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1. Prime Minister Modi Marks RBI's 90th Anniversary with Visionary Speech (April 2, 2024)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the audience at the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Mumbai as the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) celebrated its 90th anniversary on April 1st,

An Overview of the News:

- The Prime Minister Modi released a commemorative coin to mark 90 years of RBI on the occasion.
- The event was attended by various dignitaries, including RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das, Union Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, Chief Minister of Maharashtra Eknath Shinde, Deputy Chief Ministers of Maharashtra Devendra Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar, and other state and federal officials.

Key points from Prime Minister Modi's speech:

- Prime Minister Modi stressed in his speech that India wants to be economically independent over the next ten years in order to protect itself from the volatility of the world financial system.
- He emphasized the RBI's critical role in accomplishing this objective.
- He told that India's share of the world economy is growing rapidly, having risen to 15% during his administration.
- In the long run, he thought that the following ten years would be crucial to realizing the goal of a developed India by 2047.
- The Prime Minister lauded the strengthened state of the Indian banking sector under his administration, noting a significant decline in Gross Non-Performing Assets (NPA) from 11.25 percent in 2018 to less than 3 percent by September 2023.
- He brought up the government's Rs 3.5 lakh crore injection into public sector banks to increase their resilience.

Origin and Background of RBI:

- The idea for the formation of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the country's central bank, came from the Hilton-Young Commission, also known as the Royal Commission on Indian Currency and Finance.
- The Reserve Bank of India Act 1934 was passed in compliance with the recommendations made by the Hilton-Young Commission.
- The RBI started its journey on April 1, 1935, and commenced operations.
- After being privately owned for a while, the RBI was nationalized in 1949 and is now owned by the government.

The RBI's primary duties include:

- Creating, carrying out, and overseeing monetary policy.
- Supervising and regulating the banks, NBFCs, NABARD, SIDBI, EXIM Bank, and other components of the Indian financial system.
- Managing India's foreign exchange holdings.
- Releasing banknotes in India (other from coins and notes valued at Re 1).
- Overseeing and controlling India's payment and settlement system.
- Acting as the government's banker and representing all scheduled banks.

2. World Tuberculosis (TB) Day - 24 March (March 26, 2024)

World Tuberculosis (TB) Day is an annual event observed on 24 March.

An Overview of the News

- TB is an infectious disease that primarily affects the lungs, caused by the bacteria *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*.
- Transmission occurs through the air when an infected person coughs, sneezes or spits.
- It is possible to prevent and cure TB with a regimen of antibacterial drugs for a period of 6 to 12 months.
- Untreated TB can have fatal consequences, underscoring the importance of early detection and appropriate treatment.

Theme of World Tuberculosis Day

- The theme of World Tuberculosis Day 2024 is "**Yes! We can end TB**".
- This theme emphasizes global efforts to eliminate the disease through awareness and action.

History of World Tuberculosis Day

- World TB Day, observed every year on 24 March, commemorates the discovery of the bacteria causing TB by **Dr. Robert Koch in 1882**.
- Proposed by the **International Union against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (IUATLD) in 1982** on the centenary of Koch's discovery, it became an official day of observance in 1983.
- The day aims to raise awareness about tuberculosis globally and advocate for prevention, treatment and research efforts.

3. World Meteorological Day - 23 March (March 23, 2024)

World Meteorological Day is celebrated every year on 23 March.

An Overview of the News

- This day commemorates the establishment of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in 1950.
- WMO operates as a **specialized agency within the United Nations**

Theme of World Meteorological Day

- The theme of World Meteorological Day 2024 is "**At the Frontier of Climate Action**".
- This emphasizes the critical need to **address climate change and its potentially severe impacts**.

History of World Meteorological Day

- World Meteorological Day began with the establishment of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) on March **23, 1950**.
- WMO was created with the primary purpose of forecasting weather patterns and predicting climate change.
- One year after its establishment, WMO launched World Meteorological Day to **celebrate its establishment and promote understanding of the importance of weather and climate forecasting**.

4. World Down Syndrome Day - 21 March 2024 (March 22, 2024)

World Down Syndrome Day is celebrated every year on 21 March.

An Overview of the News

- Down syndrome is a condition that affects both the physical and mental aspects of a person's health, causing challenges in communication and social interaction.
- This condition results from an extra chromosome, which affects both body and brain development.
- Common indicators of Down syndrome include distinctive facial features, intellectual disability, and developmental delay.
- Treatment methods include speech therapy, physical activities, and tailored education programs.
- The average life expectancy of individuals with Down syndrome is approximately 60 years.

The theme of World Down Syndrome Day

- The theme of this year's World Down Syndrome Day is "**End Stereotypes**". It aims to combat stereotyping.
- The focus is on breaking down stereotypes and promoting a more inclusive and understanding environment for people with Down syndrome.
- This initiative seeks to shift the narrative towards recognizing the abilities and potential of individuals with Down syndrome rather than limiting them based on preconceived notions.

History of World Down Syndrome Day

- World Down Syndrome Day was established by the United Nations in 2012 to celebrate March 21, which represents the 21st chromosome associated with Down syndrome.
- Globally, approximately 3,000 to 5,000 babies are born with Down syndrome each year, with an incidence ranging from 1 in 1,000 to 1 in 1,100 live births.
- Improving the quality of life of individuals with Down syndrome includes addressing health care needs through regular screening and interventions such as therapy and counseling.
- Support from parents, medical professionals, and community-based systems, including inclusive education, is essential to enable individuals with Down syndrome to fulfill their potential and integrate into society.

5. World Water Day - 22 March (March 22, 2024)

World Water Day is celebrated annually on 22 March 1993, to raise awareness about the importance of freshwater resources.

