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1. Petersberg Climate Dialogue 2023 (May 9, 2023)

Petersberg Climate Dialogue 2023

The **Petersberg Dialogue on Climate Change** was held in **Berlin from May 2-3, 2023.**

An overview of the news

- The Petersberg Climate Dialogue (PCD) was **hosted by Germany** and the **United Arab Emirates**, which is hosting the 28th **Conference of the Parties (COP28)** to the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.**
- Ministers from **40 countries attended** the conference to discuss the way forward towards COP28.
- The main topics of discussion at the event were **renewable targets, climate finance and global stocktake.**

Key points of the summit

- To limit **global warming to 1.5°C**, the world needs to cut its greenhouse gas emissions at a rapid pace.
- The conference agreed to focus on phasing out **fossil fuel emissions** while phasing out **viable, affordable zero-carbon alternatives.**
- It calls for tripling renewable energy capacity by **2030 and then doubling it by 2040.**
- 2023 is the year of **Global Stocktech.** The Global Stocktake is essentially a periodic review of global climate action aimed at assessing whether current efforts will enable us to reach the objectives set out in the Paris Agreement.

Conference of Parties(COP)

- Every year, the United Nations organizes a climate summit where the main agenda of the parties is **to limit global temperature rise.**
- These summits are called **Conference of the Parties (COPs).**
- Participants come from **197 countries** that have signed the **1992 United Nations Climate Accord.**
- Its purpose is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere to prevent dangerous interference from human activity on the climate system.
- The agreement seeks to limit global warming to well **below 2 °C, preferably 1.5 °C,** compared to pre-industrial levels.
- It was signed in **Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Since 1994,** COPs have been organised every year. **Year 2023 marks the 28th summit, called the COP28 summit.**

The **COP28** conference will be held in **Dubai** from 30 November to 12 December 2023.

2. Border Haat between India and Bangladesh inaugurated at Bholaganj in Sylhet (May 7, 2023)

Border Haat between India and Bangladesh inaugurated at Bholaganj in Sylhet

On 6 May a new **border-haat** was inaugurated between **India and Bangladesh at Bholaganj under Companyganj Upazila of Sylhet.**

An overview of the news

- Bangladesh's Minister for Migrant Welfare and Overseas Employment **Imran Ahmed** and India's Assistant High Commissioner **Neeraj Kumar Jaiswal** jointly inaugurated the border-haat.
- The opening of the border haat at Bholaganj on the **border between Sylhet in Bangladesh and the East Khasi Hills of Meghalaya** was greeted with great enthusiasm by people on both sides of the border.
- This is the **fourth border haat in Sylhet division**, out of which **three are currently functioning**. There are plans to open three more border haats in Sylhet division.
- The Border Haat will open from **10 am to 4 pm on Wednesdays and Saturdays.**
- The Bholaganj Border Haat will have 26 stalls from India and 24 stalls from Bangladesh, where traditional items from both the countries will be sold duty free.
- The **first border haats were inaugurated in 2011 at Kalaichar in West Garo Hills district of Meghalaya and Kurigram in Bangladesh.**

3. Indian-origin Neera Tandon becomes domestic policy advisor in Biden administration (May 6, 2023)

Indian-origin Neera Tandon becomes domestic policy advisor in Biden administration

On 5 May 2023, an **Indian-American Neera Tandon** has been appointed as the **domestic policy advisor in US President Joe Biden's team.**

Important Point:-

- Tandon's appointment has been made keeping in mind the presidential election to be held in the US in 2024.
- Following Biden's decision to appoint Neera Tandon, she became the first Asian-American to lead the White House Advisory Council.
- Prior to this, Tandon served as Biden's staff secretary during this term.
- Neera Tandon responsibly processed all the paperwork that arrived on the President's desk.

- According to the White House, Neera Tandon oversaw decision-making processes in the domestic, economic and national security teams.

Neera Tandon:

- Neera Tandon was born in Massachusetts to Indian immigrant parents. Tandon studied at the University of California Los Angeles and Yale University.
- With over 25 years of experience working in public policy, Neera Tandon has worked with three US presidents, and also headed one of the country's largest think tanks for nearly a decade.
- Neera Tandon is the former US Secretary of State and a close aide of Hillary Clinton, the Democratic presidential candidate in the 2016 presidential election.
- **Neera also helped pass the Affordable Care Act in the Obama administration.**

4. Ukraine apologises for 'Devi Kali' tweet (May 5, 2023)

Ukraine apologises for 'Devi Kali' tweet

Ukraine's Deputy Foreign Minister **Emin Zhaparova** expressed regret over the "**misrepresentation**" of **Goddess Kali** by the country's Defense Ministry.

