients and conduct video consultations.
4. **e-Prescription Services:** Digitally standardised prescription sharing using multiple parameters with options to modify/customise prescription layout.

About National Health Authority (NHA)

- It is the **apex body** which is responsible for implementing **Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana**.
- It is entrusted with the role of strategy formulation, creation of technical infrastructure and implementation of "**National Digital Health Mission**" to create a national digital health ecosystem.

About Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission

- Launched - By PM Narendra modi on **27th September 2021**
- It will connect the digital health solutions of hospitals across the country.
- This will not only simplify the procedures of hospitals but will also enhance the ease of living.
- The digital ecosystem will also enable many other features such as digital consultation, patient consent for physicians to access their records, etc.
- With the implementation of this scheme old medical records cannot be destroyed as every record will be stored digitally.
- The project has been implemented in pilot phase in **six states and union territories**.

