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1. India's GDP estimated to be 5.8% in UN report 'Global Economic Situation and Prospects-2023' (Jan. 27, 2023)

India's GDP estimated to be 5.8% in UN report 'Global Economic Situation and Prospects-2023'

In the last week of January 2023, the United Nations has projected India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to be 5.8 percent in FY 2023 in the report '**Global Economic Situation and Prospects-2023**'. This is slightly lower than the **6.4 percent projected in 2022**.

An overview of the news:

- According to the United Nations, the main reason for the decrease in India's GDP growth rate is high interest rate, investment due to global economic slowdown, pressure on exports etc.
- Whereas, the United Nations has projected India's economic growth to remain "strong" while the outlook for other **South Asian countries is "more challenging"**.
- The report attributed this to the situation arising out of the **covid epidemic and the Russia-Ukraine war**, due to which a food and energy crisis has arisen and a significant increase in inflation is being seen.

Report in Global Perspective:

- The UN report states that global output growth is projected to decline from an estimated 3% in 2022 to 1.9% in 2023, the lowest in recent decades.
- The United Nations estimates that global growth in 2022 was 3 percent. The report forecasts global trade to grow at 0.4 percent and the world economy at 1.9 percent in 2023.

Report prepared by:

- The report has been prepared by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, and the Regional Economic Commissions for Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, and Western Asia.

2. Senior ISIS leader Bilal al-Sudani killed in US raid in Somalia (Jan. 27, 2023)

Senior ISIS leader Bilal al-Sudani killed in US raid in Somalia

Bilal al-Sudani, a prominent regional leader of the **Islamic State group**, was killed on January 25 in a **US military raid** in **Somalia** ordered by President **Joe Biden**.

An overview of the news

- The US military operation has also killed **10 members of the terrorist group**.

- The US President authorised the strike earlier this week after consulting with top defence, intelligence and security officials.
- Bilal al-Sudani had been on the radar of **US intelligence officials** for the past several years.
- He played a key role in providing financial support to IS operations in **Africa** as well as **ISIS-K**, a terrorist organisation operating in **Afghanistan**.

About Islamic State

- **ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria)**, also known as **ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant)**.
- It is an **Islamist militant jihadist group** that follows **Salafi jihadist doctrine** based on the **Sunni branch** of Islam.
- It was founded in **1999 by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi** and gained global prominence in **2014**.
- It soon took control of large parts of **Iraq and Syria**, raised its flag and imposed strict Islamic rule.
- It strictly enforces **Sharia or Islamic law**.

3. India-Pakistan on brink of nuclear war after Balakot strike: Never give an inch (Jan. 27, 2023)

Never Give An Inch: Fighting for the America I Love'written by former United States Secretary of StateMike Pompeo

The book '**Never Give An Inch: Fighting for the America I Love**' written by former United States Secretary of State **Mike Pompeo** has been in the limelight, commenting on India and many of its politicians.

An overview of the news:

- Pompeo mentioned in his book 'Never Give An Inch' that India-Pakistan were on the brink of nuclear war after the **Balakot strike** in February, 2019.
- Mike Pompeo said that the then Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj had told him that Pakistan was preparing for a nuclear attack after the strike and India was also preparing an aggressive response.
- Referring to this matter, Pompeo said that after the Balakot strike, his team held talks with India and Pakistan overnight to avoid nuclear confrontation between the two countries. His effort prevented a possible war between the two countries, which could turn into a nuclear war at any time.
- In his book, Pompeo does not use respectful words for former Indian External Affairs Minister late Sushma Swaraj, while praising National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, and in some cases describing S Jaishankar as his superior.