An Overview of the News

- Approximately 2.2 billion people globally do not have access to safe water, highlighting the urgent need to tackle the global water crisis.
- The United Nations says Asia and the Pacific have the lowest per capita water availability worldwide, with groundwater use projected to increase by 30% by 2050.
- About 40% of irrigation water comes from aquifers, underscoring their important role in agricultural sustainability.

Theme of World Water Day:

- The theme of World Water Day 2024 is '**Water for Peace**'.
- The United Nations' World Water Development Report (WWDR) for 2024, which sheds light on this topic.
- Despite changes each year, the central focus of World Water Day remains on issues related to clean water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), in line with the objectives of Sustainable Development Goal 6.

History of World Water Day:

- The concept of World Water Day originated during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.
- Following this resolution, the United Nations General Assembly officially designated 22 March as World Water Day later that year.
- World Water Day is dedicated to emphasizing the importance of water conservation and conservation.
- The day serves as a platform to advocate solutions to tackle the global water crisis.

6. International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination - 21 March (March 21, 2024)

The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is observed every year on 21 March.

An Overview of the News

- The theme of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in 2024 is **"A Decade of Recognition, Justice and Development: Implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent."**
- The 2024 theme aligns with the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015–2024), which recognizes the need to promote and protect the human rights of persons of African descent globally.
- Approximately 200 million people of African descent live in the Americas, with millions more living in other regions around the world.

Historical Background:

- The ritual originates from the tragic events of March 21, 1960, when police in Sharpeville, South Africa, shot 69 persons during a peaceful protest against the apartheid "pass laws".
- In 1979, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a program to combat racism and racial discrimination, instituting a week of solidarity with those fighting against racism, starting on March 21 every year.

International Legal Framework:

- The International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination serves as a global mechanism to combat racism, subject to near-universal ratification. However, additional efforts are necessary to eradicate racial discrimination around the world.

7. World Forestry Day - 21 March (March 21, 2024)

World Forestry Day is celebrated every year on 21 March to raise awareness about the vital role of forests and promote efforts for their conservation and sustainable management.

An Overview of the News

- The theme of World Forestry Day in 2024 is "**Forests and Innovation: New Solutions for a Better World**", which emphasizes the role of innovation and technology in forest conservation.
- The United Nations General Assembly established World Forestry Day in 2012 to highlight the importance of forests globally.

Important Functions of Forests:

- Forests perform various essential functions:
 - Soil stabilization, water retention, and environmental balance.
 - Provision of oxygen, medicinal resources, and biodiversity conservation.

Importance of Forests:

- Forests are important for:
 - Combating climate change as a carbon sink.
 - Conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem health.
 - Providing clean air, water and supporting livelihoods globally.

Celebrating and Taking Action:

- Ways to participate and contribute include:
 - Supporting forest conservation organizations.
 - Reducing consumption of paper and wood products.
 - Engaging in tree planting activities.
 - To spread awareness about the importance and threats of forests.

8. March 20th: International Day of Happiness (March 20, 2024)

International Day of Happiness, observed annually on 20 March, focuses on promoting global happiness and well-being.

An Overview of the News

- The theme of the International Day of Happiness in 2024 is "**Reconnecting for Happiness: Building Resilient Communities,**" encouraging participation by all to celebrate happiness.

History of International Day of Happiness

- Based on a proposal from Bhutan, the United Nations (UN) declared 20 March as the **International Day of Happiness in 2012.**
- Bhutan's advocacy of prioritizing national happiness over national income dates back to the early **1970s**, emphasizing the importance of gross national happiness.
- Bhutan convened an important high-level meeting on **“Happiness and Well-being: Defining a New Economic Paradigm”** during the **66th session** of the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).**
- The first International Day of Happiness was celebrated in 2013, which has been an annual tradition ever since.

Importance of International Happiness Day

- The day reminds of happiness as a universal right, which aims to **spread happiness and positivity among individuals.**
- It offers everyone an opportunity to contribute to happiness by initiating small acts of kindness and promoting well-being.
- The United Nations General Assembly advocates an economic development approach that prioritizes inclusivity, equity and balance, aiming to enhance the happiness and well-being of all individuals.

9. World Sparrow Day - 20 March (March 20, 2024)

World Sparrow Day is celebrated every year on 20 March.

An Overview of the News

- World Sparrow Day aims to **raise awareness around the world about the declining population of the common house sparrow.**

Origin and Effects:

- World Sparrow Day originated as a collaboration between the **Nature Forever Society (NFS)** in India and the Eco-Sys Action Foundation in France.
- World Sparrow Day was **inaugurated in 2010** to draw attention to the alarming decline of the house sparrow and encourage concerted conservation efforts.
- NFS founder **Mohammed Dilawar** was inspired by the **'Save the Sparrow'** campaign that began in Rajasthan, India during the **1960s.**
- Dilawar's goal was to turn this local campaign into a global movement for sparrow conservation.
- The NFS website serves as a repository of knowledge, providing information on sparrow species from more than 25 countries.

10. World Mental Health Day - 10 October (Oct. 10, 2023)

World Mental Health Day is celebrated every year on 10 October to raise awareness related to mental health and promote positive changes.

An Overview of the News

- The theme of 2023 World Mental Health Day is "**Mental health is a universal human right**".
- The day aims **to raise awareness and take action to protect the mental well-being of all as a fundamental human right.**

History of World Mental Health Day

- In 1992, Richard Hunter, who led the World Foundation for Mental Health, proposed the idea of dedicating October 10 as "World Mental Health Day".
- The first World Mental Health Day was celebrated in 1994 and its theme focused on "**Improving the Quality of Mental Health Services Throughout the World**".