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1. Ukraine's President awarded Order of the White Eagle, Poland's highest honour (April 7, 2023)

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky was awarded

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky was awarded the Order of the White Eagle, Poland's highest award.

An Overview of the News

- The award was given to him for his **exceptional services to protect security, resilience and human rights.**
- The Order of the **White Eagle is a prestigious and highly regarded decoration of the Republic of Poland**, awarded for outstanding civil and military contributions to the country.
- It is considered the oldest and **highest decoration in Poland**, whose history dates back to the 14th century.
- In recent years, the award has been awarded to individuals who have made a significant contribution to Polish-Ukrainian relations and to the promotion of democracy and human rights in the region.

About Ukraine

- It is located in **Eastern Europe, bordered by Russia to the east and northeast, and is the second largest country in Europe, covering approximately 600,000 square kilometres.**
- Ukrainian culture has influences from **Slavic, Byzantine and European traditions.**

Capital - **Kyiv**

Official language - **Ukrainian**

About Poland

- A country located in **Central Europe, bordered by Germany to the west, the Czech Republic and Slovakia to the south, Ukraine and Belarus to the east, and the Baltic Sea, Lithuania and Russia to the north.**
- The country is divided into **16 administrative regions**, known as provinces, each with its own government and parliament.
- Poland has a **total area of 312,696 km²**, making it the **ninth largest country in Europe and the fifth most populous member state** of the European Union.
- Poland is also a member of **several international organisations including the United Nations, NATO, and the World Trade Organization.**

Capital - **Warsaw**

Official language - **Polish**

2. IFC to stop funding new coal-powered electricity projects (April 7, 2023)

IFC to stop funding new coal-powered electricity projects

The **International Finance Corporation (IFC)**, the **private sector arm of The World Bank**, has said it **will not support investments in new coal projects**.

An overview of the news

- The announcement has come as a big relief to those campaigning for a **clean energy transition**.
- **In the year 2020, IFC unveiled a policy** that required its clients to reduce their exposure to coal projects by **2025 and to zero by 2030**.
- There was no talk of stopping new investments in that policy, but now the situation has changed with this new announcement.
- A new update to **IFC's Green Equity Approach (GEA) policy** explicitly bars its **financial intermediaries clients** (such as commercial banks) from investing in coal.
- IFC lends money to banks and other financial institutions which in turn lend to infrastructure and energy projects.
- IFC has given loans of about **\$5 billion to about 88 financial institutions in India**.

About International Finance Corporation (IFC)

- It was **established in 1956** as a **member of the World Bank Group**.
- A member of the World Bank Group, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) provides **financing for private enterprise investment in developing countries**.
- Its focus is the **elimination of poverty** through economic development, but critics claim it is more focused on profits than people.
- In fiscal year **2021, IFC invests \$31.5 billion in financial initiatives**.

3. Global trade expected to grow 1.7% in 2023: WTO (April 6, 2023)

The **world trade organization (WTO)** on 5th April revised its **global trade growth outlook for 2023 upwards to 1.7% from last October's estimate of 1%**.

An overview of the news

- The World Trade Organization said in its forecast that trade growth **for 2024 is expected to be 3.2 percent**.
- However, the WTO said the forecast is highly uncertain and at a downside risk given the impact of ongoing **global tensions, food supply problems and monetary policy tightening**.
- Global trade growth in **2023 is still projected to be low**, despite a slight increase in **gross domestic product (GDP)** estimates since last fall.
- **Global commodity trade volumes are expected to grow by 1.7 percent** this year, following a **2.7 percent increase in 2022**, given the effects of the war in Ukraine, continuing high inflation, tight monetary policy and uncertainty in financial markets.

World Trade Organisation (WTO)

- It was set up on **1st January 1995** replacing the **General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT)**.
- Its main purpose is **to promote rule based trading systems in the world** and it also settles trade related disputes between the member countries.
- The headquarters of WTO is in **Geneva, Switzerland**.
- There are **164 member countries**.
- Director General of WTO : **Dr Ngozi -Okonjo-Iweala of Nigeria**
- Report released by WTO : **World Trade Report**

4. Indian-American physician honoured with young urologist of the year award (April 6, 2023)

Dr. Nitya Abraham, an **Indian-American physician and professor**, has been honored with the **Young Urologist of the Year Award** by the American Urological Association (AUA).

An overview of the news

- She is an Associate Professor at **Albert Einstein College of Medicine and Program Director for the Montefiore Urology** residency programme.
- Abraham has been chosen from the **New York region** for her accomplishments and contributions.
- Abraham has done remarkable work for countless students, residents, fellows and junior faculty in the New York area and at his institution.
- She is serving as the **Chair of the Executive Curriculum Committee for the Albert Einstein College of Medicine**.