4. North India's largest floating solar plant in Chandigarh (Jan. 27, 2023)

North India's largest floating solar plant in Chandigarh

Administrator **Balwari Lal Purohit** inaugurated a **2MWp capacity solar plant** on January 23, 2023, with the aim of making the city self-sufficient in power generation by the **Chandigarh administration.**

An overview of the news:

- **North India's largest floating solar plant** has been installed at Chandigarh's Water Works.
- Apart from this, Balwari Lal Purohit also inaugurated a 500 kWp floating solar power plant in Dhansa Lake.
- The solar plant with 2MWp capacity will generate 28 million units of electricity. Also, due to the installation of panels on water, this project will reduce the evaporation of about 382 million litres annually.
- Also, a major benefit from this project would be that, due to the cooling effect of water, this project would generate more electricity than all other projects.
- Both these projects are on water, due to which about **eight acres of valuable land of the city has been saved.**
- The electricity generated from the solar panels installed on Dhansa Lake will be used by the Forest Department. The forest department will light up all its offices with the electricity generated from this solar panel.

5. Egypt plans to allot land to Indian industries in Suez Canal Special Economic Zone (Jan. 27, 2023)

Egypt plans to allot land to Indian industries in Suez Canal Special Economic Zone

Egypt is considering allotting a **special zone** to Indian industries in the **Suez Canal Economic Zone (SCEZ)** and the Indian side may prepare a **master plan** for the same.

An overview of the news

- The proposal is in the context of India's proposal to encourage companies with the potential to make foreign investments to make use of the investment opportunities available in Egypt.
- Egypt welcomes the flow of more Indian investments and promises to provide incentives and facilities in accordance with applicable regulations and framework.

- The trade between India and Egypt currently **exceeds \$3.15 billion**.
- Prime Minister Modi and the President of Egypt agreed to encourage businesses to explore mutually emerging economic and investment opportunities.
- Egyptian President **El-Sisi**, who arrived in Delhi on a three-day visit to India, attended the Republic Day celebrations as the chief guest.

About Suez Canal

- The **Suez Canal** is an artificial sea-level waterway running **north to south** from the **Isthmus of Suez in Egypt** to connect the **Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea**.
- This canal separates the continent of **Africa from Asia**.
- It provides the **shortest sea route** between Europe and the lands surrounding the Indian and Western Pacific Oceans.
- The Suez Canal is **one of the busiest trade routes** in the world. About **12 percent** of the world's total trade passes through this canal daily.

6. Union Health Minister unveils world's first intranasal COVID19 vaccine, iNNCOVACC (Jan. 26, 2023)

Union Health Minister unveils world's first intranasal COVID19 vaccine, iNNCOVACC

Union Health Minister **Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya** on 26 January **unveiled world's first** intranasal COVID-19 vaccine, **iNNCOVACC** in New Delhi.

An overview of the news

- The vaccine was launched in the presence of **Dr. Jitendra Singh**, Union Minister of State for Science and Technology (Independent Charge).
- It is developed by **Bharat Biotech International Limited (BBIL)** in collaboration with **Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance (BIRAC)**.
- An initial manufacturing capacity of several million doses per year of the vaccine has been established, to be scaled up to one billion doses as needed.
- iNCOVACC has been priced at **Rs 325 per dose**.
- On September 9, 2022, **Bharat Biotech's** iNCOVACC, the world's first nasal COVID-19 vaccine, was approved for emergency use in adults.
- On November 28, 2022, Bharat Biotech announced that the vaccine has been **approved for restricted emergency use in adults**.

About iNCOVACC Vaccine

- Bharat Biotech's intranasal COVID-19 vaccine is a **recombinant replicating adenovirus vectored vaccine**.
- A recombinant vaccine means that it has been manufactured using **bacterial cells or yeast cells or parts of a virus** to introduce viral proteins into the host.
- It removes critical parts of the **genome of SARS-CoV-2**, so that the viral vector can no longer replicate.
- Phase I, II and III clinical trials of the vaccine have yielded successful results.
- The vaccine will be given intranasally **through drops** in the nose, a system that has been designed and developed to be cost-effective in low- and middle-income countries.
- The maximum temperature range for storage and distribution of iNCOVACC is **two to eight degrees Celsius**.

Working of iNCOVACC

- An intranasal vaccine stimulates a broad immune response by producing a wide range of antibodies including **neutralising Immunoglobulin G (IgG) and mucosal Immunoglobulin A (IgA)**.
- The vaccine also initiates **T cell** responses.
- When the iNCOVACC vaccine is given to an individual, the immune cells in the body express the **immobilized spike protein**.
- As a result, the body starts producing antibodies against the spike protein of SARS-CoV-2.
- After a person is exposed to SARS-CoV-2, the immune system will **block Covid-19 infection** in both the upper and lower respiratory tract due to the presence of antibodies.
- Therefore, iNCOVACC has the potential to **block SARS-CoV-2 and prevent the transmission of Covid-19**.