An overview of the news

- Apologizing for this act, he said that this country and its people respect the '**unique Indian culture**'.
- In this illustration, a distorted picture of Goddess Kali was written '**Work of Art**' amidst the smoke of the explosion.
- This picture was tweeted on April 30, about which objection was expressed on the social media platform.
- Jhaparova visited India on 9 April. This was the first official foreign trip by a minister from the Eastern European country (Ukraine) since the Russian invasion of Ukraine began in February last year.

About Ukraine

- Ukraine is a country located in **Eastern Europe** and the **second largest country in the continent after Russia**.
- Its **capital is Kiev**, located on the **Dnieper River in north-central Ukraine**.
- Prime Minister: **Denys Shmyhal**
- President: **Volodymyr Zelensky**
- Capital: **Kyiv**

- Official Language : **Ukrainian**
- Currency : **Rryvnya (UAH)**

5. 21st meeting of Bangladesh-India Joint Steering Committee on Cooperation in Power Sector (May 5, 2023)

21st meeting of Bangladesh-India Joint Steering Committee on Cooperation in Power Sector

The **21st meeting of the Bangladesh-India Joint Steering Committee (BIJSC)** on the power sector was held on 4th May at **Khulna, Bangladesh**.

An overview of the news

- Bangladesh's Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Secretary **Habibur Rahman** and his Indian counterpart **Alok Kumar** led their respective sides at the meeting.
- The meeting reviewed the progress of ongoing activities related to **mutual cooperation in the power sector** between Bangladesh and India.
- The meeting also examined the **possibility of power generation projects** in India through **BIFPCL** including power export from Bangladesh to India and setting up of solar power projects.
- The delegation also discussed the signing of an agreement to **import 500 MW of hydro power from Nepal by GMR to Bangladesh** through India.
- The progress in the management of the first unit and the implementation of the second unit of the **1320 MW Maitri Super Thermal Power Project** construction project was also reviewed.

People's Republic of Bangladesh

- Capital: **Dhaka**
- Prime Minister: **Sheikh Hasina Wazed**
- President: **Mohammad Shahabuddin**
- Currency: **Taka**

6. India and Israel sign MoU for cooperation on industrial research and development (May 5, 2023)

India and Israel sign MoU for cooperation on industrial research and development

India and Israel signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** to enhance **industrial research and development cooperation** in high-tech areas such as **AI, quantum, semiconductors, healthcare, aerospace, sustainable energy and agriculture**.

An Overview of the News

- The partnership aims to facilitate **collaborative initiatives for industrial research and development** in a diverse range of high-tech domains, including **artificial intelligence, quantum computing, semiconductor technology, synthetic biology, healthcare, aerospace, sustainable energy and agriculture.**
- The MoU will focus on specific projects and will be monitored by a **Joint Steering Committee** to ensure effective implementation.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU):

- It is a type of agreement between two or more parties that expresses a shared intention to take a **common line of action.**
- Memoranda of Understanding can be used in situations where the **parties do not intend a legal commitment or cannot form a legally enforceable agreement.**
- MOUs are often used by many companies and government agencies to **define relationships between departments, agencies, or closely related companies.**

About Israel

Israel is a **Middle Eastern country** on the **Mediterranean Sea.**

It is considered the **Holy Land of the Bible by Jews,** Christians and Muslims.

Tel Aviv is the financial centre of the country and is known for its **beaches and Bauhaus architecture.**

Capital and largest city - **Jerusalem**

Official language - **Hebrew**

Recognized Language - **Arabic**

Government - **Unitary parliamentary republic**

President - **Isaac Herzog**

Prime Minister - **Benjamin Netanyahu**

Chief Justice - **Esther Hayut**

7. Devendra Fadnavis unveiled the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in Mauritius (May 5, 2023)

Devendra Fadnavis unveiled the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in Mauritius

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister **Devendra Fadnavis** unveiled the **statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in Mauritius.**

An Overview of the News

- The ceremony was attended by Prime Minister of Mauritius **Pravind Jugnauth** and members of the Mauritius Marathi Mandali Federation.
- Fadnavis highlighted Maharashtra's potential as a major industrial and investment destination in India.
- Fadnavis participated in the **Indo-Mauritius Business Forum** and **signed an MoU to promote trade between Mauritius and Maharashtra.**
- He also announced a grant of **Mauritius Rupees 44 million for the construction of a multi-purpose** hall and a scholarship for 10 students.
- Fadnavis also attended a cultural event with Prime Minister Jugnauth and interacted with members of the Maharashtrian community in Mauritius.