- She is a member of the **Society for Urodynamics, Female Pelvic Medicine, and Urogenital Reconstruction (SUFU) Young Urologists Committee and Social Media Committee.**
- The award committee described her as a prolific researcher with clinical research on the impact of social determinants of **pelvic floor health.**

Young Urologist of the Year Award

- The **American Urological Association** recognizes the hard work of young urologists across the country.
- The award was established by **Dr. Michael C. Ost, 2012-2013 AUA Young Urologist Committee (YUC) Chair.**
- The **Young Urologist of the Year Award is presented annually** to early-career members of the AUA for their progress in their field and commitment to furthering their efforts.

5. India elected to UN Statistical Commission for 4-year term (April 6, 2023)

India elected to UN Statistical Commission for 4-year term

India has been elected as a member of the UN Statistical Commission, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Programme Coordinating Board of the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the **United Nations.**

An overview of the news

- India was elected to the highest statistical body of the United Nations **for a term of 4 years** starting from **1 January 2024.**
- India was elected as a member of this commission **20 years ago in 2004.**
- In the highly competitive election for membership of the Statistical Commission, **India secured 46 out of 53 votes** in a secret ballot.
- India, along with **South Korea, the United Arab Emirates and China**, was in the fray for two seats in the Asia Pacific states category.
- In the first round of voting, South Korea got 23 votes while China got 19 and the United Arab Emirates got 15 votes.
- In the second round, China and South Korea got 25 votes each.
- **South Korea was elected for the second seat** through a draw of lots after two inconclusive rounds of secret-balloting.

United Nations Statistical Commission

- It was **established in 1947.**

- It is the **apex body of the global statistical system** which brings together the chief statisticians of the member states around the world.
- It is the supreme **decision-making body for international statistical activities**.
- It is responsible for the **establishment of statistical standards** and the development of concepts and methods, including the implementation of statistical activities at national and international levels.
- It oversees the work of the **United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)**, and is a functional commission of the **United Nations Economic and Social Council**.

UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs

- It was established in **1946 by Resolution 9(I) of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**,
- It assists ECOSOC in **monitoring the application of international drug control treaties**.

6. 7th India-Japan Defense Policy Dialogue held in New Delhi (April 5, 2023)

7th India-Japan Defense Policy Dialogue held in New Delhi

The dialogue on April 05, 2023 was **co-chaired by Mr. Giridhar Armane, Defense Secretary of India** and **Mr. Oka Masami**, Defense Minister of International Affairs of Japan.

An Overview of the News

- The two countries discussed a wide range of issues, including **service-level exercises and engagements, regional security issues and cooperation in defence equipment and technology**.
- Defense Secretary **Shri Giridhar Armane** stressed the need for both the countries to deepen cooperation between their respective defence industries.
- He also invited Japanese defence industries to **explore investment opportunities in India** under the '**Make in India**' initiative.
- Both sides agreed to diversify cooperation in new and emerging domains such as the **defence sector and cyber**.
- India and Japan reiterated their commitment to a strong defence partnership and agreed to explore opportunities to further enhance bilateral cooperation.
- **Defense Policy Dialogue is an institutional mechanism** between India and Japan to discuss bilateral defence cooperation.

About Japan

- It is also called **Nihon or Nippon** and is an archipelago in the **western Pacific Ocean in East Asia**.
- It is made up of four main islands **Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu** and **Honshu** is the largest island of Japan.
- Its highest mountain is **Mount Fuji**.
- It is the **third largest economy in the world after the United States and China**.

Capital - **Tokyo**

currency - **Yen**

Prime Minister - **Fumio Kishida**

7. Bahrain Launches Golden License To Make Large-Scale Investments (April 4, 2023)

Bahrain Launches Golden License To Make Large-Scale Investments

Bahrain launched the Golden License Initiative to encourage investment and job creation in the country and aims to provide streamlined services and benefits to local and foreign businesses with large-scale investment projects in Bahrain.

An Overview of the News

- Companies with important strategic projects and investments of more than **US\$50 million or creating more than 500 jobs in Bahrain** will be eligible for the licence.
- The Golden License offers various benefits, including **priority land allotment for investment, infrastructure services, utilities, and streamlined access to government services** such as business licensing and building permit approval.
- The licence will also provide support from **Tamkin and the Bahrain Development Bank**.
- The initiative was launched by Bahrain's cabinet, chaired by Prince **Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa**, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Bahrain, to attract local and international investment to create job opportunities.
- India has the largest expatriate population in Bahrain, with around **350,000 Indians living in the country**.

About Bahrain

- It is an island country **located in western Asia** on the **Persian Gulf and consists of 50 natural islands and 33 artificial islands**, of which Bahrain Island is the largest.

- The **capital of Bahrain is Manama**, which serves as the **commercial and financial centre of the country**.
- The majority of the population is **Muslim, with Sunni and Shia Muslims** being the largest groups.

