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1. Quad foreign minister sign an agreement to operationalise Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief at New York (Sept. 23, 2022)

The foreign ministers of the Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue) signed an agreement in New York, United States on 23 September 2022 to operationalise Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) in the Indo-Pacific area.

Foreign ministers of India([S.Jaishankar](#)), Australia(**Penny Wong**), United States(**Anthony Blinken**) and Japan(**Hayashi Yoshimasa**) signed the agreement to operationalise, which was announced by the Quad Leaders in Tokyo on 24 May 2022, as part of a shared vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific that is inclusive and resilient.

Under the HADR, the member countries will coordinate their disaster response operations in the region with other National and International agencies, private ,non-governmental organisations .

Next Quad foreign minister's meeting to be held in New Delhi

They also agreed to hold the next foreign minister's meeting of the Quad in India in early 2023.

The concept of QUAD was given by **Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe** in 2007 for maritime cooperation between these countries after the Indian Ocean Tsunami disaster in 2004.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue) :

- It is a group of Australia, India, Japan and the United States to promote cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.
- The first in person summit meeting of the Quad leaders was in **Washington, United States** in 2021.
- The second in person summit meeting was held in **May 2022 in Japan**
- The third summit meeting will be held in **Australia in 2023.**

2. Foreign Minister Jaishankar attends high level L-69 group meeting in New York (Sept. 23, 2022)

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar attended the High Level Meeting of the L.69 Group on "Reinvigorating Multilateralism and Achieving Comprehensive Reform of the UN Security Council" in New York, United States of America on 23 September 2022.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- The L.69 Group consists of developing countries from Asia, Africa, Latin America, Caribbean and Small Island Developing States, focused on reforms of the UN [Security Council](#).
- Dr S. Jaishankar is on an official visit to the United States from 18-28 September 2022. He is leading the India delegation for the High Level Week at the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

3. India records reduction in Child mortality rate as per the SRS 2020 (Sept. 23, 2022)

As per the Sample Registration System (SRS) Statistical Report 2020 released on 22nd September 2022 by Registrar General of India, the Child mortality Rate, Infant Mortality rate, Neonatal Mortality rate has registered a decline in the country as compared to 2014.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

Indicators	SRS 2014	SRS2019	SRS2020
Crude Birth Rate (CBR)	21.0	19.7	19.5
Total Fertility Rate	2.3	2.1	2.0
Early Neonatal Mortality Rate (ENMR) - 0- 7 days	20	16	15
Neonatal Mortality Rate (NMR)	26	22	20
Infant Mortality Rate (IMR)	39	30	28
Under 5 Mortality Rate (U5MR)	45	35	32

Definition and data highlights :

- **Crude Birth Rate:** It is defined as the annual number of live births per 1,000 population.
- **Total Fertility Rate (TFR):** It refers to the average number of children which a woman can give birth to during her reproductive life cycle.
- **Early Neonatal Mortality Rate:** It refers to the deaths during the first 7 completed days of life per 1000 live births in a given year.
- **Neonatal Mortality rate:** Neonatal Number of deaths during the first 28 completed days of life per 1000 live births in a given year.
- In Urban area it was 12 and in the rural area it was 23
- **Infant Mortality Rate:** Infant Mortality rate refers to the deaths of children below the age of a year and above per 1000 births.

- In the **Urban area the IMR was 19** and in the **rural area it was 31**.
- The IMR for male and female was same, **28 per 1000 live births**.
- **Under 5 Mortality Rate:** It is defined as the probability of a child dying between birth and exactly 5 years of age, expressed per 1,000 lives.
- It is **36 in rural areas** and **21 in urban areas**.
- In **females it was 33** and in **male it was 31**.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION -

Other important points of the SRS data :

- **According to the SRS 2020 data, 6 states have achieved the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target of Neonatal Mortality rate (NMR) of 12 or less.**
- These states are Kerala (4), Delhi (9), Tamil Nadu (9), Maharashtra (11), Jammu & Kashmir (12) and Punjab (12).
- **11 States /Union Territories have achieved SDG -Under 5 Mortality rate goals of 25 or less than 25 deaths per 1000 live births.**
- These states are: Kerala (8), Tamil Nadu (13), Delhi (14), Maharashtra (18), J&K (17), Karnataka (21), Punjab (22), West Bengal (22), Telangana (23), Gujarat (24), and Himachal Pradesh (24).

4. National Workshop on Role of Agri Start-ups in Honey Value Chain held in Varanasi (Sept. 23, 2022)

National Bee Board (NBB), Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, in collaboration with National Seed Research and Training Centre (NSRTC) Varanasi, organised a National Workshop on Role of Agri Start-ups in Honey Value Chain at NSRTC Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh on 22 September.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- Beekeepers, honey startups and FPOs, stakeholders in beekeeping, officials from various ministries, government organisations, institutions, state horticulture departments, agricultural universities, etc. participated in the workshop.

Sweet Revolution :

- It is an ambitious initiative of the Government of India for promoting 'beekeeping'.
- It aims to accelerate the production of quality honey and other related products.
- In order to give a boost to the sweet revolution, the National Beekeeping and Honey Mission was launched by the government in 2020.
- There are about 20,000 different species of bees in the world.
- Bees live in colonies and each colony has three types of bees, the queen bee, the worker bee, and the drone bee.

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6. 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.

7. 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

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- Wildlife Management
- 5.
- 6. Plastics and Waste Management

9. 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.

10. 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.