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1. BRICS members endorse South Africa's presidency in 2023 (Sept. 23, 2022)

The BRICS Foreign Ministers held their annual meeting on the sidelines of the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York on 22 September.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- The foreign ministers of BRICS member countries Brazil, Russia, India and China extended their full support to South Africa for the presidency of BRICS in 2023 and to hold the fifteenth summit.
- The Ministers welcomed the Transforming Education Summit convened by the United Nations Secretary-General from 16-19 September 2022.
- Member countries also welcomed the first "BRICS Anti-Corruption Ministerial Meeting", which was held virtually on 13 July.
- The Ministers encouraged cooperation against corruption among BRICS countries on the basis of full consultation and consensus.
- The Ministers reiterated their commitment to further strengthen cooperation within the BRICS Anti-Drug Working Group in accordance with the existing International Drug Control Regime.

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development :

- The Ministers called for the implementation of its three dimensions - economic, social and environmental - in a balanced and integrated manner by mobilising the necessary tools to implement the Sustainable Development Agenda in 2030.
- They reaffirmed that the BRICS countries are committed to implementing the UN Education 2030 Agenda.
- UN Education 2030 Agenda - promoting education accessibility and equity, accelerating the development of quality education and training, encouraging exchanges among the youths, strengthening knowledge on sustainable development, and providing BRICS contributions for global governance.

2. PM Modi inaugurated National Conference of Environment Ministers (Sept. 23, 2022)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the National Conference of Environment Ministers in Ekta Nagar, Gujarat on September 23 via video conferencing.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- Addressing the National Conference of Environment Ministers of all States, Modi said, New India is progressing with a new approach and new thinking.
- The PM said, India's forest cover has increased and wetlands are also expanding rapidly.
- He said that there has been an increase in the number of lions, tigers, elephants, one-horned rhinoceros and leopards of Gir in the last few years.
- He urged all the states present in the conference to adopt best practices in environmental protection and implement successful solutions across India.
- The conference will lay special emphasis on increasing the forest cover, restoration of degraded land and wildlife conservation.
- The two-day conference, to be held on September 23 and 24, will have six thematic sessions.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION -***Six thematic sessions are :***

1. LiFE, Combating Climate Change (Updating State Action Plans on Climate Change for Mitigation of Emissions and Adaptation to Climate Impacts)
2. PARIVESH (Single Window System for Integrated Green Clearances)
3. Forestry Management
4. Prevention and Control of Pollution
5. Wildlife Management
6. Plastics and Waste Management

3. 2023 Breakthrough Prize winners announced (Sept. 23, 2022)

On September 22, the winners of the 2023 Breakthrough Prize, called the Oscars of Science, totaling more than \$15 million, were announced.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- This year three awards were given in the Life Science category while one award each for Mathematics and Physics.
- Daniel Spielman of Yale University was awarded the Breakthrough Prize in Mathematics for his many discoveries in theoretical computer science and mathematics.
- Clifford Brangwyn and Anthony Hyman (British scientist) won the Life Science Prize for their discovery of a new mechanism of cellular organisation.

- Other life science prizes were awarded to Demis Hassabis (British scientist) and John Jumper (USA) for developing AlphaFold, which predicts the structure of proteins, and Emmanuel Mignot (France) and Masashi Yanagisawa (USA) for discovering the causes of narcolepsy.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION -***About Breakthrough Prizes :***

- The Breakthrough Prizes were started in 2010 by a group of Silicon Valley entrepreneurs.
- These Prizes were founded by Sergey Brin, Priscilla Chan and Mark Zuckerberg, Yuri and Julia Milner, and Anne Wojcicki.
- These prizes are the most richly endowed prizes in science, the prize money of which exceeds that of the Nobel Prizes.
- Breakthrough has an amount of \$3 million in each prize, which is more than \$1 million in prizes awarded to the winner of the Nobel Prize.
- The awards are presented in the fields of life sciences, fundamental physics and mathematics.

4. Defence Ministry signs contract to acquire additional Brahmos missiles (Sept. 23, 2022)

An agreement worth Rs 1,700 crore was signed between the acquisition arm of the Defence Ministry and M/s BrahMos Aerospace Pvt Ltd on September 22 for additional supply of BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- The total contract value signed so far for these missiles has exceeded Rs 38,000 crore.
- The induction of these missiles will further enhance the operational capability of the Navy.
- The contract will also promote indigenous production of critical weapon systems and ammunition with active participation of domestic industry.
- It may be mentioned that BAPL is a joint venture between India and Russia which is making a significant contribution in the development of a new generation of surface-to-surface missiles.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION -***About BrahMos :***

- BrahMos is a supersonic cruise missile.
- It is a joint collaboration between India and Russia.

- The missile is capable of being launched from land, sea, sub-sea and air against surface and sea-based targets.
- BrahMos was first flight tested at Pokhran test range in Rajasthan.

5. G4 group express concern over slow pace of reform on Security Council (Sept. 23, 2022)

The foreign ministers of Group of 4 (India, Japan, Brazil and Germany) met in New York on 22 September 2022 and expressed concern about the lack of meaningful progress in the Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) on United Nations Security Council (SC) reform. They met on the sidelines of the [77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly](#) being held in New York, United States.

The meeting was attended by Indian External Affairs Minister **S.Jaishanker**, German foreign minister **Annalena Baerbock**, Brazilian foreign minister **Carlos Alberto Franco Franca** and Japanese foreign minister **Yoshimasa Hayashi**.