About Mauritius

It is an **island nation located in the Indian Ocean.**

The interior of the island is mountainous and contains the **Black River Gorges National Park.**

Capital - **Port Louis**

President - **Prithviraj Singh Rupan**

Prime Minister - **Pravind Kumar Jugnauth**

Mauritius currency - **Mauritian rupee**

8. 56th Annual General Meeting of Board of Directors of ADB (May 5, 2023)

56th Annual General Meeting of Board of Directors of ADB

Finance Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman** attended the **56th Annual General Meeting** of the **Board of Directors of the Asian Development Bank (ADB)** in **Incheon, South Korea** on May 2.

An overview of the news

- Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs **Nirmala Sitharaman** led the delegation from the Indian side.
- The meeting was attended by **official delegations of ADB members, observers, non-governmental and civil society organizations,** financial institutions and banks, and other private sector companies.
- Sitharaman also participated in the annual meeting and focal events such as Governors Business.
- She also participated as a panelist in the **ADB Governors' Seminar on Policies to Support Asia's Rebound.**

The functions of the Union Finance Minister included the following components:

- Interaction with global economists, governors/finance ministers of ADB member countries, etc.
- Bilateral engagement with countries and international organizations.
- Interact with global business leaders and investors in roundtables.
- Engagement with community diaspora.

Asian Development Bank (ADB)

- It is a **regional multilateral financial institution** which focuses on the countries of **Asia and Pacific region**.
- It was set up after a resolution was passed at the **first Ministerial Conference on Asian Economic Cooperation** held by the **United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East in 1963**.
- It started functioning from **19 December 1966 with 31 member countries**.
- At present it has **68 members—of which 49 members are from within Asia** and the Pacific and 19 outside.
- **Japan is the largest shareholder** of the ADB and a Japanese has always been the head of the ADB.
- President of ADB: **Masatsugu Asakawa**
- Headquarters: **Mandaluyong City, Manila, Philippines**

9. 'Machines can See' - Summit on Artificial Intelligence held at Dubai (May 4, 2023)

The UAE government launched the '**Machines Can See 2023**' summit in Dubai, one of the **first international conferences in Artificial Intelligence (AI) across the region**.

An overview of the news

- The conference is being held in partnership between **Artificial Intelligence, Digital Economy, and Remote Work Applications Office** and '**Machines Can See**' company.
- The conference aims to bring together experts from around the world to discuss **the future of AI and its potential to contribute to the UAE's vision of creating the next Silicon Valley**.

- The event was organized in collaboration with the **Dubai Department of Economic and Tourism and the Dubai Future Foundation.**
- The summit included **presentations and panel discussions from various experts in the field of AI.**
- The **UAE is the only country with a state-level AI programme**, which is a testament to its commitment to supporting the progress of AI technology.

What is Artificial Intelligence?

- It is a broad branch of computer science that deals with the creation of smart machines capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence.

10. India to build Harbour for Maldivian Coast Guard (May 4, 2023)

India to build Harbour for Maldivian Coast Guard

India and Maldives launched construction of '**Ekatha Harbour**' for the Coast Guard of the **Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF).**

An overview of the news

- The foundation stone for the Coast Guard '**Ekatha Harbour**' was laid by Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh** and his Maldivian counterpart, **Mariya Didi**, at **Sifavaru in Uthuru Thila Falhu (UTF) atoll**, where India is assisting in construction of a **naval dockyard.**
- This is the **biggest grant-in-aid project of India in Maldives.**

UTF project

- The UTF project, announced during External Affairs Minister **S Jaishankar's visit in February 2021**, has been at the centre of a political controversy in the Maldives.
- Allegations that the project was meant for Indian military presence in the Indian Ocean nation were part of an "India Out" campaign, which was supported by the country's opposition leader, **Abdulla Yameen.**
- Last April, Maldivian President Ibrahim Solih **banned anti-India protests** as a threat to national security.
- Anti-India campaigners allege that Indian troops were stationed in a fast patrol vessel India recently gifted to Maldives Coast Guard.

Recent gifts of India to Maldives

- India gifted a **Dornier aircraft** to Maldives in 2020 and a patrol ship in 2019.
- In 2022, India had also given **Coastal Radar System to Male.**

- Last year, Modi had announced that India would provide **24 vehicles** and a naval boat and build police facilities on the country's **61 islands**.