7. Republic Day 2023: This year's parade witnessed multiple events for the first time (Jan. 26, 2023)

74th Republic Day on 26 January.

India celebrated its **74th Republic Day** on 26 January. This year's parade was special with many events taking place for the **first time**.

Programs to be organised for the first time in 74th Republic Day Parade

- This was the first Republic Day celebrations hosted at the ceremonial boulevard after Rajpath was renamed to '**Kartavya Path**' last year.

- For the first time, **12 women riders** were part of the **Border Security Force's (BSF) camel contingent** and 16 march contingents of the armed forces.
- The old howitzers with **25-pounder guns**, which traditionally thundered during the **21-gun salute** during Republic Day celebrations, were replaced by **105 mm Indian field guns** this year.
- A team of "**Daredevils**" **motorcycle riders** from the Corps of Signals, co-led by a woman officer, became part of the parade for the first time.
- Nine Rafale aircraft and the **Navy's IL-38** participated in the air show for the first time.
- Besides the IL-38 aircraft, the formations like '**Bheem**' and '**Vajrang**' showcased over the Kartavya Path for the first time.
- It is the first time that the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, **Abdel Fattah el-Sisi**, has been invited as the chief guest on the Republic Day.
- A military contingent from the **Egyptian Army** also participated in the Republic Day parade for the first time.
- During the Beating Retreat Ceremony 2023, **3-D anamorphic projection** was held for the first time on the façade of North and South Block.
- Newly appointed **Agniveer** was also a part of the parade for the first time.
- The **Narcotics Control Bureau** also presented a tableau for the first time.

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9. Ministry of Tourism to organise six - day mega event “Bharat Parv” at Red Fort lawns (Jan. 26, 2023)

Ministry of Tourism to organise six - day mega event “Bharat Parv” at Red Fort lawns

The **six - day** mega event “**Bharat Parv**” event is going to be organised by the Government of India at the **Lawns and Gyan Path in front of Red Fort, Delhi** from **26 to 31 January, 2023**, as part of the Republic Day Celebrations.

An overview of the news

- The **Ministry of Tourism** has been designated as the **nodal Ministry** for the event.
- The event included display of the best Republic Day parade tableaux at the venue, cultural performances by Regional Cultural Centers as well as cultural troupes of States/UTs, an All India Food Court and an All India Crafts Bazaar with 65 handicraft stalls.
- Bharat Parv was earlier held in **2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 and 2021 (virtually)** on the lawns in front of the Red Fort and on the Gyan Path.
- This physical event is being organised after a gap of **2 years** on the lawn and Gyan Path of the Red Fort.
- Branding and promotion of **Dekho Apna Desh, Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat, G20 and Mission Life** will be done during the event.

10. India-Egypt signed MoU between Prasar Bharati and National Media Authority of Egypt (Jan. 26, 2023)

India-Egypt signed MoU between Prasar Bharati and National Media Authority of Egypt

India and Egypt on 25 January **signed an MoU** to facilitate content exchange, capacity building, and Co-Productions between **Prasar Bharati and the National Media Authority of Egypt**.

An overview of the news

- Information and Broadcasting Minister **Anurag Singh Thakur** and Foreign Minister **Sameh Hassan Shoukry**, Government of Egypt signed the MoU.
- The MoU was exchanged in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Egyptian President **Abdel Fattah El-Sisi** in New Delhi.
- Under this MoU, broadcasters of both the countries will exchange their programs on bilateral basis in different genres of sports, news, culture, entertainment and many other fields and these programs will be broadcast on their radio and television platforms.
- The validity of this MoU will be for three years.

Arab Republic of Egypt

- It is an Arab country which is located on the African continent.
- President: **Abdel Fattah al-Sisi**
- Capital: **Cairo**
- Currency: **Egyptian pound**