The G-4 was formed in 2005 to reform the UN Security Council and include four countries as **the permanent member of the United Nation Security Council**.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

China not in favour :

- According to the government of India, as told to Lok Sabha on 22 July 2022, only China is opposing India's candidature for the UN Security Council membership while the other permanent members of the Security Council, Russia, France, United Kingdom and the United States are in favour of India.
- China is also opposed to the membership of Japan and Germany.
- It has a difficult relationship with India and Japan and consider them as its rival while it opposes Germany as it is not a developing country.

UN Security Council :

- The UN Security Council is the main UN body which is responsible for maintaining peace and security in the world.
- It consists of 15 members. 10 members are non-permanent and are elected for 2 years.
- Five members are permanent members and they have veto power. The five permanent members are China, Russia, France, the United Kingdom and the United States.

6. India and 4 other South Asian countries set up Asian Palm Oil Alliance (APOA) (Sept. 23, 2022)

The five palm oil importing countries of South Asia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal have announced the setting up of Asian Palm

Oil Alliance (APOA) at Agra, to strengthen their bargaining power and make oil imports sustainable.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

First chairman of the APOA :

- **Atul Chaturvedi**, President, Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA) has been appointed as the first chairman of the APOA.

Aim of the APOA :

- Elaborating the aim of the APOA, Chaturvedi said that "we aim at safeguarding the economic and business interests of the palm oil consuming countries and will work towards increasing the consumption of palm oil in member countries,"
- He said that membership of APOA would be further expanded to include companies or industry bodies associated with production or refining of palm oil across the continent.
- The next meeting of the APOA is expected to be held in **Indonesia** early next year.
- India is the **largest importer of palm oil in Asia and in the world** , accounting for 15% of global imports, followed by China (9%), Pakistan (4%) and Bangladesh (2%).

Palm Oil and India :

- Palm oil is used in a wide variety of products from cooking to making shampoos, breads, Ice creams etc.
- India imports about 8.3 million tonnes of palm oil including crude palm oil (CPO), Palmolein and PFAD (Palm Fatty Acid Distillate),
- Around 4 million tonnes of palm oil comes from **Indonesia** with Malaysia being the second largest source of palm oil (3.8 million tonnes) and Thailand accounting for the remaining half-a-million tonnes.
- **Indonesia and Malaysia** jointly produce 84 % of world palm oil.
- The largest producer of palm oil in India is **Andhra Pradesh** followed by **Telangana**.

7. First 'Global Clean Energy Action Forum -2022' starts at Pittsburgh, United States (Sept. 22, 2022)

The three day (21-23 September) 'Global Clean Energy Action Forum -2022 organised by the United States government's Department of Energy and Carnegie Mellon University, started on 21 September 2022 at Pittsburgh, United States .

Under the Global Clean Energy Action Forum a joint meeting of the **Clean Energy Ministerial (CEM13)** and **Mission Innovation (MI-7)** are being held.

It is being attended by energy and science ministers from **31 countries** to discuss ways to achieve a net zero carbon target for the world.

India is being led by Union Minister [Dr Jitendra Singh](#).

He met US Energy Minister Jennifer Granholm and other important dignitaries.

The **theme** for CEM13/MI-7 is **Rapid Innovation and Deployment**.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- Pittsburgh is also known both as "**the Steel City**" and as the "**City of Bridges**".
- **Jamshedpur** in India is also called as Pittsburgh of India.

8. A special tourist train to cover the Ambedkar Circuit (Sept. 22, 2022)

Union Tourism and Culture Minister G Kishan Reddy recently announced a special tourist train to cover the "Ambedkar Circuit".

IMPORTANT FACTS -

About Ambedkar Circuit :

- The central government first proposed the **Ambedkar Circuit or Panchteerth** in 2016.
- Prime Minister had said the Panchteerth would include-
 1. Janma Bhoomi, Ambedkar's birthplace in Madhya Pradesh's Mhow;
 2. Shiksha Bhoomi, the place in London where he stayed while studying in the UK;
 3. Deeksha Bhoomi in Nagpur where he embraced Buddhism;
 4. Mahaparinirvan Bhoomi or the place of his demise in Delhi
 5. Chaitya Bhoomi, the place of his cremation, in Mumbai.
- The idea is to attract tourists from beyond the Dalit community, who mostly come to these places for pilgrimage.
- Travel will include food, transportation and entry to the sites.

9. 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.

10. First Advance Estimates of production of major kharif crops released (Sept. 22, 2022)

First Advance Estimates of production of major Kharif crops for 2022-23 have been released by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare on 21 September.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- According to the Agriculture and Farmers Welfare ministry, foodgrain production of 149.92 million tonnes is estimated in the kharif season.

- It is higher by 6.98 million tonnes than the average foodgrain production of previous five years' from 2016-17 to 2020-21.
- The total production of Kharif rice during 2022-23 is estimated to be 104.99 million tonnes, an increase of 4.40 million tonnes over the last five years.
- Maize production in the country is estimated to be a record 23.10 million tonnes during 2022-23, which is higher by 3.21 million tonnes than the average maize production of 19.89 million tonnes.
- The production of Kharif nut/coarse cereals is estimated at 36.56 million tonnes, which is higher by 2.92 million tonnes than the average production of 33.64 million tonnes.

First Advance Estimates of major kharif crops for 2022-23 :

- Foodgrains - 149.92 million tonnes
- Rice - 104.99 million tonnes
- Nutri / Coarse Cereals - 36.56 million tonnes
- Maize - 23.10 million tonnes. (record)
- Pulses - 8.37 million tonnes
- Tur - 3.89 million tonnes
- Oilseeds - 23.57 million tonnes
- Groundnut - 8.37 million tonnes
- Soyabean - 12.89 million tonnes
- Cotton - 34.19 million bales (of 170 kg each)
- Jute & Mesta - 10.09 million bales (of 180 kg each)
- Sugarcane - 465.05 million tonnes (record)