8. MF Hydra: World's first liquid hydrogen ferry (April 4, 2023)

MF Hydra: World's first liquid hydrogen ferry

Norwegian company Norld launched the **world's first ferry to run on MF Hydra liquid hydrogen**.

An Overview of the News

- The vessel, named **MF Hydra**, is a hybrid and uses both batteries and liquid hydrogen fuel cells for power.
- The **Norwegian Maritime Authority (NMA)** granted approval to operate the yacht.
- An important step towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the marine industry.
- **Hydrogen fuel cells** produce only clean water as a byproduct, making them an environmentally friendly option for powering ferries and other marine vessels.
- The **MF Hydra was to be delivered in 2021 and measures 82.4 metres in length**, with a passenger capacity of 300 and a capacity to carry 80 vehicles.
- It uses **two 200 kW fuel cells, two 440 kW** generators and two Shottel thrusters to reach a speed of 9 knots.
- The hydrogen system was provided by **Linde Engineering**, the fuel cell by Ballard and the battery by Corvus Energy. The ferry was completed by Westcon and systems integrator SEAM.

About Norway

Capital- **Oslo**

Currency- **Norwegian Krone**

King- **Harald V of Norway**

9. NASA announces four-member team of astronauts to travel to the Moon (April 4, 2023)

NASA announces four-member team of astronauts to travel to the Moon

For the first time in five decades, **NASA** announced a team of **four astronauts for its human spaceflight mission to the Moon.**

An overview of the news

- The team of **four astronauts will fly around the moon for a 10-day mission next year.**
- NASA has announced the four astronauts who will go to lunar orbit and return with the Artemis 2 mission.

Who are these Artemis 2 astronauts?

- These four Artemis 2 astronauts are - **Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover, Jeremy Hansen and Christina Koch.**
- NASA's **Reid Wiseman** will be the commander of the **Artemis 2 mission.**
- **Victor Glover** will serve as the **pilot for Artemis 2.** Glover was previously the pilot of NASA's SpaceX Crew-1 mission.
- **Jeremy Hansen** will represent the **Canadian Space Agency** during the mission.
- NASA astronaut **Christina Koch** will be the **mission specialist for Artemis 3.**
- Koch visited the space station in 2019, where she was part of the first all-woman spacewalk in history.
- The Artemis II flight team will have three American and one Canadian astronauts, the first since the historic Apollo mission ended in 1972.

Artemis 2 mission

- The Artemis 1 mission will allow NASA to test the foundation of its **latest human space exploration capabilities.**
- This includes the **Space Launch System (SLS) rocket, the Orion spacecraft, and all associated ground systems.**
- Artemis 2 will be the first crewed mission to test all of these.

About NASA

- NASA was formed under the **National Aeronautics and Space Act** on July 19, 1948, in place of its predecessor, the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA).
- NASA - **National Aeronautics and Space Administration**
- Headquarters- **Washington D.C.**
- Administrator - **Bill Nelson**

10. India, Netherlands hold first Ministerial-level meeting of Joint Working Group (April 4, 2023)

1st Ministerial-level meeting of the Joint Working Group between India and the Netherlands
The **1st Ministerial-level meeting of the Joint Working Group** between **India and the Netherlands** was held on 3 April in New Delhi.

An overview of the news

- The meeting was held in the presence of Union Jal Shakti Minister **Gajendra Singh Shekhawat** and Minister for Infrastructure and Water Management, Government of the Netherlands, **Mark Harbours**.
- The '**Strategic Water Partnership**' was launched during a virtual meeting between the Prime Ministers of India and the Netherlands in April 2021.
- The partnership provides the necessary impetus to expand bilateral water cooperation.
- The Netherlands is associated with various states and municipalities, including **Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Gujarat, Punjab, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Maharashtra**, in various water resources projects.
- River-city alliance between the two countries for river-sensitive cities and technologically driven nature-based solutions for river rejuvenation.

India-Netherlands Relations

- **India and the Netherlands** enjoy long-standing warm and friendly relations based on shared values of democracy, rule of law, human rights and historical bonds of friendship.
- Both countries share **common ideals of democracy, pluralism and rule of law**.
- Bilateral relations have been marked by strong economic and commercial ties.
- The Netherlands signed the **Framework Agreement of the International Solar Alliance (ISA)** and became the **64th signatory member** country.
- There are over **200 Indian companies** operating in the Netherlands.
- The total bilateral trade stood at **US\$ 6.28 billion in the financial year 2018-2019**.
- The Netherlands was India's fourth largest trading partner in the European Union after Britain, Germany and Belgium.

About Netherlands

- The Netherlands, also known as **Holland**, is a country located in northwestern Europe.
- Monarch: **King Willem-Alexander**

- Prime Minister: **Mark Rutte**
- Capital: **Amsterdam**
- Currency: **euro**